

Wednesday, March 11th, 2020

The House met at 10:00 o'clock in the morning pursuant to adjournment.

On motion of the Honourable Government House Leader (Ms. Coady) the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider Certain Resolutions and a Bill for the Granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty (Bill No. 26).

The Speaker left the Chair.

Mr. Bennett took the Chair of Committee of the Whole on Supply.

On motion the Committee rose.

The Speaker resumed the Chair.

The Chairperson of the Committee (Mr. Bennett) reported that the Committee of Supply had considered the matters to them referred and had directed him to report that they had made some progress and ask leave to sit again.

Pursuant to Standing Order 9(1)(b) the sitting was suspended at 11:55 a.m. The Speaker resumed the Chair at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Member for Bonavista (Mr. Pardy) made a Statement to recognize Betty Fitzgerald for her contribution to her community.

The Member for Terra Nova (Mr. Parrott) made a Statement to pay tribute to the late Sam Saunders for his outstanding contributions to the community.

The Member for Harbour Grace – Port de Grave (Ms. Parsons) made a Statement to recognize the women who celebrated International Women's Day in the region of Conception Bay North on Sunday, March 8th.

The Member for Ferryland (Mr. O'Driscoll) made a Statement to congratulate Ms. Nora Noremore who celebrated her 100th birthday on February 17th.

The Member for Cape St. Francis (Mr. Parsons) made a Statement to congratulate Quinn Schmiedendorf on being named the 2020 Janeway Children's Miracle Network Champion Child.

The Honourable the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development (Ms. Dempster) made a Statement to provide an update on the preparations for the 2025 Canada Summer Games.

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The Honourable the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation (Mr. Davis) made a Statement to promote provincial parks.

The Honourable the Speaker (Mr. Reid), pursuant to paragraph 19(5)(a) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, tabled the minutes of the meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission held on November 6, 2019.

The Honourable the Government House Leader (Ms. Coady) gave notice that she would on tomorrow move, pursuant to Standing Order 11(1), that the House not adjourn at 5:30 o'clock in the afternoon on Monday, March 23rd, 2020.

The Honourable the Government House Leader (Ms. Coady) gave notice that she would on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following motion:

“WHEREAS Justice LeBlanc has delivered his report Muskrat Falls: A Misguided Project which presents the key findings of the public inquiry;

AND WHEREAS in that report it finds that the former Progressive Conservative Government “was determined to proceed with the development of the hydroelectric potential of the Lower Churchill River and it initiated several activities to advance this development”;

AND WHEREAS the report further indicates that the former Progressive Conservative Government “failed in its duty to ensure that the best interests of the Province’s residents were safeguarded”;

AND WHEREAS the Progressive Conservative Government “failed in its responsibility to objectively assess and oversee the decisions and actions of Nalcor”;

AND WHEREAS the original budget for the Muskrat Falls project was \$7.4 billion and has risen to \$12.7 billion yet findings are that “the assumptions on which the Project’s economics were based and promoted were not sufficiently tested, and a comprehensive examination of the range of possible outcomes was not undertaken”;

AND WHEREAS the report indicates that “this resulted in a combination of unrealistic optimism, a willingness to misrepresent cost, schedule and risk, and an inability to change course when things were going wrong”;

AND WHEREAS “the project had clearly reached the point of no return when the Ball Government was elected (late 2015). The real point of no return was at Financial Close of the FLG in November 2013”;

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AND WHEREAS the consequence of this \$12.7 billion project has had a profound financial impact on the people of the Province, without mitigation a doubling of electricity rates, and represents greater than 30% of the Province's direct and indirect debt;

THEREFORE BE RESOLVED that this House supports the referral of this report to the RCMP and RNC for potential criminality and further refers it to the Department of Justice and Public Safety for potential civil litigation.”

The Honourable the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (Mr. Warr) provided information related to a question asked by the Member for St. John's Centre (Mr. Dinn) on Tuesday, March 10th regarding the Provincial Teacher Allocation Model.

The Honourable the Minister of Health and Community Services (Mr. Haggie) provided additional information relating to a question asked by the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Brazil) about Newfoundland and Labrador COVID-19 virus infection statistics.

Pursuant to notice and on motion debate commenced and concluded on the following Resolution standing in the name of the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port (Mr. Wakeham):

“WHEREAS a Province facing the fiscal and economic challenges that Newfoundland and Labrador is now facing must show leadership by producing a solid fiscal and economic plan for the 2020/21 fiscal year without delay;

AND WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador is experiencing significant population decline through interprovincial migration, with Statistics Canada reporting the net loss of an estimated 1,430 people in 2017; 2,733 people in 2018; and 4,501 people in 2019;

AND WHEREAS Statistics Canada projected last fall that Newfoundland and Labrador is on track to lose 65,000 people or 12.4 percent of its population within the next 25 years under a medium growth scenario if urgent corrective action is not taken;

AND WHEREAS the Government stated in its 2019 Budget that it remains on a multi-year “plan to returning to a sustainable surplus in 2022-23”, although the details of this plan have not been publicly disclosed;

AND WHEREAS the democratic principles of accountability and transparency demand that expenditures be subject to the scrutiny of the usual budget process;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this Honourable House urge the Government to deliver the 2020 Budget at the usual time in the Spring, prior to a general election.”

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The Speaker put the question and declared the Resolution carried.

The Speaker then adjourned the House until Thursday at 1:30 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 9.

Sandra Barnes,
Clerk of the House of Assembly.