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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Delivered at the Prorogation of
The First Session of the Fiftieth
General Assembly of the Province of
Newfoundland and Labrador
by Her Honour
The Honourable Judy M. Foote, P.C., O.N.L.,
Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador

October 3, 2022



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Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly.

Good morning.

The First Session of the Fiftieth General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is about to be prorogued.

To the parliamentarians of this Honourable House of Assembly, thank you.

Thank you for your tireless commitment and advocacy over the course of the First Session of the Fiftieth General Assembly. Through thoughtful debate, you have advanced meaningful legislation on behalf of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

It has been a busy legislative session, which has included two provincial budgets.

Over the long hours of debating the budget, considerable progress was made to strategically position the province on a course to being a stronger, self-sufficient, sustainable Newfoundland and Labrador.

There was significant emphasis on easing some of the pressures that residents are experiencing in the face of the rising cost of living. These include increases in the Income Supplement and the Seniors' Benefit, as well as broader measures such as a reduction in motor registration fees and the removal of retail sales tax on home insurance premiums.

In total, Members passed 55 pieces of legislation.

Improving the Health and Safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians

There is no greater priority than the health and safety of residents and communities. That importance was consistently highlighted during the session.

The *Off-Road Vehicle Act* tightened rules and regulations for users of off-road vehicles, and included stiffer fines for those who choose to ignore the law. It puts the health and safety of operators, and the general public in mind.

The *Adoption Act* strengthened adoption legislation and recognized the unique rights and needs of Indigenous children and their families in the adoption process.

The *Adult Protection Act* strengthened the rights of adults involved in the adult protection process and protects those who are at risk of abuse, neglect and/or self-neglect, and who do not understand or appreciate that risk.

The *Access to Health and Education Services Act* established safe access zones around facilities in which health and educational services are provided.

Fostering Inclusive and Diverse Communities

With the goal of fostering inclusive and accessible communities, legislation focused on removing barriers in all aspects of society for persons with disabilities.

The *Accessibility Act* marked an important step in achieving our shared goals. It took meaningful steps to outline the principles and goals for an accessible province by preventing, identifying and removing barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from full participation in society.

Newcomers enrich our communities and grow our economy.

This sitting, amendments to the *Corporations Act* made it easier for newcomers to start businesses and create jobs. These amendments will serve as a tool for newcomers to be successful contributors to the province, and put down roots to grow their families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Advancing Reconciliation with indigenous peoples

A key element of our path towards Reconciliation is reflecting the cultures, diversity, and history of Indigenous peoples.

Our commitment to this process guided the *Renaming Indian Lake Act*, which resulted in the renaming of a large lake in the central region to Beothuk Lake. Amendments to the *Coat of Arms Act* saw Labrador included in the name of the province and removed the word ‘savages.’

Both pieces of legislation were drafted after consultations with Indigenous leaders and members of the general public. This sets the stage for further acts of Reconciliation in the coming months and years.

Greater Transparency and Accountability

It is paramount to a healthy and functioning society that government bring transparency and accountability to its operations, and create an environment where citizens can have trust in public and private institutions.

Amendments to the *Auditor General Act* strengthened the Office of the Auditor General through ensuring the Office's independence while enhancing access to information and increasing transparency on how public funds and other resources are used.

Important changes were also made to the *Securities Act*, providing greater protection of peoples' financial investments, including provisions that enhance the power of certain regulatory authorities. Amendments to the *Vital Statistics Act* and Regulations enhance consumer protection and improve the overall experience of government services.

The new *Municipal Conduct Act* marks a significant step forward for municipal governance. The *Act* provides clear guidelines for councils, requiring them to establish their own codes of conduct to effectively address issues such as conflicts of interest, and bullying and harassment in the workplace.

Amendments to the *Urban and Rural Planning Act* helped improve services to municipalities and residents and result in a more effective and efficient appeals process.

Legislative amendments to the *Petroleum Products Act* improve transparency to the Public Utilities Board process. With greater transparency, the goal is to build a greater understanding of what informs the fuel pricing process.

It is my pleasure that the First Session of the Fiftieth General Assembly now be prorogued and it is prorogued accordingly.