

Tuesday, April 21st, 2015

The House met at 11 o'clock in the morning pursuant to adjournment.

The Sergeant-at-Arms announced the arrival of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Frank Fagan, CM, ONL, MBA.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor was then pleased to make the following Speech:

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

The Third Session of the Forty-Seventh General Assembly of the Honourable House of Assembly is about to be prorogued, but before releasing you from your duties, I wish to express gratitude for the careful and sympathetic attention that you have given to important matters brought to you by our Ministers.

Openness and Accountability

During this Session, Members passed 41 pieces of legislation. A prominent theme of our Government's legislative agenda was **openness and accountability**.

Bill 1 gave our province its first *Public Interest Disclosure And Whistleblower Protection Act*. The Act provides a mechanism for the disclosure and investigation of wrongdoings in or relating to the public service that an employee believes may be unlawful, dangerous to the public or injurious to the public interest. It also protects persons who make disclosures under the Act from reprisals.

Bill 6 amended the *City of Corner Brook Act*, the *City of Mount Pearl Act*, the *City of St. John's Act* and the *Municipalities Act, 1999* to allow a council to appoint one or more youth representatives.

Bill 8 introduced the *Publication of Adjudication Tribunal Decisions Amendment Act*, which requires the publication of decisions of adjudication tribunals in all cases, although an individual can apply to the court to seek that certain information be withheld from publication.

Bill 22 amended the *Labour Relations Act* to provide workers with a mandatory secret ballot to vote on a union certification application, and to amend the conciliation provisions.

Bill 24 amended the *Labour Relations Act* and the *Public Service Collective Bargaining Act* to repeal provisions respecting vote on offer.

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Public Safety

Other legislative amendments brought forward by our Government advance **public safety**.

Bill 4 amended the *Mental Health Care and Treatment Act* to clarify to whom a rights advisor may offer advice and assistance; to add a requirement for a rights advisor to contact a person who is an involuntary patient or who is under a community treatment order and his or her representative within 10 days of the first meeting between the rights advisor and the person; and to remove the requirement for a community treatment order to contain an undertaking by the person who is the subject of the order.

Bill 14 introduced the *Emergency 911 Act*, which established “911” as the primary emergency telephone number for use in the province; and required the establishment and implementation of a province-wide emergency 911 telephone service for the reporting of emergencies.

Bill 29 amended the *Highway Traffic Act* to clarify the rules and improve the safety of roundabouts, rotary traffic islands and traffic circles.

Bill 32 amended the *Registered Nurses Act, 2008*, to add regulation-making authority respecting quality assurance; to add quality assurance provisions to enhance public protection and accountability; and to allow the complaints authorization committee to refer an allegation to the quality assurance committee, allowing concerns to be addressed before they become more serious and require engagement in the disciplinary process.

Bill 36 introduced a new *Missing Persons Act* to allow members of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to access records about a missing person that may assist them in locating the missing person; and to enter a dwelling or other premises to search for a missing minor or vulnerable person. This legislation represents a significant advance in public safety.

Bill 37 amended the *Highway Traffic Act* to require all persons riding a bicycle to wear a helmet.

Bill 38 amended the *Social Workers Act* to add quality assurance provisions to enhance public protection and accountability. These quality assurance measures provide further checks and balances within the profession to ensure that social workers are delivering the best services and care to the people who rely and depend on their expertise.

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Fiscal Responsibility

Other legislative amendments represent our Government's determination to be **fiscally responsible** in managing the province's affairs.

Bill 39 amended the *Pensions Funding Act and Public Service Pensions Act, 1991*, to reflect the Public Service Pension Plan Reform Agreement executed on September 2, 2014.

Bill 40 covered other provisions of pension reform with a new Act – the *Other Post-Employment Benefits Eligibility Modification Act*.

Bill 42 amended the *Electoral Boundaries Act* to require the electoral boundaries commission to report upon the delimitation of the province into districts in 2015; reduce the number of one-member districts in the province; and make consequential amendments for the purpose of a commission report in 2015.

Governance and Administration

Still other legislative amendments improve **governance and administration** in the province.

Bill 15 amended the *Mineral Act* to allow a mineral licence to be extended for an additional 10 year period beyond the 20year extension period and prescribe requirements for licence holders who retain licences during that additional period; and amended the requirements for renewing a mining lease.

Bill 19 amended the *Dispensing Opticians Act, 2005* to remove the restriction that a dispensing optician may only supply contact lenses where a prescription specifically indicates that they may be supplied; and to clarify that a dispensing optician who is authorized by the board to fit contact lenses may convert a prescription in order to fit, dispense or supply contact lenses, consistent with the laws of other provinces.

Bill 20 amended the *Income Tax Act, 2000* to provide for a tax credit in respect of a qualifying investment in a qualifying venture capital fund.

Bill 26 amended the *Revenue Administration Act* to establish a procedure for the issuance of electronic clearance certificates.

Bill 27 introduced a brand new *Chartered Professional Accountants and Public Accountants Act* to merge the professions of Chartered Accountant, Certified

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Management Accountant and Certified General Accountant into the profession of Chartered Professional Accountant.

Bill 30 introduced a new *Child Care Act* to modernize and strengthen the legislation, reflecting current knowledge in the child care field, streamlining policies and processes, increasing transparency and providing flexibility for licensees.

Bill 41 amended the *Municipalities Act, 1999*, to provide greater flexibility to municipalities to sell, lease or dispose of real and personal property that has an estimated fair market value of \$500 or more.

Among the other legislative measures enacted during this session was an additional bill to amend the *Revenue Administration Act*, plus a bill to amend the *Revenue Administration Act and the Tax Agreement Act, 2010*; a second bill to amend the *Income Tax Act, 2000*; two Interim Supply bills; and bills to amend the *Buildings Accessibility Act*, the *Health Professions Act*, the *Student Financial Assistance Act*, the *Fish Processing Licensing Board Act*, the *Loan Act*, the *Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, the *Elections Act, 1991*, the *Provincial Offences Act*, the *Vital Statistics Act, 2009*, and the *Provincial Court Act, 1991*. The House enacted a new *Atlantic Provinces Harness Racing Commission Act* and repealed the *Printing Services Act*.

Summary

In summary, our Government's legislative initiatives in 2014-15 enhanced openness and accountability, advanced public safety, reflected sound fiscal management, and improved governance and administration in the province.

I thank you for the large measure of Supply you have granted. I assure you the appropriations you have granted have been and will be expended by our Ministers with care and efficiency.

It is my pleasure that the Third Session of the Forty-Seventh General Assembly now be prorogued and it is prorogued accordingly.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor left the Chamber.

The Speaker resumed the Chair.

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The Speaker then said, "It is the wish and pleasure of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor that this General Assembly be prorogued, and it is prorogued accordingly".

Sandra Barnes,
Clerk of the House of Assembly.