

Speech from the Throne 2007

Highlights

- The 2007-2008 **operating and capital budgets** will be tabled on March 13, 2007.
- Legislation will be introduced supporting the government's **Day One initiatives** (3.8 cent per litre reduction in provincial tax on gasoline; first-year university student grants; elimination of parental and spousal contribution requirements; removal of seniors' homes, assets and life savings from the calculation of nursing home fees; and the memorandum of understanding on Saint John harbour clean-up).
- A new **Plan for Education** will be released; government will begin implementing the MacKay Report recommendations for **improving inclusive education**; and will move forward on a **new community schools policy** that will enhance the quality of education in rural and urban communities alike.
- A new *Post-Secondary Student Financial Assistance Act* will be introduced which will reflect the current realities of student financial assistance.
- A Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly will be established to examine how to address **long-term literacy challenges** and **community-based adult learning programs** will be integrated.
- Government will study the **feasibility of a second nuclear reactor at Point Lepreau**, examine the potential of sending natural gas to northern New Brunswick and will **explore prospective new markets** in Atlantic Canada and New England to grow the energy sector.
- A **new energy policy** will be developed and the existing *Electricity Act* will be reviewed to ensure it is meeting its public policy goals.
- A comprehensive plan will be outlined to **address the demographic challenges** faced by the province.

- A program will be brought forward this year to **stimulate capital investment for small business** start-up, expansion, diversification and productivity improvement.
- A new *Franchises Act* and amendments to the *Securities Act* will be introduced.
- The **Northern New Brunswick Initiative** will be created to ensure adequate infrastructure is made available for economic development in the northern parts of the province, including the development of a **new infrastructure program** for northern and Miramichi regions.
- Government will provide **strategic financial assistance to the forest industry** where industry can demonstrate a need, has a focused and realistic business plan, and is prepared to make a major financial investment.
- The current **moose license draw system** will be amended this spring to improve the chances of success for hunters who have not been successful in obtaining a moose license over many years.
- The **New Brunswick Fisheries Summit** will be held to help the province's fishermen and seafood processors meet the challenges facing the industry and take advantage of opportunities.
- The *Tourism Development Act* will be revised following consultations with the tourism industry and government is committed to working with the industry to ensure New Brunswick remains a destination of choice.
- Government will pursue the cooperation and partnership of the federal government to **upgrade national highway system routes 1, 7, 8, 11 and 17** and will significantly address the road infrastructure needs of rural New Brunswick during its mandate.
- A **New Brunswick Intelligent Transportation Strategy** document will be released outlining New Brunswick's position in the development and deployment of new technologies for the province's transportation sector.

- Amendments will be introduced to the *Motor Vehicle Act* to enable law enforcement to **get tough on impaired drivers**. Other measures will be introduced to reduce speeding, increase seat belt use and improve the safety of children travelling in vehicles.
- Changes will be made to the *Off-Road Vehicle Act* with specific attention to age of operation, training requirements, public awareness and education.
- A review of **access to information legislation** will be initiated, including privacy legislation as it relates to health issues and the use of electronic health record technology.
- **Twenty new legal assistants** will be hired to assume tasks related to the preparation of court documents that have been performed by social workers, enabling them to focus more on prevention and clinical therapeutic interventions.
- The government will introduce a **mediation model** as the primary form of dispute resolution in child protection cases and will commence work on a new **prevention-based multiple response service delivery model**.
- The **New Brunswick Housing Corporation** will be reinstated as a strong, proactive housing agency to address housing needs in both rural and urban New Brunswick.
- Amendments will be made to the *Insurance Act* to make certain New Brunswick drivers to continue to benefit from reasonable insurance rates and a fair insurance product.
- A **Disability Stakeholders Summit** will be held in May 2007.
- A new **Select Committee on Wellness** will be established and a **Premier's Committee on Healthy Families** will be launched to conduct an ongoing dialogue with New Brunswickers on healthy lifestyle choices.

- A **provincial Rural Health Framework** will be established to improve access to services in rural areas. Communities, health care providers and other key groups will be engaged in its development.
- Ambulance services will be consolidated under a new, **single operator, province-wide ambulance system** that will meet international standards. **Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner** positions will also be created in all New Brunswick health regions.
- The *Public Health Act* will be proclaimed following amendments to better protect public health and make the public health system more flexible. A staged approach will be implemented to **assist persons with diabetes** to access necessary medications, supplies and devices.
- A **Prescription Monitoring Program** for New Brunswick will be established to provide information to assist in patient care decision-making and promote optimal prescribing and utilization of monitored drugs.
- Government will **address health care delivery needs in francophone communities**, particularly in the Acadian Peninsula, and will implement **long-term planning** for health human resources as well as capital and technological investments.
- Amendments will be made to the *Provincial Offences Procedure Act* to allow for the collection of voluntary fine payments for provincial offence tickets by Service New Brunswick.
- A comprehensive **review of the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission** will be undertaken.
- A **Cultural Industry Development Strategy** will be developed that will provide a comprehensive plan for the growth of this sector and a **Book Policy** will be implemented.

- A **Climate Change Action Plan** will be introduced that will provide a framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Following the results of the Environmental Impact Assessment, government will select a preferred option for the **remediation of the Petitcodiac River**.
- A new relationship is being forged with **New Brunswick's First Nations communities**. This will include a process to **remove the Ganong Line division** between Mi'kmaq and Maliseet communities, the designation of **September 24 as Treaty Day** and working with the federal government and First Nations to establish a **Bilateral and Tripartite Forum**.