



ENGLISH VERSION

5 September 2024

(by email)

Legislative Assembly Committee
Bill Oliver, Chair
706, rue Queen
Fredericton (N.-B.) E3B 1C5

Object: the next Legislature

Mr. President,

This is an open invitation to future New Brunswick MLAs and the next New Brunswick Government to undertake a review of some of its long-standing New Brunswick Legislative Assembly traditions.

[Nation Prospère](#) Acadie is a charitable organisation created in 2018 to play a leading role in the continuity of the French culture and language in Atlantic Canada, as well as the prosperity of its Acadian regions. The values that guide our work include love of our common ancestral homeland, the pursuit of consensus and excellence, and freedom of expression.

This open letter proposes that the next Legislative Assembly Committee consider implementing two changes to improve the working environment of New Brunswick's elected representatives.

The first change concerns the continued obligation of elected Members of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly to swear an Oath of Allegiance to *His Majesty King Charles III*. Since December 2022, a Canadian precedent was set by the *Assemblée nationale du Québec*, whereby the only oath required to sit in a Canadian Legislative Assembly is the one that is recognised by its own provincial assembly. Here is the link to the background on this [precedent-setting legislation](#).

The first and main role of New Brunswick MLAs is to serve and represent their constituents. For this solemn affirmation to become once again meaningful and reflective of the true MLA and Ministerial roles, pledges of loyalty and service should foremost be made to the people of New Brunswick.

The second change that we would like to bring to your attention is the outdated décor of the Legislative Chamber, which features a large reproduction of King George III overlooking the Government side of the room while Queen Charlotte oversees the work of the Official Opposition.

The reign of [King Goerge III](#) is noteworthy for many historical reasons, namely occurring during the American Revolution and the subsequent creation of the Province of New Brunswick. The dispossession and persecution of Acadians and Indigenous Peoples during his reign is also associated with his legacy, while the naming of Charlottetown was bestowed in honour of Queen Charlotte.

NATION PROSPÈRE

This part of our history is of importance to New Brunswick and the Maritime Provinces. But does the day-to-day work of modern-day MLAs require that they be continuously reminded of their presence?

The emblem appearing on top of the Speakers' chair is another matter. Instead of presenting the emblem of the Province of New Brunswick, as is the tradition in other Canadian Provinces, they are those of the [Order of the Garter](#). Founded in 1348, its 24 Companions are a selection of knights and ladies associated with the British royal family and other foreign monarchs.

We doubt that these foreign dignitaries are aware that their emblem is present in our Legislative Assembly, or that they have all even heard of New Brunswick. It is up to the Legislative Administration Committee to decide whether this emblem still belongs in our Legislative Chamber, or whether it should be returned to its rightful owners.

Symbols matter, and we can think of many that could better represent New Brunswick and its beautiful landscapes than those presented today in the Legislative Assembly. Rituals and promises also matter. In the case of the oath of allegiance that concerns us, we believe that the loyalty of MLAs and ministers should first and foremost be pledged to New Brunswick and its people.

This invitation to future New Brunswick MLAs should in no way be seen as an attack on Great Britain, its impressive history or its parliamentary traditions that we value, including the freedom of expression that it champions today. Nation Prospère is not in support of erasing history, but neither of glorifying it. A prosperous, happy and peaceful Acadie is what we strive for.

There's no better time than today to revisit the long-standing but outdated traditions of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly, which hark back to our checkered past rather than our shared future.

Sincerely yours,



Daniel LeBlanc
directeur général