

Tuesday, April 28, 1998



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS No. 38

FOURTH SESSION, THIRTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

PRAYERS

1:30 O'CLOCK P.M.

The following petition was presented:

Mr. MARTINDALE - Minister of Health to consider immediately cancelling the hospital food proposal and concentrate on delivering quality health care instead of using health dollars to provide contracts for private firms (L. Barabash, G. Lamoureux, E. Karlinski and others)

The following petitions were read and received:

Mr. MARTINDALE - Minister of Health to consider immediately cancelling the hospital food proposal and concentrate on delivering quality health care instead of using health dollars to provide contracts for private firms (F. Pemkowski, A. McIntosh, G. Debuik and others)

Mr. SANTOS - Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services (S. Genovy, D. Derhak, M. Canon and others)

Mr. DEWAR - Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services (C. Bouvette, R. Bouchard, M. Bilodeau and others)

Mr. LAURENDEAU, Chairperson of the Committee of Supply, reported progress having been made on April 27, 1998. Report was received and the Committee of Supply obtained leave to sit again.

The following Bills were, by leave, severally introduced and read a First Time:

(No. 29) - The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1998; Loi de 1998 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité

(Recommended by His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor)
(Hon. Mr. STEFANSON)

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(No. 32) - The Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités et modifications corrélatives

(Recommended by His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor)
(Hon. Mr. McCRAE for Hon. Mr. DERKACH)

(No. 35) - The Mental Health and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la santé mentale et modifications corrélatives

(Recommended by His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor)
(Hon. Mr. PRAZNIK)

Hon. Mr. STEFANSON presented:

Message from His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor recommending the disposition of public revenue for Bill (No. 29).

(Sessional Paper No. 169)

Hon. Mr. McCRAE for Hon. Mr. DERKACH presented:

Message from His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor recommending the disposition of public revenue for Bill (No. 32).

(Sessional Paper No. 170)

Hon. Mr. PRAZNIK presented:

Message from His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor recommending the disposition of public revenue for Bill (No. 35).

(Sessional Paper No. 171)

Following Oral Questions, Madam Speaker made the following ruling:

On April 7, 1998, the Honourable Member for Brandon East rose on a point of order respecting the reading of Members' Statements. The Government House Leader made some input on the point of order as well, and I took the matter under advisement.

The Honourable Member for Brandon East suggested that reading verbatim of speeches was not in order, although the use of notes was acceptable. He noted that many Members were reading statements, as opposed to giving speeches from notes. The Government House Leader, in essence, concurred that the practice has tended toward more reading of speeches. He suggested that reading of questions and of statements was a reality of parliaments in the 90's.

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In considering the matter, I note that our Rule 33 prohibits, with certain exceptions, the reading of speeches during a debate. A Member's Statement, however, is not a debate, so it does not fall within the ambit of Rule 33. I would make the observation that Ministerial Statements are made from a prepared text. I would also make the observation that Members' Statements are restricted to a very short period of time -- two minutes.

I have had a survey done of practices in other Canadian jurisdictions -- of the eleven Houses which responded, ten allow Members to read from a prepared text during Members' Statements, the eleventh House does not have Members' Statements.

When Members' Statements were considered by the Rules Committee, the issue of whether they could be read was not discussed by the Committee.

I would note that it seems to have become the practice in the House for Members to read their Statements.

Because there is no specific Rule for the Chair to interpret, and because there was no position expressed by the Rules Committee in its consideration of Members' Statements, it is difficult for the Chair to make a ruling. I would note that in the past on issues like whether Members had to stand to ask questions in Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber, that matter was decided by putting the issue to the House. I am therefore suggesting that a similar approach be taken with respect to the matter raised by the Honourable Member for Brandon East. If the House is willing to deal with the matter immediately, I would be prepared to put a question to the House. If there is a desire to have some time to consider the matter further, I would be prepared to put the question to the House at a later time, and I also suggest if there are concerns that perhaps the House Leaders could arrange a meeting and discuss this if there is no will today to make an immediate decision.

Pursuant to Rule 20(1), Messrs. DYCK, REID, FAURSCHOU, STRUTHERS and KOWALSKI made Members' Statements.

Madam Speaker having left the Chair and the House resolving itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty;

And the House continuing in Committee, the Proceedings were interrupted at 5:00 p.m. for Private Members' Business.

Mr. HICKES moved:

Resolution No. 22: Bank Closures in the Inner-City and Rural Manitoba

WHEREAS bank profits of the major Canadian Banks in 1997 are at record levels of well over a billion dollars a year each; and

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WHEREAS the four major banks have closed or merged 12 branches in the inner city of Winnipeg in the past year; and

WHEREAS the major banks have also recently closed rural banks in Lynn Lake, Baldur, Miniota and Whitemouth; and

WHEREAS these banks have closed not because they were losing money but because the banks wanted even greater immediate profits; and

WHEREAS while the inflation rate has averaged less than 2% a year, Interac and bank service charges have increased by 25-35% in the last three years; and

WHEREAS the bank with the highest service fees had a profit increase of over 40% in 1997; and

WHEREAS roughly three quarters of a million Canadians do not have bank accounts and are forced to use firms charging fees to cash cheques; and

WHEREAS in the United States the Community Re-Investment Act forces banks to provide loan funding for small business and community development resulting in \$497 million in loan commitments made in local housing projects and small business over a five year period in Chicago alone.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Federal Government to introduce a Community Re-Investment Act in Canada; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the Federal Government to conduct an inquiry into bank profits and service fees.

And a debate arising,

And Mr. HICKES, Hon. Mr. RADCLIFFE and Ms. WOWCHUK having spoken,

And Mr. SVEINSON speaking at 6:00 p.m.,

The debate was allowed to remain in his name.

The House then adjourned at 6:00 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

Hon. Louise Dacquay,
Speaker.