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Minister
Health & Comm. Services
201 - Leg. Bldg.
ISSN 0542-5492



Second Session — Thirty-First Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

26 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Harry E. Graham
Speaker*



Vol. XXVI No.1 2:30 p.m. Thursday, March 16, 1978

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 16, 1978

Time: 2:30 p.m.

At 2:30 o'clock in the afternoon the Sergeant-at-Arms carrying the Mace shoulder high and followed by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, The Honourable Harry E. Graham, the Clerk of the House, Mr. J.R. Reeves, and the Clerk's Assistant, Mr. A.J. Anstett, entered the House. The Sergeant-at-Arms proceeded to the main entrance of the House, the Speaker took post on the east side of the House and the Clerks took post on the west side of the House, stood and awaited the arrival of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

DEPUTY SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

The Lieutenant-Governor entered the Chamber and then, preceded by the Mace, carried shoulder high, and followed on his left by the Military Aide, and on his right by the Civil Aide, proceeded along the west side of the Chamber to the Throne. The Officer Escort divided upon reaching the Table, the left file going to the east side of the Chamber, and the right file going to the west side of the Chamber. The Premier and the Members of the Executive Council proceeded along the east side of the Chamber and stood on the floor on the east side of the Chamber.

The Military Aide then took up his position on the right of the Throne and the Civil Aide took up his position on the west side of the Chamber.

The Escort Officers formed up on either side of the dais.

The Lieutenant-Governor then seated himself on the Throne; the Mace made obeisance and retired to the east side of the Chamber.

The Civil Aide then advanced from the position he had taken on the west side of the Chamber and after usual obeisance on each step handed the Lieutenant-Governor the Speech from the Throne.

The Civil Aide then retired step by step and took his position on the west side of the Chamber.

HONOURABLE FRANCIS L. . JOBIN, Lieutenant-Governor: Please be seated.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

HONOURABLE FRANCIS L. JOBIN: Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba:

I welcome you to the Second Session of the Thirty-first Legislature of the Province of Manitoba.

My Ministers inform me that they are committed to the restoration of confidence in the Manitoba economy and to that end my government has reaffirmed its belief in the fundamental importance of a strong and competitive private sector. In the same connection my Ministers recognize the dependence on a growing private sector in our mixed economy to generate wealth and to create permanent employment opportunities, particularly for the young people of our province.

My Ministers are aware of the duty they have to advance current questions of national unity in order that our province may be able to play her traditional role as a moderate voice among the provinces. They will be giving careful study to any constitutional proposals which may be put forward and will in fact give thoughtful consideration to those proposals bearing on the legitimate aspirations of the people of Quebec as part of a united Canada.

A ce propos, mon gouvernement compte sur la communauté francophone du Manitoba pour soutenir son rôle traditionnel de représenter le fait français dans la vie globale de notre province.

My Ministers are confident that despite the slow growth of the Canadian economy, the initial steps to recovery have already been taken in Manitoba.

My Ministers anticipate general but modest improvement in Manitoba's economic performance over the coming year. All Members should be aware, however, that the prospects for significant improvement over the longer term depend heavily on moderation of expectations in all sectors of the economy. With the implementation of the decontrol process, there is a real risk that some groups may not exercise the responsibility which the times demand.

My Ministers are considering an appropriate policy to complement federal initiatives in ensuring that total public sector compensation does not exceed comparable private sector equivalents. Consistent with this compensation policy, a measure will be presented to freeze the amount of the Members' indemnity in the coming fiscal year.

By providing leadership through continuing public sector restraint, my government is confident, as all eleven senior governments recently agreed at the First Ministers' Conference, that market forces will operate, and should be allowed to operate, to help keep price and compensation increases at levels which will not increase inflationary pressures.

My Ministers inform me that inflationary pressures continue to be a threat to our economy. Manitoba's prospects are also linked to those of the rest of Canada. National prospects depend on effective leadership by the federal government in spending restraints and responsible monetary and

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economic policies. Prospects for significant economic expansion in Canada and Manitoba, higher employment levels, and better price performance, therefore, will only follow sound economic leadership.

My Ministers tell me that through the thoughtful exercise of fiscal prudence, made especially necessary by a much larger deficit than was earlier predicted, and through actions designed to restore confidence in the economy of Manitoba, they are demonstrating the provincial leadership required at this point in time. My government will continue to develop policies and programs to further expansion of our economy for the betterment of all Manitobans, with the realization that only with continued economic growth and the generation of wealth will it be possible to increase funding and expand social programs required by those in need in our society.

My Ministers inform me that the revenues of the province in this fiscal year now concluding will not be as large as initially forecast. To ensure that programs are approved and funds are dispersed in a manner which is fair, efficient, and equitable to all our citizens, my Ministers are committed to a thorough review of the spending estimates based on legitimate priorities of the province.

While the province is giving support to urban and rural municipal councils, those local governments are also being asked to exercise restraint in their expenditure and taxation plans. It is my Ministers' belief that despite the critical financial situation of the province, legitimate programs and services for our citizens can, and will be adequately provided, particularly to those citizens in need.

My government proposes to institute a review of provincial accounting and financial reporting systems, including the requirement of quarterly fiscal reports and a change in the estimates procedure ensuring greater accountability to the Legislative Assembly.

My Ministers will be introducing legislation to effect the reductions in the personal and small business income tax rates announced at the last session. This represents the beginning of the government's commitment to implementing a more competitive tax regime in our province. In addition and consistent with my government's policy of maintaining equitable levels of taxation for low and middle income senior citizens, amendments to legislation will be introduced which will provide further relief from education taxes on property for these citizens.

In view of the fixed date of termination of the Anti-Inflation Board and before the end of Phase III of rent controls, my Ministers will recommend an appropriate program for rents in the post control period, giving particular consideration to the needs of persons of low or fixed incomes.

A measure will also be laid before you to amend The Personal Investigations Act.

My Ministers inform me that they have recently announced details concerning the direct dialing facilities that will be available to Manitobans wishing to make overseas telephone calls. This is a noteworthy and significant achievement in our communications system.

My Ministers inform me that they will be taking early action to provide for more comprehensive energy planning policies and to clarify the roles of the Board of Manitoba Hydro and the Public Utilities Board under existing legislation in order to provide a more complete framework of energy planning, production, and pricing.

My Ministers assure me that they propose to recommend continuing financial assistance to major urban projects in such areas as transportation, road building, housing, social services, and recreation facilities. Amendments will be introduced to The City of Winnipeg Act.

In spite of restrictions on provincial expenditures in the next fiscal year, my Ministers propose to recommend \$12.2 million of new capital expenditure on health facilities. These will include expansion of the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation in co-operation with the Canadian Cancer Society and the Manitoba Cancer Foundation, as well as a new facility to house the Cadham Public Health Laboratory.

This capital program will also include upgrading of the hemodialysis self care unit at the Health Sciences Centre, appropriate responses to fire code requirements in health facilities throughout the province and contingency repairs to various health facilities.

As a further commitment to the maintenance of excellence in critical health fields, my Ministers inform me that they will be recommending budgetary initiatives through the Manitoba Health Services Commission to expand the open heart surgery unit at the St. Boniface General Hospital.

My Ministers tell me that they have concluded negotiations of changes in federal cost-sharing of social services funding. In recognizing the financial challenges facing Manitoba, my government is assessing the present state of financing and administration in the field of social services, and will recommend funding to provide for the legitimate needs of persons in distress and in need of care.

The future development of fitness and amateur sport programs is a concern to many Manitobans. My Ministers have established a committee of knowledgeable citizens to study the role of government in the development, funding and operation of sport and to provide them with its recommendations for future directions in this area. My Ministers are aware of the importance of physical fitness and sport programs to Manitobans, not only for the personal benefits obtained but for the wider implications in a healthier society.

My Ministers are working toward an agreement with the federal government for cost participation by that government in the provision of social services to Treaty Indians off the reserves.

The Task Force on Government Organization and Economy has conducted a wide ranging review of government departments to determine their efficiency and effectiveness. I am told the assistance of many respected members of the community was enlisted so that the structure of government operations might benefit from a fuller knowledge of managerial methods utilized in business and commerce, as well as the professions and the other disciplines. The report of the Task

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Force will be laid before you at the present session. It is expected to include recommendations affecting specific government programs and proposals concerning the organization and management of government, to the end that the efficiency of the public service and the delivery of essential services to our people is enhanced.

Agriculture continues to be the major contributor to the provincial economy. I am informed that in 1977 the estimated total value of Manitoba agricultural production reached a record sum of \$1,146,000,000. Excessive moisture conditions at harvest time, however, resulted in some reduction in the quality of grains. The threat of a drought last summer resulted in a record number of 18,026 farmers participating in the province's crop insurance program: that number constitutes 92.5 percent of those eligible, and I am assured that a similar high rate of participation is anticipated for the 1978 season.

I am further informed that gross farm cash receipts for 1977 are down substantially from 1976. The decrease is attributed to lower cash receipts from farm sales and from Canadian Wheat Board grain payments.

My Ministers have noted with concern the continuing decline in grain prices which, together with higher on-farm expenses, has caused a reduction in total net farm income.

After consultation with farm organizations and other interested groups, my Ministers intend to propose amendments to The Farms Lands Protection Act which you will be asked to consider during this session.

Legislation enabling Manitoba cattle producers to institute a voluntary check-off for promotional and informational activities will also be presented for your consideration.

You will also be asked to make financial provision which will enable improvements in our transportation system to provide more effective service for the particular needs of all Manitobans, including farmers, manufacturers, and tourists.

My Ministers propose to accord fiscal priority to the establishment of all-weather road access as part of the provincial surface transportation system to northern and other as yet not adequately serviced communities, in consultation and co-operation with the communities affected and recognizing priorities on the basis of cost, population, resources served, and the total amount of expenditure on highways and resource roads.

My Ministers will recommend appropriate financial measures to maintain elementary and secondary education as well as the community colleges and the universities. These measures will take account of declining enrolment in the school system and also a levelling off of enrolment in the universities. Proper funding in the educational sector is a major concern of my government.

It is also proposed to examine the structure of school programs in order to ensure that the learning process is systematic and calculated to meet the needs of our young people under current conditions.

My government is giving consideration to a pilot program within the public school system to provide instruction in languages other than English and French.

Additional employment offices will be provided to expand the number of employment opportunities offered through the Youth Secretariat.

My Ministers will introduce proposals for family law and maintenance legislation for your consideration and approval.

You will be asked to approve amendments to The Civil Service Act intended to re-define areas of political activity for public servants and to effect certain other desirable changes.

My Ministers assure me of the high regard they hold for the members of the public service of Manitoba. That service continues to carry out its duties to the people of Manitoba in a manner deserving of our recognition. My Ministers inform me, however, that fiscal constrictions facing the government have made necessary some contractions of staff in the civil service.

You will also be asked to consider amendments to The Retail Businesses' Holiday Closing Act.

My Ministers inform me that they are pursuing policies to encourage greater participation by prospectors and the mining industry in the exploration and development of Manitoba's mineral resources and to decrease direct government involvement in that activity.

You will be asked to make fiscal provision for the enhancement of our tourist industry and the continuing improvement and expansion of provincial recreation areas in all parts of Manitoba.

My Ministers tell me that they are negotiating an agreement with the federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion which will enable tourism and recreation developments to be eligible for DREE funding. If achieved, this will have the result of making more capital available and of providing more employment opportunities in our expanding service sector.

The estimates of expenditure for the public service of the province for the next fiscal year as well as the public accounts for the last fiscal year will be submitted for your consideration.

If I may deviate from my text just for a moment and it is more in the form of a prayer, may a solution be found to the unemployment situation, not only here in Manitoba but throughout Canada.

En vous quittant, je prie la Divine Providence de vous guider et d'éclairer votre jugement dans vos délibérations.

May God bless the Queen and our country.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

The Civil Aide then advanced and after obeisance received the Speech from the Lieutenant-Governor and retired to the west side of the Chamber.

The Mace then made obeisance before the Lieutenant-Governor and preceded His

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Honour along the east side of the Chamber to the Bar of the House, accompanied by the Premier and his Aides, followed by the Officer Escort.

The Premier then took his seat in the Chamber.

The Speaker proceeded to the Chair after His Honour had passed the Bar of the House.

The Sergeant-at-Arms then proceeded to the Chair after His Honour had passed the Bar of the House. The Mace then made obeisance to the Speaker and retired to the Table.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell): O Eternal and Almighty God from Whom all power and wisdom come; we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our Province; grant O Merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy Will; that may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the Glory and Honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

The Honourable First Minister.

HON. STERLING R. LYON, Premier (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, by leave, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that leave be given to introduce a Bill No. 1, An Act respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office, and that same be now received and read a first time.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, that the Votes and Proceedings of this House be printed, having first been perused by Mr. Speaker, and that he do appoint the printing thereof, and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: I wish to inform the House that in order to prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy of the address of His Honour which was just recently read.

I also wish to inform the House that Edward Laing has been appointed Sergeant-at-Arms for the Second Session of the Thirty-First Legislature.

The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health, that Abe Kovnats, Esquire, Member for the Electoral Division of Radisson, be Chairman of the Committees of the House and Deputy Speaker.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Minister without Portfolio and the House Leader, that Warren Steen, Esquire, Member for the Electoral Division of Crescentwood, be Deputy Chairman of the Committees of the Whole House.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Minister without Portfolio in charge of the Task Force, that the Speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor be taken into consideration tomorrow.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the House do now adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The House is adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.