
Legislative Reports



Manitoba

The Sixth Session of the Thirty-Fifth Legislature began on December 1, 1994. The House sat for fourteen days before it adjourned for the holiday season. The business conducted included the Speech from the Throne, eight days of debate on the motion for the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne and a week of debate on Second Reading of bills.

Expected to be the last session before a provincial general election, the Government outlined a number of initiatives that were in keeping with its past record. For example, after seven budgets of freezing major tax rates, the Government plans to introduce balanced budget legislation stating that this will help to maintain financial stability of the provincial treasury. No specifics were provided concerning the details of the legislation, including what the penalties would be for a government not balancing its budget.

Beyond fiscal matters, the Government has plans for legislative changes affecting the education system. Bill No. 3 - *The Education Ad-*

ministration Amendment Act, proposes to:

- distinguish and define the duties of classroom teachers and principals;
- establish school advisory councils comprised of parents and community and business representatives and;
- provide classroom teachers with the authority to suspend a student from the classroom for being disruptive.

In conjunction with Bill No. 3, Bill No. 4 - *The Public Schools Amendment Act* proposes to provide principals and other school authorities with the means to deal with disturbances and trespassers on school property which pose a threat to the students and to the overall safe environment of the school. Both of these bills raised a provocative discussion during Second Reading debate.

A bill of historical significance is Bill No. 6 - *The Northern Flood Comprehensive Implementation Agreement (Split Lake Cree), Water Power Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act*. This bill ratifies the Northern Flood Comprehensive Implementation Agreement signed with the Split Lake First Nation. The agreement establishes a comprehensive approach to compensation for the Split Lake First Nation due to flooding as a result of Manitoba Hydro projects in the early 1970s. There is a considerable history which preceded the signing of the current comprehensive agreement, including an earlier Northern Flood Agreement, but the purpose of the new legislation is to bring to a close outstanding issues and provide fair

compensation to communities on a comprehensive basis rather than on an individual basis.

One bill which generated unanimous support was Bill No. 5 - *The Food Donations Act*. A week after First Reading, this bill passed the remaining legislative stages and received Royal Assent on December 16, 1994. The main thrust of the *Food Donations Act* is to encourage and support individuals, organizations and corporations in their donations of surplus food, by removing the risk of liability for any harm caused by donated surplus foods which might be contaminated. The bill was introduced by the Government, however, the Official Opposition had introduced a private member's bill with virtually the same purpose as Bill No. 5. The private members' bill went as far as commencement of the Second Reading debate.

The House adjourned on December 20, 1995 and was expected to return soon after the Federal budget is presented to Parliament. There is considerable expectation that the Government will bring in its eighth budget and shortly after, call an election. The election must be held before September 1995.

Procedural Matters

A matter of privilege was raised on the last day before the House adjourned, by the Official Opposition House Leader, Steven Ashton. Mr. Ashton contended that the Government had failed to allow Members of the Legislature time and opportunity to examine and scrutinize the sale of the crown corporation, A.E.

McKenzie Co. Ltd. The sale of the seed company, based in Brandon, Manitoba, was made known to the public that day but there had been no announcement in the House. Speaker **Denis Rocan** heard arguments from all three parties and subsequently took the matter under advisement.

Members

Don Orchard, Minister of Energy and Mines and Minister responsible for the *Manitoba Hydro Act* announced in December that he will not be a candidate in the upcoming election. Over his almost 18 years as a Manitoba MLA, Mr. Orchard held a number of portfolios including Minister of Highways and Transportation, Minister responsible for Manitoba Telephone System and Minister of Health.

Judy White
Clerk of Committees



Quebec

The first session of the 35th Legislature began on November 29, 1994 with the election of **Roger Bertrand**, MNA for Portneuf, as President of the Quebec National Assembly. **Pierre Bélanger**, MNA for Anjou, and **Raymond Brouillet**, MNA for Chauveau, were elected Deputy Presidents of the National Assembly. These elections were followed by an opening speech by the Lieutenant Governor, **Martial**

Asselin, and a speech by the Premier, **Jacques Parizeau**.

The National Assembly held 17 regular sittings between November 29 and December 21, 1994. During that period, the Premier tabled a draft bill entitled *An Act respecting the sovereignty of Quebec*, as well as a document describing the process of providing information to and ensuring participation by the public in the regional commissions responsible for enhancing the draft bill.

The National Assembly also met in special session on January 26 and 27 and February 2 and 3, 1995 in order to continue its consideration of various bills on the *Order Paper and Notices* and, if necessary, to table a bill to ensure the resumption of services by the *Société de transport de la Communauté urbaine de Québec*, services that had been interrupted for several months. Since an agreement was reached between the parties, the government did not have to legislate in this matter. On the other hand, a motion to suspend the rules of procedure was tabled on February 3 in order to allow the passage of Bill 46, *An Act to amend the Act respecting labour relations, vocational training and manpower management in the construction industry and other legislative provisions*.

Bill 40, *An Act respecting the establishment of the permanent list of electors and to amend the Election Act and other legislative provisions*, was the subject of lively and lengthy debates in the National Assembly and in committee. The purpose of this bill is to establish a permanent list of electors, using the list of electors used for the most recent provincial general election, on September 12, 1994, a file of electors, and a territory-based file. This bill also amends the legislation applicable to municipal and school board elections by providing, in particular, that the person responsible for the election must draw up the list of

municipal or school board electors, using the list transmitted by the Director General of Elections of electors registered on the permanent list.

Among the subjects that dominated the deliberations of the National Assembly this fall were the referendum process, with a view to Quebec's achieving sovereignty; the status of public finances; and anticipated budget cuts in such fields as health, education and the environment.

Lastly, it should be noted that since the end of January, Premier Parizeau has headed the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, following the resignation of Minister **Rita Dionne-Marsolais**, who retains responsibility for tourism and the Régie des installations olympiques.

Nancy Ford and Jean Bédard
National Assembly Secretariat
Quebec National Assembly

Committee Activity

On November 30, 1994, the Committee on the National Assembly met in order to provide for the creation of the eight Standing Committees of the National Assembly. The next day, each Committee elected its Chairman and Vice-Chairman. As is provided in the *Standing Orders*, five Committees are chaired by MNAs from the government party (the Parti québécois), while the Official Opposition (the Liberal Party) has the right to chair the three other Committees. Conversely, the positions of Vice-Chairman are allocated to members of the opposition party on five Committees, and to members of the party in power on three.

The Committees then held several working meetings in order to organize their work and adopt their budgets for the upcoming year.

Thirteen bills were referred to the various Committees for detailed consideration. Notable among them was Bill 46, on labour management in the construction industry, which took up 13 meetings of the Committee on Labour and the Economy in December and January. As well, Bill 40, on establishing a permanent list of electors, gave rise to consultations with nine organizations and required eight meetings of the Committee on Institutions, seven of which were held in January. At the end of January, both these bills were still being considered in committee.

For three days the Committee on the Budget and Administration heard the Auditor General of Quebec, as part of its study of the Auditor General's annual report for the 1993/94 fiscal year.

Doris Arsenault
Co-ordinator
Committees Secretariat



New Brunswick

The Third Session of the 52nd Legislative Assembly pro-rogued on December 16, 1994. The fall sitting which commenced on November 29 and lasted three weeks was an intense period of activity highlighted by the first-ever secret ballot election of Speaker. Procedural questions dealing with the privileges of the Assembly and its Members, and the status of the

Official Opposition in the House, dominated the fall sitting.

When the House resumed on November 29, the first order of business was to elect a new Speaker. **Gérald Clavette**, Member for Madawaska-Centre, was elected in the traditional manner and presided over the proceedings until December 2.

Following the adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure which recommended changing the process of election of Speaker, Mr. Clavette resigned the Office to accommodate the wishes of the Assembly to elect a Speaker by secret ballot. **Shirley Dysart**, Member for the electoral district of Saint John Park, who had served as Speaker from March 19, 1991 to May 4, 1994, was elected on the first ballot.

One of the new Speaker's first tasks was to settle the matter of which party should be recognized as Her Majesty's Official Opposition. The Official Opposition Confederation of Regions Party (COR) initially held eight seats following the 1991 provincial election. However, the defection of two COR members to sit as independents and subsequent by-election victories by the Progressive Conservatives left the two parties tied with six seats heading into the fall session.

In a ruling delivered December 16, 1994, Speaker Dysart noted that the Confederation of Regions Party had been the *de facto* Official Opposition since the beginning of the Legislature, due to the number of seats it held following the 1991 election. She ruled that it would not lose this status by the presence of another opposition party with an



When the Lieutenant-Governor delivered the Speech from the Throne on February 7, 1995, she became the first woman to do so in the province's history. Three other New Brunswick women are also the first to occupy the offices of Speaker, Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms. Photographed left to right are: Lieutenant-Governor Margaret N. McCain; Sergeant-at-Arms Phyllis A. LeBlanc; Clerk of the legislature Loredana Catali Sonier; and Speaker Shirley Dysart.

equal number of seats. The Confederation of Regions Party had not become the smallest group and had not been displaced by a group with numerical superiority. It would therefore maintain its status as the Official Opposition.

On December 2, a question of Privilege was raised concerning the entry of a private investigator from the Workers' Compensation Board onto the precincts of the Legislature for the purpose of questioning two Members of the Legislative Assembly regarding the members' source of the Board's financial expenditure details. Speaker Dysart's December 9 ruling noted that a *prima facie* question of privilege could be established if the activity complained of was of such a nature as to interfere with Members in the discharge of their parliamentary responsibilities. She found that although there may not have been a direct attempt to interfere with or intimidate the Members, the actions may, indirectly, have had that result. The Speaker therefore ruled that a *prima facie* question of privilege had been established.

A motion referring the matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges was subsequently adopted by the House. In its December 14 report to the House the Committee found the actions of the Workers' Compensation Board, a crown agency, to be inappropriate and unacceptable. Although the Committee recommended that no further action be taken on the matter, it did recommend that the House affirm the right of all citizens of the province, including those employed by government, to raise issues of concern with their MLAs without fear of reprimand or repercussion.

A record 57 pieces of legislation were introduced during the 12-day fall sitting. The Committee of the Whole reviewed and passed 52 government Bills, and one Private

Member's Public Bill and the Standing Committee on Private Bills considered and recommended for adoption four Private Bills. Overall, 57 Bills received Royal Assent during the fall sitting.

Committee Activity

A new aspect was added to the mandate of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations in 1994. The Crown owned utility New Brunswick Power Corporation released for the first time a comprehensive business plan outlining the Corporation's strategies and plans for the years 1994-1999. The Business Plan, which provides an overview of the Corporation's performance and directions and describes the strategic framework under which the Corporation will operate in the next five years, was referred to the Crown Corporations Committee for review and input.

At public hearings on September 7 and 8, 1994, the Committee heard from various groups and individuals and received a number of written briefs and submissions. An Interim Report containing recommendations on various areas of the Business Plan was tabled in the House on December 13, 1994, by Committee Chair **John McKay**.

The Committee held further meetings and briefing sessions with regard to the financial and accounting aspects of NB Power's operations. A Final Report was tabled in the House on February 10, 1995, containing recommendations on such areas as revenue to cost ratios, public versus private utility ownership, value of the guarantee fee and rate stabilization accounting policies.

Fourth Session of the 52nd Legislature

On February 9, 1995, Lieutenant Governor **Margaret Norrie McCain**

delivered her first Speech from the Throne opening the Fourth Session of New Brunswick's Fifty-second Legislative Assembly. The opening marked the beginning of the earliest spring sitting in over 50 years. It is likely that this will be the last session before a provincial election widely expected later this year.

The Throne Speech, one of the longest in recent memory, outlined the Liberal government's economic, social and fiscal policies, focusing on job creation in both rural and urban New Brunswick as the central priority. Initiatives in the areas of agriculture, forestry, mining, energy, fishing and aquaculture were outlined, including the announcement of a new *Agricultural Land Use and Development Act*. Also outlined in the Throne Speech were initiatives such as deregulation and quality service, a more accessible and affordable social safety net, and the continuation of prudent fiscal management. Emphasis was placed on the electronic information highway and the use of modern technology as a means of firmly establishing the Province as a leader in the new economy. The establishment of a Legislative Committee to examine the public policy implications of future demographic changes was announced, as was the creation of a provincial Service Quality Centre in which the Minister of Finance would serve as Minister of State for Quality.

The Leader of the Opposition, **Danny Cameron**, in opening the Throne Speech Debate, criticized the government for concentrating too highly on technological and computer-based jobs while placing little emphasis on the Province's traditional industries and small business. Mr. Cameron questioned the job creation figures cited by the government, noting that many of the announced jobs may not materialize

in the end. He stressed the ever-increasing cost of servicing the net debt, and the failure of the government to meet its annual budget projections. He concluded his remarks by calling for an end to the Throne Speech debate, suggesting instead that the House proceed immediately to debate on the Budget.

Highlighting the second week of the session was the address to the Assembly by the Governor General of Canada, **Roméo LeBlanc**, who visited the Legislature on February 16. It was his first official visit and the first visit to his native Province since being installed as Governor General.

On February 15, Speaker Dysart thanked **Daniel Johnson**, the Leader of the Opposition in the Quebec National Assembly, for his address to the Members of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly.

The spring session could be the last session in which 58 Members will be present in the House. A redraw of the provincial electoral map has reduced the number of ridings to 55 for the next election.

Donald J. Forestell
Clerk Assistant



Ontario

The final sitting of the 3rd Session of the 35th Parliament commenced on October 31, 1994. It was a reasonably quiet sitting, with the

completion of business already started having priority. The House considered third reading of legislation relating to the *Crown Timber Act*, *Long-Term Care* and the *Planning Act*.

Royal Assent was given to 19 public bills during this sitting, including 6 Private Members' Public Bills.

The House prorogued on Thursday, December 8, 1994, with no date having been set for the new session. In his prorogation speech the Lieutenant-Governor, **Henry N.R. Jackman** stressed the province's move into "an increasingly vibrant economic recovery". According to this speech, Ontario's recovery was founded upon the government's threefold strategy: job creation, sound fiscal management, and preservation of public services.

Committees

In November, the Standing Committee on General Government, chaired by Liberal member **Mike Brown**, resumed its clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 171, *An Act to revise the Crown Timber Act*. The bill was introduced on June 1, 1994, by the Minister of Natural Resources, **Howard Hampton**. The bill replaces the *Crown Timber Act* and seeks to provide for the sustainability of Crown forests within Ontario while meeting social, economic and environmental needs of present and future generations.

After two weeks of travel and five weeks of hearings, the government ensured quick passage of this bill by evoking a time allocation motion on November 29, 1994. The Committee reported the bill to the House on December 1, third reading occurred on December 7, and Royal Assent was granted on December 9, 1994.

Similarly, the Standing Committee on Social Development, chaired by Liberal member **Charles Beer**, continued its clause-by-clause con-

sideration of Bill 173, *An Act respecting Long-Term Care*. The Health Minister, **Ruth Grier**, introduced this bill on June 6, 1994, in order to approve and regulate agencies involved in the delivery of a wide range of community services to people in their own homes and in other community settings as an alternative to institutional care. The bill also provides for the designation of multi-service agencies for a specified geographic area and gives these agencies the responsibility for ensuring the equitable provision of specified community services to those who need them. Bill 173 sets out a Bill of Rights to persons receiving community services and deems each service provider to have contracted to respect and promote those rights. The bill also amends various statutes dealing with long-term care including the *Ministry of Health Act* to provide for the establishment and functions of district health councils.

After completing an extensive series of public hearings, where more than 230 oral presentations were heard, the Committee began clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 173. On November 17, 1994, the Legislature passed a time allocation motion. The Committee reported the bill to the House on November 22, third reading occurred on December 7, and Royal Assent was granted on December 9, 1994.

In late November the Standing Committee on Social Development began hearings on Bill 158, *Adoption Disclosure Statute Law Amendment Act*. This private member's public bill was introduced by **Tony Martin** on May 4. The purpose of Bill 158 is to amend the *Vital Statistics Act* to give adult adopted persons access to all information contained in their original statement of birth, without requiring anyone else's consent. The bill establishes a No-contact

register to be administered by the Registrar General. The bill also amends the *Child and Family Services Act* to provide counselling for adopted persons, birth parents and others who may be affected by the disclosure of information about the adoption.

After clause-by-clause consideration, Bill 158 was reported to the House as amended. The bill was carried over into the next session since third reading consideration was not completed when the session ended.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts spent most of the fall session finalizing reviews on issues which arose out of the 1993 Annual Report of the Provincial Auditor. In a series of closed session meetings, the Committee prepared reports for the House and then tabled them late in the Session. These reports dealt with Special Education, Curriculum Development, Young Offender Services, and the Child and Family Intervention Program. On the last day of the session, the Committee tabled its Biennial Report 1992-1993, a summary of its activities and directions for those years.

The Committee also received the 1994 Annual Report of the Provincial Auditor. Because it was filed late in the session and due to the prorogation of the 3rd session, the Committee has not yet begun detailed review of this report.

The Standing Committee on Administration of Justice, chaired by NDP member **Rosario Marchese**, completed its clause-by-clause review of Bill 163, the *Municipal Planning Statute Amendment Law*, under the constraints of a time allocation motion. At the time this motion was passed there were approximately 100 amendments left to vote upon. Despite this substantive number of amendments, the Committee had well over 100 recorded votes within two and one half hours and re-

ported the Bill to the House on the next available day.

The Committee also dealt with some outstanding matters including the conclusion of deliberations on a report entitled *Report under Standing Order 15 on the Relationship of Victims of Crime and the Justice System in Ontario* designated by PC member **Cam Jackson**. The report was approved by a majority of the Committee. One dissenting opinion was submitted on behalf of the PC party.

In December, the Committee considered Private Member's Bill 168, *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, introduced by NDP member **Gary Malkowski**. Prior to conducting public hearings on the bill, the Committee invited the Minister of Citizenship, **Elaine Ziemba** to appear before the Committee to provide a coordinated presentation on the impact of Bill 168. As there was an indication that the House was planning to rise the following week, the Committee passed a motion stating the Committee's intention to resume consideration of Bill 168 when the House returns in the spring.

Due to the resignation of the Chair, **Bob Huget**, the Standing Committee on Resources Development, elected a new Chair, **Mike Cooper**, on November 2. Subsequent to this election, the Committee continued its study of Bill 165, *An Act to amend the Worker's Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act*. On November 22, the Legislature passed a time allocation motion thereby ensuring that the bill was reported to the House, with amendments, on November 29. Royal Assent was given on December 9.

In January, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, chaired by **Ron Handen**, held public hearings on the *Municipal Freedom of Information Act* and tabled its

report in December. Furthermore, the Committee met on December 1, to consider a matter pertaining to the premature disclosure of a Committee report. This meeting was the result of a letter **Margaret Marland** wrote to Speaker **David Warner**, regarding the premature disclosure of a committee report to the media. Mrs. Marland claimed that there had been a breach of privileges and on November 2, the Speaker agreed, ruling that there had been a *prima facie* case of privilege. The Committee decided they would deal with the matter in the spring Session.

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, chaired by **Paul Johnson**, dealt with two pieces of legislation. On December 1, the Committee conducted public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 190, *An Act to amend the Securities Act*. The Bill was reported, as amended, to the Legislature on Monday, December 5, 1994. On December 6, the Committee held public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 198, *Municipal and Liquor Licensing Statute Law Amendment Act*. The bill was reported, as amended, to the Legislature on Wednesday, December 7, 1994.

The Standing Committee on Government Agencies, chaired by **Margaret Marland**, continued to consider proposed appointments to Ontario Government agencies, boards and commissions. Similarly, the Committee continued its review of the operations of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, and considered its draft report on the Ontario Council of Regents for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Tom Prins
Administrative Assistant
Committees Branch

House of Commons



The House of Commons has been the scene of considerable activity since the beginning of November 1994. There have been significant developments in such areas as procedure, committee business and Private Members' Business. Some more general facts are also worth noting. Continuing the trend established in the first months of the session, three special debates have been held since the end of November 1994. They dealt with the government's budget policy, violence against women, and the reform of social programs. As the autumn drew to a close, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services unveiled a plan for a major renovation of various parliamentary buildings. The work will be carried out over a number of years, with completion scheduled for the turn of the century.

Procedure

When it tabled its 51st Report on November 25, 1994, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs became the first committee to present a report under Standing Order 68(4). This Standing Order, adopted in February 1994, allows the House to appoint or instruct a committee to prepare and bring in a bill on a given subject. In this case the Committee tabled a draft bill on the establishment of electoral boundaries. Adoption of the Committee's Report on Febru-

ary 14, 1995, constituted an order to table a bill based on the Report. The same day, the government had the bill, *An Act to provide for the establishment of electoral boundaries commissions and the readjustment of electoral boundaries*, placed on the *Notice Paper*. It was given first reading three days later. On February 24, 1995, the Bill received second reading and was sent to committee for clause-by-clause study.

Michel Gauthier, Opposition House Leader, rose on a point of order when the report of the Special Joint Committee reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy was tabled in the House. The Report was printed in three sections: Volume I - *Principles and Priorities*, Volume II - *Dissenting Opinions and Appendices* and Volume III - *Position Papers*. Mr Gauthier contended that his Party's dissenting report should not have been separated from the majority report. Publishing it separately, he argued, was contrary to the Standing Orders and made the Report inadmissible. In a decision handed down on November 24, 1994, the Speaker pointed out that committees have the primary responsibility for deciding on the form their reports will take: any confusion can be avoided by passing motions at the start of proceedings on the format of the eventual report.

In the case advanced by Mr Gauthier, the Speaker concluded that the report was admissible in the form in which it had been tabled and that it could be distributed in that form until stocks were exhausted. Should a second printing be required, however, the Speaker said that the dissenting opinions ought to be appended to the majority report and published in the same volume.

The Speaker had to rule twice on the issue of premature disclosure of committee reports. On November

18, 1994, and February 15, 1995, the Speaker reminded Members that he hesitates to intervene in committee business and that keeping a report confidential while it is being prepared is primarily the responsibility of all those working on it. He also pointed out that he cannot rule that there has been a breach of Members' privileges if no specific allegation is made to him. Despite this, he said, if his intervention appears to be desirable, it can be requested by a committee in the form of a report to the House. Should the committee concerned have ceased to exist when its report was tabled, the Speaker reminded the House that there is nothing to prevent it from referring the matter to another committee for consideration.

On February 15, 1995, the Speaker ruled that associate committee members do not automatically have the right to attend committee meetings once drafting of the report has begun.

On February 16, 1994, the Speaker ruled on a question of privilege raised by **Jim Hart**. Mr Hart contended that his privileges had been infringed when the Deputy Prime Minister revealed the contents of a letter Mr Hart had sent to a Minister. Judging the letter to be in the public domain, the Speaker ruled that it could be quoted in the House.

On the grounds that there were contradictions between the answers he had been given to questions on the *Order Paper* and the answers obtained under the *Access to Information Act*, **John Cummins** asked the Chair to find that his right to accurate information had been infringed. In a decision handed down on February 9, 1995, the Speaker reminded the Members that it is not the responsibility of the Chair to determine whether the contents of documents tabled in the House are accurate or not.

Recently the House introduced a new method of holding recorded votes. When a number of divisions are anticipated, only one recorded vote is held; for the subsequent votes, if there is unanimous consent, the Whips indicate how the Members from their respective parties who voted the first time would be voting thereafter. Members who do not wish to vote with their party, or who did not vote in the initial recorded division, intervene to indicate in which way they will vote. This practice saves the House an enormous amount of time and would appear to be a viable alternative to electronic voting.

Committee business

Changes to the Standing Orders were made following adoption of the 53rd Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs on February 6, 1995. The Chief Government Whip, with the agreement of the whips of the other recognized parties, is now authorized to defer votes to a designated time. In the case of Private Members' Business, the mover must also agree to have the vote on his or her motion deferred. Under another of the changes, when the House adjourns for a lengthy period, the deadline for filing notices of motions to be placed on the *Order Paper* will be extended. Lastly, under a decision made by the Speaker, an amendment has clarified Standing Order 73(1) by spelling out that only a government bill may be the subject of a motion for referral to committee before second reading.

The 54th Report of the Procedure and House Affairs Committee deals with direct citizen participation and more specifically referendums, recall of Members, free votes and debates on petitions.

In June 1993, the Standing Joint Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations tabled its 9th Report, with a request for a comprehensive response by the government. Because Parliament was dissolved in September of that year, no official response was ever tabled by the government. With a view to obtaining a response, the Committee tabled its 9th report again, appended to the 2nd Report tabled this session.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance last fall began a consideration of government budgetary policy. It reported to the House on December 8, 1994.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources Development presented its report on reform of social programs on February 6, 1995.

Private Members' Business

Most unusually, the Royal Recommendation was given to a private Member's bill. Bill C-216, *An Act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act (jury service)*, introduced by **Guy Arseneault**, was given third reading and passed on February 21, 1995.

The House defeated a bill on recall of Members introduced by **Deborah Grey** but adopted a motion moved by **Stéphane Bergeron** to recognize the contribution that the

Patriotes and the Reformers had made to the development of democracy. The subject matter of two measures brought in by private Members was referred to standing committees for consideration: **Sue Barnes'** Bill C-239, *An Act respecting the Decade of the Brain*, and **John Duncan's** motion regarding the monitoring of property in private Members' offices.

Other events

By-elections were held on February 13, 1995, to fill the seats left vacant by the death of **Gaston Pelloquin** (Brome—Missisquoi) and the departures of **Jean-Robert Gauthier** (Ottawa—Vanier) and **David Berger** (Saint-Henri—Westmount). **Denis Paradis**, **Mauril Bélanger** and **Lucienne Robillard** were elected to replace them. They entered the House on February 22.

The Members gave a hearty welcome to the Hon. **Lucien Bouchard**, Leader of the Official Opposition, when he returned to the House after a prolonged absence caused by a serious illness.

On February 23, the President of the United States, **William J. Clinton**, addressed the Members and Senators in the House Chamber. For the occasion the Members had, exceptionally, authorized the presence of two television cameras on the floor of the House (one for the American networks and the other for the Canadian networks).

André Gagnon
Procedural Clerk
House of Commons