

Reports on Legislative Activities

(February 1 — April 30, 1983)



Yukon

The third session of the twenty-fifth legislature opened on March 22, 1983. The Speech from the Throne dealt in the main with the troubled Yukon economy and the actions the government had taken or would be initiating to deal with the problems of the unemployed (See last report for a description of the economic situation in Yukon). Figures released for December, 1982, indicated that the population had dropped by 8.8 percent, that the unadjusted unemployment rate was at 17.6 percent and that unemployment claims had jumped by 63.3 percent. Declines in the number of employed were most severely felt in mining, forestry and transportation, down by 41.3 percent, 38.2 percent and 30.5 percent respectively.

Government Leader **Chris Pearson** laid the 1983-84 Operation and Maintenance Budget before the House on April 7. It called for an increase in expenditures over the previous year of 6.5 percent to a total of \$130 million with the major objectives being a balanced budget, zero growth in the size of the public service and adequate funding to enable departments "to maintain normal levels of service without diminishing the need for increased efficiency and economy."

Even though the personal income tax rate was raised by two percentage points, the recession has led to an expected decline of 25 percent in revenues from this source. Emphasis was placed on the survival of small business and, for en-

terprises falling within that description, the corporate tax rate was reduced and school taxes were cut. The federal contribution to revenues is the largest in recent memory as the annual transfer payment has reached \$73 million.

A major announcement was made in Whitehorse on April 20, 1983, in which it was revealed that the federal government and the Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation had agreed on a \$50 million plan to reopen the company's lead zinc mine at Faro (closed since June, 1982). Under the two-year plan the federal government and Cyprus Anvil, a subsidiary of Dome Petroleum, are to invest \$25 million each for the purpose of a stripping operation which will expose a body of ore to be ready for production when world metal prices improve. The Yukon Government also was a participant in the plan, agreeing to contribute \$1 million toward topping up the wages of the 210 employees who will go back to work and foregoing \$600,000 in property taxes.

The member for Faro, **Maurice Byblow** (NDP), expressed his pleasure with the action but also asked the House not to lose sight of the unfortunate circumstances of the some 300 workers who would not be called back. He also called attention to the contribution of the Steelworkers Union which, as part of the package, had signed a new contract, boosting productivity by an estimated 20 percent.

Two other major issues captured the spotlight during the session. The first concerned land claims negotiations and the withdrawal in December 1982, of the Yukon from those negotiations. The government undertook a public advertising campaign on its stand which it described in a tabled document as follows:

The Government of Yukon will not return to the Land Claims negotiating table without the following:

1. A written agreement with the federal government making it clear that the original ground rules will be adhered to so that after settlement beneficiaries will be treated in the same manner as other Yukon residents with respect to participating in any future process regarding the devolution of self-government to the Yukon Territory.
2. A written agreement with the federal government setting out a unified approach to the problems posed by the *Canada Act*.
3. A written agreement with the federal government documenting the responsibility of the Government of Canada for funding all new and additional expenses incurred by the Government of Yukon which arise from a Land Claims Settlement.
4. A written agreement with the federal government that a satisfactory policy on aboriginal and treaty claims with Yukon by non-resident Indian people will continue to apply after Land Claims have been settled.
5. An understanding with the federal government with respect to the COPE claim within Yukon.
6. A written agreement with the federal government establishing a process for determining the procedures for and the timing of the transfer of land from federal to territorial jurisdiction.

The Council for Yukon Indians requested an opportunity to appear before the Committee of the Whole to make a presentation regarding the impasse. An opposition motion to grant that opportunity

was defeated by the government side which took the position that its disagreement was with the federal government and not with the C.Y.I. and that it would be a dangerous precedent for the House to begin receiving witnesses from aggrieved "interest groups."

The second flareup occurred as a result of the introduction of a new *Children's Act*. This act, which had not received Second Reading at the time of this writing, proposes to: establish a body of private law about establishing parentage, and about custody, access and guardianship; revise and clarify the law affecting adoption and taking into care and caring for children in need of protection; and establish appropriate mechanisms for the effective implementation of the *Young Offenders Act*.

There has been a rather spontaneous groundswell of public concern about the legislation, some of it informed, some not. The opposition has requested that the bill be referred to a select committee so that public hearings may be held and expert witnesses called. It has also proposed, as alternatives, that the bill be held over to the fall sitting for further public input, or that it be split into two or more bills which would allow less contentious provisions to be passed during the spring sitting and the rest to be dealt with later. The government has refused all of these suggestions stating that it is under an obligation to have the bill enacted as legislation prior to the proclamation in force of the *Young Offenders Act* on October 1, 1983. However, before the session adjourned the government announced it would not be proceeding with the *Children's Act* until the 1983 fall sitting. This delay will provide time for the public to provide input on the bill and for the government to draft amendments to those provisions which it agrees to change.

Standing committees of the Assembly have been active with a total of five reports being tabled, two each from Statutory Instruments and, Rules, Elections and Privileges and one from the Public Accounts Committee. The First Report from the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges dealt with the rules and practices which govern Question Period. Utilizing, as a base, an April 14, 1975 ruling of **James Jerome**, Speaker of the House of Commons, the committee proposed a set of 16 specific guidelines for members to follow in the delivery of both questions and answers. The Second Report from the same committee recommended a number of minor amendments to the Standing Orders of the Assembly. Per-

haps most notable are the abolition of the need for seconders and the requirement that cabinet present a response to petitions within two weeks of their being received. Both reports were unanimously concurred in on April 13.

For the first time in its history the Yukon Legislative Assembly received members from the Alaska State Legislature. From March 28 to 31 a delegation consisting of one state senator and eight members of the House of Representatives returned a visit made by a Yukon delegation to Juneau in March 1982. Four of the Alaskans delivered addresses to the Assembly (while in a period of recess) and all nine later appeared before the Committee of the Whole to participate in a discussion on matters of mutual concern to Yukon and Alaska.

The third session of the twenty-fifth legislature was adjourned May 2, 1983, after 22 sitting days.

Patrick L. Michael
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse



Alberta

With traditional pomp and ceremony, the first session of the twentieth legislature of Alberta was opened on March 10, 1983 by Lieutenant-Governor **Frank Lynch-Staunton**.

An immediate item of concern to the legislature and more particularly to **Gerard Amerongen**, the re-elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, was the need to designate the Official Opposition. Claims advanced by Independents **Raymond A. Speaker** and **Walter A. Buck** that they were entitled to the privilege on the basis of incumbency and seniority were met by

arguments from **Grant Notley** and **Ray Martin** of the New Democratic Party that party status and popular vote guaranteed the title to themselves. Finding neither group's representations inherently compelling nor any directly applicable precedents, Mr. Amerongen nevertheless conceded that the notion that an Official Opposition is customarily composed of elected members of a party had a certain limited validity; that is to say, where no majority team in opposition exists, the designation of Official Opposition should go to the group whose members belong to the same party. On this basis, then, the two-man New Democratic Party caucus was recognized as the Official Opposition and Grant Notley as Leader of the Official Opposition. (see pp. 44-45 of this issue for the text of the Speaker's ruling).

In the Speech from the Throne, Premier **Peter Lougheed's** fourth Progressive Conservative government recognized and accepted the challenge confronting it in the face of a world decline in economic activity, particularly in the hard-hit oil and gas industries. Three priorities were identified as keys to Alberta's recovery: an overall strategy of sound and efficient financial management, continued supplements to the Alberta Economic Resurgence Plan and substantial support for job training and retraining to help young Albertans prepare for the future.

The Budget

The budget presented on March 24 by Provincial Treasurer **Lou Hyndman** followed up on those priorities. It was, in Mr. Hyndman's words, "a resurgence budget of cautious confidence (that) sustains the economic resurgence plan... stresses a prudent responsible approach to public sector financing... (and) supports job training and retraining." Total budgetary expenditure was to be held to \$9.7 billion, the minimum necessary, to support the economic resurgence plan, essential ongoing operating programs, and needed capital construction projects. As a further objective of the government's fiscal strategy, a plan to reduce by attrition the number of permanent public service positions in an effort to reduce manpower costs was announced.

To reduce the previous fiscal year's \$2.3 billion budgetary deficit and minimize borrowing requirements, Mr. Hyndman introduced the *Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Amendment Act*. According to its terms, investment income from the Trust Fund would be transferred to the General Revenue Fund and the transfer of non-

renewable resource revenue to the Trust Fund would be reduced from 30 per cent to 15 per cent for a two-year period. This would inject an estimated \$860 million into the provincial coffers and slow Heritage Fund growth to \$1.9 billion in 1982-83, allowing Alberta to adjust to the current economic situation.

Both the Official Opposition and independent opposition members responded extensively to the Speech from the Throne. However, opposition responses to the budget address were more limited, and a motion to approve in general the fiscal policies of the government was carried after only two days of debate.

The New Democratic Party tabled a statement by the Catholic Bishops entitled "Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis". The statement was used as a means of articulating New Democratic Party policy and criticism of the government's response to the economic crisis. Mr. Notley stressed the need for increased emphasis on social responsibility, a short- and long-term industrial strategy, a more decisive role for labour unions, a focus on the problem of unemployment rather than inflation and a more equitable program for reducing the rate of inflation. Furthermore, he criticized the increase in medicare premiums as a form of regressive taxation. In response to Alberta's critical unemployment situation, Notley proposed the START (Short Term Alberta Recovery Targets) program. He also put forward a long-term proposal to incorporate measures such as restructuring corporate income tax, municipal revenue sharing, performance controls on major capital projects and others.

Mr. Ray Speaker criticized the government for failing to address adequately the issues of unemployment, deteriorating incomes and bankruptcies of small businesses and the need for clear priorities during the present economic downturn. He favoured a plan to rebuild the confidence of the private sector, which would free this sector from the burden of high taxation. He also urged the government to phase out all government housing programs, reduce government regulations, cease all direct and indirect competition with the private sector increase the commitment to higher education and re-evaluate social policy directions. He suggested holding a public inquiry into the growth of the government bureaucracy since the Lougheed administration came to power in 1971, after which the bureaucracy would be selectively reduced through a genuine hiring freeze and attrition.

During the budget debate, **David Russell**, Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, announced the introduction of a discretionary user fee program for health care services. Beginning October 1, 1983, hospital boards will be allowed to charge patients for admissions, emergency visits, out-patient care, and in-patient accommodation. To ensure that no Albertan would be denied medical care owing to these additional charges, Mr. Russell noted that safeguards built into the system would include maximums on each fee, yearly limits on individual and family contributions, and a large class of exemptions for people unable to afford the fees or who, on account of chronic diseases or special handicaps, require long-term hospitalization. In the minister's opinion the implementation of this program will increase public awareness of and responsibility for rapidly escalating health care costs as well as provide hospital boards with additional funds to cover program and operating deficits.

The announcement engendered a great deal of opposition from the New Democratic party. Philosophically opposed to a user fee concept, Mr. Notley made a last effort to dissuade the government from this course of action by proposing a reasoned amendment to the *Interim Supply Act*, urging the Assembly to decline giving third reading "until the government announces its discontinuance of establishing and imposing hospital user fees". After a ruling that the amendment was indeed in order and some spirited debate on the motion, a division was called. The results of the vote were: 3 for and 54 against.

Legislation

On April 11 the Minister of Labour, **Les Young** introduced Bill 44, the *Labour Statutes Amendments Act*. It would amend a number of labour statutes and contains five significant changes. First compulsory arbitration boards would be required to consider other union and non-union contract settlements as well as current government fiscal policies when arbitrating contract disputes. Second, hospital and auxiliary hospital employees and employers would be bound by compulsory arbitration if a negotiated settlement cannot be achieved. Third, most Alberta Liquor Control Board employees would be given the right to strike. Fourth, in the event of an illegal strike by employees covered by compulsory arbitration legislation, an employer would be allowed to discontinue deduction and remission of union dues for as long as six months. Finally, trade unions would be allowed to form organizations similar to em-

ployers' organizations for bargaining purposes.

Attorney General and Government House Leader **Neil Crawford** moved a motion to adjourn the legislature from April 25 to April 28 to allow for the Standing Committee of the Assembly on Public Affairs to conduct public hearings on Bill 44. After several opposition amendments were defeated, the main motion was carried and the public hearings took place.

Proposed Changes to Legislative Assembly Act

On Friday, April 22, Mr. Crawford tabled a white paper outlining a number of proposed changes to the *Legislative Assembly Act*, including new provisions governing the eligibility of candidates in provincial elections and the disqualification of elected Members of the Assembly.

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Ontario

For the first time in nearly a decade, the legislature was unable to prorogue at Christmas and thus sat from January 17 until February 23 to complete the work of the second session of the 32nd legislature. During this time, the House was principally preoccupied with three matters: the completion of the estimates and the budget wind-up; the unfolding "Trust Companies Affair", and the passage of Bill 127, a highly contentious measure dealing with teachers' collective bargaining and school board financing in Metropolitan Toronto.

As a result of special investigations and audits in the wake of the sale of nearly 11,000 Toronto apartment units by Cadillac-Fairview Ltd. to Greymac Ltd., serious questions arose as to the lending practices of Greymac, Crown Trust and Seaway Trust. On January 7th, Consumer and

Commercial Relations Minister Dr. **Robert Elgie** announced that the government had taken control of the three trust companies. In addition to pressing the minister for further information, Liberal leader **David Peterson** and NDP leader **Bob Rae** attacked the government for failing to properly regulate the provincially-chartered companies. On January 24th a bill was introduced to authorize the sale of Crown Trust by the government. The minister explained that this course of action was preferable to the very real possibility of winding-up Crown Trust with consequent losses and delays to investors.

Premier **William Davis** led off the debate emphasizing that the bill was indeed unique and that its principal aim was the protection of Crown's depositors. He also pointed out that the government was proceeding in this urgent matter not by way of general legislation but through a specific measure to deal with one particular situation. Opposition spokesmen were vehement in their criticism because they felt the government had not released enough information on the situation and because of what they termed the bill's "draconian", "offensive" provisions. Liberal Justice critic **Jim Breithaupt** decried as "shades of the Star Chamber" the bill's abrogation of due process and natural justice for the shareholders whose every appeal was removed. Mr. Rae pointed out that no charges had been laid and argued that despite his party's objections to Crown Trust's policies, it was entirely improper for the legislature to set itself up as judge and jury in transferring ownership of the company without consideration for the shareholders' rights.

The bill was referred to the Administration of Justice Committee where these concerns were further explored. It was reported back without major amendment and given third reading on February 1st. Within a few days, it was announced that Central Trust Company of Halifax would assume ownership.

Bill 127, introduced in Spring 1982, was the subject of extensive public hearings in the Fall, but progress was slow during clause by clause consideration in Committee of the Whole. The bill requires the elementary and secondary teachers in the six school boards in Toronto and its boroughs to bargain jointly on salaries, benefits and staffing levels. It also makes individual boards responsible for their own surpluses and deficits in place of spreading them across all boards. Both opposition parties fought vigorously against the bill on the grounds that it would cause a decline in

quality of education in Toronto and as a stalking horse for province-wide bargaining, threatening local school board autonomy.

With the opposition vowing to fight the bill in the same tenacious fashion they had employed against Bill 179, the Wage Restraint bill, Education Minister Dr. **Bette Stephenson** moved, on February 15, a time allocation motion similar to that used to speed the passage of Bill 179. However, where the earlier motion was couched in terms of 'the first sessional day' after passage of the motion, Dr. Stephenson's motion called for completion of the Committee of the Whole stage at a specific time — 5:45 p.m., on February 17th. Accordingly, it was not difficult for the opposition to prolong debate on the motion to the point where it was obvious that it would not be passed in time to take effect. Hence, the regular Committee of the Whole consideration resumed on the 17th. The bill received third reading on February 23, but only after the government found it necessary to move "the previous question" to curtail debate on several separate sections.

Committee Activities

Committees were unusually quiescent between sessions, in part due to the length and the stress of the just completed session, with the consequent desire by members to spend time in their ridings. Perhaps the most significant committee endeavour was the second phase of the Social Development Committee's family violence enquiry: a series of hearings on child abuse.

New Session

The third session of Ontario's Thirty-Second Parliament began on April 18th, with Lieutenant-Governor **John Black Aird** reading the Speech from the Throne.

The speech started from the premise that although the province was faced with difficult economic times, economic indicators were becoming more positive, so that "the restoration of confidence has begun". Specific initiatives in such areas as job training, automobile manufacturing, fusion fuel technology and computer development for the education market were set within an overall policy whereby the primary economic responsibility of government is "to create the proper climate for the private sector to foster economic growth".

Notably less critical of the federal government than had been the case in 1982, the speech called for "constructive intergovernmental co-operation", beginning with a First Ministers' meeting on the economy. The government also signified its

intention to promote a constitutional amendment dealing with the identification and definition of aboriginal rights.

In terms of social policy, the speech indicated the government's concern with housing, pension reform and the needs of the elderly. In order to "accelerate progress in the area of women's issues", the government announced its intention to name a senior minister to be directly responsible for issues of concern to women. Finally, the previously announced commitment to amend *The Education Act* to recognize the right of every French-speaking student to a French language education was reaffirmed.

Opposition members were critical of the speech for offering vague generalizations and almost no specific proposals on initiatives. Liberal Health critic **Sheila Copps**, who led off the debate for the Official Opposition, likened the government's "rehash of old promises" to a dog chasing its own tail. Ms. Copps compared the government's record against the promises made by the Premier on the dissolution of the legislature prior to the March 1981 election, and found it lacking in social policy, economic achievements and overall leadership. She went on to elaborate on why the speech would be seen as a major disappointment by farmers, by skilled industrial workers, by landlords and tenants, by injured workers, by those concerned with provision of health care, and by many others.

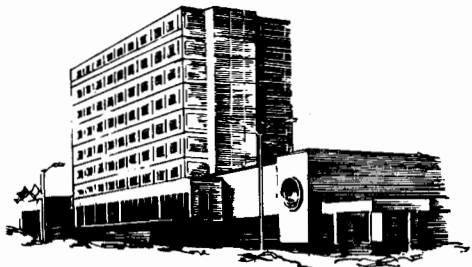
Mr. Rae referred to the speech as "light at the end of the gangplank" for those suffering from the economic recession. In his contribution to the debate, Mr. Rae chose not to comment extensively on the Throne speech but to set out detailed criticism of the government, and his party's proposals in three areas: housing, the unemployment situation, particularly its human impact on the jobless, and the health care system, with special emphasis on the nursing home industry.

Speaker's Ruling on Question Period

Before the first question period of the new session, Mr. Speaker **John Turner** served notice that he would not henceforth permit members to ask multiple questions and ministers to give multiple answers. ('Multiple questions' are not to be confused with supplementary questions, but pose several separate questions in the form of one original question or one supplementary.) This policy was designed to permit more back-bench members to participate in question period. Despite an hour long question period, party leaders had been taking so much

time and ministers were answering at such lengths that it was not unusual for only two or three backbenchers to get to ask their questions. Clearly, it will take time to judge the effectiveness of the Speaker's new approach, but within a week, Liberal Deputy House Leader **Jim Bradley** noted the increase in the number of questions being asked and congratulated the Speaker on the success of his "restraint policy".

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Northwest Territories

Extensive debate about ways in which the Legislative Assembly could further responsible government in the Northwest Territories provided a continuing counterpoint to debate on the \$474-million territorial budget as the legislature met for its six-week winter session from February 2 – March 10.

Proposals to change the Assembly's rules sparked debate about the role of the Speaker and about the role and function of the federally-appointed Commissioner. Further debate about the Commissioner's role arose as the Assembly considered the budget for operating his office. The debate received an additional impetus when Indian and Northern Affairs Minister **John Munro** announced he was transferring two more portfolios, Information and Public Works, to the Executive Committee. That leaves only one ministry, Personnel, still in the Commissioner's hands.

Motions put forward by Mackenzie-Liard MLA **Nick Sibbeston** to remove the Commissioner entirely from the legislature and to delete his office's operating funds from the territorial budget were defeated after much debate. But many MLAs found

themselves in sympathy with the intention behind the motions, and some suggested it was time for even stronger action.

After further debate, MLAs approved a four-point motion listing actions which they wanted to see achieved by October 31, 1983, the end of the Ninth Assembly's life. The points included the development of a plan for responsible government, making the Commissioner's position into that of a Lieutenant-Governor, and abolishing the Deputy Commissioner's position. The motion also invited Mr. Munro to attend the Spring Session to report on those matters.

The question of whether the Commissioner should no longer be allowed to sit with the Assembly during Committee of the Whole was referred to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures for a full report. The Commissioner, while he sits with the Assembly in Committee of the Whole, does not have a vote and is not entitled to sit with the Assembly in formal session. Removing him from Committee of the Whole would be the final step in having the Assembly made up solely of elected members, a process which has been gradually evolving since 1975, when an elected Speaker presided instead of the Commissioner for the first time since 1905.

Changes to the Council Ordinance during the session formally recognized the Office of the Speaker and created the Management and Services Board. Formerly known as the Members' Services Board, it is responsible for the management of the legislature and corresponds to Boards of Internal Economy in other legislatures.

A proposal to change the Speaker's role on an experimental basis until the end of the Ninth Assembly's life sparked lengthy debate. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, as part of its first report to the Assembly, had suggested removing the Speaker's right to participate in debate in the House or Committee of the Whole and restricting his right to vote to casting the deciding vote in case of a tie.

Yellowknife Centre MLA **Bob MacQuarrie**, a former Speaker of the Ninth Assembly, felt that in a House where MLAs individually represent their constituents, no MLA should be prohibited from participating to the fullest. Reminding the Assembly that it had publicly upheld the Speaker's right to speak to issues at a constituency meeting, Mr. MacQuarrie suggested that the Speaker's independence consists of being able to demonstrate that, when a matter of procedure is being decided, he has based his decision on the established

rules regardless of what events may have preceded that ruling.

Slave River MLA **Arnold McCallum** saw it as a question of the House evolving towards the independence of the Speaker, as is currently the practice in southern legislatures. He suggested that even the Speaker of the Eighth Assembly, who had strongly defended his right to take part in debate despite his role as Speaker, had moved away from that position by the end of his term.

The proposal to remove the Speaker's right to debate or vote on issues was defeated, but other proposed changes affecting the Speaker's role were accepted on an experimental basis. The Speaker will chair the Management and Services Board, preside over the NWT Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and may belong to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, but will not belong to any other standing and special committees for the rest of the life of the Ninth Assembly.

While debate continued about further increases in responsible government, indications of how the legislature is maturing were evident when Finance Minister **Tom Butters** rose to give the Budget Speech. While Mr. Butters, the first territorial Finance Minister, was presenting his second budget to the House, the occasion marked the first time an NWT Finance Minister had ever risen on second reading to speak to the budget placed before the House. That, noted Mr. Butters, reflected a slow evolution and slow movement toward public accountability and responsibility.

Saying he had not bought a new pair of shoes "because, after you hear this budget, I do not know whether I will be able to afford a new pair of shoes," Mr. Butters emphasized the tightness of the budget framework put before the House. "We are in for a hard ride and it is crucial right from the start that everyone throughout the Territories clearly understands that message. It is not my desire to paint a picture of monetary doom. Rather I am taking this occasion to indicate in the strongest possible terms that stringent fiscal management is the only vehicle we have to ensure that the excellent programs and priorities set by this House and Executive Committee survive."

A rigorous review of priorities had been carried out by the Executive Committee to make sure that existing programs still served valid aims, Mr. Butters said. To fund priorities set by the Assembly and the Executive Committee, \$7.69 million had been re-directed within the budgetary base.

Any new initiatives or funding requests could only be handled by trimming or eliminating existing programs.

The message that should be clear to everyone "is that any optimism about the North's immediate future must be a guarded optimism, one that recognizes the continuing adjustments in international and national influences," Mr. Butters noted after reviewing the NWT's dependence on federal financing and developments in the national and international energy fields.

But not all MLAs were happy with the budget as presented, and their attempts to redirect money within the budget to finance the priorities they saw as essential led to some lengthy and often angry debates. Mr. Sibbeston, for example, felt that construction of a new school for Fort Liard was more essential than some items in the Education budget, and his motion to delete those capital items and put the money towards an earlier start on building a new school in Ford Liard led to a lengthy debate. Other MLAs wanted a commitment on construction of a new Keewatin high school, and delayed final consideration of the Education estimates until a plan for such construction was tabled in the House.

While Mr. Sibbeston eventually got a commitment from Education Minister **Dennis Patterson** that attempts would be made to speed up construction of the new Fort Liard school and withdrew his motion, he and other MLAs suggested that the Assembly's role was virtually limited to rubber-stamping the budget as presented. Other MLAs pointed out that much work and careful thought had gone into preparing the budget, and that equal work and thought should go into making any changes to it.

The matter came to a head when Western Arctic MLA **Nellie Cournoyea**, noting that the NWT Housing Corporation had a board of directors which set its budget, moved that the Housing Corporation's budget be passed without debate. The motion carried, but it angered MLAs who had wished to ask questions about the corporation's spending plans.

Yellowknife South MLA **Lynda Sorensen** moved that the House approve the remaining Main Estimates as tabled and that the legislature recommend to the Commissioner that it be dissolved and an election be called. The motion was ruled out of order because of the previous motion deferring approval of the Education estimates. A second motion by Mrs. Sorensen "that this legislature recommend to the

Governor in Council that it be dissolved and we call an election as soon as the appropriate legislation allows" was defeated, but the debate on the motion made evident the frustration felt by both groups of MLAs.

Later in the session, a motion was passed calling for a general territorial election to be held no later than November 30, 1983. That motion would require a dissolution of the Legislature before the scheduled date of October 31, 1983.

Close to 90 committee motions were considered in Committee of the Whole during the budget debate, ranging through a wide variety of concerns. Twenty-eight formal motions were debated during the session, and 21 bills, including the *Appropriations Ordinance*, were debated and received assent from the Commissioner.

The bills included a new *Medical Profession Ordinance* to regulate licensing of medical practitioners; a new *Gas Protection Ordinance* dealing with the inspection and regulation of gas equipment and installations; a new *Civil Emergency Measures Ordinance* to set out civil measures for peacetime emergencies; a new *Travel and Tourism Ordinance* to regulate the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation industry; and a new *Occupational Training Agreements Ordinance* allowing the Commissioner or Ministers of Education or Economic Development and Tourism to enter into agreements respecting occupational training.

Amendments to existing ordinances increased the time allowed for commencing legal actions respecting the installation of urea formaldehyde; provided for penalties for violations of the *Lotteries Ordinance*; increased amounts payable to spouses on the death of an intestate; required professionals and the general public to report suspected cases of child abuse; created a new category of parks known as historic parks; defined more thoroughly the forms of political activity permitted by public servants; and made a number of changes to the *Business Loans and Guarantees Ordinance*, the *Wildlife Ordinance*, and the *Public Utilities Ordinance*.

During the session, the Assembly also heard presentations from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on radio and television service in the North; from the Fisheries and Oceans department on fisheries policy in the North; and from Bell Canada and NorthwesTel on telephone service in the eastern and western parts of the Northwest Territories. The Speaker recessed the session on March 10.

At the end of March, the Standing Committee on Finance and Public Accounts held its first public hearings as a Public Accounts Committee. The Committee considered the report of the Auditor-General of Canada on the Financial Information System put in place by the Government of the Northwest Territories, and heard testimony from territorial government officials during the three days of public hearings. The Public Accounts Committee was created during the ninth session of the Ninth Assembly.

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Yellowknife



Saskatchewan

The session, which had been adjourned in December, resumed on February 22. The House was chiefly preoccupied with consideration and approval of the spending estimates of the PC government's first budget before prorogation of the session on March 9.

Second Session Twentieth Legislature

The new session was opened on March 17 with the Speech from the Throne delivered by the Lieutenant Governor **C. Irwin McIntosh**. The Speech promised a major high technology development strategy, expansion of technical and vocational training programs, new initiatives in agricultural research and market development and legislative changes to implement a major reorganization of government departments and crown corporations. Other legislative plans included: a *Regulatory Reform Act*, new legislation to give the Provincial Au-

ditor a clear and independent mandate, a new *Urban Municipality Act* to increase the autonomy of local governments and a new *Vehicles Act* to increase fines for drinking and driving and allow police officers to demand blood samples from drivers involved in accidents.

The debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne concluded on March 28 and was immediately followed by the presentation of the government's budget by the Minister of Finance, **Bob Andrew**. The record-breaking budget showed total government expenditures of \$3.1 billion, with revenues estimated at \$2.8 billion for a \$317 million deficit. The budget featured a nine-point job creation program, including capital projects, tax reductions for small business and a summer youth employment program; and it indicated a restructuring of government with a three-part program to control spending and increase productivity. The overall increase in government spending for 1983-84 was limited to seven per cent. Heritage fund spending was estimated at \$714 million; Andrew said that instead of "being a bottomless pit for the crown corporations," heritage fund revenues will be used to encourage the private sector. Leader of the Opposition, **Allan Blakeney**, however, stated that Saskatchewan taxpayers will pay dearly for the "truly staggering" deficit and he accused the government of embarking on the "Trudeau trail" of deficits. The Budget Debate concluded on April 8.

Television

With the start of the second session, Saskatchewan has embarked on a new direction with an "electronic Hansard" in the form of an in-house system of television coverage of all proceedings in the legislative chamber. The legislative television service is operated by remote control by staff of the Assembly and is made available to Saskatchewan broadcasters and cablecasters by means of either a live signal or in the form of taped copies. Television in the House is the culmination of over seven years of planning and preparation; video tape copies of the daily proceedings now form the Assembly's primary historical record.

Initial reaction to the televised proceedings of the Legislative Assembly has been very favourable and the matter of extending the in-House system to cover proceedings in standing committees has been studied and approved in principle by the House.

Attachment to the Table

On April 14, 1983 the Assembly welcomed Mr. Bertram Tittawella as a guest Clerk at the Table. Mr. Tittawella, Assistant Secretary General of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, will serve at the Saskatchewan Table for a month-long period during which he will study all aspects of the procedure and administration of the Legislative Assembly.

David Mitchell
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Quebec

On March 10, 1983, the Quebec National Assembly finally ended the longest session in its history, a session that started on November 9, 1981.

The Assembly held an emergency sitting on Tuesday, February 15, to study Bill 111 for the restoration of services in public-sector colleges and schools. The Bill ordered the 65,000 teachers belonging to the *Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec* (CEQ), who had been on strike since January 27, to return to work. The passage of Bill 111 required 22 hours of debate in which 33 speakers took part.

A motion by the Government House Leader, **Jean-François Bertrand**, proposing that the rules of procedure be suspended because of the urgency of the situation, provoked a debate that lasted more than two hours but was approved by a vote of 67 to 36. The Minister of Labour, **Raynald Frechette**, presented the Bill for first reading shortly before six in the evening. Second reading followed immediately and lasted until five o'clock the following morning.

On Wednesday, February 16, second reading ended with a vote of 63 in favour, 36 opposed, and one abstention. In committee of the whole, the member for Argenteuil, **Claude Ryan**, brought to the attention of the Assembly a letter from **Claude Benjamin**, chairman of the *Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*. In it Mr. Benjamin asked the president of the CEQ to have the teachers return to their classrooms and the Premier to set up a parliamentary commission to study the work expected of teachers. A debate then arose on section 28 of Bill 111, which related to the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Premier **René Lévesque**, expressed his opposition to third-party mediation in the negotiations with the teachers. After the sitting had been adjourned several times in the course of the evening, Mr. Lévesque returned to the Chamber at eleven o'clock at night to report on negotiations between the government and the CEQ. Faced with an impasse, the Assembly went on to third reading of the Bill, which was finally passed by 64 votes to 35 at one-thirty in the morning. The Act was assented to moments later.

The Assembly resumed on Tuesday, March 8. The government appointed a team of conciliators in the negotiations between the teachers and the government, and announced a \$150 million plan of action for young people. The session ended two days later with a motion of censure by the Leader of the Opposition, **Gérard D. Lévesque**, condemning the government for its management of the economy. Twelve members took part in the debate, which lasted four hours, and the motion was finally rejected by 55 votes to 30.

The Fourth Session

The fourth session started on March 23 with the election of a new Speaker and the reading of an inaugural address on the theme of change.

The opening sitting was marked by a debate on the need to clarify the circumstances surrounding the out-of-court settlement in 1979 of a suit arising from the dam-

age done to work site LG-2 in 1974. Opposition House Leader **Fernand Lalonde** raised the question of the role played by the Premier in reaching a \$200,000 settlement for a \$31 million suit by Hydro Quebec against the *Fédération des travailleurs du Québec*. The opposition threatened to boycott the work of the Chamber if it did not obtain a formal commitment from the government to hear all the witnesses in the affair. The Premier agreed to call a parliamentary committee to hear everyone connected with the out-of-court settlement as soon as possible.

After these exchanges between the Premier and the Opposition, the Chamber adopted unanimously a motion by René Lévesque proposing that **Richard Guay** be elected Speaker of the Assembly following the resignation of **Claude Vaillancourt**. The Leader of the Opposition, Gérard D. Lévesque, and the independent member for Sainte-Marie, **Guy Bisailon**, expressed their satisfaction, thanked Mr. Vaillancourt for his competence and impartiality during a term of office that began in May, 1981, and wished the new Speaker every success.

The election of the new Speaker was followed by the welcoming of the Lieutenant-Governor, **Jean-Pierre Côté**, who opened the session by expressing the wish that the National Assembly would "achieve its vital task in a dignified and exemplary manner".

The Inaugural Address

On behalf of the government the Premier then delivered the Inaugural Address. In his 45-minute speech he stressed the need for change in many sectors:

- change in the governmental apparatus, with a less heavy administration. Two ministries will be abolished, Public Service and Public Works. Some government bodies will disappear and others will be combined. By next autumn all ministries and government bodies will have to prepare a precise plan for improving their service to the public. Decentralization will be stepped up, in collaboration with the province's municipalities. Employers and unions will both be called upon to share their views to a greater extent, even in the preparation of the provincial budget;
- change of direction in the economy and employment. New solutions will be proposed in the short term: work-participation, work sharing, early

retirement at age 60. In the near future Quebec will be trying to achieve a better position in the market, in an on-going search for excellence in future-oriented sectors. Umbrella legislation on scientific and technological research will be presented in the spring to achieve this end;

- Mr. Lévesque invoked the need for social change to modify our ways of thinking and acting, confronted as we are by the challenges of the future. The *Labour Code* will be amended to adapt better to the new social context. New rules will be defined for negotiations between the government as an employer and its public sector employees;
- he called for change in the political system, which through voting reforms and dialogue with Quebec's native peoples will convince Quebecers to back real constitutional change which is the only way "we can finally joint the great host of free modern nations".

He concluded by announcing that his party intends to fight the next election on the issue of nationhood. "We will say that clear thinking and realism point inevitably to independence, which for us as for so many other peoples is the source and the assurance of individual and collective progress."

In his reply for the Liberal opposition, Gérard D. Lévesque, scoffed at the government address, saying that the only noteworthy change it contained had been the recycled vocabulary used for themes already proposed to the people. It was, he said, a speech devoid of any economic or job-related policies, adding that its contents were disjointed and irrelevant to the economic reality of Quebec. "The striking aspect of this speech is the absence of innovative projects and measures capable of helping Quebec out of the crisis."

The Opposition Leader noted the effects of dangerous trends in Quebec's economy: a drop in income-tax revenue, a 6.2 per cent decline in the gross domestic product in 1982, decreasing job creation (42 per cent of Canadian job losses) and weakness in investments.

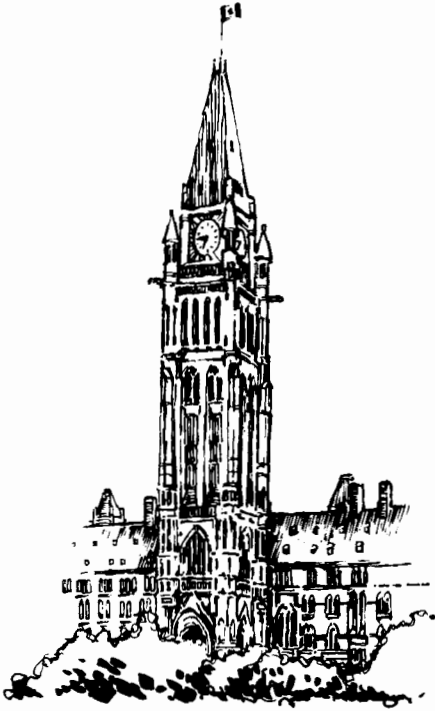
He denounced the myth of the "safety net" which the government claimed to have woven in 1982 to prevent the worst. "What kind of safety net," asked the Opposition Leader, "is made up of higher taxes, orders to govern labour relations, federal-provincial squabbles, and blind cuts in public spending?"

Finally, the Leader of the Opposition deplored the Parti québécois single-minded obsession for the independence of Quebec — without regard to the need for economic growth and job creation. He urged instead two ways of redressing the situation: a change of attitude, to adjust our priorities to suit the goals of growth and job creation; and a reform of the public sector and re-establishment of balanced public finances, especially as regards taxes.

The opposition recommended a sort of ombudsman of economic growth, to keep the government aware of the consequences of its acts. It concluded that a social consensus must be reached, by regaining the hard-work ethic that until recently had made Quebec one of the proudest and most prosperous provinces in Canada.

The Assembly devoted the week of March 29 to work that will probably characterize the fourth session: estimates were tabled for \$24.3 billion for the next fiscal year, an increase of 8.6 per cent over the previous budget; and the Parliamentary Committee on Energy and Resources began studying the circumstances surrounding the decision of the board of the *Société d'énergie de la Baie James* to settle out of court its civil suit brought following the damage done to work site LG-2 in 1974, and more specifically, the role of the Premier and his office in the decision.

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Senate

Three important committee reports were tabled during the period under review. On March 22, Senator **George McIlraith** presented the Second Report of the Banking, Trade and Commerce Committee on the advance study of budget resolutions respecting income tax and other related matters, in particular the subject-matter of Bill C-139, *An Act to amend the Statute Law relating to Income Tax (No. 2)*. The committee made a number of detailed recommendations regarding such matters as aviation turbine fuel pricing, capital cost allowances, the automobile standby charge, investment tax credits and limited partnerships.

On March 30, Senator **Earl Hastings** tabled the Fifth Report of the Special Committee on the Northern Pipeline entitled "Marching to the Beat of the Same Drum: Transportation of Petroleum and Natural Gas North of 60°". Based on evidence received during public hearings in Ottawa and Calgary and a trip to the High Arctic for on-site visits to industrial operations, the committee presented numerous proposals regarding hydrocarbon transportation, exploration and production in the Arctic Region. It emphasized the importance of appropriate planning and recommended that a federal policy towards northern energy be formulated early in 1983. It stressed that all support systems in relation to marine services be in place be-

fore production commences. The committee also recommended that a "heritage fund" from resource revenues accruing from hydrocarbon development be established in order to provide an economic cushion and to serve as a source of funds suitable for investment to promote a more diversified economic base.

Senator **William Kelly**, in his maiden speech to the Senate, praised the report saying that the committee proposals constituted "a meaningful way for the government of Canada to expedite important energy development. If we are to be consequent with the genuine global situation and the uncertainties we face, getting on with that development is an absolute high priority and there is no cost, in my opinion, that is too great".

On April 21, Senator **Lowell Murray** tabled the Fifth Report of the Special Joint Committee on Official Languages. The report contained a summary of recommendations made in previous reports as well as many new proposals regarding amendments to the *Official Languages Act*. The report recommended that the Act be amended to state clearly that its provisions shall apply to Crown corporations and their subsidiary corporations as well as to mixed enterprises. It also made a number of recommendations with the respect to the status, mandate and powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages. The committee felt it was important there be a permanent public forum to examine language policy and it recommended that a Standing Joint Committee be established to which all questions pertaining to language programs would be referred.

Joint Committee on the Reform of the Senate

After some delay, the Special Joint Committee on the Reform of the Senate was finally organized to begin its study on ways by which the Senate could be reformed in order to strengthen its role in representing people from all regions of Canada. The committee, composed of ten members of the House and eight Senators, is chaired jointly by Senator **Gil Molgat** and **Roy MacLaren**, the member from Etobicoke North. The committee has the power to adjourn from place to place within Canada and is to present its final report no later than December 1, 1983.

Legislative Activity

One of the more controversial bills before the Senate recently was Bill C-130, *An Act to authorize continuing financial assistance to be provided to certain in-*

ternational financial institutions. Many Senators took exception to certain clauses which stipulated that motions confirming or revoking Orders-in-Council amending the schedule to the Bill would originate first in the House of Commons. Senator **Duff Roblin** doubted the propriety of passing the Bill since it circumscribed the rights of the Senate and would "reduce this body to even more of a cipher than some of us might think it is at the present time". After a lively debate the Bill was referred, on March 28, to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee in order to consider its constitutionality. The Committee, chaired by Senator **Joan Neiman**, reported back to the Senate on the following day. Because of the urgency of the Bill's passage, no amendments were proposed but the Committee invited the government "to consider amending the negative resolution procedures set out in this Bill and in other legislation to insure that both the Senate and the House of Commons have equal power to initiate negative resolutions and further, that future legislation of a similar nature incorporate this principle". The Bill was passed by the Senate and given Royal Assent on March 30.

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House of Commons

The major event of the period under review was the Budget presentation by **Marc Lalonde**, the Minister of Finance on the evening of April 19. The theme of his address was recovery. As he explained "the recession that has crippled us for over a year has bottomed out. Industrial production is up. Housing starts are up. Inflation is down and so are interest rates. Even more importantly, business and consumer confidence is on the upswing." His concern, however, was to assure that the recovery will take firm hold and be durable.

Mr. Lalonde announced a four-year special recovery programme which will seek to provide some \$4.6 billion of investment support. This will involve seven major initiatives and includes a planned expenditure of \$2.2 billion in public capital projects, a system of refunds of investment tax credits and other measures to promote investment financing. To meet the costs expected in implementing the Special

Recovery Programme, the Minister said he will levy an additional 1% increase on the federal sales tax. This increase, however, will not take effect before the fall of 1984. To promote activity in the housing industry, Mr. Lalonde proposed changes to the Registered Home Ownership Program. He also revealed certain steps the government will take to encourage employment. Training programmes for students and young people will be supported by a total of \$280 million in additional funds. Part of the funds for the Special Recovery programme will also be allocated to research and development. Loans totalling \$100 million will be extended to farmers in financial distress. Farmers as well as hard pressed fishermen and businessmen will also be allowed to carry over losses incurred in one year to reduce taxes in other years.

Turning to the broad economic picture, the minister predicted that real GNP at the end of 1983 should be about 6.5% higher than it was at the end of 1982. In 1984 it can be expected to be 5.2% higher still. With regret, he indicated that unemployment would likely remain high over this year and the next. However, he expressed confidence that the trend will be downwards in coming years. As a result of the expenditures and incentives undertaken by the government, Mr. Lalonde forecast a 1983-84 budget deficit of \$31.2 billion. Within the next few years, as the economy recovers and gains strength, Mr. Lalonde said that the deficit should decrease. Restraint on expenditure growth, he noted, will mean that federal government outlays will form a steadily declining share of GNP from now to 1986-87.

The debate which follows from the speech of the Finance Minister is on the motion "That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government." **Pat Carney**, speaking as the finance critic of the Progressive Conservatives, labelled the presentation as a last chance budget — "the last chance this government has of restoring its fiscal credibility after years of fiscal irresponsibility, economic mismanagement and a string of disastrous budgets which crippled an economy already in recession." Miss Carney went on to criticize the government for its deficit, claiming its size might very well impede the recovery. This accusation formed part of the Conservative amendment motion which also condemned the government for high unemployment and increased tax burden.

Nelson Riis, the finance critic of the New Democratic Party criticized the budget as a "do not take action" budget. He said the

proposals of the Minister of Finance ignore the problem of high unemployment while selectively stimulating the business sector. Instead, it should be the policy of the government, as it is of the NDP, "to develop a long-term economic recovery programme, a long-term strategy in order to develop those sectors of our economy which ought to be developed in the best interest of Canadians." He moved a subamendment faulting the government for its failure to stimulate consumer demands and create job programmes.

The Budget and the "Leak"

Even before the Minister of Finance made his budget speech, he was confronted with demands for his resignation because of an inadvertent pre-budget leak which occurred when a cameraman photographed pages of the speech during a photo opportunity in his office one day before the speech was to be presented to the House.

While failing to obtain the consent of the Speaker to recognize a *prima facie* question of privilege or to allow an emergency debate on the matter, the opposition Progressive Conservatives nevertheless challenged the Prime Minister during the Question Period to take appropriate action. The protests of the opposition became more vehement when it was discovered that the budget was changed in respect of the job-creation programme, which was increased by \$200 million. **Erik Nielsen**, the Leader of the Opposition, subsequently gave notice of a motion to have a special Commons committee conduct a full inquiry into the whole affair.

Legislation

Of the eleven bills passed by the House of Commons between February and April, most had to do with financial and economic matters. Two bills, C-131 and C-132, are part of the government's six and five restraint policy and limit the increases for old age security payments and family allowances during the next two years. Two other legislative measures were appropriation acts; others dealt with supplementary borrowing authority and grants and loans to small businesses. By far the most significant of these "money" bills was C-139 which amended the *Income Tax Act*. It was a whopping measure, almost 300 pages in length and incorporating more than one hundred tax changes, some of which were originally recommended by **Allan MacEachen**, the former Minister of Finance, in his budget of November 1981.

On April 12, the House passed Bill C-142, the *Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Act*, which increased deposit

insurance to \$60,000 from \$20,000. The proposal was introduced by **Paul Cosgrove**, the Minister of State for Finance, last January. Originally retroactive to January 17, the House accepted an amendment by **Donald Blenkarn** to make it effective back to January 4, the first banking day of the year.

One non-financial bill to be adopted by the House recently was C-141 sponsored by **Mark MacGuigan**, the Minister of Justice. It amended certain provisions of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and received third reading March 29. The bill broadens protection for pregnant women and seeks to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace for federal employees. In addition it forbids discrimination against both mentally and physically handicapped people in all areas under federal jurisdiction.

Committee Activities

Many of the standing committees of the House were occupied during these past months with studying departmental estimates. The main spending estimates of the government were tabled in the House on February 22, by **Herb Gray**, the President of the Treasury Board. The task of the standing committees has been assisted in recent years by the new format of the estimates which are now presented in three parts. Part I is the Government Expenditure plan, Part II the Estimates proper and Part III the Program Expenditure Plans which provides detailed program information by department or ministry. This year 47 volumes were tabled as Part III. At the same time, Mr. Gray announced that changes would be made to Part II in consultation with members.

In addition to studying estimates, the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs issued in late March its report on solicitation and prostitution. Under the chairmanship of **Claude-André Lachance** the committee held numerous hearings to investigate a problem which seriously troubles many larger cities. The committee's report recommends five basic changes to the *Criminal Code*. On one issue, there was clear unanimity among committee members and that was to make clients equally liable to prosecution as the prostitutes themselves. The majority of the committee recommended changes to the federal law in respect of this disparity. Furthermore, the committee wants the offering or acceptance of an offer to engage in prostitution in a public place to be punishable by a \$500 fine or a 15 day prison term. To give teeth to this proposal, the Committee urged that the definition of "public place" be broadened to include vehicles in public places and also

private places open to public view. In considering the alarming problem of child prostitution, the committee recommended that the involvement of anyone under the age of 18 in such acts or solicitation should be made punishable either by summary conviction or by indictment. Finally, the committee suggested that the operation of the proposed amendments should be reviewed by a committee of the House within three years of their coming into force.

The Chairman of the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure, **Tom Lefebvre** presented another report to the House on March 29. This one examines committee structure and puts forward a plan for its reorganization on a model which resembles that used in Westminster. Instead of referring legislation to a standing committee, the report advised that it should be sent for study to an *ad hoc* committee which should be set up within five days after the House has given approval to the bill in principle. The chairmen of these committees, according to the report, should be selected from an all-party panel chosen by the Speaker. It further recommended that the size of these committees be limited to twenty members and that these committees be disbanded upon completion of their study. Such a system, it is held, would allow members a better opportunity to participate in the scrutiny of legislation which is of interest to them and would enable the standing committees, already overburdened, more time to examine the estimates and other tabled documents of the different government departments and ministries.

A special committee to act as a Parliamentary Task Force on Pension Reform has been struck by the House. The committee consists of nine members under the chairmanship of **Douglas Frith**. The basis of its study is the green paper "Better Pensions for Canadians" issued by the government late last year. The problems of inflation protection of pensions, of expanding mandatory pension arrangements and of financing the Canada Pension Plan, are three of the specific problems that will be examined by the committee which is expected to submit its final report by the end of the year.

The provisional standing orders adopted by the House last December permit committees to request a reply from the government to any of its reports or recommendations. Thus far, two committees have made such a request; the Public Accounts Committee and the Special Joint Committee on Official Languages. According to standing order 69(13) the govern-

ment has a maximum of 120 days to prepare a comprehensive report.

The Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections has been empowered by the House to investigate charges of contempt of Parliament against the *Montreal Gazette* for articles concerning **Bryce Mackasey**. In stories which appeared in the newspaper in between March 10 and 12, it was alleged that Mr. Mackasey had acted as a paid lobbyist on behalf of an engineering firm recently declared bankrupt. On March 17 Mr. Mackasey categorically denied the allegations and requested that the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, currently chaired by **Maurice Foster**, investigate the issue. On March 22 the Speaker, Mme **Jeanne Sauvé** ruled that the complaint constituted a *prima facie* breach of privilege which cleared the way for the House to consider a motion directing the committee to study the subject.

Matters of Procedural Interest

The issue involving Mr. Mackasey came up as the House was still discussing ministerial conflict of interest guidelines. This became a topic of debate between the government and both opposition parties from mid February through most of March. It arose from allegations raised by the opposition concerning a former minister, **Alis-tair Gillespie**, and several others still in the cabinet. The opposition alleged that Mr. Gillespie had benefitted from preferential treatment for a consortium he represented and thereby violated the government's own conflict of interest guidelines. The government denied there was any substance to the charges. Nonetheless, the opposition continued to raise the issue. The opportunities available to the opposition, as demonstrated in this case, belie somewhat the notion that initiative in the House rests exclusively with the government. The opposition frequently brought up the matter during Question Period in the latter half of February. Two non-confidence motions on conflict of interest, one presented by **Ed Broadbent**, Leader of the NDP, on February 24, the other by **Erik Nielsen**, Leader of the Opposition, on March 21, were debated in the House and defeated. The issue was also raised on other occasions as a question of privilege, statements by members and during the adjournment motion. Such persistence reflects the political dimension of parliamentary life.

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Manitoba

The Assembly re-convened on February 24 when departmental spending estimates for the 1983-84 fiscal year were tabled. At the same time the Budget was presented by Finance Minister **Vic Schroeder**. The government emphasized creating and protecting jobs as its number one priority. A \$200 million Jobs Fund was established to finance job creation efforts by the government and to entice cooperation from the federal government, municipalities and the private sector. Expenditures were forecast at \$3.3 billion, a 15.9% increase over the previous year's spending, while revenues were forecast at \$2.7 billion. A freeze on the gross income of cabinet ministers and a 2% maximum pay raise for senior civil servants was pledged. Revenues were augmented by a 1% increase in sales tax for a total of 6%, a 1.1¢ per litre gasoline tax increasing it to 7.5¢ per litre, a 1% increase in corporation tax for a total of 16% and increases in tobacco taxes and liquor prices.

Opposition Leader **Sterling Lyon** during the Budget debate accused the government of total absence of management control. He cited the increase in provincial unemployment, the government employees' wage agreement, the early lifting of a hydro rate freeze and increasing taxation as examples of no policy or direction. Premier **Howard Pawley** responded by emphasizing the Jobs Fund which was designed to improve the co-ordination of all government job creation measures while ensuring long-term benefits to the economy as well as employment growth. He also

criticized the opposition, charging that they offered no alternatives to the unemployment difficulties facing the province.

Triggered on March 4 by Speaker **James Walding's** successive recognition of two government backbenchers during Oral Question Period, Mr. Lyon advised the Speaker that he had lost the confidence of the Opposition. After a warning by the Chair, Mr. Lyon continued and then made a statement regarding a pre-Christmas ruling. When he refused to withdraw the remarks, he was named and, on a motion introduced by the House Leader, **Roland Penner** was suspended for an unprecedented four sitting days.

A heavy legislative agenda accumulated well into the session. Notably, legislation prescribing the compulsory use of seatbelts and motorcycle helmets elicited immediate opposition from some community interests. Conflict of interest legislation was

proposed to require disclosure in matters of pecuniary interest by members of the Legislative Assembly and cabinet, their spouses and dependents resident in their households. The bill proposes that members must withdraw from voting on, and refrain from influencing, matters from which they could profit. It seeks to give the courts an adjudicating role and to set out a penalty of disqualification from office. Proposed amendments to *The Legislative Assembly Act* seek to enhance members' allowances and services, especially by increasing funding for constituency service. Various bills related to family law were introduced. Manitoba residency requirements for the ownership of farmland in the province, proposed in *The Farm Lands Ownership Act*, continued to receive Opposition criticism. Considerable public representations were made on *The Surface Rights Act*. *The Manitoba Oil and Gas Corporation Act* also generated significant opposition discussion.

The opposition repeatedly raised the matter of participation of two cabinet ministers and six government backbenchers in a demonstration against United States involvement in the Nicaraguan conflict at the U.S. Consulate Building in Winnipeg. The government charged that the issue was blown out of proportion and stated that the ministers were acting on their own behalf and not on the behalf of the administration.

The Crow Rate was a leading issue in April. The House unanimously adopted a resolution identical to one passed by the Saskatchewan Assembly, rejecting the proposals by federal Transport minister **Jean-Luc Pépin**. As well, the Standing Committee on Agriculture held public meetings throughout the province on the issue.

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