



Reports on Legislative Activities



Saskatchewan

In the last legislative report, it was noted that the member for Regina Centre, **Ned Shillington** had been raising concerns over the way the old Saskatchewan Government Insurance office had been sold. These charges led to a point of privilege (see Speaker's Ruling elsewhere in this issue). The "SGI issue" continued to dominate the session in May. The Minister-in-Charge, **Paul Rousseau**, and the Premier, **Grant Devine**, denied that there had been any wrongdoing. In order to clear the air, on June 27, 1984 the Premier announced that former Chief Justice **E.M. Culliton** had been appointed to review the entire matter.

The third session adjourned for the summer on June 1, 1984. In the sixty-four sitting days, the legislature had considered 104 public bills, passing 96 of them. The Non-controversial Bills Committee was more active than it has been and passed 16 bills. This committee has an opposition chairman and an opposition majority but the committee has no power to amend or kill the bill. It is a procedure whereby members

can review non-controversial bills in detail without taking the time of the Assembly.

One of the key issues of the spring session was the plight of the Saskatchewan farmer. Due to freakish weather patterns, the northern grain belt received above average rain fall with the result that many of farmers could not finish spring seeding. On the other hand, the southern grain belt experienced serious drought conditions. The government reacted by offering financial assistance to farmers in the northern grain belt and to ranchers in the south. The government also introduced a program to provide financial counselling and loan assistance to farmers caught in the cost-price squeeze of rising input costs and declining prices for their products. The opposition argued that these steps did not go far enough but that the farmers should have the protection of a moratorium on foreclosures.

Other legislation during the session created a new Water Crown Corporation, providing a means for Saskatchewan people to invest in Saskatchewan Crown Corporations and Saskatchewan business. New amendments to the *Coroners' Act* now permit the removal of the cornea during an autopsy in certain circumstances for corneal transplants. Saskatchewan has had a voluntary corneal transplant program for several years.

On May 7, 1984, the member for Thunder Creek, **Colin Thatcher** was arrested and charged with first degree murder of his former wife. The case has been set for trial but no trial date was set at the time this report was written.

Saskatchewan marked Canada Day on July 1 with the opening of the Lieutenant Governor's new offices in Government House. In 1945, the Lieutenant Governor

was moved out of Government House and had offices in the Hotel Saskatchewan. Over the last five years Government House has been completely refurbished and opened to the public as a museum. In 1983, the Government decided to refurbish part of the House as office space for the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable **F.W. Johnson**.

Gordon Barnhart



Manitoba

The sittings of the Assembly during May and June were typified by the expeditious handling of House business and an absence of contentious legislation. Other than the consideration of departmental spending estimates, members dwelt on the matter of a government proposal to limit bell-ringing on divisions to 15 minutes. The Opposition maintained that there should be no time limit on motions to amend the province's constitution. After several proposals and counterproposals, the original government motion was agreed to on June 1, 1984.

During debate on the government motion to concur in the Report of the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House regarding bell-ringing, a point of order was raised by an opposition member who questioned the admissibility of the motion on the grounds that the Committee of the Whole, to which the Report had been referred, had not completed consideration of the Report. When the Speaker, Hon. **James Walding**, said he would take the matter under advisement, the Government House Leader, **Andy Anstett**, appealed the ruling, arguing that a motion, once proposed to the House, could not be withdrawn unilaterally by the Speaker. The subsequent recorded vote overturned the ruling 30 to 18.

Opposition House Leader, **Harry Enns**, then rose on a Matter of Privilege and moved "that this House condemn the action of the Government House Leader in taking away the protection of the Opposition provided by the Speaker of this House." The Speaker ruled that the proper use of the Rules by the Government House Leader, could not be construed to form the basis of a matter of privilege.

The only bill that evoked significant debate was *An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act and Various Other Acts of the Legislature*. The bill was drafted after a government review of the province's labour law. Chiefly, it proposed greater independence and increased responsibility for the Labour Board. To the objection of the government, the opposition charged that the bill would give unions an unfair advantage over businesses, especially in the area of the ability of unions to organize and enroll members.

Among other legislation was a bill to establish a crown corporation which would sell shares in government assets to the public, thereby raising \$150 million for the government.

The signing of two Letters of Intent was also announced by the government. On May 24, **Wilson Parasiuk**, the Minister of Energy and Mines, announced an agreement with Canamax Resources Inc. to undertake joint and separate feasibility studies into a potash mining and milling operation in Manitoba. On June 1, the Minister announced a Letter of Intent with the Western Area Power Administration of Golden, Colorado for the sale of 1200 megawatts of hydroelectricity per year for 35 years, beginning in 1993. The opposition

stated it looked forward to studying the forthcoming details of the projects.

On June 29 the House adjourned until a time to be fixed by the government.

Gordon Mackintosh



Alberta

The second session of the twentieth legislature, began its summer recess on May 31, 1984. A total of 50 Bills received Royal Assent from his Honour Lieutenant Governor **Frank Lynch-Staunton**.

As expected, a new *Child Welfare Act* was reintroduced and passed. The Act was first introduced in draft form in the fall of 1983 and incorporates suggestions submitted to the Department of Social Services and Community Health over the winter. The Act attempts to provide clearer definitions of the role of the government in the delivery of services. It also provides for more consultation with chiefs and councils in respect of native children. The government intends to postpone proclamation of the Act until after the public has had an opportunity to respond to it in its final form.

The Provincial Treasurer announced changes to public pension policy which affect the public service as well as all those plans which the government administers and/or guarantees, including those in place for employees of local authorities, universities and special forces. The *Pension Statutes Amendment Act*, 1984 clarifies the role and authority of pension boards and initiates several administrative changes. It also addresses the shortfall of revenue in these

pension funds by phased increases to the contributions which employees make to pension funds.

A discussion paper was released on the private pension plan system, in the hope of making some improvements in that area as well. The Minister of Social Services and Community Health, **Neil Webber**, also announced a major increase in funding and expansion for the Home Care Program, which provides at-home health services for the elderly and the handicapped.

The *Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Amendment Act*, 1984 makes several changes to the administration of the fund, including the transference of the income from the fund to General Revenue, in order to help offset the province's budgetary deficit.

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, chaired by **Ron Ghitter**, released an interim report in early May, summarizing the activities of the committee and declaring its intention to release four papers in the coming year. The four papers will deal with private education, aboriginal education, professionalism and curricula and inter-cultural education.

The first of these papers, dealing with private education, was released a few days later. The report reveals several examples of what it considers to be intolerant attitudes being fostered in some of the province's private schools, many of which are being operated without the approval of the government. The draft recommendations stress the need for the private schools to come under closer government scrutiny and regulation, and state that many of these schools should be closed.

The second paper, on native education in Alberta, was released on June 20. It provides an overview of native education in Alberta and includes several draft recommendations. The conclusion reached by the committee is that "the general state of native education in Alberta is deplorable" and that there are "responsibilities that are not being met and require immediate attention."

The Minister of Education, **David King**, released a discussion paper dealing with teacher education. The report, prepared by the deans of the Faculties of Education in the province, stresses the need for

higher standards in teacher training and points to the need for ongoing evaluation of teacher performance.

A few weeks earlier, the minister announced that a major review of the *School Act* was being undertaken in an effort to improve the quality of education in the province. These reports, as well as the return of comprehensive examinations for high school students last year, are part of this process.

The controversial Mount Allan Master Plan was released by the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, **Al "Boomer" Adair**. The government has been criticized by the opposition and outside groups concerned that the site for the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics at Mount Allan might not have adequate snow or sufficiently challenging hills for Olympic competition. The plan outlines three objectives for the site: a suitable venue for the Olympic games, a training area for competitive skiers and a recreational ski area, especially since Mount Allan is in Kananaskis Country Park. The plan places a heavy emphasis on the use of artificial snow both for the Olympics and beyond.

The Minister Responsible for Native Affairs, **Milt Pahl**, announced that as a result of a review of government policy regarding Indian land claims settlements, the Alberta government would be prepared to include all subsurface mineral rights in future settlements made with the federal government and Alberta Indian bands.

The Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program, which was due to end in August, will be extended although on a smaller scale. In order to be eligible for continued interest relief, individuals or families must spend at least 35% of the household income on the mortgage. The program, which was initiated in 1982 to protect Albertans from high interest rates above 12.5%, has cost the Alberta government much less than was originally anticipated.

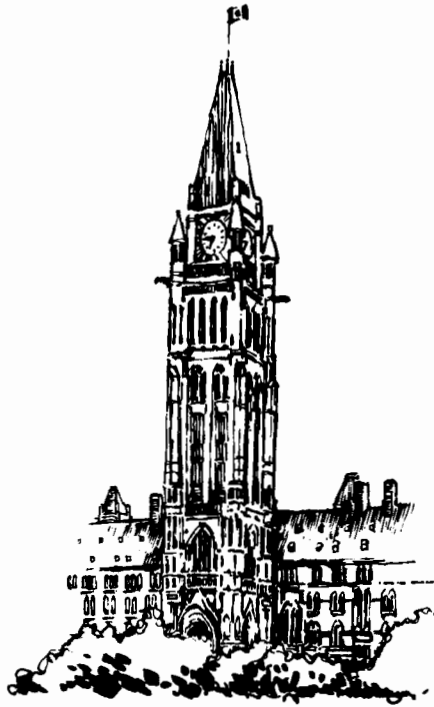
The opposition's criticism of the government on the collapse of Dial Mortgage Ltd. and Abacus Cities Ltd. continued with calls for a review of the Securities Commission and administration of justice in the province. Both cases are now before the courts.

The dispute over long-distance toll revenue-sharing between Edmonton Tele-

phones and Alberta Government Telephones continues, with little hope for resolution in sight. The City of Edmonton is continuing to scramble billing information while AGT is still intercepting outgoing long-distance calls.

The government threw its support behind the newly announced Bank of Alberta by investing in five per cent of its shares. A committee to look into regulation in the trucking industry was struck, with its report due in the fall.

Tim Daus



Senate

Senate committees were quite active during the period under review. On May 10, Senator **Gil Molgat** presented the First Report of the Standing Rules and Orders Committee. The report addressed the problem faced by many committees regarding the appearance of witnesses who are available on short notice and would like to make a formal submission to a committee although the committee does not have a specific order of reference before it. The Rules Committee expressed the view that it was in the interests of both the Senate and the citizenry that there be as few limitations on access to committees as possible. It recommended that for the duration of the

session any select committee could, on its own initiative, send for a person who is visiting the National Capital Region and hear and consider evidence on matters pertaining to the committee. The report was not adopted before the Senate rose for its summer adjournment.

The Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee was given two important orders of reference. On May 30, it was authorized to review all aspects of, and make recommendations on, an overall Canadian health care policy. On June 6, it was empowered to examine the impact of technological change on the fabric of Canadian society. According to its chairman, Senator **Lorne Bonnell**, it was not the intention of the committee to proceed with either study until the fall. Notice of a further order of reference was given by Senator Bonnell on June 6 dealing with the issues of women and work but it was not proceeded with.

On June 20, the Senate approved a motion of Senator **Charlie Watt** to establish a special committee on Aboriginal Issues. Although the committee did not have time to have an organizational meeting, it was felt that some areas into which it could inquire would include the need for new forums on aboriginal problems, economic infrastructure questions and the nationalization of government policies. With dissolution, however, the committee ceased to exist. It is the intention of Senator Watt to move that the committee be re-established in the new Parliament.

Senator **Earl Hastings**, Chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, tabled on June 20 the Committee's review of the recommendations contained in last session's report *Marching to the Beat of the Same Drum: Transportation of Petroleum and Natural Gas North of 60°*. The committee expressed satisfaction that the report provided the momentum for such federal government programs as the Northern Regulatory Review, the revised Northern Oil and Gas Action Program and the Northern Land Use Planning Program. Of the 21 recommendations made, 17 were accepted by the government and are currently in the process of being put in place. Senator Hastings believed that the Committee "should continue to scrutinize government programs in the future to ensure that development proceeds in a manner that

could be of greatest benefit to the people of Canada and, more importantly, to the people of the North".

On June 26, Senator **Leopold Langlois** tabled the Interim Report of the Transportation and Communications Committee on Rail Passenger Services in Canada entitled: *Are We On the Right Track?*. After holding many public hearings and conducting extensive studies of Amtrak facilities in the United States, the Committee made 26 recommendations covering a number of issues, such as the necessity of VIA Rail legislation, operating contracts and costing procedures, subsidies for passenger rail service, marketing functions and VIA-Amtrak services. The Committee again expressed its disapproval of the fact that routes were discontinued by Order-in-Council instead of through public hearings before the CTC. It requested that the government reconsider its decision to reduce passenger service and urged that the "Atlantic" train route from Montreal to Halifax via southern New Brunswick be restored.

On July 16, with the permission of the Senate's Inter-sessional authority, Senator **Herb Sparrow** released the report of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee on the subject-matter of soil and water conservation throughout Canada, entitled *Soil at Risk: Canada's Eroding Future*. The Committee concluded that Canada is facing the most serious agricultural crisis in its history and that unless urgent action is taken, the country will lose a major portion of its farming capability through soil degradation. The report recommended that a comprehensive federal soil and water conservation policy be developed and adopted immediately. Such a policy must clearly state the Government's intention to make soil conservation a priority in the development of all its policies and require all departments to coordinate their efforts to make the most efficient use of resources. The Committee also made a number of recommendations regarding conservation research, technological training, and programs to increase awareness and to sustain a national conservation effort.

Legislative Activity

Thirty-six bills were given Royal Assent during the period under review, the vast major-

ity being passed in the last two weeks before the summer recess. Two important Senate bills were enacted: S-11, *An Act to implement conventions between Canada and a number of countries with respect to the avoidance of double taxation*, and S-14, *An Act to implement a convention between Canada and the United States with respect to taxes on income and on capital*. An important Senate bill which was not passed and which died in the Banking, Trade and Commerce Committee upon dissolution was Bill S-12, *An Act amending the Shipping Conferences Exemption Act, 1979*. One of the Bills sent to the Senate by the House of Commons but which did not pass was Bill C-47, *An Act to amend the Indian Act*. This controversial Bill, which proposed to eliminate provisions relating to entitlement to registration under the *Indian Act* that discriminate on the basis of sex, was passed by the Commons on June 29 and was sent to the Senate only a few hours before the final Royal Assent ceremony took place. A number of Senators refused to grant the necessary unanimous consent to proceed with the second reading of the Bill that day. As a result the Bill died on the Order Paper when Parliament was dissolved on July 9.

Gary O'Brien

House of Commons

The second and last session of the 32nd Parliament came to an end on June 29, 1984. Nine days later Prime Minister **John Turner** asked the Governor General, **Jeanne Sauv **, to dissolve Parliament for the purpose of a general election which was held on September 4.

During the final few weeks of the session the House passed more than thirty pieces of legislation, all but one of them was adopted by the Senate and received Royal Assent.

Among the bills passed was the controversial legislation establishing the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. The Solicitor General had introduced the bill last January and after considerable debate the House had adopted second reading in the latter days of March. After extensive study by the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs Bill C-9 was reported back to the House on June 6. While the Solicitor

General steadfastly maintained that the bill was as good as it could be, the New Democratic Party led the opposition to the bill claiming the powers given to the security agency were too broad and the restrictions too vague. An attempt to filibuster the bill in committee was renewed in the House during report stage where over 170 motions in amendment were filed. Debate extended over a week and only concluded after the government made a time allocation order to restrict additional debate. In a final protest, the House spent hours going through more than eighty recorded divisions on the proposed motions in amendment. The bill finally received third reading June 21.

Three bills adopted by the House concerned the interests of native peoples. The first, Bill C-46, provided local self-government for two bands, the Cree and the Naskapi of Quebec. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Opposition Indian Affairs critic, and a spokesman for the NDP all applauded the bill which represented the culmination of much effort and negotiation.

The second bill dealt with the land settlement claims of the Western Arctic Inuvialuit. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development described the proposal as the first comprehensive settlement of this kind concluded with a native group from Canada's North. While spokesmen for opposition parties questioned certain aspects of the settlement and the approach being taken by the government, neither really wanted to delay passage.

More contentious, however, was a third bill relating to the status of Indian women who marry non-Indians. Several members raised objections about the lack of reinstatement provisions for those women who had already lost their Indian status; about the limited time given to the study of the bill and the apparent paternalism of the government's approach to the problem. As it turned out, the Senate did not pass the bill prior to the summer adjournment and the changes were not, therefore, incorporated in the *Indian Act*.

John Turner Succeeds Pierre Elliott Trudeau

On June 16 John Turner won the leadership convention of the Liberal party of Canada called to find a replacement for Pierre Elliott

Trudeau who announced his resignation last February. Mr. Turner took the leadership on the second ballot defeating **Jean Chrétien**, the Minister of Energy Mines and Resources and **Don Johnston**, Minister of Economic Development. Four other cabinet ministers also contested the leadership but withdrew after the first ballot. Mr. Turner was sworn in as Prime Minister on June 30.

Conservatives Win Election

In announcing his decision to call an immediate election Mr. Turner said Canada needed "a renewal of confidence and certainty". In early July the Gallup Poll showed the Liberals with support of 49% of decided voters, their highest showing since 1980. The poll showed 38% supporting the Conservative party and 11% for the New Democratic Party.

As the campaign progressed the polls revealed a steady decline in support for the Liberals in favour of **Brian Mulroney** and the Progressive Conservative party. On election day the Conservatives took 50% of the popular vote and 211 of the 282 seats in the House of Commons. The Liberal Party, in its worst defeat since Confederation, took only 40 seats. The NDP saw its number of seats and popular vote decline slightly compared to 1980 but found cause for celebration in its ability to survive the Tory landslide and actually increased its representation in Ontario.

Many reasons have been cited for the huge Conservative victory. The Liberals misinterpreted the June Gallup poll as indicating significant support for the party; political appointments made by Mr. Turner at the request of Mr. Trudeau became a campaign issue for a while; the Liberal Party apparatus in many ridings was ill-prepared to fight a general election and finally Mr. Mulroney was generally acknowledged to have "won" the televised debates. This had a "bandwagon" effect for the Conservatives.

By the end of August virtually all independent polls predicted a Conservative majority although the size of the victory surprised many. Fifteen of twenty-five cabinet ministers were defeated. In Quebec, where the Liberals had held 74 of 75 seats, Mr. Mulroney took 58 this time. The Conservatives picked up support in every other region of the country en route to their massive majority.

The turnover rate among federal parliamentarians is generally high but this election was unusual even by Canadian standards. Approximately one half of the members of the 33rd Parliament will be sitting in the House for the first time. Only 137 of the persons elected (84 Conservatives, 30 Liberals and 23 NDP) held seats when Parliament was dissolved. One independent member was elected, **Tony Roman** in York North. He defeated **John Gamble**, one of the few Conservative incumbents to lose his seat in the election.

All party leaders won their seats, Mr. Mulroney in Manicouagan, Mr. Broadbent in Oshawa and Mr. Turner in Vancouver Quadra. A complete list of members elected appears elsewhere in this issue.

The Editor



Ontario

One of the most startling developments of the fourth session was Premier **William Davis'** announcement on June 12 regarding public support for separate schools. Since before Confederation, Ontario has been beset by social and political conflicts related to the division of public (non-denominational) and separate (Roman Catholic) schools. For decades, Roman Catholic school supporters have pressed for tax support for secondary school programs. As recently as the 1971 provincial election, Premier Davis' first as party leader, the government's refusal to extend such support was a major campaign issue.

Now, after a careful and fresh review of the issue, Premier Davis declared, "I now believe this (granting of public funds) can be responsibly undertaken..." This action should seek, he said, "to build fellowship

and common values, not segregation and mutual suspicion." Nor should it "cripple or limit the viability of our non-denominational public secondary school system, which is accessible to all and universally supported." The new funding program, costing \$40 million in the first year, will be introduced gradually at the rate of one year of secondary education for each school year beginning September 1, 1985.

At the same time, the Premier established three education commissions: a planning and implementation commission to oversee the funding reform; a commission of inquiry to examine the role and status of independent schools; and a commission to study financing of elementary and secondary education.

Opposition reaction to the Premier's announcement was immediate and supportive. **David Peterson**, Official Opposition leader, said, "On behalf of my party, I am proud today to identify myself and my colleagues with the statement of the Premier on this major advance in position. I am not one of those who is going to ask why. I am only going to say "hurrah." NDP leader **Bob Rae** agreed: "... the Premier has made a very important contribution to a sense of fairness in this province... We congratulate him for it... Equality has made an important advance in Ontario today."

The Budget

The first budget of the Treasurer, **Larry Grossman**, was presented to the House on May 15, 1984. The document hailed Ontario's recovery from recession, but warned that, "We cannot return to "business as usual. We are in the midst of profound economic change..." This change, Mr. Grossman said, required 'strategic long-term investments' rather than "stop-gap measures."

The budget forecast 4.7% real growth in the gross provincial product, compared to an estimate of only 1.9% in the previous year's budget. Average annual employment was expected to increase by 125,000 jobs with a somewhat reduced unemployment rate averaging 9.1% (versus over 11% in the previous budget). The Treasurer predicted provincial spending would increase 7.4% to \$26.8 billion, while revenues would grow 9.6% to \$24.76 billion. Consequently, the projected deficit of just over \$2 billion would

represent a reduction from last year's record high of \$2.7 billion.

A primary focus of the budget was the expenditure of \$600 million over three years in support for youth employment and measures to retrain and upgrade the skills of experienced workers. The list of youth employment programs was lengthy: a \$450 million, three year Ontario Youth Opportunities Fund; Ontario Youth Trust; Ontario Youth Corps; a residential centres program for disadvantaged youth; Ontario Youth Start; Ontario Youth Tourism; Ontario Youth Work Opportunities subsidy program; venture capital interest-free loans; increase from 33 to 100 of youth employment counselling centres; a part-time employment wage subsidy program; \$5 million in added funding for Ontario Career Action Program; and appointment of a Youth Commissioner.

To help small and medium-sized businesses adapt to technological innovations, the Treasurer announced programs to assist in the rental or purchase of robots and other high tech equipment. Educational grants from a new Technology Diffusion Training Program will help foster the skills of managers, engineers and technicians in this area.

Further aid to business came in the form of a \$30 million, three year Automotive Parts Investment Fund, a \$10 million Enterprise Growth Fund, and, for new small business, exemption from corporate income tax for three years after incorporation. The Small Business Development Corporations program is to receive \$25 million this fiscal year, with \$7.5 million of this specifically earmarked for northern and eastern Ontario and \$5 million for start-up enterprises.

In the area of social policy, Mr. Grossman outlined a range of measures, including tax assessment exemptions and expanded attendant care, to help elderly and disabled people to live independently in their own communities. Recognizing the importance of child care to working parents, the Treasurer pledged \$4.8 million for 1,500 more full-time subsidized day-care spaces and \$1.2 million in additional subsidies for single parents on social assistance. The "intolerable problem" of family violence, first raised in the 1982 report of the Standing Committee on Social Development, was to receive further redress through a public education campaign and \$3.5 million for

expanded shelter services for battered women and their children.

While pre-budget speculation had indicated tax increases were highly likely, the only immediate charge to tax-payers was a 4.9% increase in Ontario Health Insurance Plan premiums. Water power rental rates for Ontario Hydro were also raised, and adjustments were made to the treatment of bank reserves.

In responding to the budget, the Treasury critic of the Official Opposition, **Patrick Reid**, said it was "based on extremely faulty assumptions and a great deal of quicksand", particularly in its optimistic prediction of 4.7% real growth. He criticized the Treasurer for no longer providing comparative economic data and for showing spending over 3 to 5 years rather than for the current year. In the proposals to deal with youth unemployment, Mr. Reid saw "a plethora of program names but very little else" and a lack of basic information on funding, eligibility criteria and timing.

Mr. Reid attacked the \$2 billion deficit and outlined ways to cut government waste. These included: reducing the 29-member Cabinet by 4 or 5 ministers; eliminating most parliamentary assistants; clipping the wings of the provincial albatross, Suncor; disposing of land banks; and lowering spending on advertising and outside consultants.

The Liberal party critic then went on to propose "about \$200 million in additional stimulation" to promote employment or equity for the tourism industry, small business, Northern Ontarians, women and farmers. In other areas, he censured the Treasurer for reducing the Environment Ministry budget for the second consecutive year; advocated creation of a standing committee on health and health care costs; and called for annual federal-provincial meetings of finance ministers. Before placing his non-confidence motion, Mr. Reid concluded with a prediction that Ontario's deficit would in fact reach \$2.5 to \$2.7 billion in this fiscal year.

Jim Foulds, New Democratic Party Treasury critic, claimed the budget was a political document aimed at an imminent election. It was, he said, "all glitz and no substance", "clever, misleading and manipulative", "creative accounting carried to spectacular heights."

Mr. Foulds focused his reply to the budget on three areas: unemployment; tax reform; and measures to rebuild Ontario's economy. He said that the measures to deal with youth unemployment were last year's programs with jazzier names but few details. He called for retraining and early retirement options for older workers and repeated NDP job security proposals. These included: a layoff fund; a work futures training fund; a shorter work week; limits on overtime and better overtime pay; a finish-high school program; support for private sector training efforts; and a program to combat illiteracy among Ontarians.

Decrying the Treasurer's claim that he avoided tax increases, Mr. Foulds pointed to the increase in OHIP premiums ("that most regressive form of tax") and said the budget will substantially increase property taxes. Furthermore, he declared, "the province will collect nearly twice as much in personal income tax as it did in 1980-81 at the same time that corporate income revenue has gone down."

Inequities in Ontario's tax system, Mr. Foulds said, mean that, "At a family income level of \$15,000 a year, Ontario ranks first in the country in provincial taxes levied. At ... \$25,000, Ontario barely slips to second place... On the other hand, at a family income level of \$100,000 a year, Ontario is the third-lowest taxing province." The NDP critic went on to call for elimination of unfair taxes and better protection for low- and middle-income earners. Specific tax measures were: an unemployment insurance tax credit; a surtax on taxpayers earning over \$40,000; a 10% bank tax on net income of financial institutions, except credit unions; recovery of \$3 billion of deferred corporate taxes on a staged basis; and a 1% payroll tax to fund an early retirement program.

Finally, Mr. Foulds urged "creative use of public investment" to reduce imports, especially through a crown automotive parts investment program, Autocan, and a resource machinery investment program.

Human Rights

Members of the Legislature continued to express their views on international human rights issues, particularly with respect to the Soviet Union and Poland. During the Throne Speech debate, Opposition House

Leader **Robert Nixon** spoke eloquently of his visit to the Soviet Union with the ad hoc Ontario Legislature Committee on Soviet Jewry. The aim of the trip was to hear concerns of the refuseniks, those Soviet citizens who have applied for emigration visas and been refused.

Later in the session, the Legislature adopted resolutions from, NDP Leader Mr Rae, Conservative backbencher **Yuri Shymko**, and Government House Leader **Tom Wells**. Mr Rae's motion dealt with Soviet treatment of Andrei Sakharov, his family and other dissidents; Mr Shymko's with three hunger-strikers seeking exit visas for their families from the Polish government; and Mr Wells' with Soviet imprisonment of Doctors Yuri Orlov and Anatoly Shcharansky.

While individual members from time to time bring forward concerns over human rights violations in other jurisdictions, the legislature has not yet established a formal mechanism to follow up on these concerns. Such a mechanism was recommended in a 1983 Special Report of the Select Committee on the Ombudsman, pursuant to a 1980 resolution of the Legislature. Under the present "ad hoc" arrangements, little or no mention is made of grave human rights abuses and torture in many countries close to Canada, such as in Central or South America.

Privacy and Information Access Bill

On May 24, the government introduced its long-awaited freedom of information legislation, now entitled the *Privacy and Access to Information Act, 1984*. The bill establishes the position of Privacy and Information Commissioner to review Government decisions on release or holding of information. The Commissioner may, upon application by an individual, inspect Government-held documents, subject to specified exemptions, and make recommendations thereon. Exemptions include: cabinet documents as certified by the Clerk of the Executive Council; law enforcement records certified by the Attorney General; any records made before 1 July 1984. The Commissioner must report to the Legislature four times a year outlining cases of recommendations denied. The Act itself is to be reviewed, according to the legislation, by a Select Committee of the Legislature during the first three years.

The minister responsible, **Norm Sterling**, Provincial Secretary for Resources Development, declared that, "as final decisions will rest with the minister and the Legislative Assembly, the bill reaffirms the principle of ministerial accountability." On the same point, Liberal **James Breithaupt** attacked the legislation for "placing an extra padlock on government secrets" and for allowing no redress through judicial review.

Bicentennial

In other developments, the grounds of the Legislature have been embellished with the installation of an illuminated bandshell and 84 permanent flagpoles bearing the Ontario and bicentennial flags. Some people compare the effect to that of Tivoli Gardens.

Douglas Arnott



Northwest Territories

Consideration of a government sessional paper and a bill on official languages in the Northwest Territories were the main items of business before the 24 members of the Legislative Assembly during their six-day session in Fort Smith May 9-16.

The Spring session is traditionally short, rarely exceeding two weeks and when the Assembly goes on the road, focus shifts from business as usual to meeting the people.

That is the whole purpose of 'field sessions' explained Speaker **Don Stewart**, MLA Hay River, as Assembly staff packed up and shipped out hundreds of pounds of furniture, books, files and office supplies to

the community of 3000 people on the west bank of the Slave River, not far from the Alberta-NWT border, about 200 miles south of Yellowknife.

"Taking the government to the people in this far-flung territory is difficult and costly, but still judged worthwhile by members of the Assembly," he said.

Dennis Patterson, speaking on the last day of the Fort Smith session, told his colleagues he and other Baffin MLAs would be inviting the Assembly to hold a session in the Baffin Region sometime over the next four years. "What price in this vast territory can you put on accessible government?" asked Mr. Patterson. "We have to consider the cost but that cannot be the only gauge."

Official Languages

The issue of official bilingualism in the Northwest Territories arose as a result of a traffic ticket case in the Yukon Territory. A Yukon man, **Daniel St. Jean**, challenged a speeding ticket on the grounds that the ticket was printed in English only. Having been convicted in the Territorial Court, Mr. St. Jean appealed to the Supreme Court of the Yukon.

The federal government then introduced Bill C-26 which contained amendments to the *Northwest Territories Act* and the *Yukon Act* making English and French the official languages of both territories.

The proposed amendments to the *Northwest Territories Act* would require all ordinances, regulations or other proclamations to be printed and published in both official languages by January 1, 1988.

The government of the Northwest Territories indicated that it is prepared to provide French language services but that rather than having it imposed from Ottawa, it would develop its own legislation.

Government leader, **Richard Nerysoo** tabled a sessional paper which stressed that in any discussions concerning funding required by the Territories to implement bilingualism, there would have to be a recognition of the North's requirements in the area of funding the development of aboriginal languages.

Following discussion of the sessional paper, Mr. Nerysoo introduced Bill 9-84(2) – *An Ordinance to Recognize and Provide for the use of the Aboriginal Lan-*

languages and Establish the Official Languages of the Northwest Territories. Besides establishing English and French as official languages of the NWT, the Bill would recognize Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Loucheux, North Slavey, South Slavey and Inuktitut as the official aboriginal languages of the Territories.

The bill received first reading, but many members expressed concern about proceeding any further before first consulting their constituents. The Assembly agreed to adjourn the second session, and reconvene again in June for further consideration of the bill.

The final days of the second session were postponed from June 20 to the following week while government leader Richard Nerysoo negotiated with the Secretary of State to support and finance provisions of the language bill which would grant official status to English and French, and recognize aboriginal languages in the NWT.

The package which Mr. Nerysoo put before members of the Legislative Assembly included \$16 million for development and enhancement of aboriginal languages.

Some native members responded with disappointment to the deal Mr. Nerysoo had worked out with the federal government. They wanted to see official status for aboriginal languages, on a par with French and English, and spoke out strongly against the Assembly settling for anything else.

Other members congratulated Mr. Nerysoo for negotiating the best possible deal, given that the federal government was not prepared to go any further towards official status for aboriginal languages. They noted that the money provided would go a long way toward developing and supporting programs to increase the use of native languages, both at home and in government offices.

When every member had had a chance to speak, and the vote was called, only **John T'Seleie**, MLA for Sahtu, voted against passing Bill 9. Commissioner **John Parker** assented to the bill and told members he would be signing into law the first regulations flowing from the official languages bill.

The session was then prorogued until early in November.

Judy Wilson



Quebec

The session resumed on May 1 following the Easter recess. One of the first items on the agenda was the budget at the National Assembly. The total budget for the current year stands at \$46.4 million, of which \$24.8 million is earmarked for the members' service and \$21.6 million for the Assembly's administration.

Events of May 8, 1984

The National Assembly did not sit on May 8, 1984, because of a tragedy in which three staff members were killed. (See the interview with the Sergeant-at-Arms, elsewhere in this issue). On May 9, the Assembly met briefly to extend its deepest sympathy to the families of the victims. The members rose in an ovation to the Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr **René Jalbert**, then adjourned to the following Tuesday for six days of mourning.

A week after the tragic events, the National Assembly resumed work. The security of Assembly members and staff was still a major concern, and a number of measures to control access to the Legislative Building were announced by Speaker **Richard Guay**. The Assembly defeated a

motion by the Opposition to set up a special committee on the security system, preferring to wait for the conclusions of various security studies being carried out by the Quebec provincial police and other authorities consulted by the Speaker.

Speaker Guay requested that the Minister of Justice provide him with recommendations concerning the problem of security at the House. He added: "The Government will be anxious to settle the space problem at the National Assembly in the next few weeks, so that work can begin on the exits to the buildings, one of the basic elements of the electronic security system to be implemented. These measures will not make the Assembly into a fortified camp, but will provide better protection for the employees who work inside. The delicate balance between an open Parliament and the protection of people will thus be maintained."

The Budget Speech

On Tuesday, May 22, **Jacques Parizeau** introduced his eighth budget since taking office as Quebec's Minister of Finance. This budget anticipated expenditures of \$25.6 billion, revenues of \$22.5 billion, a deficit of \$3.2 billion and loans of \$2.1 billion for the 1984-1985 fiscal year.

The Government proposed spending \$311 million on its economic recovery program, including \$64 million in assistance to the construction sector and \$61 million for on-the-job training for welfare recipients. An amount of \$116 million would be added to public sector capital spending, bringing total investments to 1.2 billion.

Mr. Parizeau described his budget as part of an effort to strike a new balance between increasing public spending and improving productivity, and stressed two guiding principles for expenditures: strict management of public funds and top priority for economic recovery.

The Opposition reaction to the budget speech was expressed by its financial critic, **Daniel Johnson**. The traditional debate on the budget speech took up the greater part of the week's deliberations in the National Assembly but, contrary to custom, the debate was interrupted Wednesday after thirteen and one-half hours of discussion. It was carried over to the Administration and Budget Committee

for a further ten hours, starting from the afternoon of Tuesday, June 5. This was in conformity with section 267 of the Assembly's new rules of procedure.

On the morning of Friday, June 1, the Assembly resumed its deliberations according to the timetable for the end of the session. Another precedent was set during this session: a limited debate (two hours) on the nine reports of the standing committees which had examined the 1984-1985 estimates (section 280 of the rules of procedure).

Working within the framework of these new rules, the Assembly adopted the 1984-1985 budget and, on June 6, approved the budgetary policy put forward by Mr. Parizeau.

End of session

The fourth session of the thirty-second legislature ended on June 20, 1984, after 110 days of deliberations since the inaugural message on March 23, 1983.

During this session, the Assembly examined 155 bills, approving a total of 141. The Assembly's Committees convened on 374 occasions to study estimates and bills. There were 100 government bills introduced, six members' bills and forty-nine private bills.

Several controversial bills were shelved during the session including Bill 38 concerning government contributions to municipal financing; Bill 40 concerning teaching in primary and secondary public

schools; and Bill 94, an amendment to Act 43 concerning employees who receive tips. However, six bills dealing with agricultural and fisheries matters were passed. At the end of the session, the Assembly approved legislation making it mandatory for the cities of Montreal, Quebec City and Laval to provide research and secretarial staff budgets for political parties at the municipal level.

At a press conference held the day following the prorogation, the Premier of Quebec, **René Lévesque**, noted that the fifth session, slated to begin in October, could well be the last session of the current legislature. He added that elections may be held in April 1985 if not sooner.

Yvon Theriault

Contributors

Douglas Arnott is Assistant Clerk of the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

Gordon Barnhart is Clerk of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly.

Tim Daus is a Legislative Intern at the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

Gordon Mackintosh is Deputy Clerk of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Gary O'Brien is Director of Committees and Private Legislation Branch, Senate.

Yvon Thériault is with the Indexing and Bibliographic Service of the Legislative Library, Quebec National Assembly.

Judy Wilson is Public Affairs Officer with the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.