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Daily Sitting 34

Wednesday, April 19, 2000.

10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Mr. Richard gave notice of his intention to raise a Question of Privilege concerning impediments being placed in the way of members performing their duties and, in accordance with Standing Rule 9(2), gave notice of his intention to move the following motion, seconded by Mr. C. Thériault:

THAT members are being impeded in the performance of their functions as a consequence of the government treating with contempt Members of this House, and that this issue be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges.

Mr. Blanchard, the member for Campbellton, laid upon the table of the House a petition signed by residents of northwestern New Brunswick demanding the status quo of staff working at Larry's Gulch Lodge and an immediate halt to patronage of the government. (Petition 7)

The following Bills were introduced and read the first time:

By Hon. Mr. Furlong,

Bill 35, *An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act.*

Bill 36, *An Act to Amend the Marriage Act.*

Ordered that the said Bills be read the second time at the next sitting.

Mr. C. Thériault gave Notice of Motion 126 that on Thursday, April 27, 2000, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Blanchard:

WHEREAS there is a national obligation on the part of CBC to provide an acceptable level of broadcasting services to the entire country;

AND WHEREAS there are reports that the CBC is considering cuts in delivery of television and radio services now provided by CBC operations in New Brunswick;

AND WHEREAS there are reports of coming cuts in local CBC broadcasts in a number of areas, including local news coverage and public affairs broadcasting;

AND WHEREAS these services with a New Brunswick flavour may be in jeopardy;

AND WHEREAS moving delivery of these services out of the province would result in a serious deficiency and less opportunity for debate of public issues on programs such as NB Now;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this House urge the President of CBC not to make any cuts in delivery and production of services now being provided in New Brunswick;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House urge the CRTC to examine in detail the need to maintain the CBC presence in New Brunswick and production and delivery of local services.

Mr. Richard gave Notice of Motion 127 that on Thursday, April 27, 2000, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mrs. Mersereau:

That an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House a complete breakdown of all costs associated with the restructuring program announced by this government on March 23, 2000, including all costs related to the following for each department:

1. changes in the letterhead, envelopes, stationery, note pads, transmittal pads, business cards, and signage;
2. changes to web pages and e-mail addresses;

3. changes to the *Government of New Brunswick Telephone Directory*;
4. changes in leasing of premises;
5. moving of employees;

and also the number of hours spent on drafting the necessary changes to the legislation.

Hon. Mr. Green announced that it was the intention of government that following Private Members' Motions, the House would resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to consider the estimates of the Department of Education.

Hon. Mr. Green requested the unanimous consent of the House to deal with the question of privilege raised earlier in the sitting day by the Member for Shédiac-Cap-Pelé, and unanimous consent was denied.

The House, according to Order, resolved itself into a Committee of Supply with Mr. Bernard in the Chair.

And after some time spent therein, Mr. Speaker resumed the chair, and Mr. Bernard, the Chairman, after requesting that Mr. Speaker revert to Presentations of Committee Reports, reported that the Committee had made some progress in the consideration of the matters referred to them and asked leave to sit again.

Pursuant to Standing Rule 78.1, Mr. Speaker then put the question on the motion deemed to be before the House, that the report be concurred in, and it was resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. Speaker invited the Member for Shédiac-Cap-Pelé to state his question of privilege for which the two hours' notice had been given earlier in the sitting.

In stating his question of privilege, Mr. Richard maintained that Members were obstructed or impeded in the discharge of their duties by not being provided with financial details of government restructuring during the estimates process and that these actions, in the words of Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice, 22nd Edition*, should be treated as a contempt since they had a tendency directly or indirectly to obstruct or impede Members in the discharge of their duties, even though there was no precedent for the offence. Further, Mr. Richard maintained that Members had not been provided with information requested in a Standing Committee and through tabling motions.

Mr. Richard also complained that Ministers continued to make announcements outside the House and to provide answers to the media which were not provided to Members of the House during the daily question period.

Hon. Mr. Green spoke on the question of privilege and maintained that the matters as raised had been dealt with in earlier Speaker's rulings and that the Member did not offer any new arguments.

Mr. Speaker declared it to be 12.30 o'clock p.m., and left the Chair, to resume again at 2 o'clock p.m.

2 o'clock p.m.

Due to the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ashfield, the Deputy Speaker took the chair as Acting Speaker.

The House, according to Order, resolved itself into a Committee of Supply with Mr. Bernard in the Chair.

And after some time, Mr. Ashfield took the chair.

And after some further time, the Chairman declared it to be 6 o'clock p.m., and left the Chair to resume again at 7 o'clock p.m.

7 o'clock p.m.

The Committee resumed.

And after some time further time spent therein, Mr. Ashfield, the Acting Speaker, resumed the chair, and Mr. Bernard, the Chairman, after requesting that the Acting Speaker revert to Presentations of Committee Reports, reported that the Committee had made some progress in the consideration of the matters referred to them, had passed several items, and asked leave to sit again.

The following are the items reported:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Resolved, That there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$728,487,000 to defray the expenses of the Ordinary Account program allocations of the Department of Education for the fiscal year ending the 31st of March, 2001.

CAPITAL ACCOUNT

Voted, supply in the following amounts to defray the expenses of the following programs:

Public Schools - Capital Equipment 1,000,000

WORKING CAPITAL - MAXIMUM BALANCES

2000-2001 Voted

WORKING CAPITAL ADVANCES

Education

- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority 350,000

PETTY CASH ADVANCES

Education 100,000

INVENTORIES

Education 2,750,000

The said items were concurred in by the House.

Pursuant to Standing Rule 78.1, Mr. Speaker then put the question on the motion deemed to be before the House, that the report be concurred in, and it was resolved in the affirmative.

And then, 9.30 o'clock p.m., the House adjourned.

The following documents, having been deposited with the Clerk of the House, were deemed laid upon the table of the House pursuant to Standing Rule 39:

Documents requested in Notices of Motions 66 and 101 - April 18, 2000

Document in response to Question directed to Hon. Mrs. Blaney on April 12, 2000 - April 18, 2000