

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**Fourth Session — Fifteenth Legislature**  
**33rd Day**

**Wednesday, March 22, 1967**

The Assembly met at 10:00 o'clock a.m.  
On the Orders of the Day.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONDOLENCES FROM MADAM VANIER.**

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Before the Orders of the Day I have a communication which I wish to read to the Members of the Legislature; it is from Government House, Ottawa, dated 20th of March, 1967:

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I was deeply touched to receive your letter with which you enclosed a true copy of a Resolution of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan which was passed on March 6. Tributes such as this have moved me more than I can say and have been a source of such a great comfort and consolation. I should be grateful if you would convey to the Premier of Saskatchewan and Members of the Legislative Assembly my heartfelt thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Pauline Vanier,  
(Madame George P. Vanier.)

**ANNOUNCEMENT RE: TELEGRAM LOCKAGE FEES ON WELAND CANAL**

**MR. W.E. SMISHEK (Regina East):** — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I would like to bring to the attention of this House a telegram I received the other days. It reads this way:

The imposition of lockage fees on the Welland Canal represents a discriminatory step against Ontario steel producers and this would make the Welland Canal the only North American seaway to bear such charges. Such a step will add substantially to the cost of transporting STELCO raw materials and will considerably weaken the competitive position of the Canadian steel producers on Lake Ontario.

We respectfully urge immediate consideration of the proposal.

Signed by,

V.W. Scully,  
Chairman of the Board of  
Directors of STELCO and

H.M. Griffith,  
President of STELCO.

I also notice, Mr. Speaker, just last week that the Saskatchewan

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Farmers' Union . . .

**HON. W. Ross THATCHER (Premier):** — What's the Hon. Member doing? I suggest he's out of order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I presume he's getting around to launching a question in connection with the increase of tolls in the St. Lawrence Seaway, but I do hope he'll come to the point.

**MR. J.H. BROCKELBANK (Kelsey):** — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, just the other day we had a very long statement from the Premier about cemeteries, which he thought was material and which should be brought to the attention of the Legislature. I think the Member for Regina East is of the opinion that this is important to the Legislature and as long as he isn't too long about it, I think we should let him . . .

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order with respect, I believe traditionally Members have been able to state Government policy on Orders of the Day, but I suggest that the Hon. Member for Regina East had no right whatever to make a statement of this nature.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Going back to the original statements that have been made in this House from time to time by Members of the Government and the rules and regulations in connection with that, the precedents of this House being as follows:

That it would be improper for a Member of the Government, a Cabinet Member, to make a statement outside of the House on a subject which he should make inside the House. He should do it on the Orders of the Day and this is being done. Now after the Member, the Cabinet Minister, has made his statement in regard to Government policy, whatever he thinks is important, by courtesy some Member of the Opposition has been accorded a right to comment thereon. Now that is the framework of that procedure.

Now we have a Member who wishes to bring another subject to the attention of the House, and I would presume that he was doing so in such a way as to launch a question. If he is not doing it that way, then he is out of order. If he's going to launch a question, I draw the attention of the House to the fact, again and again as I have done, that oral questions are questions considered by courtesy in this House. We have no framework of such. If this is true, and the Member has a question which he wishes to ask, and may I also go a little further and say that if this question is of importance, probably the correct way to do it would be by Resolution. But if he has question which he wishes to ask based on the statement that he makes, then I shall allow him to ask it, but I would suggest that he cannot make a speech when he's doing so.

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Mr. Speaker, I wasn't making a speech, I read a telegram and precisely the thing I want to do is direct a question to the Government.

**HON. D.T. McFARLANE (Minister of Agriculture):** — On a point of order, I ask who the telegram was directed

to or who was it sent to?

**MR. SMISHEK:** — It was sent to me, Mr. Speaker, and I said so. Now the question that I have is whether the Government . . .

**MR. THATCHER:** — If they wanted any action, why would they send it to you?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Mr. Speaker, if the Members were listening, I have read the names of people that sent the telegram. They are the President of STELCO, Steel Company of Canada Limited of Hamilton and the Chairman of the Board of Directors. Now I can't answer why they sent a telegram to me. I'm only bringing to the attention of the House that I received the telegram I read. Now what I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, is whether the Government is making an representation to the Federal Government, the Minister of Transport and to the Seaway Authority protesting the imposition of lockage fees, because I also notice that the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool have made representations to the Government. I'm wondering whether the Government is joining these organizations to oppose the imposition of lockage fees?

**MR. THATCHER:** — It is under consideration.

**MR. McFARLANE:** — Mr. Speaker, could we have the telegram tabled in the Legislature?

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Yes, I'll be glad to table it.

**MR. R.A. WALKER (Hanley):** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say with respect to the point of order which your Honour has apparently ruled that Ministers of the Government in this House are permitted to make statements of a political nature, whether they are controversial or not, that for my part, I want to dissent from that ruling. There is no such tradition even though it appears to come up. There's no such tradition.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, I shall make this ruling thoroughly clear. I shall do so when the House sits next time and I shall do it for the record with a written rule. I shall draw on the precedents of the House both when this Government was in office and when the other Governments were in office. I repeat once more what I said previously that when this House is in session the proper place for Government Ministers of the Crown to make their announcements in regard to Government policy is in the House on the Orders of the Day. I ask where else should they be made? I'll bring the written ruling in later on this day.

### **REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

Mr. J.H. BROCKELBANK (Kelsey) moved, seconded by Mr. W.S. Howes (Kerrobert-Kindersley), **that the Second Report of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing be concurred in.**

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He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to move concurrence in the report of the Committee on Public Accounts and Printing which was tabled in the House yesterday. And I want to draw to the attention of the House that this is of course only the motion for concurrence and that we are ploughing some new ground in this Committee. The Members will see in the report that they now have on their desks that this is so. It should be considered carefully, it was just available to the Members this morning when they came into the House, so I think, if there is any feeling that there should be some time taken, there will simply be no objection on my part or anybody's part for that matter, if some Member of the House should want to adjourn the debate on this until they can study the report more fully.

But I do want to go a little bit into the history of this effort of ours in changing the constitution and procedures in the Public Accounts Committee. The first effort was made in 1961 when Mr. Eldon Johnson introduced a Resolution in the House that provided for the setting up of a Select Committee of the House to study the procedures of the Public Accounts Committee. At that time, Mr. Speaker, there was so much opposition to the idea that the matter was dropped and the motion was withdrawn. But the idea did not stop there. Mr. Johnson who was then the Member for Kindersley continued to study this. He had conversations with the officials in the Treasury Department and I believe he had conversations with some of the Members in the Opposition at that time, particularly Mr. A.H. McDonald, now Senator McDonald.

The result was that in the session of 1963, Mr. Johnson again introduced this motion and a special Committee on Public Accounts procedures was set up. Mr. Eldon Johnson was appointed the Chairman of that Committee and the members of that Committee, the present Premier was a member, Mr. Thiessen, the Member for Shelbrook, Mr. Berezowsky was a member, the Hon. Minister of Public Works (Mr. Gardiner), Mrs. Strum, Member for Saskatoon and Mr. McDonald and myself.

We had a very interesting time on that Committee and I must pay some tribute to the staff who helped us with the work. First of all, our Clerk, Mr. Koester, was Secretary of the Committee and was of the greatest assistance in studying the procedures and getting information for the Committee. In addition to that, the Committee had Mr. Ned Franks who was then working in the Budget Bureau and now is working at Ottawa. Mr. Franks worked to a certain extent under the direction of Professor Norman Ward of the University of Saskatchewan. Professor Ward has written a number of books and one of them is a book on the question of public accounts. Others that were very helpful were Mr. A.W. Johnson who was Deputy Provincial Treasurer at that time and was very keen on seeing some reform made. Mr. Allan Kerr who was and is Comptroller of the Treasury was also very helpful on the Committee. Our Provincial Auditor, Mr. Smith, had some doubts about the advisability of changing the form of the Committee, but he did give his finest co-operation and there's a great deal of credit due to him and to all of the others for the help they gave to this Committee.

This Committee reported to the Legislature on February 13, 1964 and the Members have available to them this report. I just want to refer to one quotation in this report at the present time and that is the recommendations: First that an independent

Legislative Auditor responsible to the Assembly be appointed — of course our Provincial Auditor is responsible to the Assembly. He is appointed by the Government but he can only be dismissed by the Legislature so that he is in truth responsible to the Legislature — and his duties be changed. He gives up the pre-audit and only does a post-audit and reports to the Legislature on that post-audit. It was recommended that the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee be a Member of the Opposition and it was recommended that permanent heads of the departments will be called as principal witnesses. It was recommended that the meetings of the Public Accounts Committee be held in camera. It was recommended that an official verbatim report of the proceedings of the Committee be maintained and submitted to the Legislature and that has been done this morning. It was recommended that the Committee be small, not more than 11 members.

Those were some of the recommendations made by this special Committee in February 1964. The report when it was submitted to the House in 1964 was not debated, but in 1965, Mr. A.H. McDonald, now Senator McDonald, introduced a motion in the House and that motion was as follows:

That this Assembly endorses the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee on Public Accounts Procedures tabled in this Assembly as Sessional Paper No. 41 of 1964 and requests the Government to give consideration to the early implementation of the recommendations.

I want to make special mention of two people that deserve a great deal of credit for the progress that has been made in regard to the Public Accounts Committee, one is Eldon Johnson who initiated it and the other who supported it from the Opposition benches of that day, Mr. A.H. McDonald. Later he supported it when he was in the Government, and without these two and the work that they did, I certainly would not be reporting as I am here today.

Consequently the Committee at this session was appointed after steps had been taken by the Government. There was an amendment to The Treasury Department Act, there were administrative changes necessary before the change could be done, but we have at this session a Committee of 11 members. There are six members of the Government party and five members of the Opposition which of course is quite a close number. I have the honour to be the chairman of that Committee, and Mr. Howes is vice-chairman.

I want also to pay my compliments to the members of this Committee. We were doing something altogether different. The old Public Accounts Committee, as everyone knows, was pretty well only a political forum. According to how it was operated, if any line of enquiries started, the natural tendency was for the Government Members to take steps to block that line of enquiry as soon as they could. This wasn't done by just one Government, but by every Government that has been in office in Saskatchewan since I've been around. The result was you had political sparring, but you never really did a job at all of seriously looking at the Public Accounts or perhaps I should say you rarely did a serious job of looking at the Public Accounts.

Now to transfer Members of the Legislature, people who are politicians and are just as strong in their views as they were

before, from that kind of an atmosphere to the new Committee with the results that we have had, I think is an achievement and the members of the Committee deserve some credit for it. The members of this Committee that sat this winter were obviously on guard as they were watching how this would go. Undoubtedly, Mr. Speaker, they were ready to go into political battle any time it was necessary. But during the sessions of this Committee, there actually never was one political spitball thrown if you throw spitballs. The Committee paid attention to its work of looking at the auditor's report, of studying the Public Accounts, of interviewing the representatives of the departments.

Having a Committee that just had a majority of one on it for the Government introduced some problems too. Two of the members of the Committee are Ministers and I should probably pay a special tribute to them, because Ministers are more inclined to be on the defensive about the Government, but it is a compliment to these two Ministers that they acted like good private Members of the Legislature.

We arrived at an understanding in the Committee. The understanding was that we wouldn't take votes in the Committee when any Member of the Committee was absent unless we had the unanimous consent of the Committee to take the vote. Now this protected the situation from votes just because somebody was absent for obviously Ministers and sometimes others had to be absent. This worked out very well.

All though the meetings of the Committee we got the finest of co-operation and help from the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Claire Smith, and two of the Members of his staff also attended most of our meetings. The Comptroller of the Treasury, Mr. Kerr, attended all of the meetings and the Deputy Provincial Treasurer attended most meetings as well. Certainly for their full co-operation and the co-operation of others including the Deputy Ministers and their officers of the Departments we wish to express our thanks.

Now I would like to deal for a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, if I may, with the report itself which is today published in the Votes and Proceedings. I'm not going to deal with all of the points in the report, but there are some I want to mention and I would like to call your attention first of all to paragraph 4 of the report. And it reads:

Your Committee is of the opinion that its principal duties are first to determine if all expenditures have been made in accordance with the law and secondly, in so far as possible to determine if they were made prudently and honestly.

And this did turn out to be the general tone and direction of the work of the Committee, this is what we worked at. Well the Committee considered two things in particular here, one the form and content of the Public Accounts and secondly the constitution of the Committee itself. Dealing with the Committee first, the Committee has concluded that its duties could be performed much more effectively if it were appointed for the duration of the Legislature and if it had power to sit between sessions. The Committee, therefore, recommends that at this session the Committee be appointed for the duration of this Legislature and that consideration be given to authorizing the Committee to hold meetings when the Legislature is not in session to enable your Committee to consider the Public Accounts and the

Provincial Auditor's report when and if these documents are available prior to the opening of the next regular session.

Now if we are going to have a Committee meet between sessions of course it is pretty well essential that the Committee be appointed not for the session but for the life of the Legislature. But there is another very good reason indeed for appointing the Committee for the life of the Legislature. That is so that they will get experience. The system of Government accounting isn't so simple that one doesn't need some experience. We will get a good deal more work if Members are at this — they should be selected Members who will take an interest in it — are at it for a few years at a time. Then there is another reason too. This Committee, when it makes its report, will expect some action to be taken on the basis of that report and when action is not taken will expect to hear the reasons why. Therefore, it is desirable to have continuity on this Committee when Treasury reports back. Now I don't think this would mean a lot of meetings in between sessions, but the Public Accounts and the auditor's report are usually available late in the calendar year, in December. If this were so, then the Committee could probably put in a week at meetings, get this out of the road so as we wouldn't have to have so many meetings during the session. But anyway we didn't have enough time to do all the work we would have liked. So I urge on the Legislature the importance of making the Committee for the life of the Legislature, so that, if this Legislature has another session next winter, this Committee will be able to go to work in December or January for a few days.

The next thing we turned our attention to was the form of the Public Accounts. Everyone knows of course that this volume of Public Accounts is a pretty formidable affair. It is a very big and heavy volume and so we looked at it with the idea of getting out of the Public Accounts items of which were supposed to be information, which were of no interest and no particular value or information which could be easily obtained otherwise. So we make some very definite recommendations. If you will follow your report you will see in paragraph 5, sub-paragraph 1, we suggest that a lot of the detailed reporting by sub-vote be eliminated. For those Members of the Legislature who may or may not understand the votes and sub-votes, each department usually has one vote: some departments like Agriculture have two, an ordinary vote and a capital vote. But when I speak of a vote I'm speaking usually of all the estimates of an ordinary department.

Now, I won't read all of these recommendations, I think they can be understood quite easily but some of the ones that are most far reaching, for example, in sub-clause 3, that a single listing of payees and amounts except grants be provided for each department. This would be the end of that section of the Public Accounts for that particular Department rather than the present practice of reporting payees by sub-votes. These long lists of payees, most of them of no concern to Members of the Legislature could be put in one alphabetical list for anybody who does want to refer to them. They would then be easier to find than having to look in about ten, twenty or thirty places throughout the accounts of that department. Then in preparing these lists of payees, we suggest that the employees' salaries, services, gratuities and travelling expenses be one class and other payments another. We also suggest that in the employee list only individuals receiving \$4,000 or more, and this does not include day labor which would be reported in a group total, but the regular

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employees receiving \$4,000 or more in a year would show in this list.

The others would show in a bulk figure "other employees" and it would give the number of them and the total amount paid to them so that there would be nothing to prevent any Member of the Legislature asking about any other employee. Most Members of the Legislature, I think, are as Members interested in the senior employees, what they are doing, their qualifications and this sort of thing and are not interested in the junior employees which receive less than \$4,000. Then we say only travelling expenses of the people in this list that are more than \$300 should be shown.

In respect of other payments this would be another list for the whole department, not for each sub-vote or sub sub-vote, only those payees receiving total payments aggregating \$1,000 or more would be shown.

And one other recommendation we make in regard to school grants. At the present time the Public Accounts shows one huge item for school grants at \$45,000,000 or \$50,000,000 or whatever it may be, and we suggest that this be broken down and every grant shown, every recipient of a grant be shown. Now that will only be a relatively short list of two or three pages, but this is the kind of information that I think Members of the Legislature want to have.

Now other grants continue to be reported in alphabetical lists under each sub-vote as at present, with these provisions that under The Family Farm Improvement Act, grants of \$300 or less be not shown individually. Three hundred dollars is the maximum standard grant under The Family Farm Improvement Act, and I don't think we want to read over pages and pages of lists of names receiving up to \$300, but any that receive more than that standard grant should show in the list, the others would be bulk. Now if the rules change with regard to the size of these grants, and this would be other than school grants and other than Family Farm Improvement Act grants will be shown only when they are in the amount of \$100 or more. This will take in practically all grants, but it will cut out a few of the very small ones.

At the head of each sub-vote in the Public Accounts — and this would be the same classification as is shown in our Estimates — we would show there as we do now the total figures spent, for example, under administration; but we would also show the amount that was voted in the regular Estimates and in Supplementaries for administration so that when you opened your Public Accounts you would have there the figures to indicate to you whether that was overspent or underspent. This I think would be very useful to Members of the Legislature.

Now, all of these changes in the Public Accounts will reduce the size of this volume by one-third maybe more than one-third, maybe by one-half. Everybody would agree it would be a very good thing indeed.

Now, in the Auditor's report, there were certain things mentioned and we made some recommendations in regard to these. And this is all set out in the report. In paragraph 6 of the report quotes "The auditor who points out that a large some of money,



\$96,000 was paid to hospital boards without evidence of construction having been completed".

Now, all the Committee says about that is, "Your Committee is of the opinion that it is not good practice to pay conditional grants before the conditions have been met". This is just common sense. You just don't pay before the work is done. The Committee was really very moderate I think in its recommendations too. We do hope and expect those recommendations will get some attention.

It's pointed out in our report that there is a very large sum of \$739,000 that was paid out as grants to hospitals and health centres. This was an over-expenditure and nowhere was it voted for this purpose, but it was made available by the practice of "virement" which is an ancient practice. The Provincial Treasurer has the authority to transfer unspent funds in one part of a vote to be spent in another part of that same vote. Members can easily see that this is certainly to some extent changing the direction of expenditures which were authorized by the Legislature. I might mention here that this Committee was always conscious of the rights and privileges of the Members of the Legislature and conscious of having their wishes followed. Now, we recommend that this just needs further consideration but we didn't have time to go into it the way we would like to.

Another case is where there is \$300,000 voted for the University Hospital Board and \$700,000 for the Board of Governors of the South Saskatchewan Hospital Centre, and paid to suspense accounts. We say in our report, "Our Committee does not question the purpose of these payments, but it is of the opinion that the procedures adopted in making these payments result, not in a completed transaction to a payee, but in a mere transfer of funds from one account to another, both of which remain under the control of the Government." Now, this is the kind of thing, I think, that deserves attention.

We considered the whole question of using Supplementary Estimates. When I was Provincial Treasurer I certainly brought in Supplementary Estimates which had the effect of using up substantial surpluses of money for good purposes and the present Government has done the same thing. We recommend that it is very important that, when this is done, the words in the Estimates and in the Appropriation Act make it very clear what the Legislature is voting, what authority they are giving.

We discussed the whole question of discretion of the Treasury in regard to revenue. At the present time the profits of the Liquor Board are not paid into the Government except on request of the Provincial Treasurer. This means of course that there could be \$10,000,000 or \$20,000,000 of liquor profits left and not taken into revenue in any particular year. There's some degree of flexibility in regard to the Government Finance Office, so that changes can be made in the revenue which appears on the record. Your Committee wasn't prepared to make any definite recommendations, but this is one that needs further consideration.

These were the recommendations we made in regard to the procedures that have been followed and they are only made by the Committee with the idea of developing the best systems of handling our finances in the province, systems which will not put the governments in a straight jacket and which wouldn't tie them up, but which will allow them some flexibility, but at the same time

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which will keep the control in the hands of the Legislature is regard to the main principles of expenditure.

The work of this Committee cannot be good unless we have sufficient competent staff and we have in our Provincial Auditor and his assistants very competent people. But the Provincial Auditor must have enough staff, enough competent staff to examine properly the accounts of the Province. They are short-staffed now and the Committee recommends that prompt and favourable consideration be given to any request of the Provincial Auditor for two or three additional competent and experienced employees.

One other thing we recommended in regard to the Provincial Auditor. Since the Provincial Auditor now works for the Legislature, he is in a little different position. He does get advice from the Attorney General's Department but the Attorney General also advises the other departments of government. In fact, he advises the Comptroller of the Treasury Department, so you could have a situation where you had the one solicitor, the Attorney General, advising clients on both sides of a question. You would have a conflict of interest, so we would recommend that the Provincial Auditor should have the authority whenever he considers it advisable to engage an independent solicitor to get opinions on questions that come up.

We also recommend that existing Treasury Board regulations — and every Provincial Treasurer that has been in office in Saskatchewan for the last 20 years did blush a little at this one — need sorting out and bring up to date. I don't think any of the Provincial Treasurers that have been in office recently know very much about them. This is going to take some time, but it is a job that needs doing, because these regulations are the guide for the departments and for the other officials in regard to financial affairs. We didn't have enough time — that's one of the reasons why we recommend meetings between sessions. But those are some of the main recommendations that the Committee makes to the Legislature.

Speaking not for the Committee, because I didn't take it up with them, but for myself, I think that in this Legislature we are developing a committee system which involves some more work for staff and I think this is a good thing. I think we should develop a committee system. But one of the results of this is that we tend to overwork our Clerk and our Clerk's office. So in addition to favourable consideration for the staff of the Provincial Auditor, I think there should be some careful consideration given to necessary staff for the Clerk's Office because without the help of staff, the Committee is just pretty well hopeless and can't achieve very much. So it is important that our Clerk's office be sufficiently staffed, so that it will be competent to help the people in the Legislature and working in the committees. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the Treasury will pay some attention because this is where we look for action in regard to this report. I want to just quote a small bit from the report of the Special Committee and it says one of the recommendations of the Special Committee of 1963 and 1964 is: "That the Treasury implement or see to the implementation of recommendations or state in writing its reasons for not adopting such recommendations: the Treasury to report in either case at the next session, and the Public Accounts Committee to review at each session its earlier recommendations and the Treasury's report there."

And one more quotation from this report of the Special Account on Public Accounts proceedings:

The influence of both the British and Canadian committees is to a large extent a product of the reporting and follow-up procedures they have developed. In Britain the Treasury, as the central control agency of the Government, reports back to the Public Accounts Committee on each of its recommendations. The Treasury's report which is the first business of the Committee each year is either to say the recommendation has been implemented or that the Committee should consider further evidence and arguments and perhaps change its recommendations.

So that the success of the Committee in the future is going to depend not only on the members of the Committee and their experience and how they work, but on the co-operation from Treasury and the assistance of the Provincial Auditor and the assistance of the Clerk.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. W.S. HOWES (Kerrobot-Kindersley):** — Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I second the adoption of this Committee Report. I feel that the Public Accounts Committee in its new form has got off to a good start and I look forward in the years ahead to a good and active Committee. It's hard to follow the Member from Kelsey (Mr. Brockelbank) since he has covered the adoption of our report so well, so my remarks will be brief. If I cover some of the same ground as he did I hope the House will bear with me. Any innovation, such as this Committee in its new form, is approached with a measure of foreboding since uncharted waters are being navigated, and I think I can speak for all Members of the Committee when I say that our Chairman, the Hon. Member from Kelsey has started the Committee on the right road, because of the manner in which he handled the Committee and the procedure he has suggested to us. There is no question if the procedure he suggested is followed the Committee will accomplish much in the years ahead.

The Hon. Member when he first took his seat as Chairman, advised us that it was his first time in twenty-nine years in this House that he had ever acted as Chairman of a Committee, and I must say that for the first-time effort you would think he had done it for all twenty-nine years.

I would also at this time like to compliment one member of the Committee, and that is my seat-mate (Mr. MacFarlane). We had his Department before us and I think it must be very difficult for a Minister in the new form to sit quietly where questions are asked of his Department. The Minister was very good.

The Committee with its present form and with the absence of strong political overtones is now able to discuss and learn what is going on, without becoming a political forum as the Member mentioned.

I found personally that I acquired more knowledge of government finance in the few meetings we held than I had since I have been a Member of this House, and I think all other Members of

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the Committee would agree with this with the possible exception of the Ministers and former Ministers.

Our recommendations are not earth-shaking and perhaps they cannot all be implemented, but I do commend them to this House. We tried to cover only a few points, and there is no question that many others are deserving long and careful study. We felt, however, that this Committee, just being born this Session, had to learn how to walk, before it started to run.

One of the recommendations made has to do with the term of office of our Committee. I feel that in view of what I have said previously that the whole subject of Public Accounts is so vast that no Member can come on to this Committee and in one session acquire sufficient knowledge to do a job. It seems to me that the accumulation of knowledge over several sessions would enhance the value of the Committee and enable it to perform its responsibilities to this House, in a far more adequate manner and enable its members to do a much better job.

I realize that possibly some change in Standing Orders would be required, but I do feel very strongly that the end would be well worth the effort to make these changes, and I would recommend this portion of the report most highly.

From the point of view of a private member I would especially recommend to the Government and to the Treasury the suggestion regarding the form of Public Accounts. If these suggestions could be carried out, Public Accounts would become more meaningful to Members. They could be much shorter and this alone might encourage a wider reading of them. Also information of value could be secured much more quickly and this I think is what we all desire.

Another item of the report that I would like to mention at this time is with regard to the remark that the text of the appropriation is made clear in all cases and what authority is being asked of the Legislature will be made clear. You will find this under paragraph 9. I think it should be pointed out that, if the text is included in the Estimates, that text is carried forward in the Appropriation Act. The action then has full legislative authority and the Legislature is aware of what it is doing.

This policy was followed with regard to the \$750,000 appropriation to the South Base Hospital in the current Estimates and I think we on the Committee would all like to see this continued. Of course the whole matter would not then be subject to some of the controversy that now takes place.

I would also commend the suggestion regarding increased staff for the Legislative Auditor. The question of this increased staff is one that is covered in the report to some extent, and I do not feel that it deserves too much further elaboration on my part. But it is obvious that a good job cannot be done with only five men to cover the terrific expenditures that are being made and will continue to be made in view of the expanding services that are being provided and desired by our people.

Another matter I would like to mention is the co-operation we received from the various civil servants. They were most helpful and without the help they gave, our job would have been much more difficult if not impossible. It must be recognized also they did not know what they faced. I think over the years

they will like the present format much better than the old, and a better understanding will exist between them and ourselves as Members.

I could talk for a considerable length of time on this subject, but we do have a time problem. I would in conclusion like to say again I take great pleasure in seconding the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. W.S. LLOYD (Leader of the Opposition):** — Mr. Speaker, I think all of the Members of the Legislature are indebted to the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the very complete and very worthwhile statements which they have made with respect to this first meeting of the Committee. I think we are particularly indebted to the Chairman of the Committee for his description of the history and the purpose of the change. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I think this should almost be required reading for all Members of Legislature. Mr. Speaker, all of us are aware that the printed text of the report which has interested all of us just came on our desks this morning. I think it would be setting an unfortunate precedent, if we were to pass this without having it left on the desk for a day or so and Members have a chance to read it. Therefore, I would ask leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### WELCOME TO STUDENTS

**MRS. M.A. HUNT (Regina West):** — Mr. Speaker, is this the point where I welcome students? I would like to call the attention of the Members present to a group of students from Argyle School, Regina. They are in the Speaker's gallery, a very fine group of students. Unfortunately, I didn't get the name of their teacher but we do welcome them here very sincerely and I hope they will enjoy their afternoon and we hope that we will see them again another year visiting the Legislature.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. G.B. GRANT (Regina South):** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the Member from Regina West (Mrs. Hunt) in welcoming those students from Argyle School the grade seven class under the direction of Mrs. Beeson and a parent Mrs. Saltzman is also with them. They have had a tour of the Building and they have had a fairly long wait for this session to open, so I do hope they enjoy it.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. W.A. ROBBINS (Saskatoon City):** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a word of welcome to two schools from Saskatoon and I am not sure where they are seated, but I think Haultain School is in the east gallery and Lorne Hazelton School is in the Speaker's gallery, or it might be the other way around. But in any event I am sure that every Member of this Assembly will join with me in wishing them an enjoyable visit this afternoon and a safe journey home.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

### STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

He said: Earlier this day a point of order arose upon a lengthy statement made by a Member as a preamble to an oral question, and in regard thereto I would again refer all Honourable Members to a statement regarding oral questions which appears in the Debates and Proceedings for December 8, 1966.

A further point of order was then raised by the Member for Hanley as to whether or not a Cabinet Minister could make a statement concerning Government policy upon the Orders of the Day being called.

I would draw your attention to Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, Citation 91, sub-section (1). I quote in part as follows:

When a minister makes a statement on government policy or ministerial administration, either under routine proceedings, between two orders of the day or shortly before adjournment of the House, it is now firmly established that the Leader of the Opposition or the Chiefs of recognized groups are entitled to ask explanations and make a few remarks, but no debate is then allowed under any Standing Order.

And sub-section (2):

General arguments or observations beyond the fair bounds of explanation or too distinct a reference to previous debates are out of order; . . .

It has long been the established practice of this Legislature for ministerial statements to be made upon the Orders of the Day, and it is traditional that Cabinet Ministers should, as a courtesy to the House, if the House is in session, make any major policy statement or announcement in the House, prior to announcing the same outside of the House. Each of such statements should be brief, factual and specific.

It has further been an established practice of the House to allow by courtesy, a brief, strictly relevant comment to be made thereon by the Leader of the Opposition or some other senior Member, but it must be understood that a debate cannot take place, no motion being before the House.

Nor is this any limitation on the right of free speech for if a debate be desired, it can be achieved by means of a resolution after due notice given. Moreover, if a Member considers the matter to be one of great urgency not allowing for due process of notice, a motion for the adjournment of the House to discuss a special subject under Standing Order No. 20 could be employed to achieve an immediate debate, and in either case every Member would then be able to exercise his right to participate.

**HON. W.S. LLOYD (Leader of the Opposition):** — There are a few comments for clarification that I think could be made on this. I don't know if you now wish us to proceed at this time or not. My only comment, Mr. Speaker, is this, that I have no objection to or argument with the statement and the procedure which you have outlined. I agree entirely and

particularly with the suggestion that statements of policy to be made by the Members of the Government should be made to the Legislature first rather than outside. I think the difficulty which does arise at times is when the statements of policy are elaborated on and become in part statements of politics rather than policy. I don't know how Your Honour can control this. I would say it's something that does need to be guarded against and I submit that it's not always been as closely observed as possible. Statements of policy yes, but political arguments supporting these, no, and I think that this is the context of Your Honour's statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Yes, that is the context of this statement, but what the House is going to allow by courtesy or toleration I have no means of knowing. This is a decision the House is going to have to make when it comes to it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — What?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, I don't want to cut off further comments, that's all.

**MR. LLOYD:** — I simply want to rise. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Steuart) indicated to me earlier today that he'd hoped to make a statement of the situation of the House meeting or not meeting on Saturday. Could we have some clarification as to the Government's intentions.

**HON. D.V. HEALD (Attorney General):** — I would draw the Hon. Leader of the Opposition's attention to the Votes and Proceedings of yesterday, when the House Leader (Mr. Steuart) gave notice that he would Thursday next move that when this House adjourns on Thursday, March 23, 1967, it do stand adjourned until Monday March 27.

At 5:34 o'clock p.m. Mr. Speaker adjourned the Assembly without question put, pursuant to Standing Order 5(2).

The Assembly adjourned at 5:34 o'clock p.m.