

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session — Eighteenth Legislature
28th Day

Wednesday, April 21, 1976.

The Assembly met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.
On the Orders of the Day.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS & MR. J. H. BROCKELBANK

Hon. W. E. Smishek (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to Members of the Legislature a group of visitors and guests who are with us this afternoon. They are behind the rail and they are brought here by Lori Phipps and Mr. Rick Bell of the Saskatchewan Council for Crippled Children and Adults. They are involved in a vocational program and we would extend to them a warm welcome to the Legislature and express the hope that their visit with us will be a pleasant experience. It is my hope that I will be able to meet with them later in the afternoon. I do extend to them a warm welcome, Mr. Speaker.

At the same time I would also like to bring to the attention of the Members that we have a person who comes to see us every once in awhile, Mr. J.H. Brockelbank, father of our Speaker, at one time occupying a number of Cabinet positions in the Government for a good number of years and to him a warm welcome as well.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO ALLEN FAMILY & GUESTS FROM MANITOBA

Mr. B. Allen (Regina Rosemont): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the House this afternoon three distinguished guests from the Province of Manitoba. Mrs. Ruth Porter of Cypress River, Manitoba, Mrs. Mary Diehl of Glenboro, Manitoba and Mrs. Irene Diehl of Souris, Manitoba. They are accompanied here today by their sister, Mrs. Manfred Yeo of Regina and Carol and Michael Allen, also of Regina.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allen: — I would like to welcome them to our province and to our city and particularly to the Legislature this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. R. A. Larter (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, through you I would also like to welcome these distinguished people from Manitoba. From what the Hon. Member for Regina Rosemont tells me they are real good Tories, so a special welcome to them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF CONDUCTOR OF SASKATOON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, Sir, and to the Members of the Assembly, a very distinguished visitor and guest and I hope a full time resident of the Province of Saskatchewan in the person of the first full-time music director and conductor of the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. He is sitting in the Speaker's Gallery, Maestro Gurevich. I will ask him just to stand briefly, Maestro please.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — The Maestro's appointment is effective March 1st, 1976. Now you will appreciate that as House Leader I have a great affinity with Maestro Gurevich, as we both have a sort of similar objective. Me trying to orchestrate the functions of this House and he to orchestrate the Saskatoon Symphony. But as the Member for Lakeview points out the Maestro has a better record than I have in this Legislature, that is for sure.

Just very briefly, Mr. Speaker, our newcomer and full-time director is a native of South America who began music training in Uruguay and studied in various leading United States' universities and played with the Uruguay National Orchestra as a professional violinist. Upon coming to Canada, he became the assistant director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and while in Winnipeg he was also the music director and conductor of the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra. There were many applicants for the position of musical director, very many indeed and I think it can be safely said that in Saskatoon and in Saskatchewan we have here one of the most highly qualified conductors in Canada.

I should conclude by saying that Maestro Gurevich also has recently become a Canadian citizen, something that he is very proud of and we are all very happy for him. So I welcome him to the Legislature and to the Province of Saskatchewan on behalf of all of us.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS — HAGEN, SASK.

Mr. A. Thibault (Kinistino): — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce two people from Hagen, Saskatchewan, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Reine. They are sitting in the Speaker's Gallery. Mr. Reine has taken many trophies in skiing and even at the age he is now, he is pretty good at it. I wish them an educational stay here and a safe journey home.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Investigation Into Leak of Confidential Documents

Mr. E. F. A. Merchant (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should

like to direct a question to the Hon. the Minister of Finance further to one of his replies yesterday. The Minister indicated that an investigation is being conducted in the Department of Finance into the leak of confidential documents and that that investigation was begun on the 8th of April. I assume that by now an interim report has been received and I wonder if the Minister would indicate what the nature of the interim report is at this point?

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, as I recall it, the question was raised on the evening of the 8th and I asked my officials to make some checks on the date following, on the 9th, if my memory serves me correctly. I haven't looked at yesterday's report. I have not received an interim report so far.

Mr. Merchant: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I take it then the Minister of Finance is saying that you have received not a formal report as such but you have had information back from the people conducting the investigations into the nature of the leak and how it is possible that documents would be leaked from the Budget Bureau or other areas of the Department of Finance?

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, I can report this, I had a further discussion with my Deputy on the checking that is going on, but there is really nothing that I can report at the moment that would be of useful information to the Members of the House.

Mr. Merchant: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If the person who apparently leaked documents to an Hon. Member in this House is caught would that person be dismissed? Is it the view of the Government that this is a matter for which dismissal would be in order? Dismissal for cause?

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, at the moment that is a hypothetical question. I would consider if it was someone within the public service who is leaking that kind of information, I would consider it to be a very serious matter but what action would be taken I am not sure right now. There is also the whole question of secrecy depending at what level the official might be. We would have to review all this once we had all the information.

Grants to Farmers' Union for Educational Purposes

Mr. L. W. Birkbeck (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, in consideration of the Minister of Agriculture's reply yesterday to the question from the Member for Rosetown-Elrose (Mr. Bailey), I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Education but I see he isn't in the House, so I will direct the question to the Premier. Has your Department made a grant or grants to the Farmers' Union in 1975-76 for educational purposes?

Hon. A. E. Blakeney (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I will take that as notice and ask my colleague to answer.

Minister Approached for Copies of Budget Speech

Mr. D. G. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition): — A question to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday I may not have made myself clear in asking the question, I did not get an answer. I was dealing not with an allegation but with a fact. Would the Minister now tell this House did he or did he not, was he or was he not, approached by two Members of the Conservative Party, Members of this Legislative Assembly to obtain advance copies of the Budget Speech before he brought it into this House and was he or was he not offered something . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Next question.

Use of Shredders to Destroy Confidential Documents

Mr. Merchant: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might direct a question to the Premier as a follow-up to one of the questions that he answered yesterday. The Premier yesterday made some mention of shredders within the Government. Would the Premier indicate what the procedure is for the gathering of confidential documents and the procedure for the use of shredders to destroy confidential documents?

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Next question.

Leak of Confidential Documents

Mr. S. Cameron (Regina South): — A question then of the Premier. On learning Mr. Premier, of the fact that a Member or Members of the Legislature got a copy of the Budget in advance did you discuss the matter with the Attorney General to determine whether or not an offence or an attempted offence may have been involved?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I discussed the subject matter of the comments made in the Legislature in the Committee of Finance with the Minister of Finance. Subsequently there were some conversations with my colleagues including the Attorney General. I did not discuss it with the Attorney General in the sense of suggesting that this appeared to be a matter which required immediate action on his part in his capacity as Attorney General.

Mr. Cameron: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Premier would indicate when he had the discussions with the Attorney General and what the nature of those discussions were?

Mr. Blakeney: — No, I don't think I will. I think my discussions with my colleagues are a matter for me and my colleagues and I think there's no point in my giving a blow by blow description of any discussion I may have had with my colleagues.

Mr. Cameron: — Supplementary. May I simply ask you then, Mr. Premier, did you ask of the Attorney General his view on whether or not an offence or an attempt at an offence may have been involved in the approach and to check that out?

Mr. Blakeney: — No I did not. I saw some material which gave an outline of the events which had happened in the House. I had known that the Attorney General had seen the same material. I felt that no prodding on my part was necessary. If he felt that the matter required action I know that he would have acted.

Mr. E. C. Malone: — Supplementary. In your discussions with the Minister of Finance and the Attorney General and your other Cabinet colleagues, did the Minister of Finance disclose to you the names of the two Conservative Members in question?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I think that the discussions between a Premier and his Cabinet colleagues are privileged and I do not propose to answer the question.

Roumanian Tractor Parts

Mr. E. A. Berntson (Souris-Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture. How will the Minister guarantee that dealers handling the Roumanian and Bulgarian equipment will not be victimized by lack of parts under the impending legislation presently before us in the Bill before us that would amend The Implements Act of Saskatchewan?

Hon. E. Kaeding (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that that question be asked when the Bill is in Committee.

Irrigation Grants for Southwestern Saskatchewan

Mr. D. M. Ham (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, a question I believe to the Department of Agriculture or Minister of Agriculture. Is it true that the irrigation grants for southwestern Saskatchewan have been cut off.

Mr. Kaeding: — No.

Sign for Hereford Centre

Mr. R. Katzman (Rosthern): — Question to the Minister of Highways. In lieu of agriculture being a very important industry and the Hereford Centre being located on a major highway, is there any indication that the Government may allow a designating sign to show the people where that industry is?

Hon. E. Kramer (Minister of Highways): — Well, I am a member of the Hereford Association and I'm also Minister of Highways and I'm sure that if they want a sign they would be getting in touch with me. I would be happy to hear from them.

Mr. Katzman: — Are you suggesting if they contact you, you will approve a sign?

Mr. Kramer: — It would depend on signing policy.

Leak of Confidential Documents

Mr. Malone: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. In your earlier answer to my colleague, the Member for Regina South, you referred to examining some material in connection with this incident with the Conservative Party. My question to you, is the material beyond what was contained in Hansard and if so what was the material? Was there an actual report prepared by the Minister, other officials, and given to you?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, it just happened that I was not in the Committee of Finance when some of the discussions took place. I had a discussion with the Minister of Finance and in the course of, or shall I say, as an aid to such a discussion, some material had been pulled together and we looked at it. And I know that he also made it available to the Attorney General.

Mr. Malone: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Was the material dealing only with events that took place in this House during Committee of Finance or did it deal with other matters?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I think that material which is discussed between me and my Cabinet colleagues is privileged and I don't propose to answer the question.

Flood Assistance for Southeastern Saskatchewan

Mr. Berntson: — Question to the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In view of the fact that we've had severe flooding in southeastern Saskatchewan and a considerable number of farmers have had damage to fertilizer, seed grain, etc., and besides this damage they have several acres, good productive acres of land now under water, will there be any assistance forthcoming from this Government to these farmers?

Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, with regard to the flooding of farm land, they will be able to protect themselves under the flood provisions under The Crop Insurance Act. The other matters would be in Mr. MacMurchy's Department.

Leak of Confidential Documents

Mr. Merchant: — Mr. Speaker, I asked a question of the Hon. Minister of Finance about the specifics. I wonder now, if I might ask a question of the Premier in general about the administration of an oath of secrecy or something of that nature to senior government officials about the leaking of confidential documents and secondly, whether it would be the view of the Premier on behalf of the Government, that the leaking of confidential documents would be a matter for which dismissal with cause was appropriate?

Mr. Blakeney: — With respect to administering oaths, Members of Cabinet take an oath, as Members will recall, about matters discussed in Cabinet which may give some support for my reticence on some matters. I do not think it is necessary to call upon senior public servants to take a further oath. If it appears to be a serious problem and if it appears that there are a number of instances of leakage, if there are a lot of brown envelopes around containing sensitive material, then we will face that problem. But I think it really does not represent that type of a problem which would call for the Government administering new oaths to senior public servants, suggesting somehow that we lack confidence in them, which is not the case.

With respect to whether or not I would regard a deliberate leaking of information as a serious offence, possibly leading to dismissal, I would say that certainly a deliberate and calculated leaking of sensitive and important information would fall into that category. Whether or not an individual instance would fall into that category would, of course, depend upon an analysis of the facts surrounding the particular incident.

Minister Approached for Copies of Budget Speech

Mr. Cameron: — Question to the Premier. In view of the fact the Budget came down on March 24th, may I ask the Premier when and by what method did he first learn of the approach by one or more Members of the Assembly to obtain a copy of the Budget in advance?

Mr. Blakeney: — Of course, there is an assumption built in there. I will not answer the, “Have you stopped beating your wife?” question. But the answer to the question of when the issue did come to my attention which was raised in Committee of Finance, is I think the day after or shortly thereafter, but not before it was raised in this Committee.

Mr. Cameron: — Supplementary. The matter rose in the House on April 15th, that was the first indication that someone had sought a copy of the Budget in advance. May I ask you, if the Minister of Finance had indicated to you prior to April 15th that someone had sought a copy of the Budget in advance?

Mr. Blakeney: — Well, I don’t want to be difficult with the Hon. Member, so I will say that in the substance of this question the answer is, No. If this happened I had not been made aware of it. Let me put it that way.

Mr. Malone: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I’m sure the Premier will agree with me when I ask him about the material that he examined. He indicated that that material covered more than just what happened here in Committee of Finance. So may I ask the Premier, when you discussed the matter with the Minister of Finance, am I fair in assuming that reference was made to other activities prior to the date that this matter came up in Committee of Finance?

Mr. Blakeney: — I think my discussions with

the Minister of Finance are privileged and I do not propose to answer the question.

Mr. J. G. Lane (Qu'Appelle): — Supplementary of the Premier. Due to your reluctance to table the material that you have, are we to conclude that bribery attempts in fact were committed?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I am in no way able to decide what the Hon. Member concludes, particularly having regard to the fact that he habitually draws conclusions with no evidence.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — I am suggesting that there is no evidence on which such a conclusion could be rationally drawn.

Mr. Malone: — A supplementary question. Mr. Speaker, in view of the conclusions that the Premier just drew, is he prepared to give us the evidence that he has in his possession so that we can draw our conclusions?

Mr. Cameron: — Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Premier if he is not prepared to disclose the material, what the nature of the material is that he referred to?

Mr. Blakeney: — I think people are deciding there is some great material. The Minister of Finance had made some notes. There was nothing there other than his own notes. When he made them I don't know. I am just saying I discussed the matter with him following the events in this House and he made some notes, he showed the same notes to the Attorney General or he advised me he had, and the Attorney General subsequently advised me he had. That is the long and short of it.

Mr. Cameron: — Supplementary. Based upon the nature of that material the discussions you had with the Minister of Finance and the Attorney General, can you give the House an assurance that there was not an improper attempt to obtain a copy of the Budget in advance?

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Next question.

Flood Assistance to Southeastern Saskatchewan

Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Will there be any assistance available for the farmers in southeastern Saskatchewan who are victimized by a recent flood by way of loss of fertilizer, loss of seeded grain etc.?

Hon. G. MacMurchy (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the program of the Government as it applied to last year's situation has been announced by the Minister responsible, the Minister of Mineral Resources, the Minister responsible for flood disaster in the province. I think copies of the program have been made available to rural

municipalities and urban municipality offices. I understand the Member has a copy of the present program.

Some aspects of the program so far as 1976-77 are concerned are under consideration for change by the Government. We have not yet made a decision and we will announce our position in due course.

Did Notes Refer to Events Prior to Committee of Finance

Mr. Malone: — A question to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, a few moments ago the Premier referred to certain notes that you prepared for his assistance in reporting on this matter to him, I am asking you now, when did you prepare those notes and did they refer to events that happened prior to the Committee of Finance when this whole matter came to be an issue?

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that to be a privileged matter of what I discussed with the Premier and the kind of notes I discussed with him.

Removal of Radar Equipment from Private Clinics

Mr. R. Katzman (Rosthern): — A question to the Minister of Health. Yesterday you informed us in a supplementary question that the radar equipment in the private clinics is being removed because of a special agreement and is now depreciated. Are you suggesting that when the Co-op — the clinic in Saskatoon is depreciated there you are going to remove that equipment also?

Hon. W. Robbins (Minister of Health): — Any policy in relation to that equipment will be announced in due course.

Mr. Katzman: — A supplementary. Are you suggesting that private enterprise you handle one way and the co-ops you handle another way?

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Next question.

Premier's Conclusion About Bribery Attempt

Mr. Merchant: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier would indicate whether his conclusion — you have indicated that your conclusion was that in the attempt to obtain copies of the Budget there was no proper evidence of a bribery attempt — was your conclusion about the bribery attempt a different conclusion from the conclusion which the Minister of Finance had in his discussions with you about that incident?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I was in the House on the next occasion when this arose. I heard the Minister of Finance say, if my memory serves me right, that he withdrew any allegation of impropriety.

The question that is asked is a question of my state of mind,

what I thought. That is what you are asking . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — I am saying that the next day I heard the Minister of Finance say that he withdrew any allegation of impropriety and he repeated that withdrawal. I am prepared to accept that position on his part and express no view contrary to it.

Does Government Favor Guaranteed Annual Income Program

Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Social Services.

Some time ago I had asked you whether or not you favored and whether the Government favored a guaranteed annual income program. You denied that the Government had taken any position and you also denied that you had communicated your position to your Cabinet colleagues. In fact, I am afraid that the Hon. Minister didn't quite tell us the truth on the matter . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! The Member is debating the issue. If the Member can get to the point, if he can assure me he will get to the point of the question I will let him go on.

Mr. Lane: — In fact the guide to the guaranteed annual income prepared by the office of National Health and Welfare revised March 1976, says on page 14, that the Federal-Provincial Welfare Ministers had agreed to the guaranteed annual income program.

Now my first question is, have you now communicated your position to the Cabinet of Saskatchewan and will the Minister now admit that the Government of Saskatchewan has in fact favored the guaranteed annual income program?

Hon. R. Rolfes (Minister of Social Services): — No, Mr. Speaker, I have not made a proposal to Cabinet as yet.

Mr. Lane: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. At the last conference it was indicated that strikers would not be eligible for the income support, only for the reason that they were on strike. In Saskatchewan strikers can receive assistance under the Saskatchewan Assistance plan when they are on strike. Do you intend to change the Saskatchewan position now that strikers can get assistance or do you intend to urge the Federal Government to allow strikers to receive income support?

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, the matter of strikers receiving allowance was never discussed at the conference on February 3 and 4, secondly, because I have not yet made my proposal to the Cabinet, I cannot comment at this particular time when the policy will be changed.

Mr. Lane: — A supplementary. The indication from the report again

is contrary. It says that the eligibility of students for income support would be left up to the provinces. What is your position and what is the Government opposite's position on the guaranteed annual income for students.

Mr. Rolfes: — The proposal, Mr. Speaker, has not been made to Cabinet tag this particular time. I cannot state what the Government policy is on that particular matter. Let me say that the guaranteed annual income as proposed by the Federal Government would exclude anybody under 18.

University Survey on Rail Line Abandonment

Mr. R. L. Colver (Leader of Progressive Conservatives): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. Has your Government or any department thereof commissioned a survey by the University of Saskatchewan or a department of the University of Saskatchewan as it relates to rail line abandonment?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that question as notice. Someone asked me that the other day and I have someone finding out the answer to that and I just don't know it.

Canadian Pacific Trucking Limited

Miss L. Clifford (Wilkie): — A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Canadian Pacific Trucking Limited has announced their desire to discontinue trucking in the rural areas. Obviously the department's recently announced restrictions on load limits would have an effect on the Trucking Association, are you now willing to review or withdraw those limits?

Mr. MacMurchy: — Mr. Speaker, we are certainly subject to review but in order to make a specific announcement with respect to the limits which I have indicated a number of times in this Assembly, that we will be meeting with the Trucking Association to receive their point of view. We have had our initial meeting with SARM and they are participating with us in developing the final policy and we will involve the same procedure with the Trucking Association.

Miss Clifford: — Mr. Speaker, one reason was stated in the recent negotiations with the Saskatchewan Trucking Association, they have asked for a ten per cent increase in trucking rates of which they got approximately seven per cent, if my recollection is right, whereas SPC got 17 per cent. Is it under your direction that such discrimination in trucking rates occurs and affects the rural communities.

Mr. MacMurchy: — No.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! I believe that question would tend towards debate. I noticed the Minister handled it without debate.

POINTS OF ORDER

Question Period

Mr. Collver: — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to raise on a matter of privilege with reference to the questions asked in today's Question Period. I refer specifically to one question asked by the Member for Regina Wascana, in which he presumed in the question that advance copies of the Budget had been sought or were questioned by Members of the Progressive Conservative Party.

It is correct, I believe, that statements of that nature are against the privilege of the individual Members if made as a statement, however, many of the questions by the Members to my right today have included that kind of allegation within the question and I would ask the Speaker to rule on the principle as to whether or not personal allegations of impropriety against Members can be alluded to in questions as opposed to statements or answers.

Mr. Speaker: — I shall ask the Member to give me an opportunity to examine the record of the Question Period today to determine what my views are on it with regard to the point that he raises.

Documentations on Allegations on Oral Question Period

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, some few days ago as a result of some exchanges we had about the Oral Question Period, you suggested that I should bring forward some proof of some documentation about my allegations that in the application of the Oral Question Period as being applied in such a way as to shield the Government.

I have, and I should like permission to read this into the record, since you asked me publicly, I have what I propose to ask for consideration of you and of the House, some examples and some references to the Oral Question Period in Ottawa and I wonder if I may have the permission of the House to read this into the record?

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I have said prior to this time that I didn't intend to discuss the matter in the House. I will stick with that decision that I made. If the Member wants to come and see me about it I am quite prepared to see him or any Member for that matter.

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, I am not attempting to discuss it. You are the one who brought it into the House and said, all right prove it or bring some information to back up what you are saying and I have the information here. I have tabled it and you have a copy. I would again, since you brought it up, ask to have permission to read it into the record because I think it is not fair for you to say, well prove what you say, and I want now to offer some proof for your consideration and the consideration of this House.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I have made up my mind about it. I didn't ask

the Member to table. The Member tabled it of his own volition. I said that I wouldn't allow any discussion of it. In my view, reading it into the records constitutes in part discussion of it, which I am unable to respond to.

Mr. Steuart: — I fail to see why you are able to respond to it, you were able to initiate the thing in the first place. I was cut off on a question again today . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! The Member is criticizing the Speaker and the Speaker's Chair at this time. Now there is an opportunity if the Member feels that the situation warrants it, to launch a substantive motion dealing with that particular subject, but I can't allow further discussion to go on on this particular matter.

Mr. Cameron: — Mr. Speaker, may I beg leave of the Members of the Assembly to permit the Member to read the statement?

Mr. Speaker: — I have made my decision that I will not allow the Member to read it and I don't see any good reason why I should change that decision at this time.

Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, speaking to the Point of Order, you are refusing the Hon. Member the chance to rebut . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! The Member is out of order now, the Member is out of order. We will go on to the next point of business if there are no more Points of Order.

Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, with all respect the fact is that you made allegations . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! The Member is out of order. We are not dealing with any situations which occurred prior to this time, we are dealing with Points of Order that are raised today with regard to that I will deal with it.

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, I was cut off again today. I asked a question and I don't know why you cut me off.

Mr. Speaker: — If you want to know why I cut you off today, I will answer that, but I will not answer something that occurred a long time ago.

Mr. Steuart: — Well this occurred today. I want to know why I was cut off today and I suggest that the next time you don't want a public debate, don't make something public.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I would suggest that you get yourself in order and sit down. I want to avoid dragging the Chair into conflicts that occur on the floor of the Chamber.

April 21, 1976

Now, the Leader of the Opposition asked why he was cut off today. I would assume — he only asked one question today — and I recognized that to be a repeat of a question that had occurred previously, probably on more than one occasion, recently, and that is why the Member was cut off.

Mr. Cameron: — Mr. Speaker, on a fresh Point of Order.

Mr. Speaker, several days ago you gave to Members of the Assembly a written statement which was critical of remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker delivered that note to the Assembly and read it in public in the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition asks merely the same right to respond . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! The Member is raising the same Point of Order that the Member was raising prior to this. I am not prepared to accept that as a legitimate Point of Order at this time.

Mr. Cameron: — With deference, Mr. Speaker, you are anticipating what I was about to ask.

Mr. Speaker: — I can only go by what the Member says. I listened carefully to what the Member said and I have to draw a conclusion at some time. It seemed to me it was not a legitimate Point of Order. Now, if the Member can't impress me at the beginning of his remarks on raising a Point of Order, about whether it is legitimate or not, then it is not my fault that I have to make a decision. The next Point of Order.

Mr. Cameron: — I challenge the ruling, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! What ruling exactly are you challenging?

Mr. Cameron: — I am challenging Mr. Speaker's ruling not to permit the statement to be read. I wanted to do it nicely and with deference, Mr. Speaker. That is why I preceeded my comments with those general remarks.

Mr. Romanow: — On a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker. I know that you are in consultation. May I just make this observation, it may be of some assistance to you in the consultation.

It seems to me that Mr. Speaker has made a ruling earlier this afternoon the effect of which was, that you are not prepared to hear the statement that the Leader of the Opposition has prepared. It seems to me that the Opposition, if they are not satisfied with that ruling that you have made, has one of two options.

One option is that if they are not satisfied — and that is to do what the Member for Regina South (Mr. Cameron) has suggested, that your ruling be challenged. That seems tome to be the issue.

The other option, of course, is to accept the ruling that Your Honour has made. I think that is the proper way to handle the situation. And may I say while I am on my feet and if I am out of order, rule me out of order and I will sit down, I believe that the Leader of the Opposition has submitted to you the documents in writing and the materials for your perusal. He has tabled, I think, a copy on the floor of the House. Surely the object is to try and improve the Question Period for everybody's benefit, ours, the Opposition's and Mr. Speaker's, because it is an experimental operation. I am sure that Mr. Speaker will view those statements in the spirit in which they are given, with the view to improving the Question Period. We can all learn on this operation. You made your ruling, the statement is tabled and I would beg the Members to say to Mr. Speaker, he has it, he received it, he will consider it. If you don't like the ruling let's challenge it and get the vote one way or the other whether Mr. Speaker's ruling is to be sustained or not and then get on with the business of the House.

Mr. C. P. MacDonald (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, on the Point of Order, very briefly and I will not refer to the statement of the Leader of the Opposition because that has now been challenged. But I think the Speaker should make clear for my edification and for the Members of the House, that if he desires an individual Member to come to his Office and discuss a Point of Order within the House, then he certainly has the right to address that privately in the halls or in any way in which he so desires. But I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, what will be the future practice of you or the Chair, in relation to the Speaker making a public statement about Members in the House and then denying those Members the opportunity to stand on their feet and discuss it, or to defend it, or to debate it, whatever the point is?

What I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that if in the future you wish individual Members to address you privately then you address them privately. If you wish then to discuss something in the House, you do it publicly.

Mr. Speaker: — With all deference, I think the Member is putting debating points which I am not in a position to answer.

With regard to this matter, the Leader of the Opposition raised some points, one of them was that the Speaker has no right to make a statement in the House. I think that it is acknowledged that Speakers do have an absolute right to come into the Legislature and make a statement.

Secondly, Members of the Chamber, for good or ill, have no right whatsoever to comment on that statement. That is a matter of fact and there are all kinds of precedents of support.

Now, the Member for Regina South has challenged my ruling. My ruling was that I will not allow the Leader of the Opposition to read some document, of which I am not aware, into the records of the House, which I have denied. That is the subject that is before the Assembly at this time: shall the ruling of the Speaker be sustained?

Mr. Cameron: — It is debatable?

Mr. Speaker: — No, it isn't.

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It was agreed that the Ruling of the Chair be sustained.

Mr. Malone: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. You just, in your remarks a few minutes ago, referred to statements by the Speaker in this House and the fact that it is traditional that they be made. We simply do not disagree with that in any manner whatsoever. That is the tradition and the practice. However, what we do disagree with, Mr. Speaker, is accusations made in this House by the Speaker, and that is what this whole business is about.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! we have dealt with that matter and I don't think we can deal with it any further.

Mr. Malone: — . . . not ten seconds ago when you invited the vote on the challenge.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! The Member is in effect challenging again. Whether you want to call it a challenge or not you are challenging in effect what the Speaker has said with regard to the ruling and the decision made prior to this time.

Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, is there any precedent for the one-sided approach that you are taking in this particular . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order!

The Assembly adjourned at 5:32 o'clock p.m. on the motion of Hon. R. Romanow.