

Tuesday, April 20th, 2004

The House met at 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon pursuant to adjournment.

The Speaker again reminded the visitors in the Public Galleries to refrain from participating in the proceedings of the House.

The Member for Signal Hill-Quidi Vidi (Mr. Harris) rose on a point of order to request that the Leader of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public Employees be permitted to address the House in order to discuss the recent dispute between the Government and its employees in a sincere effort to resolve the strike. The Member proposed that if agreement were reached with the House Leaders that he would move the appropriate motion.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Grimes) spoke in favour of the request and was followed by the Honourable the Government House Leader (Mr. Byrne) who declined the request because an offer had just a few minutes ago been received by the Government from the leadership of the Union.

The Speaker ruled there was no point of order and that there was a lack of consent with respect to the request made by the Member for Signal Hill-Quidi Vidi. The Speaker however, offered the services of his office to convene a meeting if there were consent.

The Opposition House Leader (Mr. Parsons) rose to establish a *prima facie* case of privilege by alleging that he and other Members of the Opposition had had their privileges breached when they were denied access and entrance at the doors of the Confederation Building Complex, in particular, the regular civil service entrance and as a consequence to the precincts of parliament.

The Member for Signal Hill-Quidi Vidi (Mr. Harris) rose to support the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Parsons) and asked the Speaker to conduct an investigation into the circumstances why Members were prevented from entering the precincts of the House and further why the doors were locked preventing Members from freely entering the building.

The Honourable the Government House Leader (Mr. Byrne) agreed with the point of privilege raised by the Opposition House Leader and on behalf of the Administration stated that no order had been issued by Government directing the obstruction to Members of the House. The Government House Leader further stated that if one Member were prevented from entering the precinct of the House that all Members privileges had been breached.

The Speaker took the matter under advisement and also stated he would conduct

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an investigation into the matter.

The Member for Terra Nova (Mr. Oram) made a Statement to congratulate Mrs. Jean Chatman of Charlottetown for receiving the Newfoundland and Labrador Entrepreneur of the Year Award from Memorial University's Faculty of Business. The Member stated that Mrs. Chatman was the owner of Chatman's Bakery which was started twenty-five years ago.

The Honourable the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment (Ms. Burke) made a Statement to advise Members that she had instructed the Labour Relations Agency to arrange for the Agency's mediators to conduct exploration talks with Government and union negotiators in order to determine if there was any basis for a settlement of the current public sector dispute.

During Oral Questions it was agreed to recess the House in order for visitors to enter and fill the Public Galleries. It was noticed that there was still vacant seats in the galleries.

The Speaker left the Chair at 2:15 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Speaker resumed the Chair at 2:25 o'clock in the afternoon and Oral Questions continued.

After Oral Questions the Honourable the Government House Leader (Mr. Byrne) rose on a point of order to clarify certain remarks made before the recess of the House. The Government House Leader stated that he was told by security in the building that visitors could access the Chamber and that the union members in the Gallery were advised by their leaders to vacate the galleries after the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment had made her statement.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Grimes) rose on a point of order to state that political and management staff were requested to sit in the Public Galleries and that they were requested to wear the visitors pass instead of their regular identification cards and were asked to sign in as visitors.

The Speaker took the above matters under advertisement.

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The Honourable the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board (Mr. Sullivan), pursuant to section 26(4) of the **Financial Administration Act**, tabled the following pre-commitments for the 2004-05 fiscal year:

- (a) Order in Council 2004-185 authorized the Department of Transportation and Works to spend \$422,000 to extend the Southeast Bight contract; and
- (b) Order in Council 2004-284 authorized the Department of Transportation and Works to spend \$534,000 to extend the present contract for Gaultois/McCallum to December 2005.

Pursuant to order and on motion debate continued on the amendment to the Budget Speech (that being a non-confidence motion).

On motion debate was adjourned for further debate on tomorrow.

The Honourable the Government House Leader (Mr. Byrne) announced that both House Leaders would consult the following morning with respect to which of the two Opposition Resolutions would be debated on Private Members' Day.

It was moved and seconded that when the House rose it would adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 21st at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

On motion the House then adjourned accordingly.

A. John Noel, Q.C.,
Clerk of the House of Assembly