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Journals

(Unrevised)

Legislative Assembly

Province of New Brunswick

Hon. Herménégilde Chiasson
Lieutenant-Governor

Speaker: Hon. Eugene McGinley

Tuesday, July 3, 2007

**First Session of the 56th Legislative Assembly
Fredericton, New Brunswick**

Tuesday, July 3, 2007.*1 o'clock p.m.*

Prayers.

Mr. Speaker delivered his ruling on the point of privilege raised by Mr. Stiles, Member for Petitcodiac, on Friday, June 29, to certain allegations which he submitted had been directed against him by the Leader of the Opposition.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Members, on Thursday last, in Committee of Supply, there were remarks, as reported in the Hansard record and as reported to the House. The matter was reported to the Chair. Remarks were made, and the member for Petitcodiac complained, requesting that there be a withdrawal and/or an apology. The remarks were made by the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

On Friday last, I undertook to give a ruling as soon as reasonably possible after the House had resumed, and I think the moment is now upon us. On Friday, I said that I would consider the transcripts of Thursday and Friday, and that I would also consider the remarks of the Opposition House Leader, the Government House Leader, and the member for Petitcodiac. I have done all that.

Whereas and although the Opposition House Leader alluded to an argument that the complaint might have been untimely, I indicated on Friday—and I confirm again now—that I felt that the matter had been raised in a proper and timely matter. It is now, in my opinion, before the House as a point of order.

At the time, on Friday, I also said that at first blush, on first glance, what had been said was, in my opinion . . . I am not certain whether I used the word “inappropriate” then, but I do so now. I found that the remarks that were made were inappropriate and unbecoming. If the remarks had been made outside the House—maybe I do not need to rule on that—if the member of Petitcodiac had used the phrase, they were slanderous remarks that could have invited consequences. In the Legislature, there is immunity from libel and slander. There is immunity from the consequences of that if remarks were made outside the House. It is a privilege of members to be able to speak freely in here, to say everything and anything, but there is a policy and a tradition that we do not make personal attacks, that we do not make slanderous remarks, and that we do not abuse that privilege of free speech that members of the Legislature have.

In this case, not only were remarks made which at least insinuated that the member for Petitcodiac and the honourable Minister of Natural Resources—I hesitate to use the word “collusion”—had agreed or worked together in a way of using allocations of Crown timber in an appropriate manner. Beyond that, those remarks went so far as to allude—I think “allude” is the proper word—to the conduct . . . They went so far as to allege very improper activity on the part of a former minister of this House. He was referred to by name. I think that it is almost contemptible to the House to abuse the privilege of free speech and to attack this person who was a former minister and who is unable to defend himself or herself in this matter.

Having said all that, I find that the remarks were beyond being intemperate. I think that they were very grievous. Having said all that, I believe that I will ask the honourable Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the remarks. Although it is not within my authority as Speaker, nor do I see it within my authority as Speaker, to order an apology, I believe that it would be the honourable thing for the honourable Leader of the Opposition to do. At this point, I would ask the honourable Leader of the Opposition to withdraw those remarks.

Mr. Volpé withdrew the comments in relation to a former Minister of Natural Resources and apologized to the House, but refused to withdraw the comments relating to the current Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Mr. Arseneault and Mr. Stiles, the Member for Petitcodiac.

Following Mr. Volpé’s repeated refusal to withdraw the remarks in question, Mr. Speaker advised the House that he would address the matter by the end of the current sitting day.

Hon. Mr. Jamieson, Government House Leader, announced that with unanimous consent to dispense with the time reserved for Private Members’ Motions, it was the intention of the government that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the estimates of the Department of Post Secondary Education, Training and Labour; the Department of Justice and Consumer Affairs, and at 7 o’clock p.m., the estimates associated with the Office of the Premier.

It was agreed by unanimous consent to dispense with the Order of Private Members’ Motions.

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

And after some time, Mr. B. LeBlanc took the chair.

And after some further time, Mr. Miles took the chair.

And after some further time, Mr. Kenny resumed the chair.

At 6 o'clock p.m., the Chairman left the chair to resume again at 7 o'clock p.m.

7 o'clock p.m.

The Committee resumed with Mr. B. LeBlanc in the chair.

And after some time, Mr. Kenny resumed the chair.

It was agreed by unanimous consent that the speeches of the Honourable the Premier relating to the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons be deemed read into the record of the House.

And after some further time, Mr. Speaker resumed the chair, and Mr. Kenny, the Chairman, after requesting that Mr. Speaker revert to Presentations of Committee Reports, reported that the Committee had had under consideration the matters referred to them, had made some progress therein, had passed several items, 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.

The following are the items reported:

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2007-2008

ORDINARY ACCOUNT

DEPARTMENT OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LABOUR

Resolved, That there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$248,250,000 to defray the expenses of the following program allocations for the fiscal year ending the 31st of March, 2008:

Corporate Services	71,571,000
NB Public Libraries	13,114,000
Student Financial Assistance.....	32,518,000
Post-Secondary Affairs	2,613,000
Adult Learning and Skills	10,245,000
Labour and Legislative Development	3,280,000
Employment Development	22,738,000

Labour Market Development	92,210,000
Less amounts authorized by law	39,000
Voted	248,250,000

MARITIME PROVINCES HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Resolved, That there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$163,835,000 to defray the expenses of the following program allocations for the fiscal year ending the 31st of March, 2008:

Administration	519,000
Assistance to Universities	163,316,000
Less amounts authorized by law	0
Voted	163,835,000

DEPARTMENT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Resolved, That there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,454,000 to defray the expenses of the following program allocations for the fiscal year ending the 31st of March, 2008:

Intergovernmental Affairs.....	3,454,000
Less amounts authorized by law	0
Voted	3,454,000

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

Resolved, That there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,579,000 to defray the expenses of the following program allocations for the fiscal year ending the 31st of March, 2008:

Administration	1,638,000
Less amounts authorized by law	59,000
Voted	1,579,000

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Voted, Supply in the following amounts to defray the expenses of the following programs for the fiscal year ending the 31st of March, 2008:

Labour and Employment Board.....	630,000
Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons.....	275,000
Intergovernmental Conferences.....	25,000
Council of Atlantic Premiers	772,000
Self-Sufficiency Task Force	499,000

LOANS AND ADVANCES

DEPARTMENT OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LABOUR

Resolved, That there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not

exceeding \$108,763,000 to defray the expenses of the following program allocation for the fiscal year ending the 31st of March, 2008:

Student Loan Advances 108,763,000

WORKING CAPITAL – MAXIMUM BALANCES

2007-2008

Voted

WORKING CAPITAL ADVANCES

Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission

- Finance 360,000

- Education 160,000

- Health 515,000

- Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour 30,000

Voted 1,065,000

PETTY CASH ADVANCES

Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour 20,000

INVENTORIES

Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour 1,250,000

The said items were concurred in by the House.

And then 10 o'clock p.m. the House adjourned.