

The House met at 2:00 P.M.

Prayers.

### **SPEAKER'S RULING**

At this time I'd like to deliver a ruling respecting two points of order raised yesterday, and the day before, by the honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition and the member for Queens-Shelburne. Essentially both points of order complained about the asking of questions during Question Period by non-government Liberal caucus members to the ministers in the Liberal Government.

The thrust of these points of order was that ministers were being asked "staged" questions that allowed the ministers to make the types of statements that they can already make under the order of business, Statements by Ministers, rather than raising genuine questions of concern to the members asking the questions and their constituents.

As members will recall, on December 4<sup>th</sup> of last year I ruled that backbench Liberal members are entitled to ask some questions during Question Period. I do not intend to revisit the general substance of that ruling today, but I do wish to address the specific complaints made about the nature of questions being posed in the last few days.

In his point of order yesterday, the honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition referred to discussions between the House Leaders regarding the Government House Leader's intentions respecting the limited use of time in Question Period for these questions. Specifically, the House Leader for the Official Opposition said, "When the agreement was originally struck it was to ask important questions for constituencies of the members, more specifically in the backbench of the government side."

In my ruling on December 4<sup>th</sup> I made the following comments which relate to the specific issue at hand. I had said:

"The honourable Government House Leader has advised me and the other House Leaders that it is his intent to only have the 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> questions in each Question Period asked by non-Cabinet members of his Party's caucus, and that in each case only one question will be asked - there will be no supplementary questions.

Given these intended parameters and the principles of parliamentary procedure I have mentioned previously, I am satisfied that by permitting such limited use of the time of Question Period is reasonable so long as the primary use of the time by the Opposition is respected - by this I mean that both the question and the answer should be concise.

It is my hope that the questions will be about matters of genuine interest to the particular members posing them. I believe it would be unfortunate if the questions were simply easy plants designed to allow ministers opportunities to make statements that they are already free to make under the order of business, Statements by Ministers. This has been a concern in other jurisdictions.”

I concluded by saying that, based on what has been proposed by the honourable Government House Leader, I would permit the limited use of questions by government backbenchers in the manner he proposed, but that if problems were to arise I could always revisit the question of this new practice for our House. We're going to revisit it now.

I want to start by saying that I paid close attention to the types of questions posed by the government backbenchers during the Fall sitting of the House, and I found them very much to be in the spirit of the understanding referred to by the House Leader of the Official Opposition. There were a variety of questions relating to those members' constituencies in the areas of such things as local highway intersections, illegal dumping sites, local landfills, nursing homes, and a local satellite intake office in the Fairview-Bayers Road area.

That being said, I feel I have to agree with the House Leader of the Official Opposition that the types of questions posed over the last two days were much more in the nature of an easy lob that resulted in answers that were more in the nature of Statements by Ministers, and that concerns me.

As Speaker I have to be sensitive to the wishes and needs of both sides of the House. We are dealing with a new wrinkle in our proceedings here and I want to make sure that everybody has time to get used to it and adapt to it, so that it has the opportunity to be of benefit to the House. I don't want to jump in and impose rules and regulations on the content of questions with restrictive guidelines, and I think there's still room for the House to reasonably resolve its own issues and find its own way in this matter.

While the questions posed over the last two days have strayed from what I have understood we were working toward, I think that the ones posed in the Fall sitting embraced the spirit of what was proposed by the Government House Leader, and I have to note for everybody's benefit, that last week when we were deep in a debate over Bill No. 37, twice the Government House Leader passed on the opportunity to use the allotted questions in the agreed rotation, therefore giving additional time to the Opposition Parties.

Accordingly, I don't think the time has come for me to interfere in what can be resolved by the House itself. We are still "early in the first period," to use a hockey analogy, and on this one I hope that all members will revisit my earlier ruling on the issue and be of the understanding that between the honourable House Leaders that the parameters of these questions can be brought back on the rails and not require the Chair to wade into the fray.

I think the new practice was working as intended during the Fall sitting and I look forward to it continuing that way. I think it deserves another chance for it to work for all of us. I ask the members to do all they can to ensure this happens but will remain ready to revisit this ruling in the future if it is raised again.

#### **PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

T. Houston, Pictou East, tabled a petition calling on the government for improvements to the Laggan Road in Pictou County.

Hon. D. Wilson, Sackville-Cobequid, tabled a petition asking the government to introduce our resolution making into law recognizing the Métis of Nova Scotia.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

The following bills were introduced by the following Members, read a first and ordered to be read a second time on a future day:

**No. 45. An Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2003, the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act, and Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Community Colleges Act, to Facilitate the Reform of the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Systems**

**(Hon. K. Regan – Labour and Advanced Education)**

**No. 46. An Act Respecting a Lyme Disease Strategy for Nova Scotia**

**(T. Houston – Pictou East)**

**No. 47. An Act to Amend Chapter 505 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Wills Act**

**(Hon. S. Belliveau – Queens-Shelburne)**

**No. 48. An Act to Amend Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1994-95, the Workers' Compensation Act, Respecting First Responders**

**(Hon. F. Corbett – Cape Breton Centre)**

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

Pursuant to the order, the following notices were passed in at the Clerk's table:

Res. No. 1014 – Hon. J. Baillie, Leader of the Official Opposition - congratulating hard-working entrepreneurs Sara and Mike Hachey and their team at Egg Studios, for providing us with the entertainment on the ice before the game and for setting the bar high in global video productions.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1015 – Hon. M. MacDonald, Leader of the New Democratic Party - congratulating the Youth Project on more than 20 years of operation and expressing its appreciation for the Youth Project's ongoing dedication to Halifax and its LGBTQ community.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1016 – A. Rowe, Dartmouth South - recognizing the significant work Easter Seals Nova Scotia does right across our province and congratulating their organization on yet another successful fundraising event, helping them to continue with their important work.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1017 – T. Houston, Pictou East - thanking Art Steeves for his half-century of volunteering with Christmas Daddies, and for being a role model in making the world a better place to live and raise our children.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1018 – Hon. D. Wilson, Sackville-Cobequid - congratulating Middle Sackville's Doug Mitchell on his accomplishments in the sport of track and field over the past 45 years and wishing him and his team success as they head to British Columbia for the Legion Youth National Track and Field Championships.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1019 – P. Eyking, Victoria-The Lakes - recognizing the hard work and dedication of the North Highlands Orchard Project and wishing them continued success with their upcoming season.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1020 – C. Porter, Hants West - congratulating Hannah Jamieson on receiving a \$2000 scholarship and wishing her all the best with her dream of becoming a veterinarian.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1021 – C. Gosse, Sydney-Whitney Pier - congratulating Sergeant Tom Ripley on receiving the Nova Scotia Award for Leadership in Crime Prevention and being a leader for a positive change.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1022 – S. Lohnes-Croft, Lunenburg - congratulating Aidan Brunn and Patrick May, honoured with medals of bravery for their selfless act of heroism when they rescued two people from a two-vehicle collision.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1023 – A. MacMaster, Inverness - acknowledging the vision of Halifax Biomedical founder Chad Munro and the successful efforts of those working in Mabou.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1024 – Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse, Chester-St. Margaret's - congratulating the St. Margarets Bay Gardening Club for its efforts to beautify and educate the community through gardening.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1025 – J. Treen, Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, on behalf of Hon. K. Murphy, Eastern Shore - thanking Graham Morris for his continued service to his community of Chezzetcook and surrounding areas by his embodiment of the Lions Club motto, "We Serve."

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1026 – E. Orrell, Northside-Westmount - congratulating all volunteers whose efforts will have a major impact on Northside sports.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1027 – B. Maguire, Halifax Atlantic - congratulating Gina Gray on being chosen as this year's recipient of the Representative Volunteer Award.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1028 - Hon. P. Dunn, Pictou Centre - thanking Earl Crosby for his years of service and the outstanding efforts he has made in supporting and encouraging the Maritime Steel Foundry families in some of their darkest days.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1029 – L. Zann, Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River - congratulating Rebecca Blank for her outstanding research and for her interest in this rewarding field of agricultural science.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1030 – Hon. T. Ince, Cole Harbour-Portland Valley - congratulating Chester Borden on receiving the 2014 Tom Miller Human Rights Award and the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Carl “Campy” Award.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1031 – A. MacLeod, Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg - congratulating Wilf Edmond on receiving the Caring Canadian Award.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1032 – B. Horne, Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank - thank Sheila King, Marian MacKinnon and Wendy Saunders for their dedication to the Beaver Bank Breakfast Club program and helping it continue its strong presence in the community.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1033 – L. Harrison, Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley - recognizing Mr. Keinick and his commitment to all children and their families.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1034 – L. Hines, Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie - expressing sincere appreciation for Mr. Alonzo Reddick's lifelong commitment to making his community and the Province of Nova Scotia a better place to live.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1035 – J. Lohr, Kings North - congratulating Greg Coldwell on his appointment as district governor of Rotary International for 2013-14.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1036 – P. Arab, Fairview-Clayton Park - congratulating Campbell Pickard in his continued pursuit of excellence in his sport of hockey.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1037 – K. MacFarlane, Pictou West – thanking Clara Hughes for her inspiration and example in advocating for mental health awareness and education and wishing her well on her Big Ride.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

Res. No. 1038 – T. Houston, Pictou East - thanking Brenda Sterling-Goodwin, who suffers from Lyme disease, for taking a leadership role and support her underlying message, which is education is key.

With the unanimous consent of the House, the usual two days' notice was waived and the motion carried nem con.

#### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

With unanimous consent, the House reverted business and the following notice was passed in at the Clerk's table:

Res. No. 1048 – Hon. M. Samson, Government House Leader - congratulating the Atlantic Chapter of Meeting Professionals International on their work in promoting this important industry and Nova Scotia's new Halifax Convention Centre.

#### **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

On motion that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply, a debate ensued during which the following took part: T. Houston. The motion carried.

On motion, the following Resolution was called:



No. E5, relating to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. ADJOURNED.

On motion, the Committee rose and the Speaker resumed the Chair. The Chair reported that the Committee had made some progress and begged leave to sit again.

#### **MOTIONS UNDER RULE 5(5)**

The Speaker interrupted the business having received notices of motion under Rule 5(5). The topic of late debate as submitted by E. Orrell, Northside-Westmount:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Liberal Government admit they broke their promise to remove the efficiency fee from power bills and forced that fee onto NSP shareholders.”

A debate ensued during which the following took part: Hon. C. d’Entremont, A. Rowe and Hon. F. Corbett.

#### **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON SUPPLY**

The Committee of the Whole on Supply resumed.

On motion, the following Resolution was called:

No. E5, relating to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. ADJOURNED.

On motion, the Committee rose and the Speaker resumed the Chair. The Chair reported that the Committee had made progress and begged leave to sit again.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The House adjourned to meet Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 A.M.

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32**

The following notices were passed in at the Clerk’s table:

Res. No. 1039 – E. Orrell, Northside-Westmount - congratulating Lisa MacNeil and the Northside Community Guest home for their innovative fundraising strategy.

Res. No. 1040 – J. Lohr, Kings North - applaud the efforts of Russ Payne and his Midget Division One Female Kentville Wildcats on a memorable season and for being the second-best team in the province in their age category.

Res. No. 1041 – Hon. A. Younger, Dartmouth East - congratulating Gilles Boudreau for the prestigious award as the 2013 French Second Language Education Teacher of the Year.

Res. No. 1042 – K. MacFarlane, Pictou West - congratulating Gerald Battist Trucking Ltd. on receiving the 2013 Pictou Chamber of Commerce Large Business of the Year Recognition Award.

Res. No. 1043 – A. MacMaster, Inverness - acknowledge Sister Mary MacLeod for her contribution to education and for her passionate commitment to her roots.

Res. No. 1044 – A. MacLeod, Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg - congratulating Louisbourg Seafoods on winning the Legacy Exporter Award.

Res. No. 1045 – Hon. Z. Churchill, Yarmouth - congratulating P.O. Kenney on his receipt of a meritorious service and wishing him continued success in his career.

Res. No. 1046 – Hon. C. d'Entremont, Argyle-Barrington - congratulating Robert Kenney on receiving one of the Provincial Volunteer Awards.

Res. No. 1047 – Hon. C. d'Entremont, Argyle-Barrington - congratulating Fraser Beer on being named Volunteer of the Year and thanking him for making Nova Scotia stronger.