



The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Fact Sheet No. 7

QUESTION PERIOD

Question Period is probably one of the most exciting times for a visitor to view the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. It is also the only part of the daily proceedings that is regularly televised. (See your cable listing for details).

It is an opportunity for Members to seek information about important matters which fall within the administrative responsibility of the government or of the specific Ministers to whom questions are addressed.

How does Question Period work?

A MLA is generally allowed an initial question and up to two supplementary or subsequent questions on the same general subject area.

Who maintains decorum during Question Period?

The Speaker.

What if the Minister to whom the question is directed doesn't have the answer readily available? The Minister may defer his or her answer, take the question as notice, make a short explanation as to why an answer cannot be given at the time or say nothing.

How is the order of questioning determined?

At the beginning of each Legislature, the House Leaders establish a rotation for questioning between parties.

The Leader of the Official Opposition usually asks the first question, which is followed by two supplementary questions. After that the Speaker recognizes whichever Member is the first to rise, though a rotation is often worked out in advance between the parties. Question Period is generally considered as opposition time but government members and independent Members are recognized by the Speaker to ask questions from time to time.

How much Time is Allowed?

Oral Questions last for 40 minutes. Each question and answer is limited to 45 seconds although party leaders receive 60 seconds for questions and answers.

Are there any Prohibitions during Oral Questions?

Points of Order and Matters of Privilege may not be raised during Oral Questions.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY TELEVISION COVERAGE – QUESTION PERIOD

- Broadcast live on Shaw Cable Systems – Monday-Thursday 1:30 p.m. (Channel 9)
- Audio feed from the House can be heard “live” on Channel 42
- Broadcast live using Media Player from the Legislative Assembly Website:
http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/business/question_period.html