

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA



Fact Sheet No. 3 LEGISLATIVE TERMINOLOGY

This Fact Sheet is designed to give you a better understanding of the terminology used in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. We hope you find it a useful tool while listening to or viewing proceedings of the Legislature.

ACT - A law passed by the Legislative Assembly which has received Royal Assent. Acts can be found in the Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba or can be purchased for a small fee from Statutory Publications at 200 Vaughan Street. Acts are also available on line at <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/index.php>.

ADDRESS IN REPLY - The means by which the House expresses its appreciation to the Lieutenant Governor for the Throne Speech. The motion for an address is usually adopted after an eight-day debate dealing with the government proposals contained in the Throne Speech.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS - A written motion requesting factual information concerning the operations of Government.

ADJOURNMENT OF DEBATE - A procedure which, if agreed to, suspends debate on the subject being considered until a subsequent sitting of the House. The mover of the adjournment motion is usually the next speaker on the main subject when it is again considered.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - The termination by the House of its own sitting for any period of time within a session.

AMENDMENT - Change to a Bill, proposed Resolution or Order by adding, deleting or inserting a word or words.

APPROPRIATION (SUPPLY) BILLS - The Bills which, when passed, give legislative authority to the Government's expenditure proposals. They are also known as Supply Bills.

BACKBENCHER (UPPERBENCHER) - A Member who is not a Minister of the Crown or the Leader of an opposition party.

BILL - Draft of proposed legislation, amendment or repeal of an existing law, or appropriation of public money. See Fact Sheet No. 4 "*How Laws are Made*" for further details.

BUDGET SPEECH - Statement by the Minister of Finance concerning anticipated fiscal plans, revenues and expenditures of the Government for a fiscal year.

CABINET - See *Executive Council*.

CAUCUS - All the elected Members of a given party. It usually meets daily during sessions and less frequently intersessionally.

CHAIR - The position of authority held by the Speaker in the Chamber and the Chairperson in a Committee.

CHAIRPERSON - The Presiding Member of a Committee.

CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY - Chief procedural advisor to the Speaker and Members of the Assembly and Secretary to the Legislative Assembly Management Commission. The Clerk is responsible for a wide range of procedural, managerial and administrative duties relating to the work of the Legislative Assembly and is the senior permanent employee of the Legislature.

CLERK ASSISTANT - The procedural advisor and administrative officer of Standing and Special Committees of the House. Clerks Assistant also serve as procedural officers at the Table in the Assembly Chamber.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - Committee comprised of all Members of the Assembly chaired by the Deputy Speaker. This Committee meets to consider the spending estimates of all government departments and

sits in three separate sections simultaneously, one in the Assembly Chamber and one in each of the committee rooms.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - Committee comprised of all Members.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READING - The final legislative stage in the Bill enactment process. Adoption of the motion for Concurrence and Third Reading constitutes passage of the Bill. (Also see Fact Sheet No. 4 “*How Laws are Made*” for further details.)

DEBATE - Formal discussion according to established procedure on a motion presented to the House.

DEBATES & PROCEEDINGS - Verbatim transcript of speeches made in the House. Also known as Hansard.

DEPUTY CLERK - Present at the table in the Legislative Assembly, assists the Clerk in his/her duties, and directs the activities of the Committees and Journals and Chamber Branches of the Assembly offices. Acts for the Clerk in his/her absence.

DEPUTY SERGEANT-AT-ARMS - Assists the Sergeant-at-Arms in the performance of his/her duties. This person is responsible for the supervision of attendants, messengers and pages, and for maintaining records of their attendance during sessions.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - In the absence of the Speaker, this individual performs the duties of Speaker of the Assembly and is also Chairperson of Committee of the Whole House.

DISSOLUTION - The bringing to the end of a Legislature at or before the conclusion of its five year term by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor. It is followed by a provincial election.

DIVISION BELL - An electronic chime used to summon Members to the Assembly Chamber for the taking of a division or recorded vote.

DIVISION - A vote in which the names of Members voting for and against the question are called out and recorded.

ESTIMATES - See *Committee of Supply*.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL – Consists of the Premier and the other Ministers of the Crown. It is collectively responsible to the Assembly for the establishment of government policy and the administration of the government.

FIRST READING - The first stage of the Bill enactment process which is not debatable, but the sponsor may briefly explain the purpose of his or her Bill.

GALLERIES - The areas in the House set aside for the public, the press and distinguished visitors who wish to attend a sitting.

GOVERNMENT – In the parliamentary system it refers to the Cabinet or Executive Council. Members of the Assembly who belong to the governing party but are not Ministers of the Crown are usually referred to as government supporters.

GRIEVANCE - Once during a session a Member may speak during routine proceedings on a grievance for up to 10 minutes on any subject of concern to his or her constituencies.

HANSARD - See *Debates and Proceedings*.

HOUSE - The Legislative Assembly during a sitting.

HOUSE LEADER - The member of a party responsible for the management of House business. The Government House Leader develops a schedule of House business through consultation with the House Leaders of the other recognized parties.

JOURNALS - The official record of the proceedings of the Assembly. Compiled from the Votes and Proceedings, edited, corrected, indexed and published at the conclusion of each Session.

LAW OFFICER - An officer of the Legislative Assembly who is Legal Counsel to the Speaker and to the Assembly and who gives advice about proposed legislation and prepares Bills and amendments and is Legislative Counsel for the Government.

LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION - The Member chosen to lead the party or coalition of parties holding the second largest number of seats in the House.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY - The legislative arm of the government of Manitoba consisting of the fifty-seven Members elected to represent the people of Manitoba.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR - The representative of the Crown in the Province, appointed by the Governor-General-in-Council for a term of five years.

LOGES - Seating areas provided for certain visiting dignitaries located to the right and left of the Chair.

MACE - Symbol of authority of the House.

MEMBER - Individual usually associated with a political party and elected to represent the constituents of a certain geographic area of the province in the Legislative Assembly. Often referred to as an MLA.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS - On each sitting day, up to five Members may be recognized to make Members Statements not exceeding two minutes each, on any matter.

MINISTER - A Member who is a member of the Executive Council (A Minister of the Crown) or Cabinet, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor on the advice of the Premier.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT - A short factual announcement or statement of government policy, presented to the House during routine proceedings by a Minister of the Crown. An Opposition Member can respond to the statement using the same amount of time that the Minister used.

MOTION - A proposal introduced by a Member that the House do something or order something to be done or express an opinion with regard to some matter. Motions moved in the House require a mover and a seconder.

NOTICE OF MOTION - Notice of a Member's intention to introduce a Motion, Bill, Written Question or Resolution is printed in the Notice Paper. Generally one day notice is required prior to the item appearing on the Order Paper.

NOTICE PAPER - A document published daily when the House is sitting which contains all notices of Bills, Motions and questions which Ministers and Private Members may wish to bring before it. The Notice Paper appears at the back of the Order Paper.

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION - The party or coalition of parties holding the second largest number of seats in the House. The role of the opposition is to scrutinize, comment and offer alternatives to Government Policies.

OPPOSITION DAY MOTIONS - In each session up to 3 days may be designated as Opposition Days. On each of these days a motion proposed by a recognized Opposition Party, of which the required notice has been given, will be considered. The Motion can only deal with matters within the administrative responsibility of the Government.

ORAL QUESTIONS - Questions directed by Members to Ministers of the Crown, during the period set aside for that purpose at each sitting, seeking information about important matters within the administrative responsibility of the Government.

ORDER FOR RETURN - Written motion requesting compilation of specific information by the Government.

ORDER PAPER - The daily agenda of matters that may be dealt with by the House on that day.

PAIRING - An arrangement whereby two Members on opposite sides of the House agree not to vote for a specific period of time. The arrangement, which permits Members to be absent on other business, is worked out either by respective Whips or by the Members themselves.

PETITIONS - A request, on behalf of a number of persons, presented to the House by a Member, that the Legislative Assembly take certain actions.

POINT OF ORDER - A question raised by a Member to call attention to the departure from established procedure, or call a breach of the Rules of the House.

POLITICAL PARTY - A group of people sharing political ideas which seeks to have its members elected.

PREMIER - The Leader of the Government, who is ordinarily the leader of the party having the greatest number of Members in the Legislative Assembly.

PRESS GALLERY - The area provided for the media to observe the proceedings in the House.

PRIVATE BILL - Relates to matters of particular interest or benefit to a person or persons or a public company or corporation and is introduced by a Private Member.

PRIVATE MEMBER - Any Member who is not a member of the Executive Council or leader of an opposition party and may sit on the Government or Opposition side of the House is often referred to as a "backbencher" or "upperbencher".

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS - 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays except during Throne Speech and Budget Debates, Members may introduce Private Members' Business and debate items other than Government motions.

PRIVILEGE - Those special rights and immunities enjoyed by the House as a collectivity and by each Member individually, without which Members could not carry out their duties and the House could not fulfill its functions.

PROROGATION - The action by which a session is concluded. All business not completed is terminated.

PUBLIC BILL - Relates to a matter of public policy and may be introduced by a Minister of the Crown or by a private Member.

QUESTION PERIOD - Forty minutes is provided to each sitting day so that Members, primarily from the opposition, may elicit information from the Government.

QUORUM - Except during Tuesday morning sittings for Private Members Business, the presence of at least 10 Members of the House, including the Speaker, is necessary to constitute a meeting of the House.

RECORDER - Employee of the Legislative Assembly responsible for recording on tape all speeches made in the House or in Committees for production of Hansard.

REGULATION - Subordinate legislation authorized and limited in scope by an Act.

REPORT STAGE - The stage at which the House may give final consideration to a Bill which has been considered by a committee and reported to the House with or without amendments. At this stage, Members may propose further amendments to specific clauses of the Bill. When any or all amendments are disposed of the sponsor of the Bill moves concurrence and Third Reading. (Also see *Fact Sheet No. 4.*)

SECOND READING - The stage when the principle of a Bill is debated and either accepted or rejected. It is the most important stage in the consideration of a Bill because adoption of the motion for Second Reading constitutes approval by the Legislative Assembly of the principle of a Bill. Amendments to apply a six month hoist or to present a reasoned amendment to Second Reading motions may be moved (Also see *Fact Sheet No. 4.*)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS - Officer of the Legislative Assembly responsible for security within the Assembly and for attending the House, safekeeping of the Mace, furniture and fittings of the Assembly, and for the conduct of messengers, attendants and pages.

SESSION - Period during which Members of the Assembly meet for the dispatch of business begun by the Speech from the Throne and ended by prorogation.

SESSIONAL PAPERS – Reports required to be tabled in the House by Statute Regulation, House Rule or Resolution, including Returns to Orders, Returns to Addresses for Papers and Annual and other Reports.

SITTING - A meeting of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, usually of one day's duration.

SPEAKER - The presiding officer of the Legislative Assembly is elected by Secret Ballot. He or she is required to preserve order and decorum and to enforce the Rules of the House.

SPEAKER'S GALLERY - Area provided for guests of the Speaker to view the proceedings in the House.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE - A general statement of Government achievements and proposed policies and an outline of the legislation to be introduced. It is written by the Government and delivered by the Lieutenant Governor on the opening day of each session.

STANDING COMMITTEES - Bodies appointed to examine in detail all matters referred to them by the House and to report their findings back to the House. They usually consist of 11 Members.

STATUTES – Bills passed by the Legislative Assembly and given Royal Assent which are then known as Acts or Statutes

SUBSTANTIVE MOTIONS - An independent motion complete in itself. Normally such motions require notice before they can be moved in the House.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS - A follow up question asked to obtain clarification of an answer which has been provided during Oral Questions.

TABLE OFFICERS - The procedural officers seated at the Table in the centre of the Assembly Chamber who provide procedural advice during sittings of the House, record votes, keep the minutes of proceedings and monitor the proceedings of the House.

TABLED PAPERS – Documents presented to the House or a Committee by a Member for information or consideration.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS - Official minutes of House proceedings published at the end of each day.

WHIP - The Member appointed by each Caucus to maintain discipline, ensure attendance of Members and give necessary information to other Members of his/her Party.