



Fact Sheet No. 1

THE ROLE OF THE SPEAKER

Impartiality is the fundamental principle of the Speakership. It is the Speaker who ensures that all parties are treated fairly and respectfully at all times in the House. A Speaker's word of caution or direction is usually sufficient to gain the cooperation of a Member who has violated the practices or rules of the House.

HISTORY

On July 15, 1870, upon proclamation of the Manitoba Act, Manitoba became a province. Its first election was held December 28, 1870, and the first Speaker of the First Legislative Assembly of Manitoba was the Honourable Joseph Royal - elected March 15, 1871.

A total of 30 Speakers have served the Legislative Assembly since Speaker Royal.

The Legislative Reading Room (Room 260) contains an information binder with biographies of all Manitoba Legislative Assembly Speakers.

ELECTING A SPEAKER

For the House to function in accordance with the law, a new Speaker must be elected by secret ballot immediately after the start of the first session of a new Legislature.

SPEAKER'S DUTIES

The Speaker plays an important part in the operation of the Assembly. They preside at all sittings; preserving order and decorum, and applying the practices and procedures of the House, as set out in the *Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba*.

The Speaker poses all questions for debate, and conducts all votes once debate is concluded. When Members raise points of order, matters of privilege or urgent public importance in the House, the Speaker decides whether such matters are in or out of order, and provides appropriate rulings. A matter is often taken under advisement, allowing the Speaker to review it in greater detail.

Can a Speaker take part in debate?

The Speaker is prevented by the Rules of the House from participating in debate.

Can the Speaker vote?

The Speaker is required to cast the deciding vote when votes are tied, but may not otherwise vote.

OTHER DUTIES

The duties of the Speaker do not end in the Chamber. They are responsible for the smooth operation of the Legislative Assembly Offices, supported by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

The Chief Electoral Officer, Ombudsman, Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, Auditor General, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Lobbyist Registrar and Commissioner for MLA Indemnities, Allowances and Retirement Benefits report to the Legislative Assembly through the Speaker.

The Speaker is the Chairperson of the Legislative Assembly Management Commission and of the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House. They are President of the Manitoba Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary, and President of the Manitoba section of Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie.

What happens if the Speaker is absent?

In the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker takes the Speaker's chair.

Does the Speaker attend Committee meetings?

With the exception of the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House, the Speaker does not attend sittings of Committees of the Whole House nor Standing Committee meetings.

Speaker's Parade

Each daily sitting begins with the entrance of the Speaker, preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms carrying the Mace, and followed by the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, a Clerk Assistant and the Pages.