



Votes and Proceedings
Wednesday, 4 June 2003 - No. 1

Two o'clock
President : Mr. Michel Bissonnet

The paper version of the Votes and Proceedings takes precedence over its electronic equivalent. The headings under the table of contents are neither all-inclusive nor restrictive.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Assembly was called to order at 2.08 o'clock p.m.

Moment of reflection

Today being the day appointed for the opening of the First Session of the Thirty-seventh Legislature of the Province of Québec for the despatch of business, the Members attending, having taken and subscribed the oaths required by law, took their seats in the National Assembly.

The Secretary General, Mr. François Côté, laid upon the Table the list of Members declared duly elected following the general election held on 14 April 2003 and the election held in the Electoral Division of Champlain on 20 May 2003. These documents, received on 23 April and on 27 May 2003, had been forwarded to him by Mr. Marcel Blanchet, Chief Electoral Officer, pursuant to section 380 of the *Election Act* (R.S.Q., c. E-3.3).

(Sessional Paper No. 1-20030604)

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
THIRTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

<i>Electoral Divisions</i>	<i>Members Elected</i>	<i>Party Affiliations</i>
Abitibi-Est	Pierre Corbeil	Québec Liberal Party
Abitibi-Ouest	François Gendron	Parti Québécois
Acadie	Yvan Bordeleau	Québec Liberal Party
Anjou	Lise Thériault	Québec Liberal Party
Argenteuil	David Whissell	Québec Liberal Party
Arthabaska	Claude Bachand	Québec Liberal Party
Beauce-Nord	Janvier Grondin	Action démocratique du Québec
Beauce-Sud	Diane Leblanc	Québec Liberal Party
Beauharnois	Serge Deslières	Parti Québécois
Bellechasse	Dominique Vien	Québec Liberal Party

4 June 2003

Berthier	Alexandre Bourdeau	Parti Québécois
Bertrand	Claude Cousineau	Parti Québécois
Blainville	Richard Legendre	Parti Québécois
Bonaventure	Nathalie Normandeau	Québec Liberal Party
Borduas	Jean-Pierre Charbonneau	Parti Québécois
Bourassa-Sauvé	Line Beauchamp	Québec Liberal Party
Bourget	Diane Lemieux	Parti Québécois
Brome-Missisquoi	Pierre Paradis	Québec Liberal Party
Chambly	Diane Legault	Québec Liberal Party
Champlain	Noëlla Champagne	Parti Québécois
Chapleau	Benoît Pelletier	Québec Liberal Party
Charlesbourg	Éric R. Mercier	Québec Liberal Party
Charlevoix	Rosaire Bertrand	Parti Québécois
Châteauguay	Jean-Marc Fournier	Québec Liberal Party
Chauveau	Sarah Perreault	Québec Liberal Party
Chicoutimi	Stéphane Bédard	Parti Québécois
Chomedey	Thomas J. Mulcair	Québec Liberal Party
Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Marc Picard	Action démocratique du Québec
Crémazie	Michèle Lamquin-Éthier	Québec Liberal Party
D'Arcy-McGee	Lawrence S. Bergman	Québec Liberal Party
Deux-Montagnes	Hélène Robert	Parti Québécois
Drummond	Normand Jutras	Parti Québécois
Dubuc	Jacques Côté	Parti Québécois
Duplessis	Lorraine Richard	Parti Québécois
Fabre	Michelle Courchesne	Québec Liberal Party
Frontenac	Laurent Lessard	Québec Liberal Party
Gaspé	Guy Lelièvre	Parti Québécois
Gatineau	Réjean Lafrenière	Québec Liberal Party
Gouin	André Boisclair	Parti Québécois
Groulx	Pierre Descoteaux	Québec Liberal Party
Hochelaga-Maisonneuve	Louise Harel	Parti Québécois
Hull	Roch Cholette	Québec Liberal Party
Iberville	Jean Rioux	Québec Liberal Party
Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Maxime Arseneau	Parti Québécois

4 June 2003

Jacques-Cartier	Geoffrey Kelley	Québec Liberal Party
Jean-Lesage	Michel Després	Québec Liberal Party
Jeanne-Mance–Viger	Michel Bissonnet	Québec Liberal Party
Jean-Talon	Margaret F. Delisle	Québec Liberal Party
Johnson	Claude Boucher	Parti Québécois
Joliette	Jonathan Valois	Parti Québécois
Jonquière	Françoise Gauthier	Québec Liberal Party
Kamouraska-Témiscouata	Claude Béchard	Québec Liberal Party
Labelle	Sylvain Pagé	Parti Québécois
Lac-Saint-Jean	Stéphan Tremblay	Parti Québécois
LaFontaine	Tony Tomassi	Québec Liberal Party
La Peltrie	France Hamel	Québec Liberal Party
La Pinière	Fatima Houda-Pepin	Québec Liberal Party
Laporte	Michel Audet	Québec Liberal Party
La Prairie	Jean Dubuc	Québec Liberal Party
L'Assomption	Jean-Claude St-André	Parti Québécois
Laurier-Dorion	Christos Sirros	Québec Liberal Party
Laval-des-Rapides	Alain Paquet	Québec Liberal Party
Laviolette	Julie Boulet	Québec Liberal Party
Lévis	Carole Théberge	Québec Liberal Party
Lotbinière	Sylvie Roy	Action démocratique du Québec
Louis-Hébert	Sam Hamad	Québec Liberal Party
Marguerite-Bourgeoys	Monique Jérôme-Forget	Québec Liberal Party
Marguerite-D'Youville	Pierre Moreau	Québec Liberal Party
Marie-Victorin	Cécile Vermette	Parti Québécois
Marquette	François Ouimet	Québec Liberal Party
Maskinongé	Francine Gaudet	Québec Liberal Party
Masson	Luc Thériault	Parti Québécois
Matane	Nancy Charest	Québec Liberal Party
Matapédia	Danielle Doyer	Parti Québécois
Mégantic-Compton	Daniel Bouchard	Québec Liberal Party
Mercier	Daniel Turp	Parti Québécois
Mille-Îles	Maurice Clermont	Québec Liberal Party
Mirabel	Denise Beaudoin	Parti Québécois
Montmagny-L'Islet	Norbert Morin	Québec Liberal Party
Montmorency	Raymond Bernier	Québec Liberal Party
Mont-Royal	Philippe Couillard	Québec Liberal Party

4 June 2003

Nelligan	Russell Williams	Québec Liberal Party
Nicolet-Yamaska	Michel Morin	Parti Québécois
Notre-Dame-de-Grâce	Russell Copeman	Québec Liberal Party
Orford	Pierre Reid	Québec Liberal Party
Outremont	Yves Séguin	Québec Liberal Party
Papineau	Norman MacMillan	Québec Liberal Party
Pointe-aux-Trembles	Nicole Léger	Parti Québécois
Pontiac	Charlotte L'Ecuyer	Québec Liberal Party
Portneuf	Jean-Pierre Soucy	Québec Liberal Party
Prévost	Lucie Papineau	Parti Québécois
Richelieu	Sylvain Simard	Parti Québécois
Richmond	Yvon Vallières	Québec Liberal Party
Rimouski	Solange Charest	Parti Québécois
Rivière-du-Loup	Mario Dumont	Action démocratique du Québec
Robert-Baldwin	Pierre Marsan	Québec Liberal Party
Roberval	Karl Blackburn	Québec Liberal Party
Rosemont	Rita Dionne-Marsolais	Parti Québécois
Rousseau	François Legault	Parti Québécois
Rouyn-Noranda–Témiscamingue	Daniel Bernard	Québec Liberal Party
Saint-François	Monique Gagnon-Tremblay	Québec Liberal Party
Saint-Henri–Sainte-Anne	Nicole Loiselle	Québec Liberal Party
Saint-Hyacinthe	Léandre Dion	Parti Québécois
Saint-Jean	Jean-Pierre Paquin	Québec Liberal Party
Saint-Laurent	Jacques P. Dupuis	Québec Liberal Party
Sainte-Marie–Saint-Jacques	André Boulerice	Parti Québécois
Saint-Maurice	Claude Pinard	Parti Québécois
Shefford	Bernard Brodeur	Québec Liberal Party
Sherbrooke	Jean Charest	Québec Liberal Party
Soulanges	Lucie Charlebois	Québec Liberal Party
Taillon	Pauline Marois	Parti Québécois
Taschereau	Agnès Maltais	Parti Québécois
Terrebonne	Jocelyne Caron	Parti Québécois
Trois-Rivières	André Gabias	Québec Liberal Party

4 June 2003

Ungava	Michel Létourneau	Parti Québécois
Vachon	Camil Bouchard	Parti Québécois
Vanier	Marc Bellemare	Québec Liberal Party
Vaudreuil	Yvon Marcoux	Québec Liberal Party
Verchères	Bernard Landry	Parti Québécois
Verdun	Henri-François Gauthrin	Québec Liberal Party
Viau	William Cusano	Québec Liberal Party
Vimont	Vincent Auclair	Québec Liberal Party
Westmount–Saint-Louis	Jacques Chagnon	Québec Liberal Party

The Secretary General communicated to the Assembly and then laid upon the Table tabled seven letters he had received from Mr. Charest, Premier, dated 5 May 2003, informing him of the following appointments:

- Mr. Jacques Dupuis, the Member for Saint-Laurent, as Government House Leader, effective 29 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 2-20030604)
- Mr. Thomas Mulcair, the Member for Chomedey, as Deputy Government House Leader, effective 29 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 3-20030604)
- Mrs. Michèle Lamquin-Éthier, the Member for Crémazie, as Deputy Government House Leader, effective 29 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 4-20030604)
- Mr. Yvon Vallières, the Member for Richmond, as Chief Government Whip, effective 29 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 5-20030604)
- Mrs. Nicole Loiselle, the Member for Saint-Henri–Sainte-Anne, as Deputy Government Whip, effective 29 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 6-20030604)
- Mrs. Margeret Delisle, the Member for Jean-Talon, as Deputy Government Whip, effective 29 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 7-20030604)

4 June 2003

- Mr. Norman MacMillan, the Member for Papineau, as caucus chairman of the Québec Liberal Party, effective 29 April 2003.
(Sessional Paper No. 8-20030604)

The Secretary General then communicated to the Assembly and then laid upon the Table tabled five letters he had received from Mr. Landry, Leader of the Official Opposition, dated 25 and 29 April 2003, informing him of the following appointments:

- Mr. André Boisclair, the Member for Gouin, as Official Opposition House Leader, effective 29 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 9-20030604)
- Mr. Stéphane Bédard, the Member for Chicoutimi, as Deputy Opposition House Leader, effective 29 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 10-20030604)
- Mr. Michel Morin, the Member for Nicolet-Yamaska, as Chief Opposition Whip, effective 25 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 11-20030604)
- Mrs. Nicole Léger, the Member for Pointe-aux-Trembles, as Deputy Opposition Whip, effective 29 April 2003;
(Sessional Paper No. 12-20030604)
- Mrs. Agnès Maltais, the Member for Taschereau, as caucus chairman of the Official Opposition, effective 29 April 2003.
(Sessional Paper No. 13-20030604)

Mr. Charest, Premier, informed the Secretary General that the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor requested the Members of the National Assembly to elect a President.

The Secretary General then invited the senior Member of the Assembly, Mr. Gendron, Member for Abitibi-Ouest, to preside at the election of a President of the National Assembly.

4 June 2003

The senior Member of the Assembly then invited the Assembly to elect the President.

Mr. Charest, Premier, moved:

THAT Mr. Michel Bissonnet, Member for the Electoral Division of Jeanne-Mance–Viger, be elected President of the National Assembly.

The motion was carried nemine contradicente.

Mr. Bissonnet (Jeanne-Mance–Viger) was proclaimed elected as President of the Assembly.

Mr. Charest, Premier, and Mr. Landry, Leader of the Official Opposition, then accompanied Mr. Bissonnet to the Chair.

The Mace was then laid upon the Table and, consequently, the sitting opened.

Mr. Bissonnet delivered an acceptance speech.

Mr. President then invited the Assembly to elect the First Vice-President.

Mr. Charest, Premier, moved:

THAT Mr. Christos Sirros, Member for the Electoral Division of Laurier-Dorion, be elected First Vice-President of the National Assembly.

The motion was carried nemine contradicente.

Mr. Sirros was proclaimed elected as First Vice-President of the Assembly.

4 June 2003

Mr. President then invited the Assembly to elect the Second Vice-President.

Mr. Charest, Premier, moved:

THAT Mrs. Diane Leblanc, Member for the Electoral
Division of Beauce-Sud, be elected Second Vice-President of the
National Assembly.

The motion was carried nemine contradicente.

Mrs. Leblanc was proclaimed elected as Second Vice-President of the Assembly.

Mr. President then invited the Assembly to elect the Third Vice-President.

Mr. Landry, Leader of the Official Opposition, moved:

THAT Mr. François Gendron, Member for the Electoral
Division of Abitibi-Ouest, be elected Third Vice-President of the
National Assembly.

The motion was carried nemine contradicente.

Mr. Gendron (Abitibi-Ouest) was proclaimed elected as Third Vice-President of
the Assembly.

Mr. Charest, Premier, Mr. Landry, Leader of the Official Opposition, and
Mr. Dumont (Rivière-du-Loup) then took the floor.

Mr. President informed the Assembly that the Honourable the Lieutenant-
Governor would now deliver the Opening Address of the Session.

Mr. President suspended the sitting at 2.55 o'clock p.m.

4 June 2003

The proceedings resumed at 3.05 o'clock p.m.

The Honourable Lise Thibault, Lieutenant-Governor, entered the National Assembly and, being seated in the Chair, was pleased to open the Session by the following Address:

Mr. President of the National Assembly,
Mr. Premier,
Mr. Leader of the Official Opposition,
Members of the Executive Council,
Members of the National Assembly,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we open the First Session of the Thirty-seventh Legislature of the National Assembly of Québec.

It is yet another historic moment in our long parliamentary and political life, since it marks the beginning of the proceedings of the new Parliament elected by the citizens of Québec on 14 April last, as well as the presentation, by the Premier, of its Government agenda.

I would immediately like to take the opportunity to salute the new Premier, Mr. Jean Charest, as well as the new Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Bernard Landry. The Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition sat in this very Assembly, during the previous Legislature, but played different roles. They are experienced parliamentarians, who are most familiar with the operations of the National Assembly.

During this new Legislature, the new Government shall have to exercise initiative and the Opposition, vigilance. I am convinced that while taking on their respective roles, the Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition will ensure, by their presence, that the debates will be conducted with the requisite civility and mutual respect, as they demonstrated before the population of Québec changed their roles.

The Thirty-seventh Legislature of our history marks a new stage in our democratic life. As the first woman lieutenant-governor, I am delivering my third opening address today. I am pleased to see that the National Assembly now has more women than ever before. Indeed, on 14 April last, our fellow citizens elected the highest number of women Members that Québec has ever had.

4 June 2003

Our Parliament now boasts 38 women, which is close to one third of the total number of Members, in comparison with 35 women at the end of the previous Legislature. This represents significant progress since 14 December 1961, the date on which the first woman Member, Mrs. Claire Kirkland Casgrain, was elected.

It seems like such a long time ago when the number of women Members could be counted on the fingers of just one hand. However, it was only in 1985 with the 33rd Legislature that this Parliament finally was able to count more than ten women Members. However, the involvement of women in politics, of which the membership of the National Assembly is the reflection, must yet be strengthened. I hope that the current record established at the beginning of the Thirty-seventh Legislature will be broken as quickly as possible.

Our National Assembly has 48 newly-elected Members, whom I wish to salute more particularly. Among these are some very young newcomers, such as Alexandre Bourdeau, the youngest of the elected representatives of Québec.

Our Parliament also has experienced Members, whose knowledge is invaluable, such as François Gendron and Yvon Vallières, our longest-serving politicians. Yvon Vallières was first elected in 1973, and François Gendron has been a Member without a break in his term of office since 1976, when our youngest Member, Alexandre Bourdeau, was not yet born. I salute their presence here, representing both the experience of maturity and the boldness of youth.

Among the Members who were elected in the previous Legislature and who are no longer among us, I would like to mention the retirement from politics of four parliamentarians who played a key role in our political life in this past quarter of a century. These four Members are André Bourbeau, Jacques Brassard, Guy Chevette and Robert Middlemiss. They exercised their parliamentary duties without a break in term of office for close to or over twenty-five years. I would like to salute them on behalf of the entire National Assembly and wish them a well-deserved retirement.

The National Assembly, which today begins its proceedings, is thus deeply transformed, in comparison with the previous Legislature. The Premier clearly indicated this will to transform and change in the past weeks and, initially, to redefine the membership of the Government team. Upon introducing the first Québec Government elected in the 21st century, the Premier underlined the fact that the Cabinet had been reduced by one third in relation to the previous Government. The Premier emphasized the place of women in politics by establishing a Cabinet that boasts one of the highest female representations in our history. More specifically, this Cabinet includes the first woman Minister of Agriculture, for which I am most pleased. Women also hold some of the most strategic offices, such as those of Deputy Premier and Chair of the Treasury Board.

4 June 2003

The Premier announced his intention regarding the organization of the Québec State. The task that the new Government is to undertake will require determination and diplomacy. I trust that it will be carried out in observance of the priorities that the new Government has set for itself, at the forefront of which are health and education.

The Government is thus undertaking this new Legislature with a heavily-laden work programme that it will be dedicated to carrying out. This work programme above all concerns health, the top priority of this Government. You have committed yourself to ensuring that services to the sick and to those among us who need help shall be at the heart of the efforts of those who work in the health and social services network. This concern for individuals, extending beyond the structures, reveals a desire to bring the State and the citizens closer together.

The Government also attaches great importance to education. As you have already indicated, Québec's success is achieved through knowledge and competence, and you will specifically focus on the problem of students dropping out of school. In all sectors of activity, the Government, with this new Legislature, will be concentrating on a number of issues for which change is in order.

Facing the Government, the opposition will also focus on fully exercising its role and on carrying out the role of vigilance expected by the citizens. The Official Opposition is strong, it is composed of seasoned politicians who have assumed major responsibilities in recent years. I believe that our democracy can only be better for it.

The governance of the State of Québec can only be better ensured if the Government must answer to Members who are well prepared, who are sensitive to the issues at hand and who are very aware of the extent of their role.

The Government's implementation of the programme for which it was elected will be achieved within this Parliament, one of the oldest in the world. Québec is extremely proud, and rightly so, of its long democratic history.

This Parliament contributed to the birth and development throughout the world of the concept of responsible government. It is at the very heart of our democratic life. This is where the great debates defining tomorrow's society take place. It is also here that oftentimes contradictory opinions are represented and defended in view of the major challenges that we must meet.

I trust that each of the Members of this new Parliament will wholeheartedly carry out the duties conferred upon them by the prestigious heritage of which they are now the guardians and will ensure that this 37th Legislature fully meets the hopes and desires of our fellow citizens.

4 June 2003

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the National Assembly, you hold several of the keys that will open the doors to a better future for our fellow citizens. I pray that Divine Providence may enlighten you and guide you in order that this future is up to your expectations and convictions.

Thank you.

The Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor was pleased to retire.

Mr. President took the Chair.

Mr. Charest, Premier, then delivered the Opening Speech of the Session on behalf of the Government.

At 4.33 o'clock p.m., Mr. President adjourned the Assembly until Thursday, 5 June 2003, at 10.00 o'clock a.m.

MICHEL BISSONNET

President