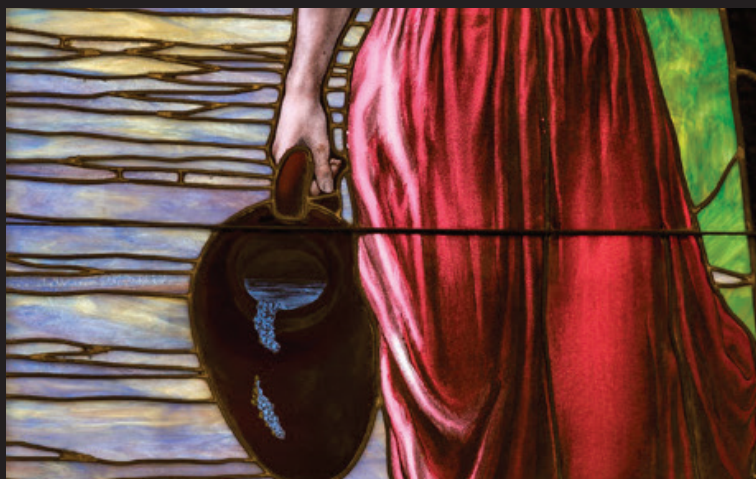
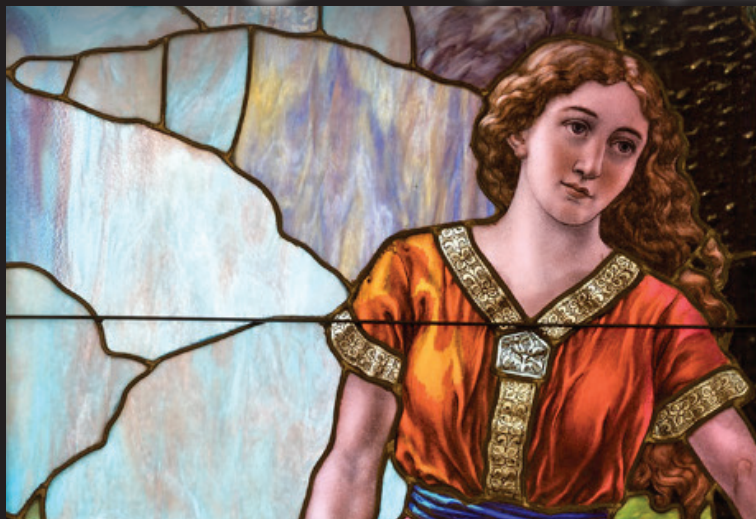


Canadian Parliamentary Review



Volume 43, No. 1



*"I draw from the source
but never exhaust it"*

A Focus on Parliamentary Libraries

Greetings Grandpa and Grandpa!

Although I never knew him, every day when I walk through the main hallway of Province House in Nova Scotia, I can greet my great-great-grandfather James McDonald. He served as the federal Minister of Justice and features prominently in a composite photograph commemorating the 1878 installation of the Marquis of Lorne as Governor General of Canada. In another room, he's featured with another of my great-great-grandfathers, Samuel Leonard Shannon.

James McDonald was born in Bridgeville, Pictou County, Nova Scotia in 1828 to a poor Scottish farming family. In beginning his legal career, James articulated

under the very conservative Martin Isaac Wilkins. He must have held his mentor in high regard; not only did he change his political stripes, but he also married Wilkins' stepdaughter. Moreover, he disregarded highland Scot tradition and named his first-born son after his father-in-law instead of his father. James successfully stood for election in 1863 as a Liberal Conservative and was appointed the Railway Commissioner in Charles Tupper's government. James fought for the government to build a railway from Truro to Pictou; he did win that fight, but only after he became the financial secretary in 1864 and appropriated the necessary funds.



The *Canadian Parliamentary Review* was founded in 1978 to inform Canadian legislators about activities of the federal, provincial and territorial branches of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and to promote the study of and interest in Canadian parliamentary institutions. Contributions from legislators, former members, staff and all other persons interested in the objectives of the Review are welcome.

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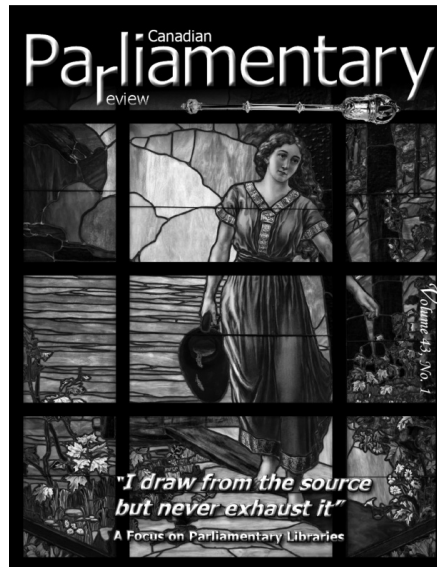
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A Focus on Parliamentary Libraries

In an age when information is at your finger tips, when answers to a query are a quick Google search away, and when the number of print publications and the need for physical copies of books is in decline, should we be asking the question: whither the library?

In this theme issue on parliamentary libraries, the Canadian Parliamentary Review provides some answers, and finds that while their role has shifted over the years, parliamentary libraries remain an important resource for the people and institutions they serve.

In their historical review, Vicki Whitmell and Sarah Goodyear trace the development of parliamentary libraries from often humble beginnings to their present state. They note how the Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Canada (APLIC) has permitted the country's parliamentary libraries to work together to identify and share best practices, and monitor emerging technology and trends.

Carolyné Ménard explains that, as stewards of objectivity and truth for their clients, parliamentary libraries have been combatting fake news long before that term hit the headlines. She defines the concept and outlines current steps to help clients assess the quality and reliability of sources.

Noting the political and linguistic challenges of navigating bilingualism in the federal parliament, Alexandre Fortier outlines the Library of Parliament Subject Taxonomy. He discusses two challenges related to its development: language neutrality and the interlinguistic equivalence of concepts between English and French.

Michael Dewing and Meghan Laidlaw explore how the role of research librarians has expanded to allow them to become subject matter experts who help clients requiring context and analysis in specialized areas.

In a modified roundtable, we ask some parliamentarians why and how they use their legislative libraries – or, in the case of one of Yukon's MLAs, what she does in the absence of one.

Remaining in the North, Gerry Burla and Riel Gallant offer an explanation of how the two territories, that use a consensus form of government, use their small legislative libraries and reading rooms.

Heather Close and Andrea Hyde detail some of the specialized resources available in Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador's parliamentary libraries, respectively.

And, Lane Lamb, Janet Bennett, Josée Gagnon, and Dominique Parent share some of the treasures held by the Library of Parliament.

Finally, two of our regular features (Parliamentary Relatives and the Sketches column) highlight subjects with connections to parliamentary libraries.

I would like to thank APLIC, and especially CPR editorial board member Kim Hammond, for their work and co-operation in developing such a robust theme issue.

Will Stos, Editor



Legislative and Parliamentary Libraries in Canada: Two Hundred Years of Service, Support and Information

Legislative and parliamentary libraries have come a long way from their humble (and sometimes informal) beginnings. In this article, the authors trace their history, outline their roles and functions, discuss some challenges they face, and look to future development. While each legislative and parliamentary library is unique, reflecting local needs and histories, they also share common responsibilities to parliamentarians and legislative staff as they do the work of parliamentary democracy. The authors note how the founding of the Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Canada/L'Association des bibliothécaires parlementaires du Canada (APLIC/ABPAC) has permitted the country's parliamentary libraries to work together to identify and share best practices. They conclude by suggesting that these libraries will continue to monitor trends, evolve and adapt to new technology as they look to the future.

Vicki Whitmell and Sarah Goodyear

Background and History

The early growth of legislative and parliamentary libraries¹ in Canada from the late 1700s to the early 1900s mirrors the development of legislative libraries in other western-style democracies. Designed to support and inform Members as they make policy, debate, pass legislation, oversee the government, and serve their constituents; these libraries continue to provide specialized and innovative research and reference service and to acquire and curate extensive and varied print and electronic collections. All are focused on meeting the day-to-day and long-term information needs of parliamentarians.

The Assemblée Nationale in France created the first parliamentary library in 1796. Four years later the formidable Library of Congress was created to

serve the US Congress. Today in Canada all provinces and territories (except Yukon) have a legislative library and the federal parliament has the Library of Parliament. As our timeline shows, each library's individual history parallels the political maturation of their jurisdiction and their entry into Confederation.

It seems fitting that the first legislative library in Canada was in Prince Edward Island, the location of the founding of Confederation. The library originated with the establishment of the Legislature in 1773, although it did not have a permanent home until it moved into the second floor of the Colonial Building (now known as Province House) in Charlottetown in 1847. New Brunswick established its library in 1841, although it had been functioning informally since the province was formed in 1784. The Nova Scotia Legislative Library began in 1862, although the House had purchased statutes and journals from other jurisdictions as early as 1758. The Newfoundland and Labrador Legislative Library traces its origins back to 1835. It was dismantled from 1933 to 1949 during the time of the Commission of Newfoundland. Following Newfoundland's entry into Confederation in 1949 the library was re-assembled.

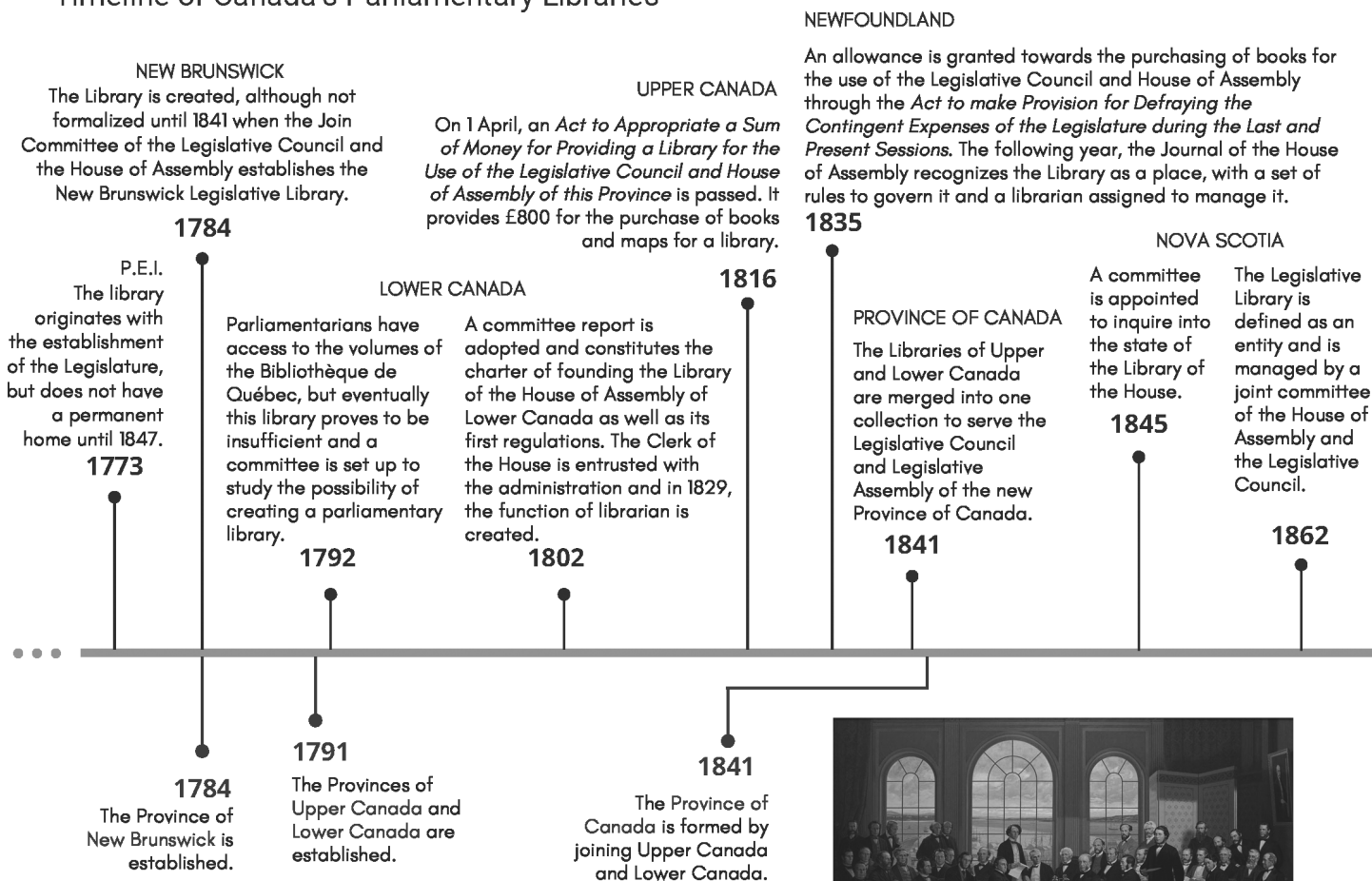
Vicki Whitmell is Legislative Librarian and Executive Director of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's Information and Technology Services Division. Sarah Goodyear is Promotions Coordinator for the Legislative Library and Research Services at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Book collections first emerged in the House of Assemblies of Upper and Lower Canada in the 1790s. Upper Canada formally began to fund its library in 1816 and its first librarian was hired in 1827. In Lower Canada a resolution was passed in the House of Assembly in 1802 to create a library, and the first librarian was hired in 1829. These two libraries operated separately until the Canadas united to form the Province of Canada in 1841. At that time, the two collections were purchased from the legislatures by the new government. The newly created library accompanied the Legislature of the Province of Canada as it travelled for more than a decade between Kingston and Montreal, and then between Toronto and Quebec, before finding its permanent home in Ottawa as the Library of Parliament in 1867.

Saskatchewan's legislative library originated in 1876 as the North-West Government Library, a working collection that moved with the territorial administration. After 1905 and the establishment of the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, the library became the Saskatchewan Legislative Library. Alberta was granted \$6,113.25 in lieu to establish a new library for the province.

Although money was voted for a library in 1858 in British Columbia, its beginnings are generally traced to a second vote in 1863, as it is not clear if the money given in 1858 was spent. The first permanent librarian was appointed in 1863.

Timeline of Canada's Parliamentary Libraries



Timeline of Canadian Confederation

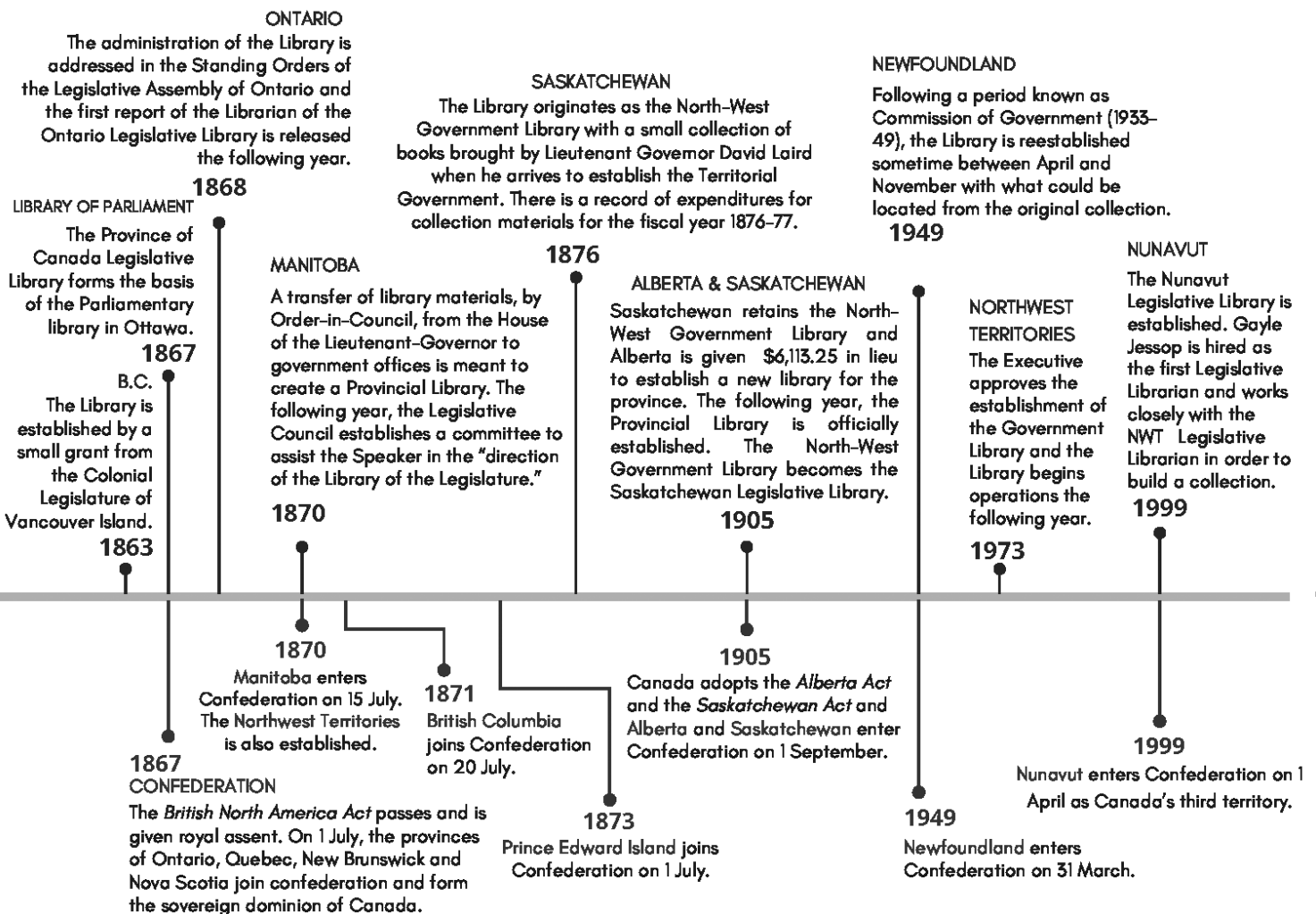
Manitoba recognizes November 5, 1870 as the date that its legislative library was established, although that date reflects only the transfer of library materials from the House of the Lieutenant-Governor to government offices. The transfer was meant to create a provincial library and during the first session of the first legislature, the Legislative Council appointed a committee to consider a library. The first mention of a report to the Legislature about the library dates to 1875.

In 1973, the Executive of the Northwest Territories approved the establishment of a government library which was subsequently transferred to the Legislative Assembly in 1992. Canada's newest legislative library is at the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. Although planning began before the territory was established, the library opened in 1999.

Roles

Legislative libraries provide access to 'all sides/perspectives' of issues, debates and policy. Through their collections and services they gather reliable information from verifiable and accurate sources, ensuring that the information they provide as a whole is unbiased, objective and non-partisan.

Each legislative and parliamentary library is unique, reflecting local needs and histories. Services and collections respond to the specific issues and policy areas that are under the jurisdiction of their government. They tailor their work in part by capturing, indexing and making available the published output of the legislature or parliament and government documents published by ministries and the agencies and boards and commissions of the province or territory. Their



subject matter experts, whether librarians or research analysts, provide information and reviews, briefings, media and press packages, reports, background, and analysis in a variety of formats and in a broad range of subjects. Confidentiality, non-partisanship, timeliness and accuracy are foundational principles of service.

Some legislative libraries exist solely to serve parliamentarians; others also have a mandate to serve the public. However, even if a library is not open to the public to visit and use, many legislative libraries make their catalogues or electronic collections widely available online.

The Library of Parliament and the Assemblies of Ontario and Quebec all have specialized research departments that provide in-depth research and comparative studies to individual Members. They also support legislative committees directly with analysis and report writing services.

With modern Open Government and Open Parliament initiatives promoting increased transparency of government and legislative information and data, legislative libraries often play a role in ensuring that their legislature's publishing, and information output and the information that the Assembly has created, collected, or saved is made available in digital formats that can be found easily.

Working Together

All types of libraries benefit their users by cooperating and sharing with each other. Legislative libraries are no exception. From the early days, Canada's legislative libraries worked closely together. In 1975 the Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Canada/L'Association des bibliothécaires parlementaires du Canada (APLIC/ABPAC) was officially chartered. Early work of the new association included formalizing the exchange of official publications between the provinces and establishing depository systems for provincial government publications. Both initiatives helped to preserve these valuable materials for the long term.

APLIC/ABPAC's annual conferences allow the libraries to catch up on activities and projects, hear of new developments and approaches to serving Members, discuss challenges, consider changes to the publishing and technology worlds and their possible impact on and utility for library services and products, and to learn from one other.

The libraries also exchange information through their listservs. These forums allow each library to quickly gather responses to legislative and policy questions that cross Canadian jurisdictions. This helps everyone to share the workload and to provide accurate information to Members more quickly and efficiently.

APLIC/ABPAC members also complete a survey each year on their services, staffing and resources. This helps the group as a whole to identify trends and best practices, and allows individual libraries to compare what they offer with those offering similar services to legislatures across the country.

One of the Association's most important recent initiatives has been the development and maintenance of the publicly-available GALLOP Portal (Government and Legislative Libraries Online Publications Portal: www.galloportal.ca), a full-text searchable database of the legislative and government publications held by Canadian legislative libraries. The Portal has resulted in efficiencies, savings, and increased availability of legislative and government information. It has achieved its original goals to:

- support parliamentarians by locating and providing the information resources they require to make informed decisions;
- reduce duplication among legislative, academic and public libraries in collection activities and contribute to national collection efforts;
- facilitate pan-jurisdictional research.

The Portal continues to evolve with technology and as the needs of legislative libraries and legislators change.

Consultation and cooperation among legislative libraries to improve services to parliamentarians extends beyond Canada's borders. Members of APLIC/ABPAC play a contributing role in the International Federation of Library Association's (IFLA) Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments. Mature parliaments like those in Canada have a responsibility to assist developing parliaments, and the IFLA section provides guidance and practical solutions for parliaments in the early stages of developing their libraries and/or research services.

Challenges

Meeting the needs of busy parliamentarians and legislative staff can be challenging. Libraries recognize that Members often suffer from information overload so they look for ways to provide the right information, at the right time, in the right format. This requires a type of partnership with their Members, who often need assistance to understand what exactly it is that they need. In turn, legislative libraries need a better understanding of how Members use the information they receive and how that might change day-to-day and over time.

Costs continue to rise for reliable and accurate newspapers, publications, books and databases, so legislative libraries must continually look for ways to work with each other and with other libraries to share resources and reduce costs. Many Canadian legislative libraries are part of consortial buying groups that help to reduce the cost of licences and subscriptions.

Newly elected Members may not know where to turn for information on the wide variety of subjects with which they must quickly become familiar. Libraries are one of the few services offered by legislatures that Members can choose whether or not to use. Helping Members to understand that the services they receive from a legislative library are more specialized and much more extensive than from a public or an academic library may take some time. Promoting library services is done through one-on-one visits, training sessions and general marketing campaigns.

It is often difficult to measure the impact of what legislative libraries do and how their information or products are used by Members. With so many available avenues for information, legislative libraries must focus on what they do best and what is needed the most. Helping Members and their staff to know how to use the library, its resources and staff effectively is an important role that libraries play, especially in a world where unfiltered information cannot always be relied upon.

The Future

Despite ongoing challenges, Canada's legislative libraries have demonstrated their value to individual Members and parliaments over the last two hundred years. This is reflected in how often they are used by all Members, whether they be government or opposition. It is shown in the early and ongoing support and commitment that Members have given and continue to give to their libraries, and it is shown in the ways that libraries are involved in how information is used, preserved and disseminated in parliaments.

Canada's legislative and parliamentary libraries will continue to evolve to meet Members' changing needs and to embrace advancements in technology and to provide support to parliamentarians as they serve their constituents, make informed decisions, and contribute overall to policy, law making and oversight.

Notes

- 1 For the purposes of this article 'legislative library' refers to any of the libraries serving a legislative assembly at the provincial or territorial level or Parliament in Ottawa.

Parliamentary Libraries, Trusted Allies in the Fight Against Fake News

Parliamentary libraries are stewards of objectivity and truth for their clients; they were combatting fake news long before that term hit the headlines. In this article, the author explores the concept of fake news, outlines how parliamentary libraries across the country have undertaken initiatives designed to educate their clients and the public about disinformation, and lists some of the procedures researchers in these libraries have adopted to ensure they provide objective and non-partisan information for their communities.

Carolyne Ménard

Fake news has been gaining prominence in the media for some years.¹ While fake news is by no means a recent phenomenon,² the mutations in traditional media and the popularity of social networks mean that it can proliferate at an alarming rate. Action is so urgent that some countries, like Finland, have launched national campaigns to combat the plague of media illiteracy.³ Around the world, institutions such as public, academic and school libraries, have undertaken initiatives designed to educate the public about disinformation. In the world of politics, parliamentary libraries play a very important role in the fight against fake news. By providing high-quality documentation and by responding to information and research requests from parliamentarians across the country, legislative libraries in Canada have, for many decades, been helping to protect political decision-makers from the damage disinformation can cause. The aim of this article is to provide an overview of the services and initiatives that parliamentary libraries in Canada have put in place in order to raise their users' awareness of disinformation and to combat the spread of fake news.

Fake news: some definitions

Before we describe those initiatives, it is important to decide how to define fake news; it is a term that, at

first sight, may appear vague and imprecise. According to Bouchra Ouatik, a reporter with the Radio-Canada program *Les Décrypteurs*, six different types of fake news must be identified:

- Disinformation: information that is intentionally false;
- Malinformation: information that is true only in part, and used incompletely and out of context;
- Misinformation: information that was true but is no longer, or that is true, but in a different context;
- Urban legends: stories that are false, but that have been around for a long time;
- Propaganda: deceptive information provided by a government or interest group;
- Satire: information that is false but used humorously.⁴

Fake news, therefore, comes in different, often complex and insidious forms. Parliamentary libraries in Canada have established various ways of combating the impact. These include organizing information and training sessions, producing quality publications and research tools, prioritizing objectivity and neutrality, verifying facts through the use of reliable sources, and monitoring the quality of the responses to parliamentarians.

Information and training sessions

Parliamentary libraries across Canada provide information and training sessions of all kinds in order to raise their clients' awareness of fake news

Carolyne Ménard is a Reference Librarian with the Library of the Assemblée nationale du Québec.

and to increase their media literacy. For example, the libraries in the legislatures of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Ontario provide training on researching the news and media articles in their databases and the electronic resources in their collections. The federal Library of Parliament offers its users four types of information sessions: one on accessing the reference services, one on assistance to the public, one on searching for information, and one on how to monitor media and the news. The Library of the Assemblée nationale du Québec provides similar training on the use of its documentary tools, including its databases that allow research on all the debates and journals since 1867.⁵

Information sessions on library services are also held so that parliamentary clients are aware of the extent of the services the institutions provide. In Ottawa, for example, the Library of Parliament has established a Library Ambassador program, which introduces senators, MPs and their staff to the Library's products and services. The Library Ambassadors take information sessions to the parliamentarians' offices on the Hill, at times that suit them best. Similarly, when the current legislature began in October 2018, the Library of the Assemblée nationale du Québec held short fifteen-minute sessions with members and their staff to introduce, in a concise, efficient manner, everything that the Library can offer.

As well as this training on their resources, legislative libraries are increasingly holding information sessions specifically on the phenomenon of fake news. For two years, the Library of the Ontario Legislature has been providing its users with a workshop on recognizing fake news and on conducting research in reliable news reporting. The Library of the British Columbia Legislature is also considering a training course for the coming year on research advice and literacy; the course will also deal with the subject of fake news. Parliamentary libraries are also holding conferences and inviting experts in combatting disinformation in order to inform and educate their clients. Librarians in public and academic libraries are increasingly teaming up with journalists to educate their users and the public about fake news.⁶ This trend can also be seen in parliamentary libraries. In the spring of 2017, the Library of the Ontario Legislature invited three journalists to a series of conferences on fake news. Along the same lines, at the most recent Congrès des professionnels de l'information, employees from the Library of the Assemblée nationale du Québec held discussions with representatives of the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec (FPJQ)

about the #30secondstocheckitout program that the organization has established. This anti-disinformation program was developed in cooperation with l'Agence Science-Presse and has been in existence in Quebec for three years. It sends a volunteer journalist, an FPJQ member, to groups to discuss fake news issues with practical examples.⁷

But library employees do not only provide training; they also contribute by constantly updating their expertise on the subject of disinformation. In the fall of 2017, employees from the Library of Parliament in Ottawa took part in a webinar organized by the *Special Libraries Association* (SLA) on researching facts in an era of "alternative truth". The Library of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan has issued a false news alert in order to make sure that its staff is on the lookout for current problems and good practices in the fight against fake news.

Producing quality publications and research tools

Parliamentary libraries produce quality publications and create trustworthy research tools that members and their staff can rely on without hesitation. For example, the Library of the Assemblée nationale du Québec designs thematic guides on various parliamentary topics such as commissions of inquiry, studies of budget items, and the history of political parties' slogans and programs.⁸ Its research service also produces a series called *Cinq lectures pour comprendre* [better understanding with five quick reads],⁹ which allows parliamentarians to quickly obtain information on a subject using reliable sources that expert researchers have previously analyzed. We must also point out the indisputable support provided by *The Encyclopedia of Québec Parliamentarism*, an online reference tool that gathers, refines and publishes essential information on the parliamentary system in Quebec.¹⁰

In addition to those publications, some parliamentary libraries have also produced information on fake news. In April 2019, the Library of Parliament in Ottawa published an article intended to inform its clients on deepfaking, the technique of modifying videos or audio files in order to spread false or fabricated information.¹¹ A number of parliamentary libraries have also passed on the information poster issued by the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions* (IFLA), entitled *How to Spot Fake News*. This is a concise and effective educational resource that can be used in different situations (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The IFLA's *How to Spot Fake News* Poster¹²



The Library of the Alberta Legislature has developed two posters along similar lines to the ILFA's in order to make its clients aware of the importance of critical thinking. They are called *Stop and Think: Exercise Critical Thinking and Ask These Questions* and *Fake News: Facts, Truth and Lies*. The Library of the Ontario Legislature has produced its own poster, also based on the ILFA's, called *How to Spot Fake News* (Figure 2).

Overseas, the research service of the European Parliament has also developed a poster, with the goal of providing users with steps to follow in order to verify trustworthy and truthful information (Figure 3).

Prioritizing objectivity and neutrality

Neutral and objective work is key to the mandate of all parliamentary libraries. Indeed, "[p]arliamentary libraries share a common mission, specifically to support the democratic process by providing all parliamentarians with confidential, non-partisan

information services to support informed debate and effective law-making."¹³ As such, employees from the reference service of the Library of the Ontario Legislature have, in the past, taken part in round tables and training sessions on writing in a legislative setting, and on producing work that is always objective and non-partisan. This training has helped library analysts to remain conscious of the tone used in the institution's official publications, and to always present a broad range of different positions in the political spectrum as they analyze controversial topics. The importance of objectivity is also repeated in the annual report of the federal Library of Parliament, where political non-partisanship and neutrality are at the centre of the institution's work:

Our employees work to ensure that all Library information – whether customized research for legislators, curated information, or classroom materials for teachers – is reliable, impartial and tailored to the needs of our clients.¹⁴

Figure 2. The Library of the Ontario Legislature's Poster: *How to Spot Fake News*

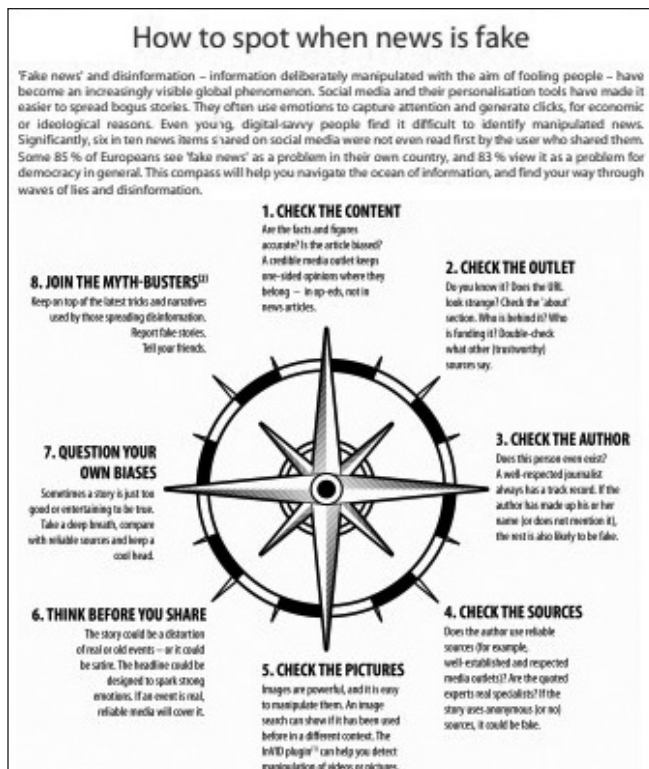


Verifying facts on the basis of scientific evidence and trustworthy sources

Libraries have a long tradition of verifying facts and responses to questions of all kinds.¹⁵ As such, a major part of the work of parliamentary libraries is to research requests for information from parliamentarians. This may take the form of preparing personalized research documents, providing documentation, researching factual information, statistics, scientific evidence, or fact-based studies. The reference services in parliamentary libraries, therefore, have fact-checking mechanisms at their very core.

As a specific example, the strategic plan of the Library of the Legislature of Ontario includes the idea of providing a research platform and tools designed to base its parliamentary work on facts and scientific evidence.¹⁶ In Quebec, fact-based verification and research are integral to the requests received by the reference service of the Library of the Assemblée nationale. Furthermore, parliamentary committees in Quebec can count on the services of the Library's research officers to assist them through the different stages of their work on public

Figure 3. The European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) Poster: *How to spot when news is fake*²¹



administration issues,¹⁷ so that their work on public policy is based on high-quality, reliable information.

Parliamentary libraries are more aware than any other institutions of the importance of evaluating the sources of information and of knowing where the information comes from. A Cornell University study has shown that people's beliefs and preconceptions about the sources of information directly influence their inclination to consider the information to be true.¹⁸ Educational work on information is therefore needed so that users are able to recognize their personal biases and to objectively evaluate the source of the information they are given. In this, librarians are trusted allies, trained as they are to rigorously question even the most reputable sources.¹⁹

Monitoring the quality of responses

In order to ensure the ongoing intellectual rigour of their services, a number of parliamentary libraries have established systems to maintain the quality of the responses given to members and their staff. In Saskatchewan, for example, the reference section of the library in the provincial legislature holds a meeting each morning at which employees discuss the difficult or unusual questions they have received. This allows them to collaborate on the responses they provide, to address challenges, and to confirm the validity of certain sources. Additionally, the reference service relies on the *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries*, published under the auspices of the IFLA,²⁰ as a way of measuring the quality of its responses.

At the Library of the Ontario Legislature, all questions to which the research officers respond go through an editorial process whereby a manager revises the responses before they are sent to the users. In addition, reference service managers conduct random checks on the responses sent by the reference librarians. A similar process is in effect in Ottawa, where the information and research service has established quality control programs for the services to the Library of Parliament's clients. These programs provide employees with methods, guidelines and appropriate tools to ensure that the information and research service is of the highest quality. Where possible, responses to users' requests must be examined by a supervisor, a manager or a senior librarian before they are sent.

Finally, the reference service of the Library of the Assemblée nationale du Québec is currently working on the quality control and standardization of responses. Response templates for different kinds of research have been developed and are currently in use in the service.

In conclusion, parliamentary libraries together provide a valuable resource, whose value increases when it is used by the parliamentary community. They ensure that political decision-makers have high-quality information for their daily work. They are the stewards of objectivity and truth; they were combatting fake news long before that term hit the headlines. While their work is already diverse and multi-faceted, there are still niches to develop in the fight against disinformation. At the dawn of the second decade of the twenty-first century, collaboration and information-sharing between institutions on best practices are still of the highest relevance.

Notes

- 1 The author would like to thank the libraries in provincial legislatures, and the Library of Parliament, for their cooperation and for the information.
- 2 In the United States, the expression “fake news” was used in a number of newspapers in the 19th century. Source: Rhonda Evans. *Fake News Isn't New: Researching Its History with NYPL's E-Resources*. New York: New York Public Library Blog, 2017. https://www.nypl.org/blog/2017/08/23/fake-news-isnt-new?utm_campaign=SocialFlow&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=referral
- 3 Agence Science-Press. “La Finlande, modèle de lutte contre les fausses nouvelles” [Finland, a model in the fight against fake news]. *Pieuvre.ca*, June 10, 2019. <http://www.pieuvre.ca/2019/06/10/societe-medias-fausses-nouvelles-finlande/>
- 4 Bouchra Ouatik. “La désinformation en ligne : comment la reconnaître et s’en prémunir?” [Online Disinformation: forewarned is forearmed] *Congrès des professionnels de l'enseignement supérieur – Colloque des bibliothèques de l'enseignement supérieur*, Montreal, October 29, pp. 8-13. <http://congrescpi.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Pr%C3%A9sentation-D%C3%A9sinformation-B.-Ouatik-Colloque-des-Biblioth%C3%A8ques-de-l'enseignement-sup%C3%A9rieur-29-octobre.pdf>
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Controlling the language used to describe the topics raised in the Parliament of Canada: A political and linguistic challenge

Words matter – especially in a bilingual environment where there are political sensitivities. As an impartial resource for Canadian parliamentarians (and others) that produces and collects many documents, the Library of Parliament maintains a controlled vocabulary internally to facilitate access. In this article, the author outlines the Library of Parliament Subject Taxonomy and discusses two challenges related to its development: language neutrality and the interlinguistic equivalence of concepts between English and French.

Alexandre Fortier

Introduction

The Library of Parliament's Parliamentary Information and Research Service (PIRS) provides research and analysis on any topic related to public policy to senators and members of the House of Commons, as well as to parliamentary committees and associations. Year in and year out, the Library analysts produce thousands¹ of background documents that are stored in an electronic document management system. The Library is also the repository for the House of Commons sessional papers and the speeches of members of Cabinet.² To facilitate the retrieval of this mass of documents by subject and also to optimize the visibility by search engines of documents published online, the Library maintains a controlled vocabulary internally: the Library of Parliament Subject Taxonomy. Controlling language, in a bilingual environment where political sensitivities can be exacerbated, proves to be a more complex task than it may seem at first. First, this article outlines the Library of Parliament Subject Taxonomy. Second, it discusses two challenges related to its development: language neutrality and the interlinguistic equivalence of concepts between English and French.

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Description of the taxonomy

All information systems seek to increase precision (the number of relevant documents retrieved as a proportion of the number of relevant or irrelevant documents returned by the system) and recall (the number of relevant documents retrieved as a proportion of the number of relevant documents in the collection). However, two natural language phenomena, synonymy and polysemy, affect precision and recall. First, synonymy, where the same concept is represented by different words or expressions (for example, the expressions "cellular phone", "mobile phone" and "cell phone" represent the same concept), affects recall: users must think of all possible synonyms to ensure that they can find all the documents on that concept. The opposite is polysemy, where the same word represents different concepts (for example, in French, "droit" is both "the body of legal rules in force in a society" and "permission to do something under rules recognized in a community"), affects precision: without language control, users may have to filter a large number of results with concepts that do not interest them but are represented by the same words.³

The purpose of controlled vocabularies is, first, to control synonymy by ensuring that, in any given information system, a concept is represented by only one label (one word or one expression). Synonyms become keys to access those labels. Second, controlled vocabularies eliminate polysemy by ensuring that

each label represents only one concept. The Library of Parliament Subject Taxonomy consists of 2,492 concepts,⁴ with one English and one French, label in 15 categories⁵ covering all the topics addressed in Parliament, in addition to networks of synonyms and quasi-synonyms (4,827 in French and 4,505 in English) that allow users to access the concepts using their own words. Special attention is paid to providing as many synonyms as possible. Some emerging concepts such as “zero-emission vehicle,” for which a number of labels exist, have up to 21 synonyms in French and 24 synonyms in English.

The Library of Parliament’s Taxonomy also organizes concepts into hierarchical structures, strictly defined by ISO-25964-1,⁶ which allow users to achieve the desired level of precision in the representation of a concept. Descriptors from different hierarchies are also linked together by associative relationships that allow users to find potentially useful terms. The semantic network of the Taxonomy contains 22,634 relationships in French and 21,970 in English.

Language neutrality

Languages are rarely neutral. In her seminal work, Hope Olson⁷ uses the expression “naming information” to describe how indexing terms are assigned. “Naming,” she says, indicates the power to control how subjects are represented in documents and, therefore, how they are accessed. Through the labels they use to represent concepts and the relationships they establish between them, controlled vocabularies (and documentary languages in general) provide a representation of the world. In this sense, continues Olson, naming information is more than representing it, it is constructing it. The major subject languages (such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings, the Library of Congress Classification or the Dewey Decimal Classification⁸) have often been criticized for their treatment of groups that do not correspond to the standards of the dominant class, factors such as their gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or cultural origins, or physical abilities. For example, by choosing “female executive” (but not “male executive”) under “executive” or “male nurses” (but not “female nurses”) under “nurses”, the Library of Congress is taking a position—intentionally or unintentionally—on the place of men and women in society.

The label given to a concept also influences the view expressed by the controlled vocabulary. For example,

the label “Indiens d’Amérique” (Indians of North America) still found in the Répertoire de vedettes-matière de l’Université Laval,⁹ rather than a more contemporary term such as “peuples autochtone” (Indigenous peoples), reflects a colonialist view—again, intentionally or unintentionally—in the representation of this concept. Sometimes, on the other hand, the choice of a particular label within a controlled vocabulary is undeniably deliberate. A clear contemporary example came in 2016 when a political group in the United States Congress forced the retention of the term “illegal aliens” instead of the more neutral term “undocumented immigrants” that the Library of Congress was seeking in its controlled vocabulary.¹⁰

In an environment such as the Parliament of Canada, political sensitivities also colour many debates; the choice of words matters. Nadine Desrochers,¹¹ for example, raises the challenge of representing politically charged concepts, such as “distinct society,” in the documentary languages used in Canada. Since impartiality is one of the three core values of the Library of Parliament, the choice of labels used in the Taxonomy must reflect this value. For example, a subject such as medical assistance in dying, the term used in the Act to amend the *Criminal Code*, which was the subject of six bills in the 41st and 42nd Parliaments, can also be expressed in several ways: suicide assistance, euthanasia, assisted suicide. Each of these expressions, although relatively neutral, carries a certain emotional charge, depending on which side of the debate one is on. Analysis of the debates in the House of Commons, for example, indicates that the terms “euthanasia” and “assisted suicide”, which are more explicit than the euphemistic term in the legislation, are used more frequently by opponents of this change to the *Criminal Code*.¹² The degree of neutrality of a word or phrase is also culturally embedded and may vary from language to language, with perfect interlinguistic equivalence being far from universal.

Interlinguistic equivalence between English and French

A controlled vocabulary contains concepts that are represented by terms linked to each other by a relational structure. In a monolingual controlled vocabulary, this relational structure is composed of intralinguistic equivalence relationships, hierarchical relationships and associative relationships. Those three types of relationships are used to define the concepts represented. A concept is simultaneously

defined by the label chosen to represent it, the synonyms attached to it, and the hierarchy in which it is placed. As a result, concepts acquire the properties inherited from concepts at higher levels, and, to a lesser extent, by the terms linked to them by their associative relationships.

Languages are the expression of complex conceptual and relational universes. A concept is not necessarily identical from one language to another. In a multilingual controlled vocabulary, such as the Library of Parliament Subject Taxonomy, there is an added interlinguistic equivalence relationship. Standards that guide the creation of controlled vocabularies, such as ISO 25964-1:2011, typically describe five degrees of interlinguistic equivalence:

- Exact equivalence: equivalence describing the same reality (for example, “travailleur étranger” and “foreign worker”);
- Inexact equivalence: equivalence presenting the same concept, but with a difference in the point of view (for example, “assurance-chômage” and “employment insurance”);
- Partial equivalence: equivalence linking two concepts that extend differently (for example, “accessibilité pour personnes handicapées” and “barrier-free access”, the second being a broader concept than the first);
- Simple to multiple equivalence: equivalence linking a concept in language A to several concepts in language B (for example, “droit” with “law” and “right”, or “law” with “droit” and “loi”);
- Non-equivalence: a concept in language A that does not exist in language B (for example, “teenager” [a young person from 13 to 19 years old] is specific to English).

The main challenge, in a multilingual controlled vocabulary, is to deal adequately with degrees three to five. The relationship of a concept to other concepts may also differ from one language and culture to another. For example, some cultures may treat animals as “goods”, whereas this hierarchy would be totally incomprehensible in another culture. A multilingual controlled vocabulary must have a hierarchical and associative structure common to the language communities it serves. Developing the Library of Parliament’s Subject Taxonomy therefore requires attention to ensure that one language does not take precedence over another. To avoid this pitfall, it seeks to adequately represent the concepts and relational structures around them so as not to create terms that

are not understood by the speakers of one language and to force a language into a relational structure that its speakers would not recognize. To achieve this, the taxonomy is constructed or modified simultaneously in English and French. The knowledge of the analysts in the Library’s Parliamentary Information and Research Service is also valuable in choosing terms and including them in a hierarchy.

Conclusion

A controlled vocabulary is not a static product; to remain relevant, it must reflect the evolution of knowledge as well as the evolution of the lexicon of the fields it covers. In the Parliament of Canada, for example, the terminology used to refer to indigenous peoples or gender identities has evolved over time, and these changes are reflected in the Library of Parliament’s Subject Taxonomy. The frequency with which terms are used by indexers and the strategies of researchers must also be periodically evaluated to ensure that the vocabulary remains relevant to the community it serves. Some of these challenges are common to the creation of any controlled vocabulary, but they are of particular importance in the context of the Library of Parliament. Examples include the use of the least partisan vocabulary possible, and an interlinguistic equivalence between English and French where neither language—nor any of the cultural contexts which underlie them—takes precedence over the other. The intellectual exercise required to create such a vocabulary must not, however, take precedence over the primary purpose of the tool: to facilitate the retrieval of information. One must learn to accept some solutions that may be imperfect, but that users find helpful.

Notes

- 1 For example, in 2017-2018, the Library received 5,659 research and analysis requests and produced 176 research publications (Library of Parliament. *Annual Report 2017-2018*. Ottawa: The Library of Parliament, 2018).
- 2 In 2017-2018, 1228 sessional papers and 970 speeches were catalogued by the Library.
- 3 Lancaster, F.W. *Indexing and abstracting in theory and practice*. 3rd ed. Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois, 2003, pp. 252-258; Hudon, Michèle. *Analyse et représentation documentaires*. Montréal : Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2013, pp. 93-98.
- 4 All statistics for the Taxonomy are as of November 15, 2019.

- 5 Agriculture, environment, fisheries and natural resources; Arts, culture and entertainment; Business, industry and trade; Economics and finance; Education, language and training; Employment and labour; Government, Parliament and politics; Health and safety; Indigenous affairs; Information and communications; International affairs and defence; Law, justice and rights; Places; Science and technology; Social affairs and population.
- 6 ISO 25964-1. *Information and documentation — Thesauri and interoperability with other vocabularies — Part 1: Thesauri for information retrieval*. Geneva: International Organization for Standardization, 2011.
- 7 Olson, Hope. *The power to name: locating the limits of subject representation in libraries*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer, 2002, pp. 3-6
- 8 These three subject languages are the most widely used standards in North American libraries.
- 9 This controlled vocabulary is an adaptation of the Library of Congress Subject Headings into French and in a Canadian context.
- 10 American Library Association. *Resolution on replacing the Library of Congress Subject Heading "Illegal aliens" with "Undocumented immigrants,"* 2006. Retrieved from: http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org/aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2016_mw_council_documents/cd_34_Resol_on_LC_Headings_11216_FINAL.pdf; Rahman, Rema and Warren Rojas. Republicans want to bring back "Illegal Alien". *Roll Call* (April 20, 2016). Retrieved from: <http://www.rollcall.com/news/policy/dems-fume-illegal-alien-reinstatement-effort>
- 11 Desrochers, Nadine. "Bilingual conundrums: a study of the use of subject headings pertaining to Québec as a distinct society." *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* 37(1), 2013, 1–23.
- 12 Research in Hansard.

Greetings Grandpa and Grandpa!

Continued from inside cover

The relationship between James and his father-in-law likely strained over time due to political leanings. My great-grandfather was a confederate while Wilkins was a vehement anti-confederate. Imagine the conversations at family get togethers! James sought but lost the federal seat for Pictou in 1867. Following a brief return to provincial politics as the Liberal Conservative representative for Pictou in 1871, he resigned his seat to contest the 1872 federal election, which he won.

Now a prominent Halifax lawyer, John A. Macdonald asked him to defend the government in the Pacific Scandal and called him "As true as steel and I think the ablest man in the House of Commons". The Pacific Scandal destroyed the government and James lost the 1874 election, but he was re-elected in 1878 and appointed Minister of Justice. He held that post until his 1881 appointment as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.

In the Province House Members' Lounge, there hangs a composite display of photographs of the members of the Nova Scotia Assembly from 1863 –

1867. McDonald's portrait is on the top row of this work. Near him is that of Samuel Leonard Shannon. Because one of McDonald's son's married Shannon's daughter, I have the pleasure of greeting two of my great-great grandparents every day, both having served in Charles Tupper's cabinet.

Samuel Leonard Shannon was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1816 to a prominent mercantile family. In 1859, he entered provincial politics representing the Western Division of Halifax County. Imagine my surprise, when I learned while researching the history of the Nova Scotia Legislative Library that in 1862 Shannon was appointed as a member of the committee to regulate the new provincial library and to superintend its management. This library is the current Nova Scotia Legislative Library where I have worked for 17 years and where I am now the Legislative Librarian, carrying on a family tradition of parliamentary service, albeit in a non-partisan role.

David Shannon McDonald
Legislative Librarian
Nova Scotia House of Assembly

Research Librarians at the Library of Parliament

When you have questions, the Library of Parliament's research librarians can help you find answers. As a part of the Library's Parliamentary Information and Research Service (PIRS), some of these research librarians are embedded in its multidisciplinary sections while others are based in the Library's five branches. In this article, the authors trace the emergence of research librarians back to the early days of widespread Internet use, explain how their role has evolved, and offer examples of how they collaborate with the library's analysts to provide information products and training. They conclude by noting this organizational structure provides librarians with opportunities to develop expertise in a given subject area and provides analysts with the support they need to serve individual parliamentarians and parliamentary committees and associations.

Michael Dewing and Meghan Laidlaw

Research Librarians: Who They Are and What They Do

Many people are familiar with the Library of Parliament's iconic building on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, which until the Centre Block closed for renovations in early 2019, housed a collection of some 600,000 items and served as the Library's main branch.

However, people tend to know much less about the Library's research role. During 2017-2018, in addition to responding to some 11,900 information and reference requests, library staff answered 5,600 research and analysis requests for parliamentary committees, associations and individual parliamentarians. The responses to these requests range from concise emails to substantial background papers and draft reports for parliamentary committees and associations.

These responses for research and analysis are provided by the staff of the Library's Parliamentary Information and Research Service (PIRS), of which

research librarians are an integral part. Indeed, 15 of the Library's roughly 30 research librarians are embedded in PIRS's multidisciplinary sections. The rest are based in the Library's five branches, which are located in several buildings in the Parliamentary Precinct.

PIRS has two research divisions, each made up of six sections. These sections deal with subject matters that are aligned with the mandates of parliamentary committees. Examples of sections include the Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs Section; the Resources, Energy and Transport Section and the Economic, Fiscal and Monetary Policy Section.

Each section is made up of between six and ten analysts (economists, lawyers, social scientists and scientists who are subject matter experts), research assistants, interns and embedded research librarians. The research librarians have an undergraduate degree plus a master's degree in Library Science or Library and Information Science.

The embedded research librarians respond directly to reference questions from parliamentary clients and support the activities of the analysts and research assistants. They also develop their own subject-matter expertise, which relates to the subject areas of their section.

For instance, research librarians embedded in the Gender, Health and Social Affairs Section develop expertise on healthcare, labour, employment, income

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security, disability issues, and social policies. They may be called upon to respond to requests on related topics, such as medical treatments or diseases, aging and seniors, homelessness, gender-responsive budgeting, unemployment, the taxation of charities, or the medical or social implications of cannabis use.

Integration into Multidisciplinary Teams

PIRS's multidisciplinary sections were created in the early 2000s, when people began turning to the Internet to find the information they needed.

At that time, service delivery at the Library was divided into two branches. Librarians were part of the Information and Documentation Branch, which, as its name implies, provided information, documentation and reference services to parliamentarians and other clients, such as the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

Analysts were part of the Parliamentary Research Branch, which provided research, analysis and information to parliamentarians, as well as parliamentary committees and associations. The Parliamentary Research Branch was set up on professional lines, with four divisions made up of social scientists, lawyers, economists and scientists respectively.

The adoption of the Internet allowed the Library's parliamentary clients to find basic information easily. This shifted their need for the Library's services to more lengthy and complex analysis and research that was not easily found online. Meanwhile, Library management expected that parliamentary committees would need increased research and analysis.

Given these trends, in 2002-2003 the Library tested a new multi-disciplinary approach combining analysts and research librarians with a view to implementing it more widely. To quote the *Report on Plans and Priorities* for 2002-2003, the creation of multidisciplinary teams would:

- Increase the quality, comprehensiveness and speed of service offered to parliamentarians;
- Improve corporate memory for parliamentary committees and associations;
- Increase the synergy between research and library professionals; and
- Facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise from senior personnel to new employees.

Following the initial test period, in 2004-2005, the librarians of the Information and Documentation Branch were integrated with the analysts of the Parliamentary Research Branch to create PIRS. The structure based on professions was replaced with one based on subject matters in which analysts from various professional disciplines and research librarians are integrated.

At the same time, a "one-stop shop" was introduced to allow parliamentary clients to access all Library services through a central unit.

In 2010-2011, the Library implemented an electronic document and records management system. It is used to track and deliver responses to parliamentary requests.

Evolution of the Teams

Initially, the embedded research librarians reported to the manager of the section to which they were assigned. This created some challenges, however, as the librarians and analysts fall under separate collective agreements and have different training needs and career paths.

Therefore, in 2017 the embedded research librarians were organized into a distinct team—the Integrated References Services team—with its own manager within the Reference, Current Awareness and User Services (RCU) Division. This allowed for better coordination, as well as for the provision of appropriate training and career development.

The RCU Division is responsible for, among other things, the coordination of reference and information requests. It also contributes to the training of new analysts and librarians on the use of the Library's databases, catalogues and other information resources.

How Does the System Work?

The kinds of requests the Library receives from parliamentary clients vary enormously. Research technicians respond to requests to borrow or access specific Library materials, such as sessional papers, academic articles, legislative summaries and news media articles. They also answer many of the research requests for parliamentary documents.

Research librarians respond to reference requests from parliamentary clients on a wide variety of

topics. They often provide curated lists of resources and annotated bibliographies. They also perform customized information searches. Members of Parliament and their constituency staff frequently request background information to assist individual constituents, and the research librarians at the Library respond to these requests.

When individual parliamentarians or parliamentary committees require in-depth analysis or when very specific expertise is required, PIRS's analysts provide responses ranging from a quick telephone call to a customized research paper to an in-person briefing.

RCU senior research librarians are responsible for the triage of requests received from parliamentarians and their staff. The requests are distributed to the research divisions based on the topic and other aspects of the request. For example, a question about abandoned ships might go to a research librarian with expertise on transport or marine law.

While the embedded research librarians are organized into a distinct team, research librarians and analysts in each section develop close working relationships and tend to work in an organic and informal manner.

Analysts are often called upon to respond to requests within short and sometimes competing deadlines. They will often request help from a research librarian when they are pressed for time or when they want to ensure that they have not missed key resources. A research librarian can prepare a tailored list of resources to give the analyst a starting point for their research. Analysts can work more efficiently and spend more time on analysis and writing by asking the research librarian to gather the initial information.

Some requests are generated internally, often beginning with an analyst visiting the research librarian in their section to outline what kind of information or resources they need to respond to a parliamentarian, to prepare a committee briefing note or to write a publication.

It is common for the research librarian to send relevant information by email. Depending on the request, a dynamic back-and-forth can take place and the request can evolve. As the research progresses, the analyst may request specific resources on certain aspects of the request. This is in no way a one-sided exchange—librarians working on requests from parliamentarians will often consult with analysts.

Examples of Collaboration

The ways in which analysts and research librarians collaborate include producing compilations of information resources, undertaking long-term projects and conducting training. The following examples are representative of the kind of work analysts and research librarians regularly do together.

Compilations

An analyst reached out to the research librarian embedded in their section. The analyst was looking for assistance to compile a list of studies and reports related to climate change that had been published by officers of Parliament and parliamentary committees. The analyst required this information for a research paper. During the initial discussion, the analyst was able to clarify and specify their information needs and outline the response they were hoping to get.

The research librarian compiled the list of relevant resources and sent it directly to the analyst. The analyst shared the compilation with other analysts and section managers for whom they thought it would be relevant. The compilation was useful as a discovery tool, and at least one analyst found a relevant publication that they did not know existed. Given its usefulness, the document was translated and properly formatted so that it could be shared more widely within the Library.

Long-term Projects

Analysts and research librarians with similar subject-matter expertise often collaborate on long-term projects. In one case, an analyst and a research librarian collaborated on a complex project on legal and political aspects of certain human rights issues.

Initially, the research librarian was approached by an analyst in their section. The analyst explained that a parliamentarian had expressed interest in a multifaceted project on the topic, which was to include research papers, an annotated bibliography of sources, training for the parliamentarian's staff on media monitoring related to the issue, and ultimately, a Library of Parliament seminar or presentation.

The analyst and the research librarian worked together to parse the request. The librarian took charge of the annotated bibliography and the media monitoring training, while the analyst and an analyst in another section tackled writing publications on law and policy respectively.

The research librarian and the analysts involved with the project met with the parliamentarian and their staff to discuss their specific information needs and interests. At this meeting, the librarian presented information on how to use Library resources for customized media monitoring to keep abreast of developments on the topic.

The drafting of an annotated bibliography and publications required ongoing communication between the analysts and the research librarian to ensure consistency in terms of the organization of information in their respective documents. As well, the team was actively involved in peer-reviewing each other's work and providing suggestions and feedback.

The research librarian also searched for parliamentary information and case law to illustrate certain ideas explored in the analysts' research papers. The annotated bibliography was packaged together with the analysts' research papers and presented in such a way that the package could be more widely distributed.

Finally, the presentation portion of the project involved preparing a Library of Parliament seminar for all interested parliamentarians and their staff. The research librarian contributed to the design and the delivery of information for the seminar.

Training

In addition to training new employees and providing ad hoc training on specific databases, senior research librarians periodically offer training sessions on topics like legal research at the Library of Parliament.

One of these training sessions is offered to analysts who are members of provincial bar associations. It includes overviews of both recent developments in legal research in Canada using publicly available tools, such as the Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII) database, as well as key databases available through subscription at the Library. The session is intended to ensure that analysts are aware of all the legal resources that are available to them and are comfortable using these resources. A parallel training session is offered to librarians and research technicians as an introduction to legal research.

Other training sessions are devoted to legislation, regulations and case law. These sessions provide the base upon which research librarians can build their

legal research expertise to respond to their own client requests and to support the work of the analysts in their section.

Continuing to Evolve

As with all knowledge institutions, the Library of Parliament must adapt to a rapidly changing environment. With each Senate appointment and each election to the House of Commons, new parliamentarians and parliamentary staff arrive on the scene. They bring their experiences in business, academia or public service. While they are generally able to find basic information on their own, they often turn to the Library with more complex requests.

To adapt to this ever-changing environment, the Library of Parliament is evolving as well.

In the *2017-2018 Annual Report*, the Library of Parliament identified four areas in which it would focus its efforts—gender-based analysis, international affairs, committee-related communications and visual elements. This requires research librarians and analysts to learn new skills in order to provide the kinds of services that are increasingly in demand by parliamentarians.

By way of example, the Library has developed the capacity to create geographic information system (GIS) maps. Indeed, during 2017–2018, the GIS team, which includes analysts and a librarian, produced 239 maps for parliamentary clients.

To help new parliamentarians learn how best to make use of the Library services, the Library has instituted an ambassador program. Through this program, library employees visit new parliamentarians' offices to let them and their staff know how the Library can provide them with information and research to help the parliamentarian fulfil their various roles.

At the same time, the Library is working to improve its feedback mechanisms, with a view to ensuring that comments—both positive and negative—are recorded and acted upon.

Training also plays a big role. As already mentioned, research librarians regularly share information and research strategies through in-house training sessions. The Library also provides its staff with professional training on matters such as gender-based analysis, plain writing and statistics.

Conclusion

In the 15 years since research librarians were integrated into multidisciplinary sections within PIRS, the approach has proved adaptable and beneficial to librarians, analysts and the Library's parliamentary clients.

The organizational structure provides librarians with opportunities to develop expertise in a given subject area and provides analysts with the support

they need to serve individual parliamentarians and parliamentary committees and associations. The structure also provides the Library of Parliament with the ability to innovate, while at the same time responding to feedback from parliamentary clients.

While the Library of Parliament's main building will remain closed for a decade, its research librarians will continue work with colleagues to ensure that parliamentarians have the information and research they need.

Parliamentarians Discuss Parliamentary Libraries

As one of the principal clients of Parliamentary Libraries, many parliamentarians see the inherent value in these institutions – even if their own jurisdiction doesn't have one. In this modified roundtable discussion, the Canadian Parliamentary Review has compiled interviews with four parliamentarians discussing how and why they use their Parliamentary Library, or what they do when they don't have access to one.

Participants: Shane Getson, MLA, Liz Hanson, MLA, Nathan Neudorf, MLA and Kevin O'Reilly, MLA

CPR: How soon after becoming an MLA did you become acquainted with/start using the Legislative Library? If your jurisdiction doesn't have one, what did you do to meet your research needs?

Nathan Neudorf: I was elected a little over a year ago and we were in session almost immediately after the election. I took a tour of the Legislative Library right away. It was a huge source of information for a completely new job task for me: speaking in the Legislature. Whether it was related to a bill, or a member's statement, or my maiden speech, using the archives was an immediate help to understand how previous MLAs in my constituency had done things. Within a week or two I was already using those resources and files.

Shane Getson: I became familiarized on the first day. It was part of the tour and orientation. I love libraries, and the one that we have at our disposal is amazing. The service that the Library has of pulling relevant articles from local Alberta papers and breaking them down by region is an immense help.

Kevin O'Reilly: I had used the Legislative Library before I was a Member as it had several polar and circumpolar journals of personal interest. I used the Library within the first six months of my start as an MLA for both those duties and my personal interest. The Library is very helpful in terms of locating documents and what was previously said in Hansard on any issue. For my personal research and interest, they were able to track down a 1920s era mining statute for Newfoundland. My first constituency assistant was also well-versed in the Library and made use of its services behind the scenes.

Liz Hanson: We don't have a Parliamentary Library in Yukon. In small jurisdictions like Yukon we have the same gamut of issues that any parliamentarians have to deal with, but we have few or no resources. The staff resources that are dedicated to parties in a small jurisdiction are miniscule. You have one staff member, or maybe two. MLAs often end up doing all the research on their own. It's interesting, but it does not lend itself well to any sort of continuity of source or documentation. That's one of the concerns I have. On procedural matters that arise relating to conduct within the Assembly itself, we certainly rely on the good work of the clerks. But other than that, we reinvent the wheel a lot and you waste a lot of time. I'm not sure that it really contributes to a very healthy debate if you don't have information about precedents or things done prior. Nothing is really new under the sun.

Shane Getson is MLA for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland, Alberta. Liz Hanson is MLA for Whitehorse Centre, Yukon. Nathan Neudorf is MLA for Lethbridge-East, Alberta. Kevin O'Reilly is MLA for Frame Lake, Northwest Territories.



Shane Getson

CPR: How easy was it to get/become familiar with how to use your library? Were there individual/group training sessions? Did you do independent work to familiarize yourself?

SG: Honestly I have only scratched the surface on the services that are available. Orientation covered the basics, but the staff at the Library is very helpful.

NN: I come from a construction background, so the orientation was very helpful. The Library could be a bit intimidating based on its size, the volume of resources, and the type of material it holds, but the staff make it incredibly accessible. I rely on the staff a lot to help me narrow down my focus quickly rather than sifting through all the research on my own. The value of what was there really jumped out at me. Why reinvent the wheel when someone has gone before?

KO: During my first term orientation as an MLA in 2015, there was a general introduction to the Library staff and encouragement to visit the facility which is inside the building envelope. I pushed for and was successful in having a more substantive presentation by the Library staff as part of the orientation in 2019.

CPR: What do you use the Library/research services for most often? Have your needs changed over the time you've been in office?

NN: The primary way I've used it has been to gauge the speaking style of Members who have gone before me. But it has slowly started to become more topical in terms of content. I now look at whether an issue has been discussed before, and how it's been discussed in a local, provincial or sometimes national context and in historical perspective.

KO: I have used the Library and research staff for preparation of background materials for Member's Statements and Oral Questions, briefing notes to help understand how other jurisdictions deal with issues or matters, and to assist with constituency concerns and responses. I don't think my needs have changed over time, although I have a better understanding of what services and assistance can be provided. I still don't know everything they can do, but it is perhaps even more important that constituency assistants receive orientation and training.

SG: Currently I use it for news events from papers and magazines, but going forward I will focus more on treaties, land agreements, environmental studies, and wildlife assessments in regards to transportation corridors.

LH: I would love to use it as a repository for past debates. Now, if I wanted to access Hansard from 30 or 40 years ago, it would be difficult to do. We're getting better and better at having access to digitized material, but it's not all there yet. And there are issues around committees and documentation related to committee activities – without access to it you're trotting on some of the same ground.

CPR: Do you or your staff do research using other sources? If so, which ones?

NN: Most of my staff are millennials or younger, so of course, as you'd expect, they are quick to go to Google. But the nature of our work means that a lot of public information is not as specific as what we'd want for parliamentary discussion or debate. We do end up going to the Library fairly often for that archived and historical perspective.

KO: A lot of my research is done by my constituency assistant, who will more than often turn to the Library. The turn-around time is often quicker and more comprehensive than trying to go through Ministers'



Liz Hanson

offices, which is how our consensus government approach is supposed to work. Library and research staff often have long corporate and institutional memories about how issues were handled in the past, which can be very helpful

LH: I've been an MLA since 2010. I've been through three elections. When we were Official Opposition we had a few more staff resources and would rely on them to do more of the research and outreach. It's not just about researching, but also corroborating and collaborating with the experts on the subject matter, wherever they are. You might be able to identify research, but you need to follow up with them. That becomes a problem with little or no staff. We rely a lot on local people who have an interest in certain subject matter. They can sometimes put us in touch with people across the country who are subject experts. It really comes down to the individual MLA and the extent of the staffing. If you're relying on one person to run an office, it can be challenging to add research on top of that.

CPR: Based on what you know about your colleagues, do different MLAs use the Library differently? Does it depend on your role/constituency, legislative interests?

NN: I haven't specifically asked my colleagues about their Library use; based on the diversity of representation I'm sure there are different habits and expertise on how to approach an issue. I think some would rely more heavily on their staff. If I had to guess, I would imagine MLAs who have been here longer would likely use the Library more often based on what it holds. There is a lot of trust and responsibility put onto staff for accessing the right kind of information for a debate at hand. I would suspect the longer that staff have been here, the more likely they would be to go to that institution to seek it out.

KO: I hear often that many members do not use the Library or research. It seems to depend on their individual level of education, what riding they represent, and if they are a Regular Member; Cabinet reportedly rarely ever uses them.

CPR: As more and more library resources become digital, do you worry about your ability to find what you need, or are you excited that you can do more searches on your own?

SG: Yes and no. I do not often have the best results when it comes to electronics. The insight of having real people who may be able to point me in the right direction, may know of alternate resources, or may have found similar information in the past is invaluable.

NN: I think it's a little bit of both. It's great if something's online because you can find it faster, but my concern is how search engines prioritize results.

KO: I have good internet skills so am not worried about being able to find or use digital resources, but I am concerned that some of these services will not be offered for free or become monopolized. Training and promotion of what may also be available through the Library is also very important and often not well understood.

LH: There's so much junk on the Internet. If you're not a subject matter expert it's a challenge to sift through it. You can hear statements being made in the Legislative Assembly and think to yourself, 'Oh gosh, they did not push past the next level to find out if that



Nathan Neudorf

was true or valid or what the source was on certain statements being made.' It's also a rabbit hole. You can keep on going down and down and down; you need to realize you don't have the time for that. When you're constrained by time, your quality of research is not that good.

CPR: Liz, are you aware of why Yukon is the only jurisdiction in Canada without a Legislative Library?

LH: There's a real resistance to invest, in my observation. I've spent 30 years in civil service and management. I came into government thinking, 'Okay, we have a system in place.' But what I find is that it's only been since 2003 that the territory had the gamut of province-like responsibilities, and for the longest time I don't think MLAs were really viewed as having a full-time job. The reality is slowly sinking in that we are accountable as members of the Assembly for the stewardship of the territory and we haven't built the infrastructure up. The people in power seem to be resistant to any idea that we're spending money on the government, but we're really spending

on the integrity of the Legislative Assembly and how business is conducted. It's different when you start from scratch with a territory like Nunavut that sprang out of the land claims agreement. It was created as a whole government. The Northwest Territories has a different system entirely. We have a party-system here, and there's a resistance to spending. People will ask why we need another clerk, or why we need a library, but we do. It's been very challenging to get people to understand that our standing committees should be meeting between sessions.

CPR: Are there any unique sources or services that are provided by your Legislative Library that have become critical/irreplaceable to your work/research?

NN: The ones I appreciate the most are the archiving of speeches given in the Assembly. If there's an individual who may be a role model for me as an MLA, I love to hear how they've done it and see how they've spoken about topics. No other place would have that kind of specific history of how that person brought in legislation. That unique history is what I'm most after. I also don't know of many other places that would store as many sources, and print media specifically, providing political analysis. Those two would be the most important things I look to in the Legislative Library that I wouldn't know where to find outside of the Legislative Library.

KO: It's not just the sources and services, but the staff themselves; especially ones who have long public service track records, often longer than MLAs and senior managers. I worry about succession planning and how that corporate and institutional memory is preserved and passed along. There is also a longer-term project to digitize and make searchable, Hansard and other related records of our Assembly back to the 1920s. Much of this is not available anywhere else and it would prove to be a very valuable historical record about Canada's north and public policy.

CPR: What, if anything would you like to change about your library? What do you appreciate the most about it?

KO: More space generally and more useable and interactive space specifically would be very helpful. The Legislative Library has had to absorb the holdings from other departmental libraries and, more recently, our Court Library. Only a fraction of the materials and documentary holdings of the Legislative Library are easily accessible, despite moving towards more digitized information. We have very dedicated and



Kevin O'Reilly

helpful staff who have never failed to help; even if they don't have the information directly, they will point us in the right direction.

NN: I would like the general public to be more aware of it and what it holds. I know people are more likely to be drawn to their local library and I understand that, but the use of this resource is invaluable to me. As a society we tend to be more interested in the flash and ease of search with Google, but, as institutions, libraries are so important.

SG: I would not change a thing, again, I may have an update to this over the next several years as I use it more. I appreciate the feel of the Library, the staff, and the history. It is an amazing resource!

CPR: Is there a push to get a Legislative Library in Yukon based on your impression, or is it a case of 'we don't have one, do we really need one?'

LH: I think it's the latter without understanding the implications of it. It's fine if you're the government in power and you have access to every resource you want, but you lose sight of the fact that the minority, or the opposition should also have an equitable level of resources to perform their function. I was part of the Official Opposition, so I know they don't have a continuity of resources either. The brain trust just doesn't continue, but we do see some continuity among people whose job is to be in the Legislative \ Assembly offices.

CPR: Are there other topics I've missed about your library/research work that you'd like to mention?

KO: It is important for Legislative Libraries to be linked together as often questions arise about best practices or how other jurisdictions deal with issues. It will become increasingly important to digitize and make collections more accessible, especially with direct access on-line, but at a time when leaders and governments want to spend less on information management. Part of the work of Legislative Libraries should also be promoting their services to the general public so there is a greater understanding of their function and need for support.

LH: I would like to see us establishing one (*laughs*). To me that would be a good starting place. I've modified my expectations about the Legislative Assembly and what its folks can do over the last 10 years. I'm trying to be more realistic in my expectations that we're a small territory and our Assembly is building to become an effective representative for the people. We've made some good progress in the last few years. I'm not a very patient person, but I have seen it. It's going to take some time and also take some suggestions from colleagues across the country about how to get people to understand the importance of having that central, independent source to provide quality research; without having whatever partisan colour/slant that looks for the zinger. We need to concentrate on the facts that parliamentarians can distill in debate. We need to get an understanding that this is a legitimate investment on behalf of the citizens in the interest of having an informed debate. And, I'd like to hear from colleagues about how to ensure adequate resources are provided to it.

Legislative Libraries in a Consensus Government: Familiarity within the Distinct

Two of Canada's three northern territories use a Consensus government model in their legislative assemblies. Some of the unique features of this system are visible in how their parliamentary libraries are situated and used. In this article, the authors outline how parliamentarians and other clients in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut access the libraries' resources in a way that reflects the openness and the cooperation associated with this method of governance.

Gerry Burla and Riel Gallant

In a Consensus-style government there are no party allegiances. The Members are elected based on their relatability to the communities they represent. In this environment, even the Chamber differs slightly from the traditional Westminster-style Parliament. Traditionally, the governing party sits across the floor from the opposition Members in most parliaments. In a Consensus-style legislature, the seats are arranged in a circle. This layout symbolizes that Members are one amongst equals. The sentiment is echoed in the selection of the Cabinet (who do sit in near proximity to each other) where the Premier and Ministers are selected by the Members themselves during the Territorial Leadership Committee (Northwest Territories) or the Leadership Forum (Nunavut).

Although the circular seating plan gives the perception of unity, the Members sit as individuals. This individuality can be daunting for some Members, especially newly elected Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) who are still trying to find their way. There are no party affiliations to create an instant bond – each Member is on his or her own.

The Legislative Library can serve as a meeting place for Members to congregate and 'discover familiarity.' Most MLAs have visited libraries in their home communities or spent time in study carrels at school. In the first few days after an election, the Members are introduced to the Caucus Room, the Chamber, the Committee Rooms, their offices, and several other unfamiliar surroundings. The Library offers a sense of familiarity, even if this is their first time visiting the Legislative Library at the Legislature.

The Library's location within the Precinct gives testimony to this purpose. In the Northwest Territories, the Library is situated directly beneath the Caucus Room; gatherings and discussions held there may be continued in the Library in a much less formal manner. The Caucus Room mimics the Chamber in its circular design. It is smaller than the Chamber, but still has enough room for all the Members to participate in discussion. In a Consensus government, the Caucus Room is where Members debate the strategic directions and important emerging issues relevant to the Territory and its citizens.

Directly below the Caucus Room, the Library offers the opportunity for Members, should they wish, to conduct interviews in a space that makes them feel comfortable. Many times the interview or speech given from the library location tends to be longer than average, such as a recorded message for an opening address to a conference or an expression of appreciation for a function to which the Member unfortunately could not attend. The backdrop of the Library adds a sense of warmth to the statement.

*Gerry Burla is the Northwest Territories' Legislative Librarian.
Riel Gallant is Legislative Librarian of Nunavut.*



Patrons enjoy the Northwest Territories' Legislative Library Reading Room.

In Nunavut, the Library is located on the top floor of the Precinct. Regular Members from the first floor and Cabinet Ministers from the second floor will routinely drop by the Library when visiting the Office of the Clerk. The atmosphere in the Library is relaxed and welcoming. Visitors will often begin by taking a glance at the "New Arrivals" shelf at the front door before proceeding to the reference desk or the collection. Some prefer to come through the back entrance to take advantage of the reading area which looks over the western end of the city.

The library materials not only make a pleasant and inviting backdrop; they also serve a function. The Members are welcome to sit and read periodicals on local news from their home communities, and there are also reports and research papers on different subjects of interest to better inform the Members.

Research is an important task, and an unfortunate reality of the north is that not all government departments have libraries. The Legislative Library fills that role when called upon. All Members may take advantage of the resources maintained by the Library. Annual reports, strategic frameworks, and topical documentation going back decades are included within the Library's collection. These resources are utilized by the Library staff to respond to in-depth reference questions, and to participate in research conducted by the Research Unit of the Assembly. With a limited number of Assembly staff to assist the Members, partnerships amongst the Units are necessary to achieve the desired results.

The information provided to the Members from Research Division and the Library may be presented to the House in the language the Member chooses. In Nunavut, the content may be delivered in English,

French, Inuinnaqtun, or Inuktitut. The Northwest Territories provides the right for Members to speak in these same four tongues plus North and South Slavey, Cree, Chipewyan, Gwich'in, Inuvialuktun, and Thóchó. The Library makes every effort to acquire, and to make accessible, materials in these official languages (among others) for the benefit of the Members and the people of the northern territories, although translation services are offered through other departments.

The Library is steeped in tradition but is also evolving for the future. Assembly staff are working with the Library to combat the great distances between communities. Community engagement through visits during the Committee schedule is an integral part of Consensus government. The Library is continuously developing ways for the Committee members to access the information resources required to meet the communities' and the Members' needs.

The legislative libraries within Canada's northern territories' Consensus style government precincts reflect the openness and the cooperation associated with this method of governance. Like the people the Members represent, the Libraries are retaining much of the northern traditions as possible while keeping an eye on the future and the developments yet to come.



The Nunavut Legislative Library Reading Room.



Yvonne Earle



Riel Gallant

The Nunavut Legislative Library Stacks.

Specialized Resources for Parliamentary Libraries

Parliamentary libraries are specialized environments, requiring dedicated and unique resources to support their client-centered reference service. Staff add value to collections and information sources using their knowledge and understanding of the local parliamentary context. Examples provided from Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador highlight the customized products and tools developed by these libraries to meet the needs of parliamentary library clients.

Heather Close and Andrea Hyde

Introduction

Parliamentary libraries are highly specialized information environments, where knowledge of parliamentary tradition, legislation, public policy, and local history merge with personalized and professional service.

Meeting client needs in this fast-paced landscape necessitates the creation and maintenance of a variety of dedicated and unique reference services and resources. Library staffs' time and knowledge is skillfully invested in the curation, development, and maintenance of customized tools specifically designed to provide authoritative, timely, and non-partisan information in support of their legislative assemblies.

The Alberta Legislature Library and the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislative Library provide examples of this type of specialized resource particular to parliamentary information service.

Alberta

The Alberta Legislature Library has created two resources of current and historical data to support library reference service, Members, legislative staff, researchers, and the engaged public— *Member Profiles* and *Constituency Profiles*.

Heather Close is the Manager of Library Services at the Alberta Legislature Library and Andrea Hyde is the Information Specialist – Client Services at the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislative Library.

Member Profiles are legislative service summaries of all Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta who have served since 1905. Launched to the public in 2016, the online profiles include a photograph, dates of service, contested elections and constituencies, party affiliation, offices and roles, and legislative committee membership of each Member.

Library staff compile and verify the information using a wide variety of authoritative and primary sources. While much of this information has been reproduced and is available in published sources, the *Member Profiles* offer researchers a uniquely comprehensive and trusted source on the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and its Members.

The *Constituency Profiles* provide current and historical data regarding the province's electoral divisions, Members, and the electorate. The specific focus of the information presented reflects the geographic areas covered by the current electoral divisions. Each profile provides access to demographic data, local histories, and newspapers from the constituency. There is a general chronology of elections, Legislatures, and Session dates, as well as a guide to key sources on legislative process and procedure.

The Library has been updating the information in these profiles at each election and with each electoral boundary change since they were first produced in 2001. For the most recent general election, the profiles were moved from print to a dynamic online format that allows for continuous updates and direct access to electronic resources.

The unique value of both these resources comes from the time in researching and compiling the information from legislative records, such as the *Journals* and *Hansard*, and presenting it in a way that is tailored to the needs of the parliamentarian. For example, new Members faced with drafting their Maiden Speeches refer to the *Hansard* transcripts for examples and inspiration from what was previously said. The *Constituency Profiles* pinpoint the speeches of those who represented each constituency historically, with links to the speeches in the official *Hansard* (1972 to date) and *Scrapbook Hansard*, the Library's online collection of historical newspaper clippings.

Newfoundland and Labrador

The goal of the reference service at the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislative Library is to provide attentive, efficient, and comprehensive information to its clients. Questions posed to reference staff range widely, but some important patterns emerge that help in the development of reference tools. One such pattern is the reliance on media sources to provide both context for, and reaction to, government decision-making.

In order to facilitate responses to questions of this nature, the library has created an in-house database of press releases and periodical articles that is indexed daily by Legislative Library staff. All press releases published by the government, opposition, and third party are included in the database; each entry containing the title, date, authors, and controlled-vocabulary subject headings. The periodical articles are indexed in a similar way, and include articles from

any publications to which the library subscribes that include reference to Newfoundland and Labrador government activities.

The use of controlled-vocabulary subject headings that have been developed by Legislative Library staff, as well as the ability to include individual items that are uniquely important in our legislature's context, makes the database an invaluable resource. Containing entries from 1998 onwards, the database allows reference staff to promptly form a timeline of events, and to quickly provide a set of primary sources to clients, as they are often working within a very tight deadline. This preliminary set of sources then provides a foundation for further research, leading to other resources and materials.

Conclusion

While parliamentary library services across the country differ in size and scale, our common purpose – to provide reliable, relevant, and non-partisan information service – provides a shared vision for the work they do to support our legislatures each day.

The worth of staff-created specialized tools comes from the skillful synthesis of information from a wide range and volume of material, presented in a format that fits the demanding work of parliamentarians.

The creation and maintenance of resources that help parliamentary libraries answer reference questions quickly and effectively builds the capacity of library services, allows for greater client trust, and promotes continued reliance on their information services.

Treasures of the Library of Parliament

The Treasures of the Library of Parliament include items from its rare books, art and artefacts collections, as well as the architecture and fixtures of the Library building itself. This article, which highlights each of these four facets, was compiled from submissions written by the Library of Parliament's Preservation Group for the Library's Treasures web page.

Compiled by Lane Lamb, Janet Bennett, Josée Gagnon, and Dominique Parent

The Treasures of the Library of Parliament include items from its rare books, art and artefacts collections, as well as the architecture and fixtures of the Library building itself. With the exception of the Library building, the items in these collections are conserved to modern museum standards in the Library's rare book room, where temperature, humidity, light levels and access are controlled. Some items have undergone conservation treatments to preserve them for future generations.

With the closure of Centre Block as part of the Long-Term Vision Plan for Canada's Parliament, the preservation group at the Library was tasked with providing access to these compelling collections despite their move off of Parliament Hill. In response to this call to action, items from these collections are now being highlighted on the Library's new *Treasures of the Library* webpage, on which a new treasure is posted each month. Each new treasure is added to the archive so that the site will eventually feature the full collection. To view the *Treasures of the Library*, visit <https://lop.parl.ca/treasures>.

This article highlights each of these three facets of the Library's treasures – art and artefacts, rare books and decorative arts and finishes in the Library building.

Lane Lamb is Director of Collection Access and Preservation at Canada's Library of Parliament. Janet Bennett, Josée Gagnon, and Dominique Parent are members of her team.

Art and Artefacts Collection

The Library of Parliament's collection of art and artefacts consists of rare and unique items that chronicle the history of Canada, as well as the history of Parliament and of the Library. The collection also includes items of ceremonial or esthetic value and examples of decorative and visual arts, such as busts, statues, bas reliefs, paintings, heritage furniture and other decorative pieces. Architectural plans and drawings of the Library building are also preserved in the collection. In addition, the collection includes some textiles and clothing, such as the civilian dress uniform that belonged to Joseph de la Broquerie Taché, General Librarian from 1920 to 1932.

Arguably the most significant non-documentary artefact in the collection is the Confederation Inkstand.

Confederation Inkstand

The Confederation Inkstand was used at three important moments in Canadian history, as described on the sterling silver plaques attached to its side. They read:



© Canadian Museum of History

Confederation Inkstand,
Library of Parliament Collection



Convention at Quebec of Delegates of the Legislatures of Canada, Library and Archives Canada / MIKAN no. 3194512

“Encrier dont se sont servi [sic] les Promoteurs de la Confédération Canadienne pour signer les résolutions adoptées à la Conférence de Québec” [Translation: Inkstand used by the proponents of Confederation to sign the resolutions adopted at the Quebec Conference] (the 1864 conference presided over by Sir Étienne-Paschal Taché)

“Cet encrier fut prêté à M. Mackenzie King devant servir au président des États-Unis et au premier ministre de Grande-Bretagne, lors de la Conférence de Québec en 1943» [Translation: This inkstand was loaned to Mr. Mackenzie King, to be used by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain at the 1943 Quebec Conference] (a secret meeting hosted by Prime Minister Mackenzie King in the city of Québec during the Second World War)

“On December 11, 1948, this Inkstand was used by the delegates of Canada and Newfoundland at the signing in Ottawa of the Terms of Union” (in the Senate chamber

when the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation was formalized)

The fourth plaque commemorates the donation of the inkstand by Sir Étienne-Paschal Taché’s family: “To the Canadian Nation from Major R.A.C. Kane, VD, grandson of Sir Étienne P. Taché.”

The inkstand is made of ebonized (painted black) wood, a style that was popularized after Queen Victoria arranged to have much of her furniture painted black as a sign of mourning following the death of her husband, Albert, Prince Consort. Based on this, appraisals of the inkstand have set the manufacturing date to sometime between 1861 and 1864. The inkstand is topped by two identical cut-glass inkwells with brass collars sitting within circular recesses and includes two elongated recesses for quills and a single front drawer.

For more information about the history of this artifact, see the Library’s publication, *The Confederation*



Mackenzie King, Roosevelt and Churchill at the Quebec Conference, Library and Archives Canada / MIKAN no. 3194622

Inkstand.¹ The Confederation Inkstand was recently at la Musée Royal 22e Régiment - La Citadelle de Québec as part of their special exhibit, *Armistice 2018 – Memories of Wartime*.

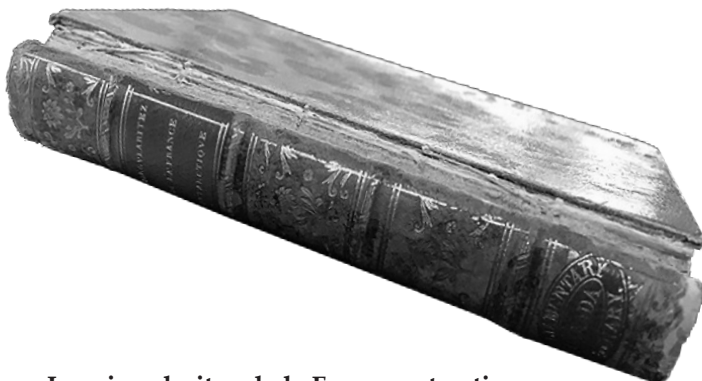
Rare books

The rare book collection of the Library of Parliament can trace its roots back to the establishment of the

legislative assemblies of Lower Canada and Upper Canada in 1791. In 1840, the *Act of Union* united Upper and Lower Canada into the single Province of Canada. Then, in 1841, the two libraries merged to serve the newly created Legislative Assembly for the Province of Canada.

Until Ottawa was named the national capital, the Legislative Assembly travelled frequently, with its collection of books in tow. It moved from the city of Québec to Montréal to Toronto or Kingston. Each move would result in some damage to the collection and some lost volumes. However, the two most devastating losses to the collection were caused by fire. First in Montréal in 1849, when a mob set fire to Parliament in reaction to the Rebellion Losses Bill and only 200 books survived. Then, five years later, in Québec City, when an accidental fire destroyed a further part of the collection.

Following these fires, the collection was largely rebuilt by two individuals. The first was Georges-Barthélemi Faribault, Assistant Clerk of the Legislative Assembly



Les singularitez de la France antarctique



Title Page

from 1835 to 1855, who rebuilt the collection after the 1849 fire. The second was Alpheus Todd, who was Assistant Librarian in 1855 and later became the first Parliamentary Librarian, who was sent by Parliament following the fire in Quebec to London and Paris with a budget of £10,000 to purchase books and to acquire donations from those countries' governments.

Les singularitez de la France antarctique

Published in 1558, *Les singularitez de la France antarctique* is the oldest book to continually be in the Library's collections. Given its immense historical value, this rare book written by the French Franciscan André Thevet is one of the Library of Parliament's most valuable holdings.

What the author calls "France antarctique" is actually South America, specifically Brazil. The book describes explorations not only in this part of the world, but also in areas farther north, in what are today the United States and Canada. The author describes many Indigenous cultures, plants, exotic fruits and animals, such as toucans, coatis, tapirs, sloths, and monkeys. His accounts also provide detailed information about eastern Canada. The places the author explored, the events he witnessed and the landscapes he was able to

behold during his travels are depicted in magnificent engravings with at times exaggerated details.

Les singularitez de la France antarctique also includes tales from sailors and explorers who travelled in the New World. In fact, the final chapters contain a collection of information on Canada gathered during the voyages of the explorer Jacques Cartier.

The Library of Parliament holds two copies of this book. The original, published in 1558, is kept in a custom-made acid-free box stored in the Rare Book Room. Due to its extremely fragile condition, the book must be handled with the utmost care. The second copy is a new edition published in 1878, with notes and commentary by the French historian Paul Gaffarel.

A digitized version of the book is available on *Early Canadiana Online*.²

Decorative Arts and Finishes of the Library of Parliament Building



Sloth, an animal described in *Les singularitez de la France antarctique*

The Main Library has been called the “Jewel in the Crown of Parliament Hill,” the “grand old lady,” the “wedding cake,” and “Canada’s most beautiful room.”

Soon after Queen Victoria chose Ottawa as the permanent seat for the Parliament of Canada, the Department of Public Works invited architects to submit designs for the Parliament Buildings. Alpheus Todd, who was inspired by a study of modern library architecture undertaken during his book-buying trips to Europe, and by Edward Edwards’ *Memoirs of Libraries*, submitted his recommendations for the future design of the Library building. His suggestions included fireproofing elements, which would ultimately save the Library (and its collection) from disaster in the fire of 1916.

Thomas Fuller and Chilion Jones won the competition and began construction of the Parliament Buildings in December 1859. The Library building construction lasted until 1876. Its interior finishes were completed by 1878.

The Library is an example of High Victorian Gothic Revival. This architectural style was popular in England late in the 19th century. Inspired by medieval architecture, it is eclectic and highly romantic, using multicoloured decoration and multiple textures. The ornate exterior, for example, shows off three types of sandstone. The circular wall is surrounded by 16 flying buttresses topped with pinnacles. A lantern dome roof caps the structure. Inside, the spacious reading room rises to an impressive 40-m domed ceiling – the first of its kind in Canada. Its walls are surrounded by richly sculpted white pine panels. The overall impression is reminiscent of a medieval chapter house.

The Library of Parliament is the only section of the original Parliament Buildings to survive the fire of 1916. However, in 1952, an electrical fire in the domed ceiling badly damaged the Library’s interior. The Library was closed for nearly four years for restoration. The wood panelling was carefully dismantled, then sent to Montréal for cleaning and fireproofing. A replica of the cherry, oak and walnut parquet floor was installed.

By the late 1990s, the Library had lost some of its original lustre and function as a reading room. The once multicoloured ironwork was now a uniform black and the original light-filtering glass floors of the galleries had been removed. The interior was now a cluttered open office space. After careful planning, the Library closed again between 2002 and 2006. The work restored the Library to its original Victorian splendor

and upgraded the infrastructure to meet modern standards.

The Library Dome

Soaring over 40 metres above the floor, the dome is one of the most arresting features of the Main Library.

At the core of the dome’s design is its iron frame, a prefabricated structure that was ordered from England. It consisted of 32 iron ribs with a plaster infill. The circular space that its diameter encompasses was a span unprecedented in Canada when the Library opened in 1876. The dome was completely rebuilt using the original iron frame and moulded plaster following the fire of 1952. The rebuilt dome was crowned with a replica of the original lantern - the raised structure with its chrysanthemum-like pattern that sits atop the dome, overarching the immense, open space.

The dome spans the Library’s reading room. Supporting it structurally are 16 exterior flying buttresses which counteract the lateral thrust of the dome upon the walls. Inside, pairs of diagonal ribs, which fan out from marble columns to create a patterned web around the upper portion of the dome, provide further reinforcement.

The Library dome was once again renovated as part of a full restoration of the Library from 2002 to 2006. The gold leaf, which caps the dome’s lantern, was returned to its original shine, while the ribs radiating



A view from the floor of the Main Library up into the dome



Detail of the dome's centre

from it were painted a hue of blue characteristic of Victorian times, bringing it back to its distinctive appearance of 1876.

Audubon's Birds of America

Of course, no talk about the Library of Parliament's Treasures would be complete without mention of John James Audubon's *The Birds of America* – an item that fits the collection criteria for both the art and artefacts and the rare book collections.

Created by one of the world's foremost naturalists, the paintings of John James Audubon depict the wilds of North America and the creatures inhabiting it.

Audubon was born in Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) in 1785 and sent to France as a young boy. It was here where he developed his love of nature and an aptitude for drawing birds. When he reached the age of 18, his father sent him to America to avoid conscription into Napoleon's war and to enter into business.

In the 1820s, Audubon began travelling the United States and Canada to capture the likenesses of bird species from across the continent. Audubon's passion for the portraiture of birds allowed him to combine his interests and skills in art and science. He created 435 paintings of over 450 species of birds, each life-sized, from the smallest hummingbird to the grandest flamingo. His collection, *The Birds of America*, which reproduced these paintings as colour plates, was originally sold through subscription.

To produce the plates for *The Birds of America*, Audubon sent his original paintings to Europe, to the engraver and printer Havell, who produced the

images through copperplate etching and hand-applied watercolour. The collection is now commonly known as the "double elephant folio" edition. This moniker is a direct reference to the impressive size of the paper on which the plates were produced, measuring about 100 cm tall by 70 cm wide. The complete run of plates was sent to subscribers in 87 sets of 5 plates each.

The Birds of America holds a special place in the Library of Parliament's collection. The current set is the Library's third exemplar. The Legislative Council of Canada and the Legislative Library acquired the first two as complete sets from Audubon in 1842. These two sets were lost to fire when Parliament was burned by protesters in Montréal in 1849. The present copy was acquired in 1857 after the Library of Parliament approached Audubon's family for a replacement set.

At the time of its purchase by the Library, *The Birds of America* was the premier volume on ornithology in North American and represented a topic of great



Red-winged Starling or Marsh Blackbird, plate LXVII



Summer or Wood Duck, plate CCVI

interest to Parliament at the time – that of natural history. Today, Audubon's *The Birds of America* contains representations of several species of birds that have since become extinct. The Library's copy also contains some unique features such as composite plates, in which Audubon added additional details, and some notes and sketches in the margins that Audubon may have inserted himself.

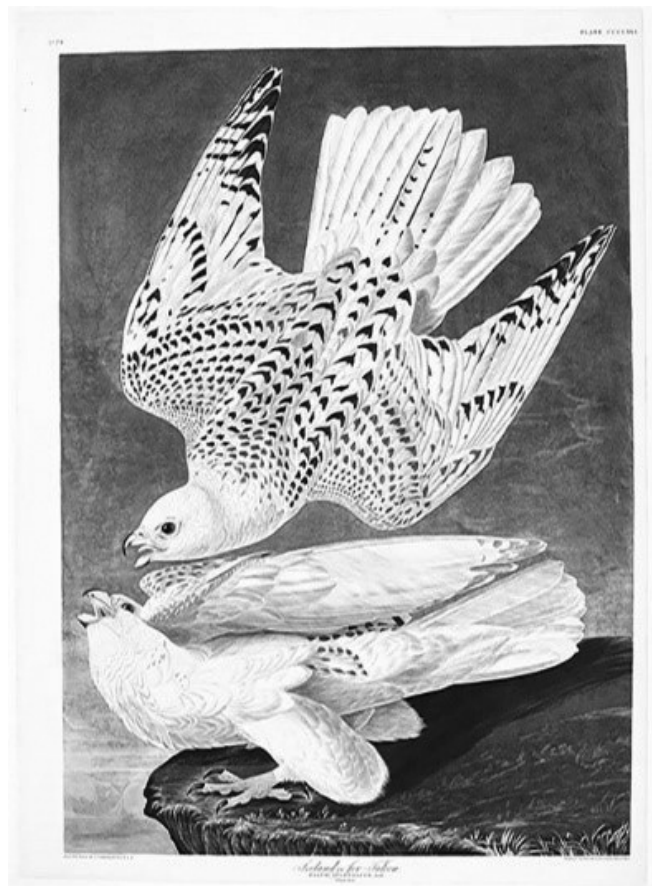
The Library's copy of *The Birds of America* is also an excellent example of an item in the collection that has received treatment for preservation. Originally housed in four enormous volumes, the Library's copy of the *The Birds of America* suffered wear and tear from years of use. The Library partnered with the Canadian Conservation Institute in the 1980s and 90s to preserve the condition of the plates. The Institute rebound

the plates in 17 smaller volumes made specifically to ensure the long-term preservation of the work. Bleeder pages interleaved each plate to prevent bleed-through of colour from one plate to another. Special inserts were also placed along the spine to reduce pressure on the bound edge of each plate.

To learn more about the Library's Treasures, visit the Treasures of the Library³ page.

Notes

- 1 <https://hillnotes.ca/2015/05/08/the-confederation-inkstand/>
- 2 <http://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.94751/3?r=0&s=1>
- 3 <https://lop.parl.ca/treasures>



Iceland or Jer Falcon, plate CCCLXVI

The Canadian Region

New Nunavut Speaker

Aggu MLA **Paul Quassa**, a former premier of Nunavut, was elected Speaker of the territory's assembly on February 26 in a secret ballot over MLA **Tony Akoak**. Former Speaker **Simeon Mikkungwak** had resigned from the position one day earlier citing personal reasons.

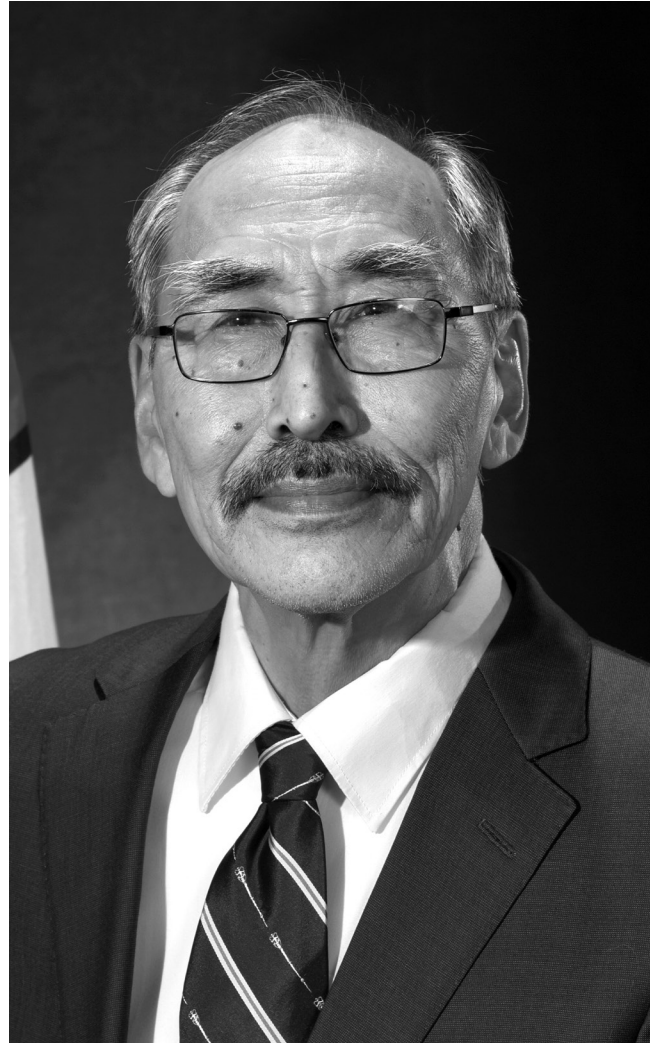
Speaker Quassa called the election "a great moment for me and my family and for Nunavummiut because it's an honour to be a Speaker of the House, wherever we are, in any jurisdiction."

Prior to entering territorial politics, Speaker Quassa worked as a land claims negotiator, held senior positions in several media organizations, and served as mayor of Igloolik and president of the Nunavut Association of Municipalities.

First elected to the Assembly in 2013, he served as Education Minister, Government House Leader, and Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College. Re-elected in 2017, he was selected premier by his fellow MLAs under the territory's consensus system. His tenure as premier ended after losing a vote of confidence in 2018.

Speaker Quassa explained that his past experiences in the executive gave him a good understanding and appreciation of the role of the assembly. "I know the process," he said. "I think it's very important for Nunavummiut to get as much [as they can] out of our legislative assembly."

Paul and **Elisapee Quassa** have six children. Outside of work, he enjoys hunting, fishing and music.



Paul Quassa

Regional Executive Committee, CPA*

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Kevin Murphy, Nova Scotia

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Ted Arnott, Ontario

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

Vacant, Québec

PAST PRESIDENT

Yasmin Ratansi, Federal Branch

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Alexandra Mendès, Federal Branch

Vacant, Québec

Kevin Murphy, Nova Scotia

CHAIR OF THE CWP, CANADIAN SECTION

(Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians)

Laura Ross, Saskatchewan

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER

Michel Patrice, House of Commons

Members of the Regional Council*

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Anthony Rota, Speaker

Charles Robert, Clerk

SENATE

George Furey, Speaker

Richard Denis, Clerk (Interim)

ALBERTA

Nathan Cooper, Speaker

Shannon Dean, Secretary

NOVA SCOTIA

Kevin Murphy, Speaker

Neil Ferguson, Secretary

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Darryl Plecas, Speaker

Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Secretary

ONTARIO

Ted Arnott, Speaker

Todd Decker, Secretary

CANADIAN FEDERAL BRANCH

Yasmin Ratansi, Chair

Rémi Bourgault, Secretary

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Colin LaVie, Speaker

Joey Jeffrey, Secretary

MANITOBA

Myrna Driedger, Speaker

Patricia Chaychuk, Secretary

QUÉBEC

François Paradis, Speaker

Simon Bérubé, Secretary

NEW BRUNSWICK

Daniel Guitard, Speaker

Donald Forestell, Secretary

SASKATCHEWAN

Mark Docherty, Speaker

Gregory Putz, Secretary

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Scott Reid, Speaker

Sandra Barnes, Secretary

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Frederick Blake Jr., Speaker

Tim Mercer, Secretary

NUNAVUT

Paul Quassa, Speaker

John Quirke, Secretary

YUKON

Nils Clarke, Speaker

Dan Cable, Secretary

*As of March 31, 2020

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Parliamentary Bookshelf: Reviews

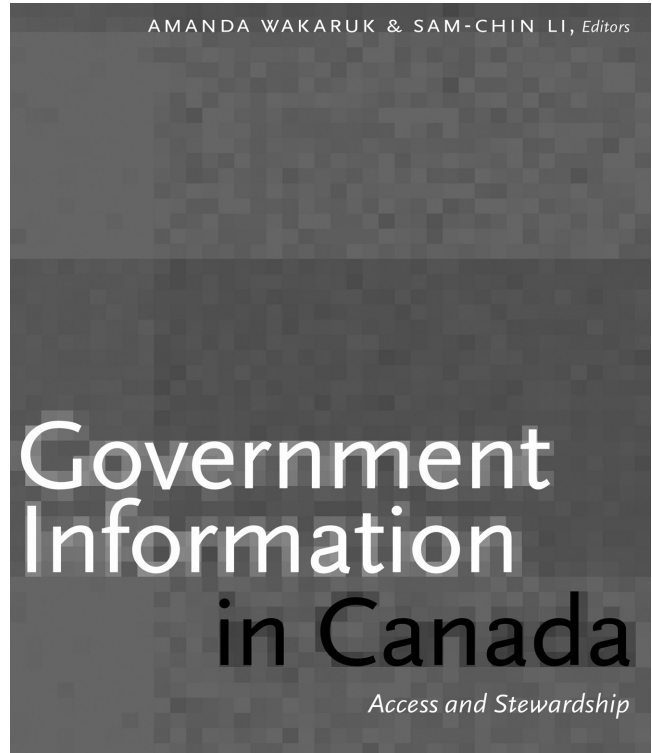
Government Information in Canada: Access and Stewardship. Amanda Wakaruk & Sam-chin Li, Editors. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 376pp.

Last summer when Nova Scotia hosted the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Canadian Region) annual conference I worked the information desk. There were times when we weren't very busy, so I started to read *Government Information in Canada: Access and Stewardship* edited by Amanda Wakaruk and Sam-Chin Li. As an information professional, the subject area was of great interest to me and I ended up reading it avidly at the desk. Some delegates asked me what I was reading so intently, and I think I may have disappointed them when I showed them the cover. But, they shouldn't have been.

Now, I'm sure you're thinking, "I can understand why you, a librarian, would be interested in this book, but why should a parliamentarian be interested in this material? What's in it for me?"

In a democracy, publicly accessible information is not a want, it is a necessity. This became very clear to me a few years ago when I participated in a cycling tour in the Baltic states organized by librarians for librarians. We cycled from library to library through the countryside of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Throughout this tour, 80-odd cycling librarians were treated with the utmost respect by the citizens and the politicians. As librarians, we were lauded and praised wherever we went. People cheered everywhere we cycled, the red carpet was laid out for us, and we had many police escorts. The Baltic people, so long subjugated by Soviet rule, had been denied freedom of information and the freedom to access that information. They recognized access to information as necessary for democracy. They weren't closing libraries; they were opening brand new national ones and they were ensuring that all citizens have the access to information they need. In short, they understood the enduring value of access to government information – a principal goal of this book.

This book will help you, the parliamentarian, understand why and how libraries curate and store government information for present and future generations. This work, in turn, helps ensure a functioning democracy for years to come. Because the



book's contributors are all librarians who work in the field, and their comments and conclusions are based on years of experience and knowledge, the parliamentarian can get a first-hand glimpse of the challenges and issues that librarians face in their stewardship role. The reader will also learn about the real dangers that exist to the preservation and access of government information.

A parliamentarian may not garner much from reading the entire book cover to cover. There are certain sections, however, that warrant attention. I'll spend the balance of this review highlighting the chapters that I think may benefit a parliamentarian.

The first chapter discusses the state of government deposit systems in Canada, both federally and provincially, and is the result of a survey conducted by three academic librarians who work in the field. This chapter is foundational and provides the basis for the rest of the book. It offers an objective view of the current situation in Canada and states clearly which provinces have depository and legal deposit programs and which ones do not.

Chapter three, written by another field librarian, concentrates on the Library of Parliament and discusses the rules and orders of parliament before analyzing where to find parliamentary information. Of particular use to a parliamentarian might be the chart that traces the issue of gun control through the parliamentary record. Here the authors trace the evolution of gun control from statements on the December 7, 1989 shooting at the Polytechnique in Montreal to the enactment of the *Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act* in 2015.

The next chapters discuss the situations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario respectively. A parliamentarian should pay particular attention to the end of these chapters which discuss the challenges of open government and digital information, particularly in regard to access and preservation. For example, governments are making the decision not to publish material in PDF format. Although these documents are currently more accessible, what happens to them in the future? Librarians or curators need to decide what and how to keep these documents for future generations. In doing so they need to determine: What is a document? How do we find these documents? Should curators convert these documents to another format? How do they store these documents? How long will the format be readable? Should the document be converted to contemporary formats over time? What is the risk of losing the document forever?

The last three chapters examine the future and the need for understanding and collaboration to ensure that future generations have access to critical government information:

“The last two decades of government information librarianship have taught us that digital government information is much more precarious than its print equivalent has proven to be during the past one hundred years” (p. 275).

Chapters 10 and 11 are particularly eye-opening and warrant a serious read. In Chapter 10, the authors point out that:

“one has an easier time finding and reading a surveyor’s report of Aboriginal lands that was submitted to and published by the Government in Canada in 1897 than finding and reading an academic research paper submitted to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in ... 1997” (p. 276).

To illustrate the problems with stewardship, they use an example from the *Romanow Commission on the*

Future of Health Care in Canada. “Transcripts and ... stakeholder submissions were removed from the Health Canada web site.” Later they discovered that a single copy of these documents was on a CD-ROM in the desk drawer of a single federal employee. When questioned, the employee asked, “Who would want them?” Fortunately, through library and archives collaboration, these documents were saved. Another example is the removal of Stephen Harper’s video diary and daily posts. These materials have evidentiary value and need to be given the proper stewardship they deserve. These observations are shocking, and parliamentarians can help the situation. By reading “Appendix 10.1 – A Proposal and Call for Partners” and “Appendix 10.2 – Resolution on Access to Canadian Federal Government Information,” parliamentarians will get a sense of the importance of this topic, the challenges involved in government information stewardship and the importance of making this information available.

Another astounding revelation in these last chapters is that:

“One might estimate that there are more born-digital government information items produced in a single year than all the two to three million non-digital government information items accumulated in the FDLP (US Federal Deposit Library Program) over 200 years” (p. 305).

The Canadian environment is similar.

The contributors to this book all work in the government information sector; they are not academics. Because of the real-life experiences and observations in this book, it is a must read for anyone interested in government information in Canada, particularly its dissemination, access, and preservation. The book provides a historical overview of how government information has been handled in the past and how it is being handled in the 21st century. It presents some real problems, as well as possible solutions, that exist in our current situation.

If you’re still reading this “review,” I hope I have convinced you of the need to at least peruse this book’s valuable insights into the current situation of government information in Canada. Simply put, government information is in crisis. Parliamentarians can help fix some of these problems if they understand the situation. This book will help you do just that.

David McDonald

Legislative Librarian, Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly

New and Notable Titles

A selection of recent publications relating to parliamentary studies prepared with the assistance of the Library of Parliament (November 2019 - February 2020)

Bowden, James W.J. "The founders' Senate - and ours." *The Dorchester Review* 9 (2), Autumn/Winter 2019: 55-65.

- Canada's Upper House was (and is) supposed to be partisan...history and precedent are firmly on Scheer's side: the Senate of the Dominion of Canada and its direct predecessor, the Legislative Council of the Province of Canada, always operated as partisan chambers. The Senate of Canada should remain partisan; however, Prime Ministers should, from time to time, nominate Senators to the Opposition benches [in] order to maintain balance and hew to the original compromise upon Confederation.

Hazell, Robert. "Can Boris Johnson simply repeal the *Fixed-term Parliaments Act*?" The Constitution Unit blog, February 5, 2020: 4p.

- The Conservative manifesto pledged to repeal the *Fixed-term Parliaments Act*, but was silent about what, if anything, would replace it. The author argues that it is not enough to simply repeal the *Act*; new legislation will have to be drafted, parliamentary scrutiny will have to take place, and the options for reform should be properly considered.

Hoyle, Lindsay. "Emerging security issues for parliamentarians and the impact on democracy." *The Parliamentarian* 3, 2019: 222-23.

- The Deputy Speaker of the UK House of Commons examines increasing security issues in Parliament.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. "Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament." 2019: 67p.

- These guidelines offer advice and practical information for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff on how to transform parliaments into gender-sensitive environments free from sexism and abuse.

Lilly, Alice. "Moving the Lords north would have far-reaching implications." Institute for Government blog, January 20, 2020: 2p.

- This spring, the government is planning to launch a review into the Constitution. It will assess the workings of the courts and Parliament, with ministers reportedly contemplating a permanent move for the House of Lords — away from Westminster and to a city in the north or Midlands, such as York or Birmingham.

Maddox, Bronwen. "Moving the Lords could be an inspired gesture of the government's commitment to the regions." Institute for Government blog, January 20, 2020: 2p.

- While obstacles to relocating the House of Lords are not insuperable, the author argues that who sits in the Upper House matters more than where they meet.

Mallard, Trevor. "Fit-for-purpose Parliament: Reviewing and enhancing parliamentary effectiveness." *The Parliamentarian* 100 (3), 2019: 214-21.

- A case study of the Parliament of New Zealand.

Morley, Gareth. "Who's on first? Is there a 'modern convention' for minority governments?" *Inroads - A Journal of Opinion*, 46, Winter/Spring 2020: 47.57.

- Whatever the reason for Canada being one of the world's oldest and most stable democracies, it is not because Canadians understand exactly how it works...

Patriquin, Larry. Rowman & Littlefield International – *Policy Impact Series*, 2020: 106p.

- This book ...makes a case for the creation of permanent citizens' assemblies.

Purser, Pleasance. "Overseas Parliamentary News - December 2019: A summary of news from overseas parliaments." New Zealand Parliamentary Library, December 2019: 5p.

- Denmark - Ban on mobile phones in Foreign Policy Committee meetings - Members may no longer take their mobile phones or other electronic devices into meetings of the Folketing's Foreign Policy Committee.

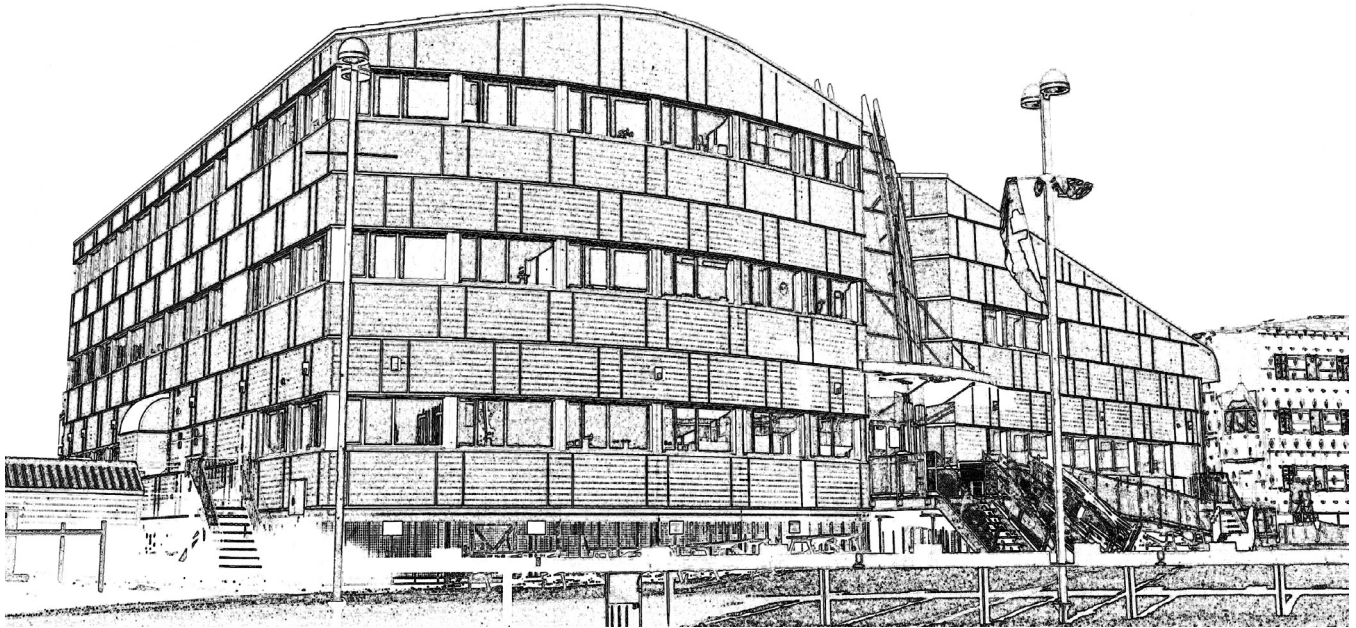
Renwick, Alan. "The government's electoral reform agenda: an assessment." The Constitution Unit blog, February 12, 2020: 5p.

- The Johnson government is committed to maintaining the core element of the electoral system – First Past the Post. But it has indicated its intention to pursue a range of other reforms. In this post, the author assesses its agenda. Most urgent is the need to update campaign rules to reflect the digital age - but the strength of the government's will to act here remains unclear, and recent steps that could undermine media independence are worrying. Other proposals are mixed, but some have the potential to strengthen the system.

Tonge, Jonathan. "The *Recall of MPs Act 2015*: Petitions, polls and problems." *The Political Quarterly*, 60 (4), October/December 2019: 713-18.

- Under the terms of the *Recall of MPs Act 2015*, there have been three recall petitions brought against MPs who have committed misconduct. The outcomes have been variable...





Nunavut

House Proceedings

On September 10, 2019, Speaker **Simeon Mikkungwak** announced the recall of the House for a special one-day sitting, which was held on September 17, 2019. The purpose of the sitting was to consider amendments to the *Nunavut Elections Act* in advance of territory-wide municipal elections, which were held on October 28, 2019. The amendments clarified the ability of employees of the territorial public service to stand for office. The 2019 municipal elections were the first municipal elections to be administered by Elections Nunavut since the passage in 2017 of legislation to bring them under the authority of the *Nunavut Elections Act*.

The fall 2019 sitting of the 2nd Session of the 5th Legislative Assembly convened on October 17, 2019, and concluded on November 7, 2019. The proceedings of the Committee of the Whole during the fall 2019 sitting were dominated by the consideration of the government's proposed 2020-2021 capital estimates. Nine bills received Assent during the fall 2019 sitting:

- Bill 8, *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*;
- Bill 26, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax*;

- Bill 29, *An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act and the Interpretation Act with Respect to Nunavut Day*;
- Bill 30, *Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2020-2021*;
- Bill 31, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2019-2020*;
- Bill 32, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2019-2020*;
- Bill 33, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2018-2019*;
- Bill 34, *Write-Off of Assets Act, 2018-2019*; and
- Bill 38, *An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act*.

Bill 38 implemented recommendations of the 2019 Independent Commission to Review Members' Indemnities, Allowances, Expenses and Benefits. The Commission's final report had previously been tabled in the House by Speaker Mikkungwak on May 28, 2019.

The winter 2020 sitting is scheduled to convene on February 18, 2020.

Tununiq By-Election

A by-election for the constituency of Tununiq was held on September 16, 2019. The by-election was necessitated by the March 29, 2019, passing of former Member **Joe Enook**. Two candidates stood in the by-

election. Member-Elect **David Qamaniq's** swearing-in ceremony was held on the morning of October 17, 2019, and he took his seat that afternoon for the commencement of the Legislative Assembly's fall sitting.

Committee Hearings

From September 25-26, 2019, the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held televised hearings on the 2019 *Report of the Office of the Auditor General to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on Support for High School Students and Adult Learners*. Committee Chairperson and Arviat North-Whale Cove MLA **John Main** subsequently presented the standing committee's report on the televised hearing during the fall 2019 sitting of the House.

From November 25-28, 2019, the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Legislation held televised hearings on Bill 25, the proposed *Act to Amend the Education Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act*. A number of witnesses appeared before the standing committee, including the sponsor of the Bill, Minister of Education and South Baffin MLA **David Joanasié**.

Appointment of Acting Languages Commissioner

On October 11, 2019, Speaker Mikkungwak announced the appointment of **Karliin Ariak** as Acting Languages Commissioner of Nunavut. The appointment followed the resignation of her predecessor.

Passing of Former Members

During the summer of 2019, the Nunavut and Northwest Territories legislatures mourned the passing of **Ludy Pudluk**, who served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories from 1975 to 1995. Mr. Pudluk was inducted into the Order of Nunavut in 2018 for his contributions to public service and the creation of the territory.

Two former Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut passed away during the fall of 2019: **Ovide Alakannuark**, former Member for Akulliq and **Peter Kattuk**, former Member for Hudson Bay. Flags were half-masted at the Legislative Assembly Precinct in honour of their passing.

Alex Baldwin

Office of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut



British Columbia

The fall sitting of the fourth session of the 41st Parliament of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia adjourned on November 28, 2019. During the sitting, 13 bills received Royal Assent, including a Private Member's bill introduced by the Leader of the Third Party, **Andrew Weaver**. It is anticipated that the Legislative Assembly will resume sitting on February 11, 2020.

Amendments to the Standing Orders

To ensure that the Legislative Assembly's Standing Orders continue to better reflect British Columbia's growing diversity and evolving standards and expectations, a number of them were amended during the fall sitting.

On October 3, 2019, **Rachna Singh**, MLA for Surrey-Green Timbers, wrote a letter to Speaker **Darryl Plecas** seeking clarification regarding a recommendation contained in the Acting Clerk's May 2019 *Report on Dress Guidelines and Expectations in the Parliament Buildings*. Ms. Singh inquired about the status of the recommendation to solidify the long-accepted unwritten practice that "Indigenous attire, traditional cultural attire and religious attire continue to be considered appropriate dress," and asked how it pertained to the Standing Orders, in particular Standing Order 36 which requires Members to 'rise uncovered' to speak. Ms. Singh felt that Standing Order 36 might prohibit religious and Indigenous head wear in the Chamber and possibly contradict the Acting Clerk's recommendation.

On October 10, Ms. Singh sought and received unanimous consent to move a motion without notice to amend Standing Order 36 to read "Every Member

desiring to speak shall do so from their assigned place and address the Speaker.” In her remarks upon moving the motion, Ms. Singh thanked the Speaker for his response to her letter, “which made it clear that a change to the order would be necessary in order to ensure the Legislature remains a welcoming space for all Canadians.” She indicated that the amendment to Standing Order 36 would reflect “our mutually held values of diversity, religious freedom and reconciliation.” The motion was adopted unanimously and Members may now wear a head covering in the Chamber if it is part of their traditional cultural, Indigenous or religious attire. Further certainty in this regard was provided with the addition of Standing Order 17B on October 31, 2019. The Standing Order provides that Members shall dress in professional contemporary business attire for all proceedings of the House, and that Indigenous, traditional cultural and religious attire are appropriate dress.

Under Standing Order 25, the daily routine business of the House for each sitting day begins with “Prayers” and are the only proceeding not transcribed for publication in the Hansard transcript. The Speaker will invite a Member or invited faith leaders, Indigenous leaders or Elders to “lead the House in prayer.” On the last day of the session, the Government House Leader moved a motion without notice to amend Standing Orders 25 and 17A, replacing the reference to “Prayers” with “Prayers and Reflections” in order to represent the range of faith-based, non-denominational, and non-religious traditions among Members.

Legislation

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

The fall sitting included the introduction, consideration and adoption of Bill 41, the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, making BC the first Canadian jurisdiction to enact legislation to affirm the application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The *Act* requires that government ensure provincial laws are consistent with UNDRIP, implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of UNDRIP and report annually on its progress.

Prior to the introduction of the bill on October 24, 2019, proceedings in the Chamber began with a blessing, land acknowledgment and prayer song by members of local Indigenous communities. After the bill received First Reading, the House moved to suspend proceedings and defer routine business to

allow Indigenous leaders Grand Chief **Ed John**, Cheryl **Casimer**, Regional Chief **Terry Teegee**, and Grand Chief **Stewart Phillip** to address the Legislative Assembly. The Premier, Leader of the Official Opposition and Leader of the Third Party also made statements, all of which were appended to the *Official Report of Debates of the Legislative Assembly*. The bill received Royal Assent on November 28, 2019.

Other Legislation

A number of other bills received Royal Assent during the fall sitting reflecting a range of significant public policy areas, including:

Bill 38, *Climate Change Accountability Amendment Act*, which seeks to improve government’s accountability measures as they relate to BC’s legislated 2030 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets.

Bill 40, *Interpretation Amendment Act*, which renames BC’s time zone as “Pacific Time” and places the province on permanent Daylight Saving Time (DST). This follows a government-led public consultation on DST in which over 220,000 people participated - the largest response to a public consultation in British Columbia. Ninety-three percent of respondents indicated a preference to observe DST year-round. At Introduction and First Reading, the Attorney General stated that changes resulting from the *Act* will be brought into force at a later date to allow government to coordinate its approach with other jurisdictions that share the current Pacific Time Zone with BC and where similar initiatives are being considered.

Bill 43, *Election Amendment Act 2019*, which implements recommendations proposed by the Chief Electoral Officer in his *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on Recommendations for Legislative Change, May 2018* and will permit the Chief Electoral Officer to maintain a list of future voters aged 16 to 17 in an effort to improve voter registration rates. The report was issued in accordance with section 13(1)(d) of the *Election Act*, which provides that the Chief Electoral Officer may make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly respecting amendments to the *Act* or other enactments affecting election matters.

Bill 45, *Taxation Statutes Amendment Act*, which seeks to address concerns with vaping and tobacco consumption by increasing the rate of the Provincial Sales Tax on vaping products from 7 percent to 20 percent and raising the cigarette and per-gram tobacco tax rates by 2 cents.

Bill M 225, *Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day Act*, which was introduced by Mr. Weaver, Leader of the Third Party, establishes the fourth Saturday in November as Holodomor Memorial Day throughout BC. This is the third Private Members' Bill introduced by Mr. Weaver to receive Royal Assent in the 41st Parliament.

Legislative Assembly Administration

During the reporting period, a number of external and internal processes continued in order to address issues raised in the January 2019 *Report of the Speaker Darryl Plecas to the Legislative Assembly Management Committee Concerning Allegations of Misconduct by Senior Officers of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly*.

On October 8, 2019, the Legislative Assembly Management Committee (LAMC) approved the release of the *Investigation Report in the Matter of Allegations Regarding the Conduct of Special Provincial Constable Gary Lenz*. The report was prepared by **Doug LePard** who was appointed by the Speaker to conduct an investigation into allegations against Sergeant-at-Arms **Gary Lenz** pursuant to the *Special Provincial Constable Complaint Procedure Regulation of the Police Act*. The report found that Mr. Lenz, who had been placed on administrative leave by the Legislative Assembly on November 20, 2018, did not uphold his Oath as a Special Provincial Constable and that he committed Neglect of Duty for failing to adequately investigate a misappropriation of liquor. Mr. Lenz retired on October 1, 2019.

The January 2019 report of the Speaker included a number of matters regarding the terminations of former Assembly staff. At the January 21, 2019 LAMC meeting, the Acting Clerk was asked to develop a framework for a workplace review of Assembly departments in order to address the matters raised in the report of the Speaker. Following completion of a competitive bidding process, ADR Education Partnership was selected by LAMC to conduct a workplace review with current and former employees of the Legislative Assembly. The workplace review process is intended to seek ways to enhance organizational health and wellbeing through inclusive engagement and collaborative participation. Interviews with staff are underway and results are expected to be presented to LAMC and Assembly staff in 2020. LAMC continued to meet throughout the fall to oversee the reform of numerous administrative and financial management policies including matters identified in the report of the Speaker, as well as issues raised by the Auditor General in her September 2019

report, *Expense Policies and Practices in the Offices of the Speaker, Clerk and Sergeant-at Arms*. The Legislative Assembly acknowledged the report's conclusions and accepted all recommendations. A comprehensive action plan presented to LAMC on October 8, 2019 indicated that many recommendations had already been substantially implemented and initiatives were planned to fully implement the outstanding recommendations. The Office of the Auditor General is also undertaking a series of performance audits in the areas of purchasing cards, compensation and benefits, capital asset management and overall governance.

Parliamentary Committees

Review of the Police Complaint Process

The Special Committee to Review the Police Complaint Process was appointed by the Legislative Assembly on February 21, 2019 to conduct an audit respecting the outcome or resolution of randomly selected complaints and investigations, pursuant to section 51.2 of the *Police Act*. The Special Committee engaged an external audit firm to conduct compliance and performance audits, and also sought public input regarding improvements to the police complaint process. The Special Committee's unanimous report, released on November 25, 2019, includes 38 recommendations aimed at increasing the efficiency, effectiveness and accessibility of the police complaint process.

Children and Youth with Neuro-diverse Special Needs

As reported in the summer 2019 edition of this publication, the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth held a public consultation to hear from parents of children and youth with neuro-diverse special needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and developmental delay, as well as caregivers, service providers and local community organizations. The Committee released its unanimous report on October 30, 2019 which makes 16 recommendations for improving access to services and supports, enhancing universal screening and increasing public awareness, and helping families to navigate and understand the system.

Annual Review of the Budgets of Statutory Offices

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services conducted its annual review on the budgets of BC's nine independent statutory offices and released its unanimous report with

recommendations respecting each office's operating and capital expenditures on December 16, 2019. This included the first full budget for the operationalization of the new Office of the Human Rights Commissioner which was created in 2018.

Permanent Officers

The Legislative Assembly adopted a motion on October 8, 2019 appointing **Greg Nelson** as Acting Sergeant-at-Arms until the appointment of a Sergeant-at-Arms. Under the terms of the motion, Mr. Nelson will undertake any responsibilities prescribed to the Sergeant-at-Arms by statute, the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and any other authority. Mr. Nelson formerly served as the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms and succeeded **Randy Ennis**, who retired as Acting Sergeant-at-Arms on May 31, 2019.

On October 23, 2019, LAMC approved a position description, compensation, and terms and conditions with respect to the position of Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. A Special Committee is currently working to select and unanimously recommend the appointment of an individual as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to statutory provisions and the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly. An open call for applications was issued on November 7, 2019 with a closing date of January 15, 2020.

Statutory Officers

Two statutory officer appointment processes concluded in November. On November 26, 2019, the Special Committee to Appoint a Conflict of Interest Commissioner unanimously recommended that **Victoria Gray** be appointed as Conflict of Interest Commissioner for a term of five years. The following day, the Special Committee to Appoint a Merit Commissioner unanimously recommended that **Maureen Baird** be appointed as Merit Commissioner for a term of three years. Both recommendations were subsequently endorsed by the House and the appointments are expected to take effect in January 2020.

Following the announcement of the resignation, effective December 31, 2019, of **Carol Bellringer** as Auditor General, a Special Committee was established to select and unanimously recommend the appointment of an Auditor General. The Special Committee issued a call for applications on November 4, with a deadline to apply of January 17, 2020. To ensure continuity at the Office of the Auditor General, on November 28, 2019,

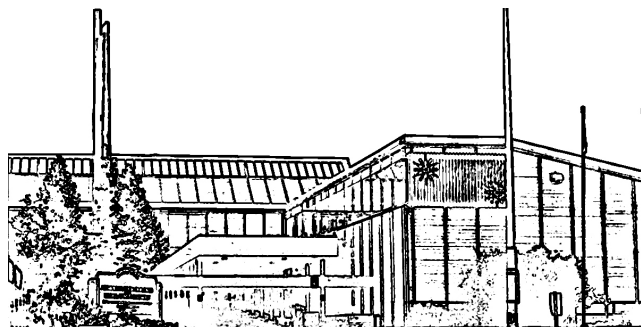
the Legislative Assembly appointed **Russ Jones** as Acting Auditor General effective December 31, 2019 on the unanimous recommendation of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts, pursuant to section 7(1) of the *Auditor General Act*.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

A Transgender Day of Remembrance to memorialize the murder of a transgender woman in Massachusetts, first took place on November 20, 1999 and has since evolved into an international day of action to remember those who have lost their lives as a result of gender-based violence or transphobia. The day is now observed in over 185 cities in more than 20 countries. The transgender pride flag was raised in front of the Legislature for the first time in a ceremony on November 20, 2019.

Josée Couture
Committee Researcher

Lisa Hill
Committee Research Analyst



Yukon

2020 Spring Sitting

The Third Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly resumed on March 5, 2020.

As per a November 29, 2019 Order of the House, the Legislative Assembly will not sit from March 16-19 due to the 2020 Arctic Winter Games. The Arctic Winter Games, "an international biennial celebration of circumpolar sports and Indigenous culture" for youth, will be held in Whitehorse from March 15-21, and is expected to be 2,000 participants strong.

The Standing Orders provide that the Spring Sitting will be between 20 to 40 sitting days in length; a 30-day Sitting would see the House rise on May 5.

Bills assented to during 2019 Fall Sitting

The 2019 Fall Sitting began on October 3 and concluded on November 27, after 30 sitting days. On the final day of that Sitting, the following government bills were assented to by Yukon's Commissioner, **Angélique Bernard**:

- Bill No. 2, *Yukon University Act* (**Tracy-Anne McPhee**) Note — this legislation transforms Yukon College into Canada's first Arctic university
- Bill No. 3, *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and regulation Act* (**Pauline Frost**)
- Bill No. 4, *Act to Amend the Elections Act* (**Sandy Silver**)
- Bill No. 5, *Liquor Act* (**John Streicker**)
- Bill No. 6, *Act to Amend the Corrections Act, 2009* (Ms. McPhee)
- Bill No. 7, *Technical Amendments Act, 2019* (Ms. McPhee)
- Bill No. 200, *Second Appropriation Act 2019-2020* (Mr. Silver)

Private Member's bills

During the 2019 Fall Sitting, the following private members' bills were introduced:

- Bill No. 300, *Act to Eliminate Daylight Saving Time* (**Wade Istchenko**)
- Bill No. 301, *Act to Amend the Taxpayer Protection Act* (**Brad Cathers**)

Public Accounts Committee report

On November 14, the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts was tabled in the House by the Chair of the Committee, **Stacey Hassard**. The report charted the progress made by departments with regard to implementing previous recommendations made in three previous Committee reports, and reports by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. The previous reports dealt with government transfers to societies, capital asset management, and climate change in Yukon.

Public Accounts Committee hearings

On December 11, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (PAC) held public hearings in the Chamber.

The morning hearing was on a report entitled *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly*

of Yukon – Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Education in Yukon – Department of Education, which had been released on June 18, 2018. A December 19, 2019 news release by PAC noted that the report "highlighted gaps in student outcomes between First Nations and other students, problems with the delivery of services and supports to students with special needs, and a lack of culturally inclusive programming in schools." At the hearing, officials from the OAG as well as witnesses from the Department of Education answered questions from the Committee.

The hearing PAC held on the afternoon of December 11 was on the *Yukon Public Accounts 2018-19*, which had been tabled in the House on October 30, 2019. The Committee's December 19, 2019 news release observed that despite the fact that the Public Accounts stand automatically referred to the Committee by way of Standing Order, this had been the first occasion since the committee's October 1979 creation on which a hearing had been held on the Public Accounts.

Yukon Party leadership

The Yukon Party (which years ago was known as the Yukon Territorial Progressive Conservative Party) has not had a permanent leader since the November 2016 general election, when former Yukon Party Premier **Darrell Pasloski** stepped down as leader upon losing his seat.

Mr. Hassard, who had been re-elected as the Member for Teslin, took on the role of Acting Leader of the Yukon Party and Leader of the Official Opposition in the House (the House first met in January, 2017).

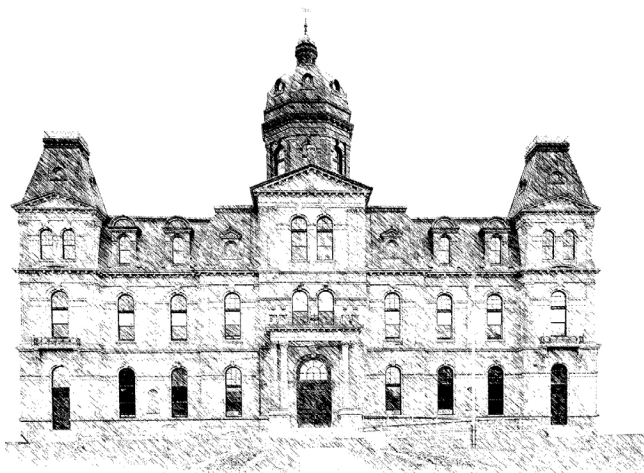
On November 20, 2019, the Yukon Party announced that on May 23, 2020, it would elect a permanent leader.

On November 21, **Currie Dixon**, the former Member for Copperbelt North, who had served as a Minister in Premier Pasloski's government from 2011-2016, announced that he was seeking the leadership of the Yukon Party. Mr. Dixon had not stood for re-election in the 2016 general election.

On December 5, **Brad Cathers**, the Member for Lake Laberge, announced his intention to run for the party leadership. First elected in 2002 and re-elected to the Legislative Assembly in successive general elections, Mr. Cathers (who is the Dean of the House) served in Cabinet during three Legislatures, and sat as an Independent from 2009-2011.

On January 14, 2020, past Yukon Party president and treasurer **Linda Benoit** joined the leadership race. Ms. Benoit was the federal Conservative Party candidate's campaign manager in the federal election, and had previously worked for former Premiers Pasloski and the late **Dennis Fentie**.

Linda Kolody
Deputy Clerk



New Brunswick

Third Session of the 59th Legislature and Throne Speech

Lieutenant-Governor **Brenda Murphy** opened the 3rd Session of the 59th Legislature on November 19, 2019, with the delivery of the Speech from the Throne. The speech focused on six priority areas of Premier **Blaine Higgs'** government: delivering dependable public health care; creating a world-class education system; energizing the private sector; creating vibrant and sustainable communities; ensuring affordable and responsive governance; and transforming the public service into a high-performing organization. Highlights included proposed amendments to the *Essential Services in Nursing Homes Act* to better protect residents, workers and taxpayers; the development of a physician resource strategy; exploration of new educational approaches to help more students learn both official languages; engagement with First Nations to renew the Enhanced First Nation Education Programs and Services Agreement; a goal to increase immigration, using the Population Growth Strategy and the New Brunswick Francophone Immigration

Action plan as guides; proposed amendments to the *Climate Change Act* to allow for the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions; the development of a tax reform roadmap that will include a review of all major taxation programs; and a goal to ensure that succession plans are in place for critical positions within the public service.

Reply to the Throne Speech

On November 21, Official Opposition Leader **Denis Landry** gave his reply to the Speech from the Throne. He thanked former Premier and Member for Shediac Bay-Dieppe **Brian Gallant** for his service and wished him well in his next endeavours. He also congratulated **Kevin Vickers**, who is the new Leader of the provincial Liberal Party and will be running as a candidate if a by-election is called for the riding. Mr. Landry raised concerns about the economy, highlighting the need for job creation in all regions of the province and more investment in tourism. He also expressed a desire to celebrate the achievements of businesspeople and successful new businesses in all regions of the province. He expressed his hope that the government would act with more urgency and creativity to build a stronger economy. Mr. Landry also addressed concerns about health care, including nursing shortages, wait times for health care services, dispute resolution over nursing homes, more resources for mental health, and the better use of other medical health professionals, including nurse practitioners. He also expressed his hope that the government would focus more on social development, particularly with regards to poverty reduction.

Capital Budget

The 2020-21 Capital Budget was tabled by Finance Minister **Ernie Steeves** on December 10 and totals \$599.2 million. Specifically, the government will invest \$123.9 million in health care infrastructure, including \$62.9 million earmarked for the continuation of renovations, additions and other improvements to health care facilities around the province; \$45 million for capital improvements and equipment; and \$16 million to start new projects in the coming year. In order to support the education system, \$70.6 million will be allocated for K-12 infrastructure. Other investments will include \$279.3 million for the maintenance and improvement of highways, roads and bridges around the province. An additional \$30.9 million will be used to maintain and improve government buildings and other infrastructure.

Standing Committees

On November 20, the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, chaired by Minister of Justice and Attorney General **Andrea Anderson-Mason**, tabled its first and second reports. The first report was the result of the Committee's deliberations on Bill 39, *An Act Respecting Proof of Immunization*. The purpose of the Bill was to remove non-medical exemptions from the mandatory immunization requirements for public school and licensed early learning and child care admissions. After hearing from members of the public and other interested stakeholders, Bill 39 died on the Order and Notice Paper as the second session of the 59th Legislative Assembly was prorogued on November 19. Nonetheless, the mandate of the Committee to review the subject matter of the Bill remained in effect. The Committee recommended that the Assembly consider the issues and concerns outlined in its report during any potential consideration of proposed legislation similar to Bill 39 in the future.

The second report tabled by the Standing Committee on Law Amendments was the result of the Committee's deliberations on Motion 31 with respect to property assessment and taxation exemptions or benefits applicable to heavy industry. Based on the input received during the public consultation process, the Committee recommended that the government consider a review of taxation with a view of modernizing and improving the current property tax system.

On December 3, the Standing Committees on Public Accounts and Crown Corporations, chaired by **Roger Melanson** and **Glen Savoie** respectively, met with Auditor General **Kim MacPherson** for the release of her *Report of the Auditor General of New Brunswick 2019, Volume II – Performance Audit* and *Volume III – Financial Audit*. Volume II focused on provincial funding to post-secondary institutions, group homes and specialized placement programs that fall within the Department of Social Development. It also followed-up on two financial assistance case studies (Blueberries and Naval Centre). Volume III presented performance reports focused on year-end financial results and matters arising from the annual financial audit of the provincial government and Crown agencies including the state of New Brunswick's financial condition. It also highlighted opportunities to increase transparency.

On December 19, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts tabled its first report, which outlined the Committee's activities since it last reported on March 26, 2019.

The Standing Committee on Procedure, Privileges and Legislative Officers, chaired by **Stewart Fairgrieve**, also tabled its first report on December 19. The report contained recommendations for amendments to the Standing Rules in order to dissolve the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations and merge its mandate with the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and to create a new Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Stewardship. The recommendations were subsequently adopted by the House, the two committees were merged, and the Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Stewardship was appointed with **Bruce Fitch**, a government caucus member, elected as Chair, and **Kevin Arseneau**, a Green caucus member, elected as Vice-Chair.

The Standing Committee on Economic Policy, chaired by **Gary Crossman**, remained active during the Fall session, considering various government bills.

Legislation

Thirty-one bills were introduced during the third session. Legislation introduced included:

- Bill 10 – *An Act to Amend the New Brunswick Liquor Control Act* – introduced by Minister Steeves, facilitates the potential change of direction for the operation, distribution and sale of recreational cannabis in the province from the public sector to the private sector.
- Bill 11 – *An Act Respecting Proof of Immunization* – introduced by Education and Early Childhood Development Minister **Dominic Cardy**, removes non-medical exemptions from the mandatory immunization requirements for public school and licensed early learning and child care admissions. The Bill differs from Bill 39 introduced during the previous session as it now contains a notwithstanding clause.
- Bill 12 – *An Act Respecting the Management of Prescriptions and Recovery Authority* – introduced by Health Minister **Hugh Flemming**, seeks to clarify the authority of the Department of Health with respect to the audit of claims made under the New Brunswick Drug Plan. It also addresses the recovery of overpayments to pharmacies and establishes a formal process for the review of inspection audit decisions.
- Bill 13 – *An Act to Amend the Industrial Relations Act* – introduced by Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour Minister **Trevor Holder**, specifies the process and requires arbitrators

to consider specific criteria when rendering a decision that involves a local government and police officers and firefighters as employees. The Bill was subsequently referred to the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for public consultation.

- Bill 17 – *An Act to Amend the Essential Services in Nursing Homes Act* – introduced by Social Development Minister **Dorothy Shephard**, addresses collective bargaining by ensuring an appropriate number of employees can strike while not interrupting essential services, to avoid endangering nursing home residents.
- Bill 20 – *An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act* – introduced by Service New Brunswick Minister **Sherry Wilson**, allows victims of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence or stalking to end a residential lease early.

Resolutions

On November 28, the Assembly adopted a resolution introduced by **Monique LeBlanc** that urged the government to focus resources towards the position of a mental health advocate. The Assembly also agreed to a resolution introduced by **Cathy Rogers** on December 12 that urged the government to refer the issue of glyphosate spraying to a legislative committee for consultation purposes.

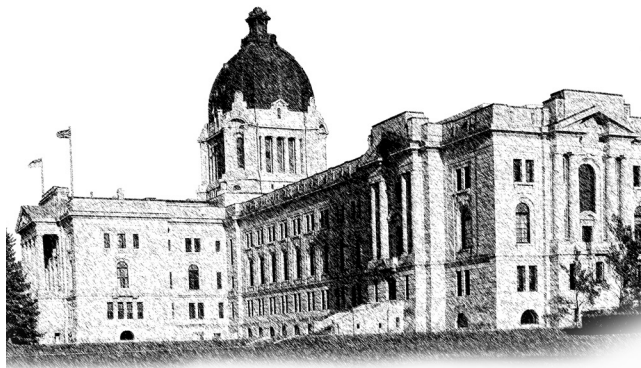
New Commissioners

On November 22, a new Official Languages Commissioner and a new Integrity Commissioner were recommended by the Legislative Assembly. **Shirley MacLean**, the deputy executive director and complaints registrar for the New Brunswick Law Society, was named New Brunswick's next Official Languages Commissioner. New Brunswick's Ombud, **Charles Murray**, was named as the new Integrity Commissioner after filling the role on an interim basis.

Adjournment

The House adjourned on December 20 and is scheduled to resume sitting on March 10, 2020, when it is expected that Minister Steeves will present the government's second budget. The standings in the House are 21 Progressive Conservatives, 20 Liberals, three People's Alliance and three Greens.

Shannon Jensen
Research Officer



Saskatchewan

Fall sitting of the fourth session of the twenty-eighth legislature

The fourth session of the twenty-eighth legislature was opened on October 23, 2019 by **Russ Mirasty**, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, who delivered his first Speech from the Throne. During the fall sessional period, 33 public bills were introduced by the government and the opposition introduced two private members' public bills.

The government and opposition found common cause to pass the following three bills through all stages in one sitting day.

Bill No. 185, *The Legislative Assembly (Protective Services) Amendment Act, 2019*, defines what the legislative precinct encompasses and establishes the Legislative Protective Services. The legislation confirms that the Speaker is responsible for the security of the precinct.

Bill No. 186, *The Provincial Emblems and Honours Amendment Act, 2019*, grants former members of Executive Council, with the exception of those convicted of certain offences, to be honorary members and entitles them to use 'The Honourable' before the member's name and the initials 'E.C.S.' (Executive Council of Saskatchewan) after their name.

Bill No. 202, *The Election Amendment Act, 2019*, continues the phased-in modernization of election legislation proposed by the Chief Electoral Officer. This legislation addresses administrative inefficiencies and other housekeeping changes.

Bill No.182, *The Tobacco Control Amendment Act, 2019*, was passed through all stages over two sitting days. It ensures vaping devices, products, and restrictions on use align with the regulations for tobacco products.

Mr. Mirasty gave royal assent to these four public bills on December 4, 2019.

An additional highlight of the fall sitting was the completion of the high definition (HD) migration project in the Chamber and committee room. Arrangements are being made with cable providers to broadcast proceedings in HD.

Vacancies

As previously reported, two seats became vacant when MLA **Warren Steinley** and MLA **Corey Tochor** resigned their seats on September 11, 2019 to seek election federally. Both members were elected as Members of Parliament.

On October 23, 2019, the Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) amended the transition allowance directive to preclude members that are elected as Members of Parliament or appointed to the Senate during the period of transition from receiving a transition allowance.

The composition of the Assembly is now 46 government members and 13 opposition members. The Standing Committee on House Services made changes to committee membership to reflect the composition of the Assembly. The policy field committees now have two opposition members and five government members each.

Infant in the Chamber

For the first time, an MLA, **Nicole Sarauer**, brought an infant into the Chamber on October 31, 2019. In April 2018, the Legislative Assembly adopted changes to the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* to permit a member to bring their infant into the Chamber.

Rule 1(2), which provides the authority for the Speaker to alter the rules and practices to accommodate members with a disability to fully participate in proceedings, was expanded to include members who are pregnant or ill. It also allows members to care for their infants in the Chamber. Additionally, the Assembly adopted a rule to ensure

that infants being cared for by a member are not regarded as strangers.

The BOIE also amended the annual indemnity and allowance directive. Now, if a member is absent from a sitting of the Legislature for maternity, paternity, or adoption leave, no deduction from the member's annual indemnity will be made.

New Advocate for Children and Youth

The Legislative Assembly unanimously appointed **Lisa Broda** to the position of Advocate for Children and Youth on November 4, 2019. Ms. Broda was serving in the role of Deputy Advocate for Children and Youth at the time of her appointment.

A competition was held to select a new Advocate for Child and Youth, and a sub-committee of the BOIE, comprised of the Speaker, a non-cabinet government member, and an opposition member, was established to conduct the first round of interviews. A short list of candidates was provided to the BOIE, and the board in its entirety conducted the final interviews. The BOIE recommended Ms. Broda to the Legislative Assembly, and her appointment was by order of the Assembly.

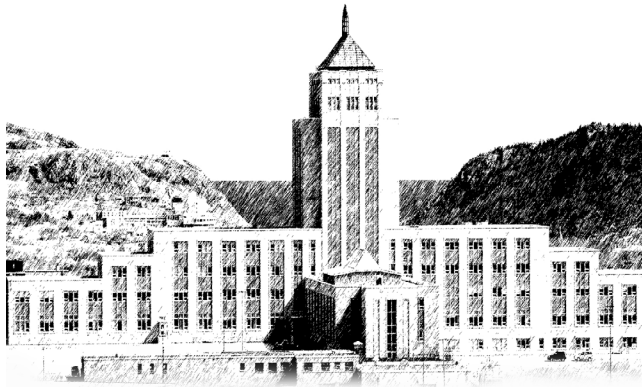
Interparliamentary relations

On November 4, 2019, Saskatchewan welcomed representatives from the Council of State Governments Midwestern Legislative Conference (MLC). In August 2019, Saskatchewan became the first Canadian province to become a full member of MLC. Representatives were in Regina to celebrate the achievement by signing the MLC proclamation welcoming Saskatchewan as a full member.

Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy

From November 16 to 20, 2019, Speaker **Mark Docherty**, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, hosted several teachers for the 21st Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy. Since the program's launch in 1999, over 300 teachers from across Saskatchewan have participated. The Legislative Assembly Service provided information sessions on a variety of topics. The next teachers' institute is planned for the spring of 2021.

Stacey Ursulescu
Procedural Clerk



Newfoundland and Labrador

The House reconvened for the continuation of the First Session of the 49th General Assembly on November 4th, 2019.

Election of Speaker

The first order of business was the election of a new Speaker. Two candidates put their names forward: **Scott Reid**, MHA for Humber - St. George's and **Perry Trimper**, MHA for Lake Melville. Mr. Reid was elected. **Derek Bennett**, MHA (Lewisporte-Twillingate) was elected Deputy Speaker succeeding Mr. Reid in the position.

Points of Privilege

On November 12, the Opposition House Leader, **David Brazil**, MHA, raised a point of privilege regarding comments made by a Minister about two MHAs which he described as damaging to the MHAs' reputations. The Speaker ruled that there was a *prima facie* case of breach of privilege. After considerable debate the House decided that there had been a breach of the two Members' privileges and resolved that the Minister withdraw unequivocally the comments in question. The Member complied with the request.

On December 2, the Government House Leader raised a point of privilege regarding the premature release of a report of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. The Speaker ruled that a *prima facie* case had been established. The House referred the matter to the Privileges and Elections Committee which has not reported yet.

Appointment of Privacy Commissioner

Bradley Moss was appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council Citizens' Representative for Newfoundland and Labrador on a unanimous resolution of the House of Assembly, and was sworn in for a term of six years on May 1, 2019. Mr. Moss succeeds **Barry Fleming**.

Reports of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards

On June 25, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards released his report on a complaint made by an MHA of a number of violations of the Code of Conduct by another MHA. The Commissioner concluded that the Member in question had not violated the Code.

On November 13, the Commissioner released a Report arising out of a referral to him by the Speaker of a report prepared by the Citizens' Representative regarding violations of the Code of Conduct by a Minister which required corrective action. The violations related to an appointment to an entity over which the Minister's Department had oversight. The Commissioner recommended a reprimand to ensure that Ministers act diligently in the future when involved in matters which may impact the public purse and governance of crown boards and/or agencies.

The House concurred in the Report and resolved that the Minister:

- apologize unequivocally to the Assembly, in writing;
- apologize unequivocally in writing to former and present Board members of an agency over which his Department had oversight;
- meet with the Commissioner for Legislative Standards to review the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Assembly and
- be suspended from the House of Assembly without pay for a period of two consecutive weeks when the House was next in session.

The Member apologized to the House unequivocally.

On December 2nd the House concurred in the *Final Report To The House of Assembly On The Development Of A Legislature-Specific Harassment-Free Workplace Policy*. The first three elements were carried out during the adjournment period. The suspension was served during the first two weeks of the Winter-Spring 2020 session.

The report was the work of the Privileges and Elections Committee of the 48th General Assembly which met during the Spring and Fall of 2018 consulting numerous individuals and organizations. The idea for the policy resulted from a Private Member's Resolution concurred in by the House in May of 2018. The MHAs have already participated in a mandatory training programme which takes into account the unique role of elected officials, and the skills needed to prevent and recover from incidents of harassment and bullying, as recommended in the Committee's Interim Report. The policy will come into effect on April 1, 2020.

The House is scheduled to reconvene on March 4.

In Memoriam

A number of former Members of the House of Assembly died in the last 10 months:

Haig Young, who represented the District of Harbour Grace from 1972 to 1989 (March 14, 2019).

Darryl Kelly, who represented the District of Humber Valley from 2007 to 2011 (May 18, 2019).

Beaton Tulk, who represented the District of Fogo from 1979 to 1996 and Bonavista North from 1996 to 2002 and served as Premier from October 2000 to February 2001 (May 23, 2019).

David Gilbert, who represented Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir from 1993 to 1995 (July 1, 2019).

James Morgan, who represented Bonavista South from 1972 to 1985 (August 4, 2019).

Glenn Greening, who represented the District of Terra Nova from 1983 to 1989 (August 5, 2019).

Thomas V. Hickey, served six terms as the Member for St. John's East Extern from 1966 to 1986 (January 2, 2020)

John C. Crosbie, former Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, former MHA representing the District of St. John's West (1966-1976) and former MP representing the Riding of St. John's West (1976-1993) (January 10, 2020)

Elizabeth Murphy
Clerk Assistant



Manitoba

Second Session of the 42nd Legislature

The Second Session of the 42nd Legislature began on November 19th, 2019 with the Speech from the Throne delivered Chief Justice **Richard J.F. Chartier**, in his role as Administrator of the Province. The address highlighted a range of commitments and proposals focused on areas such as tax relief, job growth, health-care investments education reform, climate action, safer streets, including:

- eliminating the education portion of property taxes, with phase-out beginning the first year after the budget is balanced, and to be completed over a maximum of 10 years;
- promoting job creation in the north;
- introducing legislation that would eliminate Sunday and holiday shopping restrictions;
- constructing 13 new schools over the next 10 years;
- undertaking a mandate review of the Department of Education to prepare to implement reforms recommended by the Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 review;
- continuing to implement the Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan; and
- implementing the Safer Streets, Safer Lives Action Plan in order to crack down on drug dealers.

During his contribution to the Throne Speech debate on November 21st, the Leader of the Official Opposition **Wab Kinew** moved a motion expressing non-confidence in the government, highlighting several areas he believed the Government failed to address in the Speech from the Throne, including:

- freezing funding for municipalities;
- a broken healthcare system;
- no plan to help reduce and end poverty;
- laying the groundwork for cuts to education;

- failing to meaningfully consult with Indigenous leaderships regarding the Lake St. Martin outlet channel and other initiatives that affect Indigenous rights;
- ignoring the needs of the northern communities; and
- failing to take any meaningful action on climate change.

On the same day, **Dougald Lamont**, Member for St. Boniface, moved a sub-amendment, stating several reasons why his party would not support the Throne Speech.

On November 28th, the sub-amendment was defeated on a voice vote. Subsequently, Mr. Kinew's amendment was defeated on a recorded vote of yeas 20, nays 32, while the main budget motion carried on a recorded vote of yeas 32, nays 20.

During this sitting period, the Government introduced several bills, including Bill 7 – *The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Victims of Interpersonal Violence)*, a bill designed to expand leave eligibility to an employee who is a victim of sexual violence or stalking. After going through all the stages of the legislative process, the Bill received royal assent by Lieutenant Governor **Janice C. Filmon** on December 5. The Lieutenant Governor received a heartfelt standing ovation from all Members as it was one of the first official duties she undertook after taking time off for health issues.

Standing Committees

During the November sitting of the House, the Standing Committee on Human Resources met to complete clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 7.

Before the winter break, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts met to elect a new Chairperson and a new vice-Chairperson. **Jim Maloway**, MLA for Elmwood was elected Chairperson, while **Andrew Smith**, MLA for Lagimodiere, was elected Vice-Chairperson. In addition, the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs met to consider the most recent Annual Report from Elections Manitoba.

Finally, the Social and Economic Development Committee met on December 5 to consider the Annual Reports of the Manitoba Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs is scheduled to meet in January to start the hiring process for a new Auditor General.

Matter of Privilege Ruling

On October 10, 2019, the last day of the 1st Session of the 42nd Legislature, **Jon Gerrard**, Member for River Heights, rose on a Matter of Privilege regarding the government's failure to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review – Revenue Estimates report. In his opinion, the failure to provide an account of the estimates of revenue by the Government impeded his ability as an MLA to understand a critical component of the financial affairs of Manitoba and asked that the matter be referred to a Legislative committee.

In her ruling on November 25, Speaker **Myrna Driedger** explained to Members that questions of privilege are frequently raised but few are found to be *prima facie* cases. She then highlighted the individual protections for Members under parliamentary privilege (freedom of speech, freedom from arrest and civil actions, exemptions from jury duty, freedom from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation, and the exemption from attendance as a witness).

The Speaker ruled that based on his comments, the Member appeared to have a grievance against the government regarding the tabling of the Revenue Estimates, but his argument did not meet the thresholds described regarding his privileges as a Member of the House. She also pointed out that several previous Manitoba Speakers have made the point that while Members may have a case for a grievance or complaint against the government, such cases do not amount to a *prima facie* case of a breach of privilege.

Cabinet Shuffle

On October 23, Premier **Brian Pallister** presented his new Cabinet with two new faces while several ministers have been assigned new duties.

Ralph Eichler, previously Minister of Agriculture, is the new Minister of Economic Development and Training, a newly created department, which will also oversee post-secondary education.

Blaine Pedersen, former Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade, is the new Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development.

Rochelle Squires, former Minister of Sustainable Development, is the new Minister of Municipal Relations.

Cathy Cox is the new Minister responsible for the status of women, in addition to her current duties as Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage.

The new ministers are:

Sarah Guillemard was appointed Minister of the newly created Department of Conservation and Climate. Mrs. Guillemard is the MLA for Fort Richmond, first elected in 2016, was re-elected in the recent general election of September 2019.

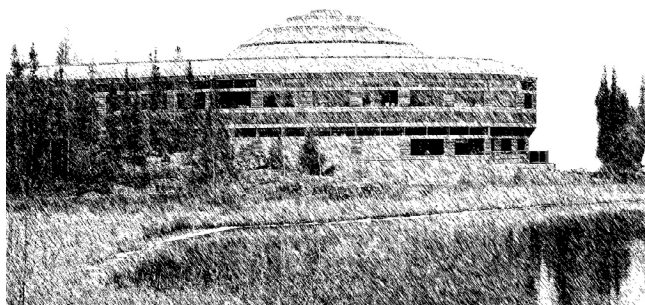
Reg Helwer is now the Minister of Central Services, a new department designed to focus on modernization of government services including procurement, information technology and shared services. Mr. Helwer has represented the constituency of Brandon West since 2011 and has served as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee of Public Accounts.

Current Party Standings

The current party standings in the Manitoba Legislature are: Progressive Conservatives 36, New Democratic Party 18, and three Independent Members.

Andrea Signorelli

Clerk Assistant/Clerk of Committees



Northwest Territories

General Election

The general election was held on October 1, 2019 and resulted in the Northwest Territories making history with nine women being elected. Women now account for 47 per cent of the Assembly. Further, 11 of the 19 Members were elected for the first time.

October Sitting – 19th Assembly

The House convened for the first Session of the 19th Assembly on October 25, 2019 in accordance of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

However, prior to convening, newly elected Members began an extensive orientation program which included a Northern Leaders Roundtable with Indigenous and community government leaders. This forum provided local leadership with the opportunity to discuss their priorities, and allowed Members to gather information that would help identify the priorities of the 19th Assembly moving forward.

This marked the third time the newly-elected Members of the Legislative Assembly have hosted northern leaders in such a forum prior to the selection of a premier and cabinet. Additionally, this was the first time it was open to the public as well as to the media.

On October 24, 2019, the Members of the Assembly met as a Territorial Leadership Committee and elected **Frederick Blake Jr.** (Mackenzie Delta) as Speaker and **Caroline Cochrane** (Range Lake) as Premier for the 19th Assembly. The Members also elected six Members to serve with the Premier on Cabinet, four of whom are women (see below).

Standing Committees

During the creation of Standing Committees, Members decided to discontinue the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning and strike a Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight in its place. Unlike other Standing Committees, this committee is comprised of all eleven regular Members.

The following Standing Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs were elected:

Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight:

- Chair: Steven Norn (Tu Nedhe – Wiilideh)
- Deputy Chair: Kevin O'Reilly (Frame Lake)

Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment:

- Chair: **Jackie Jacobson** (Nunakput)
- Deputy Chair: **Ronald Bonnetrouge** (Deh Cho)

Standing Committee on Government Operations:

- Chair: **Frieda Martselos** (Thebacha)
- Deputy Chair: **Julie Green** (Yellowknife Centre)

Standing Committee on Social Development:

- Chair: **Caitlin Cleveland** (Kam Lake)
- Deputy Chair: **Les Semmler** (Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures:

- Chair: **Kevin O'Reilly** (Frame Lake)
- Deputy Chair: **Rocky Simpson** (Hay River South)

Caucus

- Chair: **Rylund Johnson** (Yellowknife North)
- Deputy Chair: **Kevin O'Reilly** (Frame Lake)

Cabinet Announcement

Premier Cochrane assigned Ministerial responsibilities on November 5, 2019.

- **Diane Thom** (Inuvik Boot Lake) as Deputy Premier; Minister of Health and Social Services; Minister Responsible for the Status of Women; and Minister Responsible for People with Disabilities
- **Paulie Chinna** (Sahtu) as Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs; Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation; and Minister Responsible for Homelessness
- **Katrina Nokleby** (Great Slave) as Minister of Infrastructure; Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment; and Minister Responsible for Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission
- **R.J. Simpson** (Hay River North) as Government House Leader; Minister of Education, Culture and Employment; and Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board
- **Shane Thompson** (Nahendeh) as Minister of Environment and Natural Resources; Minister of Lands; Minister Responsible for Youth; Minister Responsible for Seniors; Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation
- **Caroline Wawzonek** (Member for Yellowknife South) as Minister of Finance; and Minister of Justice

Bills

Bill 1: *An Act to Amend the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Act* was passed. This

amendment to the *Act* changes the indemnities and allowances for Members, as well as providing for a new Child Care Travel Allowance for Members.

Prorogation

The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories prorogued the first session on December 12, 2019 and will resume with the second session on February 5, 2020.

Cynthia James
Committee Clerk



The Senate

Opening of the Forty-third Parliament

The Opening of Parliament was held on December 5, 2019. The opening took place with two distinct sittings of the Senate on one day for the first time since 1988. During the first sitting, a new senator, the Honourable **Tony Loffreda**, was introduced and the House of Commons was directed to elect its Speaker. During the second sitting, Governor General Julie Payette delivered the Speech from the Throne in the Senate Chamber.

Legislation

Bill C-2, *An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020*, received Royal Assent on December 12. A traditional Royal Assent ceremony was held in the Senate Chamber.

Chamber, Procedure and Speaker's Rulings

On December 5, the Senate adopted a motion naming Senator **Nicole Eaton** as Speaker pro tempore until the Senate adopts a report of the Committee of Selection nominating the Speaker pro tempore.

In December, two motions to amend the *Rules of the Senate* were put on notice. The first motion would change the Rules to grant similar privileges and responsibilities to the leaders and facilitators of all recognized parties and recognized parliamentary groups, as well as replace the definition of “Critic of a bill” with “Spokesperson on a bill” in English. In French, the term “porte-parole” would be retained, but its meaning would significantly change. Each party or group would be entitled to a spokesperson on each bill, with the exception of the party or group that the sponsor of the bill belongs to. The second motion would create a new standing committee, the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight. The committee would be composed of three Senators and two qualified external members. Both motions were on the Notice Paper and had not been moved when the Senate adjourned until February 4, 2020.

New Senate Groups

On November 4, the Canadian Senators Group (CSG) became a new recognized parliamentary group in the Senate. The 11 founding members include senators who previously belonged to the Conservative Party of Canada, the Independent Senators Group (ISG) and one non-affiliated senator. The interim leader of the CSG is Senator **Scott Tannas** and the interim deputy leader is Senator **Josée Verner**. On November 14, the Progressive Senate Group (PSG) became another recognized parliamentary group. The PSG counted nine members at its creation, all of whom previously belonged to the Liberal Party of Canada. Senator **Joseph Day** was the interim leader of the PSG and Senator **Terry Mercer** the interim deputy leader. On November 18, Senator **Percy Downe** joined the CSG and left the PSG, which resulted in the latter dropping below the nine members required for a recognized parliamentary group in the *Rules of the Senate*. The remaining eight PSG senators became non-affiliated senators as a result.

Committees

On December 5, the Senate adopted a motion to appoint senators to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance until the end of 2019. The committee presented its first report, on the Supplementary Estimates (A), on December 11.

On December 10, the Senate adopted a motion appointing members to the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, until such a time as the committee is appointed by order

of the Senate or in the manner foreseen in the *Rules of the Senate*. On the same day, the Senate adopted a separate motion to authorize the committee to examine and report on developments and actions in relation to the committee’s fifth report, regarding Senator **Lynn Beyak**, from the first session of the Forty-second Parliament, which was adopted on May 9, 2019.

The Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration presented its first report (Senate Budget for 2020-21) on December 12.

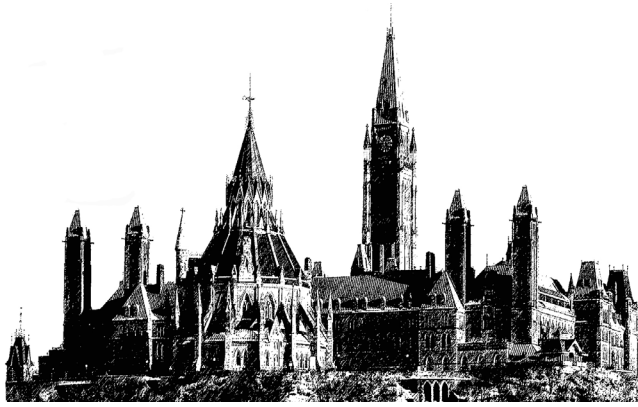
Senators

Mr. Loffreda (Quebec – Shawinigan), who was appointed to the Senate on the advice of the Prime Minister on July 23, was introduced on December 5, 2019, and took his seat in the Senate Chamber. Senator Loffreda is a certified public account with 35 years of experience in the Canadian financial industry and is an active member of the Ahuntsic neighbourhood in Montreal.

Senator **Paul E. McIntyre** retired from the Senate on November 1. He was appointed to the Senate in 2012 on the advice of Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** to represent New Brunswick. Senator McIntyre practiced law in New Brunswick prior to his appointment to the Senate, and chaired the New Brunswick Criminal Code Board of Review for 25 years. He served on a number of committees, including the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defense.

Senator **Richard Neufeld** retired from the Senate on November 5. He was appointed in 2008 on the advice of Prime Minister Harper to represent British Columbia. Senator Neufeld previously served four terms representing the riding of Peace River North in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, including eight years as Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. He served on many Senate committees, including as chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources.

Emily Barrette
Procedural Clerk



House of Commons

This account covers events leading up to the First Session of the 43rd Parliament from October to December 2019 and the House's several sittings before rising for the holiday season on December 13.

General Election and Party Leadership

The 43rd general federal election, held on Monday, October 21, returned a deputation to the House of Commons in which no party held a majority of the seats. **Justin Trudeau** (Papineau) continued as Canada's 23rd prime minister, forming a minority Liberal government. Thirty-six ministers took their oaths at Rideau Hall on November 20.

The election's outcome meant that the House now has four recognized parties: the Liberal Party of Canada with 157 members, the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) with 121, the Bloc Québécois (BQ) with 32 and the New Democratic Party (NDP) with 24. The remaining four seats are held by three Green Party members and one independent member. The Leader of the Official Opposition is **Andrew Scheer**, but, on December 11, he stated his intention to resign his post as soon as the CPC chooses his successor as party leader. **Jean-Yves Blanchet** leads the BQ and **Jagmeet Singh** leads the NDP.

Opening of Parliament: Election of a New Speaker and Speech from the Throne

The Governor General convoked Parliament on December 5. Answering her summons was a logistical challenge, as the House's members had to travel from West Block to the Senate, now lodged some 700 metres away in what was originally Ottawa's central train station and, until recently, the Government Conference Centre. Enjoined there by Chief Justice **Richard Wagner**,

in his role as the Deputy of the Governor General, to elect a Speaker, the House returned to West Block where, as dean of the House, **Louis Plamondon** (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour) presided for a fourth time over the election of the Speaker. The Commons chose **Anthony Rota** (Nipissing—Timiskaming) using a secret ranked (or preferential) ballot.

That afternoon, the members again made their way to the Senate. Governor General **Julie Payette** delivered the Speech from the Throne to open Parliament, outlining the government's agenda. The House returned to West Block to initiate its business and then to consider the Speech from the Throne. The Standing Orders provide for up to six additional days of debate on the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and on any amendment or subamendment proposed to it. On December 12, the fourth day of debate on the motion, a second subamendment was moved – this is an infrequent occurrence but procedurally in order, as the House had already disposed of the first subamendment – and later that day both it and the amendment were negatived by the House. When the House rose on December 13, one day of debate remained.

The House agreed to the appointments of **Bruce Stanton** (Simcoe North) as Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole on December 9, to **Carol Hughes** (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking) as Assistant Deputy Speaker and Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole, and to **Alexandra Mendès** (Brossard—Saint-Lambert) as Assistant Deputy Speaker and Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole on December 10.

Legislative Measures and Financial Procedures

When Parliament opened there were only four sittings available before the supply period was to end on December 10. The House, therefore, agreed to a special order so that the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020, would be referred to and considered in a committee of the whole on December 9, so that the House could debate an opposition motion on a "first and final" allotted day for the Business of Supply, that is, December 10. The House adopted the opposition motion, thereby ordering the creation of a special committee of the House with the mandate to examine and review all aspects of the Canada–China relationship. It went on to pass Bill C-2, *Appropriation Act No. 3, 2019-20*, giving effect to the spending plans in the supplementary estimates. The Senate passed the bill on December

11, and the House attended the Governor General in the Senate chamber for a royal assent ceremony, as required by the *Royal Assent Act* in the case of the first bill of a session appropriating sums for the public service of Canada, on December 12.

Committees

A motion adopted in the House significantly changed how committees will operate for the duration of the 43rd Parliament. On motion of **Pablo Rodriguez** (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) the House agreed that the membership of each standing committee be increased such that 11 members will comprise those committees chaired by the opposition and 12 members those chaired by members from the government side. The motion also suspended those standing orders that barred parliamentary secretaries from voting in committee or from appointment to standing, legislative or special committees, and it modified the standing orders to ensure that any subcommittees created by standing committees include members from all recognized parties.

Other Matters

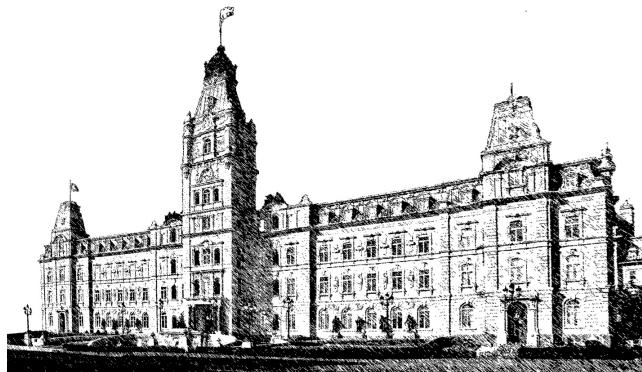
As is usually done after a general election, on December 5, the Speaker informed the House of who among them were to serve on the Board of Internal Economy. They were **Dominic LeBlanc** (Beauséjour) and **Pablo Rodriguez** (Honoré-Mercier), as members of the Queen's Privy Council, **Mark Holland** (Ajax) and **Ginette Petitpas Taylor** (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe), as representatives of the government caucus, **Candice Bergen** (Portage—Lisgar) and **Mark Strahl** (Chilliwack—Hope), as representatives of the Conservative Party of Canada caucus, **Claude DeBellefeuille** (Salaberry—Suroît), as the representative of the Bloc Québécois caucus, and **Peter Julian** (New Westminster—Burnaby), as the representative of the New Democratic Party caucus.

Later that day, reviving a practice followed in the previous three Parliaments, the House agreed to order that bells would sound to call in members for recorded divisions for up to 30 minutes on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays, except for divisions held after Oral Questions. Construction on and around Parliament Hill has pushed some House activities beyond Parliamentary Precinct's historic boundaries, so the House has adopted the order to ensure members have enough time to return from offices and committee rooms to the chamber for votes.

As the House planned its business during its first sitting, it agreed that, on December 6, the 30th anniversary of the events at École Polytechnique in Montreal, the House would meet at 9:30 a.m. That Friday sitting began with statements from a member of each recognized party and a member of the Green Party. The House then observed a moment of silence before proceeding to the orders of the day.

Andrew Bartholomew Chaplin

Table Research Branch



Québec

National Assembly Proceedings

Extraordinary sitting

On Saturday, December 7, 2019, at the request of Premier **François Legault**, the Assembly held an extraordinary sitting to introduce an exceptional legislative procedure to conclude consideration of Bill 34, *An Act to simplify the process for establishing electricity distribution rates*. The bill was passed during the night on the following vote: Yeas 60, Nays 39, Abstentions 0.

Composition

Following the by-election held on December 2, 2019 in the electoral division of Jean-Talon, **Joëlle Boutin**, the Coalition Avenir Québec candidate, was declared elected. As a result, the composition of the National Assembly now stands as follows: 76 Members of the Coalition Avenir Québec, 28 Members of the Quebec Liberal Party, 10 Members under the Québec Solidaire banner, 9 Members of the Parti Québécois and two independent Members.

Bills passed

Since October 1, 2019, the National Assembly has passed 20 bills, of which 14 were government bills,

one was a private member's bill, and five were private bills. Notable among them were:

- Bill 2, *An Act to tighten the regulation of cannabis*;
- Bill 5, *An Act to amend the Education Act and other provisions regarding preschool education services for students 4 years of age*;
- Bill 17, *An Act respecting remunerated passenger transportation by automobile*;
- Bill 25, *An Act to amend mainly the Firearms Registration Act*;
- Bill 33, *An Act to amend the Labour Code concerning the maintenance of essential services in public services and in the public and parapublic sectors*;
- Bill 38, *An Act amending certain Acts establishing public sector pension plans*;
- Bill 390, *An Act to replace the Act respecting the Amicale des anciens parlementaires du Québec*.

Rulings from the Chair

On November 14, 2019, the President ruled on a matter of privilege raised by the Leader of the Third Opposition Group on October 29, 2019. The matter concerned Hydro-Québec's submissions to the Régie de l'énergie with regard to Bill 34, *An Act to simplify the process for establishing electricity distribution rates*, within the context of a request to adjust electricity rates for 2020-2021. In the opinion of the Leader of the Third Opposition Group, Hydro-Québec was in contempt of Parliament in the context of its submissions to the Régie and undermined the authority and dignity of the Assembly in two ways. First, the government corporation allegedly assumed that the bill would be passed and, in a number of communications, described the passage as imminent because of the majority government. Second, it allegedly sought to take advantage of provisions in the bill before they were passed by referring to specific provisions in the bill in making its case.

The news release issued by Hydro-Québec on October 29, 2019, was published as a reaction to the information provided by an individual about the effects of Bill 34. The text of the news release merely describes the proposals in the bill; it never suggests that the bill had been passed. It therefore simply participates in a debate providing different points of view on the appropriateness of the bill. This is not contempt of Parliament.

The government corporation's other submissions, as reported by the Leader of the Third Opposition Group, were in two letters and Hydro-Québec's presentation in a case opened by the Régie de l'énergie at the request of three associations on establishing electricity rates for the 2020-2021 billing year.

Having read various passages from these documents, the Chair understands that some parliamentarians may have felt some indignation and perceived a lack of consideration for and discrediting of the important work they carry out when the Assembly studies a bill. Suggesting that a bill has the force of law when it has not been passed or availing oneself of legislative provisions when they are still being studied may constitute *prima facie* contempt of Parliament. Moreover, representing the passage of a bill as a *fait accompli* while completely ignoring the role of parliamentarians could be considered an affront to the dignity or authority of the Assembly and its members.

When examining such a matter, the Chair must consider the circumstances under which the information was communicated because contempt must involve a serious act. The Chair must therefore rigorously analyze the facts and actions surrounding the communication of information before finding *prima facie* contempt.

In this case, the context of the case before the Régie must be considered. In fact, in its arguments, Hydro-Québec also sets out the criteria that the Régie must consider in its analysis of a rate application. These are the timing of the application, whether it is in the public interest and whether it is likely to have a significant effect on those involved.

The passages quoted must therefore be read in the context of a focussed argument on a point of law presented to support a submission to the decision-makers on an administrative tribunal. Such decision-makers are in a position to strike a balance between contradictory submissions made to them.

The Chair points out that a bill can have no legal effect until it has passed all stages of the legislative process and has come into force. It was therefore inappropriate to say that Bill 34 set any rates at all. The most that could have been said was that it proposed to set rates. But that statement should still have been accompanied by express mention of the fact that everything was still dependent on a decision by the Assembly.

Only the Assembly is competent to decide how its work shall proceed and when the legislative process comes to an end. To pretend otherwise is disrespectful not only to parliamentarians but also to the public who elected their representatives to perform the important function of enacting legislation. While it is possible that the bill may be passed by the date that Hydro-Québec mentions, it is also possible that it may be passed later, or not at all. That is entirely up to the parliamentarians.

Moreover, the government corporation itself recognizes that the outcome of the bill is not currently known. It would have been desirable for all the government corporation's representations to be made in that way, with the necessary caveats. The same also goes for the way in which the text of the bill is described in the presentation, which implies that a number of clauses will have the same content once the legislative process is complete. That view demonstrates a flagrant disregard for the workings of Parliament, which has an essential, pivotal role in the legislative process. Since there is no certainty as to whether a bill introduced in the Assembly will be passed or as to its content once it is passed, communications about the legislative process should be made with restraint and should explicitly indicate the role of the Assembly and of its members.

In a letter tabled at the sitting on November 5, 2019, the Vice-President of Hydro-Québec apologized on behalf of the government corporation. He also pointed out that, taken as a whole, its submissions show that Hydro-Québec officials demonstrated the expected deference on a number of occasions. The Chair acknowledges the apology and the information provided in response to the concerns raised by parliamentarians. If all Hydro-Québec communications had the tone of the passages quoted in the letter of November 5, 2019, the matter would likely not have come before the Chair.

For those reasons, the facts as analyzed do not give rise to contempt of Parliament.

However, the Chair is issuing two warnings. First, it is entirely possible to take a strong position such as the one Hydro-Québec wanted to defend, but, when doing so, the language must be carefully chosen so that the role of Parliament is emphasized, not merely hinted at. Second, those representing a government corporation of the stature of Hydro-Québec must assume their responsibilities, in particular with regard to acting with respect toward Parliament and its Members. The role entrusted to them by the public, who elected the Members to undertake the legislative functions of government, must never be underestimated.

On December 5, 2019, the Chair rendered a decision on a matter raised on November 29, 2019, by the Leader of the Second Opposition Group, in which it is alleged that the Minister of the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change violated the rights and privileges of the Members of the Assembly by

failing to meet his obligation to table the strategic plan of the Conseil de gestion du Fonds vert by the date stipulated in the *Act respecting the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs*.

To find *prima facie* contempt, the Chair must be presented with evidence showing that the period between when the Minister received the strategic plan and when it was tabled exceeds the timeframe stipulated in the Act. The Act states that, from the time a strategic plan prepared by the Conseil de gestion du Fonds vert is received by the Minister, he has 30 days to table it in the Assembly. If the Assembly is not sitting at that point, the Minister must table the plan no later than 15 days after it resumes its proceedings.

In this case, the Minister tabled the strategic plan on December 3, 2019. To be able to determine that it was tabled before the deadline, the Chair must see that the Minister received the document 30 days prior to tabling it. An access to information request to the Conseil de gestion du Fonds vert reveals that the strategic plan had been sent to the Minister on March 11, 2019, almost nine months before. Given the probative nature of this evidence, it would be necessary for facts to be produced indicating that the Minister had actually received the strategic plan at a later date and that it had been tabled within the timeframe stipulated in the Act. Such was not the case. The government leader argued that an error had been made in good faith and that some confusion surrounded the finality of the strategic plan, but he revealed nothing more about the circumstances of the confusion. The explanations that the Minister gave during question period on December 5, 2019, do not change his legal obligation and do not lead to the conclusion that the date of receipt was other than the one shown in the access to information request. Consequently, the only date of receipt that has been provided as evidence is March 11, 2019. At this stage of analysis, this is sufficient, as it is not the Chair's role to conduct a more thorough investigation.

Failure to table a document as required by law constitutes *prima facie* contempt. This is because, in order to exercise effective parliamentary scrutiny, the Assembly needs to be informed of everything that happens in the state apparatus in a timely fashion. In this case, the content of the strategic plan can also help members in their role as law-makers given the upcoming study of Bill 44, *An Act mainly to ensure effective governance of the fight against climate change and to promote electrification*, which proposes amendments to the rules governing the Green Fund and the abolition of its Conseil de gestion. This specific

situation supports the idea that a failure to table a document of this kind by the time prescribed by law deprives Members of information that is relevant to the performance of their duties and thus hinders their work.

Nothing leads to a conclusion that there is any date of receipt other than the one shown in the access to information response. The only way to shed full light on the situation is to declare the matter valid. The argument that this is an administrative error can be considered, if deemed appropriate, by the Committee of the National Assembly when it investigates, if a motion is made to that effect.

In conclusion, the tabling of documents in the Assembly must not be considered as simple routine administration, but rather as an important exercise in transparent public administration. The legislative authority must be able to rely on timely information, meaning within the timeframes stipulated by the Assembly, so that it can fulfil its role as the lawmaking body that regulates the affairs of state.

On December 6, 2019, the Chair rendered a decision on two matters of the breach of rights or privilege raised respectively on December 3, 2019, by the Leader of the Official Opposition, and on December 5, 2019, by the Leader of the Second Opposition Group.

The Leader of the Official Opposition alleges that a breach of the rights and privileges of Members of the Assembly occurred when the government communicated privileged information to third parties, including a journalist, before it was introduced in the Assembly. The information concerned Bill 52, *An Act to strengthen the complaint examination process of the health and social services network, in particular for users receiving services from private institutions*.

The matter raised by the Leader of the Second Opposition Group concerns an announcement that the Minister of Families had published in a newspaper in his riding, informing readers that Bill 40, *An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance* had passed whereas in fact the bill still undergoing clause-by-clause consideration in committee.

Parliamentary rulings have repeatedly dealt with matters involving the communication of information related to bills. The Chair has always made it clear that it is not reprehensible for Members of the Assembly to wish to inform the public about parliamentary proceedings; on the contrary, it is one of the

Members' duties. However, public communications about bills must be in accordance with the rules and accepted practices, which are clear and consistent on the matter.

Three key principles must guide the conduct of all Members in disclosing information or issuing communications about bills. First, Members must be the first to be made aware of the information intended for them. The text of bills, therefore, must remain confidential until the Assembly agrees to address it. Second, since there is no certainty that bills introduced in the Assembly will be passed or about what it will contain when it is passed, communications dealing with the legislative process must be prepared with restraint and must expressly indicate the role of the Assembly and its Members. Third, information disseminated about parliamentary proceedings must reflect reality. Anyone who does not abide by those rules is in contempt of Parliament, that is to say an act or omission that undermines the authority or dignity of the Assembly or its Members, or brings them into disrepute.

As to the first matter, having become familiar with the content of Bill 52, the Chair notes that some of the items identified in the newspaper article that the Leader of the Official Opposition refers to in support of his contention are certainly there, while others are not. The Chair also emphasizes that the bill contains other items that are not mentioned in the newspaper article.

It seems clear that the journalist had access to the information as he wrote the article, but does that mean that he had been given the text itself or details about the content of the bill? In other words, is the level of detail in the article such that the conclusion must be that contempt of Parliament was committed?

Parliamentary rulings have repeatedly stated that elected representatives, not journalists, are the first to be provided with information of which they are the primary users. However, on a number of occasions, rulings have also stated that this principle does not extend to preventing the government from communicating its intentions to propose certain measures in an upcoming bill or from indicating the broad directions of such a bill.

To date, rulings considered it *prima facie* contempt when has access to certain aspects of a bill before it is introduced, but there is no evidence that the Minister has issued a formal communication to make the bill public and the text in the newspaper article is not the same as the text introduced in the Assembly.

In the light of the facts and considering parliamentary law, therefore, the Chair cannot conclude that *prima facie* contempt has been committed in this matter.

Nevertheless, all Members, and especially the members of the Executive who introduce most of the bills debated in our Chamber, must be extremely vigilant when the time comes to communicate information on a bill that has not yet been introduced. This caution also goes for those around ministers and who have access to privileged confidential information solely in order to do their jobs. Since a bill is first and foremost a parliamentary document inextricably linked to the Assembly's primary function, which is to legislate, it is not mere symbolism to ask for the Assembly to address it first. It is because this is its fundamental role.

There is sometimes a fine line between what can and cannot be communicated about a bill that has not yet been introduced. A simple way to be more cautious would be to wait until the Assembly consents to introduce a bill before discussing its content with third parties. This solution, which is far from unreasonable, seems to fully respect everyone's role. It would avoid unfortunate situations where Members might feel some interference with their right to be the first to be made aware of the legislative measures they will be asked to discuss, study and vote on.

As to the second matter, the Chair is at a loss to explain the lack of knowledge of parliamentary procedure in the announcement that the Minister of Families made about Bill 40.

Though the Minister mentioned in a tweet that the error was made in good faith by an employee in his riding office, the Chair points out that Members are responsible for the publications issued on their behalf and for ensuring that their staff have a modicum of information on the role of Parliament and what is done there.

However, contempt of Parliament is a serious matter and the Chair must rigorously analyze the facts and circumstances before accepting a matter of privilege that alleges it. It is therefore important to put the publication in its proper context. As a result, the Chair notes that the action does not seem to indicate any improper intent on the part of the Minister. Nor was he taking a provision still under study and doing something he had no authority to do without the provision being passed. Lastly, he was not calling into question the role of parliamentarians or of Parliament by implying anything at all in that regard.

Analyzing the facts, the Chair must also recognize that a correction was swiftly published in the electronic edition of the newspaper and in the Minister's social media accounts. It rectified the inaccurate information originally published. This was done quickly so as to leave no doubt as to the message that should have been communicated. This was the right thing to do. However, it would have been appropriate for the Minister to have also considered making amends with his colleagues in Parliament out of respect for their legislative work.

After an overall analysis of the circumstances, this situation seems to be more the result of clumsiness than of a desire to undermine the authority and dignity of the Assembly and of its Members. It is regrettable, but the facts do not in themselves appear to be so serious that the Committee of the National Assembly needs to be convened in for an inquiry. While what was published was unseemly, Parliament's work on Bill 40 was not compromised and continues to proceed. For this reason, and in the light of the facts, the Chair is not able to conclude that contempt of Parliament occurred.

Other events

Appointment of the Secretary General

On October 22, 2019, **Siegfried Peters** was appointed Secretary General of the Quebec National Assembly. A lawyer by training, Mr. Peters has worked at the National Assembly since 2002. He began as an advisor on parliamentary procedure and then had the opportunity to work in different directorates under the Secretary General, including the Legal and Legislative Affairs Directorate. He was Parliamentary Affairs Coordinator from 2011 to June 2017. Since then, he has been the Director of Legal and Legislative Affairs and Parliamentary Procedure. He was also involved in drafting the second and third editions of *Parliamentary Procedure in Québec*, a specialized work about the mechanics of the National Assembly. After the interim tenure of **François Arsenault**, Director General of Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Peters succeeds **Michel Bonsaint**, Secretary General from 2010 to 2019, whom the Cabinet has appointed as Quebec's representative to Canada's permanent delegation to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris.

Opening of the Marie Claire Kirkland and Pauline Marois Committee Rooms

On October 23, 2019, **François Paradis**, President of the National Assembly, officially opened two new parliamentary committee rooms, with Premier **Pauline**

Marois and members of **Marie-Claire Kirkland's** family in attendance. During the ceremony, the President unveiled two plaques bearing the names of these two distinguished Quebec women. The plaques are located near the two committee rooms in the National Assembly's reception pavilion.

Commemorating the 30th anniversary of the École Polytechnique tragedy

To mark the 30th anniversary of the École Polytechnique tragedy, the National Assembly paid tribute to the 14 murdered women with a public event and a ceremony within the institution. For two days, December 5 and 6, 2019, the agora of the National Assembly was transformed into a place of reflection in memory of these women. On December 5, the President of the National Assembly, accompanied by the Premier, the Leader of the Official Opposition and the leaders of the Second and Third Opposition Groups, held a ceremony of remembrance during which he awarded the Medal of the National Assembly posthumously to the 14 murdered women. The ceremony was attended by family representatives and a number of parliamentarians.

Committee proceedings

Here are some highlights of the various orders carried out by parliamentary committees from October to December 2019.

Intensive committee work

As is the case every year, the parliamentary committees ended with two weeks of intensive work. This involves an extension of the National Assembly's working hours. Committees are then able to meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., in addition to their regular hours. As a result, from November 26 to December 6, 2019, the parliamentary committees met for almost 135 hours.

Bills

The bills that underwent clause-by-clause consideration this fall included Bill 5, *An Act to amend the Education Act and other provisions regarding preschool education services for students 4 years of age*. This bill introduces an educational service for students who have reached the age of four.

On October 10, 2019, the Committee on Transportation and the Environment (CTE) completed clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 17, *An Act respecting remunerated passenger transportation by automobile*. This bill repeals the *Act respecting transportation services by taxi* and therefore provides

new regulations for remunerated passenger transportation by automobile. It also contains transitional provisions, including covering the payment of dues for a compensation program for those who held taxi permits.

After conducting special consultations and public hearings with nearly 50 organizations from November 4 to 13, 2019, the Committee on Culture and Education (CCE) began clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 40, *An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance*. The purpose of this bill is mainly to amend the organization and governance of school boards, which are to become school service centres administered by boards of directors composed of parents, community representatives and members of the centres' staff.

In November 2019, the Committee on Health and Social Services (CHSS) conducted clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 31, *An Act to amend mainly the Pharmacy Act to facilitate access to certain services*. This bill was initially intended to allow pharmacists to provide new services, including prescribing and administering vaccines and, in emergency situations, certain other medications. During this clause-by-clause consideration, the committee members adopted amendments proposed by the Minister of Health and Social Services that would make some personal information held by health and social services institutions accessible to families of Indigenous children. This would allow these families to shed some light on the disappearance or death of children admitted to institutions during the period spanning the 1950s to 1980s. One of the amendments resulted in a change to the title of the bill, which became *An Act to amend mainly the Pharmacy Act for the purpose of facilitating access to certain services and to authorize the communication of personal information concerning certain missing or deceased Aboriginal children to their families*.

Order of reference

On November 14, 2019, the Committee on Public Finance (CPF) received an order of reference from the National Assembly concerning the leak of personal data from Desjardins. The committee then proceeded to hold special consultations and public hearings during which it heard from six witnesses, including Mouvement Desjardins and Equifax. The members adopted a report that summarized the hearings and made six observations. The report asks the Chair of the CPF to send additional questions from members to Mouvement Desjardins no later than 15 days

following the tabling of the report in the National Assembly. The report was tabled on November 27, 2019.

Select committee on the sexual exploitation of minors

On June 14, 2019, the National Assembly carried a motion to establish a select committee on the sexual exploitation of minors. After several training sessions and briefings on the topic, the members held a first series of public hearings in Quebec City from November 4 to 7, 2019. During the hearings, committee members were able to hear from organizations and individuals working on a daily basis to combat the sexual exploitation of minors. The next public hearings are scheduled for the winter of 2020 in Montreal and Val-d'Or. The Committee's work can be followed at: <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/travaux-parlementaires/commissions/csesm/mandats/Mandat-41757/index.html>

Self-Initiated Order

The CHSS began hearings on the self-initiated order on the troubling increase in the use of psychostimulants in children and young people in connection with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The order was adopted in April 2019 after an open letter, signed by almost 50 pediatricians and other experts, was published at the beginning of 2019. In that letter, the experts expressed concern about the widespread use of medications to treat symptoms similar to attention deficit disorder, with or without hyperactivity, among children and youth in Quebec. The hearings took place on November 6, 7, 8 and 13, 2019, and heard from 15 organizations and experts. The hearings gave committee members a better understanding of the problem and the opportunity to hear a number of proposals from the experts.

Tabling of the Report from the Committee on Public Administration

On November 28, 2019, the Committee on Public Administration tabled its 40th report on the accountability of deputy ministers and heads of public bodies. The document reflects the three public hearings held during the fall of 2019. It also contains nine recommendations designed to improve the administrative management of those departments and bodies.

Stéphanie Labbé

Sittings and Parliamentary Procedure Directorate

Sabine Mekki

Parliamentary Committees Directorate



Ontario

The First Session of the 42nd Parliament resumed on October 28, 2019; sitting until December 12, 2019 when it adjourned for the winter recess. The busy fall sitting saw substantial changes made to the Standing Orders, and Royal Assent granted to five government bills, two private Members' public bills and eight private bills.

Standing Order Changes

On November 27, 2019, **Paul Calandra**, Government House Leader, moved a motion to propose several changes to the Standing Orders. The motion carried as amended on December 4, 2019, and came into effect on February 18, 2020. As a newly added Standing Order, the Speaker is now authorized to alter the application of any Standing Order or practice of the House in order to permit the full participation in proceedings of any Member with a disability. The Standing Orders also now provide for the use of laptops, tablets and smartphones in the Chamber and committee rooms as long as they are operated silently, do not impair decorum, and are not used as a telephone, recording device, camera or prop. While Members have been using electronic devices in the legislature for years, this new Standing Order officially codifies unwritten practices.

A number of changes have been made relating to the participation of Independent Members in proceedings of the current Parliament. For the duration of the 42nd Parliament, Independent Members will be able to participate in debate on opposition day motions and time allocation motions, which are normally limited to Members of recognized parties.

One of the changes that garnered the most debate was the removal of a restriction on calling a government bill for debate on both the morning and afternoon meetings of the House on the same Sessional day. It was argued that this change would allow bills to pass much more quickly.

However, on December 11, 2019, the House amended the earlier changes to provide that without unanimous consent, no government bill shall be called during an evening meeting of the House if that same bill has been called on both the morning and afternoon meetings on that same Sessional day. This motion carried unanimously.

Lastly, the Standing Orders now specify that following Prayers on the first sitting Monday of each month, the Canadian National Anthem (O Canada) and the Royal Anthem (God Save the Queen) shall be sung in the Chamber.

Ministerial Changes

On October 21, 2019, the Premier announced changes to ministerial responsibilities that affected three Cabinet portfolios: **Lisa MacLeod** is now the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries; **Monte McNaughton** is now the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development; and **Ross Romano** is now the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Condolences

The House expressed its condolences on the passing of former Members **James Roos Breithaupt**, Member for Kitchener from October 17, 1967 to May 1, 1985; **Richard Alexander Allen**, Member for Hamilton West from June 17, 1982 to June 7, 1995; and **John Roxborough Smith**, Member for Hamilton Mountain from October 17, 1967 to June 8, 1977.

Committee Activities

Standing Committee on General Government

The Standing Committee on General Government met during the month of November to consider Bill 124, *An Act to implement moderation measures in respect of compensation in Ontario's public sector*. Among its initiatives, the bill establishes different three-year moderation periods for represented and non-represented employees in the public sector. During the applicable moderation period, salary increases

are limited to one per cent for each 12-month period of the moderation period. Following one day of public hearings and one day of clause-by-clause consideration, the bill was reported back to the House, as amended, on November 6, 2019. The bill received Royal Assent on November 7, 2019.

Standing Committee on Justice Policy

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy met to consider Bill 136, *An Act to enact the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019 and make consequential amendments with respect to animal protection*. The bill provided a new legislative framework for animal welfare in the province. Following one day of public hearings and one day of clause-by-clause consideration, the bill was reported back to the House, as amended, on December 3, 2019. The bill received Royal Assent on December 5, 2019.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts presented six reports to the House and moved the adoption of their recommendations. The reports examined sections of the Auditor General's 2017 and 2018 Annual Reports pertaining to Real Estate Services, Cancer Treatment Services, Public Health: Chronic Disease Prevention, Ontario Works, the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station Refurbishment Project, and the Review of Government Advertising.

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills

The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills considered eight private bills, which all received Royal Assent on December 12, 2019.

The Committee considered two private Members' public bills in the fall of 2019. Bill 6, *An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie* honours the late poet and lead singer of Canadian rock band The Tragically Hip, who passed away in October 2017. The Committee held clause-by-clause consideration of the bill on November 27, 2019, and reported the bill back to the House that day with certain amendments. The bill received Royal Assent on December 12, 2019. The Poet Laureate of Ontario will be an officer of the Legislative Assembly, whose duties will include promoting art and literacy, celebrating Ontario and its people, and raising the profile of Ontario poets. The appointment of Ontario's first Poet Laureate is expected by late fall 2020.

The Committee also met to consider Bill 123, *An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations*. The bill amends the *Highway Traffic Act* making it illegal to park a non-electric vehicle in an electric vehicle charging station that is identified by a sign that satisfies certain requirements prescribed by regulation. Following public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration, the bill was reported back to the House, as amended, on December 11, 2019. The bill received Royal Assent on December 12, 2019.

Standing Committee on Social Policy

The Standing Committee on Social Policy met to consider Bill 116, *An Act to enact the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence Act, 2019 and the Opioid*

Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act, 2019. The bill provides for the creation of a Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence within the framework of Ontario Health, and directs the Minister to develop and maintain a mental health and addictions strategy. The bill also allows the Government to sue manufacturers and wholesalers of opioid products to recover the cost of health care benefits caused or contributed to by an opioid-related wrong. The Committee held one day of public hearings and one day of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill before reporting it back to the House, as amended, on December 10, 2019. The bill received Royal Assent on December 12, 2019.

Eric Rennie
Committee Clerk

Sarah Ramsland: Pioneer in Politics and Library Service

After winning a by-election caused by the unexpected death of her husband, Sarah Katherine Ramsland became Saskatchewan's first woman MLA in 1919. Serving until her defeat in 1925, Ramsland then made the transition into the province's Legislative Library from 1926 to 1930. Noted for her dignity, firmness, and forthrightness, Ramsland is celebrated in Saskatchewan for her pioneering role as first female MLA, her pioneering contributions to library services, and for keeping her watchful eye on the Library Reading Room for one hundred years!

Melissa K. Bennett

In today's Canadian parliamentary environment, the policies and practices of non-partisan legislative services would bar a politician from crossing over to a non-partisan role in the legislative service. In earlier days, however, this was not always the case. In Saskatchewan, the Province's first female Member of the Legislative Assembly, Sarah Katherine Ramsland, served as MLA from 1919 to 1925 and then worked for the Saskatchewan Legislative Library from 1926 to 1930.

Sarah Ramsland was born Sarah McEwen in 1882 in Minnesota. She taught school in Minnesota until she married Magnus O. (Max) Ramsland. Historians note that Sarah always had an interest in politics. Her grandfather had been a member of the Minnesota Legislature and Max's father was a member of the Minnesota Legislature as well. Sarah and Max moved to Saskatchewan in 1906, where they farmed and Max brokered real estate, loans, and insurance. They had three children.

Max Ramsland successfully ran as a Liberal candidate for the Pelly constituency in Saskatchewan's 1917 provincial general election. A year later, tragedy struck when Max died in the 1918 influenza epidemic. The Liberal government of the day, faced with calling a by-election, asked Sarah to run for the vacated seat and she agreed. Historians believe that the Liberals backed Sarah Ramsland as their candidate because they thought she would generate a sympathy vote and they wanted to provide an income for her and the children.

During the by-election campaign, a newspaper headline of the day declared "Mrs. Ramsland is Making Strong Run in Pelly: With a Woman Friend, Tours Rough Country Canvassing for Votes." The friend was Sarah's sister-in-law. They had toured the northern part of the constituency by car and addressed two meetings a day. Newspaper coverage of a campaign event reported that Ramsland spoke "in a clear and emphatic way" and "showed the people that she was strong for Liberal principles and the Martin government." It went on to conclude that she "amply demonstrated to the electors that a woman can represent a farming district such as Pelly."¹



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Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, R-A 7553

Sarah Ramsland won the 1919 by-election and was seated in the Legislative Assembly that November, making history as the first female Member of the Legislative Assembly in Saskatchewan. In a letter to her parents the next day, she reflected on the significance of the event, the warm welcome she had received by Members of the Assembly and women's organizations, and her intention for handling herself in the role. She stated, "If for one moment I thought I could not be the same lady I had always tried to be I would never have entered politics. And I am sure my own good judgment will be used in every instance and my vote during my political (career) can never be bought."²

Sarah Ramsland served as an MLA for six years. She was re-elected in the 1921 provincial election but defeated in the 1925 election. Contemporaries noted her dignity, firmness, and forthrightness. Her speeches as an MLA suggest an individual who was aspirational, and positive, articulate, aware of the complexities of issues, and inclined towards moderation, incremental change, and consensus building. She took particular interest in promoting improvements to Saskatchewan's education system. In the last year of her political service, she introduced a resolution in the Legislative Assembly calling for equal rights for women in divorce proceedings (all MLAs voted in support of the resolution). In her inaugural address to the House, she stated that the aim of the Legislative Assembly should be to make Saskatchewan the best-governed province in Canada.

After her defeat in the 1925 election, the Legislative Library employed Sarah Ramsland. Library records indicate that she initially worked as a Library Clerk and that the Library advanced her to Assistant Librarian in 1927 managing the Travelling Libraries service.

The Travelling Libraries program provided recreational reading material to Saskatchewan residents living in communities without public library services. This was a time when public library services were still a pioneering endeavor and much work remained in the development of the regional library systems that serve the province today. The Legislative Library worked with executive government to initiate Travelling Libraries and continued to provide staff and support as an adjunct to its primary function as a Legislative Library until executive government took on administration of the program. Sources suggest that Ramsland was employed by the Legislative Library until 1930 and in charge of Travelling Libraries for the Province until her second marriage in 1943.

In addition to her political career, work in libraries, and her role as parent, Ramsland served as president of the Saskatchewan Canadian Club, grand matron of the Eastern Star, and as one of the early presidents of the Regina Business and Professional Women's Clubs. When Ramsland passed away in 1964, the *Leader Post* remembered her alert, methodical, and perceptive mind; precise way of thinking and speaking; and "ability to circumvent triviality and guide a meeting purposefully through to a successful conclusion."³ Ramsland's daughter remembered her as a wonderful single parent through difficult years; who had a great love of books and hats and "followed political issues completely."⁴

In 1920, while Ramsland was still an MLA and prior to her service in the Library, the Legislative Assembly installed her photograph in the Legislative Library Reading Room to honour her status as the first female MLA in Saskatchewan. The Library holds a special esteem for Ramsland; for her pioneering role as first female MLA, her pioneering contributions to library services, and for her watchful eye on the Library Reading Room for one hundred years!



Saskatchewan Legislative Library
Reference Room, 1913. Provincial
Archives of Saskatchewan, R-B 18

Notes

- 1 "Mrs. Ramsland is Making Strong Run in Pelly," *The Leader* (July 23, 1919), p. 2.
- 2 "Breaking New Ground: Sarah Ramsland, MLA, 1919-1925," *Documents and Newspaper Scrapbook, Saskatchewan History* 43, No. 2 (Spring 1991), p. 54.
- 3 "First Woman MLA," *Leader Post* (April 8, 1964), p. 23.
- 4 "Breaking New Ground," p. 52.

