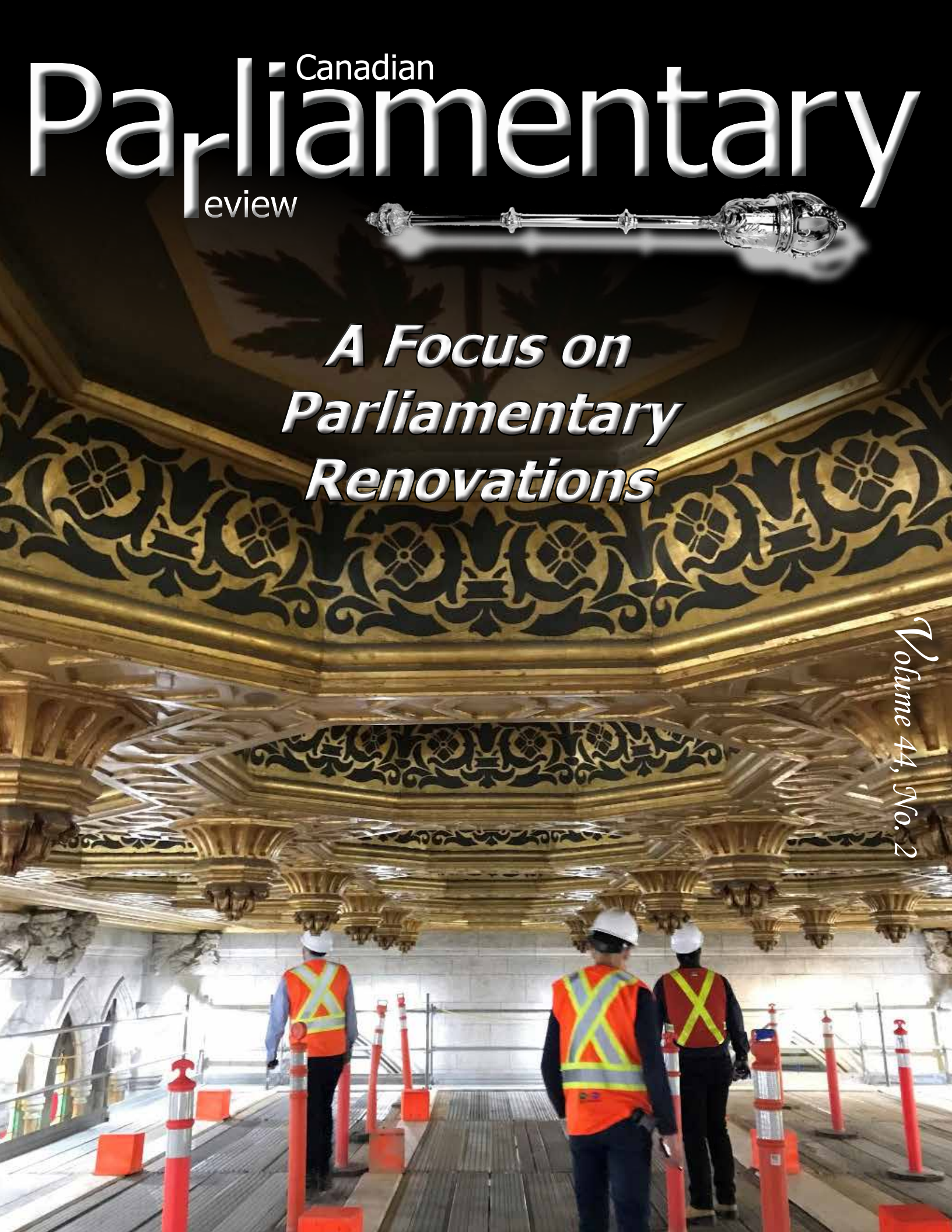


Canadian Parliamentary Review



A Focus on Parliamentary Renovations

Volume 44, No. 2



Parliamentary Relatives: *Across the Table from "Uncle Ernie"*

In 1952, Aris and Arisje Hardeman, accompanied by 14 children and pregnant with a 15th, emigrated from Holland and settled in Southwestern Ontario. One of their sons went on to be elected as the Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) representing the very riding in which they arrived. One of their daughters went on to raise another eventual MPP.

First elected in 1995, Ernie Hardeman has held the riding of Oxford through six subsequent elections. His nephew, John Vanthof, was elected in the Northern Ontario riding of Timiskaming—Cochrane in 2011. While it is not entirely unusual for uncles and nephews to serve simultaneously in legislatures, the case of Hardeman and Vanthof is unique for many reasons. Most notably, they represent two very different parties, with Hardeman being a Progressive Conservative (PC) and Vanthof representing the New Democratic Party (NDP).



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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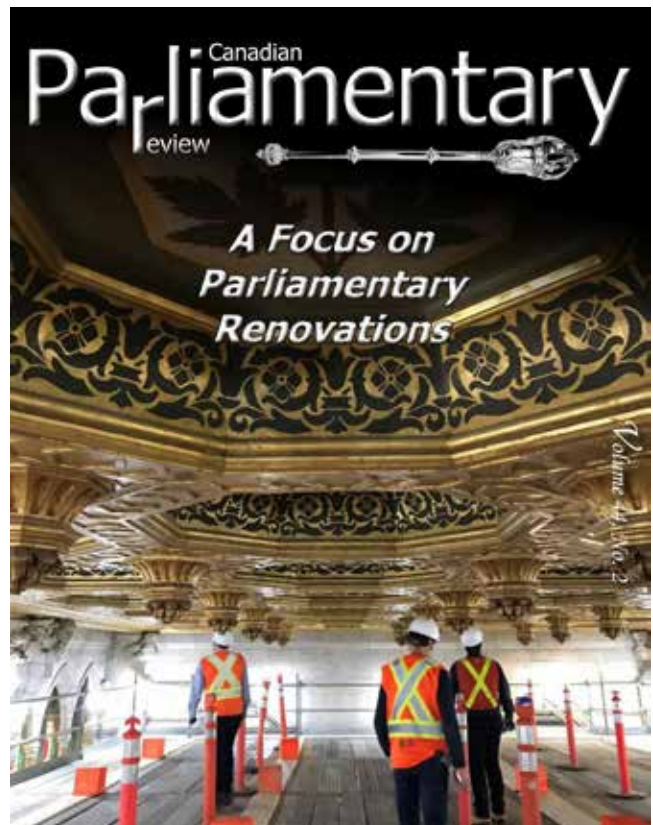


Photo: House of Commons

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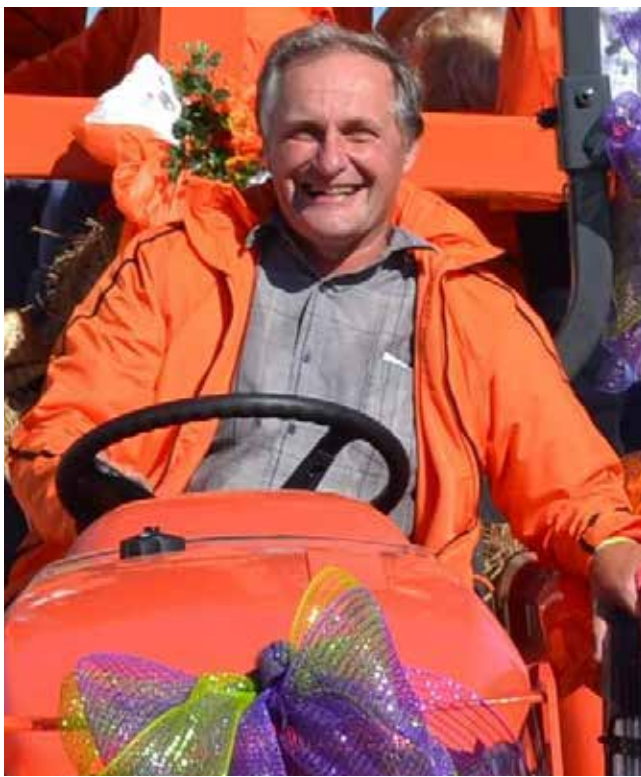
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Their interventions in the House and committees are sometimes interrupted with light-hearted heckles poking fun at their family ties. A PC Member once interrupted Vanthof's speech saying: "I'm with Uncle Ernie on this." When Hardeman spoke in a committee clause-by-clause, one New Democrat said: "I believe that Mr. Hardeman has been listening to his nephew in the NDP caucus because I agree with everything he just said." Mr. Hardeman replied: "I want to thank the member for recognizing the fact that my nephew John has learned well from his uncle."

Having served together for a decade, the cordiality inherent from their family ties has seeped into the tone of both caucuses. Vanthof's NDP caucus colleagues have taken to respectfully calling Hardeman "Uncle Ernie," including when he was congratulated for getting a bill passed with multi-party support. Their continued contributions serve as a reminder that dialogue can be respectful despite the differences of partisanship and views across our tables.

David Cumming

Collections and Acquisitions Librarian, Legislative
Assembly of Ontario



John Vanthof



Ernie Hardeman

Planning for the Rehabilitation of Centre Block: The House's Experience

Parliament Hill has been buzzing for decades with renovations and rehabilitation projects. While all of these projects created some disruptions for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, the rehabilitation of Centre Block was perhaps the most daunting. The two chambers would need to be moved to new locations that could be fully operational without much disruption. In this article, the author uses the House of Commons experience to trace the meticulous and extensive planning needed to make this massive move work and explain how stakeholders have been kept informed.

Susan Kulba

Setting the Stage

The West Block Rehabilitation Project was a keystone in the Parliamentary Precinct Long-Term Vision and Plan (LTVP) implementation strategy. Its critical role was the provision of an interim Chamber and legislative spaces to allow the Centre Block to be renovated. Given the domino effect created when vacating and moving office spaces, the implementation of this vision had to be undertaken incrementally.

The West Block Rehabilitation Project was a major undertaking that restored the existing heritage building to its former glory and incorporated all the modern functionality required to support our Parliament. The architectural vision includes a new multi-level infill within the West Block courtyard to accommodate the space needed to meet the requirements of the House of Commons. The new Chamber sits in the former open courtyard. The glazed roof design is at the core of the architectural vision. The roof arches over the central aisle of the new Chamber. The double structural arcade emphasizes the vertical architecture and echoes the neo-gothic influence of the heritage building.

For the duration of the Centre Block rehabilitation, the West Block will serve as the interim Chamber. The move was not an overnight occurrence; it took years of planning and preparation to successfully transition

our key legislative functions into a new space. Much of this planning stems from the Long Term Vision and Plan, a guiding framework to upgrade the buildings and landscapes of the Parliamentary Precinct and meet the modern requirements of parliamentarians. The LTVP was first developed in 2001 by Public Services and Procurement Canada in consultation with the parliamentary partners: the Senate, the House of Commons and the Library of Parliament.

The LTVP allows for a strategic and aligned approach among stakeholders. Accommodations were carefully considered within the context of the end state. The main move was kept to the essential functions which could not be done without disrupting the operations of Parliament. The opening of West Block was originally planned for September 2018, with the main move scheduled to take place during the summer adjournment. In the end, it was deferred to January 2019 to ensure the readiness of the building. The result was a two-phase scenario covering the recess periods in the winter and the summer. Members whose offices were not moving to West Block were gradually moved out of Centre Block between July and November of 2018 to the recently restored Wellington Building and to the Confederation and Justice buildings. These moves aligned with the LTVP objective, which calls for the greater use of buildings away from Centre Block. The vacated offices allowed for some of the Centre Block project investigation work to begin. Members whose offices were located in West Block, including the Prime Minister, the Speaker and House Officers, were moved during the winter recess period. This marked the first time that the Office of the Prime Minister was moved, other than after an election, since the fire of 1916.

Susan Kulba is the Director of Real Property Services at the House of Commons and oversees the Centre Block Rehabilitation Program.



Interim House of Commons Chamber, West Block.

To prepare for the office moves, Party Whips who are responsible for the office allocation and informed their Members. Four to six weeks before the move, the Administration met with each Member and their staff to decide the exact date and time of their move, as well as to discuss any special needs and furniture layout preferences for the new office. Phone lines were typically only transferred the day of the move to avoid any interruption of service to constituents. Members and staff were briefed on the new office layout and details, such as programmable light switches and card reader programming – an operational shift for Members. All Members and staff were also offered tours of West Block to help them become accustomed to the new building. West Block, with its Chamber and committee rooms, became the Members' workplace and they needed to be familiar with it even if their offices were not placed there. On opening day, and for the following two weeks, House Administration staff were onsite at each entrance and other key locations to assist Members in orienting themselves within West Block – a service that was greatly appreciated and noted by Members afterwards.

The move involved an additional level of complexity due to the heritage furniture in the Chamber and the art collection. It was decided that the Centre Block Chamber furniture would be used in the interim Chamber, meaning the Chamber had to remain operational with its furniture until the very last day of sitting before the December adjournment. In the week following the adjournment, the old Chamber became a worksite, and the Administration sprang into action to dismantle it, modify the heritage desks Members use to accommodate new technology, restore the desks, and reinstall them in the interim Chamber. A custom crate was built to move the massive Clerk's Table in three separate sections. It was a collaborative effort to disassemble the desk, move it safely out through the Peace Tower staircase and entrance, load it onto a truck, and into the Mackenzie Tower Entrance to its new home. To ensure safe delivery, a dry run with the empty crate was held to practice this move. Another major undertaking was moving the Prime Ministers' portraits along with numerous other heritage paintings and sculptures, which were carefully transported to West Block over a period of months.



House of Commons

Installation of the Prime Ministers' portraits in West Block.

The Books of Remembrance from the Memorial Chamber were moved to their new temporary home in the Visitor Welcome Centre, when the new space was made ready for them. It was clear to everyone that once the Centre Block Chamber was dismantled there was no going back, therefore, the decision to proceed with the move was made only once there was a high level of confidence that West Block would be operationally ready for the return of the House on January 28, 2019, for the first sitting in the interim Chamber.

The Dress Rehearsal – Dry Runs

The execution of the move to West Block was made possible in large part due to the operational readiness efforts that took place in parallel to the move plan. The building and many operational services were tested in a series of four major dry runs that saw between 400 to 600 participants (mostly House Administration staff and a few Members) in various roles, take part in simulations of Chamber proceedings, committee meetings, and protocol events. These simulations were key to the success of the readiness in supporting Members' work. Carrying out tests, training, and dry runs allowed employees to have practice in West Block before opening day and provided opportunities to identify and solve any glitches or bugs that arose.

With this smooth transition, Parliament remained operational with limited impacts leading up to the move date. Much work was done in advance, with contingency plans in place and, in some cases, redundant systems eliminated to ensure a smooth transition. Personal offices had been transferred to other buildings ahead of time, resulting in little disruption to Members, apart



House of Commons

Room of Remembrance, West Block.

from the emotional severing of ties with a building that is most loved. Members were able to move from Centre Block to West Block with minimum disruption while parliamentary proceedings transitioned smoothly from one building to another.

The Move

The move from Centre Block to West Block was difficult for all parliamentarians and particularly emotional for many who realized that, given the length of the closure, they would not be returning to their familiar and special place of work. Parliamentarians were aware that after years or decades of working in the Parliament Building, they might never work in that space again. The national significance of Centre Block was written on the walls, rich in detail and meaning, with personal stories and anecdotes that Members could share with visiting constituents. Others, elected after the move, may never had the chance to experience the Parliament Building as a working environment.

Moving into West Block, assigned originally as a Departmental building, was an adjustment for many. Years of planning and preparation can never fully prepare staff and Members for the full impact of having to move key legislative functions into a new space. The move resulted in less space and fewer grand architectural features. Members were forced to re-orient themselves, and traditions and ceremonies, such as the Speaker's Parade, were revised. Yet, the departure from Centre Block to the freshly rehabilitated West Block also presented opportunities for significant workplace improvements in a state-of-the-art facility. Working in this new space allowed Members greater



opportunities to use Indigenous languages with simultaneous interpretation. The move also meant that Members' desks now had USB charging stations, more varied dining options for rapid meal selection, and wheelchair access to the galleries and other spaces. West Block also allowed for direct access to three permanent simultaneous interpretation booths where previously in Centre Block there were only two, and the ability to connect five additional booths within proximity of the Chamber.

The galleries were placed further back meaning better visibility for all Members, better thermal comfort, and enhanced audio and visual systems, among other improvements. There was also an opportunity to tell the story of West Block, which highlights the growth of our nation and construction campaigns that took place to accommodate our changing parliamentary landscape.

Lessons Learned

The move to West Block provided important lessons that will be applied when moving back into Centre Block. Parliamentarians supported the approach

of moving the House of Commons operations into West Block, allowing for the Administration and parliamentarians themselves to reassess years of processes, requirements, and methodologies used in Centre Block. An example of the ingenuity in these moves is the use of the Rhodes Chair. The Speaker's Chair in Centre Block was used for almost one hundred years prior to the move, but due to its size and heritage integrity, moving it into West Block was not possible. The solution was to use an alternate chair, built for Speaker Edgar Rhodes in 1917, after the fire in the Parliament Building. As the Rhodes Chair was required when the House of Commons met in a temporary location a century ago, it was fitting for the chair to once again be used in an interim Chamber.

While the House of Commons continues to sit in West Block, Canada's largest rehabilitation project is taking place in Centre Block. The multimillion-dollar restoration project is designed to preserve the historic character of the building and ensure the needs of parliamentarians and the people who support them for the next hundred years. The project includes significant repairs to its masonry, a new roof and windows, seismic upgrades, enhanced information technology and security features, among other improvements. It will also require the temporary closure of the Peace Tower for important structural work, as well as



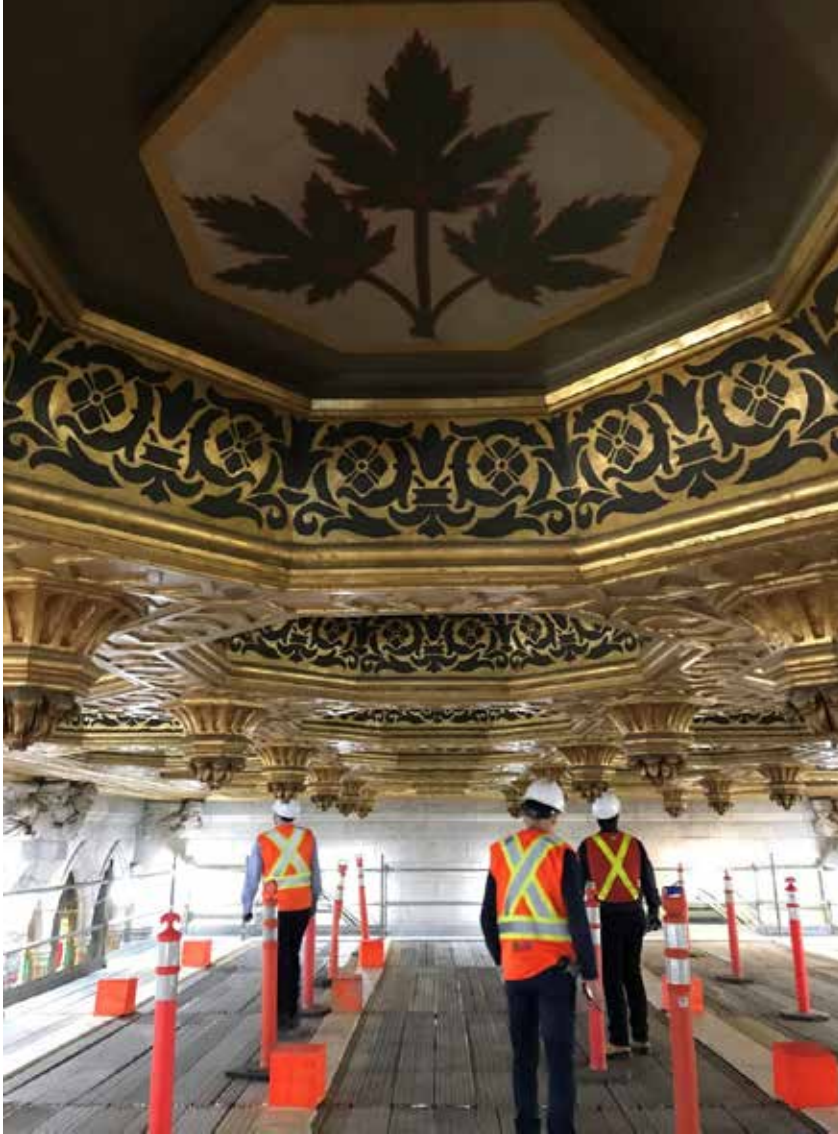
Top: Gallery seating, West Block Interim Chamber; Bottom: Rhodes Chair, West Block Interim Chamber; Opposite page, top: Ongoing construction, Centre Block; Opposite page bottom: Arthur Crisp murals in Centre Block's Reading Room carefully being removed for protection during the rehabilitation.



House of Commons



Public Services and Procurement Canada



Members of Parliament tour the Centre Block construction site.

conservation of the Carillon's bells. The Carillon has only been silent twice since its installation: from 1980 to 1982 for rehabilitation work on the interior of the Tower, and from 1995 to 1997 for work on its exterior.

Engagements with Parliamentarians

The House of Commons continues to explore options for how to best engage Members in the LTVP and its rehabilitation and construction, and to ensure their role in discussions on the design and operational requirements for the future of Centre Block and the wider precinct.

To ensure Members are involved in decisions about the rehabilitation, in March 2020 the Board of Internal Economy discussed the governance of the Centre Block Rehabilitation Project and agreed to establish a working group composed of Members from each recognized party, which would report to the Board.

The group is tasked with providing updates on the rehabilitation project and with making recommendations as required. The working group will guide and inform consultations and engagement with Members and parliamentary partners, including joint consultations with the Senate when necessary. This working group also serves as a forum to consult with Members about their views, expectations and needs on a regular basis.

Information for Members at large is summarized in a Bulletin issued from the Speaker featuring updates on decisions made at the Board of Internal Economy, construction updates, information about the heritage asset preservation and conservation work, as well as updates from other projects in the precinct falling under the umbrella of the LTVP.

Members also have an opportunity to tour Centre Block to see the rehabilitation work first-hand at regular intervals. Feedback from Members who attend tours provides an important engagement tool, allowing them to understand the full scope and scale of the project.

While the Parliament Building is a workplace for Members and their staff, it is also a building of great symbolic importance to all Canadians, which is why public engagement is so crucial to the success of this historic undertaking. Using digital platforms, information, photos and videos are shared to document the ongoing rehabilitation work in an effort to keep Canadians engaged in the process, and also excited for the future of the building.

Construction of the National Assembly of Quebec's New Visitor Centre: Redesigning the Visitor Experience

In 2016 the National Assembly of Quebec undertook the largest construction project since it was first built between 1877 and 1886. Accessibility concerns were central when the Assembly designed its award-winning visitor centre. In this article, the author outlines the project's scope and the carefully crafted meaning behind some of the new centre's elements.

Rachel Plante

Building the Centre: A Meaningful Experience

In 2016, the National Assembly of Quebec launched the largest construction project involving the Parliament Building since it was first built between 1877 and 1886. The reason behind the expansion project, which finished in 2019, was to make the premises more accessible to Quebecers and tourists and to add spaces for parliamentary proceedings. The new underground centre, which is separate from the Parliament Building, has modern reception facilities to allow staff to provide an optimized visitor experience and carry out better security screenings.

The 5,100-m² centre also includes a multi-purpose room and an agora, which have enabled the National Assembly to completely redesign its visitor experience. The visitor centre will also host a new educational tour that is adapted to all visitors and will help Quebecers get better acquainted with their Parliament.



National Assembly Collection.
Photograph by Stéphane Groleau.



The National Assembly now offers more with its new underground visitor centre. The civic agora forms the heart of this bold, contemporary structure. Two new committee rooms with state-of-the-art technology have also been added to meet the needs of parliamentarians.

Rachel Plante is the Civic Programming Coordinator in the Visitor Services and Educational Mission Directorate at the National Assembly.

An Architectural Design that Combines Past and Present

Reaffirming the national motto

Je me souviens [I remember] is the concept on which the Parliament Building was founded. By adding these three simple yet eloquent words under Quebec's coat of arms, Eugène-Étienne Taché gave meaning to his work. Taché's building design invites Quebecers to commemorate their heroes and their history.

Therefore, it seems only natural that the new visitor experience would honour Taché's vision for the Parliament Building. As soon as visitors enter the centre, they are greeted with the National Assembly's signature message, *Je me souviens*, engraved on a steel wall. The stage is set for visitors to remember that they are standing where the Quebec they know today has been built since the late 19th century. This commemorative design also inspires them to think about the historical importance of the National Assembly as a place that has shaped Quebec through the debates, struggles, decisions and compromises that have taken place within its walls.

In the 19th century, Taché designed a pantheon of major figures from Quebec's history to adorn the Parliament Building's main facade. After more than a century, the centre's architects wanted to preserve

the building's heritage and its magnificent facade that tells the story of Quebec's history. So, they decided to continue Taché's work in a different way. Inside the centre, a long wall of microperforated wood includes imagery that visitors can enjoy over the course of their tour. This imagery is steeped in meaning and presents stories that showcase Quebec's fundamental values and characteristics: diversity, the French language and its French roots, equality, northerness, Indigenous heritage, openness to the world, natural resources and the vastness of the land.

With its modern features, the visitor centre demonstrates that, even though the National Assembly is rooted in a tradition that draws on old British customs and practices, it is and must absolutely be cemented in the present. As a result, visitors become aware that a parliament is not a place that is frozen in time; rather, it is a forward-looking, dynamic institution that is constantly evolving.

Meaningful architecture for an enhanced experience

The architecture creates a dialogue between heritage and modernity that speaks to everyone. The agora's pale design and sober atmosphere evokes the political neutrality of the National Assembly, while the neighbouring spaces are painted in vibrant and contrasting colors. Since reference points are crucial



National Assembly Collection. Photographs by Stéphane Groleau and Roch Thérioux.

The *Je me souviens* motto, which guided Taché's work, was also a key theme of the new visitor centre design.



National Assembly Collection.
Photograph by Stéphane Groleau.

The historical main facade of the Parliament Building continues in modern guise in the underground visitor centre

underground, visitors will be able to know when they are under the National Assembly Chamber (the *Salon bleu* [blue room]) and the Legislative Council Chamber (the *Salon rouge* [red room]) by looking at the corresponding colours on the wall.

Another constant theme in the visitor centre’s design is the circle. And this is no coincidence, because the circle symbolizes the agora as an emblem of Athenian democracy and the ideal of equality. The visitor centre is a central and meaningful space that invites visitors to understand their role in the political and civic sphere. They will also be stunned by the large circular skylight’s magnificent view on the Central Tower, which is located just above the zero-kilometre marker that positions the tower as a geographical and symbolic landmark for everyone.

The passageway between the visitor centre and the National Assembly above it inspires visitors to think about the importance of democratic institutions. This tunnel, which was dug under the Parliament Building’s main facade, showcases artist Jonathan Villeneuve’s piece *The Spectrum of Enlightenment*. Visitors walking through the tunnel will be immersed in an enchanting visual and sonic experience, and moved by the

artwork’s full gamut of colours and sounds. Its title is an obvious reference to the Western Enlightenment, which provided a groundswell of new philosophical, political, social, scientific and artistic teachings. Beyond this symbolism, *The Spectrum of Enlightenment* pays tribute to the different shades of opinion expressed during debates in the Chamber. The tunnel is a link between modernity and memory and guides visitors to the entrance of the Parliament Building, which is the key destination of the tour.



National Assembly Collection.
Photograph Roch Thérioux.



National Assembly Collection.
Photographs by Stéphane Groleau.

The Spectrum of the Enlightenment by Jonathan Villeneuve offers visitors an immersive experience just before entering the Parliament Building.

Visitor Experience: Diverse Content for a Diverse Audience

The stage is now set for the National Assembly to use the centre's large, symbolic space to present a full range of activities. Visitors can stop by various installations that are guaranteed to give them a rich, meaningful and pleasant experience. This tour segment is the product of the know-how and expertise of the National Assembly's internal teams.

Whether they are with a tour guide or alone, visitors will be able to better understand the National Assembly's role, expand their knowledge and understanding of democratic processes, appreciate the rich history and heritage of the Parliament Building and consider opportunities for civic participation.

A digital, multimedia approach

Visitors are invited to use the touch screens with educational and entertaining content, which includes interactive animations, games, videos and tools showcasing parliamentarism, political life and democracy.

Once the National Assembly reopens to the general public after the pandemic is over, visitors will be able to take self-guided digital tours using their mobile device. All they have to do is listen in to the audio guide, which is available in French and English and will also provide visitors with additional content, including photos and videos.

New audiovisual installations enhance the tour. In the reception area, people can contemplate images of Quebec and view a wall of screens showing videos and photos illustrating the geographical diversity of its 17 administrative regions in all four seasons. Further on, the National Assembly presents its very own film, *Confluence*, in the multi-purpose room, which highlights how important the National Assembly is for society, brings the building to life and creates a sense of pride and belonging. Lastly, the agora's vast projector area screens videos on various themes. Since the visitor centre first opened, the feature video has showcased the cultures and heritage of Quebec's Indigenous Peoples.

One of the objectives of redesigning the visitor experience was to make information that is useful for public, institutional and parliamentary activities more accessible. Information screens are placed at strategic locations throughout the tour. At the entrance, visitors are shown tour schedules, upcoming activities, information on the flags being flown, service hours and so on. Screens behind the registration desk present a detailed schedule of institutional activities—akin to a menu—as well as information on services, guided tours, and more. Lastly, two screens next to the new parliamentary committee rooms display their daily schedules and information on upcoming proceedings.

Personalized educational tours

The guided tours were updated to better meet the needs of different groups. The general public tour has been updated to fit the new spaces, and the tours and workshops for elementary and high school students were reviewed to align themselves with the Quebec Education Program. In addition, new themed tours have been added for the Library, which is now more easily accessible, and the gardens and grounds.

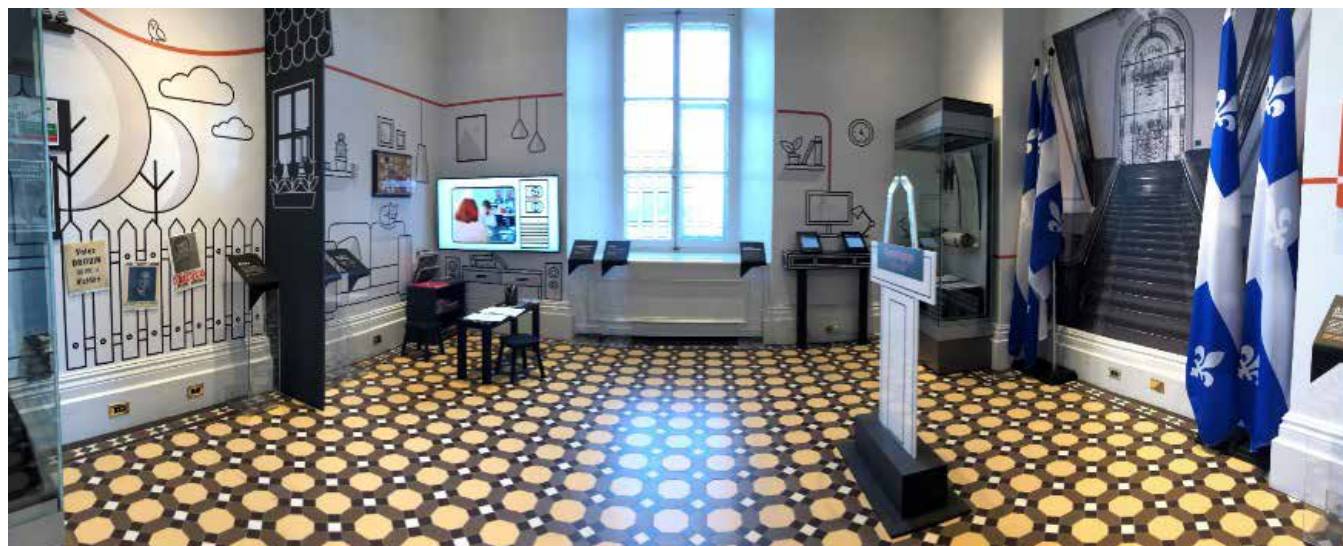
Exhibition areas

Themed exhibition areas are spread out across the tour. The visitor centre features two displays on Quebec City's parliamentary buildings and the construction of the Parliament Building. One floor below, curious visitors can visit an alcove that includes a time capsule that will be sealed until 2092 (to be opened on the 300th anniversary of Quebec's first election) and is generally time-themed with the inclusion of hourglasses, clocks and so on. Another nearby exhibition focuses on how bills are introduced and become laws. Interestingly, progress for women is illustrated through the pro-equality laws adopted by the National Assembly. In the Library, which is now linked to the tour by a tunnel, visitors can stop by the curiosity cabinets and be amazed by what is inside them.

The main building features an exhibition on the Parliament Building and its designer, Eugène-Étienne Taché. A transparent model gives visitors a glimpse into the building's interior and most important rooms. Then, another room showcases the general theme of civic participation by presenting ways everyone can contribute to citizen and parliamentary action in Quebec.



Guided tours have been redesigned to meet the needs of different audiences. A new room for young people is now a key destination for school groups.



A souvenir shop that is worth the detour

At the end, visitors can stop by *La Boutique* and discover a wide variety of items that showcase Quebec's terroir and its creators' works, talents and skills. All of its treasures are elegantly displayed in the souvenir shop's semi-circle layout.

Civic Programming for Institutional Recognition

The inauguration of the visitor centre in 2019 positioned the National Assembly as a modern, living and accessible institution. In addition to updating its tour, the National Assembly introduced civic programming, which includes an annual calendar of free public events. This programming brings the visitor centre to life and allows visitors to know more about the National Assembly and what it does for Quebec.

The heritage building now has new exhibitions, including one on the National Assembly's architecture and its designer, and another on civic participation, which allows Quebeckers to think about how they can participate in politics as citizens.

To offer activities that represent Quebeckers and cement the National Assembly's role as a real community partner, the National Assembly issues public calls for projects every year. Through its calendar of events, the National Assembly supports current and future generations of programming talent and provides spaces for expressing diversity. In addition, these events allow for partnerships with museums, universities, arts organizations and more. Lastly, they help the National Assembly to promote initiatives from across Quebec.

In an effort to meet the needs and interests of as many people as possible, the National Assembly offers annual programming on various themes (arts, culture, society, politics, science, the environment, youth, education, health and so on). This programming can take on various forms, such as conferences, round tables, exhibitions, screenings, workshops and artistic events.

To date, the events have illustrated the National Assembly's desire to position itself as an essential destination in the national capital and a true civic space, as reflected by the following activities: the Quebec City Film Festival, a photography exhibition on the theme of paternal leave in partnership with the FIKA(S) festival, the *Des œuvres qui donnent des ailes* [uplifting artworks]



The National Assembly's civic programming offers a wide range of activities, including screenings, exhibitions and art displays.

exhibition in support of the Fondation Maison Dauphine, which helps vulnerable youth, and the installation of *Sommet de la montagne* [mountain peak] on the forecourt of the Parliament Building as part of the *Passages insolites* [unconventional passageways] urban art trail.

A Construction Project, Better Communication and a Much-needed Redesign

The initial reasoning for building a visitor centre was pragmatic, because additional space was needed for parliamentary proceedings. Now, there are two additional modern parliamentary committee rooms, equipped with the latest broadcasting technology, to meet the needs of parliamentarians. In honour of gender equality, the National Assembly named these two rooms after prominent parliamentarians Marie-Claire Kirkland, who in 1961 became the first woman to be elected to provincial office, and Pauline Marois, who was Quebec's first woman premier, from 2012 to 2014.

Then, the visitor experience became central to the project, as there was a desire to create spaces for locals and tourists alike. These spaces now offer a broad range of activities that suit a wide array of guests and promise them a more meaningful experience.

Lastly, as in most parliaments, security has become a fundamental issue. State-of-the-art security devices

protect parliamentarians and visitors from the moment they arrive to the moment they leave the parliamentary precinct.

Above all, the National Assembly has successfully reaffirmed its heritage and historical value by bringing Eugène-Étienne Taché's work and motto into the 21st century. It has also succeeded in redefining its civic identity and image so that Quebecers can view it as an open, expressive, emblematic and living institution. This transformation, which implicitly sought to inspire pride, not only makes this feeling surface in visitors and staff, but also shows that the institution, although rooted in the past, is by all means modern and brought to life by the aspirations and interests of Quebecers.

From now on, the National Assembly will take on a new personality, which, in addition to helping it accomplish its fundamental roles, will enable it to truly fulfill its mission of civic education, thereby making it a true civic space for all Quebecers.



La Boutique offers a glimpse into Quebec creators' know-how.

The Alberta Legislature Building: A Living Monument

Alberta's Legislature Building has undergone many renovations since its construction more than 100 years ago. From technological improvements to structural repairs to an ever-changing colour palette, the building has truly become a living monument. In this article, the authors trace the history of major and minor renovations and pay special attention to projects that coincided with significant visits or anniversaries.

Valerie Footz and Philip Massolin

Even before it was completed, the Alberta Legislature Building was undergoing alterations. The project, while grand and magnificent, a striking beacon for the burgeoning young province, was affected by changing architectural directions initially and emerging needs over time. Started by one architect, Allan M. Jeffers, and completed by another, Richard P. Blakey, the Building incorporated different visions. Jeffers left the project in 1912, to become a Hollywood set designer, leaving Blakey to complete the interior and the south wing, where the Chamber is located.¹ The challenges of the construction are documented in numerous articles and studies, but the history of the Building renovations over the course of time, the subject of this article, is fragmented and incomplete.² The objective of this piece is to provide a brief history of such renovations and the impact they had on this impressive building and the individuals who inhabit it.

When the Assembly convened for its first sitting in the new Building in November of 1911, it was not long before issues arose. "Legislators' lives imperiled by walls", read one headline, as Members continued their first sitting in the new Legislative Chamber.³ By January 1912, the Legislature Building was still settling. The plaster on the pillars in the Chamber began to crack. A bill was being debated when a "sharp crack" was heard, followed by a cascade of

plaster that showered the floor near the Premier's seat. Premier Arthur Sifton did not budge; rather he glared across the floor as he looked to see if it was part of an orchestrated attack by opposition Members. The Speaker instinctively reached for his gavel to call order if required, but nothing came of it. About a week later, during a debate on the budget, a Member for Calgary asked the Premier what provisions had been made for the reduction of the province's debt. To the delight of the Members present, Premier Sifton retorted that these things would not last forever and that if any evidence of that was needed, all they needed to do was look around and see the plaster falling off the walls!⁴

While being presented as a "marked contrast to the barn-like, ill-ventilated, incommensurable room in which the law-makers of the province have been wont to labor in the past"⁵, by the 1920s, the Chamber was still a cavernous space not conducive to debates. In 1924, Members reeled off multiple complaints leading to the eye-catching headline of "Members risk their lives in house chamber." During committee discussions of the Department of Public Works' budget estimates, Dr. John S. Stewart, the Member for Lethbridge, complained about the ventilation in the Chamber. While Minister of Public Works, Alexander Ross, agreed that the ventilation was poor, he expressed concern that any renovations would be too costly. Leader of the Official Opposition, John R. Boyle, then complained about the acoustics, especially when the galleries were empty. A *Calgary Herald* writer cheekily suggested that filling the galleries with building staff might be a solution to the problem: "The staffs, marshalled by some soldierly-like person would march in and out on various words of command, while expert acousticians, armed with

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The museum in the Legislature Building (1964) prior to the establishment of the Provincial Museum in 1967.

acousticords, would test the acoustics and report at a later date on the desirability of plugging the galleries with civil servants, in all seats not occupied by the public. It would be interesting but rather hard on the civil servants, perhaps.”⁶ The criticism continued with Members remarking on the glare of the lighting in the Chamber and the cold draughts. Valid concerns, but life-threatening?

Indeed, the acoustics in the Chamber was a long-standing problem. From the beginning, Members had difficulty hearing each other. To resolve the issue, at first, cotton was draped along the walls to dampen sound. The long-term solution was to install elaborate tapestries in the Chamber, as the finishing touches on the Building were completed, but this never occurred. There was hope that laying carpet after the

sitting concluded in February 1912 would solve the problem. It did not. In 1914, a vast improvement was reported after the H.W. Johns-Manville Company placed “felts of a special nature” in the panels of the ceiling and walls, covered them with a membrane and then painted over them to match the interior.⁷ In 1919, silk and velvet drapes with valances adorned the Chamber walls for the visit of the Prince of Wales and then remained up for the visit of the Duke of Devonshire (then Governor General) two months later. In an article entitled, “These Halls were not made for Dances,” *The Calgary Herald* declared:

The heavy velour curtains that were hung around the walls are to be left in position until after the next session of the House. First draped in rich effect to help carry out the decorative scheme of



The Carillon Room circa February 1973. The paint scheme in use on the 5th Floor of the Legislature Building at the time was more colourful than the current neutral tones.

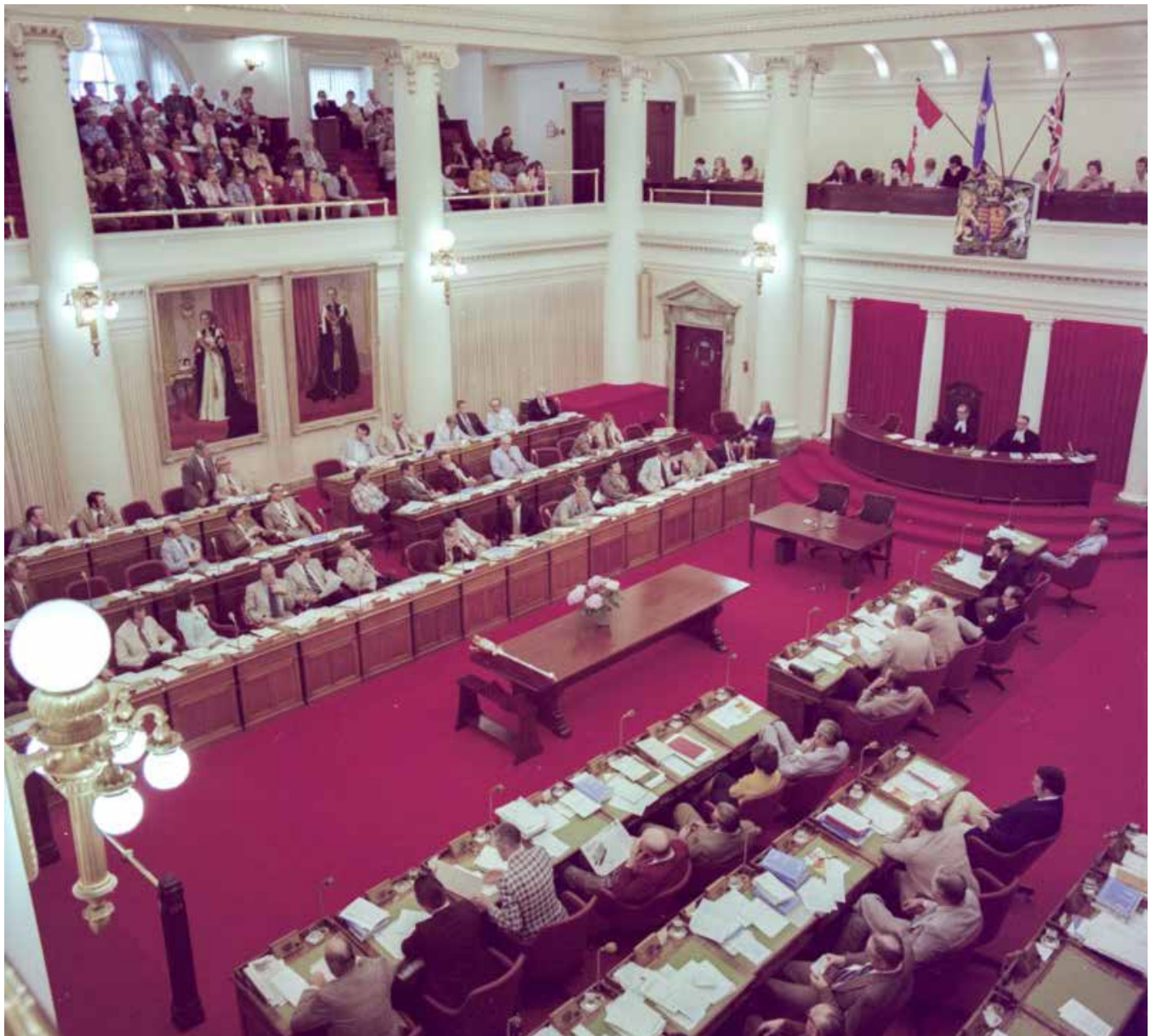
the ball-room, they are now, with some slight changes in arrangement, to please and gratify the aesthetic tastes of the Alberta legislators. If the latter indicate their approval sufficiently and particularly if the experiment improves the acoustic qualities of the chamber, the curtains will be retained as a permanent furnishing.⁸

Not until the summer of 1963, when a loudspeaker system was added, was the acoustics issue finally resolved. At that time, each Member's desk was equipped with a microphone and an earphone and loudspeakers were installed in the galleries. The new audio equipment also allowed for the recording of debates or speeches as Members of the Legislative Assembly wished.⁹

Renovations and improvements to the Legislature Building were commonly tied to special events, such as the Prince of Wales' visit in 1919. Sometimes, the changes were permanent; other times, they were temporary. The 1919 visit saw a temporary fountain installed in the centre of the rotunda.¹⁰ It was removed after the visit, just as the fountain installed for the 1939 Royal Visit of King George and Queen Elizabeth was later removed. A newspaper report from 1939 indicates the fountain installed for the Royal Visit had live perch in the basin and a ball on an invisible string that made it look as though it was floating on the fountain top as the pressure of the water went up and down.¹¹ It took a third Royal Visit in 1959 by Queen Elizabeth II for a permanent fountain to be installed.

The 1919 visit of the Prince of Wales resulted in further adjustments within the Legislature Building. The Chamber was transformed into a ballroom, with the Speaker's chair and Members' desks removed and the luxurious sound-dampening carpet lifted for a dance floor.¹² When the Governor General remarked about the modifications to the Chamber, he was reassured it was an anomaly and that the Legislative Assembly was not in the habit of accommodating gala events on a regular basis.

The 1959 Royal Visit of Queen Elizabeth II resulted in a number of further enhancements to the Legislature Building and its grounds, in addition to the installation of the permanent fountain. In connection with the Royal Visit, a cairn was erected on the grounds to mark the former location of Fort Edmonton. The lawn bowling greens were spruced up, and a bandshell on the south grounds and walkway from the Building to the south grounds were constructed.



Provincial Archives of Alberta, GR1989.0516/2930 #1

Alberta House in Session in May 1976. At the time the chamber had red carpet and the table officers were on the dais.



Extensive renovations of the Chamber were undertaken in 1987. January 19, 1987.

In addition to contending with acoustics and coping with the requirements of hosting Royal visitors, those in charge of building renovations also had to deal with concerns about décor. In 1939, a discordant panoply of colours in the Chamber garnered media attention. The deep blue velour drapery, red furniture, and new green carpet caused confusion. The original carpet in the Chamber was bright red with a motif of a crown encircled with oak leaves. Worn from 27 years of use, the old carpet was replaced with a new green one, reflecting the colour traditionally associated with a Lower House. The colour change was not an issue but rather there was an initial “shriek in protest until the mellowing hand of time subdued all three [drapery, furniture and carpet] to amity ...”¹³

In early 1956, the interior of the Chamber’s dome was repainted to the shock of many of its inhabitants. Whites were replaced with bold colour choices: blues, browns, reds, greens, gold and grey. Public Works

officials decided the existing white lacked character and no one actually looked up to see the inside of the dome. Taking their cue from buildings in Europe (“where they’re not afraid of color”¹⁴), they proceeded to transform the interior. The response was swift. The Leader of the Opposition, J. Harper Prowse, said it looked like they were trying to change the rotunda into a “bachelor’s apartment” and referred to the new colour scheme as “Hartley’s Horror”, in reference to the legacy of Minister of Public Works James Hartley.¹⁵ When the Chamber was repainted in 1956, for the first time since the opening of the Building, a more subdued paint colour scheme was selected.

A “legislative” museum was housed in the building until the construction of the Provincial Museum in 1966. Situated on the 5th floor, this room displayed a variety of artifacts, including a uniform from the North-West Mounted Police, a piece of pemmican said to be from the 1800s, and various bits of taxidermy. The

museum was established by the province's first Chief Game Officer thus explaining the stuffed birds and mammals.¹⁶ With the arrival of the carillon to celebrate the country's centennial in 1967, the name of the space was changed to the Carillon Room. Concerts were regularly played by the provincial carillonneur in the room's dramatically transformed environment.

In 1972, more renovations occurred following a change in government. Under new Speaker Gerard Amerongen, a curved desk, consisting of three sections, was installed on the dais. From 1972 until 1980, seating plans show that the Clerk and the Clerk Assistant flanked the Speaker at the rounded desk. The Assembly reverted to a scarlet carpet. Also in 1972, Premier Peter Lougheed renovated the Premier's wing to allow for a reception area.¹⁷

The changes during the Lougheed Government period paled in comparison to the renovations that were to come about as part of the 75th anniversary of the Building in 1987. Under the direction of Speaker David Carter, the plan originally had three ambitious phases. The first phase focused on the Chamber. Among the changes were:

- The dais was decreased in size to allow for greater mobility on the Chamber floor (Pages were able to go behind the Speaker's chair to serve Members as required).
- Provision was made for greater accessibility for the disabled.
- 60 seats added to Public and Members' galleries.
- Original gallery seats reupholstered and refinished.
- Brass tubing was replaced in gallery parapets to improve the sightlines of visitors.
- The sound system was replaced as the existing system had been failing, impeding the ability for Members to be heard.
- Over 40,000 linear feet of cabling installed to enhance audio and video capabilities.
- New green carpet replaced red carpet, again to reflect the "legislative green" of a Lower House.
- The rotunda and hallways were repainted for the second time since 1912. But phases two and three were never implemented.¹⁸

When the more limited renovations were complete, Speaker Carter remarked:

In reality it is the number one building in the province in its combined importance – its political, architectural, and historical focus. It's a great old building and a very fine building for its

day, but nobody at that time envisioned all of the electronic requirements that would be needed in the future.¹⁹

In fact, the Building was overloaded electrically. As a building constructed in the early 20th century, the electrical capacity was limited. Many newspaper accounts over the years detail the intricacies of changing the lightbulbs in the vaulted ceiling of the Chamber, but the challenges of the electrification of the Building were experienced throughout. When preparing for more renovations in the 1950s, a former employee recalled having to run a metal snake through the electrical wiring at one end and then hunting around room-by-room to find where it came out. In some cases, it was found on another floor in a different wing.²⁰

These days, some cabling is being removed as technology marches on and Wi-Fi is available for today's technology-savvy Members and staff. As it was, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta was one of the first in Canada to enable staff and Members to use computers in the Chamber to do their work. Table Officers first began using laptops in 1994 with Members following soon thereafter. In 2002, the Alberta Legislature Building became the first in Canada to use solar power.²¹ Two dozen solar panels were installed on the roof of the building's power plant to help meet demand.

The exterior of the Alberta Legislature Building has also been the focus of refurbishment, especially of late. Over the years, the original sandstone has deteriorated. Indeed, no flashing was ever installed to protect the building from the rain and snow. The flat roofs on the east and west wings collected water, and the harsh weather led to the decay of the exterior of the Legislature Building. In addition, the location of the fountain directly beneath the cupola affected the interior of the structure due to excessive moisture. A renovation was completed to address the resultant bulging terra cotta tiles on the cupola.

While major undertakings, this and other fixes were not sufficient for the longer term. The 100th anniversary of the Legislature Building in 2012 resulted in further renovations to the interior of the Building: the rotunda walls and ceilings were repainted; the terrazzo and marble floors were refinished; slate stair treads and landings were replaced, and the elevator cabs were upgraded. But perhaps most importantly, immediately after the Building centennial, the cupola was completely refurbished.²² Waterproofing and maintenance were badly needed. Many of the terra cotta tiles needed to be

replaced. When former Premier Ed Stelmach (the first Alberta Premier of Ukrainian descent) returned to the Building for his portrait unveiling in 2012, he likened the sight of the wrapped cupola to a giant perogie!²³ The chance to work on a once-in-a-lifetime restoration resulted in an extensive detailing of the project in *Construction Canada*.²⁴ The refurbishment took over two years to complete.

Currently, the Legislature Building is undergoing yet another restoration. Commenced in 2019 and projected to conclude in 2022, masonry experts are making their way around the Building repairing the sandstone cladding and windows. Over 18,000 deficiencies were identified where slippage, chips, cracks, or pieces of cladding had fallen off.²⁵ No interruptions to operations within the Building have been noted due to the construction work; however, the Legislature is once again partly draped in a construction tarp and the sound of machinery can be heard faintly echoing through the halls from time to time.

Regardless of whether it is the focal point of extensive renovations or whether there is only the need for a simple touch-up to the paint or the modernization of a building system, the Legislature is a prominent architectural feature and a great symbol of democracy in the province of Alberta. As part of the Centennial celebrations in 2012, the Legislature Building and portions of the south Legislature grounds were designated as provincial historical resources in recognition of their historical and architectural significance. The Legislature Building, through all of its refurbishments inside and out, is truly a living monument that continues to transform along with the lives of those whom it touches.

Notes

- 1 Jeffers worked at the City of Edmonton for 15 years before moving to Hollywood in 1923 to be a set designer.
- 2 See for example: Moragh Macauley. "The 75th anniversary of the Alberta's Legislative Building," *Canadian Parliamentary Review* (Autumn 1987): pp. 5-7.
- 3 "Legislators' lives imperiled by walls," *Edmonton Journal* (February 15, 1912): p. 3.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 "Legislative chamber to be ready for next session," *Edmonton Capital* (November 3, 1911): p. 11.
- 6 "Members risk their lives in house chamber," *Calgary Herald* (March 31, 1924): p. 5.

- 7 "Vast improvement in acoustics, general opinion of members," *Edmonton Capital* (October 3, 1914): p. 5.
- 8 "These halls not made for dances," *Calgary Herald* (November 4, 1919): p. 22.
- 9 Alberta Hansard did not commence until 1972; however, selected recordings of proceedings were made after the installation of the sound system.
- 10 "Legislative buildings transformed into fairy bower for Prince's visit," *Edmonton Journal* (September 9, 1919): p. 1.
- 11 "Presentation is highlight royalty visit," *Edmonton Bulletin* (June 2, 1939): p. 13.
- 12 "These halls not made for dances," *Calgary Herald* (November 4, 1919): p. 22.
- 13 F. Bailie Hughes. "It's housecleaning time on Capitol Hill...Royal Visitors expected," *Calgary Herald* (May 20, 1939): p. 26.
- 14 "Rotunda under legislative dome decorated in reds, greens, browns," *Edmonton Journal* (January 16, 1956): p. 13.
- 15 "Color scheme in rotunda is called 'Hartley's Horror'," *Edmonton Journal* (February 14, 1956): p. 13.
- 16 "Alberta's rich history is depicted in renovated legislative museum," *Within Our Borders* (April 1960): p. 4.
- 17 "Legislature face-lifting costs \$37,300," *Calgary Herald* (March 15, 1972): p. 41.
- 18 Memo from David J. Carter, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. "Welcome to the newly refurbished Chamber of the Alberta Legislature." March 5, 1987.
- 19 Jac MacDonald. "Capital was assured with 'mammoth undertaking'," *Edmonton Journal* (May 1, 1987): p. E7.
- 20 "The legislature outlasts sand foundations, stonewalling and critics," *Saint John's Edmonton Report* (June 27, 1977): p. 12.
- 21 *Working together on sensible solutions: Climate Change Central 2002 progress report*. Calgary: Climate Change Central, 2003, p. 8.
- 22 Trish Audette. "Legislature dome repair to cost \$6.1M," *Calgary Herald* (June 19, 2020): p. A8.
- 23 Darcy Henton. "Honest Ed says legislature with construction cover looks like a giant pyrogy," *Calgary Herald* online (December 4, 2012). URL: <https://calgaryherald.com/news/politics/honest-ed-says-legislature-with-construction-cover-looks-like-a-giant-pyrogy>
- 24 Karl Binder, Rob Pacholok, and Gary Sturgeon. "A legislative legacy," *Construction Canada* 56(1) (January 2014): pp. 58-66, 68-70.
- 25 Marta Gold. "Chipping away at the stone: inside the restoration of Alberta's Legislature," *NAIT Techlifetoday* (January 3, 2020). URL: <https://techlifetoday.ca/articles/2020/alberta-legislature-restoration>

Construction, maintenance and expansion of the parliamentary building complex in Québec from 1764 to the present day

In northern countries, all buildings must weather the passing years and the harsh climate. Parliaments are no exception. Since 1764, Québec parliamentarians have taken care to build, restore and expand the buildings where they perform their duties. In this article, the author provides an overview of the major projects and concludes that Members and legislative councillors have sought to sit in spaces that are both functional and prestigious.

Christian Blais

To perform their duties, Québec parliamentarians have used the Château Saint-Louis, the Bishop's Palace, the new Parliament Buildings of Lower Canada and the Union, the Parliament of Montréal, the Post-Office Parliament, the Parliament in Ottawa and Québec's current Parliament Building. The passage of time, the increased number of parliamentarians and the modernization of services that parliaments offer have made the construction, renovation and expansion of buildings necessary. The primary purpose of this work has been to provide parliamentarians with functional workplaces. Another objective has been to ensure that parliament becomes an architectural monument that expresses the dignity of the exercise of legislative power.¹

Province of Québec, 1764–1792

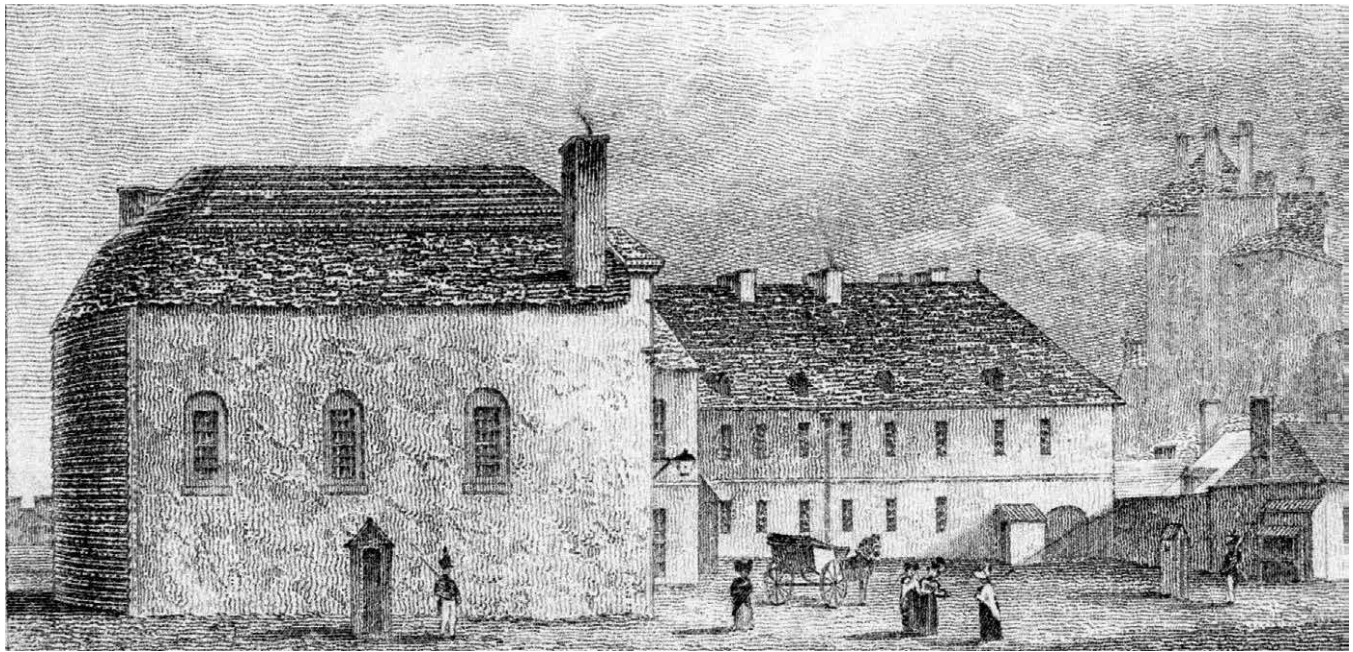
After a civil government was established in the Province of Québec in 1764, the members of the Council of Québec were granted the power to legislate. The work related to the drafting of ordinances took place at the Château Saint-Louis, a seat of power where the governors had resided under the French Regime since 1647. The first session was held on August 10, 1764.

However, the councillors found that the furnishings of their assembly room were inadequate. On November 8, they passed a resolution to provide the Great Council Chamber with furniture suitable for the performance of their duties.² Two councillors were assigned to find chairs, tables and an improved heating system. Interestingly, in 1765 and 1766, Governor James Murray convened nine meetings of the Council of Québec at "Sans-Bruit," his country estate located less than five kilometres from the capital. In short, not a location to confer prestige upon the institution.

In 1774, a Legislative Council was created under the Québec Act. Between 17 and 23 prominent citizens were admitted to that legislature, one third more councillors than under the previous administration. However, the assembly hall in the Château Saint-Louis remained spacious enough to accommodate meetings of both the Legislative and Executive Councils.

The colonial government needed more space to ensure the proper functioning of its administration. As a result, on August 1, 1777,³ the Bishop's Palace was rented from the Archdiocese of Québec City. The more spacious halls of the Palace are probably the reason why the legislative councillors of the Province of Québec chose to hold their parliamentary assemblies there, starting on January 17, 1781. From then on, the legislature and the Governor in Council had separate addresses. The Bishop's Palace, therefore, became the symbol of legislative power and the Château Saint-Louis the symbol of executive power.

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Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Centre d'archives de Québec, P600, S5, PGN76

The Parliament of Lower Canada in the Bishop's Palace circa 1820, drawing by James Smillie. This building was located at the present-day site of Montmorency Park, at the top of Côte de la Montagne, Quebec City.

Through the work of historian Michel Hébert, we can make a comparison with Europe, where the places most frequently used for parliamentary assemblies were also places of worship: palaces, monasteries and convents.⁴ One well-known example is the Palace of Westminster in England, originally a Benedictine monastery.

Lower Canada, 1792–1841

The Constitutional Act of 1791 was followed by the election of 50 representatives in Lower Canada. On December 17, 1792, the legislative councillors and the first parliamentarians met in the capital. The size of the chapel in the Bishop's palace was perfectly suited to the activities of the House of Assembly. However, the situation changed after revisions were made to the electoral map in 1829. Following the 1830 general election, the palace chapel had become too small for the 84 parliamentarians.

Age also took its toll on this stone palace built in 1692. Bombed by British troops in 1759, it never regained its former glory. Despite essential renovations, the building fell into disrepair. As early as 1815, the surveyor Joseph Bouchette reported that part of its foundations and walls were in poor condition and that the whole structure "threatens an imminent ruin."⁵

In 1831, the government assumed ownership of the Bishop's Palace, and construction of the new parliament building began. The old chapel was demolished in 1833 to be replaced by the main body and the first wing of a magnificent parliamentary building. Interior finishing work continued until the late fall of 1834. The legislative assembly chamber was not completed in time for the ongoing session of parliament, so members temporarily gathered in the library's reading room. This was where the Ninety-Two Resolutions were adopted in 1834. This manifesto setting out the demands, grievances and complaints of the parliamentary majority was not well-received in Britain. Then came the rebellions of 1837 and 1838, and the suspension of the Lower Canada Parliamentary Constitution. The adoption of the Act of Union of 1840 put an end to the status of Québec City as capital.

United Province of Canada, 1841–1867

Kingston was the capital of the Province of Canada from 1841 to 1843. The general hospital served as a parliamentary building, despite its "miserable furnishings" and small rooms.⁶ The 84 MPs felt cramped. A move was planned as early as 1842.



Augustin-Norbert Morin, Louis-Joseph Papineau and the parliament of Lower Canada, by Réal Godbout, cartoonist. [Left: “—How many resolutions are we at now? —92. —Hmm... ‘The 92 Resolutions,’ I like the ring of it!” Right: On February 17: “Resolved, That His Majesty’s loyal subjects, the people of this province of Lower Canada...”] Christian Blais, Michel Giguère, Magali Paquin, Vincent Giard, Réal Godbout, VAN, VoRo, 1792 : à main levée, Québec, Publication du Québec, 2017.

When Montréal became the capital in 1844, major work was undertaken to refurbish St. Ann’s Market, built from 1832 to 1834, to turn it into a splendid parliament building. The assembly chambers of parliamentarians and legislative councillors were carefully decorated with paintings and carved coats of arms of Great Britain⁷. This comfortable and spacious building also included

library and committee rooms.⁸ In the Legislative Council Chamber, the governor sanctioned the Rebellion Losses Bill for the victims of the 1837–1838 rebellion, which led English-speaking imperialists to revolt. On the evening of April 25, 1849, these Tory rioters set fire to Parliament. The building was destroyed by the fire. As a result, Montréal ceased to be the capital.



Collection of the National Assembly.

The impressive sober beauty and classic design of the parliament building in Québec City built to plans drafted by François and Thomas Baillairgé.

Parliamentary proceedings now alternated between the former parliaments of Toronto and Québec City, marking the beginning of the second phase of construction of the parliament building of Lower Canada, where parliamentarians had last sat in 1837. The last remnants of the old Bishop's Palace were demolished in 1850. The new wing of the building was completed in 1851 to house the Parliamentarians gathered there for the 1852 session.

Many believed that it was the most beautiful building in the capital. The Legislative Assembly Chamber was high and spacious, with large windows providing plenty of natural light. It also stood out thanks to its modern infrastructure, especially its ventilation system. The gas lighting was state-of-the-art and of fashionable design. A journalist wrote: "From the vaulted ceiling are suspended two handsome massive gas lustres, with 130 burners on each, surrounded by rows of innumerable prisms, producing a most brilliant effect when lighted."⁹ However, on February 1, 1854, the new

wing caught fire and, within a few hours, the whole building became "a pile of smoking ruins."¹⁰ An inquiry commission ruled that the fire was accidental, probably caused by a cracked chimney or a faulty furnace.¹¹

After the fire, the parliamentarians determined that public finances would not allow them to build a new parliament in Québec City while simultaneously renovating the one in Toronto that needed work as well. The concept of an alternating capital had to give way to that of a permanent location. Kingston, Montréal, Québec City, Toronto and Bytown (Ottawa) all lined up to become the seat of government. After much debate, Queen Victoria made a decision in 1857, and Ottawa was named the capital of the Province of Canada.

Until 1866, when the construction of a parliament in the new capital was completed, parliamentary proceedings were held in Québec City. A building was hastily constructed in 1859 on the site of the



Collection of the National Assembly, photographer: Claude Mathieu.

Restaurant Le Parlementaire after renovation work conducted in 2019–2020. Before the work started, archivists and historians at the Library of the National Assembly provided expertise and support to the Building Management and Material Resources Directorate in matters of heritage protection.

former parliament that burned down on the Côte de la Montagne. It was a modest structure made of Scottish bricks that was expected to be converted into a post office.

Confederation to the Present Day

Québec City regained its status as a capital with Confederation. For lack of anything better, parliamentarians and legislative councillors met in the Post Office building. Its architecture was ordinary, with no special ornamentation, but the rooms were functional. In fact, the main problem was that the building was built with poor quality materials, which led to it deteriorating prematurely. Construction defects caused rain and snow to infiltrate and damage the walls, paint and carpets.¹² Renovation work needed to be repeated every year. However, the idea of building a new parliament was hindered by the province's low income and the economic crisis of the early 1870s.

In 1874, the government of Charles-Eugène Boucher de Boucherville loosened the purse strings to establish a proper parliament in Québec City. The following year, Eugène-Étienne Taché designed a stunning Parliament building, which was constructed in two stages. First, the three wings to be used by the ministries and the lieutenant-governor were built between 1877 and 1880, and second, the main facade called "the Legislative Building" was built between 1883 and 1886.

Yet another disaster occurred. On April 19, 1883, the Parliament of the Côte de la Montagne burned to the ground. Temporary rooms had to be set up in the new parliament still under construction: the Legislative Assembly was installed on the first floor of an unfinished wing, while the Legislative Council was housed in the library. These arrangements were completed just in time for the 1884 session. Then the facade was shaken by the explosion of two bombs. This criminal attack, never to be resolved, forced the reconstruction of the damaged wing.

Upon completion, Québec City's Parliament Building raised the status of Québec City as a capital. Built in the Second Empire style, it is firmly French. However, Old Regime fleurs-de-lis carved in stone blend with English roses. The monogram of *Victoria Regina* appears at the top of the tower, but the historiated architecture mainly features, through bronzes and engravings, historical figures who were sympathetic to the French-Canadian cause. This monument, dedicated to the glory of a national history as it was perceived at the time, is entitled *Je me souviens*.

Parliament Hill

Originally, the Parliament Building in Québec City was indistinctly called "legislative building" or "government building" because the legislative and executive powers shared the same workspace. The creation of new departments at the beginning of the 20th century quickly caused difficulties in housing all government services. Consequently, the Pamphile-Le May (1915), Honoré-Mercier (1925), Jean-Antoine-Panet (1932) and André-Laurendeau (1935) buildings were inaugurated on Parliament Hill. Until they were named after these historical figures in 1980, these buildings were referred to by the letters "B," "C," "D" and "E." This custom is still maintained by some public servants today.

Finally, a truly parliamentary complex unfolds when the National Assembly fully or partially took over these Beaux-Arts-style buildings, as of the mid-1970s. The Honoré-Mercier Building, acquired by the National Assembly at the end of the 1980s, was ceded in 2001 to house the Prime Minister's offices in return for the André-Laurendeau Building. Today, all the Assembly's services are concentrated around the Parliament Building.

Source: "Édifice Pamphile-Le May", "Édifice Honoré-Mercier", "Édifice Jean-Antoine-Panet" and "Édifice André-Laurendeau" in *Encyclopédie du parlementarisme québécois* [online], National Assembly of Quebec.

The maintenance and management of the Parliament Buildings were entrusted to the department of public works, which was also responsible for modernizing its infrastructure. With this in mind, a new expansion project was conducted in the interior courtyard from 1912 to 1917. The new building housed the parliamentary restaurant as well as the heating and electrical systems.¹³

Year after year, Québec winters and the north wind blowing on Parliament Hill took their toll, causing the stones of the century-old Parliament building to deteriorate, crack and break. Substantial restoration work was required and took place between 1977 and 1983. The building envelope was refurbished.¹⁴ Inside, the frame of the National Assembly Chamber was reinforced, among other things. Then, in 1978,

the necessary installations were set up to broadcast parliamentary debates on television.¹⁵ Thereafter, the chamber of the parliamentarians, the Green Room, was repainted blue. Camera tests previously showed that, in an environment dominated by green, the parliamentarians looked “sick” on the screen. In addition, this represented a break with the British custom of using green as the colour of the legislative assemblies.¹⁶

In 1983, the department of public works handed over the management of the parliament building to the National Assembly. Since then, the Building Management and Material Resources Directorate has been overseeing the preventive maintenance, conservation and renovation of the Parliament Buildings.¹⁷ Among the most important work carried out in the 21st century was the complete restoration, in 2005–2006, of the crowning of the central tower of the parliament, built in wrought iron in 1895.¹⁸ In 2010, the damaged stones and sculptures of the main facade were replaced. Centre de conservation du Québec was called upon to restore the patina of all the bronze statues that decorate the facade.

More recently, in 2016, work started on a new expansion project. The main objectives were to make parliament more open to citizens, to build two new parliamentary committee rooms, and to make the facilities more secure.¹⁹ Built underground, this modern construction has the quality of not distorting the heritage character of the Parliament Building. This new reception pavilion was inaugurated by President François Paradis on May 29, 2019.

In conclusion

Parliamentarians in a capital city need a building in which to perform their duties. First, a parliament building must meet functional requirements which means that the size of the space available is important.²⁰ A large room is needed to gather the Members of the National Assembly, another one for the legislative councillors and finally, nearby rooms for the commissions. Today, the essential support services (library, protocol, communications, computers, reception of visitors, political staff, security, etc.) must be accommodated as well.



Collection of the National Assembly, photographer: Claude Mathieu.

Québec Parliament Building, masterpiece of Eugène-Étienne Taché. “The National Assembly, a ‘people’s house,’ has a duty to remember. It connects past and present, and reflects what we have been, what we are and what we will become,” said François Paradis, President of the National Assembly during the inauguration of the new reception pavilion in 2019.

But there is more. A parliament must satisfy the symbolic requirements of assemblies as the place where legislative power is exercised.²¹ Dignity, consideration and prestige of the institution (*dignitas*) are concepts that guide the construction and decoration of the parliamentary buildings.²² An architectural setting often inspired by Westminster, an ornamentation of the arms of the British Crown and an arrangement of the furniture that mimics the furnishings of the English Commons add historical depth to any parliamentary complex. Moreover, distinctive identity symbols have been added to the current Québec Parliament Building: a motto, fleurs-de-lis, bronze statues, names of historical figures engraved in stone and woodwork, as well as historical frescoes on canvas are there to express the unity with which Quebecers made the British tradition of parliamentary institutions their own.

In short, since 1764, the purpose of the construction, maintenance and expansion of the parliamentary buildings in Québec has been to provide Members with workplaces that are both functional and spacious, in a building that commands respect for the institutions and representative figures of democracy. However, it must be noted that these requirements in terms of space and dignity were met to varying degrees in the Château Saint-Louis, the Bishop's Palace, the new Parliament of Lower Canada and the Union, the Parliament of Montréal, the Post Office Parliament, the Parliament of Ottawa and the present-day Parliament Building. Today, following more than two and a half centuries of evolution, Québec has a parliamentary building adapted to the needs of the 21st century, which combines heritage and modernity better than ever.

Notes

- 1 The author wishes to thank Marie-Hélène Fournier, Rachel Plante, Danielle Simard, Jules Racine St-Jacques and Frédéric Lemieux for their comments on the draft version of this article.
- 2 Christian BLAIS, *Aux sources du parlementarisme dans la Province de Québec, 1764-1791*, Thesis (Ph. D.), Québec, Université Laval, 2019, pp. 199-200.
- 3 Christian BLAIS, Gilles GALLICHAN, Frédéric LEMIEUX and Jocelyn SAINT-PIERRE, *Québec : quatre siècles d'une capitale*, Québec, Les Publications du Québec / Assemblée nationale du Québec, 2008, p. 176.

- 4 Michel HÉBERT, *Parlementer. Assemblées représentatives et échange politique en Europe occidentale à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Paris, Boccard, 2014, p. 297.
- 5 Joseph BOUCHETTE, *Description topographique de la province du Bas-Canada*, London, W. Faden, 1815, p. 463.
- 6 *Le Canadien*, 15 February 1841, p. 2.
- 7 *Journaux du Conseil législatif, de la Province du Canada... étant la première session du second parlement provincial, 1844-5*, Montréal, J.C. Fisher & W. Kemble, [1845], appendix, p. b26.
- 8 Gilles GALLICHAN, "De Kingston à Montréal : à la recherche d'une capitale 1841-1844", *Les Cahiers des Dix*, n° 70, 2016, p. 69.
- 9 *The Québec Mercury*, 31 August 1852, p. 2
- 10 "Incendie du palais législatif", *Le Canadien*, 1 February 1854, p. 2.
- 11 C. BLAIS, G. GALLICHAN, F. LEMIEUX et J. SAINT-PIERRE, *Québec : quatre siècles...*, p. 282.
- 12 "The Session", *The Morning Chronicle*, 5 December 1877, p. 3; "The Parliamentary Wigwam", *The Morning Chronicle*, 9 October 1877, p. 3.
- 13 Gaston DESCHÊNES, *Le parlement de Québec. Histoire, anecdotes et légendes*, Québec, Multimondes, 2005, p. 184-186.
- 14 Jean-François COSSETTE, "Défis et responsabilités de l'entretien et de la restauration de l'Hôtel du Parlement", *Bulletin de la Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale*, vol. 40, n° 1 (2011), p. 19.
- 15 Luc NOPPEN et Gaston DESCHÊNES, *L'Hôtel du Parlement : témoin de notre histoire*, Sainte-Foy, Publications du Québec, 1996, p. 172-176.
- 16 "Salon vert », *Encyclopédie du parlementarisme québécois*, Assemblée nationale du Québec, 10 octobre 2014, <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/patrimoine/lexique/salon-vert.html>.
- 17 In 1983, the name was Direction de l'aménagement.
- 18 Jean-François COSSETTE, "La restauration du couronnement de la tour centrale de l'Hôtel du Parlement", *Bulletin de la Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale*, vol. 35, n°s 1-2 (2006), p. 19-21.
- 19 See also: Frédéric LEMIEUX, "Agrandir le parlement? Trois projets oubliés", *Bulletin de la Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale*, vol. 45, n° 1 (2016), p. 16-23.
- 19 M. HÉBERT, *Parlementer...*, p. 296.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 Concerning the concept of dignity, see also: Martin PÂQUET, "Le deuil comme consensus. Les rituels funéraires des responsables politiques au Canada et au Québec, 1868-2000", *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, vol. 14, n° 1 (2005), p. 73-88.

Accessibility Renovations in Canada's Parliamentary Precincts

Canada's parliamentary precinct buildings were constructed during periods when thoughts about accessibility accommodations ranged from virtually non-existent to something considered when commissioning new builds. As a result, jurisdictions with older properties have undergone a series of renovations in recent decades to make these precincts more accessible for parliamentarians, staff and the public. The following lists and summaries detailing these renovations were created using information provided by the Office of the Clerk, parliamentary librarians, and/or departments of property management.

British Columbia

The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia has undertaken the following measures to make the parliamentary space more accessible to Members, staff and visitors with mobility restrictions:

Chamber and Committee Room Renovations and Improvements

- Improved the technology in the Legislative Chamber and facilitated the participation of Members with limited mobility.
- The Speaker's chair now incorporates a console system which features a House messaging system that Members with mobility restrictions can use to alert the Speaker of their interest in participating in debate.
- Reconfigured the Legislative Chamber – as required – to allow room for a Member with mobility restriction to easily access their desk.
- Members with mobility restrictions vote by raising their hands as opposed to standing during a formal division.
- Installed special extended microphones and standup desks in committee rooms for Members with mobility restrictions participating in Committee proceedings.

External Renovations and Improvements

- In March 2013, a new accessible entrance was unveiled at the front of the Parliament Buildings. It is named after Douglas Lyle Mowat who served as a Member of our Legislative Assembly from

1983 to 1991. Mr. Mowat was the first wheelchair user elected to a legislature in Canada.

- Other improvements include:
- upgrades to create barrier free entrances;
- new accessible parking spaces;
- changes to curbs, paths and rolling surfaces around the Parliament Buildings to enhance accessibility; and,
- a concrete ramp and metal railings to facilitate improved accessibility to the Parliamentary Dining Room.

Internal Renovations and Improvements

- installed an internal ramp to provide accessibility to our Legislative Library
- renovated washroom entrances and fixtures to enhance accessibility
- installed automatic door openers
- modernized the building's elevators to enhance access to the overall building. The elevators were over 30 years old and, except for the elevator shafts, were completely replaced
- updated the fire alarm system with new fire bells and strobe lights for the hearing impaired
- installed "Evacu-Trac Evacuation Chairs" to assist mobility restricted Members should the elevators become inoperable during an on-site emergency requiring evacuation
- added closed captioning for the hearing-impaired as part of our television broadcast of all proceedings
- provided for personal care attendant services and Committee travel supports for Members as required.

Alberta

1912: Elevators were put into the Legislature Building when it was originally constructed.

1965: New elevators were installed early in the year to replace the existing elevators.

1973: In response to a question in the Assembly on the availability of Legislature accessibility features the Minister of Public Works referenced plans to change access to the galleries to make them more accessible. Ramps are mentioned as being in place to enter the Building.

1981: Complete wheelchair accessibility to the Legislature Building was put in place during the International Year of the Disabled Person.

1986: Renovation provisions made for eight wheelchairs in the galleries; washrooms and telephone booths made accessible within the Building; handrails added in galleries to assist those who have difficulty with stairs.

1987: A temporary plywood ramp over front steps installed for visit of Rick Hanson.

1989: The first Member using a wheelchair is elected. Percy Wickman was a paraplegic who received the Order of Canada for his political career and efforts on behalf of people with disabilities. An interview with Percy Wickman about his experiences can be found in *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 13(1) 1990.

1990: Alberta is the first province to have American Sign Language interpreters sign on broadcasts. Technical issues and budget reductions resulted in a move to closed captioning in 1995.

2004: Bill 201 *Safety Codes (Barrier-free Design and Access) Amendment Act, 2004* passed.

2007: As part of a review of occupational health and safety measures, offices and furnishings (including in constituency offices) were assessed and upgraded as required. Elevator cabs in the Legislature Building renovated to barrier-free standards regarding the control panels. Washrooms renovated to ensure access for people with disabilities.



Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

The barrier-free entrance ramp to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

2007: Assistive listening devices are made available upon request to members of the public entering the galleries. The original listening devices were the size of a small box and amplified the audio. In 2015, the assisted listening devices were updated to iPads that also provide closed captioning.

2008: The election of Kent Hehr, who is a quadriplegic using a motorized wheelchair. Upon Mr. Hehr's election, a review was undertaken by the Legislative Assembly and a representative of HFKS Architects. This initial site review identified potential barrier-free modifications for consideration. It was noted that the need for both accessibility and security presented conflicts in several locations. Egress from the allotted parking spaces into the Legislature Building, which included ramps, was deemed satisfactory. While door widths met Building Codes, the push buttons for the automatic door opener were upgraded. Within the Chamber, the Bar was moved to allow the Member to proceed unimpeded to his desk.

2012: Dedicated washrooms for people with disabilities established within the Legislature Building.

2013: Member Heather Forsyth brings her service dog Quill into the Chamber - a first in Canada. Quill assisted Forsyth, who has hearing loss. On Quill's first day at work at the Alberta Legislature, he sat under Forsyth's desk and was quite at ease. However, she said Quill was startled when politicians started thumping their hands on their desks during debate.

2013/2014: An accessibility investigation for the Legislature Building was completed by Percy Wickman's son's business, Ron Wickman Architect. At the time, funding was not in place to make any modifications.

Saskatchewan

The United Nations declared 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons. The same year the Assembly put handrails on the legislative steps. It was a first small step toward much more extensive renovations in subsequent years.

In 1997, an emergency rehabilitation of the Legislative Building began. The project addressed major structural deficiencies to stabilize the building's foundation. In that same year there were



Legislative Assembly of Manitoba



The floor of the Assembly before and after it was raised.

upgrades to the building's safety components and accessibility standards, but stabilizing the foundation from underneath took precedent and delayed the accessibility piece of the building upgrades.

In April 1997, MLA Ned Shillington was confined to a wheelchair as a paraplegic; a special ramp had been provided for him in the Chamber, but it was not a permanent feature.

An accessible entryway was added to the front of the building in 2001. Named for the Prince of Wales and opened by him, it was developed during a substantial construction project on the Legislative Building. The impetus for the renovation was spurred by a visit five years earlier by paraplegic athlete and national hero Rick Hansen. He could not enter the building except via the service entrance at the back of the building. Officials vowed to make the necessary changes to prevent this scenario from happening again.

In 2015 four Saskatchewan Party MLAs and one member of the opposition took part in a challenge posed by First Steps Wellness Centre: spend the day in a wheelchair. All five MLAs reported that the challenge gave them a new perspective for the types of barriers still present for persons with disabilities.

While the issues of accessibility are an ongoing discussion, Rule 1(2) of the Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan state that "The Speaker may alter the application of any Rule or practice of the Assembly in order to accommodate the full participation in the proceedings of the Assembly of any Member: (a) with a disability..."

Manitoba

Over the years, the Manitoba Government and the Manitoba Legislative Assembly undertook a number of key initiatives to enhance accessibility in the Manitoba

Legislative Building for persons working in or visiting the building. The Government led a number of the initiatives, as it has jurisdiction over the majority of the Legislative Building, while the Government and the Legislative Assembly worked in cooperation for plans related to Assembly spaces.

These measures for enhancing accessibility include the following:

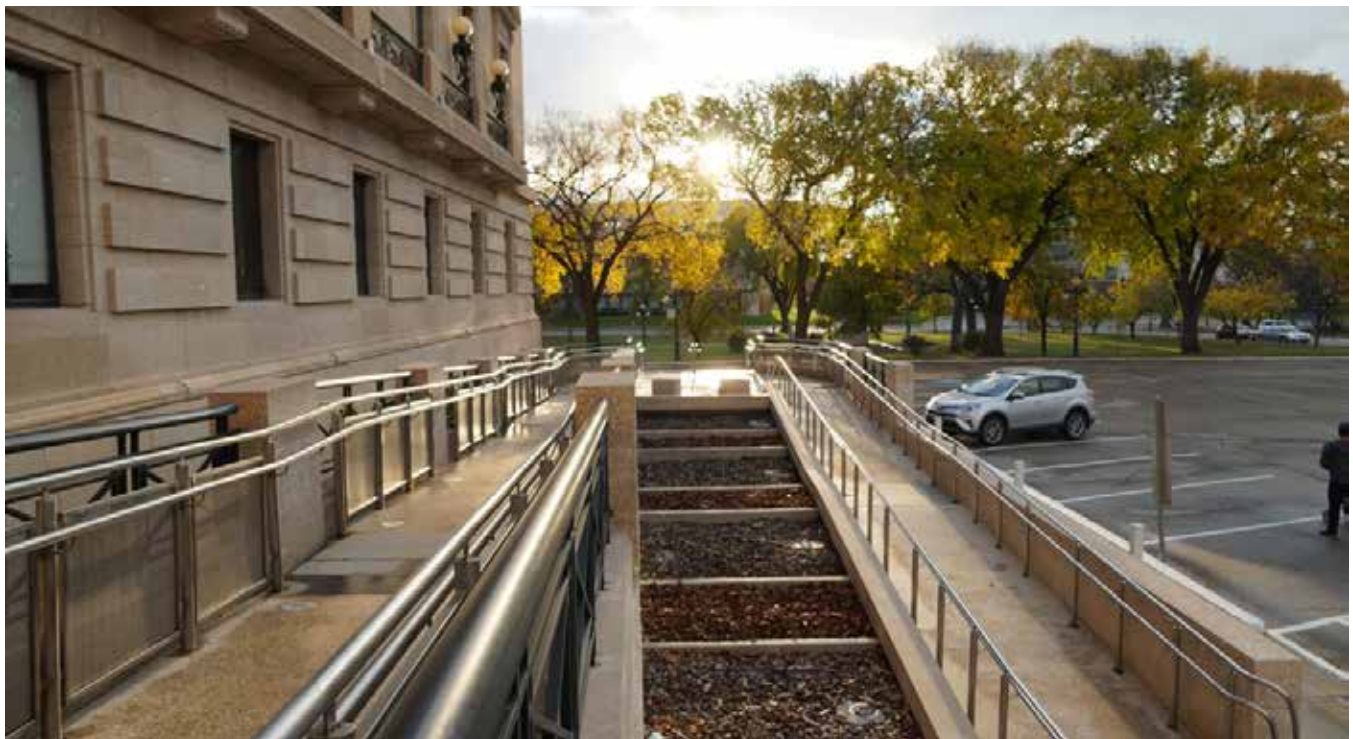
- In 1993, a designated section in the Legislative Assembly Public Gallery underwent renovations to provide space for persons using wheelchairs and other mobility devices to watch the Assembly in session. In addition, a wheelchair lift was added outside one of the Gallery doors to provide access to the Public Galleries;
- Closed captioning was added to the broadcasting of Routine Proceedings in 2001;
- In 2006 and 2013, the platform lifts in the Public Gallery were upgraded to provide newer models of platform lifts capable of handling the heavier weight of contemporary wheelchairs;
- In 2007, the Manitoba Legislative Building became the first legislative building in Canada to provide full access at the front doors with the completion of a universal access ramp at the front entrance of the building. The ramp design incorporates visually with the heritage design of the building. The

structure is wide enough to allow two wheelchairs to pass each other safely and includes a circular landing that allows users the opportunity to stop and view the outside of the building and the nearby grounds. In addition, the installation of custom doors at the main entrance provides better accommodation for wheelchairs, strollers and groups of visitors. Accessibility parking stalls are located at the base of the ramp;

- Standing Committees have provided American sign language interpretation and live closed captioning of proceedings upon request since 2011, and in 2013, the Legislative Assembly Management Commission approved an annual budget for the Committees Branch to provide these accessibility services during the committee stage of public presentations to legislation;
- In cooperation with Government, improvements were made to the Assembly's Public Gallery in 2015 to enhance audio, provide better floor lighting to reduce trip hazards, widen and improve stair treads, and improve visibility of stairs;
- Also in 2015, accessibility doors were added to public bathrooms in the Legislative Building;



Legislative Assembly of Manitoba



Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Above: Manitoba Speaker Hon. Myrna Driedger with Rick Hansen. Below: The ramp leading to the entrance of Manitoba's legislature building.

- From 2015 – 2017, an Advisory Committee was struck to look into the issue of enhancing accessibility in the Chamber. The Committee consisted of representatives from the Speaker’s Office, the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Hansard, Visitor Tours, Accommodation Services, Historic and Cultural Resources, representatives from the disabled community and advisory groups, the City of Winnipeg Accessibility Coordinator, the Disabilities Issues Office, project architects and contractors. From the discussions and investigations undertaken by this Advisory Committee a number of recommendations were acted on to enhance accessibility;
- In 2016, the Legislative Assembly agreed that any MLA requiring personal assistance such as a personal assistant, a service dog, sign language interpretation, real time closed captioning device, voice simulation or any other such reasonable personal assistance can have such assistance present in the Assembly without requiring the leave of the Legislative Assembly;
- In 2016, based on recommendations from the Advisory Committee, the third row of MLA seating in the Legislative Assembly Chamber was renovated to make the desks and seats accessible for those using mobility devices;
- Also in 2016, Government Caucus office doors were renovated into accessibility doors. An MLA office was renovated as an accessibility office complete with an accessible door and an ensuite bathroom with accessibility features and a proper wheelchair turning radius;
- In 2016, a touch screen monitor was configured to provide an MLA with movement challenges, the ability to have an aide signal for the attention of the Speaker, the Table Officers, the Pages, and the intention to speak in debate, by touching the screen on behalf of the Member;
- Also in 2016, the Speaker and Clerk investigated and observed the operations of platform lifts located in other cities to determine whether a platform lift would be a suitable option for providing access to the floor of the Legislative Chamber for persons using mobility devices. Concerns were reported back to the Advisory Committee after seeing those lifts in operation. The idea of using a platform lift was discarded due to the noise level, the potential for mechanical breakdown, and for the lack of discretion for persons using the lift. The Advisory Committee returned to the idea of installing a wheelchair ramp. Previously, this idea had been rejected because the dimensions of the Chamber made the slope of a ramp too steep, however with the creative thinking of raising the floor of



The new, accessible visitor’s entrance.

the Assembly Chamber, it was determined that a wheelchair ramp could indeed be installed that would conform to code requirements;

- In 2017, the Commissioner for MLA Indemnities, Allowances and Pension Benefits added, at the request of the Assembly, \$5,000 to the Constituency Allowances of all MLAs, specifically to provide renovations to constituency offices to enhance accessibility;
- In 2017, based on recommendations from the Advisory Committee, the Legislative Assembly Chamber underwent significant renovations to enhance accessibility. In order to provide the proper slope for the installation of a wheelchair ramp, the Chamber floor was raised by four and a half feet. With the installations of the ramp, access to the Chamber floor is now possible for anyone using a mobility device;



The ramp installed in the West Lobby.

- In addition, the first row of desks on both sides of the Assembly Chamber were moved in order to provide a proper wheelchair turning radius, meaning that MLAs using mobility devices could sit on the front benches on either side of the Assembly Chamber. The Speaker's dais and the Clerks' table are now also accessible. This renovation was completed on time and under budget and was so well done that it won a Heritage Winnipeg award; it was also a finalist for Project of the Year award and won acclaim from notable activist Rick Hansen;
- In 2020, broadcasting of Assembly proceedings expanded from Routine Proceedings to the entire of the sitting day, which means that closed captioning now includes the full sitting day. With the move to virtual participation by MLAs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, instead of appearing in person, Standing Committee presenters now participate virtually from their homes or offices.

Ontario

1995 – North Wing Entrance Exterior Ramp Design & Installation – Accessibility ramps integrated into the existing stair design and heritage façade of the North Wing to provide accessible entrance.

1997 – 2008 – West Wing First Floor to Fourth Floor Washroom Renovations – Renovations to all existing West Wing washroom facilities to meet current building code and accessibility standards.

2000 – New Accessible Building Entrance – Introduction of a new public building entrance and accessible ramp located on the south façade of the Legislative Building.

2003 – 2004 – Centre Block Basement Washroom Renovation – Renovations completed to basement washroom facilities to meet current building code and accessibility standards.

2004 – Chamber Ramp Installations – Accessibility ramps integrated into the existing environment in the Chamber and Chamber lobbies to provide barrier-free path of travel.

2007 – 2008 – East Wing Fourth Floor Accessibility Ramp – Accessibility ramp integrated with existing stair to provide barrier-free path of travel to office spaces.

2007 – Centre Block Elevator Renovation – Renovation to basement and intermediate level of Centre Block for the addition of an accessible elevator.



The security desk at the West doors, on the main level of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

2008 – 2009 – New Elevator and Associated Accessibility Upgrades – Lieutenant Governor’s Suite – New elevator installed to provide access to all three levels of the suite with associated accessibility upgrades, including a new washroom.

2008 – 2010 – North Wing Washroom Renovations First Floor to Fourth Floor – Renovations completed in all North Wing washrooms to meet current building code and accessibility standards.

2009 – 2011 New Security Desks – Security desks at public entrances all replaced with barrier-free desks.

2009 – Building Wayfinding Signage Review and Upgrade – Comprehensive review completed of all existing building (interior and exterior) signage followed by the implementation of updated signage to meet current accessibility standards (pictograms, braille, etc...).

2009 – 2014 – Elevator Voice Notification System – Audible signals installed in all elevators to provide audible voice messaging to indicate direction of travel and floor levels.

2010 – Pages Quarters Accessible Washrooms and Showers – Redesign of existing washroom facilities to

meet current building code and accessibility standards.

2010 – Library Circulation Desk Accessibility Renovation – Library circulation desk redesigned and replaced with a barrier-free desk.

2012 – East Wing Basement Men’s Washroom & New Family/All Gender Washroom – Renovation completed in the basement men’s washroom to meet current building code and accessibility standards. Redesign included the introduction of a separate new family/all gender accessible washroom.

2014 – North Wing Basement Renovations – North Wing basement renovated with the addition of accessible washrooms and showers.

2015 – Barrier-Free Door Operators throughout North Wing from Basement through to Fourth Floor

2019 – Barrier-Free Door Operators installed at various location throughout buildings.

2021 – Visitors Centre Screening Facility – 2,000 sq. ft. addition built on to Legislature for the purposes of security screening. Selected location built upon the previously introduced accessible entrance and ramp (2000)

House of Commons

A major rehabilitation project is now underway at the Parliament building known as the Centre Block, which houses both the Senate Chamber and the House of Commons Chamber. The work is anticipated to take about 10 years to complete. To facilitate the rehabilitation, interim chambers were constructed in nearby buildings. An interim Senate Chamber was constructed within the recently renovated Government Conference Centre now known as the Senate of Canada Building. An interim House of Commons Chamber was constructed within a former courtyard at West Block on Parliament Hill.

While still located in Centre Block, the House of Commons Chamber first accommodated a quadriplegic Member of Parliament in 2004 by modifying the furniture in the room. In subsequent elections in 2006, 2008, 2011 and 2015, similar accommodations were made for Members with physical disabilities. Members with physical disabilities were accommodated in offices with closer proximity to the Chamber and accessible features, as supported by the Whips, to enable them to fulfill their parliamentary duties.

Standing Order 1.1, which reads as follows, was added to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons following the election of the first quadriplegic Member of Parliament in 2004:

Participation of members with disabilities.

The Speaker may alter the application of any standing or special order or practice of the House in order to permit the full participation in the proceedings of the House of any member with a disability.

In addition to the above-mentioned renovations, the Parliamentary Precinct is currently undergoing a complete rehabilitation to modernize and restore its heritage buildings, which is part of the Long Term Vision and Plan (LTVP) that was developed in 2001. One of the elements of this major rehabilitation project is to create an accessible Parliament, as stated in The Long Term Vision and Plan: Annual Report 2018 to 2019:

The grounds and buildings throughout the Parliamentary Precinct were designed and built over 100 years ago, long before accessibility standards were in place. This reality poses unique challenges with regards to the need

to balance modern accessibility requirements with the preservation of heritage character. New and restored buildings throughout the precinct, including the West Block, Senate of Canada Building, and phase 1 of the Visitor Welcome Centre, have been designed and built to overcome these challenges and to meet and in many cases, exceed building codes.

In accordance with Bill C-81, *The Accessible Canada Act*, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) is addressing accessibility standards throughout its rehabilitation of the Parliamentary Precinct. PSPC is becoming a leader and model in the development of accessible environments by making the precinct more family friendly, inclusive, and open to the public. This commitment presents an opportunity in the development of the Campus Master Plan, whereby the integrated campus approach will continue to enhance accessibility across the entire precinct.

The rehabilitation of the Centre Block and redevelopment of Blocks 1, 2, and 3 will further allow PSPC to showcase global leadership in universal accessibility within a heritage context. PSPC's design team is collaborating with all stakeholders to create a balance between accessibility, security, heritage, and existing site conditions, to position the precinct as a model of accessibility for generations to come.

It should be noted that facilities in Parliament are wheelchair accessible. The following are additional examples of renovations that have been made in recent years within the Parliamentary Precinct to address accessibility needs (source: Parliamentary Affairs section of Public Services and Procurement Canada):

- Perimeter Security Barriers (2013) made specific provisions for clearance of oversized motorized wheelchairs (large format wheelchairs), at the main entry points to Parliament Hill.
- Parliament Hill grounds (2014) made improvements to accessibility on the site, including the addition of gently ramped concrete pathways and curb cuts and modifications to building entrances.
- The Sir John A. Macdonald Building renovation, completed in 2015 for the House of Commons, was built to respect accessibility requirements as per applicable codes and standards and includes the following accessibility features:
 - Elevators are accessible;
 - All doors in the new annex and the existing heritage building are accessible;

- Accessible washrooms are provided;
 - All furniture layouts for Multipurpose Rooms I & II, for all scenarios, include spaces for wheelchairs;
 - All Break-Out Rooms are accessible.
- Renovations were completed at The Wellington Building in 2016 for the House of Commons. It has enhanced accessibility provisions in all publicly accessed committee rooms. All main functions within the building, including vertical movement between floors via dedicated elevators, are designed for accessibility for persons with a severe mobility impairment/disability. The previous ramp leading from Sparks Street to the main floor has been improved and ensures free and practical access for persons with disabilities. The building also contains eight fully accessible Member of Parliament office suites, slightly over 10% of the total number of suites.
 - In the recently renovated West Block (2018), vertical access between all public areas allows for enhanced barrier-free access, including access to the House of Commons Interim Chamber, the upper public viewing gallery, access to committee rooms and access to parliamentary office floors. One office suite is specifically adapted for enhanced accessibility. The Chamber has level access to approximately 10% of the seating for Members of Parliament. All Members are provided with assigned desks and chairs in the Chamber. The furniture arrangement does not allow barrier-

free access in its present configuration, but accommodations are adapted to best respond to individual accessibility requirements, given the diverse range of accessibility needs. In the Chamber Galleries, space has been made to accommodate wheelchairs on the accessible level within the theatre-style seating. Seating is provided for an attendant or companion to be seated beside the person in a wheelchair.

As part of the requirements to ensure equal access to all for the Senate of Canada building (2018), additional elevating devices (elevators and wheelchair lifts) and accessible washrooms were added as part of the rehabilitation work.

In planning for new buildings, building connections, and current rehabilitation projects, the approach is to provide universal accessibility and balance the heritage constraints in existing buildings, to ensure Parliament is made physically accessible. This includes uniform floor levels with vertical movement provided by elevators as a minimum.

New signage in renovated buildings includes braille detail and the newer elevators have voice floor indicators. Accessible parking spaces are available to Members and staff.

The Senate

The summary below highlights various changes made within the Senate of Canada occupied buildings during the last 23 years to make spaces more accessible to parliamentarians, staff and/or visitors with disabilities.

1988 – wheelchair ramp installed at Centre Block (CB) east freight door

1992 – upgrade to accessible washrooms at main entrance at CB

1997 – installation of wheelchair ramp at translation booth room 160 at CB

1997 – Room 160S CB complex, fully accessible washrooms inside the space

1997 – wheelchair accessible ramp installed at temporary north loading dock at CB

1998 – fully accessible washrooms with East Block (EB) in the 1910 wing



Accessible washrooms in the Senate buildings.



At the Senate of Canada Building the visitor gallery in the chamber has wheelchair and adaptable seating.

1998 – elevator capability to 4th floor so wheelchairs could access room 362 EB meeting room

1999 – accessible washrooms with fit-up of 4 floors for the Administration move to Chambers building

2000 – upgrade to accessible washroom at rear of Senate Chamber (CB)

2000's – automatic door opener upgrades at the Governor General (GG) and Privy Council (PC) main doors at EB

2000's – automatic door opener upgrades at main doors VB

2002 – intercom installed at EB end of underground tunnel to CB for a disabled person to call Corporate Security Directorate (CSD) Ops Center if he/she requires help to climb the incline in tunnel to the CB side. This issue was noted after a disabled person visited an employee of the Senate in their workplace as an initiative of the Clerk to find out from disabled individuals what the barriers really are when accessing Senate buildings on Parliament Hill.

2000's – installation of emergency buttons in all accessible designated washrooms (VB)

2002 – asphalt ramp installed at CB ice hut to allow a Senator at the time to enter the CB main door with his wheelchair.

2009 – accessible ramps to National Press building

2019 – SW Tower bypass project

2020 – replacement of portable hydraulic lift at main entrance steps to the National Press Building (Admin)

2021 – accessible upgrades to all washrooms at the EB

2021 – gender neutral accessible washroom pilot project at EB

2021 – PC entrance upgrade (railing extension at the ramp, door operators and intercom controls lowered, new door opener installed at new ballistic door, all aligned with CAN-CSA B651. Ramp itself, which does not meet current CAN-CSA, was not altered);



One of the original benches from when the Senate building was the train station.

At the Senate of Canada Building (SCB), the temporary home to the Senate Chamber while the Parliament's Centre Block is undergoing its first major rehabilitation since the building's opening in 1920, the building was renovated in a way that ensures all senators, staff and visitors can easily function in the space. From barrier-free entrances to tactile signage and universal washrooms with changing tables, the SCB features a barrier-free path to provide easy access throughout the building. Visitors watching the proceedings from the public galleries are also offered wheelchair and adaptable seating.

Currently, with the passing of the Accessible Canada Act in July 2019, the Senate endeavours to support PSPC in creating a Parliamentary Precinct that enables everyone to participate fully in the workplace and the visitor experience without barriers. Since under the Act, the Government of Canada including parliament entities, are required to develop and publish accessibility plans that describe how it will identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility through the proactive identification, removal and prevention of accessibility barriers, to ensure persons

with disabilities are no longer required to fight barriers to accessibility, the Senate has put together an internal working group to develop the initial Senate Accessibility Plan.

Quebec

On June 1, 2019, the reception pavilion of the National Assembly opened its doors to the public. It won the Universal Accessibility Award at the Gala of Awards for Excellence in Architecture (Ordre des architectes du Québec), in June 2020. Mirroring the democratic spirit of the institution, the architects chose to design a wide ramp whose spiral structure allows everyone to travel along the same route rather than creating a separate entrance for visitors with reduced mobility. It was an acknowledgement of the full membership of people with reduced mobility in Quebec's society.

All areas of the Reception Pavilion are accessible to people with reduced mobility – visitors as well as staff and Members. A number of improvements have also enhanced accessibility to the Parliament Building and the Library.

New Brunswick

- In October 1980 an elevator was installed in the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly
- A ramp was installed at a side door of the building at an unknown date
- The building went through a multiphase renovation project between 2006 and 2012 to both its exterior and interior. During this time a ramp was installed at the front of the building. A new side entrance was built including a new ramp
- The main floor bathrooms were completely renovated making them wheelchair accessible by including an automatic door with a push switch, a large stall and grab bars

Nova Scotia

- In 2013, when Kevin Murphy became the first Speaker in a wheelchair, a ramp was installed so that he could reach the Speaker's dais.
- An elevator was installed in 1979 (modernized in 2011) which allows persons with mobility impairments access to the second floor (where the Legislative Chamber and the Red Chamber—the Chamber used by our long-defunct upper house, and now used for Committee meetings and special events—are located) and the third floor, where the galleries are located.
- In 2002, the back ground-floor entrance was renovated to make it completely accessible, complete with power-assist doors. A vault on the main floor was removed to accommodate an accessible entrance.
- A resolution by MLA Mark Parent from November 14, 2002, explained the significance of these changes:

RESOLUTION NO. 4734

MR. MARK PARENT: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas recently I took part in an exercise whereby I spent a day in a wheelchair to experience just how challenging it is for those who must do so every day; and

Whereas after this experience I realized how important the recent work to make this House accessible to those who are physically challenged was, a request from the League for Equal Opportunities (LEO) which moved forward due to the co-operation between the Office of the Speaker, LEO, and Transportation and Public Works; and

Whereas changes include a new sidewalk and exterior lighting leading to a fully accessible entrance, complete with power-assist doors as well as accessible washrooms;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge these efforts designed to ensure that Province House is physically accessible to all its citizens and thank employees of Transportation and Public Works who did such a fine job while respecting the heritage of Canada's oldest legislative building.

- There is also the current project that will make staff areas more accessible and bring the ramp on the 3rd floor up to code.

Prince Edward Island

The parliamentary precinct presently consists of Province House (closed since 2015 for a major conservation project managed by Parks Canada, estimated to re-open in 2023); the Hon. George Coles Building (the temporary Chamber, some Legislative Assembly administrative offices, and offices of the three caucuses); the Rectory (Office of the Speaker, Office of the Clerk); and the J. Angus MacLean Building (the legislative library, Hansard, and a few other offices).

Some accessibility modifications that have been made or are in the process of being made include:

Coles Building

- -a few years ago the Assembly began allowing public access to the ground level entry, which has a ramp, in the Coles Building. Prior to that, the public had to climb a set of stairs to use the main door.
- -in the last five years an accessible washroom was added on the first floor of the Coles Building, and in a recent renovation all the washrooms on the other levels were made accessible.

Province House

- the Province House restoration project includes renovations that will make the building totally accessible. These include:
- an accessible ramp in the main entryway (on the south end of the building); the main washrooms will be in the basement level and will be accessible via a new zero-turn elevator;
- elevator access to all four floors as opposed to only three before. (The elevator will also be made larger);

- an accessible/universal washroom on all floors of the building;
- accessibility modifications will also be made to the first floor theatre, second floor Legislative Assembly Chamber and third floor public gallery.

Other

- Although not a building renovation, closed captioning of the broadcast of House and committee proceedings was added in the past 2-3 years.

Yukon

In terms of recent accessibility renovations/accommodations, renovations were completed to the public washrooms outside the Visitors' Gallery entrance to the Chamber in 2016. Post-renovation, while there is just one public washroom, it is barrier-free and accessible (e.g., wide door, automatic lights, grab bars, baby change-table), and gender-neutral. At the moment, no additional accessibility renovations/accommodations are planned, however, this could change (e.g., if a Member has accessibility requirements). Just a note – the Yukon Legislative Assembly Chamber, and the Assembly's precincts (at this point, the precincts are not defined in legislation) are contained within the Government of Yukon's Main Administration Building.

Nunavut

The territory's Assembly building has always had wheelchair accessibility including outside parking.

The main internal entry doors both outside and inside have accessible door openers and the washrooms and water fountains were designed to be "disability friendly".

Although no MLA currently has a disability requiring accommodations in office space, the Assembly would renovate offices as needed.

Northwest Territories

2012/2013 – National Building Code Upgrades

To address changes in the 2010 National Building Code, specifically to allow for an 800mm clear door

opening, the following upgrades were completed in February 2013:

- installation of 10 new tempered glass doors and associated hardware that lead to the Office of the Clerk, the Library, the Rear Chamber Corridor – 1st Floor, the Café, public washrooms, the Elevator Lobby/Official Symbols Display Area, Member's offices, executive offices, Committee Room A, Members' offices/Committee Room B
- installation of two new wooden doors and associated hardware at the Public Gallery entrance.

The following adjustments were made to existing building infrastructure:

- removal of door closer mechanisms from the wooden doors for the two ground floor wheelchair accessible washrooms
- adjustment of several 'flip up' seats in the Public Gallery to remain down to allow for ease of access for persons with canes, crutches, etc.

2014/2015 - Phase 1 Upgrades

- installation of electrically assisted door opening mechanisms in the doors to the two ground floor wheelchair accessible washrooms
- installation of electrically assisted door opening mechanisms on glass doors to Committee Room A and the Library
- installation of one companion seat in each wheelchair area (two) of the Visitors' Gallery
- removal of the glass door leading to the public washrooms
- removal of the shelving from the corridor leading to the public washrooms

2015/2016 - Phase 2 Upgrades

- installation of electrically assisted door opening mechanisms on the glass doors leading to Members' offices and executive council offices (back hallway behind Chamber, Office of Clerk, Members' Offices/Committee Room B)
- installation of contrasting edging around all glass door openings
- installation of contrasting strip on all slate tile stair nosing

Historic Moves: Parliament in the Victoria Memorial Museum: 1916-1920

After a great fire destroyed its building, Canada's Parliament needed to seek out temporary quarters. For a four-year period during reconstruction, Members of Parliament and Senators sat in the Victoria Memorial Museum. In this article, the author describes the damage of the fire, the desire to keep parliamentary proceedings going with limited disruption, and what was required to make the museum building useable for its new purpose. In contrast with the current renovation project in Centre Block, the move to the Victoria Museum could not be planned well in advance and modifications were made as best as possible under the circumstances.

Johanna K. Mizgala

February 3, 1916 was a Thursday, during the sixth Session of the 12th Parliament. In the Chamber of the House of Commons, the business of the day included a lengthy exchange about the fish trade, in which Bowman Brown Law, MP for Yarmouth (NS), gently chided his colleagues for their lack of enthusiasm.¹ Following the dinner break, the House resumed at 8 pm. Deputy Speaker Edgar Nelson Rhodes took the Speaker's Chair for the first time that evening, and was congratulated by his colleagues as a result. Apart from this personal milestone, it was a sitting much like any other.²

At 8:55 pm, Francis Glass, MP for Middlesex East (ON), was sitting in the House of Commons Reading Room, located in the old Parliament Building between the Chambers of the House and the Senate.³ Mr. Glass recalled smelling smoke, and although cigarettes and cigars were permitted in certain of rooms of the Parliament Building, they were not allowed in the reading room. He noticed a small fire below one of the shelves and immediately called for help. Constable T.S. Moore of the Dominion Police Force ran to get the only fire extinguisher in the room, but was unable to put out the fire. Instead, the extinguisher spread the embers up to the rows of newspapers hanging from long rods above the shelves and the fire soon ignited the recently oiled and varnished pine panelled walls.

By 9 pm, C.R. Stewart, Chief Doorkeeper of the House of Commons, ran into the chamber, yelling, "There is a big fire in the reading room; everybody get out quickly!"⁴ The Hansard for the day's proceedings records that the sitting:

was immediately suspended without formality, and members, officials, and visitors in the galleries, fled from the Chamber. Some of them were almost overcome by the rapidly advancing smoke and flames before reaching a place of safety. The fire, which had originated in the reading room, gained momentum with extreme rapidity and was soon beyond control.⁵

The fire spread rapidly onto the roof and throughout the corridors. Within the hour, the centre portion of the Parliament Building was a raging inferno. Members of the 77th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) realised what was happening and quickly abandoned their dinner to rush to Parliament Hill. Some 70 members of the CEF stayed through the night and into the morning helping the firefighters battle the blaze and controlling the gathering crowd.⁶

As the fire raged, Prime Minister Borden, members of his cabinet, and the Leader of the Opposition, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, met at the Chateau Laurier, determined to find a place to continue the business of government the next day. The Minister of Public Works was entrusted with finding a suitable location.

Johanna K. Mizgala is Curator of the House of Commons.



photographer unknown, Library and Archives Canada: PA-009864

Facade of the Victoria Memorial Museum, ca. 1914.

The following morning Canadians woke up to an ice-covered smouldering ruin where the majestic neo-Gothic building once stood. Only the Library of Parliament remained intact; its iron fire doors and the valiant efforts of the firefighting crews who doused the Library roof with water throughout the night saved the structure from ruin. News spread that seven people had lost their lives during the fire⁷. Also destroyed was the mace of the House of Commons — that precious symbol of the authority of the Speaker and the right conferred on the Commons by the Crown to meet and create legislation. In spite of this impediment, the House decided to meet as usual. The following day, at 3 pm, in the Victoria Memorial Museum (now home to the Canadian Museum of Nature) — the House borrowed the mace from the Senate and sat for the first time in this interim location.

The order papers on February 4, 1916 include the speeches of Prime Minister Borden and the Leader of the Opposition, Wilfrid Laurier. One followed the other, paying tribute to those lost in the fire, whom they considered not simply colleagues but dear friends. Regarding the destruction of the building, Prime Minister Borden stated:

As to the historic building itself, my own association with it has extended over a period of nearly twenty years; my right hon. friend on the other side of the House has been associated with it for more than twice that period. The building dates from the very earliest years of Confederation, or even before Confederation. In that Chamber the great policies were debated and worked out which have touched the development of our country and its future

destiny. In that Chamber the great men who founded this Confederation spoke, and did their duty as representatives of the people in Parliament from the inception of Confederation through the active period of their lifetime.⁸

He went on to read into the day's proceedings the messages of condolence from the King, the Governor General, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan, and from the Premier of Quebec.

When it was his turn to speak, Sir Wilfrid Laurier rose to utter the following:

Sad indeed are the circumstances under which we meet to-day. The old Parliament Building in which we sat yesterday, and which has been identified with the life of the Canadian people since Confederation, is a mass of ruins. Great though the material loss is to every Member of Parliament, to those of the present day and to those of an older generation still living, the loss of life is still more appalling. We had become attached to the scene and to everything which pertained to that building.⁹

Laurier concluded his speech by echoing the thoughts of the Prime Minister – it was essential that the House should go on with the business of the country. Both men urged their colleagues to proceed, with “firm hearts and renewed resolve” in the discharge of their duties in service to Canadians.



William James Topley, Library and Archives Canada: PA-009864

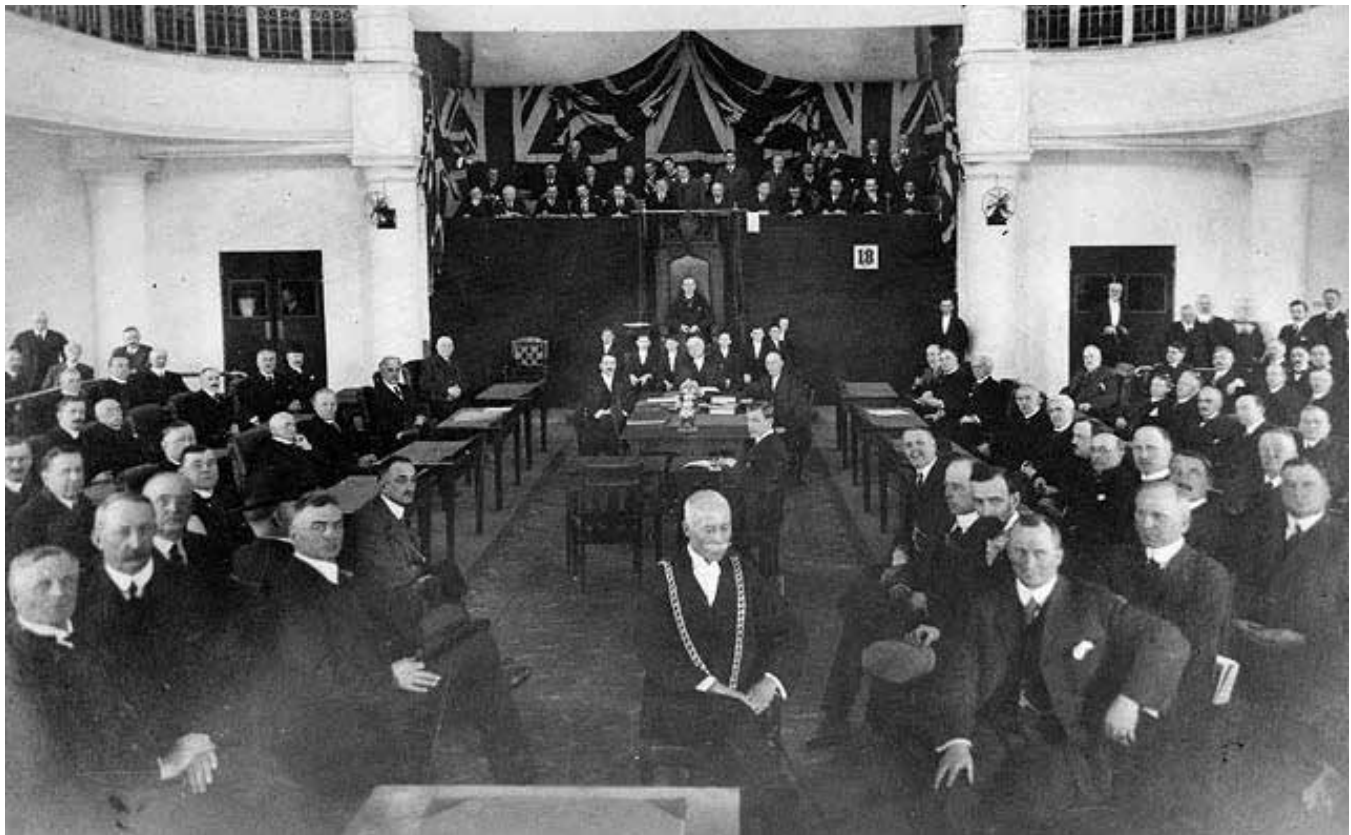
Above: Metcalfe Street, Ottawa, ca. 1911, Right: Lt.-Col. Sir Henry Robert Smith and Speaker Edgar Nelson Rhodes, ca. 1917.



Photographer unknown, Bytown Museum: P2276

While the reconstruction project dominated the landscape of Parliament Hill through the First World War and the eventual Armistice, the Parliament of Canada sat in its interim location on McLeod Street. Built between 1905 and 1911, the Victoria Memorial Museum was designed by Chief Dominion Architect, David Ewart. It was the first purpose built federal museum in Canada, and one of the many building projects in Ottawa credited, in part, to Laurier's vision for the city as the capital of the country. In thinking about the future of Ottawa and of the country at the turn of the century, Laurier suggested the following:

...and when the day comes, as it will come by and by, it shall be my pleasure and that of my colleagues, I am sure, to make the city of Ottawa as attractive as possibly could be; to make it the centre of the intellectual development of this country and above all the Washington of the North.¹⁰



photographer unknown, Library and Archives Canada: PA-022433

First Session of the 13th Parliament, held in the Victoria Memorial Museum, 1918.

Aside from the need to transform Ottawa from a lumber town to a nation's capital, the Museum is further associated with the building of similar institutions across North American and Europe to house growing collections of specimens, artifacts and art – many of these amassed by wealthy patrons and by eager nations wanting to display these pieces and attract the growing public who wanted to experience them.

When the Museum opened in 1911, it housed not only the National Gallery of Canada, but also the Geological and Natural History of Canada Survey Collections. The Neo-Gothic structure, built in Tyndall limestone and Nepean brownstone, stood alone in a green park at the base of Metcalfe Street. The site leads directly to Parliament Hill, which likely contributed to its selection as an interim location. More importantly, the Museum was large enough to accommodate both Chambers, but it was impossible to find a direct substitute for the Parliament Building. Although the exhibition halls could be transformed into the respective Chambers for the Senate and for the House of Commons, there wasn't adequate space for Parliamentary Offices and

the respective administrative groups were crammed together. The Library of Parliament, the only structure that survived the fire, remained in operation on the Hill throughout the four years of construction.

While the Museum was occupied by Parliament, the Geological Survey was required to move their specimens, including fossils and other extinct creatures, to other spaces in the building and to off-site locations. The National Gallery's collection had to be relocated as well. All activities of the Museum were on hold for the duration of the temporary occupation by Parliament and the spaces utilized for the Chambers were fitted up as well as possible for their requirements. The Museum's large auditorium space was transformed into the House of Commons Chamber. The room was fitted up with gallery seating on the second floor that was ideal to accommodate not only the Press Gallery but also any visitors wishing to watch the proceedings. Very little furnishings were salvaged from the fire, so the set-up was somewhat makeshift with chairs on either side of a long aisle. Photographs from 1918, however, show that in addition to seating, MPs were



photographer unknown, Library and Archives Canada: C-022355

Lying in State at the Victoria Memorial Museum, 1919.

equipped with desks and a table was in place for the Clerk and other Table Officers. Likewise, while the House was in this interim location, they continued the tradition of commissioning a new chair for the Speaker. Edgar Nelson Rhodes, who became Speaker in 1917, was the last to have a personalised chair, which was brought to the new building in 1920 and used until the permanent Speaker's Chair, a gift from Great Britain, was presented to Parliament in 1921.¹¹

The Senate took over a large exhibition space in the southwest wing of the Museum, and the Department of Public Works worked round the clock to recreate the original Chamber, down to the red carpet, in time for the Senators to sit on February 8, 1916.¹² By a stroke of good fortune, the Senate had not been sitting on the evening of the fire in the Parliament Building. This contributed to the fact that there had been time to salvage the portrait of Queen Victoria, some furnishings and of course, their mace.

Although the House had been able to borrow the Senate's Mace temporarily, this was not a long-

term solution. A wooden mace, painted gold, was employed by the House of Commons until March 28, 1917, when the new mace was presented in London to Prime Minister Robert L. Borden.¹³ The mace is similar in designed to the one used by the British House of Commons and bears the following inscription:

THE MACE, REPLACING THE ORIGINAL MACE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA DESTROYED BY FIRE ON FEBRUARY 3RD 1916, WAS PRESENTED BY COLONEL THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR CHARLES CHEERS WAKEFIELD, LORD MAYOR OF LONDON, AND BY THE SHERIFFS OF LONDON, GEORGE ALEXANDER TOUCHE, ESQ., M.P. AND SAMUEL GEORGE SHEAD, ESQ.¹⁴

Parliamentary lore tells the story of a molten piece of the old mace having been found in the rubble of the fire and incorporated into the new mace. Sadly, this lovely continuity is untrue: analysis performed by the Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Company revealed



Laurier's funeral procession, 1919, film still.

that the metal was not from the mace, so it was not incorporated.¹⁵In 2017, the mace was restored on its centenary and contemporary analysis confirmed these findings.¹⁶

Although deeply tied to the history and heritage of place, the 1916 fire underscored the notion that the business of Parliament could not stop to wait for its permanent home to be rebuilt. The fact that the House of Commons met the day following the fire, albeit for only 40 minutes, speaks to the belief that Parliament must carry on, especially during war time. Following the largely ceremonial act of sitting on February 4, 1916, full efforts were devoted to transforming the Museum into Parliament, and between 1916 and 1920, some 485 Acts received Royal Assent, including:

- *An Act to Amend the Canada Temperance Act*, May 18, 1916
- *An Act to authorize the levying of a War Tax on certain incomes*, September 20, 1917
- *A War-time Elections Act*, September 20, 1917

- *An Act to provide Compensation where Employees of His Majesty are killed or suffer injuries while performing their duties*, May 24, 1918
- *An Act to confer the Electoral Franchise on Women*, May 24, 1918
- *An Act respecting the Department of Health*, June 6, 1919

This legislation, as well as the effect of the First World War, would radically transform the country and would set the stage for the Canada in the twentieth century and beyond.

February in Ottawa continued to be cruel – on February 17, 1919 Wilfrid Laurier succumbed to a stroke, while still in office as Leader of the Opposition. On February 20, 1919, on opening of the second Session of the 13th Parliament of Canada, the Speech from the Throne was read into the record. Prime Minister Borden was in Europe at the time, and so Acting Prime Minister Sir Thomas White had the duty to inform the House of plans for the funeral of Laurier:

Mr. Speaker, we meet today under the shadow of a great loss and a deep and widespread personal sorrow. The Right Honourable Sir Wilfrid Laurier, senior member of this House, has passed away and the entire nation mourns his death. It is my intention later to ask the adjournment of the House until Tuesday next, out of respect to and in honour of his memory... In the meantime the Government, desirous of paying every appropriate mark of respect, has arranged, with the consent of the family, for a State funeral, which will take place on Saturday morning in accordance with the public announcement which has been made. From eight o'clock this evening the remains will lie in state in this Chamber, when all will have the opportunity of looking upon his face for the last time.¹⁷

Once again, the Museum was transformed, from Chamber of the House of Commons to a location fit for lying in state. Contemporary news accounts estimate that 50,000 people made the journey to the Museum to pay their respects during the 36 hours that Laurier laid in state within the Chamber of the House of Commons. The Chamber was draped in mourning and filled with floral tributes. In a touching show of respect, the floral wreath from the Parliamentary Press Gallery was adorned with a floral number 30 — in reference to the shorthand for indicating the end of the story.

Mourners came by the tens of thousands to line the streets to watch Laurier's cortege make its journey from the Museum to the funeral services at Notre-Dame Basilica. Though he did not live to see the opening of the new building on Parliament Hill, it is clear that its architects John A. Pearson and Joseph-Omer Marchand had taken into consideration Laurier's pronouncements on the 20th-century being the century of Canada.¹⁸

Instead of undertaking a reconstruction of the Parliament Building, which by 1916 had been renovated and expanded in an effort to match the growing country and its accompanying needs for representation, the new building was a distinctly 20th-century design that not only acknowledged the traditions of the past but also heralded the future. As we undertake the current restoration and rehabilitation project, let us keep those messages from the past in mind and continue to pay tribute to its legacy.

Notes

- 1 *House of Commons Debates*, 12th Parliament, 6th Session: Vol. 1, 3 February 1916, page 571.
- 2 *House of Commons Debates*, 12th Parliament, 6th Session: Vol. 1, 3 February 1916, page 574.
- 3 *Royal Commission: Parliament Buildings Fire at Ottawa, February 3, 1916*, Reports of Commissioners and Evidence, Ottawa, 1916, page 16.
- 4 *House of Commons Debates*, 12th Parliament, 6th Session: Vol. 1, 3 February 1916, page 578.
- 5 *House of Commons Debates*, 12th Parliament, 6th Session: Vol. 1, 3 February 1916, page 578.
- 6 Vakardis, Jane and Lucile Finsten, *Fire on Parliament Hill*, Erin: Boston Mills Press, 1988, page 22.
- 7 Killed in the 1916 fire were Florence Bray and Mabel Morin, both guests at the Sévigny residence in the Parliament Building; Constable Alphonse Desjardins, Dominion Police Force; Alphonse Desjardins, steamfitter, Department of Public Works; Randolph Fanning, Post Office Department; J.B. René Laplante, Assistant Clerk, House of Commons, and Bowman Brown Law, Member of Parliament for Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.
- 8 *House of Commons Debates*, 12th Parliament, 6th Session: Vol. 1, 3 February 1916, pages 578-579.
- 9 *House of Commons Debates*, 12th Parliament, 6th Session: Vol. 1, 3 February 1916, page 581.
- 10 Wilfrid Laurier as Leader of the Opposition in the *Address to the Reform Association of Ottawa*, 19 June 1893.
- 11 The Permanent Speaker's Chair proved impossible to move to the interim Chamber in West Block during the rehabilitation and restoration period, and so it was decided to use the Rhodes Speaker Chair once again, in honour of the last time the House of Commons sat in an interim location.
- 12 Vakardis, Jane and Lucile Finsten, *Fire on Parliament Hill*, Erin: Boston Mills Press, 1988, page 51.
- 13 Tradition dictates that the wooden mace continues to be used annually in the House of Commons on the sitting date closest to the anniversary of the fire.
- 14 Mace of the House of Commons, created by Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Company (Great Britain), gilded sterling silver, 1917.
- 15 *The Mace in History, Arts and Architecture*, Parliament of Canada, https://www.ourcommons.ca/About/HistoryArtsArchitecture/decorative_arts/ceremonial/2872-e.htm, accessed February 5, 2021.
- 16 The Mace of the House of Commons, conservation reports, House of Commons Heritage Collection, 2017.
- 17 *House of Commons Debates*, 13th Parliament, 2nd Session: Vol. 1, 20 February 1919, pages 2-3.
- 18 This phrase appears in Laurier's speech at Toronto's Massey Hall, 14 October 1904 and in other speeches of the time.

The Canadian Scene



Hon. Jeremy Harper

New Yukon Speaker

Newly elected Liberal MLA **Jeremy Harper** became the 26th Speaker of the Assembly on May 11, 2021.

“It is the Speaker’s duty to be impartial and to treat all members equally and without favour,” said Speaker Harper, calling the role an honour and privilege. “This high standard must be met in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the [Legislative] Assembly and I commit today to carry on this tradition.”

The Mayo-Tatchun MLA is a member of Selkirk First Nation. Speaker Harper has worked as a recreation coordinator with the First Nation for more than two decades and served as a Wolf Councillor. For nine years he served as a part-time director for the Selkirk Development Corporation and is also a member of the Canadian Rangers. In his spare time, he enjoys playing baseball and hockey and hunting for his family.

New Newfoundland and Labrador Speaker

After two ballots, Lewisporte-Twillingate MLA **Derek Bennett** was elected Speaker of the Newfoundland and Labrador Assembly. Speaker



Hon. Derek Bennett

Bennett, who expressed surprise at his victory, was selected over former Speaker **Scott Reid, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Brian Warr, and Paul Dinn.**

Speaker Bennett told his fellow parliamentarians that he intended to restore civility to the House of Assembly and said all parties must work together for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in these challenging times.

“There are times when things get heated,” Speaker Bennett conceded, but he explained that “people look upon us as leaders,” and respectful debate must be enforced.

An emotional Speaker Bennett thanked his family for their support and made special mention of his grandchildren who he can’t see in person often due to the pandemic. “Poppy loves you,” he told them from the Speaker’s chair.

Speaker Bennett, who worked as the Director of Recreation and Tourism with the Town of Lewisporte for 25 years, was first elected in 2015 and re-elected in 2019 and 2021.

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Kevin Murphy, Nova Scotia

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Ted Arnott, Ontario

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

Colin LaVie, Prince Edward Island

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George Furey, Speaker

Gérald Lafrenière, Clerk (Interim)

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NOVA SCOTIA

Kevin Murphy, Speaker

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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Derek Bennett, Speaker

Sandra Barnes, Secretary

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Frederick Blake Jr., Speaker

Tim Mercer, Secretary

NUNAVUT

Paul Quassa, Speaker

John Quirke, Secretary

YUKON

Jeremy Harper, Speaker

Dan Cable, Secretary



*As of June 30, 2021

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Manitoba

3rd Session of the 42nd Legislature – Spring Resumption of Virtual Sittings

The 3rd Session of the 42nd Legislature resumed on March 3, 2021 continuing with the use of hybrid virtual technology for MLA participation in its regular daily sittings.

Due to the spring 2020 session being greatly abridged because of the COVID-19 pandemic, a limited number of Government Bills were debated and passed last session. As a consequence, the Government introduced a larger number of Bills than usual since the Specified Bill format of the Rules were incorporated a few years ago, addressing different areas of governance. Fifty-one (51) Bills were introduced in time to meet the criteria for Specified Bills; this status will result in them receiving guaranteed passage before the House rises in June. However, the process for the Second Reading passage of these Bills was modified in accordance with a Sessional Order passed on March 15, detailed below. In addition to those 51 Bills, the Official Opposition designated five (5) other Bills to be delayed until the fall. In regards to the 51 Bills, the legislative agenda included:

- *Bill 3 – The Public Service Act* will replace the Civil Service Commission with a Public Service Commissioner and replaced *The Civil Service Act* in order “to provide a legislative framework for an ethical and effective public service for Manitoba”. The Official Opposition expressed some concern claiming it undermined the collective bargaining process as the legislation eliminates provisions for the appointment of an arbitration board and for the establishment of a Joint Council;
- *Bill 10 – The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Health System Governance and Accountability)*, amends various *Acts* restructuring the Manitoba health system in order to “consolidate administrative services related to health care and to centralize the delivery of certain health services across Manitoba”. The Official Opposition expressed concerns about the powers the *Act* grants to the Minister of Health and Senior Care to possibly interfere with the decision-making abilities of health authorities;
- *Bill 13 – The Public Sector Construction Projects (Tendering) Act*, prohibits the issuing of a tender that would require the successful bidder to employ unionized employees or non-unionized employees for work on the project. The Official Opposition argued the Bill would lead to public safety concerns claiming that workers would be left untrained in many instances;

- *Bill 27 – The Administrative Tribunal Jurisdiction Act* addresses the ability of administrative tribunals to decide questions of constitutional law. The Official Opposition expressed concern that the legislation gives the Provincial Government more control over administrative tribunals as the *Act* would only allow such tribunals to consider questions of constitutional law if they were designated to do so by regulation;
- *Bill 29 – The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2020* amends several *Acts* and repeals five *Acts* to reduce or eliminate regulatory requirements or prohibitions, to streamline government operations and to eliminate committees. The Official Opposition argued it was an omnibus Bill which will lead to more cuts and erasures of important regulations that actually protect consumers and the environment and more privatization of important government assets;
- *Bill 38 – The Building and Electrical Permitting Improvement Act (Various Acts Amended and Permit Dispute Resolution Act Enacted)*, amends several *Acts* to create a process to hear appeals of permitting decisions and orders related to building and electrical codes, as well as allow for the establishment of service standards for permitting authorities in Manitoba. Its purpose is to “ensure municipal governments make timely and transparent decisions on private sector capital investment opportunities in their communities”. The Official Opposition argued that many municipalities are concerned with this Bill increasing provincial control over local democracy;
- *Bill 51 – The Limitations Act* replaces many existing 10-year limitation periods with a single limitation period of two years, which begins to run from the day the claim is discovered. It also creates an “ultimate limitation period” of 15 years. The Official Opposition argued the legislation is problematic and creates too short of a period for citizens to pursue legal action.
- *Bill 56 – The Smoking and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act* removes the federal exemption respecting smoking and vaping and the advertising and sale of tobacco and vapour products. The Official Opposition argued the legislation impinges upon the rights of First Nations to govern themselves.

Sessional Orders

The Legislature is still operating under the Sessional Order originally passed on October 7, 2020, discussed in previous issues, and subsequently extended to June 1, 2021. On March 15, 2021, the House passed a new Sessional Order, primarily to deal with the large volume of Specified Bills that could have resulted in the Assembly sitting continuously for numerous days on end to comply with original Second Reading Specified Bill deadline. Some of the provisions of the new Sessional Order included:

- Allowing for Second Reading to be completed on March 24 and 25, with the House adjourning at midnight on March 24 and ending debate at midnight on March 25;
- Official Opposition designation of five Bills to be announced on March 24;
- Committee Stage to be completed by April 27, 2021;
- Report Stage to be completed by May 11, 2021; and
- Concurrence and Third Reading to be completed by May 20, 2021.

In addition, the Order called for:

- The Assembly to pass *The Interim Appropriation Act* on March 22 as the passage of this legislation is required by the end of the fiscal year on March 31 to provide interim funding for operating and capital expenditures effective April 1, until the budget processes and the main supply Bills are completed later in the session.
- Debate on March 24 and 25 to operate under the provisions outlined for limited debate on Specified Bills in Rule 2(10), with the exception that after each debate concluded the Speaker would put the question. Essentially, those provisions called for the following steps to occur for Bills that were not yet moved for Second Reading:
 - Sponsoring Minister to speak up to 10 minutes in debate;
 - Question period on the Bill of up to 15 minutes;
 - Opposition Critic on the Bill to speak up to 10 minutes in debate; and
 - Independent Members to speak up to 10 minutes each in debate.

Budget Debate

On April 7, 2021, Finance Minister **Scott Fielding** delivered the budget to be followed by an expected six days of debate, with a focus of protecting Manitobans and advancing the province past COVID-19. Highlights included:

- Phasing out education property taxes by 50 per cent over the next two years for residential and farm properties thereby returning nearly \$250 million to approximately 658,000 property owners this year; there would be an average rebate of \$1,140 over two years;
- Placing \$25 million “in trust” to redevelop the flagship building of Hudson’s Bay located on the historic site of Portage Avenue and Memorial Boulevard;
- Increasing funding in the priority areas of health care, education and social services to by nearly \$1.5 billion including:
- \$1.18 billion in 2021-22 for COVID-19 costs including personal protective equipment (PPE), vaccine deployment, education supports and future needs;
- An initial \$342 million for programming and services within the new Department of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery;
- A record investment above \$3 billion in the public school system including:
- More than \$78 million for COVID-19 costs through the Safe Schools Fund;
- An increase of \$100 million in school capital project funding to accelerate construction of the 20 New Schools Guarantee; and
- An Education Funding Guarantee of at least \$1.6 billion in additional investment over four years
- A record \$2.1-billion investment in strategic infrastructure to help advance jobs and stimulate the economy, including:
- Almost \$630 million for road construction and maintenance;
- \$415 million for kindergarten to Grade 12 and post-secondary infrastructure; and
- More than \$292 million for health infrastructure

During his contribution to the budget debate on April 8, Leader of the Official Opposition and NDP leader **Wab Kinew** moved a motion expressing non-confidence in the Government, stating that the budget was not in the best interests of the people of the province and that it neglected the priorities of Manitobans in many areas including:

- Refusing to learn the lessons of the pandemic by further reducing healthcare funding and holding it to below the inflation rate, compromising bedside care and failing to prepare for a potential third wave;
- Cutting the health capital budget, which means less investments in services, such as a seizure clinic and new technology, and refusing to invest in training for frontline health professionals, such as nurses, to help Manitobans get quality care;
- Compromising the Crown Corporation, Manitoba Hydro, by trying to influence Manitoba Hydro operations and continuing their unconstitutional wage freezes, by refusing to repeal Bill 28, which has caused a strike for members of IBEW;
- Failing to be transparent with its plan to privatize Manitoba Hydro;
- Providing millions in funds for insurance brokers but refusing to pay a fair wage to employees of Manitoba Public Insurance;
- Requiring educators to pay out of pocket to meet the educational needs of children because of inadequate educational funding;
- Refusing to invest in local mental health supports, ignoring the addictions and homelessness crisis, and refusing to invest in supports such as a safe consumption site or building new social and affordable housing units;
- Failing to provide support for women, BIPOC, newcomers and low-income Manitobans to fully assist in a social and economic recovery from the pandemic, including training and credential recognition;
- Failing to match the commitment of Manitobans who have worked together heroically and sacrificed collectively to fight COVID-19.

On the same day, Independent Member **Jon Gerrard** of the Manitoba Liberal Party, moved a sub-amendment, stating that the budget failed Manitoba by:

- Failing to adhere to the most basic standards of honesty, competence and human decency, with a budget that gaslights Manitobans with empty promises while denying the basic necessities of life of housing, food, clean water and lifesaving and enabling medications and devices;
- Failing utterly to learn from its own catastrophic failures and incompetence in mishandling the second wave of COVID-19, business supports

and the vaccine rollout, and choosing to plow ahead with radical right-wing policies that will eviscerate public services and the families and communities who depend on them;

- Failing the basic obligations of every government in a crisis, to place the common good ahead of blind partisanship and ideology, choosing instead to present a budget that steals from the poor and gives to the rich, loots the public treasury while running up billions in debt in order to cut cheques that enriches itself and its political cronies.

150th anniversary of the first Sitting Day of the Manitoba Legislature

March 15, 2021 also marked the 150th anniversary of the first Sitting Day of the Manitoba Legislature. The Speaker made a statement to the House noting that the First Manitoba Legislature sat from March 15, 1871 to December 16, 1874. During those sessions, 43 Bills received Royal Assent, most of them dealing with initial administrative and judicial matters for the new government. The following excerpt from that statement provides a unique insight to those early days:

It is fascinating to peruse the estimates of Expenditure for the year ending December 31, 1872. Members may be interested to know that the total budget for the Province of Manitoba that year was \$81,425. Line items in the budget included the following:

- \$10,000 for roads and bridges
- \$6,000 for public buildings
- \$7,000 for education
- \$2,000 for immigration and agriculture
- \$500 for the Hospital of St. Boniface
- \$9,330 for the operation of the 24 Member Legislative Assembly, including allowances for the Speaker, The Clerk and the Sergeant-at-Arms.
- \$3,395 for the seven Member Legislative Council.

From 1871 to 1873 the Assembly met in a modest log house in the Red River settlement owned by A.G.B. Bannatyne (near the current corner of Main Street and McDermot Avenue). The Assembly met on the main floor, while the “Upper Chamber” Legislative Council met upstairs.

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms – Goodbye and Hello

On March 25, 2021, the Speaker paid tribute to **Ray Gislason**, the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, who retired from his post that day. Ray was hired as a Gallery Attendant with the Assembly in 2002, and appointed Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms in January 2011.

On April 6, 2021, **Cam Steel** officially assumed the position as Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, which will have additional responsibilities being on par with the Sergeant’s position in terms of its focus on security as well as ceremonial responsibilities.

Cabinet Changes

On January 5, 2021, the Provincial Government introduced changes to its Cabinet increasing the Ministerial roles to 18 positions. Some of the major changes included the creation of a new portfolio, Legislative and Public Affairs (Minister **Kelvin Goertzen**) and dividing the Health department into two portfolios:

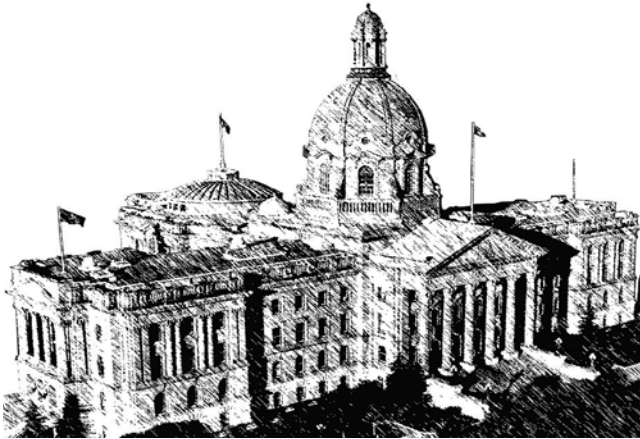
- Health and Senior’s Care (Minister **Heather Stefanson**); and
- Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery (Minister **Audrey Gordon**, the province’s first Black Cabinet Minister).
- In addition, Economic Development and Training was also split into two departments:
- Economic Development and Jobs (Minister **Ralph Eichler**) and
- Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration (Minister **Wayne Ewasko**).

Standing Committees

Since the last submission, the Standing Committee on Justice met on March 22 and April 6 to complete clause-by-clause consideration of six separate Bills. The Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs also met on April 6 to consider four more Bills. During the first three weeks of April, the Committee Clerks will be quite busy as they are tentatively scheduled to have two meetings per night to complete consideration of the 51 Bills that passed Second Reading in March. Many of these Bills already have more than 10 presenters, which could make for some very long evenings.

Greg Recksiedler

Research Officer/Clerk Assistant



Alberta

2021 Spring Sitting

On February 25, 2021, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta began the 2021 Spring Sitting of the 2nd Session of the 30th Legislature and the Government tabled the provincial budget. Although the schedule of the 2nd Session was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, the Assembly completed lengthy sittings in both the spring and fall of 2020 as well as a special sitting day in August 2020. The sessional calendar currently indicates that the 2021 Spring Sitting is scheduled to end on May 20, 2021.

Included among the first bills introduced by the government this sitting are:

- Bill 51, *Citizen Initiative Act*, which would create a process to permit eligible voters to petition the Assembly to review legislative proposals and policy proposals and petition the government to hold a referendum on proposed constitutional amendments;
- Bill 52, *Recall Act*, which proposes a process for the recall of Members of the Legislative Assembly as well as municipal and school board officials;
- Bill 53, *Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act*, which proposes amendments to multiple *Acts* in order to reflect modern communication technology and to provide businesses, non-profits, societies, cooperatives and condominium corporations with the legal option to meet and vote online as opposed to in person; and
- Bill 57, *Metis Settlements Amendment Act, 2021*, intended to provide greater governance and financial autonomy for Metis settlements through

measures including providing additional authority to Metis settlement councils to charge for essential services such as water, sewage and road maintenance and removing the power of the Minister of Indigenous Relations to make decisions related to the Metis Settlements General Council's financial policies.

Standing Order Changes

The Assembly approved several temporary changes to the Standing Orders to help ensure that it is able to function during the current challenges of the pandemic and if an unanticipated emergency arises. These changes include providing authority for the Speaker to increase periods of adjournment and reducing quorum from 20 to 12 Members. These temporary changes to the Standing Orders are scheduled to expire at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, June 4, 2021. In addition, pursuant to Government Motion 62, Members may sit, speak and vote in any seat in the Chamber in order to accommodate physical distancing for the duration of the 2021 Spring Sitting of the 2nd Session of the 30th Legislature.

Membership Changes

On January 4, 2021, in response to news that a number of Members of the United Conservative Party (UC) caucus had travelled internationally for vacations in December 2020, Premier Jason Kenney announced that five Members of the UC caucus would be relieved of their committee duties, including **Jeremy Nixon**, MLA (Calgary-Klein); **Jason Stephan**, MLA (Red Deer-South); **Tanya Fir**, MLA (Calgary-Peigan); **Pat Rehn**, MLA (Lesser Slave Lake); and **Tany Yao**, MLA (Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo). Mr. Nixon also lost his position as Parliamentary Secretary for Civil Society and Mr. Stephan was taken off Treasury Board. In addition, the Premier accepted the resignation of **Tracy Allard**, MLA (Grande Prairie) from her position as Minister of Municipal Affairs. **Ric McIver**, Minister of Transportation, has temporarily taken on the Municipal Affairs portfolio.

Ten days later Premier Kenney removed Mr. Rehn from the UC caucus due to lengthy absences from his constituency. Mr. Rehn will not be eligible to run for future nominations with the UC.

Following these changes, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta currently consists of 62 Members of the UC, 24 Members of the New Democratic Party and one Independent Member.

Budget 2021-2022

On February 25, 2021, **Travis Toews**, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, released the province's Budget 2021-22. With a focus on health care and jobs, the budget includes an additional \$900 million for health care in the coming year and a temporary increase in funding to municipalities for infrastructure projects, while funding for postsecondary education has been cut. No changes to personal or corporate taxes have been made, nor has a sales tax been introduced.

Bill 211

On February 25, 2021, the Assembly passed Government Motion 66, which authorized Bill 211, *Municipal Government (Firearms) Amendment Act, 2020*, a Private Members' Public Bill sponsored by **Michaela Glasgo**, MLA (Brooks-Medicine Hat), to be moved to Government Bills and Orders on the Order Paper. The one-page Bill proposes to amend the *Municipal Government Act* to prohibit municipal councils, unless authorized by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, from passing bylaws respecting firearms. The Bill passed Second Reading on March 17, 2021.

Committee Business

The Select Special Democratic Accountability Committee completed its mandate and deposited its report regarding the *Election Act* and *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* with the Legislative Assembly on January 8, 2021. The report included 27 recommendations on topics including residency requirements, recounts, collusion and third-party advertising.

The October 2020 Evaluation Summary Report of the Office of the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities was referred to the Standing Committee on Families and Communities for review. The Committee met to review the report on December 7, 2020, and January 15, 2021, and issued a report making no recommendations.

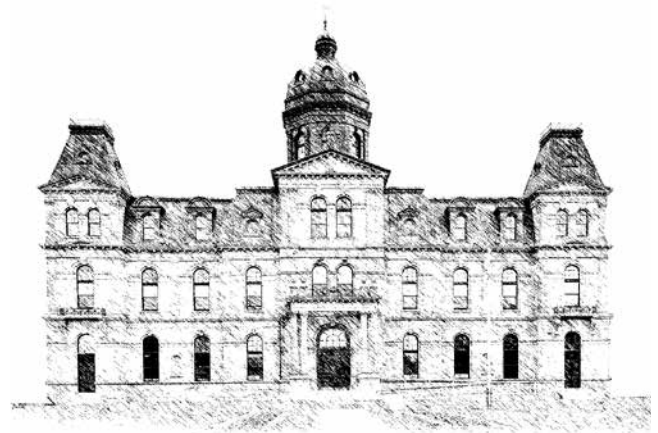
The 2019-2020 Annual Report of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate was referred to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices for review. The Committee met to review the report on January 12, 2021, and issued a report making no recommendations.

Following the release of Budget 2021-22, the consideration of the main estimates by the Legislative Policy Committees began on Monday, March 8, 2021. Estimates meetings were scheduled over seven sitting

days, with two meetings being held concurrently on most mornings, afternoons and evenings. The final vote in Committee of Supply occurred on March 17. To help promote physical distancing during the pandemic, the minister and ministry staff were located in one meeting room that was connected by videoconference to the committee meeting room. Members had the option of participating in meetings remotely using video or teleconference, and the committee room galleries remained closed to the public.

On March 22, 2021, Government Motion 69 established the Select Special Committee on Real Property Rights. Consisting of 12 Members, the Committee has a mandate to review whether legal remedies available to property owners are sufficient and may consider a number of related issues, including the potential expansion or constitutional protection of property rights, abolishing the law of adverse possession and the adequacy of current expropriation legislation. The Committee must report to the Assembly no later than December 15, 2021.

Jody Rempel
Committee Clerk



New Brunswick

Budget

The 1st Session of the 60th Legislature adjourned on December 18, sat one day on February 12, and resumed on March 16, when Finance and Treasury Board Minister **Ernie Steeves** tabled the 2021-2022 Budget. This was the first budget of the Progressive Conservative majority government, led by Premier **Blaine Higgs**.

The budget aimed to address the continued public health challenges of COVID-19, while also supporting economic recovery. It showed a projected deficit of \$244.8 million. Revenues were projected to grow by 1.2 per cent, while spending was expected to grow by 3.4 per cent. Due to the anticipated decline of COVID-19 cases as a result of vaccine availability, the Department of Finance and Treasury Board projected a rebound in real GDP growth of 2.9 per cent in 2021-22.

Highlights of the budget included an investment of \$7 million for mental health services in response to the Inter-Departmental Addiction and Mental Health Action Plan; \$11.1 million for physician recruitment to address New Brunswick's physician shortage; and \$10.3 million for the Nursing Home Renovation and Replacement Plan. The budget also included \$64 million to address ongoing COVID-19 pressures, with funds designated for triage, immunization, assessment, testing and contact tracing. Funding in other sectors included \$1.7 million to support the development and delivery of distance learning opportunities; a \$20 million multi-year strategy investment to support the development of the small modular nuclear reactors sector; \$10.8 million to increase the availability of affordable housing units throughout the province; and \$36 million transferred to the Climate Change Fund.

On March 18, Finance Critic **Robert McKee**, delivered the Official Opposition's Reply to the Budget. McKee argued that the government did not designate enough funds for the recuperation of the private sector, particularly with regard to tourism; and that more support was needed for mental health programming and resources for seniors in long-term care, as well as resources directed toward fulfilling the recommendations of the Climate Change Action Plan. Overall, the Official Opposition argued that although the budget forecasted a deficit in order to help alleviate ongoing cost pressures associated with the pandemic, it did not provide significant investments – these had come from the federal government instead.

Legislation

As of March 26, 15 bills were introduced during the spring session. Some bills of note included:

- Bill 32, *An Act to Amend the Gasoline and Motive Fuel Tax Act*, introduced by Mr. Steeves, increases the tax on carbon-emitting products by \$10 per tonne as required by the federal backstop. The made-in-New Brunswick approach applies to 20 separate fuels;

- Bill 35, *An Act Respecting Empowering the School System*, introduced by Education and Early Childhood Development Minister **Dominic Cardy**, amends the *Education Act* to support teachers in managing their classrooms and to ensure schools offer a positive learning and working environment, free from intimidation and abuse. The proposed changes also allow teachers with specialized training to administer and interpret a psychoeducational assessment to support the development of a student's personal learning plan;
- Bill 37, *An Act to Amend the Fish and Wildlife Act*, introduced by Natural Resources and Energy Development Minister **Mike Holland**, makes changes to the permit process, as well to various offences relating to the *Act*. It also gives the Minister the authority to establish an annual quota for a species of wildlife that may be hunted in the province;
- Bill 39, *An Act to Amend the Auditor General Act*, introduced by Mr. McKee, amends the definition of "auditable entity" to include Vestcor Corp., a private not-for-profit entity that manages the public service pension plan; and
- Bill 45, *An Act Respecting Municipal General Elections in 2021*, introduced by Local Government and Local Governance Reform Minister **Daniel Allain**, makes it possible for the municipal electoral officer to suspend candidate nominations and voting in a health zone related to the May 10 election, should a lockdown result from a COVID-19 outbreak. The Bill received Royal Assent on March 26;

Standing Committees

Four Standing Committees met in February. The Standing Committee on Economic Policy, chaired by **Greg Turner**, considered various Government Bills and the Standing Committee on Private Bills, chaired by **Ryan Cullins** met to discuss Bill 27, *An Act to Amend the Saint John Transit Commission Act*.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts, chaired by **Lisa Harris**, reviewed Auditor General report sections and the annual reports of various government departments, Crown corporations, and other provincial entities, including WorkSafe NB, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Extra-Mural/Ambulance New Brunswick, and the Department of Social Development.

The Standing Committee on Procedure, Privileges and Legislative Officers, chaired by **Jeff Carr**, reviewed the 2019-2020 *Annual Report* of the Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick and the report entitled *Post-Election Recommendations for Legislative Change* prepared by Elections New Brunswick. The Committee also met with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to discuss the possibility of virtual sittings of the Legislature.

In March, the Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Stewardship, chaired by **Jake Stewart**, held its organizational meeting and heard from the Climate Change Secretariat as well as various government departments in order to gauge the progress towards the implementation of New Brunswick's Climate Change Action Plan. Committee members also discussed the issue of glyphosate spraying in the province and the planned public hearings, which were previously scheduled for March 2020, but were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members passed a motion to resume the study during the 60th Legislature.

Auditor General

After 36 years of service with the Province of New Brunswick and after completing a 10-year term as Auditor General of New Brunswick, **Kim Adair-MacPherson** announced on March 11 that she will conclude her work in New Brunswick and begin a new role as Auditor General of Nova Scotia in May 2021. Ms. Adair-MacPherson expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve her home province and the Legislative Assembly in this important capacity. During her mandate, in addition to delivering independent financial and performance audits, Ms. Adair-MacPherson focused on building and strengthening the audit team; modernizing the *Auditor General Act*; increasing the office budget for additional performance audit resources; and encouraging a more effective Public Accounts Committee.

Sitting Days and Standings

The House met from March 16 to 26 and is scheduled to resume sitting on May 11. The standings in the House are 27 Progressive Conservatives, 17 Liberals, three Greens and two People's Alliance.

Shannon Jensen
Research Officer



Québec

Parliamentary Proceedings

Composition

On January 21, 2021, **Éric Caire**, Member for La Peltrie, was appointed Minister Responsible for Access to Information and the Protection of Personal Information, replacing **Simon Jolin-Barrette**, Member for Borduas, who retained his duties as Minister of Justice, Minister Responsible for Laicity and Parliamentary Reform and Minister Responsible for the French Language. Mr. Caire also retained his duties as Minister for Government Digital Transformation.

On February 24, 2021, **Benoit Charette**, Member for Deux-Montagnes, was appointed Minister Responsible for the Fight Against Racism, with the duties being added to his usual duties as Minister of the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change. This is a newly created office. In addition, **Lucie Lecours**, Member for Les Plaines, was appointed Minister for the Economy.

Since March 30, 2021, **Louis-Charles Thouin**, Member for Rousseau, has been sitting as an independent Member. Consequently, the National Assembly is now composed of 74 Coalition avenir Québec Members, 28 Québec Liberal Party Members, 10 Québec solidaire Members, eight Parti Québécois Members and five independent Members.

Terms for the continuation of Assembly proceedings

On February 2, 2021, the parliamentarians carried a motion regarding regular sittings of the National Assembly and the parliamentary committees between February 2 and 19, 2021. On March 9, 2021, the parliamentarians adopted a motion on the same matter, effective from March 8 to April 21, 2021. Essentially,

the motions renewed the measures that had been adopted at the beginning of the sessional period on September 15, 2020 and were designed to ensure the safety of all during the pandemic.

The Assembly thus sat with a reduced number of Members. A total of 36 parliamentarians, excluding the Chair, were present in the Chamber, according to the following distribution:

- No more than 20 Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government;
- No more than eight Members from the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition;
- No more than three Members from the Second Opposition Group;
- No more than three Members from the Third Opposition Group;
- No more than two independent Members.

The above distribution was modified to allow more Members in opposition to be present in the Chamber during Routine Proceedings. The number of government Members was reduced to 16 to allow for two additional Members from the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, which subsequently totalled 10, and one additional Member from each of the Second and Third Opposition Groups, for a total of four Members from each group. Furthermore, a Member of the Second Opposition Group could fill in for an absent independent Member. In the event that a third independent Member wished to participate in Routine Proceedings, the Government would yield one of its seats.

Parliamentarians were allowed to take the floor and vote from seats that were not the ones usually assigned to them.

The previously adopted procedure for recorded divisions was maintained. Under that measure, the vote of the House Leader or of the Deputy House Leader of a parliamentary group, or where applicable, of another Member identified beforehand, was valid for all Members of his or her group. However, a parliamentarian was entitled to individually record a vote that differed from the vote of his or her group or to choose not to vote. In addition, if an independent Member was absent, the Government House Leader was authorized to record the Member's vote regarding a stage in the consideration of a bill according to the instructions that the absent Member had transmitted to the Government House Leader.

An additional measure, initially put in place through a motion carried on October 20, was renewed. It consists in dividing the ministers into two groups for Oral Questions and Answers such that one group participates during Tuesday and Thursday sittings, and the other during Wednesday sittings and also Friday sittings during periods of extended hours of meeting.

New measures were added through a motion carried on February 2, 2021. Procedure masks were to be worn at all times during sittings of the Assembly and parliamentary committees, except by those in attendance via videoconference and by those taking the floor during proceedings.

To ensure quorum for Tuesday morning sittings, the parliamentary groups agreed to have at least seven Members of the parliamentary group forming the Government, three Members of the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, one Member of the Second Opposition Group and one Member of the Third Opposition Group present in the National Assembly Chamber.

The Assembly proceedings schedule was changed to allow Members to respect the curfew ordered by the Government. Tuesday sittings began at 10 a.m. instead of 1:40 p.m. and adjourned after debates upon adjournment instead of at 9:30 p.m. Thursday sittings adjourned at 4:30 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. During Wednesday and Thursday sittings, proceedings resumed at 2:30 p.m. instead of 3 p.m.

Other schedule changes concerned debates upon adjournment. During Tuesday sittings, these debates began at 6:30 p.m., delaying adjournment of the sitting as a consequence. During Thursday sittings, these debates were held at 1 p.m. instead of 6 p.m.; sittings then followed their normal course, with proceedings being held from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Business Standing in the Name of Members in Opposition was taken from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., instead of from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

These schedule changes allowed for the usual number of hours for Orders of the Day, but ended proceedings earlier.

Bills introduced and passed

From January to March 2021, seven public bills were introduced in the National Assembly, including three private Members' bills. During the same period, the Assembly passed five government bills:

- Bill 46, *An Act to amend the Natural Heritage Conservation Act and other provisions*;
- Bill 65, *An Act to amend mainly the Environment Quality Act with respect to deposits and selective collection*;
- Bill 67, *An Act to establish a new development regime for the flood zones of lakes and watercourses, to temporarily grant municipalities powers enabling them to respond to certain needs and to amend various provisions*;
- Bill 73, *An Act to amend various provisions relating to assisted procreation*;
- Bill 77, *An Act respecting the Institut de technologie agroalimentaire du Québec*; and
- Bill 87, *An Act to limit certain charges in the restaurant industry*.

Rulings from the Chair

February 2, 2021 – Ruling concerning the distribution of certain measures and speaking times during limited debates following changes in the composition of the Assembly.

A ruling was handed down following changes in the composition of the Assembly, which had two additional independent Members since the adjournment of proceedings in December 2020, that is, the Member for Rimouski and the Member for Rivière-du-Loup-Témiscouata. As had been done several times since the beginning of the 42nd Legislature, the President made changes to the distribution of measures and speaking times during limited debates.

March 23, 2021 – Directive on the motions on establishing an independent process for determining Members' conditions of employment

The President of the National Assembly responded to the question about a directive asked by the Second Opposition Group House Leader on March 10, 2021, regarding motions carried by the Assembly on establishing an independent process for determining Members' conditions of employment.

In his comments, the Second Opposition Group House Leader recalled that on June 14, 2019, the Assembly had unanimously adopted an initial motion to give the Office of the Assembly the mandate to determine the best process to periodically, with complete independence, determine Members' conditions of employment. A working committee of the Office of the National Assembly, chaired by the First Vice-President of the Assembly, was given the mandate. The Leader also recalled that on December 6,

2019, a new motion was unanimously carried by the Assembly to allow the Office of the Assembly to continue its work and submit its final report not later than February 20, 2020. He stated that a third motion was later carried by the Assembly on June 10, 2020 to mandate the independent committee, whose creation had been recommended by the Office of the National Assembly, to develop a parental leave component for Members.

The Leader recalled that the Office of the National Assembly report that followed from the motions carried in June and December 2019 was tabled in the Assembly on February 20, 2020. He noted that the report determined that the best process would be to periodically form an independent committee with the mandate to determine the conditions of employment of Members and Cabinet members.

The Leader noted that once the report had been tabled, work to implement its recommendations continued until, in the week of March 1, the Government informed all the parliamentary groups that it was no longer planning to create the independent committee.

In this context, the Second Opposition Group House Leader asked whether the Office of the Assembly, or some of its members, could decide to ignore an order from the National Assembly. He noted that the motions carried by the Assembly did not require the Executive to take action, but targeted only the National Assembly and its Office.

He ended by saying that he found it difficult to see how a single parliamentary group could annul, in the Office of the Assembly, decisions taken unanimously by the National Assembly. According to him, that would imply that the Office of the Assembly had more authority, legitimacy and sovereignty than the Assembly when it expressed itself through a unanimous motion.

The President explained that to be able to rule on the matters submitted and on the nature of the motions carried by the National Assembly on June 14 and December 6, 2019, he had to begin by examining the intent of the words in the motions. The desire expressed in the wording was to mandate the Office of the Assembly to determine the best process to implement to ensure that the employment conditions of Members are periodically determined in a fully independent manner and to table a final report no later than February 20, 2020.

To follow up on this request, the Office of the Assembly asked the committee on Members' conditions of employment and various allowances, chaired by the First Vice President of the National Assembly, to reflect on the matter and submit a proposal to it. This committee did so by conducting a serious examination, in particular by doing a comparative study with other parliaments. On completing its work, the committee submitted its recommendations to the Office of the Assembly, which endorsed them in its report tabled in the Assembly on February 20, 2020.

The President concluded that the Office of the Assembly had fulfilled its mandate by tabling, within the prescribed time, a final report setting out its recommendations. By tabling the report, the Office of the Assembly had indeed fulfilled the mandate it had been given in the motions.

That said, the real underlying question seemed to concern the steps that followed or rather that should have followed the tabling of the report in order to implement the recommendations. In this regard, the President stated that he could not compel the parliamentarians in any manner to amend an existing law or formally sanction them if they did not follow through on their commitment.

In this specific case, the underlying intent of the motions was a moral commitment shared by the parliamentarians to follow up on the report and include the identified process in a bill. By choosing an informal process to discuss the implementation of the report's recommendations, the parliamentarians chose a path that the Chair could not rule on because it relied on the desire of those involved and on a moral commitment. The Chair has no power to compel Members to honour such a commitment. It is only by proceeding in the manner set out in the report, that is, by passing a bill, that the independent committee could have been established. In the absence of such actions, the independent committee does not exist, and the Chair could not conclude that it should have been established simply by the tabling of the report.

The motion carried on June 10, 2020 asking the Office of the Assembly to mandate the future independent committee to establish the terms of Members' parental leave expressed a consensus on the independent committee that no longer seemed to exist. The Chair could not presume the will of the Assembly regarding the means to achieve the desired outcome. The Members themselves had to consider whether they wanted to leave the matter of parental leave as it was or whether

they wanted to pursue the matter in a different way. If there was a desire to address this issue in a different forum, other procedural avenues were available to do so.

The Chair ended by specifying that, while the Office of the Assembly's recommendations on establishing an independent committee were not enforceable, the tabled report and unanimous adoption of three motions had certainly created expectations among the Members and the public. The Members' common goal following the carriage of the motions was to act on those recommendations. Accordingly, the Members could expect there would be follow-up to the Office's work. The motions carried by the Assembly and the content of the Office of the Assembly's report created an expectation that everything planned for would be carried out to completion. The proper functioning of Parliament rests in part on necessary cooperation between parliamentarians. The Chair said that it could hope that actions would be in line with words, but that it could not compel such consistency and that parliamentarians would have to assume responsibility for their positions.

Examination of the supplementary estimates

On March 16, 2021, the National Assembly carried a motion without notice by the Government House Leader that the National Assembly resolve itself into a committee of the whole to undertake examination of the supplementary estimates of March 2021 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021. On March 23, after the Committee of the Whole had completed its mandate, the Assembly passed Bill 89, Appropriation Act No. 5, 2020–2021.

Budget Speech

On March 25, 2021, **Eric Girard**, Minister of Finance, delivered the Budget Speech. The estimates of expenditure for the year 2021–2022 were also tabled that day. At the next sitting, on March 30, 2021, interim supply was granted, and Bill 91, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2021–2022*, was passed. The next day, the Assembly began the 25-hour debate on the Budget Speech.

Other events

Changes to the National Assembly's Administrative Structure

On February 18, 2021, the Office of the National Assembly adopted a new administrative structure,

establishing the General Directorate for Information and Visitor Experience. The new directorate groups together the Library Directorate, the Communications Directorate, the Visitor Services and Educational Mission Directorate and the Restaurants Service. **Isabelle Giguère** was appointed to head up this administrative component as Director General.

Creation of a Select Parliamentary Committee

On March 31, 2021, the Assembly carried a motion to establish a select committee to examine the issues related to extending medical aid in dying to persons who are incapable of caring for themselves or who are suffering from a mental illness. The committee, named *Select Committee on the Evolution of the Act respecting end-of-life care*, is composed of 11 members, including the Chair and Vice-chair.

Circle of Young Leaders in Public Administration

Two managers from the National Assembly were chosen to participate in the Circle of Young Leaders in Public Administration. **Christina Turcot** and **Claudia Rousseau** will be part of the next cohort of this high-level program coordinated by the École nationale d'administration publique and intended to pool the strengths of managers from various public administrations with a view to improving the services delivered to citizens. This 20-month program offers participants an opportunity to develop their leadership skills through skills development and mentorship activities.

Committee Proceedings

The following are highlights from committee proceedings for January to March 2021:

COVID-19

Two new motions intended to adapt to health standards were carried by the National Assembly on February 2 and March 9. The two motions were similar, with the exception of the cancellation of sectorial committee deliberative meetings during the three weeks governed by the first agreement, that is, from February 2 to 19. Since deliberative meetings make it possible for committee members to deal with petitions tabled in the Assembly, the first motion therefore suspended the time limits provided for in the Standing Orders for a committee to decide whether to examine a petition tabled in the Assembly or to table a related report.

Both motions allowed public hearings to continue virtually. Only the chair and committee staff were allowed to be present in the committee room, while the other committee members and witnesses were required to appear by videoconference. Sittings devoted to the clause-by-clause examination of bills continued in person, but with a reduced number of members. For such mandates, the quorum was set at three members instead of one-third of all committee members, and votes were held in accordance with a procedure for recorded divisions: a member of the Government and a member of the Official Opposition were empowered to vote for the aggregate of the members of their parliamentary group. Members of those groups continued to be entitled to record a different individual vote.

Independently of these special orders, plexiglass panels were installed between the available seats in all the parliamentary committee rooms. Amendments and other documents continued to be sent electronically. Lastly, in most rooms, committees adopted the practice of projecting amendments onto large screens.

Committee chairs

On February 26, 2021, **Sylvie D'Amours**, Member for Mirabel, became Chair of the Committee on Citizen Relations, replacing **Lucie Lecours**, Member for Les Plaines, who was appointed Minister for the Economy.

Bills

Three special consultations and public hearings were held in January. Under a retroactive agreement approved by the Assembly on February 2, these mandates were carried out virtually, with only the chair and committee staff being present at the Assembly. One of these consultations concerned Bill 84, *An Act to assist persons who are victims of criminal offences and to facilitate their recovery*, which proposes reforms to assistance for victims of criminal offences. The Committee on Institutions, which was responsible for that mandate, received 21 briefs and, over three days, heard 22 individuals and organizations via videoconference.

Concurrently, the Committee on Labour and the Economy held public hearings and consultations on another bill proposing legislative reforms, Bill 59, *An Act to modernize the occupational health and safety regime*, which concerns prevention of and compensation for employment injuries. One of the purposes of the bill

is to create a scientific committee on occupational diseases. The committee's mandate would be to make recommendations regarding occupational diseases and require employers to take the measures necessary to protect workers exposed to violence in the workplace. The mandate was carried out over four days, during which the Committee received 75 briefs and heard 30 individuals and organizations.

Over the course of February and March, the sectorial committees held three special consultations and public hearings and proceeded with the clause-by-clause examination of 10 bills. In three sittings, members of the Committee on Planning and the Public Domain held special consultations and public hearings on and carried out the clause-by-clause examination of Bill 85, *An Act to facilitate the conduct of the 7 November 2021 municipal general election in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic*. The purpose of this bill, which consists of five sections, is to make it easier to hold the fall 2021 municipal general election, in particular by extending the election period.

The Committee on Planning and the Public Domain also completed its clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 67, *An Act to establish a new development regime for the flood zones of lakes and watercourses, to temporarily grant municipalities powers enabling them to respond to certain needs and to amend various provisions*, which began on November 10, 2020. It took the Committee a little over 95 hours, spread over 19 meetings, to carry out this mandate.

The Committee on Health and Social Services carried out the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 73, *An Act to amend various provisions relating to assisted procreation*, which concerns mainly the quality, safety, ethics and planning of assisted procreation clinical activities, but also provides that the cost of certain physician-rendered assisted procreation services is assumed by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec.

Lastly, the Committee on Institutions began clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 64, *An Act to modernize legislative provisions as regards the protection of personal information*, which contains 165 sections.

Committee on Public Administration

The Committee on Public Administration, which mainly carries out accountability mandates, held two public hearings over these three months. On February 19, the Committee heard the Auditor

General on her annual management report and financial commitments. On March 22, it heard the Public Curator on his November 2019 report entitled "Protection of Incapacitated Persons Under Public Protective Supervision".

Marie-Christine Aubé

Sittings and Parliamentary Committee Proceedings

Stéphanie Pinault-Reid

Parliamentary Committees Directorate



British Columbia

Spring Sitting

The 1st Session of the 42nd Parliament resumed on March 1, 2021. As the previous Sessional Order regarding hybrid House proceedings expired on December 31, 2020, the first order of business was the adoption of a new Sessional Order. The new Sessional Order reflected provisions in previous orders to enable equitable treatment of Members participating through Zoom and Members participating in person in the Legislative Chamber. As with previous Sessional Orders, the one adopted on March 1 provided for any formal divisions to be deferred until 15 minutes prior to the fixed time of adjournment, or, if there was less than 30 minutes remaining prior to the fixed time of adjournment, then the division would be deferred to the end of the afternoon sitting of the following sitting day. Should a division be requested during a morning sitting, it would be deferred until the afternoon sitting of the same day. The Sessional Order for the Spring Sitting added a provision that if a division is requested on a closure motion, as set out in Standing Order 46, or a time allocation motion, as set out in Standing Order 81.1, the division would not be deferred but would proceed forthwith 15 minutes thereafter, unless the House or the Committee unanimously agreed otherwise.

The House prorogued on the morning of April 12, with the Speech from the Throne to open the 2nd Session delivered that afternoon. The 2021-22 Budget and Main Estimates are scheduled to be presented to the Legislative Assembly on April 20, pursuant to the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, which was amended in December 2020 to adjust the deadline for presenting the annual budget and estimates to on or before April 30 in the fiscal year immediately following a provincial general election.

Legislation

The *Supply Act (No.1), 2021* received Royal Assent on March 25 and provides \$12.305 billion of interim funding for public sector operations for the 2021-22 fiscal year. This amount represents three months of spending from the 2020-21 fiscal year. As the 2021-22 Budget and Main Estimates will not be presented until April 20, this interim *Supply Act* interprets the Main Estimates for the previous fiscal year as if they were the Main Estimates for 2021-22. The *Act* was the subject of significant debate with a number of questions regarding process and practice for interim supply given that the Budget and Main Estimates for 2021-22 had not yet been presented.

The *Firearm Violence Prevention Act*, which restricts the sale, transportation, and possession of real and imitation firearms in the province, received Royal Assent on March 25. During committee stage, concerns were raised with respect to the level of consultation with Indigenous peoples and the potential impacts on Indigenous hunting rights. The Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General introduced an amendment, which was subsequently adopted, to address these concerns. The amendment to clause 5 – which prohibits the discharge of a firearm in, on, or from a vehicle or boat – clarified that the clause must be applied in accordance with section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, which recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights.

The *Insurance Corporation Amendment Act, 2021* also received Royal Assent on March 25. The *Act* creates an independent fairness officer to oversee and respond to customer complaints, and policy and process issues at the Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC). The fairness officer was introduced to improve public trust in ICBC as the Corporation transitions to a no-fault, comprehensive insurance coverage model.

Parliamentary Committees

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services is responsible for reviewing and considering the 2021-22 budget estimates, annual reports and services plans of the province's nine statutory offices. This review process typically takes place in the fall; however, with the October 2020 provincial general election, this year's process took place in February 2021. The Committee carefully examined requests for additional funding within the context of supporting offices to fulfill their legislated mandates while also acknowledging the particular challenges of the last year as it relates to COVID-19 and its impact on staffing arrangements, office space and leasing requirements, and safety protocols. On February 26, the Committee released its report titled, *Annual Review of the Budgets of Statutory Offices*, with recommendations for the operating and capital budgets of each statutory office.

Legislative Assembly Administration

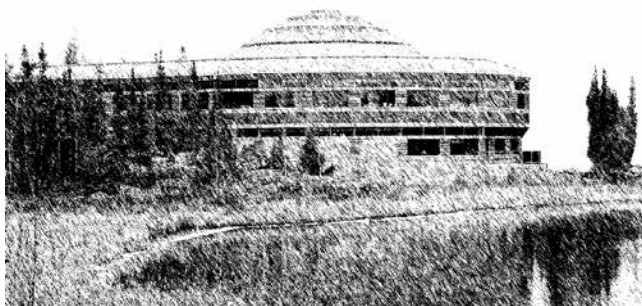
The Legislative Assembly Management Committee reviewed and approved the 2021-22 Legislative Assembly budget submission (Vote 1) on February 19. Vote 1 includes expenses for Members services, caucus support services, and legislative support services. The proposed operating budget provides for total operating expenses of \$86.1 million, a \$1.0 million increase from the 2020-21 operating budget. The additional funding includes targeted investments in staffing and employee engagement, and data and information management initiatives. The Assembly's capital budget of \$6.3 million in funding provides significant life cycle investments in critical IT systems, assets, and infrastructure.

The Committee also amended two policies: the retraining allowance for former Members and the accompanying person travel provisions. The retraining allowance is available to former Members and is part of the transitional assistance program. The word "career" was removed from the retraining allowance policy, the limitation on certain types of training were eased, and the eligible and ineligible expenses for the allowance were clarified. The accompanying person travel provisions in the Members' Guide to Policy and Resources were modified to allow for an accompanying person's travel to overlap significantly with the Member, rather than necessitate travel together with the Member, and to allow for a designated caucus position other than a Legislative Assistant, where such a position does not exist, to undertake eligible accompanying person travel.

Legislative Lights

The Legislative Assembly held its 7th annual Legislative Lights Employee Recognition event on February 25. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was rescheduled from its original September date and was held virtually. **Raj Chouhan**, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and **Kate Ryan-Lloyd**, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, addressed Legislative Assembly employees from the Legislative Chamber and congratulated award nominees and recipients for their outstanding achievements in categories including teamwork, spirit and leadership as well as Long Service Awards recognizing staff who have worked in the public sector for 25 years or more.

Natalie Beaton
Committee Researcher



Northwest Territories

Session

The 2nd Session of the 19th Legislative Assembly resumed on February 3, 2021, as scheduled, after the previous sitting was adjourned on November 5, 2020. The Assembly sat until March 31, 2021 and remains adjourned until May 27, 2021.

The main item of business was the review of the 2021-2022 Main Estimates in Committee of the Whole. Before adjourning, the Assembly passed the budget, and two Supplementary Appropriation Acts. In passing the budget, the Government committed to a number of additions and reductions requested by the regular Members that will be brought forward in a Supplementary Appropriation in the May/June sitting.

COVID-19 protocols remain in place in the Assembly, allowing all 19 Members to safely attend. This includes a modified chamber, with extra rows of seats added

to the Chamber, temperature checks, electronic distribution of materials, and a masks requirement when 2-metre social distancing cannot be maintained. The Assembly remains closed to the public, with the exception of media who are able to attend, socially distanced, in the Gallery.

Motions 33-19(2) and 26-19(2) were moved appointing Statutory Officer positions; the appointment of Members to the Human Rights Adjudication Panel and the Appointment of the Languages Commissioner respectively.

Motion 29-19(2) was moved by the regular Members to call upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to review its policies and practices for racial and cultural bias relating to education, health and social services, justice, housing, and government hiring.

Motion 30-19(2) was also moved calling upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to prioritize a review of the NWT Housing Corporation as part of the Government Renewal Initiative.

Legislation

During the February-March Sitting, the following bills received assent:

- Bill 3, *An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act*;
- Bill 12, *An Act to Amend the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification Act*
- Bill 13, *An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act*;
- Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Securities Act*;
- Bill 16, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*;
- Bill 20, *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*;
- Bill 26, *Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021*;
- Bill 27, *Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021*; and
- Bill 28, *Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2021-2022*.

Standing Committees

Standing Committees continued to meet throughout the first quarter of 2021 both in person and virtually. Committees continued to hold public meetings through the Assembly's social media channels.

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment tabled their Report on the Review

of Bill 3: *An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act*. The Minister concurred to four amendments to the Bill at the Committee stage.

The Standing Committee on Social Development tabled their Report on the Review of Bill 20: *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards*. The Minister concurred with one amendment to the Bill during Committee's review. The Committee also tabled their Report on the Review of Bill 13: *An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act*, with the Minister concurring to an amendment requiring that the Minister consult on the elimination of a time change.

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures released two reports: Report on Motion 5-19(2): Referral of Point of Privilege Raised By the Member For Monfwi on March 10, 2020, which looked at the use of Official Languages in the Legislative Assembly, and the Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election. The Assembly adopted 27 recommendations from the two reports combined.

Glen Rutland
Acting Clerk

James Thomas
Intern – Committee Support Officer



Ontario

Spring Sitting

The 1st Session of the 42nd Parliament resumed for the spring meeting period on February 16, 2021 following the Family Day long weekend. Along with the opening of the Legislative Building's new visitors' entrance, the Spring Sitting has already seen Standing Order amendments, the Budget, and a great deal of committee work.

New Visitors' Entrance

The new visitors' entrance officially opened to the public on March 1, 2021. This is the first addition to Queen's Park in over 100 years. The 1,948 square foot entrance was designed by Diamond & Schmitt Architects, Inc., of Toronto. The addition features materials that are complimentary to the heritage building's exterior finishes and locally sourced wherever feasible. The entrance has been outfitted with new security equipment to ensure a safe and secure environment for staff and visitors entering the Legislative Building.

Standing Order Amendments

On February 17, 2021 **MPP Andrea Khanjin** moved a motion proposing several amendments to the Standing Orders.

One particular amendment requires that when the Chair of a Standing Committee is a Member of the Government Party, the Vice-Chair should be a Member of the Opposition. Conversely, if the Chair is a Member of a Party in Opposition, the Vice-Chair should be a Member of the Party in Government.

Changes also authorize the Chair of any Standing or Select Committee to convene a meeting within 7 calendar days of receiving a written request signed by the majority of the committee. The request must contain the text of a non-amendable motion proposing that the committee consider a bill or other matter that is within its mandate.

These and other changes came into effect on March 26, 2021 at 12:01 p.m.

Budget Day

On March 24, 2021 the Minister of Finance, **Peter Bethlenfalvy** presented the 2021 Budget and Budget Papers. The motion that the House approves in general the Budgetary Policy of the Government was seconded by Premier **Doug Ford**. The House then reverted to Introduction of Bills for the introduction and First Reading of Bill 269, *An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes*.

New Faces

On January 18, 2021, **Meghan Stenson** was appointed to the role of Senior Clerk – Table Research. In addition to being the new Manager of the Table Research Office, she is now also a permanent Table Officer.

Ongoing COVID-19 response

Speaker **Ted Arnott** issued a directive requiring the mandatory use of a mask or face covering by every individual entering the legislative precinct, which came into effect on January 11, 2021. When the House resumed on February 16, 2021, the House passed a motion renewing physical distancing initiatives such as permitting Members to speak and vote from any Member's desk in the Chamber. The motion also required Members to wear a tightly-woven fabric face mask that completely covers the mouth and nose and fits snugly against the sides of the face without gaps, while in the Chamber except when recognized to speak.

The House also acknowledged that every person seeking to enter the legislative precinct, including Members of the Assembly, are subject to the Speaker's COVID-19 screening and masking protocols, and that application of these protocols could result in a Member of the Assembly being refused entry to the legislative precinct.

On the same day the House passed a separate motion which authorized the Government House Leader, the Official Opposition House Leader, a Liberal Independent Member and the Independent Green Party Member to jointly provide written notice to the Speaker that the Assembly adjourn for a period of up to 30 calendar days. The motion also stipulated that subsequent notices may be provided for additional periods of up to 30 calendar days each.

His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

On April 12, 2021, the House passed a motion that a Humble Address be presented to the Queen expressing the Legislature's condolences on the passing of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The House also observed a moment of silence. Speaker **Ted Arnott** issued a statement of condolence and the Assembly's website featured a commemorative gallery of Prince Philip's visits to the Legislature.

Committees

The Select and Standing Committees have been busy in the early months of 2021. They collectively considered 19 bills and presented nine reports.

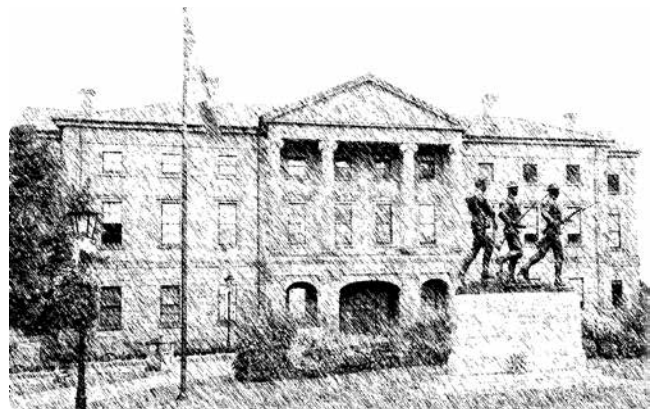
Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight

Since January 15, 2021 the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight has tabled five interim reports. As per its mandate, the committee receives oral reports from the Premier or his designate(s) on any extensions of emergency orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rationale for those extensions.

Standing Committee on General Government

The Standing Committee on General Government considered Bill 257, *An Act to enact the Building Broadband Faster Act, 2021 and to make other amendments in respect of infrastructure and land use planning matters*. One of the purposes of the Act is to expedite the delivery of broadband projects of provincial significance. The need for reliable broadband internet has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Isaiah Thorning
Committee Clerk



Prince Edward Island

2nd Session, 66th General Assembly

On the advice of Executive Council, Lieutenant Governor **Antoinette Perry** prorogued the 1st Session of the 66th General Assembly effective February 23, 2021, and summoned the Legislative Assembly to meet for the 2nd Session on February 25, 2021.

New Parliamentary Calendar and Sitting Hours

The opening of the 2nd Session marked the first time the Assembly met according to a new parliamentary calendar and new sitting hours, which were brought

about by rule changes adopted in June 2020 to take effect in January 2021. The calendar continues to include two sittings per year, but shifts them to a Winter-Spring Sitting beginning on the fourth Tuesday of February, and an autumn sitting on the third Tuesday of October; previously the sittings began in April and November. The new calendar also includes, after every third sitting week, a planning week in which the Assembly will not meet. The new sitting hours are 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; and 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Friday. This schedule retains the same sitting days and total sitting hours as before, but eliminates Tuesday and Thursday evening sittings, with those hours redistributed to the afternoons.

Speech from the Throne

Lieutenant Governor Perry opened the 2nd Session with a Speech from the Throne. It provided an overview of Government's plans for the new legislative session. The speech addressed the ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic, discussed economic recovery efforts, geared in particular toward the tourism sector and related businesses, and how to help transition Islanders from emergency supports back to meaningful employment. In healthcare, a new model will focus on community-based care over acute and long-term care. Government has set an objective of 300 new childcare spaces this year, and the speech indicated budgetary measures for childcare staff professional development and wage improvements would be forthcoming. Government will create a School-to-Workforce Transition Team, and a new Agency for Workforce Development. Business and educational supports for the development of clean technology will be provided, and environmental measures will be implemented to encourage the use of electric vehicles, reduce food waste and single-use plastics, improve soil health, and increase the level of protected land in the province. Various other initiatives in the areas of justice, diversity and well-being were raised. Debate on the Draft Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne commenced on February 26, and concluded when the Assembly carried the Address on March 9.

Budget

Minister of Finance **Darlene Compton** provided the 2021-22 Budget Address on March 12. The Road to Recovery was the general theme of the address. Spending highlights include:

- In health care, funding to revitalize primary health care, develop a Centre for Mental Well-Being, and provide a free shingles vaccine to Islanders aged 65 and older;
- In education, implementing a new universal half-day Pre-Kindergarten Program, directing funding to reducing child care rates, and adding 80 new frontline educational positions; and
- A new \$5,000 provincial rebate on the purchase of new and used electric vehicles and a rural transit pilot project to launch in autumn 2021.

The basic personal tax amount will be raised to \$11,250, and the small business tax rate will be reduced to 1 per cent. The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure were tabled on the same day the Budget Address was given. They continued to be debated as of the time of writing.

Cabinet Changes

On February 4, Premier **Dennis King** announced changes in the responsibilities of Cabinet members. **James Aylward**, formerly Minister of Health and Wellness, became Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. **Ernie Hudson**, formerly Minister of Social Development and Housing, became Minister of Health and Wellness. **Natalie Jameson**, formerly Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change, became Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, while retaining responsibility for the Status of Women. **Steven Myers**, formerly Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, became Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action. **Brad Trivers**, formerly Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, became Minister of Social Development and Housing. No Members were added or removed from the 10-person Cabinet.

Speaker's Rulings

On March 2, Leader of the Opposition **Peter Bevan-Baker** rose on a point of order to seek clarification on a comment Speaker **Colin LaVie** made that Bill 100, *Election Age Act*, which had just been introduced, would be referred to the Standing Committee on Legislative Assembly Management. On March 3, Speaker LaVie explained that the bill would be referred to the committee pursuant to section 46(2) of the *Legislative Assembly Act*, which holds that any bill pertaining to the Legislative Assembly or its offices shall be committed to the committee for its consideration. A bill affecting elections would pertain to Elections PEI, an office of the Legislative Assembly.

On March 12, Speaker LaVie issued rulings on points of order raised on March 10 and 11. On March 10, Leader of the Third Party **Sonny Gallant** rose on a point of order to object to the amount of time it took for an amendment to be made to a motion, given the limited time available for debate. On March 11, **Heath MacDonald** (Cornwall – Meadowbank) rose on a point of order to provide information about the previous government’s funding of mental health supports. In his rulings, Speaker LaVie found that neither instance was a true point of order. Regarding the preparation of amendments, he noted that amendments can be proposed without notice, though written copies must be provided once the amendment is moved. While advance preparation is helpful, ideas for amendments may occur to Members during debate and thus short recesses are acceptable for the purpose of wording and printing amendments. The other matter related to providing information to clarify a matter, which doesn’t fit within the purpose of a point of order.

Changes in Assembly Roles

On March 4 the Assembly appointed **Emily Doiron** as Deputy Clerk. She was formerly Clerk Assistant – Journals, Committees and House Operations. Former Clerk Assistant – Research and Committees **Ryan Reddin** took on the new role of Director of Parliamentary Research effective February 19.

Ryan Reddin

Director of Parliamentary Research



Saskatchewan

Spring Sitting

On January 28, 2021, Premier **Scott Moe** wrote to Speaker **Randy Weekes** to request that Members reconvene on April 6, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. The Premier

also indicated that the provincial budget would be delivered that day.

As per the rules of the Legislative Assembly, the week after Easter is designated as a non-sitting period, which is normally a break in the parliamentary calendar. To permit the Legislative Assembly to begin sitting on April 6, the Standing Committee on House Services (HOS) adopted a report recommending that the regular hours of sittings apply to the week after Easter Monday.

Standing Committee on House Services report

On the morning of April 6, before the resumption of session, HOS met to consider and adopt another report recommending the extension of the Easter week period through April 10, 2021 with the addition of two sitting days and incorporating all subsequent Fridays to provide for a 30-day sitting period with a May 14, 2021 completion day. The report also assessed and updated temporary modifications to the Assembly’s processes, practices, and standing orders in order to facilitate the Spring Sitting of the first session of the 29th legislature in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proposals contained in the HOS report reflect many of the modifications to rules and practices adopted for the Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 sitting periods presented in two of the committee’s previous reports. Updated procedures are as follows:

Remote Participation in Committee Proceedings

The report proposed changes to practices and procedures in order to test remote participation of one Member during committee proceedings in the committee room. The remote participating Member is required to provide email notice of their intention to participate to the Chair and committee clerk a minimum of two hours prior to participating in a meeting. Training on remote participation was provided to the participants of the committees.

Masking Requirements

The requirement that MLAs and officials wear a mask at all times in the Chamber and in the committee room is continued. However, masks may be removed when recognized to speak during Assembly or committee proceedings in the Chamber. Masks continue to be mandatory at all times in the committee room because of the more confined space, which is a factor in physical spacing and protective shielding.

Under the November 19, 2020 Saskatchewan Health Authority public health order, the wearing of masks is not mandatory during proceedings before a legislative tribunal or court where the decision maker determines that removing the mask is essential to ensure the integrity of the proceeding. To allow Members to be clearly heard in person and on the broadcast of Assembly proceedings, Members and officials were permitted to remove their masks during proceedings once they are recognized to speak.

Travel to and from Regina

On March 23, 2021, the Saskatchewan Health Authority stated that it strongly discouraged unnecessary travel to and from the Regina area due to an increased risk of transmission of COVID-19. While the recommendation against unnecessary travel to Regina is in place, MLAs were advised not to travel to and from constituencies outside of Regina. In extenuating circumstances, caucuses are permitted to approve a Member's travel if it does not contravene a public health order. Enforcement of the so-called MLA bubble is left to the respective caucuses and their Whips.

Stacey Ursulescu
Procedural Clerk



House of Commons

This account covers the period of January to the end of March 2021.

Return of the House

The House returned on January 25, 2021. At the beginning of the sitting **Mona Fortier** (Ottawa—Vanier), sought and received unanimous consent for the adoption of a motion organizing parliamentary

proceedings until June 23, 2021. The motion was similar to the special order adopted in September 2020, with additional provisions in relation to an electronic voting application.

Electronic Voting Application

The special order adopted on January 25, 2021, instructed the House Administration to begin onboarding all Members to the electronic voting application and to conduct two comprehensive simulations with all Members being invited to attend. Provided that after the two simulations the Speaker receives a notice from the House leaders of all recognized parties stating that they are satisfied with the remote voting application, electronic votes would be cast through the voting application from the next sitting day.

Two electronic voting application simulations with Members took place in February. On February 22, 2021, **Mark Gerretsen** (Kingston and the Islands) sought and obtained unanimous consent for a motion modifying the special order of January 25, 2021, with respect to the process for electronic voting in a hybrid setting. The amendment to the special order outlines how Members are to vote remotely if faced with technical issues in the voting application, and a process for verifying the identity of a Member if a concern is raised during a vote.

On February 25, 2021, the Speaker **Anthony Rota** (Nipissing—Timiskaming) made a statement informing the House that he had received notice from the House leaders of all recognized parties that they were satisfied with the electronic voting application and that it was ready to be used. The first vote using the application took place on March 8, 2021.

Procedure / Privilege

Questions of privilege

On February 16, 2021, **Elizabeth May** (Saanich—Gulf Islands) raised a question of privilege regarding the participation of Independent Members and Members from non-recognized parties in oral questions. Ms. May felt that her right to ask questions in order to hold the government to account is being violated because Independent Members and unrecognized parties are not able to participate in question period on Wednesdays, the day when the Prime Minister normally answers all questions. The Speaker delivered his ruling on February 23, 2021, stating that he does

not believe that this is a question of privilege, rather it is a point of order. He also suggested that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs may wish to look at how question period is conducted.

On February 16, 2021, **Blake Richards** (Banff—Airdrie) raised a question of privilege regarding language interpretation resources. Mr. Richards highlighted an issue that arose during the meeting of the Standing Committee on Health on February 12, 2021, which had to be suspended due to lack of resources. It should be noted that this issue was raised without the committee reporting the situation to the House. The Speaker delivered his ruling on February 19, 2021. He noted that he is responsible for administrative services and support to parliamentarians. He mentioned that, despite all efforts, these resources are not unlimited. The Speaker informed the House that he had asked the House Administration, in collaboration with its partners, to review the organization of the service offer and to add a protocol to be followed in certain circumstances. This protocol would allow the whips of the recognized parties to agree on the priority of use of the House's resources. Lastly, as a report from the committee was not submitted to the House, the Speaker concluded that he could not intervene further in this question of privilege.

On February 19, 2021, **Rob Moore** (Fundy Royal) rose on a question of privilege to allege that the contents of Bill C-22, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, were disclosed prior to its introduction in the House. According to Mr. Moore, CBC/Radio-Canada had published an article online regarding details of the bill before it was introduced in the House. The Speaker ruled on March 9, 2021 and found that grounds were not sufficiently compelling in the case at hand, and therefore the question of privilege had not been made out.

Points of Order – Use of Masks

With more Members wearing masks during proceedings, it has led to a number of questions in the House. For example, questions have been raised of whether masks with messaging on them are considered props. The matter was first raised on January 25, 2021, through a point of order by **Chris Bittle** (St. Catharines), comparing the masks being worn by some Members at the time to buttons or stickers, which are forbidden. The Assistant Deputy Speaker **Carol Hugues** (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking), requested that masks with sayings on them not be used in the House because they are props. The matter was

raised again on January 27, 2021, by Mr. Gerretsen on a point of order, indicating that certain Members were still wearing masks with logos. Some members rose to argue that the House's practice on the use of props has been variable in the past. The Speaker delivered his ruling on February 2, 2021, reiterating that the use of props to illustrate a point has always been contrary to the rules and practices of the House. Thus, masks should be plain and neutral, and should not be used to deliver a message or express an opinion. The Speaker asked the members to take this ruling into account in their choice of masks to wear in the House.

On February 25, 2021, **Andréanne Larouche** (Shefford) rose on a point of order to signal that there were problems with simultaneous interpretation because the interpreter was having difficulties hearing **Marie-France Lalonde's** (Orléans) remarks due to the thickness of her mask. The Deputy Speaker **Bruce Stanton** (Simcoe-Nord), informed Ms. Lalonde of the issue and suggested she may wish to speak without a mask. **Claude DeBellefeuille** (Salaberry—Suroît) rose to encourage Ms. Lalonde to instead use one of the surgical masks available at the entrance to each party's lobby. Ms. Lalonde sought and received unanimous consent to change her mask, and the Deputy Speaker informed the House that they would take a short break to allow her to do so. On March 8, 2021, Ms. DeBellefeuille rose on a question of privilege following the above point of order, asking the Speaker to rule on the appropriate balance between the use of masks and the right to interpretation services. The Speaker delivered his ruling on March 11, 2021, stating that an agreement among parties had been reached. Members who want to wear a mask during their interventions in the House and in committee will have to use surgical masks, which would be made available in the lobbies. At any other time, members may wear any mask they prefer.

Point of order – Rule of anticipation

Following the vote at Second Reading of Bill C-218, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sports betting)*, and its referral to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on February 17, 2021, Mr. Gerretsen rose on a point of order and requested unanimous consent for Bill C-13, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (single event sport betting)*, to be discharged and withdrawn from the Order Paper as the bills have similar aims, and in the interest of moving forward with legislation efficiently, the government would focus its energy on supporting Bill C-218. Unanimous consent was denied.

On February 18, 2021, Mr. Gerretsen rose on a point of order and requested that the Speaker rule on the impact the second-reading vote on Bill C-218 has on Bill C-13 and the similarity between the two bills. The Speaker delivered his ruling later that day, stating that Bill C-13 may not be proceeded with. He explained that both bills seek to amend the same paragraph in the *Criminal Code* as it pertains to sports betting, with C-218 proposing to repeal paragraph 207(4)(b) completely and C-13 amending the paragraph. The Speaker further explained that, by adopting C-218 at Second Reading, the House had approved the principle of the Bill and, thus, approved the intention to repeal paragraph 207(4)(b) of the *Criminal Code*. As such, the Speaker expressed the opinion that it would be impossible for Bill C-13 to proceed as it seeks to amend a paragraph that would no longer exist with the adoption of C-218. The Speaker encouraged Members wishing to participate in deliberations related to the provisions of C-218 to do so in committee.

Point of order - Discrepancy between the English and French texts

On March 10, 2021, **Brad Vis** (Mission–Matsqui–Fraser Canyon) rose on a point of order to identify a discrepancy between the English and French texts of Bill C-19, *An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (COVID-19 response)*, at clause 239(2). Mr. Vis asked the Speaker to rule on whether the Bill could stand in its current form, or whether it should be discharged and resubmitted.

The Speaker ruled on March 22, 2021, that the Bill need not be discharged, as its drafting contained an error, but did not meet the threshold for being “incomplete”. The discrepancy was also not substantial enough to affect the general principle of the Bill, which was the subject of the debate at Second Reading. As the government had since clarified that the French version was correct, and since the discrepancy could be corrected during committee stage, the Speaker concluded that debate at Second Reading could continue.

Legislation

A message was received from the Senate informing the House that it had passed Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*, with amendments on February 17, 2021. On March 9, 2021, **Bardish Chagger** (Waterloo) gave notice of the intention to move closure at the next sitting of the House, so that in relation to the consideration of the Senate amendments, debate not be further adjourned.

The motion was moved and adopted on March 11, 2021. The Bill received written declaration and Royal Assent on March 17, 2021.

Committees

During the allotted day of February 4, 2021, **Tracy Gray** (Kelowna—Lake Country), moved an opposition motion to establish a special committee to examine and review all aspects of the Canada–United States economic relationship. The question was put on the motion and it was later agreed to on a deferred recorded division. The Special Committee on the Economic Relationship between Canada and the United States met for the first time on February 23, 2021.

Several committees presented reports throughout the period covered by this article. Notably, the Standing Committee on Finance’s report on Bill C-14, *An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 30, 2020 and other measures*, and the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs’ final report *Protecting Public Health and Democracy During a Possible Pandemic Election*.

On the supply day of March 25, 2021, the House adopted an opposition motion giving instructions to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics regarding its study on questions of conflicts of interest and lobbying in relation to pandemic spending, and to the Standing Committee on National Defence regarding its study on addressing sexual misconduct issues in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Financial Procedures

On Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at the request of the Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland (University–Rosedale), an Order of the Day was designated for the consideration of a ways and means motion for a budget presentation on Monday, April 19, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. This will be the first budget in over two years (Budget 2019, presented in the House on Tuesday, March 19, 2019).

Other

Two emergency debates were held during the period covered by this article:

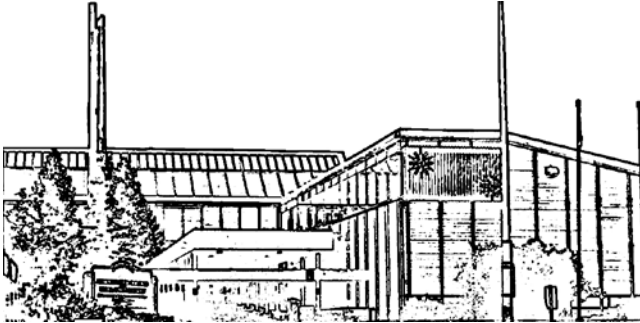
- an emergency debate on the Keystone XL Pipeline on January 25, 2020; and

- an emergency debate on the COVID-19 vaccine on January 26, 2021.

On February 1, 2021, pursuant to Standing Order 51(1), the House debated the Standings Orders and procedure of the House and its committees.

Marielle Hawkes

Table Research Branch



Yukon

2021 Spring Sitting

The 2021 Spring Sitting of the 3rd Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly began on March 4, and ended on March 11. Although 30-day Spring Sittings have become the norm (apart from the 2020 Spring Sitting, shortened due to COVID), given the dissolution of the House on March 12, the Sitting comprised five sitting days.

Bills Introduced

During the 2021 Spring Sitting, the government introduced eight pieces of legislation, three of which were appropriation bills: the second supplementary budget for 2020-21, the main budget for 2021-22 (of almost \$1.8 billion), and an interim supply bill. Of the eight bills, only Bill No. 207, *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*, standing in the name of the Premier and Minister of Finance, **Sandy Silver**, was called for Second Reading. On March 11, the motion for Second Reading of the main budget bill carried, with the recorded division running along party lines.

In addition to appropriation bills, the government introduced bills seeking to amend the *Child Care Act*, the *Family Property and Support Act*, the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*, and the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act*. As well, Bill No. 22, *Workers' Safety*

and *Compensation Act*, which sought to replace the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, modernize the *Workers' Compensation Act*, and combine them into one act, received First Reading.

During the brief Sitting, no new Private Members' Bills were introduced.

Resignation of Deputy Speaker

On the second day of the 2021 Spring Sitting (March 8), Speaker **Nils Clarke** announced that **Don Hutton**, the Member for Mayo Tatchun, had resigned as Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole, and from the Liberal Party caucus, and would sit as an Independent Member. The position of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole remained unfilled for the remainder of the Spring Sitting.

Passages

On March 4, tributes were delivered in memory of **Darius Elias**, the former Member for Vuntut Gwitchin (2006-16), who during his life had championed the preservation of the Porcupine Caribou herd central to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation's traditional way of life. Mr. Elias died in February.

On March 11, a moment of silence was held to mark the passing of former Minister **Archie Lang**, who had served as the Member for Porter Creek Centre from 2002 to 2011, and had held Cabinet portfolios including Highways and Public Works, Community Services, and Energy, Mines and Resources.

General Election

On March 12, 2021, the 34th Legislative Assembly was dissolved by Order of Yukon Commissioner **Angélique Bernard**, at the request of Premier Silver. At the time of dissolution, the standings in the House were: 10 Yukon Liberal Party MLAs, six Yukon Party MLAs, two NDP Members, and one Independent.

Of the 19 MLAs that formed the 34th Legislative Assembly, the majority (17) sought re-election. The NDP's **Liz Hanson**, the Member for Whitehorse Centre – who had served as the Third Party Leader earlier in the 34th Legislative Assembly, and as the Leader of the Opposition in the preceding Assembly – retired from politics. **Don Hutton**, who represented the rural riding of Mayo Tatchun, and ended his time in the Assembly as an Independent Member, did not seek re-election.

In the general election held on April 12 to elect the 19 members of the 35th Legislative Assembly, 14 of 17 incumbents were re-elected.

Premier Silver, the Leader of the Liberal Party, was re-elected for a third successive term as the MLA for the electoral district of Klondike. Yukon Party Leader **Currie Dixon** was elected in Copperbelt North, the riding he had represented during his tenure as an MLA in the 33rd Legislative Assembly (Mr. Dixon who became party leader in May 2020, did not have a seat in the House at the time of dissolution). The Leader of the NDP, **Kate White**, was re-elected in the general election for a third successive term as the MLA for the Whitehorse-area riding of Takhini Kopper-King.

The initial breakdown of the April 12 general election results, by party was:

8 seats – Liberal Party

8 seats – Yukon Party

2 seats – NDP

1 seat – to be determined

The question of who would be the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, a riding that is unique in many respects, was unsettled for a week following the general election as the initial count on election night and subsequent recount three days later both resulted in a tie. The riding has the fewest number of electors in the territory. There are about 29,000 registered voters in Yukon, less than 200 of whom reside in Vuntut Gwitchin. Old Crow, the village in the riding, is a First Nation community located north of the Arctic Circle. It also has the distinction of being Yukon's only fly-in community. This is not the first time that there has been a tie in the riding of Vuntut Gwitchin; in the 1996 territorial general election, there was also a tie between the top two candidates.

While in the past, each of the three major parties has represented Vuntut Gwitchin in the Legislative Assembly, in the April 12, 2021 general election, only the Liberal Party and NDP fielded candidates in the riding. The Liberal candidate was incumbent **Pauline Frost**, Yukon's Minister of Health and Social Services; the NDP candidate was **Annie Blake**. On election night, and in the April 15 Elections Yukon recount (termed the "official addition"), each candidate received 78 votes. Given these results, pursuant to Section 280 of Yukon's *Elections Act*, the returning officer applied for

a judicial recount. The judicial recount took place on April 19, and confirmed the equality of votes between the two candidates. Pursuant to section 300 of the *Elections Act*, the winner was determined by a draw. That section of the act states that in this scenario, "the election shall be decided immediately by the drawing of lots by the returning officer in the presence of the judge and any candidate or agent present at the time."

Ms. Blake was declared elected following the draw.

Linda Kolody

Deputy Clerk, Yukon Legislative Assembly



The Senate

Legislation

On February 16, the Senate passed Bill S-3, *An Act to amend the Offshore Health and Safety Act*, as amended, at third reading. A message was sent to the House of Commons to acquaint that House accordingly.

On February 17, Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*, as amended, was read a third time, and passed (the process used during debate on the bill is described below). On March 11, the Senate was informed by message that the House of Commons had agreed with an amendment, disagreed with some amendments, made amendments to other amendments and proposed an amendment in consequence of the Senate's amendments. On March 17, the Senate adopted a motion in response to the message from the House of Commons, concurring in the amendments made by the House and not insisting on the Senate's amendments to which the House of Commons had disagreed.

On March 16, the Senate passed Bill C-18, *An Act to implement the Agreement on Trade Continuity between Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and*

Northern Ireland, at third reading, without amendment. On March 17, the Senate passed Bill C-24, *An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (additional regular benefits)*, the *Canada Recovery Benefits Act (restriction on eligibility)* and another Act in response to COVID-19, at third reading, without amendment. Later that day, the following bills received Royal Assent by written declaration: Bill C-7, Bill C-18, Bill C-24, and Bill S-1001, *An Act respecting Girl Guides of Canada*.

On March 30, Bill C-26, *An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021*, and Bill C-27, *An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*, were read a third time and passed. The bills received Royal Assent by written declaration later that day.

Chamber and Procedure

On February 8, the Senate adopted three motions. The first allowed senators to speak and vote from a seat other than their assigned place, including a seat located in the Senate galleries; required them to remain seated when speaking from a seat located in the Senate galleries; and allowed them to speak while either seated or standing on the floor. This renewed the provisions of a motion that expired at the end of 2020, and its provisions are in place until June 23, 2021.

The second motion governed the proceedings relating to Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*, at third reading. Debate on the bill was divided into five themes in the following order: (a) mental illness and degenerative illness; (b) safeguards and advance requests; (c) vulnerable and minority groups, healthcare (including palliative care) and access to medical assistance in dying; (d) conscience rights; and (e) review process and coming into force of the act. The motion set a deadline of February 17 for the Senate to decide on the bill at third reading. There were special time limits for speeches during the thematic debates as well as shorter time limits for debate on amendments. If a point of order was raised on amendment, debate could continue on other matters relating to the bill, and the Senate would resume consideration of the amendment – if appropriate – once a ruling was given. After the thematic debates, there was a final general debate on the entire bill, without the possibility of moving amendments.

The third motion allowed certain speeches that could not be delivered on December 17, 2020, to be printed as appendices to the *Debates of the Senate* of that day.

Speaker's Rulings and Statements

On February 16, the Speaker ruled on a point of order raised by Senator **Marc Gold** on February 11, concerning Senator **Marilou McPhedran's** amendment to Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*. The main concern of the point of order was that the amendment did not respect the basic objective of the bill and was therefore fundamentally destructive of its principle. The Speaker agreed that the amendment, if adopted, would undo the basic principle of the bill, namely, to expand access to medical assistance in dying to persons whose death is not reasonably foreseeable, with a system of safeguards and eligibility criteria in place. Since the Senate had already agreed with the basic principle and objectives of the bill by adopting it at second reading, the Speaker ruled the amendment out of order. As a result, the motion in amendment was withdrawn, by order.

Committees

On February 8, the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs tabled its third report, entitled *Subject matter of Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*, and presented its fourth report on Bill C-7, without amendment but with certain observations appended to the report. The fourth report was adopted with leave the same day and the bill was placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading later the same day.

The Committee of Selection presented its fourth and fifth reports on February 8. The fourth report, entitled *Speaker pro tempore by means of a secret ballot*, recommended that for the remainder of the current parliamentary session, the position be filled by means of a secret ballot, using a process established by the Speaker after consulting with the Leader of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition, and the leader or facilitator of any other recognized party or recognized parliamentary group. The fifth report, entitled *Standing Joint Committees*, recommended that those committees be authorized to hold hybrid meetings or meetings entirely by videoconference. The Senate adopted both reports with leave the same day.

On February 16, the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration tabled its fourth report, entitled *Senate Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy*, informing the Senate that it had approved on February 11, 2021, the new *Senate Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy*. The policy comes into force after the appointment of the designated recipient, as defined by the policy, and the repeal of the 2009 *Senate Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace* by the Senate. On March 30, the Senate adopted a motion repealing the *Senate Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace* adopted by the Senate in June 2009, and the 2019 interim process for the handling of harassment complaints currently in effect, upon the appointment of the designated recipient.

On February 16, the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources presented its second report, on Bill S-3, *An Act to amend the Offshore Health and Safety Act*, with amendments and observations. The report was adopted with leave and the bill, as amended, placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading later the same day.

On March 15, the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulation presented its first report, entitled *Rule 12-26 - Expenses incurred by the committee during the First Session of the Forty-second Parliament and other matters*. The report was adopted with leave the same day. On March 16, the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration presented its fifth report, entitled *Senate Budget 2021-22*. The Senate adopted the report the next day.

On March 26, the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance tabled its third report, entitled *The expenditures set out in the Supplementary Estimates (C)*

for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021. On March 30, the Committee of Selection presented its sixth report, entitled *Committee Meeting Schedule*, authorizing all committees to meet by videoconference as the norm until June 23, authorizing meetings during most periods until then, and re-establishing a schedule for committee meetings, with earlier decisions on related to such matters ceasing to have effect. The Senate adopted the report with leave later that day.

On March 30, the Senate adopted a motion authorizing each standing committee to examine and report on issues relating to its respective mandate as set out in the *Rules of the Senate*, and to submit its final report on its study under this order no later than June 23, 2021.

Retiring Senators

Senator **Murray Sinclair** resigned from the Senate on January 31, 2021. He was appointed to the Senate on April 2, 2016, on the advice of Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** and represented the province of Manitoba. From December 2, 2016, onwards he sat as a member of the Independent Senators Group. Prior to joining the Senate, he was a practicing lawyer and served as a judge in Manitoba from 1988 to 2009, the first Aboriginal judge appointed in the province. He served as the Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada from 2009 to 2015. Senator Sinclair served on several committees in his time at the Senate, including as Chair of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators and Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament.

Emily Barrette
Procedural Clerk

One Building, Shared Jurisdiction: Prince Edward Island's Province House

The art of federal-provincial diplomacy is a pervasive and recurring part of Canadian politics and governance. For almost 50 years, Prince Edward Island's Province House has shown how co-operation between levels of government has worked on a small scale. Since 1974, PEI's Assembly building has been jointly managed by Parks Canada and the provincial government in recognition of its importance to Canada's national history. The partnership has permitted Parks Canada to invest in restoring some of the building's features to their appearance at the time of the Charlottetown Conference. In this article, the author explores how the cooperation between these parties is faring during a current multi-year \$91.8 million conservation project.

Will Stos

Since 1847, Province House has served as the seat of Prince Edward Island's Assembly. In 1864, it also achieved national significance as the host site of the Charlottetown Conference which resulted in Confederation. In 1974, Parks Canada entered into a 99-year lease agreement for joint management of the structure to help facilitate a restoration project. The four-year project restored the Confederation Chamber and other rooms in one end of the building to their 1864 state. Joint management allowed the federal and provincial governments to co-operate as they sought to preserve the building's historic elements while maintaining its function for contemporary parliamentarians and Assembly staff.

This unique arrangement has worked well during the initial restoration and subsequent "one-off" projects to fix whatever was broken at the time. However, the current conservation projects dwarves all others before it. The \$91.8-million project has caused significant disruption to daily operations for both Parks Canada's heritage displays and interpretation, and the Legislative Assembly.

All of the Legislative Assembly's operations have been moved into temporary spaces since 2015. The Chamber is now housed in the Coles Building, next door to Province House, and the Speaker's and Clerk's offices have moved to an additional building. A return to Province House is anticipated for 2023.



Will Stos is the Editor of the Canadian Parliamentary Review.



Although Assembly management has learned lessons from past projects, they explained that the scale of this undertaking was unique. “Probably the biggest lesson is that renovations like this take longer than expected,” said Joseph Jeffrey, Clerk at PEI’s Legislative Assembly. “Old buildings hold many surprises. It taught us about patience and business continuity.”

Both parties recognized a deterioration in the building and advocated for a major renovation, Jeffrey adds, noting this took the better part of a decade to achieve. While Parks Canada is funding most of the renovation budget, the provincial government (which officially owns the building) is contributing \$4 million includes investment in the interior of Province House to meet the needs of the Assembly when it returns to Province House.

Although there have been some differences of opinion early on in the process between the partners during the project, most have been minor and usually focussed on the use of space in the building. Jeffrey explains that these differences have been well managed through careful negotiation among both parties. Good communication has been a key factor in keeping everyone informed and troubleshooting emerging problems. Currently, the partners communicate daily via Zoom, Microsoft Office and conference calls.

Jeffrey says the cooperation of both all parties (Parks Canada, provincial government and Legislative Assembly) in the building has benefitted everyone, and the provincial government and Assembly staff have appreciated Parks Canada’s interpretation and conservation expertise.



