

CPA Activities: The Canadian Scene

CPA Regional Conference in Alberta

The annual conference of the Canadian Region of CPA was held in Calgary and Edmonton from July 12 - 17, 1989. It was attended by more than sixty legislators from every Canadian jurisdiction as well as two British MPs, four representatives from the neighbouring state of Montana and the President of CPA **Lawson A. Weekes** from Barbados. The host of the conference was **David Carter**, Speaker of the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

One of the most interesting sessions dealt with the issue of National Parks policy. The guest speakers were **Sandy Davis**, Regional Director of the Canadian Parks Service and **Brian Evans** MLA for Banff-Cochrane. They outlined some of the difficult policy decisions in achieving a balance between development and preservation.

One of the lead-off speakers, **Art Webster** Minister of Tourism of the

Yukon called for "succinct development, carefully controlled". If necessary he preferred to "err on the side of preservation". A colleague from the Yukon, **Bill Brewster**, took a different approach noting that development meant jobs. While agreeing with the need to control access he suggested there was no point in having parks if people could not get into them relatively easily.

The other lead-off speaker, **Ed Clark**, MLA of Prince Edward Island said it was important not to generalize about parks policy since each national park had its own individual history and problems.

Another session dealt with the viability of Energy Megaprojects. The Deputy Minister of the Alberta Department of Energy, **Myron Kanik**, focused on the heavy oil reserves in the Tar Sands. The critical factor in their

development was pricing since it was very expensive to bring these large reserves to market. In general he thought megaprojects of this type were good long term investments and governments should look at them as such and be prepared to share the risks as well as the rewards.

Rod Gardner MLA, Saskatchewan gave two examples of viable energy projects in that province and said it was important to keep in mind the impact of large projects on smaller industries. **Bill Blaikie** of the House of Commons argued that megaprojects be required to meet non economic as well as economic criteria. Projects launched for purely political reasons and without due attention to environmental impact would lead to public skepticism. Finally he suggested the concept of "mega project" be expanded to include such things as expanding passenger rail ser-



The conference began with an opening reception in Calgary (*Alberta Legislative Assembly*)



The business sessions were held at the Carriage House Inn.
(Alberta Legislative Assembly)

vice which would have many of the same effects on the economy as more traditional energy oriented megaprojects.

Another aspect of energy policy was dealt with in a session led by the senior Vice President of Nova Corporation, **Bruce Simpson**. He outlined the present state of natural gas pipelines in Canada and the United States and the prospects for self sufficiency now and in the future. The lead-off Speaker from Newfoundland, **Tom Lush**, contrasted the relatively optimistic picture in natural gas with less encouraging prospects for crude oil, particularly in the Hibernia project off the coast of Newfoundland. New Brunswick Speaker **Frank Branch** suggested it was time to extend the natural gas pipeline to the Maritime provinces.

One session of the conference was devoted to substance abuse. **Stan Nelson**, Chairman of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission said that substance abuse was a social rather than an individual problem. He said governments had a responsibility to act although they should not over-react. He cautioned legislators to avoid quick fix solutions and to refuse to cater to the loudest interest group. Instead he said there was a need for more interprovincial co-operation to assure that citizens of all provinces have access to facilities not available locally. **Ken Black** of Ontario outlined the recommendation of that province's Task Force on Drug

Abuse and Nova Scotia MLA **Marie Dechman** focused on the particular drug related problems in Canadian prisons and among the native population.

Another subject on the agenda was water management. **Alan Hyland**, Chairman of the Alberta Resources Commission and MLA for Cypress pointed out the variety of demands on Alberta and Canadian waters. He concluded it was not possible to have a single water management objective but rather to continually try to resolve conflicts within a multi-use philosophy. **Edward Helwer** of Manitoba noted that his province was particularly vulnerable to water management policies of its neighbours and there was no dispute settlement mechanism between the provinces. **John Mooney** of New

Brunswick said the Atlantic provinces were less concerned with management than with the quality of water and the danger of pollution.

The role of the government in waste management was also considered by the delegates. Guest speaker **Bob Clark**, Chairman of the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation pointed out the background, organization and technology of the new Swan Hill treatment plant. **Jean Joly** of Quebec said that the problem for legislators is that the public has high expectations about the need for effective disposal but is unwilling to change its attitude. Without a different attitude toward waste management little substantive progress can be expected in this area. **Cliff Serwa** of British Columbia said the mismanagement of waste was a growing threat to the global environment and he outlined the recommendations of a recent BC Task Force on Waste Management.

In addition to the business sessions held in Edmonton and Calgary delegates had an opportunity to visit Banff, Lake Louise, Red Deer and to take in some of the festivities associated with the Calgary Stampede. Typical western friendliness and hospitality by the Alberta Speaker and staff made for a successful conference. ■

