



## *CPA Activities: The Canadian Scene*

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### **16<sup>th</sup> Presiding Officers' Conference**

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**A**lthough not officially a CPA activity the Presiding Officers's Conference brings together most of the individuals who head their respective Branches of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

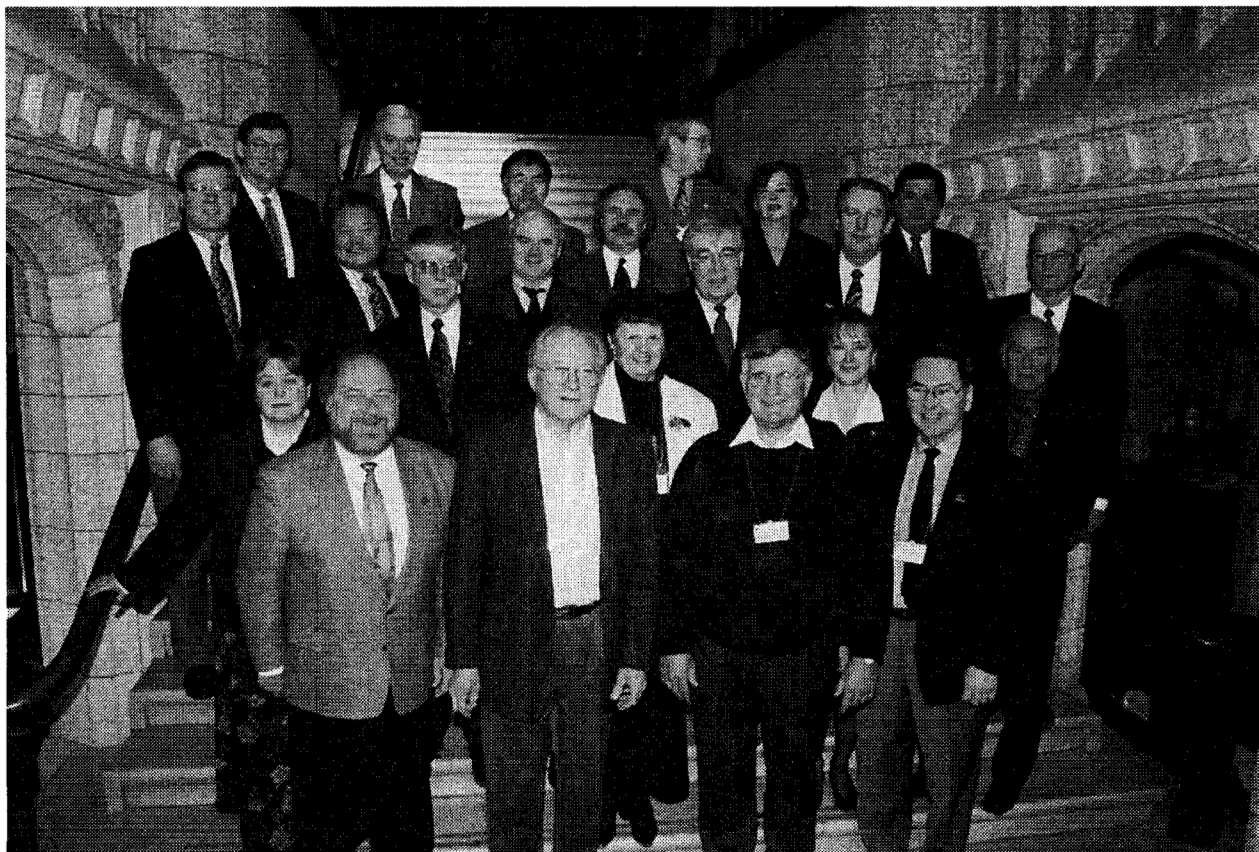
The 16<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Presiding Officers was held in Ottawa from January 7 to 10, 1999. The co-hosts of the meeting were

Speaker **Gildas Molgat** of the Senate and Speaker **Gilbert Parent** of the House of Commons.

Every Canadian jurisdiction was represented by either a Speaker, a Deputy Presiding Officer or a Clerk.

Following a format adopted several years ago a number of business sessions consisted of formal presentations by table officers followed by general discussion. Among the topics dealt with in this way were: "The Role of Parliaments and Parliamen-

tarians in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Governance" presented by **David McNeil** of Alberta, "The Changing Demographics of Parliamentary Assemblies", presented by **Claude DesRosiers** of Ontario, "Ensuring Order and Decorum" presented by **Lori Catalli Sonier** of New Brunswick, "The Casting Vote" presented by **W.H. (Binx) Remnant** and "Agreements to be Ratified by Legislatures: A case study of the Nis-



ga'a Treaty" presented by **Robert Vaive**.

The Conference also included reports from each jurisdiction on procedural issues that arose during the past year. These reports were presented by the following Speakers **Lloyd Snow** (Newfoundland and Labrador), **Sam Gargan** (Northwest Territories), **Jean Pierre Charbonneau** (Quebec) **Ken Kowalski** (Alberta) **Ron Russell** (Nova Scotia), **Chris Stockwell** (Ontario) **Wilbur MacDonald** (Prince Edward Island), **Louise Dacquay** (Manitoba), **Glenn Hagel** (Saskatchewan) and Senator Molgat. Two Deputy Speakers presented reports for their jurisdiction: **Peter Milliken** (House of Commons) and **John Flynn** (New Brunswick). The Yukon report was presented by Deputy Clerk **Missy Follwell** and the British Columbia report was presented by Clerk Assistant **Robert Vaive**.

The last session was an Oxford Union-style debate on the following proposition: BE IT RESOLVED that the televising of debates in legislatures and their committees is a key contributor to the understanding of our parliamentary institutions.

Arguing for the affirmative were **Erda Walsh** of British Columbia and **Kim Trew**, Deputy Chair of Committees in Saskatchewan. For the negative were **Ian McClelland**, Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole in the House of Commons and **Donald Tannas** Deputy Speaker of Alberta.

Presenters were allowed six minutes each for an opening statement and two minutes each for rebuttal. There was also an opportunity for interventions from the floor. Following debate the results were decided based on applause from the audience and the negative was declared the winner.

The meetings demonstrated once again the community of interest shared by presiding officers regardless of which part of the country they came from or their party affiliation.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Presiding Officers will be held in January 2000 in Manitoba.

#### Upcoming Events

The schedule of CPA activities for 1999 includes:

- 38<sup>th</sup> annual Canadian Regional Conference to be held in Quebec City from August 8 to 14, 1999
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Regional Seminar which will be held in Newfoundland in October.

Following practice of the last few years the 1999 Regional Council meeting will be held in Quebec City immediately before the Conference.

At the international level there will also be several activities involving Canadian parliamentarians including:

- CPA Executive Council Meeting in Singapore from May 2-8, 1999.
- 11<sup>th</sup> CPA Seminar in Malta from May 28-June 2, 1999.
- 45<sup>th</sup> CPA Commonwealth Conference will be held in Trinidad & Tobago from September 13-23, 1999.