



Legislative Reports



Ontario

During the second half of the Legislature's Fall sitting, a number of noteworthy pieces of legislation were passed:

- the *Toughest Environmental Penalties Act* which significantly increased fines for environment-related infractions under the *Environmental Protection Act*, the *Pesticides Act* and the *Ontario Water Resources Act*
- the *Labour Relations Amendment Act* which reformed the collective bargaining processes in the industrial, commercial, institutional and residential construction sectors, and provided for a common contract expiry date among all collective agreements in order to prevent a string of consecutive strikes caused by varying, successive expiry dates, as occurred in 1998
- the *Continued Protection for Property Taxpayers Act* which made amendments relating to municipal taxation and property taxes
- the *Social Housing Reform Act*, relating to the funding and transfer of social housing administration from the provincial to the municipal level
- the *Employment Standards Amendment Act* which, among others, made the following changes: employers will be required to post material prepared by the Ministry of Labour that describes the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers; employees may refuse daily and weekly hours of work in excess of eight hours (or the employee's regular day if more than 8 hours) and 48 hours, respectively; revocable agreements in writing are allowed for employees to work further hours up to a maximum of 60 hours per week; employers and employees may agree to average overtime over a period of up to four weeks, and they may also agree that the overtime pay be taken as time off in lieu; parental leave is increased to 35 weeks; provision is made for up to 10 days' emergency leave a year for employees whose employers regularly employ 50 or more employees; the leave could be taken because of personal medical reasons or the death or illness of a child, spouse, same-sex partner and certain other specified relatives; provision is made for a new general anti-reprisal provision to protect employees
- the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act* which will permit the establishment of private post-secondary degree granting institutions
- the *Trillium Gift of Life Act* which revises the organ donation system in Ontario to require hospitals to notify the donor network when a potential organ donation becomes

available, and to ensure specially-trained staff are in hospitals to talk to patients and families about opportunities for organ and tissue donation. The goal of the province is to double the rate of organ donations by 2005

- the *Imitation Firearms Act*, which regulates the transfer or sale of convertible starter pistols, deactivated firearms and imitation firearms

The House also passed private members bills which:

- proclaim an annual Fire-fighter's Memorial Day
- allow owners of vintage automobiles to retain on their vehicles Ontario number plates that were issued during the year of manufacture of the vehicle, are in a condition satisfactory to the Ministry of Transportation and show no numbers that duplicate the number of any other existing permit
- proclaim the month of June as deaf-blind awareness month
- establish a vehicle ignition interlock program to prevent previously convicted impaired drivers from operating motor vehicles without providing a breath sample to an electronic device installed in their vehicles

In mid-November, the Ontario Legislature considered and passed back-to-work legislation relating to the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. After four weeks of missed classes due to rotating strikes and eventually a lock-out of teachers, the legislature was forced

to act to end the work stoppage in order to ensure that the school year for the 40,000 affected students would not be in jeopardy.

While the bill was passed in 2 days, its "fast-tracking" was opposed by one MPP, **Peter Kormos** (ND-Niagara Centre) who withheld his consent to have the bill introduced and dealt with in one day. As he told the House, "I don't support back-to-work legislation. I don't support it under any circumstances." Unable to be in the Chamber continuously, however, consent was obtained during a brief absence and the bill was successfully introduced and debated. The Bill passed the next day and students were back in their classrooms on November 22.

On December 4, the Legislature took the unprecedented step of withholding publication of a portion of its own Hansard record. Such a proscription has never before occurred in Ontario. The reason for it lay in an event that occurred during debate on a motion to allocate time for consideration of a bill concerning correctional services. In his speech to the House, **Doug Galt** (PC/Northumberland) recounted his attendance at a graduation ceremony for young offenders from one of the province's strict discipline facilities, and allegedly communicated the names of one or more of these young offenders from the ceremony's agenda. Eventually the House came to realize the possibility that a contravention of the *Young Offenders Act*, which prohibits such a disclosure, may have occurred. Within hours, Mr. Galt resigned his position as Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The Minister of Correctional Services, **Rob Sampson** (PC/Mississauga Centre) likewise quickly resigned from the Cabinet pending a police investigation of the incident.

To mitigate the dissemination of the remarks in question, the House adopted a motion to withhold their publication in print, electronically or in any other form until police have completed any ensuing investigation. The Hansard transcript, reporter's notes and the videotape record from the television distribution system were sealed under lock and key. The House subsequently passed another motion authorizing the release of these same materials to the relevant police authorities to assist their investigations. As of this writing, the matter remains open and unresolved.

The House expressed its condolence on the death of one of its former Speakers, **Frederick Cass**. Mr. Cass served in the Cabinets of Premiers **Leslie Frost** and **John Robarts**, rising to the senior portfolio of Attorney General. Mr. Cass served as Speaker from 1968 to 1971.

On its last day before Christmas, the House adopted an Address calling for the appointment of **John Hollins** as the new Chief Election Officer for Ontario.

Todd Decker

Clerk of Journals and
Procedural Research
Ontario Legislative Assembly



Manitoba

On November 21, 2000, Manitobans went to the polls to elect new representatives in the constituencies of Tuxedo (formerly held by **Gary Filmon**) and Kirkfield Park (formerly held by **Eric Stefanson**).

The two long time Progressive Conservative seats were retained. **Stuart Murray**, Progressive Conservative Party Leader, was elected in Kirkfield Park and **Heather Stefanson** was elected in Tuxedo. The New Democratic Party presently hold 32 seats, the Progressive Conservatives hold 24 seats and the Liberals hold 1 seat.

The Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Legislature commenced on December 5, 2000 with the presentation of the Throne Speech by Lieutenant Governor **Peter Liba**. Highlights of the Throne Speech included a single hydro rate, tax advantage for ethanol, extended parental leave, new prenatal benefits and school initiatives. The Leader of the Official Opposition, **Stuart Murray**, moved an amendment to the Throne Speech which was defeated, on division. The main motion to the Throne Speech was agreed to, on division, on December 15, 2000.

Five pieces of legislation that received speedy passage during the brief 9 day session. Two of the more significant pieces of legislation passed were:

- Bill (No. 5) – *The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Act*; establishes a scholarship fund for Aboriginal students pursuing post-secondary education. The bill passed, unamended and received Royal Assent on December 15, 2000.
- Bill (No. 2) – *The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act*, conforms Manitoba's employment standards legislation with the federal government's maternity and paternity benefits. This bill passed, with amendments and received Royal Assent on December 15, 2000.

Another significant piece of legislation that was introduced in the House on December 15, 2000 is *The*

Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act. This is the first step in moving Manitoba towards a graduated driver licensing system for novice drivers. Last year, a Graduated Driver Licensing Task Force held meetings across the province hearing representation from all sectors of the public. The Minister responsible indicated further details would be unveiled early in 2001.

On December 6, 2000, Speaker **George Hickes** delivered a privilege ruling that had been raised during the last sitting day of the 1st Session of the 37th Legislature. The matter of privilege, raised by Mr. Praznik (Member for Lac du Bonnet), suggested that the Minister of Labour had deliberately mislead the House in a government press release, issued outside of the Chamber, regarding the number of persons making public presentations to the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations hearing representations on Bill (No. 44) – *The Labour Relations Amendment Act* (2). The motion moved by Mr. Praznik stated that the House found "the Minister of Labour in contempt of this House for purposely providing untrue and improper information about the proceedings in the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations in its consideration of Bill 44, thereby effecting the collective privileges of all members." On December 6, 2000, Speaker Hickes delivered his ruling on whether a *prima facie* case of privilege had been established. The Speaker explained that, in accordance with Beauchesne citation 31.(3), statements made outside the House may not be used as the basis for a question of privilege and further cited Beauchesne citation 31.(1) that a dispute arising between two members as to allegations of fact does not fulfil the conditions of parliamentary privilege. Speaker Hickes ruled that the

evidence did not suggest that a *prima facie* case of privilege had been demonstrated.

The House adjourned on December 15, 2000. A date for the resumption of the session has not been announced.

On November 24, 2000, the Minister of Finance, **Greg Selinger**, announced that an \$8 million special warrant had been approved to provide additional funding for emergency expenditures for the 2000/2001 fiscal year. The additional funding was required due to spring flooding and forest fires this past summer in Manitoba.

Standing Committee activity has been quite low during this quarter. During the 9-day session, two standing committee meetings were held. The Standing Committee on Industrial Relations and the Standing Committee on Law Amendments each met on December 11, 2000 to consider legislation referred. The Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources met on January 22, 2001 to consider the Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the year ended February 29, 2000. This report passed. The Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections met on January 30, 2001 to consider the reports of the Chief Electoral Officer dating as far back as 1988. The reports dating from 1988 to 1994 inclusive, were passed.

The Manitoba Legislative Chamber was used from November 9 to 12, 2000 by the Parlement Franco-Canadien du Nord et de l'Ouest in celebration of the group's 10th anniversary. Approximately 60 students, between the ages of 14 and 25 took part in this event in an effort to teach Canadian political traditions in French and to allow a greater understanding of and to allow participation in political debates. As well, during the Christmas holidays, De-

cember 26 to 30th, as has been the custom for many years, Youth Parliament took place in Manitoba's Legislative Chamber. Youth Parliament provides students with the opportunity for hands on experience of what parliamentary life is all about. Both of these events were a success!

On January 17, 2001, Premier **Gary Doer** made some changes to his cabinet. The number of portfolios was increased by one, increasing the number of cabinet members from 15 to 16. Several ministers were assigned new duties but there were no changes in membership of the existing cabinet. One new face will now appear at the cabinet table. **Scott Smith**, MLA for Brandon West, was appointed Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister Responsible for the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission. The new department established, Advanced Education, will be overseen by **Diane McGifford**. The portfolio of Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, previously held by Ms. McGifford, has been reassigned to **Ron Lemieux**, former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

JoAnn McKerlie-Korol
Clerk Assistant



Senate

As Parliament was dissolved on October 22 for the November 27 general election, this report will

look at the end of the previous Parliament and the start of the new one.

36th Parliament

Among the bills that the Government had identified as important for passage prior to dissolution were Bill C-37, *an Act to amend the Parliament of Canada and the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act*; Bill C-41, *An Act to amend the statute law in relation to veterans' benefits* and Bill C-45 (*Canada Health Care, Early Childhood Development and Other Social Services Funding Bill*). On September 21 the Government introduced a time allocation motion with respect to Bill C-37. Third Reading and Royal Assent occurred that same day. Both C-41 and C-45 were passed just before dissolution on October 19, Bill C-45 having the special distinction of passing all stages in one day.

The Senate met in Committee of the Whole on two occasions, on October 16 in order to receive **George Radwanski** on the matter of his appointment as Privacy Commissioner, and on October 19 to consider Bill C-45 (*Canada Health Care, early Childhood Development and Other Social Services Funding Bill*).

Several Standing Committees were active during the last few months of the 36th Parliament. The Special Committee on Illegal Drugs held its first public meeting on October 19, a day-long session where experts from four institutions outlined the major issues to be considered. This committee meeting was also the first to be broadcast live over the Senate website, an innovation approved by the Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, on a trial basis, to allow internet users to listen to Senate and committee proceedings live.

The Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee also maintained a busy schedule with hearings on Bill

C-16, *An Act respecting Canadian Citizenship* that would replace the existing *Citizenship Act*.

The Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources studied the controversial issue of using the proposed landfill site at the Adams Mine in Timiskaming District of Northern Ontario for garbage from Toronto. The Committee recommended that the Senate support the petition from a coalition of interested parties to the Minister of the Environment for a full environmental assessment. The Committee's report was adopted by the Senate on October 17, a few days before the City of Toronto abandoned its plans for using the landfill site at the Adams Mine.

The disclosure by committee members of the existence of any private financial interests when dealing with an order of reference was the subject of the *tenth report of the Committee on Privileges, Standing Rules and Orders*. This report sets out a procedure to ensure transparency as a paramount principle. Where a committee considers that it would be in the public interest in respect of its consideration of an order of reference, the committee may order its members to disclose the existence of their private financial interests, whether held directly or indirectly, in respect of the matter. The committee will establish a time frame for the disclosure for present and future members. A member may comply with this order by filing with the committee clerk a declaration or update that discloses the source and nature, but not the value, of the member's private financial interests. A member who does not file a declaration within the required time is deemed to declare no private financial interest. The committee clerk shall make these declarations available for public consultation during business hours.

This report was adopted on October 19.

Speaker's Rulings

There were three Speaker's Rulings, all concerning matters relating to the *eighth report of the Standing Committee on Privileges, Standing Rules and Orders* that recommended the establishment of two new committees, one on defence and security and the other on human rights. On September 19 the Speaker ruled on a matter that had been raised in June, just before the summer adjournment. Senator **Doug Roche** (Alberta) proposed that the report be amended to make two additional changes to the *Rules of the Senate*. The first would authorize the Committee of Selection to recommend the nomination of two more senators to any standing committee over and above what is currently allowed in the rules. The second would permit senators to apply to sit on any standing committee by application either to their whip or directly to the Committee of Selection. Senator **Noel Kinsella**, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, raised a point of order challenging the procedural acceptability of this amendment. He expressed the view that it was inadmissible because it was incongruent with the content of the eighth report and beyond its scope. In making his ruling, Mr. Speaker referred to the *eleventh report of the Committee on Privileges, Standing Rules and Orders* that was presented in the previous session on June 2, 1999. The scope of that report included the addition of two new committees, the possible addition of members to all standing committees as well as new rules on the variable size of all standing committees. However, he pointed out that unlike the eleventh report, the eighth report was very limited in its subject

matter. It sought only the creation of two new committees and nothing else. Thus, the Speaker concluded the proposed amendment is really a new question and should be treated as a separate motion. He ruled that it was not in order.

On October 19 during the debate, Senator Kinsella, proposed an amendment to the report, the first part deleting the reference to the committee on defence and security and the second part dealing with the committee on human rights. In the latter case the word "generally" would be replaced by the words "but with particular reference to economic, social and cultural rights". Senator **Jack Austin**, Chair of the Committee on Privileges, Standing Rules and Orders, raised a point of order noting that reports of committees may be returned to committee for further study but they could not be amended. Senator **Dan Hays**, Deputy Leader of the Government, made a similar point, referring to a citation from Beauchesne that "A report from a committee may not be amended in a substantive manner by the House; it must be referred back to the committee...". Senator Kinsella countered that his amendment relating to the human rights committee was not a substantive amendment. In making his ruling, Mr. Speaker noted that the Senate refers to authorities when its practices are not clear, but essentially its practices supercede the authorities. He also noted that Beauchesne says that a report from a committee may not be amended in a substantive manner by the House, but it also states that a report may be adopted in total or in part. In order to adopt a report in part, it would be necessary to amend it to get to that part. Beauchesne takes a vague stance. Then, he cited three instances where reports had been amended by the Senate, on May 5, 1995; on April 15,

1999 and on April 7, 2000. He ruled that the amendment was in order.

When the Speaker put the question on the amendment to the motion to adopt the eighth report, the Opposition Whip requested that the vote be deferred until 5:30 p.m. on the next sitting day. Senator Austin raised a point of order, explaining that the whip may make the request but the Senate has control of its agenda and is not bound by the request. In making his ruling, Mr. Speaker noted that the word "request" implies that something is being asked for; however, that something may not necessarily be received. For example, Rule 65(3) states that "Upon the request of two Senators before the Senate takes up other business, the Speaker shall call for a standing vote..." In such cases there is a request by two senators and it is never challenged. If two senators rise, then a standing vote is taken. It is automatic. With regard to the request by the whip for a deferred vote, the Speaker noted that in examining the precedents, there is not a single instance where the request of a whip on either side has not been accepted. Thus, he ruled that a request is mandatory.

On October 4 the *ninth report of the Committee on Privileges, Standing Rules and Orders* advised the Senate that the committee had reprinted the *Rules of the Senate*. Since its last printing in 1996, there have been four rule changes. Rule 137 was added on February 19, 1998. Rule 138 was added on June 9, 1998. Rule 1(3) was added on February 9, 1999. Rule 22 was amended on June 27, 2000.

Opening of the 37th Parliament

There were several leadership changes in the Senate. Senator **Dan Hays** (Alberta) was appointed Speaker while Senator **Sharon Car-**

stairs (Manitoba) and Senator **Fernand Robichaud** (New Brunswick) were appointed Leader of the Government and Deputy Leader of the Government respectively. Senator **John Lynch-Staunton** (Quebec) and Senator Kinsella (New Brunswick) continue as Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

On January 30th, Governor General **Adrienne Clarkson** opened the first session of the 37th Parliament by stating that "the vital relationship that exists between Canadian people and Parliament is what we celebrate today through history, custom and symbolism". The Speech from the Throne outlined the Government's plans to create opportunity, encourage innovation, invest in skills and learning, connect Canadians, increase trade and investment, share opportunity, support children and families, ensure good health and quality care, preserve a clean environment, create strong and safe communities, sustain a vibrant Canadian culture, create and share opportunities globally, and celebrate our Canadian citizenship.

There have been several changes in membership. Senator **Raymond Perrault** (British Columbia) who was a parliamentarian for more than 32 years, having been elected to the House of Commons in 1968 and appointed to the Senate in 1973, retired. Senator **Betty Kennedy** (Ontario) and Senator **Raymond Squires** (Newfoundland) who were appointed last year also retired.

Barbara Reynolds
Committee Clerk



New Brunswick

The Third Session of the 54th Legislature adjourned Wednesday, December 20, 2000, to reconvene Tuesday, March 27, 2001. During the 22-day sitting, Members passed 24 public Bills, debated and passed a capital budget and unveiled a plaque officially designating their workplace as a protected historic site.

Priorities outlined in the Throne Speech read November 14 by Lieutenant-Governor **Marilyn Trenholme Counsell** included legislation to establish district education councils, a referendum on video lottery terminals, a one-time payment to remarried surviving spouses of deceased workers, a tort of invasion of privacy, public input respecting a Judicial Remuneration Commission, a new *Income Tax Act*, and a new provincial honour, the *Order of New Brunswick*.

In responding to the Throne Speech, Opposition Leader **Camille Thériault** (Kent-South) noted that the government had talked a lot about sector-specific economic development strategies or regional economic development strategies but had been long on terminology and short on specifics, since the Throne Speech gave little indication of what the government planned to do for the next two or the next ten years.

Subsequent to recommendations of the Select Committee on Education chaired by Riverview MLA

Pat Crossman, Education Minister **Elvy Robichaud** (Tracadie-Sheila) introduced an amendment to the *Education Act* to create 14 autonomous district education councils (DECs) with local decision-making authority. During debate at the second reading stage of the Bill, Ms. Crossman noted that each DEC would have authority over:

- hiring and directing the district superintendent, who in turn would hire all school district staff on behalf of the DEC;
- managing and controlling school property;
- budgeting and expending money;
- retaining a small surplus;
- making policy;
- operating schools;
- flexibility respecting local curriculum;
- placing students in classes, grades, programmes, services and schools as appropriate;
- facilitating community use of schools; and
- developing district education plans.

The *Video Lottery Scheme Referendum Act* introduced by Justice Minister **Bradley Green, Q.C.**, (Fredericton South) allows a one-time binding referendum on the future of VLTs to be held during the next municipal elections. The wording of the referendum question will be determined by regulation.

The *Special Payment to Certain Dependent Spouses of Deceased Workers Act*, introduced by Minister of Training and Employment Development **Norman McFarlane** (Saint John Lancaster), sets up a one-time payment to the surviving spouses of workers whose compensation survivor benefits were discontinued upon remarriage.

Shortly after the introduction of Bill 10, *Privacy Act*, the subject matter was referred to the Standing Committee on Law Amendments. A *Commentary on the Privacy Act*, Department of Justice, December 2000 was later tabled. The proposed Act would make invasion of privacy a tort for which people could bring a legal action.

Additional legislation amends the *Provincial Court Act* to allow public input in determining judges' salaries; a *New Brunswick Income Tax Act* lowers personal income taxes and establishes a tax on taxable income system; an *All-Terrain Vehicle Act* introduces mandatory snowmobile trail permits; *Employment Standards Act* amendments match the level of benefits available to parents taking child care leave as a result of federal changes to the *Employment Insurance Act*, and the *Order of New Brunswick Act* will honour individual New Brunswickers for outstanding achievement.

In introducing the 2001-2002 capital budget, Finance Minister **Norman Betts** (Southwest Miramichi) noted that the \$197.2-million budget, 30% higher than that of the previous year, would protect the health and safety of New Brunswickers by providing clean water, healthy schools, safer buildings, and better roads.

On November 28, **Bernard Richard** (Shediac-Cap-Pelé) rose on a Question of Privilege and claimed that the Minister of Training and Employment Development's failure to provide important information to the House, namely an actuarial study reflecting on spousal benefits, amounted to contempt. The Member claimed the study was directly relevant to the subject matter of a Bill before the House and that it had been requested both by notice of motion and during a meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. The study had not been pro-

vided until the House had begun consideration of the Bill. Speaker **Bev Harrison's** (Hampton-Belleisle) December 1 ruling found that a *prima facie* case of breach of privilege had not been established and that unless there is an Order of the House, there is no Standing Rule or other legal requirement that a Minister of the Crown provide the House in advance with all documentation applicable to a matter under debate or to legislation under consideration.

On December 5, Speaker Harrison tabled the report of Conflict of Interest Commissioner **Stuart G. Stratton, Q.C.**, into allegations by **Elizabeth Weir** (Saint John Harbour) of a possible violation of the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* by Transportation Minister **Margaret-Ann Blaney** (Saint John-Kings). Although there had been sufficient grounds for an investigation, Commissioner Stratton concluded that no breach of the Act had occurred and that the issues raised by the case were ones of perception. He also noted that, while conflict of interest Acts in other jurisdictions encompass both actual and apparent conflicts of interest, the *New Brunswick Act* does not. He reminded Members that the primary objective and purpose for the enactment of the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* was to enhance public confidence in the integrity of government and its office holders by the prohibition of conflicts between the Member's office and powers and the Member's private interest. Thus, Members must always be mindful of their words and actions.

On December 7 the House unanimously passed a motion of Justice Minister Green, seconded by Premier **Bernard Lord** (Moncton East), "THAT this Assembly condemns the *Moncton Times & Transcript* for the editorial cartoon it published in its Thursday, December 7, 2000, edi-

tion" (Motion 36). Minister Green, who is also Government House Leader, maintained that the primary focus of the cartoon was to ridicule and that such an image would not have appeared were it not for the gender of the Minister of Transportation. He stated: "For many years now, observers from all sides of the political debate have observed the unequal participation of women in high public office as a problem that needs to be addressed. It is certain that a number of structural barriers exist which hinder women from full participation in elected office. Those women who are able to overcome these barriers can take special pride in their accomplishment, and I certainly know that they serve as an inspiration to others who might wish to follow them."

During the fall session, the most frequent queries posed during Question Period related to NB Coal, the Courts, the Court Stenographers, and NBPower. Questions and responses were often lengthy leading Speaker Harrison to remark at adjournment: "In wishing everybody the complements of the season, I had a thought that I would provide a Christmas gift for everybody today, ... and that would be *Harrison's First Edition on Concise Questions and Answers*."

On November 29, 2000, the Speaker, the Premier, the Minister responsible for the Culture and Sport Secretariat, and the Minister of Supply and Services unveiled a plaque designating the Legislative Assembly Block, commonly known as *Parliament Square*, as a provincial historic site. As the seat of New Brunswick government, the three buildings and grounds that comprise the square served as a prominent and symbolic place in the province's history:

- the Main Legislative Assembly Building designed by J.C. Dumaresq and built of sandstone in the Second Empire style in 1882;
- the Departmental Building or West Block built of purple sandstone in the Romanesque Revival style in 1888; and
- the Old Education Building, the oldest surviving public building in Fredericton, built in 1816 and enlarged with the addition of a second story in 1869.

As a result of the February 5 by-election, the Progressive Conservatives increased their majority in the House from 44 to 46 seats. Former Madawaska-Restigouche MP **Jean Dubé** was elected to fill the Campbellton vacancy, and **Gaston Moore** was elected for Caraquet. This brings the official standings in the New Brunswick Legislature as of February 6, 2001, to Progressive Conservatives, 46; Liberals, 8; NDP, 1, for a total of 55 seats.

Diane Taylor Myles
Researcher



Saskatchewan

A new Saskatchewan premier was sworn into office on February 8th. **Lorne Calvert**, a former minister in the administration of retiring Premier **Roy Romanow**, assumed the role as a result of capturing the leadership of the New Democratic Party on January 27th. Mr. Calvert won the leadership on

the fourth ballot after a three-month campaign against six other candidates. The vote was extended to all members of the party through the use of preferential mail-in ballots as well as the more customary delegate vote. Mr. Calvert is not currently an elected Member of the Assembly but is expected to seek a seat soon.

One of the first tasks facing Mr. Calvert was the renegotiation of the coalition agreement with the three member Liberal caucus. A new agreement was signed on February 2nd with Liberal leader **Jim Melenchuk** and the Speaker, **Ron Osika**. However the third Liberal MLA, **Jack Hillson**, chose to resign as Mr. Romanow's Minister of Intergovernmental & Aboriginal Affairs and Provincial Secretary to sit as an Independent. Later on February 6th, Mr. Osika resigned as Speaker in order to join Mr. Calvert's cabinet as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Two veteran backbenchers were also added to the cabinet sworn in on February 8th. **Kim Trew**, formerly the Deputy Speaker, takes on the Labour portfolio while **Pat Lorjé** was appointed Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Provincial Secretary. Agriculture Minister **Clay Serby** adds the role of Deputy Premier to his duties. A new Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be elected by secret ballot when the House reconvenes.

The current numbers in the Assembly consist of 28 New Democrats, 26 Saskatchewan Party, 2 Liberals, one Independent and one vacancy. A by-election to fill the constituency of former Deputy Premier **Dwain Lingenfelter**, will take place on February 26th.

Committees

The work of committees has dominated much of the fall legislative agenda. Two committees held pub-

lic hearings while another three committees carried out their meetings in the capital.

The Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children through the Sex Trade undertook an extensive schedule of public hearings around the province last fall and has returned to Regina to begin work on its second report. Their travels were spread over three months and took in venues as far north as La Ronge and Meadow Lake before stops in cities and towns in the central and southern areas. Committee Members, led by Co-chairs **Peter Prebble** and **Arlene Julé**, have put special emphasis on reaching out to First Nations and Metis organizations in addition to local community service providers. The Committee hopes to complete its work later this year.

The Special Committee on Tobacco Control, chaired by **Myron Kowalsky**, presented its first report last May, leaving the issues of tobacco use in restaurants, bars, casinos and bingo halls outstanding. Further public hearings were held last fall to receive input from the hospitality industry on areas affecting their businesses. The Committee's final report was released on February 8th.

The Special Committee on Rules and Procedures is the third committee contemplating travel. Its current priority is the reform of the Assembly's committee structure and Private Members' business. Committee Members plan to review the practices of other Canadian, New Zealand and Australian jurisdictions, which might serve as models for reform in Saskatchewan.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts, chaired by **Ken Krawetz**, devoted its fall hearings to considering a process for the appointment of a new Provincial Auditor and other changes to *The Provincial Auditor's Act*. Its recom-

mendations in this regard will be presented in its next report to the Assembly later this spring. The Committee has now turned its attention to its regular review of the Provincial Auditor's Reports.

Finally, the Special Committee on Regulations has resumed its review of the regulations and bylaws of professional associations under the chairmanship of **Don Toth**. Changes to the way in which issues are presented and documented have simplified the committee's procedures. This in turn has enabled the material to be reviewed in a more effective and efficient manner.

New Clerk Assistant

For the first time in nearly 20 years, a new Committee Clerk/Table Officer position has been created. **Viktor Kaczkowski** has been appointed Clerk Assistant and assumed his duties on November 13, 2000. Mr. Kaczkowski joins the Saskatchewan Table after eight years at the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

Margaret A. Woods
Clerk Assistant



Northwest Territories

The Third Session of the Fourteenth Legislative Assembly reconvened on October 31st, 2000. On November 3rd, **Jane Groenewegen**, Minister of Health and Social Services, introduced Motion 9-14(3): Legislative Assembly's Declaration

on Family Violence. The Motion resolved:

That the Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly declare their intent to address the issue of family violence through their personal commitments to help stop family violence through their own actions and leadership; and further support a collective commitment of the 14th Legislative Assembly to work in partnership with communities and their leaders to help "lift the silence" surrounding family violence and create caring supports for people experiencing violence; and furthermore the 14th Legislative Assembly invites all northern leaders, including leaders of aboriginal governments and organizations, municipal governments, trade unions, boards, agencies and societies, to adopt the principle of zero tolerance of family violence in spirit and in practice.

The Motion was carried unanimously.

During this sitting, ten Bills received Royal Assent. In addition, Bill 13, *Hotel Room Tax Act*, received Second Reading and has been referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development. The Bill would establish a tax on the price of accommodation at hotels, motels, lodges and other such establishments. It would set out a procedure to register operators to collect the tax. The Bill would also set out enforcement provisions to ensure the tax is paid, collected and remitted in accordance with the Act and the regulations. Public consultations are currently underway.

The Legislative Assembly also struck two Special Committees before the House was recessed on November 16th.

The Special Committee to Review the *Official Languages Act* is chaired

by **Steve Nitah**, MLA for Tu Nedhe. The Committee will conduct a mandatory 10-year review of the *Official Languages Act*, including an examination of the administration and implementation of the Act, the effectiveness of its provisions and the achievement of the objectives stated in its preamble. The Committee is empowered to make recommendations for changes to the Act.

The Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause, is co-chaired by **Sandy Lee**, MLA for Range Lake and **Jim Antoine**, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. The Committee was created to consider matters under its authority that are impacted by the implementation of self-government in the areas of legislation, programs, services and finances and to provide advice and direction to the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Committee must also examine the Sunset Clause, which in Section 2 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* provides that upon dissolution of the 14th Legislative Assembly the current electoral

boundaries cease to exist. It is important that the Legislative Assembly give consideration on the impact this section would have for the future of public government in the Northwest Territories and upon the implementation of self-government.

Also during the Session, **Anthony (Tony) Whitford**, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly unveiled his new Speaker's robe. In the Northwest Territories, Speaker's have traditionally worn robes that represent the region and the culture of his/her origin. It is the desire of our current Speaker to wear a robe that captures the cultural mosaic that makes up the Northwest Territories. His robe reflects the wonderful diversity of people who live "North of Sixty". Speaker Whitford stated that "the ceremonial robe lends authority and cultural relevance to my position as Speaker. I am pleased to support the Northwest Territories tradition of wearing a robe that truly reflects our many cultures." The Clerks at the table also have new northern jackets



**Hon. Anthony (Tony)
Whitford**

that mirror the style of the Speakers robe.

On January 17th Premier **Stephen Kakfwi** made a territorial wide address. His speech marked the first anniversary of his election as Premier. Premier Kakfwi promised that the Government of the Northwest Territories will guarantee employment to every NWT graduate from a recognized nursing or teaching program. "We will aggressively recruit and retain individuals in competitive job categories, so that from within our own ranks, we can meet the shortage of these professionals," said Mr. Kakfwi. He also forecasted that by the end of March, the GNWT would be in a position to extend the same guarantee to other priority occupations. This was one of the many initiatives the Premier said his government will pursue to achieve its vision of a proud and independent "have territory" in Canada's north.

The Premier also renewed his government's commitment to conclude Aboriginal rights negotiations and announced that a process will be established to look comprehensively at political and constitutional development in the NWT.

The House is scheduled to reconvene the Third Session on February 14th. During this Session the annual budget will be presented for consideration.

New Sergeant-at-Arms

Just prior to the start of Session, on October 19th, the first woman Sergeant-at-Arms for the Northwest Territories was appointed. Ms. **Nicole Latour-Theede** is a Metis woman who was born in Yellowknife and raised in a number of northern communities. As the first female Sergeant-at-Arms in the Northwest Territories, Ms. Latour-Theede was excited to accept the opportunity and expressed enthusi-



Nicole Latour-Theede

asm in being given the opportunity to introduce a fresh and innovative perspective to her position.

Pamela Colquhoun

Public Affairs and Communications
Advisor

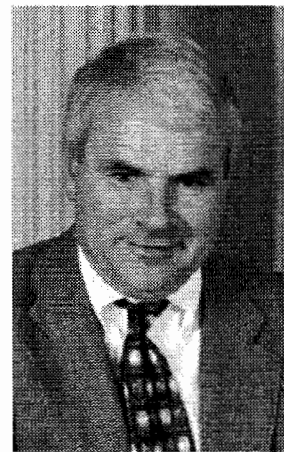


House of Commons

An election was held in every electoral district in Canada on the twenty-seventh day of November, 2000. The election was characterised by low voter turnout. Only 58% of Canadians voted in the election, a decrease of more than 5% from the previous election. The new Parliament includes 47 new Members which is the fewest since 1980. The large Liberal majority has

caused the government benches to take up a bigger section of the opposition side of the House than either the NDP or the Tories. All four opposition parties achieved at least the 12 seats required for official recognition in Parliament.

The First Session of the 37th Parliament began on January 29, 2001. Pursuant to the Standing Orders, the first item of business on the agenda was the election of a Speaker. After five ballots, it was announced that **Peter Milliken** had been elected to the Office of the Speaker. Leaders of all the parties paid tribute to Mr. Milliken and offered their congratulations. Mr. Milliken has expressed interest in working with the House Leaders to improve parliamentary affairs. The following day, the 301 Members were summoned to the Senate for the Speech from the Throne delivered by Governor General **Adrienne Clarkson**.



Hon. Peter Milliken

Procedure

Prime Minister **Jean Chrétien** moved a motion that the Speech from the Throne be taken into consideration; the motion was agreed to. **Paul Macklin**, seconded by **Carole-Marie Allard**, moved the

motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. Questions and comments followed Ms. Allard's maiden speech in the House of Commons, which prompted the Prime Minister to rise on a point of order to state that never before on the day of the Speech from the Throne, have Members questioned one another. During the debate, **Stockwell Day** moved that the debate be now adjourned. Subsequently, **Don Boudria** moved that the House do now adjourn. Both motions were agreed to.

Debate resumed on the motion of Mr. Macklin the following day, which is a day reserved for the speeches of the Leaders of the parties. The Official Opposition was critical of what they called a strong interventionist approach, advocating instead an empowerment approach for individuals, communities, and the whole of civil society. They called for significant tax cuts, a new budget in the spring, parliamentary reform, and an independent ethics commissioner reporting directly to parliament. The Prime Minister replied that the government cannot separate social and economic principles, and that his party has been given a mandate by the Canadian people to build an innovative economy, ensure social inclusion, and to strengthen the voice of a united Canada on the world stage. All opposition parties agreed on the need for a new budget.

On January 30, the Speaker announced the members of the Board of Internal Economy. They are: **Don Boudria** and **Andy Mitchell**, members of the Queen's Privy Council; **Marlene Catterall** and **Jacques Saada**, representatives of the government; **Chuck Strahl** and **John Reynolds**, representatives of the Canadian Alliance; **Stéphane Bergeron**, representative of the Bloc Québécois; **Bill Blaikie**, representa-

tive of the New Democratic Party; and **Peter MacKay**, representative of the Progressive Conservative Party.

The following day, Presiding Officers were appointed on nomination of the Prime Minister. They are: **Bob Kilger**, Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the Whole House; **Réginald Bélair**, Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House; and **Eleni Bakopanos**, Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House. Motions agreed to. Mr. Kilger was subsequently appointed to the Board of Internal Economy.

On January 31, following Question Period, **John Williams** rose on a point of order concerning the use of a Governor General's special warrant providing for operating expenditures during the period of dissolution before the 37th Parliament. In the opinion of the Member, these expenditures were not eligible to be approved by special warrant since there was already an appropriation made by the House last June to cover the operating expenditures for the Departments listed, and the special warrant was therefore a contravention of the law as it currently stands. The Speaker expressed his reservations as to whether the issue was truly a point of order, and invited the Leader of the Government to clarify the situation. The Speaker then closed the debate in saying that this special warrant would be referred to committee for consideration, and that the Member should raise his concerns there.

The Speaker informed the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81(10), a total of eight days would be allotted for the Supply Period ending March 26, 2001.

Other Matters

The Prime Minister announced some minor changes to Cabinet to replace two ministers defeated in the November election. **Robert Thibault** replaces **Bernie Boudreau** as the Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, while **Sharon Carstairs** takes over his role as Senate Leader. **Rey Pagtakhan** was appointed to replace **Raymond Chan** as Secretary of State for the Asia Pacific region.

An Ottawa MP has been named the first woman to hold the post of Chief Government Whip in the House of Commons. **Marlene Catterall** replaces Mr. Kilger who resigned to pursue his interest in the Office of the Speaker.

Bonnie Charron
Procedural Clerk

Table Research Branch
House Proceedings and Parliamentary
Exchanges Directorate



Prince Edward Island

The 2nd Session of the 61st General Assembly of Prince Edward Island's opened on November 23, 2000 with the reading of the Speech from the Throne by Lieutenant Governor **Gilbert R. Clements**. The session adjourned on December 20 after 15 sitting days. During this relatively brief fall session, 26 Government Bills were introduced: 24 having received Royal Assent and two of which remain on the Order

Paper for the spring sitting (anticipated to commence in March). Some of the more significant legislation considered by the House include:

- *The Pharmaceutical Information Act* (Bill #4), which provides for the establishment and regulation of an electronic network linking pharmacies, care providers, hospitals, and other health facilities and making available patient medication records;
- *The Act to Amend the Income Tax Act No. 2* (Bill #6), which separates PEI's income tax regime from that of the Government of Canada;
- *The Child Protection Act* (Bill #14), which is a complete revision of the role and processes of the Department of Health & Social Services as they relate to the protection of children from harm and neglect; and
- *Amendments to the Highway Traffic Act* (Bill #17), which implement a system of graduated drivers' licensing for newly licensed drivers. The Bill also empowers the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulation relating to the use of cell phones while driving.
- Also of significance was the introduction of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Bill #19). The Bill has been referred to a Standing Committee of the House for review. Public hearings will be held during February and March, with a report expected during the spring sitting.

After an interim report during the fall sitting, the Special Committee on the *Elections Act* has continued its deliberations over the winter and will make a final report in the spring. Under consideration is the *Provincial Election Act*. In addition, during the public hearing process

the Committee heard representation calling for the implementation of a system of proportional representation for returning Members to the Legislative Assembly. It is anticipated that the Committee will also be making report on this matter in its report to the House.

Administratively, the Legislative Assembly web-site was expanded just prior to the opening of the session to include the Journal of the Legislative Assembly, daily order papers and transcripts of Oral Question Period. Further modifications to the site are planned including the posting of a "virtual tour" of the Assembly.

A by-election has been called for February 26 in the district of Morell-Fortune Bay, where former Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment, **Kevin MacAdam**, resigned to run in the federal election. After being unsuccessful in the Federal Election, Mr. MacAdam was nominated as the Progressive Conservative candidate for the by-election and is now running against **Larry McGuire** for the Liberal Party and **Lynn Keefe** for the Island New Democrats.

Jill Walsh

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees



When the proceedings adjourned on December 20, 2000, the Members of the Quebec National Assembly had passed

some thirty public bills (one of which was introduced by the Official Opposition House Leader) and four private bills, since the resumption of proceedings October 17, 2000.

On the eve of the Assembly's adjournment, the Government House Leader, claiming the urgency of the situation, moved a motion to suspend certain rules of procedure in order to adopt four bills. Other than the bill on municipal mergers, namely the *Act to reform the municipal territorial organization of the metropolitan regions of Montréal, Québec and the Outaouais*, which was the source of numerous debates in recent months, the three remaining bills included in this motion were the following: *An Act to again amend various legislative provisions respecting municipal affairs*, *An Act respecting La Financière agricole du Québec* and *An Act to amend the Crop Insurance Act*.

Furthermore, a few days prior, with the Opposition in agreement, the Minister of Labour had been forced to introduce a special bill in order to ensure the resumption of normal public transport service in the territory of the Société de transport de la Communauté urbaine de Québec.

The following are among the other bills that were adopted since last November 15:

- the *Act respecting the exercise of the fundamental rights and prerogatives of the Quebec people and of the Quebec State*, which reaffirms the fundamental rights and prerogatives of the Quebec people and the Quebec State. The bill specifies, in particular, that the Quebec people has an alienable right to freely decide the political regime and legal status of Quebec, and that the Quebec people, acting through its own political institutions, shall determine alone the

mode of exercise of that right. In addition, the bill establishes that no other parliament or government may reduce the powers, authority, sovereignty or legitimacy of the National Assembly, or impose constraint on the democratic will of the Quebec people to determine its own future. The bill also states the characteristics and the jurisdiction of the Quebec State in various areas.

- the *Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies and amending the Charter of human rights and freedoms*, establishes a special framework so that women, aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities may have equal access to employment in public bodies. The Human Rights and Rights of Youth Committee will see to the carrying out of the new provisions and will oversee the development of equal access employment programs.
- the *Act to amend the Supplemental Pension Plans Act and other legislative provisions*, which simplifies the legislative framework applicable to supplemental pension plans. Provisions are included in the bill concerning the appropriation by the employer of all or part of the surplus assets of a pension plan to the payment of employer contributions.
- the *Act to amend the Act respecting the conditions of employment and the pension plan of the Members of the National Assembly*, which amends the existing act in order to increase the annual indemnity of the Members of the National Assembly from \$63,317 to \$69,965 as of July 1, 2000. The bill also provides that the annual indemnity is to be increased by 2.5% as of January 1, 2001 and by 2.5% as of January 1, 2002. The annual indemnity will subsequently be increased by a percentage equal to the percentage of increase applicable to the salary scales for the group of posi-

tions of senior executive officers in the public service.

- the *Act to amend the Highway Safety Code and the Automobile Insurance Act*, as regards the establishing of speed limits, particularly in school zones, and the power of municipalities to establish such speed limits. This bill includes amendments concerning the speed limits authorized for outsized vehicles requiring special permits. Furthermore, it clarifies the provisions concerning the number of passengers permitted in a road vehicle. It also specifies, as regards motorcycles, the obligations of the holders of learner's licenses and of the persons who accompany them.

Ministerial Statement

On March 22, 2000, the National Assembly passed a resolution designed to approve, with certain amendments, the recommendations indicated in the report from the committee on the remuneration of judges of the Court of Quebec and of municipal courts in relation to the pension plan and fringe benefits associated with this plan and with the collective insurance plans (*Bisson Report*). This resolution was contested at the Superior Court level by the Quebec Judges Conference.

On December 20, following evaluations made by the Treasury Board indicating that the cost associated with the new pension plan proposed in the *Bisson Report* differed from that which the Board had estimated and included in the answer tabled by the Government before the National Assembly, the Minister of Justice, by means of a ministerial statement, indicated her intention of recommending that the Government take the necessary measures in order to implement in full the second *Bisson Report*. Consequently, upon the resumption of

Assembly proceedings this spring, the Minister should propose amendments to Bill 178, *An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act*.

Appointment

During the same sitting, the motion moved by the Premier to name **Pauline Champoux-Lesage** as Public Protector was carried *nemine contradicente*. Mrs. Champoux-Lesage was appointed for a five-year period, beginning on January 3, 2001. Before being named to this position, she was Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Education.

Exchanges with other Parliaments

Last November 15, the President of the National Assembly, **Jean-Pierre Charbonneau**, and the President of the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan, **Farid Khairullovi Moukhametshin**, signed an information exchange agreement that will enable their respective legislative assemblies to exchange information and experiences for the betterment of their legislative proceedings.

This delegate's visit was the follow-up to a mission to Tatarstan headed by the Member for Portneuf, **Roger Bertrand**, president of the National Assembly delegation for relations with Europe, in February 1999.

Parliamentary Simulations

Each year, during the Christmas holidays, several parliamentary simulations for various age groups are held consecutively at the Parliament Building. They are the following: the Student Parliament, under the sponsorship of the *Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec* (young people from 18 to 25 years of age); the Quebec Youth Par-

liament, (non profit association recognized by the Inspector General of Financial Institutions of Quebec); and finally, the Student Forum, organized in collaboration with the Commission de la capitale nationale du Québec, the Association des politiciens du réseau collégial du Québec, and the Ministère de l'Éducation, with a view to introducing college-level young people to the everyday life and work of Members. The latter activity takes place under the supervision of professors and of members of the Assembly staff.

Since its establishment in 1992, on the occasion of the Bicentennial of the Parliamentary Institutions of Quebec, the Student Forum has now become a tradition. Using as a guide the Standing Orders and other Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly, which are adapted for the duration of the simulation, the participants hold caucus meetings, debate the budget policy proposed by their Minister of Finance, give clause-by-clause consideration to their bills in parliamentary committee, etc. In parallel, certain students learn the fundamentals of the work of parliamentary correspondents while others learn about press officers and their work.

This year, from January 7 to 11, some 140 young people from 25 public and private Quebec colleges participated in the "9th Legislature of the Student Forum", during which they considered and adopted three bills: *An Act respecting the recovery of recyclable material*; *An Act respecting day care benefits granted for children with a disability or who are seriously ill*; and *An Act respecting publicity and sponsorship in high schools and colleges*.

Rulings from the Chair

On November 21, 2000, the Speaker gave a directive on time manage-

ment during Question Period since the beginning of the 36th Legislature. The directive outlined the basic criteria that guide the Chair with regard to the distribution of questions and, incidentally, on the length of questions and answers as well as the rank of questions asked by the independent Members or Government Members.

The main criteria that the Chair observes during Question Period are the following: any Member may ask a question, including Government party Members; Question Period is mainly set aside for the Opposition on the whole; the acknowledgement of a party as a parliamentary group is a principle that must be considered in conjunction with the first two. As regards the distribution of questions, no more than one question per three sittings is usually allotted to the independent Members and a maximum of two questions per three sittings could be allotted to Government party Members.

Concerning the rank of questions, when an independent Member is allowed a main question, it is not before the fourth question that the Chair gives him the floor. When a Government party Member wishes to ask a question, it is not before the fifth question that he is given the right to speak. In the case where the fourth question was granted to an independent Member, it is not before the sixth question that a Government party Member may speak. All other questions are granted to Official Opposition Members. As regards supplementary questions, Standing Order 78 states that it is up to the Chair to determine the number thereof.

The management of time used for questions and answers is the aspect of Question Period for which the Chair exercises the most discretion. In this regard, the Chair may take into consideration the current po-

litical events or the nature of the subject. On the whole, while following certain guidelines, the Chair avoids creating a situation that would be restrictive and thus not representative of the nature of Question Period.

On December 7, 2000, the Speaker rendered a decision regarding a request to rise on a point of privilege or contempt by a Member of the Official Opposition. According to the Member, on December 6, 2000, as she was leaving the Assembly Room after the adjournment of the proceedings of the Assembly, which had just concluded the debate on the report stage of a bill, the Minister of Revenue allegedly contravened the provisions of paragraph 55(10) of the *Act respecting the National Assembly* by threatening her because of the comments she made during this debate. According to the Member, on at least two occasions the Minister threatened her by saying that she would pay for the comments she made during the debate.

The Chair ruled that, owing to the precedents in similar cases, the facts could, at first glance, give rise to a point of privilege or contempt. Despite the fact that the Chair did not witness the event described by the Member, in such a situation, the Chair has no other choice but to accept the word of the Member who raises such a matter, otherwise no question of this nature could at first glance be declared receivable.

Francine Boivin Lamarche
Secretariat of the Assembly
Translated by: **Sylvia Ford**
Secretariat of the Assembly



British Columbia

The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia met for a special sitting on December 7, 2000, in order to bring forward the second Supplementary Estimates in British Columbia's history. The BC Legislature introduced, debated and passed its first Supplementary Estimates at a special sitting on September 17, 2000. The purpose of the first special sitting was to introduce Bill 33, the *Supply Act, 2000-2001 (Supplementary)*, which authorized additional provincial funding for hospitals expenditures and the recruitment and retaining of doctors in rural and small urban communities, and allocated \$70 million in restored Canadian Health and Social Transfer funding to the Ministry of Health. The most recent sitting was called to introduce Bill 34, *Supply Act, 2000-2001 (Supplementary No. 2)*, which authorized additional provincial funding of \$212 million for the Ministry of Health.

These special sittings were called in order to reduce the use of Special Warrants, a goal established in the government's reformed budget planning and estimate debate process and reflected in the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, which came into force on July 6, 2000.

New Deputy Speaker

During the special sitting on December 7, **Dennis Streifel**, MLA, the NDP member for Mission-Kent, was elected Deputy Speaker. He replaces the **Tim Stevenson**, MLA, who became Minister of Employment and Investment in November.

Legislative Committees

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, which, in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, was struck in July 2000 to analyse and make recommendations with respect to the pre-budget consultation paper prepared by the Minister of Finance, deposited its final report with the Clerk of the House on December 27, 2000.

The Committee fulfilled its mandate to consult widely with British Columbians on budgetary and fiscal policy options and priorities for the upcoming provincial budget by publishing a call for submissions and holding 14 public hearings at locations throughout BC during the month of November. Its report surveys the views of 477 participating individuals and organizations on the matters of fiscal policy; provincial deficit and debt; taxation; streamlining and privatization; funding for various sectors, including health, education and training, and the social, environmental and justice sectors; labour relations and employment; and matters relating to the public service, agriculture and food, transportation and highways, arts, heritage and culture, sport and recreation, the resource and business sectors, and local government. In brief, the Committee discerned two broad streams of opinion: one that emphasized the need to enhance BC's competitive position and strengthen the provincial economy through tax cuts,

regulatory streamlining and other measures, and one that emphasized the need for sustained public spending to achieve the Province's social and economic objectives. The *Report on Pre-Budget Consultation in British Columbia* is available on the web site of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

A number of Legislative Committees are continuing with the tasks assigned to them during the Third Session of the Thirty-Sixth Parliament.

The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries met in January and February for the purpose of discussing its final report on a new agri-food policy for British Columbia.

The Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts met in December 2000 with Auditor General **Wayne Strelieff** and Comptroller General **Arn van Iersel** to discuss the Office of the Auditor General's follow-up process, the mandate of the office, and the year-end and supplier payment process.

The Special Committee to Appoint a Child, Youth and Family Advocate, appointed to select, and recommend the appointment of a Child, Youth and Family Advocate, met in January 2001 to hear an overview of the work of the Child, Youth and Family Advocate's Office from the current Advocate, Ms. **Joyce Preston**. The Committee also published an advertisement for the position in fifteen BC newspapers and two national newspapers in late January. The Committee will be accepting applications until February 28, 2001.

The Special Committee on Information Privacy in the Private Sector met in February to hear the results of the focus-group discussions and opinion poll it commissioned from Ipsos-Reid on British Columbians' views of information privacy in pri-

vate sector transactions. Highlights of that research included the findings that 74 percent of respondents were concerned about the issue of information privacy, with financial, medical or health, or "personal" information (age, ethnicity, religion, etc.) being the types of information that respondents thought were most relevant to a discussion of information privacy. The Committee is in the process of drafting its final report.

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Transportation and Highways Minister **Harry Lali**, the NDP MLA for Yale-Lillooet, resigned from cabinet on February 8, 2001, claiming dissatisfaction with the leadership of Premier **Ujjal Dosanjh**. Mr. Lali has confirmed that he will remain a member of the NDP caucus until the dissolution of the Thirty-Sixth Parliament, but will not seek re-

election. A provincial general election must be called by June 28 of this year.

Helmut Giesbrecht, NDP member for Skeena, has replaced Mr. Lali as Minister of Transportation and Highways.

Wynne MacAlpine
Committees Researcher