



CPA Activities: *the Canadian Scene*

Twenty-Fourth Regional Seminar

The Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly was site of the 2001 seminar of the Canadian Region of CPA which took place from October 18 to 21, 2001. The seminar was hosted by Speaker **Myron Kowalsky** and attracted about 50 participants from every Canadian legislature except the Senate and the Northwest Territories.

The first session, chaired by Speaker **Claude Richmond** of British Columbia, dealt with Electoral Systems and Democratic Change. The speakers were **Nick Loenen**, Member of Fair Voting BC and former MLA in British Columbia, Senator **Steve Kelley** of the Minnesota Senate, Speaker **Bev Harrison** of New Brunswick and **Gary Levy**, editor of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*.

The second session was chaired by **Muriel Baillie** of Nova Scotia and dealt with Committee Reform. Among the speakers were **Steve Mahoney** MP, **Jean-Paul Bergeron** of Quebec, **Peter George Dyck** of Manitoba and **Greg Putz**, Deputy Clerk in Saskatchewan.

The third business session was a Roundtable on Issues in Education chaired by **Pierre-Etienne Laporte** of Quebec. It featured Speaker **Mildred Dover** of Prince Edward Island, Speaker **Ken Kowalski** of Alberta, Deputy Speaker **John Weisbeck** of British Columbia, Speaker **Harrison** of New Brunswick and **Bill Murdoch** of Ontario.

The final session dealt with the Power Shift from Elected Representatives to Global Organizations. The chairman was **Graham Addley**, Deputy Speaker of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly and the presenter was **Sarmite Bulte** MP.

In addition to the business sessions there were several opportunities for delegates to experience Saskatchewan hospitality including a visit to Moose Jaw and a tour of that city's historic tunnels.

Inaugural Canadian Parliamentary Seminar November 18-24, 2001

For the first time the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association hosted a seminar bringing together delegates from various Commonwealth branches for a week of discussions around the theme of Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy.

The objective of the seminar is to allow members from diverse backgrounds to exchange information on matters of common interest to their parliamentary profession.

The host of the seminar was **Sue Barnes** MP chair of the Canadian Branch. The seminar was organized by the Canadian Branch of the CPA and financed jointly by the Canadian Branch and the CPA Secretariat in London.

The first session dealt with the Role of the CPA and featured a presentation by retiring Secretary General, **Arthur Donahoe**. The next

session provided delegates with an overview of Canadian Federalism and the Role and Operation of Parliament. The guest speakers were **Paul Bélisle**, Clerk of the Senate and **William Corbett**, Clerk of the House of Commons.

The second day began with a session on Electoral Systems and Relations Between Parliamentarians and their Constituents. The guest speakers were **Bill Blaikie** MP and **Eleni Bakopanos**, MP. This was followed by a session on the Organization, Staffing and Services to Parliament featuring Senator **Lorna Milne** and **Peter Adams** MP. Another session on the work of parliamentary committees completed the second day. The speakers for this session included **Bonnie Brown** MP, **John Williams** MP and **Mauril Bélanger** MP.

The third day began with a session on Human Rights, Parliament and the Courts featuring Senator **Lois Wilson** and **Irwin Cotler** MP. It was followed by a session on Parliament and Civil Society with Senator **Noel Kinsella** and **Jean Augustine** MP.

The fourth day began with a session on Engaging Women in the Political Process with Senator **Sharon Carstairs**, **Sarmite Bulte** and Ms **Barnes** leading the discussion. It was followed by a session on representation in multicultural societies with Senator **Donald Oliver** and **Ovid Jackson** MP. The next session was on Parliament and the Media and featured presentations by Sena-

tor **Joan Fraser**, **John Harvard** MP and **Hugh Winsor**, National Political Columnist with *The Globe and Mail*.

The final day began with a session on Reconciling Party Discipline, Electoral and Personal Conviction. The lead speakers were **John Reynolds** MP and **Monique Guay** MP. The remainder of the time was devoted to topics suggested by delegates and included discussions of health care, aboriginal self governance, Electoral fraud and the African renaissance

In addition to the working sessions, delegates were treated to a number of social events including a dinner hosted by the Speaker of the House of Commons, a tour of Rideau Hall, residence of the Governor General, a visit to the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Civilisation, and a tour of an MP's office in the newly renovated Justice Building.

Delegates to the seminar included:

Australia

New South Wales

Mr. Colin Markham, MP

Hon. Helen Sham-Ho, MLC

Tasmania

Hon. Gillian James, MHA

Bangladesh

Mr. Md. Mozahar Hussain, M.P.

Alhaj Prof. Kazi Golam Morshed, M.P.

Canada

Hon. Janis Johnson, Senator

Hon. Lorna Milne, Senator

Ms. Monique Guay, MP

Mr. Joe McGuire, MP

Nova Scotia

Mrs. Mary Ann McGrath, MLA

Saskatchewan

Mr. D.F. Huyghebaert, MLA

Grenada

Sir Curtis Strachan, Kt., CVO., MP

India

Smt. Jayashree Banerjee, MP

Shri Thomas Hansda, MP

Malaysia

Sarawak

Hon. Fatimah Abdullah, MLA

Hon. Dr. Judson Sakai Tagal, MLA

South Africa

Eastern Cape

Mr. Sam Mazosiwe, MPL

Ms. Anne C. Nash, MPL

United Kingdom and Devolved Assemblies of the United Kingdom

United Kingdom

Mr. Colin Challen, MP

Northern Ireland

Mrs. Joan Carson, MLA

Mrs. Carmel Hanna, MLA

Wales

Ms. Lorraine Barrett, AM

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Secretary General

Mr. Arthur R. Donahoe, QC

The diversity of the participants which included one speaker, several former cabinet minister, some longtime members and several very newly members together with their enthusiasm for the subjects being debated made for a very useful inaugural seminar which may well will become a feature of the CPA agenda in the years to come.

Retirement of Arthur Donahoe

With the beginning of the new year 2002, the term of **Arthur Donahoe**, as Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association comes to an end. The new Secretary General is **Denis Marshsall** of New Zealand.

Before assuming his position as Secretary General in 1991, Arthur Donahoe had established solid credentials as an able parliamentarian. For ten years, he served as Speaker of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to which he had been first elected in 1978. It was during his tenure in the Chair that the Supreme Court defined the scope and nature of parliamentary privilege, post the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, in a case that is familiarly known as the *Donahoe Decision*.

All federal, provincial and territorial legislators can take pride in the significant achievements of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association while Arthur Donahoe was Secretary General. From an impressive organization of 127 member-countries, it now boasts more than 140 including nations like Mozambique that had no previous connection to the Commonwealth. More importantly perhaps, the CPA has undertaken in recent years an ever-larger role in promoting knowledge of parliament and its importance in preserving and sustaining democracy through a series of seminars and exchanges between members. Many Canadian parliamentarians and procedural staff have participated in these programs over the years. These invaluable exchanges and seminars will continue under the new Secretary General but everyone involved in CPA during the last decade will retain fond memories of the Donahoe era.