



CPA Activities: The Canadian Scene

42nd Canadian Regional Conference

The Annual Conference of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will take place in Victoria, British Columbia from July 12-18, 2003. The opening ceremonies will be held in the Legislative Assembly Chamber with business sessions in the Crystal Ballroom of the Fairmont Empress Hotel.

The agenda includes the following business sessions:

- Oxford Style Debate: The Effectiveness of the Private Member
- Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform: A Made-in-BC Consultative Process
- Public Perception of Parliamentarians: The Role of Public Outreach Programs
- The News Media and Parliament: The Role of the Fourth Estate
- Making Parliament Work for Parliamentarians: The Case for Practical Reforms
- Polling: Legitimacy and Impact on the Public Policy Process
- Health Care: Reinventing the Wheel?
- Educating our Children: Measures of Effectiveness and Efficiency

In addition to the business sessions delegates will have a opportunity to participate in many other activities including a tour of the Butchart Gardens, a naval cruise on the HMCS Vancouver, and a reception hosted by the Lieutenant Governor.

New Speaker in Quebec

On June 4, 2003, **Michel Bissonnet** was unanimously elected Speaker of the Quebec National Assembly.

A native of Montreal he studied law at the University of Montreal and was called to the Quebec Bar in 1977. He served as Mayor of the City of Saint Leonard from 1978-1981. First elected to the National Assembly in 1981 representing the riding of Jeanne Mance, he was re-elected in 1985, 1989, 1994, 1998 and in 2003 in the new riding of Jeanne Mance-Viger



President Michel Bissonnet

Mr. Bissonnet has served as Deputy Speaker for a total of nine years under three different Speakers and has held a number of other positions during his twenty-two years in the

National Assembly. For example he has been opposition critic for Communications, Consumer Protection, and Access to Information. He has been a member of several Commissions including Social Affairs, Culture, Transport and the Environment, and the Commission on Institutions.

He has been on the Executive Committee of the Liberal Party of Quebec, Chairman of the Liberal Caucus, and Deputy Whip of the Official Opposition. Mr. Bissonnet is a former Chairman of the Quebec Section of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He was on the organizing Committee for the Conference marking the Bicentenary of Quebec's Parliamentary Institutions in 1992.

Canadian Regional Council Meeting

The Canadian Regional Council of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association consisting of the Chairs of the federal, provincial and territorial branches was scheduled to meet in Ottawa on June 7, 2003 to transact the business of the Association. However, as a result of several provincial elections and other commitments by various Speakers it was decided to postpone the meeting until the conference in Victoria.

The main topic on the agenda will be a report on preparations for the International Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference to be held in Canada in 2004.