



CPA Activities: *The Canadian Scene*

CPA Conference in Victoria

The 42nd Conference of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was held in Victoria, British Columbia from July 12-18, 2003. The Speaker of the BC Legislature, **Claude Richmond**, welcomed the delegates and observers from every Canadian jurisdiction. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of CPA **Bob Speller** MP and the Secretary General, **Denis Marshall** also welcomed delegates to the Conference.

The official opening also featured entertainment from the Victoria Children's Choir and the Lekwungen traditional dancers from the Songhees First Nation led by Elder **Elmer George**.

The first business session focused on prospects for the new Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform. The speakers were **Gordon Gibson** of the Fraser Institute whose study provided the basic structure of the Assembly, **Nick Loenen** co-founder of Fair Voting BC and Professor **Ronald Cheffins** of the University of Victoria. The session was chaired by **John Les** MLA (British Columbia).

In the second session **Ralph Sultan**, MLA (British Columbia) and **Jack Weisgerber** a former MLA offered perspectives on actual and potential reforms to enhance the role of the private member. The session was chaired by **Joy MacPhail** MLA (British Columbia).

The third session, chaired by **Debby Carlson** MLA (Alberta) focused on health care policy and included presentations by Senator **Jane Cordy**, **Rebekah Uqi Williams** MLA (Nunavut), **Susan Brice** MLA (British Columbia) and Dr. **Charlyn Black**, Co-Director, of the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation.

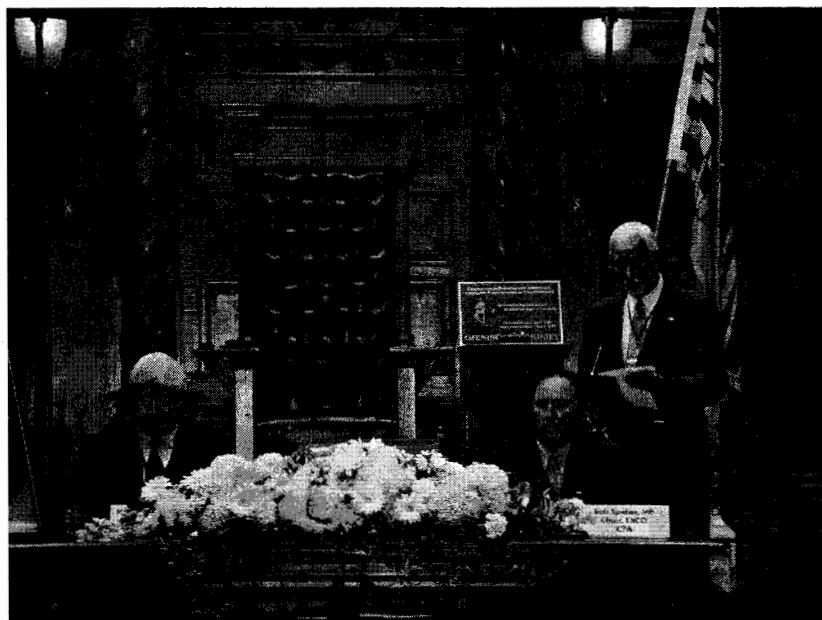
The session on Public Perception of Parliamentarians featured presentations by **Sue Barnes** MP and **Kevin Krueger** MLA (British Columbia). The chair was **Charlotte L'Ecuyer** MNA (Quebec).

A session on Measures of Effectiveness in Educating Our Children was chaired by **Muriel Baillie** MLA (Nova Scotia). The Speakers were

Richard Stewart MLA (British Columbia), **Yvonne Fritz** MLA (Alberta) and **Sandra Kelly**, MHA (Newfoundland and Labrador).

The Speaker of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly, **Bev Harrison**, chaired a session on the Impact of Polling on the Public Policy Process. The Speakers were **Sarmite Bulte** MP, Professor **Norman Ruff** of the University of Victoria and **Ian McKinnon** a public opinion consultant and former President of Decima Research.

Jeff Bray MLA (British Columbia) chaired the session on the Role of the Fourth Estate which featured presentations by two journalists, **Les Leyne** of the *Victoria Colonist*



Speaker Claude Richmond at the opening of the 42nd Regional Conference



The highlight of the social programme was a day sail on the HMCS *Vancouver* a fully operational warship stationed at Esquimaux

and **Mike Smyth** of the *Vancouver* Province.

The final session was devoted to Parliamentary Reform. It was chaired by Speaker **Mildred Dover** of Prince Edward Island and included presentations by **Ben**

Heppner MLA (Saskatchewan) and **Dr. John Weisbeck** (British Columbia).

In addition to the business session an ambitious social programme was organised which included visits to the Butchart Gar-

dens, the Royal British Columbia Museum, and Government House. Delegates were given tours of the HMCS *Vancouver* including the command room, the bridge and the 57mm Anti-Air/Anti Surface gun. They also observed the crew practise a man overboard exercise and a helicopter demonstration of a rescue at sea.

The experience left delegates with an increased admiration for the Canadian military and particularly the men and women of the HMCS *Vancouver* who spared no effort to make this a memorable day for the visiting parliamentarians and observers.

Seminar in Nunavut

Nunavut will host the 2003 Canadian Regional Seminar to be held in Iqaluit from October 16-19, 2003. This is the first CPA Regional activity to be held in Nunavut since the territory was created in 1999.