



# CPA Activities: *The Canadian Scene*

---

## Canadian Regional Council

The Council of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held its annual meeting in Ottawa on June 4, 2005.

The meeting was chaired by Speaker **Harvey Hodder** of Newfoundland and Labrador. Also in attendance were Speakers **Bev Harrison** (New Brunswick), **Murray Scott** (Nova Scotia), **George Hickes** (Manitoba), **Myron Kowalsky** (Saskatchewan), **Ted Staffen** (Yukon), **Michel Bissonnet** (Quebec), **Greg Deighan** (Prince Edward Island), **Alvin Curling** (Ontario) and **Paul Delorey** (Northwest Territories). Two other Speakers participated via teleconference, **Ken Kowalski** (Alberta) and **Claude Richmond** (British Columbia). **Sarmite Bulte** MP, Chair of the Canadian Branch of CPA and **Sue Barnes** MP Canadian Regional Representative also participated as did two Deputy Speakers, **Patterk Netser** (Nunavut) and **Bruce Crozier** (Ontario).

One item considered by the Council was a proposed Amendment to the Rules of the Canadian Region which would add to the Executive Committee a regional representative to the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee. After considerable discussion the amendment was adopted but the decision as to who would be designated to that position and how it would be filled was postponed for further discussion

and consultation with women legislators in various jurisdictions.

The Council also discussed a draft report on the 50th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference that was held in Canada in 2004. The report contained numerous recommendations intended to improve the way future conferences were organised. When finalised the report will be sent to CPA headquarters in London and possibly to other Commonwealth countries in line to host upcoming conferences.

Under other business Speaker Bissonnet drew the attention of Speakers to a submission that Quebec is making to the CRTC asking that cable stations which carry provincial legislative broadcast be required to do so under the same conditions as applies for the broadcast of the House of Commons, which is to say at no charge to the legislature. Several Speakers said they would join Quebec in making this request to the CRTC.

Following the Council meeting a special professional development seminar on the Office of Speaker was organized by the House of Commons. Speaker **Peter Milliken** gave the delegates the benefit of his experience on issues such as decorum, managing the mood of the House, relationship with House leaders and various other topics. Deputy Speaker **Chuck Strahl** gave his view on the special challenges facing new members when they become presiding officers. The Acting Clerk, **Audrey O'Brien** briefed the Speakers on some of the procedures

used for managing the House as well as administrative matters including relations with the press and security questions.

Following the seminar Speaker Milliken hosted a dinner for the delegates at his residence in Kingsmere.

---

## Canadian Regional Conference

The 43rd Canadian Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was held in St. John's from July 19-24, 2005. Some 200 delegates, observers and accompanying persons attended the conference which was hosted by the Speaker of Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly.

At the official opening a number of Canadian Forces Veterans were invited form a Colour Guard for the occasion. Delegates were welcomed by Speaker Hodder and by **Edward Byrne**, **Gerry Reid** and **Jack Harris** on behalf of the government, official opposition and New Democratic Party respectively. Music was provided by H.M.C.S Avalon Band with traditional Newfoundland songs performed by **Miranda MacDonald** and **Peter MacDonald**.

The Conference featured eight business sessions on the following topics.

- Private Members Public Bill -Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act (**Mary Anne Jablonski** MLA Alberta)

- Buying Local Food Products; Can it be Done? ( **John Macdonell** MLA Nova Scotia)
- Challenges Facing Rural Communities: A Newfoundland and Labrador Perspective ( **Roger Fitzgerald** MHA Newfoundland and Labrador)
- A North American Energy Strategy and Newfoundland and Labrador's Oil and Gas Industry ( **Edward Byrne** MHA and Minister of Natural Resources, Newfoundland and Labrador)
- Cyber-democracy at the Quebec National Assembly ( **Charlotte L'Ecuyer** MNA Quebec)
- Tackling Bullying in Canadian Schools ( **Myrna Driedger**, MLA Manitoba)
- Should the Private Sector be involved in the Financing of Public Infrastructure? ( **Ted Arnott** MPP, **Bruce Crozier** MPP and **Elizabeth Witmer** MPP Ontario)
- Smoking in Public Places and the Retail Sale of Tobacco Products ( **Wayne Collins** MLA Prince Edward Island)

Delegates were treated to a number of receptions including one hosted by the Lieutenant Governor, **Edward Roberts** and another at The Rooms, the spectacular new Provincial Museum, Art Gallery and Archives in St. John's.

One entire day was devoted to providing visitors with a taste of Newfoundland history and culture. It began with a visit to the historic village of Brigus including Hawthorne Cottage, home of the Arctic explorer **Bill Bartlett**. The Mayor of Brigus, **John Waller** and local MHA **Tom Hedderson** were instrumental in securing the participation of the Calico Step Dancers, dramatic "Live on the Lawn" readings by **Anita Vitth** and **Jordan Harvey** as well as recitations of Newfoundland stories and poems by **Peter Laracy**.

In the afternoon the group continued to Port de Grave and Bay Roberts where local MHA **Roland**

**Butler** welcomed them to visit the Western Union Museum and Pratt Art Gallery and to attend a "Mussel Boil" compliments of the Town of Bay Roberts. This was followed by a buffet dinner organised by the Lion's Club of Bay Roberts. Entertainment was provided by **Harvey Moulton** and **Craig Pardy** whose show entitled "Life on the Water" consisted of their own songs and music about the fishing industry in Newfoundland. Several hours later the evening ended in St. John's with a "Newfoundland and Labrador Cabaret".

Delegates were unanimous in their praise of Speaker Hodder, the organising committee and staff directed by **John Noel**, Clerk of the House of Assembly, for a conference and hospitality that will be long remembered by all fortunate enough to attend.

### *Ian G. Imrie 1929 to 2005*

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association lost a great friend when Ian Imrie died on June 21, 2005. For 30 years Ian was the heart and soul of CPA in Canada and was well known and respected in Parliaments throughout the Commonwealth. He began his parliamentary career in 1964 as a special advisor to Speaker Alan Macnaughton. At one time or another he was Secretary to all Canadian interparliamentary associations but CPA always had a special place in his heart. Over the years he was instrumental in establishing many initiatives within the Canadian Region including the Regional Seminar and Presiding Officers Meetings. He was a founding member of the Editorial Board of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review* and served on the Board from 1978 until his retirement in December 1995. A short memoir by Ian appears in the summer 1998 issue of the *Review*.

Ian Imrie will be remembered for the humanity, diplomacy and common sense he brought to public administration and for his belief that good international relations begin with personal contact and individual acts of friendship.

*Paul Belisle  
Executive Secretary Treasurer  
Canadian Region, CPA*