

The link between the efforts of newspapermen to achieve freedom of the press and the reporters who transcribe a verbatim account of parliamentary debate is a vital one for the author. It was newspapermen who fought to have the words expressed in parliamentary debate made public and available to all people whom legislators represent; and it was newspapermen who first learned the skills of shorthand and were, therefore, the first parliamentary reporters.

Mr. Ward conveys a warm personal appreciation for the work of all the various "toilers in the vineyard" from the first Chief Reporter to those who presently carry on in the great tradition. His list of Hansard reporters includes outstanding Canadians such as the former prime minister John Thompson and the well-known authority on parliamentary procedure, John George Bourinot, but does not fail to include all the others whose long period of service marks them as a very special group of people. As the special plaque commemorates, they wrote shorthand in the cause of their country during the first one hundred years of *Hansard's* service to the House of Commons. Mr. Ward asks, "Who knows what Hansard has yet to offer the nation?"

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What Have You Done For Me Lately? by
Jeremy Akerman, Lancelot Press, Windsor,
Nova Scotia, 1977, 84p.

Although not a recent work this little book published by a member of the Nova Scotia Legislature deserves to be better known, particularly among parliamentarians. Mr. Akerman claims he wanted to write a brief handbook to explain politics and politicians to the average person but in fact he has done much better. In a few pages he captures with remarkable wit and clarity the joys and frustrations of ordinary parliamentarians. He knows the exasperation of the provincial politician who is stopped

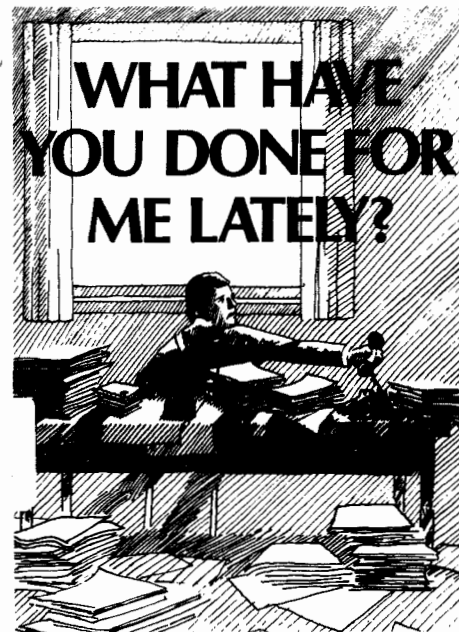
on the street in mid-summer and asked by an angry constituent why he is not in Ottawa. He can sympathize with the federal member who spends hours driving or flying home only to find himself being condemned for actions of a municipal council of which he is not even aware. But, there are also touching moments in politics as when an old age pensioner, with tears in her eyes, offers a crumpled dollar bill to thank her representative for having solved her problem.

Mr. Akerman spends some time discussing his parliamentary colleagues who he divides into several different categories including the "Statesman", a type so rare he has no personal experience with them. Other types are the "Partisan" who is blind to the virtues of anyone but himself and to arguments other than his own; the "Orator" who is able to entertain or devastate according to the occasion; the "Nightwatchman", who can deliver a lengthy speech saying virtually nothing, on any subject under the sun, thus gaining valuable time for his colleagues to gather their material and their wits.

Mr. Akerman has a warm spot for the person holding the office of Speaker. He or she is supposed to be totally objective and impartial but like all humans the Speaker is subject to human frailties. The author illustrates the point by giving two examples of Speakers called upon to cast the deciding vote because of a tie. One Speaker took the traditional approach saying he would vote in favour of a controversial bill introduced by Akerman because that would allow for consideration at a future time. Another Speaker broke a tie in favour of the administration and added "I think the government is doing a fine job!"

The most serious chapter in this book is the one dealing with the question of whether a Member of Parliament should follow the dictates of his conscience or the wishes of his constituents. Akerman clearly favours more scope for the individual member to speak and vote as he pleases rather than as he is expected to by his party or even by his constituents. This is particularly true on moral or what he calls "lifestyle" issues such as abortion.

Like many politicians Mr. Akerman does not have a very high opinion of the press. He shows how mischievous their use of headlines or their tendency to take things out of context can be. What are "crowds" for their favourite is merely an "audience" for the man they dislike. For one candidate there are "masses of people" but for the other only "a handful of party faithful". He gives a personal example of this kind of journalism. After a meeting in Antigonish during the 1970 election campaign the story read "Mr. Akerman, whose expensive imported English tweed suit contrasted sharply with the plain garb of his tiny audience, said the NDP was the party of the little guy." The suit in question, he says, was bought off the peg in a Sydney store for about \$100.



In his concluding chapter Mr. Akerman evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of being a politician. The work is interesting and varied with an opportunity to travel around the province or the country. On the other hand he laments a loss of privacy. The real disappointing element, however, is when those you have helped turn against you. "Some of the people on whose problems the member has spent the most time and effort may be the very people who are working hardest against him in the next election. This is democracy, but it still hurts." The reward in public

life, according to Mr. Akerman, comes from the satisfaction of knowing that one is not sitting helpless on the sidelines but is in there trying to influence those events. "Even greater reward than that is to be found in learning that one's efforts on behalf of a person have been successful, especially when that person acknowledges the help."

The Editor

Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Cabinet Ministers, Document tabled in the House of Commons, May 1, 1980, 11p. and appendices.

On May 1, 1980 Prime Minister Trudeau's guidelines for cabinet ministers were tabled in the House of Commons by Yvon Pinard, the President of the Privy Council. The purpose of such guidelines is to require the divestment of those interests which pose a high probability of creating conflict situations; to disclose interests which have a lesser, but not unknown, potential for conflict but which through disclosure would inhibit a self-serving decision; and to exempt assets for personal use and commonly-held investments which have virtually no abuse potential such as residences, automobiles, household goods and works of art. Also exempt are cash and deposits except foreign currency held for investment purposes, savings bonds, various types of savings plans, and loans to relatives, or non-relatives where the amount is less than \$5000.

Certain activities are completely prohibited, including professional, corporate, commercial, consultant or management positions; directorships or offices in commercial corporations except philanthropic or charitable organizations not receiving federal government funds; and active membership in union or professional associations.

Assets which may be publicly disclosed include interests in family businesses and companies whose stocks are not publicly traded provided they are local, do not contract with the government and do not control shares of public companies; farms; other real property not likely to create a conflict of interest; and interests in trust assets provided

administration is at arm's length. If not disclosed, these assets must be sold or placed in a blind trust.

Unlike the guidelines issued by the Conservative government in 1979, the rules do not directly apply to spouses or dependent children of Ministers. However, Ministers must not transfer their assets to their spouses or dependent children to avoid the guidelines. The guidelines are also applicable to exempt members of the Minister's staff (such as executive assistants, senior policy advisors) as designated by him. Other staff members are subject to the Public Servants Conflict of Interest Guidelines.

The Editor

The Right To Know: Essays on Governmental Publicity and Public Access to Information, Donald Rowat (ed.), Ottawa, Carleton University, Department of Political Science, 1980, 326p.

Thirteen essays by Professor Rowat and his graduate students dealing with various aspects of the freedom of information issue.

Does Canada Need a New Electoral System? by W.P. Irvine, Kingston, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations / Queen's University, 1979, 99p.

The author suggests the Canadian electoral system be modified in the direction of greater proportionality. He proposes a new revised system and examines its likely effects on the Canadian political scene.

Le parlementarisme britannique: Anachronisme ou réalité moderne? Québec, Assemblée nationale du Québec, 1980, 359p.

Documents and debates of a conference on the British Parliamentary System held in October 1978. Among the subjects discussed were the role of the member as legislator, the problem of delegated legislation and parliamentary control of the administration. The documents are reproduced in either English or French depending on the language of the author.

ARTICLES

"Comparing legislatures: the policy role of backbenchers in Ontario and Nova Scotia", by Michael Atkinson, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol 13, (March 1980)

"British representative theories and parliamentary specialisation", by David Judge *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol 32, (Winter, 1980)

"Parliamentary control of the Bank of England", by Michael Moran *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol 33, (Winter, 1980)

"Sondages et consultations populaires", by Maurice Pinard, *Relations*, vol 40, (March, 1980)

"The Canadian general election of 1979", by D.E. Smith, *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol 61, (Winter, 1980)

"Committees in the Ontario Legislature", by Graham White, *The Parliamentarian*, vol 61, (January, 1980)

DOCUMENTS

Ministerial Responsibility for National Security, study prepared for the Macdonald Commission on RCMP activities by J. L.I. J. Edwards, Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services, 1980, 146p.

Parliament and Security Matters, study prepared for the Macdonald Commission on RCMP activities by C.E.S. Franks, Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services, 1980, 88p.

National Security: The Legal Dimensions, study prepared for the Macdonald Commission on RCMP activities by M.L. Friedland, Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services, 1980, 219p.

Report of the Commission to Review Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament and Senators, (Hales Commission) Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services, 1980, 137p.

Report of a Special Study by The Commissioner of Official Language On the House of Commons Administrative Organization, Document tabled in the House of Commons, April 16, 1980, 17p.