



CPA Activities: The Canadian Scene

Thirty-Second Canadian Regional Seminar

The annual seminar of the Canadian Region of CPA took place in Toronto from October 21-24, 2010. The host was Speaker **Steve Peters** of the Ontario Legislative Assembly. A number of other Speakers attended including **George Hickes** (Manitoba), **Roger Fitzgerald** (Newfoundland and Labrador) and **Paul Delorey** (Northwest Territories). A total of 34 delegates and observers attended from every Canadian jurisdiction except Nunavut, Yukon and Québec.

Following the Official Opening the first business session dealt with Backbench Private Members' Bills: A Waste of Time or Not? The presenter was **Cheri DiNovo**, MPP (Ontario). The Chair was **Rick Borotsik**, MLA (Manitoba).

The next session dealt with Climate Change on Prince Edward Island: Impact and Adaptation. The presenter was **Robert Henderson**, MLA (Prince Edward Island) and the Chair was Speaker Fitzgerald.

The focus of the third session was the Alberta Oilsands. The presenters

were three Alberta legislators, **Ray Prins**, **Art Johnston** and **Naresh Bhardwaj**. The chair was Speaker Peters.

The fourth business session was on Regulations: Is there enough Oversight by Parliamentarians. The presenter was **Linda Reid**, MLA (British Columbia). Speaker Delorey was the Chair.

The last session was on Technology in the Legislature: When does it become Distractive? In the absence of the scheduled presenter, **David Zimmer**, MPP (Ontario), who was ill the presentation was made



Delegates to the 32nd Canadian Regional Seminar
Toronto, October 21-24, 2010

(Courtesy of Nokomis O'Brien, Parliamentary Protocol and Public Relations, Legislative Assembly of Ontario)

by **Kosta Chialtas**, Executive Assistant to Mr. Zimmer. The Chair was **Sonny Gallant**, MLA (Prince Edward Island). Speaker Peters also responded to questions regarding Ontario practices relating to the use of electronic media in the legislature.

In addition to the business sessions the delegates were guest of the Ontario Branch for a dinner at the CN Tower. On the final night they attended the Royal Alexandra Theatre for a performance of "Rock of Ages".

Throughout the seminar Speaker Peters, the Clerk of the Assembly, **Deborah Deller**, Seminar Co-ordinator, **Zina Decker** and the entire conference staff made sure everyone had an enjoyable stay in Toronto.

Canadian Parliamentary Seminar

For the eighth year the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association organized a seminar bringing together members from all parts of the Commonwealth to discuss "Strengthening Democracy and the Role of Parliamentarians: Challenges and Solutions."

The host for the seminar was **Russ Hiebert**, MP, Chair of the Canadian Branch. Among the Commonwealth jurisdictions represented were, Seychelles, Swaziland, Zanzibar, Pakistan, South Australia, Wales, New Zealand and Singapore, along with two Canadian provincial branches, New Brunswick and Alberta.

The following topics were on the agenda:

- Role and Operation of the



Delegates to the 8th Canadian Parliamentary Seminar
Ottawa, October 17-23, 2010

(Bernard Thibodeau, House of Commons Photographer)

- Canadian Parliament
 - Audrey O'Brien**, Clerk of the House of Commons
 - Gary O'Brien**, Clerk of the Senate
 - The Commonwealth and the Role of the CPA
 - Russ Hiebert**, MP, Chair Canadian Branch, CPA
 - The Canadian Political Scene
 - Senator **Joan Fraser**
 - Jim Abbott**, MP
 - Youth Engagement
 - Patrick Brown**, MP
 - The Role of Party Caucuses
 - Guy Lauson**, MP
 - Parliamentary Committees: What Works and What Doesn't
 - Senator **Raynell Andreychuk**
 - Joe Preston**, MP
 - How an MP's Office Works
 - Nicole Demers**, MP
 - Bev Shipley**, MP
 - Have the Media Taken Over the Representational Job of Parliamentarians?
 - Senator **Mike Duffy**
 - Role of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians
 - Maria Minna**, MP Chair, CWP Canadian Region
 - Engaging Citizens: Resources and Tools
 - Carolyn Bennett**, MP
 - Connecting with Constituents: Representing Pluralistic Constituencies
 - Derek Lee**, MP
 - Devinder Shory**, MP
 - Parliament and Lobbyists
 - Tim Powers**, Suma Strategies
 - Hon. **Don Boudria**, Senior Counsellor, Hill & Knowlton
- The final day was devoted to topics suggested by the delegates. These included:
- Giving Back to the Community (**Carl Benito**, MLA Alberta);
 - Managing Diversity in a Democratic Political System (**Hawazi Daipi**, MP, Singapore and **Alun Davies**, AM Wales);
 - Leading with your Constituents and How to get Re-elected (**Pam Lynch**, MLA, New Brunswick and **Rachel Sanderson**, MP, South Australia);

Can the Internet Assist in Creating a more Open Government (**Darien Fenton**, MP, New Zealand; Hon. **Marie-Antoinette Rose**, Seychelles, Mr Davies, Ms Sanderson);

Financing Elections – Problems & Solutions (Mr Fenton);

Violence Against Women – How Men Can Lead (**Ian Hunter**, MLC, South Australia);

50/50 Equal Representation in Parties (Hon. **Bhekhe Mkhonta**, Swaziland);

Fixed Date Elections (**Roger Melanson**, MLA, New Brunswick);

Using a Petition – Committees & Other Ways to Give People a Direct Access to the Legislature (**Veronica German**, AM, Wales);

Independent Electoral Commissions: How independent can they be? (Hon. **Mahmoud Thabit Kombo**, Zanzibar, Tanzania);

Strengthening the Public Accounts Committees of Parliaments (**Aftab Shahban Mirani**, MNA, Pakistan);

Women's discussion on Issues & Problems/ Selection & Campaigning (Ms German, Ms Fenton, Ms Lynch, Ms Rose)

In addition to the business sessions participants attended dinners and receptions offered by the Speaker of the House, **Peter Milliken**, the Speaker *Pro Tempore* of the Senate, **Donald Oliver**, the Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, Canadian Branch, Ms Minna and by Mr. Hiebert on behalf of the Canadian Branch of CPA.

Delegates also attended Question Period in the House and Senate and visited the Canadian Museum of Civilisation.

New Speaker in New Brunswick

On October 27, 2010 **Dale Graham** was elected Speaker of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly. He was



Hon. Dale Graham

first elected to the legislature for the Progressive Conservative Party in a Carleton North by-election on June 28, 1993. After redistribution, he was re-elected in the 1995 and 1999 general elections to represent the riding of Carleton.

As a member of the official Opposition, he served on the select committees on land use and the rural environment; and gasoline pricing. He was also on the standing committees on privileges and law amendments. He chaired the Public Accounts Committee. He was the official Opposition whip and the critic for natural resources, mines and energy and supply and services.

On June 21, 1999, he was sworn in as Minister of Supply and Services and as Deputy Premier. He was re-elected June 9, 2003, and became Minister of Supply and Services and Deputy Premier on June 27, 2003. He also served as Acting Minister of Environment and Local Government, Minister of Human Resources, Minister responsible for Service New Brunswick. He was a member of the Board of Management and the Policy and Priorities Committee of Cabinet.

Re-elected in 2006 and 2010, he was the official Opposition critic for intergovernmental affairs. He was a member of the Standing Committees on Crown Corporations and Legislative Officers.

Mr. Graham was born in Woodstock and attended local schools in Centreville. A restaurant and bake shop owner since 1981, Mr. Graham was a school trustee in districts 30 and 13; a member of the steering committee of Centreville "Project Splash"; a director of Carleton-York Community Futures; and vice-president of the Centreville Chamber of Commerce. He is a member and former deacon of the Centreville United Baptist Church.

New Speaker in Nunavut

On November 5, 2010 **Paul Okalik**, Member for Iqaluit West was elected Speaker of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly replacing **James Arreak** who resigned in order to stand for election to the Executive Council of Nunavut.



Hon. Paul Okalik

Mr. Okalik was elected to the 1st Legislative Assembly of Nunavut in the February

1999 general election. He was subsequently re-elected in the general elections of February 2004 and October 2008. He served as Premier of Nunavut from April 1, 1999 to November 19, 2008. During his tenure, Mr. Okalik also served as Minister of Justice. He is currently a member of the Legislative Assembly's Management and Services Board.

During the 1980s, Mr. Okalik worked as Deputy Chief Negotiator and Special Assistant to the President of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, the Inuit organization which negotiated the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA). Mr. Okalik went on to lay the groundwork for the creation of the Inuit Heritage Trust, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, the Nunavut Implementation Training Committee and the Nunavut Social Development Council.

Returning to school during the early 1990s, Mr. Okalik graduated from Carleton University with a degree in political science and Canadian studies. Mr. Okalik completed his law degree at the University of Ottawa in 1997 and was called to the Nunavut Bar on February 12, 1999.

New Secretary General in Québec

On June 10, 2010 the National Assembly unanimously voted in favour of the Premier's motion to appoint **Michel Bonsaint** to the position of Secretary General of the



Michel Bonsaint

National Assembly effective September 21, 2010.

The new Secretary General has a bachelor's degree in law and a master's degree in public law from Laval University. He began his career at the National Assembly in 1989 as legal counsel for the legislative branch. From 1992 to 1998 he was a law and parliamentary procedure adviser. As director of parliamentary procedure and research from June 1998 to May 2006 and director general of parliamentary affairs from September 2003 to April 2005, he sat on the management committee and contributed to setting the direction and objectives of the National Assembly with regard to its mission. The management committee also discussed a variety of administrative issues and files and communicated with managers across the National Assembly. Mr. Bonsaint was the acting director of the committee secretariat from September 2003 to June 2004.

In April 2005, Mr. Bonsaint became the deputy secretary general for parliamentary affairs and procedure. He held this position until he was appointed secretary general. Throughout his career, he has been involved with a number of interparliamentary associations in various roles. He has been a member of the Association of Parliamentary Counsel in Canada since 1992, the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada since 1996 and the Association des secrétaires généraux des Parlements francophones since 2004.

In 2008, he chaired the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada and, since October 1, 2010, he has been the secretary-treasurer of the Association des secrétaires généraux des Parlements francophones. Mr. Bonsaint has also been a member of the Québec Bar since 1989 and a member of the Québec association on constitutional law since 2006.

Mr. Bonsaint has been an instructor at Laval University's Faculty of Law since 2005. He developed the first course at a Québec university to focus exclusively on law and parliamentary procedure. He also edited and co-authored the reference book *La procédure parlementaire du Québec*.

Mr. Bonsaint replaces **François Côté**, who had held the position of secretary general since 2001.