

The Canadian Scene



Hon. Steve Thomson

New British Columbia Speaker

On June 22, Kelowna-Mission MLA **Steve Thomson** was acclaimed as the new Speaker of British Columbia's Legislative Assembly, replacing **Linda Reid**.

A former executive director of the BC Agriculture Council, he also spent time as general manager of the BC Fruit Growers' Association and the BC Milk Producers Association, and was director of the Kelowna Museum, the Okanagan Innovation Fund and the BC Bioenergy Network.

Previously a member of Canada's National Rugby team, Premier **Christy Clark** said she couldn't think of a better choice to set the tone of debate "or a bigger man to enforce the rules."

A former forestry minister, Thomson presided over a brief session which saw the Liberal government defeated on a non-confidence motion. He resigned as Speaker on June 29. As of the time of writing, the position is vacant.



Hon. Perry Trimper

New Newfoundland and Labrador Speaker

Lake Melville MHA **Perry Trimper** was elected Speaker of Newfoundland and Labrador's House of Assembly on August 8, defeating Harbour Grace-Port de Grave MHA **Pam Parsons** in a secret ballot. Trimper replaces **Tom Osborne** who was appointed to cabinet on July 31. Deputy Speaker **Lisa Dempster** was appointed a minister during the same cabinet shuffle.

First elected in 2015, Trimper was born in Nova Scotia and moved to Labrador in 1987. A former Principal Scientist with Stantec, he worked on environmental assessment, research and land-use patterns associated with resource development projects in Labrador and other northern regions around the world.

Trimper was formerly Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, Climate Change, the Government Purchasing Agency, and WorkplaceNL.

A resident of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, he said he believed he is the first Speaker to represent the



Canadian Women Parliamentarians delegates gather around a statute of the Famous Five located on the grounds of the Manitoba legislature in honour of Nellie McClung's accomplishments as a suffragist.

mainland portion of the province and was honoured to share this accomplishment with all of Labrador.

Trimper, who pledged to continue Osborne's efforts to bring more decorum to the House, immediately presided over an unscheduled Question Period requested by the Opposition.

55th CPA Canadian Regional Conference

From July 16-22, 2017, more than 60 parliamentarians and guests gathered in Winnipeg to participate in the 55th Annual CPA Canadian Regional Conference. The city that proudly calls itself the heart of the continent welcomed attendees with characteristic friendliness, and conference organizers presented a thoroughly engaging and interesting program.

Canadian Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Meetings

On July 16-17, 2017, Canadian Women Parliamentarians (CWP) met to discuss the year's recent events and plan a course for the new year. On

July 16, Ontario MPP **Lisa Thompson** was acclaimed as the new vice-chair of the CWP steering committee. Thompson will use the three-year term to observe Saskatchewan MLA **Laura Ross**, the incoming CWP chair, before assuming the role.

Outgoing CWP chair Linda Reid explained that CWP's "challenge is to widen the path – to bring more women with us." Numerous initiatives, including twinning initiatives with Caribbean Commonwealth countries, dedicated funding from CPA International for Canada's CWP outreach projects, and the highly successful Daughters of the Vote (DOTV) event were heralded as some of the ways the organization was meeting that challenge. Ross called the DOTV program "invigorating. It gave us a lot of confidence in the upcoming generation. They are not afraid to ask the tough questions."

Ontario MP **Yasmin Ratansi** reported on the recent International CWP conference where theme was political violence against women. While attending the event Ratansi presented information on gender-based budgeting and was invited to hold a master class on the subject.

Reid stated that she was unsuccessful in her bid to be elected International CWP chair. However, she said that based on what she observed at the meeting and heard from voting members, she was ultimately pleased with the result. Reid explained that some international CWP members don't see Canada, Australia, and other similar Commonwealth countries as "needing" the CWP the way they do. Women politicians in other countries know their very lives can be in danger by standing for election. Reid said that these women truly need these types of positions and CWP Canada should be there to support these women.

During a second day of panel presentations, Guyana MP **Amna Ally** and Turks and Caicos Islands MP **Karen E. Malcolm** spoke about the percentage of women being elected or appointed in their respective countries and noted some recent highlights, including Turks and Caicos women holding all of the country's highest positions, save for that of governor.

Equal Voice's Executive Director **Nancy Peckford** and former MP **Eleni Bakopanos**, vice-president of the Quebec chapter, offered a recap of DOTV event and provided an honest analysis of the many positives (increased awareness, lasting networking connections, broad support from parliamentarians) and some negatives (lack of universality of translation services, online bullying of some delegates) from the event. **Alexa Lewis**, a DOTV delegate, who was present at the conference called the event "one of the first moments where I felt truly Canadian." Equal Voice has received

A Message To My Younger Self

Cathy Rogers
MLA for Moncton South
(New Brunswick)



Years ago you may not have fully grasped the importance of learning and investing in various employment, volunteer, or professional development experiences. Nor may you have known that these personal investments gave you your passion for learning and acting to make a better society.

But at 38, when you left a government career to complete both a Master's and a PhD, while balancing work, single parenting, volunteering, and managing a household, it became more and more clear that women are strong.

I'm glad that you did not succumb to the voices saying, "No, it's too much... too late, or not worth it." As long as you follow your passion, and work hard and smart for the honourable and right causes, then risks are worth taking, and faith and passion will sustain.

A Message To My Younger Self

Daiene Vernile
MPP for Kitchener-Centre (Ontario)



You've won the lottery! You don't realize it yet, but being born in Canada, you'll benefit from an excellent education system and universal healthcare. You live in a country where we strive to protect women's rights and gender equality.

Sure, you were born into an impoverished, immigrant family, but you'll take advantage of all those phenomenal Canadian opportunities.

Your love of politics and history will land you a career anchoring and producing a weekly television current affairs program. There will be few women in your workplace, and at times, you'll have to put up with a lot of chauvinistic nonsense. But, don't be deterred, as great things are in store.

After 30 years of covering Ontario news, an opportunity will come knocking. Don't say, "No." This will be your chance to serve your community. Time to give back.



Some delegates of the 55th Annual CPA Canadian Regional Conference pose on the steps of the Manitoba Legislature during a break from the proceedings.

grants for a legacy project that will keep building and fostering the networks that were created, and another DOTV event is planned for 2020.

In a session on interacting with the media, presenters **Mary Agnes Welch** and **Louise Waldman**, a political reporter and a public relations expert, respectively, offered tips about talking to reporters. They discussed subtle sexism but also noted ways to make gender work for women parliamentarians.

During a final session, **Sandy Mayzell** explained how a previous CWP meeting provided some inspiration for her education project. Titled “Dancing Backwards,” it promotes the study of women politicians in history curriculums in Grades 5-8 across the country. The program creates an archive of stories of women politicians as retold by students in various media.

Session 1 – Heckling and Civility in the Chamber

The first of the conference’s featured sessions examined the role of heckling in the chamber. Panellists, who included Manitoba Speaker **Myrna Driedger**, Ontario Speaker **Dave Levac**, Saskatchewan Speaker **Corey Tochor**, and House of Commons Deputy Speaker **Bruce Stanton**, shared diverse

opinions on the issue. Driedger noted that she had heckled while in Opposition, but serving as Speaker and watching debate from a different vantage point has changed her opinion on the matter. She said that when children see this behaviour from the gallery it looks like adult bullying. Levac suggested humorous heckling has its place in debate, but he won’t tolerate misogyny, bullying, or heckling that drowns out an MPP who has the floor. Levac uses a three strikes policy where he names an offending Member to warn them in advance of taking action. Tochor contended that cracking down on heckling is almost a partisan activity because it would mostly serve to benefit the government. Finally, Stanton suggested that heckling can actually elevate debate by bringing more backbench MPs into debates and making them and ministers up their game. However, he also noted that heckling is different from wilful obstruction. During a Q&A period, Newfoundland and Labrador Speaker **Tom Osborne** noted that during Question Period if he finds opposition MHAs are obstructing Ministers from answering questions through boisterous heckling he will let the clock continue to run. If government MHAs appear to be heckling in an attempt to run out the clock, he will stop time until they settle down in order to give the opposition members the full opportunity to ask questions.

Session 2 – Overcoming Obstacles in Male-dominated Professions

A second session featured a presentation by **Katherine Bueti**. Formerly serving in Canada's military, Bueti is now a criminal defense lawyer at the firm of Bueti Wasyliw Wiebe. She recounted her experiences faces instance of sexual harassment and misogyny at times when relatively few women were involved in these professions. Bueti spoke of the informal support groups women in these professions have created and how change is occurring, but slowly.

Session 3 – Moving Forward on Indigenous Prosperity

The third conference session was structured as a Q&A period with **James Wilson**, Deputy Minister of Manitoba's Department of Growth, Enterprise and Trade, and **Angie Bruce**, Deputy Minister of Manitoba's Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations and Deputy Minister of Municipal Relations. Wilson and Bruce outlined some successful strategies First Nations communities and Indigenous people were using to foster economic growth and security. However, they stressed the complexity and institutional entrenchment of colonialism which puts numerous obstacles in the way, and the difficulty all levels of government have had as they navigate relationships and jurisdictional issues with an exceptionally diverse Indigenous population across the country, and even within provinces.

A Message To My Younger Self

Mireille Jean
MNA for Chicoutimi
(Quebec)

I'm a businesswoman who only recently took the plunge into politics. Still, here are a few lessons that I have learned and would like to share. Don't wait for someone to offer you a spot—take it!

Once you're elected, allow yourself to make mistakes. You will find that people are not as nasty as you have been led to believe. In fact, they're quite friendly and often want to help. In politics, it's important to learn how to take a step back; there is always tomorrow.

As for your reputation, don't worry about it: despite the bad press politicians sometimes get, people always show a lot of respect for those who dare to enter the arena, whether they voted for you or not.



A Message To My Younger Self

Tina Beaudry-Mellor
MLA for Regina University (Saskatchewan)

In her groundbreaking book, *Lean In*, Sheryl Sandberg writes that "it's a jungle gym, not a ladder." Your life and your career is not likely to walk in a straight line from point A to point B. Don't be afraid to take advantage of new opportunities and challenges as they arise, even if they temporarily shift you in a different direction. Stretching out of your comfort zone is something you need to do regularly in order to grow in areas of competency. With each new challenge, focus on mastering the skills and knowledge you need to rise to the occasion. If you do this, you will soon have all the tools to be a strong and competent leader. Remember to surround yourself with people who will inspire you to be better.

Politics can be tough and there will be plenty of times you will struggle. If you surround yourself with the doers, the movers, the shakers and those filled with positive energy, you will have all you need to protect yourself during those times you will struggle with the inevitable haters you will encounter.

Keep moving, always.



Session 4 – Talkin’ Bout My Generation: Millennial Edition

A fourth session explored Canada’s millennial generation as it comes of age politically. **Shannon Sampert**, an associate professor at the University of Winnipeg’s Department of Political Science reviewed recent voting data on millennials. Voter turnout among this demographic is up in recent elections and especially in competitive races or general elections with an uncertain outcome. She noted this generation has great mistrust and cynicism about politics, and while millennials are engaged politically they generally believe governments have let them down. **Adrienne Tessier**, Deputy Premier of Manitoba’s Youth Parliament, suggested that the millennial generation’s worldview was fundamentally shaped by ideas of insecurity relating to the September 11 attacks on the United States, the Great Recession, and the trend towards precarious contract work and the gig economy. **Lisa Cefali**, a partner at the Legacy Bowes executive search group spoke about using the distinct life experiences and skills of intergenerational groups to solve problems. The millennial, or “video game generation,” learned that if they try, they could

reach the next level; but if they failed they could start again until they succeeded. However, they need to understand why they are doing something in order to ‘buy into it’ and become invested. **Dana Oftedal**, the director of Brand Management at Red River Mutual, spoke of the importance of corporate responsibility to members of this generation and how they are willing to switch brands for a good cause – provided that a company demonstrates it believes in the cause. Finally, **Catherine Fournier**, a Parti Québécois MNA who became the youngest woman ever elected to the National Assembly, spoke of this generation seeking to avoid excessive partisanship and wanting to choose ideas à la carte.

Session 5 – Mental Health in Politics: It’s Time To Talk

This session explored burnout in politics, finding good work-life balance, and managing mood disorders and other mental health conditions in public office. **Tara Brousseau-Snyder**, executive director of the Mood Disorder Association of Manitoba, listed symptoms associated with burnout and noted that certain conditions such as bipolar disorder are common among politicians because these people tend to be creative and high-energy. **Royce Koop** of the University of Manitoba’s Department of Political Studies, reviewed information contained in Samara Canada’s exit interviews which indicated a need for strategies to minimize strain on family life, possibly including shorter work weeks, more limited sitting hours, and better availability of childcare options. **Sharon Blady**, a former Manitoba MLA, spoke about her lived experience of being an elected politician with a mood disorder – post-partum depression. Blady said many great leaders have suffered from mood disorders, and “we should not hide this.” She noted these leaders hone the ability to work through a crisis and these skills should be considered assets, not liabilities.

Session 6 – Polling in the Age of Trump: Challenges and Lessons

Christopher Adams, a past pollster who currently works as a political scientist at the University of Manitoba’s St. Paul’s College, noted that polling companies have had some high-profile missed predictions in the past few years. He explained that their current challenge is in identifying an accurate mini-electorate to sample. However, he contended that recent elections have seen pollsters accurately predict the popular vote while being off in terms of seat forecasts.



A Message To My Younger Self

Caroline Simard
MNA for Charlevoix–Côte-de-Beaupré (Québec)

You don’t know it yet, but in 2014 you will be elected for the first time as the Member for a large riding covering more than 13,000 km². You will be named Parliamentary Secretary

to the Premier of Quebec and, a few years later, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism.

Your team will cause you to question yourself sometimes, but you will stay the course by believing in your dreams and showing what you are capable of. Trust in yourself, respect others and take the time to listen — you’ll go far.

Session 7 – How Tweet It Is! The Art of Effective Social Media and Political Communications

Susie Parker of the Sparker Strategy Group, **Steve Lambert** of the Canadian Press, and Newfoundland and Labrador MHA **Bernard Davis** discussed how politicians are increasingly using social media to interact with constituents and disseminate their messages. They noted that as the ‘Wild West’ days of the Internet and social media come to an end, we are likely moving towards a more policed and polite social media landscape. However, when abuse does occur, they recommended maintaining screen grabs for evidence prior to deleting offensive messages or blocking abusive posters. Parker also explained that maintaining a presence on all platforms is not necessary. She recommended a politician chooses one or two, ‘owns it,’ and ensures that staff also using these accounts follow policies to identify and differentiate their posts from your own thoughts and ideas. For example, some politicians use their initials to indicate their own posts while staff posts might include a note such as “From the Office of...”

Session 8 – Adjusting to “Civilian” Life After Politics

The conference’s final session dealt with retirement from political life. Whether a politician’s exit is planned or the result of an electorate’s decision, the transition is difficult for many former politicians who have built an identity around the job. Former Manitoba MLA **Gord Macintosh** advised parliamentarians to take their work seriously, but not to take themselves too seriously. “If you take yourself too seriously, you’re setting yourself up for a fall.” Another former Manitoba MLA **Kerri Irvin-Ross** said one challenge for former parliamentarians returning to private sector work is realizing that they have developed many useful skills in politics, but not knowing how to market themselves to businesses or organizations. **Barbara Bowes**, of the Legacy Bowes Group, outlined eight motivators that people should consider when examining what type of work they are best suited for.

Conference attendees praised the selection of the panel subjects and the quality of panellists. The 2018 CPA Canadian Regional conference will be held in Ottawa.



A Message To My Younger Self

Catherine McKenna
MP for Ottawa Centre
(Ontario)

You will hear from people who don’t think you can win. They will tell you that you aren’t good enough, you aren’t connected enough, and that moms can’t do the job.

Don’t listen. Do things your own way and you will be great.

Some days are harder than others, and it won’t always be easy, but always stick to what you believe in. You are a strong woman and you work hard, so take a deep breath and embrace the challenges you face. Make sure to take time for yourself, your family and friends and everything will be okay.



A Message To My Younger Self

Lorraine Richard
MNA for Duplessis
(Quebec)

After 14 years in politics, one thing is clear: despite the progress women have made in our society, they still face many barriers. Some of them are harder to break down than others.

But the more women there are in politics, the more they can change!

So get in there and seize the opportunity; no one will hand it to you. Make decisions based on your convictions and you will make a difference. Be strong. Above all, be yourself. Staying true to your beliefs will be your greatest asset.

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*As of September 30, 2017

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