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***Parliamentarians and Mental Health:
A Candid Conversation***

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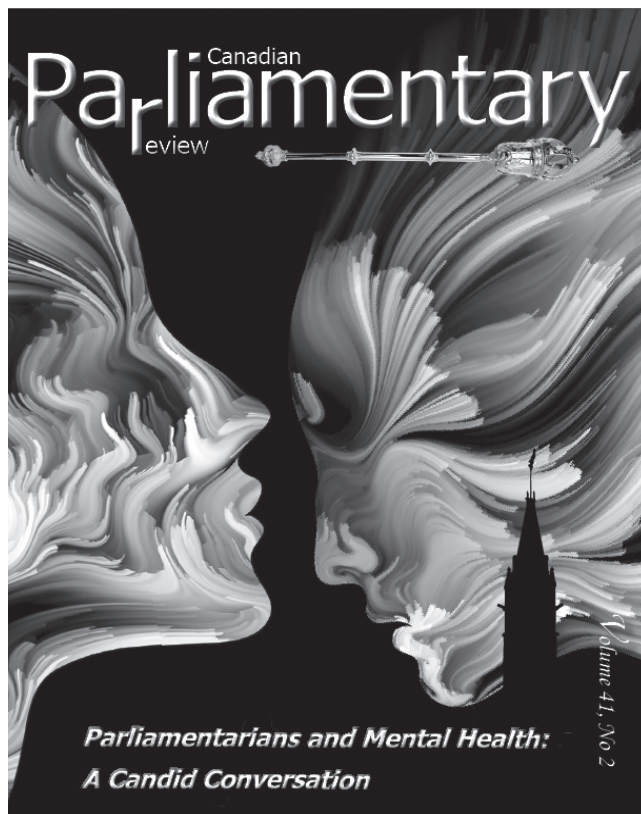
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The Rise of Partisanship and How it Paralyzes Parliaments

Partisanship permits groups of like-minded people who share similar ideas to organize themselves efficiently in politics. It's an accepted and acceptable part of parliamentary democracy. But when hyper-partisanship takes hold in politics it can be detrimental to the way parliamentarians serve their constituents and severely diminish how they see their representatives. In this article, the author reflects on his experiences in Alberta's Assembly and suggests three ways he, his colleagues, and other parliamentarians across the country can reverse the trend towards hyper-partisanship. First, he suggests parliamentarians treat our political adversaries as colleagues, and seek opportunities to get to know them away from the legislature. Second, he urges parliamentarians to seek options for dealing with legislation in a less partisan, more collaborative environment in committee. Finally, he recommends making a conscious effort to elevate the level of debate, discussion, and decorum in each of our respective Legislatures. This article was originally presented to the 39th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Canadian Regional Seminar in Charlottetown, on October 11, 2017.

Richard Starke, MLA

When first elected as an MLA in April 2012 I sat on the government benches. Upon my re-election in 2015, I found myself sitting on the opposition side – one of nine members of a much smaller Progressive Conservative caucus. Within the limited space I have for this article, I won't go into all of the goings on and machinations that have occurred in Alberta politics since then, other than to say it's rather like going to SeaWorld and being forced to sit in the first three rows to watch the Shamu Show.

In approaching the topic of partisanship as an MLA who has sat both in Government and in Opposition, both as a private member and as a Cabinet Minister, I'm able to draw on experiences that offer some differing perspectives on the topic at hand.

But my experience as a parliamentarian extends back many more years, to when I was a teenager and joined what was at that time known as the TUXIS and Older Boys' Parliament of Alberta. This is a model youth parliament that has been operating continuously in Alberta since 1919—parallel organizations exist in



Richard Starke

most other provinces—and I was a member from 1975 through 1981. During my time in parliament I served in a number of Cabinet positions as well as serving as Alternate Leader of the Opposition, Premier, and Speaker of the House.

Richard Starke is MLA for Vermilion-Lloydminster (Alberta) and sits as a Progressive Conservative.

I mention this organization because it was unique in how it approached parliamentary debate. Members were divided into Government and Opposition sides, but every vote in the Parliament was a free vote. There were no political parties, and each member was free to speak their own mind, and conscience, on every issue. We followed Beauchesne's Rules of Order, and we learned a lot about what it took to craft good legislation, how it could be amended to improve it, and how it was important to listen to the views of others, even those that you disagreed with.

Fast forward 30 years to 2012 and I found myself sitting in those same seats in the Legislature in Edmonton. I arrived, as I suspect many newly elected members do, full of idealism and naïveté. In my maiden speech, I told my new colleagues that no one party has a monopoly on all the good ideas, and that it shouldn't matter if it was a Liberal idea, or an NDP idea, or a Wildrose or Progressive Conservative idea, what should matter is that if it was a *good* idea. I remember a hearty round of desk pounding after that, and felt that my 86 colleagues and I were prepared to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

How quickly that all changed.

Let's start with Question Period. There's little doubt that this is the one hour of the Sitting day that gets the most media (and therefore public) attention. In many ways, that's a shame. It's not that the theory of QP is flawed—it should be the time where the Government is held to account, by private members on both sides of the Assembly. In a perfect world, members ask probing, insightful questions, and the Premier and cabinet ministers give clear, thoughtful answers.

That's the theory.

But if your legislature in anything like ours, they call it Question Period and not Answer Period for a reason. There are lots of questions, but precious little substance in the answers that are given. And the fault for this must be shared by both sides of the Chamber. When a question is punctuated with phrases like "culture of corruption" or "the Minister so inept he needs help finding the washroom," it's small wonder that the answer that ensues is equally inflammatory in nature.

The temperature in the Chamber inevitably rises, along with the volume and frequency of heckling. All this while Grade 6 school children, who have come from across the province to watch their representatives

in action, are watching. We have already received a number of letters from the teachers of those students stating that they will never again bring a class to the Legislature, or if they do, they will leave before Question Period. They point out that such childish and disrespectful behavior would never be tolerated in their classroom, and that they did not want to expose the students to it as being normal or acceptable.

Question Period is political theatre. I get that. But if that's the case, it vacillates between tragedy and comedy, sometimes within the same series of questions. As a cabinet minister I was coached to use the question only as a "door-opener" that would allow me to pivot to the Government's key messages of the day. And the final answer of the series, the one where you get the last word, to be sure to take a shot at the Opposition, however obtuse or tangential the connection was to the question at hand.

And, while it may seem hard to believe, there are people that are watching. A surprisingly large number of people. It never ceases to amaze me how many people come up to me and tell me that they watch Question Period every day. I always reply that there is a 12-step program for getting off that habit, or that they should look at cultivating a more productive hobby.

Thankfully being a legislator extends beyond Question Period. But even through the very serious business of crafting, debating, and passing legislation, partisanship reigns. I find this to be especially true when it comes to dealing with amendments to legislation. One of my most vivid memories of my first session was debate on our Government's Bill One. The Opposition brought forward what I thought was an eminently reasonable amendment. It was thoughtful, well worded, and would strengthen the intent of our legislation. I thought that supporting it would be a no-brainer, and when to our Caucus Whip to indicate that I thought we should vote in favor of the amendment.

He looked at me and smiled. "You're new here, aren't you?" The only thing missing was a condescending pat on the head.

"Well, yes", I replied, "I'm new, but I think this is a good amendment. It makes the legislation better. We should vote for it."

Our Whip responded, "Well, that may well be the case, but you see, we don't vote for Opposition amendments. Ever."

I was incredulous. “Why not? I thought our job was to craft the best legislation possible, and to do it as a group effort.”

Again, the condescending smile. “No, you see, if we voted for Opposition amendments, it would just give them hope. We don’t want that.”

And that was the pattern throughout my first term in office. Oh, a few very minor amendments, that either addressed a blatant oversight in the legislation, or that made a very slight change, were accepted. But the vast majority, well over 90 per cent, were summarily rejected by the government majority.

Now, as some of you may have heard, 29 months ago we had an election in Alberta and there was a change in the governing party. We don’t do this often in Alberta, but when it happens it is usually accompanied by promises of doing things differently, finding a better way of governing. I found myself over on the Opposition benches but was prepared to take the new Government at its word. After all, they had promised to do things differently.

Well, it didn’t take long for that balloon to burst. Opposition amendments are being rejected with the same speed and consistency that our Government practiced. Now don’t get me wrong—our new Government is doing some things very differently, and I will say straight out that some of those changes are welcome. But inside our Chamber, while the names, faces and parties have changed, the dance has not. Question Period is a raucous free-for-all. Opposition amendments are rejected; in many cases, the Minister sponsoring the Bill being debated is not even in the Chamber to explain why.

We have to ask ourselves, does this serve our constituents? And where might refusal to work together across the benches lead? My fear is that we will soon find ourselves in a situation that has plagued our American counterparts in Congress for the past two decades: deadlock and discord.

It hasn’t always been that way. Prior to the mid-1990s, Congress was a place where Democrats and Republicans worked together. For decades, the Democrats had the majority, but the focus was on the task at hand, and the measure of success was on the quality, and quantity, of legislation that was debated and passed. Both parties recognized the need to work together in order to get legislation passed. By cooperating, both sides could incorporate changes

“But we have to remind ourselves that the vast majority of the population, the people we are elected to serve, don’t live in the political world. They live in the real world. They live in a world where every conversation does not turn to confrontation, where common solutions are sought, where there is give and take, and where plans are made that extend beyond the next election cycle.”

important to their particular base. It wasn’t about winning or losing, it was all about getting things done. As Harry Truman famously said, “It’s amazing what you can accomplish when you do not care who gets the credit.”

What changed, and why?

In his book “Leaders Eat Last,” author Simon Sinek describes how, prior to the mid-1990s, Members of Congress were encouraged to move their families to Washington and spent much of their time there. There they existed in their own small world, their kids attended the same schools, and they worshipped at the same churches. So while they debated tooth and nail on policy by day, their attended the same school concerts, backyard barbecues and cocktail parties by night. Friendships formed, many that crossed party lines. While there were the inevitable political differences, there was a level of mutual trust and respect even between political adversaries, and this cooperation ensured that Congress actually worked.

But Republican leaders of the mid-1990s grew frustrated with the Democrats’ long string of majorities and decided to make a series of sweeping changes to the way things were done in Washington. Cooperation

was out, control was in. The focus shifted from “getting things done” to “winning the next election”. One of the key changes was a greater emphasis on fundraising. This meant Congressmen now spent the vast majority of their time in their home districts, and much less time in Washington. They would fly in Tuesday morning, sit for parts of three days, and return to their districts Thursday evening. As a result, most left their families at home, and the opportunity to form relationships of trust and mutual respect with members of other parties disappeared. The desire to win supplanted the desire to serve.

How many of you have heard people lament, “I wish politicians weren’t just worried about winning the next election”? I know I certainly have. And I get it, in the political world, is important.

But we have to remind ourselves that the vast majority of the population, the people we are elected to serve, don’t live in the political world. They live in the real world. They live in a world where every conversation does not turn to confrontation, where common solutions are sought, where there is give and take, and where plans are made that extend beyond the next election cycle. And because they don’t see those behaviors in our political world, many have grown frustrated, disillusioned, and disconnected from our world.

One of my favorite quotes is from American author, theologian and abolitionist Henry Freeman Clarke. “A politicians thinks about the next election—a statesman, of the next generation.”

Given that choice, whom do you think our constituents would elect?

There are real and tangible consequences to this shift to hyperpartisanship in our legislatures. The level of disillusionment and disconnection people feel towards their representatives is deeply concerning. The political world, what they see in newscasts, on YouTube or other social media platforms, is simply not reflective of their real world. Normal human beings don’t behave this way, and they don’t treat colleagues the way we do.

Remember that Grade 6 class? Is it any wonder that younger voters, millennials like my two sons and their circle of friends, feel completely disconnected from the political world. Political parties spend huge amounts of time and money in an attempt to engage younger voters without ever pausing to ask what caused

them to become disengaged in the first place. As my professor at vet school used to remind us, “Any fool can see that horse is lame. You’re supposed to figure out why he’s lame.”

Our constituents see us hoarding political power instead of sharing it. Public elected office, once viewed as a noble pursuit, is now seen as a vehicle for selfish personal gain. This has yet another consequence: Who in their right mind would choose to participate in that environment? Not only is voter participation and interest declining, but interest in seeking elected office

Our constituents see us hoarding political power instead of sharing it. Public elected office, once viewed as a noble pursuit, is now seen as a vehicle for selfish personal gain.

has also declined. I worry that this disproportionately discourages women from seeking elected office—in our province, when I see the vicious misogynist attacks leveled at former Premier Allison Redford, current Premier Rachel Notley, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne or many of my current colleagues, it’s no wonder that we need to make special efforts to increase the voice of women in our Legislatures.

So if we agree that hyperpartisanship in our Legislatures is a real problem, and that it has real consequences, and that these consequences need to be addressed, what can we do about it? As elected officials, as legislators, and as parliamentarians, what role can we play in reversing this trend?

There’s no shortage things we could try. But I believe there are three concrete things that we can do to address the current parliamentary malaise.

First, let’s treat our political adversaries as colleagues, and seek opportunities to get to know them away from the halls of Government. This shouldn’t be that difficult. We are, after all, still human, and humans are

social creatures. Our basic human physiology dictates that we perform best when we are in an environment of safety and trust.

So, let's make a special effort. It may be as simple as organizing an evening out at a local bar, or organizing a recreational activity like a pond hockey game. Goodness knows that we could all use the exercise—elected office has to be one of the least healthy lifestyles ever devised—long hours, constant stress and demands on time, criticism (deserved and otherwise) from all quarters, irregular and nutritionally incomplete meals, and virtually no time for exercise.

Second, let's seek options for dealing with legislation in a less partisan, more collaborative environment. I'm talking about Committees here. Much of the legislation we deal with is not so urgent that it needs to be passed within a week of being introduced. And yet, that is the course that is followed in many legislatures.

I understand that some Assemblies are already referring the majority of pieces of legislation to standing policy committees for further review, study, and debate. I think that's an excellent idea. I'm not saying do things behind closed doors—our constituents demand that public policy be debated in public and that's exactly what should happen. But all-party Committees are, by their nature, less partisan and often give members a real opportunity to sink their teeth into an issue, hear from stakeholders and experts, and arrive at decisions cooperatively.

Third, let's make a conscious effort to elevate the level of debate, discussion, and decorum in each of our respective Legislatures. This can seem like a lonely task. It can seem like something that nobody notices. But I can assure you that people do notice, and people do appreciate it. It will start with those unfortunate

Question Period groupies that watch us every day, but it won't end there. It took a tragedy to prove that.

In November 2015 my colleague and friend Manmeet Singh Bhullar was killed on Highway 2 between Edmonton and Calgary while stopped to assist a motorist who was stuck in the snow. Two days later, by agreement with the official opposition, each of the 8 members of the Progressive Conservative caucus asked heartfelt questions on issues that were close to Manmeet's heart, and received equally heartfelt and thoughtful answers. It was an amazing day—and even the most grizzled members of the legislature press gallery agreed that they had never seen anything quite like it, and asked why every day couldn't be like that.

Well, maybe every day can't be like that. There will always be partisanship in our Chambers, and people will vociferously disagree. That is normal, it is expected, and it is most definitely part of the thrust and parry of debate. I know that the 25 men who gathered in Charlottetown 153 years ago didn't agree with each other on everything either. But they sought common ground, and they took the time to get to know each other (I'm told there were some incredible parties every night) and they managed to hammer out a framework that would eventually lead to Confederation. It was rather like breeding elephants—it was done at a high level, there was much trumpeting and stamping of feet, and it took two years before anyone knew if the effort was successful.

Like those great statesman, those nation builders, it's time for us to take up that torch. If we make a conscious effort to debate policy, not personality; to question methods rather than motives, and to pursue statesmanship rather than showmanship, we too can make a lasting contribution to our provinces and to our nation.

A Parallel Chamber for Canada's House of Commons?

The most valuable and perishable commodity one has, as a Member of Parliament (MP), is time. How we use our time in Ottawa and in the riding speaks to the value we bring to the people who elect us. The efficiency of Members' time is an integral principle throughout our Parliamentary procedures and conventions. Making efficient and effective use of the Member's time in Ottawa is paramount. In this article, the author explores how the creation of parallel chambers in two sister Westminster Parliaments has provided ways to make maximum use of the time MPs have during a parliament to engage in debate and discussion. In addition to streamlining the legislative process and reducing the need and/or use of closure and time allocation, the concurrent chambers have been used to test new proposals for procedures that eventually have been adopted by the main chamber.

Bruce Stanton, MP

There has been considerable discussion recently, within media and public forums, with respect to the health of our parliamentary system; specifically: its effectiveness in promoting quality debate and meaningful impact in lawmaking; its service to democratic principles of fair representation; and the ability of Members of Parliament (MPs) to represent their constituency interests in contrast with their party's priorities. The discussion often considers the overriding influence of political parties' leadership in directing the day-to-day affairs of Parliament; from message discipline in speeches and statements, to voting; from deciding which questions should or should not be posed in Question Period, to how long a bill can be debated before being voted upon.

For avid politics followers and activists, these discussions are surely intriguing. For most of the broader voting public, however, the discussions are entirely too academic and obscure, bearing little to no relevance in their day-to-day lives.



Bruce Stanton

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So, it is left to legislators to grapple with issues involving the effectiveness of our Parliament as an institution. It is also fair to say we are persuaded in this work by media commentary, researchers, academia, political forums and think-tanks who contribute to this area of politics and political discourse.

The Member of Parliament is an essential link between Canadians and their Parliament. Their responsibilities include legislating, scrutinizing and holding the government to account, serving and being the voice of constituents, and upholding the commitment of political parties to their promises and values.

The recent *Samara Report on Democracy #4, Who's the Boss – Canadians' Views on their Democracy* elaborates on this theme: "...Canadians understand the importance of MPs and look to them to tackle public problems. For example, when asked to whom they turn when it comes to policy issues that concern them, Canadians' number one choice was Members of Parliament, followed by elected leaders at other levels."¹ It is this relationship, between representatives and their constituents, that is a vital link between the public and their foremost, lawmaking institution.

In this respect, it is MPs who have the means to improve how Parliament works. The Standing Orders of the House of Commons is the essential document that frames the procedures and practices in the House and Members have the ability to amend the Standing Orders to better serve the public interest.

As we look at how Parliament could be made to work better we should first understand the issue or problem we're trying to solve. Second, we should be asking ourselves how any measures to effect such improvements would serve Canadians better.

One can easily compile a list of deficiencies or areas of concern for MPs with our current system. Some of these areas of concern have direct implications for all Members, while others reflect differing roles and responsibilities between government and opposition. These could include: electoral reform, disorder and heckling in the House, omnibus bills, whipped votes (votes enforced by party whips), limitations on debate (time allocation, closure), repetitive and party-scrutinized speeches, limitations on Private Member's Business (via lottery), Committee Chair and membership being prompted by party leadership, and the list could go on. There are opinions on either side, but each of these has been criticized as being a

restraint on citizens' democratic expression via their elected Member of Parliament.

Two recent books on a number of these subjects describe the scenario well. The first is *Tragedy in the Commons*, by Alison Loat and Michael MacMillan (co-founders of Samara Canada), and the second, *Turning Parliament Inside Out – Practical Ideas for Reforming Canada's Parliament*, a compilation by eight, sitting Members: Niki Ashton, Michael Chong, Michael Cooper, Nathan Cullen, Elizabeth May, Scott Simms, Kennedy Stewart and Anita Vandenberg. Both are written from the perspective of MPs; their observations and experience from the "inside" of Parliament.

Would addressing the points these authors raise also serve the public's benefit as well? If we were addressing issues that, in the opinion of the media, academic commentators, and Parliamentarians themselves, are in need of improvement, then we could assume these measures would translate into improved trust and confidence in Parliament among the voting public.

This would surely be an area for further in-depth academic study, but in this article I have chosen to discuss an innovation adopted by our sister Westminster parliaments in Australia and Great Britain in 1994 and 1999, respectively, that have achieved considerable success and broad acclaim. Specifically, it was their creation of a parallel, or concurrent, chamber to their main House of Commons (House of Representatives, in Australia) for debates and business of the House. In the years since their debut, the parallel chambers have significantly improved the legislative process and helped MPs to be more effective in representing their constituents and holding the government to account.

Australia led the initiative in 1994 when it created a "Main Committee," a sort of Standing Committee of the Whole, since renamed the Federation Chamber, in 2012.

The Federation Chamber – Parliament of Australia

The Federation Chamber was seemingly born out of a legislative paralysis in the wake of the 1993 election, where the government was having great difficulty moving legislation through the process within the time constraints of the House. The House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Procedure was tasked to look into ways of "... streamlining legislative activity and provide additional time for

Members to consider legislation, without increasing the hours of the House."² That Committee's report in October 1993, *About Time: Bills, Questions and Working Hours*,³ noted there had been numerous proposals to reform and improve legislative processes going back 20 years, some of which were trialled and abandoned. None came to fruition and demands on the House remained.³

The Procedure Committee recommended the creation of a new Main Committee, and summarized the anticipated benefits of it as follows:

The proposals reorganise [sic] legislative business to allow Members to use their time more productively. The dual legislative streams should make a major contribution to minimising [sic] the need for closures and the use of the guillotine [time allocation]. It gives the House more time (by putting more of its business into committee and removing committee proceedings from the Chamber). More legislation can be dealt with in a given number of days. At the same time it is possible to give additional time to individual bills. The additional legislative time would open up fuller opportunities, in the House, for debate on the major and controversial items of the Government's legislative agenda. It would also provide more opportunities for backbenchers to make speeches for the record ... on routine bills which are of special interest to them or of importance to their electorate.⁴

In its *Celebrating 20 years of Operation (2015)* report, the Procedure Committee concluded that all of the benefits imagined at the Federation Chamber's debut had effectively been realized and it has become integral to the effectiveness of the House.⁵

It achieved its foremost mandate by streamlining the legislative process and reducing the use of time allocation in its first year. Where their guillotine, or time allocation, had been used on 132 bills in 1993, before the new chamber's debut, only 14 bills were guillotined in 1994.⁶

The Federation Chamber is used for legislation when the Chief Government Whip, in consultation with Ministers and Opposition Whips, and non-aligned Members, determine it can be deferred there.⁷ It works especially well for less contentious bills. This, in turn, takes the strain off of debate time in the House and gives Members more opportunities to participate.

Across those 20 years, the Federation Chamber has expanded from its initial role as an adjacent lane for the progress of legislation, to providing a means for additional debates on Committee Reports, Adjournment, Business of Supply, and Private Member's Business. It has also been used for presenting petitions and features reserved time for 90 second Member's Statements, and three-minute Constituency Statements.⁸

The last item, Constituency Statements, has been a remarkable success and was much sought by Members to speak up on matters of urgency and relevance to their constituents. In 2014, the usual 30 minute period for these three-minute statements was extended to 60 minutes on 17 occasions in order to accommodate demand. Ministers are also permitted to use these Constituency Statement time slots,⁹ but continue to be prohibited from using the usual Member's Statements, as it is in our own Standing Orders in Canada.

The Federation Chamber has even become a testing ground for new, proposed procedures before they might be implemented in the House and become Standing Orders. For example, they tested a new set of display screens that would inform the current item of business for Members in attendance and the public. They also tested a new potential Standing Order where Members could rise and interrupt a Member's speech to seek permission to pose a question, creating a more interactive debating style. Each was later implemented in the Main House.¹⁰ Another successful trial involved the use of a digital clock to display the Member's remaining speech time. This tool has also been implemented in the House.¹¹

The workload and hours of meeting in the Federation Chamber have steadily increased from 94 meeting hours in 1994 to approximately 280 hours in 2014. This compares with 760 hours of meeting time in the House of Representatives in 2014.¹²

On the whole, the Federation Chamber had an overwhelmingly positive response from Members, including those who were initially skeptical. As the Procedure Committee noted in its 1995 report:

Other comments have been made to the committee that there is a better interplay in debate and the more intimate environment encourages true debate and response to others' contributions. Signs of less formal and more responsive debate in the Main Committee are encouraging. It is to be hoped that this trend

will continue and any sterility in the atmosphere will dissipate in time.¹³

The Federation Chamber is also seen as a less intimidating forum for new Members to gain confidence and improve their skill in public speaking and debate, and also for new Chair Occupants to hone their presiding ability.¹⁴

The parallel chamber operates by consensus but any Member may force a division, at which point the question is referred to the House for its consideration. The quorum is low, usually the Chair and at least two other Members; one from the government, one from opposition. Debates are chaired by a presiding officer from their "Speaker's Panel of Chairs." In Canada it is interesting to note that our Standing Orders provide for the Speaker to appoint Members to the 'Panel of Chairs' for legislative committees (Standing Order 112). A similar system is also used for the presiding officers for Annual General Meetings of Parliamentary Associations.

Meetings of the Federation Chamber are open to the public, transcribed and televised. It is not an investigative forum, the way a Standing Committee operates. No witnesses are called to testify.¹⁵ Rules for debate are essentially the same as those in the House.

The House of Representatives in Australia has benefited greatly from its parallel chamber, where it was observed that the Federation Chamber "... epitomizes the best of the House of Representatives working in a collaborative manner and has earned its place as a permanent part of the operations of the House."¹⁶

It was the success of this innovation that prompted the United Kingdom's (UK's) House of Commons to consider it for similar challenges they were having with their legislative schedule. Their Select Committee on Modernisation [sic] took up consideration of the idea in 1998 but concerns were raised, not unlike those initially raised of Australia's proposed parallel chamber, namely that such a chamber would devalue the work of the Main House and Members might be conflicted as to which debates to invest their time and interest.¹⁷

As a result, the UK Parliament presented a detailed overview of Australia's Federation Chamber and invited the input of Members on how such a parallel chamber might best serve the House of Commons. With their comments in mind, the Select Committee

tabled a subsequent report recommending the adoption of a secondary debating chamber, and in May 1999 the House of Commons agreed to the establishment of a parallel chamber – what came to be known as Westminster Hall. In November of that year, Westminster Hall was convened for the first time. The name of the Hall was associated with its physical location, in one of the Grand Committee rooms, adjacent the historic Westminster Hall.

Westminster Hall

Although it took its lead from Canberra, the UK House of Commons opted for a different utilization of its concurrent chamber, chiefly that of expanding opportunities for Private Members. The House of Commons had not been able to keep up with requests from Members for the usual end-of-day adjournment debates¹⁸ (opportunities to raise questions and compel responses from a Minister or their representative). Members were eager for more opportunities to hold the Executive to account.

Its schedule today reflects that need. The majority of the time in Westminster Hall is taken up with what is called Backbench Business. The government allots time for Backbench Business and the debates that occur in these limited time-slots are managed by the Backbench Business Committee. Members are able to submit proposals to the Committee for debate, in Westminster Hall or the House, on topics which they deem relevant. Debate requests are vetted by the Backbench Business Committee, and those selected are then scheduled, usually on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, each sitting week.¹⁹

The proposals selected for debate are chosen on their merits, considering the subject's topicality and timing, the importance of holding a debate on the matter, the number of MPs that would likely take part, whether the debate has already been aired or arranged through other channels, and whether or not a substantive motion on the matter had already been considered in the House.²⁰

Westminster Hall also schedules time for debate on petitions and electronic petitions (e-petitions), and on Select Committee [Standing Committee] reports, managed by a Petitions Committee and a Liaison Committee, respectively.²¹ Other business in Westminster Hall is scheduled in coordination with the *usual channels* [Government and Opposition Whips] of the House.²²

Procedurally, Westminster Hall operates similar to the Federation Chamber: low quorum, no votes, no witnesses, and a defined schedule each sitting week.

After its first year in operation in November 2000, the Select Committee on Modernisation [sic] presented a report to the House noting the considerable success Westminster Hall had in providing additional opportunities for Members to debate. The Westminster Hall experiment had afforded Members 134 additional occasions to raise issues with Ministers, and 13 additional debates were held on Select Committee reports.²³

When it comes to attendance at debates, this varied between 5 and 30 Members with the average being 10 to 12, which is approximately 25 per cent of the capacity of the meeting room. The relatively low attendance was not a concern of the Committee, however, as the purpose of the chamber was to address the demand for debate time to give Members, particularly backbenchers, a chance to get on the record on topics of importance, and to address these matters to the executive branch of government.²⁴

A New Chamber for Canada's Parliament?

Within our Westminster family these two Parliaments took deliberate steps to streamline the legislative process. The strains on House time encouraged them down the path to a second, concurrent chamber. Along the way, they discovered valuable ways to enhance the work of Members of Parliament. Each has increased the available time for debates (by about 30 per cent), provided new channels for the expression of Private Members in holding the government to account, and opened the door to debates on matters of greater relevance to their constituents.

Their parallel chamber enables the testing of procedural changes being considered prior to their introduction in the Main House. They provide the Whips and House Leaders greater flexibility in managing the legislative agenda without resorting to time allocation. More available debate time in the Main House can ensure Members have the opportunity to get on the record on more controversial and consequential legislation.

Relieving the constraints on the House schedule could reduce the use of omnibus legislation. That would mean more bills accomplishing what an omnibus bill would have, but with separate debates and separate votes on key elements of legislation.

The most valuable and perishable commodity one has, as a Member of Parliament, is time. How we use our time in Ottawa and in the riding speaks to the value we bring to the people who elect us. The efficiency of Members' time is an integral principle throughout our Parliamentary Procedures and conventions. Making efficient and effective use of the Member's time in Ottawa is paramount.

Each year, MPs from 338 ridings across Canada convene in Ottawa for about 26 weeks. As of adjournment on December 13, 2017, the House had convened 250 days in this 42nd Parliament (since December 3, 2015); about 125 days per year.

To date in this Parliament, 35 Commons Bills have received Royal Assent; only five of them Private Member's Bills. Another 33 Government Bills and 51 pieces of Private Members Business remain pending, at different stages of the legislative process in the Commons and Senate.²⁵ There are likely just over 200 sitting days remaining before the 2019 election.

At just over the half-way point, there is more business on the Order Paper than what Parliament can, at this pace, likely complete before dissolution and the next federal, general election. Even to this juncture, the government has closed debate three times, and imposed time allocation on 27 occasions.²⁶

It therefore behooves us to consider how we could use this precious time more effectively. Thankfully, there are two good examples within the Commonwealth we can look to.

Earlier this Parliament, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (PROC) undertook a study of the Standing Orders in relation to making Parliament more family friendly. The study considered how MPs could use their time in Parliament more effectively while also bringing greater predictability to their schedules. Then Acting Clerk Marc Bosc was invited to testify and his opening remarks included the following:

...with a view to alleviating some of the time pressures we are talking about, the committee may wish to examine the usefulness of a parallel chamber, a practice followed in Britain and in Australia, and perhaps elsewhere. Here, the committee could look at whether it would want to recommend such an alternate venue and if so, how it could function, when it could be convened to have its sittings, what limitations

could be placed on what it could and could not do, and so on. In other words, would it exist for debate purposes only or for more?²⁷

Following his remarks, committee members put questions to the Acting Clerk, including about a parallel chamber. On the issue of potential cost, it was noted that setting up and operating a concurrent Chamber would not necessarily be administratively cumbersome or expensive depending on how complicated a system is envisioned.²⁸

On the whole, a parallel chamber for the House of Commons would strengthen the democratic process in Canada's Parliament by giving MPs greater means to legislate and challenge the Executive Branch of government. As such, the idea deserves our careful consideration.

Notes

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Parliamentarians and Mental Health: A Candid Conversation

One in five Canadians will experience symptoms relating to mental illness in their lifetime. Yet, despite strides to destigmatise mental health conditions, people experiencing acute symptoms or episodes often feel as though they must struggle through alone and in silence. High-stress occupations, including those in parliamentary politics, are often places where these conditions first manifest or reappear due to certain triggers. The very public nature of the job and the continuing need to seek re-election tend to make politicians reluctant to disclose their mental health issues. In recent years, however, more parliamentarians appear to be coming forward, while in office, to speak openly about managing their mental health on the job. In this roundtable, three parliamentarians who have publicly disclosed their mental health conditions came together to talk about their experiences serving as parliamentarians while dealing with mental health conditions. With astonishing candour, they shared their stories and took the opportunity to talk to others in the same unique position about how they've persevered during trying times. The participants, while acknowledging the challenges of managing the conditions while in office also spoke of its positive effects in terms of giving them compassion, realism, and great perspective that can be used to excel at aspects of their jobs. This roundtable was held in November 2017.

Sharon Blady, Celina Caesar-Chavannes, MP, and Lisa MacLeod, MPP

CPR: In the last few years, each of you has experienced periods of depression before or while serving as a parliamentarian. Could you briefly describe the circumstances behind how and when your depression manifested?

SB: For me, I was in office and a backbencher at the time. We were dealing with a session that was being dragged out over the summer by the opposition. They were bound and determined to keep us in the chamber, so it was July by that point. There were a few other pressures. I'm a single mom and I've had post-partum depression. Going through that, I came to understand when I would have a depressive episode. I learned a whole bunch of coping skills and tools and had always done very well.

One morning we were sitting in caucus and I received a message on my phone about an event that happened in my neighbourhood. It was a news article that showed a picture of a house, and talked about two infant bodies being found and removed, and talked about the mother. As soon as I saw the house I knew exactly where it was and who lived there and I had this sick feeling that I knew what had happened. It was a constituent of mine. The last time I saw her she had been pregnant with the second child and had the first child on her hip. What we found out over the course of the day was that she was going through post-partum psychosis. As the result of a psychotic break, she ended up bathing the children and they never came out of the tub, and she would later be found in the river.

This basically triggered survivor guilt related to my own post-partum depression. This was in July 2013, and I gradually slid into my own depressive state. I was making my way through it because we had all these obligations related to house duty and we had already been told at the beginning of the summer that no one would be taking breaks because we had to maintain numbers in the house. But it got to the point that after a few days I had to take the Whip off to the side and have a discussion in my office about whether I could take a break because of how this was impacting me.

Sharon Blady served as MLA for Kirkfield Park (Manitoba) from 2007-2016. First elected in 2015, Celina Caesar-Chavannes is MP for Whitby (Ontario). First elected in 2006, Lisa MacLeod is MPP for Nepean (Ontario).



Sharon Blady

Because this was my constituent, some people were aware that I knew her and was participating in vigils and other community support events. I was granted that day off. I went home, curled up in bed, and I was right back in that place of suicidal ideation which I had only experienced once before in my own post-partum situation.

I was fortunate that we have an EAP (employee assistance program) and I reached out to them. I have an adult son who was in his early 20s, and those were two huge supports. And I also have to admit that this was a case of one condition overriding another to save my life. I also have obsessive compulsive disorder and this meant I had to come up with a water tight plan for how I was going to exit the world and this situation. It was literally that part of my brain that would eventually cause procrastination and shutting the whole idea down. I would also get the help I need, but really it was one part of my brain overriding the other.

I was able to get myself back together and function well. Most people at work had no clue

what had happened, other than I was upset about what happened with this constituent. An interesting thing happened a few months later in October. I was appointed the Minister of Healthy Living and became responsible for the mental health portfolio. And then 13 months later I would go on to become the Minister of Health. I took that lived experience into those portfolios. I would have taken those portfolios seriously regardless, but it gave me some additional perspective and eventually I went public with it, and I am grateful to the media for the supportive coverage they provided.

LM: That was really moving to hear that, Sharon, thank you very much for sharing that. My experience was through work as well. I've been part of a team that has worked very hard to form a government. When we lost the 2014 campaign I started having great difficulty eating. Maybe eating 400 calories a day, if that. That went on for about two months and I just shrugged it off. I went to Israel for about a week and started eating again and feeling good, but when I came home there was so much pressure on me. People were expecting me to do things and all I really wanted to do was spend time with my family and take some down time.

By Christmas I was having what felt like paralysis, but it was really my anxiety. I felt really bad. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't enjoy life. By February, my federal Member of Parliament, John Baird, decided that he was going to leave. I had a lot of people telling me not to run for the provincial leadership but instead to run for this federal seat. I looked at that as a bit of an escape for me and my family to slow things down, but I still had a lot of pressure from all sides. That's when I started to become uncommunicative to a lot of people and started to withdraw. Really, if I could have, I would have just slept in my bed from that period of time until the end of summer.

I would be in Ottawa and going to my local hospital, the Queensway-Carleton, thinking I was having a heart attack when it was clearly anxiety. Then I'd be in Toronto, experience problems with my lungs and think it was an aneurism or something, go to the Toronto General Hospital and be there for the whole day. On both occasions I came out with a clean bill of physical health. Then in, I think May 2015, I fractured my ankle, and that's when things got really bad because I would just sit at home and couldn't move. I really withdrew from my colleagues and my public commitments. I just think of what I put my daughter through, having to see me like that.

As the summer started, I slowly started talking to people about what was happening. I told my family doctor, and she put me on the right path. I was able to confide with people in the mental health sector and started to learn coping mechanisms to start to get my breathing under control. I had to start to learn to focus on positive things rather than things I perceived to be negative.

I'm a productive person, as we all are as politicians, so I can get up at 6am and write my list of 10 things that need to be done that day and prioritize what needs to be done first. In those days, I couldn't even put a list of one together without feeling defeated. The other thing that was a trigger for me, and I have no idea why because all of these people are my friends, was going to caucus. I would fixate on going to caucus for two days. Ours was on Tuesdays, so starting on Sunday I would begin to lose my perspective and worry – and these are some of the most supportive people in my life. I have no idea why I would start to feel this way.

The other thing was that people in my community began to notice. I pride myself on keeping a very full calendar of events in my constituency. I will go to the opening of an envelope – literally. People were starting to comment to me: why were you not there? I had lost all sense of myself. I had no self-esteem or confidence left. I would just sit there, staring at a wall and think about what a loser I was.

When I first started talking to people, it was hard. I had been calling my doctor for every little reason and I finally told her, 'I think it's in my head. There's something here that's not physical.' Saying it out loud was much better for me. It started helping me because I wasn't hiding it.

Now, I must say I made a very public declaration about it, probably a little sooner than I think I should have. But I wanted it out there. I was immediately overwhelmed. I don't think I was prepared for it. I had a media interview the following day with someone who had been very involved in mental health issues in Ottawa. I broke down in the middle of it. I had to call a friend at the Royal Ottawa Hospital to help me work through some coping mechanisms. I've had two other episodes where my anxiety has really gotten the better of me – again, it was a physical manifestation of what was going on with my emotions and my anxiety.

I will say that when you do make a public disclosure, sure, there are some detractors; but the overwhelming response I received was from people saying 'thank

you, because I'm going through it too,' or 'your story is exactly like mine.' In a strange way, that comforts you because you realize you're not alone.

CCC: I want to say thank you to both of you because so much of your stories resonate with me. Just speaking about caucus – I hate going into it on Wednesdays. I obsess about it all the time because I always feel that I'm not good enough. Everyone else is able to report on all the wonderful things they've done in the community and I feel as though I have done nothing. And this is not true, but in my head that's how I'm feeling.

I'm a productive person, as we all are as politicians, so I can get up at 6am and write my list of 10 things that need to be done that day and prioritize what needs to be done first. In those days, I couldn't even put a list of one together without feeling defeated.

~ Lisa MacLeod

Staying in bed, the lack of confidence, the constant vulnerability, I'm still going through that. Going to emergency all the time – I've sworn to my doctors about 10 times that I must be dying and he should get out the paddles and yell clear because my heart was going to stop. And of course, this never turned into anything.

And also, talking about my condition out loud has been very therapeutic, but going public about it has been very overwhelming. I appreciated hearing from the others about that, because I felt the exact same way.

I've known I've experienced depression for quite a while, but I think I really first felt it following my loss in a by-election. For some reason, I thought in my head that every single person in the world was watching this

by-election and losing it was absolutely the worst thing that could happen to me. I'm a Type A personality, I win everything, my resumé is stellar – and then I lose this by-election and everyone in the world is watching me and thinking I'm a loser.

The by-election was in November 2014. I didn't get out of bed until February. I didn't want to do anything. And I kept telling myself, 'What kind of loser stays in bed and doesn't get up and do all the things an adult needs to do?' My depression was just getting worse and worse, and of course now I was in a general election and I felt I couldn't stop to get the help I needed because someone from another party would find out and use it against me.

“When I look at myself now compared to back then, the only saving grace is that in politics, it can't be about you. It has to be about the people you serve. So, I think my mental health may have given me a lot of humility and has probably made me more modest. It's allowed me to really empathise with people who are going through some struggles.”

~ Celina Caesar-Chavannes

LM: Or someone from your own party would, right?

SB: Exactly!

CCC: I didn't even think about someone from my own party doing it quite honestly. But the people who did know about it, including my husband, kept saying you can't do it now. So, the pressure keeps getting

worse. My husband ends up having to quit his job to help and I haven't been working since the previous election.

I win the election and things are supposed to be great. I win an election, I'm parliamentary secretary to the prime minister...things should be fantastic. And then in March I remember being in a meeting and just thinking, 'I can't do it.' It was no secret that I wasn't enjoying my role as parliamentary secretary to the prime minister because I didn't feel it was structured enough for me. But instead of saying 'This isn't structured enough for me,' I just kept going along with it, thinking 'Of course you can do this. You're a former entrepreneur of the year. You're used to juggling a million balls in the air. You have three kids, for heaven's sake.'

Instead, I ended up quitting, quitting caucus, leaving the Hill, going home as this blubbering mess, not knowing what was happening, and getting to a point where I was having a break down.

Talking about it was not something I intended. The *Huffington Post* asked me to write a blog about it and the response to it was so overwhelming that it actually almost made me feel worse. It got to the point where, similar to what happened to Lisa, I was doing an interview about it and just broke down. It got to the point where I didn't want to talk about it anymore and I actually told my staff that I wouldn't be doing anymore interviews around my mental health.

Slowly, with the medication, the meditation, the prayer, all the things I did to recover, it started to get better. The one thing that made it feel completely better was talking about it. Talking about it allowed me to at least tell my husband when I was having a bad day. So rather than hiding it and fighting it, once I was able to tell him I was having a bad day he could say, 'Okay, I'm not going to give her a hard time about not brushing her teeth this morning. I'm going to let her stay in bed and leave her alone.' That's a strategy I prefer. So now, at least he knew, and I wouldn't be cursing him and telling him off.

But again, hearing the other women on this call experiencing the same thing, that helps too.

SB: The curling up in bed thing? Been there, done that, got the T-shirt.

CCC: I don't remember a lot about what was happening on those days, but I do remember that it

didn't always manifest itself in 'depression equals crying.' It manifested itself in me not wanting to do anything. My motivation to do things severely changed. So by telling my story, I hope other people are hearing that depression doesn't always equal crying.

CPR: Did you feel there were adequate resources available (within your legislature, your party, your social circle, your health care provider) to help you seek treatment and assist in your recovery?

CCC: Within the caucus, I think absolutely. The prime minister told me to take all the time I need. Of course, I was determined to go back to work. But my family was my number one resource. My husband was the one to tell me: 'You need to do what you need to do. I will support you in whatever way I can with whatever need you have.' That was very important. Once my caucus colleagues found out what was going on they were very supportive. It allowed me to build this support system around me to know it's okay.

I think things could be better. There could be more formal processes within the federal infrastructure to make that support happen. If I didn't have such a strong bond with my husband and his support, it would have been more difficult to try to get through this. Because, as mentioned earlier, when the Whip tells you not to leave, you can't leave. To have someone else, like a spouse, with that kind of understanding who can tell you, 'No, babe, you can leave. You're not going to kill yourself trying to stay because the Whip says you have to,' – that's very important.

LM: I agree with Celina. Since people now know what it is, they are very accommodating. In terms of mental health resources, Celina and I are the same but different. I leave Ottawa for the Assembly in Toronto and she leaves just outside of Toronto to head to work in Ottawa. Some of my worst days are when I'm away from my family. They are my support. I've actually spoken to our Assembly to suggest that maybe we should have someone on site – even if it's just for a couple of hours per day and even if only one person uses it. It's a resource that really should be required. I really could have used someone to speak to because all my support was at home in Ottawa.

I had shared with my Chief Whip and Leader that I had dealt with something a few weeks ago and ended up in hospital. The immediate response was 'is there anything we can do for you?' Well, no. The event has passed now and I have to remember that there are certain things I need to do to cope that I let slide. Some



Celina Caesar-Chavannes

of this is my personal responsibility, and some things are beyond my control. So they were really good about it, but having a resource in place would help.

At first people were concerned about why I was missing so much work. I just wanted to get on a plane to go to my husband and daughter, and be inside my house with my two dogs and my cat. And at first people were confronting me, saying 'You think you can just not be here when you're supposed to be here?' And it's just not that simple.

I think once I went public people had far more compassion. But I think the opposite is true as well. I had been calling for more mental health support and I was confronted by a senior member of the legislature who said we have enough already. And that's all well and good that you live near Queen's Park and you have access to supports, but I don't and I could really use them. So that shocked me because it was done in a very public way. I felt very humiliated and regressed a bit. I felt my privacy had been violated even though I've been clear about this.

Like Celina, I had stopped giving the mental health interviews because it was overwhelming. The only one I had done after that happened when a colleague of mine, Michael Gravelle, said he had been dealing with depression. I felt as though I should support him. I was very clear with the CBC when I did it and told them if at any moment I feel overwhelmed I'm going to hang up the phone. So, they were gentle. I can take the tough questions, but not when it comes to my mental health.

It goes back to the incident with the senior member of the legislature who said there are enough supports for mental health. Well, if there are enough supports, why did a senior cabinet minister and a senior member of the opposition disclose – in one sitting – that they were struggling with mental health issues. And who else was struggling in silence? I don't want to say it's courage that makes you come out – sometimes it's just that you'd had enough. But there are people who are genuinely afraid to go public. I don't know if this has happened to the others on this call, but when I went public I had cabinet ministers and colleagues come up to me in the legislature, hold my hand and look into my eyes – and you just know they have dealt with something similar.

CCC: Absolutely. Absolutely.

SB: It's interesting that for the two of you, when you were coming out, it was very much in the moment – at a time when you were still in the thick of things, in recovery and getting back on your feet. When my depressive bout happened I was a backbencher. Everyone was so preoccupied by what they had going on and what they were missing out on because we were in a summer session: how they couldn't be in the constituency, the events they were missing, etc. I was dealing with colleagues who were wonderful people, but we were not in a healthy place in general.

The other difference, I'm realizing, is that I live in Winnipeg and the legislature is in Winnipeg. I have a 20-minute drive down Portage Avenue every day and then I'm at work. For me, when this happened, I don't want to call it a cushion, but because we were already in this situation due to the way the session was going, my community knew that I wasn't going to be out and about. I wasn't going to be able to make this barbeque or that event because I was going to be stuck in session. So, I had a bit of a cushion and also a bit of cushion from the caucus.

But, I was not in a hurry to tell people in my caucus. I was not expecting sympathy. I had already dealt with

another situation publicly. My 'gift' from my then-husband, and now ex-husband following my election was an assault. And I was assaulted again about six months later. And then, a few days after the second assault I was diagnosed with cancer. When I came out to the caucus, staff, and constituents and said, 'Guess what? I'm serving part of my term under a protective order and also dealing with cancer,' I got a lot of flack for that – about how that just wasn't appropriate. I was told we were supposed to find ways of managing it so people didn't find out why you were missing from events, meaning cover stories were to be put in place, so as to not show weakness.

When my depressive episode happened, I already felt that I had dealt with a lot of shame and blame. I kept it to myself. A handful of people in my caucus knew about it, and they had the understanding that they were supposed to keep it to themselves. A couple of months later, the EAP was essential to help me manage things. I was using the EAP proactively once things settled too: 'Oh, this thing looks like it might lead to an unravelling. I'm going to go in and I'm going to set up an appointment.' But again, the person I was seeing as part of the EAP was literally two buildings down Broadway from the legislature. So, I could make appointments, have it shuffled into my day and no one would second guess why I was headed down the street.

So, unlike the others, I didn't have the immediate caucus support. But I did have the EAP and I had been proactively using the EAP in advance of this. There was just no way to be proactive about this particular trigger. I do think we had some good supports, but I also think a lot more is needed. When I became minister responsible for mental health initiatives I was able to meet all of these people and be up front about what had happened.

Slowly, I was able to build up additional coping mechanisms and was able to communicate this to my staff. I'm sure some of them were sick of hearing about CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy). At one point when I was Minister of Health I was told I was to no longer go into Question Period with answers involving the word neuroplasticity (*laughs*) because it just works the other side up and your two supplemental questions get a little weird.

It was later, as Minister of Health, that we had a situation where a woman named Bonnie Bricker came out to the media about what had happened to her son, Reid. It hadn't come up through the food chain in the

department yet. She went public with how her son had been let out of three emergency departments within 10 days and he would eventually be lost to suicide. The question was, how did this happen? I heard her on the radio on the way to work, got into my office and told my staff to get me her phone number right away. I called her and spoke to her, mother to mother. And that's how this all came out. I was in a better place by that time and the response I got was generally positive. But, at the same time, I also knew that for every person coming up to me and holding my hand or saying that I did a good thing, there was another whispering somewhere in a corner and saying something behind my back. And sadly, some of those people were on my team.

CCC: I have to agree with that. I remember doing the interviews and thinking at the time that some people would be out there saying that I was doing this to boost my profile. I thought members of my own caucus were not going to understand this and wonder why I was doing this and making this 'all about her.'

I kept thinking, 'Imagine if I was at my 100 per cent best?' But I'm not at 100 percent. I'd say I'm about 70 per cent of the Celina I was – the one who would push through and do all the great kinds of things I had done in the past.

People came up to me from all sides – the Liberal side, the Conservative side, the NDP side - people who I wouldn't have expected – to say thank you for doing this. In terms of the community reaction to all of this, that I'm still uncertain about. I'm not entirely certain if the community understands because you have to show up at all of the events.

And recently I've been saying no. No, I'm not going to go to every church bazaar, I'm not going to go to every business opening. I can't. I just don't have the capacity with three kids, the job, the travelling. I simply can't do everything. I've had to do my best to get the naysayers and doomsayers out of my head who say, 'Well, Celina, that's the expectation. If you don't do this you're not going to win next time.' As a matter of fact, I give zero f*cks if I lose the next election. I need to survive. I'm in survival mode right now, and it's difficult, but it's where I need to be.

I used to love to be in busy situations. That's where I'd be thriving. Now I feel like I'm moving to behind the curtain. So it really shifted how I act and how I am when I'm around other people. It's a bizarre feeling that I can't quite put into words.



Lisa MacLeod

When I look at myself now compared to back then, the only saving grace is that in politics, it can't be about you. It has to be about the people you serve. So, I think my mental health may have given me a lot of humility and has probably made me more modest. It's allowed me to really empathise with people who are going through some struggles.

And there really is a silver lining. A friend of mine said to me, 'Once you start appreciating your mental illness as a gift you'll live with it better.' Every once in a while, I have to remind myself about that. But it is a gift. I have to try to find the good in it and use it to help others.

LM: Celina, I could have taken your story, removed your name and put mine on it. In terms of being depleted of energy... You know, I'm going into my fifth election and I've said, 'I've walked through hell and come out the other side, so losing an election isn't going to kill me.' It might have before. It might have destroyed me. But, you know, I've gone through worse.

I totally look at it, as you do now, as a gift. I didn't at first. But I can look at people now who are struggling with PTSD and help them. I can give that compassionate hug when I need to.

I do know there are some naysayers, and I'll give you an example. I got elected quite young. When I was celebrating my 10-year anniversary I had just had a baby, my father died the same year... I think everything just culminated that year in what I consider a breakdown. I use the word depleted because it felt like people had taken every ounce of energy out of me and no one was restoring it or replenishing it. And the worst offender, of course, was me. I just continued to work and I didn't have any self-care.

But I remember telling people this [at the anniversary celebration], there were about 500 people there and they were all crying. I told them not to cry because I wasn't telling them this for them to cry or feel sorry for me. I do not want your sympathy. And I'm not apologizing, because I wouldn't if I had cancer. But I'm telling you this just to help you understand why I have been different.

When I think about using [my anxiety disorder as a Super-power] on the job, I also think about Question Period. With my anxiety issues it got to the point where I would think to myself, 'What could the Critic, or another opposition member, or a journalist in an interview say to me that my brain hasn't already said in a way that's 10 times worse.

~ Sharon Blady

I did this one media interview with a person who is no longer in journalism. It was the most horrific thing. She looked at me and said, 'What about the people who are saying you're only doing this to get a headline?'

Others: (*Gasps*)

LM: And I looked at her and thought, 'For f*cksakes if I wanted a headline I'd go have a press conference.' But it was the worst thing. I remember thinking, 'You callous person!' I mean, nobody talks about their mental health struggle because they think it's going to help their career. In fact, when I talked to my husband about it – and he had a long career as a senior advisor and deputy chief of staff for Peter McKay and he had been to Afghanistan – I remember telling him in January in the year I disclosed. I said, 'I'm going to tell people. He said, 'Honey, don't. It's probably going to impact your career.' And I said, 'Honey, I don't care. I have to get this weight off my shoulders and I can't until I acknowledge that this has happened to me.'

I'm glad I did. My constituents have been very understanding and supportive. I've had a couple of colleagues, one in particular, who think I look fine and that I should shut up, and that one journalist, but by in large, most people are pretty good. And again, like Celina, I'm at a point where everything I have worked for in politics is at stake. But I feel like I have a life and need to do self care. Like you, I feel like I'm operating at 70 per cent of the Lisa I once knew – the determined, motivated person... I'm still motivated, but by different things.

And I have to be honest with you. When I'm happy, I'm dealing in pure joy. And I don't know if I ever had that before.

CCC: Absolutely.

LM: It's the weirdest thing.

SB: It's interesting that you both used the language of 'gift.' [CPR Editor Will Stos] and I crossed paths at the Canadian Parliamentary Association regional conference in Winnipeg. I had been invited by the Speaker, who actually used to be my Health critic, and whose professional background is as a psychiatric nurse. I was asked to speak on a panel about mental health and politics as the 'lived experience while in office' example.

While there I spoke about how I reframed things for my kids, because part of this is genetic and both of my boys have had some experiences. My eldest son had his first depressive bout during a gap year between high school and university. And my youngest one was dealing with anxiety. I found I was having to explain this to him, and I didn't want to pathologize it. So I talked to him about his super powers. I found myself spontaneously telling my child about how he was like one of the X-Men – how he had a mutant power. I used the example of Cyclops. I said, 'Look at how Cyclops can use his laser vision to blow up the bad guys. Or, if he doesn't put his visor on, he might light his underwear on fire as he's getting ready for school in the morning.'

So when you talk about gifts, I'm bringing it to the next level and talking about mental health conditions as *Superpowers*. I've been doing research to develop comic book characters to help kids with this. It gets down to a belief that those of us with this kind of lived experience, and the right supports: whether it's CBT or medications, or whatever things from the toolbox we need, I think when we have these supports we come out of it much better. We actually have the kinds of profiles of the people you want in public office. You want people who are compassionate, empathetic, creative. From the depression perspective, there's a lot of research out there that suggests we have a sense of realism, a grounded and realistic perspective.

From the anxiety perspective, I've said how if I burn lasagna while my anxiety brain is turned on, it can take the situation to the apocalypse in fifteen steps. I can think myself into a hole faster than anyone on the planet. So, for the reframing and recovery work I've been doing, I've thought about how I can use this productively. I've decided to make this work for me. In office, this becomes strategic planning and thinking. If I exhaust my brain with this kind of productive exercise, it's not going to be able to think me into a hole should something go wrong with dinner!

What I found interesting was, there were times when my staff would come in with a briefing note about a crisis with a proposed solution. And I laugh when I think about this now, but I would tell my staff, 'Okay, you don't have to go with me all the way to crazy town, 12 steps down the line, but this solution only works to step three. Follow me through steps four, five and six and you'll see how the wheels come off the bus. Two years from now, or three years from now, we're going to have two or three problems worse than the one we're solving.'

So you don't want to follow my anxiety brain to the apocalypse, but I believe we do have some super powers, and we just have to learn how to harness them.

Then there's the stigma issue. I didn't come out with this while it was happening to me as a backbencher because I wanted to get into cabinet eventually. I knew damn well that if I told my colleagues and the political staff that information, and the bias, would be helping to make that decision during a cabinet shuffle, I'd be shooting myself in the foot.

I was lucky that by gradually disclosing to certain people and in certain circles, that by the time the issue came up for discussion when Bonnie Bricker went to the media and then the media came to me, I had a lot more control. I was in a better place and I was able to reframe things and talk about my lived experience in a particular way. I could take control of the narrative and the messaging. But I still don't think that the average person who has that kind of lived experience, and who is looking to run for office, can do that... you're not putting that on your campaign literature.

Others: (*Laughs*)

SB: But for me. By that time it was 'You want to call the Minister of Health crazy? Have at it!'

When I think about using these super powers on the job, I also think about Question Period. With my anxiety issues it got to the point where I would think to myself, 'What could the Critic, or another opposition member, or a journalist in an interview say to me that my brain hasn't already said in a way that's 10 times worse.'

But at first this surprised me. I would watch my colleagues who had been at this longer than me, see their body language and think, 'My God, this person gets nervous in QP?' For me, as a less experienced parliamentarian, I wondered what there was to be afraid of? I've got my notes in front of me, I'm sitting in a particular way and focussing on my breath.... And again, what could they say that my brain hasn't already said in a way 10 times worse. So, thinking about my anxiety disorder as a super power, I'm thankful I have an anxiety disorder because QP was a breeze.

CCC: I appreciate the comments around cabinet because I'm in that position right now. Maybe about a month ago, I shaved my head, my hair. I was

having a really bad weekend. My husband went to the Heritage Fair to set up a tent, came back and I had shaved off my hair. He asked what I had done, and I said, 'I just couldn't get my hair to do what I wanted it to.' I called the Whip and said I couldn't come in. And the look on my husband's face, it was almost as though he pitied me. And I said, 'Babe, don't look at me like that. I don't care about being in cabinet. I could tell he wanted to burst into tears, because, I mean we both want that....'

LM: You're going to get there. You're a force to be reckoned with, girl!

SB: Yes, you are!

CCC: But, I'm at a point where that cannot be what drives how I live. I can't live my life by saying, 'Well, maybe I can't do that, or maybe I won't be able to do that.' We've had a great life before this, we'll have a great life after this.

It's just something we're dealing with. There are ups and downs. I can't do lists anymore. If I can't do it right away, it doesn't get done. I can't read a speech. If you want me to give a speech you'll need to give me the top five points and let me go research it and write my own speech, because I can't read what someone else has given me.

SB: But stop and think about what you said there. You said you can't read someone else's speech anymore. And don't get me wrong, it's a lot of extra work to write all your own speeches. But you're actually speaking from the heart.

LM: Absolutely.

SB: I think for the general population, one of the most discouraging things is watching someone read through a canned speech with somebody else's words. If anything, you're being much more authentic. It may not be easy, but you're being the kind of person I want in office. I want someone who is passionate, who cares, who speaks from the heart as opposed to a person who says, 'Ya, ya, ya. Hand me that thing and I'll go up and be a talking head.' Think of it as a super power!

CCC: I think it's going to take some time to think about it as a super power and not something negative. But, then again, that's the brain we work with. I'll get a call from the Prime Minister's Office and think, 'Oh

no, you're getting fired!' Then I remember, no, that can't happen. Or that I'm in trouble for something. Well, no, you're an adult, you can't get in trouble for something. It really is an exercise in taking it day by day.

There are still times when I slip back and think at how the Celina from 10 years ago would look at what's happening and say, 'No, I would never cry over this, or handle something this way.' But I have to remember that the Celina of right now has to handle it the way she needs to handle it.

LM: You have to remember that you were never perfect, but you're a different imperfect now. I think sometimes our biggest flaw is to look back and think that we had it all. No, we didn't.

CCC: I want to ask a question about the apocalypse syndrome. I found I was having a lot of those moments before I actually started talking about it. It was usually between me and my husband. There were times when I was sure our marriage would end. I find now that I talk about it, I'm less likely to go down that path.

LM: I agree with you. I find that my marriage with my husband is probably stronger now than it ever was. We always had a good relationship, but now I find when he has bad days, I'm more compassionate because he literally watched me sit in a La-Z-Boy chair for a year. I told my family I was going to be a professional Solitaire player. But he stayed with me through all of that.

And just to your other point Celina... You said the Celina of 10 years ago wouldn't be crying at this meeting. I used to be a political pitbull. I led some of our most fiercest attacks and craziest fights in the legislature on scandals and such. I was never known to shed a tear. And there I was this past Saturday, sitting at our party's convention where we launched our platform. My leader said we have five priorities and one was mental health. I was sitting in the middle of this ballroom with 1,500 people and, I kid you not, I start bawling – uncontrollably. God bless little, 20-year-old Sam Ooseterhoff, the youngest person ever elected in Canada. Poor thing, he was sitting there, stroking my hand. And then Todd Smith, who is our energy critic was there. He didn't know what to do, so he just put his arm around me, kissed me on the head and held me. (*Laughs*)

At the same time, I wonder, if we were to get to a position where we formed government, would these guys trust me to be able to hold it together. So I worry about that, but I don't fixate on it anymore. When I started in politics, I really wanted to get into cabinet. And when we lost the last election and that didn't happen, it crushed me. Now, if we do it and I'm named to cabinet, I know I could do it. I think I would be capable at it. But if it didn't happen, would it crush me? Would I lose my sense of self? No, I don't think so.

CCC: I agree. If I don't get into cabinet, if I lose the next election... first off, I can't think that far ahead anymore. I know if I do the little things really well today, that's all I have control over and that's all I have the capacity to have control over.

LM: Do you guys find when you travel you have anxiety now?

SB: I went through some phases, but not now, and not when I was in office. But there were times when I would have panic attacks and the notion of getting on a plane would terrify me.

LM: For me, whenever I'm going on a train or plane, I worry about every little step. How I'm going to miss my family. What if I can't communicate with them? Did I bring everything I needed to bring?

CCC: My suitcase is never unpacked, so I don't worry about that. I'm trying to think about what I do obsess about, and I think the one thing is caucus Wednesdays. I want to be doing a good job, and I don't ever feel as though I'm doing a good job.

LM: I'm so glad I'm getting better at that, but for me it was a real struggle for over a year.

CCC: Every Wednesday after it's over I'll go find a room to myself and just be in tears. And I have to call my husband, and he has to talk me down by saying, 'Babe, you're doing a good job. Look at all the things you're doing.' And I say, 'No, no. You should have heard So-in-so. They're killing it! I'm doing nothing!' And he'll help to calm me down and eventually I'll come out of it. But I know every single Wednesday it's going to be a sh*tshow.

LM: So, before caucus, are you paralysed for two days?

CCC: No, I try not to let it paralyse me for that long a time. Just leading up to it. So from Tuesday night to Wednesday around noon to 1pm, it's just not going to be a good scene for me. A couple of my friends text me with 'I know it's Wednesday. Remember you're great. You're so awesome.' And I just want to send a message back saying, 'F-off!'

All: *(Laughter)*

CCC: But that is my Achilles Heel. I feel like I want to quit every Wednesday.

CPR: I just wanted to say...

LM: Oh! Hi Will! You're still here!

All: *(Laughter)*

CPR: *(Laughs)*. I had other questions, but just listening to you talk and interact was the greatest purpose of this call. And just to end on that note, all of you are amazing people for doing this. Especially knowing, as some of you have said, that public speaking on this topic or these interviews can take a tremendous toll to do.

But, in terms of talking about this, and perhaps providing some insight to other people – and parliamentarians – who may be dealing with mental health issues privately and reading this... it's an enormous service. Thank you.

LM: I just want to thank you for doing this. I think you saw that it was a bit of therapy session for us. Because we're not in this alone, and sometimes we have to remember that. I think it's wonderful that you had people from three different political parties. Thank you for thinking about this and sticking with it, because I know we're not easy to schedule. I'm really grateful I had the opportunity to do this, and I was quite nervous going in.

CCC: Thank you ladies for sharing and being so candid.

SB: I think the one thing I would add, as someone no longer in office, is that I am happy to help people still in office in any way I can. My new mission in life is to take the combination of my time in office with my lived experience with mental health to see how I can help others.

Parliamentary Tour Guiding Around Canada

Tour guides at federal, provincial and territorial parliaments serve an important role as educators; sometimes, they are the first point of contact for Canadians, newcomers and tourists who are seeking to learn more about Canada's political system. In this roundtable discussion, chaired by Canadian Parliamentary Review intern Mariya-Kvitlana Tsap, seven tour guides and tour officers from British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec and the Parliament of Canada shared insights into their typical day on the job, some memorable personal anecdotes and their take on the most intriguing facts about their respective building and programming that might be of interest to visitors.

Tourguides representing Assemblies in British Columbia (BC), Manitoba (MN), New Brunswick (NB), Ontario (ON), Quebec (QC), and Parliament of Canada (PC 1 and PC2). Moderated by Mariya-Kvitlana Tsap

CPR: How would you describe a regular day at your job?

PC1: At Parliament no two days are ever the same because we have visitors from all over the globe. This makes for a unique tour experience every time. We also rotate through different positions within the team itself. Some days we are giving tours, other times we are greeting visitors outside and escorting them to the observation deck of the Peace Tower.

MN: My days vary from day to day, as well, but they also vary in terms of seasonality. During the summer we have our tour guide staff working. My job shifts from providing programming to supervising and training the tour guides. During the winter we have a smaller program where we provide school tours and administration around the office, develop new programming and conduct a lot of research. We try and gather as much information as we can about travelling exhibits and historical commemorative events during the year.

QC: At the National Assembly we offer tours to the public, staff, school groups and dignitaries during the sittings Monday to Friday and seven days a week in the summer. We are responsible for the scheduling

and the distribution of the tour calendar to the MNAs and touristic partners. We also maintain the brochure displays and participate in different programs and activities such as the annual Open House on Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day (June 24th).

NB: As a student tour guide, there are three of us working at the New Brunswick legislature this summer. There are a few scheduled tours but usually we provide tours as soon as people walk in, both in French and English.

CPR: What made you interested in the tour guiding profession or in politics and policy in general?

PC2: This is actually a very interesting question for me as I am a Modern Languages major and I didn't have an inherent interest in the political system in Canada until I found this opportunity. I thought this opportunity would be a great way to learn hands on about the political system. Diving in with both feet really encouraged me to turn my attention towards politics and it gave it a living face.

QC: I didn't have much interest in politics while growing up, although I had a little in university as some of my friends were studying politics. In 2007 I followed the Quebec local tour guide program at Merici College and during this training we toured many sites and attractions – the National Assembly was one of them. After the tour, I told myself that I would finish my career as a tour guide there. It actually took me seven years to get the position.

Mariya-Kvitlana Tsap held a 2017 internship at the Canadian Parliamentary Review. She is an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto.



Emmanuel Boucher-Fassett shows a tour group Quebec's former upper chamber. In use until 1968, the National Assembly has become a unicameral parliament. This room is now used for public hearings and ceremonies,

MN: I actually stumbled on my job by accident. I graduated university with a science degree but during the summer months I would be working for the Provincial Parks System as a Park Entrepreneur doing public education. Once I graduated I was fortunate to apply and receive the position of a Tour Officer. I had always been interested in politics growing up, but I never imagined I would be teaching civics on a daily basis as a career.

CPR: *What are some interesting questions you tend to get on a daily basis and how do you handle some tough political questions from time to time?*

BC: I have worked both in the federal Parliament and in British Columbia legislature, yet the most commonly asked questions I receive are: "What's that church?"; "What's in that mall?"; or "Where do we check in for the hotel?" It seems that sometimes people walk over to this ornate building and they don't know what the building is. They tend to have

questions about what happens here exactly which I think serves as a great learning opportunity for us to educate people about the role of MLAs, the legislature and Canada's political system.

QC: It's interesting you mention hotels because in French, when we refer to the National Assembly building, it's called "L'hôtel du Parlement". Therefore, when people come in, they ask: "So do you have any rooms here?" The building is also quite ornate and many people think that it might be a museum. These comments also serve as an opportunity to explain what takes place in it.

MN: One of the commonly asked questions we get is how much do we pay the Queen and what role the Queen serves in Canada. American tourists are always very interested in comparing and contrasting the American and the Canadian systems of government. However, there is some difficulty in understanding the separation between the Head of State and the Head

of Government. This is always a good experience to enlighten people about how things work in Canada.

NB: We also get very similar questions. One of the funniest questions I have received was a couple from the United States that was wondering why we had a legislature in Fredericton when they still believed that we were in the province of Quebec.

PC1: On a bit of a lighter note, a child recently asked me how many light bulbs were in Parliament and how they were all changed. These questions really keep us on our toes and make us think about questions we may not have ever considered before.

CPR: How knowledgeable and aware about the Canadian system have visitors, and especially Canadian visitors, proven to be?

PC2: One thing that has become very evident to me are the many different backgrounds that Canadians come from and the wide degree of knowledge they have. Sometimes I've had to describe what voting is to certain families and what the first-past-the-post voting system is; in other cases people have proven to be very knowledgeable, which I think reflects the mosaic of the Canadian people.

MN: One of the most rewarding things about my job is educating new Canadians about how our system works. It's amazing to be that frontline person and engage with them. But something I've found is that people don't understand the different levels of government and jurisdiction. Some people might ask questions such as, "Where is Justin Trudeau's office?" It never ceases to surprise me how many people are misinformed about that.

NB: Most visitors that come in for a tour fall into two categories, they are either there to learn about the parliamentary process or they've been to many legislatures before and they want to know the intricacies of this particular building. I find this interesting as it reflects in the approach that we take with our visitors during tours.

ON: Back in 1990s during the Amalgamation of the City of Toronto, there was a lot of anger towards the Ontario Legislature. One thing I noticed was that a lot of people were coming to the building more to learn about the system because they were angry. However, it was that anger that ended up spurring a lot of changes within the legislature. Before, people felt that the building at Queen's Park was very intimidating;

but we are always working towards making it more family-oriented and ensuring that the tours are taking place for people to come in and learn.

CPR: What activity or event can you recommend for visitors?

QC: During the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Open House, on June 24th, we offer self-guided tours of the Parliament building, parts of which are not usually open to the public such as the Press Conference Room, the Premier's Room and the clock tower which can only be visited that day.

BC: We have a summer program called The Parliamentary Players. It's a big crowd pleaser and also the way I initially got involved with the legislature. It runs from Victoria long weekend to Labour Day. The Parliamentary Players bring to life historical characters of BC's past on tour and with vignettes on the front steps of the Buildings.

PC1: I really encourage visitors to take a guided tour of the Centre Block of Parliament because it's the best way to learn not only about the political process but also about the history, art and the architecture of the building. We also have two types of specialized tours that we offer throughout the school year for elementary school students. One is called Searching for Symbols and the other is Follow that Bill where we focus more on participation to foster understanding about our system. For example, we have students act out the necessary steps required to turn a bill into a law.

MN: We have Doors Open Winnipeg which happens in late May or early June where a lot of the heritage buildings in Winnipeg become open to the public to explore. We participate in that program every year. During the year we have exhibits on the history of Manitoba, to mark commemorative dates and a variety of art exhibits.

ON: About 20 years ago, the Ontario legislature began to re-evaluate its programs in order to try and make them more interactive. We introduced a new program for children where they would be able to come in and dress up in the costumes of the Table Officers and participate in a debate with their classmates. The goal is to introduce more family-oriented activities. For example, we introduced a March Break program, Family Fun Fridays and Weekend Explorers where families can participate in activities such as crafts and a scavenger hunt.

CPR: How are you engaging youth and fostering their civic engagement through different programs?

BC: Last year we partnered a new program with the Royal British Columbia Museum directly across the street from the British Columbia Legislature called "Governance and Beyond." At the museum, elementary school children look at Indigenous forms of governance in the morning and later they cross over to the legislature to learn about Canada's local, provincial and federal governance.

PC2: Our tour guides are well educated when it comes to the content of the building itself as well as the parliamentary process. However, one thing we work on continuously is adapting our tours and making them palatable for young audiences. The other day for example, I gave an entire tour of the Centre Block using the metaphor of Parliament as a pizza restaurant for young visitors under the age of 8. This worked quite well and the children seemed captivated. It's definitely a matter of reading the people that come in for tours as much as possible.

MN: Especially with young audiences, you have to make your tours interesting and entertaining. Sometimes students may not be enthusiastic when learning about the political system. As a tour guide, I think of it as one of my primary responsibilities to package the information for the audience in a very palatable way and make the information feel applicable to them.

ON: We have a few programs that try to engage students outside of the classroom directly such as the Legislative Page program for students in Grades 7 and 8 in Ontario. The students are at the legislature for two to five weeks working on the floor of the legislature. This allows these students to really develop their interest in politics as they are in the middle of the action. Several pages have actually been elected as MPPs, including current MPP Monte McNaughton. We have also introduced programs through the Speaker's Office that are engaging youth such as the Youth Arts Program. Here, it's not just about the politics, there is also room for artistic expression. Most importantly, we have covered every single grade with our programming, reaching every age group and topic.

CPR: What is an interesting fact you can share or something that a visitor must see when they visit?

PC2: The Memorial Chamber is definitely worth a mention. Inside the Chamber there are seven books commemorating different conflicts in which Canada has been involved. These books include the names of Canadians who have died in military service. Every day at 11am, one page of each book is turned. One visitor brought up how incredible it is that Canada commemorates its fallen soldiers daily, right here in the Parliament building.

PC1: To add to that, the Memorial Chamber is actually found in the Peace Tower and what many Canadians don't know is that the bell sound you hear is actually a musical instrument with 53 bells called the carillon. We have the Dominion Carillonneur, Andrea McCrady who plays the instrument daily at noon. She plays "O Canada" every day but we have also heard *Game of Thrones*, *Star Wars*, Mozart, you name it, we've heard it. Dr. McCrady also publishes her daily concert schedule ahead of time on <http://www.ourcommons.ca> so we know what to expect.

QC: When we look at the main facade of the parliament, we see 26 bronze statues of the men and women who made their mark on the history of Quebec and French America. It is very much a historical building as it pays tribute to key figures, including founders, explorers, soldiers, missionaries, politicians and public administrators. When people enter the National Assembly Chamber, their first reaction is, "Wow!" The Legislative Council Chamber is also interesting because Quebec is one of the few provinces that had a Senate, which was later abolished in 1968 and, not many people know that we had a bicameral system.

MN: The architecture of the Manitoba Legislature is stunning. It's a textbook example of a neoclassical style architecture. In fact, people are sometimes surprised at how ornate it is. It was constructed during the First World War and the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919. As for an interesting story, there was a construction scandal involving the general contractor of the building who was stealing and misappropriating funds. As a result of that scandal, the Conservative government had been replaced by a Liberal government, which eventually passed the Women's Suffrage Law in 1916, making Manitoba the first province in Canada to enfranchise women.

ON: The highlight for many visitors, I think, is seeing the Chamber. There has been a lot of restoration done to the Chamber which was originally hand painted by Gustav Hahn. The beautiful mural was later covered



Emmanuel Boucher-Fassett offers some information and anecdotes to an attentive audience in the National Assembly's chamber.

over in 1912 and 1913. Over the past 20 years, some art conservationists have been coming in and picking away at little bits and pieces that have been covering it and revealing the original mural. Last summer we were able to reveal the ceiling part of the mural. It's amazing that some of these sections have not been seen for over 100 years.

NB: The New Brunswick Legislature is actually pretty small so it doesn't have the feel of some of the western legislatures. However, people really comment about how inviting it is. The Main Chamber, in particular, is very popular with visitors and its also my favorite section of the building. Another neat feature that we have is our staircase. It is the largest self-supporting staircase in eastern Canada and, I believe, all of Canada.

CPR: Can you share any amusing anecdotes with our readers from a time on the job?

MN: On our central dome, we have a statue of the Golden Boy. It's a large bronze statue and the Golden Boy is covered in gold leaves. One time, I was giving a tour to a group of younger school children. In one of the hallways there was a gentleman doing a photo shoot and he was dressed as the statue. The gentleman had nothing on but a speedo while his entire body was painted gold. The students and I were just blown away, so this definitely made it onto the list of being the most bizarre tour guiding experience for me.

PC1: An anecdote I always like to share during a tour is the fact that usually, once an artwork is created in the building, it is never changed or take it down because it's like a time stamp. The artists who worked on the sculptures in the Senate foyer decided to use this to their advantage and without telling anyone they left their mark on the building. But rather than subtly scribbling their names somewhere, they took it one step further and actually sculpted their own faces onto the walls. Their faces have been up there

now for over 100 years, which visitors find amusing, as do I. On a separate note, it is also very common for parliamentarians to join the tours and share a little bit about their role within the building. The current Speaker of the House of Commons, Geoff Regan, seems to have this sixth sense when we are about to explain the role of the Speaker to visitors and he occasionally comes over to explain it himself. His interpretative techniques have definitely improved.

PC2: To add to that, there was one time when I was giving a tour to the High Commissioner of New Zealand, who wanted to visit Speaker Geoff Regan's office. We stopped by the office and the secretary told us that he actually wasn't in but we were still welcome to tour. Inside, there is a historical portrait of Sir Winston Churchill looking grim, directly into the camera. As I was telling the story of this portrait, which had taken place in this very office and is now a world famous photo, Speaker Geoff Regan came out from behind me saying, "I couldn't have told the story better myself." He had actually stopped by with his wife at that time and listened in.

QC: On a similar note, we have a pop-up screen in our main hall where all the portraits of our legislative members are accessible. When we touch the member's photo, their data sheet comes up along with all their political functions. Every time one particular member walks in the hall, he touches his picture and leaves it there for everyone to see!

ON: In our lobby we have the parliamentary Mace of Upper Canada on display. I always found it interesting over the years how American visitors react to the fact that during the War of 1812, the

Mace of Upper Canada was taken away by American soldiers in 1813. On a number of occasions, American visitors feel bad about it and personally apologize to me afterwards.

CPR: Thank you to everyone for participating in this Roundtable. I think this was a great opportunity to learn about each other's respective legislatures and about the Parliament of Canada but to also share the wonderful programming that takes place across Canada.

PC2: Hearing so much about other legislatures has given me a lot of interest in coming and visiting next time I'm in your respective provinces.

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<http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/home.do>

Quebec

<http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/index.html>

Parliament of Canada

<https://visit.parl.ca/index-e.html>

Seminar: Members and Their Constituency

Every Member of Parliament represents a constituency. Yet the amount of attention paid to the Member-constituency relationship by scholars is quite small compared to its importance in our democratic system. Members must spend time building connections to their constituencies, understanding concerns, and mediating these tensions within a party caucus if party policy conflicts with what an MP is hearing locally. Additional responsibilities such as being in cabinet or having a constituency far from Ottawa where travel is difficult can create other challenges. The Canadian Study of Parliament Group organized a seminar on March 16, 2018 which brought parliamentarians, academics, parliamentary staff and journalists together to explore ideas of constituency representation and engagement. This article summarizes the seminar's sessions and provides some insight into how these various groups of stakeholders think about the nature of constituencies.

Will Stos

Connecting with Constituents: Observations on how MPs engage at home

Library of Parliament analyst Madalina Chesoi presented research she conducted while serving as a parliamentary intern at the same time as the most recent parliament was sworn in. Most MPs in the 42nd parliament were rookies, and this meant that dozens of newly elected politicians suddenly became responsible for opening up and managing something similar to a small business. Most constituency offices have two to four staff members responsible for case work and referral services. Each office serves about 100,000 citizen-clients, though some remote or rural-urban ridings may have more than one constituency office serving a smaller, but more dispersed population.

Chesoi conducted 13 semi-structured interviews with MPs and two more with House of Commons staff. She learned that the main concerns of MPs were: 1) logistical needs (physical working space, lease agreements and technology) and, 2) constituency casework. Some MPs expressed frustration in the lag time required to set up telephone and internet lines.

These delays are understandable given the scope of the offices, but she says some new MPs would have liked more guidance in the meantime. Chesoi noted that the orientation sessions for new MPs did not address constituency concerns much. She concluded by stating that all of her interviewees wanted greater structure for these support systems for new MPs, but they differed for how this should be accomplished. Some raised the possibility of webinars or a standard welcome package with checklist.

Initially scheduled for the seminar's second session, organizers asked Ottawa-Vanier MP Mona Fortier to speak earlier so that she could attend a meeting in her constituency later that morning. Fortier said her entrepreneurial background helped with the work of setting up a constituency office. Elected on April 3, 2017, she decided to locate her office beside the MPP's office, noting that she works closely with her provincial counterpart and local councillors. The long-time former MP's office was in a less visible location and she decided she wanted and needed more signage. Among her immediate concerns were building a team and determining how much she could do with the funding provided. Fortier hired three people for her office and asked her executive assistant to work from this office. She also has a part-time employee who serves as a liaison with the large Muslim community in her riding. This hire has helped with outreach and building connections greatly.

Will Stos is Editor of the Canadian Parliamentary Review.

About 80 percent of the cases opened by her office deal with immigration matters. The rest are a combination of pension issues, requests to help a constituent look for work, or other matters. With so many federal employees living in her constituency, Fortier told the audience that they would be surprised to learn that only five of her current cases deal with the Phoenix system payroll problems. She said people are scared to come forward to seek help and that more outreach was necessary.

Fortier explained that MPs are entrepreneurs in a sense, but they also have a social role. For example, a constituent who was being abused by her husband came for help to get out of that situation. “I’m also the bearer of bad news,” she said. Every week she must meet with people to break the news that a relative can’t come to Canada despite doing everything she could to further the case with Immigration officials. “This is still the best job in the world, but it does come with some hard realities,” she added.

Louise Cockram, a PhD candidate in Political Science at Carleton University reported on her research. She conducted interviews with 35 former Nova Scotia MLAs who served from 1993 to 2013. She sought out to see if Samara’s similar project with federal MPs produced findings that were applicable to the provincial scene. Among her interviewees, MLAs prioritised constituency work and said they felt that was the most important aspect of their job. Some former church clergy MLAs compared it to church service work, while other likened it to other professions such as social work or legal aid work. Cockram described the intake process and case management as being similar to a law firm’s process.

In terms of calls and cases, road work/paving was very important for some rural MLAs, while others dealt with electric bills and being disconnected. She told the story of an MLA visited by a single mother who said she didn’t have food to feed her family for the weekend. He rushed home, got some deer meat his son had prepared, and headed back to the office to give it to her. She said this example demonstrates the level of individual service these MLAs offer. Of course, other calls dealing with a blocked toilet, or resume-writing help, may be handled differently. Cockram reported that urban MLAs received different, but similar calls, including calls for medical assistance. Junior cabinet ministers and backbenchers said they didn’t feel they had much of a role or power in the House; but doing constituency work gave them a sense of doing meaningful work.

Royce Koop, and associate professor of Political Science at the University of Manitoba, discussed his new book, *Representation in Action*. Koop and his co-authors were interested in ‘practice of representation,’ and concerned by literature that overemphasizes discipline in parliament, overlooks agency and adaptability often found in constituencies. One of the central questions they hoped to answer was why MPs develop different styles when representing their constituents?

Koop explained that representation is “an ongoing process of constructing and maintaining connection between MPs and constituents.” An MP’s representational style (overall patterns in connection-building activities) is based on policy connections, service connections, symbolic connections, and party connections. Three factors tend to influence why certain styles develop: personal goals, riding context, experiential learning. While doing research for the book he observed 11 MPs by spending between four to seven days with each in their constituencies and Ottawa and conducted semi-structured interviews.

Koop used the balance of his presentation to do a case study involving Churchill—Keewatinook Aski MP Nikki Ashton. First elected in 2008, the Manitoba NDP MP has developed a service-oriented representational style. She is concerned with construction and maintenance of service connections and demonstrating service through presence. Koop said in the authors observations of her at work in the constituency there was an emphasis on being present and being seen. Visibility was important because it’s a vast rural constituency and less easy to get media attention for issues. Moreover, inaccessibility necessitates presence. Among her personal goals, Ashton is focussed on human rights at home and particularly concerns shaped by nature of her riding which is Northern, rural/dispersed, and containing a sizable Indigenous population. Koop related that he and his co-authors often heard Ashton saying: “There’s no election, I’m just visiting.” This phrase underscores a sense of being marginalized and ignored by politicians except around election time.

He concluded by highlighting two broad themes in representation in Canada: 1) Diversity: in practice of representation, also in how Canadians experience representation; and 2) Agency and adaptability: MPs make choices about types of representatives they’ll be and their representational styles are dynamic.



Moderator Anna Esselment introduces the first panel. (Left to right): Kelly Blidook, Madalina Chesoi, Louise Cockram, Royce Koop, Anthony M. Sayers, and Mona Fortier.

A final presenter, Anthony M. Sayers, an associate professor of Political Science at the University of Calgary, titled his talk “From Chaos to Cohesion: The Engine Room of Canadian Democracy.” Sayers explained that Canada has one of the highest turnover rates in democratic world, where one in two MPs can expect to lose their seats at an election. In the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia about one in four or five representatives will lose their office at any general election. At the electoral level there is flexibility (high rates of turnover), but at the cabinet level there is high level of rigidity (low turnover in governing party).

The Canadian system, with its first-past-the-post electoral system that prioritizes geography, also has few organizational roles for MPs in Canada. This practice is unusual compared to other democracies. With, arguably, the most open process for the candidate nominations in the democratic world, Canadian parties are also highly permeable (members and candidates enter and exit easily).

Sayers noted that Canadian parties have an unusually high reliance on raising funds from voters and local campaigns remain key collection points for this activity. When local things matter, and if the party doesn’t control things as much there, that’s where MPs devote their energy, he said. Sayers explained that it’s a fairly remarkable dynamic where MPs often vow to do the right thing and go back to help the community even knowing they may still lose the next election. While some of this representation and service work is in self-interest, there is also sense of being a good democrat in the system. Many MPs conclude that there’s little value in other work, so it’s best to simply help constituents.

On the Ground: The Practice of MPs in their Constituencies

Following a short break, three former MPs offered their reflections on how they served their respective constituencies. Françoise Boivin, first elected as a Liberal MP for Gatineau in 2004 and then re-elected



(Left to right): Peter Millikin, Christian Paradis, and Françoise Boivin.

to the riding as an NDP MP in 2011, told the audience that she initially had little idea of how to set up a constituency office or what services she should offer. Many of her requests dealt with immigration issues. While there is an impression that an MP does all the work for these people, they simply help to direct them to the right department. Sometimes they can help speed up the process with help of people in the departments.

Boivin said most of her hires were very green and inexperienced, but she relied on the personal quality of the staff to help with these files. During her first term in office the unstable minority government made it difficult to spend as much time in the constituency as she would have liked. When she was defeated in 2006 she vowed to concentrate on being present in her riding if she were ever re-elected.

Some things had changed when she returned in 2011, however. Social media and Facebook helped her to foster close ties with many constituents without necessarily seeing them in person. She would use

Facebook to explain what she would be talking about in the House of Commons and asked for feedback about issues her constituents thought she should be addressing. Boivin suggested that every party can and should do more to help newly elected MPs navigate their responsibilities in their constituencies.

Peter Milliken, a former Liberal MP from Kingston, noted that since his constituency was close to Ottawa he was able to return home almost every weekend. Slots for appointments during these weekends filled up quickly. While in opposition, many of these meetings dealt with helping people with passport applications, since Kingston did not have a passport office at the time; once in government more people would come in to discuss issues or problems they were having.

Milliken explained the importance of being attentive to his constituents and visible in the constituency was made clear to him the year before he won office. Flora MacDonald, a popular MP and cabinet minister, was no longer living in Kingston and constituents were

expressing dissatisfaction with lack of time she spent in the constituency office. He recalled attending a concert where MacDonald was also present. When she departed at intermission, he could hear and see people in the crowd being miffed that she had left halfway through the event. He said he avoided doing this like the plague.

Milliken raised the importance of co-operating with MPPs and municipal politicians. Even though the issues people coming to meet him about weren't always in his jurisdiction, he could still offer to help them find the right person and leave a positive impression. Once he became Speaker, things changed dramatically with constituency work. Getting word about issues of concern to cabinet ministers was easier, but he was criticized at campaign time or being ineffective. Milliken said he believed he actually had more sway as Speaker than as a backbench MP who could spend more time in the constituency because the ministers wouldn't like to say no to a request from the Speaker, at least not immediately.

He concluded with a note of concern – there have been fewer questions in the House about constituency matters recently. MPs are often told what their topic for Question Period is and sometimes even the exact text to use. Previously, constituency questions often received coverage in the local paper.

Former Conservative MP Christian Paradis represented Mégantic—L'Érable from 2006-2015. The main issues in his riding were the asbestos mines, forestry, supply management (circovirus disease affected hog producers), internet access (remote areas) and old manufacturing.

Paradis noted how frustrating it was not to have any system to transfer files from a previous representative to a newly elected one. Although confidentiality was cited as a reason for not passing along files, he didn't understand the lack of continuity. Through carefully managing his budget, Paradis was able to have three constituency offices (including satellite offices) to better serve older constituents who would not have

been able to travel to the riding's main population centre.

When he was appointed Quebec lieutenant for his party, Paradis said he became stressed that he was away from the riding much more often. To prevent constituents from thinking he would become an absentee MP in the role, he used social media to post photos of every time he was in his riding. Although he was only there about 40 per cent of the time, Paradis said he was 'seen' to be much more active.

Paradis concluded by discussing the Lac Mégantic fire. Although he was asked to be his government's spokesperson, the moment he learned of the disaster he said he only had his constituency hat on. He could not represent the government when all his focus was simply being there for his people.

During a Q&A period, an audience member asked if taking Fridays off for constituency business and family time would assist in helping MPs with their work-life balance. Milliken said he supports such an idea but would also favour a return to night sittings. Since Members now get served lunch in their respective lobbies, there is little social interaction anymore. Night sittings and return to sitting together at the parliamentary restaurant for dinner would do wonders for inter-party co-operation. Boivin said the difficulty is if Friday sittings are cut, someone will fill it with something else.

Another questioner asked about how MPs establish boundaries for the type of help they provide. Do they ever say: "I could probably help this constituent, but should I?" Milliken told attendees that an MP always has to try to help, but it does not have to be done publicly. Paradis offered that "the golden rule is you listen to everybody, but sometimes you can't help." Boivin explained that the rule for her in the riding is uniformity of service. "Sometimes a person can be more convincing than another, but our job is not to be their immigration lawyer," she said. "We direct them to resources they need."

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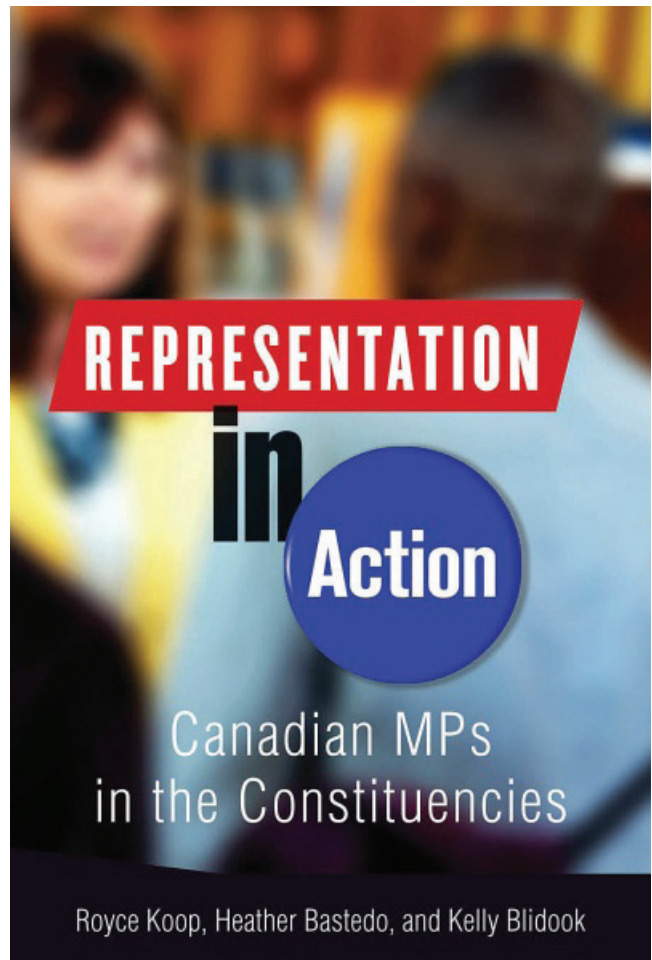
Parliamentary Bookshelf: Reviews

Representation in Action: Canadian MPs in the Constituencies, by Royce Koop, Heather Bastedo and Kelly Blidook, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018), 235 pp.

There is no doubt that Canadians take the work of their Members of Parliament for granted and there is a reason for this: almost all MPs are elected because of the label they represent, not because of their personal qualities or politics. Parliamentary representation has rarely worked out in practice the way it was supposed to in theory. The democratic ideal was that electoral districts would choose one of their own to represent the region without compromise within a unifying assembly. Instead, political parties have used their own organizing and ideation powers and quickly overcame whatever an individual might offer (exceptions do exist, but they are extremely rare). Members of Parliament are seen as practically anonymous and interchangeable, utterly dependent on the party and programme they represented during the previous electoral contest.

The role of MPs, in Canada as in Great Britain, was basically untouched for 200 years. Two things changed this in the postwar period. First, government expanded and offered a wider variety of services—and inevitably created administrative issues in the implementation of programs. Secondly, the democratic impulses of the 1960s gave expression to the idea that more MP involvement would help resolve problems and create a more solid link between citizens and parliament. As problems multiplied and as the State sought to be more responsive, constituency offices were funded in the early 1970s. The initiative was modest and came with just enough money to rent storefront space in the riding and one or two relatively poorly paid administrative assistants who could respond to the needs of residents. The idea that Members of Parliament were responsible to represent the State instead of the opposite was cemented.

There is a small literature in Canada that examines the role of MPs. David Docherty's *Mr. Smith Goes to Ottawa* focused on the MP as legislator. Anthony



M. Sayers's *Parties, Candidates and Constituency Campaigns in Canadian Elections* valiantly argued that constituencies were sufficiently unique and that riding associations did make the difference in electoral outcomes. David V.J. Bell and Frederick J. Fletcher's edited *Reaching the Voter: Constituency campaigning in Canada* (Vol 20 of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing) came to a different conclusion, with most contributors concluding that the 1988 local-level efforts were nothing more than reproductions of the national campaigns. R.K. Carty's

Canadian Political parties in the Constituencies (Vol. 23 in the Royal Commission) also looked at the party on the local level but hardly mentioned the candidate. In his various works, Peter McLeod specifically examined the workings of constituency offices and the functions of the people who are employed by them.

Royce Koop, Heather Bastedo and Kelly Blidook bring a new perspective on the role of MPs in *Representation in Action*. The book is innovative in that it is the first time scholars report on MP behaviour at home by personally observing their subjects in action (this method is still common in some of the better journalism). In each case, one of the writers spent a few days in 2013 accompanying the parliamentarian in his/her journeys in the riding, reporting on meetings with stakeholders, voters, media, etc. This is an important distinction—readers looking for trends in parliamentary committee involvement, policy-making roles or even private-bill generation will be frustrated. This book is about how members of the Canadian House of Commons cultivate the rapport with their constituents.

The choice of MPs was carefully made so as to present a wide perspective on the many roles of MPs. Men and women are represented; attention is devoted to ensuring a balance between rural, semi-rural and urban ridings. Not all provinces are represented, but the effort is laudable and the composite portrait is convincing. The book is structured around three detailed case studies and each is given a chapter: Leon Benoit in Alberta, Tony Clement in Ontario, and Megan Leslie in Nova Scotia. Another chapter examines three different representational styles (Niki Ashton in Churchill, Manitoba; Scott Simms in Bonavista-Gander-Grand Falls-Windsor in Newfoundland; Ted Hsu in Kingston, Ontario). A final chapter reports on one author's (Heather Bastedo) particular observations of five members in densely populated urban areas in the Greater Toronto Area (Andrew Cash, Mike Wallace, John McKay), and two in Greater Montreal (Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet and Pierre Nantel).

The authors focus on four particular types of “connections” MPs make with their constituency (policy, service, symbolic and party) and report on how the individuals they observed fulfilled their roles. Naturally, there is a wide variety of practices. Some MPs are drawn to public service because of their policy expertise and use it to their advantage among key members of the riding; others because they want to help their fellow citizens find better access to government services. The authors emphasize the “symbolic” connections MPs make with their electors and detractors: where they meet, how and at what time. The intention is to draw stronger ties between individuals. A good example is the choice of Tim Hortons donut shops to meet people (and to hold court!)—a place to see and be seen that is far more agreeable a space than a drab office (where the real work of helping constituents actually happens).

The authors draw a variety of conclusions that are hardly ground-breaking, namely that the individual traits of MPs will shape the nature of their service, as will the nature of the riding they represent. The book is clearly written, if often repetitive and prone to grand declarations of the obvious, but it probably does justice to the individual MPs involved. Portraits like these are useful, but best situated in richer socio-demographic studies. For instance, we never learn the ages of the MPs involved, and cannot judge if they are older or younger than the average for their cohort. We learn practically nothing of their educational, professional, family or social backgrounds, or how long they have served in parliament (again, context would bring more insight to the enterprise). This is not journalism but a rather cold analysis written under the fluorescent lights of the laboratory. All the same, the approach is novel and may yet set a baseline for future studies as others seek to measure the changing role of MPs in a new era of technological change.

Patrice Dutil

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New and Notable Titles

A selection of recent publications relating to parliamentary studies prepared with the assistance of the Library of Parliament (March 2018-May 2018)

Eichhorn, Jan. "Votes at 16: New insights from Scotland on enfranchisement." *Parliamentary Affairs* 71 (2), April 2018, pp. 365-91.

- This article presents new evidence on the experience of 16-year olds voting after the reduction of the voting age in Scotland following the 2014 independence referendum.

Geddes, Marc. "Committee hearings of the UK Parliament: Who gives evidence and does this matter?" *Parliamentary Affairs* 71 (2), April 2018, pp. 283-304.

- While evidence hearings by House of Commons select committees have received increasing attention by the public and the media in recent years, academic research on this topic has remained rather thin. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative methods, this article examines this topic. It begins by explaining why evidence is important: (i) it is fundamental to sustain detailed scrutiny; (ii) it builds individual-level and institutional-level expertise; and (iii) the range of evidence gathered is used by committees to engage with the public. The article then presents empirical data of the pool of witnesses on which committees rely, which arguably does not reflect the UK population. This data analysis raises important further questions over the representative claims of committees.

Gerson, Jen. "Crashing the party." *The Walrus*, 15 (4), May 15, 2018 p. 13.

- Our process for choosing political leaders is flawed.

Greenberg, Daniel. "Editorial - Standards of drafting of primary legislation in the United Kingdom." *Statute Law Review* 39 (1), 2018, pp. v-vii,

- A particularly egregiously poor piece of statutory drafting would doubtless have attracted considerable concern and caused considerable

confusion had it not mercifully escaped from the statute book as a result of the last General Election...

Hargrave, Lotte. "Intimidation of candidates and others during political campaigns: the report and recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life." *Constitution Unit*, March 29, 2018, 4p

- Following the 2017 general election, the Prime Minister asked the Committee on Standards in Public Life to conduct an independent, non-partisan inquiry into the issue of intimidation and harassment during elections. The report undertakes a review of the intimidation of parliamentary candidates, a third of whom experienced harassment and intimidation during the campaign...

Kennon, Andrew. "Proxy voting in the [UK] House of Commons: How could it work in practice." *The Constitution Unit Blog*, April 24, 2018, 3p.

- In February, the House of Commons passed by acclamation a motion to permit a system of voting by proxy for Members of Parliament who have recently adopted or given birth to a child. Ahead of the Procedure Committee's report on the matter, former Clerk of Committees Andrew Kennon offers his view on how a system of proxy voting might work, and some of the problems its designers will have to consider.

Strong, James. "The war powers of the British parliament: What has been established and what remains unclear?" *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 20 (1), 2018, pp. 19-34.

- Britain's parliament has historically lacked formal war powers. Since 2003, however, MPs have voted five times on military action, including famously vetoing intervention in Syria in 2013. A new convention developed that - regardless of the legal

position - governments should permit the House of Commons the opportunity to veto certain military deployments. This article explores what we now know - and what we do not - about the British War Powers Convention.

Strong, James. "Confidence and caretakers: Some less-obvious implications of the *Fixed-Term Parliaments Act*." *The Political Quarterly* 89 (2), 2018, pp. 1-8.

- This article explores the 2011 *Fixed-term Parliaments Act*'s less-obvious implications. First, it discusses why Theresa May found calling the 2017 election so straightforward, and notes what this implies for how *FTPA* works. Second, it looks at executive-legislative relations. *FTPA* removed the government's ability to designate controversial parliamentary votes as matters of confidence and introduced a 14-day cushion between a no-confidence vote and Parliament's dissolution. In the process, it shifted the balance of power from ministers to backbenchers, to an extent potentially greater than most observers recognise. Third, it considers the more outlandish possibilities raised by *FTPA*'s imposition of a 14-day waiting period after a government's defeat on a no-confidence motion before a new election can be called. It is possible, for example, for rebel MPs from the governing party to use the no-confidence procedure to force concessions from the cabinet. Finally, it assesses *FTPA*'s long-term survival prospects, and what repeal would involve.

Taflaga, Marija. "Does it really matter if we call Australian politics 'semi-parliamentary'?" *Democratic Audit UK* blog, April 26, 2018, 4p.

- Australia's 'hybrid' executive-legislative relationship, whereby the two chambers of parliament have distinct and separate powers, has been described in numerous ways, including 'semi-parliamentarism'. The author argues that the terminology matters, and the term helps both politicians and political scientists clarify how the Australian system works, and understand the political incentives and behaviours it produces.

White, Hannah. "[UK] MPs should not be their own judge and jury when accused of harassment." *Institute for Government*, 2p, March 12, 2018.

- The UK House of Commons must hand over the investigation and sanction of bullying and harassment to an independent body.

Wollaston, Sarah (Chair). "Changing committee practice and procedure: enhancing effective working." *House of Commons Liaison Committee - First Report of Session 2017-19*, report, together with formal minutes relating to the report. HC 922, 17p, 29 March 2018.

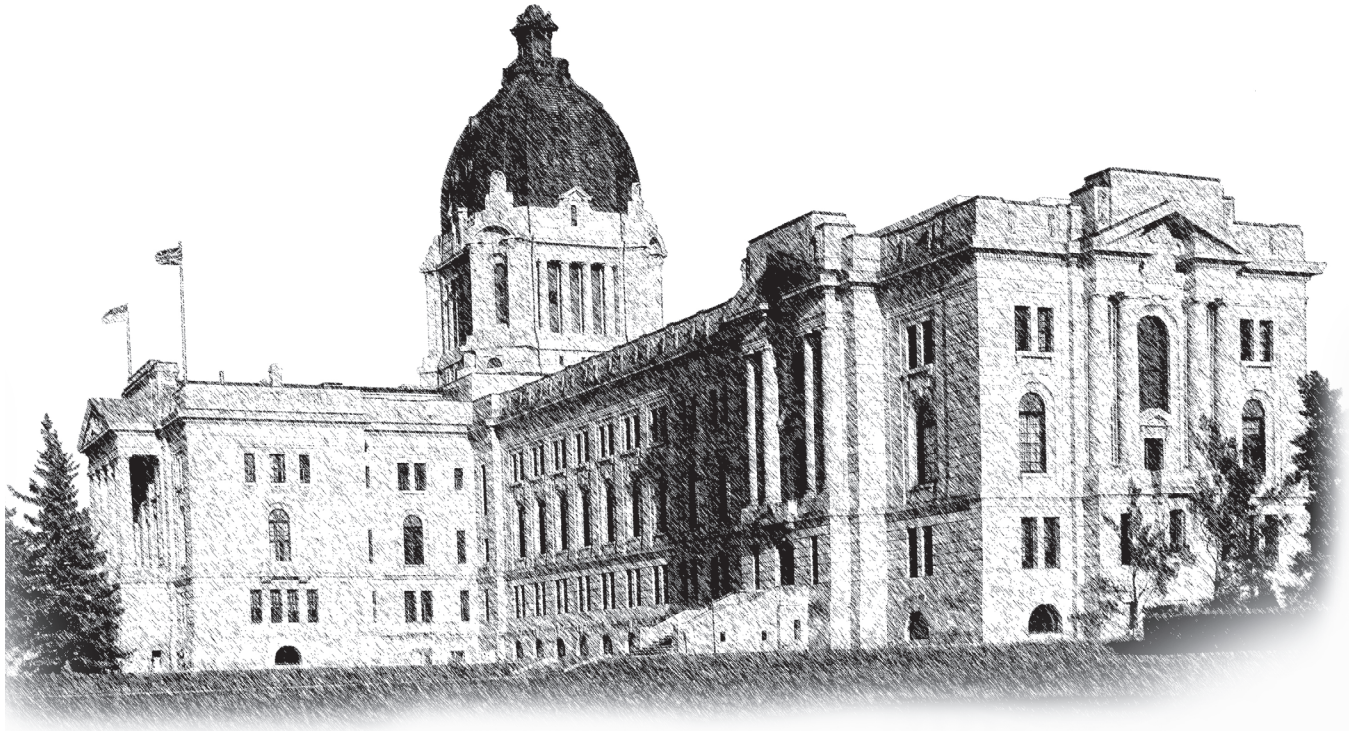
- This report proposes two minor changes to the practice and procedures of the House relating to its select committees. There is a consensus in the Liaison Committee that these adjustments would enhance the effective working of the House's committees. The proposals concern: simplified arrangements for joint working between committees, and the admission of a member of a Chair's personal staff to deliberative meetings of committees.

Castonguay, Alec. « Jusqu'où iront les sénateurs? » [How far will senators go?] *L'actualité* 43 (3), april 2018, pp. 22-7.

- Showing more independence than ever, senators are no longer hesitating to call bills into question and influence the country's direction. And this is for the better, in the opinion of those who are leading the charge.

Pelletier, Benoît. « La modification et la réforme de la Constitution canadienne. » [Amending and reforming the Canadian Constitution] *Revue générale de droit* 47 (2), 2017, pp. 459-517.

- Constitutional reform in Canada has for a long time been a laborious process, marked by highs and lows, surprising outcomes and resounding failures. At the heart of this reform is of course the constitutional amending procedure, which has varied according to the era. Before patriation, we had to turn to the British Parliament in order to get changes made to the more substantive parts of the Canadian Constitution. Since 1982, the constitutional amending procedure has comprised five formulas, three of which require, to varying degrees, the participation of the federal and provincial orders of government. To these already quite stringent requirements must be added various factors that add to the difficulty of its implementation. It is therefore not surprising that political actors and the courts have developed various para-constitutional adaptation strategies, that is to say substitute mechanisms to be used instead of the formal constitutional amending procedure...



Saskatchewan

Resignation of Speaker

On January 5, 2018, **Corey Tochor** resigned as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. In the absence of a Speaker, *The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007* assigns the duties of the Speaker to the Deputy Speaker. Consequently, the Deputy Speaker, **Glen Hart**, assumed interim responsibility for the duties of Speaker including the role of Chair of the Board of Internal Economy until the Assembly elected a new Speaker.

Election of Speaker

The first item of business on the resumption of the second session of the twenty-eighth legislature was the election of Speaker. The election took place on March 12, 2018. The election set a record for the number of candidates and for the first time a Member of the Opposition was a candidate. There were seven candidates:

- **Danielle Chartier**, MLA for Saskatoon Riversdale
- **Mark Docherty**, MLA for Regina Coronation Park
- **Glen Hart**, MLA for Last Mountain-Touchwood
- **Delbert Kirsch**, MLA for Batoche
- **Warren Michelson**, MLA for Moose Jaw North

- **Eric Olauson**, MLA for Saskatoon University
- **Colleen Young**, MLA for Lloydminster.

On the fifth ballot, the members elected Mr. Docherty to serve as Speaker. Mr. Hart will remain in the Deputy Speaker role.

New Leaders of Political Parties

The Saskatchewan Party held their leadership convention on January 27, 2018. Party members chose **Scott Moe** as the leader of the Saskatchewan Party over five other candidates, on the fifth and final ballot. Mr. Moe was sworn into office as Premier of Saskatchewan on February 2, 2018 at a ceremony at Government House by outgoing Lieutenant Governor, **Vaughn Solomon Schofield**.

The Saskatchewan New Democratic Party held their leadership convention on March 3, 2018 and selected a new Leader of the Opposition. **Ryan Meili** was selected to lead the party with a victory over **Trent Wotherspoon**.

New Cabinet

On February 2, 2018, Premier Moe announced the appointment of his first Cabinet. The new cabinet included 17 cabinet posts. **Gordon Wyant** was appointed as Deputy Premier.

One MLA is entered cabinet for the first time:

- **Warren Kaeding**, Minister of Government Relations, and Minister of First Nations, Metis and Northern Affairs.

Four MLAs are re-entering cabinet:

- **Tina Beaudry-Mellor**, Minister of Advanced Education, Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan, and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women;
- **Ken Cheveldayoff**, Minister of Central Services, Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission, and Minister Responsible for the Provincial Capital Commission;
- **Jeremy Harrison**, Minister of Export and Trade Development, and Minister of Immigration and Careers Training;
- **Gordon Wyant**, Minister of Education.

Two ministers changed portfolios:

- **Bronwyn Eyre**, Minister of Energy and Resources, Minister Responsible for SaskWater, and Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy;
- **Christine Tell**, Minister of Corrections and Policing, and Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation.

Ten other cabinet ministers retained their current portfolios:

- **Dustin Duncan**, Minister of Environment, Minister Responsible for the Water Security Agency, and Minister Responsible for SaskPower;
- **Joe Hargrave**, Minister of Crown Investments Corporation and Minister responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance;
- **Donna Harpauer**, Minister of Finance;
- **Gene Makowsky**, Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport, Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, and Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan;
- **David Marit**, Minister of Highways and Infrastructure, Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds, and Minister Responsible for Priority Saskatchewan;
- **Paul Merriman**, Minister of Social Services;
- **Don Morgan**, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Minister Responsible for Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister Responsible for Workers' Compensation Board, Minister Responsible for the Global Transportation Hub,

and Minister Responsible for SaskTel;

- **Greg Ottenbreit**, Minister of Rural and Remote Health;
- **Jim Reiter**, Minister of Health;
- **Lyle Stewart**, Minister of Agriculture, and Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance.

By-elections

On March 1, 2018, three by-elections were held in the province. In the constituency of Kindersley, **Ken Francis**, the Saskatchewan Party candidate, was elected to replace retired member **Bill Boyd**. **Everett Hindley**, the Saskatchewan Party candidate, was elected to replace former Premier **Brad Wall** in the constituency of Swift Current; and **Todd Goudy**, the Saskatchewan Party candidate in Melfort, was elected to fill the vacancy left by the passing of **Kevin Phillips**.

Resignation of a Member

On March 12, 2018, **Kevin Doherty**, MLA for Regina Northeast, announced his retirement from politics in order to pursue an opportunity in the private sector.

As a result of the by-election and the resignation of Mr. Doherty, the composition of the Assembly is now 48 Saskatchewan Party members, 12 NDP members, and one vacancy.

Lieutenant Governor

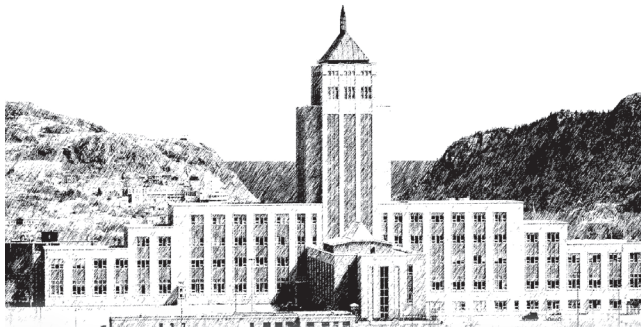
On January 22, 2018, Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** announced the appointment of **W. Thomas Molloy** as Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan. Mr. Molloy is a lawyer, treaty negotiator, and former Chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan. He is a recipient of the Order of Canada and the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

He was installed as Saskatchewan's twenty-second Lieutenant Governor on March 21, 2018 in a ceremony conducted in the Legislative Chamber.

Conclusion of Session

The second session of the twenty-eighth Legislature began on March 12, 2018. Premier Moe announced that the budget would be delayed and introduced on April 10, 2018. This has pushed back the completion of the spring sitting period to May 31, 2018.

Robert Park
Committee Clerk



Newfoundland and Labrador

The House reconvened for the continuation of the Second Session of the 48th General Assembly on February 26 in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Calendar.

The review of the Standing Orders continues. Toward the end of the 2017-2018 sitting, the House approved a provisional amendment providing for a response to Petitions, of not more than 90 seconds in duration, which may be given on the day of the presentation of the Petition or the following day.

The House prorogued on March 12 and convened for the Throne Speech opening the Third Session of the 48th General Assembly on March 13.

The House will make some changes to the estimates procedure this year in that they will refer all estimates to Standing Committees. Traditionally three Heads of Expenditure have been referred to the Committee of Supply. The House also adopted a change to the Standing Orders to permit ministers to appoint other ministers, if need be, to represent them at meetings of the committees examining their departmental estimates.

The House passed a Resolution on March 28 unanimously supporting Government's modernization of harassment policy and urging it to make the necessary changes to legislation to ensure all workers are protected from harassment in the workplace.

The Budget was brought down on March 29 after which the House adjourned for the Easter break to reconvene on April 16.

Elizabeth Murphy
Clerk Assistant



Ontario

Prorogation

The Ontario Legislature prorogued on March 16, 2018 and began its Third Session of the 41st Parliament on March 19, 2018. **Elizabeth Dowdeswell**, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, delivered the Speech from the Throne to open the new session.

Budget

On March 28, 2018, Finance Minister **Charles Sousa** presented Ontario's 2018 Budget. The Minister's Budget speech highlighted proposed investments in health care, child care, home care and mental health.

Membership Changes

A vacancy occurred in the membership of the House following the resignation of MPP **Eric Hoskins**, effective February 26, 2018. Mr. Hoskins was the MPP for the electoral district of St. Paul's and served as the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

MPP **Victor Fedeli** was recognized as Leader of the Official Opposition following MPP **Patrick Brown's** resignation of the position on January 25, 2018. Mr. Brown has been sitting as an Independent Member since February 16, 2018.

Condolences

The House expressed its condolences on the passing of former Members **Norman Jamison**, Member for the electoral district of Norfolk from September 6, 1990 to June 7, 1995 and **Gerry Martiniuk**, Member for the electoral district of Cambridge from June 8, 1995 to September 7, 2011.

Reports by Parliamentary Officers

The House received a number of reports from its Parliamentary Officers:

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, **Dianne Saxe**, tabled the 2017 Greenhouse Gas Progress Report titled *Ontario's Climate Act: From Plan to Progress*.

The Integrity Commissioner, **J. David Wake**, tabled a report concerning the review of expense claims under the *Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002*, for submissions received in October, November and December 2017 and complete as of February 23, 2018.

The temporary Financial Accountability Officer, a position also occupied by Mr. Wake, tabled two reports, *Hydro One: Updated Financial Analysis of the Partial Sale of Hydro One* and *Ontario Health Sector - An Updated Assessment of Ontario Health Spending*. He also tabled a backgrounder titled *Ontario Service Fees in 2017-18*.

The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, **Irwin Elman**, tabled his 2017 Annual Report.

Royal Visit

On March 14, 2018, Their Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians paid a visit to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Their visit included an official meeting with the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and a courtesy call and personal tour of the Legislative Chamber with **Dave Levac**, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Committee Activities

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs held its 2018 Pre-Budget Consultations in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Ottawa, Kitchener-Waterloo and Windsor in January 2018. The Committee heard 123 presentations and received over 80 additional written submissions from agencies, associations, community groups, local administrative bodies, municipalities, organizations, unions and individuals during its consultations. The Committee tabled its Pre-Budget Consultation report in the House on February 26, 2018.

Standing Committee on Justice Policy

In February, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy began consideration of Bill 175, *An Act to implement measures with respect to policing, coroners and forensic laboratories and to enact, amend or repeal certain other statutes and revoke a regulation*. The bill's primary objective was to review how police services should be provided in Ontario, detailing relevant oversight and discipline measures.

The Committee held two days of public hearings on the bill. Presentations and written submissions were received from police associations, municipal leaders, for-profit and not-for-profit security companies, legal clinics and First Nations communities. The bill was time allocated on March 6, 2018, and the Committee held its clause-by-clause consideration of the bill later that day. The Committee reported the amended bill back to the House on March 7, 2018, where it was immediately ordered for Third Reading. The bill passed Third Reading and received Royal Assent the following day.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

During the winter sitting, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts held public hearings to review three additional audits from the 2016 and 2017 annual reports of the Auditor General:

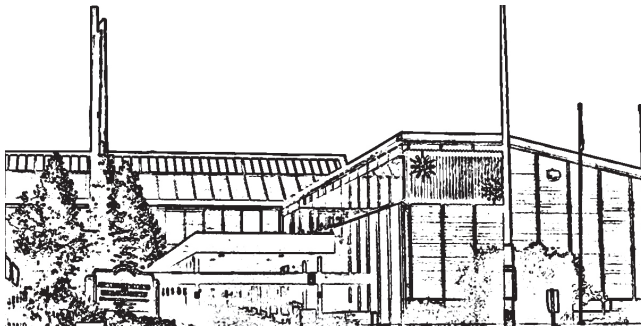
- Metrolinx – Public Transit Construction Contract Awarding and Oversight (2016 Annual Report)
- Public Accounts of the Province (2017 Annual Report)
- Independent Electricity System Operator – Market Oversight and Cybersecurity (2017 Annual Report)

The Committee also adopted a motion requesting that the Auditor General conduct a value-for-money audit of the Tarion Warranty Corporation. Tarion administers the Ontario New Home Warranty Plan and was established as a corporation in 1976 by the Government to regulate new homebuilders and protect rights of new homebuyers. The recently passed Bill 166, *Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, 2017*, included the necessary legislative amendments to the *Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act* to allow the Office of the Auditor General oversight of the corporation.

Standing Committee on Social Policy

The Standing Committee on Social Policy met to consider Bill 193, *An Act to enact Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018 and to amend the Education Act*. The bill set out requirements for sport organizations and schools to oversee concussion prevention, detection, management and improve awareness in amateur competitive sport. The Committee held one day of public hearings on the bill, followed by one day of clause-by-clause consideration. The bill was reported back to the House, as amended, on March 1, 2018 and received Royal Assent on March 7, 2018.

Eric Rennie
Committee Clerk



Yukon

Sitting Dates

The 2018 Spring Sitting of the Second Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly began on March 1, and concluded on the 30th sitting day, April 24.

Bills

The following government bills were introduced and assented to during the 2018 Spring Sitting:

Bill No. 15, *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*

Bill No. 16, *Technical Amendments Act, 2018*

Bill No. 17, *Gender Diversity and Related Amendments Act*

Bill No. 18, *Order of Yukon Act*

Bill No. 204, *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18*

Bill No. 205, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2018-19*

Bill No. 206, *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*

Commissioner of Yukon

As noted in Yukon's preceding Legislative Report, outgoing Commissioner **Doug Phillips'** term concluded on January 31, 2018. On March 9, Governor General **Julie Payette**, on the advice of the Prime Minister, appointed **Angélique Bernard** as Yukon's new Commissioner. The appointment is for a five-year term. On March 12, Ms. Bernard was sworn-in as Commissioner in Whitehorse at the Commissioner's office, Taylor House, by the Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of Yukon, Justice **Ron Veale**. Ms. Bernard, Yukon's first francophone Commissioner, moved to Yukon in 1995. For seven years, Ms. Bernard was president of the Association franco-yukonnaise, and at the time of her appointment as Commissioner, was serving as the association's vice-president.

On March 18, Commissioner Bernard appeared in the Chamber for the first time, to grant assent to three bills that had passed the House: Bill No. 18, *Order of Yukon Act*, Bill No. 204, *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18*, and Bill No. 205, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Administrator of Yukon

The federal *Yukon Act* gives the Administrator the authority to act in place of the Commissioner when the latter is absent or ill, and when there is no Commissioner. From the expiration of Commissioner Phillips' term at the end of January until the March 9 expiration of the Administrator's Governor in Council appointment, **Gerald Isaac** had fulfilled that additional role.

On March 9, **Adeline Webber**, a member of the Teslin Tlingit First Nation, was appointed as Yukon's new Administrator. Ms. Webber was also sworn in by Justice Veale on March 12. A biographical note released by the Prime Minister's office on the day of her appointment noted that Ms. Webber had worked "to advance the recognition of indigenous and women's rights, and played an important role in the implementation of land claims and First Nation self-government agreements in the territory."

Electoral District Boundaries Commission

As noted previously, on November 21, 2017, Speaker **Nils Clarke** tabled the Interim Report of the Yukon Electoral District Boundaries Commission, which proposed changing the boundaries of nine of the territory's 19 electoral districts, as well as the names of five.

In addition to accepting written submissions, the Commission held public meetings across the territory to receive Yukoners' views on the interim report's proposals. In the course of its travels (on February 8, 9 and 12, and March 8-10), the Commission held public hearings in Teslin, Marsh Lake, Carcross, Tagish, Mount Lorne, Whitehorse, Pelly Crossing, Mayo, Carmacks, Faro, Ross River, and Watson Lake.

The Electoral District Boundaries Commission was chaired by Justice Veale. The other members comprising the Commission were Yukon's Chief Electoral Officer **Lori McKee, Darren Parsons, Jonas Smith, and Anne Tayler**. The Commission's non-binding final report was submitted to the Legislative Assembly on April 19, 2018.

Linda Kolody
Deputy Clerk



Senate

Legislation

The following bills received Royal Assent by written declaration during this quarter: S-2 – *Strengthening Motor Vehicle Safety for Canadians Act*, C-70 – *Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee Governance Agreement Act*, C-72 – *Appropriation Act No. 5, 2017-18*, C-73 – *Appropriation*

Act No. 1, 2018-19, S-232 *Canadian Jewish Heritage Month Act*, C-210 – *An Act to amend the National Anthem Act (gender)* and C-311 – *An Act to amend the Holidays Act (Remembrance Day)*.

Bills C-25, *An Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Canada Cooperatives Act, the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and the Competition Act*, and C-49 – *the Transportation Modernization Act*, were both amended in the Senate and returned to the House of Commons. At the time this summary was written, they were both awaiting further consideration in the Commons.

Chamber, Procedure and Speaker's Rulings

On January 30, the Senate said goodbye to interim Clerk **Nicole Proulx** and wished her well on her retirement after nearly 20 years of service in the Senate. The next day the Senate welcomed its new interim Clerk. **Richard Denis** brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position. Since 2004, Mr. Denis has served as Deputy Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel in the House of Commons and has also been a Table Officer in that house since 2002.

The Speaker was kept busy this quarter dealing with procedural issues. On February 15, he made a statement to remind senators of the prohibition on the use of props in the Chamber. On March 1, he ruled on a question of privilege that had been raised by Senator **Marilou McPheeran** about a communication to the media of information contained in correspondence that had been marked confidential. Though the Speaker found no *prima facie* breach of privilege, he urged senators to balance the importance of conducting business in a transparent and accountable manner with the obligation to respect administrative processes. Finally, on March 22, the Speaker ruled on a question of privilege raised by Senator **Lynn Beyak** regarding a motion that would direct the Senate administration to cease support for her Senate website. The Speaker found no *prima facie* breach of privilege, so debate on the motion will continue. In his ruling, the Speaker noted that the privileges of individual senators do not trump those of the Senate itself, and that the rights or benefits of individual senators may be restricted by decisions of the Senate.

A few rare procedural events took place in the Senate during the period covered by this summary. A motion for the previous question was moved on January 30 in relation to a disposition motion relating to third reading of Bill C-210, *An Act to amend the*

National Anthem Act (gender). The previous question was adopted the following day, and, as required by the Rules, the Speaker then immediately put the question on the motion, which was adopted on division. The Speaker subsequently proceeded to put all questions necessary to dispose of the bill at third reading as mandated by the order of the Senate. At the end of the process, the bill was read a third time and adopted without amendment.

Another rare event took place on February 6 when Senator **David Tkachuk** gave notice of his intention to request an emergency debate on recent actions by the Government of British Columbia relating to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. After having heard from senators on the matter, the Speaker ruled in favour of Senator Tkachuk's request. The debate was held later in the sitting in accordance with the *Rules of the Senate*. This was the Senate's first emergency debate since 1999.

Committees

On January 30, the Senate adopted a motion creating the Special Committee on the Charitable Sector. The committee organized on February 26, electing Senator **Terry Mercer** as its chair and Senator **Ratna Omidvar** as its deputy chair. The committee is to submit its final report no later than December 31, 2018.

On February 15, the Senate applied a process based on one normally reserved for budget implementation bills to a piece of regular legislation. It adopted a motion to refer the subject-matter of different elements or topics in Bill C-45, *The Cannabis Act*, to four of its standing committees (Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Aboriginal Peoples, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and National Security and Defence), with the bill itself to be referred to the Social Affairs Committee if adopted at second reading. Pursuant to the motion adopted by the Senate, each of the four standing committees examining parts or topics of the bill is to report to the Senate no later than May 1, 2018. The Social Affairs committee is authorized to take any of those reports into consideration during its study of the bill. The bill was actually adopted at second reading on March 22, and, pursuant to the order, was sent to the Social Affairs Committee

On March 27, the Senate adopted the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration. This report recommended that the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament develop and propose amendments

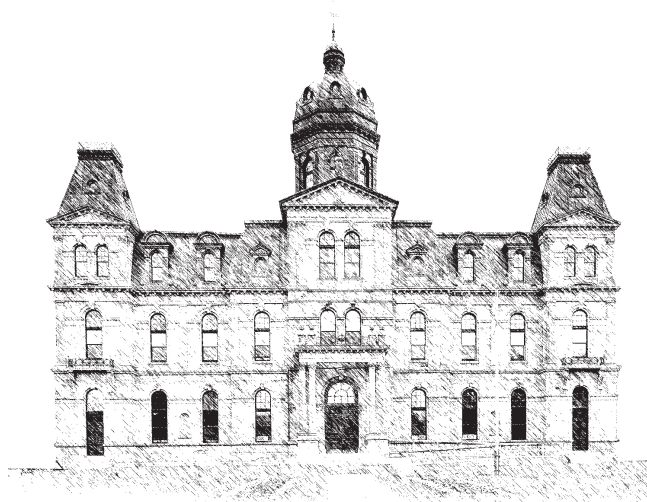
to the *Rules of the Senate* required to establish a new Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight. This new committee would be charged with overseeing senators' travel and living expenses, as well as the Senate's other expenditures, in accordance with the principles and best practices contained in the fifth report of the Subcommittee on the Senate Estimates. The committee would be empowered to undertake work on its own initiative, without an order of reference, which is a requirement for most committees in the Senate. The membership of this new committee is to be separate and independent from the membership of the Internal Economy Committee. The report also recommended that consultations be undertaken with the leadership of all recognized parties and recognized parliamentary groups in the Senate to propose amendments to the *Parliament of Canada Act* to provide the new committee with intersessional authority to conduct its work.

Senators

This quarter saw many changes to the membership of the Senate. On February 2, Senators **Joan Fraser**, **Colin Kenny** and **Claudette Tardif** resigned from their positions. Senator Fraser was appointed by Prime Minister **Jean Chrétien** on September 17, 1998 after a successful career in journalism. During her time at the Senate, she chaired many committees, most notably the committees on Legal and Constitutional Affairs; on Transport and Communications; and on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament. She was a vocal advocate for the rights of the English-speaking minority in Quebec. She also served as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate twice. Senator Kenny, appointed by Prime Minister **Pierre Elliott Trudeau** in June of 1984, will be remembered for his contribution to the Senate's National Security and Defence Committee. Senator Tardif was appointed in March of 2005 by Prime Minister **Paul Martin**. She came to the Senate with a background in education. A proud Franco-Albertan, she spent her career at the Senate advocating for official language minorities and for institutions of higher learning. She was the chair of the Official Languages Committee and also served as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate. Subsequently, on March 16, Senator **Charlie Watt** resigned from the Senate after 34 years of service to the institution. He represented the senatorial division of Inkerman and spoke out on issues of concern to Inuit and aboriginal peoples in the Senate and in committees. He had served as chair of the Aboriginal Peoples Committee and was elected as chair of the Special Committee on the Arctic when it organized in late 2017.

During this quarter the Senate welcomed three new senators, all representing the province of Ontario. **Martha Deacon** and **Robert Black** were appointed on February 15. Senator Deacon comes to the Senate with a background in education and in sports, while Senator Black has years of experience in agricultural and municipal affairs. **Yvonne Boyer** was appointed on March 15. A member of the Métis Nation of Ontario, she had a distinguished career as a lawyer, professor and researcher.

Céline Ethier
Procedural Clerk



New Brunswick

Budget

The Legislature resumed sitting on January 30, 2018, at which time Finance Minister **Cathy Rogers** tabled the fourth budget of the Gallant government.

The budget focused on investments in seniors, youth employment and economic competitiveness, including an additional \$73 million in new targeted investments, delaying a return to a balanced budget by one year to 2021-22. Economic growth is anticipated to surpass one per cent in 2018; the projected deficit is \$189 million. The budget does not contain new taxes or fee increases.

“The decisions your government have made in this budget reflect the economic growth, education and family plans that New Brunswickers have helped develop,” said Ms. Rogers. “The investments we are making will enhance the competitiveness of our economy, support our youth and seniors and lead

to improved economic and social outcomes into the future.”

Highlights included nearly \$28 million invested to support youth employment, including an additional \$4 million in summer job opportunities for post-secondary students, and creating a paid internship program within government to hire recent graduates; more than \$20 million invested to help seniors, including \$800,000 to implement action items identified by the Council on Aging and \$12 million to increase wages for special care home employees and home support workers; \$2.5 million invested to support improved mental health outcomes; \$1 million invested to fully implement a colon cancer screening program to reach all men and women between the ages of 50 and 74; \$3 million invested to reduce wait times for hip and knee replacements; and \$12.6 million invested in parks, trails, historic sites, and other tourism infrastructure.

Opposition reply

On February 1, Finance Critic **Bruce Fitch** replied to the budget on behalf of the official opposition. Mr. Fitch echoed concerns raised by some media and academics regarding the budget. He focused on the estimated \$1 billion in extra revenue generated from new taxes during the current mandate; arguing that the deficit continued to grow while investments did not produce measurable results. He further argued the fiscal policies edged the province closer to the fiscal cliff, where social programs that families rely on may no longer be sustainable. “This budget is putting us closer to that economic crisis”, stated Mr. Fitch.

Legislation

The fourth session of the 58th Legislative Assembly opened on October 24, 2017, and adjourned on March 16, 2018, sitting a total of 39 days. Of the 41 bills to receive Royal Assent, the following were introduced during the last few weeks of the session:

Bill 42 - *Government Advertising Act* - introduced by Treasury Board President **Roger Melanson**, established standards to direct government departments in creating and disseminating information to the public. The Bill aimed to improve impartiality in the creation and delivery of advertising by government departments and other related entities.

Bill 44 - *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act* - introduced by Labour, Employment and Population Growth Minister **Gilles LePage**, introduced leave for

domestic violence, intimate partner violence and sexual violence. Regulatory amendments will be introduced later based on a 60-day consultation period.

Motions

The Assembly considered a number of debatable motions; the following were adopted near the end of the session:

Motion 32, introduced by **Wilfred Roussel** and seconded by **Daniel Guitard**, urged the federal government to make changes to the qualifying provisions of the Employment Insurance program to address the plight of seasonal workers.

Motion 36, introduced by Mr. Melanson and seconded by Families and Children Minister **Stephen Horsman**, appointed a Select Committee on Public Universities charged with inviting publicly funded universities to appear before the committee to discuss university administration, programming, performance measurement, accountability and transparency.

Motion 37, introduced by Seniors and Long-Term Care Minister **Lisa Harris** and seconded by **Hédard Albert**, adopted a committee recommendation to implement a Statement on Roles and Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for Members.

Motion 38, introduced by Ms. Harris and seconded by Official Opposition Leader **Blaine Higgs**, directed the Legislative Administration Committee to establish a policy on the prevention and resolution of harassment, including sexual harassment, in the workplace of the Assembly.

Motion 23, introduced by **Kirk MacDonald** and seconded by **Dorothy Shephard**, urged the Legislature to include breast cancer in existing presumptive legislation coverages for professional firefighters.

Motion 31, introduced by **Ernie Steeves** and seconded by **Carl Urquhart**, urged the government to add tow trucks to the list of emergency vehicles included in the “slow down move over” legislation. The motion highlighted the tragic example of RCMP officer Constable **Francis Deschênes**, who was killed while assisting a motorist with a flat tire.

Committees

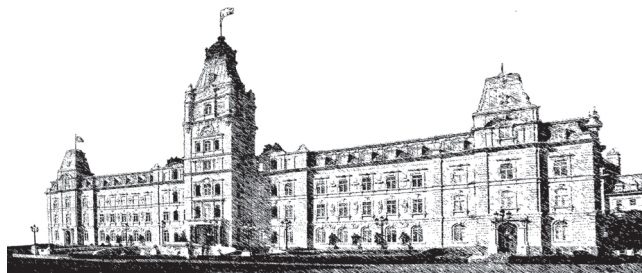
During the session, the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, chaired by **Chuck Chiasson**, held

29 meetings to consider legislation at committee stage. The Estimates and Fiscal Policy Committee, chaired by **Bernard LeBlanc**, reviewed departmental estimates for the prescribed 80 hours over 12 meetings. Additionally, the Standing Committee on Private Bills, chaired by **Wilfred Roussel**, met to consider private legislation concerning provincial land surveyors.

Election and Standings

The provincial general election is scheduled for September 24, 2018. The current House standings are 25 Liberals, 22 Progressive Conservatives, one Green and one vacancy.

John-Patrick McCleave
Committee Clerk



Québec

National Assembly proceedings

Composition of the National Assembly

On February 2, 2018, **Jean-François Lisée**, Leader of the Official Opposition, made the following appointments: **Véronique Hivon**, Member for Joliette, as Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition; **Sylvain Gaudreault**, Member for Jonquière, as Chief Official Opposition Whip; and **Carole Poirier**, Member for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, as Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Bills passed

Since the resumption of proceedings last February 6, the National Assembly passed the six Government bills and one private bill:

Bill 107, *An Act to increase the jurisdiction and independence of the Anti-Corruption Commissioner and the Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes and expand the power of the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions to grant certain benefits to cooperating witnesses;*

Bill 149, *An Act to enhance the Québec Pension Plan and to amend various retirement-related legislative provisions*;

Bill 163, *An Act respecting the implementation of recommendations of the pension committee of certain public sector pension plans and amending various legislative provisions*;

Bill 164, *An Act respecting access to certain documents held by the Conseil exécutif or intended for the Conseil exécutif*;

Bill 166, *An Act to reform the school tax system*;

Bill 177, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2018-2019*;

Bill 234, *An Act to amend the Charter of the Université de Montréal*.

Estimates of expenditure and passage of Appropriation Act No. 1, 2018-2019

On March 28, 2018, the parliamentarians concurred in interim supply for the 2018-2019 fiscal year and passed Bill 177, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2018-2019*. The following day, the Assembly began the debate on the budget speech.

Special events

International Trade Legislative Conference

Organized in partnership with the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Assembly held the International Trade Legislative Conference (ITLC), which took place from March 15-18, 2018. For the occasion, parliamentarians hailing from Canada, the United States and Mexico participated in various working sessions to discuss free trade, a highly topical issue of major importance within the context of the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Several experts were also present to share their vision and discuss the issue with participants.

Research Chair on Democracy and Parliamentary Institutions recognition event

On February 7, 2018, the President of the National Assembly, **Jacques Chagnon**, welcomed the partners of the Chair. On this occasion, four students received a scholarship to underline the quality of their research work related to democracy and parliamentary institutions.

Committee proceedings

Consultations and public hearings

Between January and March 2018, the National Assembly's sectorial committees set aside 28 public meetings for consultations and public hearings. Over 100 hours were spent in committee during these meetings.

Notable among these consultations was the one on Bill 128, *An Act to promote the protection of persons by establishing a framework with regard to dogs*. The Committee on Institutions (CI) heard 18 individuals and organizations from March 20-22, 2018 and received 25 briefs within the framework of this mandate.

Clause-by-clause consideration of bills

Between January and March 2018, 54 public meetings, totalling 182 hours of work in committee, were set aside for the clause-by-clause consideration of public bills. Seven committees thus examined 13 public bills.

Among these, we should mention Bill 141, *An Act mainly to improve the regulation of the financial sector, the protection of deposits of money and the operation of financial institutions*, whose clause-by-clause consideration began in the Committee on Public Finance (CPF). This bill enacts two new laws: the *Insurers Act*, which replaces the *Act respecting insurance*, and the *Trust Companies and Savings Companies Act* to replace the *Act respecting trust companies and savings companies*, which will be repealed. This bill contains over 2000 sections.

For its part, the Committee on Health and Social Services (CHSS) began the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 157, *An Act to constitute the Société québécoise du cannabis, to enact the Cannabis Regulation Act and to amend various highway safety-related provisions*. To date, 16 sittings and over 66 hours have been devoted to the consideration of this bill.

Finally, during this period, the Committee on Culture and Education (CCE) concluded its consideration of Private Bill 234, *An Act to amend the Charter of the Université de Montréal*. Of note, within the framework of this mandate, the committee heard 19 interested parties, which is quite a high number for a private bill.

Other mandates

On February 20, 2018, the CI examined and approved the *Regulation to amend the Nomination Regulation*, tabled in the National Assembly on February 6, 2018, by the Chief Electoral Officer. Section 550 of the *Election Act* provides that all draft regulations shall be submitted to the Committee on the National Assembly or to any other committee designated by the National Assembly. At the end of a sitting, which lasted slightly over one hour and a half, the members approved the regulation with one amendment.

Composition of committees

On February 6, 2018 **Sylvain Rochon**, Member for Richelieu, was elected chair of the Committee on Public Administration (CPA). This position had previously been held by Mr. Gaudreault who was appointed Chief Official Opposition Whip.

Stéphanie Labbé

General Directorate for Parliamentary Affairs
Sittings Service

Sabine Mekki

General Directorate for Parliamentary Affairs
Committees Service



British Columbia

Third Session of the 41st Parliament

The Second Session of the 41st Parliament prorogued on February 13, 2018, and the Third Session opened that afternoon with the Speech from the Throne delivered by Lieutenant Governor **Judith Guichon**. The Throne Speech highlighted investments in affordable housing,

child care and social services, and proposed measures to address the effects of speculation, tax fraud and money laundering in BC's real estate market. It also confirmed commitments to build a sustainable economy, protect the environment and take action on climate change, as well as partner with Indigenous peoples.

On February 20, 2018, Minister of Finance **Carole James** presented the first comprehensive budget of the new minority government, which confirmed the priorities set out in the Throne Speech. The budget outlined a made-in-BC child care plan, a comprehensive housing plan, and investments in capital projects; introduced a speculation tax and expanded the scope of the foreign buyers tax; and provided details on the plan to replace Medical Service Plan premiums with an employer health tax. The Official Opposition Finance Critic **Shirley Bond** raised concerns about government spending and the potential negative impact of new taxes on businesses. Third Party Leader **Andrew Weaver** indicated support for the budget, but noted that further steps are required to address the housing crisis in British Columbia.

The first confidence vote of the Third Session was held on March 1, 2018, on the motion "That the Speaker do now leave the Chair" for the House to go into Committee of Supply. The motion passed on division by a vote of 44 to 41.

On March 8, 2018, the Legislative Assembly adopted two amendments to the Standing Orders. Standing Order 23, which pertains to strangers in the House, was amended to allow for the presence of infants in the Chamber. This aligns with changes made in jurisdictions such as the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, to make legislatures more welcoming to Members with young families. A new Standing Order 17A clarifies rules and codifies practice regarding the use of electronic devices during House proceedings.

Parliamentary Committees

Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

As previously reported, on November 28, 2017, the Legislative Assembly instructed the Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations to inquire into and examine ride-hailing in British Columbia. The Committee invited 67 expert witnesses to present at a public hearing or provide a written submission and 38 participated. In a report released on February 15, 2018, the Committee made 32 unanimous recommendations for a province-wide approach to governing

transportation network companies, and discussed key issues for the development of a ride-hailing regulatory regime, including the potential impact on British Columbians and their communities. The report also highlighted the importance of collecting and monitoring data, public safety, accessibility, and the provision of insurance products for transportation network companies and their drivers.

Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth

On February 28, 2018, the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth released their report on the review of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*. Section 30 of the *Act* requires the Committee to review the *Act* every five years. The report included nine recommendations primarily focused on clarifying and enhancing the Representative's role with respect to young adults who have previously been in care, and children, youth and young adults with special needs.

During in-camera report deliberations, the Committee approved a motion to make a portion of the in-camera transcript publicly available after the report was formally presented to the Legislative Assembly. This transcript portion revealed that the Committee divided on the motion to adopt recommendation nine in the report: "The *Act* be amended to require that, in undertaking the functions under the *Act*, the Representative reflect the principles contained in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child." The vote was tied, and as a result, the Chair was required to exercise a casting vote. The Chair voted in favour of adopting the recommendation, explaining that his vote reflected his conscience.

Special Committee to Appoint an Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Special Committee to Appoint an Information and Privacy Commissioner released their report on March 5, 2018, unanimously recommending that the Lieutenant Governor appoint **Michael McEvoy** as Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia for a six-year term, commencing April 1, 2018. Mr. McEvoy had served as Deputy Commissioner to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner in BC since 2012, and was most recently seconded to the Information Commissioner's Office in the United Kingdom, where he led an investigation into the use of data analytics in the political process.

Hansard Recent Innovations

Hansard Services launched several new initiatives in the spring session focused on digital publishing, and improving the accessibility of Hansard video and transcripts. Final certified copies of Hansard transcripts, known as the *Official Report of Debates*, are now available online in Digitally Certified PDF format. The HTML version of the online final transcripts has new functionality, including a linked table of contents so users can navigate to specific points in the text, tools for sharing on social media, and direct links to the archived video. A new video search has also been implemented for the Hansard video webcast archive. The archive dates back to 2003, and includes full video webcasts of Chamber and Committee of Supply proceedings and audio-only webcasts of parliamentary committees. Video search functionality has been enhanced to enable users to search the archive by keyword, Member name or item of business.

Vice Regal News

Governor General **Julie Payette** made her first official visit to British Columbia. She was officially welcomed by Premier **John Horgan** on March 20, 2018 at the Legislative Assembly, where a traditional welcome from local Indigenous groups also took place. At a Presentation of Honours ceremony, Ms. Payette recognized 45 Canadians for their excellence, courage and exceptional dedication to service.

On March 20, 2018, Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** announced the appointment of **Janet Austin** as British Columbia's 30th Lieutenant Governor. Ms. Austin will be third female Lieutenant Governor in BC's history, replacing Ms. Guichon who was appointed in 2012.

Ms. Austin most recently served as the Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA Metro Vancouver, and previously worked for Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland and BC Housing. She has received several awards for her work, and is the recipient of the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilee medals as well as a Member of the Order of British Columbia. Ms. Austin has a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Calgary, and an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Changes in the Legislature

The BC Liberal Party held their leadership convention on February 3, 2018, electing **Andrew Wilkinson** as leader on the fifth ballot. The new

Leader of the Official Opposition was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in 2013 and served in several Cabinet positions in the former government.

A by-election in the riding of Kelowna West was held on February 14, 2018 to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of former Premier Christy Clark. **Ben Stewart**, a BC Liberal, won the election and was sworn in on February 27, 2018. Party standings in the House are now: BC Liberal Party 42, BC NDP 41, BC Green Party 3 and one Independent Member, the Speaker.

Death of a Former Premier

The first BC NDP Premier of British Columbia, **Dave Barrett**, died on February 2, 2018 at the age of 87. Serving as Premier from 1972 until 1975, his government passed a record 367 bills and introduced a number of lasting initiatives, including the introduction of the daily question period and full Hansard transcripts of House proceedings.

On March 1, 2018, the Premier, Official Opposition Leader and Third Party Leader all paid tribute to the former Premier in the Legislative Assembly. A state funeral attended by more than 1,000 people was held on March 3, 2018.

Jennifer Arril

Committee Research Analyst



Manitoba

3rd Session of the 41st Legislature – Spring Sitting

The Third Session of the 41st Legislature resumed on March 7, 2018.

The Government has introduced a number of Bills so far this session addressing different areas of governance:

Bill 4 – The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Member Changing Parties), repealing the provision of *The Legislative Assembly Act* that requires a Member of the Assembly elected as a member of a political party to sit as an independent if they cease to belong to that party;

Bill 11 – The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended) authorizes and regulates the retail sale of cannabis in Manitoba when such sales are permitted by the federal government;

Bill 16 – The Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act, enacting a new *Act* requiring the government to develop a plan with a comprehensive set of policies, programs and measures designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address the effects of climate change, promote sustainable development and protect Manitoba's water resources and natural areas. The Bill also enacts another new *Act* establishing an output-based pricing scheme to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from industrial operations in Manitoba and it expands the existing fuel tax rates to include a carbon tax rate;

Bill 25 – The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Amendment Act (Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption in Outdoor Public Places), to prohibit the smoking or vaping of cannabis in outdoor public places and other places specified by regulation;

Bill 26 – The Impaired Driving Offences Act (Various Acts Amended), which amends various acts to include the new criminal offences in relation to administrative driver's licence suspensions and disqualifications for impaired driving.

Budget Debate

On March 12, 2018, Finance Minister **Cameron Friesen** delivered his third budget. Highlights included:

- increasing the threshold under which individuals pay no income tax by \$2,020 over the next two years;
- raising the small business income tax threshold to \$500,000 from \$450,000;
- investing \$102 million to establish an independently

run conservation trust that will fund projects to support the Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan;

- decreasing ambulance fees to \$340 from \$425;
- support for funding for more than 700 new child-care spaces including funding for the construction of 251 new spaces;
- a \$13.7-million increase in education funding and confirmation of the construction of five new schools;
- a new Child Care Centre Development Tax Credit to give businesses an incentive to create daycare spaces for workers' children;
- funding for various infrastructure projects including launching the Lake Manitoba outlet project, funding to complete 'Freedom Road', to complete the Waverley Street underpass and upgrade the Portage la Prairie wastewater treatment plant;
- investing in Look North, the long-term economic development strategy for growth and prosperity in northern Manitoba and supporting a northern tourism strategy.

During his contribution to the budget debate on March 13, new Leader of the Official Opposition and NDP leader **Wab Kinew** moved a motion expressing non-confidence in the government, stating that the budget was not in the best interest of the people of the province and that it neglected the priorities of Manitobans by:

- failing to protect front-line services by making deep cuts to health and education despite unprecedented new revenues from the new gas tax;
- underspending the health-care budget, freezing acute-care services, cutting long-term-care supports, doctor recruitment programs, mental health and addiction services while wasting millions on endless reports by high priced consultants;
- cutting funds for Pharmacare;
- underspending the education capital budget for K to 12 and failing to keep school spending at least up to the rate of inflation;
- cutting post-secondary education while increasing tuition rates;
- failing to provide a comprehensive jobs plan, cutting supports for apprenticeships and training;
- cutting the infrastructure spending and the flood protection budget with no mention of the Town of Churchill or supports for mining jobs in the North;
- forcing regular Manitoba families to pay hundreds

of dollars more this year in the gas tax with no tax relief in 2018 while letting big corporate polluters off the hook.

On the same day, Independent Member and Manitoba Liberal Party member Honourable **Jon Gerrard** moved a sub-amendment, stating that the budget, among other deficiencies, failed:

- to articulate a forward-looking vision or have an adequate plan for job creation and growth for the Manitoba economy;
- to decrease inequality in Manitoba;
- to provide transitional support for trucking or related industries while bringing in a carbon tax; and failed to provide a logical, clear and precise explanation of where the money raised will be spent;
- to show clear plans to mitigate the problems associated with climate change;
- to act to improve the health of Manitobans;
- to develop a duty-to-consult framework for indigenous communities;
- to invest in the city of Winnipeg and other municipalities by cutting funding;
- to invest carbon tax or federal funding in environmental measures, and to reduce emissions by cutting funding to the clear environment commission, water stewardship and environmental stewardship.

On March 20, the sub-amendment was defeated on a recorded vote of yeas 15, nays 38. Subsequently, Mr. Kinew's amendment was defeated on a recorded vote of yeas 15, nays 38, while the main budget motion carried on a recorded vote of yeas 37, nays 15.

Interim Supply

During the debate on Budget 2018, the Government interrupted the debate twice, as allowed in our rules. The interruption was necessary to consider and pass supply resolutions dealing with interim funding for operating and capital expenditures until the 2018/19 fiscal year budget and budget processes and the main supply bills are completed later this session. The process concluded on March 22, after the votes on the Budget debate motion and amendments. On that day, the House dealt with passing the remaining stages of Interim Supply legislation. As a result, Bill 21 – *The Interim Appropriation Act, 2018* received Royal Assent on the same day prior to the House's Spring break.

Standing Committees

During the intersessional period, the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs met in January to consider annual reports from the Children's Advocate.

Resignation of former Premier Greg Selinger

On March 7, 2018 at the resumption of House business following the winter break, **Greg Selinger** sat one last time as member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. Following a last speech in reply to a ministerial statement from Premier **Brian Pallister** acknowledging his career, Mr. Selinger resigned his seat as MLA for St. Boniface, which he held for 19 years.

First elected in the 1999 General Election, Mr. Selinger was immediately appointed Minister of Finance of the new NDP government, a portfolio that he managed for almost 10 years. In 2009, he won the Manitoba NDP Leadership election and on October 19, 2009 became Manitoba's twenty-first Premier. Mr. Selinger then led his party to a victory in the 2011 General Election, before losing the last provincial election on April 16, 2016. He won his St. Boniface seat, but resigned immediately as leader of the party.

A by-election for the constituency of St. Boniface has not yet been called, but under the *Elections Act* it will be called within six months of the vacancy.

Manitoba Girl Guides in the Chamber

On March 10, 2018, Speaker **Myrna Driedger** invited over 100 Manitoba Girl Guides, age 10 to 12, to take their seats in the Chamber of the Manitoba Legislature. This was the first time in Manitoba history girls have filled all Chamber's seats.

This full day event began in the committee room where the Speaker spoke to the importance of political engagement. It followed a presentation from Equal Voice Manitoba, which talked about the lack of female representation in politics.

The girls then prepared debate points with **Rochelle Squires**, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, with **Nahanni Fontaine**, Member for the constituency of St. Johns, and with the Speaker. The girls then discussed these topics on the floor of the Chamber.

Current Party Standings

The current party standings in the Manitoba Legislature are: Progressive Conservatives 39, New Democratic Party 12, five Independent Members, and one vacancy.

Andrea Signorelli

Clerk Assistant/Clerk of Committees



House of Commons

The First Session of the Forty-Second Parliament continued through the early months of 2018. The information below covers the period from December 14, 2017, to March 27, 2018.

Financial Procedures

On February 12, 2018, at the request of the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, **Carolyn Bennett** (Toronto—St. Paul's), an Order of the Day was designated for the consideration of a Ways and Means motion to introduce the *Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee Governance Agreement Act*. Following the adoption of a Ways and Means motion on February 14, 2018, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, **Catherine McKenna** (Ottawa Centre), introduced Bill C-70, *An Act to give effect to the Agreement on Cree Nation Governance between the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and the Government of Canada, to amend the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts*. The next day, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, **Bardish Chagger** (Waterloo), sought and obtained unanimous consent that the Bill be deemed read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole, deemed considered in Committee of

the Whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at the report stage and deemed read a third time and passed. This represented an extraordinary occasion whereby a bill advanced two readings on the same day.

On February 15, 2018, at the request of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, **Bardish Chagger** (Waterloo), an Order of the Day was designated for the consideration of a Ways and Means motion for a budget presentation. On February 27, 2018, the Minister of Finance, **Bill Morneau** (Toronto Centre), moved “[t]hat the House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government” and presented the budget speech. Following the usual four days of debate, the motion was agreed to on March 21, 2018.

Procedure and Privilege

Points of Order

On February 27, 2018, the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, **Ruth Ellen Brosseau** (Berthier—Maskinongé), rose on a point of order, pursuant to Standing Order 69.1, regarding Bill C-69, *An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*, requesting that the Speaker divide the question, for the purpose of voting, on the motion for second and third reading of the Bill. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, **Kevin Lamoureux** (Winnipeg North), intervened on the point of order to argue that the legislation reflected the outcome of a comprehensive review with stakeholders of federal environmental and regulatory processes. On March 1, 2018, the Speaker delivered his ruling in which he determined that the question at second reading will be divided into two groups.

Questions of Privilege

On February 26, 2018, **Ed Fast** (Abbotsford) rose on a question of privilege concerning the alleged preferential access of the media and select stakeholders to a departmental briefing on February 8, 2018, by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Ms. McKenna, and officials of Environment and Climate Change Canada on Bill C-69, *An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. Mr.

Fast and the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, Ms. Brosseau, who spoke to the same question of privilege on March 1, 2018, contended that by preventing parliamentarians from participating in the briefing offered to the media, Members were impeded in their ability to immediately respond to media inquiries. On March 1, 2018, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Mr. Lamoureux, argued that the Bill was not debated in the House until February 14, 2018, thereby providing Members the opportunity to prepare any interventions during debate at second reading. In his ruling on March 20, 2018, the Speaker reminded Members that part of his role in assessing the question of privilege is to consider whether the matter was assessed at its earliest opportunity. In this particular case, the time elapsed between the date of the alleged contempt, and February 14, 2018, the date on which the Member first raised his complaint, was a cause of concern. The Speaker acknowledged that the House’s right to first access the legislation was respected and reiterated the limited parameter of the Chair to intervene in matters of departmental briefings. Accordingly, the Speaker concluded that there was no breach of privilege; however, the Speaker noted that Members’ needs for timely and accurate information should be respected.

On March 2, 2018, **Erin O’Toole** (Durham), rose on a question of privilege alleging that Members of Parliament were denied access to information on the Prime Minister’s trip to India. Mr. O’Toole argued that the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, **Ralph Goodale** (Regina—Wascana), had acknowledged that the Prime Minister’s national security adviser purportedly shared information deemed confidential with members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery during a media briefing. The same information was withheld from Members of Parliament. In his ruling on March 27, 2018, the Speaker agreed with the need for Members to defend their right to access accurate and up-to-date information. The Speaker reiterated that the Chair does not have the authority to require the government to provide information to the House and noted that neither the House nor a Committee had ordered the government to produce the information in question. Given this, the Speaker concluded that Members were not hindered in the performance of their parliamentary duties and that it was not a *prima facie* question of privilege.

Committees

On February 1, 2018, the 10th Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage entitled *Taking Action Against Systematic Racism and Religious Discrimination Including Islamophobia*, was presented in the House. Although not a regular member of the Committee, **David Anderson** (Cypress Hills—Grasslands), spoke briefly to the dissenting opinion from the Official Opposition, which is in variance with Standing Order 35(2), which allows, “a committee member of the Official Opposition representing those who supported the opinion or opinions expressed in the appended material [to] also rise to give a succinct explanation thereof”.

On February 12, 2018, **Robert Oliphant** (Don Valley West), sought and obtained unanimous consent for the following motion: “That the 12th Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, presented to the House on June 20, 2017, be amended by replacing the name of the witness identified in footnotes 76 and 82 to ‘Witness 1’, and that the modification be reflected in Appendix A - List of Witnesses of the report”. This was done in order to protect the personal information of the witness.

On February 12, 2018, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities commenced consideration of Bill C-65, *An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1*, after the House unanimously referred the Bill to the Committee on January 29, 2018. On February 26, 2018, **Charles Robert**, Clerk of the House of Commons, and **Pierre Parent**, Chief Human Resources Officer of the House of Commons, appeared before the Committee to reaffirm the commitment of the House to support a safe and harassment free workplace for Members of Parliament, their staff and the House of Commons administration. Mr. Parent highlighted policies and various initiatives that have been introduced to support the House harassment prevention and conflict resolution frameworks, including a code of conduct for Members regarding sexual harassment, an informal conflict resolution program, and an online training session to raise awareness on harassment and available services. In responding to questions, Mr. Parent noted that the House administration is monitoring Bill C-65 and will make the appropriate recommendations to the Board of Internal Economy to ensure bylaws and policies remain in compliance

should the Bill receive royal assent. Over the course of the study, the Committee heard from the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, **Patty Hajdu** (Thunder Bay—Superior North), the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Library of Parliament of Canada.

On March 2, 2018, pursuant to the motion adopted by the Standing Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Communities, **Bernadette Jordan** (South Shore—St. Margarets), presented the 22nd Report of the Committee in relation to Bill C-64, *An Act respecting wrecks, abandoned, dilapidated or hazardous vessels and salvage operations*. Ms. Jordan is not a regular member of the Committee.

Private Members’ Business

On February 7, 2018, the Private Member’s Bill C-210, *An Act to amend the Nation Anthem Act (gender)*, received Royal Assent.

On March 1, 2018, the Private Member’s Bill C-311, *An Act to amend the Holidays Act (Remembrance Day)*, received Royal Assent.

Other Matters

Statements

On January 29, 2018, the Prime Minister, **Justin Trudeau** (Papineau), made a statement in honour of the anniversary of the attack at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec. In addition, the Leader of the Opposition, **Andrew Scheer** (Regina—Qu’Appelle), and **Guy Caron** (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques), made statements. By unanimous consent, **Xavier Barsalou-Duval** (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères) and **Elizabeth May** (Saanich—Gulf Islands) also made statements.

On February 14, 2018, the Prime Minister made a statement on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. In addition, statements were made by **Cathy McLeod** (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo), and **Romeo Saganash** (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou), a portion of which was spoken in Cree. By unanimous consent, **Marilène Gill** (Manicouagan) and Ms. May also made statements.

Members

On January 29, 2018, the Speaker informed the House that the Clerk had received from the Acting Chief Electoral Officer certificates of the election of four new Members. **Rosemarie Falk** (Battlefords—Lloydminster), **Gordie Hogg** (South Surrey—White Rock), **Churence Rogers** (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity), **Jean Yip** (Scarborough—Agincourt) were introduced and took their respective seats in the House.

On January 29, 2018, the Speaker informed the House that the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, Ms. Brosseau, was appointed a member of the Board of Internal Economy to replace **Peter Julian** (New Westminster—Burnaby) under the provisions of section 50 of the *Parliament of Canada Act*.

As of February 28, 2018, **Michel Boudrias** (Terrebonne), **Rhéal Fortin** (Rivière-du-Nord), **Simon Marcil** (Mirabel), **Monique Pauzé** (Repentigny), **Louis Plamondon** (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel), **Gabriel Ste-Marie** (Joliette), **Luc Thériault** (Montcalm) are no longer members of the Bloc Québécois and now sit as members of the Groupe parlementaire québécois.

Moment of Silence

On January 29, 2018, the House observed a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the attack at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec.

Other

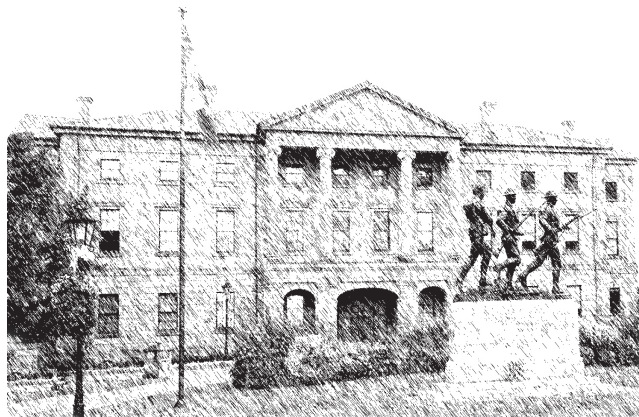
On January 31, 2018, the Speaker tabled *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Third Edition, 2017.

On February 2, 2018, the Assistant Deputy Speaker invited Members to take note of the use of the wooden mace to commemorate the anniversary of the fire that destroyed the original Centre Block the night of February 3, 1916.

On February 14, 2018, a take-note debate in a Committee of the Whole was held on the subject of the experience of Indigenous Peoples within Canada's justice system.

On February 28, 2018, the House approved the appointment of **Caroline Maynard** as the Information Commissioner, for a term of seven years.

Danielle Widmer
Table Research Branch



Prince Edward Island

Third Session, Sixty-fifth General Assembly

The Third Session of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly resumed on April 5, 2018.

Cabinet Changes

On January 10, 2018, Premier **H. Wade MacLauchlan** announced several changes to Cabinet. **Chris Palmer**, the Member for District 21: Summerside – Wilmot, was appointed Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. Mr. Palmer had previously been a private member. **Richard Brown**, the Member for District 12: Charlottetown – Victoria Park, rejoined Cabinet as Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, after previous Cabinet appointments and, most recently, a period of time as private member. **Alan McIsaac** and **Allen Roach**, the members for District 5: Vernon River – Stratford and District 3: Montague – Kilmuir, respectively, departed Cabinet after indicating that they did not plan to reoffer in the next general election. Within Cabinet, **Jordan Brown** (District 13: Charlottetown – Brighton) took on the portfolio of Minister of Justice and Public Safety, which had previously been held by the Premier, in addition to his existing role as Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture. **Robert Henderson** (District 25: O'Leary – Inverness) left the portfolio of Health and Wellness to become Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, following the departure of Mr. McIsaac. **Heath MacDonald** (District 16: Cornwall – Meadowbank) left the portfolio of Economic Development and Tourism to become Minister of Finance, following the departure of Mr. Roach. Finally, **Robert Mitchell** (District 10: Charlottetown – Sherwood) moved from the portfolio

of Communities, Land and Environment to Health and Wellness. Cabinet stands at eleven members.

Independent Member

On January 31, 2018, **S. Forrest (Bush) Dumville**, the Member for District 15: West Royalty – Springvale, resigned from the Liberal Party to sit as an Independent Member. Mr. Dumville was first elected in 2007, and re-elected in 2011 and 2015. The Legislative Assembly is now composed of 16 Liberal Party members, eight Progressive Conservative Party members, two Green Party members, and one Independent member.

Inaugural Visit of Parliamentary Partners

In February, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of PEI, Speaker **Francis (Buck) Watts** and Clerk **Charles MacKay** made an inaugural visit to the House of Assembly of the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) as part of the Parliamentary Partnership Agreement between the two legislatures.

As President of the PEI Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Speaker Watts addressed the House of Assembly and presented a plaque to commemorate the inaugural visit and, on behalf of the province, the Speaker presented a cheque to **Dwayne Taylor**, Speaker of the TCI House of Assembly, to assist with repairs to the House of Assembly Building in Grand Turks resulting from devastation wrought by hurricanes Irma and Maria.

The Parliamentary Partnership Agreement was signed between the Parliament of the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Prince Edward Island Legislative Assembly in July, 2016. This Agreement aims to promote a sharing of best practices and expertise between the parliaments for their mutual benefit. It builds on the partnership between the two parliaments and paves the way for future cooperative initiatives. The inaugural visit also involved meetings with parliamentary officials, including Governor **John Freeman**, Premier and Minister of Finance, Investment and Trade **Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson**, Leader of the Official Opposition **Charles Washington Misick**, Speaker Taylor, and Clerk of the TCI House **Tracey**

Parker. Meetings were also held with InterHealth Canada on the delivery of health and core services in TCI, hospitality industry partners, and several Canadian business owners operating in TCI.

Exchanges and initiatives will be explored to strengthen both parliaments, including advice from PEI to assist in developing a revitalized legislative library, and to provide information on best practices for a Hansard service. PEI will also provide information and assist in coordinating a Youth Parliament through Rotary Clubs International, similar to the Youth Parliament held in Charlottetown every November. The Prince Edward Island Legislative Assembly looks forward to welcoming a TCI Parliamentary delegation return visit during the fall 2018 Legislative session.

Potential Electoral Map for Mixed Member Proportional Model

On March 13, 2018, the PEI Electoral Boundaries Commission submitted a report to the Speaker providing a potential electoral map for PEI under a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral model. In December, the Premier requested that the Commission independently prepare a map as an educational tool. MMP was the favoured electoral model in a 2016 plebiscite and the Premier has indicated that it shall be an option in a binding referendum to be held in conjunction with the next general election. In creating the map, the Commission tried to follow the same principles and procedures it used to create the most recent 27-district electoral boundaries map, which was adopted in the spring of 2017. However, some adjustments were required, given that the MMP model divides the Island into 18 single-member districts, with 9 “at-large” members with no district boundaries. The Commission noted in its report that the map itself is not binding, and will not determine the districts for the next general election; it is instead a tool to be used during the referendum process to assist Islanders in understanding the MMP model. The report and map can be found at <https://www.electoralboundaries.pe.ca/special-report>.

Ryan Reddin

Clerk Assistant – Research and Committees

Now you see it, now you...won't! The growing porticoes, disappearing wings, and secret attics of PEI's Province House

Prince Edward Island's Province House was very much a work-in-progress as it was being built – with budgets and popular opinion changing the scope of the project several times and leaving some quirky architectural features. But it has stood the test of time for over 170 years and ongoing renovations mean it will be preserved for many more.

Laura Morrell

Prince Edward Island has a respectably lengthy history when it comes to democratic government led by an assembly of citizens. Our first House of Assembly was elected in 1773 when Prince Edward Island was a British colony known as Saint John's Island. The main settlement of Charlotte Town had been laid out around a natural harbor by Charles Morris, Chief Surveyor of Nova Scotia, in his 1768 survey. Green space was set aside on high ground overlooking the harbour for buildings to house the colonial administration. Governor Walter Patterson named it Queen Square and, while it was the site of many different buildings throughout the colony's history, it eventually became home to Province House.

As often happens in life, having a plan and implementing it are two very different endeavours. The burgeoning city had space to build administrative buildings but lacked the financial means. The initial grant of £3,000 provided by the British Colonial Office for construction wound up paying the salaries of Governor Patterson and other officials when the mostly-absentee landowners refused to pay their quit rents, which were supposed to fund the colony's administration.¹ It wasn't until 1812 that the first public building was built by John Plaw on Queen Square. The Plaw Building was a small wooden structure shared by the courthouse and the legislature. By the mid-1830s, after the British Government abandoned quit rents in

favour of a land assessment tax, the legislature was able to turn its attention towards building a "solid and well constructed edifice for the deposit and safe custody of all Public Records."²

In August 1839 a contest to design a brick building to hold the two legislative chambers, offices, committee rooms, a library, visitor galleries, the courts, and seven public offices was published in newspapers in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. The winning plan was designed by Island architect Isaac Smith, who was awarded £20. By this time, Smith had a solid track record as the designer –and builder– of most of the key buildings in the colony. His plan called for a three-story building in the classic revival style popular in other British colonies.³

Records indicate two substantive changes were made over the course of construction: one set removed architectural elements to reduce building costs, and the next replaced some of those same architectural elements to make it more attractive.⁴

In March 1842 the legislature approved £5,000 to build the Colonial Building (as Province House was first known), then immediately passed an act appointing building commissioners to contract with Island tradespeople and to oversee construction while also doubling the budget to £10,000. Still, the lowest tender for construction came in at more than £2,800 over the available grant. Rather than delay the project while an increase was debated in the legislature, the building commissioners had Isaac Smith, who was also the contractor, remove parts of the design to bring it within budget.

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The cornerstone was laid May 16, 1843, kicking off the official beginning of construction. The first stage of construction saw the basement excavated and the exterior walls built. Despite being still in the early stages of construction, public opinion of the building's skeletal silhouette wasn't favourable. Grumbings around town and in the newspapers spurred Smith to take the plans back to the legislature in 1844 for approval to make two significant changes to the exterior: small wings were added to the ends of the building, and the porticoes were extended.⁵

The addition of the wings also served a functional purpose, as offices for the President of Legislative Council and the Speaker of the House of Assembly were added to the second story of each wing, behind their respective chambers. Oddly enough, the third floors of each wing were never designated as anything but decorative, and are only accessible by way of the building's attic.

In Smith's initial design of the Colonial Building, the porticoes were recessed into the façade, a feature of classical architecture that was popular at the time. They were extended outward to improve the grandeur of the building, with one oversight: the large windows installed along the second floor of the building were never replaced with doors to allow easy access to the roof of the portico from the library. A number of distinguished guests have had to climb out the window over the years in order to address crowds below.

Photo: Brian Simpson

The legislature moved into its permanent home on January 26, 1847, and continued to meet there for 168 years. In January 2015, Province House was closed so that extensive conservation work could be undertaken. While there are no plans to modify the building's silhouette with extra wings or expanding porticoes, workers have been finding interesting bits of the past hidden in the walls, such as a kazoo, antique pudding tins, rum bottles, and a pair of eyeglasses. The work is also providing experience for a new generation of specialized Island tradespeople. Six recent graduates of the Holland College Heritage Retrofit Carpentry program were hired to work on the Province House restoration, documenting and photographing wooden infrastructure and decoration for removal and restoration.⁶ Province House is expected to re-open in the early 2020s.

Notes

- 1 Cullen, Mary K. *A History of the Structure and Use of Province House, Prince Edward Island, 1837-1977*. Parks Canada, National Historic Parks and Site Branch. Manuscript report number 211. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1977), 5
- 2 *Journals of the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island*(Charlottetown: John Henry White, 1837), 6.
- 3 Cullen, 10.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 13.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 15.
- 6 CBC News, (2017). "Holland College grads working on Province House conservation project" [Online]. Available: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-holland-college-heritage-grads-province-house-1.4185010>.

