



# Commonwealth Parliamentary Association - Alberta Branch

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1999 Annual Report

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A parliamentary delegation from Russia visited Alberta in 1999.

# Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

## Overview

**T**he Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is an association of members of Commonwealth parliaments who, irrespective of race, religion, or culture, are united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law, and individual rights and freedoms, and by pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. Canada was one of the six original member countries of the CPA when it was formed in 1911 under the

name of the Empire Parliamentary Association. Association branches now exist in 134 national, state, provincial, and territorial parliaments with a total membership of over 14,000 parliamentarians. Each provincial and territorial Legislative Assembly in Canada as well as the federal Parliament comprises a branch of the CPA. All Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta are members of the Alberta branch of the CPA.

## President's Report

Speaker Ken Kowalski, President of the Alberta Branch of the CPA

**I**n 1999 the Alberta branch of the CPA moved one step closer to my goal of having all private members of the Legislative Assembly participate in at least one interparliamentary conference or exchange during the term of the 24<sup>th</sup> Legislature. All MLAs who have participated so far have benefited considerably from the experience. Of course, the ultimate beneficiaries of these MLAs' experiences are the people of Alberta who, in the long run, will be better represented and the parliamentary process, which will be able to evolve to better suit the ever-changing demands of society in the new century.

As one of the following MLA reports notes, all of us parliamentarians obtained our positions by selling ourselves to our constituents; none of us became MLAs by graduating from a training program. The need for MLAs to have professional development should therefore be obvious. The primary way to meet that need is through the CPA and other related interparliamentary functions. These experiences enable members to share experiences and points of view with their

counterparts across Canada and around the world. The nonpartisan environment affords everyone involved an opportunity for open sharing and engenders a collaborative approach to issues and parliamentary processes that can rarely be achieved in any other forum.

Even after being an MLA for 20 years, I am continually learning how to be a more effective member whenever I participate in interparliamentary functions. In addition to CPA conferences, in 1999 I had the privilege to participate in Alberta's first delegation to Germany under the Partnership of Parliaments program. Alberta hosted a group of German parliamentarians in 1998, and in 1999 it was Alberta's turn to send a delegation there. I witnessed the work of a nation still trying to reintegrate itself after over 50 years of division into east and west. I saw how despite our differences in language, history, geography, and population density I could apply to my work the insights and experiences of our German counterparts. Even though German democratic institutions did not develop along the lines of the British model followed in the

Commonwealth, the differences between our two traditions helped me appreciate the best features of both systems and enabled me to think about how ours can be improved.

I also was honoured in 1999 with an invitation to attend the National Speakers Conference in San Antonio, Texas. A Speaker from Germany and I were the only two participants from outside the United States. Alberta has nurtured connections with the United States in various ways over the last many years,

primarily in order to enhance our economic links with our most important trading partner. My experience at this conference underlined the importance of understanding the legislative and social issues in the United States and maintaining contact with our counterparts there.

All Albertans should be proud of the leading role Alberta continues to play in interparliamentary relations through the work not only of Alberta MLAs but of support staff as well.

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## Secretary's Report

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W.J. David McNeil, Secretary of the Alberta Branch of the CPA and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

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**T**he Alberta branch participated in 13 interparliamentary activities in 1999, three of which were with countries outside the Commonwealth. This was Alberta's first opportunity to send a delegation to Germany as part of the Partnership of Parliaments program, after having hosted a group of German parliamentarians in 1998. Alberta's commitment to this program will involve hosting German guests in even-numbered years and sending a delegation to Germany in odd-numbered years.

Alberta's connection with the francophone parliamentary association Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) grew closer in 1999 to the point that the association expressed interest in having its international conference in Alberta in 2001.

Staff of the Legislative Assembly Office provided excellent support to Alberta MLAs partic-

ipating in interparliamentary functions. Staff also represented Alberta well in interparliamentary activities at the staff level. They collaborated with each other and with their counterparts in other jurisdictions to share knowledge and expertise and develop contacts from which all participating parliaments are sure to benefit.

I was pleased to be asked by the CPA to co-ordinate the development of the first of a series of training modules for Commonwealth parliamentarians. This module, entitled Fundamentals of Parliamentary Democracy, is being developed in co-operation with Athabasca University, the Commonwealth of Learning and the CPA.

I was privileged to support members in their attendance at the National Conference of State Legislators in Indianapolis and the CPA Canadian Regional Conference in Quebec.

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## 16th Canadian Presiding Officers' Conference

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*Ottawa, Ontario, January 7 - 10, 1999*

### **Agenda**

- 1 Role of Parliaments and Parliamentarians in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Governance
- 2 The Changing Demographics of Parliamentary Assemblies
- 3 Ensuring Order and Decorum
- 4 The Casting Vote

- 5 Agreements to be Ratified by Legislatures:  
Case Study of the Nisga'a Treaty

### **Alberta Delegation**

The Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker  
Mr. Don Tannas, Deputy Speaker  
Dr. W.J. David McNeil, Clerk

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## Biennial Conference of Australasian Council of Public Accounts

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*Perth, Australia, February 21 - 23, 1999*

### **Agenda**

- 1 Competitive Tendering and Contracting Out
- 2 Commercial Confidentiality
- 3 Corporate Law Economic Reform  
Legislation: Review of Accounting  
Standards Setting in Australia
- 4 Public Accounts Committees: A Canadian  
Perspective
- 5 Compliance Auditing and Reporting by  
Auditors General
- 6 Year 2000 Problem: Millennium Bug
- 7 The Funding and Administration of  
Community Service Obligations/Universal  
Service Obligations
- 8 The Cost of Accountability: Getting the  
Balance Right
- 9 Audit Legislation: Trends in Australia
- 10 Proposal for an International Organization  
of Public Accounts Committees
- 11 Constitution of the Australasian Council of  
Public Accounts Committees

### **Alberta Delegation**

Mr. Shiraz Shariff, MLA

### **Delegate's Report** (edited for length)

Conference attendees included Australasian Council of Public Accounts (ACPAC) delegates and Auditors General of the Australian states, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, and Papua New Guinea. International observers representing Canada, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United Kingdom also attended.

My impression of the conference was very positive. Tremendous learning occurred from sharing experiences. In particular, this forum provided an excellent opportunity to work with Auditors General identifying areas of improvement. I highly recommend that Alberta continue to participate in such conferences.

– Shiraz Shariff

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## Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie Régional Amérique Section Presidents and Regional Mission 1999

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*Lafayette and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, February 27 - March 4, 1999*

### **Alberta Delegation**

Mr. Paul Langevin, MLA

#### **Delegate's Report** (edited for length)

I found the meetings to be very informative and a good opportunity to discuss matters of interest with other participants. The purpose of these missions is to make Francophone and Anglophone parliamentarians from American parliaments aware of the existence of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) as well as its goals and achievements.

In having a mission at Lafayette and Baton Rouge, the group wanted to portray the interest and the solidarity that the American region has with the Louisiana branch, to reinforce our ties with the branch, and to promote its participa-

tion within the APF and French-speaking countries. The group also wanted to familiarize and promote the APF to parliamentary Francophones, Francophiles, and Anglophones from Louisiana, expand the range of the American region beyond its parliamentary scope, and strengthen the links between Francophone communities in Louisiana in order to promote the French language and culture in America.

The parliamentarians were also able to share thoughts and ideas with other members of the Louisiana community, and after the conference we met with Louisiana parliamentarians and assisted with parliamentary committee work.

– Paul Langevin

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## Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Meeting

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*Edmonton, Alberta, June 20 - 22, 1999*

### **Agenda**

- 1 Working groups on topics including recycling, tourism, private-sector initiatives, environment and agriculture, forest products, and transportation
- 2 Canada/U.S. Border: Bridge or Wall?

### **3 PNWER in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

#### **Alberta Delegation**

Mr. David Coutts, MLA  
Ms Karen Leibovici, MLA

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International Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)  
American Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

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25th Plenary Session, Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

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XVI Ordinary Session, Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

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Ottawa, Ontario, July 4 - 11, 1999

### **Alberta Delegation**

Mr. Paul Langevin, MLA, President of the  
Alberta Section

Mr. Wayne Cao, MLA

Mr. Denis Ducharme, MLA

Ms Karen Leibovici, MLA

Mrs. Louise Kamuchik, Administrative Secretary  
to the Section

### **Delegates' Reports** (edited for length)

This was my first opportunity to witness international debate, and I found it quite interesting. The APF international membership held a plenary session prior to the APF Régional Amérique Conference. As an observer I attended the political session. APF membership fees, problems concerning delinquent membership fees, and requests for APF delegations to assist and participate in democratic reform in some African countries were discussed and debated.

As a member of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie Région Amérique our Alberta delegation participated in discussions and debate regarding the use of technology in the roles of parliamentarians and the expansion of French language services in all provinces within Canada.

All in all, both conferences were very informative and interesting.

– Denis Ducharme

Delegations from 30 countries attended this conference, and it was very interesting to meet so many new people. Since my name is Wayne Cao on the list of delegates representing Canada, other delegates asked if I was of Japanese, Chinese, or Korean roots. I joked in French that I was of native North American Indian roots. But when talking to Vietnam delegates, to their surprise I quickly switched to the

Vietnamese language, telling them that I was born in Vietnam and that in 1954 our family clan avoided the Communists from North Vietnam and moved from South Vietnam for the same reason at the end of the Vietnam war.

On the resolution to use the information highway to connect parliaments around the world, I expressed my support and encouraged its usage. I also voiced that there are countries where the governments have a monopoly on the telecom system and do not trust free flow of information, internally and externally.

During the social part of the conference we were well treated with receptions by Canadian ministers, the Speaker of the House, the Speaker of the Senate, and ambassadors of different nations.

It was very educational for me to learn about the problems of other nations and to meet with people from many places. I promoted the Alberta economic climate to other delegates by pointing out our Alberta initiatives.

– Wayne Cao

### **25<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session**

This was the first APF plenary session held in Canada since Alberta became a member of the organization in 1998. Alberta delegates attending the conference gained much insight into events occurring in a number of countries that have French as their spoken language. Over 175 representatives from 35 Francophone countries and provinces from Europe, Africa, Vietnam, Haiti, and Canada were in attendance.

Topics of discussion included the Moncton summit to be held in September and its perspective on youth. The election of the new executive was announced with Nicholas Amougou Noma, Deputy Speaker, National Assembly of Cameroon, becoming President of the APF and

Jean Pierre Charbonneau, Speaker of the National Assembly of Quebec, appointed first vice-president. The Parliamentary Women of Francophonie discussed the difficulties encountered by women attempting to penetrate the political sphere in their jurisdictions.

## **XVI Ordinary Session**

The opening session began with Dr. Bernard Patry, MP and president of the Canadian section, offering words of welcome to the 60 delegates. A business session entitled *Is Our Youth Healthy?* heard presentations from Senator Losier-Cool and Jean-François Simard, while the theme for the afternoon session was *The Adaptation of the Inforoute to Francophonie and its Utility to Parliamentarians in America.*

The two guest experts, Suzanne Richer, director general, International Information Bank on Francophone States and Pierre C. Belangr, news director, French Radio, Radio-Canada, participated in an interesting exchange with delegates on the use of the Internet by elected officials and members of the public. Delegates also informed their colleagues of the level of services in their respective jurisdictions.

The opportunity to meet new friends, renew acquaintances, and enjoy a healthy exchange of information with delegates of similar backgrounds while discovering an interesting number of differences will be of benefit to all Members of the Legislative Assembly who were fortunate enough to attend this worthwhile conference.

– Paul Langevin

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## Partnership of Parliaments

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*Germany, July 10 - 25, 1999*

### **Alberta Delegation**

The Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker  
Mr. Rob Renner, MLA  
Mr. Tom Thurber, MLA

### **Delegate's Report** (edited for length)

I was pleased to have been invited to participate in the second half of a reciprocal parliamentary exchange between Canada and Germany. The Partnership of Parliaments is a longstanding program between the U.S. and Germany, and its success led to an expansion of the program to include Canadian legislators.

I was impressed with the obvious thought that was put into creating our itinerary. Beginning and ending in the cosmopolitan cities of Berlin and Hamburg, the group was exposed to as broad a spectrum as could be accommodated in the time available. The bulk of the time was spent in discussion with a mix of private-sector, public-sector, and academic representatives.

The delegation had an opportunity to understand and reflect upon the tremendous implica-

tions related to the unification of the former East Germany with West Germany. Focusing not only on growth and economic expansion, we also viewed and discussed the social and financial pressures posed by attempting to assimilate a region that in many ways had been in a time warp for 50 years.

Geographically Germany is about one-third the size of Alberta. With a total population almost three times that of Canada, one could come to the conclusion that we would have little in common, but issues related to government and politics seem to be almost universal.

Technology is shrinking our world daily, and we are rapidly moving to a worldwide economy. If society expects its elected leaders to make critical policy decisions, it is wise to provide them with a better understanding of the global political and economic environments. Organizations such as the Partnership of Parliaments provide a valuable tool in assisting politicians to gain such knowledge and insight.

– Rob Renner

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## National Conference of State Legislators

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*Indianapolis, Indiana, July 24 - 28, 1999*

### **Agenda**

- 1 The Legislative Institution
- 2 Oversight and Performance Evaluation
- 3 U.S. Foreign Relations
- 4 Women Legislators: World Leaders  
Weaving the Global and Domestic Agenda
- 5 International Fiscal Federalism and  
Devolution
- 6 U.S./European Trade Relations: We Have  
No Bananas Today
- 7 The Digital Economy, the Internet, and  
State Taxation
- 8 Africa Roundtable Discussion

### **Alberta Delegation**

Mrs. Judy Gordon, MLA

Mr. Hugh MacDonald, MLA

### **Delegates' Reports** (edited for length)

I had the pleasure of representing the Legislative Assembly and the province of Alberta as a member of the international delegation at this conference.

Many interesting issues were on the conference agenda. I found the policy discussions very informative, particularly the programs on long-term care, medicare reform, growth management and healthy cities, global climate change, the genetic revolution and how it affects agriculture,

privatizing public education, and demographics and its impact on health care.

My family also attended the conference, and the programs available to them were excellent.

– *Hugh MacDonald*

It was my first opportunity to attend such a large function stateside, and I was duly impressed with the calibre and variety of the business sessions.

I attended numerous sessions, including one on the impacts of gambling and several on health reform. As Americans, like Canadians, are getting older and more racially and ethnically diverse, it was felt that failing to address these changing health needs could result in far-reaching economic and social ramifications. I also participated in a roundtable session on Fiscal Federalism and Devolution, where I discussed the fiscal relationship between the federal and provincial governments in Canada.

Many issues facing American legislatures are the same ones we as lawmakers face in our own country and province. I have no doubt we can well learn from each other, and it can only prove to be beneficial to send delegates to future conferences like this one.

– *Judy Gordon*

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## 38<sup>th</sup> Canadian Regional CPA Conference

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Quebec City, Quebec, August 7 - 13, 1999

### Agenda

- 1 Parliamentary Diplomacy
- 2 The Parliamentary Conference of the Americas and Legislative Assemblies of Canada
- 3 The Role of Parliamentarians in the Defense of Large Canadian Industries on the International Scene
- 4 The Commonwealth and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
- 5 The Parliament in the Year 2000: Is Traditional Parliamentary Government Still Appropriate?
- 6 The Role and Place of Independent Members
- 7 Is the Party Line a Necessary Evil?
- 8 The Financing of Political Parties

### Alberta Delegation

Mr. Don Tannas, MLA  
Mr. Ron Stevens, MLA  
Mr. Richard Marz, MLA  
Mr. Julius Yankowsky, MLA  
Mrs. Linda Sloan, MLA  
Mr. Ed Gibbons, MLA  
Dr. W.J. David McNeil, Clerk  
Mrs. Susan Purdie, Special Assistant to the Speaker

### Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

Quebec City was a beautiful and historic setting for this conference. Representatives from across Canada attended, and representatives from other countries including the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, Malaysia, and Puerto Rico were observers. The experience and knowledge one can gain in meeting with other elected representatives are overwhelming.

The conference began with a session on parliamentary diplomacy. A variety of issues were discussed including globalization, NAFTA, responsibilities of opposition party leaders, and credibility of representatives of all levels of government.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, Speaker of the National Assembly and our fantastic conference host, delivered a persistent message that the province of Quebec should be recognized as a distinct government. I enjoyed many interesting conversations and debates about the affairs of Quebec with representatives of that province.

In other sessions throughout the week delegates discussed the parliamentary process, information exchanges, embassy networking, agriculture, and concerns leading up to the World Trade Organization conference. They also expressed concerns about specific issues relating to their own provinces.

The province of Quebec and Quebec City did an outstanding job in hosting all delegates.

– Ed Gibbons

I would first observe that the Canadian CPA members reaffirmed last year's decision not to have the CPA become a body making policy decisions. The Canadian CPA will remain a nonpartisan professional development and improvement association of elected representatives.

Speaker Charbonneau of the Quebec National Assembly was the first presenter on the topic of parliamentary diplomacy. While I thought he would dwell on the issue of diplomacy in our interactions with fellow members of our own Legislatures or with members of other Legislatures, he actually presented a point of view that dealt with a parallel diplomacy to governments' foreign affairs or intergovernmental departments. He advocated that interparliamentary gatherings should deal with international issues and that as elected members we should not leave diplomacy only to the civil servants.

The second session on the topic Parliamentary Conference of the Americas and the Canadian Legislative Assemblies was also presented by Speaker Charbonneau. The third session dealt with the role of parliamentarians in defence of Canada's major industries.

Mr. Arthur Donahoe gave an informative presentation on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and Alberta's Linda Sloan gave a thought-provoking presentation on Parliament in the Year 2000: Is Traditional Parliamentary Government Appropriate?

I enjoyed the conference, and it was very worth while.

– Don Tannas

This conference was aptly described by an habitual attendee as professional development for the parliamentarian. Parliamentarians do not qualify for the position by attending school; rather, they are elected to it. So this event brings together members from all provinces, territories, the federal government, and some Commonwealth countries to discuss, both formally and informally, their experiences and issues.

Formal sessions were held in the National Assembly Chamber. A wide range of topics, from the parochial Quebec issue of parliamentary diplomacy to the broad-based financing of political parties, was discussed. This group of parliamentarians was by no means homogeneous. They shared opinions freely, with passion, and without incident, as all members appeared to come to the conference with a full reserve of bonhomie.

The Quebec members were superb hosts, and all in all this was a most wonderful experience.

– Ron Stevens

I was pleased to be a member of the all-party delegation attending this conference. As a first-term parliamentarian, meeting elected officials from the 10 provinces, the territories, the House of Commons, and the many senators and international delegates who attended was a great privilege.

The conference gave me an opportunity to meet and speak with Quebec parliamentarians as well as citizens in and around that region. I found this experience particularly enlightening. I have gained valuable insight into the issues of importance to the Quebecois, and their concerns were remarkably similar to those I hear

throughout my constituency.

This conference stressed the importance of interparliamentary co-operation and how that co-operation can help us as elected members do our jobs better. Not only can we learn from the experiences of other jurisdictions, we can be examples to developing democracies around the world. Our challenge is to take advantage of this opportunity.

– Richard Marz

I found all sessions to be informative, thought-provoking, and useful to me as a parliamentarian. Presentations addressed the role of parliamentarians in defence of Canada's major industries, the role of independent members, party discipline, and the financing of political parties. All were interesting and well prepared. I found that the discussions following the presentations revealed information about other provinces' and jurisdictions' similarities and differences, which was quite fascinating.

From a parent perspective I was most impressed by the program co-ordinators who ensured that I was aware of what the day's activities would entail and how my 11-year-old daughter, Sarah, would be supervised. A credit to their personable and engaging approach was that Sarah, initially reluctant to participate, made five new friends during the week and returned home speaking very positively of the program and her first visit to Quebec City.

– Linda Sloan

The Canadian Regional CPA conferences are a place for federal, provincial, territorial, and some foreign political representatives to come together on a friendly basis and discuss issues common to all. The topics chosen for the 38<sup>th</sup> conference business sessions certainly bore this out, generating lively discussion and debate both inside and outside of the Quebec Parliament Chamber where the sessions were held.

A personal highlight for me was being chosen to chair the third business session, The Role of Parliamentarians in the Defense of Canada's Major Industries Under Attack on the International Scene.

The conference was exciting and invigorating from the opening ceremony to the closing banquet. In closing, I want to comment on how well it was organized. The receptions, tours, and events for spouses and families were very well planned, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, Speaker of the National Assembly, and his wife, Mme Anne-Marie Desmarais, are to be commended for being such gracious hosts.

– Julius Yankowsky

## Summary of Alberta Presentation

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*Parliament in the Year 2000: Is Traditional Parliamentary Government Appropriate?* by Linda Sloan (with contributions by Thomas Borreson, political science student at the University of Lethbridge)

In 1997 the Alberta government co-ordinated the Alberta growth summit. The fundamental question posed to participants and delegates was: in the context of where we want to be in the year 2005, what private- and public-sector actions and policies are needed to ensure sustainable and broad-based growth in Alberta?

The summit concluded with priorities for action being identified under the categories of people development, health and quality of life, vision of the province, infrastructure, regulatory and tax issues, role and function of government, partnerships, and framework for policy development and management. Concluding the event, Premier Klein committed to outline the government's response and a vision for the province. The Premier mused that he would like to see a response card developed to track follow-up actions, but this has not occurred.

While such an event might appear to most as a measure of Alberta's democratic state, closer examination of other parliamentary measures would suggest that parliamentary democracy in

Alberta is not being sustained but eroded in the context of summits, unelected appointments, and government practices.

The fall sittings of the Legislature in 1997 were replaced by the growth summit. Policy is being made more and more by government-appointed boards. Meanwhile, the Legislature of Alberta is sitting less and less. It sat for only 38 days in 1996-'97 – a stark contrast to Ontario, where the Legislature sat for 134 days over the same period.

Meanwhile, on a national scale it is important to examine the impact of the social union negotiated between the provinces and Ottawa, as well as the North American free trade agreement and the multilateral agreement on investment.

Canadians are bombarded with notions that Canada must adapt in order to remain globally competitive, and this includes changing how Canada is governed. Under this unyielding influence the strength of the Canadian parliamentary system wanes, to the point where recent governments have afforded special rights to these artificial entities which can prevent them from addressing the concerns of actual people.

Is the Canadian parliamentary system an appropriate model for the next century? In its present form it appears to be hamstrung and steadily withering. The corporate powers have considerable financial clout and an ever increasing amount of rights once reserved for human beings. Their power has been more than sufficient to undermine democracy in other nations, creating a de facto command economy in various developing regions.

Perhaps the question is not simply whether or not the Canadian parliamentary system is appropriate but which values Canada wishes to represent in its political system.

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## 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Canadian Conference of Legislative Auditors (CCOLA) and the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees (CCPAC)

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Quebec City, Quebec, August 29 - 31, 1999

- 1 Roundtable reports from delegations
- 2 International Public Accounts Committees
- 3 Subcommittees on Guidelines and International Standards Concerning the Financial Statements of Public Sector of Standing Committee on Public Accounts, House of Commons
- 4 Value-for-money Auditing in Canada and Quebec Governments
- 5 Managing the Cost of Drug Therapies and Fostering Appropriate Drug Use in British Columbia
- 6 User Fees for Public Services
- 7 The John J. Kelly Forum on Relationships Between Public Accounts Committees and Auditors General

### Alberta Delegation

Mr. Lance White, MLA, Chairman  
Mrs. Mary O'Neill, MLA

### Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

The CCPAC conference was attended by parliamentarians, researchers, and committee clerks from the Canadian House of Commons and the provinces. The group was pleased to have the chairman of the Nunavut Territory

Public Accounts Committee and two staff members in attendance. International observers from Bermuda, Tasmania, and western Australia also participated. It is interesting to note the involvement of other Commonwealth nations in the CCPAC process.

Also interesting is the extent to which public accounts committees in Canada can be proactive in ensuring that administration and implementation of policies are carried out in a prudent manner. This fact was corroborated by the survey discussed during the joint session between public accounts committee members and legislative auditors.

– Lance White

I thought the conference was valuable for its national and even international connections. I am convinced that every public accounts committee member in their respective jurisdictions is striving to give the best service in scrutinizing the public accounts for their regions, and the conference confirmed that opinion. The setting and the venues, coupled with the timing and pace of the conference, in Quebec City were excellent.

– Mary O'Neill

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## Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie

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Antananarivo, Madagascar, October 19 - 21, 1999

### Alberta Delegation

Mr. Paul Langevin, MLA

### Theme: Parliament in the Year 2000

#### Delegate's Report (edited for length)

The purpose of the conference was to help improve democracy in that part of the world. This was done by sharing our experiences.

Along with parliamentarians from Quebec, Belgium, Mali, and Benin, I made presentations to approximately 60 elected officials and held working sessions. Those who attended appreciated our help and viewed the conference as a great success.

It was a great experience, and I am pleased to have had the opportunity.

– Paul Langevin

#### Executive Summary of Alberta Presentation (translation from French)

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Mr. Langevin gave an information presentation outlining the roles and rights of Members of the Legislative Assembly in Alberta. He explained the differences between government MLAs sitting as members of cabinet and those sitting as backbenchers and the members of the opposition parties, and he indicated that the job of the MLA in Alberta has now evolved to become a full-time position from being essentially part-time prior to 1970.

His presentation touched on such topics as the role of the MLA in caucus, the responsibilities of MLAs both to their constituents and to the Assembly, and also with respect to party discipline and voting. He addressed the role of

bills, resolutions, and motions as means of addressing and responding to constituents' needs and concerns. Further, he spoke about the role of the Official Opposition in Alberta's Legislature vis-à-vis critiquing potential legislation and government expenditures, their participation on the standing committees of the Assembly, and the formation of the "shadow cabinet" to scrutinize the operations and spending of specific departments of government.

Mr. Langevin detailed the rights and privileges of MLAs in Alberta, noting two essential privileges: freedom of expression and protection from arrest. He explained that freedom of expression permits the MLA to speak his mind within the Assembly without fear of prosecution and that the other privilege, protection from arrest, dates from the early days of British parliamentary democracy and was designed to ensure that a member could not be detained from carrying out his parliamentary duties.

In conclusion, he indicated that while Legislatures have changed little as far as the process of enacting and changing legislation, our society has changed a great deal, passing from the industrial age to the information age. In the new millennium issues such as globalization, the desire for transparent and responsible government, increased demand on services, and citizens wishing more direct involvement in democracy will pose challenges to all parliaments. As his closing observation, Mr. Langevin noted that future parliaments and legislators must possess a more in-depth knowledge and make the most of their capacity to obtain and evaluate the data originating from the many new information sources.

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## State Legislative Leaders Foundation (SLLF) National Speakers' Conference

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*San Antonio, Texas, October 20 - 24, 1999*

- 1 Judicial System and the Parliamentary System
- 2 Politics and the Media
- 3 Roundtable discussions
- 4 Private Economists Constituency presentation

### **Alberta Delegation**

The Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker  
Ms Bev Alenius, Executive Assistant to the Speaker

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## 22<sup>nd</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Canadian Regional Seminar

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*St. John's, Newfoundland, October 21-24, 1999*

- 1 Role of Committees: Future Effectiveness in Parliament
- 2 The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
- 3 Information Technology in Legislatures: Present Reality and Future Prospects
- 4 Question Period: How is it Handled by Speakers?
- 5 The Balance Between the Legislature and the Executive
- 6 Presentation on Confederation
- 7 Parliament/Media Relations  
The Parliamentary Image: How Can It Be Improved?
- 8 Forestry

### **Alberta Delegation**

Mr. Denis Herard, MLA  
Mrs. Colleen Soetaert, MLA

### **Delegates' Reports** (edited for length)

I attended several sessions, including one on Confederation, and my colleague's presentation on parliamentary media relations. The session on Confederation was a great history lesson that crystallized an understanding of the heart and soul of Newfoundlanders and provided a new perspective on current issues as they relate to separatism in Quebec.

The session on media relations was perhaps the liveliest, with Colleen Soetaert's humorous paper on how to prepare for media interviews, followed by a debate on all aspects of media relations and the perception of voters.

– Denis Herard

As this was my first time as a participant at a CPA seminar, I found it to be informative and enjoyable. It is great to see how other parliaments work, to see where, in my opinion, Alberta's Legislature is ahead, the technology, and where we are behind, the role of committees.

The question period session was most interesting. In some jurisdictions government backbenchers do not get to ask any questions. In B.C. question period is only 15 minutes long.

All in all, it was a very informative weekend hosted by the gracious people of Newfoundland, most notably the Speaker and his wife. What I learned in Newfoundland was very valuable, but it was getting to know the people of Newfoundland that was most valuable. My intent is to return to Newfoundland with my family someday so that they, too, may benefit from knowing more about the rest of Canada.

– Colleen Soetaert

## Summary of Alberta Presentation

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*Parliamentarians and the Press* by Colleen Soetaert

Everyone has a horror story to tell about being misquoted in the press, but in reality the press is absolutely essential to our jobs. I always get distressed when I hear people in politics talking about the press as if they are snakes. We need them. The public needs them. They are the conduit to the masses. How else does the public get information? How do we get our message out? Whether the message is about a good move government has made or the opposition pointing out the government's shortcomings, we need to work with the press.

It is interesting how some politicians want to be in the news and others would just as soon not. I was chatting with a minister one day and he said to me, "A good day is when I'm not in the press," but for opposition a good day is if you

are in the paper, even if it is the last line of the last paragraph.

I have found that the small community papers love news and look for it. If you have a credible issue you will get covered, and local papers tend to be read cover to cover, unlike some of the bigger papers.

I know many of the reporters fairly well, but I never say anything to them that I don't want to read about the next day. They have a job to do, and if you are talking to them and it is newsworthy, they have an obligation to report it. Half the time you end up giving an interview with no prior notice, and it is important not to get caught off guard. You have the right to say, "Let me do a little homework, and I'll get back to you."

Most of all, be yourself. Thousands of people voted for you, and when you get into the news in a positive way, it reaffirms that they were correct in choosing you to speak for them.

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## 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference, Council on Governmental Ethics Laws

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*Providence, Rhode Island, December 5 - 8, 1999*

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| 1 The Importance of Public Access to Government Information  | 10 Creating a Positive Image for a Watchdog Agency                             |
| 2 A Generation of Reform—How Much Progress?  | 11 Nuts and Bolts I: Effective Use of Subpoenas                                |
| 3 Public/Private Partnerships: Recognizing and Avoiding Bad Deals                                  | 12 Election Administration: U.S. and Canadian Perspectives                     |
| 4 Instilling the Public Value of Open Government   | 13 Information Use and Privacy in the Health Care Industry                     |
| 5 Ethics in Government—A Personal Perspective  | 14 Managing Public Access Reports  |
| 6 How to Develop a Useful and Effective Web Site   | 15 Watchdog Agencies from Board Members' Perspectives                          |
| 7 Ethics Update  | 16 Independent Expenditures and Third Party Advocacy                           |
| 8 Analysis of Campaign Finance Reform in the United Kingdom and Implications for the United States | 17 Freedom of Information Update   |
| 9 What the World Expects in Freedom of Information   | 18 Truth in Polls  |
|  | 19 Electronic Filing Update  |
|  | 20 Affecting Political Culture and Government Institutions From the Outside In |

- 21 Nuts and Bolts II: Drafting Advisory Opinions
- 22 Identifying and Combating Voter Fraud
- 23 Mock Commission Meeting
- 24 Public Finance of Campaigns
- 25 Lobbying Update
- 26 Conducting an Effective Compliance Audit
- 27 A Consumer's View of Ethics Laws
- 28 How Minnesota's Campaign Laws Helped Elect a Third Party Governor
- 29 Oceans of Data: Keeping Government Open in the Age of the Internet

### **Alberta Delegation**

Bob Clark, Ethics Commissioner and Information and Privacy Commissioner  
 Paul Langevin, MLA  
 Frank Work, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner  
 Karen South, Office of the Ethics Commissioner  
 Brian Fjeldheim, Chief Electoral Officer  
 Diane Shumyla, Committee Clerk

### **Delegate's Report** (edited for length)

The conference focused on information and privacy, ethics, and election and government reform issues. Topics such as the importance of public access to government information, recognizing and avoiding bad deals in public/private partnerships, and election campaign finance were addressed.

The session on Instilling the Public Value of Open Government led to a discussion of freedom of information laws and how such laws are based on a recognition and acknowledgement on the part of government; that while openness and transparency are necessary parts of the accountability framework for public administration, at some point governments invariably begin to question the value of the law.

Debate also focused on the roles and responsibilities of board members of watchdog agencies by commission chairs who have various enforcement powers, discussing the relationship and interaction between members, their appointing authorities, staff, constituencies, the public, and the press.

The topic Affecting Political Culture and Government Institutions from the Outside was discussed as successful government reform efforts begin from outside the institutions of government.

The session also explored the efforts of private advocacy groups to achieve reform on issues including campaign finance, lobbying, ethics, and public access to information. Public participation processes were discussed with emphasis on how and why groups outside government affect and interact with existing watchdog agencies.

– Paul Langevin

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## Bursaries

Bursaries are presented annually to nominees from Tuxis Parliament of Alberta and the Alberta Girls' Parliament to increase interest in the parliament process among young Albertans. On May 4 Speaker Kowalski awarded bursaries to Jill Delarue from Tuxis and to Kristy Bruce and Jessica Schaink from the Alberta Girls' Parliament.

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## Grade 6 Essay Contest

A provincewide essay contest is held annually for grade 6 students to encourage greater awareness of the Commonwealth and the parliamentary system. This year the grand prize went to Jacqueline Kennedy.



# Interparliamentary Relations

(Left to right) Her Honour Mrs. Lucille Olson, His Honour the Honourable H. A. "Bud" Olson, former Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General, His Excellency John Ralston Saul, and Speaker Kowalski.

**T**he Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chairman of Committees, and staff of the Legislative Assembly Office are involved in ongoing liaison with members and staff of other parliaments and representatives of foreign countries. In 1999 they hosted or met with the following visitors.

March 10	Mr. Marlis Syamsuddin Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia
March 16	Mr. Shigeru Ise Consul General of Japan
March 17	His Excellency Roberto Nigido Ambassador of Italy
March 22	Most Reverend Joseph MacNeil Roman Catholic Archbishop of Edmonton
April 15	His Excellency Billy Modise High Commissioner for South Africa
April 15	Russian Parliamentary Delegation
April 21	Forum for Young Albertans
May 3	His Excellency Dr. M Al-Hussaini Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
May 5	Mr. Kiyoshi Shidara Consul General of Japan
May 12	His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Khandogiy Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine
May 12	Mr. Ian Kydd British Consul General

May 17	His Excellency René Fidèle Rajaonah Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar
May 27	Mr. Michel Dejaegher Consul General of France
June 22	His Excellency Erhan Ögüt Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey
July 2	His Excellency Katsuhisa Uchida Ambassador of Japan
August 24	His Excellency Manuel Pesantes Ambassador of Ecuador
September 27	His Excellency André Jaquet High Commissioner for South Africa
October 14	Mr. Patricio Villanueva Consul General of the Republic of Chile
October 14	His Excellency Walther Lichem Ambassador of the Republic of Austria
October 18	The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, C.C. C.M.M. C.D. Governor General of Canada
November 17	His Excellency Vladimir Kotzy Ambassador of the Czech Republic
November 25	His Excellency Dr. Juergen Poehlmann Ambassador of Germany
December 6	Mr. Byong-Il Kang Consul General of the Republic of Korea