
Legislative Assembly Office

2000 Annual Report



*Members of the
24th Legislature.*



*The Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)
conclude their anniversary year with the laying
up of the old Regimental Guidon (flag) in
the Rotunda.*



*The Carillon Room on the fifth floor
of the Legislature Building. The
carillon is in the far right corner.*



*Premier Ralph Klein and Speaker Ken Kowalski at
the ceremony for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.
The box, containing soil from the four corners of
the Legislature grounds, was transported to the
grave in Ottawa.*

An Introduction

The Legislative Assembly Office: In Service to Alberta's Parliament



Speaker Ken Kowalski.

The origins of the Legislative Assembly Office of Alberta can be traced to the 14th century in England, when Parliament elected the first Speaker and appointed the first Clerk. Today the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is the head of the office, and the Clerk is the Speaker's deputy. The Legislative Assembly Act of 1983 made the office's current name official.

The most common misconception about the Legislative Assembly Office is that it is a branch of the government and that its staff are government employees. However, in the parliamentary system the government is the executive branch and is responsible for applying and enforcing laws; the Legislative Assembly is the legislative branch and is responsible for establishing those laws. The Legislative Assembly Office provides various types of support to the entire Assembly, including MLAs of opposition and government parties alike.

Although the office is sometimes called the Speaker's department, it is not a government department. The Speaker does not belong to the cabinet and cannot be asked questions during Oral Question Period or participate in the Assembly's debates. The Speaker does have administrative authority and responsibility similar to that of the ministers of government departments; the Clerk is the Speaker's chief administrative deputy and has authority and responsibility similar to that of a deputy minister.

The Speaker has two distinct but related roles. In the Assembly the Speaker maintains order and ensures that MLAs conduct their business according to the Standing Orders of the Assembly. Administratively, the Speaker is responsible for the Assembly's records and for providing services to MLAs and

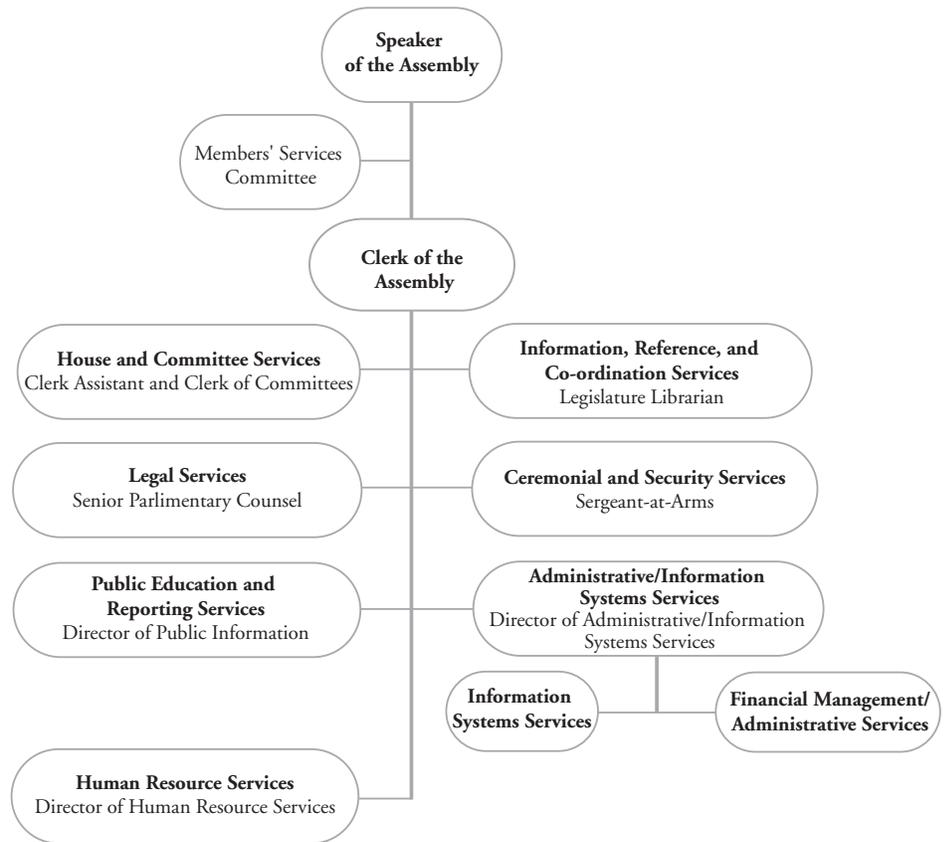
the public. The latter include financial administration, purchasing, human resources, office automation assistance, public education, and the library.

The Legislative Assembly Office as a whole has the same two procedural and administrative roles. This is a unique characteristic of the office and is evident throughout the office, particularly during session, when the normal duties, work hours, and office locations of many staff change significantly.

The office's annual budget as well as statutory provisions for financial and human resource administration are under the purview of the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services. An all-party committee of the Assembly, the Members' Services Committee also regulates constituency office support and Members' pay, allowances, benefits, and group insurance plans, all of which the office administers. Traditionally, the Speaker chairs the Members' Services Committee.

Each party grouping of elected Members, or caucus, is a branch of the Legislative Assembly Office. Although technically the Speaker has authority over the administration of each caucus office, for obvious reasons these branches operate with considerable autonomy. The caucus branches are therefore not part of this report; it includes only branches of the office under the Speaker's full control. However, since the caucuses receive financial, administrative, and human resource services as well as other support from other branches of the office, this report does comment on those services. In addition, the office's consolidated budget estimates and audited financial statements, which appear at the end of this report, include caucus finances.

Legislative Assembly Office



Purpose Statement

Within the traditions of parliamentary democracy as constitutionally established in Alberta, the Legislative Assembly Office will:

1. Support Members in carrying out their roles as elected representatives of the people of Alberta.
2. Support the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in carrying out the duties of office.
3. Record the proceedings and maintain and preserve the records of the Legislative Assembly.
4. Inform and educate the public on behalf of Members and the institution of Parliament.
5. Support the Assembly in protecting its institutions and privileges.
6. Support the exchange of ideas/information among legislatures throughout the world.
7. Provide services to external clients as required.



*Goals of the Legislative Assembly Office
2000-2001*

- Assist Members in carrying out their roles as legislators within the parliamentary system and as representatives of their constituencies.
- Meet and exceed the service expectations of Members.
- Assist the Speaker in fulfilling the duties of office.
- Respond to increased demands for technology-related services from Members, staff, and the public.
- Increase public awareness of the Legislative Assembly within Alberta's democratic parliamentary system through information and outreach programs.
- Continue to maintain the separation of powers among the Legislative Assembly, the Executive, and the Judiciary.
- Ensure that the Legislative Assembly Office provides quality services in an increasingly competitive environment.
- Provide leadership in fostering increasing interparliamentary co-operation through participation in national and international parliamentary forums and exchange programs, including planning for the 2001-2002 Canadian Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.
- Promote the products, services, and achievements of the Legislative Assembly Office to Members, staff, and the public.
- Foster and recognize leadership and teamwork within the Legislative Assembly Office.
- Ensure the continuing development of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Legislative Assembly Office workforce.
- Promote the involvement of employees in the ongoing development of the Legislative Assembly Office.
- Develop plans for special centennial events and projects.
- Plan for the transition from the 24th to the 25th Legislature.