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# The Year in Review: Meeting the Challenge of an Extraordinary Year

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W.J. David McNeil, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly



*Christmas at the  
Legislature Building.*

The Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) met or exceeded its goals in 2000, thanks to the dedication, professionalism, and collaboration of staff in all branches. Every branch and individual staff member contributed significantly to reaching these goals, and deserve to be congratulated for their achievement. They achieved their goals at a time when some branches were short-staffed or in the process of training new staff. Their achievements are all the more notable in light of an extraordinarily busy year throughout the LAO. Staff met these challenges and went on to expand services to Members and the public, maintaining the LAO as a leader among the parliamentary support organizations in the Commonwealth.

## *Assembly Records Set*

The Assembly set a number of records, many associated with consideration of Bill 11, the Health Care Protection Act. Extended debates on Bill 11 raised the average number of sitting hours per day to 6.16 in 2000, highest in the history of the Assembly. The conclusion of debate on the bill in Committee of the Whole on May 2 saw an unprecedented 22 requests for recorded votes between midnight and 2:15 a.m. Public demonstrations in the Legislature Building or surrounding grounds were held at all stages of the debate. The number of petitions received in 2000 totalled 431, the highest number in the history of the Assembly.

Table officers and staff throughout the LAO worked hard to help Members successfully meet the challenges of this intense activity. In accordance with the requirements of the Standing Orders, Parliamentary Counsel reviewed all proposed amendments to the bill before they were introduced. Counsel and the other table officers provided advice to the Speaker on two questions of privilege, both concerning some aspect of Bill 11.

The LAO implemented a House Leaders' Agreement to provide for coverage by Access television of the first three hours of second reading debate on Bill 11 on the evening of April 4. A live radio broadcast was also provided. The Legislative Assembly security staff worked with the RCMP and the Edmonton Police Service to provide security both inside and outside the Legislature during debates. They successfully dealt with the daily challenge of balancing the need to provide for both public accessibility and maintenance of security so Members and staff could carry out their responsibilities.

During 2000, the Assembly sat for 56 days compared to 62 in 1999. Standing and special committees held 28 meetings against 32 the previous year. House and Committee Services (HCS) and Legal Services provided procedural, administrative, and legal support for these sittings and meetings. Parliamentary Counsel drafted a total 19 private members' public bills that were introduced in the Assembly in 2000.

*Hansard* staff provided accurate transcripts of nearly 3 million words spoken over 410 hours of the Assembly and its committees. During the spring



session the final *Hansard* for afternoon sittings was available on the Internet by 11 p.m. on the same day, nine hours sooner than in previous years. The Public Information Branch (PIB) and Information System Services (ISS) began work to put the weekly *Hansard* index on the Assembly's web page. The PIB worked with constituency and caucus staff to produce reprints of remarks made by individual Members in the Assembly. The branch published a special commemorative issue of remarks by all Members on the debate of Bill 26, Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act, which passed all stages unanimously in November.

The PIB Director was absent for the last six months of 2000. PIB staff worked co-operatively to ensure that all functions were carried out with a high degree of commitment and professionalism even though many were performing new and unfamiliar tasks.

#### *Services Enhanced*

MLAs and the public rely increasingly on electronic access to information. ISS successfully maintained these computer systems during the transition to the year 2000 as a result of extensive planning and upgrading during 1999. With the Y2K transition behind it, ISS upgraded the LAO's servers, providing for high-speed transmission of data for Members and staff and additional firewall protection. Several branches worked with ISS to upgrade the external and internal Assembly web sites. The external site is now easier and faster to use in linking to

texts of bills and amendments, Standing Orders, *Hansard*, and other House records. Gavel-to-gavel audio coverage is now available on the web site. Work is progressing to allow Members and their staff to fill in forms on line through the internal web site.

Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS) surveyed constituency offices to evaluate the effectiveness of the current package of furnishings and equipment provided by the LAO. The Members' Services Committee subsequently approved a proposal to upgrade the package, starting in 2001. FMAS prepared budget proposals, which were approved by the Members' Services Committee. Accounting and administrative staff continued to process financial transactions promptly and accurately and to maintain and enhance the administrative infrastructure necessary for the Assembly to perform its work.

Administrative Services provided telecommunications advice to Members in areas such as cellular equipment and peripherals, air time programs and adjustments, and equipment/service upgrades as required for constituency offices.

Human Resource Services (HRS) refined and expanded services to Members and their constituency office employees. Under the direction of the Members' Services Committee, it developed and implemented the Members' Choice Benefit Plan and implemented an increase to MLA indemnity, tax-free allowances, and other related remuneration.

Three Members retired in 2000, and two new Members were elected in by-elections. HRS assisted them with pay, benefits, transition allowances, and staffing. HRS co-ordinated 20 competitions for sessional, seasonal, and salaried positions, conducted 133 interviews, and hired 40 staff.

Planning for an election intensified during 2000. The LAO rewrote and redesigned the dissolution policy guide and made presentations to constituency and caucus staff. The LAO also assessed and streamlined internal processes and forms to facilitate the substantial staff changes that an election brings.

Ceremonial and Security Services (CSS) provided security for Members and visitors in the galleries. Some individuals had to be ejected from the gallery during debate on Bill 11. The Sergeant-at-Arms offered security advice to Members' constituency offices throughout the year.

The Legislature Library, with assistance from ISS, upgraded its online catalogue to make it more user-friendly for the Members and staff. The new web-based system also permits Library staff to catalogue web sites of interest to their clients, provide easy access to electronic publications, and share catalogue records with greater ease. With the strong support of the Members' Services Committee, the Legislature Library became a member of The Alberta Library. Membership allows the Legislature Library to participate more fully in information resource-sharing across the province, including direct desktop access for Members to four full-text databases relevant to their work and research

interests. The Legislature Library also worked closely with other branches and Alberta Infrastructure to provide safer storage and an updated valuation of its important historical collections.

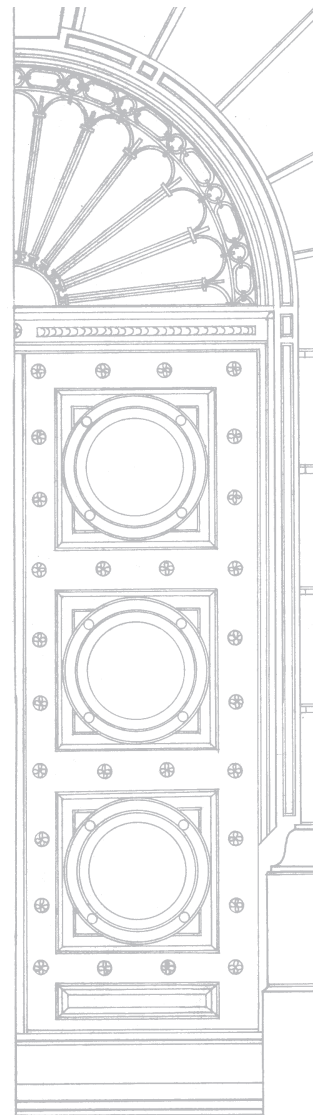
#### *Public Outreach Programs Successful*

The Public Information Branch worked co-operatively with other branches throughout 2000 on outreach services to educate the public about the legislative process.

The second annual Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament brought together 83 grade 10 students representing the same 83 constituencies as Alberta's elected MLAs. The event gives participants an insight into the parliamentary process and what it means to represent a constituency.

The Assembly is now home to more model parliaments than any other jurisdiction in Canada: Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament, the University of Alberta Model Parliament, the Forum for Young Albertans, the Tuxis Parliament of Alberta for Western Canada Youth Parliament, the Parlement jeunesse de l'Alberta, the Tuxis Parliament of Alberta for the Alberta Alumni Society, and the Alberta Debate and Speech Association.

Public information calls increased by 11 percent over the previous year, and the total number of visitors greeted by Visitor Services grew by 11 percent because of strong attendance at a number of special events, notably Family Day activities at the Legislature.





The number of visitors on booked tours increased in 2000, although the number of walk-in visitors declined. The School-at-the-Legislature program, which has been in pilot mode for the past two years, was successfully launched on November 20, offering grade 6 students hands-on knowledge about the Assembly, government, and the parliamentary process. The program is due to expand in 2001.

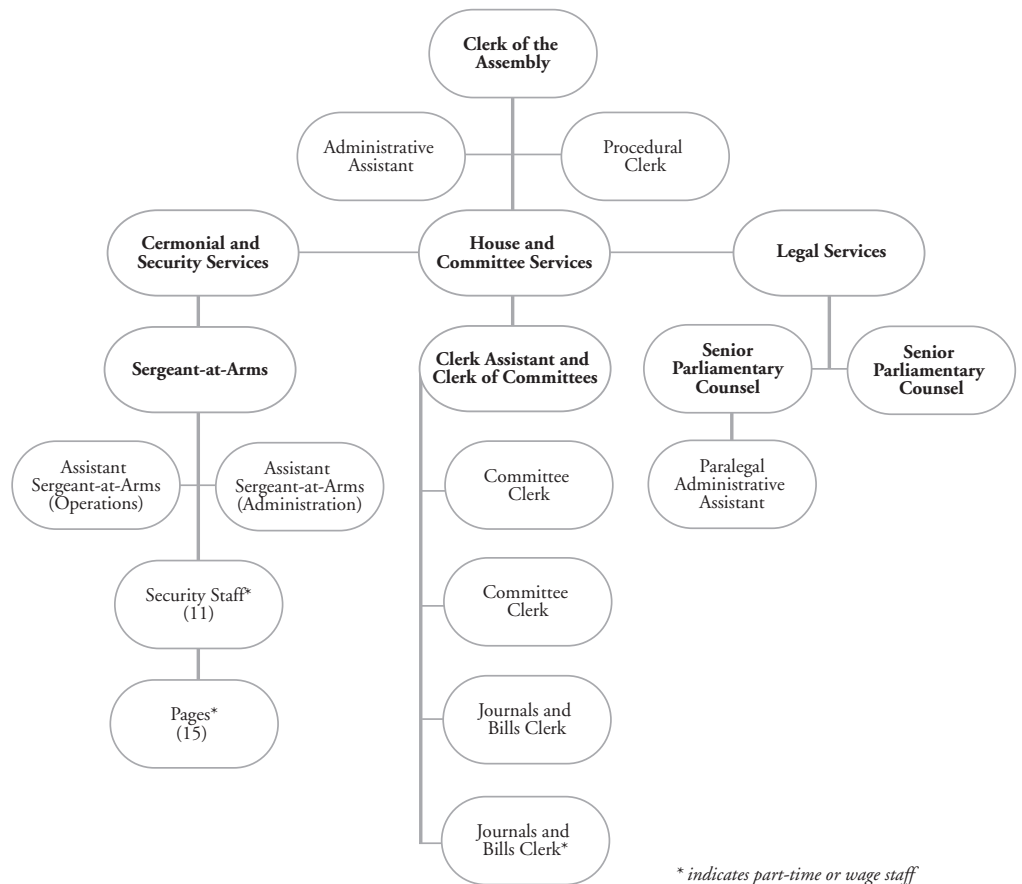
Among the many special events, some 600 people attended the installation in February of Lois Hole, CM, as the 15th Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. An official Lying-in-State was held in the Rotunda in June for former Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. J.W. Grant MacEwan, OC, LLD. More than 1,700 visitors were served

refreshments and cake in the Rotunda in August in honour of the Queen Mother's 100th birthday. Some 2,400 people came to the Rotunda in September to sign a book of condolences on the passing of the Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau. The annual Halloween-o-rama attracted 6,000, and more than 11,600 people enjoyed Christmas activities at the Legislature during December.

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# House Services

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*\* indicates part-time or wage staff*



# House and Committee Services

Louise J. Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees

## *Function Statement*

- *Provides procedural advice to the Speaker and Members of the Assembly*
- *Manages support services to legislative committees*
- *Maintains Assembly records*
- *Manages production of Assembly documents*

**H**ouse and Committee Services (HCS) provided procedural and administrative support during 56 sitting days and 28 meetings of standing and special committees in 2000.

HCS expanded public access to Assembly documents during the year by increasing the number of sessional and committee documents available on the Assembly's web site. In addition, gavel-to-gavel audio coverage of daily sessions is now available on the site. The membership list for the standing and special standing committees was also added to the site, along with information on how to contact the appropriate committee clerk and a link to transcripts of committee meetings. A schedule of anticipated weekly House business was posted on the Assembly web site.

The first ceremonial event of the year took place in the Chamber on Thursday, February 10, when Lois Elsa Hole, CM, was sworn in as Alberta's 15th Lieutenant Governor. She is the second woman in

Alberta's history to hold this position. Following the ceremony a reception was held in the Rotunda and Library during which Her Honour had the opportunity to greet Members, dignitaries, and the public.

## *Special Bill 11 Coverage Arranged*

The Fourth Session of the 24th Legislature opened on Thursday, February 17 with the Speech from the Throne. Provincial Treasurer Stockwell Day tabled the province's budget on February 24. Bill 11, the Health Care Protection Act, was introduced on March 2 and became the most controversial legislation in the Assembly's recent history. A House Leaders' agreement was negotiated to provide for coverage by Access television of the first three hours of second reading debate on the evening of April 4. A live radio broadcast was also provided.

The conclusion of debate on the bill in Committee of the Whole on May 2 saw an unprecedented 22 requests for recorded votes between midnight and 2:15 a.m. Public demonstrations in the Legislature Building and on the surrounding grounds were held every evening at all stages of the debate. Royal Assent was granted on May 30. The 47-day spring session adjourned May 25.

On February 2 Pam Barrett, the Leader of the New Democrats and MLA for Edmonton-Highlands, announced her resignation. A by-election to replace her was held on June 12. Brian Mason, also

a New Democrat, was sworn in as Alberta's newest member on July 5, 2000.

On July 11 Stockwell Day resigned as the Member for Red Deer-North following a successful bid for the leadership of the federal Canadian Alliance Party. Mary Ann Jablonski, Progressive Conservative, won the September 24 by-election and was sworn in on October 23. Both new Members took their seats in the Chamber when the session resumed on November 14. The Fourth Session of the 24th Legislature adjourned on November 28.

Sue Olsen, Liberal Member for Edmonton-Norwood, resigned her seat on October 25 to run as a candidate in the fall federal election. No by-election was called to fill the vacancy.

Three of the 19 private members' public bills introduced in the 2000 session received Royal Assent. A total of 22 private members' public bills have received Royal Assent since the 1993 parliamentary reforms. The number of petitions rose from 268 in 1999 to 431 in 2000, most of them dealing with health care.

### *Committees Supported*

HCS staff provided administrative and procedural support for 28 meetings of standing, special standing, and Committee of Supply subcommittee meetings of the Assembly. One committee clerk was reassigned to assist with the increasing number of delegations visiting Alberta each year and with the regional meeting

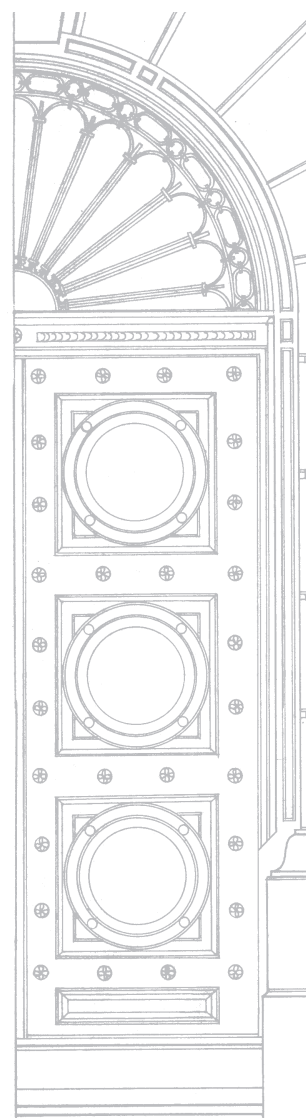
of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). Alberta will host the CPA regional meeting in July 2001.

During the year Alberta welcomed the Partnership of Parliaments from Germany and the Parliamentary Committee on Health and Welfare from Sweden.

Active standing committees in 2000 included the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (12 meetings), the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund (five meetings), Legislative Offices (four meetings), Private Bills (five meetings), and the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services (two meetings). The Assembly approved minor changes to the membership of three standing committees at its fall session.

During the spring session the Committee of Supply continued its practice of establishing nine committees to review government department estimates. Five designated supply subcommittees were appointed to review the estimates of specific departments designated by the Official Opposition. An additional four subcommittees of supply were appointed to review the estimates of other departments.

The branch continued its practice of co-operating with other jurisdictions by responding to numerous surveys and questionnaires on Assembly and committee procedures. Staff actively participated in relevant associations and attended professional development seminars and conferences.







The Clerk Assistant continued to provide administrative support to the Alberta section of the America Region of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) and was elected Secretary Treasurer of the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table at that organization's professional development seminar in August. Alberta APF members and the Clerk Assistant attended the international ordinary session of the APF in New Brunswick.

The Clerk Assistant also presented the jurisdictional report at the Clerks-at-the-Table professional development seminar in August. Branch staff attended the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees conference and the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws conference.

HCS staff were actively involved as volunteers or representatives in a number of joint internal projects, including the Assembly's web committee, the Assembly's web management subcommittee, the staff recognition dinner, and the Speaker's Cup tournament.

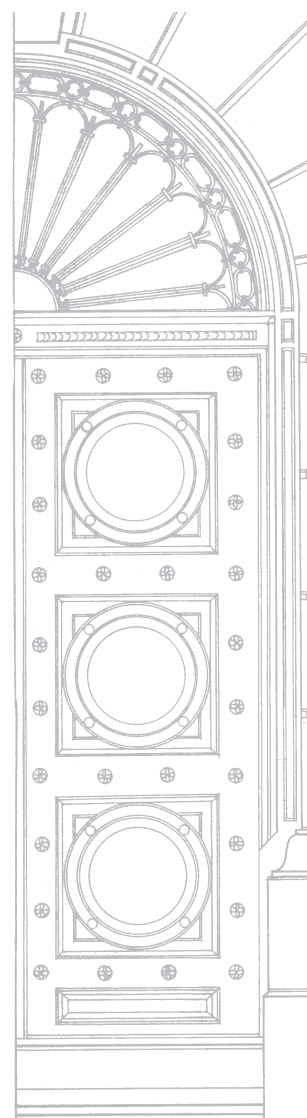
Table officers also participated in a number of functions at the Legislature. These included the unveiling of a portrait of the former Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. H.A. "Bud" Olson, and the unveiling of a statue of Lord Strathcona by the Governor General, Her Excellency the Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson. Other functions included the laying up of the Old Guidon, Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) in the Rotunda, and the celebration of Francophone Week in Alberta.



## House and Committee Services

### Comparative Statistics

			2000	1999	1998
			Fourth Session 24th Legislature	Third Session 24th Legislature	Second Session 24th Legislature
Sitting Days (hours)	Spring		47 (178)	49 (177)	49 (177)
	Fall		9 (33)	13 (51)	14 (51)
Evening Sitzings (hours)	Spring		34 (106)	36 (85)	36 (76)
	Fall		7 (20)	10 (33)	11 (33)
Government Bills	Introduced		29	46	50
	Rec'd Royal Assent		26	43	44
Private Bills	Introduced		5	3	4
	Rec'd Royal Assent		5	2	4
Private Members' Public Bills	Introduced		19	29	32
	Rec'd Royal Assent		3	3	4
Government Motions	Debated		26	26	39
	Agreed to		25	24	38
	Withdrawn		0	2	1
				(closure motion not moved)	(closure motion not moved)
Private Members' Motions	Placed on Order Paper		67	94	97
	Agreed to		9	8	10
	Defeated		5	7	6
	Withdrawn		1	4	1
Written Questions	Placed on Order Paper		37	99	57
	Accepted		22	74	43
	Rejected		3	16	11
	Withdrawn		0	0	0
Motions for Returns	Placed on Order Paper		58	156	50
	Accepted		10	51	23
	Rejected		40	95	21
	Withdrawn		0	0	0
Committee of Supply (days)	Main Estimates		20	20	20
	Lottery Fund		2	2	3
	Supplementary		3	4	5
Designated Supply Subcommittees (hours)					
(2000: Learning, Health and Wellness, Environment, Human Resources, Children's Services)			13.32	17.82	13.70
Tablings	(Required by Statute)		130	146	176
	(Voluntary)		1,192	1,211	849
	<b>Total</b>		<b>1,322</b>	<b>1,357</b>	<b>1,025</b>
Petitions (excluding Private Bills)	Presented		431	268	120
	Read and Received		355	89	80
Recognitions			154	199	139
Members' Statements			80	87	93
Ministerial Statements			6	23	22
Pages Published	Journals		1,004	1,029	810
	Votes and Proceedings		604	589	520
	Order Paper		707	1,086	882





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## Legal Services

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Robert Reynolds and Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel

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### *Function Statement*

- *Provides legal and procedural advice to the Speaker, Members of the Assembly, committees of the Assembly, caucuses, and staff of the Legislative Assembly Office*
- *Drafts private members' public bills and private bills*
- *Reviews amendments, motions, written questions, and motions for return*
- *Provides legal services to the Chief Electoral Officer*

The office of Parliamentary Counsel experienced a busy year in 2000 with a diverse workload inside and outside the Assembly. In addition to regular duties as table officers during the spring and fall sittings and advising the Speaker, Members, and caucuses on legal and procedural issues, the office provided support to other staff in the Legislative Assembly Office and the Chief Electoral Officer on legal and litigation matters. Parliamentary Counsel work in conjunction with the Clerk, the Clerk Assistant, the Procedural Clerk and the Committee Clerks in the Chamber to assist the Speaker in preserving and asserting the rights and privileges of the Assembly.

### *Bill 11 Activity*

The focal point of the spring session was Bill 11, the Health Care Protection Act, which generated considerable activity.

The issues surrounding Bill 11 contributed in part to a record of 431 petitions being presented in the Assembly. Parliamentary Counsel reviewed petitions to ensure that they comply with the Standing Orders and the practices of the Assembly. In addition, two questions of privilege arose during the spring session, both concerning aspects of Bill 11.

In accordance with the requirements of the Standing Orders, Parliamentary Counsel review amendments to bills before they are introduced. Parliamentary Counsel also review all motions, Motions for Returns, and Written Questions before they are placed on the Order Paper.

Parliamentary Counsel was responsible for drafting a total of 19 private members' public bills that were introduced in the Assembly in 2000. Pam Barrett, MLA for Edmonton-Highlands, had held the first position for private members' public bills with Bill 201. The bill was not introduced because of her resignation just prior to the start of the spring session. In addition, the Member holding the position for Bill 203 did not introduce a bill.

Owing to the timing of other business before the House on Tuesdays and Wednesdays throughout the session, the Assembly could only consider private members' bills up to Bill 210 before adjournment of the fall session. Of the eight private members' public bills considered, three received Royal Assent: Bill 202, the Marriage Amendment Act,

2000; Bill 205, the Emblems of Alberta (Alberta Dress Tartan) Amendment Act, 2000; and Bill 206, the School (Students' Code of Conduct) Amendment Act, 2000.

### *Advice and Briefings*

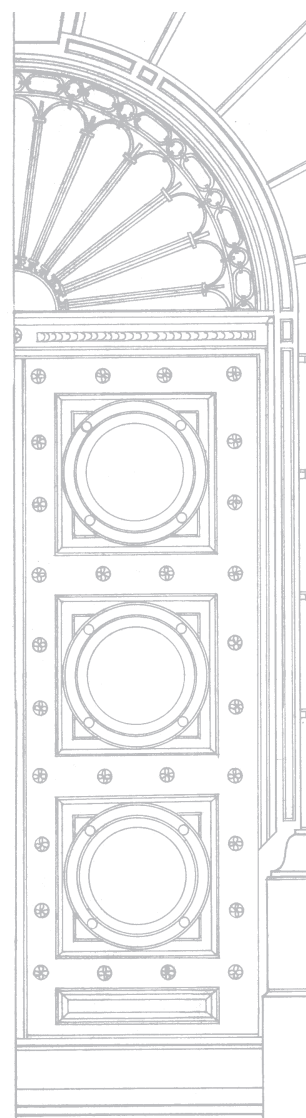
As one of their responsibilities, Parliamentary Counsel serve committees of the Assembly. In 2000, Parliamentary Counsel provided advice and briefings to meetings of the Members' Services Committee. They continued to serve as counsel to the other standing committees of the Assembly, most notably the Legislative Offices and Public Accounts committees. They provided support to the Standing Committee on Private Bills by working with petitioners, co-ordinating the process for bringing bills to the committee, and providing legal advice. Five private bills were introduced and referred to the committee in 2000. The Standing Committee recommended passage of all the bills, some with amendments. All five ultimately passed and received Royal Assent.

The office of Parliamentary Counsel continued to educate members of the legal profession and the public in general about procedures for making laws in Alberta and the rights and privileges of the Assembly. They served as moderators for Mr. Speaker's Youth Parliament and assisted as procedural advisors to the various caucuses. The branch continued to be involved in the School-at-the-Legislature program by participating in talks with school groups.

The office participated with the other table officers in supporting the Speaker at important ceremonial events. These included the swearing in of the Lieutenant Governor; the Hon. Lois Hole; the unveiling by the Governor General of the statue of Lord Strathcona on the south grounds of the Legislature; the ceremonies by the Legislative Assembly commemorating the passage of the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act; Remembrance Day; the Muslim Festival of Eid al-Adha; and Francophone Week.

The office continued to serve as the Alberta correspondents for two parliamentary publications: the Canadian Parliamentary Review and the Table Review, a publication of the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table.

In September Parliamentary Counsel and Legislative Counsel co-hosted the annual joint Conference of Parliamentary and Legislative Counsel in Canada. Conference members consist of lawyers who advise assemblies in all the provinces and territories, the House of Commons, and the Senate, as well as senior government drafters of legislation in every Canadian jurisdiction. Robert Reynolds, Senior Parliamentary Counsel, co-chaired the conference as President of the Association of Parliamentary Counsel in Canada and presented a paper.





# Ceremonial and Security Services

Brian Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms

## *Function Statement*

- *Provides security services to the Legislative Assembly*
- *Provides page and messenger services to the Assembly during its sittings*
- *Plans and executes ceremonial functions and provides protocol advice*
- *Provides support to the Speaker and the Speaker's office*
- *Has other duties as listed in Standing Order 105(1)*

Ceremonial and Security Services (CSS) experienced significant challenges in 2000 involving safety and security issues and major ceremonial events.

CSS' Legislative Assembly Security Staff (LASS) provided security for Members and for 11,953 visitors in the galleries during the 56 afternoon and 41 evening sessions during the 24th Legislature. LASS also provided security coverage for 33 committee meetings – Public Accounts (10 meetings), Private Bills (five meetings), and Supply (18 meetings) – and eight meetings of committees and subcommittees in room 512.

In conjunction with the Speaker's office, CSS co-ordinated and facilitated the use of the Chamber and precincts by outside groups. The University of Alberta Model Parliament 2000 met for three days in

January and the Forum for Young Albertans used the Chamber for one day in April. In May Tuxis held the Western Canadian Youth Parliament for three days. The Parlement jeunesse de l'Alberta visited for three days in October and the Alberta Debate and Speech Association came for two days in November. Tuxis held another model parliament for the Tuxis Alberta Alumni Society for three days in December. With other branches, CSS provided planning and resources to the second Mr. Speaker's Youth Parliament in April.

## *Advises on Office Security*

The Sergeant-at-Arms visited seven constituency offices of Members and offered advice on their security arrangements. CSS supervised the installation of alarm systems at a number of constituency offices. The branch delivered a security briefing to constituency office staff in November. In addition, the branch provided timely and in many cases immediate security-related advice to Members and constituency office staff throughout the year. The branch also improved liaison with the RCMP and the Edmonton Police Service, notably during debate on Bill 11, and with the Calgary Police Service, particularly concerning the World Petroleum Congress in that city.

In April and May CSS faced the most critical security challenge to the Assembly in 30 years. Demonstrations inside and outside the Legislature Building during the

Assembly's debate over Bill 11 challenged the LASS' need to provide for both public accessibility and maintenance of security to allow Members and officers of the Assembly to perform their duties in the Chamber.

CSS continued its involvement with the Security Co-ordination Committee, comprised of representatives from the Department of Justice Protection Services and facilities managers of both the Legislature Building and the Government Centre. The committee meets regularly to discuss security issues related to the Legislature Building and surrounding areas.

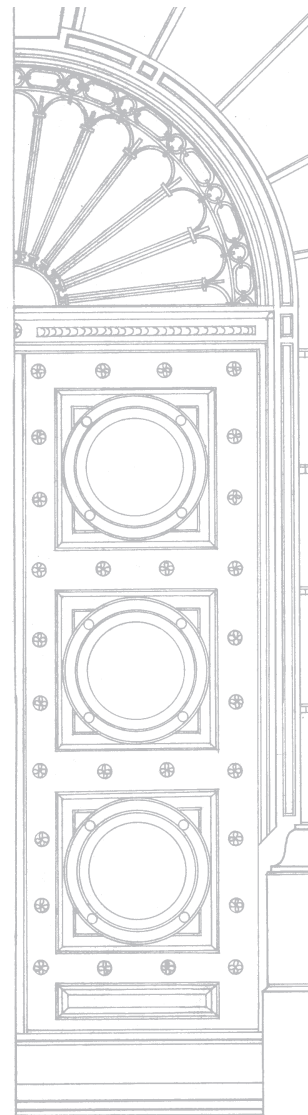
#### *Busy Year for Ceremonies*

On the ceremonial side CSS devised, co-ordinated, and executed several events beginning in March with a celebration commemorating the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha, with a reception following. In May the Legislature Grounds were visited by members of the Royal Canadian Legion and active members of the Canadian Forces in a ceremony to collect soil for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa. Later that month Her Excellency the Governor General, the Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, visited the Legislature to help unveil the statue of the first Lord Strathcona. CSS participated in Canada Day events at the Legislature. Visitor Services guides, LASS officers, and pages were all involved in welcoming the public to the building and precincts, including the floor of the Chamber.

In June CSS worked with other branches in hosting a German delegation from the Partnership of Parliaments. August included attendance at the 19th Canadian Association of Sergeant-at-Arms Conference in New Brunswick and Mr. Speaker's Cup golf tournament in Westlock, with CSS chairing the organization committee.

In September the second annual Peace Officers Memorial Day was held on the Legislature Grounds. CSS worked with Department of Justice Protection Services in organizing the event. November events included the annual presentation of the first poppies by members of the Royal Canadian Legion, the annual Remembrance Day ceremonies with the presence of members of the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) and the South Alberta Light Horse regiments, and the Laying-up Ceremony of the Regimental Guidon of the Lord Strathcona's Horse. The portrait of the former Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. H.A. "Bud" Olson, was unveiled on December 7, with CSS providing support to the Speaker's office. In October CSS helped to organize the London itinerary for the Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. Lois Hole, and accompanied her on a visit to Westminster Palace.

The branch continued to provide strategic direction and overall planning as a member of the Management Web Steering Committee. In August the branch produced the second edition of the official newsletter of the Canadian Association of Sergeants-at-Arms. In September CSS was appointed to the communications subcommittee of the





Alberta Pandemic Influenza Working Group. CSS attended the Disaster Forum 2000 later in November.

CSS worked with Human Resources and Parliamentary Counsel in a team effort to complete a draft policy on sexual and workplace harassment.

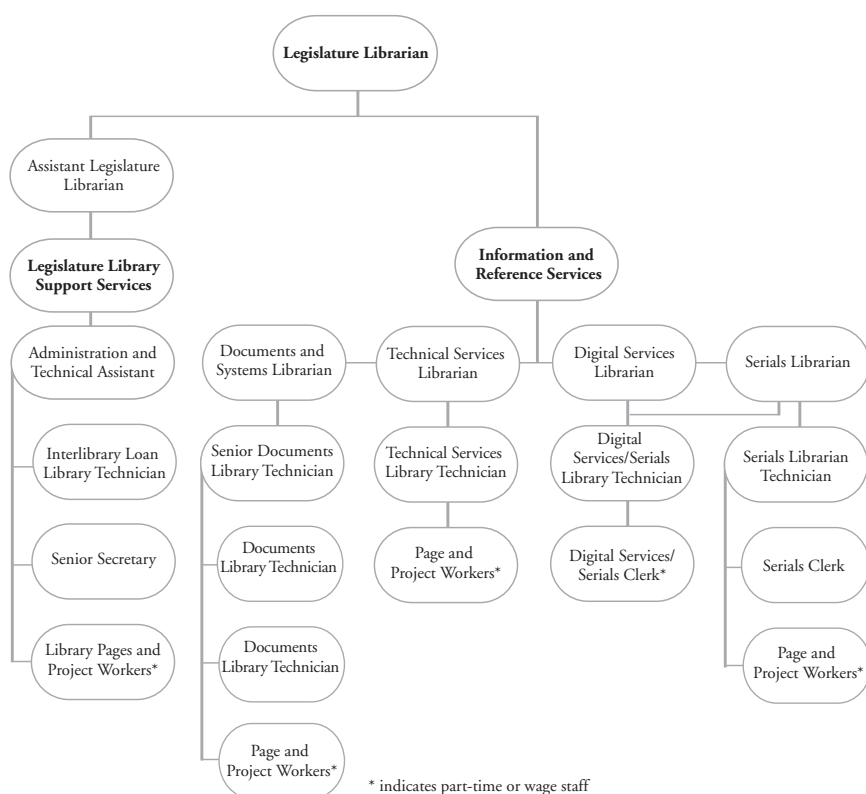
CSS and Human Resources interviewed 29 prospective pages. The branch conducted page professional development

seminars during the session, culminating in the TransAlta/Speaker's Cup Page Speech Competition. The topic was "the role of Commonwealth parliamentarians in defending and enhancing human rights," chosen from the plenary session topic of the 45th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference. The winner for the second year was Daniel Novak, who received a \$100 cheque from TransAlta, the event sponsor.



# Information, Reference, and Co-ordination Services: Legislature Library

Sandra E. Perry, Legislature Librarian



## Function Statement

- Provides information and reference services to the Legislative Assembly



*Speaker Ken Kowalski highlights new services in opening the Library's 2nd annual Spring Tea and Open House.*

Upgrading the Legislature Library's on-line catalogue in 2000 was a milestone in the development of services for Members and other clients. The Library upgraded from the Dynix on-line catalogue to the new Windows- and web-based Horizon software. Although this involved a significant learning curve for all Library staff, the results for clients will be well worth the effort.

The move is in keeping with current developments in the library and information technology fields.

Clients find the web-based catalogues more user-friendly. Library staff can take advantage of the greater flexibility provided by the software that allows them to catalogue web sites of interest to their clients, provide easy access to electronic publications, and share catalogue records with greater ease.

The move to Horizon began in the spring of 2000. Staff training was completed by the end of October. With increased support from Information Systems Services (ISS) staff, the system was fully implemented by November.





With the strong support of the Members' Services Committee, the Library became a member of The Alberta Library (TAL) in early 2000. TAL membership allows the Library to more fully participate in information resource sharing across the province and provides substantially reduced rates for electronic services. Membership permits the Library to provide the Members with direct desktop access to four full-text periodical databases covering topics relevant to their work and research interests. Sitting at their computers anywhere in the province, the Members can access articles from a wide range of Canadian and international publications.

Further developments on the Library's intranet site included a series of fact sheets, which act as pathfinders to information for clients, and an election site with current information on nominations and information on previous elections. In addition, a trivia section appears weekly on the front page of *Our House*, highlighting for the Members various historical developments in the Legislature and across the province. A customized Alberta-specific news-feed project is under development. The Library provided primary clients and professional and community groups with orientations to its facilities and training sessions in electronic services.

#### *Historical Collections Preserved*

The Legislature Library is placing increased emphasis on the preservation of its important historical collections. It worked closely with the Financial

Management and Administration (FMAS) branch to update the valuation of its collections. It also worked with the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) administration and Alberta Infrastructure to develop new facilities to provide safer storage for valuable parts of the collection. Some materials were moved to on-site temporary storage facilities until the permanent facility can be completed. Informal discussions have been held with colleagues across the country, including the National Librarian of Canada, to share ideas to improve the storage of print materials in older facilities. Library staff have also been investigating efficient methods of digitizing parts of the collection. To this end, partnerships have been initiated with the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary.

The year 2000 marked changes for the Legislature Library Support section (LLSS), formerly called Co-operative Government Library Services (CGLS). The role of CGLS in support of government libraries was substantially reduced by the establishment of the centralized Alberta Government Library. The change will allow LLSS to concentrate on its rapidly emerging role of working closely with the Library's Digital Services unit in providing the research and intellectual content for many new web-based information services. One such initiative already in progress is an electoral research project that will provide Members with detailed histories of their individual constituencies. A by-product of this research is a bibliography of works by and about Members since 1905.

LLSS will accelerate its microfilming projects and has assumed responsibility

for library storage, library page recruitment and supervision. This year weekly newspapers were microfilmed for the communities of Bow Valley, Crossfield, Daysland, Lamont, Waskatenau, and Wimbourne. The Library's print collection of the early French-language newspaper L'Union was filmed and gratefully received by the library of the Faculté Saint-Jean.

Funding was approved for a part-time digital services/serials clerk to assist with electronic projects. In December the Senior Documents Technician retired after 25 years with the Legislature Library. Other anniversaries included five years of service by the LLSS Interlibrary Loan Technician and 20 years of service by the Serials Technician.

### *Special Events and Joint Projects*

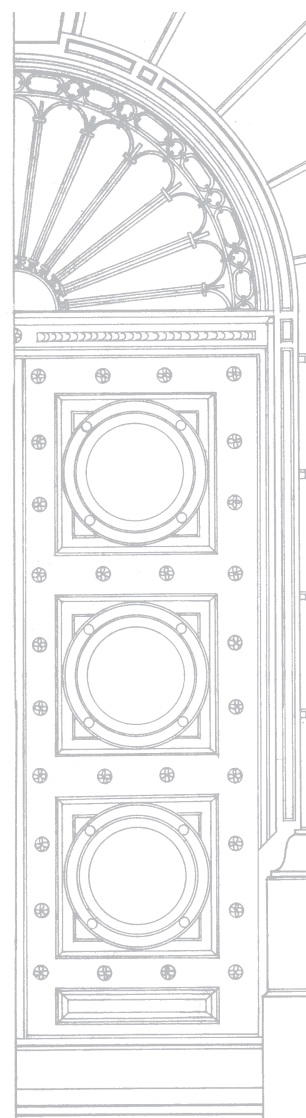
In May the Library hosted its second annual spring tea and open house. The Speaker opened this event and highlighted the new library services. For the first time the Library provided direct support to Mr. Speaker's Youth Parliament by preparing background packages for participants. The Library was pleased to support the School-at-the-Legislature program by providing tours and interview opportunities to groups of students.

In December the Library staff worked with other LAO branches to provide information sessions to constituency staff. The Library's session focused on the new database services and the new catalogue interface. Planning began in December for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) regional conference,

with Library managers taking roles in business session planning and children's programming.

Joint projects with the library community included partnering with the University of Alberta in the digitization of Alberta's Royal Commission reports, working with government libraries to produce a report on performance measurement in libraries, and serving on a number of library committees. These included: the TAL Government Information Project Team, the Alberta Government Libraries Council (AGLC), the AGLC Electronic Services Subcommittee, the AGLC Performance Measures Subcommittee, Edmonton Law Libraries Association (ELLA), the Alberta Association of Library Technicians (AALT), and the Canadian Association of Special Libraries and Information Services (CASLIS). The Legislature Librarian represents the Library as a director of TAL and as vice-chair of the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Canada (APLIC).

In June the annual conference of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) was held in Edmonton with a number of Legislature Library staff acting as volunteers. The Library was also pleased to host some CLA delegates at an afternoon tea and tour of the Legislature Library. Other staff professional development opportunities included 16 days of training sessions for the Horizon system, attendance at the APLIC conference in Halifax, the TAL Netspeed conference, and the AALT conference in Calgary. Staff also continued to participate in upgrading sessions in electronic database technology.





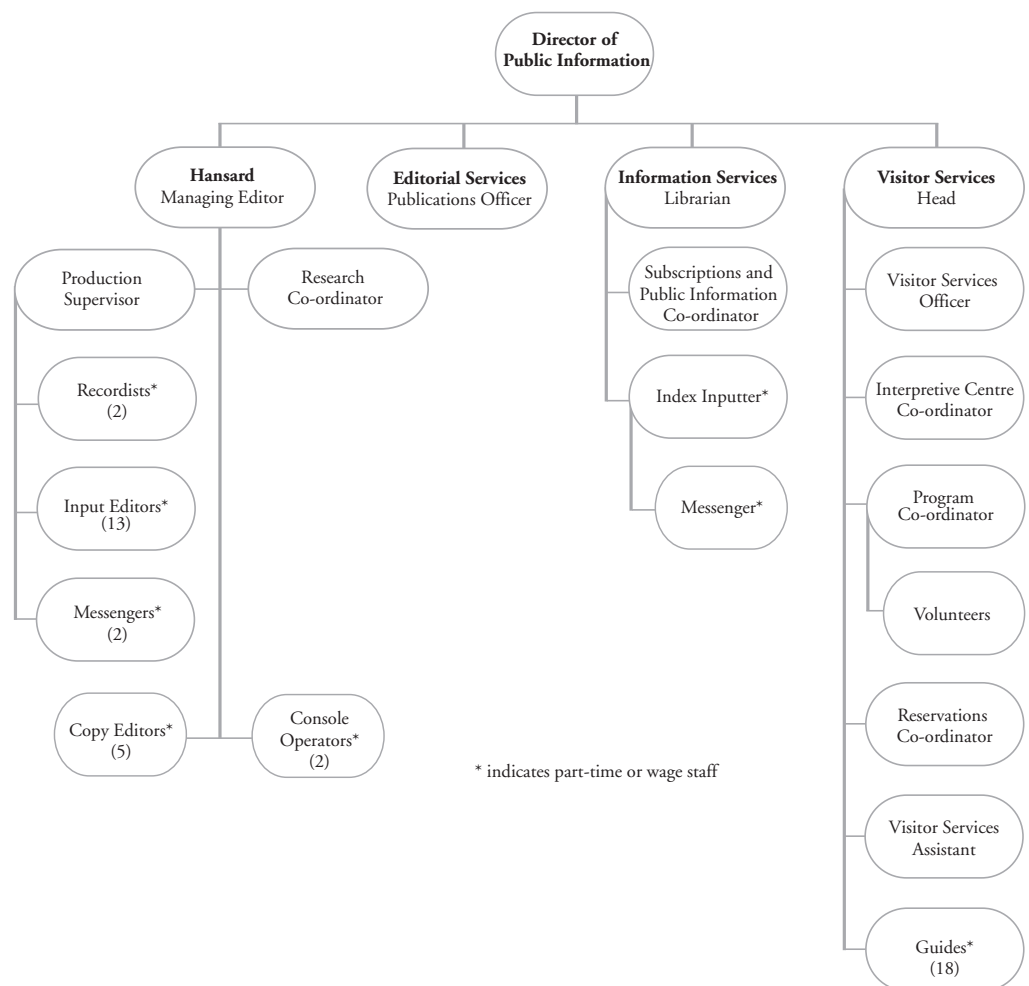
## Legislature Library Comparative Statistics

	2000	1999
<b>Information and Reference Services</b>		
Total number of volumes in the collection	316,165	304,830
Items borrowed for use outside the Library	4,374	5,493
Items used on site *	3,314	n/a
Number of sessional papers added to the collection	1,355	1,181
Number of requests requiring less than 15 minutes to complete	4,639	6,419
Number of requests requiring 15 minutes to one hour to complete	803	536
Number of requests requiring more than one hour to complete	110	80
Number of on-line searches	606	447
MLA/LAO usage of the Library's Intranet site *	6,814	n/a
Number of times the on-line catalogue was accessed remotely	4,025	5,090
<b>Legislature Library Support Services</b>		
Titles in Union List of Serials	13,129	11,779
Number of interlibrary requests from Members and staff	520	288
Number of interlibrary requests by Alberta Government Libraries	1,735	1,876
Number of requests by Alberta Government Libraries for professional advice	58	66

\* New category

# Public Education and Reporting Services: Public Information Branch

Gary Garrison, Director



*Speaker Ken Kowalski talks to McDougall School students as part of the School-at-the-Legislature program.*



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### *Function Statement*

- *Produces the official report of what is said during meetings of the Legislative Assembly and its committees*
- *Welcomes visitors and provides public education services for the Assembly*
- *Provides public information about the Assembly*
- *Prints and distributes Assembly publications*

The Legislative Assembly set a record in 2000 with the highest average number of sitting hours per day (6.16). As a result, *Hansard* staff transcribed and provided timely and accurate transcripts for nearly 3 million words spoken over 410 hours of meetings of the Assembly and its committees. During the spring sittings the final *Hansard* for afternoon sittings was available on the Internet by 11 p.m. on the same day instead of the following morning, a full nine hours sooner than in previous years. The evening transcript continued to be available by 1 p.m. the following day.

The branch produced or assisted constituency and caucus staff in producing reprints of remarks made by individual Members during Recognitions and Members' Statements and debate on bills and motions. It also published a special commemorative issue of remarks made by all Members during the unanimous passage of Bill 26, Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act.

Six new *Hansard* Input Editors began training in January. Five completed the training program, bringing the complement of Input Editors to 13. The high turnover of part-time staff remains a perennial challenge, and the branch once again held a competition prior to the November session. It recruited three additional Input Editors for training beginning in January 2001.

Staff developed a new training module using a multimedia projector set up in the training room by Information Systems Services (ISS). The module enhanced the demonstration of word processing and procedural formats and made the training process more efficient and effective.

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### *Hansard Upgrades Made*

Cindex software, which was installed before the 1999 session, has proven effective in producing a weekly *Hansard* index during the session and a subsequent annual index. The system handles large amounts of data quickly in a variety of formats. Inputting is made easy by features that reduce the need to retype entries. Upgrades to the software since its installation have made inputting even faster.

PIB and ISS staff began work to put the index on the Assembly's web site. The index would initially be uploaded as is, with an accompanying list of page numbers and related issue numbers. The long-term plan is for links between the page numbers in the index and the corresponding page of the *Hansard* text.

A new program for managing subscriptions has enhanced service delivery to the branch's client base. Although subscriptions to sessional publications remained static, subscriptions to *Hansard* decreased, with many clients choosing instead to take advantage of faster access to the Internet version. The *Hansard* web pages registered approximately 30,000 hits.

Public information calls increased by 11 percent over the previous year, with many callers expressing their appreciation for having a "real person" listen to their concerns and direct them to their MLA or the appropriate department. In addition, PIB staff dealt with numerous e-mail requests for information from across Canada. The branch handled an increasing number of requests for congratulatory anniversary and birthday scrolls and planned for a request form that will be posted on the Assembly web site early in 2001. This change will increase general awareness of the scrolls and expedite service.

The branch continued to provide research, editorial support, and desktop publishing services to the Assembly as well as participating in preparations for Mr. Speaker's Youth Parliament. It also provided a transcript of the proceedings. Staff again participated with other branches in the United Way committee, the staff recognition dinner organizing committee, the web development committee, the constituency staff orientation program, and the Speaker's Cup golf tournament.

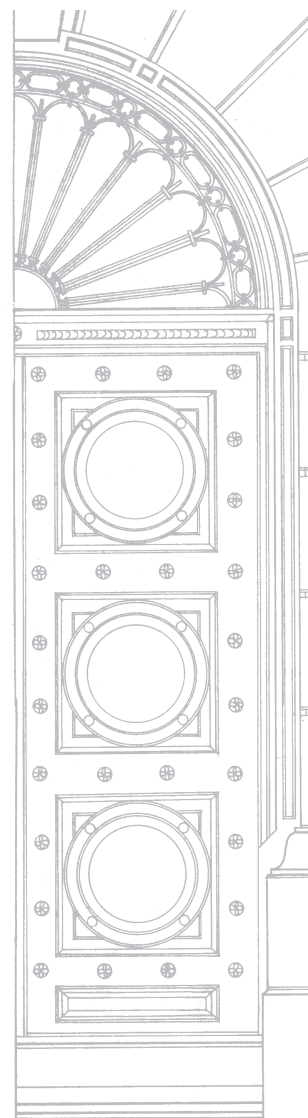
In August two members of the *Hansard* staff attended the Hansard Association of Canada conference in Québec City.

Delegates attended presentations on new forms of publishing to address the changing needs of their client base, voice recognition technology, digital recording, which is currently being explored by PIB and ISS staff, and other technological advances. These advances present challenges and opportunities not only for the various *Hansard* jurisdictions but also for all legislatures and parliaments. The Managing Editor co-chaired a workshop on production environments and production measures. The branch also took a lead role in developing and administering a survey of training and development requirements in *Hansard* jurisdictions across Canada and continued its stewardship of the association's web site. The Director of the Public Information Branch advised the executive of the Hansard Association before the conference that he was stepping down as secretary-treasurer of the organization, a position he had held since the fall of 1996.

#### *Visitor Services Active*

The goal of Visitor Services is to increase public awareness of the Legislative Assembly within Alberta's democratic parliamentary system through information and outreach programs.

Visitor Services organized a number of special events in 2000. Among the highlights were Family Day, drawing over 4,400 visitors; Canada Day, attracting 8,400; Christmas at the Legislature, bringing 11,600 visitors to the site; and the School-at-the-Legislature program launch.





The total number of visitors greeted by Visitor Services increased by 11 per cent from 1999 due to a number of special events. Public awareness of these events has grown tremendously through advertising and promotion. The largest increase was for Family Day activities in the Interpretive Centre pedway when visitors came to watch live entertainment, try their luck at a penny carnival, and sip hot chocolate. A significant increase in visitors was evident on Canada Day. The Clerk, Parliamentary Counsel, and guides welcomed visitors to the Chamber. Musical entertainment throughout the grounds and pedway, the Pathfinder penny carnival, the ERTC Criterium bike race, and a naval gun display were among the highlights of the afternoon.

The number of visitors on booked tours increased in 2000, although the number of walk-in visitors declined. A guide was scheduled as a greeter in the Rotunda from May to the end of December. The number of booked visitors admitted to the galleries to view the Assembly in session decreased. The volume of sales in the gift shop increased by 22 per cent.

The School-at-the-Legislature program was successfully launched on November 20 with the Speaker presiding over the ceremony in the Rotunda. This innovative educational program has been in pilot mode for the past two years. The program offers grade 6 students hands-on knowledge about the Legislative Assembly, government, and the parliamentary process. Three community partners—Shaw Communications Inc., Capital City Savings & Credit Union Limited, and the Quality Group of Companies—provided support for the

program, which will result in a full-time position for a co-ordinator. The program had seven weeks booked for 2000 and will later expand to 22 weeks.

Visitor Services staff took part in professional development at the Edmonton Space and Science Centre in January. The head of Visitor Services was an active member of the Canadian Capital Cities Organization (CCCCO) program committee and played a key role in organizing the Canada Day family exchange program for the second year. This program enabled families to meet on June 30 with the Clerk of the Assembly and eat lunch in the pedway. On July 1 the program included lunch with the Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. Lois Hole, at Government House. The head of Visitor Services was involved with the Edmonton Capital Region Tourism Partnership as a member of the Regional Marketing Committee and Long Haul Leisure Marketing Committee.

A series of exhibits in the pedway promoting millennium projects and celebrations occurring across Alberta in 2000 was well received. The exhibit room in the Interpretive Centre housed two hands-on displays from the Science Alberta Foundation. Mirror Image focused on teens adopting a positive image and Jungle Fever explored the medicinal properties of plants and medicines to relieve symptoms and cure diseases. In the new year an Athletics in Alberta pedway display will feature the Edmonton 2001 World Championships in Athletics, the Edmonton ITU Triathlon World Championships, the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame, and many other Alberta sports organizations.



On February 10 Visitor Services staff supported a special ceremony in the Chamber for the installation of Lois Hole as Alberta's 15th Lieutenant Governor, followed by a reception in the Rotunda.

On May 13 and 14 the pedway was the site of the Edmonton Regional Heritage Fair for 330 students from grades 4 to 9. It included more than 205 projects and programs. Several of the exhibits were displayed in the pedway after the event. Eight students from the Maritime provinces participated in the fair as part of an exchange program.

On June 19 Visitor Services staff provided support for the official Lying-in-State in the Rotunda for former Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. J. W. Grant MacEwan. More than 850 people paid their respects.

In August more than 1,700 visitors were served refreshments and cake in the Rotunda by Visitor Services staff in honour of the Queen Mother's 100th birthday. Visitors were invited to sign a book of birthday wishes, which was forwarded to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, on behalf of the people of Alberta.

In September the Sergeant-at-Arms became the Acting Director of the Visitor Services branch.

In October, with the passing of the Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the public was invited to sign a book of condolences in the Rotunda. Visitor Services staff greeted nearly 2,400 people. Late in the month the annual Halloween-o-rama took place on the north grounds and in the pedway, attracting 6,000 visitors.

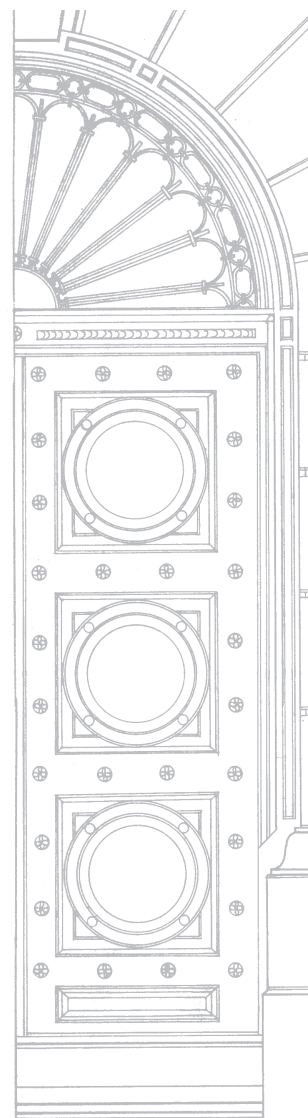
In mid-November the fifth annual craft sale took place in the pedway, drawing 37 vendors.

Visitor Services organized or provided support for several interbranch events and ongoing programs. They included opening day ceremonies, Mr. Speaker's Youth Parliament luncheons, the Klondike Days breakfast on the grounds, the Antique "Whatever" Show, Poppy Presentation, Remembrance Day, the Laying-up Ceremony of the Regimental Guidon of the Lord Strathcona's Horse, and the Christmas Light-up. Staff were actively involved in the committee for the web site, Under the Dome, and Mr. Speaker's staff recognition dinner.

#### *Publication Production Expands*

Publication production, particularly the in-house production of materials for a variety of events, continued to expand in 2000. The 1999 annual report was completely redesigned and restructured to accommodate the addition of the LAO's financial statements and, for the first time, photographs of noteworthy events. Another large publication, the *Members' Guide*, was completely revised, updated, and distributed to Members during the fall session.

Other publication work included the in-house production of support materials for the Partnership of Parliaments in June and co-ordination and production of print materials for the School-at-the-Legislature launch in November. The branch continued to provide ongoing publications support and expertise to other areas of the LAO, including the Speaker's office and the office of the Clerk.





## Public Information Branch Comparative Statistics

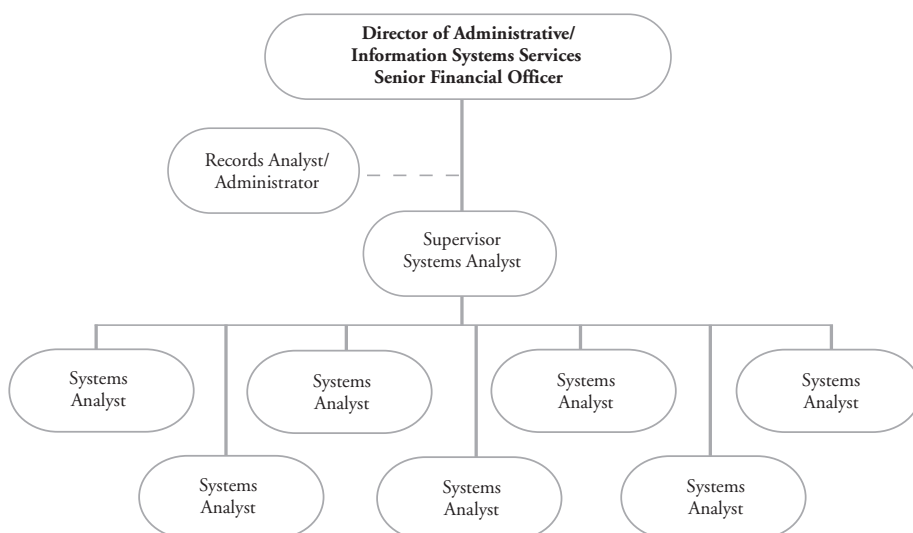
	2000	1999
<b>Visitors to Legislature and Interpretive Centre</b>		
Visitors on tour	44,900	43,356
Special events	39,806	36,789
Casual	36,346	37,435
Total	132,952	119,580
<b>Tours and Programs</b>		
Regular tours	2,945	2,817
VIP tours	24	13
Educational programs	421	366
Civil service orientation	4	2
Gallery seats reserved	10,415	12,084
Volunteer hours	457	403
Gift Shop sales	\$88,646	\$85,325
MLA promotional items	\$231,883	\$177,767
<b>Public Information and Subscriptions</b>		
Public information calls	7,616	6,802
Congratulatory scrolls	2,615	2,312
Paid subscriptions		
Daily <i>Hansard</i>	283	375
<i>Hansard</i> bound volumes	35	43
Bills, Votes	274	275
Journals	274	275
Complimentary issues		
Daily <i>Hansard</i>	269	264
<i>Hansard</i> bound volumes	102	102
Bills, Votes	432	469
Order Paper	384	310
<i>Hansard</i> index and on-line inquiries	44	63
Web site inquiries	81	91
<b>Assembly Statistics</b>		
<i>Hansard</i> pages	2,190	2,397
Subcommittees of supply		
Meetings reported	17	17
Meeting hours	37	41
Transcript pages	254	280
Standing and special committees		
Meetings reported	25	31
Meeting hours	34	53
Transcript pages	260	403
Mr. Speaker's Youth Parliament		
Meetings reported	1	1
Meeting hours	5	5
Transcript pages	40	40
<b>Total <i>Hansard</i>, committee, and miscellaneous transcript pages</b>	<b>2,744</b>	<b>3,120</b>

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# Administrative/Information Systems Services: Information Systems Services

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Bill Gano, Director and Senior Financial Officer



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## *Function Statement*

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- Provides financial and administrative support to the Legislative Assembly
  - Provides electronic data processing and office automation services to the Legislative Assembly
  - Acts as co-ordinator for the administration of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)
  - Provides records management services to the Legislative Assembly Office
- 

The transition of systems to the year 2000 went smoothly due to the planning and upgrading that occurred in 1999. The branch had worked to ensure that all potential Y2K system problems were anticipated and dealt with. As a result, the Legislative Assembly experienced no adverse effects from Y2K. With the transition behind it, the branch used 2000 to complete a number of major upgrades to new servers, Internet audio broadcasts, a new library system, and improved network security.

The branch continued to respond to increased demands from MLAs and staff for technology-related services. It offered all system users prompt and reliable support service and regular upgrades and

maintenance. The branch also led the process to redesign and expand the Assembly's web site and continued to develop the Intranet site.

Reliability of systems is a crucial issue as dependency on the network and file servers increases. As a result, ISS replaced all Novell servers and implemented a Storage Area Network (SAN) to provide increased security and redundancy. ISS examined the network infrastructure and designed a three-phase plan for a more robust network. Phase I of the plan has been implemented, providing 100 gigabit speeds between the Legislature Building and the Legislature Annex. In addition, private Internet Protocol (IP) addressing was enabled to accommodate the



increasing growth of the network and the increased reliance on the Internet.

The Legislative Assembly is now "Live On-line." In April 2000 ISS implemented an audio server to broadcast gavel-to-gavel proceedings.

The branch upgraded network security through increased activity on the firewall. Planning began for the implementation of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) for the Legislative Assembly under the 2001-2002 budget. The VPN will allow faster connection speeds and more client connections than is possible through the current dial-up service. This new technology will allow ISS to address the increasing demand for remote access to the Assembly's network.

Work began on implementing a process that provides automatic software installs and upgrades to meet the demand for more frequent improvements. Zenworks was installed as a pilot in ISS and is gradually being expanded to other branches of the LAO.

ISS staff continued to make significant improvements to the Assembly's internal and external web sites. Internet changes included a renovated web page that is easier and quicker to navigate in linking to texts of bills and amendments, Standing Orders, *Hansard*, and other House records. The changes improved the search capability for these materials.

A system to manage trouble calls to the branch logged 1,500 calls in 2000. ISS practice has been to enter most calls into the system and to keep response/ resolution time to a minimum.

Work progressed in permitting MLAs and staff to complete and submit their forms by computer rather than filling out hard copies and mailing them in. This process is being developed in co-operation with Human Resource Services (HRS) and Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS).

ISS, HRS, and FMAS began planning for an election in 2001. The dissolution policy was rewritten and redesigned. Presentations on dissolution were made to constituency and caucus staff.

In the spring ISS worked closely with the Legislature Library in implementing a new library system and with the Speaker's office in developing a contact management and event planning system. Alberta Infrastructure began a major recabing project throughout the Legislature Building and the Legislature Annex. ISS is involved in the planning and implementation of this project. Other projects involving ISS include the construction of new committee rooms on the fourth floor of the Annex, a new Library storage vault in the basement, and expansion of the ISS area.

ISS provided expertise to all branches during the budget process. Other areas of activity included testing, installing, maintaining, and upgrading in-house information management systems. These included accounts payable, payroll, inventory, Library, visitor reservations, and point-of-sale. Staff also purchased, installed, moved, and maintained computer terminals, printers, and software and provided training, advice, and other assistance to users. Numerous word-processing, spreadsheet, e-mail,

database, and financial systems training sessions were conducted. Network servers and workstations, as well as remote workstations, continued to be maintained and upgraded to stay current with changing technology.

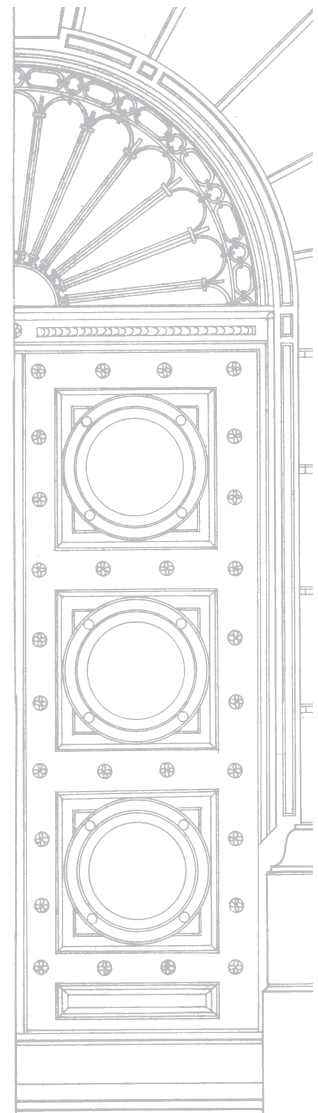
ISS worked closely with all branches of the LAO in a number of areas. These included the EDP Management Committee, chaired by the Director of Administrative/Information Systems Services, which met regularly to set and manage the priorities of the Assembly. The committee approved the policy that

outlines acceptable use of the Assembly's network and equipment. The name of the committee was updated in 2000 to the Information Technology (IT) Management Committee.

Other responsibilities addressed related to FOIP, records management, the Senior Financial Officer, and LAO policies and procedures. Among other tasks, this work involved a major audit of the Legislative Assembly and the production of two years of financial statements.

### Comparative Statistics

	2000	1999	1998
Equipment in place			
Constituency workstations	106	117	108
Constituency printers	124	115	101
LAN workstations	173	171	154
LAN laser printers	45	56	56
Dedicated library workstations	0	4	18
Servers	18	20	20
Scanners	18	4	3
Notebook computers	98	98	78
Equipment replaced			
Obsolete workstations	45	60	63
Obsolete laser printers	16	13	30
Obsolete laptop computers		6	2
Training			
Person days of training	34	86	164
Help Desk calls			
Help calls logged	1,500	1,969	1,917

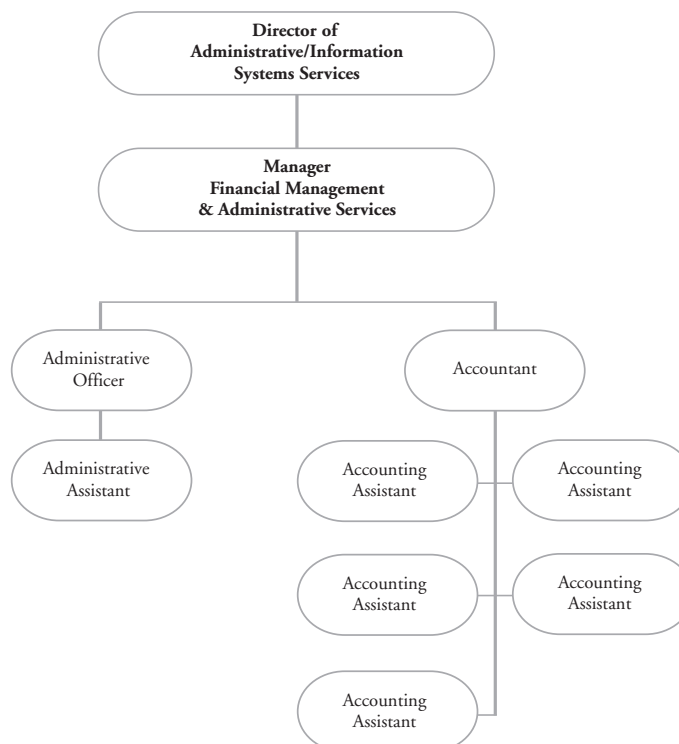


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# Administrative/Information Systems Services: Financial Management & Administrative Services

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Jacqueline Breault, Manager



## *Function Statement*

- *Provides financial and administrative support to the Legislative Assembly*



**F**inancial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS) deals with all accounts payable, revenues/ accounts receivable, inventory, and general ledger functions for the Legislative Assembly Office. The branch also administers and maintains leases on approximately 90 locations, conducts property management functions for constituency offices, facilitates moves, and addresses insurance issues and maintenance concerns for Members and their constituency office staff.

A major project undertaken by FMAS in 2000 involved a review of constituency office furnishings and equipment. FMAS

conducted surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the current package. Based on feedback, a proposal to upgrade the furniture and equipment package was presented in December to the Members' Services Committee and was subsequently approved. The impact of this upgrade will be felt in 2001, when FMAS assumes responsibility for acquiring and implementing new furniture and equipment packages in all constituency offices.

Early in 2000 FMAS forwarded budget information for 2000-2001 for entry into the Legislative Assembly financial system. Alberta Treasury received the 2000-2001



budget information for production of the Legislative Assembly estimates and consolidation of the information in the government financial system. FMAS completed internal budget adjustments associated with the resignation of two Members and subsequent by-elections and made budget preparations for the 2001-2002 fiscal year. The Speaker presented the budget to the Members' Services Committee (MSC). It was accepted and approved at the December MSC meeting. FMAS continued to produce quarterly budget and expenditure forecasts and actuals for Alberta Treasury as required by legislation.

FMAS successfully completed fiscal year-end activities, including all year-end accruals, production of enhanced processing guidelines and calendars, an in-depth review of reports to correct anomalies and errors prior to deadlines, and preparation of all final reports to meet Treasury deadlines.

Work started on development of the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 financial statements for tabling with the 2000 annual report. A full reconciliation of balance sheet financial information to March 31, 2000 to ensure the accuracy of financial information reported for the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) was completed. With the publication of these two statements, the LAO addresses the Auditor General's request that financial reporting conform with generally accepted Canadian accounting principles.

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### *Upgrades implemented*

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With the help of Information System Services (ISS) staff, FMAS periodically implemented upgrades to the financial system throughout the year. These upgrades maintained the financial system at a level appropriate for control of the LAO's three main bank accounts: the LAO imprest account for accountable advances, the main LAO account for funds voted to the LAO by the Assembly, and the Gift Shop account. The branch is responsible for custody and control of these accounts, including reconciliation. Legislative Assembly cheque and direct deposit stock allows the Assembly to differentiate itself from government payments.

FMAS procured foreign exchange currency or money orders for authorized travel or purchases by branches, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and Legislature committees.

Ministerial and government committee remuneration continued to be processed through the payroll system and charged back to departments. FMAS tracked, receipted, and credited back all charge-backs from departments.

The accounts unit and administrative staff continued to optimize use of electronic commerce tools and databases: Diner's Club/enRoute Globalvision, Telus Bill 2000, PHH on-line billing information, and MasterCard.

Service to Members and Legislature and constituency office staff continued. Staff provided backup assistance during orientations and meetings and helped to prepare materials for those events.



Staff workloads were reviewed and adjusted based on the changing work volumes, the needs of clients, and any requirements for cross-training among staff. A classification review began.

#### *Administrative Services*

The administrative services area continued to provide telecommunications advice to Members on matters such as cellular equipment and peripherals, air time programs and adjustments, and equipment/service upgrades as required for constituency offices. Staff worked to ensure that all phones are on the best toll program available and liaised with Alberta Infrastructure telecommunications staff. Staff kept up to date with changes in telecommunications technology and regulations. They also worked with Telus Inc. to ensure that its new harmonized billing systems were implemented properly for the LAO. Throughout the year the administrative staff helped with telephone relocations and continued to administer the calling card and credit card programs for long-distance tolls, Member gasoline purchases, and travel.

Administrative staff assisted accounts staff in clarifying or troubleshooting statements for telecommunications, equipment, and supplies and provided information and assistance in upgrading photocopiers and fax machines.

The branch arranged for letterhead, business cards, and other stationery and supplies for MLAs, their staff, and constituency offices. They provided more than 200 stationery and office supply items to constituency offices (95 percent) and LAO branches (100 percent) and

administered the Legislature lounge supplies program during spring and fall sittings.

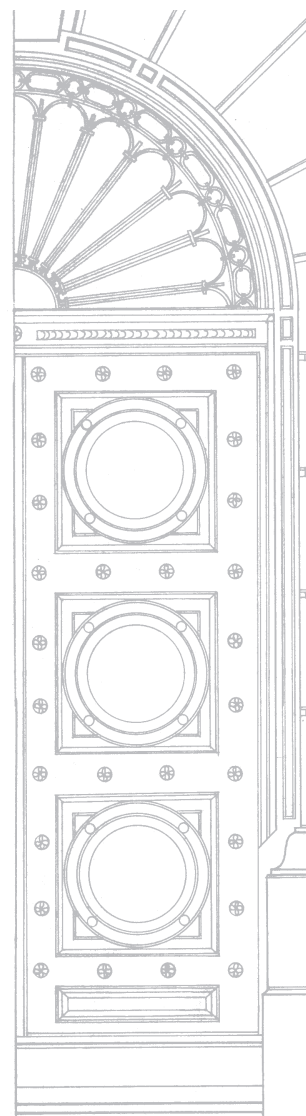
Liaison continued with private-sector vendors providing goods and services to the LAO. Administrative staff took the lead in contacting building management for the Legislature Building and Annex to ensure optimal working conditions. When problems or concerns arose, staff worked with vendors who provided goods or services to branches.

Staff continued to act as liaison with Risk Management and Insurance (Alberta Treasury). Staff assisted branches and constituency offices with claims arising from thefts and damage to LAO property due to flooding and vandalism. The branch also helped in researching and providing assistance with questions of policy and procedure.

#### *On-line Forms Developed*

The branch participated in the development of the LAO Intranet site *Our House*. All staff had input into the information available on the site. Administrative staff included extensive materials on policies and procedures, contact information, and on-line forms. On-line forms development continued in 2000 with the catalogue project that is designed to provide on-line ordering capabilities to Assembly clients.

In the fall of 2000 the branch worked with staff from Information System Services, Records Management, and Human Resource Services to hold information sessions in Calgary and





Edmonton for constituency office staff. The presentations concentrated on the impact of dissolution on the Members and staff of the Assembly.

Management and staff of FMAS participated in a number of LAO activities and organizations including membership

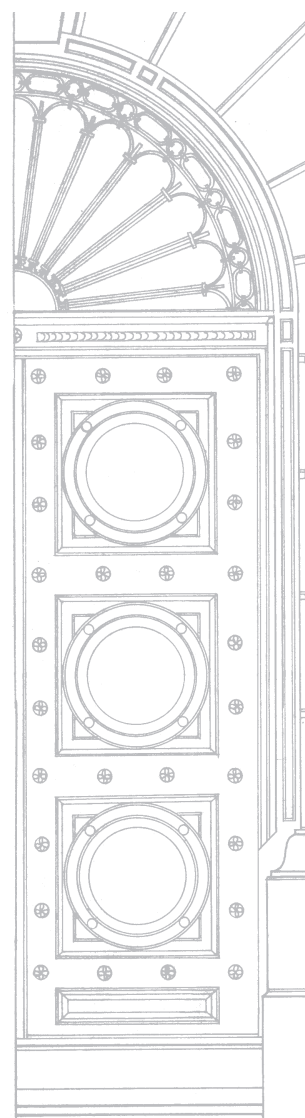
on the LAO IT Committee (manager), the Under the Dome editorial board (manager), LAO ergonomic committee (administrative officer), the Speaker's Cup golf tournament, the United Way committee, and the 2000 staff recognition dinner.

### Comparative Statistics

	2000	1999	1998
Invoices coded and data entered (ledger 19A)	19,281	20,019	21,416
Constituency offices, moved	3	5	4
Constituency offices, new	0	0	0
Constituency offices, closed	0	0	2
Leases processed (new or renewals)	14	6	-
Telecommunications services installed or moved	4	5	11
Telecommunications - service requests	117	105	-
Mail processed	12,561	12,740	13,107
Direct purchase orders issued	126	133	159
MLA purchase orders processed	6,650	4,975	5,125
Other requests processed	2,575	2,350	2,450
Special requests processed	275	263	221

## Legislative Assembly Office Estimates

<b>Description</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>
<i>Human Resource Expenses</i>		
Earnings - Management	\$976,148	\$877,120
Earnings - Nonmanagement	\$5,325,347	\$5,122,072
Employer Contributions	\$1,022,890	\$953,829
Allowances & Supplementary Benefits	\$189,975	\$137,867
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$7,514,360</b>	<b>\$7,090,888</b>
<i>Operational Expenses</i>		
Travel	\$1,530,159	\$1,488,134
Advertising	\$123,001	\$155,089
Insurance	\$53,100	\$51,000
Postage & Freight	\$150,872	\$143,080
Office Equipment Rental/Purchase	\$466,654	\$436,555
Telecommunications	\$480,986	\$482,486
Equipment Repairs & Maintenance	\$55,125	\$55,400
Other Labour & Services	\$864,575	\$587,751
Data Processing Equipment & Services	\$375,500	\$322,300
Hosting	\$111,853	\$80,708
Other Administration/Supplies	\$733,708	\$546,438
Rentals	\$2,040	\$4,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$4,947,573</b>	<b>\$4,352,941</b>
<i>Grants</i>		
General	\$3,460	\$2,560
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$3,460</b>	<b>\$2,560</b>
<i>Payments to Members of the Legislative Assembly</i>		
Payments to MLAs	\$7,050,011	\$7,223,879
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$7,050,011</b>	<b>\$7,223,879</b>
<i>Members' Services Allowances</i>		
Constituency Office Allowances	\$3,702,630	\$3,466,572
Communication Allowances	\$1,104,928	\$1,104,928
Promotion Allowances	\$304,252	\$304,252
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$5,111,810</b>	<b>\$4,875,752</b>
<i>Revenues</i>		
Fees & Permits		\$1,200
Other Revenue	\$182,600	\$135,100
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>(\$182,600)</b>	<b>(\$136,300)</b>
Election Contingency	\$2,100,000	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$2,100,000</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$26,544,614</b>	<b>\$23,409,720</b>

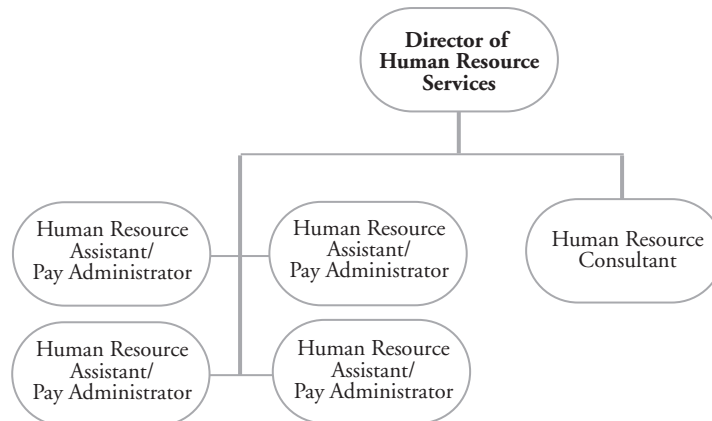


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# Human Resource Services

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Cheryl Scarlett, Director



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## *Function Statement*

- *Provides human resource management services to the Legislative Assembly*



*Former Lieutenant Governor H.A. "Bud" Olsen views his Legislature portrait at its unveiling in November.*

A commitment to refine and expand services to the Legislative Assembly generated considerable activity for Human Resource Services (HRS) in 2000. Members and their constituency office employees remained a primary focus. HRS provided professional and responsive support in all matters relating to human resource management, including salary, wage, and fee-for-service contract administration; pay and benefits management; recruitment; occupational health and safety; job classification; employee relations and training; and employee development. This same expertise was provided to managers and staff of the caucus offices and the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO).

The top priority of HRS is to support Members and their staff by providing customized and timely services. HRS again prepared annual personalized benefits statements for each Member.

The Members' Choice Benefit Plan was also developed and implemented under the direction of the Members' Services Committee. HRS negotiated plan components with the various carriers and stakeholders. Implementation in July included material development, individual consultations with Members, and modified pay and benefit processing.

Benefit changes for Members and staff included changing the dental carrier from Clarica to Alberta Blue Cross in July 2000. Detailed communication plans, co-ordination of services, and follow-up with staff resulted in a successful transition that improved the provision of dental coverage.

Under the direction of the Members' Services Committee, the branch on April 1 implemented a 1.13-percent increase to MLA indemnity and tax-free allowances and all other related MLA remuneration.



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### *Members Assisted*

Three Members retired in 2000 and two new Members were elected in by-elections. HRS assisted both the retiring and new Members with pay, benefits, transition allowances, and staffing. A cabinet shuffle in June resulted in various pay, benefit, and staffing changes for Members. HRS continued to liaise with Members, Executive Council, and government department representatives to initiate, pay, recover, and monitor payments made to MLAs on behalf of departments for ministerial and government committee work.

Daily priorities included support to constituency and caucus staff in all areas of human resource management. In a process of ongoing consultation, HRS dealt with employment contracts, pay and benefit entitlements, fee-for-service requirements, and labour relations issues. HRS provided Members and staff with a vacation accrual report detailing costs for employees in constituency offices. Constituency office information sessions in the fall were tailored to the specific challenges facing staff and included an overview of the dissolution guidelines and the impact of an election. This information was also provided to caucus office employees.

Pay and benefit administration was another major focus as HRS addressed the changing needs of a dynamic organization. Consultation, documentation, and payroll processing relating to commencements, terminations, leaves, or transfers were attended to, often under tight time frames. HRS supports a workforce of over 500 Members and employees.

A new payroll savings program to purchase Canada Savings Bonds with an option of registering in an RRSP was prepared for start-up in January 2001. HRS provided follow-up pay processing and administration for United Way contributions.

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### *Intranet Site Helps Members*

HRS worked to ensure better use of technologies, enabling the branch to focus on supporting the needs of Members and employees. Enhancements to the Intranet site are one example. Members and employees can now readily access information on a variety of issues such as pay and benefit information, payroll forms, pay dates, career development, and ergonomic training.

HRS also focused on the organizational effectiveness of the LAO through a variety of programs and services. It provided advice and assistance to managers and staff on issues such as interpretation and application of labour regulations, policy development, strategic planning, performance management, job design, and problem resolution. Workforce development initiatives included promoting and co-ordinating training courses for 25 staff members and first aid training for Assembly security staff.

HRS is committed to workplace wellness. Work in this area included ergonomic education and awareness through orientation sessions for new staff, workstation assessments, communication materials, and periodic reviews. An analysis of the constituency office furniture surveys conducted in the fall will help

determine further ergonomic initiatives for 2001. The Employee Recovery and Assistance Program helped 16 employees off work as a result of general or long-term illness or work-related injuries.

HRS worked closely with LAO managers to co-ordinate the recruitment and selection of employees for sessional, seasonal, and salaried positions. Staff co-ordinated 20 competitions, conducted 133 interviews, and hired 40 staff. A new recruitment strategy for the page program, developed in conjunction with the Sergeant-at-Arms, targeted high school students directly and resulted in a record number of applicants from schools across Alberta. Ten pages were hired from among the 37 applicants and three students remained on the eligibility list. HRS also managed the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP), which employed 71 additional staff in constituency, caucus, and LAO offices. HRS co-ordinated the participation of two students in the Quebec/Alberta exchange program.

HRS prepared for an election in 2001. Staff participated in several strategy sessions with other LAO branches. Internal processes and forms were assessed and streamlined to facilitate the substantial staff changes that an election brings.

The LAO's annual employee recognition dinner attended by constituency and LAO staff was again a success. The Speaker expressed appreciation to all staff for their continued support and service to the organization. The LAO also held a constituency information seminar on the same day, providing an overview of services and support, and an exchange of ideas.

The LAO will host the 40th Canadian regional conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 2001. All managers were actively involved in preparations for the event. The establishment of the Canadian Association of Parliamentary Support Services (CAPSS) is an initiative of the Human Resource Services, Information System Services, and Financial Management and Administrative Services branches of the LAO. Alberta will host their first conference in 2001.

