

# Legislative Assembly Office

## 2001 Annual Report



Left: the Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker; reviews the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) at the 40th Canadian Regional CPA Conference held in Edmonton.



Middle left: in the Spring of 2001, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta received two Court Dress Swords for use by the two Assistant Sergeants-at-arms in ceremonial duties.



Right: following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the United States, books of condolence were set out in the Legislature Rotunda for the public to sign.

# An Introduction

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

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

The most common misconception about the LAO 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, responsible for applying and enforcing laws; the Legislative Assembly is the legislative branch, responsible for establishing those laws. The Legislative Assembly Office provides various types of support to the entire Assembly — both members of government and opposition parties.

Although the LAO 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. However, the Speaker does have administrative authority and responsibility similar to that of a minister of a government department. 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 provides services to MLAs and the public.

The latter include financial administration, purchasing, human resources, office automation assistance, public education, library services, parliamentary counsel and House services.

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

The LAO'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. As an all-party committee of the Assembly, the Members' Services Committee regulates constituency office support and Members' pay, allowances, benefits and group insurance plans, all of which the LAO administers. Traditionally, the Speaker chairs the Members' Services Committee.

Each party of elected members, or caucus, is a branch of the Legislative Assembly Office. Although the Speaker technically has authority over the administration of each caucus office, for obvious reasons these branches operate with considerable autonomy. Therefore, the caucus branches are not part of this report; it only includes branches of the LAO 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 LAO, 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.

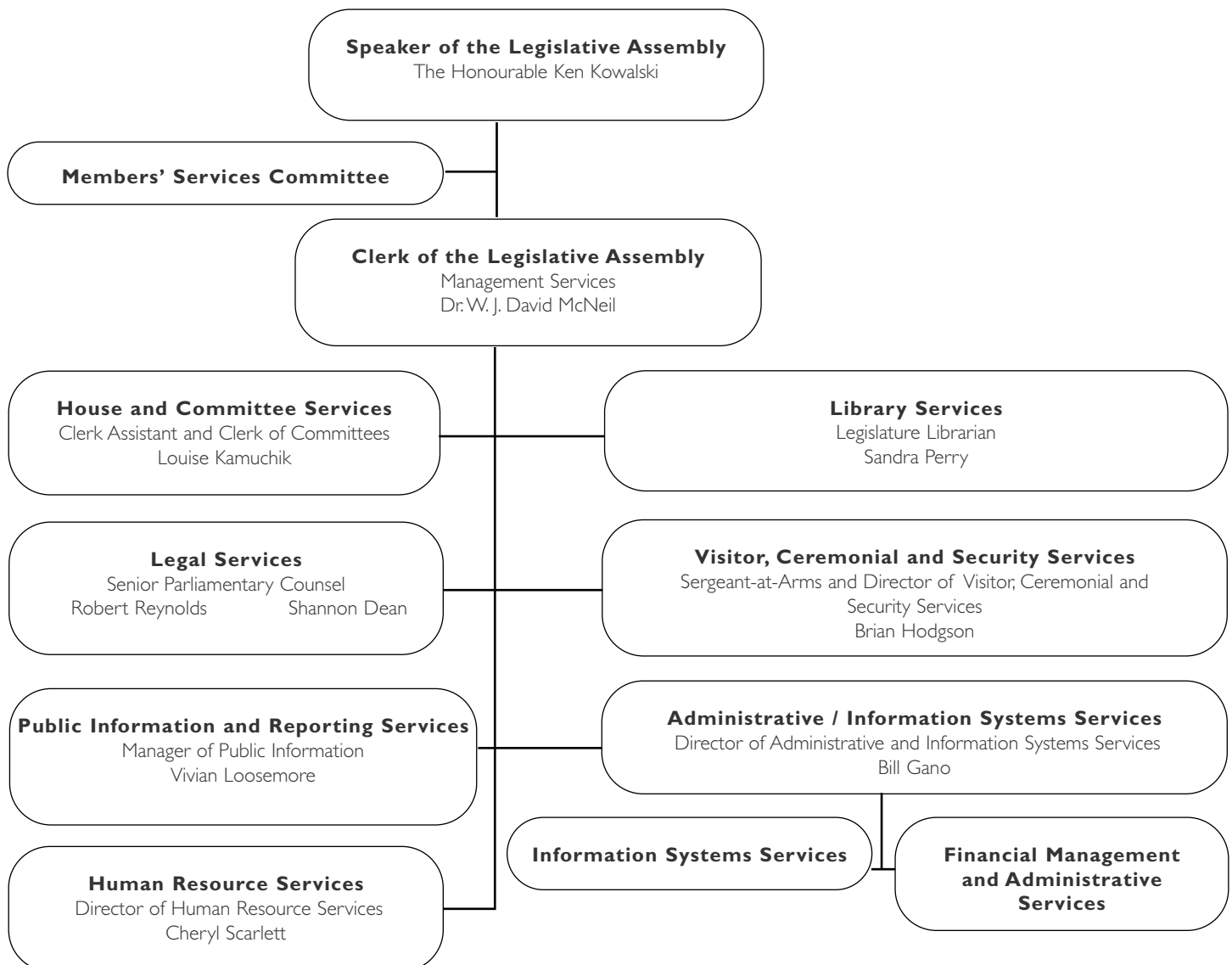


Speaker Ken Kowalski addressing the Legislative Assembly.

# Legislative Assembly Office

## Vision Statement

To be the best parliamentary support organization through a commitment to excellence.



## Services of the Legislative Assembly Office

### Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS)

Along with providing full accounting services such as budget preparation and monitoring, payment processing and financial reporting, FMAS provides administrative services including equipment and supplies procurement, telecommunications management, constituency office lease and credit card administration.

### Information Systems Services (ISS)

ISS handles all technological issues including installation and support of software and hardware, remote access and network infrastructure. ISS also assists with records management and handles the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for the LAO.

### Human Resource Services (HRS)

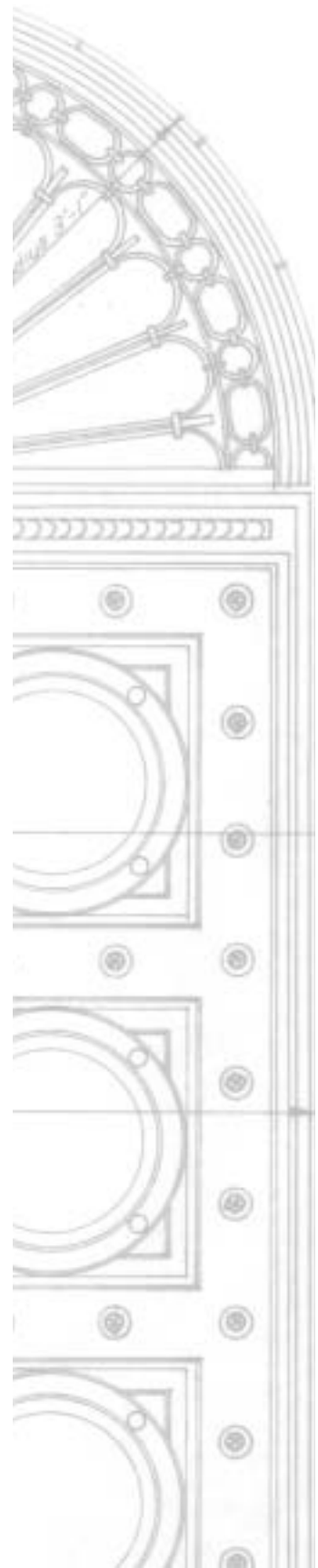
HRS provides support to Members and staff in all matters of human resource management. This includes contract administration, pay and benefits management, recruitment and job classification, employee relations, training and development and all issues related to occupational health and safety.

### Legal Services

Parliamentary Counsel provide legal advice on a wide range of matters including parliamentary procedure. They draft Private Members' Public Bills and Private Bills. Parliamentary Counsel serve as Table Officers in the House and advise the Speaker on points of order and questions of privilege.

### Library Services

Library Services provides information, news, reference and research services to the Members and their staff using current library and information technology. As well, Library Services provides training in the use of the electronic services that are delivered to the Members' desktops.





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## Public Information and Reporting Services

Public Information Branch (PIB) is responsible for the recording and publication of print and electronic versions of *Alberta Hansard*, the official report of proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and its committees. PIB also administers a subscription service to *Alberta Hansard*, *Votes and Proceedings* and bills and distributes sessional publications in addition to operating a public information service and providing editing and proofreading services.

## Visitor, Ceremonial and Security Services (VCSS)

VCSS plans and executes ceremonial and special events such as Canada Day and seasonal celebrations, as well as the coordination of school and public outreach programs, tours of the facilities and the production of several educational and orientation materials. Maintaining security in the Chamber and precincts, providing security-related advice to constituency offices and managing the Alberta Legislative Assembly Page Program are also the responsibility of VCSS.

## House and Committee Services (HCS)

Along with producing the *Votes and Proceedings*, *Order Paper*, *Journals* and assisting in maintaining House records, such as bills and motions, HCS provides all the arrangements for the Assembly's Standing, Special Standing and Select Special Committee meetings. As well, HCS assists with expenses, budgets, historical records and transcripts relating to committees.

## Purpose Statement

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

1. support the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in carrying out the duties of office
2. support Members in carrying out their roles as elected representatives of the people of Alberta
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





## Strategic Goals 2001-2002

assist the Speaker in fulfilling the duties of office

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 the Members

respond to increased demands for technology-related services from Members, staff and the public

plan and manage the transition from the 24th to 25th Legislature and ensure the effective orientation of new Members and staff

provide Members with professional development opportunities and foster interparliamentary cooperation through participation in national and international parliamentary forums and exchange programs, including planning and hosting the 2001 Canadian Regional Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference

increase public awareness of the Legislative Assembly within Alberta's democratic parliamentary system through information and outreach programs

continue to foster understanding of the division of powers among the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches of government

ensure that the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) provides quality services in an increasingly competitive environment

ensure the continued development of the effectiveness and efficiency of the LAO workforce through the fostering and recognition of leadership and teamwork

develop plans for special centennial events and projects