

commonwealth parliamentary Association – Alberta branch

Overview	
The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) consists of members of Commonwealth parliaments who, irrespective of race, religion, or culture, are united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms, and pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. Canada was one of six original member countries of the CPA when it was formed in 1911 under the name Empire Parliamentary Association.	Association branches now exist in 152 national, state, provincial, and territorial parliaments with a total membership of over 14,000 parliamentarians. Each provincial and territorial Legislative Assembly in Canada as well as the federal Parliament comprise a branch of the CPA. All Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta are members of the Alberta branch of the CPA.

<i>Speaker's Report</i> Speaker Ken Kowalski, President of the Alberta Branch of the CPA	
<p>New Brunswick, host of the 2002 Canadian Regional Conference of the CPA, is known for its rivers and scenic landscape – a beautiful landscape that is paralleled by the majesty of Alberta's mountains and the openness of its prairies. Canadian people, like its lands, are both diverse and yet very much connected. This theory is validated annually at the CPA regional conference, which provides parliamentarians an opportunity to experience an open, and often frank exchange of ideas and views.</p> <p>For the past 41 years, parliamentarians have gathered to share thoughts and information. Benefiting from the experiences of their colleagues, parliamentarians may gain insight into local issues that are common nation wide.</p> <p>The 2002 conference provided a broad scope of sessions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Powers of the Legislative Branch vs Authority of Executive Branch• Selection process for party Leaders• Role of Government in the Control, Marketing and Treatment of Gambling• Electoral Reform• Can Press Councils Play a Role in a Democratic Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interprovincial Trade• Canada/US Relations Since 9/11• Smoke-Free Legislation – the Nova Scotia Experience• Member Remuneration <p>Whether parliamentarians have attended these conferences before or if it is their first time - valuable lessons are always learned and important issues are discussed and debated. Often, we become so entrenched in our own issues that it is refreshing to see how others view the exact same challenges.</p> <p>The bottom line is that we all are doing our best to serve our publics. Of course, one of the best ways to do that is to be open to all schools of thought. Who better to teach us than our colleagues from across the country? While our specific lessons may differ, the overall course is very much the same.</p>



“networking with representatives of other nations
provides unique insight into parliamentary issues.”
Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel

The Speaker with Mr. Jong Ki Park, Consul General of the Republic of Korea and associate.

Secretary’s Report

Clerk David McNeil, Secretary of the Alberta Branch of the CPA

<p>The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association’s 41st annual Canadian Regional Conference was held in New Brunswick and was well attended.</p> <p>Alberta was able to send nine delegates to the 2002 conference, which featured a diverse scope of business sessions ranging from Members’ Remuneration to Canada/US relations since 9/11.</p> <p>Parliamentarians work in a unique environment. In some ways it is steeped in rich tradition dating back hundreds of years. In other ways it is evolving at lightning speed causing widespread change in terms of technology, policy and even organization.</p> <p>While focusing on the day-to-day duties we face within our own province, we often forget that these “local” issues are actually “global” in nature. As we deal with issues of Royal Assent, Interprovincial Trade and Electoral Reform, we may forget that other Parliaments are dealing with the same issues.</p>	<p>It is through the exchange of innovative ideas that we often gain insightful perspective into solutions for our own challenges.</p> <p>Equally important, the Canadian CPA Conference allows parliamentarians the opportunity to keep in touch with colleagues, establish new business relationships and strengthen ties with previous friends.</p> <p>Nine delegates attended the 2002 conference and each one gained something different from the experience whether it be new insight, new contacts or other positive learning experiences.</p>
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Bursaries

<p>Bursaries are presented to nominees from TUXIS Parliament of Alberta and the Alberta Girls’ Parliament to increase interest in the parliamentary process among young Albertans.</p>	<p>On May 28, Speaker Kowalski awarded bursaries to Adam Park of the Calgary-Bow constituency for TUXIS and to Kim Ackermann of Peace River constituency and Shirmee Doshi of Sherwood Park constituency for Alberta Girls’ Parliament.</p>
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Grade 6 Essay Contest

<p>To encourage greater awareness of the Commonwealth and the parliamentary system, a province-wide essay contest is held annually for Grade 6 students. Emily Burt of Cardston-Taber-Warner was the grand prize winner for 2002.</p>	
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Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference

Windhoek, Namibia September 4-14

Agenda

- 1) Address by CPA Secretary-General
- 2) Address by Commonwealth Secretary-General to the first Plenary Session
- 3) Regional Meetings
- 4) First Plenary Session: The Parliamentary Dimension of Human Security
- 5) Meeting of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians
- 6) Meeting of Society of Clerks-at-the-Table
- 7) Panel Sessions
- 8) Election of CPA Secretary-General
- 9) Executive Committee Meeting
- 10) Plenary Session: Role of the Democracy in Promoting Regional and Global Security

Alberta Delegation

Don Tannas, MLA Highwood, Deputy Speaker

Delegate Report (Edited for length)

I wish to thank you for providing me with the opportunity to attend this very worthwhile conference and I take this opportunity to report on it.

On September 9th, there was an address by the Secretary General of the CPA (Hon. Dennis Marshall) noting that there are now 152 parliaments in 52 countries who are members of the CPA.

I attended the workshop on “Parliaments and Policies to Reduce Poverty and Enhance Human Security” which heard the call for a “Marshall Plan” for the third world countries. Rick Stapenhurst of the World Bank Institute showed that those countries with democratic involvement of its people were more prosperous and cited examples of counties which have improved the living standards of their citizens.

A senator from Australia noted that the most promising path to peace, prosperity, justice, individual dignity and safety of person was through democracy.

The closing ceremonies included gifts to retiring members of the CPA Executive and the turning over to Bangladesh of the responsibility for the 2003 CPA Conference.

As you know, we left Namibia and flew to Mpumalanga to meet with the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker and to visit their legislature building before traveling on to Uganda and Kenya.

I very much appreciate all that you have done for me to attend this conference.

Don Tannas, MLA



Canadian Presiding Officers Conference

St. John’s, Newfoundland January 24-27

Agenda

- 1) Exercising the Right to Petition the National Assembly
- 2) Subpoena Powers of the Legislative Committees
- 3) New Rules on Senators Indicted and Subject to Judicial Proceedings
- 4) The Report Stage of Bills
- 5) Neutrality of the Presidency
- 6) Security
- 7) Canadian Regional Council Meeting-The 2004 CPA Conference to be held in Canada

Alberta Delegation

Hon. Ken Kowalski, Speaker Don Tannas, MLA, Highwood
Shiraz Shariff, MLA, Calgary-McCall

Canadian Regional Council Meeting

Ottawa, Ontario June 1

Agenda

- 1) Adoption of Draft Agenda
- 2) Approval of Minutes of the meeting of June 2, 2001 Ottawa and January 26, 2002, St. John’s Newfoundland
- 3) 2004 Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference
- 4) Proposal re: Funding of Annual Conferences
- 5) Financial Matters
- 6) Regional Representative and Stand-by Branch – 2002-2003; List of Rotation
- 7) Regional Executive Committee – 2002-2003
- 8) Canadian Parliamentary Review
- 9) Centre for Legislative Exchange – Professional Development Seminar
- 10) Delegation Secretaries – 48th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference
- 11) Regional Conference Sites
- 12) Parliamentary Seminar Sites
- 13) Conference of Presiding Officer Sites
- 14) Membership of the Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians
- 15) Date of next Regional Council Meeting
- 16) Other business

Alberta Delegation

Hon. Ken Kowalski, Speaker

Canadian Regional Conference

Fredericton, New Brunswick July 16-21

Agenda

- 1) Powers of the Legislative Branch vs Authority of Executive Branch
- 2) Selection Process for Party Leaders
- 3) Role of Government in the Control, Marketing and Treatment of Gambling
- 4) Electoral Reform
- 5) Can Press Councils Play a Role in a Democratic Society
- 6) Interprovincial Trade
- 7) Canada / US Relations Since 9/11
- 8) Smoke Free Legislation – the Nova Scotia Experience
- 9) Members’ Remuneration

Alberta Delegation

Hon. Ken Kowalski, Speaker Debby Carlson, MLA, Edmonton-Ellerslie
Jon Lord, Calgary-Currie Mary Anne Jablonski, MLA, Red Deer-North
Mel Knight, MLA, Grande Prairie-Smoky Gordon Graydon, MLA, Grande Prairie-Wapiti
Tony Vandermeer, MLA, Edmonton-Manning Ray Danyluk, MLA, Lac La Biche-St. Paul
Susan Purdie, Special Assistant to the Speaker

Delegate Reports (Edited for length)

It was a real pleasure to be included in the Alberta Delegation for the 41st Canadian Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. This is the second conference I have attended and wished to be a more active participant in order to benefit as much as possible from the experience.

I chaired the business session on Interprovincial Trade. That was a topic of specific interest to me as I have been a member of the Alberta all party delegation for PNWER (which also deals with trade issues) for many years. This was a very interesting discussion with the presenter, David Paye, M.N.A., Quebec. The general opinion was that while the central government supports the autonomy of the provinces, there are many lost opportunities in this area.

I was also interested in the session on electoral reform. The chair of this session, the Hon. Bev Harrison, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick talked about how Canada and its provinces are the furthest behind of all Commonwealth Countries on Electoral Reform.

The CPA conferences are a unique opportunity for all legislators, regardless of party background to participate on an equal footing in professional development. It is also an opportunity to network with other legislators, giving us a broader perspective on the world we live in.

Debby Carlson, MLA Edmonton-Ellerslie

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It was my pleasure to attend the Canadian Regional Conference. Overall, the conference was worthwhile and informative. I believe the opportunity for interprovincial sharing of information was the most interesting and thought provoking.

As you know, I was co-presenter for the business session on Members’ Remuneration along with Ted Arnott, M.P.P. Waterloo-Wellington, Ontario. The discussion following our presentations was quite lively. An overview follows.

- There was unanimous consent to not follow Alberta’s lead with regard to the elimination of pensions—the participants didn’t believe the transition allowance or any other support had value when compared to a pension plan.
- It was felt that the general public is not concerned with MLA remuneration.
- Concern was expressed regarding the lack of documentation on the length of sessions and time commitment in the legislature that is communicated to constituents.
- There was general agreement that there should be a different calculation for rural constituencies with an increase/adjustment for distance to allow for more than one office, etc.
- My comments on using telecommunications to a higher degree were well received and considered an item worth pursuing.

Thank you again for the opportunity to attend this conference.

Ray Danyluk, MLA

It is clear that this conference provides not just a venue for debate on important national issues, but rather, is obviously a pivotal arena for influencing political thought within Provincial governments right across the nation.

I must say that I was greatly impressed by the calibre of speakers, who all presented very cogent arguments on a variety of important subjects. I was particularly pleased to hear the discussions highlighting the need for Interprovincial Trade policy changes, as well as hearing about the issues that have arisen between Canada and the US since 9/11.

The particular business session which I was assigned to was an interesting and controversial one, Press Councils and their Role in a Democratic Society. Virtually all of the speakers provided comments that were thoughtful, balanced and very mindful of the important role that media play in a democratic society.

The evening discussions proved equally enlightening. It is at conferences like this, that one realizes how vital it is to be in regular and constant communication with our counterparts across the nation.

I also thought I would mention that while it was not the focus of the trip, the side tour out to the historic village was quite a highlight, as well. It is a shame that we as Canadians seem to sometimes know so little of our country, and of the many attractions, assets and history we have to share with each other.

I hope this report will give you a good indication of my thoughts about this conference. I would certainly recommend that we continue to participate in it next year, in fact, I think it rather vital that we not only attend, but vocalise our support for its importance.

Jon Lord, MLA Calgary-Currie

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As this was my initial experience with the CPA it was a beneficial learning opportunity from the business sessions to the social events, which showcased the unique attributes of the Province of New Brunswick. The open and frank exchange of ideas and opinions on various methods employed in dealing with governance issues in different jurisdictions is perhaps for a new MLA, the fastest way to discover that there is not an exclusive right way to govern, but a number of applications of legislation that will produce the right result for constituents.

I was pleased to be chosen as a presenter in the seventh business session: Canada /US Relations Since 9/11 chaired by the Honourable Mildred Dover, Speaker of the Prince Edward Island Assembly. Sarmite D. Bulte, MP from Ontario addressed the issue from a federal perspective and I related Alberta’s experiences both positive and negative with respect to this issue. The Q&A generated good debate on the topic and again added to my positive experience at the conference.

As a bonus, the National Energy Board hearings, relative to Nova Scotia’s offshore gas exports, were underway in the same venue and I was able to attend briefly and see first hand how these hearings are conducted.

In summary, the program was very informative and well attended with a high level of participation.

Mel R. Knight, MLA Grande Prairie-Smoky

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this conference. Exchanging concerns and ideas with our parliamentary colleagues from across Canada was a very valuable experience.

The presentation for the third business session: Role of Government in the Control, Marketing and Treatment of Gambling was given by Russell M. Williams, MNA/Député from the Nelligan constituency in Quebec. As a member of the Liberal Party in Quebec, Russell was the Social Service Critic and led a campaign to prohibit the sale of lottery tickets to minors.

In his presentation Russell noted the following:

- Canadians believe that government should control gaming;
- Governments should not promote gambling; Gambling is a public health issue;
- Governments spend less than 1 per cent on problem gamblers;
- A Lotto Quebec study determined that the average player of VLTs is male, 37 years of age, 12 years of schooling, has an annual income of \$39,000 and loses \$1,200 annually through gambling.
- There were 33 suicides in one year connected with gambling, youth are twice as vulnerable as adults and young adults between 18 and 25 years of age are also vulnerable;
- The growth in gaming is huge, profits are up 570 per cent.

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Russell recommended the following:

- Print the chances of winning on every product;
- Implement a HELPLINE with counseling for gambling addictions;
- Cut back on the number of machines by 7 per cent. This will not result in less revenue as remaining machines will have more revenue;
- Train employees to recognize problem gamblers and to take positive steps to help them;
- Automatically shut down machines at closing time;
- Let communities decide if they want gambling in their communities;
- and Governments should not promote gambling.

In conclusion, Russell gave a good presentation on gaming that leaned toward his beliefs that gaming creates a social and public health problem. His strongest recommendation was that governments should always control gaming and never promote gambling.

Mary Anne Jablonski, MLA Red Deer-North

Regional Assemblée Parlementaire de la francophonie

Halifax, Nova Scotia September 4-8

Agenda

- 1) Adoption of agenda
- 2) Report of the Chargé de mission on the activities of the American Region, July 2001 to July 2002
- 3) Update on salient points of the XXVIII Ordinary Session of the APF held in Berne in July 2002
- 4) APF support group for women parliamentarians – selection of two representatives from the America Region in anticipation of upcoming elections
- 5) Situation in certain sections of the America Region
 - a) New section: Saskatchewan
 - b) Modified section status: Louisiana and Maine
 - c) Disbarment of one section: Saint-Lucia
- 6) Follow-up of resolutions adopted at the XVIII Section of the Regional America Assembly held in Quebec in July 2001
- 7) Provisional calendar of regional activities 2002-2003
- 8) Statement of revenues and expenditures for the America Region of the APF 2001-2002
- 9) Information on the XIX Regional Session of the America Region of the APF
- 10) Working session: State of the francophonie in America
- 11) Working session: Fundamental Liberty and Democracy – Recognizing Rights to French Educational and Health Services
- 12) Working session: Parliamentary Diplomacy

Alberta Delegation

Denis Ducharme, MLA, Bonnyville-Cold Lake

Hector Goudreau, MLA, Dunvegan

Denis Herard, MLA, Calgary-Egmont

Louise Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant

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Delegate Reports (Edited for length)

The opening session was chaired by Mr. Raymond Brouillet, President of the Quebec Section of the APF. He re-emphasized the objectives of the APF organization, namely to encourage and support the enhancement of the French language and to defend French culture and respect individual rights in areas that are totally or partially French-speaking in America.

To facilitate discussions and focus on strategies responding to Francophone needs, Mr. Brouillet advised that a questionnaire has been prepared by the Quebec section to be filled out by various jurisdictions, dealing with five main questions on language, parliamentary plan; international and multilateral plans; cultural and communication plans and general observations.

He pointed out that individual provinces have taken different approaches to promoting French services and virtually all provinces have associations that promote the enhancement and preservation of the French language, services and culture.

The session on Fundamental Liberty and Democracy was chaired by Mrs. Claudette Boyer, Ontario MPP.

Mrs. Boyer stated that in Canada the right to minority language instruction at the primary and secondary levels is protected under Article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

She went on to say that concerns existed in smaller communities with low student populations which impacted the availability of course selection.

There were also discussions about the move in many provinces towards linguistic schools rather than the public/separate school concept. There was widespread recognition that many organizations are now involved in education through the use of technology which is expected to increase dramatically in the future.

Concerns on the health services side were discussed, particularly the ability of seniors to understand and to be understood when communicating in a language other than their own. Health Canada was supportive of access to French medical services in Francophone communities. Mr. Ducharme stated that a number of communities in Alberta have begun to offer services in French, particularly in the Peace and Lakeland Health Regions.

The last session was on Parliamentary Diplomacy. Mr. Bernard Patry, MP, the session chair, stated that Canada had an ongoing obligation towards the rest of the world and that obligation would increase as globalization continued to progress. He added there was an ongoing need for Canadians to understand what was happening around the world and for us to get involved.

Considerable discussion took place during the business sessions of this conference. The social functions also permitted excellent opportunities for the exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences.

Denis Ducharme, MLA Denis Herard, MLA Hector Goudreau, MLA



Le Parlementarisme au XXI Century Canadian Regional Seminar

Quebec City, Quebec October 9-12

Agenda

- 1) What are the roots of this malaise affecting our democracy?
- 2) Is Parliament's decline irreversible?
- 3) Can the parties and proponents of one cause only, their own, be kept at bay?
- 4) Should ministerial responsibility be limited?
- 5) Can Parliament be reinvented?
- 6) In the age of the Internet, towards a resurrection of the citizen?

Alberta Delegation

Dave Broda, MLA, Redwater Brian Mason, MLA, Edmonton-Highlands
LeRoy Johnson, MLA, Wetaskiwin Camrose Rob Lougheed, MLA, Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan

Delegate Reports (Edited for length)

Several respected, well known speakers gave presentations on six topics. A question period followed the presentations.

During the first session, Serge Cantin, a Philosophy Professor at the University of Quebec, Trois-Rivieres, stated that there is no remedy and there has always been malaise. He also felt the work of the Legislature is not just to calm the people but educate them as well.

During questions from the floor, the presenters were asked how they would give more power to the people when fewer of them are voting. Matthias Rioux, a member of the National Assembly of Quebec, said that people participate when they understand the issues, so parliament needs to inform them.

The during the second session, Louis Balthazar, Political science professor at the Laval University in Quebec stated that politicians are too responsive to the electorate in the short term and therefore make legislation without regard for the longer term effect. Alan Rosentahl a Professor at the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University in the United States commented that governments are indeed becoming less representative and more democratic as a result of plebiscites and lobbying by groups. He attributes the decline to increasing power in the media, the negative is emphasized and legislatures can't deal with the assaults. He also said that people want neither conflict nor compromise, and the only way to stop the decline of parliament is civic education on representative democracy.

The third plenary session asked the question, Could or Should Party Line and Proponents of a Single Issue (their own) be kept at bay? In response, Jacques Brassard, a former Minister, stated that people are elected for the first time as a party member. The public votes the party, then the leader, then the candidate.

Claude Ryan, a former Quebec Minister, spoke against reinventing parliament, but rather just improving it. He advocated improving the voting system, having all members involved in Oral Question Period, more time for private members business, free votes on bills dealing with civil liberties but not on government bills like budgets, elimination of filibuster rules and less emphasis on behind-the-scene small stuff by the media.

Oliver Giscard d'Estaing, Chairman of the Committee for a World Parliament spoke about the impact of globalization on parliamentary action. He felt the 25,000 parliamentarians of the world could form a "World Parliament".

Rob Lougheed, MLA Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan

This organization of former members of the Quebec parliament was created by an act of the National Assembly of Quebec in 1993. It believes in the importance of sharing its knowledge and experience by putting them at the service of parliamentary democracy, both in and outside Quebec.

While the conference literature indicated that participants were to be from a breadth of backgrounds, in fact, 12 of the speakers were Quebec politicians. Thus, there was a strong Quebec political focus and perspective to the conference.

While there was simultaneous translation for the speeches, it was difficult for English-speaking delegates, like myself, to fully comprehend question and answer sessions, as most speakers spoke in French.

All participating speakers were given the opportunity to:

- Share their views about the status and trends of parliamentarianism, the cornerstone of democracy.
- Discuss the gap between the principles and the reality of the parliamentary system.
- Debate issues of concern to parliamentarians and legislators of all parliaments.
- Take up the role and powers of parliaments

During questions, it was stated that MLAs have more power than they realize. We need the courage to accept that power. If not, we are not made for the job.

We need more time to study bills. We introduce then pass bills before taking the time to study them properly.

The symposium was a valuable experience in that it provided an opportunity to look at the parliamentary system primarily from a Quebec and French perspective. The Amicale des anciens parlementaires du Quebec has done a good service to the Quebec parliament and the participants at this conference.

I believe that we in Alberta should also proceed to establish an organization of former MLAs with a similar purpose. I am sure an "Alumnus" organization of Alberta MLAs could do much to educate our public on our parliamentary system and to improve parliament's (legislative) effectiveness. I would be pleased to lend my assistance to that end.

LeRoy Johnson, MLA Wetaskiwin-Camrose

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National Conference of State Legislatures

Denver, Colorado July 22-28

Agenda

- 1) The Legislature’s Budget: A Panel Discussion
- 2) Roundtable Discussion – NCSL Task Force on Protecting Democracy
- 3) International Delegates’ Reception with NCSL President-Elect, Oklahoma State Senator Angela Monson
- 4) Opening Plenary: Homeland Security and Economic Issues
- 5) Interactive Breakout Session: Update on the Trust for Representative Democracy and NCSL’S Center for Ethics in Government
- 6) Breakout Session: Technology and the Legislature
- 7) Assembly on Federal Issues and Assembly on State Issues Committee Meetings
- 8) Plenary Session: Keynote Speaker AFL-CIO President John Sweeney
- 9) Off-Site Tour: Mock Session and Tour of the Colorado Capital
- 10) Closing Plenary Session: Ed Goeas and Peter Hart present their perspectives on the public’s attitudes and how it will shape the United States 2002 elections

Alberta Delegation

Judy Gordon, MLA, Lacombe-Stettler Doug Horner, MLA, Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert
Bob Maskell, MLA, Edmonton-Meadowlark

Delegate Reports (Edited for length)

During the introductions and roundtable discussions on how legislature budgets are determined, we heard from three Speakers: State Senate of Ohio President Richard Finan discussed the legislative branches of budget expenditure by state, Rt. Hon. Peter Ala Adjetey, Speaker of Ghana’s Parliament presented problems faced by the Speaker and the fact that funding for his Parliament’s activities was not only subject to the dictates of the Executive but also usually delayed, and the Hon. John Murray, MP Speaker of the New South Wales Parliament who described his system of appropriations and acts.

The opening plenary session was a panel discussion of new national polling information covering many issues, including a fairly bleak forecast of confidence in the economy. Fifty per cent of Americans believe it will decline. A lengthy discussion regarding how to get the public to understand and believe their money is being spent wisely followed.

There was very lively discussion surrounding the merits of the US Farm Bill during the afternoon session covering the subsidizing of agriculture. I shared Alberta’s perspective with a number of US Senators. Australia shared our view that massive farm subsidies have a negative impact on world trade. In fact, a member of the British Parliament also spoke to that issue.

During a session on health care, I was involved in a discussion regarding whether the US should follow Canada’s lead and enter into a fully publicly funded health care system. There were also presentations on Health Care Cost Growth, New thinking on Health Care Costs and what different states are doing, Medical Savings accounts, The Dilemma of Medical Savings accounts and Balancing Health Needs with Resources. All of these sessions were valuable in our committee deliberations in Alberta.

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The topic of the closing plenary session was polling data. Ed Goes and Peter Hart presented polling data which applied to the US electorate. The presentation indicated that there is a great deal of mistrust for the political system and the impression that big business has a major impact on political decision making.

I felt that the networking ability and the discussions with various groups at the conference broadened my perspective as a legislator. I was surprised by the fact that some of the problems outlined were unique to their system and some were common with ours. I would definitely recommend this as a good forum to learn from and to lobby for Alberta.

Doug Horner, MLA, Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert

I was most impressed with the conference. NCSL is a highly respected organization and has long been a productive forum for legislators to collaborate, address issues of mutual concern and strategize for the future. Over 6,000 attendees and more than 160 sessions to choose from.

The highlight for me was when I attended the Leaders Summit. A most interesting, interactive dialogue amongst knowledgeable panel members. Facilitated by Mara Liasson, a most controversial national political media correspondent, timely topics were hotly debated. Many issues were similar to Alberta – how can we fix a sagging economy, rebuild confidence in democracy, garner public trust and entice our citizens to become more informed and involved. As session participants we were able to share our views through instant polling.

I attended various sessions on education, health care, welfare reform, agriculture and crime. Repeatedly it was stated that America is at a critical point in its history – post September 11th. So many sessions and speakers focused the threats and issues related to terrorism.

I found the overall conference informative, and Denver to be a beautiful host city. Thank you for allowing me to be one of the Alberta Legislature representatives.

Judy Gordon

Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER)

Welches, Oregon June 9-12

Agenda

- 1) Telecommunications
- 2) Tourism
- 3) Workforce in the 21st Century
- 4) Environment
- 5) Transportation
- 6) Agriculture
- 7) Sustainable Development
- 8) Financing Cross-border Infrastructure
- 9) Health Care
- 10) Energy
- 11) Inauguration of new PNWER President
- 12) Blue Cascades: Interdependencies Scenario

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Alberta Delegation

Drew Hutton, MLA, Edmonton-Glenora

Mel Knight, MLA, Grande Prairie-Smoky

Rob Renner, MLA, Medicine Hat

Debby Carlson, MLA, Edmonton-Ellerslie

Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committee (CCPAC)

St. John’s Newfoundland August 25-27

Agenda

- 1) Roundtable-Reports from Delegations
- 2) The John Key Forum (joint session with CCOLA delegates): Measuring a Government’s Bottom Line
- 3) The Cost and Value of Culture (Guest Speaker)
- 4) Administrative Management – 5 years of Hearings
- 5) GOPAC (Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption) and Regional Chapter role
- 6) Canadian Auditor General, Legislative Auditor – Mandate, Role, Function and Oversight Committees
- 7) NAPAC (North American Parliamentarians Against Corruption) and World Bank: The International Context of World Governance Reform
- 8) Statements by Members of Parliament Regarding NAPAC
- 9) Resolution to Adopt NAPAC Constitution – Motions and Debate
- 10) East Coast Oil and Gas – Fueling our Economic Engine (Guest Speaker)
- 11) CCPAC Council Business

Alberta Delegation

Laurie Blakeman, MLA, Edmonton-Centre

Harvey Cenaiko, MLA, Calgary-Buffalo

Alana DeLong, MLA, Calgary-Bow

Gary Freidel, MLA, Peace River

Janis Tarchuk, MLA, Banff-Cochrane

Delegate Reports (Edited for length)

Resolution to Adopt NAPAC Constitution – Motions and Debate

During the ninth business session, the House of Commons PAC Chair presented the group with a proposal to consider a resolution to adopt a constitution for a regional chapter of GOPAC (Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption). He mentioned that the World Bank was prepared to fund a Secretariat for the group in Ottawa. The following motion was moved:

That the assembled parliamentarians at the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, create an organization called the North American Parliamentarians Against Corruption (NAPAC) as a regional chapter within the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC).

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This resolution was opposed by all jurisdictions, except Ottawa and Ontario. Some criticisms raised in the debate were:

- Creation of this body could duplicate the work of police and other bodies;
- CCPAC did not have the authority to make this decision; and
- The assembled parliamentarians could not speak for anyone else on their Committees or in their Caucuses.

Some delegates supported the motion, saying that it was agreement to an initiative which did not obligate any individual or group to join. Some amendments to the wording were suggested. As amended, the resolution would have read as follows:

That the individual parliamentarians at the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, endorse the creation of an organization called the North American Parliamentarians Against Corruption (NAPAC) as a regional chapter within the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC).

In the end, the resolution was deferred for future discussion.

British Columbia Resolution

During the closing session the following resolution was proposed:

“That CCPAC endorses the furthering of the independence of the Auditor General’s Office by supporting the notion that the budget for the Auditor General’s Office be reviewed and determined by the PAC through meetings held in public.”

There was opposition to this resolution, with most delegates agreeing that CCPAC had no authority to make such a decision or agree in principle to this decision. Again amendments were proposed but the idea did not gain support. As amended, the resolution would have read as follows:

“That CCPAC endorses the furthering of the independence of the Auditor General’s Office by supporting the notion that the budget for the Auditor General’s Office be reviewed and determined through meetings held in public.”

The Chair advised that the CCPAC constitution did not allow authority to consider the matter, and he accordingly ruled the motion out of order.

During discussion, the Saskatchewan PAC Chair mentioned that his jurisdiction had recently adopted a mechanism to allow their PAC to consider and approve the Auditor General’s budget. The Council agreed that Saskatchewan should be called upon to report next year.

Laurie Blakeman, MLA

Member, Standing Committee on Public Accounts



Council on Governmental Ethics Laws

Ottawa, Ontario September 29-October 2

Agenda

- 1) Campaign Finance Update
- 2) Achieving Public Integrity Through Whistle-blower Laws
- 3) Keys to Successfully Lobbying Legislators: How to Lobby for Change in the Campaign and Finance Laws
- 4) Impact of 9/11 on Access to Public Buildings and Records
- 5) Campaign Finance Debate
- 6) Ethics Update
- 7) Comparative Analysis of the Voting Systems in Use During Elections and Recommendations Under Consideration for Improvement
- 8) Stonewalling vs. Transparency: Executive Privilege vs Accountability
- 9) Conducting Risk Based Analysis of Financial Returns
- 10) Development of Business Contingency and Recovery Plans
- 11) Lobbying Update
- 12) Freedom of Information Legislation/Litigation Update
- 13) Enduring Constitutional Governance: Effects of 2001 Events on Disaster Planning of the Senate and the Road Forward
- 14) Update on Issue Advocacy, Independent Expenditures, Soft Money and Third-Party Advertising
- 15) Adjudication of complaints from Commissioners’ Viewpoints
- 16) Impact of 9/11 on Access to Information
- 17) Plenary Session: Levelling the Campaign Playing Field: Disclosure vs. Limits – International Panel
- 18) Information Accuracy and What to do with Data
- 19) National and International Political Funding and Electoral Developments: The Latest Word
- 20) Revolving Door/Conflict of Interest: Where Do Loyalties Lie?
- 21) Effective Enforcement of Financial Disclosure Requirements
- 22) Political Campaigning on the Internet
- 23) Model Lobbying Web site Revolutionizes Lobbying: How your Organization Can do the Same
- 24) National and International Ethics, Anticorruption and Transparency: What is COGEL’s role?
- 25) www.ETHICS-TRAINING.org
- 26) COGEL Annual Business Meeting
- 27) An Online Peek at Your Neighbour’s Politics: Has Disclosure Gone Too Far?
- 28) To Fine or Not to Fine? That is the Question
- 29) Electronic Filing Update: Campaign Financing and Economic Interests Statements
- 30) Open Government Beyond Our Borders
- 31) Plenary Session: Ethics Leadership, Building on Ethical Culture in the New Ethics Environment

Delegates

Janis Tarchuk, MLA, Banff-Cochrane Raj Pannu, MLA, Edmonton-Strathcona

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Delegate Report (Edited for length)

With the location, there was a larger than usual Canadian presence at this Conference in comparison to recent years. Bob Clark, Ethics Commissioner; Brian Fjeldheim, Chief Electoral Officer; Scott Sutton, Ombudsman; and senior staff from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner were also in attendance.

The host for this year’s Conference was Elections Canada and the program covered election issues ongoing in the United States, the effects of 9/11 on government programs and facilities, and freedom of information and protection of Privacy legislation. There was a particular emphasis on ethics issues and Bob Clark, Ethics Commissioner participated as a panelist on a number of panels.

Of particular interest were the sessions on conflict of interest and ethics updates, as well as sessions relating to the ease of access and availability of personal information online. The two keynote speakers, Ms Jeri Thomson, Secretary of the United States Senate, and Rex Murphy, Canadian writer, broadcaster and political commentator, were informative and provocative.

The conference provided opportunities to discuss ideas and solutions with delegates and panelists, who attended from as far away as South Africa and Australia, and to discover that overall, current issues relating to ethics, election processes, and freedom of information and protection of privacy are very similar in all jurisdictions. Delegates also attended the COGEL Annual Awards Banquet at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, a world-class facility.

Karen Sawchuk, Committee Clerk for the Select Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Parliamentary visit to United Kingdom

September 13-23

Agenda

London

- 1) Tour of Westminster Palace
- 2) Meeting with Clerk of Overseas Office – House of Lords
- 3) Meeting with CPA Secretary-General, Hon. Denis Marshall, QSO
- 4) Meeting with CPA-UK Branch members
- 5) Briefing on London Governance – Greater London Authority
- 6) Briefing, Canadian High Commission
- 7) Meeting at the High Commission

Edinburgh

- 1) Welcome and Introduction to the Scottish Parliament by Roy Devon, Secretary of the CPA (Scotland Branch)
- 2) Presentation on Devolution and the Scottish Parliament
- 3) Tour of the Visitor’s Centre and Assembly Hall
- 4) Observe Question Time and First Minister’s Question Time
- 5) Meeting and Presentation on Webcasting and Broadcasting

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Belfast

- 1) Ulster Folk and Transport Museum guided tour
- 2) Meeting with the Speaker Lord Alderdice and Mr. Arthur Moir, Clerk to the Assembly
- 3) Overview of the Northern Ireland Assembly
- 4) Tour of the Parliament Buildings
- 5) Meeting with representatives from various parties

Alberta Delegation

Hon. Ken Kowalski, MLA, Speaker	Bill Bonner, MLA, Edmonton-Glengarry
Richard Marz, MLA, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills	Brent Rathgeber, MLA, Edmonton-Calder
Thomas Lukaszuk, MLA, Edmonton-Castle Downs	Albert Klapstein, MLA, Leduc

Delegate Reports (Edited for length)

I was pleased to have been invited to travel to the British Isles as a member of the Alberta Parliamentary delegation. From the onset it was very obvious that our group was to benefit greatly from the strong relations developed over the years between parliaments in the British Isles and Alberta. The Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker, led our delegation through an interesting and informative itinerary put together by our Clerk, Dr. David McNeil.

Our trip began in London, England with stops in Edinburgh, Belfast and Dublin. Sunday, our first full day in London, was spent touring Buckingham Palace. The following days were filled with meetings at Westminster Palace, with Commonwealth Parliamentary Association–UK Branch members, the Greater London Authority and the Canadian High Commission.

We then traveled to Scotland and met with members of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We also visited the Scottish Parliament where the main topic discussed was devolution and its impact on Scotland. A highlight was observing Question Time and the First Minister’s Question Time followed by meetings. We also had the opportunity to visit Glasgow City Hall, and meet with Lord Provost. One of the topics of discussion was the difficulty experienced by Glasgow with the loss of their ship building industry.

In Belfast we were given an overview of the Northern Ireland Assembly and then had separate meetings with representative from each party. It was very evident that they were experiencing difficulties with their move to devolution.

Our next stop was Dublin where we had very informative discussions with their parliamentarians regarding the great economic success, similar to Alberta, they are experiencing in the Republic of Ireland.

The discussions on issues dealing with devolution and the impact of joining the European Union helped to provide us with awareness of how change can occur and how important change is for all parliaments. The sharing of experiences and solutions was a great asset to all of us. The result was a greater appreciation of the democratic process and how important it is for us to make the process work more efficiently.

Bill Bonner, MLA, Edmonton-Glengarry

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It was a privilege for me to accompany legislature colleagues on this trip to meet with parliamentary members from each of the United Kingdom jurisdictions.

Items of discussion included the current as well as the historic role of the Monarchy in the United Kingdom, the United Kingdom’s involvement in the European community, currency issues, as well as trade and agriculture.

Of particular interest to me was the impact mad cow disease has had on the United Kingdom economy and the importance of the United Kingdom to trade with Alberta, ranking first in Europe and seventh overall.

Devolution of parliamentary powers to Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Welsh National Assembly was another topic of particular interest, especially compared to the Canadian opinion of sharing of federal/provincial powers.

I feel this tour was an important opportunity to dialogue with other Commonwealth parliamentarians, to share opinions on problems that are common to us, as well as learn about problems we can, hopefully, prevent.

I appreciate the opportunity to represent Albertans as a member of this delegation.

Richard Marz, MLA, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills

