

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Alberta Branch

1998 Annual Report

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is an association of members of Commonwealth parliaments who, irrespective of race, religion, or culture, are united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law, and individual rights and freedoms, and by pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. Canada was one of the six original member countries of the CPA when it was founded in 1911 under the name of the Empire Parliamentary Association. Association branches now exist in 134 national, state, provincial, and territorial parliaments with a total membership of over 14,000 parliamentarians. Each provincial and territorial Legislative Assembly in Canada as well as the federal Parliament comprises a branch of the CPA. All Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta are members of the Alberta branch of the CPA.

President's Report

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

During my first year and a half as Speaker I have had the privilege of completing Speaker Schumacher's term on the Executive Committee of the CPA and attending numerous parliamentary conferences. This has enabled me to establish contacts with many parliamentarians from all over the world and has reinforced my strongly held view that interparliamentary contact is essential in order for us as elected people to represent our constituents effectively and to fully appreciate the value of our own parliamentary democracy.

It is no longer good enough, if it ever was, for us to make decisions based simply on our own experience or opinions or those of our constituents. In these last years of the second millennium we live in a world so shaped by mass communications and electronic technology that we truly have become a global village. In terms of economics and culture and in many other ways we are connected to people of every race, creed, and occupation in the villages of Swaziland and the factories of Malaysia as well as in the Canadian Arctic, the outposts of Newfoundland, and all across Canada. The CPA helps make us more aware of the larger, global context we live in so that we can make better decisions at the provincial

level and in our constituencies.

The beauty of the CPA is that when we meet with our counterparts from other parts of Canada or of the world, we encounter another elected person who faces many of the same issues we do, and we are able to share with them our respective viewpoints on those issues. When we talk with them about health care, agricultural marketing, education, unemployment, or the administration of justice, we learn more about what it means to be human in the 1990s, and we gain invaluable insights into how we can and should address these and other issues in Alberta and in our constituencies. These encounters can even have an impact on issues as serious as world peace and the exploitation of children.

Members who attend CPA functions or any other interparliamentary meetings are always amazed that they can establish good relationships and even friendships with members who belong to parties holding views that conflict with their own. This occurs because at such gatherings we all come as equals and without labels. We know that an effective way to reach beyond the rigid separatist position of a Quebec government, for example, is to meet individual Quebecers, to build bridges at a personal level. Interparliamentary organizations like the CPA enable us to do something

similar in a broader context. For example, I attended an executive meeting in 1998 with representatives from India and Pakistan who were able to work together even as their governments were testing nuclear weapons and threatening war. Another meeting addressed the issue of child labour, and despite extreme cultural and economic differences, we were able to work together in finding solutions.

In 1998 Alberta became an associate member of the APF, Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, thereby enabling us to establish closer ties with francophones in Quebec and other parts of Canada as well as around the world. We hosted the America region presidents' meeting here in Edmonton, and many members had the opportunity to meet the participants. We also hosted the CPA regional seminar in November, which was attended by 40 visitors and seven of our own members.

In June we participated for the first time in the Partnership of Parliaments program by hosting elected members from state legislatures in Germany. In November a delegation from our twinned province in

South Africa, Mpumalanga, visited the Legislature. We were thereby able to learn from and share experiences with people from a long-established democratic tradition as well as with those from a country just starting to develop its democratic institutions. In future these two special relationships with Germany and Mpumalanga will offer members and staff from all the involved jurisdictions continuing opportunities to deepen their appreciation of our parliamentary democratic institutions and thereby to improve those institutions and to make the institutions and all of us more fully human.

Secretary's Report

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

In 1998 the Alberta branch participated in seven conferences, two of which we hosted in Edmonton. The branch also hosted a delegation of members of German state legislatures and a delegation of Assembly officers from Mpumalanga, South Africa. The most noteworthy new venture for the branch was its being granted associate member status in the francophone parliamentary association, Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF). To highlight this event, which had been in the works for several years, the Alberta branch invited the executive of the APF to hold its meeting in Edmonton in March. On that occasion, Speaker Kowalski hosted a lunch and a dinner for the association, thereby providing the opportunity for a total of 24 members to learn more about this association and to meet with members of the executive.

For the first time Alberta participated in the Partnership of Parliaments program, an initiative designed to foster exchange visits of parliamentarians between U.S. and Canadian jurisdictions and Germany. In June Alberta hosted parliamentarians from German state legislatures, and members and support staff were able to enhance their parliamentary experience by numerous discussions and meetings with our German visitors.

In November the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Clerk, Clerk Assistant, committee administrative assistant, and editor of *Hansard* from the province of Mpumalanga, South Africa, made an extended visit to Edmonton to

learn from Alberta's experience on a wide variety of issues, including financial management, committee administration, production of *Hansard*, human resources support, parliamentary procedure, library services, technology, et cetera. This visit gave a significant number of staff and members the opportunity to broaden their perspectives on the issues affecting parliaments and parliamentarians in other parts of the world. It was one in a series of contacts between the Legislatures of Alberta and Mpumalanga, the province of South Africa with which Alberta has been twinned for several years.

I was able to attend several parliamentary conferences during the year, including the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Plenary Conference in New Zealand in October, at which I participated in the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments, which was part of the plenary conference. In December I had the honour of serving on the CPA's Expert Group on Innovative Training Methods for Parliamentarians.

Presiding Officers' Conference

Victoria, British Columbia, January 15-18

Conference Agenda

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The Speaker's latitude as an MLA | | the prerogative of the caucuses, not of Speakers or officers of the House |
| 2 | Structure and operation of the parliamentary committee system | 6 | How a ruling is prepared |
| 3 | Issues relating to private members' business | | |
| 4 | Speaker's private consultations re the business of the House, procedural and decorum issues | | |
| 5 | Oxford-style debate: parliamentary reform, | | |

Alberta Delegation

Speaker Ken Kowalski
Clerk David McNeil

America Region Presidents Conference Assemblée de la parlementaires de la Francophonie (APF)

Edmonton, Alberta, March 9

Conference Agenda

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Review of key points from board meeting in Guadeloupe, December 1997 | 4 | Discussion of Regional Assembly agenda for August 1998 |
| 2 | Replacement of the positions of the representatives from America region and office members of the AIPLF | | |
| 3 | Report of the representative on the activities of the America region, September 1997 to March 1998 | | |

Alberta Delegation

Speaker Ken Kowalski
MLA Paul Langevin
Clerk Assistant Louise Kamuchik

10th Annual CPA Seminar

Prince Edward Island, May 21-30

Conference Agenda

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|---|
| 1 | Development of the Commonwealth and the role of the CPA: looking to the future | 8 | the executive and the civil service
Remuneration, allowances, and support services for members |
| 2 | The various roles of a member: obligations to constituents and party and relationships with interest groups | 9 | Members and the media |
| 3 | Powers and privileges of the Legislature | 10 | Conflict of interest: how to ensure ethical standards in public life |
| 4 | The business of the House: striking the parliamentary agenda and balancing the requirements of government and opposition | 11 | Parliamentary sovereignty versus judicial activism: conflict or complement? |
| 5 | The role of the Speaker and parliamentary staff | | |
| 6 | Enhancing parliament's scrutiny of legislation and public expenditure through parliamentary committees and committee systems | | |
| 7 | Private members and their relationship with | | |

Alberta Delegation

MLA Carol Haley

Delegate's Report (edited for length)

Thirty-two delegates attended, representing India, Pakistan, Australia, Canada, the U.K., South Africa, Kenya, eight island countries, and several other members of the CPA.

I learned much about our differences: constituencies that range from 2,000 residents to 1.2 million, constituencies that have no roads, no schools, and no health care versus our own very fortunate existence. Constituency support levels varied widely, many with none at all.

What amazed me most is that we as parliamentarians have so much in common: concerns about how politicians are viewed, problems with the media, and wrestling with conflict of interest legislation.

In May 1998 India and Pakistan were both detonating underground nuclear test weapons. In Charlottetown delegates from Pakistan and India were able to sit next to one another and discuss this situation calmly and rationally, leaving the tension at home.

I think the CPA has much to offer the world when it can bring people together from such diverse areas to share ideas and concerns.

Carol Haley

Partnership of Parliaments

Edmonton, Jasper, and Kananaskis, June 7 to 11

Speaker Kowalski and the Legislative Assembly of Alberta hosted a team of 15 German visitors, including parliamentarians from 10 states in Germany. This was Alberta's first opportunity to participate in the Partnership of Parliaments program, an initiative designed to foster closer ties between German parliamentarians and their counterparts in Canada and the United States. The agenda included meetings with Premier Klein, Edmonton Mayor Bill Smith, and several cabinet

ministers and the opportunity to meet numerous other MLAs. The program was designed to enable participants to exchange information and experience with respect to fiscal and economic challenges, social and cultural issues, energy, the environment, and political and parliamentary relations.

National Ombudsman Conference

Yellowknife, N.W.T., June 18-21

Conference Theme

Fairness and Good Governance

Alberta Delegation

MLA Paul Langevin
Diane Shumyla, Committee Assistant
Ombudsman Scott Sutton
Daniel Johns, Assistant to the Ombudsman

Information and Privacy Commission Summit

Whitehorse, Yukon, June 24-28

Alberta Delegation

MLA Paul Langevin
Information and Privacy Commissioner
Bob Clark

CPA Canadian Regional Conference

Toronto, Ontario, July 18-24

Conference Agenda

- 1 Correcting past wrongs: when is it the government's responsibility?
- 2 Conflict of interest guidelines: too little or too much?
- 3 Will referenda make government more accountable?
- 4 Parliament and the courts: who's legislating whom?
- 5 Year 2000 and technology: are we ready?
- 6 Have the public and government abandoned the environmental file?
- 7 The creation of Canada's two new territories

- 8 Pollsters, the press, and political winds of fortune

Alberta Delegation

Speaker Ken Kowalski
MLAs Jocelyn Burgener, Debby Carlson,
Robert Fischer, Sue Olsen, Gary Severtson,
and Janis Tarchuk
Clerk David McNeil
Bev Alenius, Speaker's Executive Assistant

Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

In the absence of specific professional development courses for elected officials, I found the opportunity to meet with elected officials from the 10 provinces, two territories, House of Commons, and Senate as well as international delegates to be a productive and informative experience.

The agenda covered a range of topics and the format of presentations, followed by questions and responses, allowed for an informed debate. Within the context of nation building and a mutual understanding of our social and economic diversity, those debates were quite meaningful.

I was privileged to chair on behalf of the Alberta delegation the session on conflict of interest. Alberta has continued to lead the country on specific areas of fiscal and social reform. The CPA provided an opportunity to feature our Alberta advantage.

I appreciate the Speaker's initiative in maintaining a priority for Alberta legislators to participate in conferences such as these.

Jocelyn Burgener

This conference was one of the highlights of my elected career. The CPA is to be congratulated on providing a forum where elected representatives can gather in a nonpartisan fashion and work on professional development and building bridges between parties and provinces. This is a very important goal, and it is encouraging to see the Speaker play a significant role in achieving this goal.

I found all of the working sessions to be very informative and would certainly be willing to be a presenter at a future conference. Equally important was the ability to meet informally with other legislators. I

gained as much information from our informal discussions as I did from the formal part of the program.

It was a real pleasure to be able to bring my children to the conference. As legislators we spend a great deal of time away from home, and there are many things they are not included in. They are also isolated from their peers as few children have had the experience of having parents as politicians.

Debby Carlson

As well as finding the conference enjoyable and very rewarding, I appreciated the many benefits of networking with parliamentarians representing provincial and territorial legislatures, the Parliament of Canada, and other Commonwealth nations.

The organizers did a wonderful job hosting delegates and constructing working sessions that promoted open exchanges of ideas on important social, political, and economic issues of the day. While

discussing these issues common to all, there was much to be learned from different experiences and perspectives contributing to various approaches to problem solving. Whether in a social environment or working session, dialogue was always stimulating and enhanced better understanding of our many shared challenges.

Janis Tarchuk

I believe conferences such as these are the only manner Alberta MLAs have for professional development and networking opportunities. I would encourage all Members of the Legislative Assembly to participate not just as a delegate but as a presenter.

I was also grateful for the opportunity to bring my son. Sometimes we overlook the impact our chosen profession has on our children. This gave Blake a chance to meet other youths whose parents are also parliamentarians and to share some of the experiences he

has had. They also were able to see their parents meet with others in a nonpartisan environment.

I believe the most timely presentations were on conflict of interest legislation and “Parliament and the courts: who’s legislating whom?” I had the opportunity to present on the latter topic.

Sue Olsen

The conference was very interesting in that the business sessions were filled with high-level discussions on parliamentary systems within the Commonwealth. Ontario did a superb job of hosting the conference.

Marian and I thoroughly enjoyed this conference as we made many new friends. Certainly the deliberations in the business sessions were informative and gave us a

special appreciation for democracy in the province of Alberta.

Robert “Butch” Fischer

The conference was very well organized, and the topics for discussion were well chosen. I found the business sessions to be most informative, and the opportunity for exchange of ideas afforded a great learning experience.

I found it particularly interesting to note how the tones and viewpoints on different issues varied between government members and representatives of opposition

parties. I thoroughly enjoyed this conference and believe the knowledge I gained and the experiences I shared will be of benefit to me throughout my political career.

Gary Severtson

Summary of Alberta Presentation

Parliament and the Courts: Who’s Legislating Whom? by Sue Olsen

Many citizens are asking whether the courts have become policymakers by the way they have been interpreting the law. Since the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, the concept of judicial activism has gained prominence. In fact, the primary reason for including section 33 in the Charter, the notwithstanding clause, was to ensure that public policy was determined by elected legislators rather than by unelected judges.

A major event in Alberta in 1998 was the Supreme Court’s decision in the Delwin Vriend case on the issue of sexual orientation. The Premier decided not to invoke the notwithstanding clause to override the decision despite deep divisions in his party’s caucus and strong lobbying by interest groups. The court’s decision basically demonstrated that our Constitution must evolve to reflect current trends in our society. It also underlined that the Constitution, not the courts, limits Legislatures and that “this is necessarily true of all constitutional democracies.”

Unfortunately, with the growing concentration of media ownership, the media is more interested in creating discord than agreement, and so only the more controversial decisions get the headlines. So the public

has only unreliable, often one-sided information on which to base its opinions. This is the context in which governments are receiving increased pressure to elect judges in order to make the judiciary more accountable to the electorate. However, governments that bow to this pressure will have to explain why this type of accountability should be limited to the judiciary and not also include quasi-judicial bodies like human rights commissions and regional health authorities.

I believe that if legislators or parliamentarians apply an equality lens to any pending legislation, we will reduce the ambiguities. Then the interpretative role of the judiciary is made that much easier and will become more accepted by the citizens of this country. The important question to ask, then, is: do our legislators have the political will to rule in the best interests of society rather than the best interests of re-election?

National Conference of State Legislatures

Las Vegas, Nevada, July 20-23

Alberta Delegation

MLAs Marlene Graham, Pamela Paul,
and Tom Thurber

Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

I found the information from the conference very innovative and exciting in terms of being able to compare what we are doing in the province of Alberta to what we are doing across Canada and what is being done in the States. There were 7,000 preregistered delegates and 130 international delegates at the convention. I participated in an open discussion on communication and media relations at the beginning of the conference with other delegates from Egypt, South Africa, Japan, Germany, China, and California. I also attended a number of sessions dealing with welfare reform. There were 11 of us in the group, and we were able to share all sorts of information on state policies and reforms. I was asked if I would be interested in taking part in an

international women's initiative. I also had an opportunity to meet delegates from Germany on a number of occasions. It was easy to relate to them, and they were very open in sharing ideas with me.

I found the overall experience exciting and very enjoyable. Although it was informative to be present under observer status, in the future it may be more effective to be able to participate in the actual discussions. Perhaps next time some consideration for our active participation could be arranged with the host organization.

Pamela Paul

I was very impressed with both the quality and number of sessions contained on the program. The presenters were all very knowledgeable. I was also struck by the similarity of issues facing American Legislatures and those we face in our own country. Of particular interest to me were the sessions I attended on child support enforcement, the prevalence and impact of substance abuse in crime and the effect of current policy in this area, the implications of the current robust economy, and the need for legislatures to promote civic education in schools to help preserve our democratic system.

At this time the federal and state governments have a combined surplus of \$160 billion. We were told this was unexpected and came from capital gains tax revenue

occasioned by the doubling of the stock market. Most jurisdictions are having to decide how to best utilize these surpluses.

Alberta and Quebec were the only Canadian provinces represented at the conference. I believe we should continue to maintain our connections to the NCSL and send delegates annually. Not only is the conference informative; it serves to provide a venue to give Alberta a greater profile.

Marlene Graham

State representatives and Senators had organized meetings to develop policy on many items, such as the Kyoto accord, agriculture policies, and social programs. The meetings I attended were mostly on environment and agriculture. Preservation of agricultural land, intensive livestock operations, and the protection of the environment were key issues in many discussions. It became very apparent that all participants face basically the same problems that we face here, with different solutions according to the different legislation of the

different states.

My impression was that American states lobby their federal government much more actively than we do. They appear to get state senators and representatives together on a wide basis to get their opinions heard at the federal level.

Tom Thurber

19th Annual Conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees and Conference of Legislative Auditors

Yellowknife, N.W.T., August 16-18, 1999

Conference Agenda

- 1 Report of the Planning and Co-ordinating Committee on strategic planning for COLA
- 2 Legislative Audit Practices Committee (LAPC) update and planned activities
- 3 Intranet/Internet issues
- 4 Government accounting standards: where are we going?
- 5 Joint session with CCPAC delegates: governments moving into the third millennium
- 6 Study groups on performance management for audit offices reporting and public-sector

accountability (performance reporting)

Alberta Delegation

MLAs Shiraz Shariff and Lance White
Corinne Dacyshyn, Committee Assistant
Auditor General Peter Valentine
Assistant Auditor Generals Nick Shandro and Jim Hug

Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

Ottawa, Ontario, August 18-23

Conference Agenda

- 1 Political and parliamentary actuality in the various sections
- 2 The evolution of public libraries in the maintenance of French language and culture in America
- 3 Labour's professional and developmental formation

Alberta Delegation

Speaker Ken Kowalski
MLAs Paul Langevin and
Denis Ducharme
Clerk Assistant Louise Kamuchik

Delegates' Reports (edited for length)

The opening session included the official welcome of Alberta as an associate member of the international Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. This included President Senator Jean-Robert Gauthier's presenting to Speaker Kowalski the organization's flag. Speaker Kowalski then addressed the gathering in French and pledged Alberta's active participation in the organization.

The Alberta delegation made a presentation at the business session dealing with the evolution of public libraries in the maintenance of the French language and culture. Resolutions were passed to recommend that governments abolish all taxes on books and to recommend that public broadcasters and community radio and television stations air messages encouraging francophones to frequent their public libraries. The

delegation also presented on the subject of the professional formation and development of labour.

The APF is the sole interparliamentary organization representing the French-speaking world which brings together parliamentarians interested in defending and promoting French language and culture in totally or partially French-speaking areas of the American continent. Its work is especially important in areas where French is in the minority.

Paul Langevin and Denis Ducharme

Summaries of Alberta Presentations

The Evolution of Public Libraries in the Maintenance of French Language and Culture in Alberta by Paul Langevin and Denis Ducharme

Library services in Alberta began as voluntary operations, and until the 1950s few communities other than the larger cities established municipal, taxpayer-funded library services. A major step forward in the provision of French language materials came with the introduction of Alberta's multilingual biblioservice in 1978, which purchased books in 27 languages, including French. However, this service was discontinued in 1993 due to lack of funding.

Public libraries in major centres have maintained modest French language collections, and many school boards have developed French language collections as their French immersion and second language programs developed during the 1970s and 1980s. Unfortunately, the number of adults accessing French language materials has been declining. Recently, Alberta has

begun to implement the Alberta public library electronic network. When fully operational, Albertans will be able to borrow French materials from any public library in the province.

As helpful as the Internet is to the effort, francophones and francophiles face major challenges in combating illiteracy and purchasing technology and materials in order to maintain and promote French language and culture in Alberta. They need the co-operation and support of elected officials from all levels of government.

The Professional Formation and Development of Labour: a Francophone Perspective by Paul Langevin and Denis Ducharme

Alberta remains committed to respecting the constitutional rights of francophones and Catholics to a separate education system. Overall spending in education is increasing by 5.7 percent in the current year and by 3.1 percent in Advanced Education and Career Development. In order to maintain its competitive advantage in a knowledge-based, global economy, Alberta must give education and training top priority. Growth summit participants identified people development as the number one priority.

Alberta has developed a new human resource strategy, established a renewed vision for apprenticeship and industry training, expanded youth programs, integrated provincial and federal labour market programs, increased adult learning support, and developed alternative certification mechanisms consistent with the agreement on internal trade.

Faculté Saint-Jean of the University of Alberta is the only francophone postsecondary institution west of Winnipeg. In addition to numerous regular programs, it

offers courses and programs in French for adult learners and a tutoring service for adults and children. The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology offers a paid work experience program in co-operation with Faculté Saint-Jean. Albertans also have access to several other private- and public-sector education and training programs and initiatives.

Many partners are involved in ensuring Albertans have access to the learning and training opportunities they seek. It is important that all partners work together to support people development as a priority so that all Albertans can contribute to and share in Alberta's prosperity.

The Council on Governmental Ethics Laws Annual Conference

Seattle, Washington, September 13-16

Alberta Delegation

MLAs Paul Langevin and Howard
Sapers
Diane Shumyla, Committee Assistant
Information and Privacy Commissioner
Bob Clark

Frank Work and Karen South from the
Information and Privacy
Commissioner's office

Summary of Delegates' Report

The conference did not seem to have one theme, but the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws, COGEL, is a professional organization for government agencies, organizations, and individuals with responsibilities or interests in government ethics, elections, campaign finance, lobby law, open public

meetings, and records regulation. A broad range of topics in those areas was discussed.

CPA Plenary Conference

Wellington, New Zealand, October 13-23

Conference Agenda

- 1 How can Commonwealth governments and parliaments act as a catalyst for good governance in the face of international economic pressures?
- 2 Maintaining accountability to parliament in an era of corporatization and privatization
- 3 How can the Commonwealth assist in the protection and development of national and regional cultures in the face of increasingly globalized communications and entertainment?
- 4 Empowerment of women in politics and decision-making: can sustained gains be made?
- 5 Be it resolved: first past the post is an

undemocratic electoral system which should be replaced by some form of proportional representation

- 6 The Commonwealth's role in representing the interests of its more vulnerable members, including overseas territories, and the importance of foreign aid in alleviating poverty

Alberta Delegation

Speaker Ken Kowalski
Clerk David McNeil

CPA Regional Seminar

Edmonton, Alberta, November 20-22

Conference Agenda

- 1 The Alberta economic outlook – soft landing or continued expansion: things that go bump in the night
- 2 The role of the private member in government
- 3 Making a difference: private members' business in Alberta

- 4 Proportional representation

Alberta Delegation

Speaker Ken Kowalski
Deputy Speaker Don Tannas
MLAs Mike Cardinal, Gary Dickson,
Carol Haley and Howard Sapers
Clerk David McNeil

Summary of Alberta Presentation

Private members' business: can the private member make a difference? by Gary Dickson and Don Tannas

Since Standing Order reforms in 1993 Alberta's private members have had much more impact on the business of the Assembly. Considerably more time has been designated for private members' public bills, and 15 have been passed. There have been free votes and considerable co-operation among members and across party lines. However, relaxing fairly rigid party discipline is still perceived to be a challenge at least in some cases.

Nonetheless, despite the reforms and the empowerment of the private member the chances of

opposition bills passing are still low; all of the 15 bills passed since the reforms were sponsored by private government members. The reason for this is that government members' bills tend to focus on narrow issues which don't challenge government policy, but opposition bills generally reflect caucus priorities and party policy and are usually more wide ranging.

Delegation from the Legislative Assembly of Mpumalanga, South Africa

Edmonton, November 23-26

The Mpumalanga delegation included the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Acting Secretary (Clerk), Deputy Director of Parliamentary Proceedings, the head of *Hansard*, and a committee clerk. Funded under the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Canada-South Africa program on governance, this visit was a result of the long-term twinning relationship begun in 1995 between Alberta and Mpumalanga. This relationship was established to help the newly created province establish its parliamentary democratic institutions and the related administrative structures.

The delegation studied the operation of the

Legislative Assembly of Alberta and discussed with Alberta counterparts financial systems and controls, committee practices, human and financial resources management, the framework of rules and regulations under which the Assembly operates, and other related issues. The program included meetings with Speaker Kowalski, several MLAs, the table officers, LAO managers, and other staff.

Bursary Award Winners/CPA Essay Contest Winner

Bursaries are presented annually to nominees from TUXIS and the Alberta Girls' Parliament to increase interest in parliament among young Albertans. On May 21 Mr. Don Tannas, MLA and Deputy Speaker, presented bursaries to Brendan Brown from TUXIS and to Hanna Davis and Vithya Gnanakumar from the Alberta Girls' Parliament.

A provincewide essay contest is held annually for

grade 6 students to encourage greater awareness of the Commonwealth and the parliamentary system. This year the grand prize went to Dan Piche.

Visiting Delegates

The Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chairman of Committees and staff of the Legislative Assembly Office are involved in ongoing liaison with members and staff of other parliaments and with representatives from foreign countries. In 1998 they hosted or met with the following visitors.

January 21	His Excellency Stanislav Chýlek, Ambassador of Czech Republic		Oblast
January 22	Her Excellency A. Missouri Sherman-Peter, High Commissioner of the Bahamas	May 27	His Excellency Gregory Wood, Australia High Commissioner
January 28	Mr. Brian Austin, Former British Consul General	May 29	His Excellency Dr. Emil Constantinescu, President of Romania
February 3	His Excellency Gordon D. Giffin, Ambassador for USA	June 23	Mr. Peter Maier-Oswald, German Consul General
February 17	His Excellency Vladimir P. Kuramin, Chairman of the State Committee of Russian Federation on Development of the North (Goskomsever of Russia)	August 25	Her Highness Princess Zahra Aga Khan, Pakistan
March 4	University of Alberta fourth year political science students	August 26	IAVE Executive Board 15 th Biennial World Volunteer Conference
March 19	British Parliamentarian Delegation	September 23	Mr. Gu Huaming, Consul General of The People's Republic of China
March 25/26	The Hon. Sam Gargan, Speaker of the Northwest Territories and Delegation	September 24	Monarchist League of Canada
March 26	Speaker Vasily Fillipov, Sakha Republic, Russia	October 2	His Excellency Tang Jiaxuan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China
March 30	Alberta Girls' Parliament	November 9	His Excellency Sunai Bunyasiripant, Ambassador of Thailand
March 31	His Excellency José Tomas Letelier, Ambassador of the Republic of Chile	November 19	Hon. Franklin Pitura, Manitoba Minister of Government Services, Responsible for Emergency Management Organization
April 6	His Excellency Luc Carbonez, Ambassador of Belgium	November 23	His Excellency Sándor Papp, Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary
April 20	His Excellency José Manuel Duarte de Jesus, Ambassador of Portugal	November 25	Her Excellency June Yvonne Clarke, High Commissioner for Barbados
April 22	Mr. Walter Suter, Consul General of Switzerland	December 10	Austin O'Brien high school students
May 13	Forum for Young Albertans		
May 26	Mr. Vyacheslav F. Medvedev, Deputy Governor of Tyumen		