

# **Legislative Assembly Office**

**1998 Annual Report**



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ALBERTA

March 11, 1999

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta:

I am pleased to submit the 10<sup>th</sup> annual report of the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO), as required by Standing Order 109, for the calendar year ended December 31, 1998.

This report also includes the second annual report of the Alberta Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

As Speaker, it has been my pleasure to lead the staff of the Legislative Assembly Office since my election to this office on April 14, 1997. This talented team of men and women has enabled the LAO to maintain a high standard of service excellence which is well recognized in Commonwealth Parliamentary circles. They have a reputation for professionalism, co-operation, and all-round expertise that is well-deserved. Further, they have done Alberta proud every time they are called upon to host visiting parliamentarians. In 1998 they responded with distinction on four noteworthy occasions: the America Region Presidents Conference of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) in March, the visit of German parliamentarians in June, the visit of six officers and officials from the Legislative Assembly of Mpumalanga, South Africa, in November, and the Canadian Regional Seminar of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, also in November.

I thank Members of the Legislative Assembly who have presented papers or otherwise very ably represented our province at various interparliamentary conferences, and I thank all MLAs for supporting the Legislative Assembly Office and the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Kowalski'.

Ken Kowalski, MLA  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ALBERTA

March 11, 1999

To the Honourable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta:

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> annual report of the Legislative Assembly Office and the second annual report of the Alberta Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

These two reports outline in some detail the extent to which Alberta's Legislative Assembly has maintained leadership among the parliaments of Canada in terms of service excellence, innovation, and interparliamentary relations.

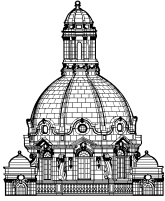
I am proud to be able to collaborate with the men and women who staff the Legislative Assembly Office. Time and again they have demonstrated their dedication, resourcefulness, and creativity both within their individual work units and in co-operation with staff from other areas within the LAO. They provide service to all Members of the Legislative Assembly at a very high level, often exceeding the high service expectations of the members themselves, and are always challenging themselves to improve.

This year Alberta was a strong contributor to interparliamentary conferences and other interparliamentary activities. All MLAs who participated in these activities enthusiastically confirmed that the professional development offered through these gatherings has proven beneficial to them individually, to the Assembly as a whole, and ultimately, to the people they represent. Staff who have assisted in interparliamentary relations or participated in such endeavours have similarly benefited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W.J. David McNeil".

W.J. David McNeil  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly



## ***Introduction***

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

**T**he origins of the Legislative Assembly Office of Alberta can be traced to the 14<sup>th</sup> century in England, when Parliament elected the first Speaker and appointed the first Clerk. Today the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is the head of the office, and the Clerk is the Speaker's deputy. The Legislative Assembly Act of 1983 made the office's current name official.

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

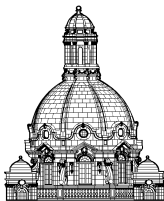
Although the office is sometimes called the Speaker's department, it is not a government department. The Speaker does not belong to the cabinet and cannot be asked questions during Oral Question Period or participate in the Assembly's debates. The Speaker does have administrative authority and responsibility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

The Speaker has two distinct but related roles. In the Assembly the Speaker maintains order and ensures that MLAs conduct their business according to the Standing Orders of the Assembly. Administratively, the Speaker is responsible for the Assembly's records and for providing services to MLAs and the public. The latter include financial administration, purchasing, human resources, office automation assistance, public education, and the library.

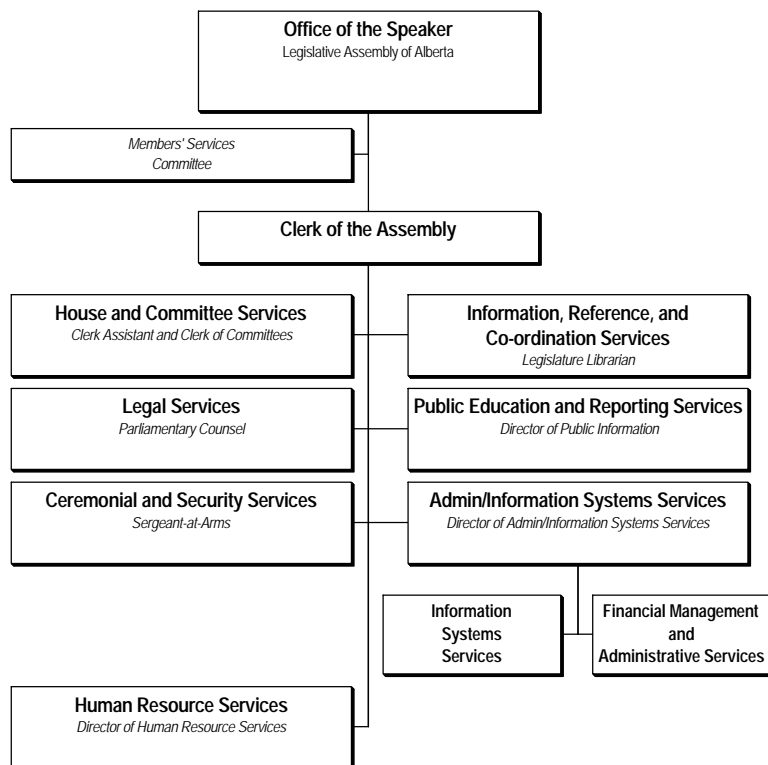
The Legislative Assembly Office as a whole has the same two procedural and administrative roles. This is a unique characteristic of the office and is evident throughout the office, particularly during session, when the normal duties, work hours, and office locations of many staff change significantly.

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

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



## Organization, Purpose and Function



### Purpose Statement

Within the traditions of parliamentary democracy as constitutionally established in Alberta, the Legislative Assembly 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 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 information and ideas among Legislatures.
7. Support the officers of the Legislature as required.

## ***Function Statements***

### **Clerk of the Assembly**

- Provides advice and support to the Speaker and members on procedural and administrative matters
- Manages the Legislative Assembly Office
- Acts as Secretary of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Alberta branch

### **House and Committee Services**

#### *Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees*

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

#### *Parliamentary Counsel*

- Provides legal services to the Speaker, members of the Assembly, and staff of the Legislative Assembly Office
- Drafts Assembly documents, including private members' bills and motions
- Provides legal services to the Chief Electoral Officer and Ethics Commissioner

#### *Sergeant-at-Arms*

- Provides security services to the Legislative Assembly
- Provides page and messenger services to the Assembly during its sittings

### **Information, Reference and Co-ordination Services**

#### *Legislature Librarian*

- Provides information and reference services to the Legislative Assembly
- Co-ordinates a number of co-operative programs among Alberta government libraries

### **Public Education and Reporting Services**

#### *Director of Public Information*

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

### **Human Resource Services**

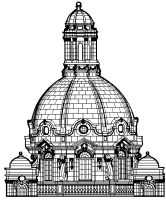
#### *Director of Human Resource Services*

- Provides human resource management services to the Legislative Assembly

### **Administrative/Information Systems Services**

#### *Director of Administrative/Information Systems Services*

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



## **The Year in Review**

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

### **Interbranch Collaboration Enhances Service Excellence**

**I**n the first full calendar year of Speaker Kowalski's tenure, the Legislative Assembly Office met or exceeded its goals both in terms of ongoing, regular services and special projects and events. Every branch contributed significantly to this achievement by dedicated effort within the branch and working together with staff of other branches. Staff throughout the Assembly energetically supported numerous initiatives of the Speaker's office and other interbranch projects, developing closer working relationships with staff in other branches as they did so. Throughout the year, all staff contributed to maintaining the LAO's reputation among MLAs and the public for prompt, friendly, professional service.

The most important change in the LAO in 1998 involved the relocation and renovation of virtually every work area in the department, which took place over the spring and summer. Thanks to the support of the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services, the LAO secured the southern half of the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Legislature Annex and additional space in the pedway, thereby enabling several branches with cramped quarters to gain much-needed additional office space. Public Works collaborated with LAO staff to determine the best configurations for offices and work areas and secured new ergonomic furniture for all support staff in order to provide a safer and more productive work environment. On December 2, Speaker Kowalski and the Hon. Stan Woloshyn, Minister of Public

### **1998-99 Goals of the Legislative Assembly Office**

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|--|--|
| 1 Assist the Speaker in fulfilling the duties of office.   | 10 Foster and recognize leadership and teamwork within the Legislative Assembly Office.                                |
| 2 Meet and exceed the service expectations of Members.   | 11 Ensure the continuing development of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Legislative Assembly Office workforce. |
| 3 Assist Members in carrying out their roles as legislators within the parliamentary system in Alberta   | 12 Promote the involvement of employees in the ongoing development of the Legislative Assembly Office.                 |
| 4 Respond to increased demands for technology related services from Members, staff, and the public.  |  |
| 5 Increase public awareness of the Legislative Assembly within Alberta's democratic parliamentary system through information and outreach programs.                          |  |
| 6 Continue to maintain the separation of powers among the Legislative Assembly, the Executive and the Judiciary.   |  |
| 7 Ensure that the Legislative Assembly Office provides quality services in an increasingly competitive environment.  |  |
| 8 Provide leadership in fostering increasing interparliamentary co-operation through participation in national and international parliamentary forums and exchange programs. |  |
| 9 Promote the products, services, and achievements of the Legislative Assembly Office to members, staff, and the public.   |  |

Works, Supply and Services, officially opened the newly renovated space as part of the LAO open house celebration.

The most significant staff change during the year was the retirement of Lorne Buhr as Legislature Librarian in May and the hiring of his successor Sandra Perry. In all, human resources co-ordinated 19 competitions for various positions involving most branches of the LAO.

The Assembly sat for 63 days in 1998, a substantial increase over the 41 days of 1997 but very near the average for the 1990s. This included 49 days (36 evenings) in the spring and 14 days (11 evenings) in the fall. During that time as well as throughout the year table officers and other staff provided professional support to the Speaker and the other members of the Assembly. Parliamentary Counsel drafted many private members' public bills; more were introduced in the 1998 spring sitting than in any year since the parliamentary reforms of 1993. *Hansard* continued to produce an accurate, reliable, and timely record for the Assembly and its committees. The Library continued to supply members with the broad range of authoritative information necessary for debate and decision-making. Committee staff ably assisted regular standing committees as well as the new special committee on Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Review Committee and the committee to select a new Chief Electoral Officer.

An historic event occurred on opening day when the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion presented Speaker Kowalski with a new Black Rod. The special ceremony in the Rotunda marked the first time since 1919 that a Legislative Assembly in Canada has received a Black Rod. This project was spearheaded by the Sergeant-at-Arms but involved several other branches as well. Two managers collaborated to produce a feature article for the *Parliamentarian* magazine, which publicized the event and the Assembly's use of the Black Rod throughout the Commonwealth.

On Flag Day, February 12, the flags of all the provinces and territories were hung permanently on the south wall of the Chamber. Alberta thereby became the first jurisdiction in Canada to hang all Canadian flags in its legislative Chamber.

LAO staff continued to build on their excellent reputation for helping host parliamentary visitors. In June, 15 Germans visited Alberta as part of the Partnership of Parliaments program, in which the Assembly was involved for the first time. Most of these visitors were elected members of state Legislatures in Germany. In November, a delegation of six officers and staff from the Mpumalanga, South Africa, Legislature came to Edmonton to learn from Alberta's experience in all areas of the Assembly's

operation.

The key support areas of Human Resource Services, Financial Management and Administrative Services, and Information Systems Services continued to provide very high quality services to MLAs and other branches of the Assembly. Classification reviews, employment competitions, payroll and expense account processing, computer upgrades, and ongoing advice and support provided by these areas enabled everyone to do their work more efficiently.

March 31 marked the end of the second year of operation for the Legislative Assembly Management Information System (LAMIS), which has been successfully managed to handle the Assembly's financial information independently of Alberta Treasury. Accounting and administrative staff continued to process financial transactions promptly and accurately and to maintain and enhance the administrative infrastructure necessary for the Assembly to perform its work.

Major enhancements were made to the Assembly's Internet web site, the most noteworthy of which was the addition of legislative bills and amendments. This addition was tested on the internal network in the fall and readied for full implementation prior to the opening of the 1999 spring sittings. As well, work continued to ensure that all computer systems were year 2000 compliant.

The ergonomic committee, with representatives from all branches, continued its awareness and education program. Following the installation of ergonomic workstations throughout LAO offices in the summer, the committee held training sessions for staff, and information updates and brochures were distributed. This committee's awareness of the types of work being done in the various areas was of great benefit in tailoring the sessions and adjusting the equipment to suit individual needs.

Thanks to successful promotional activities and the creation of new educational programs and materials, visitor numbers increased substantially again in 1998. A major new initiative was opening the floor of the Chamber for Canada Day and having tour guides dress in ceremonial parliamentary robes. This open house event attracted over 6,000 visitors. Activities for visitors were expanded at Christmas as well with regular choir performances in the evenings as well as displays of gingerbread houses and sleighs in the pedway.

Toward the end of the year a pilot project was launched to set up museum school tours. This project, sponsored by the Alberta Museums Association, involved having four school groups establish a temporary classroom in the interpretive centre for a week while students, parents, and teachers met with staff and members all around the Legislature to learn



more about how the place operates, from plumbing and gardening to passing laws and talking with constituents. Thanks to the co-operation and support of Public Works and security staff as well as LAO staff and members, the program went well, and plans were put in place to seek corporate sponsorship so that this might become a regular program at the Legislature.

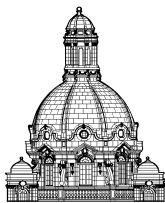
The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Speaker's Cup Golf Tournament took place September 3 at the Westlock Golf Club. For the first time LAO staff collaborated in a major way with the Speaker's office staff in co-ordinating this event. Financially, the tournament not only paid for itself but provided funds for two charities, the World Food Grains Bank and the Winnifred Stewart school.

In the fall, many LAO staff from all branches contributed time, energy, and funds to the annual United Way campaign. Activities included participation in the wagon race, bagel sales, loonie draws, and a mountain bike draw. The campaign exceeded its goal, bringing in a total of \$10,450.

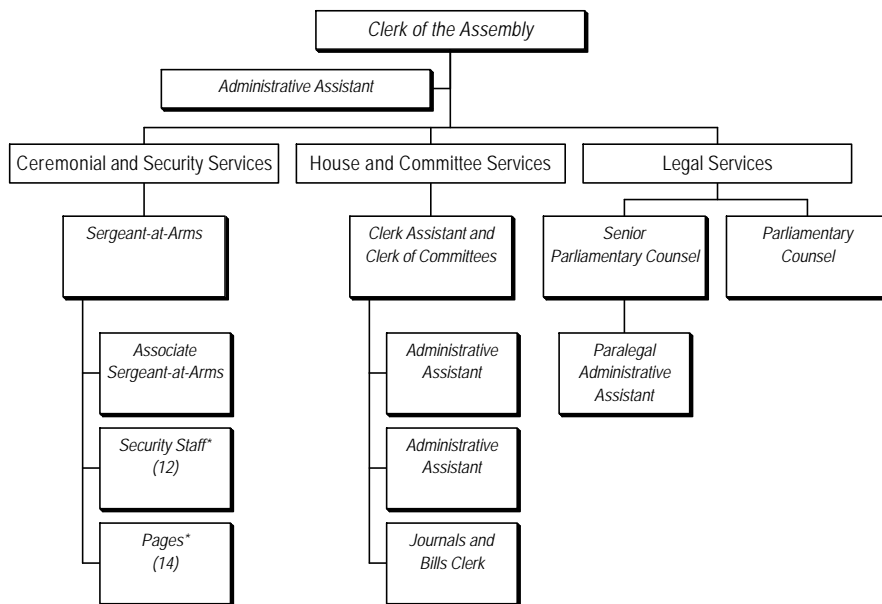
Planning was under way throughout the year for the first Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament, scheduled to take place in April 1999. The steering committee, comprised of the Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, Director of Public Information, and Clerk's Administrative Assistant worked with six teacher advisors to develop a program that would be attractive and beneficial for the 83 students and 12 teachers who would participate. This program will involve one student MLA representing each constituency and will give them experience not only of debating and House strategy but of representing constituents. It was made possible thanks to the generous financial support of the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion.

On December 3 Speaker Kowalski hosted the

second LAO staff appreciation dinner in the pedway. On that occasion, 15 staff received recognition for five, 10, 15, and 20 years of service, and all staff were thanked for their contributions to the many special projects that had occurred throughout the year and for their dedication and professionalism in providing excellent service to the Assembly every day. That evening's events were themselves co-ordinated by a committee of staff from various branches.



## House Services



\*indicates part-time or wage staff

## House and Committee Services

*Louise J. Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees*

In addition to providing procedural advice and support to Assembly members and staff both during and outside of session, House and Committee Services (HCS) adjusted procedures in accordance with amendments to the Assembly's Standing Orders, provided administrative assistance to five active standing committees and two select special committees, updated bill status reports on the Internet, helped with special ceremonies of the Assembly, hosted or assisted with visiting delegations and parliamentary association meetings, responded to questions concerning Assembly and committee procedures, and participated in professional conferences.

The Second Session of the 24<sup>th</sup> Legislature opened on Tuesday, January 27, with the Speech from the Throne read by His Honour the

Honourable Lieutenant Governor H.A. "Bud" Olson. That same day the Legislature was presented with a new Black Rod by the Royal Canadian Legion in a special ceremony. The Provincial Treasurer tabled the province's budget on February 12. The spring sitting of the Second Session was adjourned on April 29 but continued in the fall, opening November 16 and closing December 8.

Of the 32 private members' public bills introduced during the Second Session, four went on to receive Royal Assent. Since the 1993 changes to the Standing Orders a total of 16 private members' public bills have now received Royal Assent. With few exceptions, House activity increased over the previous year, as shown on the attached comparative statistics chart.

On May 11, shortly after the spring sitting ended, Mr. Grant Mitchell, former Leader of the Official

Opposition and MLA for Edmonton-McClung, resigned his seat after serving as an MLA since 1986. Mrs. Nancy MacBeth was elected as the new Liberal Party leader on April 18 and, after winning the June 17 by-election in Edmonton-McClung, was officially sworn in on July 16 by Speaker Kowalski.

Shortly after Mrs. MacBeth's swearing-in, Mr. Gene Zwozdesky, Liberal MLA for Edmonton-Mill Creek,

announced he would sit as an independent member when the House next met. He subsequently joined the Progressive Conservative Party. Party representation in the House at year's end stood at 64 Progressive Conservatives, 17 Liberals, and 2 New Democrats.

The branch administered both temporary and permanent amendments to the Assembly's Standing Orders, which were agreed to in early March. Highlights

<b>Comparative Statistics</b>		1998 Second Session 24th Legislature	1997 First Session 24th Legislature	1997 Fifth Session 23rd Legislature
<b>Sitting Days</b> (hours)	Spring	49 (177)	36 (124)	2 (4)
	Fall	14 (51)	3 (13)	0
<b>Evening Sitzings</b> (hours)	Spring	36 (76)	25 (56)	0
	Fall	11 (33)	2 (6)	0
<b>Government Bills</b>	Introduced	50	34	1
	Rec'd Royal Assent	44	29	0
<b>Private Bills</b>	Introduced	4	7	0
	Rec'd Royal Assent	4	7	0
<b>Private Members' Public Bills</b>	Introduced	32	19	20
	Rec'd Royal Assent	4	3	0
<b>Government Motions</b>	Debated	39	23	6
	Agreed to	38	22	5
	Withdrawn	(closure motion not moved) 1	0	0
<b>Private Members' Motions</b>	Placed on Order Paper	97	88	81
	Agreed to	10	4	0
	Defeated	6	3	0
	Withdrawn	1	2	0
<b>Written Questions</b>	Placed on Order Paper	57	29	(on notice) 5
	Accepted	43	16	0
	Rejected	11	0	0
	Withdrawn	0	0	0
<b>Motions for Returns</b>	Placed on Order Paper	50	55	(on notice) 2
	Accepted	23	18	0
	Rejected	21	7	0
	Withdrawn	0	0	0
<b>Committee of Supply (days)</b>	Main Estimates	20	20	0
	Lottery Fund	3	1	0
	Supplementary	5	2	0
<b>Designated Supply Subcommittees (hours)</b> (1998: Environmental Protection, Family and Social Services, Health, Justice and Attorney General, Municipal Affairs)		13.70	14.35	0
<b>Tablings and Filings</b>	Tablings Required by Statute	176	154	18
	Voluntary tablings	849	531	23
<b>Petitions</b> (excluding Private Bills)				
	Presented	120	114	8
	Read and received	80	58	0
<b>Recognitions</b>		139	not applicable	not applicable
<b>Members' Statements</b>		93	54	3
<b>Ministerial Statements</b>		22	12	0

of these amendments include:

the provision for a private member to amend his or her motion standing on the Order Paper not less than four sitting days before the motion is moved subject to the Speaker's approval; the provision for tablings required by statute to be made outside of the ordinary hours of sitting; the introduction of a "Recognitions" item during the daily Routine on Mondays and Wednesdays where up to seven members other than members of Executive Council may make one-minute statements of congratulations or recognition which are not debatable; and beginning in 1999, the requirement that a notice portion be included on petitions to the Assembly in order that they may be read and received.

Throughout the year, HCS provided administrative and procedural support to standing and special select committees of the Assembly. Active standing committees in 1998 included the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (15 meetings), the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund (4 committee meetings and 4 public meetings), Legislative Offices (5 meetings), Private Bills (6 meetings), and the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services (2 meetings).

Five designated supply subcommittees, which review estimates of a particular department, were again established by the Committee of Supply along with four other subcommittees of supply that may review the estimates of several departments.

For the second year, the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund continued under its new mandate. This included reviewing and approving the business plan, receiving and reviewing quarterly reports on the operation of the fund, approving the annual report, and reviewing the fund's yearly performance. During the fall the committee held public meetings in Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray, and Lethbridge on the fund's investment activities. The committee placed daily newspaper advertisements inviting individuals and groups to attend and sent additional invitations to various individuals, groups, and organizations.

In early March the Assembly created the Select Special Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) Act Review Committee. The eight-member all-party committee invited submissions from the public about FOIPP through extensive advertising in daily and weekly Alberta newspapers and a mail-out to groups and organizations. Following 14 meetings, which also included technical support from Alberta Labour staff, the ministry responsible for FOIPP, the committee's interim report with numerous recommendations reflecting the feedback of Albertans

was released in late December. Copies were sent to all individuals and groups who made submissions to the committee, and the report was posted on the Assembly web site. The committee intends to table its final report during the spring sitting.

Gerrald Gwynn Scott Sutton was sworn in as Alberta's sixth Ombudsman on March 25, 1998, following the recommendation of the Select Special Ombudsman Search Committee and the approval of that recommendation by the Legislative Assembly in February.

The Assembly also established a Select Special Chief Electoral Officer Search Committee in early March. The committee, chaired by the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul, interviewed a number of qualified candidates and submitted their recommendation to the Assembly. Mr. O. Brian Fjeldheim, the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer at Elections Alberta for several years, became Alberta's fourth Chief Electoral Officer on November 17 when the Assembly approved the committee's recommendation.

The bill status report, previously a WordPerfect summary loaded daily during session onto the Assembly's home page, was replaced in the fall with a Microsoft Access database loaded onto the internal Intranet site to allow users to search for and link to full text documents. This new searchable database for bills and amendments was scheduled to be available on the Assembly's external home page beginning with the spring 1999 session. Only those bills introduced and amendments passed during the current session will be available. Users will now be able to print and track the data for government bills, private members' public bills, private bills, and successful amendments as they are posted.

From June 7 to 11 Speaker Kowalski hosted a group of German state parliamentarians as part of the parliamentary exchange Partnership of Parliaments program. The delegation met with the Premier, the Minister of Environmental Protection, and the chair of the standing policy committee on economy and jobs, many members of the Assembly, as well as officials from the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, the University of Alberta hospital, and representatives from the energy, forestry, and medical research and technology sectors.

At the Clerks-at-the-Table Professional Development Seminar in August, the Clerk presented a paper entitled Private Members' Business: Can the Private Member Make a Difference? This paper also formed the backdrop for a discussion of the same topic at the CPA Regional Seminar in November.

The branch continued its practice of co-operating with other jurisdictions by responding to many surveys and questionnaires on Assembly and committee

procedures. The Clerk Assistant continued to provide administrative support to the Alberta section of the America region of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) and the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table's Education Committee.

As part of the ongoing responsibilities associated with their positions, branch staff attended the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees conference, the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws Conference, and the Canadian Ombudsman Conference.

HCS also assisted with and participated in events organized by the Assembly and the Canadian Parliamentary Association (CPA): the Black Rod presentation ceremony, the spring meeting of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, the 21<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Canadian Regional Seminar, and meetings with the Mpumalanga Legislature.

## Legal Services

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*Robert Reynolds, Senior Parliamentary Counsel  
Shannon Dean, Parliamentary Counsel*

Counsel continued to serve as table officers during session and to provide legal and procedural advice to the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chairman of Committees, the committees of the Assembly, members, the Legislative Assembly Office, and the office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

During the spring sitting 46 government bills and 32 private members' bills were introduced, the greatest number of private members' bills to be introduced in the spring sitting since the parliamentary reforms of 1993. Prior to reforms such bills had virtually no chance of becoming law and therefore the drafting process was less demanding. By the end of the spring sitting 35 government bills, three private members' public bills, and four private bills received Royal Assent. The three private members' public bills that received Royal Assent were Bill 206, Human Tissue Donation Procedures Statutes Amendment Act, 1998; Bill 212, Amusements Amendment Act, 1998; and Bill 213, School (Computer Instruction) Amendment Act, 1998. During the sitting the office was busy providing advice on a number of interesting procedural matters, including amendments to the Standing Orders.

Although it spanned only four weeks, a number of procedural issues arose during the fall sitting. On the first day, Speaker Kowalski made a statement regarding the role of the Chair in presiding over question period and the *sub judice* convention. The following day he ruled on a question of privilege stemming from comments made during question period on the last day of the spring sitting. In the last days of the session the motion for the previous question was moved. This was the first time this procedural tactic had been used in several years. Nine government bills and one private member's bill, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1998, were passed by the Assembly and received Royal Assent during the fall sitting.

Parliamentary Counsel provided support to the Private Bills Committee by working with petitioners for

private bills, co-ordinating the process for bringing these bills to the committee, and providing legal advice. In 1998 the committee studied four private bills, all of which were recommended to the Assembly.

Together with the Clerk both counsel participated in presenting a procedural orientation to the Public Affairs Bureau in June. In August both counsel presented a paper at the annual conference of the Association of Canadian Election Officials titled "Disqualification of Members, the Charter and Privilege: Implications of the Supreme Court of Canada's Decision in *Harvey versus New Brunswick* (Attorney General). In September both counsel attended the annual meeting of the Association of Parliamentary Counsel (APC) in Canada held in Whitehorse, where Rob Reynolds presented the paper *Parliamentary Privilege and the Courts: The Limits of Respect*. Rob was also elected APC secretary.

The office had additional assistance during the latter part of 1998 from a Quebec exchange student who was hired to work on research projects related to parliamentary law and procedure. She also helped the Clerk Assistant with various tasks related to the Assembly's participation in the spring meeting of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF).

Finally, Parliamentary Counsel continued to advise both the public and the legal profession on matters concerning parliamentary law and the procedures of the Legislative Assembly.

## Ceremonial and Security Services

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*Brian Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms*

Ceremonial and Security Services (CSS) continued to respond to security concerns, ensure the safety of members, visitors, and staff in the Chamber, precincts, and constituency offices, secure the Chamber and staff areas of the Assembly, make technical improvements to the security system, oversee the page program, and plan ceremonial events. In addition, the branch provided increased communications support to the Speaker's office.

Branch staff responded to numerous security issues and concerns raised by individual MLAs and the staff at several constituency offices. While some of these issues were extremely serious, most related to threatening letters, abusive telephone calls, or dangerous visitors to constituency offices. There was one break-in at a constituency office; another office had an attempted break-in, but the security alarm prevented any theft from occurring. The value of the stolen property was down substantially from previous years. Security briefing visits to constituency offices were down from 1997, which was an election year. Seven new security alarm systems were installed this year.

During the fall and spring sittings the branch assisted approximately 12,300 visitors to the galleries and provided security for 63 sitting days, 47 evening sittings, and 32 committee meetings for members and staff. CSS also provided security for five youth parliaments held in the Chamber. These were the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill Society of Edmonton, Alberta Debate and Speech Association, the Forum for Young Albertans, the Parlement Jeunesse de l'Alberta, and the University of Alberta Model Parliament. Branch staff also co-ordinated arrangements for these groups to use other areas of the Legislature Building.

The Sergeant-at-Arms helped interview 20 prospective pages. Branch staff also co-ordinated the page development program, including a speech competition sponsored by TransAlta. Tim Jolly was the

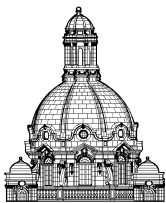
winner of this year's competition.

CSS also assisted with nine civil service orientation tours, met with six school groups, made presentations to two classes at Weinlos elementary school, and conducted numerous tours of the Chamber at the request of individual members. Along with the Director of Public Information, the Sergeant-at-Arms made a presentation to the Social Studies Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

The branch implemented the terms of reference for the Security Co-ordination Committee. This committee consists of staff from the Department of Justice protection services, Legislative Assembly security, and Public Works, Supply and Services: the three agencies that secure the Legislature Building, Grounds, pedway, and Annex.

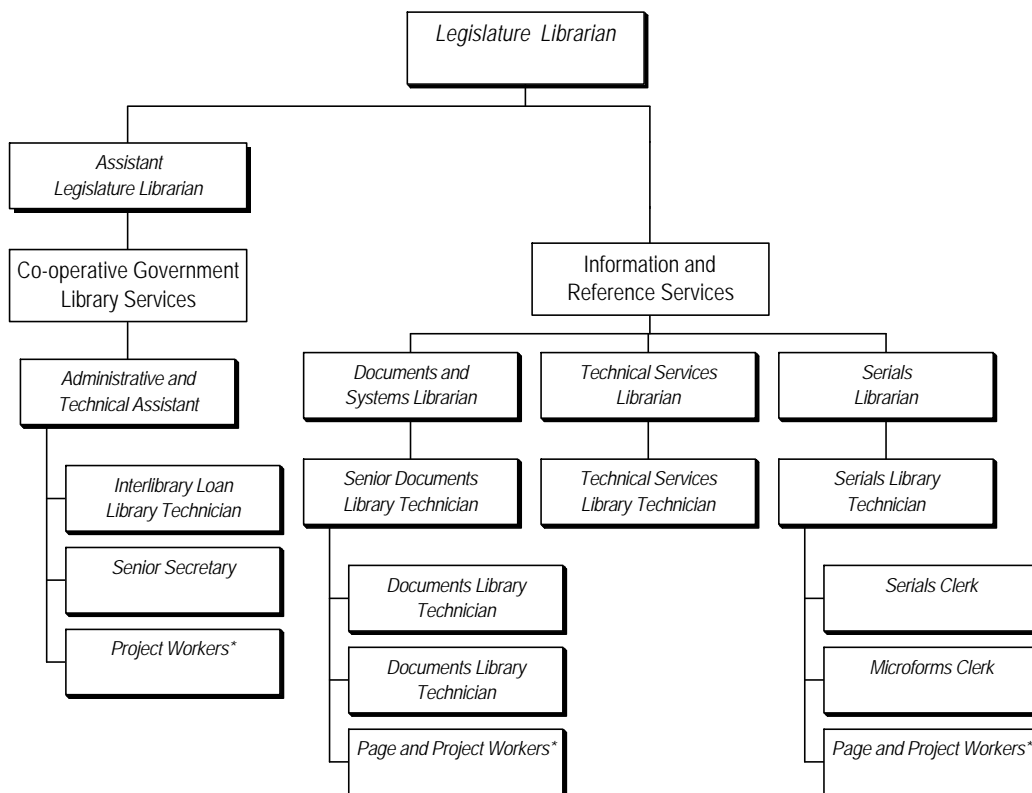
In August the Sergeant-at-Arms attended the 17th annual Canadian Association of Sergeants-at-Arms conference in Yellowknife, N.W.T., and presented a paper called Partnerships in Promoting Parliamentary Institutions. This year the Sergeant-at-Arms will also produce and edit the association's newsletter.

Finally, the branch spearheaded or supported several interbranch events and programs including Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Model Parliament, the Black Rod ceremony, the South Alberta Regimental Association brass plaque ceremony, a poppy presentation ceremony by the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion, the 1998 Remembrance Day service, the Legislative Assembly brand, the Partnership of Parliaments, and the CPA seminar.



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

Sandra E. Perry, *Legislature Librarian*



\*indicates part-time or wage staff

The most significant change for the Library in 1998 was the retirement of Legislature Librarian Lorne Buhr, who left in May following 21 years of service. Assistant Legislature Librarian Karen Powell served as acting head until the appointment of Sandra Perry as the new Librarian on September 1. Ms Perry came to the Legislature from Alberta Justice, where she had been manager of the Provincial Court Libraries for five years. The library's staff complement remained unchanged with 14 full-time permanent employees and three part-time wage positions.

Overall goals for the year included enhancing access to the library's print collection, improving

service to clients via electronic media, broadening the scope of current awareness services, and continuing to preserve the unique collection of Alberta community newspapers. Other initiatives included supplementing the library's book and serials collection to provide more comprehensive coverage of timely topics before the Legislature, surveying client satisfaction with selected library services, participating in co-operative ventures within the Legislative Assembly Office and the Alberta Government Libraries' Council, and partnering with other library and information colleagues whenever appropriate.

This year the records for the Library's periodical collection were added to the on-line catalogue, enabling patrons to determine the most recent issue



of a particular periodical received in the Library. With the assistance of summer students, the first ever automated inventory of the book collection was undertaken.

With a small increase in funding for collection development the Library was able to update some of its reference material and begin several new periodical subscriptions. Staff continued to alert Library patrons to the latest acquisitions and authoritative web sites with frequent issues of its current awareness publications: *New Books in the Library*, *Selected Periodical Articles in the Library*, and *WebWatch*. A new publication, *Notes from the Library*, describes specific services and products offered by the Library. The Library was pleased to extend distribution of these titles electronically to all constituency offices.

To provide increased access to electronic service for the end user, the Library began subscribing to the following new electronic services: NewsScan, Dow Jones Interactive, CARL Uncover, and Quicklaw. These services allow on-line access to a multitude of periodicals, newspapers, and legal/legislative materials. Providing clients with online access to the Library's catalogue sped up the process of identifying local resources, as evidenced in the 117 percent increase in visits to the catalogue on the Internet site.

In 1976 the Library commenced microfilming parts of its unique Alberta weekly newspaper collection, some of which goes back to 1905. To date, newspapers have been microfilmed for 92 communities. Priority is given to newspapers published prior to 1950. The papers being prepared for microfilming during the '98-99 fiscal year include those from the communities of Czar, Innisfree, Killam, Onoway, Millet, Rosalind, and Strome. Newspaper preservation developments in other jurisdictions are monitored, particularly those involved in assessing the costs and benefits of scanning and digitization. As well, the Library participated in a Canadian Institute for Historical MicroReproductions survey and submitted a microfilming report for inclusion in the publication *National Library News*.

The Library's Co-operative Government Library Services section (CGLS) continued to publish the *Alberta Government Libraries' Newsletter* and the *Directory of Alberta Government Libraries & Resource Centres* and distributed survey questionnaires to subscribers to obtain input regarding future directions. CGLS staff continued to maintain the *Union List of Serials in Alberta Government & College Libraries* and issued a substantially revised edition of the *Union List Coding Manual* for participants. They also continued to update historical files on Members of the Legislative Assembly, Alberta deputy ministers, and government departments since 1905. As well, a bibliography of books and journal articles written by and about Alberta MLAs was completed for the time period

1905-93. CGLS staff continued to be responsible for maintaining the government's periodical storage facility and providing document delivery service for government libraries from the University of Alberta.

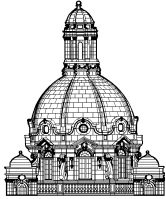
The summer of 1998 turned out to be a period of transition both in terms of personnel and facilities. In mid-July the staff of the CGLS section moved to the eighth floor of the Legislature Annex. Two students were employed in July and August to assist with special projects, including the transfer of the library's historical videotape collection from the Terrace building to the Annex. They were also available to help staff respond quickly and efficiently to repeated flooding in several of the Library's storage areas. Fortunately, damage to the Library's stored collection was minimal, but these incidents underscored the need to obtain more suitable storage space for housing weekly newspapers and government documents.

Library staff enjoyed opportunities to meet and exchange information with visiting delegations, to assist with hosting of special events, and participate in LAO interbranch initiatives. These included hosting the Mpumalanga, South Africa, delegation; the meeting of the American Region of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie; the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Canadian Regional Seminar; the LAO ergonomics committee; United Way; *Under the Dome*; and the staff awards and recognition ceremony committee.

In addition, the Legislature Librarian served as chair of the Alberta Government Libraries' Council and the assistant Legislature Librarian served as ex-officio member and chair of the council's performance measures committee. The latter also participated in the work of the Alberta directory of records project advisory group.

Several staff members attended the Alberta Association of Library Technicians Conference. The technical services librarian and the documents/systems librarian represented the Library at the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Canada conference in Yellowknife. The documents/systems librarian was also able to spend a few days at the B.C. Legislative Library studying their Dynix acquisitions module and Internet applications, all of which is expected to benefit the Library in 1999.

<i><b>Comparative Statistics</b></i>	1998	1997
<b>Information and Reference Services</b>		
Total number of volumes (by conventional count)	287,815	277,366
Circulation items borrowed for use outside the Library	6,385	6,824
Current Awareness Electronic Circulation	5,200	—
Number of reference requests requiring less than 15 minutes to complete	7,470	6,678
Number of reference requests requiring 15 minutes to one hour to complete	817	846
Number of reference requests requiring more than one hour to complete	48	51
Number of online searches	219	133
Number of times our on-line catalogue was accessed through the Internet	4,821	2,215
<b>Co-operative Government Library Services</b>		
Titles in Union List of Serials from Alberta government libraries	11,834	12,375
Number of interlibrary requests by Alberta government libraries	2,076	2,707
Number of requests by Alberta government libraries for professional advice	78	59



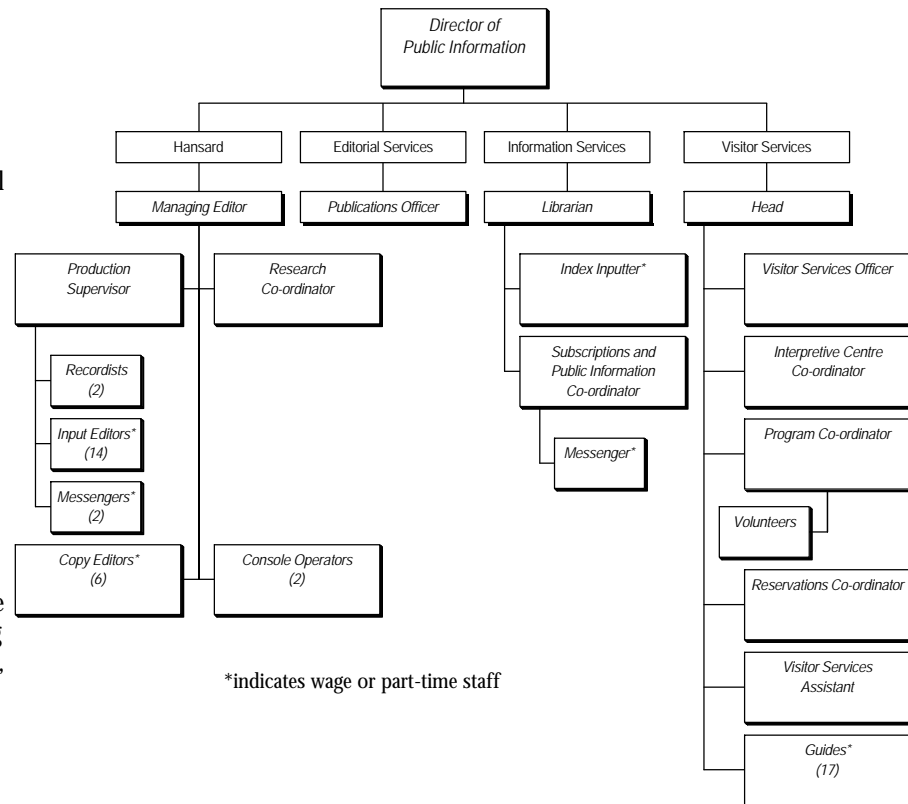
## Public Education and Reporting Services: Public Information Branch

Gary Garrison, Director

In 1998 Visitor Services expanded their educational and outreach activities, resulting in significant increases in school bookings and overall visitor numbers. *Hansard* staff maintained their longstanding reputation for timeliness and accuracy, despite editorial staff turnover. Editorial and information services staff continued to provide high-quality information and publications services. Other highlights of the year included adjusting to new WordPerfect software for the production of *Hansard*, hiring a new full-time staff member, a classification review of full-time Visitor Services positions, major initiatives in public education and program materials for school groups, and increased and improved special events and exhibits.

*Hansard* staff continued to produce a highly reliable, accurate, and timely record of Assembly and committee proceedings despite a shortage of senior sessional editors and a high turnover of sessional input editors. The sessional workload returned to more normal levels with 63 sitting days this year, up from 41 days in 1997. The demand for committee transcripts was up significantly as well partly due to the new Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review Committee.

Eight new input editors were hired in January, but by the end of the year it was clear that at least eight more would be needed early in 1999. Interviews and testing were done prior to the fall sittings in November, and nine new input editors were selected to start training in



\*indicates wage or part-time staff

the new year. In May the branch hired a full-time publications officer partly to provide additional editorial support for *Hansard*.

Following installation of WordPerfect 8, the full-time staff dedicated considerable effort and creativity to upgrade *Hansard* and develop new methods for producing transcripts that would make the most effective use of the new software's features. Thanks to the expertise of the full-time staff, problems encountered along the way were dealt with on the fly and were invisible to transcript users.

Information staff continued to create an accurate and complete *Hansard* index. With the support of ISS work proceeded on new indexing software so that it would be ready to use by opening day in 1999. Although they received approximately the same volume

of information requests as in the previous year, the number of requests for information unrelated to the Legislative Assembly was significantly higher than before. This was probably because more people are using the Internet to do research and because it's easier to make multiple requests for information by electronic mail than it is to make numerous telephone calls.

The demand for subscriptions and congratulatory scrolls continued to be steady, and progress was made towards implementing new subscription software to help manage the records and print labels.

The branch enhanced its publications in 1998 as the hiring of a new publications officer helped improve the quality of flyers, advertisements, newsletters, and other printed materials and provided additional writing and publications expertise to other parts of the LAO. PIB's contribution to the worldwide web included a new virtual tour of the Legislature Building and an educational game. These resulted from close collaboration between Visitor Services staff and the Department of Education and were featured in the fall during Education Week. Increased school bookings and promotional activities led to greater demand for copies of *The Citizen's Guide*. A third edition of the guide was produced in the fall incorporating updates to material originally printed in 1994.

The branch worked with LAO managers to produce the Assembly's annual report. Staff created the first annual report of the Alberta branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which was published together with the LAO report and tabled in the Assembly in February. For the 11<sup>th</sup> year, the branch also produced the staff newsletter, *Under the Dome*, which continues to be well regarded and well received by the staff.

Branch staff continued to play key roles in the *Hansard* Association of Canada and the Association of Legislative Visitor Services. Alberta continued to be among the leaders in both areas. The director was re-elected secretary-treasurer of the *Hansard* Association and at the end of the year traveled to Iqaluit to assist in the creation of a *Hansard* for the new Nunavut Territory. The head of Visitor Services was invited to sit on the Canadian Capital Cities Organization committee to represent the Legislature and to help enhance co-operation among capital cities, especially with respect to Canada Day activities.

When office space renovation plans were in the final stages, the branch's administrative functions were re-examined. This led to some restructuring. The branch's administrative assistant became the assistant to the head of Visitor Services, and when Visitor Services' space was expanded and renovated in the pedway in March, the branch's administrative duties were adjusted, with most

of them reassigned to staff in the information section. The sale of MLA promotional items also shifted from information to the gift shop.

Many new projects have been undertaken since the appointment of a new head of Visitor Services in October 1996. The Mock Legislature program, which kicked off in November 1997, proved to be very popular with teachers, students, and MLAs in 1998. The Preserve Our World (POW) environmental program for grade 4 has also attracted strong interest. Full-time and part-time staff proved their resourcefulness by reacting creatively to the wide variances in groups' preparedness and managed to improve the overall effectiveness and appeal of both programs as the year proceeded.

The total number of school group bookings in 1998 was up 26 percent from 1997 partly because of increased interest in the new programs and partly because of increased advertising and promotion. These efforts included a mail-out to Edmonton area grade 6 teachers in September, followed by a general mail-out to all elementary schools in the province. The centrepiece of the mail-out was the new full-colour educational poster created thanks to the collaboration of many Visitor Services staff and some initial assistance from Alberta Environmental Protection. The colour illustration on the front of the poster outlines Alberta's geographical shape and features a variety of activities such as oil drilling, agriculture, construction, skiing, fishing, children playing, et cetera. Ten MLAs are shown in various situations, and one of the educational activities on the back of the poster asks students to talk about the role of the MLA in each case and to role-play conversations with constituents. In all, the back of the poster includes nine activity and information panels, with duplicating masters for teachers.

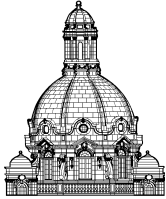
In the spring the branch produced a new activity book designed for younger grades, specifically kindergarten to grade 4. This, too, resulted from the collaboration of a number of Visitor Services staff. Both the activity book and the poster were well received by MLAs, teachers, students, and the public.

The director collaborated with the Clerk and the Sergeant-at-Arms to develop plans for the first Mr. Speaker's Alberta Youth Parliament. Sponsored by the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion, this new program, to be held in April 1999, will involve 83 grade 10 students, one from each constituency, and 12 grade 10 social studies teachers. Promotional posters, pamphlets, and applications were sent to every Alberta high school early in December.

The Public Information Branch organized or provided support for several interbranch events and ongoing programs including opening day ceremonies, the Black Rod presentation, the Klondike Days breakfast

on the grounds, Canada Day at the Legislature, the Speaker's Cup Golf Tournament, the CPA Regional Seminar, the Mpumalanga, South Africa delegation, the Partnership of Parliaments visit, the museum school tour program pilot project, the Christmas light-up, Celebrate the Season Christmas, office renovations and relocations, and the ergonomics committee.

<b>Comparative Statistics</b>	1998	1997
<b>Visitors to Legislature and Interpretive Centre</b>		
Visitors on tour	46,449	43,404
Special events	21,612	11,749
Casual	35,157	40,117
<b>Total</b>	<b>103,218</b>	<b>95,270</b>
<b>Tours and Programs</b>		
Regular tours	2,959	2,840
VIP tours	13	21
Educational programs	426	337
Civil service orientation	7	11
Gift shop sales	\$ 88,960	\$ 69,803
MLA promotional items	\$139,740	\$130,666
Gallery seats reserved	12,277	6,967
Volunteer hours	680.5	626
<b>Public Information and Subscriptions</b>		
Public information calls	6,963	8,589
Congratulatory scrolls	2,403	2,330
Paid subscriptions		
Daily <i>Hansard</i>	304	307
<i>Hansard</i> bound volumes	34	46
Bills, Votes	282	296
<i>Journals</i>	282	296
Complimentary issues		
Daily <i>Hansard</i>	351	347
<i>Hansard</i> bound volumes	90	100
Bills, Votes	511	506
Order Paper	327	316
<i>Hansard</i> index and on-line inquiries	81	96
Web site inquiries	109	
<b>Assembly Statistics</b>		
<i>Hansard</i> pages	2,428	1,454
Subcommittees of Supply		
Meetings reported	17	17
Meeting hours	37	39
Transcript pages	262	270
Committee meetings reported	52	41
Committee meeting hours	90	71
Committee transcript pages	686	546
Total <i>Hansard</i> and committee pages	3,376	2,270



## **Administrative/Information Systems Services: Information Systems Services**

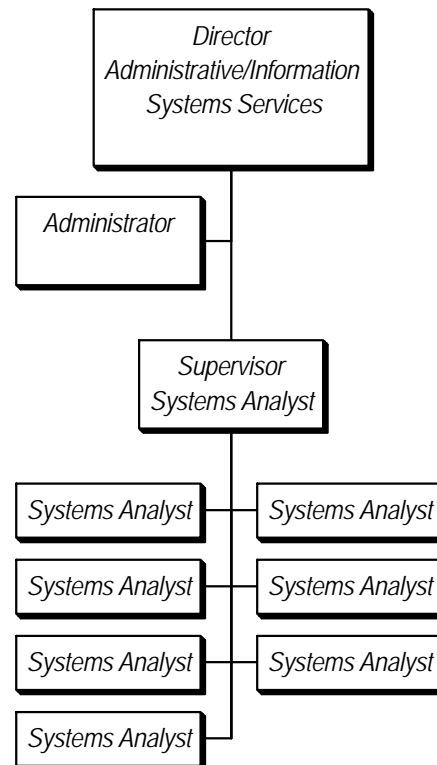
*Bill Gano, Director*

**T**he biggest project of 1998 was to upgrade computer systems so the Assembly would be Y2K compliant. Other highlights included web site enhancement, software upgrading, network connections for MLAs' desks in the Chamber, new cheques and direct deposit statements, and attending to freedom of information requests on behalf of the LAO. Of course, considerable effort was devoted to maintaining the Assembly's computer network and providing ongoing user support.

In order to ensure that all LAO computers and programs were Y2K compliant, staff reviewed every piece of software and hardware owned by the Assembly and upgraded systems in most cases to a Windows 95 platform, 32-bit applications, and new Pentium class CPUs. As of year's end 77 of 83 constituency offices and 190 of 200 networked workstations at the Legislature had been upgraded to meet Y2K requirements. The remaining systems are slated for upgrading at the start of the 1999-2000 fiscal year. ISS also made plans to change the phone numbers preprogrammed into computers when northern Alberta's new area code came into effect in January 1999.

Other work in 1998 included upgrading the electronic mail system for all Legislature offices and planning to upgrade e-mail for constituency offices during the first six months of 1999. As well, the branch continued to establish Internet and e-mail connections for MLAs using laptops in the Chamber. By the end of 1998 35 members had these connections.

A number of changes were made to the Assembly's internal and external web sites. Both sites now have a more standardized look from page to page, but the most significant project was the introduction of bills and amendments online. A searchable database tested internally and recently posted on the external web site gives anyone with Internet access the ability to quickly review current bills and approved amendments and download or print the text in WordPerfect format. The database is updated within 24 hours of a change. The Assembly also continued to maintain web pages for the Auditor General, Chief Electoral Officer, and the



Ombudsman.

Another web project begun in 1998 will make time sheets and expense claims available on the internal web site. Members and staff will have the option of completing and submitting their forms electronically.

The Legislative Assembly Information System continued to provide keyword search facilities for *Hansard*, Alberta Statutes, bill status reports, tablings, government motions, private members' motions, written questions, motions for returns, committees, commissions, the RITE directory, and Canadian phone books as well as searches for government program information (SPERG).

The branch continued to test, install, maintain, and upgrade in-house information management systems such as accounts payable, payroll, inventory, and point of sale; to purchase, install, move, and maintain computer terminals and peripherals; to

provide training and advice to users; to maintain network servers and local and remote workstations; to establish budgetary priorities; to meet the electronic database processing needs of all constituency offices; to facilitate regular electronic data processing management committee meetings; and to conduct word processing, spreadsheet, e-mail, database, and financial systems training sessions.

A system implemented to track calls to the ISS help line and manage inventory has logged more than 2,800 calls since it was installed in June 1997. ISS staff enter most calls in the system and try to keep response time to a minimum.

Plans were also made to hold a joint seminar with Human Resources Services and Financial Management and Administrative Services for all constituency office staff to help them become better acquainted with the range of services provided and the best way of accessing them.

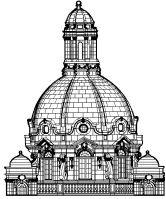
One very visible change that occurred this year was the introduction of new cheques and direct deposit statements. These cheques and statements, unique to the Assembly, were made possible through the creation of an independent Legislative Assembly bank account. As well, steps were taken toward producing separate Legislative Assembly financial statements.

Freedom of information and protection

of privacy (FOIPP) activity continued, one noteworthy issue being a request for access to former members' benefit records.

ISS provided technical support to interbranch activities including the Speaker's Cup and the CPA seminar.

<b><i>Comparative Statistics</i></b>	1998	1997
<b>Equipment in place</b>		
Constituency workstations	108	109
Constituency printers	101	101
LAN workstations	154	163
LAN laser printers	56	56
Dedicated library workstations	18	18
Servers	20	21
Scanners	3	3
Notebook computers	78	61
<b>Equipment replaced</b>		
Obsolete workstations	63	65
Obsolete laser printers	30	17
Obsolete laptop computers	2	8
<b>Training</b>		
Person-days of training	164	175



## ***Administrative/Information Systems Services: Financial Management and Administrative Services***

*Jacqueline Breault, Manager*

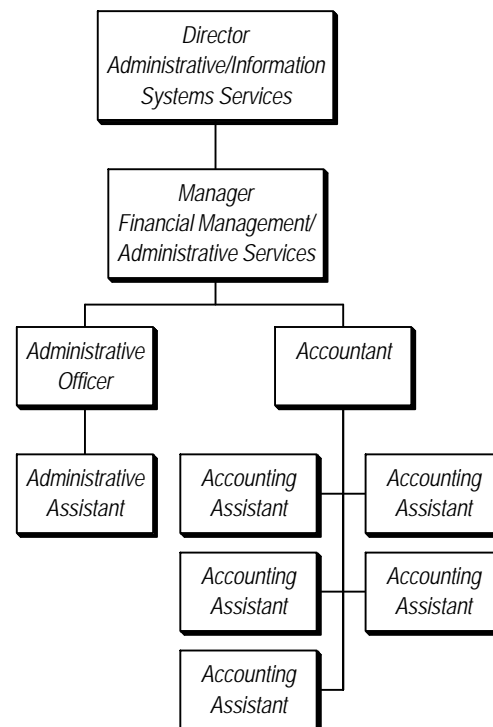
**T**he branch continued to provide fiscal support, advice, and administration including financial reconciliation and reporting, control of a new bank account for the Assembly, managing leases, and purchasing equipment and supplies.

Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS) staff are responsible for all accounts payable, revenues/accounts receivable, inventory, and general ledger functions for the Legislative Assembly Office. Until September FMAS was also responsible for the accounts payable and general ledger functions for the office of the Ethics Commissioner and Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The branch entered budget information for fiscal 1998-99 into the Legislative Assembly Management Information System (LAMIS) early in the year, provided Alberta Treasury with budget information for the production of LAO estimates and the consolidation with government budget figures, processed internal budget adjustments associated with a member's change in standing in the summer and decisions made by the Members' Services Committee in October, completed initial budget preparations for 1999-2000, and along with ISS staff reviewed and redesigned budget spreadsheets for 1999-2000.

Staff spent considerable time working on the reconciliation project and ensuring that fiscal year-end went smoothly. The branch completed a full reconciliation of the balance sheet financial information to March 31, 1998, completed the fiscal year-end (including year-end accruals) in June, and produced quarterly budget and expenditure forecasts for Alberta Treasury. Staff from Deloitte & Touche and ISS assisted with periodic updates to the LAMIS system. Due to the increased responsibility of having an independent financial system and LAO bank account, the branch focused more attention on completing ongoing as opposed to periodic financial and bank account statement reconciliations.

FMAS continued to track and report on LAO expenses. The accountant and branch manager drafted an initial MLA travel/gasoline analysis for the



Clerk following a suggestion in the 1997 Auditor General's report. Staff completed annual MLA expense and allowance reports for fiscal 1996-97 and 1997-98 and budget tracking and forecast reports for the Clerk. Implementation of direct deposit for MLA expense and allowance claims was completed early this year; the phase-in for employee expense claims and payments to major vendors will be done in 1999. Ministerial and government committee remuneration processed through the payroll system was charged back to departments, and a spreadsheet program was developed to speed up the process. On behalf of all branches of the LAO the branch also procured foreign exchange to cover authorized foreign travel or purchase.

The administrative staff of FMAS provided patient, friendly, and informative services to our clientele and assisted the Manager in ensuring that all administrative activities were accomplished in a



timely, comprehensive manner. The branch maintained leases on approximately 90 locations, made arrangements for moving office furniture, equipment, and furnishings, and addressed insurance issues and maintenance concerns.

Branch staff provided a range of telecommunications service, troubleshooting, and advice to members and LAO staff. FMAS completed six upgrades to the Centrex system and two upgrades to alternate systems, liaised with Public Works telecommunications staff, and kept up with industry technology and regulatory changes including the abolition of C400 mobile service in the upcoming year. Also in 1998 staff enhanced the process for submissions of MLA directory advertising with Telus Advertising Ltd., provided assistance in the review and development of a new RITE directory format in co-operation with a representative of the Public Affairs Bureau, and continued to administer the calling card and credit card programs. Staff helped the Director of Administrative/Information Systems Services determine the impact of Y2K on constituency and LAO operations. Staff increasingly used electronic commerce tools in administration duties.

The branch continued to upgrade photocopiers and faxes where necessary in LAO and constituency offices, provided more than 200 stationery and office supply items, administered the Legislature lounge supplies program during the spring and fall sittings of the Legislature, and continued to liaise with private-sector vendors.

Several staff changes occurred in March and September this year. A new accounting assistant to fill a vacancy. A part-time tour guide from PIB was hired as an accounting assistant to provide maternity leave in

mid-March. The administrative assistant position was vacated and then filled in mid-September. A part-time employee in the spring worked full-time in the summer under STEP (summer temporary employment program) and left in the fall.

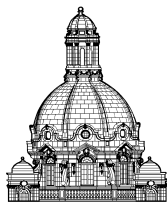
FMAS provided support for conferences, orientations, and other meetings. In addition, branch staff were involved in several LAO initiatives; for example, membership on the EDP Management Committee, representation on *Under the Dome's* editorial board, representation on the LAO's Ergonomic Committee, participation in the Speaker's Cup Golf Tournament, and participation in United Way, including co-chairing the committee.

Comparative Statistics	1998	1997
Invoices coded and data entered (ledger 19A)	21,416	19,776
Invoices coded and data entered (ledger 19E)*	195	232
Invoices coded and data entered (ledger 19F)*	514	298
Constituency offices, moved	4	28
Constituency offices, new	0	5
Constituency offices, closed	2	1
Telecommunications services installed or moved	11	48
Mail processed	13,107	14,144
Direct purchase orders issued	159	187
MLA purchase orders processed	5,125	6,000
Other requests processed	2,450	2,880
Special requests processed	221	260
Revenues:		
Hansard	\$ 30,914.39	\$ 1,382.23
Sessional	\$ 20,333.12	\$ 7,843.12
Private Bills	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 1,400.00
Gift Shop	\$ 88,960.00	\$ 126,225.60
Library	\$ 25,656.41	\$ 7,714.22
Other	\$ 4,371.00	\$ 5,061.37
TOTAL	<u>\$172,434.92</u>	<u>\$159,626.54</u>

\*Note: The Offices of the Ethics Commissioner and Information and Privacy Commissioner began processing their own accounts payable effective October 1, 1998.

***Summary of Budget Estimates by Account***

	<b>Description</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1997-98</b>
	<b>Human Resource Expenses</b>		
	Earnings - Management	\$ 788,976	\$ 675,292
	Earnings - Nonmanagement	4,797,015	4,520,659
	Employer Contributions	901,593	846,704
	Allowances & Supplementary Benefits	115,178	101,815
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$6,602,762</b>	<b>\$6,144,470</b>
	<b>Operational Expenses</b>		
	Travel	\$1,462,417	\$1,425,169
	Advertising	159,700	132,550
	Insurance	50,000	24,268
	Postage & Freight	174,237	193,256
	Office Equipment Rental/Purchase	380,014	373,468
	Telecommunications	467,697	434,701
	Equipment Repairs & Maintenance	56,191	56,011
	Other Labour & Services	519,435	584,930
	Data Processing Services	319,632	298,632
	Hosting	58,258	72,617
	Other Administration/Supplies	530,644	510,220
	Rentals	1,400	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$4,179,625</b>	<b>\$4,105,822</b>
	<b>Grants</b>		
	General	\$2,560	\$2,560
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$2,560</b>	<b>\$2,560</b>
	Payments to MLAs		
		\$6,437,652	\$7,590,972
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$6,437,652</b>	<b>\$7,590,972</b>
	<b>Members' Services Allowances</b>		
	Constituency Office Allowances	\$3,378,266	\$3,275,346
	Communication Allowances	1,080,675	973,914
	Promotion Allowances	304,679	293,536
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$4,763,620</b>	<b>\$4,542,796</b>
	<b>Revenue</b>		
	Fees & Permits	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200
	Other Revenue	132,360	130,438
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>(\$133,560)</b>	<b>(\$131,638)</b>
<b>Net Total</b>		<b>\$21,852,659</b>	<b>\$22,254,982</b>



## Human Resource Services

*Cheryl Scarlett, Director*

**H**ighlights for Human Resource Services (HRS) this year included enhancing the in-house payroll system, managing salary adjustments, conducting 145 interviews, completing a major classification review, providing ergonomics training, overseeing LAO office moves, and developing a new career section on the Assembly's Internet web site.

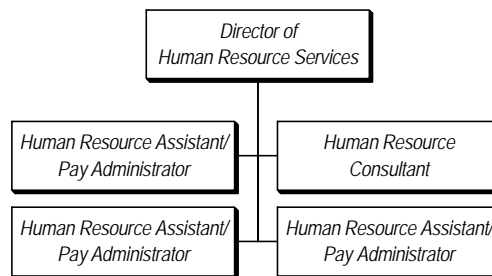
The branch was involved in ongoing maintenance and enhancement of our in-house payroll system. This included third-party reconciliations and reporting system enhancements. Planning and development of a human resource component to complement the present system is also well under way. Year-end processing related to issuance of T-4s and other issues increased due to the previous year's provincial election.

Each member was provided with a vacation accrual report in January relative to accrued vacation costs for present employees in constituency offices, following direction from the Members' Services Committee. As this was the first accrual report, appropriate tracking and reporting systems were developed and implemented. In addition, similar requests related to employees' entitlements were addressed with both caucus and LAO employees.

Managing salary adjustments was a major component of the branch's emphasis in 1998. Salaries were reinstated, including a return of the unpaid days for those employees who were previously subject to both pay reductions. In addition, achievement bonuses were processed as appropriate. Together, this resulted in two pay reviews involving detailed recalculations of earnings, tax, and pension.

The 5 percent reduction to the MLA indemnity and tax-free allowance and all other related MLA remunerations were reinstated effective October 1, 1998. As with any similar adjustment human resources responded to questions and queries from the general public. General fact sheets were produced to assist interested parties, and information systems services placed the same information on the Assembly's web site.

HRS continued to liaise with members and



government department representatives to initiate, pay, recover and monitor payments made to MLAs on behalf of departments for work on ministerial and government committees. To aid this process, an enhanced on-line tracking system for MLA committee payments was developed and implemented along with invoice and cost-recovery systems. Demands related to committee activity continue to increase.

Members and constituency office employees continue to be one of the primary focuses for the branch, which provides daily advice and assistance in all matters relating to human resource management, including but not limited to salary, wage, and fee-for-service contract administration; pay and benefits management; recruitment; occupational health and safety issues; job classification; employee relations and performance appraisals; training and employee development; and other issues related to attendance, maternity, illness, and workers' compensation leaves. This expertise is also extended to managers and LAO and caucus office employees.

A considerable amount of time and effort was directed to support Assembly issues related to extended illness or accident this year. Ten staff were absent for extended periods because of illness or accident. This resulted in 552 total days absent due to extended illness and 14.5 days related to Workers' Compensation claims. This required both management and staff to stretch resources to continue to meet client expectations with reduced staff levels.

The branch is proud to be among the leaders in Alberta and Canadian Legislatures in the development

of an ergonomic program as an enhancement to our workplace wellness. The Assembly's ergonomic committee, with representatives from all branches, developed and implemented a practical program that emphasizes education and awareness using an LAO-developed information brochure, orientation sessions, and individual workstation assessments. The program is expanding to include caucus and constituency staff to continue the Assembly's support of a safe and productive work environment.

Human Resource Services helped co-ordinate LAO office moves, which addressed significant ergonomic concerns and improved the working environment and the staff's ability to provide professional services to all clients. This move was celebrated with an open house in December.

The branch's move from the eighth floor to the ninth floor also allowed staff the opportunity to review internal processes, including file systems and management of employee master files. A major accomplishment was the inventory and transfer to the records centre of 1,600 inactive employee files. A brochure was developed as a result of the move with updated names and numbers and a summary of the Legislative Assembly Office mandate and goals as a practical mail-out and reference tool for our clients and associates.

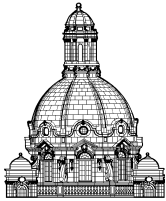
An extensive classification review was conducted for salaried positions in the Visitor Services section of the Public Information Branch in response to continued changes and developments in that branch. The Visitor Services review compared the six existing positions with similar functions in municipal, provincial, and Canadian Legislature environments.

The LAO welcomed five Quebec/Alberta exchange students for a mutually beneficial experience. The students enjoyed the camaraderie of their colleagues as well as the interaction with staff throughout the LAO. Human Resource Services also managed the summer temporary employment program (STEP) employing 75 employees throughout the constituency, caucus, and LAO offices. In addition the branch co-ordinated the recruitment for 19 competitions, which ranged from volunteers with Visitor Services to replacing the retiring Legislature Librarian. Of the 145 interviews conducted, 45 staff

were hired: 35 for sessional and wage assignments including *Hansard*, pages, and guides; six for salary vacancies; and four for illness or maternity leave cover-off. The branch developed a new career opportunity link on the LAO web site that has helped to attract outstanding applicants to positions in the Assembly.

Human Resource Services continued to provide support to the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Ethics Commissioner related to basic pay and benefits administration, particularly during the office's transition to their own payroll and accounting systems effective January 1, 1999.

Along with other branches of the Assembly, HRS shared information and expertise with colleagues from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the German delegation from the Partnership of Parliaments, and Mpumalanga Assembly members and staff.



## Special Events

### Presentation of the Black Rod

On opening day, Tuesday, January 27, 1998, the Assembly moved that it accept a new Black Rod presented by the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion. That same day Speaker Kowalski held a special ceremony in the Legislature Rotunda to commemorate the occasion and officially accept Alberta's new Black Rod. The presentation to the Assembly recognized the Legion's loyalty, service and sacrifice to Sovereign, country, and province. Premier Ralph Klein, Official Opposition Leader Grant Mitchell, and New Democrat opposition leader Pam Barrett offered their remarks. Guests included the Sri Lankan High Commissioner, the British Consul General, members of the Aboriginal and Native Veterans Association, 60 school children from Weinlos school, the RCMP, and bandsmen and soldiers from the Canadian Army Regular and Reserve.

The new, hand-crafted Black Rod presented by the Legion is fashioned from an ebony shaft donated by the government of Sri Lanka. In its base is a 1905 gold sovereign, a gift from the United Kingdom. Sterling silver features include a British lion at the top holding a golden Alberta wild rose with a band of Canadian maple leaves and wild roses below.

In parliamentary tradition the Black Rod is a symbol of authority carried by the Sergeant-at-Arms only when escorting the province's Lieutenant Governor. The Sergeant-at-Arms knocks on the door of the Chamber with it to seek the Assembly's permission for His Honour to enter. When not in use, it is displayed in a case on the third floor of the Legislature Building along with Alberta's Mace.

### Flag Day

On February 12 all provincial and territorial flags were displayed on a permanent basis in the Legislature Chamber. Alberta's Chamber thereby became the first in Canada to fly a complete set of Canada's flags.

### America Region Presidents Conference, Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

On March 9 the Assembly hosted this meeting of francophone parliamentarians in Edmonton. Alberta became an associate member of the AIPLF in 1998. For

additional details see page 35.

### Swearing-in of new Ombudsman

On Wednesday, March 25, 1998, Mr. G.G.S. (Scott) Sutton was sworn in as Alberta's sixth Ombudsman. Speaker Kowalski presided at the ceremony, which was held in the Carillon Room of the Legislature Building. A reception followed, attended by members and staff of the Legislative Assembly and Mr. Sutton's friends and family. Mr. Sutton officially began his duties on April 1.

### Page Speech Competition

Each year a speech competition for the page development program is held. The three winners of the May 20, 1998, competition sponsored by TransAlta were Tim Jolly (first place), Melanie Ransum (second place), and Simone Godbout (third place).

### Canada Day

On Canada Day for the first time visitors were welcome to walk on the floor of the Chamber. They were hosted by several guides, including some wearing replica ceremonial parliamentary robes. Working with the local Edmonton Canada Day committee, the Assembly received extensive publicity for this event. More than 6,000 came to the Legislature and the pedway.

### Annual Klondike Days Breakfast

More than 1,000 people came to the Legislature Grounds on July 25 for the Legislative Assembly's Klondike Days breakfast. Several MLAs and LAO staff assisted.

### Historic Edmonton Week

The Assembly organized special tours of the Legislature Building and a presentation during Historic Edmonton Week, July 26 to August 3, 1998. Edmonton author Ken Tingley made a presentation based on his book *The Path of Duty: The Wartime Letters of Mr. Bramley-Moore*. Bramley-Moore was a Member of the Legislature prior to military service during World War I. He was killed in action.

### Remembrance Day Ceremonies

On October 28 in the Legislature Rotunda the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal

Canadian Legion launched their poppy campaign by presenting poppies to His Honour The Honourable H. A. "Bud" Olson, Deputy Speaker Don Tannas, and representatives from government and opposition caucuses.

On November 9 Speaker Kowalski, the Hon. David Hancock, Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, opposition leader Nancy MacBeth, and New Democrat opposition leader Pam Barrett participated in a wreath laying ceremony on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. The Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, and a grade 6 student on behalf of students throughout the province laid wreaths in memory of those civil servants who gave their lives in World War I, World War II and the Korean War.

### **CPA Regional Seminar**

Alberta hosted the 21<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) regional seminar, held November 20 to 22. Elected representatives from the federal Parliament and the Legislatures of all but two provinces along with table officers took part in business sessions held in the Chamber. See page 42 for additional details.

### **Swearing-in of Chief Electoral Officer**

On Monday, November 30, 1998, Mr. Brian Fjeldheim was sworn-in as Alberta's fourth Chief Electoral Officer. Speaker Kowalski presided at the ceremony, which was held in the Carillon Room of the Legislature Building. A reception followed, attended by Members and staff of the Legislative Assembly and Mr. Fjeldheim's friends and family.

### **Christmas at the Legislature**

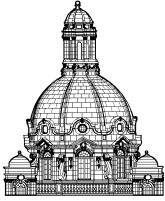
On December 3 Premier Ralph Klein and Speaker Kowalski delivered Christmas messages to the public in the Rotunda as part of the festivities preceding the annual Christmas light-up ceremony. The program included singing by the University of Alberta mixed chorus and featured the official unveiling of the Alberta 2000 logo and slogan, a program co-ordinated by the Department of Community Development. The unveiling involved original presentations by school children from the Edmonton area on the theme of the new millennium. After the Premier switched on the outdoor Christmas lights on the Legislature Grounds, hot chocolate and shortbread were served in the Legislature Rotunda.

The 1998 Christmas season featured more evening openings than in 1997 as well as choir performances at noon, in the evening, and on selected weekends. For most of these evenings, over 300 visitors came to the

Legislature to see the lights, hear the choirs, and view a pedway full of over 80 gingerbread houses, dozens of trees decorated by local school groups, and a display of sleighs on loan from Fort Edmonton and the Remington Carriage Centre. The gingerbread houses were donated by Safeway and Save-On Foods and constructed by schoolchildren from all parts of the Edmonton region. Staff volunteers judged their handiwork and awarded prizes to the best and most original houses. Another Christmas-related function was the third annual staff craft sale in the pedway, which was well received once again.

### **Staff Recognition Dinner**

On December 3, LAO staff gathered in the pedway to mark the past year's accomplishments at the annual staff recognition dinner hosted by Speaker Kowalski. Awards were presented to staff with five, 10, 15, and 20 years of service.



## ***Former Members of the Legislative Assembly***

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### **O**bituaries

#### **Mr. John Drobot**

*July 3, 1926 to January 17, 1998*

Mr. Drobot was first elected on November 2, 1982, and served until June, 14, 1993, representing the constituency of St. Paul for the Progressive Conservative Party. During his years of service, Mr. Drobot served on the following committees: Law and Regulations; Legislative Offices; Private Bills; Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing; Public Accounts; and Public Affairs. He was appointed to the Special Ombudsman Search Committee in 1989, served on the Standing Policy Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, and was Chairman of the Special Committee of the Government Caucus for the Decentralization of Government Operations.

#### **Dr. John Walker**

*October 30, 1927 to June 5, 1998*

Dr. Walker represented the constituency of Macleod for the Progressive Conservative Party. He was first elected on March 26, 1975, and served until March 14, 1979. During his years at the Legislature he served on the Standing Committees on Privileges and Elections and Law and Regulations, the caucus Standing Committee on Legislation, and the caucus special committees on Airport Development, Irrigation, and Legislative Strategy.

#### **Mr. Robert Simpson**

*April 5, 1910 to September 24, 1998*

Mr. Simpson represented the constituency of Calgary-North for the Social Credit Party. Mr. Simpson was first elected in the general election held on July 17, 1963, and served until 1971. During his years of service Mr. Simpson served on the following select standing committees: Municipal Law and Law Amendments, Public Accounts, Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, and Public Affairs.