

# THE MONARCHY

Educational Resource

January 2020

## The Person at the Top

Constitutionally, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the Queen of Canada and the head of state while the real power is held by the head of government (the Prime Minister at the federal level or the Premier at the provincial level) and cabinet. On the advice of the Prime Minister the Governor General appoints a Lieutenant Governor to represent the monarch in each province.

### Tips for a successful school visit

- Review the Confirmation of Visit to ensure that all information is correct.
- Discuss expectations with students and volunteers. Teachers and parents are asked to turn off their cellphones, model good listening, supervise and remain with the students at all times.
- Ensure the bus driver is aware of the current drop off and pick up location (effective September 2018).

## What's Happening at the Legislature in January?

01 – Lieutenant Governor's Levee at Government House

01 – Legislature and Visitor Centre closed to public

02 – [New winter hours](#) for Legislature and Visitor Centre take effect

04 – Legislature closed to public

11 – Legislature closed to public

15 – 2020 Sessional calendar released



Alberta Legislature

## In This Issue

- A Constitutional Monarchy
- Role of the Lieutenant Governor
- Resource Links and Videos
- Activities
- Learning Outcomes



Queen Elizabeth II, with Premier Ralph Klein and Lieutenant Governor Norman Kwong, during her Royal Visit in 2005  
(courtesy of the Government of Alberta)

## Representing the Queen

In Canada the monarch's representatives are the Governor General at the federal level and the Lieutenant Governor at the provincial level.

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette was invested as Canada's 29th Governor General on October 2, 2017. Her motto, *Per Aspera Ad Astra* (Through Hardship to the Stars), refers to her belief in the abilities of people everywhere to achieve their potential and make discoveries for a better world though determination, co-operation and healthy living.<sup>1</sup>

## A Constitutional Monarchy

Canada is a constitutional monarchy. Although Canada's head of state is a monarch, currently Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, its supreme law is the Constitution.

The constitutional monarchy as a form of government came about when English monarchs, once supreme rulers of the realms, were gradually forced to share power with Parliament, which represented the loyal subjects. The history of the parliamentary system is thus intertwined with the history of the British monarchy. As the powers of the Parliament increased, the powers of monarchs diminished.

In the British parliamentary system today monarchs and their representatives have real power but rarely use it. Parliaments make laws and monarchs have to obey them and although all proposed new laws must have royal approval, that approval often appears to be a formality. However, if they have compelling reasons, Governors General and Lieutenant Governors in Canada can refuse to approve Bills.

Other examples of constitutional monarchies include Japan, Spain, the Netherlands and Denmark.

Of course, monarchs did not want to give up their power and often fought to keep it. In the 18th century, for example, the United States declared its independence and fought a war against the British Crown. As a result, the American head of state is not a monarch but an elected president, and the United States is a republic.



Governor General Julie Payette

*If the Bill passes all stages in the Assembly and the Committee of the Whole, the Lieutenant Governor approves it on behalf of the Queen. We call this stage royal assent. Only when a Bill receives royal assent does it become an Act of the Legislature and part of the law of the land.*

## Did You Know?

In 1959, the central fountain in the Legislature rotunda was installed to mark the occasion of Queen Elizabeth II's first official visit to Alberta.

The province of Alberta was named after a member of the monarchy, Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria.

In 1937 Alberta's Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable John C. Bowen refused royal assent to three Bills passed by the government. Two of the Bills fell within federal jurisdiction and the third would have placed restrictions on how the media reported the news.



Pages cover the Mace during Speech from the Throne

## The Role of the Lieutenant Governor

The Governor General in Council appoints each Lieutenant Governor for a period of five years, and the federal government pays his or her salary. The Lieutenant Governor does not belong to a political party and does not favour one party or its policies over others. While their role appears to be largely ceremonial, Lieutenant Governors have the power under extraordinary circumstances to dismiss the government and call an election; thus, Lieutenant Governors are an important part of our Constitution.

Some of the responsibilities of a Lieutenant Governor are:

- Issues the royal proclamation which calls the Legislative Assembly into session
- Reads the Speech from the Throne at the opening of each session
- Grants royal assent to Bills which have passed third reading in the Assembly
- Approves cabinet orders (orders in council)
- Prorogues, or discontinues, a session of the Legislature
- Dissolves the Legislature when an election is called
- Ensures that the province always has a Premier who has the confidence of the majority of the elected Members of the Assembly





**Alberta's 18th Lieutenant Governor**  
(courtesy of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor)

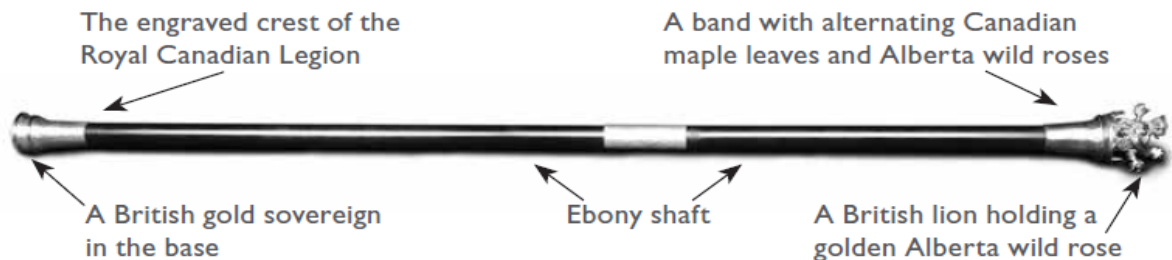
## Her Honour the Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD<sup>2</sup>

Lois Mitchell is an accomplished businesswoman and a proud, longstanding member of Alberta's dedicated corps of community volunteers. She began her duties as the 18th Lieutenant Governor of Alberta on June 12, 2015. Her Honour has chosen to make history education a focus during her tenure in office and is Founding Patron of the History and Heroes Foundation.

Prior to becoming Lieutenant Governor, Her Honour spent many years working as an entrepreneur, developing and growing successful marketing and corporate training firms and later serving as a founding partner of Rainmaker Global Business Development in Calgary.

Her résumé as a community volunteer includes service in a wide range of areas, including sport, education, the arts, national unity and support for Canada's men and women in uniform.

His Honour, Doug Mitchell, serves as National Co-Chair with Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. Their Honours' family includes four children and seven grandchildren.



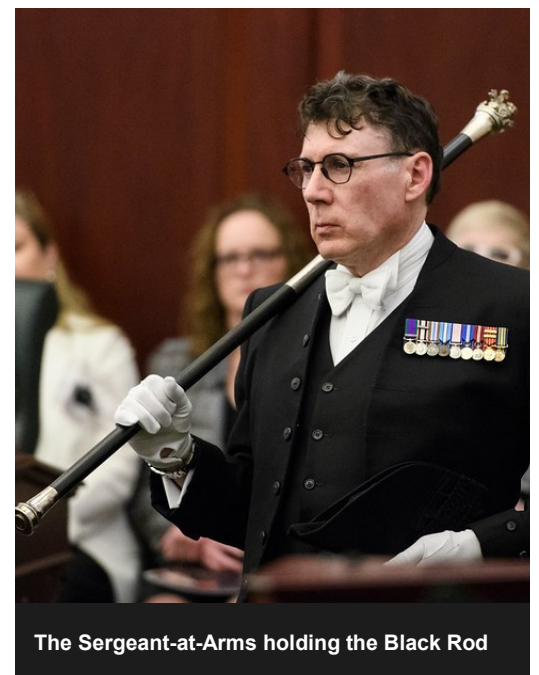
## The Black Rod

Every parliament has a Mace, but not all use a Black Rod. Alberta started using a Black Rod in 1991, but the tradition the Rod embodies is over 500 years old.

The Sergeant-at-Arms uses the Black Rod when escorting the Queen or the Lieutenant Governor and knocks on the Chamber door three times to request the Assembly's permission to enter the Chamber. Permission to enter is granted through the Speaker.

The ceremony emphasizes the Assembly's right to control its own proceedings and its own space, including even the right to exclude the Queen's representative.

The shaft of Alberta's Black Rod was made from a piece of ebony given by the Parliament of Sri Lanka, and the 1905 British gold sovereign in the base was a gift of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.



**The Sergeant-at-Arms holding the Black Rod**

## Resource Links

[Citizens Guide](#)

[Ask an Expert](#)

[Hansard: Introduction of Alberta's Black Rod](#)

[Biographies and Portraits: Alberta's Lieutenant Governors](#)

[Lieutenant Governor official website– Kids Zone](#)

[Lieutenant Governor: Origin of the Function](#)

[Governor General official website](#)

## Resource Videos

[Speaker's Corner](#)

[In Conversation with Her Honour Lois E. Mitchell](#)

[Alberta and the Monarchy](#)

[Golden Jubilee Medal award ceremony](#)

[Official Visit of the Governor General](#)

[Installation of the 18th Lieutenant Governor of Alberta](#)



Speech from the Throne

## Activities

These three suggested activities ask students to consider the monarchy's lasting impact on our democratic traditions and process. Refer to the resource links and videos for more activities and background information.

### Debate

Many countries have chosen to move away from having Kings and Queens but Canada keeps our proud tie to the British monarchy. Divide the class into two groups to develop arguments on the benefits and drawbacks of being a constitutional monarchy.

### Reflect

Lieutenant Governors try to help improve the lives of the citizens in our province, and each Lieutenant Governor chooses something special to focus on during their time in office. If you were the Lieutenant Governor, what would you want your legacy to be? How would you help to make Alberta a better place?

### Create

To commemorate their service, official portraits of our Lieutenant Governors are hung in the Alberta Legislature. Each Lieutenant Governor chooses the artist and designs their portrait to reflect who they are as a person. Use the resource links and videos to learn more about official portraits before drawing your own. Be sure to include details that represent you and your interests.

# Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Honour and value the traditions, concepts and symbols that are the expression of Canadian identity (Social Studies, Values and Attitudes)
- Analyze the structure and function of Alberta's provincial government by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: What is the role and status of the Lieutenant Governor within the provincial government? (Social Studies, 6.1.5)
- Analyze the structure and function of Alberta's provincial government by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: How are representatives chosen at the provincial level of government? (Social Studies, 6.1.5)
- Appreciate the complexity of identity in the Canadian context: acknowledge British influence and presence in Canada (Social Studies, 5.2.1)
- Listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences. (English Language Arts, General Outcome 1)

Alberta Education Program of Studies

## Contact Us

Please let us know if you enjoyed this resource and if there are any other topics you would like to see covered.

Also, if you try any of the suggested activities, we would love to see examples of your students' work!

### Visitor Services

3rd Floor  
9820-107 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 1E7

(780) 427-7362

[education@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:education@assembly.ab.ca)

Visit us online at  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)

Unless indicated otherwise, the included information has been taken directly from the Legislative Assembly Office's *The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* (9th edition, 2016) or from the Legislative Assembly Office's Agora Interpretive Centre.

1. "Governor General Julie Payette", *The Governor General of Canada*, accessed November 26, 2019, <https://www.gg.ca/en/governor-general/governor-general-julie-payette>

2. Biography supplied by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor

