

CPA Activities: The Canadian Scene

Second Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar

From May 25 to June 3, 1990 the Canadian Region hosted the 2nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar. Participants included parliamentarians from ten Commonwealth legislatures as well as federal, provincial and territorial legislators. The Chairman of the seminar was Speaker, **David Carter**, of Alberta, president of the Canadian Region.

The first session was chaired by **Girve Fretz**, MP, chairman of the Canadian Branch of CPA. The topic was "Canada as a Federation: the Federal Scene". Professor **J.R. Mallory** of McGill University, **Gordon**

Robertson, and **Michel Robert** discussed the Meech Lake Accord and federal-provincial relations in general.

The next two sessions dealt with procedural developments in Canada and the provinces. **Philip Laundy**, Clerk Assistant of the House of Commons delivered a paper on the Speakership, and other panellists for these sessions included **Roger Sands**, Clerk of the Overseas Office in the British Parliament, **Lawrence Cannon**, of the Quebec National Assembly, Senator **Gerald Ottenheimer**, and Ontario MLA **Robert Callahan**.

Three distinguished former parliamentarians led discussion of "A Parliamentarian's Dilemma: the Party, the Electorate and Personal Convictions". They included **Keith Penner**, **Paul McCrossan** and **Ian Deans**. A discussion of the Committee System was chaired by **John Bosley**, MP and included **Felix Holtmann**, MP, **Ted Chapman**, of South Australia and **David Lambie** of the United Kingdom.

Another UK parliamentarian, **Bill Walker**, chaired the session on "Parliament and the Executive". The panelists were two former Canadian parliamentarians **John Reid**



and **David Daubney** and in addition **Joseph Toney**, MP of Trinidad and Tobago. "Parliament and the Media" was chaired by **Geoff Scott**, MP and consisted of several members of the press gallery: **Marjorie Nichols** of the Ottawa Citizen, **Judy Morrison** of CBC radio, **Michel Gratton** of the Toronto Sun and **Vadim Fotinov** of Soviet TV-Radio.

Nelson Riis, MP chaired a session on "Educating the Public About Parliament" which consisted of representatives of the House and Senate information services, **Robert Desramaux** and **Gordon Lovelace** as well as **John Warren** of the Parliamentary Television Service.

The seminar concluded with an Oxford Union-style Debate which resolved that there was Room for a Second Chamber in Commonwealth Parliaments. On the winning side were Senator **Gerald Beaudoin** and **Sidney R. Stallard** of Bermuda. Their opponents were **David Lambie**, and **Myron Kowalsky**, MLA of Saskatchewan. The Chairman of the debate was **Edward Clark**, MLA, Speaker of the Prince Edward Island Legislative Assembly.

Regional Conference in New Brunswick

From Wednesday August 22 to Monday August 27, 1990, the 30th Canadian Regional Conference will be held in New Brunswick. Among the topics on the agenda are:

Canadian Sovereignty and the Impact of Free Trade; Combating Illiteracy in our Educational System; Problems Inherent in Achieving a Practicable Native Self-Government; The State of the Fishing Industry in Canada; Effective Environmental Management of Solid, Toxic and Nuclear Waste; Pollsters/Media Interpretation of Polls in Influencing Public Opinion; The Independent Role of the Private Member Within Traditional Party Discipline; The Future of Canada's Health Care System; Canadian Identity - A Multicultural Canada versus a Common Canadian Culture; Recognition and Respect: the Transitional Role of Women in Public Life; Teen Suicides: What are the Reasons for This Disturbing Dilemma?; and The Powers of the Senate: Theory and Practice.

The program will also include an opportunity to visit Kings Landing Historical Settlement and a traditional lobster dinner.

Regional Council

On June 2, 1990 the Canadian Regional Council held its annual meeting. Speaker **Frank Branch**, New Brunswick was chosen to succeed Speaker **David Carter** of Alberta as chairman of the Canadian Region for the coming year. Speaker Carter presented a report on the activities for 1989-90 as did Regional Representatives, Senator **William Doody** and Speaker **Hugh Edighof-**

fer of Ontario. The Secretary General of CPA reported on relations between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the CPA Secretariat and the need to impress upon Commonwealth First Ministers the important role played by the Association in promoting democratic institutions throughout the Commonwealth.

Canada agreed to host the 1994 International CPA Conference with the expenses to be shared between Parliament and the provincial and territorial legislatures.

The Deputy Speaker of the Northwest Territories, **Sam Gargan**, reported on the 14th Canadian Parliamentary Seminar held last November. He also suggested that the presiding officers conference scheduled in Yellowknife for 1991 be moved to 1994 when the new Parliament Buildings will be completed. Speaker **Arthur Donahoe** offered Nova Scotia as the site for 1991.

Speaker Donahoe also brought to the attention of the Council a recent decision of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia which ordered the Assembly to admit television cameras. He pointed out that the implications of the decision went far beyond television and involved the whole question of parliamentary privilege and whether it is subject to review by the courts.

The Council also approved a proposal by the Centre for Legislative Exchange for a seminar on education issues to be held in Washington in the fall of 1990.