



# CPA Activities: The Canadian Scene

## Thirty-sixth Regional Conference, Regina

Approximately sixty-five parliamentarians from across Canada, representing a cross section of political parties gathered in Regina from July 12-18 for the 36th Canadian Regional Conference of the Commonwealth parliamentary Association. The host of the Conference was Speaker **Glenn Hagel** of Saskatchewan. A number of other provincial and territorial Speakers were also in attendance including **Ken Kowalski** (Alberta), **Lloyd Snow** (Newfoundland), **Sam Gagan** (Northwest Territories), **Wayne Gaudet** (Nova Scotia) and **Robert Bruce** (Yukon).

Also in attendance was **Eric Pickles** from the British House of Commons, **Emily Saunders**, a Member of the Legislative Council of the Turks & Caicos Islands and **Andrew Imlach** representing the CPA Secretariat in London. The Conference took place in the Legislative Assembly Chamber where it was officially opened by Saskatchewan Premier **Roy Romanow**.

Saskatchewan is known for its innovative spirit both in public policy and parliamentary government. This spirit was very much present in the organization of the Conference as well. For the first time proceedings were televised live across the province on the provincial cable network. They were also rebroadcast nationally in both English and French on CPAC.

Another precedent was a professional development workshop led by **Lee Morrison** on "Political Personalities: Is there a quintessential temperament?" Delegates were asked to fill in a Myers-Briggs questionnaire designed to help them discover and use their strengths, improve communication and understand others.

The first topic for the business session, chaired by **Richie Hubbard** (Nova Scotia) was "Women Parliamentarians: Is there a Path to a Gender-balanced Parliament?" The lead Speaker was **Jane Groenewegen**, (NWT). She said the key to attracting more women into politics was to make political life more compatible with family life.

Another session, chaired by Speaker Snow, dealt with "Increasing Public Respect for the Parliamentary Institution: Is it time for more outreach?" The panellists were Speaker Hagel, and **LeRoy Johnson**, (Alberta). Speaker Hagel outlined the ambitious outreach programme undertaken by his province (See *Canadian Parliamentary Review* vol. 20 No. 2 Summer 1997 pp. 2-3). Other members discussed what was being done in their jurisdictions.

**Russell MacNeil**, (Nova Scotia) chaired a session on "Devolution of Programme Responsibilities: Community Empowerment or Fiscal Downloading?" The Speakers were **Russell Williams** (Quebec) and **Doug Livingston**, (Yukon). It engendered a lively discussion be-

tween advocates of a strong central government and those in favour of more powers for provincial governments.

A session on "The Changing Face of the Grain Industry" was chaired by **Dan D'Autremont**, (Saskatchewan). It featured presentations by **Albert Klapstein**, (Alberta) and Senator **Nick Taylor**. The discussion centred around arguments for and against the use of marketing boards and particularly the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

**Pat Duncan** (Yukon) chaired the session on the "Role of the Caucus in the Canadian parliamentary system". The panellists were **Ray White** (Nova Scotia) and **Violet Stanger**, (Saskatchewan). There was no single model for caucus but many ways were suggested to involve members in the legislative process.

**Yves Blais**, (Quebec) chaired a session on "Delegated Legislation/Regulations: The weak link of Parliamentary Accountability?" Different aspects of this topic were presented by **Elizabeth Weir** (New Brunswick) and **Sue Olsen** (Alberta). Articles based on their presentations appear in this issue of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*.

A session entitled "Negotiations on Self-government Arrangements with First Nations" was chaired by **Dave Boushy** (Ontario) and included presentations by **Roy Erasmus**, (Northwest Territories) and **Eber Hampton** (President of the

Saskatchewan Indian Federated College).

There was a First Nation's theme running throughout the Conference. For example, at the opening ceremony Elder **Donald Bigknife** of the Piapot Reserve offered a Prayer for the Conference. During a visit to Craven in the Qu'Appelle Valley delegates were treated to an evening of First Nations Cultural Performances directed by **Boye Ladd** of the Hochunk Nation. It including a spectacular Hoop Dance by **Preston Pashe** of the Dakota Tipi Reserve. Other Dancers represented the Cree, Ojibwa/Pawnee, and Hidatsa/Arikara Nations.

On the Sunday before the Conference there was an Ecumenical Aboriginal Service led by **Christine Hodgson**. It included prayers, readings and a "Water Ceremony" Representatives from each Canadian jurisdiction had been asked to bring small samples of their local water. They were called forward one by one to pour the water into a large clear bowl. Samples of the combined water were given to delegates. The remainder was returned to earth in a ceremony outside the legislative building. The pitchers used to pour the water were crafted by former Saskatchewan MLA **Anita Bergman** who requested that each pourer accept the pitcher as a souvenir of the ceremony.

The social programme included a reception and dinner hosted by **J.E.N. Wiebe**, the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan. It was followed by a command performance of the historical play *The Trial of Louis Riel* at the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts. Delegates were also treated to a trip to Moose Jaw for a rare opportunity to witness a practice by the Canadian Forces *Snowbirds*. This was followed by a visit to the Western Development Museum with its transportation collection. There was an opportunity to tour a



The part of Louis Riel (centre) was played by Del Fraser of the Riel Co. He is flanked by five Presiding Officers conscripted for jury duty during the play. They are: to Riel's left Ken Kowalski and Greg Deighan. To Riel's right: Lloyd Snow, Wayne Gaudet and Glenn Hagel.

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool elevator and visit a working farm in order to obtain some insight into what is still Saskatchewan's largest and most important industry.

The organizing committee, headed by Speaker Hagel put together a memorable programme that left all delegates with a favourable impression of Saskatchewan.

#### **Canadian Regional Council**

The Council met on July 12 to conduct the business of the Association. **Bob Speller**, MP was elected to serve on the international executive committee replacing Senator **William Petten** whose three-year term had expired. The other two regional representatives are Speaker **Ken Kowalski** of Alberta and Speaker **Lloyd Snow** of Newfoundland.

The 1998 Regional Conference will be held in Ontario and the following year in Quebec. The Regional Seminar will be in Alberta in 1998 and Newfoundland in 1999. The Presiding Officers Conference will be in British Columbia in Janu-

ary 1998 and in Ottawa the following year.

#### **Quebec Hosts Parliamentary Conference of the Americas**

An important event in the field of parliamentary relations took place from 18 to 22 of September 1997, when the National Assembly of Quebec hosted the Parliamentary Conference of the Americas, a meeting which brought together for the first time in the history of our continent parliamentarians of the two hundred unitary, federal and federate States of the Americas. (See article in Summer 1997 issue of *Canadian Parliamentary Review*) Participants discussed the issues and impacts of economic integration on the 775,000,000 inhabitants of our hemisphere.

The debates were held in four languages: French, English, Spanish and Portuguese. Speakers discussed various matters relating to the theme "Towards the Americas of the Year 2005: Democracy, Development and Prosperity".