



CPA Activities: The Canadian Region

10th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar

From May 21 to 28 the 10th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar will be held in Prince Edward Island. It is the first time the Commonwealth-wide event has been hosted by a provincial legislature. Suggested topics on the agenda include:

- Overview of Canada's constitutional structure, and the parliamentary and political scenes in Prince Edward Island
- Development of the Commonwealth and the role of the CPA – looking to the future
- The various roles of an MP – obligations to constituents and party; and relationships with interest groups
- Powers and privileges of the Legislature
- The Business of the House – striking the parliamentary agenda and balancing the requirements of government and opposition
- The role of the Speaker and parliamentary staff
- Enhancing Parliament's scrutiny of legislation and public expenditure through parliamentary committees and committee systems
- Private Members and their relationship with the Executive and Civil Service
- Remuneration, allowances and support services for Members
- Members and the media

- Conflict of Interest – how to ensure ethical standards in public life
- Parliamentary sovereignty versus judicial activism: conflict or complement?

New Date for CPA Regional Conference

The 37th Canadian Regional Conference will be held in Toronto from July 18-24, 1998. The Regional Council meeting will be held on Saturday, July 18.

1998 CPA Regional Seminar

The 1998 Regional Seminar will be held in Alberta from November 20-22, 1998.

New Usher of the Black Rod

The name Usher of the Black Rod comes from the ebony cane which Black Rod, as the individual is called by the Speaker of the Senate and the Senators, carries as a symbol of authority. The Rod is used to rap on the House of Commons' door when Members of Parliament are summoned to the Senate by the Black Rod for the Speech from the Throne or for the royal assent of bills. The Usher of the Black Rod is a floor officer of the Senate and is responsible for security in the Senate chamber. The Black Rod also leads the daily Speaker's Parade to and from the Senate Chamber.

The new Usher of the Black Rod is **Mary McLaren**. She was appointed as the Usher of the Black Rod for the Senate of Canada on November 10, 1997. With this appointment, Mary became the first woman in Canadian history to hold this prestigious position.

Mary McLaren was born in Drumbo, Ontario on July 29, 1950, a small rural community in Southern Ontario. She attended Paris High School in Paris, Ontario and pursued her post-secondary education at the University of Guelph, graduating with honours in 1972 with a Bachelor of Applied Science. In addition to obtaining a BASc, Ms. McLaren has pursued a variety of professional development courses including the Program for Public Executives at Queen's University (1991) and the federal government's Career Assignment Program (1988), a program for promising executive talent within the federal workforce.

Her early employment focused in the field of chemical and textile testing at the now disbanded Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. She then joined the Department of National Defence (DND) as a technical project officer. Upon entering the Career Assignment Program, Mary worked at a variety of progressively challenging positions with a variety of Federal Departments including Supply and Services Canada (now Public Works and Government Services Canada), and the Treasury Board before returning to DND in the area of procure-

ment and supply management. She spent the last five years at DND at the Executive level where her responsibilities included operational and strategic planning for a large and diverse division, and for the comptrollership of the material procurement and supply budget (approximately 4 million dollars). She was also responsible for the development and provision of corporate support services including information technology, personnel and financial services and for the establishment of policies and practices in administration, procurement and supply management.

In her final three years at National Defence, Ms. McLaren gained extensive experience in process re-engineering and change management as a core team member of the departmental restructuring team. She later served as team leader of the reengineering and restructuring of the civilian personnel services organization which involved approximately 800 employees and which resulted in the centralization of civilian personnel administrative services and the redefinition of the service provider role of civilian personnel administration. The last position she held at DND was Director of Strategic Human Resources Analysis.

In addition to the ceremonial duties which are steeped in hundreds of years of history, Ms. McLaren is a member of the senior management team of the Senate administration and is responsible for the Senate Page Program and for co-ordination



**Mary McLaren, Usher of the Black Rod with
Gildas Molgat, Speaker of the Senate**

of Protocol and Exchanges for the Senate. In her role as the Director of Services, Ms. McLaren is responsible for accommodation, informa-

tion systems, maintenance, postal, messenger and trades services.