

pages long. There are over 5800 footnotes. The word "comprehensive" does not begin to be an adequate adjective when describing the range of subjects covered and the level of information provided on each. And yet . . . I am not sure whether that adds up to a complaint or a compliment.

There is certainly an argument to be made for having it all in one place. Every new Member of the House of Commons can have this book provided to them and be told that, if they read this and nothing else, they will have gained a solid understanding of their House and its ways. They will have learned about the history of parliamentary institutions in Canada, about the conduct of elections of members, about the conflict of interest laws that apply to them, about their pay, expenses and pensions, about the buildings that they occupy, about the administration of the House of Commons, about the arrangements made to broadcast the proceedings of the House and much, much more.

When we do move onto subjects that, in my mind, fall within the rubric of "procedure and practice" there is superb coverage of all the standards beginning with privileges and immunities and continuing through chapters such as "The Daily Program", "Questions", "The Process of Debate", "Rules of Order and Decorum", "The Curtailment of Debate" and "Committees of the Whole House". I cite those particular ones because they are most likely to be referenced in the Yukon Legislative Assembly and they add up to about 340 pages. If the next edition is issued as a three-volume set, I wish to put in an unashamed self-interested plug for those chapters to comprise one of the volumes.

In the final analysis, it should be clear that these random musings do not constitute serious reservations. Mr. Marleau's enthusiasm for the

work of the project team that produced this book, describing it as a "milestone", is entirely justifiable and understandable. The research is thorough and well documented for those who need to seek the original sources. The organization and outline of the book is excellent. The text is clear, lucid and expressed in plain language.

I am reluctant to attempt to name names for fear that I will fail to give credit where it is due. To those who use this book, I recommend in the strongest terms that you read the acknowledgements provided by co-editor Camille Montpetit. It would be a disservice to those responsible for this book not to be recognized for the work they have done.

Congratulations to Mr. Marleau, Mr. Montpetit and all others on the team responsible for *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. I am confident that it will soon take its place at the head of Canadian parliamentary authorities and remain there for years to come. In the end, that acceptance by parliamentarians and Table officers will be the highest compliment that can be offered.

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Le processus législatif et réglementaire fédéral, Luc Gagné, Les Éditions Yvon Blais Inc., Cowansville, 1999, 424 pp.

In a field where few works are written originally in French, this book is bound to be appreciated by

many. It differs from standard works on the topic in that its primary purpose is not to "tell everything" about the legislative process or parliamentary practice but to give citizens the tools they need to take an active part in the parliamentary process. Mr. Gagné, a former research assistant with the Law and Government Division of the Parliamentary Research Branch, explains at the outset that he wanted to fill a major publishing "gap": the scarcity of works dealing with the rules of the House of Commons and the Senate. This is, then, a book that will be appreciated by those who want an overview of the nuts and bolts of Parliament and a chance to have a say on policy development.

Le processus législatif et réglementaire fédéral is not aimed at the specialist reader. That is undoubtedly why Mr. Gagné chose to present his subject "chronologically" rather than thematically. For each type of bill, the author invites us to follow a particular bill from beginning to end and he explains how citizens can provide input at every stage. This brings us to another innovative aspect of the book: Mr. Gagné deals not only with the stages a bill passes through in Parliament, he also gives an idea of what goes on at the "pre-parliamentary" and "post-parliamentary" stages. Thus we learn what happens (in a government department, in Cabinet, in a Member's office, and so on) before notice is given of a bill on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* and what happens to a bill once it has received Royal Assent.

The advantage of the chronological method is that it gives a good overview of the legislative process. Anyone who wants to express his point of view on a particular kind of bill could find out whom to approach and what to expect, depending on where the bill is in the

process. A citizen who, for example, wanted to learn how to participate at the committee stage would only have to consult that section of the book to find out how to maximize his chances of being invited to submit a brief. Aware that, while the average citizen may not want to read a big tome addressed to an expert, he may want to learn more about the federal system, Mr. Gagné uses reference notes to guide the reader to other works that are accepted as authorities in parliamentary procedure. He also uses reference notes to reproduce some sections of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons and the Senate and to define concepts that may be unfamiliar to the reader.

Mr. Gagné also chose to reproduce photocopies (perhaps too

many) of House publications in order to "show" the reader what they look like and give a clear idea of where the relevant information can be found.

Where notice is given of a bill, for example, not only is the entry on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* reproduced, but the first page and the relevant page of the publication are reproduced as well. The same is true for each step in the process, and every time a new entry appears in one of the House's publications, the entry is reproduced. Readers who are "visual" will appreciate this approach.

While the chronological method has the advantage of allowing an overview, it can lead to repetition. Where there are descriptions that resemble other descriptions with-

out being "completely" identical to them, the reader may be moved to wonder whether there is a subtle difference between the two stages or if the same idea is just being expressed in a different way. Having said this, the work will certainly interest those who are not experts in the subject but would like to know how and to what extent they may hope to participate in the legislative process.

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