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# CPA Activities: The Canadian Scene

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## Two Parliamentary Conferences on Parliament in Quebec

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A special conference bringing together parliamentarians and students of parliament from several countries was held in Quebec City from October 9-12, 2002. The conference was organized by the *Amicale des anciens parlementaires du Québec* and the present members of the Quebec National Assembly. There were approximately 175 participants.

The opening ceremony included a welcome from Speaker **Louise Harel**. **André Boulerice**, Minister for Relations with the Citizens and Immigration spoke on behalf of Premier **Bernard Landry**, **Monique Gagnon-Tremblay** spoke on behalf of the Leader of the official Opposition. **Pierre de Bellefeuille**, the Conference Chair and **Denis Hardy**, President of the *Amicale des anciens parlementaires du Québec* also welcomed delegates.

The Opening session featured a presentation by **Beatriz Elena Paredes Rangel**, President of the House of Deputies of Mexico.

The topic for the first plenary session was "What at the Roots of the Malaise Afflicting our Democracies?" The panel consisted of **Matthias Rioux**, MNA, **Bernard Cassen**, General Manager of the *Le Monde diplomatique*, and **Serge Cantin**, Professor of Philosophy at the Université du Québec at Three Rivers.

The second plenary session was devoted to the question of whether

parliament's decline is irreversible. The panel was made up of Professor **Louis Balthazar**, **Denis Marshall**, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Professor **Alan Rosenthal** of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University.

The third plenary session dealt with party discipline and featured **Jacques Brassard**, former MNA and cabinet minister, **Gilles Lesage** a freelance journalist in Quebec and **Nathalie Rochefort**, MNA.

The fourth session asked the question "Should Ministerial Responsibility be Limited". The speakers were **Jean Garon**, Mayor of Lévis and former MNA, **Victor Goldbloom**, former MNA and Senator **Jean-Claude Rivest**.

The fifth session asked "Can Parliament be Reinvented". It featured presentations by **Richard Guay**, former Speaker of the National Assembly, **Claude Ryan**, former MNA and cabinet minister; and **Caroline St-Hilaire**, MP.

The sixth session looked at "Resurrecting the Citizen in the Age of the Internet". The speakers were **Jacques Dufresne**, philosopher and writer from Quebec and **Olivier Giscard d'Estaing**, Chairman of the Action Committee for a World Parliament.

The closing session featured an address by **Philippe Séguin**, former President of the French National Assembly.

The Speaker of the Quebec National Assembly was also instru-

mental in organizing another conference "Global Governance 2002" which took place in Montreal on October 14 as part of a larger conference on Globalization organized the *Forum International de Montréal*.

Speakers at this conference included **Jacques Parizeau**, former Premier of Quebec, **Bob Rae**, former Premier of Ontario, **Philippe Herzog**, a Member of the European Parliament, **Adrien Houngbedji**, Speaker of the Benin National Assembly, **Carlos Baraibar** of the House of Representatives of Uruguay, **Elizabeth Ungar**, Professor of the University of Los Andes in Columbia and **Olivier Giscard d'Estaing** of the Action Committee for a World Parliament.

The rapporteur was **Roger Paquin**, MNA of Quebec who is also Chairman of the Quebec Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

## Second Canadian Parliamentary Seminar

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From November 3 to 9, 2002, the Canadian federal Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association hosted a seminar attended by 22 parliamentarians from Antigua and Barbuda, South Australia, India, Karnataka (India), the Isle of Man, Terengganu (Malaysia), Nigeria, St Christopher and Nevis, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, the United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales, Zambia as well as three Canadian provinces - Manitoba, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

The Chair of the seminar was **Sarmite Bulte**, Chair of the Canadian Branch, CPA. The first session was devoted to the Commonwealth and the Role of CPA. Speakers were **Denis Marshall**, Secretary-General of CPA and **Bob Speller**, MP, Chairman of the Executive Committee. An overview of the role and operation of the Canadian Parliament was provided by **Audrey O'Brien**, Deputy Clerk of the House of Commons.

An introduction to the Canadian Political Scene was offered by Senator **Lorna Milne**, **Loyola Hearn**, MP, **John Williams**, MP, and **Suzanne Tremblay**, MP. The topic of Political Recruiting and Women in the Political Process was addressed by Senator **David Smith**, **Hedy Fry**, MP and **Alexa McDonough**, MP.

The Role of Party and Caucus was the subject of another session which featured **Joe Fontana**, MP, Professor **C.E.S. Franks**, and **Werner Schmidt**, MP.

The speakers for the session on Engaging Citizens: Resources and Tools were: Dr. **Carolyn Bennett**, MP and Dr. **Keith Martin**, MP. A session on Representing Pluralistic Constituencies featured **Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral**, MP, **Libby Davies**, MP, and **John McKay**, MP.

A panel on Parliament and the Media consisted of **John Harvard**, MP and **Susan Murray** of CBC News. The topic of Parliament and Civil Society featured Senator

**Raynell Andreychuk** and **Sean Moore**, Public Policy Advisor with Gowling, Lafleur, Henderson.

The panel on Parliamentary Committees consisted of **Charles Caccia**, MP, **John Williams**, MP and **William Young** of the Parliamentary Research Branch of the Library of Parliament. The session on Parliament and Lobbyists featured **John Chenier** and **Marlene Jennings**, MP.

In addition to the business session delegates had an opportunity to attend question period in the House of Commons and Senate. The Speaker of the House, **Peter Milliken**, and the Speaker of the Senate, **Dan Hays**, hosted a reception and dinner for the delegates. The keynote address for the conference was delivered by **Hugh Segal**, President of the institute for Research on Public Policy. He spoke on "Parliamentarians as Intermediaries: A View from Outside the precincts of Parliament".

#### **New Chairman of Executive Committee of CPA from Canada**

**Bob Speller**, MP was elected Chairman of the Executive Committee, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association at the 48<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Windhoek, Namibia in September 2002.

The other three candidates for the position were **Bill Baxter**, MP (Victoria, Australia); **Hazel Hannan**



(Isle of Man) and Senator **Dato Ghazi Ramli** (Malaysia). Mr. Speller won on the second ballot and succeeds **Pius Msekwa** from Tanzania who was executive head of the Association since 1999. The position is for a three-year term.

#### **New Regional Representative**

In September 2002 the Speaker of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, **Myron Kowalsky**, was elected as one of Canada's three representatives on the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

First elected to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly in 1986 and re-elected in 1991, 1995 and 1999, he has served as Government Whip and on various committees before his election as Speaker in March 2001.