



CPA Activities: The Canadian Scene

50th CPA Conference

The 50th Conference of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was opened by **Jacques Chagnon**, President of the Québec National Assembly and Chairman of the Québec Branch of the CPA on July 17, 2012.

The Vice-Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, Speaker **Rebecca Kadaga** of Uganda,

brought greetings from that organization and Sir **Alan Haselhurst** spoke on behalf of the Executive Committee of CPA.

The first business session consisted of a presentation on "Interparliamentary Relations and the Promotion of Human Rights." The speaker was the First Vice-President of the National Assembly **Fatima Houda-Pepin**.

Joe Preston MP for Elgin-Middlesex-London spoke at the

second session on "Reinforcing Parliamentary Democracy in the Caribbean: A Project for the Canadian Region of CPA?"

The third session featured a presentation by **Nomandiya Mfeketo**, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa on "Bicameralism in South Africa." During the course of this session the delegates adopted a motion congratulating **Nelson Mandela** on his 94th birthday



on July 18. He was lauded for his contribution to democracy, human rights and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

“The Participation of Aboriginal Peoples in Political and Parliamentary Life” was examined in the fourth session with a presentation by **Pearl Calahasen** MLA for Slave Lake, Alberta and two officials from Elections Canada, **Alain Pelletier** and **Miriam Lapp**.

The fifth session dealt with “Women’s Participation in Politics: Challenges and Perspectives”. The presenters were **Ingrid Moses-Scatliffe**, Speaker of the House of Assembly of the British Virgin Islands, Mme Houda-Pepin and **Lindiwe Maseko**, Speaker of the Gauteng provincial legislature in South Africa.

The sixth session considered the question “Are Private Members’ Bills a Useful Tool in Today’s Legislature?” The presenter was **David Forbes** MLA of Saskatchewan.

Yves-François Blanchet MNA (Québec) and **Linda Reid** MLA (BC) spoke at the seventh session on “The Impact of Conventional and Social Media on Parliamentary Government and the Role of Parliamentarians”.

The final business session featured a presentation by Speaker **Hunter Tootoo** on “Consensus Government in Nunavut”.

A total of 125 delegates and observers attended the conference from every federal, provincial and territorial legislature as well as guests from Uganda, South Africa, British Virgin Islands, United Kingdom, Scotland, Western Australia, Gauteng, Andhra Pradesh, Jersey, Malaysia, Zambia, Victoria,

Trinidad and Tobago, Tasmania, Tanzania and Swaziland. The CPA was represented by **William F. Shija**, Secretary General and **Luseane Chesham**.

Delegates and guests were treated to some traditional Québec hospitality which included a visit to *La Citadelle de Québec*, a luncheon at the Manoir Montmorency, a tour of Place Royale and Quartier Petit Champlain as well as a St. Lawrence River cruise on *M/V Louis Jolliet*. They were given an opportunity to see The Image Mill, the largest multimedia projection in the world portraying the history of Québec City. It was created by **Robert Lepage** in 2008 for the city’s 400th anniversary celebrations.

New Speaker in Alberta

On May 23, 2012 **Gene Zwozdeksy** was elected Speaker of the Alberta Legislative Assembly replacing **Ken Kowalski** who did not seek re-election in the recent provincial election.



Hon. Gene Zwozdeksy

Mr. Zwozdeksy was born in Saskatchewan but came to Alberta at an early age. A longtime resident of Edmonton he obtained bachelor’s degrees in arts and education from the

University of Alberta.

He was first elected in the 1993 general election for the Liberal Party and re-elected in 1997. In July 1998, he left the Liberal caucus and sat as an Independent member before joining the Progressive Conservative caucus later that year. Re-elected in 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2012 he has served as Minister of Community Development, Minister of Education, Capital Planning, Minister of Aboriginal Relations, Associate Minister of Health and Wellness and Deputy and Government House Leader.

Before becoming an MLA, Mr. Zwozdesky worked as a teacher, administrator, professional musician and business owner. He was also the Executive Director of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation and of the Alberta Ukrainian Canadian Centennial Commission, as well as Music Director for the Shumka Dancers and Cheremosh Dancers.

He was elected Speaker in a secret ballot defeating one other candidate, **Laurie Blakeman** (Edmonton Centre).

Changes at the Table

In recent months there have been a number of changes among the Table Officers of provincial legislatures.

In Newfoundland and Labrador the new Clerk is **Sandra Barnes**. She is a former Deputy Clerk of Executive Council who most recently served as Deputy Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs. She has worked in the public service with Treasury Board Secretariat, and as Assistant Secretary to Cabinet for Program Renewal and for Economic Policy. Prior to joining the public service,

Ms. Barnes was employed by Newfoundland and Labrador Computer Services. She is a graduate of Memorial University with a degree in computer science.

In New Brunswick **Donald J. Forestell** was appointed Clerk of the Legislative Assembly effective September 1, 2012. Mr. Forestell has 19 years experience at the Table, serving as senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees. He replaces **Lori Catalli Sonier** who retired

on August 31 but who will continue with the Legislature in a consulting capacity. **Shayne Davies**, who has served at the Legislative Assembly since 2000, will assume the position of Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees.

In British Columbia **Ian Izard**, Law Clerk and Clerk Assistant, and **Robert Vaive**, Clerk Assistant, both announced their retirements from the Legislative Assembly in January 2012. Ian was appointed Law Clerk and

Clerk Assistant in 1977 and appointed Queen's Counsel in 2003. Robert, having previously worked at the House of Commons and the Saskatchewan Legislature, joined the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia in 1994 as a Clerk Assistant. Both Ian and Robert served in various executive positions with the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table. Ian was President of the Association in 1991-92 while Robert served as President in 1997-98.