

Alberta

Continuation of the 3rd Session of the 28th Legislature

The 3rd Session of the 28th Legislature resumed on March 10, 2015. After months of floor crossings and resignations the composition of the Assembly was at 70 Progressive Conservatives, five Wildrose members, five Liberals, four New Democrats, one Independent and two vacancies.

Bill 10

During the fall sitting the Assembly considered the highly controversial Bill 10, *An Act to Amend the Alberta Bill of Rights to Protect our Children*. Among other things, Bill 10 addressed the issue of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) in schools. The Bill passed Committee of the Whole, with amendments, on December 3, 2014, but was put on hold by Premier **Jim Prentice** to allow for further consultation.

In March 2015, when session resumed, **Laurie Blakeman** (Edmonton-Centre) moved to have Bill 10 recommitted to Committee of the Whole, out of which it was passed with new amendments. Later that same day it received Third Reading which was followed by Royal Assent on March 19, 2015. Under this legislation all Alberta public, Catholic, and charter schools will be required to accommodate GSA clubs if students request one, and schools will no longer be required to notify parents when sexual orientation is to be discussed in the classroom. It also adds sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds from discrimination under the Alberta *Bill of Rights*.

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

The Standing Committee on Legislative Offices met in December 2014 to review the budget estimates of Alberta's Legislative Officers. The Committee approved these budgets at two per cent less than the previous year with two exceptions: the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, which has a four-year budget cycle, and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA). In July 2014, the OCYA received additional funds following a legislated increase to its responsibilities. This pro-rated amount was added to the amount originally approved for the previous year before the two per cent reduction was applied.

On February 10, 2015, the Committee met with representatives of the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) and the OCYA to consider requests for an increase to their approved budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. The OAG requested an additional \$546,000 in order to ensure the Office would be able to fulfill its mandate and perform its work. The OCYA requested an additional \$275,000 to reflect the cost of fulfilling its expanded legislated mandate for a full 12 months. The Committee approved the additional funds for the OAG, but the request from the OCYA was denied.

The following day, Premier Prentice announced no additional funding would be provided to the OAG. When asked if he was unilaterally overruling a decision of a legislative committee the Premier confirmed he was and suggested that while the Committee could consider the budgets of Legislative Officers the final decision on the matter would reflect the economic issues facing the Government of Alberta.

Less than a week later, on February 17, 2015, the Committee met again to revisit the approval of the OAG request for an additional \$546,000 in 2015-2016. Before business could proceed, **David Eggen** (Edmonton-Calder) raised a purported question of privilege regarding interference by the Premier in the work of the Committee. The Committee Chair, **Matt Jeneroux** (Edmonton-South West), determined that the issue did touch upon privilege and Mr. Eggen proceeded with his motion that the question of privilege be reported to the Assembly. The motion was defeated and Committee did not report the matter to the Assembly. When session resumed weeks later, Mr. Eggen attempted to broach the issue again by raising a purported question of privilege in the Assembly. Speaker **Gene Zwozdesky** (Edmonton-Mill Creek) ruled the question out of order as it had already been addressed by the Committee.

The composition of the Committee was also a point of contention. Under the Standing Orders the membership of legislative committees in Alberta are determined by a resolution of the Assembly. When session adjourned on December 10, 2014, the 11-member Committee consisted of seven members of the governing Progressive Conservatives, two members from the Official Opposition, and one member each from the other two opposition parties. However, one week after session adjourned, the Committee was left without representation from the Official Opposition when nine members of the Wildrose, including the two members of the Legislative Offices Committee, crossed the floor to join the government. The Chair ruled that only the Assembly had the authority to set or change the membership of the Committee and, therefore, the business of the Committee could continue. The Committee proceeded with its agenda and the decision approving additional funding for the OAG was rescinded.

Leadership Contests

Following the departure of **Danielle Smith** and eight other caucus members in December 2014, **Heather Forsyth** (Calgary-Fish Creek) took over as interim leader of the Wildrose Party. At the time it was anticipated a new leader would take the helm in June 2015; however, the schedule for the leadership contest was accelerated in response to rumours of a spring election. On March 28, 2015, **Brian Jean** (former Member of Parliament for Fort McMurray-Athabasca) was named the new leader of the Wildrose Party.

The Alberta Liberal Party is also seeking a new leader following the January 26, 2015, resignation of **Raj Sherman** (Edmonton-Meadowlark). Dr. Sherman continued to serve as an MLA for the remainder of the Legislature but is not seeking re-election. On February 1, 2015, it was announced that **David Swann** (Calgary-Mountain View), who previously led the party from 2008 until 2011, would step in as interim leader. The party plans to have a new leader in place within a year.

Budget 2015

On March 26, 2015, the Government of Alberta presented a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year; however, it was not passed due to the dropping of the writ. Under this budget the province would be expected to run a deficit of approximately \$5 billion. To address this shortfall, health care funding would see a 0.8 per cent decrease, its first reduction in years. Several “sin taxes” have already increased, including

markups on cigarettes, alcohol, and gasoline. Fees for a variety of services, such as land titles, motor vehicle registrations, and other vital statistics documents, have also increased. In addition, Alberta would no longer have a 10 per cent “flat tax”. Beginning in 2016, two new tax brackets would be created for those earning over \$100,000 and \$250,000 annually. Taxes on these two groups would be increased to 11.5 per cent and 12 per cent respectively by 2018. A new health care levy would come into effect on July 1, 2015; however, this levy will apply only to those earning \$50,000 or more annually and will increase incrementally as income rises.

Spring Election

On April 7, 2015, months of speculation came to an end when Premier Prentice announced a provincial election for May 5, 2015. Although Alberta has “fixed election date” legislation which anticipates the next provincial election in the spring of 2016, the Premier argued that the early election call was necessary in order to ask Albertans for the mandate needed to implement significant changes in response to both the short-term and long-term economic challenges facing the province.

Jody Rempel
Committee Clerk



House of Commons

The Second Session of the Forty-First Parliament continued through the early months of 2015. The information below covers the period from February 1, 2014, to April 30, 2015.

Legislation

The Legislation Section of the Department of Justice recommends, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and as part of the Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment (MSLA) Program, periodic legislative initiatives to correct anomalies, inconsistencies, outdated terminology or errors that are contained in the statutes. A singular example of this was Bill C-47 (*An Act to correct certain anomalies, inconsistencies and errors and to deal with other matters of a non-controversial and uncomplicated nature in the Statutes of Canada and to repeal certain provisions that have expired, lapsed or otherwise ceased to have effect*) which, by unanimous consent, was passed at all stages on December 8, 2014. The Bill was passed by the Senate on February 25, 2015 and received Royal Assent the following day. It is worthy of note that this was the first time since 2001 that Parliament has adopted a Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act.

Financial Procedures

On April 21, 2015, the Minister of Finance, **Joe Oliver**, delivered the 2015 budget.

Points of Order, Questions of Privilege and Procedure

Points of Order

On February 19, 2015, **Royal Galipeau** (Ottawa—Orléans) rose on a point of order to question the validity of a vote by **Pat Martin** (Winnipeg Centre) who had left his seat during the vote and then returned to it in order to vote. Mr. Martin attributed his action to ill-fitting underwear. The Deputy Speaker (**Joe Comartin**) ruled that since Mr. Martin had been in his seat at the time the motion was read and at the time he voted, the Chair would allow his vote to stand. Later in the proceedings, **John Duncan** (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip), rising on a point of order, asked the Chair whether this represented a change in the procedure for voting. The Speaker ruled on March 10, 2015, that from the time the Speaker begins to put the question until the results of the vote are announced, Members are not to enter, leave or cross the House and Members must be in their assigned seats in the Chamber and have heard the motion read in order for their votes to be recorded. However, given Mr. Martin's particular circumstances, the Speaker evoked the use of Standing Order 1.1, which allows the Chair to alter

the application of any Standing or special Order or practice of the House to permit the full participation in the proceedings of the House of any Member with a disability. The Speaker therefore confirmed the Deputy Speaker's ruling.

Privilege

On February 4, 2015, **François Lapointe** (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup) rose on a question of privilege arising from the fact that earlier that day he had been prevented from entering Centre Block by an RCMP officer. The following day, Mr. Lapointe advised the Chair that he had received a fully satisfactory explanation and apology from the security services. Thus, the Acting Speaker (**Bruce Stanton**) declared the matter closed.

On February 17, 2015, the Speaker ruled on the question of privilege raised on January 26, 2015, by **Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe** (Pierrefonds—Dollard) in connection with the Government's response to a written question (Q-393). Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe alleged that the office of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration had interfered with the preparation of the answer to her question. She alleged that departmental officials had provided her with the same response as was provided to Q-359 in the name of the Member for Markham-Unionville, which was a non-response with a view to obfuscating its contents, and that Department staff had, before this intervention, been preparing a full and adequate response to the question. The Speaker concluded that this was not a *prima facie* breach of privilege and reminded the House that it is beyond the purview of the Speaker to judge the content of the Government's responses to written questions.

On January 28, 2015, **Jack Harris** (St. John's East) raised a question of privilege alleging that the Prime Minister had provided misleading information to the House regarding the Canadian military engagement in Iraq. The Government denied that any misrepresentation had been made, insisting that the Canadian forces' mandate to "advise and assist" included the right to defend themselves when attacked. On February 26, 2015, the Speaker ruled that disputes with respect to the accuracy of a response to an oral question are often found to be matters of debate. He concluded that Mr. Harris had failed to offer undeniable evidence of a deliberate intention of the part of the Prime Minister to mislead the House, and that there was not a *prima facie* case of privilege.

On April 2, 2015, Mr. Harris rose once again on a question of privilege regarding allegedly misleading statements made in the House by the Minister of National Defence on the use of precision-guided munitions against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant targets. Although the Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism **Jason Kenney** admitted that he had unintentionally conveyed to the House inaccurate information that he had received from military officials, the Minister explained that as soon as he had been made aware of the inaccuracy, he had taken all appropriate steps to correct the record, and that he had never knowingly misled the House or concealed information material to matters being debated. At the time of writing, the Speaker has not ruled on the matter.

Committees

Since February 19, 2015, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has undertaken to review the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons. On February 19, the Committee heard from Commissioner **Mary Dawson**. At the time of writing, the Committee has met eight times in pursuit of this study, and heard from the Acting Clerk and Law Clerk on April 23, 2015.

On February 27, 2015, **Peter Julian** (House Leader of the Official Opposition) rose on a point of order regarding the use of what he qualified as “the previous question” by the government majority on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security during its meeting the previous day with respect to its study of Bill C-51, *An Act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and the Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts*. He indicated that the previous question was inadmissible in committee. Later in the sitting, **Peter Van Loan** (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) argued that committees were masters of their own business, and that in absence of a report, the Speaker should not intervene in their proceedings. On March 23, 2015, the Speaker declined to intervene until such time as the Committee saw fit to report the matter to the House.

During Routine Proceedings on March 31, 2015, immediately after Mr. Julian had moved a motion of instruction to grant the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security the power to

enlarge the scope of Bill C-51 during its consideration, Mr. Van Loan rose on a point of order to argue that the motion was out of order as it required a Royal Recommendation. The Speaker ruled that the motion was in order because it was a permissive instruction; thus, were it adopted, it was possible for the Committee to accomplish the goals stated in the motion of instruction without infringing on the Royal Recommendation.

Other Matters

Members

Effective January 5, 2015, **Glenn Thibeault** (Sudbury) resigned as a Member of Parliament.

On February 3, 2015, **John Baird**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced his decision to resign from Cabinet—and not to run in the next general election. Mr. Baird subsequently resigned as a Member of Parliament effective March 16, 2015.

Effective March 31, 2015, **James Lunney** (Nanaimo—Alberni) left the Conservative Party caucus to sit as an Independent Member. Rising on a point of personal privilege on April 1, 2015, Mr. Lunney attempted to explain the reasons for his decision.

Statements, Resolutions, Special Debates

On February 3, 2015, the Speaker invited Members to take note of the use of the wooden mace which is customarily used when the House sits on February 3 to mark the anniversary of the fire that destroyed the original Centre Block on February 3, 1916.

On February 16, 2015, after two days of vigorous debate and the adoption of a closure motion, the House adopted a government motion (No. 14) calling on the Speaker, in coordination with his counterpart in the Senate to invite the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to lead operational security throughout the Parliamentary precinct while respecting the privileges, immunities and powers of the respective Houses, and ensuring the continued employment Parliamentary Security staff. At the time of writing, consultations continue with respect to this new arrangement.

On February 18, 2015, the Speaker drew the attention of Members to the new flagpole and stand at the right hand of the Speaker’s chair fashioned from

wood from the silver maple tree that had inspired the song “The Maple Leaf Forever”. He noted that the remains of the tree, which had fallen during a storm in 2013, were being turned into 150 art-craft projects for public display across Canada. The Speaker also called attention to the presence in the Hall of Honour of the maple leaf flag flown at the top of the Peace Tower 50 years ago on February 15, 1965.

On February 24, 2015, a take-note debate in a Committee of the Whole was held on the subject of the troubling rise in anti-Semitism around the world, as discussed at a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on January 22, 2015. The following day, on February 25, the House adopted a motion by unanimous consent on the same subject.

On March 24, 2015, **Stephen Harper** (Prime Minister) made a statement on the progress and proposed extension for 12 months of the Canadian military mission against the so-called “Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant”. This was followed by statements by **Thomas Mulcair** (Leader of the Opposition) and **Justin Trudeau** (Papineau) on the same subject. Following these statements, on March 30, 2015, the House adopted a government motion (No. 17) extending the Canadian military mission in Iraq and authorizing airstrikes on Syrian territory.

Miscellaneous

On March 30, 2015, **Kevin Vickers’** presence in the gallery of the House of Commons was noted by the Speaker. Mr. Vickers, former Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons, had been appointed Canada’s ambassador to Ireland in January.

On February 9, 2015, **Philippe Dufresne** assumed the position of Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Commons. Mr. Dufresne had previously been Senior General Counsel and Director General of the Canadian Human Rights Commission’s Protection Branch. Prior to that, he had been a legal officer responsible for international criminal tribunals with the United Nations, Human Rights and Humanitarian law division of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Gary Sokolyk
Table Research Branch



Manitoba

The Fourth Session of the 40th Legislature resumed on April 30, 2015 with the delivery of the first budget from new Finance Minister **Greg Dewar**.

NDP Leadership convention

During the party’s annual convention held on March 6-8, 2015, the NDP had a leadership election, with three candidates vying for the position: Premier **Greg Selinger**, **Steve Ashton**, former Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, and **Theresa Oswald**, former Minister of Jobs and the Economy and previously Minister of Health. Following two ballots, Mr. Selinger won the leadership and continues serving as Premier of Manitoba.

Standing Committees

Since our last submission, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts met twice, completing consideration of the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011. In addition, the Committee continued consideration of several chapters of the 2013 and 2014 Auditor General’s *Annual Reports* to the Legislature. Moreover, the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs met in April to consider the report of its Sub-Committee for the hiring process of the Ombudsman.

Former minister not seeking re-election

Jim Rondeau, MLA for Assiniboia, announced that he will not run in the next election. First elected to the House in 1999, he served in cabinet in a variety of portfolios between 2003 and 2013. Among the many Bills he introduced as member of cabinet, Mr. Rondeau is best known for the anti-smoking bill passed in 2004, a bill banning smoking in indoor public places and workplaces.

By-Election in The Pas

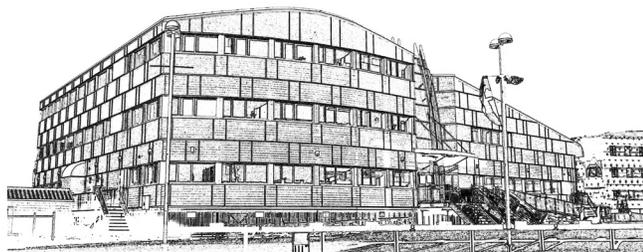
On April 21, 2015, a by-election was held in the rural constituency of The Pas, a seat that has been vacant since May 16, 2014, following the resignation of **Frank Whitehead**, a government backbencher. NDP candidate **Amanda Lathlin** became the newly elected member for the constituency. She will be officially introduced in the House in early May. Ms. Lathlin is the daughter of former NDP MLA and cabinet minister Oscar Lathlin, who passed away in 2008. She is the first indigenous woman elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Current Party Standings

The current party standings in the Manitoba Legislature are: NDP 37, Progressive Conservatives 19, Liberal 1.

Andrea Signorelli

Clerk Assistant/Clerk of Committees



Nunavut

House Proceedings

The winter 2015 sitting of the 2nd Session of the 4th Legislative Assembly convened on February 24, 2015. Finance Minister **Keith Peterson** delivered his seventh consecutive Budget Address on February 25, 2015.

The proceedings of the Committee of the Whole during the winter 2015 sitting of the House were dominated by the consideration of the Government of Nunavut's proposed 2015-2016 main estimates and departmental business plans.

On February 24, 2015, the Legislative Assembly adopted a motion to recommend the re-appointment of **Elaine Keenan Bengts** as Nunavut's Information and Privacy Commissioner under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Ms. Keenan Bengts also serves as the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

Eleven bills received Assent during the winter 2015 sitting:

Bill 1, *Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act*;

Bill 11, *An Act to Amend the Corrections Act*;

Bill 12, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act*;

Bill 13, *An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act*;

Bill 14, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital Act, No. 3, 2014-2015*;

Bill 15, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2014-2015*;

Bill 16, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016*;

Bill 17, *Write-Off of Assets Act, 2012-2013*;

Bill 18, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital Act, No. 1, 2015-2016* ;

Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*; and

Bill 21, *An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act*.

The *Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Act* establishes the legislative framework for the continuation of the Northern Employee Benefits Services plan as a multi-employer, multi-jurisdictional pension plan for employees of approved public sector employers in northern

Canada. A piece of mirror legislation, Bill 12, had been introduced in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories on February 26, 2014.

On October 27, 2014, the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut adopted a motion to extend the period of time for the Standing Committee on Legislation to report Bill 1 back to the House by an additional 120 days. A similar motion was adopted by the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories at its sitting of October 30, 2014. A number of substantial amendments to both bills were made during the winter 2015 sittings of both legislatures. In his opening comments to the Committee of the Whole on the occasion of its clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 1, Committee Chairperson **Joe Savikataaq** noted the high degree of co-ordination between the two legislatures' respective standing committees in developing amendments to Bills 1 and 12.

The spring 2015 sitting of the 2nd Session of the 4th Legislative Assembly will convene on May 26, 2015.

Uqqummiut By-Election

On February 9, 2015, a by-election was held in the constituency of Uqqummiut, which includes the communities of Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq. Newly-elected Member **Pauloosie Keyootak** took his seat on February 24, 2015.

Speaker's Youth Parliament

The fifth biennial Speaker's Youth Parliament was held in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly on November 27, 2014. The proceedings of the Youth Parliament, which were opened by Speaker **George Qulaut**, were televised live on local community cable stations and direct-to-home satellite service. Twenty-two high school students from across Nunavut were selected to represent each of the territory's 22 constituencies.

Alex Baldwin

Office of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut



Northwest Territories

The 17th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories resumed its 5th Session on February 4, 2015, with a Sessional Statement by **Robert R. McLeod**, Premier of the Northwest Territories.

Premier McLeod outlined the government's progress with regard to the priorities as set out by the 17th Legislative Assembly at its inception. He recognized the devolution of land and water resources, the implementation of policies supporting economic growth, as well as efforts to address poverty, mental health and addictions.

Minister of Finance **J. Michael Miltenberger** delivered the Budget Address on February 5, 2015, providing details of the government's economic plans for the last year of the current Assembly.

Following the Budget Address and in keeping with the Assembly's budget procedures, the Finance Minister tabled the Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016. Further to the rules of the Legislative Assembly, the tabled document was immediately moved into Committee of the Whole for Assembly consideration. The review of the Main Estimates was conducted over a four-week period with the adoption of a Concurrence Motion by the House to further consider the Main Estimates through the form of an appropriation bill.

In a similar manner, the House also reviewed three supplementary appropriation bills. Following the motions for concurrence, all four appropriation bills were adopted by the House on March 12, 2015.

Later that day, prior to the adjournment of the spring sitting, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, **George L. Tuccaro**, granted assent to a total of 10 bills.

The 5th Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly was scheduled to resume May 27, 2015.

Legislation

Several pieces of legislation of particular note were considered during the sitting. The first of these was Bill 46: *Deline Final Self-Government Agreement Act*. This bill creates the Deline Gotine Government, the first community-based self-government in the Northwest Territories. The Bill was debated in Committee of the Whole and received third reading on March 4, 2015, following heartfelt and congratulatory words from Premier McLeod and **Norman Yakeleya**, the Member for Sahtu. Members of the team that worked on the 19-year long negotiation and residents of the Community of Deline filled the gallery to witness the historic event.

Also of note was Bill 12: *Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act*. Bill 12 was sponsored by the Department of Finance and sets out the legislative framework for the Northern Employee Benefits Services pension plan as a multi-employer and multi-jurisdictional plan for public sector employees in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

The multi-jurisdictional nature of the legislation presented unique challenges as two distinct sovereign legislatures were simultaneously considering amendments to two separate but virtually identical pieces of legislation, governing a single body that conducts business in both jurisdictions.

Given the complexity of the legislation, the widespread public interest and the high degree of collaboration required between the Northwest Territories Standing Committee on Government Operations, and the Nunavut Standing Committee on Legislation, both Committees sought permission from their respective legislatures in autumn 2014 to extend the review period.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations, chaired by **Michael Nadli**, worked closely with its Nunavut counterpart to respond to the many submissions received by both Committees. A clause-by-clause review of Bill 12 took place on February 19, 2015. The Committee adopted, with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance, 12 motions to amend Bill 12. The bill, as amended and reprinted, was reported to the House where it was adopted at third reading and received assent from the Commissioner.

In its substantial report on the Review of Bill 12, the Standing Committee on Government Operations acknowledged the collaborative efforts of officials in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, as well as the Nunavut Standing Committee on Legislation for their contributions to the successful review of this legislation.

The Spring sitting concluded on March 12, 2015, with five bills introduced and referred to Standing Committees for review.

Establishment of a Special Committee on Transition Matters

In preparation for the fall 2015 territorial general election, the Assembly adopted a motion to establish a Special Committee on Transition Matters to identify and report on major trends and issues for consideration by the Caucus of the 18th Legislative Assembly and to advise on the process for transition. The Committee is comprised of six Members of the Legislative Assembly, two selected from among the Members of the Executive Council and four selected from among the Regular Members.

Rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

A motion was introduced by **Bob Bromley**, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, to repeal and replace the Rules of the Legislative Assembly effective May 27, 2015.

Mr. Bromley, in speaking to the motion, identified the two objectives of the review. The first was to modernize the rules, acknowledging changes related to technology, to update the rules to reflect current practices as adopted by the Assembly and to replace outdated or irrelevant rules. The second objective was to streamline procedures while balancing the interests of all Members and to provide a transparent and more efficient method of transacting public business. The motion was adopted by the House.

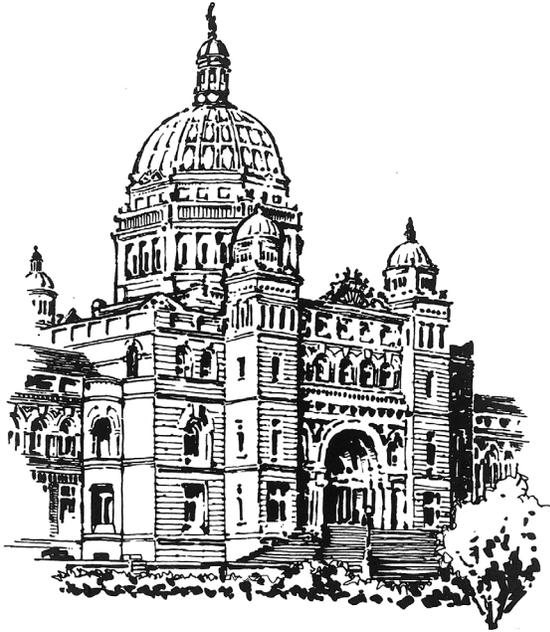
Date of Territorial General Election

The *2015 Polling Day Act*, adopted by the Legislative Assembly in November 2014, provided that if, as of April 1, 2015, the upcoming federal and territorial election period are scheduled to overlap, the territorial election is postponed from October 5, 2015 to November 23, 2015.

Pursuant to the Act, on April 1, 2015, the Legislative Assembly confirmed that the 2015 Territorial General Election will take place on November 23, 2015.

Gail Bennett

Principal Clerk, Corporate and Interparliamentary Affairs



British Columbia

The third session of the 40th Parliament of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia was prorogued on the morning of February 10, 2015, and the fourth session convened that afternoon with a Speech from the Throne delivered by Lieutenant Governor **Judith Guichon**. The Legislative Assembly is expected to adjourn for the summer on May 28, 2015.

Speech from the Throne

The Speech from the Throne outlined the government's plan to build on new jobs created since 2011 by focusing on key sectors of the economy and further growing British Columbia's trading relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, while continuing to focus on encouraging development of a BC liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry. In addressing the Speech from the Throne, Official Opposition MLAs outlined their priorities, expressed concern about continued delays in construction of LNG projects, and advocated measures which in their view were not sufficiently addressed in the throne speech, including actions to reduce economic

disparities in the Province and initiatives to address health care gaps.

Budget 2015

Finance Minister **Mike de Jong** tabled Budget 2015 in the House on February 17. In his comments on the budget, Mr. de Jong stated that BC's diverse economy and export markets have insulated the Province from the recent global economic downturn, creating the context for BC's third consecutive balanced budget. He pointed toward economic forecasts of increased provincial real GDP growth and anticipated surpluses for 2014-15 through 2017-18. In responding to Budget 2015, the Official Opposition raised concerns about the province's job creation situation and significant levels of unemployment; criticized the budget's fee and rate hikes; and called for initiatives to support employment creation through enhanced skills and training, to maintain support for education, and to ensure high standards of health care across the Province.

Sessional Order

On February 12, 2015, the House again adopted a sessional order to amend Standing Orders 25 and 47(a) to reschedule Oral Question Period and daily Members' Statements to mornings on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each sitting week, with question period to remain in the afternoons for Mondays and Wednesdays. A similar sessional order has been adopted for each session since it was adopted for the first time on February 13, 2014.

Legislation

At the time of writing, nine Government Bills have received Royal Assent out of a total of 27 Government Bills introduced during the 4th session of the 40th Parliament. Legislation this session includes:

Bill 14, *Tobacco Control Amendment Act* expands the scope of the existing legislation to permit regulation of e-cigarettes and associated products. Accordingly, the amendment act will change the name of the *Tobacco Control Act* to the *Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act*.

Bill 15, *Motor Vehicle Amendment Act* strengthens the Province's strategy to combat high-risk driving behaviour on BC roads, including more certain and transparent remedial requirements for drivers who surpass established alcohol- and drug-driving-related thresholds. The bill also includes an amendment

clarifying left-lane rules for drivers, responding to provincewide consultation findings of significant public concern with slow drivers impeding traffic flow in leftmost lane, generally considered a passing lane on highways.

Bill 17, *Guide Dog and Service Dog Act* reflects advances in training and the uses of service dogs, which can be trained to assist people with many more conditions — including mobility issues, epilepsy, and hearing impairments — than in the past. The bill maintains current access and tenancy privileges for individuals with a certified guide or service dog. Additionally, the act will now provide access rights for dogs in training and extend tenancy rights to retired dogs that continue to reside with their handlers. It will also ensure that certified dogs can reside with their handlers in strata properties.

Bill 27, *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* creates a more flexible framework for regulating liquor, reducing the need for amendments in the future, as government implements recommendations stemming from BC's recent liquor policy review.

Fifteen Private Members' Bills and one Private Bill have been introduced during the spring sitting.

Parliamentary Committees Activity:

Nine parliamentary committees and the Legislative Assembly Management Committee were active between February and April, with public consultations by the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth and the Special Committee on Local Elections Expense Limits underway during the reporting period.

On February 24 the Special Committee to Appoint an Ombudsperson was appointed to select and unanimously recommend to the House the appointment of an Ombudsperson to replace incumbent **Kim Carter**, who has announced her intention to resign prior to the 2018 conclusion of her second term of appointment in that role.

The Special Committee to Review the Independent Investigations Office completed its examination of the administration and general operations of British Columbia's Independent Investigations Office, and the Chief Civilian Director's progress toward a goal of having an office that is staffed entirely with employees and investigators who have never served as officers or members of a police or law enforcement

agency, with the release of its final report on February 12, 2015. The final report included recommendations designed to enhance the IIO's administration and general operation, and also recommended that the Ministry of Justice report publicly on actions taken to address human resources issues within one year of the release of the Committee's report and that the *Police Act* be amended to require comprehensive statutory review of the IIO by a special committee at least once every six years.

Following the conclusion of the first phase of its special project to examine children and youth mental health in the province of British Columbia, and the release of an interim report, on March 26 the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth embarked on a second phase that will focus on the development of concrete and practical solutions for improving and integrating services for youth mental health in the province. During this reporting period the Committee also completed its statutory review of section 6(1)(b) of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, assessing its effectiveness in ensuring that the needs of children are met. Section 6(1)(b) provides for the Representative's monitor, review, audit and research functions. Following meetings with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Representative for Children and Youth, the report recommends, in accordance with the views of the Ministry and the Representative, that section 6(1)(b) not be amended at this time.

Having concluded the first phase of its inquiry, establishing principles to guide the establishment of expense limits for candidates and third party advertisers in municipal elections in BC, on February 26 the Special Committee on Local Elections Expense Limits commenced phase 2 of its mandate: to establish expense limit amounts for candidates and third party advertisers in municipal elections in BC. Principles identified by the Committee during phase 1 included fairness, neutrality, transparency, and accountability.

The Select Standing Committee on Health continued its work to identify potential strategies to maintain a sustainable health care system for British Columbians, considering the information collected through a public consultation that concluded on December 31, 2014. A Health Sub-Committee was struck on March 26 to consider and make recommendations to the Select Standing Committee on Health on the topic of dying with dignity.

Accountability

Continuing the Legislative Assembly's implementation of expanded disclosure on Members' compensation and expenses, October to December 2014 third quarter Members' compensation and expense reports were for the first time accompanied by copies of thousands of reimbursable receipts in support of each Member's travel and constituency office expenses. This information is available on the Assembly website's accountability portal at <http://www.leg.bc.ca/accountability/index.htm>

Caucus resignation

On February 12, MLA **Marc Dalton** announced his resignation from the BC Liberal caucus in order to pursue the Conservative Party of Canada nomination in the federal riding of Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge-Mission. Mr. Dalton expressed his intention to return to the government caucus, should he fail to secure the federal riding nomination.

Temporary Appointments

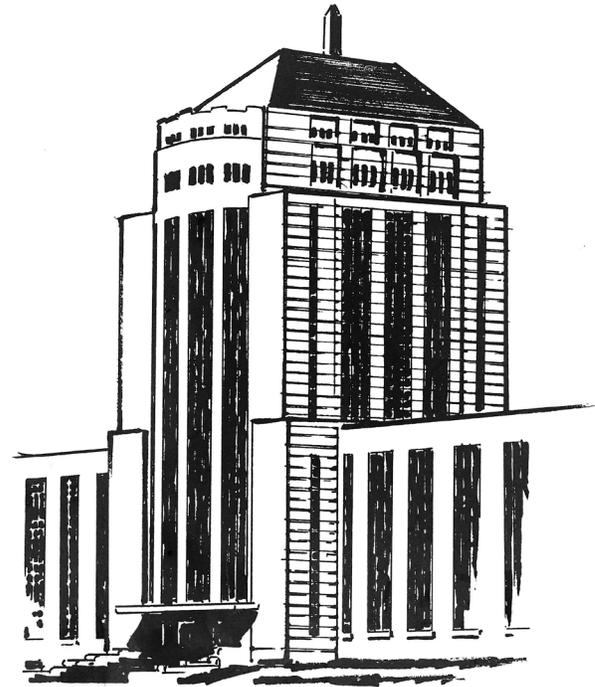
Rod MacArthur returned as Sessional Law Clerk with the Legislative Assembly of BC from the opening of the 4th session of the 40th Parliament until the Easter break. Following the Easter break, **Loredana Catallisonier**, former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, joined the Assembly as Sessional Law Clerk for the remainder of the spring sitting.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Canadian Regional Conference/Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference

The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia will host the 53rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Canadian Regional Conference and Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference from July 19 to 25, 2015.

This year's CPA Canadian Regional conference theme is *Safe Passage – Secure and Accessible Parliaments*. Business session topics will include accessibility within Canadian Parliaments, security within parliamentary precincts, and ethics and accountability of Members.

Aaron Ellingsen
Committee Researcher



Newfoundland and Labrador

Electoral Boundaries Commission appointed

Following a short sitting in January convened to amend the *Electoral Boundaries Act*, an Electoral Boundaries Commission was appointed to review the electoral boundaries with a view to reducing the number of seats in the House from 48 to 40. The House sat from January 19 to 22, the latter day extending from 1:30 p.m. to the next calendar day at 8:30 a.m.. The Commission released the proposed new electoral boundaries on April 10. Public hearings on the proposed electoral districts have been scheduled for the period April 22 to May 1. The Commission's final report is due June 9.

Party Leadership

On March 7, **Earl McCurdy** was elected leader of the New Democratic Party, succeeding **Lorraine Michael** who had been leader since 2006. Mr. McCurdy is not a Member of the House of Assembly. Ms. Michael continues as the Member of the House of Assembly for the District of Signal Hill-Quidi Vidi.

Cabinet

On March 12 the Premier shuffled his Cabinet, reassigning portfolios and reducing Cabinet size from 16 to 14 ministers.

The House reconvened on March 17, passed Interim Supply on March 26 and adjourned to April 21 when the Third Session of the 47th General Assembly will prorogue in the morning. The Fourth Session will open with the Speech from the Throne in the afternoon.

Elizabeth Murphy

Clerk Assistant



New Brunswick

Standing Rules

The Legislative Assembly resumed the first session of the fifty-eighth Legislature on February 10, 2015. One of the items for the House's consideration upon its return was the proposed changes to the Standing Rules. On December 10, 2014, the Standing Committee on Procedure, chaired by the Government House Leader, **Hédard Albert**, presented a report to the House recommending various revisions to the Standing Rules. A motion to adopt the Report's recommendations was

passed by the House on March 10, after several days of debate.

Legislation

An Act to Amend the Oil and Natural Gas Act, introduced by the Minister of Energy and Mines, **Donald Arseneault**, was debated in the House over the course of several days. The *Act* enables the government to impose a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in New Brunswick and received Royal Assent on March 27.

An Act to Amend the Elections Act, introduced by the Member for Fredericton South and the Leader of the Green Party, **David Coon**, proposes to lower the voting age from 18 to 16 and would, according to Coon, "give young people a voice in the future of our province." The bill passed second reading and is currently in Committee of the Whole.

Ross Wetmore, Member for Gagetown-Petitcodiac, introduced a bill entitled *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*. The bill would allow first responders who are diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder to be eligible for workers' compensation, as the condition would be presumed to be work-related. The Bill received second reading on March 19 and is currently in Committee of the Whole.

Committees

A joint meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations was held on March 24. The purpose of the meeting was the consideration of a report presented by Auditor General **Kim MacPherson** entitled *Report of the Auditor General of New Brunswick 2015 Volume 1 Performance Audit*. In June 2013 the Legislative Assembly requested, by way of unanimous motion, that Ms. MacPherson conduct an audit into the matter of financial assistance given to Atcon Holdings Inc. The focus of the audit was on events surrounding government's decision making process in granting financial assistance to Atcon for the period from 2008 to 2010.

Budget

On March 31, Minister of Finance **Roger Melanson** tabled the 2015-2016 Budget, the first for the government of Premier **Brian Gallant**. The Budget focused on three of the government's priorities: establishing the conditions for job creation, dealing with fiscal challenges and helping families.

For 2015-16, the provincial government is projecting a deficit of \$476.8 million. This is higher than the 2014-15 projected deficit due largely to one-time revenues in 2014-15 that will not recur, and includes a \$150 million contingency reserve in 2015-16 that will protect against unforeseen circumstances. If the reserve is not required, the deficit will be \$326.8 million.

An improving economy combined with a number of new measures will result in revenues reaching \$8.308 billion in 2015-16, a 0.6 per cent increase over revised 2014-15 estimates. Expenses will grow by 1.5 per cent, an increase of \$125 million over revised 2014-15 estimates.

Job creation initiatives include increasing the Small Business Investor Tax Credit, investments in the Miramichi Regional and Northern New Brunswick Economic Development and Innovation Funds, lowering the small business corporate income tax rate and imposing a tuition freeze on public universities in New Brunswick in order to make university more affordable.

Spending reduction initiatives in the Budget include increasing fuel taxes, removing the maximum daily amount for nursing home care, closing courthouses that are no longer required, the creation of a new tax bracket for high-income earners, reducing the number of teaching positions to reflect reduced enrolment and keeping 2014-2015 funding levels for Officers of the Legislative Assembly.

On April 2, **Blaine Higgs**, Opposition Finance Critic, delivered the Official Opposition's reply to the Budget. Higgs spoke on the government's changes to programs respecting the education system, senior care and efforts to reduce the provincial deficit. Higgs stated "We need a government focused on actually reducing the deficit, a government that chooses to move toward a balanced budget so that we can begin to pay down our debt and stop mortgaging our children's and grandchildren's futures. Instead, the debt is growing more rapidly. The government is borrowing even more money—money that we cannot afford."

Standings

The standings in the House remain 26 Liberals, 22 Progressive Conservatives, and one Green.

Rose Campbell
Clerk Assistant



Nova Scotia

Spring sitting 2015

The 2nd session of the 62nd General Assembly continued on March 26, 2015 with the first day of the Spring sitting.

Resignations and Vacancies

On April 2, 2015 **Frank Corbett** and **Gordie Gosse**, two of the seven NDP members, resigned their seats effective that day. At present there are three vacant seats in the House of Assembly as on March 16, 2015 Liberal MLA **Allan Rowe** died at the age of 58 after suffering an aneurysm. The *House of Assembly Act* requires the calling of a by-election within six months after the seat vacancy occurs and the election must be held within twelve months after the vacancy occurs.

Budget

In the weeks leading up to the Budget Speech on April 9, 2015, the Premier and the Finance Minister both indicated there would be important measures taken to reduce spending. A few days before the budget the Government announced that non-unionized civil servant salaries were to be frozen for three years. On April 7, 2015 the Minister of Finance introduced Bill # 80 – *An Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the House of Assembly Act*, this bill freezes MLA salaries until at least January 1, 2018. The bill received third reading on April 16, 2015.

The budget eliminated the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. The Minister who had been responsible for that Department, **Michel Samson**, is now Minister of Energy, having assumed that portfolio on March 25, 2015 upon **Andrew Younger**'s resignation from cabinet. He also holds the following portfolios: Minister of Communications Nova Scotia, Minister of Acadian Affairs and Minister responsible for Part 1 of the *Gaming Control Act*. A new Department of Business was created on budget day with the following mandate: "The Mandate of the Department is to lead and align all government efforts to expand business and social enterprise growth in Nova Scotia. The Department provides strategic direction and leadership to all provincial Government Departments, Crown Corporations and Agencies to achieve alignment on strategy and operations for business and social enterprise growth." **Mark Furey** was named Minister of Business. His other cabinet responsibilities are Municipal Affairs, Service Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Business Incorporated, the *Innovation Corporation Act*, Part 2 of the *Gaming Control Act* and the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

One budget item which has generated much public interest is the reduction of the film industry tax credit from 100 per cent refundable to 25 per cent refundable as of July 1, 2015 and the elimination of Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia. On April 15, 2015 a day-long protest was held at the House of Assembly with an estimated crowd of over 2,000 people that made national media headlines.

House Procedures

The Rules of Procedure as amended on October 15, 2014, provide that the House does not sit on Mondays. Pursuant to Rule 5C, however, the House may sit on a day and for the hours determined by the House on the motion of the Government House Leader. The House has thus been sitting on Monday evenings and into extended evening hours since the budget was delivered to consider the estimates. Rule 62DA(2) and 62DB provide for a maximum of four hours on any day for supply to a maximum of 40 hours in each of the main Chamber and the Red Chamber (subcommittee) for the consideration of Estimates.

Legislation

Two bills that received Royal Assent at the end of the Fall sitting 2014 are the subject of amending bills this sitting:

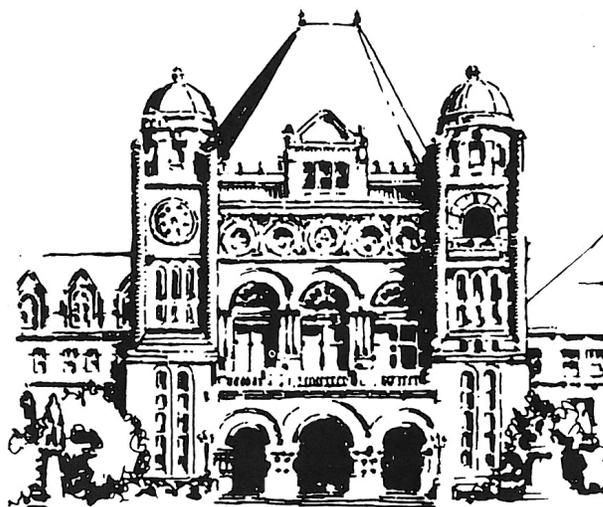
Bill # 69, amending the *Health Authorities Act*, was introduced, received second reading and was referred to the Law Amendments Committee on March 26, 2015 – the first day of the Spring sitting. On March 31, 2015 the Bill was reported back to the House and proceeded to Committee of the Whole House on Bills where not one MLA spoke to the Bill. That day the Bill also received third reading and Royal Assent was given to the bill on April 1, 2015.

Bill # 71, amending the *Limitation of Actions Act*, was introduced on March 27, 2015, the second day of the Spring sitting and with unanimous consent on the same day proceeded to second reading. The referral to the Law Amendments Committee was dispensed with and again not one MLA spoke to the Bill in Committee of the Whole House on Bills. A recorded vote on third reading was held and the Bill passed on the same day.

Assembly Staff

On April 13, 2015 the House of Assembly welcomed Nicole Arsenault, an additional Assistant Clerk to the Nova Scotia table. There are now three table officers in Nova Scotia.

Annette M. Boucher
Assistant Clerk



Ontario

Prior to the adjournment of the House for the Christmas Holidays, **Joseph Cimino** resigned as a Member of Provincial Parliament which triggered a

by-election for the Electoral District of Sudbury on February 5, 2015. After a month-long campaign, **Glenn Thibeault** was returned as the new representative for Sudbury. The new MPP took the Oath and subscribed to the Roll just in time to take his seat in the Legislature for the resumption of the First Session of the 41st Parliament on February 17, 2015.

On February 19, 2015, **Greg Essensa**, Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, responded to two complaints received from the Opposition Parties alleging that certain individuals had contravened subsection 96.1(e) of the *Election Act* in the February 5 Sudbury by-election. This subsection of the Act deals with bribery in connection with inducing a person to become, to refrain from becoming, or to withdraw from being a candidate. In his report to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Essensa concluded that there were apparent contraventions of the *Election Act* relating to the selection of the Liberal Party candidate and reported the matter to the Attorney General of Ontario as mandated by the *Election Act*. An investigation is currently underway.

During the session, the House considered a number of bills, held concurrence debate on the spending estimates of certain ministries reported from the Standing Committee on Estimates; and gave Second and Third Reading to the Supply Bill which ultimately received Royal Assent before the end of the 2014-2015 fiscal year. In addition, the Legislative Assembly also unanimously approved the appointments of two new Parliamentary Officers, **Brian Beamish** as the Information and Privacy Commissioner; and **Stephen LeClair** as the Financial Accountability Officer, both individuals for a term of five years each.

Committees

On December 11, 2014, a Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment was appointed to make recommendations to the Legislature with respect to the prevention of sexual violence and harassment and to improve response to Ontarians who have experienced sexual violence and harassment. The Committee held its inaugural meeting at the Legislative Assembly on March 4, 2015 and is scheduled to hold future public hearings across the province in Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Ottawa, Kingston, Kitchener-Waterloo and Windsor. An interim report is expected no later than June 24, 2015.

During the winter adjournment, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs held its annual pre-budget consultations in Fort Frances,

Sudbury, Ottawa, Cornwall, Fort Erie, London and Toronto and presented its findings to the House.

Bill 31, *An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 and the Highway Traffic Act in respect of various matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Provincial Offences Act* was considered by the Standing Committee on General Government. The provisions of the bill relate to various aspects of road safety, including impaired driving, bicycling, pedestrian safety, and the creation of a new vehicle inspection centre system.

In the minority 40th Parliament, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy was tasked with the review of the Speaker's finding of a *prima facie* case of privilege with respect to the production of documents; the tendering, planning, commissioning, cancellation and relocation of gas-fired electrical generating plants in Mississauga and Oakville. The review was never completed due to the dissolution of the 40th Parliament but when the standing committees were struck following the election of 2014, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy self-initiated two studies: one to examine the record keeping practices of the Ontario Government and the other on the relocation of the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants. Both studies were considered concurrently by the Committee and the findings were combined into a single report presented to the House.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts tabled a report on the 2013 value-for-money audit conducted by the Auditor General on programs provided by the government with respect to services and supports to women and their children fleeing violence. The Committee also examined two other value-for-money audits as well as a follow-up audit from the 2014 annual report of the Auditor General.

Public hearings were held by the Standing Committee on Social Policy on Bill 56, *An Act to require the establishment of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan*. The bill sets out the framework for the creation of the plan and requires its establishment by January 1, 2017. The bill was reported as amended to the House and is awaiting Third Reading debate.

Katch Koch
Committee Clerk



Saskatchewan

The fourth session of the 27th Legislative Assembly resumed on March 2, 2015.

Budget Presentation

On March 18, 2015, Finance Minister **Ken Krawetz** presented the province's budget for 2015-2016. He indicated in his budget speech that this was his fifth and final budget. The budget entitled *Keeping Saskatchewan Strong* focused on keeping taxes low, investing in infrastructure, controlling spending and providing new incentives that will help create jobs. The government cited significant planned expenditures in health, education and social services.

Opposition Finance Critic **Trent Wotherspoon** criticized the government for having record revenues but not passing the savings along to everyday families. On March 19, 2015, Mr. Wotherspoon moved an amendment to the budget debate motion that opposed the government's contention of record level spending as being full of waste and failing to deliver opportunities for young people, fairness and affordability for families, and dignity and security for seniors.

On March 26, 2015 the budget motion was passed in the Assembly and under the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, the Estimates were automatically deemed referred to their respective standing committees. The rules provide for a vote to be taken on any remaining Estimates on the

second last day of session provided the cumulative total time for debate on the Estimates is no less than 75 hours of debate.

The government identified one budget related bill in the Estimates book, Bill No. 178 – *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2015*. The Saskatchewan standing orders require that any new legislation required for the passage of the provincial budget must be identified by title in the government's financial plan, including details on the purpose of the bill and an explicit link to the Subvote or spending Allocation in the Estimates book. Any bills identified as "Budget Bills" are required to be voted as part of the estimates process as long as they receive five hours or more of debate. Bill No.178 made amendments to the Act in response to changes made to the federal Income Tax Act resulting from initiatives announced in the 2013 federal Budget and as such received a considerable amount of attention but was passed in time for the introduction and passage of the final Appropriation Bill on second last day of the Spring sitting.

Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy

Speaker **Dan D'Autremont** welcomed 17 teachers from across the province to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute that was held from April 18-22, 2015.

The first Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy was held in 1999, with the aim of developing a strategy to enhance the understanding of parliamentary democracy in the classroom. Since then, over 200 teachers from across Saskatchewan have participated in the institute. During the five-day institute teacher participants receive a behind the scenes look at democracy at work. Participants have the opportunity to meet with the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker, the Premier, cabinet ministers, caucus leaders, Whips and Chairs, as well as with private members, the Clerk and other members of the Legislative Assembly Service, Officers of the Assembly, the press gallery association and the judiciary.

Rob Park

Committee Clerk



National Assembly

Extraordinary sitting

On February 6, 2015, at the request of Premier **Philippe Couillard**, the Assembly held an extraordinary sitting to complete the examination of Bill 10, *An Act to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network, in particular by abolishing the regional agencies*. This bill was passed on the following division: Yeas 62, Nays 50, no abstentions.

Composition of the National Assembly

The Member for Jean-Talon and Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports, **Yves Bolduc**, handed in his resignation on February 26, 2015. **François Blais**, who had been Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity, replaced Mr. Bolduc as Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research. **Sam Hamad**, Minister of Labour, now holds the combined offices of Minister of Labour, Employment and

Social Solidarity, while **Pierre Arcand**, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, was named Minister responsible for the Côte-Nord region.

On March 9, 2015, **Sylvain Rochon**, the Parti Québécois candidate, won the by-election in the electoral division of Richelieu.

The composition of the National Assembly now stands as follows: 69 Members of the Québec Liberal Party, 30 Members of the Parti Québécois, 22 Members of the Coalition Avenir Québec, three Members under the banner of Québec Solidaire, and one vacant riding.

Estimates of expenditure and passage of *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2015-2016*

On March 31, 2015, the Members concurred in Interim Supply for the year 2015-2016 and passed Bill 40, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2015-2016*. During this sitting, the Assembly entered upon the debate on the budget speech.

Bills passed

For the period from January to March, the Assembly passed five bills:

Bill 10, *An Act to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network, in particular by abolishing the regional agencies;*

Bill 30, *An Act respecting mainly the suspension of payment of bonuses in the context of budget-balancing measures;*

Bill 19, *An Act to amend the Cooperatives Act and other legislative provisions;*

Bill 25, *An Act to transfer the responsibility for issuing road vehicle dealer's and recycler's licences to the president of the Office de la protection du consommateur;*

Bill 40, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2015-2016.*

Ruling from the Chair

Among the decisions rendered by the Chair, the ruling of March 19, 2015 on a point of privilege or contempt raised by the Official Opposition House Leader should be noted. In her notice, she alleged that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy and the Minister's department were in contempt of

Parliament for having invoked two sections of a bill that was still under consideration, which constitutes contempt of Parliament. As provided in the Standing Orders, she also announced her intention to move a motion relating to a breach of privilege or contempt to impugn the conduct of the Minister acting in his official capacity.

According to the Chair, for a Minister to be liable for actions carried out by a body that invoked legislative provisions which had not yet been passed, there must be a sufficiently strong link between these actions and the Minister's involvement. Pursuant to parliamentary jurisprudence, advertising or communication of information must include an explicit reference to the legislative process and properly acknowledge the role of the Assembly and its Members in the consideration and passage of bills. Furthermore, in regard to the role of the government departments, the Chair understood their needed to be able to plan, in good faith, the implementation of measures that would result from the passage of a bill as well as their concern for efficiency and good governance. However, the Chair concluded that there was, *prima facie*, a connection between the facts submitted and the two sections of the bill, and that the information communicated to the organizations concerned by this bill and their resulting actions appeared to be connected. Although the Chair ruled that this point of privilege was in order, it specified that a more thorough investigation of the matter would be conducted at a later stage.

Following this ruling, the Official Opposition House Leader moved a motion relating to a breach of privilege or contempt in pursuance of the Standing Orders, which stipulate that the Assembly must rule on the alleged offence by voting on a report from the Committee on the National Assembly, which shall previously have inquired into the matter without special reference. The Committee on the National Assembly will therefore be convened for its inquiry into this matter.

Standing committee proceedings

Following a very busy fall owing to the work on Bill 10, *An Act to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network, in particular by abolishing the regional agencies*, the Committee on Health and Social Services resumed work in 2015 with another important round of special consultations, this time on Bill 20, *An Act to enact the Act to promote access to family medicine and specialized medicine services*

and to amend various legislative provisions relating to assisted procreation. Some 50 groups came before the Committee to present their positions on this bill and 66 briefs were submitted. The consultations ended on March 25, 2015.

Bill 28, *An Act mainly to implement certain provisions of the Budget Speech of 4 June 2014 and return to a balanced budget in 2015-2016*, tabled in November 2014, continued to work its way through the legislative process with special consultations and public hearings being held in the Committee on Public Finance. Within the framework of these consultations, which took place from January 23 to 11 February 11, 2015, the Committee members received a total of 74 briefs and held nine sittings to hear 47 groups. On March 19, 2015, they began the clause-by-clause consideration of this massive piece of legislation containing 337 sections.

In December 2014, the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy and Natural Resources carried out an order of initiative on the farmland grabbing phenomenon. At the beginning of March, within the framework of this mandate, the Committee held special consultations during which 19 groups were heard and 20 briefs were submitted.

Last, it should be mentioned that two committees tabled reports within the framework of orders of reference.

The Committee on Citizen Relations (CCR) was instructed by the Assembly to hold special consultations and public hearings on the *2008-2013 Government Action Plan concerning Sexual Assault*. Within the framework of this mandate, the Committee received 26 briefs. The public hearings were held over a four-day period, from March 16-24, 2015, and allowed the Committee members to hear 18 organizations. At the request of a member, once the public hearings were over, the CCR held a deliberative meeting to draft its conclusions. These conclusions state that the Committee will make its recommendations after forums on this topic have been held.

For its part, the Committee on Transportation and the Environment (CTE) held special consultations and public hearings on the revised *Government Sustainable Development Strategy 2015-2020*. Forty-one groups were heard during the seven public hearing sessions. A total of 57 groups expressed their opinions by submitting briefs. Here too, the members met at

the end of the public hearings to discuss whether observations, conclusions or recommendations would be made. On this occasion, the Committee members agreed unanimously that each parliamentary group could make their own observations, as well as the independent Member who took part in the proceedings.

Pierre-Luc Turgeon

Parliamentary Proceedings Directorate
Committees Service

Nicole Bolduc

Parliamentary Proceedings Directorate
Sittings Service



Prince Edward Island

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

The Sixty-fourth General Assembly was dissolved on April 6, 2015, with a provincial general election scheduled for May 4, 2015. According to the Rules of the Legislative Assembly, the new General Assembly must commence within 60 days after declaration day, May 20, 2015, in order to elect a Speaker. The Assembly will meet in the new chamber of the Hon. George Coles Building, the first time a sitting has been held outside of Province House since the building was completed in 1847.

MLA retirement

Ron MacKinley, the longest-serving member of the Legislative Assembly at the time of dissolution of the Sixty-fourth General Assembly, announced his retirement from public life in February 2015. He was first elected as member of the Legislative Assembly in a by-election in December 1985, and was subsequently

re-elected in every general election since 1986. In April 2000, as the sole member elected from the Liberal Party, he became Leader of the Opposition, a position he held until the 2003 provincial general election when he was replaced by **Robert Ghiz**. Following the 2007 provincial general election, which returned a Liberal majority, he was appointed Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal in the Ghiz government. His most recent appointment was on October 18, 2011, when he became Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development. His decision not to re-offer in the 2015 provincial general election marks the end of an era in Prince Edward Island politics.

New Leaders for the Major Political Parties

Wade MacLauchlan became leader of the Liberal Party of Prince Edward Island on February 21, 2015. He had announced his candidacy for the position in late November, following the announcement by Premier Ghiz on November 15, 2014, of his resignation. Mr. MacLauchlan was the sole candidate for the position. Prior to entering provincial politics, he served as president of the University of Prince Edward Island from 1999 to 2011. Earlier he was Dean of Law at the University of New Brunswick and a professor of law at Dalhousie University. Mr. MacLauchlan was made a Member of the Order of Canada in 2008 and was awarded the Order of Prince Edward Island in 2014. He was sworn in as premier on February 23, 2015.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Prince Edward Island also selected a new leader. On February 28, 2015, former Charlottetown City Councillor, **Rob Lantz**, was elected, replacing **Steven Myers**, who held the position on an interim basis following the January 2013 resignation of **Olive Crane**. Mr. Lantz has worked at DeltaWare, a Canadian-based IT company, for the past 16 years, in a broad range of roles, including business analyst, software consultant and account manager. He was elected to Charlottetown City Council in 2006, and re-elected in 2010. The Progressive Conservatives have been the Official Opposition in the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island since June 2007.

New Cabinet

Premier MacLauchlan reduced the number of cabinet positions from 11 to 8, naming the following members to Executive Council: Wade MacLauchlan, Premier, President of the Executive Council, Minister of Finance and Energy, Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister Responsible for Acadian and Francophone Affairs, and Minister of

Intergovernmental Affairs; **George T. Webster**, Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture and Forestry; **Doug W. Currie**, Minister of Health and Wellness and Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs; **Valerie E. Docherty**, Minister of Community Services and Seniors, and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women; **Janice A. Sherry**, Minister of Environment, Labour and Justice, and Attorney General; **Robert L. Henderson**, Minister of Tourism and Culture; **J. Alan McIsaac**, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, and Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal; **Allen F. Roach**, Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning and Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development.

New Restrictions on Deputy Minister and Senior Advisors

On March 2, 2015, Premier MacLauchlan announced that he will introduce new conflict of interest requirements, similar to those in place for ministers, for deputy ministers and senior political advisors as part of an enhanced emphasis on openness and transparency within government. In addition, there will be an extension of post-employment restrictions for deputy ministers and senior advisors. He indicated he intends to confirm these measures during the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Ethics and Integrity Commissioner

Premier MacLauchlan announced the appointment of **Shauna Sullivan-Curley** as the province's first Ethics and Integrity Commissioner on March 31, 2015. Her key areas of responsibility will include expense disclosure, conflict of interest disclosure within the public service, strengthening the Code of Conduct and Oath of Office, and identifying and overseeing the implementation of new provisions to maintain and strengthen public confidence in the work of government. Ms. Sullivan-Curley began her public service career in 1989 with the provincial Department of Justice and Attorney General. She has been involved at the senior management level with a variety of departments, serving as Deputy Minister of Provincial Affairs and Deputy Attorney General, Secretary to the Legislative Review Committee and Counsel to Executive Council, Deputy Minister of Education, and Deputy Minister of Environment, Labour and Justice.

Forecasted Change to Government Departments

In late March, Premier MacLauchlan forecast a number of changes to government departments, to take

effect with the formation of a cabinet following the May 4, 2015, election. He plans a department responsible for communities, land and environment; and a department responsible for workforce and advanced learning. The current department of innovation and advanced learning will become responsible for economic development. The current department of environment, labour and justice will be responsible for justice and public safety. No increase in the number of government departments is foreseen. "There will be a unique opportunity during the election writ period for senior officials to refine and prepare for all aspects of the transition," said MacLauchlan.

Auditor General to Review E-gaming

Auditor General **Jane MacAdam** will be undertaking a review of the government's dealings with number of companies in relation to on-line gaming and financial services. The file has been the source of community and media comment in recent months, and the announcement came in the wake of an article published in the *Globe and Mail* on February 27, 2015, detailing the province's exploration of the possibility of entering the business of on-line gaming regulation. The Auditor General's remit includes the conduct of current or former elected officials and staff with regard to their investments in specific companies involved in the industry.

Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Neil Robinson, Prince Edward Island's Conflict of Interest Commissioner, resigned on March 8, 2015. He had been in the position since 1999. His departure was triggered by public comments made by the Leader of the Opposition, and demands from the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party for an emergency sitting of the Legislative Assembly to debate an assertion of conflict of interest. Although the allegations were denied by Mr. Robinson, he subsequently released a statement indicating he felt he did not have the necessary confidence of the Assembly to continue as province's Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

John A. McQuaid, retired Justice of the Prince Edward Court of Appeal, was appointed acting Conflict of Interest Commissioner on March 10, 2015. Mr. McQuaid practiced law for 20 years prior to becoming justice of the Court of Appeal, a position he held from 1993 to his retirement in 2013. Pursuant to the *Conflict of Interest Act*, Mr. McQuaid will serve as acting commissioner until the Legislative Assembly appoints a new commissioner.

Accountability Requirements for MLAs

In mid-March, Premier MacLauchlan announced his plans for new requirements for cabinet ministers and all elected officials to publicly release detailed copies of their travel and hospitality expenses. Similar requirements are already in place for deputy ministers, chief executive officers and senior advisors within government. Premier MacLauchlan indicated he would be asking the Legislative Management Committee to take steps to require members of the Legislative Assembly to adhere to the same standards.

Marian Johnston

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees



Senate

The Passing of the Speaker of the Senate

On April 23, 2015, **Pierre Claude Nolin**, Speaker of the Senate, lost his battle with cancer at the age of 64. He was appointed to the Senate in 1993 on the advice of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and represented the senatorial district of De Salaberry, Quebec. A lawyer by trade, Senator Nolin was an active member of several Senate committees, including the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional

Affairs; the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence; the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations; the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources; the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament and the Special Senate Committee on Anti-terrorism. From 2000 to 2002, he chaired the Special Senate Committee on Illegal Drugs and, most recently, he was the Chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration. He was unanimously elected as Speaker *pro tempore*, a role he served in from November 2013 to November 2014 when he was named Speaker of the Senate on the advice of Prime Minister Harper. Speaker Nolin lay in repose in the Senate Chamber on April 28 and his funeral took place in Montreal at Notre-Dame Basilica on April 30.

Legislation

The Senate reconvened after the winter adjournment on January 27 and during the late winter period of sittings, 10 government bills, three Senate Public Bills and one Commons Public bill received Royal Assent. Among the government bills was Bill C-32, *An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts*. This bill creates a federal bill of rights for victims of crime; amends the *Criminal Code* to enhance the rights of victims to information and protection and provide victims with increased opportunities for participation in the criminal trial and sentencing processes; creates a general rule of competency and compellability with respect to the testimony of the accused's spouse in criminal proceedings under the *Canada Evidence Act*; and amends the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* to increase victims' access to information about the offender who harmed them.

Bill C-27, the *Veterans Hiring Act*, amended the *Public Service Employment Act* to grant priority for appointment in the federal public service to members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are released from military service for medical reasons attributable to service. Another bill that received Royal Assent was Bill S-221, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assaults against public transit operators)* which amended the *Criminal Code* to require a court to consider the fact that the victim of an assault is a public transit operator to be an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing.

Though not yet before the Senate, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence

began a pre-study on Bill C-51 whose short title is the *Anti-terrorism Act, 2015*. The Committee began hearing from Ministers and departmental witnesses on March 30 and has been continuing its pre-study into the spring, hearing from stakeholders and academics.

Committees

In addition to the pre-study of Bill C-51, the Senate's committees continued their examination of other legislation as well as their ongoing special studies. On February 17, the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples tabled an interim report entitled *Housing on First Nation Reserves: Challenges and Successes*. The committee is conducting its study in two phases, with this first interim report focusing on housing. It plans to issue another report, dealing with community infrastructure, before the Senate rises for the summer. Another report of note is the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, on prescription pharmaceuticals in Canada, tabled in March. The committee had previously issued four interim reports on the subject since the study began in November, 2011. Throughout the course of the study, the committee made a total of 79 recommendations to address some of the challenges facing prescription drugs that have an impact on the health and safety of Canadians. Many of these recommendations called for the Minister of Health to foster greater collaboration between the provinces on standardized approaches to electronic data collection to facilitate research and policy decisions. All committee reports can be accessed at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/SenCommitteeBusiness/default.aspx?parl=41&ses=2&Language=E>

Speaker's Rulings

On February 3, Speaker Nolin delivered a ruling on a point of order raised by **Wilfred P. Moore** in December 2014, concerning the use of omnibus legislation. The point of order had been specifically raised about the *Budget Implementation Act*; however, Mr. Moore was also interested in speaking about the use of omnibus legislation in general. He argued that it was "improper to put senators in the position of having to vote once on many unrelated issues". The Speaker determined that omnibus bills are procedurally in order, but the Senate may nevertheless wish to review options as to how it can best study such bills and better ensure government accountability, particularly in relation to public finances and expenditures. He discussed a number of options the Senate could consider in the future, but emphasized any changes would be for the

chamber itself to decide, not for the Speaker to impose.

Following the October 22 attack at the war memorial and Parliament Hill, the government moved a motion respecting security arrangements on Parliament Hill. The motion called on the Senate to recognize the necessity for integrated security throughout Parliament Hill and invited the RCMP to take the lead on the initiative. Senator **James S. Cowan** raised a point of order as to the acceptability of the motion and raised concerns that the motion attempts to delegate power to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in a way that is not permissible under *the Parliament of Canada Act*. In his ruling on the matter, Speaker Nolin pointed out that there was nothing in the rules and procedure of the Senate to block consideration of the motion, that the motion was in order and debate could continue. At that time, he assured senators that, if the motion passed, he would, in discussions and negotiations, take his role as custodian of the rights and privileges of the Senate and individual senators most seriously.

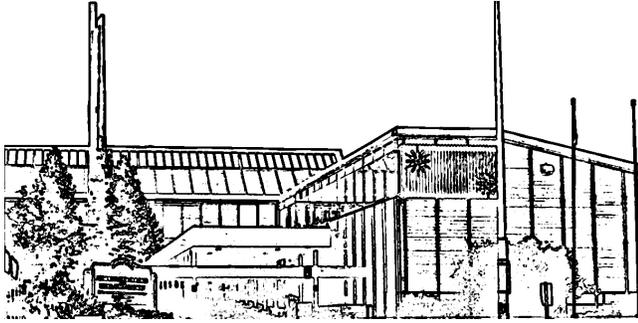
Senators

There were two departures from the Senate during this period with the resignations of **Jean-Claude Rivest** on January 31 and **Marie Charette-Poulin** on April 17. Mr. Rivest was appointed to the Senate on the advice of Prime Minister Mulroney in 1993, representing the Quebec senatorial division of Stadacona. Prior to his appointment, he was a lawyer and political assistant before being elected to the Quebec National Assembly twice in 1979 and 1981. Most recently, he served on many Senate committees and was at one time, the Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages. Most recently, he was a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

Ms. Charette-Poulin was appointed to the Senate in 1995 on the advice of Prime Minister Chrétien. A Franco-Ontarian, she represented Northern Ontario and had worked as a program producer, researcher and university lecturer before serving in the Senate. She was a member of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, and the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence. She was also a past member of the committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce and past chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications.

Vanessa Moss-Norbury

Procedural Clerk



Yukon

Spring Sitting

On March 5, 2015, Premier **Darrell Pasloski** advised Speaker **David Laxton** that the public interest required that Legislative Assembly reconvene. The Premier identified April 2 as the start date for the 2015 Spring Sitting of the First Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly. This was the first time since 2007 that the Spring Sitting had begun after the start of a new fiscal year.

The Legislative Assembly does not have a fixed calendar for sittings. Standing Order 73(2) requires the Premier to give the Speaker at least two weeks' notice of the date on which he would like the House to reconvene. This year's four-week notice period was unusual, as the Speaker is normally given the minimum two-weeks' notice. Having received the Premier's advice, the Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 73, informed the Members that the House would reconvene on April 2.

On April 2, Government House Leader **Darius Elias** informed the House, pursuant to Standing Order 75(4), that after conferring with opposition House Leaders it was agreed that the Spring Sitting would be a maximum of 31 sitting days, with the 31st sitting day being May 28. This was also unusual. The Government House Leader's report on the length of the Sitting is, by practice, given only after the Government has introduced all its legislation for that Sitting. This is the first time the report was given on the first sitting day of a Spring or Fall Sitting.

Budget Day

The first day of the Spring Sitting is traditionally the day the budget is introduced. In keeping with that tradition, the Premier, who is also the Minister of Finance, introduced Bill No. 18, *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*. Once the House moved to Orders of the

Day, the Premier moved second reading of Bill No. 18 and then delivered his 2015-16 budget address. For the coming fiscal year the government sought approval to appropriate \$1.367 billion, the largest budget in Yukon's history. The motion for second reading of Bill No. 18 carried on April 7 and Committee of the Whole consideration of the bill commenced on April 20. Much of the remainder of the 2015 Spring Sitting was devoted to Committee of the Whole consideration of departmental estimates. The bill was passed and assented to on May 28.

Government Bills

The other government bills introduced, passed and assented to during the 2015 Spring Sitting were:

Bill No. 16, *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, which finalizes government expenditures for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Bill No. 17, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, which authorizes the appropriation of \$353.979 million to cover government expenditures from April 1 to June 4, 2015.

Bill No. 84, *An Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Enactments*. The *Public Lotteries Act* (PLA) currently authorizes the Government of Yukon to conduct and manage only interjurisdictional lotteries. This bill amends the PLA to enable the Government also to conduct and manage a single "government gaming establishment". The purpose is to provide a better statutory basis for the existing gaming activities at Diamond Tooth Gerties Gambling Hall in Dawson City.

Bill No. 85, *Condominium Act, 2015*, provides a comprehensive update of matters affecting the development, ownership and governance of condominiums in Yukon.

Bill No. 86, *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, amends the *Income Tax Act* to revise the personal income tax rate structure. The bill also amends provisions relating to the administration of the Yukon Small Business Investment Tax Credit. Other amendments harmonize Yukon's income tax legislation with federal legislation, including those relating to credits for political contributions and the now refundable Yukon Children's Fitness Tax Credit.

Bill No. 87, *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*, amends the *Personal Property Security Act*. This will enable conversion from the existing personal property security registry system, which is a document-based registry and operated by government, to the electronic Atlantic Canada Online registry system (referred to as the “new registry system”), which will be operated by an agent of government.

Bill No. 88, *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, provides for the licensing of pharmacies and rural dispensaries; establishes the obligations of licensees and proprietors; provides for inspections of pharmacies and rural dispensaries; provides for the investigation of complaints and for the discipline of licensees and proprietors; and amends other statutes to ensure that the Act is properly integrated with existing law relating to health professions. The bill also repeals the *Pharmacists Act*, as part of creating a modern regulatory system for the profession under the *Health Professions Act*.

One private member’s bill was introduced during the 2015 Spring Sitting. Bill No. 106, *An Act to Amend the Workers’ Compensation Act, with Respect to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, which was introduced by the **Elizabeth Hanson**, Leader of the Official Opposition on April 28, 2015. It was not brought forward for second reading.

Appointment of Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole

As mentioned in our previous submission, on January 16, 2015 the Premier announced a cabinet shuffle. As part of the cabinet shuffle, **Stacey Hassard** was named a minister, thereby requiring his resignation as Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole. At that time, the government also announced its intention to nominate

Mr. Elias as Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole once the House reconvened. On April 16, 2015 the Legislative Assembly adopted Motion No. 908, thereby appointing Mr. Elias as Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Appointment of Yukon Child and Youth Advocate

Also as mentioned in our previous submission, on January 16, 2015 an all-party subcommittee created by the Members’ Services Board recommended the appointment of **Annette King** as Yukon’s next Child and Youth Advocate. On April 20, 2015 the Legislative Assembly adopted Motion No. 907, signifying that Ms. King’s five-year term as Child and Youth Advocate would commence on May 1, 2015. Ms. King will be sworn in on that date.

Auditor General’s report

On March 5, 2015 the Auditor General of Canada released *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly - 2015: Corrections in Yukon - Department of Justice*. Officials from the Office of the Auditor General presented the report to Speaker Laxton that morning. The Speaker then authorized the distribution of the report to Members of the Legislative Assembly, as the House was not in session on that date. Once the report had been distributed to Members it was then made public and posted to the websites of the Auditor General of Canada and the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Later that day, officials from the Auditor General’s office met with the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. At that meeting the Public Accounts Committee indicated its intention to hold a public hearing on the report. The hearing was scheduled to be held on June 9, 2015.

Floyd McCormick
Clerk