

## British Columbia

The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia resumed on September 28, 2015, for a continuation of the fourth session. As reported in the previous issue, the Legislative Assembly adjourned on July 21, 2015, after a rare summer sitting which lasted six days.

### Legislation

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In the fall sitting, 11 government bills had been introduced at the time of writing, and five bills had received Third Reading. Bills introduced in the fall included the following initiatives.

- Bill 35, the *Workers Compensation Amendment Act (No. 2), 2015*, would make workplaces safer following the accidents that occurred in Prince George and Burns Lake sawmills in 2012, including new requirements for employers to immediately report fires and explosions, participation for worker and employer representatives in employer accident investigations, a role for workplace health and safety committees to give advice to employers on equipment and machinery changes, and an increased ability for WorkSafeBC to assist health and safety committees in resolving disagreements over health and safety matters.
- Bill 38, the *Franchises Act*, proposes a framework of legal rights and remedies to the province's business owners who operate or are looking to operate a franchise business in the province.
- Building on past legislative initiatives to support government's liquefied natural gas (LNG) strategy,

Bill 40, the *Natural Gas Development Statutes Amendment Act, 2015*, would allow carbon capture and storage as a permanent solution for disposing of carbon dioxide in British Columbia, improve rules and regulations for oil and gas activities, and strengthen industrial oversight in preparation of more large-scale projects moving forward, such as the construction and operation of pipelines and LNG facilities.

- Bill 43, the *Local Elections Campaign Financing (Expense Limits) Amendment Act, 2015*, would establish a framework for setting expense limits by regulation for local government candidates, school board trustees, and third-party advertising in advance of the next local government elections in British Columbia in 2018. The legislation, introduced as an exposure bill, follows the recommendations of the Special Committee on Local Elections Expense Limits, as outlined in its June 2015 report.

### Parliamentary Committees Activity

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The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services concluded its annual pre-budget consultations on October 15, 2015. The Committee received 572 submissions, in the form of online survey responses, written and video submissions, and presentations at 13 public hearings. The Committee is required to release its report by November 15, 2015. The Committee also met on September 15, 2015 to consider and approve a supplementary budget request to support the Office of the Ombudsperson of British Columbia in an investigation of the 2012 termination of Ministry of Health employees. The budget recommendation followed the Committee's July 29, 2015 decision to refer the investigation to the Ombudsperson, pursuant to provisions of the *Ombudsperson Act*.

The Special Committee to Review the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* continued the consultation stage of its statutory review of the Act, which was launched on July 29, 2015 and will conclude on January 29, 2016. The Committee is required to submit its report by May 27, 2016.

The Select Standing Committee on Health continued its work to identify potential strategies to maintain a sustainable health care system for British Columbians. A Sub-Committee established on March 26, 2015 to consider and make recommendations on the topic of dying with dignity reviewed submissions from stakeholders and presented its report to the Committee on October 21, 2015.

## Changes in Deputy Speaker and Members

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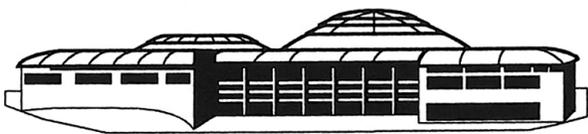
On September 28, 2015, the Legislative Assembly unanimously adopted a motion to appoint **Richard T. Lee**, Member for Burnaby North, as Deputy Speaker for the remainder of the session. He replaces **Doug Horne**, Member for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, who resigned in the summer to run in the federal election campaign. Two by-elections, for the constituency of Coquitlam-Burke Mountain and the constituency of Vancouver-Mount Pleasant (resulting from the resignation of MLA **Jenny Wai Ching Kwan** to run in the federal riding of Vancouver East), are expected within a six-month period.

MLA **Marc Dalton** returned to the BC Liberal caucus following his announcement that he had not secured the Conservative Party of Canada nomination in the federal riding of Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge-Mission. Mr. Dalton had resigned from the government caucus earlier in the year, and indicated that he would sit as an Independent Member while engaged in the nomination process.

The current party standings at the Legislative Assembly are: British Columbia Liberal Party – 48; New Democratic Party of British Columbia – 33; Independent – 2; and vacant – 2.

**Ron Wall**

Manager, Committees Research



## Northwest Territories

### Seminars and Conferences

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The Northwest Territories Table was delighted to host the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table Professional Development Seminar in Yellowknife from July 27-31, 2015. Fifty-six delegates and accompanying persons attended the event with international delegates travelling from the United Kingdom, Australia, Isle of Man and the United States.

Delegates participated in eight very informative business sessions and conducted the Association's Annual General Meeting. There were also many opportunities provided to enjoy the beautiful northern landscape from land, water and air.

In August, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, **Daryl Dolynny**, had the pleasure of attending the annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees (CCPAC) and the Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors (CCOLA) in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Mr. Dolynny and **Michael Ferguson**, Auditor General of Canada and of the Northwest Territories, issued an invitation to the CCPAC and CCOLA members to attend the next conference, scheduled to take place in Yellowknife, from August 21-23, 2016.

### Committee Activities

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In advance of the final sitting of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, 12 bills were before standing committees for consideration. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure held public hearings in Yellowknife to consider six pieces of proposed legislation. An additional six bills were under review by the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

Of particular note was Bill 55: *Mental Health Act*, a highly anticipated modernization of the current legislation. The introduction of the bill generated intense public interest and the Standing Committee, chaired by **Alfred Moses**, entered into a comprehensive public consultation process, visiting nine communities and hearing from over one hundred witnesses. During the final committee review, 27 motions to amend Bill 55 were adopted, with the concurrence of the Minister of Health and Social Services, **Glen Abernethy**. During the debate in the Assembly, both Mr. Moses and Mr. Abernethy commented on the collaboration which took place during the review process and which facilitated the passage of the legislation during the life of this Assembly. The Standing Committee on Social Programs also presented to the House a substantive report of its review of Bill 55, setting out the many concerns that were raised and providing recommendations with regard to the next steps and the actual implementation of the *Mental Health Act*.

### Order of the Northwest Territories

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Established in 2013 by the *Territorial Emblems and Honours Act*, the Order of the Northwest Territories is the highest honour awarded to residents of the

Northwest Territories. The inaugural investiture ceremony took place in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly on October 7, 2015. Speaker **Jackie Jacobson** began the ceremony by presenting the first medal to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, **George L. Tuccaro**. The Commissioner, by virtue of his office, is a Member and Chancellor of the Order of the Northwest Territories. The Commissioner then presided over the investiture of the first six inductees. The ceremony was followed by a reception in the Great Hall.

### **Final Sitting of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly**

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The final sitting of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly reconvened on September 29, 2015, with a sessional statement by Premier **Bob McLeod**.

The sitting began with consideration of the 2016-2017 capital estimates and two supplementary appropriation documents. Following debate in Committee of the Whole, the Assembly adopted a motion concurring with the estimates in all three documents and instructed that appropriation bills based thereon be introduced in the Assembly. The three bills received first, second and third reading during the short sitting.

Several committee reports were presented to the House during the sitting. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, chaired by **Robert Hawkins**, presented its *Report on Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing*. The report outlines the work undertaken by the Committee with regard to horizontal hydraulic fracturing. The report includes studies that have been conducted, highlights areas that may need further attention, comments on the proposed regulations, and encourages the continuation of such work by a standing committee of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

The Special Committee on Transition Matters presented its report entitled *Passing the Mace: Recommendations to the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly*. The Special Committee was part of a new and enhanced approach being undertaken to ensure a smooth transition from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

Four Assembly standing committees also presented reports related to transition matters.

On September 29, 2015, Mr. Dolynny rose on a question of privilege related to an announcement by Premier McLeod and Minister of Finance **J. Michael Miltenberger** made during an intersessional press

conference. They announced additional funding for the territorial power corporation in order to mitigate the impact of low water levels and to prevent an increase in power rates for all NWT residents. Mr. Dolynny pointed out that this announcement was made prior to appropriation authority being granted by the Assembly, leaving the impression that there was no meaningful role for the Legislative Assembly in debating and approving such an appropriation. Speaker Jacobson allowed debate on the matter and six Members rose to comment. The Speaker rendered his decision on October 7, 2015, finding no *prima facie* case of privilege. The Speaker continued to further examine the issue of contempt, and despite finding that a relevant news release did create an improper impression regarding the role of the Assembly, he did not find it to be an act of contempt.

A motion was adopted by the House requesting the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories to dissolve the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly on October 25, 2015, to permit polling day for a general territorial election to be held on November 23, 2015. This was the first time that the Commissioner has had the authority to dissolve the Legislative Assembly, a power previously held by the Government of Canada. This was the result of recent changes to the *Northwest Territories Act* (Canada) and is another historic first for the Northwest Territories.

On October 8, 2015, Commissioner Tuccaro gave assent to 15 bills, before proroguing the fifth and final session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

### **Territorial Election**

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The 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly was dissolved on October 25, 2015. A general election was called for November 23, 2015.

**Gail Bennett**

*Principal Clerk,  
Corporate and Interparliamentary Affairs*



## New Brunswick

### Building Restoration and Upgrades

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The ongoing historic restoration of the Legislative Assembly building continued over the summer months with the installation of a new sprinkler system. Directly following the work on the sprinkler system, a new digital sound and interpretation system was installed in the chamber, replacing an antiquated and unreliable system which had begun to fail during the spring session. Other proposed upgrades to the chamber include the possible installation of two digital clocks on the chamber walls. This would allow the Speaker and Members to monitor speaking times during debates. New Brunswick is grateful for the assistance provided on this project by the staff of the National Assembly of Quebec.

### Conflict of Interest Commissioner Retirement

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**Alfred R. Landry**, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, announced his retirement in July. Commissioner Landry's retirement closes out a remarkable career of public service and dedication to the Province of New Brunswick. Appointed judge of the Court of Queen's Bench in 1985, Landry became a supernumerary judge in 2001 and retired from the bench in 2011. On the unanimous recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, he was appointed

Commissioner under the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*, effective September 1, 2013.

### Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

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In September, the Legislative Assembly building was illuminated in gold in honour of children who are fighting cancer, survived cancer, or who have lost their lives to cancer. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, **Chris Collins**, invited his colleagues from across Canada to recognize this event at their Legislatures, many of whom participated.

### Interparliamentary Relations

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In September and October, the Legislative Assembly hosted two parliamentary study groups. In conjunction with the Parliamentary Centre in Ottawa, two parliamentary staff from the Kingdom of Bhutan met with various staff and officials of the Legislative Assembly with the goal of examining the parliamentary system in New Brunswick and in particular the bilingual nature of our province. The delegation also had the opportunity to visit the Department of Political Science at St. Thomas University and participate in several classes and interact with the students. The visit culminated with a visit to Speaker Collins' constituency where they were able to experience a day in the life of an MLA.

New Brunswick was also chosen by the United Nations Development Programme to host a delegation of parliamentarians from the Republic of Fiji. The group met with staff and officials from the Legislative Assembly to discuss topics such as the parliamentary process in New Brunswick, committees, public auditing and reporting, and conflict of interest requirements for MLAs.

### By-election and Swearing-in Ceremony

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A by-election was held on October 5, in the electoral district of Carleton, to fill a vacancy created when former Premier **David Alward** resigned as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. **Stewart Fairgrieve** was sworn-in as the newly elected Progressive Conservative member for Carleton at a ceremony held in the Legislative Assembly chamber on October 29.

### Committee Activity

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The standing committees on Public Accounts and Crown Corporations have full schedules through October and November while they review various government departments and Crown corporations.

The Standing Committee on Procedure, Privileges and Legislative Officers will meet later in November to review the role and mandate of the various legislative officers of the Legislative Assembly. The Standing Committee on Law Amendments continues to study Bill 15, *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.

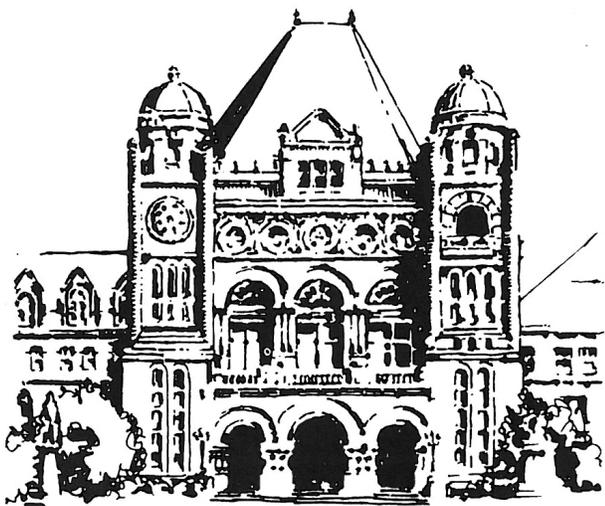
### Opening of Session and Standings

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The second session of the 58<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly is scheduled to open on December 1. The current House standings are 26 Liberal Members; 22 Progressive Conservative Members; and one Green Party Member.

**Shayne Davies**

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees



## Ontario

The Legislative Assembly resumed its Fall sitting on September 14, 2015. During the Summer adjournment, two vacancies occurred with the resignations of **Garfield Dunlop**, Member for the Electoral District of Simcoe North on August 1, 2015 and **Christine Elliott**, Member for the Electoral District of Whitby-Oshawa on August 28, 2015. A by-election for the riding of Simcoe North was held on September 3, 2015. **Patrick Brown**, a former federal MP who recently won the leadership for the Progressive Conservative Party of

Ontario, emerged victorious. The new Member took his Oath and subscribed the Roll in time to take his seat in the Legislature for the first day of the Fall sitting and as such, the Speaker informed the House that Mr. Brown was recognized as Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. The date for the by-election for the Electoral District of Whitby-Oshawa is to be determined.

On the first day of the Fall sitting, the House by unanimous consent, passed motions requesting the appointment of **Ellen Schwartzel** as the temporary Environmental Commissioner for the Province of Ontario for the period of September 14 to December 1, 2015, and **Dianne Saxe** as the permanent Environmental Commissioner for the Province of Ontario effective December 1, 2015. To fill a vacancy in the position as of September 14, **Barbara Finlay**, the Deputy Ombudsman, was also appointed temporary Ombudsman until the appointment of a permanent Ombudsman.

The House adjourned on September 21 and 22, 2015 to allow Members of Provincial Parliament to participate in the 2015 International Plowing Match which was hosted this year by the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry near the town of Finch in Eastern Ontario. Plowing matches have been part of the agricultural history of Ontario for well over a century. In the early days, they were sponsored by Agricultural Societies, the first farm groups to be established. The first provincial exhibition was held in the city of Toronto in 1846 which gave farmers an opportunity to display their skill in the handling of a walking plow and to show the fine teams of horses, many of which were imported or were from imported stock. Over the years, it has become a tradition that the leaders of the political parties along with their caucuses, usually decked out in jeans and boots, would participate in the opening parade which featured various floats, a mixture of old farm equipment, heritage themed entries and marching bands.

On September 23, 2015, the Speaker delivered a ruling on a question of privilege regarding the appointment of a temporary Ombudsman for the Province of Ontario. The Third Party contended that by appointing the Temporary Ombudsman by Order-in-Council without first securing a House address requesting the appointment amounted to a contempt of the House because traditionally, a House Address should precede the actual appointment of a parliamentary officer when the Legislature is sitting. The Speaker found that the process in the current case was entirely consistent

with the process used continuously on a number of occasions since 1978 with respect to the appointment of temporary Ombudsman, and therefore could not find a *prima facie* case of contempt.

On October 19, 2015, pursuant to a provision in its Standing Orders, the House adjourned for the general election of members to serve in the Canadian House of Commons.

**Katch Koch**  
Committee Clerk



## Manitoba

The Fourth session of the 40<sup>th</sup> Legislature resumed on October 20, 2015 and will sit until November 5, 2015 followed by a one week constituency break with the House to resume sitting on November 16, 2015 until December 5, 2015. The above dates were part of a House agreement related to Rule changes mentioned in our last submission.

### Intersessional Standing Committees

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Since our last submission, Manitoba Standing Committees held several intersessional meetings.

- The Standing Committee on Public Accounts Committee met on two separate occasions to consider several Chapters of the 2013 and 2014

Annual and 2014 Follow-up Auditor General's Reports.

- The Standing Committee on Crown Corporations met four times to consider annual reports from Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Insurance, The Workers Compensation Board, and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation.
- The Legislative Affairs Committee met to consider the Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee, as well as the Process for hiring a new Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Lobbyist Registrar and Information and Privacy Adjudicator
- The Standing Committee on Human Resources met on four occasions and the Social and Economic Development Committee met on two occasions to hear public presentations and conduct clause-by-clause consideration of one Bill that the House had not completed in June. The following Bills were reported to the House in October and proceeded through the remaining stages of the bill enactment process:

Bill (No. 4) – *The Farm and Food Awareness Act*

Bill (No. 10) – *The Municipal Amendment Act*

Bill (No. 13) – *The Planning Amendment Act (Special Planning Areas)*

Bill (No. 15) – *The Foreign Cultural Objects Immunity from Seizure Amendment Act*

Bill (No. 19) – *The Legal Profession Amendment Act*

Bill (No. 20) – *The Architects Amendment Act*

Bill (No. 21) – *The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions Amendment Act*

Bill (No. 23) – *The Boxing Amendment Act*

Bill (No. 24) – *The Wildlife Amendment and Fisheries Amendment Act*

Bill (No. 28) – *The Personal Property Security Amendment Act*

Bill (No. 30) – *The Non-Smokers Health Protection Amendment Act (E-Cigarettes)*

Bill (No. 31) – *The Registered Professional Planners Act*

Bill (No. 32) – *The Noxious Weeds Amendment Act*

### Opposition Day Motion

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On October 28, 2015 **Kelvin Goertzen** moved an opposition day motion urging “That the Legislative Assembly condemn the Provincial Government’s actions in repeatedly violating procurement rules in awaiting untendered contracts, as highlighted in the March 2014 Report from the Auditor General of Manitoba, including announcing a \$5 million contract for flood fighting equipment without tender and without Treasury Board approval on July 25, 2014.” Following an afternoon of debate the motion was defeated on a vote of yeas 18, nays 31.

### Members resigning/not seeking re-election

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In the previous submission, it was noted that **Leanne Rowat**, MLA for Riding Mountain, **Stu Briese**, MLA for Agassiz and **Bonnie Mitchelson**, MLA for River East would not be seeking re-election. Since that time, two more Members have resigned and one more Member indicated she would not be seeking re-election.

**Peter Bjornson**, MLA for Gimli, resigned on August 7, 2015. Mr. Bjornson was first elected in 2003 and served in Ministerial roles in Education, Housing and Community development and Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade during his tenure. Mr. Bjornson previous served as a councillor for the Town of Gimli from 1998 to 2002 and has 13 years of experience as a teacher. Mr. Bjornson’s teaching career was celebrated and recognized through numerous awards such as the Queen’s Jubilee Medal, the Governor General’s Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History (2000 and 2003) and the Prime Minister’s Award in 2001.

**Erin Selby**, first elected as an MLA for Southdale in 2007, resigned on September 4, 2015 to run in the recent Federal election but did not win a federal seat. Ms. Selby served in Ministerial capacity in the Advanced Education and Health. Prior to her election, Ms. Selby co-hosted Breakfast Television on City TV Winnipeg from August 4, 2005 to March 23, 2007 and has appeared in movies including the *Art of War* that starred Wesley Snipes.

**Theresa Oswald**, MLA for Seine River, first elected in 2003, announced on October 27, 2015 that she would not be seeking re-election in April 2016. Ms. Oswald served for several years as a minister in several portfolios. She served as Health Minister for seven years, longer than any other Health Minister in Canada, prior to her

appointment as Minister of Jobs and the Economy on October 18, 2013 where she served until November 2014. Prior to her political career, Ms. Oswald spent eleven years as a teacher and also served as a vice-principal at an exceptional needs school in the Louis Riel School Division.

### Current Party Standings:

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The current party standings in the Manitoba Legislature are: NDP 35, Progressive Conservatives 19, with one Liberal member and two vacancies.

**Greg Recksiedler**

Research Officer / Clerk Assistant



## House of Commons

The Forty-First Parliament was dissolved by means of a proclamation from the Governor General issued on August 2, 2015. The general election was held on October 19, 2015, the date determined in accordance with the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* which stipulates that a general election must be held on the third Monday in October in the fourth calendar year following polling day from the last general election.

As set forth in the *Fair Representation Act*, the number of seats in the House of Commons contested in the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Election was 338, an increase of 30 seats from the 308 seats comprising the House of Commons of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament at its dissolution. Additional seats based principally on population were assigned to Alberta (6), British Columbia (6), Ontario (15), and Quebec (3). Desks have been added to the Commons Chamber to accommodate the 30 additional Members. Members’ desks, which are generally arranged in pairs, have been arranged in larger sets in the two back rows on each side of the Chamber.

The general election resulted in the Liberal Party winning a majority of the seats in the House of Commons. Based on the unofficial results from Elections Canada, party standings in the House of Commons are as follows: the Liberal Party with 184 seats, the Conservative Party with 99 seats, the NDP with 44 seats, the Bloc Québécois with 10 seats and the Green Party with 1 seat. The Bloc Québécois and the Green Party are both below the 12 Member threshold required for recognized party status in the House of Commons. The complete official list of elected Members of Parliament should be available as of Monday, November 9, 2015, the last day for the return of the writs of election.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament reconvened on December 3. The first order of business of the House of Commons will be the election of a Speaker, which will be accomplished, for the first time, by means of a preferential ballot. The Speech From the Throne was read on December 4.

**Gary Sokolyk**

Table Research Branch



## Prince Edward Island

The First Session of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly resumed on November 12, 2015. The House adjourned to the call of the Speaker on July 10, 2015.

### Province House Remains Closed

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Province House was closed for an extensive conservation project in January, 2015. Assessment of the building envelope and structure was carried out over summer, 2015. The project is expected to take three to five years.

The Legislative Assembly will continue to meet in the Hon. George Coles Building next door to Province

House when it resumed the session in November, 2015.

### Standing Committees

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The various standing committees of the Legislative Assembly met multiple times to conduct their business during the late summer and early fall, 2015. Motions passed during the spring sitting directed the Standing Committee on Education and Economic Development to review the provincial tax system and make recommendations on policy changes to improve private sector growth; and directed the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness to examine out-of-province health care expenditures. Other committees have decided to examine diverse matters according to their individual mandates. These subjects include the regulation of petroleum products, renewable energy, energy conservation, and various subjects within agriculture and fisheries.

A rule change was recently made that affects the business of committees. During the spring sitting, the Assembly accepted the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Privileges, Rules and Private Bills that the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended to extend the life of committees to the duration of the General Assembly. Previously committees were dissolved each time the current session was prorogued. The report notes that "...these changes will align, more closely, the practice in Prince Edward Island concerning the lifespan of standing committees with the majority of Legislative Assemblies across the country. They will allow the committees to enjoy more continuity, and perhaps undertake more lengthy and in-depth studies on behalf of residents of the province." The Assembly also accepted the committee's recommendation that members be permitted to use electronic devices within the Chamber, with certain limitations. The June 18, 2015 report of the Standing Committee on Privileges, Rules and Private Bills can be read at <http://www.assembly.pe.ca/reports>.

### Special Committee on Democratic Renewal

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During the spring sitting, Government released the *White Paper on Democratic Renewal*. The White Paper encourages all Islanders to engage in a discussion on how to best strengthen democracy in the province, specifically by examining PEI's voting system, election laws, and legislature composition. The White Paper calls for a plebiscite on PEI's voting system, suggesting that Islanders should choose between the current first-past-the-post system, a proportional representation system or a preferential balloting system.

Subsequent to the tabling of the White Paper a special committee composed of MLAs from the three parties represented in the legislature was struck to guide public engagement and make recommendations in response to the White Paper. Chief among the committee's duties is the formulation of a question to put to Islanders in a voting system plebiscite. The committee is expected to present this question in an interim report during the fall legislative sitting, and then carry on with further public engagement activities in the lead-up to its final report in the spring 2016 sitting. PEI's electoral boundaries are also due to be reviewed by commission in early 2016.

The special committee met multiple times in August and September to plan its activities. In October the committee held several public consultations in communities across the Island to discuss voting systems with Islanders and receive input on their preferences. Details of the special committee's activities and the *White Paper on Democratic Renewal* can be found at [www.assembly.pe.ca/democraticrenewal/](http://www.assembly.pe.ca/democraticrenewal/).

### **Leader of the Official Opposition & Progressive Conservative Party Leadership**

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**Rob Lantz** won the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party at a convention in February, 2015 and unsuccessfully offered for a seat in the Legislative Assembly during the May 4 general election. Election results confirmed that the Progressive Conservative Party would form the Official Opposition. Given that Mr. Lantz did not have a seat in the House, the Official Opposition Caucus selected MLA **Steven Myers** to serve as Leader of the Official Opposition while Mr. Lantz continued to lead the Progressive Conservative Party from outside the rail until his resignation on September 23, 2015. On October 15, 2015 the Progressive Conservative Party Executive and Opposition Caucus selected MLA **Jamie Fox** as interim party leader and the Opposition Caucus confirmed that Mr. Fox would also serve as Leader of the Official Opposition in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Fox stated publicly that he does not intend to seek permanent leadership of the party. A permanent leader will be chosen at a future party convention (date to be determined). MLA **Darlene Compton** also sought the position of interim party leader.

### **Government Mandate Letters**

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In October, ministerial mandate letters outlining the strategic priorities of departments were posted online. The government indicates that this is the first time such letters have been released. The letters outline the

specific priorities of each minister and department, as directed by Premier Wade MacLauchlan. They emphasize the need for departments to work together; the requirement for departments to conduct themselves in an accountable, transparent, and ethical manner; and government's commitment to fiscal responsibility. Several departments are new, bringing together areas of government that were previously organized differently. The letters can be read at [www.gov.pe.ca/premier/mandate-letters](http://www.gov.pe.ca/premier/mandate-letters).

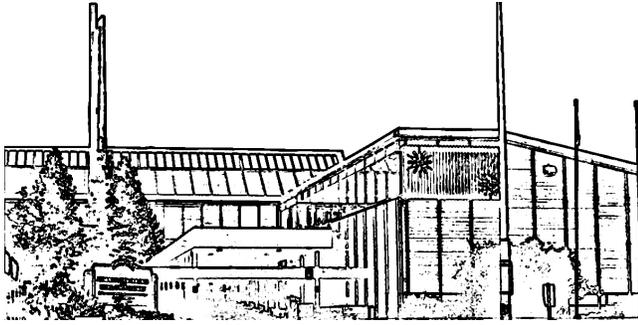
### **Government Whistleblower Policy**

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In October, the government also released a whistleblower policy. The policy provides a procedure for reporting wrongdoing as well as protection from reprisal for public sector employees who, in good faith, report wrongdoing they believe has been committed or is about to be committed. The policy states that an employee may make a disclosure to a supervisor, deputy minister, or the Ethics and Integrity Commissioner on a confidential basis. The Commissioner will take appropriate steps to help resolve the matter, including referring it for investigation or conducting an investigation. The policy applies to employees of entities listed in the schedules to the *Financial Administration Act*, with the exception of the Legislative Assembly, the Office of the Auditor General, the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission and the Human Rights Commission. The policy supplements the existing Conflict of Interest, and Fraud Awareness and Reporting policies. The Whistleblower Policy can be read at [www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/whistleblower.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/whistleblower.pdf).

**Ryan Reddin**

Research Officer and Committee Clerk



## Yukon

### Fall Sitting

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On October 1, 2015, Premier **Darrell Pasloski** advised Speaker **David Laxton** that the public interest required that Legislative Assembly reconvene. The Premier identified October 22 as the start date for the 2015 Fall Sitting of the First Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly. Pursuant to Standing Order 75(1), the Assembly sits for a maximum of 60 days per calendar year. The House sat for 31 days during the 2015 Spring Sitting, leaving a maximum of 29 days for the Fall Sitting. The House will not sit on Remembrance Day. On October 27, **Brad Cathers**, the deputy Government House Leader, gave notice of a motion which would also have the House not sit on November 12. Should Mr. Cathers' motion be adopted the final sitting day of the Fall Sitting will be December 15.

### Bills introduced

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The following government bills were introduced by October 29; the fifth sitting day (pursuant to Standing Order 74, this is the deadline for the introduction of government legislation to be dealt with during a Sitting):

Bill No. 19, *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2014-15*

Bill No. 20, *Second Appropriation Act, 2015-16*

Bill No. 89, *Act to Amend the Municipal Act*

Bill No. 90, *Land Titles Act, 2015*

Bill No. 91, *Act to Amend the Elections Act and the Electoral District Boundaries Act*

Bill No. 92, *Act to Amend the Travel for Medical Treatment Act*

Bill No. 93, *Act to Amend the Oil and Gas Act*

Bill No. 94, *Act to Amend the Education Act*

No private members' bills have been introduced so far during the 2015 Fall Sitting.

### *Elections Act and Electoral District Boundaries Act amendments*

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Bill No. 91 seeks to implement a major revision of key aspects of Yukon's electoral law. This revision is based on recommendations contained in a report of the Chief Electoral Officer, **Lori McKee**, that was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in December 2014. The bill's explanatory note outlines that:

"The main improvements included in the Bill are:

- More accessible and efficient voter registration, including a permanent register of electors;
- A single, simplified special ballot process that allows absentee electors and others with special needs an extended opportunity to vote;
- Better recognition of the role of modern communications technology, and the opportunity to apply innovative methods in electoral operations where appropriate; and
- The codification of the independence of Elections Yukon and more consistency in how election officers are appointed.

"The bill also makes many focused amendments to particular aspects of election administration and corrects minor errors in existing electoral district boundaries."

"Subject to limited transitional rules, most of the bill's provisions will apply on assent. Exceptions are the elimination of proxy voting, which will take effect only after the next general election, and improvements to the rules for parties' annual financial reporting, the application of which is generally delayed to 2016."

Yukon does not have a fixed date for the next general election. However, it is widely anticipated that the vote will take place in the fall of 2016.

### *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act update*

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On September 11, 2015, the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* was proclaimed and its regulations established. The *Act* had been assented to in December

2012. The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and regulations will come into force on January 1, 2016.

### CPA meeting

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Speaker Laxton, in his role as a Canadian Regional representative, attended the meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Executive Committee and the 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly in London, U.K. from October 1-5, 2015.

### 2015 Summit of North American Governors and Premiers

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Premier Pasloski led the Canadian delegation and represented all Canadian premiers at the 2015 Summit of North American Governors and Premiers, which was held in Colorado Springs, Colorado on October 31. The National Governors Association (US), the Council of the Federation (Canada) and the National Conference of Governors of Mexico jointly hosted the conference. Premier Pasloski represented the Council of the Federation as he will take over as chair of the council in 2016. This will be the first time a territory has been given this role. As council chair the Premier will host the next annual summer meeting of Canada's premiers, in Whitehorse.

Linda Kolody,  
Deputy Clerk



## Saskatchewan

The fourth session of the twenty-seventh legislature reconvened on October 13, 2015. This is the last sitting of the legislature expected prior to the provincial election mandated for April 4, 2016. The Saskatchewan

provincial election was to have been held on November 2, 2015 as per the election date prescribed in The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007. As the provincial election writ period would have overlapped that of the federal election, the legislation provides that the provincial election date be moved to the first Monday of the following April.

The Assembly agreed to sit 25 days and conclude at the end of the sitting day on November 26. While the opposition recorded their displeasure at the lack of a Throne Speech, they did not oppose the motion.

Premier **Brad Wall** indicated that the continuation of the 2014-15 session of the legislature would provide MLAs with more time to debate new legislation introduced by the government. In particular, the Premier said the government would be looking to pass a bill that was introduced in the spring to reduce magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) wait times by allowing private MRIs in Saskatchewan. It was also announced that legislation would be introduced to amend the province's essential services law to make it compliant with a recent Supreme Court ruling. New legislation related to farmland ownership is among other issues that the government plans to address.

**Cam Broten**, Leader of the Opposition, stated that his party will focus on issues that will benefit ordinary people and families. Four private members' bills remain before the Legislative Assembly from the previous sitting. They propose minimum care standards in seniors' homes, the establishment of gay-straight alliances in public schools, increased fairness for local businesses in government procurement policies, and increased transparency in regards to public-private partnerships.

### Members' Code of Ethical Conduct

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On October 14, 2015, the Standing Committee on House Services presented its 14th report to the Legislative Assembly with the purpose of demonstrating a commitment to the protection of personal information by MLAs. The report proposed that a model code of conduct regarding the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information be added to the Code of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Legislative Assembly.

As a result of an investigation by his office, Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner **Ronald J. Kruzeniski** presented recommendations to the committee regarding the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information by MLAs and their

staff. The investigation had been launched on April 29, 2015 following a citizen's complaint, the nature of which had been referred to in legislative proceedings. The Standing Committee on House Services recommended that the model code of conduct as proposed by the Information and Privacy Commissioner be adopted with minor amendments and added to the Code of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The addition to the Code of Ethical Conduct, as adopted, includes:

- Members of this Assembly must comply with *The Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, Part IV, Protection of Privacy, to the extent possible and as circumstances require.
- Members of this Assembly are committed to the protection of a citizen's personal information or personal health information which comes into their possession.
- Members of this Assembly must, when dealing with a citizen, obtain written consent to collect, use or disclose personal information or personal health information and will determine whether the citizen agrees to share in confidence or in a public way.
- Members of this Assembly must use the consent form outlined in this code with appropriate modifications.
- Members of this Assembly must provide a copy upon request of that consent to other Members of the Legislative Assembly, Ministers of the Crown or public bodies when requesting information or exchanging information.

The consent form outlines the purpose for which the private information was provided; grants consent for the disclosure of information in confidence to another MLA, a minister, their staff, or caucus staff; and provides direction on the treatment of the file upon the MLA's departure from office. Additional consent must be granted to share the information with the Legislative Assembly, the public, or the media.

The Assembly adopted the revised Code of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Code of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Legislative Assembly is an appendix of the Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. It can be viewed online at <http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/mlas/code-of-conduct>.

**Anne Drake**  
Committee Clerk



## National Assembly

### National Assembly proceedings

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The National Assembly resumed its proceedings on September 15, 2015, as provided in the Standing Orders.

### Composition and parliamentary offices

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Four Members handed in their resignation in recent months: **Gilles Ouimet**, Québec Liberal Party Member for the electoral division of Fabre, on August 24, 2015; **Marjolain Dufour**, Parti Québécois Member for the electoral division of René-Lévesque, on 10 September 10, 2015; **Marguerite Blais**, Québec Liberal Party Member for the electoral division of Saint-Henri-Sainte-Anne, on September 15, 2015; and **Robert Dutil**, Québec Liberal Party Member for the electoral division of Beauce-Sud, on September 26, 2015.

**Sylvie Roy**, Coalition Avenir Québec Member for the electoral division of Arthabaska, informed the

Chair of her decision to sit as an independent Member as of August 26, 2015.

On September 6, 2015, **Bernard Drainville**, Member for Marie-Victorin, was appointed Official Opposition House Leader. **Harold LeBel**, Member for Rimouski, was named Chief Opposition Whip, and **Nicole Léger**, Member for Pointe-aux-Trembles, was chosen as Caucus Chair of the Official Opposition.

The composition of the Assembly now stands as follows: 68 Members of the Québec Liberal Party, 29 Members of the Parti Québécois, 20 Members of the Coalition Avenir Québec, 4 independent Members, including three sitting under the banner of Québec Solidaire, and four vacant seats.

The President of the National Assembly, **Jacques Chagnon**, tabled modifications made to the distribution of measures and speaking time to reflect the changes in the composition of the Assembly. The modifications concern Oral Question Period, Statements by Members and the allocation of speaking time for certain limited debates.

### **Conduct of proceedings in the National Assembly**

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At the resumption of proceedings, the parliamentarians unanimously carried a motion moving that the National Assembly put an end to applause during Oral Questions and Answers in all sittings. The motion also asked that the resumption of Routine Proceedings of all sittings start 15 minutes after the beginning of Statements by Members so as to avoid delays for the remaining items of business. Last, the motion requested that the Standing Orders of the Assembly be amended accordingly before October 8, 2015.

### **Other events**

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In August 2015, the President of the National Assembly and of the Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant, Mr. Chagnon, as well as the Chief Electoral Officer, **Pierre Reid**, jointly launched the new democracy education program: *Vox populi : Your democracy at school!* This program allows young people to acquire knowledge about the election process as well as democratic institutions and replaces, among others, the *Parlement au primaire et au secondaire* training activity.

On September 23, 2015, the President of the Assembly inaugurated a new exhibition: *Entre savoir et pouvoir*,

*l'édifice Pamphile-Le May et la Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale 1915 à 2015*. This exhibition highlights the pivotal moments in the construction of Pamphile-Le May building as well as the history of the people who contributed to the development of the Library from 1915 to the present day.

### **Standing committee proceedings**

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#### *Public consultations*

Several committees held public consultations at the end of the summer. Close to a dozen mandates of this type were initiated before the resumption of Assembly proceedings in the fall.

On August 17, the Committee on Culture and Education (CCE) began its hearings with the heads of university-level educational institutions, within the framework of a statutory order. Thirteen of these institutions were heard by the Committee members, the last hearing having been held on September 21.

The Committee on Health and Social Services (CHSS) devoted five sittings to gathering the opinions of some 30 groups interested in Bill 44, *An Act to bolster tobacco control*. In total, over 60 briefs were submitted to the Committee within the context of this mandate.

Other extensive public consultations that had begun this summer continued in September. The Committee on Institutions (CI) held nine sittings on Bill 59, *An Act to enact the Act to prevent and combat hate speech and speech inciting violence and to amend various legislative provisions to better protect individuals*. Consultations were held from August 17 to September 23 and enabled close to 40 individuals and organizations to come before the Committee to give their point of view. The Committee on Transportation and the Environment (CTE) focussed its attention on the Green Paper on the modernization of the Environment Quality Act entitled "Moderniser le régime d'autorisation environnementale de la Loi sur la qualité de l'environnement". Hearings began on August 31 and ended on September 15, allowing some 40 groups to express their views on the issue.

#### *Committee chairs and vice-chairs*

Several committees elected their chairs and vice-chairs. The members of the CI appointed the Member for Chomedey, **Guy Ouellette**, to replace Mr. Ouimet as chair of this committee. The Committee on Citizen Relations' vice-chair vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Ms. Blais was filled by the appointment of **Michel Matte**, Member for Portneuf.

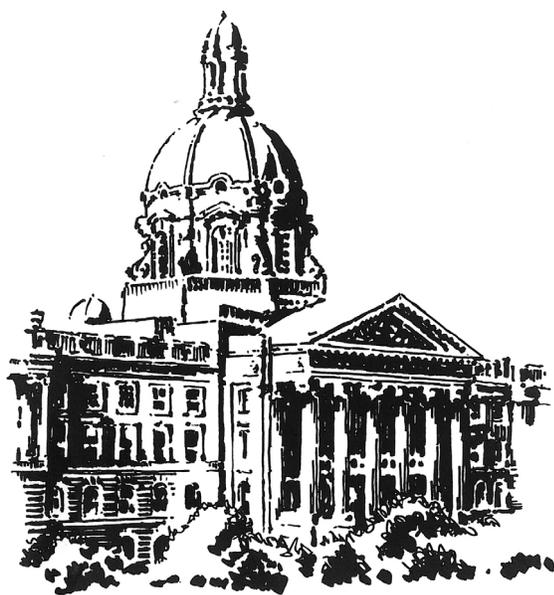
The redistribution of duties and portfolios among the Members of the Official Opposition and of the Second Opposition Group also brought about changes in the composition of the standing committees. The appointment of Mr. Drainville as Official Opposition House Leader and of Ms. Léger as Caucus Chair of this parliamentary group brought about the election of the vice-chair of the Committee on Public Finance (CPF) and the chair of the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy and Natural Resources (CAFENR). The Member for Labelle, **Sylvain Pagé**, replaced Mr. Drainville as vice-chair of the CPF, and the Member for Chicoutimi, **Stéphane Bédard**, replaced his colleague Ms. Léger as chair of the CAFENR.

**Sylvia Ford**

Parliamentary Proceedings Directorate  
Sittings Service

**Pierre-Luc Turgeon**

Parliamentary Proceedings Directorate  
Committees Service



## Alberta

### 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the 29<sup>th</sup> Legislature – continued

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The 1<sup>st</sup> session of the 29<sup>th</sup> Legislature resumed on October 26, 2015. In the first week the Government's Bill 4, *An Act to Implement Various Tax Measures and to Enact the Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act* and a Private Member's Public Bill, Bill 203, *Election (Restrictions on Government Advertising) Amendment Act, 2015*, sponsored by Rick Strankman, MLA (Drumheller-

Stettler) received First Reading. Bill 4 would repeal the *Fiscal Management Act* and create legislative requirements for the contents and coordination of the Government's financial reporting. It would also set limits on the amount of debt the Government is permitted to incur and provides how amounts in various funds may be allocated. Bill 203 seeks to legislate limits on government advertising during election campaign periods to ensure government resources are not used to support partisan interests.

### 2015-2016 Budget

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On October 27, 2015, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance Joe Ceci, MLA (Calgary-Fort) released the new government's first budget. Delayed for several months by the spring provincial election the 2015-2016 budget confirms the progressive income tax model and higher corporate taxes brought in on July 1, 2015, and that Alberta will continue to have no provincial sales tax. The budget anticipates a \$6.1-billion deficit by the end of the fiscal year, which will require the Government of Alberta to borrow to cover its operational expenses for the first time in over two decades. The Government will increase infrastructure spending throughout the province with a focus on projects related to sustainable housing, flood mitigation, roads and bridges, education and health-care facilities. Other features of the budget include increased taxes on alcohol, tobacco and locomotive fuel and a two-year freeze on post-secondary tuition. A variety of services will see significant funding increases including: public home care and long-term care, childcare programs, women's shelters, a targeted school nutrition program and other education initiatives.

### Changes to the Standing Orders

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Government Motion 19 (GM 19), which proposed significant changes to the Standing Orders, was passed on November 5, 2015. The previous Standing Orders noted that each Ministry was scheduled for three hours of main estimates consideration with the exception of Executive Council, which received two hours of consideration. Under the amended Standing Orders beginning on January 1, 2016, the Official Opposition will now have the opportunity to designate up to four Ministries whose estimates will receive up to six hours of consideration in exchange for reducing the time allotted to three other Ministries down to two hours. Executive Council will continue to have two hours of consideration.

GM 19 has also introduced morning sittings. Previously the Assembly would sit from 1:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Monday through Wednesday, and 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Thursdays. The Assembly could also, upon passage of a government motion, hold evening sittings Monday through Wednesday commencing at 7:30 p.m. The amended Standing Orders now permit morning sittings, to conduct Government business, from 10:00 a.m. until noon on Tuesday and 9:00 a.m. until noon on Wednesday and Thursday. The addition of morning sittings came into effect on November 24, 2015, following the completion of main estimates consideration.

### **By-Election in Calgary-Foothills**

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On September 3, 2015, a provincial by-election was held in the constituency of Calgary-Foothills to fill the vacancy left when former Premier **Jim Prentice** resigned from politics. The successful candidate was Wildrose candidate **Prasad Panda**, a professional engineer and senior manager with Suncor. With his victory the membership of the Assembly now includes 53 New Democrats, 22 Wildrose, nine Progressive Conservatives, one Alberta Liberal, one Alberta Party and one Independent.

### **Cabinet Changes**

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On October 22, 2015, the Cabinet expanded by one, when **Danielle Larivee**, MLA (Lesser Slave Lake) was sworn in as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Service Alberta. **Deron Bilous**, MLA (Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview), who formerly held these two portfolios, will now oversee the new Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, which encompasses part of the previous Advanced Education and Innovation portfolio. As a result, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Innovation has been renamed "Advanced Education" but remains the responsibility of **Lori Sigurdson**, MLA (Edmonton-Riverview) who also retains the Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour portfolio.

### **Report by the Clerk**

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In response to concerns raised by the Progressive Conservative House Leader **Richard Starke**, MLA (Vermilion-Lloydminster), a review was initiated by the Clerk of the Assembly of the practices followed in the recruitment and selection of constituency staff for members of the New Democrat (ND) caucus following the spring election. It was determined that the initial advertising for these non-partisan positions developed

by the ND transition team, without the involvement of the Human Resource Services branch of the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO), raised a number of concerns. However, a report, released on September 11, 2015, concluded that although the initial advertising for constituency office assistants by the ND transition team raised a number of concerns, the timely intervention of former Speaker **Gene Zwozdesky** and the Government House Leader resulted in a recruitment and selection process consistent with the requirements of the *Financial Administration Act*, and the orders and directives of the Members' Services Committee.

### **Legislative Offices Committee**

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On September 24, 2015, the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices held its first meeting since the spring election. The Committee approved an additional \$200,000 for the Office of the Ethics Commissioner to rebuild and improve the Lobbyists Registry and database, as well as an additional \$275,000 to cover the expansion of responsibilities for the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. In addition, the Committee authorized a compensation strategy for the Officers of the Legislature, which included a 2.25 per cent cost of living adjustment and a five-per-cent salary modifier, and approved funds to send three committee members and the Committee's Clerk to the 2015 Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) conference in Boston, Massachusetts.

The latter two decisions faced significant criticism from opposition parties and the media, and the Committee Chair, **Denise Woollard**, MLA (Edmonton-Mill Creek), announced that another committee meeting would be scheduled to review these decisions. A meeting was held on September 29, 2015, and the Committee made unanimous decisions to rescind the increases in the Legislative Officers compensation package for 2015-2016, and also decided that the Committee would not send delegates to the 2015 COGEL Conference.

### **Clerk of the Assembly - Retirement**

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After serving as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for over 28 years David McNeil will be retiring at the end of January 2016. Dr. McNeil is the sixth Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and has the second longest tenure in this role. He has served during nine legislatures under five different Speakers and during the terms of seven different Premiers.

**Jody Rempel**  
Committee Clerk