



British Columbia

General Election

The Legislative Assembly adjourned on March 16, 2017 and dissolution of the 40th Parliament occurred on April 11, 2017, with the provincial general election scheduled for May 9, 2017. Party standings at dissolution were: 47 BC Liberal Party; 35 New Democratic Party of BC; 3 Independents.

Speech from the Throne

The Fifth Session of the 40th Parliament prorogued on February 14, 2017, and the Sixth Session opened that afternoon with the Speech from the Throne delivered by Lieutenant Governor **Judith Guichon**. This year's Throne Speech focused on housing affordability, education, job creation, and natural resource development – including partnerships with Indigenous communities. During the Address in Reply debate, Opposition Members criticized the Throne Speech for failing to provide affordable child care or address social inequities and poverty, and for not prioritizing improvements to the child welfare system.

Budget 2017

One week later, on February 21, 2017, Minister of Finance **Michael de Jong**, presented the government's budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year. The Minister noted that this was BC's fifth consecutive balanced budget, delivering "the dividends of a strong and diversified economy and prudent fiscal management." Highlights

of the budget include reduced Medical Services Plan premiums, increases to funding for health care, education and social services, as well as incentives for first-time homebuyers. In her response to Budget 2017, Opposition Finance Critic **Carole James** argued that the budget does not address costs that will adversely affect low and middle-income families, such as planned rate increases to BC Hydro and Insurance Corporation of BC, nor does the budget provide minimum wage increases or measures to address BC's current housing affordability issues.

Legislation

In total, 10 government bills and 40 private members' bills were introduced this Session. Seven government bills received Royal Assent on March 16, 2017, including the *Discriminatory Provisions (Historical Wrongs) Repeal Act*. This Act, which was unanimously supported by Members, will permanently remove discriminatory provisions in 19 historical private Acts, including provisions based on a person's ethnicity or place of origin. The *Information Management (Documenting Government Decisions) Amendment Act* was also given Royal Assent. The Act requires the head of a government body to create and maintain certain records that document key business decisions made by government. *Supply Act (No. 1), 2017* also received Royal Assent in order to provide interim supply for government operating expenses and expenditures during the first six months of the 2017-18 fiscal year. Following the opening of the new 41st Parliament following the general election, the Assembly will resume consideration of a budget and accompanying estimates.

A Rare Question to the Chair

For the final question of the Sixth Session, Opposition House Leader **Mike Farnworth** made use of the rarely-employed procedure of asking a question of a chair of a parliamentary committee. Opposition Member, **Bruce Ralston**, Chair of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts, was queried about the Office of the Auditor General's report on the 2015-2016 Public Accounts, which had been referred to the Committee for review.

Transition Guide for Members of the Legislative Assembly

As the Sixth Session drew to a close, 14 of 85 Members announced that they would not be seeking re-election. The Assembly offered seminars for these Members on the services and supports available, including transitional assistance and retraining allowances, as well as information regarding pension planning for Members who are retiring. A *Transition Guide for Members of the Legislative Assembly* was also made available on the Assembly's website (<http://members.leg.bc.ca/docs/Transition-Guide.pdf>), which additionally includes information for Members seeking re-election regarding procedures to note during the election period, including the appropriate use of constituency and legislative offices.

41st Parliament Preparations

As noted in the 2016 Spring Issue, two new electoral districts will be added in the coming provincial general election to reflect BC's growing urban populations, bringing the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly up to 87. With significant changes to the Legislative Assembly's complement of Members, preparations are underway for the development of an orientation program and renewed online resources to assist new and returning Members, including an updated Members' 2017 Orientation website available publicly (<http://members.leg.bc.ca>).

Parliamentary Committees

A number of parliamentary committees had an intense period of activity prior to the close of the Sixth Session. The Select Standing Committee on Health completed its mandate to identify potential strategies to maintain a sustainable health care system for British Columbians with the March 1, 2017 release of its report *Looking Forward: Improving Rural Health Care, Primary Care, and Addiction Recovery Programs*. The Committee's

work over a three-year period was supported by two public consultation processes and hearings throughout the province. The unanimous report puts forward 59 recommendations targeted at strengthening three key areas of health care: rural health care and recruitment; the use of interdisciplinary teams in primary and community care settings; and addiction recovery programs.

The Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth continued its statutory review of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, as required at least once every five years under the *Act*. The Committee invited input on the *Act* through their public consultation process, which ran from December 16, 2016 to February 10, 2017. In addition, the Committee received briefings from officials with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The Committee is expected to resume its review of the *Act* in the next Parliament.

Following the November 15, 2016 unanimous recommendation of the Special Committee to Appoint a Representative for Children and Youth, the Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution on February 16, 2017 appointing **Bernard Richard** to a five-year term as the Representative for Children and Youth. As noted in the previous issue of this publication, Mr. Richard was appointed as Acting Representative effective November 27, 2016, the date on which the previous Representative's term concluded.

From March 1, 2016 to March 15, 2017, the Special Committee to Appoint an Information and Privacy Commissioner conducted two comprehensive recruitment processes, which included extensive interviews with a number of applicants; however, the Committee was unable to come to a unanimous recommendation as required by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. In light of this, the Committee presented a report to the Legislative Assembly on March 16, 2017 with the recommendation that a new Committee be appointed in the next Parliament to continue this work.

BC Search and Rescue Volunteer Memorial

The Lieutenant Governor proclaimed March 2, 2017 as Search and Rescue Volunteer Memorial Day in British Columbia. She marked the day by joining Speaker **Linda Reid**, Minister of State for Emergency Preparedness **Naomi Yamamoto**, and Leader of the Official Opposition **John Horgan**, along with search and rescue volunteers and their families in unveiling

the new B.C. Search and Rescue Volunteer Memorial. This is the latest monument to be erected in proximity to the Garden of Honour on the Legislature grounds, which includes the Fallen Firefighters Memorial, Fallen Paramedics Memorial, and the Law Enforcement Memorial.

Partnership Agreement with Guyana

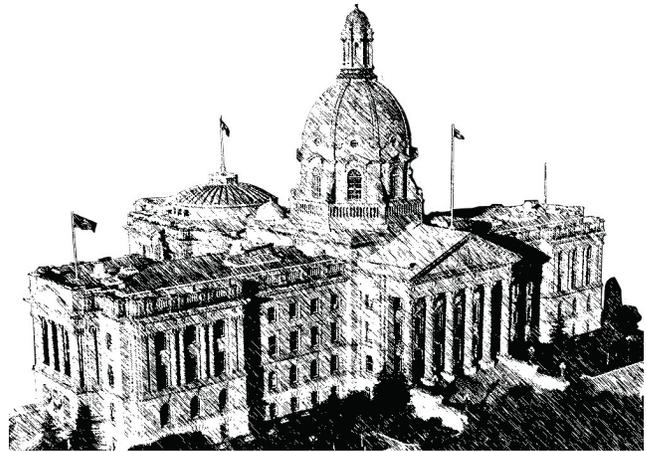
On January 17, 2017, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia and the National Assembly of the Parliament of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana signed a Partnership Agreement between the two assemblies during a ceremony that took place in Georgetown, Guyana. This agreement was two years in the making and initiated by the Clerk of the House in consultation with the Speaker following a request by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for Canadian legislatures to twin with Caribbean parliaments. After two visits to Georgetown by the Clerk, a delegation from BC led by Speaker Reid, and consisting of the Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees and the Director of Hansard, travelled to Guyana to sign the agreement and meet with their parliamentary colleagues. Under the terms of the Partnership Agreement, the two assemblies will actively work towards developing professional relationships through the exchange of information regarding the work of the assemblies on matters of common interest, as well as through professional development activities between the two institutions. Additionally, the agreement will promote the exchange of visits between the two assemblies as a means of fostering links between parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, building capacity in the National Assembly of Guyana, and exploring areas for potential project development.

Visit from Danish Delegation

Representatives from the National Parliament of Denmark's Committee for Rural Districts and Islands, accompanied by Royal Danish Embassy and Consulate officials, visited the Legislative Assembly on March 6, 2017 and met with Speaker Reid, Members of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, and ministry officials. The Danish Committee's visit to BC centered on learning about the promotion of growth, employment and development in our province, and how the traditional industries of agriculture, fishing and forestry have adapted to a changing business environment.

Lisa Hill

Committee Research Analyst



Alberta

3rd Session of the 29th Legislature

On Thursday, March 2, 2017, the 3rd session of the 29th Legislature commenced with the Speech from the Throne, delivered by Lieutenant Governor **Lois Mitchell**. The speech focused on job creation, improvement of public services and maintaining an affordable cost of living. Later that afternoon Minister of Education **David Eggen**, MLA (Edmonton-Calder) introduced Bill 1, *An Act to Reduce School Fees*. The proposed legislation seeks to amend the *School Act* to place limitations on the fees charged by school boards for student transportation, textbooks, and instructional fees.

Budget 2017-2018

On March 16, 2017, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance **Joe Ceci**, MLA (Calgary-Fort), tabled the Government's Budget 2017 fiscal plan. As in previous years the main estimates for each ministry have been referred to one of three Legislative Policy Committees for consideration. The meetings to consider the estimates were scheduled to run through April 19, 2017, when all estimates will be voted on in Committee of Supply. In recent years, the estimates for each ministry have been scheduled for three hours of consideration with the exception of Executive Council which, under the Standing Orders, receives two hours of consideration. This year, for the first time, the Official Opposition has used Standing Order 59.01(3.1) to designate four ministries for which estimates are considered for up to six hours while also designating three ministries for which estimates consideration is set at two hours. The 2017-18 estimates of the following four ministries have been designated to receive six hours of consideration: Justice and Solicitor General;

Environment and Parks; Health; and Education. Accordingly, the time scheduled for consideration of the estimates for Status of Women, Service Alberta, and Indigenous Relations has been reduced to two hours for each ministry. Executive Council continues to be set at two hours by the Standing Orders.

Cabinet Changes

On January 19, 2017, Premier **Rachel Notley** announced the creation of the new Ministry of Children's Services by dividing the responsibilities of the Ministry of Human Services. **Danielle Larivee**, formerly the Minister of Municipal Affairs, is now the Minister of Children's Services. **Irfan Sabir**, previously the Minister of Human Services, retains responsibility for the services that remain under the renamed Ministry of Community and Social Services. **Shaye Anderson** is now the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Following these changes, the Government of Alberta now has 21 ministries.

Standing Order 30 – Emergency Debate

On March 6, 2017, **David Swann**, MLA (Calgary-Mountain View), requested that an emergency debate take place on "the growing number of deaths from opioid use and abuse, including the use of fentanyl". All Members in the Assembly agreed to proceed with the debate, and, later that same afternoon, as discussion on the matter approached three hours in length, the Assembly again gave unanimous consent to extend the afternoon sitting by an extra half hour and to adjourn no later than 6:30 p.m.

Committee Business

Standing Order 59.01(11) prohibits committees from meeting for any other purpose during the period in which the main estimates stand referred to the Legislative Policy Committees unless otherwise ordered by the Assembly. The Select Special Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner Search Committee has requested and received an exemption from this prohibition to ensure it is able to conduct its recruitment process in an efficient and timely fashion.

On March 13, 2017, the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship released its report on its review of the Alberta Property Rights Advocate Office 2015 *Annual Report*. Once the consideration of the 2017-18 main estimates is finished the Committee will continue its review of the *Lobbyists Act*, which must be completed before August 18, 2017.

The Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future completed its inquiry into growing and diversifying Alberta's agri-food and agribusiness sectors. As part of the review process the Committee received 104 written submissions and heard 32 presentations from identified stakeholders. The Committee's final report, tabled on April 10, 2017, contains 13 recommendations, many of which were supported by all members of the committee. The Committee has now been tasked with reviewing Bill 203, *Alberta Standard Time Act*, and reporting its recommendations to the Assembly by October 4, 2017.

On February 13, 2017, the Standing Committee on Families and Communities tabled its report on Bill 203, *Fair Trading (Motor Vehicle Repair Pricing Protection for Consumers) Amendment Act, 2016*, as an intersessional deposit. The report recommended that the Bill, which had been referred to the Committee after First Reading, not proceed.

Jody Rempel
Committee Clerk



Manitoba

The Second Session of the 41st Legislature resumed on March 1, 2017. In addition to bills introduced in December 2016, the Government introduced several new bills addressing different issues including:

Bill 9 – The Advocate for Children and Youth Act, which expands the mandate of the Children's Advocate of Manitoba for advocacy services, gives the Advocate a broad discretion to review and investigate a serious injury or death of a child, and expands public reporting;

Bill 21 – The Fiscal Responsibility and Taxpayer Protection Act, which replaces the Balanced Budget Act, repealed last year. Among other measures, it sets the guidelines to withhold part of the salary of members of Cabinet if government incurs a deficit;

Bill 28 – The Public Services Sustainability Act, establishes a four-year sustainability period during which the compensation for public sector employees, and the fee payments to physicians and other health professionals, may not be increased except by the percentages permitted by the Bill;

Bill 30 – The Local Vehicles for Hire Act, giving municipalities the power to make by-laws regulating the vehicle-for-hire industry, including taxis, limousines, and vehicles hired through an online application, a digital network or platform or a website.

Bill 31 – The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act, which amends the restrictions on tuition increases and removes the restrictions on course-related fees. The bill also sets guidelines for provincial grants to universities.

The Legislative Security Act

On March 8, the Government introduced *Bill 18 – The Legislative Security Act*, to deal with security in the legislative precinct. The bill confirms that the Speaker of the Assembly is the individual with the ultimate responsibility for security for Legislative Assembly offices and areas. However, it also requires the Speaker and the Minister of Justice to enter into an arrangement respecting the provision of security in the legislative precinct. A director of legislative security must be selected and will be responsible for providing direction to legislative security officers who will provide security services in the legislative precinct.

The bill also authorizes security officers to screen people entering the Legislative Building together with the power to deny entry, seize weapons, and evict a person from the legislative precinct.

Standing Committees

Since our last submission, the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs met in January to consider annual reports from the Children's Advocate and again in April to consider the appointment of the Children's Advocate and the recommendation from the Subcommittee struck to deal with the hiring process.

In addition, the Social and Economic Development Committee, the Legislative Affairs Committee, and the Justice Committee met on several occasions to hear public presentations and conduct clause-by-clause consideration of a number of government bills.

Committee of Supply

In the beginning of March, the Committee of Supply considered and passed supply resolutions dealing with temporary funding for operating and capital expenditures until the 2017-18 fiscal year budget and budget processes and the main supply bills are completed later this session. The House also dealt with passing all stages of Interim Supply legislation. As a result, *Bill 8 – The Interim Appropriation Act, 2017* received Royal Assent on March 20, 2017.

Specified and Designated Bills in the New Rules

As noted in previous submissions, the Legislative Assembly adopted a series of changes to its Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceeding, prior to the dissolution of the 40th Legislature.

One of the most significant changes was the establishment of a sessional calendar and the creation of two bill categories: specified bills and designated bills. The rules set defined deadlines for the completion of all stages of these bills by either the end of the Spring Sittings or the Fall Sittings. Government bills meeting certain deadlines are guaranteed to receive Royal Assent by the end of the Spring Sitting in the beginning of June. Those bills are called specified bills. However, the Official Opposition may designate up to five Government bills for the purpose of further consideration, with these bills to be held over until the resumption of the Fall Sittings.

On April 3, for the first time, the Opposition House Leader tabled the list of Government Bills Designated by the Official Opposition for consideration in the Fall Sitting Period. The first Bills designated for completion in the Fall Sittings were *Bill 30 – The Local Vehicles for Hire Act* and *Bill 31 – The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act*. On April 6, the Opposition House Leader designated three additional bills, *Bill 23 – The Fisheries Amendment Act*, *Bill 24 – The Red Tape Reduction and Government Efficiency Act*, and *Bill 27 – The Elections Amendment Act*. In accordance with our rules, the Official Opposition may designate up to five Government Bills for the purpose of further consideration at a later sitting period.

Retirement of the Sergeant-at-Arms

On March 23, **Blake Dunn**, the Sergeant-at-Arms, marched for the last time in front of the parade carrying the mace. It was Mr. Dunn's last day with the Legislative Assembly prior to his well-deserved retirement. On the previous day, the House paid a tribute to the retiring Sergeant-at-Arms with comments from the Speaker, the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party.

Member Sitting as an Independent

Mohinder Saran, MLA for the Winnipeg constituency of The Maples, was removed from the NDP caucus on January 31. In accordance with section 52.3.1 of *The Legislative Assembly Act*, a member who is elected with the endorsement of a political party and ceases to belong to the caucus of that party during the term for which he or she was elected must sit in the Assembly as an independent during the remainder of the term.

Recognizing the 100th Anniversary of Manitoba Women Getting the Vote

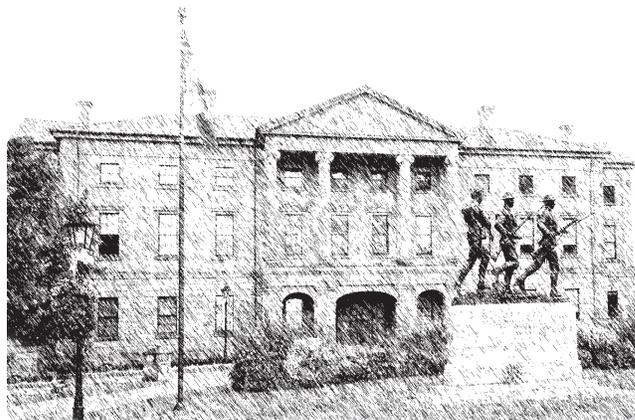
On November 29th, 2016, Speaker **Myrna Driedger**, along with the Nellie McClung Foundation, unveiled a plaque commemorating the 100th anniversary of some Manitoba women gaining the right to vote, making Manitoba the first province in Canada to enfranchise some women. This plaque marks the centerpiece of the Vote100 Wall, a permanent exhibit outside the Chamber. Speaker Driedger unveiled the Vote100 Wall January 24th, 2017, while hosting the Manitoba delegation for Equal Voice's Daughters of the Vote. The young women enjoyed an eventful day at the Manitoba Legislature; beginning with a discussion led by Equal Voice National regarding the importance of encouraging more women to participate in politics, a tour of the legislature, lunch with Speaker Driedger, Senator Bovey, former Member of Parliament and Member of the Legislative Assembly **Judy Wasylcia-Leis**, and Manitoba Teachers' Society's **Danielle Fullan-Kolton**. In the afternoon Speaker Driedger hosted two panels discussing the panelists experiences being a woman in politics. The first panel featured three former Members of Parliament: **Anita Neville**, **Dorothy Dobbie**, and Ms. Wasylcia-Leis. The second panel featured current Members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly: **Rochelle Squires**, **Nahanni Fontaine**, and **Cindy Lamoureux**. Each Daughter of the Vote delegate was presented with a special medallion from the Speaker.

Current Party Standings

The current party standings in the Manitoba Legislature are: Progressive Conservatives 40, New Democratic Party 12, four Independent Members, and one vacancy.

Andrea Signorelli

Clerk Assistant/Clerk of Committees



Prince Edward Island

Second Session, Sixty-fifth General Assembly

The Second Session of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly resumed on April 4, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. in the Legislative Assembly Chamber, The Hon. George Coles Building. It had previously adjourned to the call of the Speaker on December 15, 2016.

Budget

Minister of Finance **Allen Roach** delivered the Budget Address on April 7. Total revenue for 2017-18 is listed at \$1.812 billion, and total expenditures \$1.811 billion, with a surplus of \$600,000. In terms of tax measures, the Basic Personal Income Tax exemption will grow by 2 per cent. Notable expenditure increases include \$5.5 million more for K-12 education, a 5.8 per cent growth in health expenditures, and \$6.6 million more to the Department of Families and Human Services for programs and services for Islanders in need.

House Business

To date in the month of April, Government has tabled 3 bills, with 4 bills from the fall sitting still on the Order

Paper awaiting second reading. Notable among them are Bill No. 61, “An Act to Amend the Archives and Records Act”, which is intended to improve records management across government, and a new “Lobbyists Registration Act” (Bill No. 57).

Leader of the Third Party Peter Bevan-Baker tabled Private Member’s Bill No. 103, “Election Age Act”, on April 6. This bill would amend the *Election Act* to lower the voting age to 16 from 18 years of age, and also amend the *Legislative Assembly Act* to lower the age of eligibility to serve as a member to 16 from 18. As of this writing the bill has been introduced and read a first time.

The Official Opposition has not introduced any bills so far during the spring sitting, but has tabled eight motions on matters such as re-introduction of elected school boards, the establishment of a Passport Canada Office in PEI, and an expansion of the insulin pump program for adult Type 1 diabetes.

Electoral Boundaries Commission

A five-person Electoral Boundaries Commission was established pursuant to the *Electoral Boundaries Act* in December 2016, in order to review the provincial electoral districts and make a report, complete with recommendations, to the Legislative Assembly. The Commission held public meetings during the winter, and is due to submit its report to the Legislative Assembly during the spring sitting. In putting forward recommendations, the Commission will consider public input, enumeration data from the last General Election, population patterns, communities of interest, existing polling divisions, municipal boundaries, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and other factors the Commission may deem relevant. The decisions of the Commission regarding electoral boundaries are binding under the *Electoral Boundaries Act*.

Speaker’s Ruling

On April 5, Speaker **Francis (Buck) Watts** ruled on a Point of Order raised by **Steven Myers** (District 2: Georgetown – St. Peters) on December 8, 2016 in objection to a response given during Oral Question Period by **Allen Roach**, Minister of Finance. The Speaker found that the response did not attribute unavowed or false motives to Mr. Myers or the Members of the Official Opposition, and thus there was no basis for a Point of Order.

Cabinet Changes

On February 15, 2017, Premier **H. Wade MacLauchlan** announced two new appointments to Cabinet. **Pat Murphy** (District 26: Alberton – Roseville) was appointed to the newly created position of Minister of Rural and Regional Development. **Sonny Gallant** (District 24: Evangeline – Miscouche) was appointed Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, replacing **Richard Brown** (District 12: Charlottetown – Victoria Park). Mr. Brown is no longer in Cabinet, but was later appointed to serve as Government House Leader. With the changes, Cabinet now stands at 11 members, which is the largest it may be under the *Executive Council Act*.

Ryan Reddin

Clerk Assistant – Research, Committees & Visitor Services



Ontario

Tributes

On March 6, 2017, the Legislature paid tribute to the Member for York-Simcoe, **Julia Munro** for her distinguished 22 years of public service. Ms. Munro is the longest-serving female member of the Ontario Legislature.

Changing of the Guard

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario has a new Sergeant-at-Arms. **Jacquelyn Gordon** brings 34 years of experience with the Halton Regional Police Service to the role, which she began on January 16, 2017. Ms. Gordon is also the first female Sergeant-at-Arms in the history of the Ontario Legislature.

Accessibility at the Legislature

On November 15, 2016, the Legislature passed a motion authorizing a change in format to the online and printed bills. As part of the Legislative Assembly's commitment to accessibility and in an effort to facilitate the use of screen readers for the visually impaired, the two-column format of bills has been abandoned. Previously, bills were formatted with two columns on each page, displaying both English and French text side-by-side. Effective January 1, 2017, all new bills are now printed in a flip format, allowing the reader to read the entire bill in English and, by flipping the bill over and beginning from the other cover, read it entirely in French. The bills are also available on the Legislative Assembly's website in both languages.

Committee Activities

The Standing Committee on General Government considered Bill 27, *An Act to reduce the regulatory burden on business, to enact various new Acts and to make other amendments and repeals*. The bill, which was introduced by Minister of Economic Development and Growth **Brad Duguid** was comprised of 17 schedules in which the amendments, repeals and new Acts, affecting a dozen ministries, were set out.

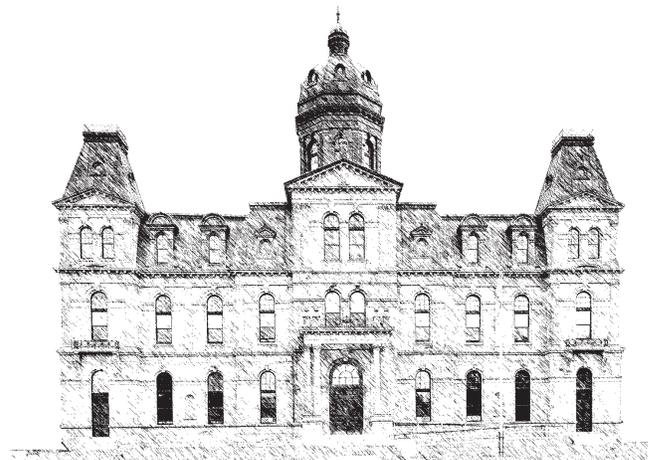
Schedule 10 of the bill proposed an amendment to the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998*, that would, among other things, authorize the Board to make rules respecting the periods during which gas or electricity may not be disconnected from low volume consumers. This measure was the subject of much discussion in the House and, in an effort to expedite its passage during a cold winter period, both the member for Prince Edward-Hastings **Todd Smith** and Minister of Energy **Glenn Thibeault**, introduced stand-alone bills containing this provision of Schedule 10 for the House to consider while Bill 27 was being considered in Committee.

On February 22, 2017, the House granted unanimous consent for the stand-alone bill proposed by the Minister of Energy (Bill 95, *An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998*) to receive all three Readings in one day. The bill received Royal Assent that same afternoon. Meanwhile, the Committee held two days of public hearings on Bill 27 on February 22 and 23, 2017, and clause-by-clause consideration on February 27, 2017. The bill was reported to the House as amended on February 28, 2017, and received Royal Assent on March 2, 2017.

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs considered Bill 84, *An Act to amend various Acts with respect to medical assistance in dying*. The Committee held public hearings on the bill on March 24 and March 31, 2017, with clause-by-clause consideration of the bill scheduled for April 11, 2017.

The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly resumed its consideration of petition procedures in March of 2017, following 10 months of study on the potential implementation of E-petitions during the First Session of the 41st Parliament. The Committee received the report of the E-petitions Working Group, which was struck after the Committee's Report on E-petitions was presented to the House on February 16, 2016. **Todd Decker**, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and **Kirk Cameron**, Director, Technology Services, appeared before the Committee to answer questions about the Working Group's report. At a subsequent meeting, the Committee referred further consideration of E-petitions to the Sub-committee on Committee Business.

Christopher Tyrell
Committee Clerk



New Brunswick

Ice Storm

The House adjourned on December 16 and briefly resumed sitting on January 31, when Finance Minister **Cathy Rogers** was expected to table the Government's third Budget. Instead, the House adjourned again until February 7 to accommodate the relief efforts in the Acadian peninsula, which was severely impacted by an ice storm. At the storm's peak, 130,000 people were without power for several days and several New Brunswick communities declared states of emergency.

Over 380 crews were on the ground, including the Canadian Armed Forces, to provide relief services.

Budget

On February 7, Minister Rogers tabled the 2017-2018 Budget. While a deficit of \$191.9 million was projected for 2017-2018, the New Brunswick economy was also projected to grow by 0.6 per cent in 2017. The province aims to return to fiscal balance by 2020-2021. "We are meeting our financial targets," said Minister Rogers, "we have been able to do this without making deep cuts to the programs that New Brunswickers hold dear."

The 2017-2018 Budget includes record investments in education and health care. Effective January 1, 2018, the daycare assistance program's budget will be doubled and an annual \$7 million has been earmarked for investments in literacy programming for adults and children. An additional \$45 million has been secured over four years to invest in publicly-funded universities, as well as setting aside money for a new program to provide tuition relief for the middle class. As a result of a partnership with the federal government, the current budget for health care is increasing by 3.3 per cent, bringing the budget for the Department of Health to \$2.657 billion. There is also a \$58.2 million investment for the construction, maintenance, and general improvement to the network of nursing homes across the province over the next three years.

Finance Critic **Bruce Fitch** delivered the Official Opposition's reply to the Budget on February 9. Fitch raised concerns over the government's increased spending and that recent tax increases have not decreased the debt. Fitch questioned the governing party's relationship with the federal government, accusing the Premier of missing a financial opportunity for the people of New Brunswick with regard to the Energy East Pipeline. He called for the Premier to support the findings of the National Energy Board, regardless of the Prime Minister's position. Fitch also questioned certain government initiatives, such as the privatization of cleaning and food services within the health care system, the Tuition Access Bursary program's lack of a sliding scale, and the spruce budworm forest protection investment after cuts to silviculture.

Legislation

Legislation introduced by the Government during the spring sitting includes:

Bill 39, *An Act Respecting the Opening of Sealed Adoption Records*, introduced by Families and Children Minister **Stephen Horsman**, proposes to make future adoption records available to both birth parents and their children once the adoptee has reached the age of majority, to make past adoption records available once the adoptee has reached the age of majority unless a birth parent has filed a disclosure veto against the release of identifying information, to allow birth parents and adult adoptees to choose if and how they want to be contacted by the other party, and to create an original birth registration that includes the names of the birth parents and the adoptee's name at birth.

Bill 44, *Local Governance Act*, and Bill 45, *Community Planning Act*, introduced by Environment and Local Government Minister **Serge Rousselle**, will act in concert and replace the current *Municipalities Act* and *Community Planning Act* to bring New Brunswick's local governance legislation in line with that of most other Canadian jurisdictions by recognizing local governments as a responsible and accountable level of government which is a separate, autonomous and distinct entity from the provincial government. The proposed legislation will give local governments power to enact bylaws without having to request legislative changes, to engage in activities to maintain and expand their tax base, providing planning and development tools that will generate funding, modernize service delivery, and be more user-friendly to make navigation easier for planning authorities.

Bill 47, *Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Act*, introduced by Premier and Minister responsible for Women's Equality, **Brian Gallant**, provides more timely access to civil remedies for victims of intimate partner violence. It will allow victims to apply to a designated official for an emergency order, without notice to the respondent, to obtain remedies to respond to their circumstances. These remedies may include an exclusive occupation of the residence, temporary possession of personal property, no contact provisions, temporary custody of children, and seizure of weapons.

Bill 48, *An Act Respecting "Ellen's Law"*, introduced by Justice and Public Safety Minister **Denis Landry**, is an amendment to the *Motor Vehicle Act* aimed at improving safety for cyclists by prohibiting motor vehicles from passing bicycles travelling in the same direction unless there is one meter between cyclists and motor vehicles and by allowing motorists to cross the center line while passing bicycles. The name of the amendment is in memory of cyclist **Ellen Watters**, who

died in December as a result of injuries from a collision with a motor vehicle during a training ride.

Bill 62, *An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act*, introduced by Deputy Government House Leader **Victor Boudreau**, responds to a recommendation from the New Brunswick Commission on Electoral Reform to change the fixed date for provincial elections from the fourth Monday in September to the third Monday in October. The rationale is that this would accommodate a greater number of post-secondary students who wish to participate in the electoral process. Currently, a period of 40 days is required to establish residency in the province, which limits students who have recently moved to the province in order to attend a post-secondary institution.

Committees

The Standing Committees on Economic Policy, chaired by **Gilles LePage**, and Estimates and Fiscal Policy, chaired by **Bernard LeBlanc**, remained active during the spring session, considering various government bills and departmental estimates. Additionally, the Standing Committee on Private Bills, chaired by **Wilfred Roussel**, met to consider various private legislation.

Recognition of the Battle at Vimy Ridge

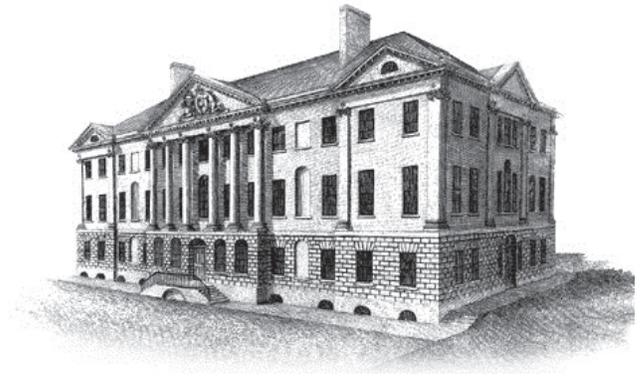
On March 30, the Assembly adopted a resolution introduced by **Stewart Fairgrieve** and seconded by **Brian Macdonald**, which proclaimed April 9, 2017, as Vimy Ridge Day in New Brunswick, in recognition of the centennial anniversary of the Battle at Vimy Ridge, France, in April of 1917.

On April 9, the New Brunswick Legislature participated in the nation-wide Vimy Foundation illumination project by lighting the portico of the Legislative Assembly building green, light blue, dark blue, and red, representing the coloured badges of the four Canadian Divisions that formed the entire Canadian Expeditionary Force that fought at Vimy Ridge. The Legislature also recognized the sacrifice at Vimy Ridge by having three cadets serve the House as Honourary Pages on March 31.

Standings

The current standings in the House are 26 Liberals, 22 Progressive Conservatives, and 1 Green.

Alicia R. Del Frate
Parliamentary Support Officer



Nova Scotia

Reference before Nova Scotia Court of Appeal

On January 24, 2017, a five-judge panel of the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal issued a judgment on *Reference re the Final Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission*. This reference was submitted to the Court by the Governor in Council concerning the September 24, 2012 Final Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission and Section 1 of the *House of Assembly Act*, as set out in Order in Council 2014-414, dated October 1, 2014 referring two questions for the opinion of the Court of Appeal:

Does Section 1 of Chapter 61 of the *Acts of Nova Scotia 2012*, by which provisions the recommendations tendered by the Electoral Boundaries Commission by its Final Report to the House of Assembly were enacted, violate Section 3 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* by abolishment of the electoral districts formerly known as Clare, Argyle and Richmond?

If the answer to question 1 is “YES”, is the impugned legislation saved by the operation of section 1 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*?

In Nova Scotia, every 10 years, pursuant to Section 5 of the *House of Assembly Act*, an independent electoral boundaries commission is appointed and issued terms of reference by a select committee of the House to recommend boundaries and names for the electoral districts comprising the House. The section also provides guidance for the setting of the terms of reference.

In its judgment, the Court of Appeal noted that the 1992 and the 2002 Commissions recommended three significantly Acadian constituencies when drawing the electoral boundaries map and these were included in the bills that were subsequently passed by the House.

However, the Court noted that in 2012 the Commission's terms of reference, as written by the Select Committee of the House required all constituencies to satisfy the same maximum variance of population ratio with no mention made to maintain or otherwise deal with the Acadian constituencies.

Notwithstanding the terms of reference, the Commission's interim report recommended continuing the three Acadian constituencies. On receiving the interim report the Attorney General was of the view that this recommendation was outside the Commission's terms of reference as written by the Select Committee. After being informed of this the Commission prepared a new interim report and legislation setting out the new boundaries that did not maintain the former Acadian constituencies, was adopted and received Royal Assent on December 6, 2012. In the Court of Appeal decision, the judges stated that the 2012 legislative action resulted in "the three protected ridings disappearing."

On October 8, 2013, the 39th Nova Scotia general election was held using the new 51 electoral districts as described in the 2012 legislation.

The Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse was an intervenor in the reference heard before the Court of Appeal on September 20 and 21, 2016.

The Court of Appeal responded "YES" to the first question of the basis that the Commission was expected to apply criteria set out in Section 3 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and that the interference of the Attorney General prevented the Commission from doing that work, thus the result was the abolition of the three Acadian constituencies and this violated Section 3 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Given that the Court responded in the affirmative to the first question it continued its consideration of the second question and responded "NO" by finding that the infringement to Section 3 of the of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was not justified under Section 1 of the of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The Court of Appeal accepted the Province's position that the matter before the Court was a reference requesting an advisory opinion and that the Court had no authority to issue a declaration.

Recall of House on February 13, 2017

Work-to-rule initiated by the teachers on December 6, 2016, continued and as there did not appear to be

a resolution in the offing on February 11, 2017, the Speaker issued a Notice requiring the House meet on February 13, 2017 at 8pm. A severe winter blizzard complicated matters and the House commencement was postponed to February 14, 2017 at 8 pm.

On the evening of February 14, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development introduced Bill No. 75, *An Act respecting a Teachers' Professional Agreement and Classroom Improvement*, to address classroom conditions and provide a wage package to the province's teachers. The House rose at 9:52 pm that night on completion of the Daily Routine.

Several hours later at 12:01 am on February 15, 2017, the House proceedings commenced – Wednesday is Opposition Day so following the Daily Routine in accordance with House Rule 20, the Opposition called three Private Members' Bills which were debated for one hour each. At the conclusion of Opposition Day business, the Government House Leader called Bill 75 for second reading. Second reading debate continued until 5:29 pm when a recorded vote was requested on the second reading motion. Following bell-ringing the recorded vote was taken at 6:15 pm with 30 members in favour of the motion and 14 against – the motion for second reading of Bill 75 passed and the Bill was referred to the Law Amendments Committee. The House then proceeded with adjournment debate – another feature of Opposition Day – at the end of which the Government House Leader rose and confirmed that the Law Amendments Committee would meet from 7 to 10 pm that evening. Given the large number of persons who requested to be heard by the Committee on Bill 75, the Government House Leader sought the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion that a subcommittee of the Law Amendments Committee be created to hear submissions from the public at the same time the Law Amendments Committee was sitting on Bill 75. Unanimous consent was not given and thus the motion was not properly before the House for consideration. The House rose at 6:58 pm.

The Law Amendments Committee met for most of the day on February 16, 2017 and the proceedings were live-streamed in part by CBC. The House proceedings for February 16, commenced at 9:30 p.m. with a point of privilege being raised regarding the Law Amendments Committee decision to stop the hearings to 8:00 pm on February 16 on the Bill. It was argued that only a small number of the over 400 registered persons has been able to secure times to speak before the Committee. The Government House Leader responded that he had attempted to have the House agree to having

a sub-committee created to permit the hearing of a larger number of people before the Law Amendments Committee, but the opposition parties would not give unanimous consent to consider the motion. The Speaker ruled that the issue had been dealt with by the Committee and was not a point of privilege that was properly before the House.

The Minister of Justice, as Chair of the Law Amendments Committee reported Bill 75 back to the House from the Law Amendments Committee without amendments. Following the Daily Routine at 11:20 pm the Government House Leader moved the adjournment of the House and a recorded vote was requested. The recorded vote was taken at 12:21 am on February 17 and was adopted by a vote of 35 in favour and 7 against.

All public school teachers in Nova Scotia were on full walk-out strike on February 17, and continued their protests before the House of Assembly. Protest had been continuous since February 14. Following the Daily Routine on February 17 at 2:29 am the House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole House on Bills to consider Bill 75. Amendments were proposed by the Opposition parties, but none were adopted by the Committee. The Committee rose 12 hours later at 2:20 pm to report the Bill to the House and recommend its favourable consideration by the House. At that point the Bill was ordered read a third time on a future day. The House was then adjourned at 2:23 pm until February 21 at 12:01 am as February 20 was a provincial holiday and the Government House Leader informed the House that the teachers would not be taking any job action on February 21.

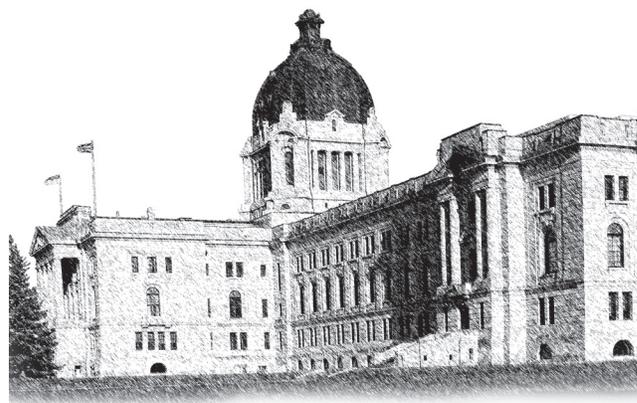
The House commenced proceedings at 12:01 am that day. Following the Daily Routine, the Government House Leader called Bill 75 for third reading and then immediately moved a motion that Bill 75 be recommitted to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills for the sole purpose of making a specific amendment to the Bill, that the Committee's consideration be limited to 30 minutes, that a vote be held on the amendment and that the Bill be reported back to the House to commence third reading of the Bill forthwith. Unanimous consent was given by the House to proceed in this manner and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills at 1:54 am. The Committee rose at 2:35 am and reported that an amendment to Bill 75 was made in Committee and pursuant to the order of the House that Bill 75 proceed forthwith with the motion for third reading. The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development moved third

reading of the Bill and a "hoist" motion was moved at the end of the first Opposition members' comments. Debate continued on the hoist motion until 12:08 pm. A recorded vote was requested and it was taken at 1:08 pm with 14 voting in favour of the motion and 33 against – the hoist motion was defeated and the debate on the third reading motion continued until 4:40 pm when a recorded vote was requested on the third reading motion. The vote was taken on the motion for third reading of Bill 75 at 4:47 pm with 33 voting in favour and 17 against. Third reading was given to the Bill and it was walked down to Government House for Royal Assent. The House rose at 4:58 pm.

Spring Sitting of the House

On March 23, 2017, the Speaker issued notice advising that the 3rd Session of the 62nd General Assembly would resume at 1pm on April 25, and the Government has advised that the budget speech will be delivered in the House of Assembly on April 27, 2017.

Annette M. Boucher
Assistant Clerk



Saskatchewan

Saskatoon Meewasin Constituency By-election

On March 2, 2017, **Ryan Meili**, the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party candidate, was elected in a by-election for the constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin. Following the passage of *The Saskatoon Meewasin Constituency By-election Act* on Monday, March 6, 2017, Mr. Meili was seated in the Assembly. The *Act* allowed Mr. Meili to be seated in the Assembly before the return of the writ.

First Session of the Twenty-Eighth Legislature

The first session of the twenty-eighth Legislative Assembly resumed on March 6, 2017. This is the third and final sitting of the first session of the twenty-eighth Legislature. Due to the federal election on October 19, 2015, the Saskatchewan general election was moved to April 4, 2016. With this change in the election date the Assembly agreed to a sessional order that set out three periods and conditions for the sitting of the first session of the twenty-eighth legislature.

Budget

On March 22, 2017, Minister of Finance **Kevin Doherty** presented the province's budget for 2017-18. The budget, entitled *Meeting the Challenge*, focused on controlling spending; modernizing the tax base; and investing in priority government programs, services, and infrastructure projects. The government said it was a "...move away from the level of reliance on resources revenues while at the same time ensuring important government programs and services are affordable and sustainable."

Opposition Finance critic **Cathy Sproule** criticized the government's financial plan stating it will lead to increased debt without investing for the future while still cutting programs for vulnerable people. On March 29, 2017, she moved an amendment to the budget debate motion that opposed the government's "...budget of broken promises, callous cuts, and tax hikes."

On March 30, 2017, the budget motion was passed in the Assembly. Under the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, the estimates were automatically committed 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.

Budget-related Bills

Pursuant to rule 34(1)(c)(i), 20 budget-related bills were outlined in the government's financial plan, which was presented on March 22, 2017. Budget-related bills, must be subsidiary to the passage of the budgetary estimates and be listed in the estimates tabled with the Assembly. This is an increase. The average over the past four years has been four to five budget-related bills.

Reduction of Members' Salaries

An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017 was introduced by **Jeremy Harrison**, lead government minister on the Board of Internal Economy, on March 20, 2017. This Bill was introduced because the Board of Internal Economy was unable to reach a consensus on the proposed wage rollback for MLAs and a proposed reduction of funding for political staff. The Bill set out a 3.5 per cent salary reduction for MLAs and a 10 per cent funding cut for caucus support. Even though the bill received Royal Assent and came into force on April 13, 2017, it is retroactive to April 1, 2017. The rollback of Members' salary and caucus funding was meant to reflect the government's broader budgetary initiative to decrease public service expenditure by 3.5 per cent.

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan Budget

The Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan's budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year was approved by the Board of Internal Economy in January with a five per cent cut from the previous fiscal year. Funding for the Legislative Assembly Service was reduced, the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program was indefinitely deferred, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Saskatchewan branch budget was cut to zero, and a series of allowances for Members and their constituency offices were either frozen or reduced. These measures were made even before the introduction of *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017*

Bills Through All Stages

Despite the fierce debate over the budget, the government and opposition found common cause to give quick passage of a number of bills.

The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2017

On April 6, 2017, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2017* was introduced and passed through all stages with unanimous consent. This bill, which was an amendment to *The Traffic Safety Act* allows for tow truck drivers in Saskatchewan to use both amber and blue coloured emergency lights with the expectation this will increase visibility, heighten awareness, and remind motorists, to slow down to 60 kilometres per hour when passing a stopped tow truck on the highway.

The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2017 and The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Amendment Act, 2017

On April 10, 2017, *The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2017* and *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Amendment Act, 2017* were introduced and passed through all stages with unanimous consent. These two bills amend existing legislation to allow a tenant to end a fixed-term rental agreement with 28 days' notice if they or their family members are victims of interpersonal violence by another resident or former resident. The bills will also expand access to victim compensation programs for family members of victims of violent crime.

The Critical Support for Victims of Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2017

As a result of the passage of two government bills, *The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2017* and *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Amendment Act, 2017*, opposition Justice critic **Nicole Sarauer** requested the withdrawal of her Private Members' Public Bill, *The Critical Support for Victims of Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act*. This bill was introduced on March 15, 2017 with the intention of providing additional support to those seeking to escape an abusive relationship.

Rob Park
Committee Clerk



The Senate

In the Chamber

During the first quarter of 2017, the Senate adopted three government bills: S-2 (*Strengthening Motor Vehicle Safety for Canadians Act*), which amends the *Motor Vehicle Safety Act* to give the Minister of Transport new vehicle recall powers, as well as the two supply

bills to fund on-going government operations. Debate also continued on other government and public bills at second reading and much time was spent debating the nine reports of the Special Committee on Senate Modernization that had been issued in the fall of 2016 which remained on the Order Paper. Two of the reports were adopted in February 2017. The first one introduced changes to simplify the structure of the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* by listing most items in numerical order, while the other report recommended that the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament study the issue of how the Senate deals with omnibus bills.

Speaker's Ruling

On February 14, a point of order was raised alleging the use of unparliamentary language during a speech in the chamber. Two days later the Speaker ruled that, when interpreted contextually, the language used had indeed been unparliamentary. He stated that:

Rule 6-13(1) states that "All personal, sharp or taxing speeches are unparliamentary and are out of order." The Senate is characterized by the respectful exchange of ideas and information, even when we deal with topics about which honourable senators have strong views. We should always show respect for each other, no matter our views on an issue, since the right to hold and express our divergent opinions is the basis of free speech.

Committees

Committees were busy during this quarter studying legislation and continuing their special studies. Several committees travelled, including the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, which continued its study on Canada's maritime search and rescue operations with a fact-finding mission and public hearings in Newfoundland and Labrador in March.

That same month, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade travelled to Mexico to meet with counterparts in the Mexican Senate for discussions on the relevance of the Canada-Mexico bilateral relationship. Committee members also took the opportunity to meet with more than a dozen other Mexican stakeholders, government officials, academics and business people, as well as with Canada's diplomatic corps in Mexico to hear analysis of the political and economic implications of recent developments in Mexico and in North America more generally.

In March, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples tabled a final report on northern housing, entitled *We can do Better: Housing in Inuit Nunangat*. The report, which was adopted by the Senate on March 9, made 13 recommendations to the government, emphasizing the need to develop a long-term and predictable strategy related to funding for northern housing. The Senate has requested a response from the government, which must be tabled within 150 days.

Senators

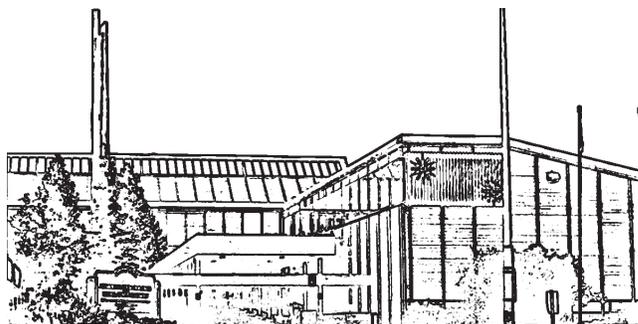
Since our last report there have been two resignations from the Senate. On February 1, Senator John D. Wallace from New Brunswick resigned his seat in the Senate after serving eight years. Senator Wallace, also a lawyer, was appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2009. He sat as a Conservative until 2015 when he left caucus to sit as an independent senator. He was a past chair of the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, co-chair of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations and was a member of nearly every other standing committee over the course of his Senate career.

Senator Pana Merchant also resigned from the Senate during this quarter. Appointed in 2002 by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, she was most recently the joint chair of Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations as well as having been a member of several of the standing committees.

Leadership

Late in the quarter, there were changes in the leadership of the Conservative caucus in the Senate with the announcement that, effective March 31, Senator Claude Carignan would step down as Leader of the Opposition. Senator Carignan had previously served as Deputy Leader of the Government and, from August 2013 until late 2015, as Leader of the Government in the Senate. The Senate Conservative caucus selected Senator Larry Smith to be Leader of the Opposition in the Senate as of April 1.

Vanessa Moss-Norbury
Procedural Clerk



Yukon

Announcement about 2017 Spring Sitting

As previously reported, on January 12, the First Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly convened for a one-day Special Sitting to elect presiding officers and appoint committees. On March 2, Premier **Sandy Silver** informed Speaker **Nils Clarke** that the House would reconvene on April 20 for the 2017 Spring Sitting. On April 6, Commissioner **Doug Phillips** issued a Proclamation proroguing the First Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly on April 20 at noon, and summoning the Second Session of the House to meet three hours thereafter.

Reports of the Auditor General

On March 6, officials from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) were in Whitehorse to present the Speaker with two performance audit reports. Later that morning, MLAs were provided with an in camera briefing in the Chamber on the reports by the officials. One of the reports concerned Yukon government transfers to societies; the other report concerned capital asset management (links to both reports are posted on the Assembly's website). The same day, the Yukon Government issued a news release stating that it agreed with and was in the process of implementing the Auditor General's findings and recommendations.

Public Finances Orientation Session

On the morning of April 3, officials from the Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation and the OAG provided an orientation session in the Chamber for MLAs and caucus staff. Each of Yukon's 19 MLAs was in attendance. Topics covered included the role of MLAs in ensuring effective accountability and oversight of public finances, the purpose and functions of the Public Accounts Committee, and the OAG's products and services. In the afternoon, the officials provided an additional briefing to the members of the Public Accounts Committee.

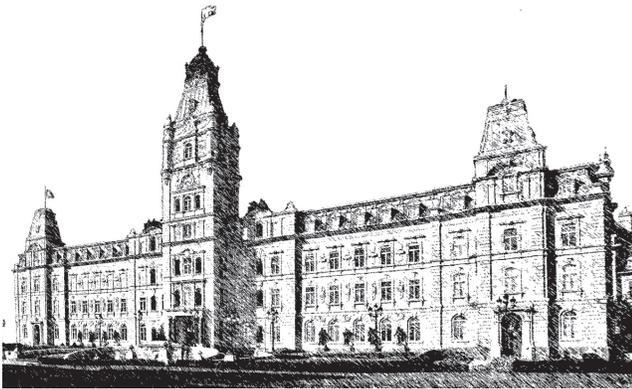
Committee Activity

The five Committees established at the January 12 Special Sitting have been active during the adjournment. At the time of writing, the Members' Services Board, the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Boards and Committees, and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts have each held meetings. As well, the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, and the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, have met. Prior to meeting this March, the latter Committee had last convened in 1991, and had last done substantive work in 1986.

New Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms

On March 8, 2017, the Legislative Assembly Office issued a news release announcing that **Karina Watson**, a 27-year veteran of the RCMP, had been appointed as the new Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms. The appointment had been made at a Members' Services Board meeting in September 2016, during the preceding Legislative Assembly. Ms. Watson succeeds **Doris McLean**, who as previously reported was appointed Sergeant-at-Arms following the retirement of **Rudy Couture** at the end of July 2016.

Linda Kolody
Deputy Clerk



Québec

National Assembly Proceedings

Extraordinary sitting

On February 27, 2017, the Assembly held an extraordinary sitting to permit the introduction of Bill 127, *An Act to ensure the continuity of the provision of legal services within the Government and to allow continued negotiation and the renewal of the collective agreement of the employees who provide those legal services*. After more than

21 hours of debate this Bill was passed the following day on division: Yeas 52, Nays 38, Abstentions 0.

Composition of the National Assembly

Upon his return to the National Assembly after a long convalescence, **Pierre Moreau**, Member for Châteauguay and then Minister for Finance, was named Minister responsible for Government Administration and Ongoing Program Review and Chair of the Conseil du trésor on January 16, 2017. **Carlos J. Leitão**, who had previously held this office, remains Minister of Finance.

On January 19, 2017, **Françoise David**, who had been sitting under the Québec Solidaire banner since the general election of 4 September 2012, resigned as Member for Gouin.

On January 24, 2017, **Claude Surprenant**, Coalition Avenir Québec Member for Groulx, was excluded from caucus and now sits as an independent Member.

On January 26, 2017, **Laurent Lessard**, Member for Lotbinière-Frontenac and Minister of Transport, Sustainable Mobility and Transport Electrification, was also named Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to replace **Pierre Paradis**, Member for Brome-Missisquoi, who now sits as an independent Member after having been excluded from the caucus of the parliamentary group forming the Government.

Martine Ouellet, Member for Vachon, has also been sitting as an independent Member since February 5, 2017, at which time she announced that she would be running for the leadership of the Bloc Québécois on the federal scene.

The composition of the Assembly now stands as follows: Québec Liberal Party, 69 Members; Parti Québécois, 29 Members; Coalition Avenir Québec, 20 Members; and six independent Members, two of whom sit under the Québec Solidaire banner. One seat remains vacant.

Bills passed

From January to March 2017, the Assembly passed five Government bills:

- Bill 63 - *An Act respecting inmate identity verification through fingerprinting*
- Bill 102 - *An Act to amend the Environment Quality Act to modernize the environmental authorization*

scheme and to amend other legislative provisions, in particular to reform the governance of the Green Fund

- Bill 112 - *An Act to give effect mainly to fiscal measures announced in the Budget Speech delivered on 17 March 2016*
- Bill 127 - *An Act to ensure the continuity of the provision of legal services within the Government and to allow continued negotiation and the renewal of the collective agreement of the employees who provide those legal services*
- Bill 129 - *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2017-2018*

Estimates of expenditure and passage of Appropriation Act No. 1, 2017-2018

On March 29, 2017, the parliamentarians concurred in interim supply for the 2017-2018 fiscal year and passed Bill 129, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2017-2018*. The following day, the Assembly began the debate on the budget speech.

Special Events

Celebrations of the 225th anniversary of Québec's parliamentary institutions

On February 16, 2017, the National Assembly announced the holding of celebrations to mark the 225th anniversary of Québec's parliamentary institutions. A new visual signature featuring the colours of the 225th anniversary of Québec's parliamentary institutions was launched for the occasion. Activities are scheduled to take place throughout the year, until April 2018.

Leadership Workshop for Women Parliamentarians

The Leadership Workshop for Women Parliamentarians was held from March 6-10, 2017. This workshop was made possible thanks to the collaboration of the National Assembly, the Chaire La Capitale en leadership dans le secteur public of the École nationale d'administration publique (ÉNAP) and the Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie (GFPD), with the support of Global Affairs Canada, the Government of Québec and the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie.

Under the chairmanship of **Maryse Gaudreault**, Vice-President of the Québec National Assembly and Chair of the Cercle des femmes parlementaires, the Leadership Workshop for Women Parliamentarians provided an opportunity for 21 women Members of various parliaments and the Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador to attend conferences and

take part in roundtable discussions and practical workshops. At the end of this week that also contributed to intercultural networking between women parliamentarians, participants received a certificate issued by the National Assembly, the ÉNAP and the GFPD.

Conference on the topic of parliaments in the international environment

On March 1, 2017, the Research Chair on Democracy and Parliamentary Institutions organized, at the National Assembly, its biennial conference on the topic of parliaments in the international environment. Parliamentarians, both former and current, academic experts and international relations and cooperation practitioners came together to take a critical look at the various forms of international relations that the legislative powers of Québec and elsewhere develop and maintain. This event also provided the opportunity to discuss the impact of parliamentary diplomacy and the contribution of parliaments to the institutional strengthening of democracy.

Committee Proceedings

From early January to the end of March 2017, the standing committees sat for over 291 hours, which included 38 sittings for the clause-by-clause consideration of bills and 19 sittings for public hearings.

Public hearings

Immediately upon returning from the holiday break, on January 17, 2017, the sectorial committees entered upon new special consultation mandates, seven of which were held within the framework of the consideration of bills. The Committee on Health and Social Services (CHSS) heard witnesses prior to the consideration of two bills falling within its area of expertise, namely Bill 118, *An Act respecting medical laboratories, orthopedic service centres and respiratory physiology centres operated by an entity other than a health and social services institution*, and Bill 130, *An Act to amend certain provisions regarding the clinical organization and management of health and social services institutions*. This last Bill continues the reform of the Québec health system by amending the *Act to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network, in particular by abolishing the regional agencies* (Bill 10), which was passed on February 6, 2015. The CHSS heard 14 witnesses during its special consultations on Bill 130. Thirty-nine witnesses came before the Committee on Planning and the Public Domain (CPP) during

its special consultations on Bill 122, *An Act mainly to recognize that municipalities are local governments and to increase their autonomy and powers*.

The Committee on Culture and Education (CCE) carried out a mandate stemming from a petition in which 4,357 citizens indicated their opposition to weighing students in physical education classes. Five witnesses came before the CCE and provided the information the committee needed to draft its report, tabled on February 22, 2017, in which two recommendations concerning the Department of Education and Higher Education were issued. Each recommendation asks the department to issue a directive regarding weigh-ins, the first during physical education and health classes in primary and secondary schools, and the second during physical education classes in CEGEPs. The directive to be established in primary and secondary schools must specify that the school curriculum makes no mention of weigh-ins and that this practice therefore should not be retained, while the directive to be established in CEGEPs must specify that weigh-ins may be carried out only when requested by students, without any kind of pressure and in private.

The Committee on Public Administration (CPA) heard the representatives of two departments and three organizations during the three first months of 2017. Among these, it heard the Department of Transport, Sustainable Mobility and Transport Electrification within the framework of a follow-up to a recommendation issued by the CPA in its 34th report, tabled on June 10, 2016, following hearings during which administrative deficiencies were raised. The CPA members also heard La Financière agricole in relation to a chapter of the Sustainable Development Commissioner's spring 2015 report entitled "La Financière agricole du Québec: Measures to Assess Effectiveness and Performance."

Clause-by-clause consideration of bills

From January to March, four committees examined five bills. The clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 102, *An Act to amend the Environment Quality Act to modernize the environmental authorization scheme and to amend other legislative provisions, in particular to reform the governance of the Green Fund*, which the Committee on Transportation and the Environment (CTE) began on December 2, 2016, resumed on January 17, 2017 but was slow to progress owing to pressure tactics used by Québec government lawyers and notaries on strike since October 24, 2016, which strike ended on February

28, 2017 with the passage of special legislation. The consideration of Bill 102 lasted 80 hours during 19 sittings. The Committee on Citizen Relations (CCR) began the consideration of Bill 115, *An Act to combat maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations*, following special consultations held in January. The purpose of this Bill is to combat maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations by enacting measures to facilitate the reporting of maltreatment and to promote the establishment of an intervention process with respect to maltreatment of seniors.

The Committee on Citizen Relations travels to aboriginal communities

Within the framework of its order of initiative on aboriginal women's living conditions as affected by sexual assault and domestic violence, the CCR continued its visits to aboriginal communities for the purpose of holding informal meetings to allow its members to better understand the reality of these communities. A delegation of eight people, including six Members, met representatives and persons working for the Wendake community. This meeting allowed Members to see first-hand what has been initiated and carried out by the community to prevent and address violence and aggression against aboriginal women.

Composition of committees

In February, two committees elected a new vice-chair, namely the CPP and the Committee on Labour and the Economy (CLE). The CPP elected **Claude Cousineau**, Member for Bertrand, while the CLE elected **Paul Busque**, Member for Beauce-Sud. Also in February, the CLE welcomed several new members, including an independent Member, **Claude Surprenant**, MNA for Groulx.

Parliamentary simulations

In January, the Parliament welcomed 14- to 25-year-old students interested in learning about parliamentary life by taking part in simulations reflecting the reality of MNAs. It all began with the Student Parliament of Québec, organized by the Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec inc., during which approximately 140 young people, aged 18 to 25, simulated activities relating to the functioning of the National Assembly and its committees. This event was followed by the 25th legislature of the Student Forum and the 15th Legislature of the Youth Parliament, which involve CEGEP students and Secondary 3 and 4 students

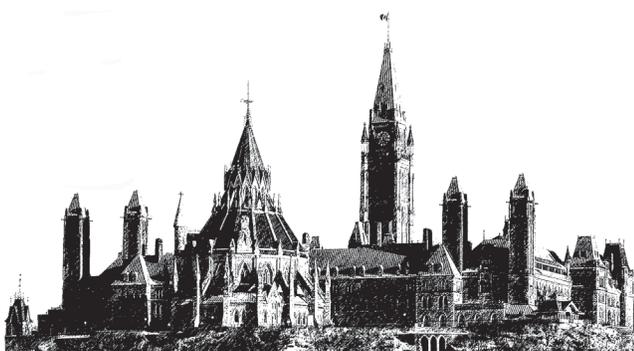
respectively. These young people were given the opportunity to conduct a simulation very similar to that experienced by the older students, with the collaboration of National Assembly personnel. Both events allowed 275 students to better understand the foundations of the parliamentary system, to acquire oral and written communication skills, to increase their interest in civic participation and to interact with National Assembly specialists.

Stéphanie Labbé

General Directorate for Parliamentary Affairs
Sittings Service

Stéphanie Pinault-Reid

General Directorate for Parliamentary Affairs
Committees Service



House of Commons

The First Session of the Forty-Second Parliament continued through the early months of 2017. The information below covers the period from January 21, 2017, to April 6, 2017.

Financial Procedures

On March 7, 2017 at the request of the Minister of Finance, **Bill Morneau** (Toronto Centre), an Order of the Day was designated for the consideration of a Ways and Means motion for a budget presentation. On March 22, 2017, Mr. Morneau moved “[t]hat this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government” and presented the budget speech. Following the usual four days of debate, the motion was agreed to on April 5, 2017.

Legislation

On March 8, 2017, the House unanimously adopted a motion to give second reading to Bill C-337, *An Act*

to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code, requiring sexual assault training for judges, standing in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, **Rona Ambrose** (Sturgeon River—Parkland), and to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. On March 9, 2017, by unanimous consent, the bill was referred to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

On March 8, 2017, the Speaker made a statement concerning the selection of amendments at report stage of Bill C-22, *An Act to establish the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts*. Exceptionally, certain amendments which could have been put forward in committee were selected for debate at report stage as a result of a recent Supreme Court decision. The changes proposed in the amendments arose out of the court decision in question, which was rendered on November 25, 2016, four days before the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

Points of Order and Questions of Privilege

Points of Order

On February 15, 2017, the Speaker **Geoff Regan** ruled on two similar points of orders raised by **Pierre Poilievre** (Carleton) and **Tom Kmiec** (Calgary Shepard) in December 2016 and February 2017, respectively. Mr. Poilievre and Mr. Kmiec argued that the answers they received to their written questions lacked specific information which had been requested. Mr. Poilievre claimed that the Government had suppressed information and therefore asked the Speaker to compel the Government to provide it. In his ruling, the Speaker noted the limitations on the role of the Speaker with respect to the content of answers to written questions, specifying that he does not have the authority to adjudicate on the accuracy or completeness of the answers in question. As the Government had complied with the requirements of the Standing Orders in each instance, the Speaker concluded that no breach of the rules and practices of the House had taken place.

On March 21, 2017, **John Nater** (Perth—Wellington) rose on a point of order regarding the supply bill that was distributed with the Supplementary Estimates (C) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, which was going to be called for debate later that day. Mr. Nater argued that the parts of the bill concerning the salary of certain ministers were already before the House in an amending bill, Bill C-24, *An Act to amend*

the Salaries Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Financial Administration Act, and that as such items were of a legislative character, they should not be included in the estimates. The Speaker ruled later that day, noting that the situation was not unique and that past precedents existed. Given that the parts of the bill in question did not try to amend an existing law or to legislate new programs, the Speaker allowed the supplementary estimates to proceed.

On March 22, 2017, **Murray Rankin** (Victoria) rose on a point of order to indicate that **Yasmin Ratansi** (Don Valley East) had taken a photo with her electronic device during a recorded division and that the photo had subsequently been posted on Twitter. The Speaker directed Ms. Ratansi to immediately delete the photo.

Questions of Privilege

On March 22, 2017, **Gérard Deltell** (Louis-Saint-Laurent) rose on a question of privilege concerning the advance distribution of the Budget documents in the House of Commons Chamber. Mr. Deltell claimed that a breach of privilege occurred when copies of the Budget documents, being distributed by pages of the House, were given to some government members in advance of some other opposition members, and before the start of the Minister of Finance's budget presentation. In his ruling delivered on April 6, 2017, the Speaker noted that the early distribution of the budget documents was an administrative error and that the distribution was stopped as soon as the Speaker was made aware. While the Speaker reminded the House of the parliamentary practice that information contained in the budget should not be disclosed until the Minister of Finance delivers the budget speech in the Chamber, he went on to highlight that the secrecy of the budget is a matter of parliamentary convention and not one of privilege. The Speaker ruled that this occurrence was not a *prima facie* breach of privilege and concluded his remarks by thanking the pages for their professionalism in serving Members.

On March 22, 2017, **Lisa Raitt** (Milton) and **Maxime Bernier** (Beauce) rose on a question of privilege arising from their delayed access to the parliamentary precinct for a recorded division in the House earlier that day. Both Members claimed that they were impeded in their ability to perform their parliamentary duties due to the Prime Minister's vehicles temporarily blocking their access to Centre Block. The Speaker delivered his ruling on April 6, 2017, highlighting the importance of ensuring that Members' access to the precinct not be denied. The Speaker gave a summary of the report of

the events of March 22, provided by the Parliamentary Protective Service, and acknowledged that the delay was caused by the arrival of other buses at the screening facility, which were transporting journalists for the presentation of the Budget. The Speaker indicated his confidence that the Parliamentary Precinct Services would continue to provide training to its workforce on the rights and privileges of Members. Given the evidence that Ms. Raitt and Mr. Bernier were impeded in the fulfilment of their parliamentary duties and the guidance provided by precedents, the Speaker concluded that there were sufficient grounds for finding a *prima facie* question of privilege, and invited Ms. Raitt to move the appropriate motion. Ms. Raitt moved the motion to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, and during debate on the motion, Mr. Bernier moved an amendment, instructing the Committee to consider the question of privilege ahead of other matters, including its study of the Standing Orders of the House.

On March 23, 2017, **Candice Bergen** (Portage—Lisgar) rose on a question of privilege regarding an alleged intimidation in the Chamber by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, **Carolyn Bennett** (Toronto—St. Paul's) during a recorded division the previous day. Ms. Bergen stated that Ms. Bennett "came running towards [her] in a very aggressive way" and impeded on her ability to do her work. Ms. Bennett admitted that she crossed the floor to speak with Ms. Bergen, and explained that she did so with the intention of notifying her of the presence of two visitors in the Gallery. At the time of writing, the Speaker had not yet rendered a decision.

On April 4, 2017, **James Bezan** (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman) rose on a question of privilege regarding the alleged discrepancies between the answer provided to written question Q-600 and statements made in the House during Oral Questions by the Minister of National Defense, **Harjit Sajjan** (Vancouver South). Mr. Bezan explained that the answer given to question Q-600 indicated that all Members of the Canadian Armed Forces deployed on Operation IMPACT in Kuwait and Iraq under the previous government were granted tax relief benefits for the risk associated with their work. Mr. Bezan then pointed to comments made by Mr. Sajjan during Question Period in March 2017, when the Minister said that members of the Canadian Armed Forces deployed by the previous government to Iraq and Kuwait were, at the time of their deployment, not entitled to the tax-relief measures. Mr. Bezan alleged that these two different answers given by the Minister amounted to a misleading of the House and

constituted a *prima facie* question of privilege. At the time of writing, the Speaker had not yet ruled on the matter.

Committees

On March 21, 2017, during Meeting No. 55 of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, **Scott Simms** (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame) moved a motion that the Committee undertake a comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. The motion followed the publication of a discussion paper by **Bardish Chagger** (Waterloo), Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, on the topic of proposed reforms to modernize the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. The motion called on the Committee to complete its study and report its findings and recommendations to the House no later than June 2, 2017. During debate on the motion, **Scott Reid** (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston) moved an amendment requiring that any recommendations made during the study be adopted unanimously by all members of the Committee. Debate arose on the amendment. Subsequently, a filibuster began during which members of the opposition refused to allow debate to end. The meeting has been suspended on multiple occasions and at the time of writing, had not yet been adjourned.

Other Matters

Emergency Debates

On January 31, 2017, an emergency debate was held to discuss the ban on immigration and travel from seven countries in the Middle East and North Africa ordered by the President of the United States.

Take-note Debates

On February 8, 2017, a take-note debate in a Committee of the Whole was held on the subject of job losses in Canada's energy sector.

On March 20, 2017, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to take part in a take-note debate to discuss Operation Unifier, Canada's mission in Ukraine.

Members

On January 30, 2017, the House was informed that **Pablo Rodriguez** (Honoré-Mercier) had been

appointed to the Board of Internal Economy, in replacement of **Andrew Leslie** (Orléans). Mr. Rodriguez has assumed new duties as the Chief Government Whip.

On February 2, 2017, the Speaker informed the House that a vacancy had occurred in the Electoral District of Markham—Thornhill by reason of the resignation of **John McCallum** as a Member of Parliament.

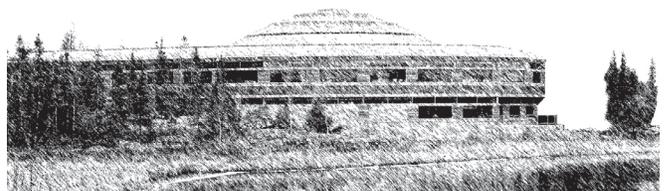
On February 8, 2017, the Speaker informed the House that a vacancy had occurred in the Electoral District of Saint-Laurent by reason of the resignation of **Stéphane Dion**.

Moments of Silence

On March 7, 2017, the House observed a moment of silence in honour of Constable **Richer Dubuc**, the RCMP officer who lost his life in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, Québec.

On March 23, 2017, the House observed a moment of silence for the victims of the attack at the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Marisa Monnin
Table Research Branch



Northwest Territories

The Second Session of the 18th Legislative Assembly resumed on January 31, when Premier **Robert R. McLeod** delivered a sessional statement updating Members and the public on recent activities undertaken to advance the mandate and priorities of the Legislative Assembly.

The next day, Finance Minister **Robert C. McLeod** delivered his second budget address and tabled the main estimates for fiscal year 2017-18. The government's first budget, delivered in June 2016, set the course for achieving the 18th Assembly's mandate and collective priorities. The 2017-18 budget continues this effort to ensure that core programs and services are delivered while priorities are strategically acted upon.

The budget proposed operating expenditures of \$1.66 billion and revenues of \$1.86 billion. It also projected an operating surplus of \$167 million and, after accounting for infrastructure investments, an overall cash surplus of \$15 million for 2017-18.

Over the next six sitting days, nine of the 11 regular Members delivered their Replies to the Budget Address in which they offered their observations on the budget and raised concerns on key items such as funding for junior kindergarten, community employment support and seniors' living.

On March 3, as House consideration of the budget was drawing to an end, Finance Minister McLeod delivered a statement to the House in which he referenced the significant and passionate debate on specific elements of the budget and the extensive review process that had transpired in Committee of the Whole. The Minister indicated that Cabinet had listened carefully to Members and the concerns of their constituents and were committing to a number of adjustments to the 2017-18 budget including additional funding for homecare, youth in crisis programs, the Anti-Poverty Fund, the fishing industry, the Mineral Incentive Program and the Community Access Road Program. The funding adjustments were subsequently brought forward through the supplementary estimates process.

Legislation

The Assembly sat from January 31 to March 10 before adjourning until late May. Legislation considered during this period included:

Bill 7, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act*, introduced by Transportation Minister **Wally Schumann**, provides for the establishment of a revolving fund at the Yellowknife Airport to meet the airport's capital, operations and maintenance needs. The Bill was considered by the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, chaired by Yellowknife North MLA **Cory Vanthuyne**. The Committee reviewed substantial feedback from the public on the proposed changes and reported to the House on both the risks and opportunities that the amendments would enable. Bill 7 ultimately received Third Reading on March 9 after spirited debate in Committee of the Whole.

Bill 13, *Marriage Act*, introduced by Health and Social Services Minister **Glen Abernethy**, replaces the current *Marriage Act* and ensures compliance with the

federal *Civil Marriage Act* and the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The bill received Third Reading on March 7.

In addition, the *Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2017-2018* which provides formal expenditure authority for the 2017-18 Main Estimates and four supplementary appropriation bills were also brought forward for consideration by the House and all received Third Reading on March 7-8.

Committees

The Assembly's Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, chaired by Frame Lake MLA **Kevin O'Reilly**, presented a report on February 28 on the Committee's review of the Members' Conduct Guidelines. The Committee had been tasked by the House with conducting a comprehensive and public review, including a thorough examination of conduct guidelines from other jurisdictions, all relevant legislation, and the Rules of the Assembly. The Committee reviewed the Members' Conduct Guidelines as part of a broader framework governing Members' behaviors. The report recommended ways to strengthen that matrix and through it, public confidence in the Legislative Assembly.

The report contained six recommendations that dealt with the following conduct-related matters:

- Provision of a candidates' code of conduct during the election period;
- Provision of a five-year limit on eligibility for legislature candidacy for anyone convicted of an offence of violence or threats of violence under the *Criminal Code* of Canada;
- Revisions to the Members' Oath of Office to increase Members' focus and public attention to matters of conduct that are linked to the Oath but set out elsewhere;
- Revisions to the Members' Conduct Guidelines to include more specific and enforceable provisions;
- Amendments to the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* to expand the duties of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to include oversight for the Code of Conduct and to empower the Commissioner to receive and investigate complaints and to recommend sanctions and penalties as appropriate; and
- A public review of the statutory conflict of interest provisions and other relevant legislation and policy before the end of the 18th Assembly.

The Committee's report garnered a high degree of public and media attention upon presentation. The report was debated on March 9-10 and all recommendations were formally adopted by the House with the sole exception being the recommendation pertaining to the five-year limit on candidate eligibility for anyone convicted of a crime of violence under the *Criminal Code*. Upon a recorded vote, the motion was defeated with two Members voting in support, 13 Members voting against and one abstention.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations, chaired by Kam Lake MLA **Kieron Testart**, presented two reports to the House during this sitting. The first report, presented on March 2, was on the Committee's review of the 2014-15 and 2015-16 Annual Reports of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The second report presented on March 7, was on the Committee's review of the 2016 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Support to Communities for Municipal Services in the Northwest Territories provided by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Moment of Silence

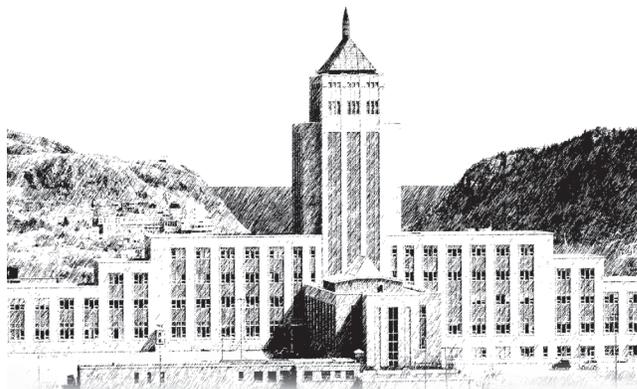
On January 31, Members observed a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the Quebec City Mosque attack, that occurred on January 29, 2017.

Condolences

On January 31, Speaker **Jackson Lafferty** delivered a statement of condolence on behalf of the Assembly on the passing of former Legislative Assembly Clerk **William "Binx" Remnant**, who passed away on January 5, 2017. Mr. Remnant served as Clerk Assistant from 1963 to 1966 and as Clerk from 1966 to 1982. He then went on to serve as Clerk of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly for 17 years. Condolences were expressed to his many family and friends.

The Second Session of the 18th Legislative Assembly was adjourned on March 10 and will reconvene on May 25.

Doug Schauerte
Deputy Clerk



Newfoundland and Labrador

Parliamentary Calendar and continuation of Session

On January 17, Clerk **Sandra Barnes** circulated the first Parliamentary Calendar for the House of Assembly in accordance with the amendments to the Standing Orders adopted in November. A provision stipulates that the House convene for the Spring sitting no later than the first Monday in March. The House reconvened on February 27 to continue the First Session of the 48th General Assembly. The House was prorogued on March 27, having passed 71 Bills.

Second Session of the 48th General Assembly

On February 28, Lieutenant Governor **Frank Fagan** delivered the Throne Speech opening the Second Session of the 48th General Assembly.

On April 6, Minister of Finance **Cathy Bennett**, delivered the Budget Speech. The amount to be voted this year is \$7,327,757,400, slightly less than last year's budget of \$7.9 billion. The 2017 budget provides for a 12.5 cent staggered reduction by December 1 of the 2016 16 cent Temporary Gas Tax.

The House adjourned for the Easter break on April 11.

Elizabeth Murphy
Clerk Assistant