

## Northwest Territories

### October Sitting

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On October 11, 2018, Speaker **Jackson Lafferty** addressed the Assembly to emphasize the importance of language for the culture and heritage of the Northwest Territories. The Speaker advised members of the House and the public that throughout the October sitting, the proceedings would be interpreted in four languages: Tlicho, South Slavey, Chipewyan, and French. The four-week sitting adjourned on November 1, 2018.

Premier **Robert R. McLeod** also delivered a sessional statement for the continuation of the third session and final year of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. The Premier spoke of the completion of 104 of 233 mandate commitments; engagement with the Federal Government on the needs and priorities of Northerners; resource development, and the goals of creating a strong and prosperous sustainable future in the North in partnership with Indigenous governments.

Minister of Finance **Robert C. McLeod** delivered a fiscal and economic update on October 12, which included a brief summary of the Capital Estimates being considered in the sitting. The government proposed \$118 million for highways, \$93 million for social infrastructure, \$42 million for energy projects, \$29 million for community governments, and \$62 million in other projects in support of program delivery.

### Legislation

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Ten bills were introduced during the October sitting. Six bills were referred to their respective committees for review:

- Bill 25: *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*;
- Bill 26: *Statistics Act*;
- Bill 29: *An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;
- Bill 30: *An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act*;
- Bill 31: *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act*; and
- Bill 32: *Naturopathic Profession Statutes Amendment Act*

Five supplementary appropriation acts and one appropriation act received Assent during the October/November sitting, and the following bills also received Assent:

- Bill 24: *An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act*;
- Bill 7: *Chartered Professional Accountants Act*;
- Bill 8: *Emergency Management Act*;
- Bill 13: *An Act to Amend the Securities Act*;
- Bill 14: *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2018*;
- Bill 15: *Document Formalization, Service and Notice Reform Statute Law Amendment Act*;

- Bill 16: *An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act*;
- Bill 17: *An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act*;
- Bill 18: *An Act to Amend the Cities, Towns and Villages Act*; and
- Bill 20: *Ombud Act*

### **Committee Activity**

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Two substantive Committee Reports were presented during this sitting:

On October 30, 2018 the Standing Committee on Government Operations, chaired by **Kieron Testart**, presented its Report on the Review of Bill 18: *An Act to Amend the Cities, Towns and Villages Act*, and its Report on the Review of Bill 20: *Ombudsperson Act*.

The report on Bill 20 included two recommendations: that the Minister Responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency work closely with the Office of the Clerk and the newly appointment Ombud, to ensure a timely and robust public awareness campaign to support the opening of the Office of the Ombud, and that the Minister responsible work closely with the Office of the Clerk and the Office of the Ombud to advise the Tlicho Government of any investigations by the Ombud of the Tlicho Community Services Agency.

The report also included a summary of the clause by clause review. The Committee moved 19 separate motions to amend the bill, with the Minister concurring with 16 of the motions. One of the motions was to change the word “Ombudsperson” to “Ombud” wherever it appears in the bill, therefore making “Ombud” the official title of the position.

### **Special Committees**

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On October 30, the terms of reference for two Special committees were tabled and formally adopted by the House on November 1. The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly has the purpose of identifying and recommending initiatives to increase the representation of women in the Legislative Assembly to 20 per cent by 2023 and 30 per cent by 2027.

The Legislative Assembly’s Process Convention on Priority Setting and Reporting calls for the establishment of a joint Special Committee on Transition Matters. The purpose of this Special Committee is to make recommendations to the next

Legislative Assembly on the transition process and the political structure of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

### **February-March Sitting**

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The Third Session resumed on February 5, 2019 which was the final budget session of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Speaker Lafferty advised members of the House and of the public that throughout the sitting, interpretation would be provided in Tlicho, Chipewyan, French, Inuvialuqtun, North Slavey, Inuktitut, Gwich’in, South Slavey, and Inuinnaktun, making use of 10 of the 11 official languages of the Northwest Territories.

Premier McLeod delivered a sessional statement highlighting the bilateral agreement with the Federal Government on implementing the National Housing Strategy in the Northwest Territories to protect, renew, and expand social and community housing support. He also spoke about a \$1.8 million investment for cannabis education, \$750,000 for opioid addiction treatment, the opening of the \$10 million Centre for Mine and Industry Training in Fort Smith, and the governments continued investments in economic growth and diversification to help the long term economy of the Northwest Territories. The Mackenzie Valley Highway received an additional \$140 million in combined funding, and a \$1.2 million in combined investments for the Taltson Hydroelectricity Expansion Project.

On February 6, 2019, the Finance Minister delivered the final budget address of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Minister spoke of the \$81 million decline in revenue over the past two years, and emphasized the importance of a longer term view of the fiscal plan, investing \$1.1 billion in the Territory’s Infrastructure to support the economy for future generations. The 2019-2020 Main Estimates proposed operating expenditures of \$1.873 billion with \$1.933 billion in estimated revenues, leaving an overall surplus of \$60 million to directly fund a portion of the 2019-2020 Infrastructure budget approved in October 2018.

The following week, seven of the 11 regular members delivered replies to the budget address offering their views on the budget address with some positive observations like the creation of the office of the Ombud, and the additional \$3.3 million for child and family services. Concerns, such as the lack of public consultation on the budget, cuts to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the need for government service officers in all communities, the future economic outlook and the cost of living, were also presented in those replies.

Beginning on February 20, the main estimates were thoroughly discussed in Committee of the Whole and consideration was concluded on March 8. On March 14 the Finance Minister presented Bill 53: *Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operation Expenditures)*, No. 1, 2019-2020 which increased the operations budget by \$2.5 million. This included an increase in funding for Education, Culture and Employment; Industry, Tourism and Investment; Infrastructure; and Justice.

## Legislation

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Fifteen bills were introduced during this sitting. Fourteen were referred to their respective standing committee for review:

- Bill 34: *Mineral Resources Act*;
- Bill 35: *Supply Chain Management Professional Designation Act*;
- Bill 36: *An Act to Amend the Petroleum Resources Act*;
- Bill 37: *An Act to Amend the Oil and Gas Operations Act*;
- Bill 38: *Protected Areas Act*;
- Bill 39: *Environmental Rights Act*;
- Bill 40: *Smoking Control and Reduction Act*;
- Bill 41: *Tobacco and Vapor Products Control Act*;
- Bill 42: *An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act*;
- Bill 43: *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*;
- Bill 44: *Forest Act*;
- Bill 45: *Corrections Act*;
- Bill 46: *Public Lands Act*; and
- Bill 48: *Post-Secondary Education Act*;

Four bills were granted an extension by the House:

- Bill 25: *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*;
- Bill 26: *Statistics Act*;
- Bill 29: *An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; and
- Bill 30: *Human Rights Act*

Private Members' Bill 49: *Small Business Tax Relief Act* was defeated at first reading.

Bill 47: *Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures)*, 2019-2020 was introduced and received assent on March 11, 2019. Bill 3: *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act* and Bill 32: *Naturopathic Profession Statutes Amendment Act* also received assent on March 11, 2019.

Bill 50: *Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures)*, No. 4, 2018-2019; Bill 51: *Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures)*, No. 4, 2018-2019; Bill 52: *Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures)*, No. 1, 2019-2020; and Bill 53: *Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures)*, No. 1, 2019-2020 were introduced during this sitting and received assent on March 14, 2019.

## Committee Activity

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The Standing Committee on Government Operations, chaired by Mr. Testart, presented four substantive reports:

The committee report on the Review of the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Reports contained no recommendations, and the committee thanked the Human Rights Commission for its efforts to promote and uphold human rights in the Northwest Territories.

The Report on the Review of Bill 30: *An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act*. The report contained one recommendation that the Human Rights Commission develop an evaluation framework for assessing the efficacy of moving to a restorative process, which includes a gender-based analysis and assessment on Indigenous people. The report also included a summary of the clause by clause review where committee moved eight separate motions to amend the bill, with the minister concurring with seven out of eight motions, not concurring with the motion to add "genetic characteristics" as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

The Report on the Review of the 2018 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services contained 12 recommendations which included the Department of Health and Social Services incorporating the recommendations made in the report into its quality improvement plan, ensure all gaps in screenings and reviews are addressed, that the department of HSS appear before the appropriate committee to report on its compliance with the *Child and Family Services Act*, and that the department incorporate into its quality improvement plan on child and family services a commitment to strengthen working relationships with Indigenous and community governments, to name a few.

The Report on the Review of Bill 31: *Northwest Territories 9-1-1 Act* contained three recommendations including that the department of Municipal and Community Affairs work with the Department of Finance to develop a strategic approach designed to secure support and funding to expand cellular coverage in the NWT as part of the national cellular network, and to develop a detailed municipal implementation plan that sets out information needed by each local authority to ensure successful implementation of NWT-wide 9-1-1 service. The report also contained a summary of the clause by clause review where three motions to amend were moved by committee, with all three carried and concurred with by the Minister.

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly, chaired by **Julie Green**, presented their interim report. The committee held public meetings in Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Providence, Dettah, Yellowknife, and Fort Simpson to date to request input from members of the public on potential ways to increase the number of women in the Legislative Assembly. The report contained seven recommendations:

- that the Board of Management consider childcare expenses as a Constituency Work Allowance;
- that the Legislative Assembly make childcare an allowable election expense;
- that the Government of the Northwest Territories deliver Campaign School for Women initiatives throughout the NWT and offer more than two workshops in a fiscal year;
- provide the public with a better understanding of the work of a member, using videos, visual and written materials and information on prerequisites, roles and responsibilities, and benefits for members;
- ensure that information is made available to any group or organization involved in teaching young women, and to support hands on learning activities on consensus government such as school visits to the Legislative Assembly;
- investigate practical measures to make the legislature family-friendly; and
- that the Board of Management make allowance for members to be absent without financial penalty for up to four months due to pregnancy, childbirth, or care of a child after birth or adoption.

**Jennifer Franki-Smith**  
Committee Clerk



## Alberta

### Composition of the Assembly

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On January 15, 2019, **Rick Strankman**, MLA (Drumheller-Stettler) left the United Conservative Party (UCP) caucus to sit as an Independent Member. With this move the composition of the Legislative Assembly was 52 seats for the New Democratic Party, 25 seats for the UCP, and three seats for the Alberta Party. In addition, there was one seat each for the Alberta Liberal Party, the Progressive Conservative Party, and the Freedom Conservative Party, along with three Independent Members and one vacant seat.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the 29<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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The Fifth Session of the 29<sup>th</sup> Legislature was opened on March 18, 2019, with the Speech from the Throne delivered by the Honourable **Lois E. Mitchell**, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Alberta. Later that afternoon, Health Minister **Sarah Hoffman**, MLA (Edmonton-Glenora) introduced Bill 1, *An Act to Protect Public Health Care*. The bill proposed amendments to the *Alberta Health Care Insurance Act* to maintain a single-tier healthcare system and prevent extra billing or any other form of private payments related to insured medical services.

### Committee Activities

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The Special Standing Committee on Members' Services met on February 12, 2019, and received and approved two reports from the Subcommittee to Review the Members' Services Committee Orders. One of the reports recommends the implementation of a new funding model for future caucus budgets and the

other recommends changes to the *Regulations Exemption and Variance Order* to update exemptions applicable to the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) from various government regulations which do not meet the unique needs of the LAO, including regulations relating to employment contracts, severance payments, and the issuance of credit cards, as well as the travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive. The Committee has directed staff to draft policies related to severance pay and the reimbursement of travel and other expenses for LAO employees for further consideration.

With new electoral divisions set to take effect, the Committee also reviewed and approved a revised funding matrix for the updated electoral boundaries. These new rules came into effect with the issuance of the writs on March 19, 2019.

The Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship completed its review of Bill 211, *Alberta Underground Infrastructure Notification System Consultation Act*, which was referred to the Committee after first reading during the Fourth Session. The Committee deposited its final report intersessionally on March 7, 2019, recommending that the Bill proceed. However, because the Fourth Session ended when the Assembly prorogued on March 17, 2019, the Bill will not receive further consideration.

The Standing Committee on Families and Communities continued its review of the *Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act* and, having received written submissions, it decided to invite oral presentations. Meanwhile, the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future also continued its inquiry into the potential impact of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement on Alberta agriculture, which included a full morning of presentations and panel discussions with a wide range of representatives from the province's agricultural industry. Neither of these two committees reported prior to the dissolution of the 29<sup>th</sup> Legislature.

### Provincial General Election

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On March 19, 2019, Premier **Rachel Notley** announced the dissolution of the 29<sup>th</sup> Legislature of Alberta and the passing of an Order-in-Council calling for a provincial election to be held on April 16, 2019. The election announcement was made while a meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts was in progress, which prompted the Chair, **Scott Cyr**, MLA (Bonnyville-Cold Lake) to interrupt the proceedings and immediately adjourn the meeting.

### Sunrise and Sunset

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On March 18, 2019, Speaker **Robert E. Wanner** revealed a new work of art created by renowned Indigenous artist **Alex Janvier**. The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees commissioned the painting in celebration of its centennial year and donated it to the Legislative Assembly as a gift to Albertans. The vibrant and colourful work of art, in two pieces, entitled *Sunrise* and *Sunset*, will be permanently featured in two galleries of the Chamber which face each other. The unveiling ceremony was witnessed by Indigenous elders and leaders from around the province and it included an honour song featuring traditional Indigenous drummers, a prayer and smudging.

### New Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

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On February 14, 2019, Speaker Wanner announced the appointment of **Merwan N. Saher** as the eighth Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, and noted that "his history and record of constructive leadership along with a commitment to the public service will ensure the future of the Legislative Assembly Office's mission to provide nonpartisan parliamentary support and exemplary service". Mr. Saher has an extensive public service career including an eight-year term as the province's 10<sup>th</sup> Auditor General.

**Jody Rempel**  
Committee Clerk



## British Columbia

### Fourth Session of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

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After the Third Session of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament prorogued on February 12, the Fourth Session commenced that afternoon at 2:00 pm with the Speech

from the Throne delivered by Lieutenant Governor **Janet Austin**. The Throne Speech highlighted changes to medical service plan premiums, the implementation of a poverty reduction strategy, and measures to address real estate speculation and money laundering.

On February 19, Minister of Finance **Carole James** presented the government's second full budget. The budget proposed expanding the existing child benefit program, eliminating interest on provincial student loans, putting measures in place to support renters including a rent bank, and providing for a poverty reduction strategy to be released later in the year. The Official Opposition Critic for Finance, **Tracy Redies**, expressed concern with respect to higher taxes, the pace and scale of spending, and the budget's limited efforts to encourage investment and job creation. The Leader of the Third Party, **Andrew Weaver**, expressed overall support for the budget and its measures to address climate change and encouraged consideration of additional childcare funding.

### **Legislation**

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Bill 2, the *Protection of Public Participation Act*, which had been introduced in the Third Session, was re-introduced and received royal assent on March 25. The legislation discourages lawsuits that are intended to limit public participation or expression by establishing an expedited process for the dismissal of a lawsuit if it hinders the defendant's ability to speak freely on a matter of public interest.

Bill 11, the *Civil Forfeiture Amendment Act, 2019* received first reading on March 5. The bill proposes to enhance the ability of the civil forfeiture office to trace, reserve, and forfeit the proceeds of crime through the use of new tools, and address drug trafficking and organized crime by making the forfeiture process more efficient and fair.

Bill 6, the *Supply Act, 2018-2019 (Supplementary Estimates)* received royal assent on March 25. The bill authorizes additional funding for the operation of government programs in the 2018-2019 fiscal year and draws on a budget surplus to fund new initiatives within the fiscal year. This was the first time supplementary estimates have been authorized since 2008-2009.

### **By-election Results**

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A provincial by-election was held on January 30, 2019 in the electoral district of Nanaimo. The by-

election was conducted to fill the seat vacated when NDP MLA **Leonard Krog**, resigned on November 30, 2018 following his successful bid to become Mayor of Nanaimo. The NDP candidate, **Shelia Malcolmson**, was elected with 49.88 per cent of the vote. Malcolmson resigned as Member of Parliament for the district of Nanaimo-Ladysmith to run in the provincial by-election. The by-election had no effect on party standings in the House, and Ms. Malcolmson was sworn in as a member on February 14.

### **Legislative Assembly Administration**

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As reported in the previous issue, on November 20, 2018, the House adopted a motion placing the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms on administrative leave. At its January 21 meeting, the Legislative Assembly Management Committee received a report from the Speaker titled, *A Report of Speaker Darryl Plecas to the Legislative Assembly Management Committee Concerning Allegations of Misconduct by Senior Officers of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly*. The Committee released the report publicly, urged all House Leaders to consider the allegations in the report, and invited a response from the Senior Officers, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the Sergeant-at-Arms, to the allegations in the report.

On February 21, the Committee received legal submissions and written responses from the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms and authorized their release and that of an additional report from the Speaker addressing the responses from the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms. The Committee also supported a comprehensive financial audit of the Legislative Assembly by the provincial Auditor General and authorized the House Leaders to develop an independent review process to examine the reports and determine whether the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms engaged in misconduct.

On March 6, the House Leaders announced that former Chief Justice of Canada, the Right Honourable **Beverley McLachlin**, had been retained as a Special Investigator to conduct an investigation into allegations of misconduct against the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms, and to present a final report to House Leaders by May 3. On March 7, the House adopted a motion ratifying the memorandum of understanding signed with the Special Investigator.

On March 7, the Speaker, as Chair of the Legislative Assembly Management Committee, presented a report from the Committee in the Legislative Assembly. The report summarizes events following

the motion to place the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms on administrative leave, references the January 21 report of the Speaker and the responses from the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms and outlines steps that have been taken to inquire into the allegations including a financial audit and workplace review.

## Parliamentary Committees

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### *Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations*

As reported in the previous issue, the Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations was mandated to make recommendations on regulations regarding Transportation Network Services (TNS) in British Columbia. TNS are a type of app-based ride-hailing service that include services provided by companies such as Uber and Lyft. The Committee solicited submissions from expert witnesses including academics, municipalities, First Nations, taxi associations and transportation network companies. One government member on the committee, **Ravi Kahlon**, recused himself from deliberations after submitting an inquiry to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to determine whether there was a real or perceived conflict of interest as a result of his father holding a taxi licence. The Conflict of Interest Commissioner did not provide an opinion prior to the release of the Committee's report (see below) and the Member remained recused until the report was released. Temporary substitutions on Parliamentary Committees are not permitted in British Columbia.

The Committee presented its report to the Legislative Assembly on March 26 and made eleven recommendations including no operational pick-up boundaries or caps on fleet sizes, ensuring that the cost of a trip in an accessible vehicle does not exceed the cost of a trip in a non-accessible vehicle, and setting a minimum per-trip price that is not lower than the cost of public transit. The Committee also recommended that TNS drivers be required to hold a Class 5 driver's licence. This recommendation was supported by the Opposition and the Third Party and opposed by government members on the Committee who were in the minority as a result of the recusal of Mr. Kahlon.

## Statutory Officers

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On March 29, BC's Conflict of Interest Commissioner **Paul Fraser** passed away after a short illness. Mr. Fraser was widely respected in the province and across Canada. Premier **John Horgan**, Leader of the

Official Opposition **Andrew Wilkinson**, and Leader of the Third Party **Andrew Weaver**, all made statements recognizing his many years of exemplary service, sense of humour, and profound integrity. The government is expected to appoint an Acting Commissioner pursuant to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* to serve until a permanent appointment can be made.

**Nicki Simpson**  
Committee Researcher



## House of Commons

The First Session of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament continued, becoming the second longest in Canada's Parliament's history, surpassed only by the First Session of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Parliament in the early 1980s. The session is also unusual in that it resumed in the interim chamber established in West Block of the Parliament Buildings after the closure of Centre Block for renovations. Speaker **Geoff Regan** (Halifax West) remarked that it was "no small feat when we consider the scale of effort required to move many of the occupants and contents of the Parliament buildings into West Block." This account covers from January 2019 to the end of March 2019.

## Legislation

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On February 5, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism **Pablo Rodriguez** (Honoré-Mercier) introduced Bill C-91, *An Act respecting Indigenous languages*. The House referred the bill to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on February 20, after the government invoked time allocation. The bill establishes a Commissioner of Indigenous

Languages and officially “recognizes that the rights of Indigenous peoples, recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* include rights related to Indigenous languages”.

A report from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs had recommended that Bill C-421, *An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (adequate knowledge of French in Québec)*, standing in the name of **Mario Beaulieu** (La Pointe-de-l'Île) be designated non-votable. Mr. Beaulieu had indicated to the Speaker that he wished to appeal the designation of the bill to the whole House, pursuant to Standing Order 92(4), by filing with the Speaker a motion to that effect signed by himself and at least five other members of the House representing a majority of the recognized parties in the House. The vote by secret ballot took place on January 29 and 30. The motion was rejected and the bill was designated non-votable.

### Financial Procedures

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The government designated March 19, as the final allotted day for the supply period ending March 26. The Official Opposition gave notice of 61 opposed votes of the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, and 196 votes of the Interim Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020. Having previously designated March 18 as the last supply day, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, **Bardish Chagger** (Waterloo) changed the designated day to March 20. She informed the Speaker and the opposition of this in writing. In doing so, she avoided the possibility that marathon voting on the Supplementary and Interim Estimates would lead to the loss of a sitting and the opportunity to deliver the budget speech as planned. The sitting on the last day of the supply period lasted from 2 p.m. on March 20 until 12:51 a.m., Friday, March 22, with voting having taken over a day and a half.

Finance Minister **Bill Morneau** (Toronto Centre) delivered the budget speech as announced on March 19, under the aegis of Ways and Means Motion No. 27.

### Procedure and Privilege

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On January 28, **Luc Thériault** (Montcalm) sought unanimous consent of the House to have the results of the secret ballot on Bill C-421 made public. There was no consent, so he rose on a point of order the following day to argue for the results' disclosure.

Citing a ruling from a similar case a year earlier, the Speaker ruled later that day that Standing Order 92 did not provide direction to the Chair which would allow the disclosure and stated: “Until such time as the House decides to provide new direction on this matter, the Chair will continue to follow the only similar practice that exists in our Standing Orders, that of the election of the Speaker.” Once the voting ended on January 30, the Clerk provided the Speaker with only the outcome of the vote, which the Speaker then announced to the House. The Table Officers could not reveal to the Chair, nor to anyone else, the number of ballots cast either way on the question of the designation of Bill C-421.

### Questions of Privilege

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The Speaker found none of the questions of privilege raised during the last three months to be *prima facie*, but one was of note.

**Greg Fergus** (Hull—Aylmer), raised a question on February 6, concerning an incident on February 4, 2019 that he considered to be racial profiling within the parliamentary precinct. In his ruling on February 19, the Speaker explained that Mr. Fergus's intervention was not properly a question of privilege as it did not involve a Member of Parliament or a proceeding of Parliament. Nevertheless, the Speaker saw fit to make a statement on the incident and the subsequent investigation thereof. He referred to an apology made by the Parliamentary Protective Service and stated that, although the apology is a welcome and necessary first step, “the unacceptable nature of the incident serves as a sombre lesson to do better going forward.” The Speaker explained that all who come to Parliament must be welcomed with equality, dignity and respect, and that the gravity of the matter could not be dismissed.

### Points of Order

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**Michelle Rempel** (Calgary Nose Hill), raised a point of order concerning proceedings in the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on February 25 and 27. The Committee was debating a motion when the Chair suspended the meeting to allow its members to vote in the House. When members returned after the votes, the committee never regained quorum, and the Chair left the room without either resuming or adjourning the meeting. A point of order was raised at the next meeting to resume the debate on the motion that was under



consideration on February 25 since, according to the Conservatives members, the Chair never adjourned the meeting. In response, the Chair of the Committee confirmed that the meeting had indeed been adjourned; upon appeal, that decision was sustained. Contending that the adjournment was a unilateral and prohibited decision of the Chair, Ms. Rempel argued that committees do not have any authority to act beyond the powers granted to them by the House and, specifically, they cannot circumvent, even indirectly, Standing Order 116(2). The Chair, **Robert Oliphant** (Don Valley West), rose to confirm that the meeting had indeed been adjourned.

This was the first instance in which Standing Order 116(2), which created an exception to the right for a Chair's decision to be appealed to a committee, had been invoked since the House adopted the Standing Order in June 2017.

### Other Matters

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On February 28, **Candice Bergen** (Portage—Lisgar) and **Charlie Angus** (Timmins—James Bay) requested an emergency debate with respect to alleged political interference regarding a remediation agreement. The Speaker accepted the requests and the debate took place later that day.

### Committees

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The House concurred in the 66<sup>th</sup> report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (PROC) on November 29, 2018. It contained the recommendation, "That the use of Indigenous languages be recognized in the House of Commons according to the process set out in this report." The process involves members declaring their abilities in an Indigenous second language to the Clerk of the House or of a committee, and that they give reasonable notice of their intention to use the language during proceedings. Since suitable interpreters may not always be available, measures for such occasions are also laid out.

On January 28, during Private Members' Business proceedings on M-207, a motion recommending the establishment of Dutch Heritage Day, **Robert-Falcon Ouellette** (Winnipeg Centre) rose to speak in Cree. Mr. Ouellette's speech in Cree was interpreted simultaneously into English and French and reported in the *Debates*. He later posed a question in Cree to the Minister of Canadian Heritage during Oral Questions.

On March 20, PROC presented its report on a question of privilege raised May 28, 2018, by **Glen Motz** (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner). The question concerned information about the Canadian Firearms Program that Mr. Motz had found on the RCMP website that he alleged led the public to believe that Bill C-71 had already been enacted by Parliament, even though the bill was still before Parliament and subject to its approval.

When the Speaker ruled on June 19, 2018, that the question was *prima facie*, he explained that he had needed to determine if the information published on the RCMP website assumed that Parliament would make a particular decision, which would undermine the authority of the House. He criticized the RCMP's lack of attention to the fundamental principle that the review of legislative proposals and their passage into law is only by act of Parliament. He also expressed his disappointment that the RCMP had allowed the public to draw false conclusions about the force's obligations under the law. Through this, he emphasized the fundamental role of MPs as legislators and that any usurpation of this role was unacceptable.

The committee found that the actions and omissions of the RCMP overlooked, and thereby diminished, Parliament's role, but did not constitute a contempt of Parliament. The Committee accepted the apologies of the Minister of Public Safety, **Ralph Goodale** (Regina—Wascana) and the RCMP, and found no evidence of malice or ill-intent on the part of the Minister or the RCMP and accepted that the error was committed in good faith.

PROC began a study of parallel debating chambers, as is practiced at Westminster and Canberra. Besides hearing from Deputy Speaker **Bruce Stanton** (Simcoe North) and **Charles Robert**, the Clerk of the House, the committee heard from **David Natzler**, Clerk of the House of Commons at Westminster, on his ultimate day of service in that House. At the time of submission, the committee had not yet finished hearing witnesses, nor had it reported.

**Andrew Bartholomew Chaplin**

Table Research Branch



## Senate

### First sitting in the Senate of Canada Building

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The sitting of February 19 marked the first in the Senate of Canada Building, the Senate Chamber's new location until the completion of the Centre Block's rehabilitation project. On that day, the Speaker began the proceedings with a territorial acknowledgement and provided welcoming remarks, acknowledging the efforts involved in the rehabilitation and move to the former Government Conference Centre.

### Legislation

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On February 28, the following bills received royal assent by written declaration: C-64, *An Act respecting wrecks, abandoned, dilapidated or hazardous vessels and salvage operations*; and C-57, *An Act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act*. The following bills also received Royal Assent by written declaration on March 23: C-95, *An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019*; and C-96, *An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020*.

### Chamber, Procedure and Speaker's Rulings

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March 18 marked the first day that the Senate's proceedings were televised. Previously, the Senate's proceedings were only broadcast in audio format, though Senate committee proceedings have been televised for many years. The Senate Chamber proceedings will be available on the Cable Public Affairs Channel (CPAC) and on the Senate website.

On March 19, a point of order was raised with respect to the receivability of an amendment to a motion to authorize the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs to examine and report on

allegations to pressure the former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. The Speaker ruled on April 4 that the amendment was out of order.

### Senators

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On February 19, four new senators were sworn in. **Rosemary Moodie**, a neonatologist at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children and a clinical teacher at the University of Toronto, will represent Ontario. **Stanley Paul Kutcher**, an expert in adolescent mental health and leader in mental health research, advocacy and policy development, will represent Nova Scotia. **Patricia Jane Duncan**, a former premier of Yukon with extensive experience in business and public service, will represent the territory. **Margaret Dawn Anderson**, a proud Inuvialuk with over 20 years of experience as a public servant with the Government of the Northwest Territories, will represent the Northwest Territories. The four newest senators bring the total number of senators up to 105 for the first time since 2010.

### Committees

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On February 28, the fourteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, entitled *Feast or Famine: Impacts of climate change and carbon pricing on agriculture, agri-food and forestry*, was adopted and a government response was requested. On the same day, the seventeenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, entitled "*An Ocean of Misery*": *The Rohingya Refugee Crisis*, was also adopted, and a government response was requested. On March 19, the thirty-sixth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, entitled *Second Interim Report on the 2018-19 Main Estimates*, was adopted. On March 21, the same committee's thirty-eighth report, entitled *Final Report on the Supplementary Estimates (B), 2018-19*, and its thirty-ninth report, entitled *Final Report on the 2019-20 Interim Estimates*, were also adopted.

In addition, on March 21, the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration tabled its thirty-seventh report entitled *Modernizing the Senate's Anti-Harassment Policy: Together let's protect our healthy worklife*. On the same day, the committee also presented its thirty-eighth report dealing with the process for providing a recommendation on the appointment of the Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments. The report is still on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* and has not yet been moved for adoption.

## Officers

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On March 21, the Senate adopted the thirty-fifth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration entitled *Appointment of Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the Senate*. The report recommended that **Philippe Hallée** be appointed Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the Senate. Mr. Hallée will assume his new position on April 22.

**Emily Barrette**  
Procedural Clerk



## Manitoba

### 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the 41<sup>st</sup> Legislature – Spring Sitting

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The Fourth Session of the 41<sup>st</sup> Legislature resumed on March 6, 2019.

The Government introduced a number of bills this session addressing different areas of governance. A total of 20 of these bills were introduced in time to meet the criteria for Specified bill status and therefore guaranteed passage in June (subject to the right of the Opposition designating five of those bills to be delayed until the fall). The legislative agenda includes:

- Bill 2 – *The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members)* includes a number of changes that would strengthen the legislation around Council codes of conduct. These changes would include requiring all Members of Council to undergo mandatory respectful conduct training within six months of being elected or re-elected;
- Bill 4 – *The Public Sector Construction Projects (Tendering) Act*, prohibits public sector entities, such as the Manitoba Government, Crown corporations, school boards and regional health authorities, from using unionization status as a tendering requirement. The practice of employees paying dues to unions they are not members of would also be eliminated;
- Bill 8 – *The Referendum Act*, requires that a referendum be held before implementing a significant change to the provincial voting scheme and before the Manitoba Legislative Assembly can vote on authorizing an amendment to the Canadian Constitution. These requirements are in addition to existing requirements to hold a referendum on major tax increases or on the privatization of public utilities, including Manitoba Hydro and the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. The *Act* also proposes a number of steps that the Clerks have flagged could require a Rule change before they could be implemented;
- Bill 9 – *The Family Law Modernization Act*, provides for simplification of child support processes so that thousands of matters can be addressed outside of court; expansion of the administrative authority of the Maintenance Enforcement Program so parents can make support arrangements outside of court; improved enforceability of family arbitration awards and creates a three-year pilot project to test a new family dispute resolution model;
- Bill 12 – *The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act*, among other measures, strengthens deterrents for the most serious workplace infractions by doubling maximum penalties for offences under the *Act* to \$500,000 (first offence) and \$1,000,000 (second/subsequent);
- Bill 15 – *The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cannabis Possession Restrictions)* makes it an offence to possess more than 30 grams of non-medical cannabis in a public place. It also enables inspectors, including Manitoba Finance officers who enforce provincial tobacco laws, to take action against those who possess illicit cannabis in Manitoba. It would also give police the option to proceed by way of a ticket for possession over 30 grams rather than going through the more complex process of charging an individual criminally. The fine amounts for all new offences would be determined by regulation;
- Bill 18 – *The Labour Relations Amendment Act*, would end the use of government supplied mediators and conciliators to help companies and unions negotiate collective agreements. Instead, companies and unions needing a third party would need to hire them at their own cost from the private sector;

- Bill 21 – *The Legislative Building Centennial Restoration and Preservation Act*, allocates \$10 million annually for the next 15 years to address much needed restoration and preservation of the Manitoba Legislative Building, the grounds and associated infrastructure.

## Budget Debate

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On March 7, 2019, Finance Minister **Scott Fielding** delivered his first budget. Highlights included:

- reducing the Provincial Sales Tax from 8 per cent to 7 per cent effective July 1;
- forecasting a summary deficit of \$360 million for the 2019-20 fiscal year which is \$161 million less than the deficit projected in Budget 2018;
- investing an additional \$2.3 million to target drug-related criminal activity including methamphetamine and gang-related crime prevention initiatives;
- investing historic levels of funding in health care to lower ambulance fees to a maximum of \$250, to open five new or enhanced health facilities with operating funding of \$6.4 million, to hire 35 additional primary care paramedics with \$3.8 million in devoted funding and to increase renal replacement therapy funding by \$2.4 million;
- increasing primary and secondary school funding by \$6.6 million, and increasing kindergarten to Grade 12 capital funding by more than \$56 million to support structural repairs, roof replacements, new mechanical systems and accessibility projects;
- increasing funding for Community Living and disABILITY Services by \$13.6 million to \$439.5 million;
- increasing operating funding for existing and new community-based day care projects by \$759,000;
- increasing Manitoba's RCMP staffing complement by 29 positions, including funding for 27 additional officers;
- providing a total of \$313.5 million in basket funding for local governments that continues to provide municipalities with the flexibility they need to meet local needs including enhanced support for roads and bridges for municipalities outside of Winnipeg;
- allocating \$45 million toward capital projects in recognition of Manitoba's 150th anniversary including funding for additional highways and other infrastructure projects;
- increasing funding for the Manitoba Film and Video Production Tax Credit to \$31.5 million from \$16 million; and

- supporting 15 new projects and over 50 drain rehabilitation projects under the Water Related Capital program, for a total estimated investment of \$46 million.

During his contribution to the budget debate on March 11, Leader of the Official Opposition and NDP leader **Wab Kinew** moved a motion expressing non-confidence in the Government, stating that the budget was not in the best interests of the people of the province and that it neglected the priorities of Manitobans. It did this by:

- breaking the Premier's promise to protect front line services by making deep cuts to health and education despite unprecedented revenues from the Federal Government;
- continuing the Premier's attack on the health care system by underspending on health care by \$240 million, cutting the health care budget by \$120 million, continuing forward on the plan to close two more emergency rooms while freezing mental health and addictions services during a methamphetamine epidemic and continuing to undermine health care for women and girls across Manitoba;
- reducing college and university education funding by millions while increasing tuition rates for parents and students, thereby putting education and good jobs out of the reach of Manitoba's youth; and
- continuing to cut over \$150 million in infrastructure spending from what was previously promised, cutting \$40 million from water infrastructure in the same year as flood forecasts have worsened while failing to offer any program to reduce greenhouse emissions and fight climate change.

On the same day, Manitoba Liberal Party Leader of the second Opposition, **Dougald Lamont**, moved a sub-amendment, stating that the budget failed Manitoba by:

- failing to properly implement health system reorganization causing crises in emergency rooms and primary care;
- failing to invest federal funding increases in Manitoba into crucial services and infrastructure for Manitobans;
- failing to support Manitoba's economic health and choking off growth by; falsely inflating the Province's deficit, budgeting increased amounts in departments for which there is no intention of spending the increases;

- failing to ensure that wealthy Manitobans pay their fair share of taxes by defending tax loopholes that allow the wealthiest to pay a lesser tax rate than medium and low income Manitobans;
- failing to protect the public universal healthcare system by reiterating plans for a grand bargain that would prioritize cheaper wine imports over the Federal Government maintaining its role in health care;
- failing to support Manitoba by acting as a barrier to municipalities and First Nations to access much needed federal infrastructure funding;
- failing to support children in the care of CFS by slashing funding under the guise of block funding for agencies,
- failing to meet or work with the trilateral methamphetamine taskforce; and
- failing to allow jurisdiction over First Nations' children in CFS.

This year's budget debate was limited to five of the allotted six days. The Government interrupted the debate once (as allowed by our Rules), and on March 15 and 18, the House did not enter into Orders of the Day due to procedural maneuvers in the House. On March 19, the eighth day after the budget was introduced, the rules required a vote on all motions related to the Budget. That afternoon the Second Opposition's sub-amendment was defeated on a recorded vote of yeas 16, nays 38. Subsequently, the official Oppositions' amendment was defeated on a recorded vote of yeas 16, nays 38, while the main budget motion carried on a recorded vote of yeas 38, nays 16.

### **Interim Supply**

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On March 20, the House began to consider resolutions and legislation dealing with interim funding for operating and capital expenditures, required until the 2019-2020 fiscal year budget processes and the main supply bills are completed later this session. On March 21, the House considered the remaining stages of Interim Supply legislation, however debate did not conclude prior to the hour of adjournment. As a result, Bill 28 – *The Interim Appropriation Act, 2019* did not receive Royal Assent prior to the end of the fiscal year (the House did not sit the next week as Spring break is a scheduled break week for the House). When the House resumed on April 1, debate concluded on the *Act* and it received Royal Assent.

### **Standing Committees**

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Further to our previous submission, the intersessional period from the end of 2018 to March

2019 was a busy period for the Committees Branch. On December 18, 2018 and again on March 5, 2019, a sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs met to consider the hiring process of the Ombudsman, which is still ongoing as of the date of this submission.

As previously reported, on November 28, 2018, the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs met to consider Annual Reports for Elections Manitoba for the years 2016 and 2017. Subsequently, on January 28, 2019, the Committee met to consider and subsequently pass Elections Manitoba's proposal to modify the voting process.

The January 28 meeting involved improving three process changes proposed by Elections Manitoba. Two changes involved streamlining advance voting and allowing for real time strike-off as well as using a new voting book format. The third change involved a combined pre-printed voting book/list for use on election day that has the preliminary and revised voters list in one place including the names of advanced voters already struck from the list. The Committee accepted the proposal by passing the following motion:

*THAT pursuant to subsection 28.1(5) and subject to subsection 28.1(6) of The Elections Act, the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs approve the proposal to modify the voting process included in the Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2017, and recommend that the Chief Electoral Officer direct that the voting process be modified for upcoming by-elections and the 2020 general election.*

The Standing Committee of Legislative Affairs also met twice in January 16, 2019 to consider reports from the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth as well as the Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee.

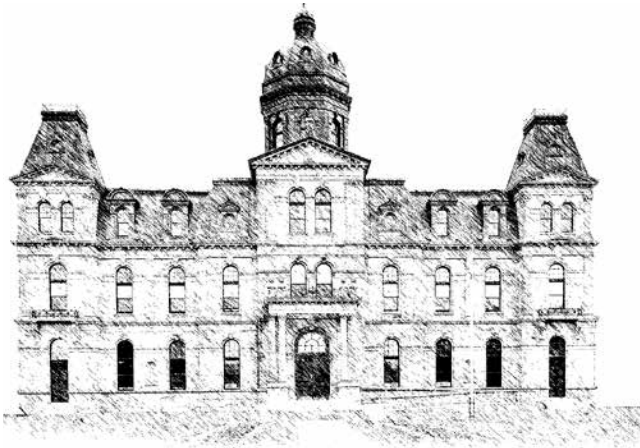
### **Current Party Standings**

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The current party standings in the Manitoba Legislature are: Progressive Conservatives 38, New Democratic Party 12, Liberal Party four and three Independent Members.

**Greg Recksiedler**

Clerk Assistant/Research Officer



## New Brunswick

### Budget

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The Second Session of the 59<sup>th</sup> Legislature adjourned on December 14 and resumed on March 19, when Finance Minister **Ernie Steeves** tabled the 2019-2020 budget. This is the first budget of the Progressive Conservative minority government, led by Premier **Blaine Higgs**.

“Today is about laying the foundation for a sustainable future,” said Minister Steeves. New Brunswick’s net debt is projected to decline for the first time in 13 years. The net debt is currently estimated at \$14.1 billion and is expected to decline by \$49 million.

The 2019-2020 budget is balanced with a surplus of \$23 million and total spending of \$9.823 billion. Revenues are projected to grow by 1.5 per cent, the budget limits spending growth to 1.3 per cent. The Department of Finance and Treasury Board now project the New Brunswick economy to expand by 0.6 per cent despite ongoing trade uncertainty, weaker growth among major international and domestic trading partners, and temporary weakness in the manufacturing sector contributing to slower growth in 2019.

Highlights of the Budget included no new tax increases, a \$1 million funding increase to the Office of the Auditor General, the introduction of a new funding program to support community projects for Members of the Legislative Assembly, a \$2.4 million investment to implement a new nursing human resource strategy, an additional \$1 million to increase

wages for trained early childhood educators, and over \$16 million to increase wages for home support workers.

On March 21, Finance Critic **Roger Melanson** delivered the official Opposition’s reply to the budget. Melanson argued that the government’s approach to balancing the books was too aggressive, noting the previous Liberal government had recently achieved a surplus and intended to work towards balanced budgets in the future without affecting important social services. He suggested the Department of Social Development was incurring a \$19 million reduction that would affect the most vulnerable New Brunswickers. He further noted the costs associated with the cancellation of numerous capital projects that had already started, such as the twinning of certain major highways and the construction of new court facilities.

### Legislation

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As of March 29, eight bills were introduced during the spring session, two of which received royal assent. Certain bills of note included:

Bill 11, *An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Pricing Act*, introduced by Energy and Resource Development Minister **Mike Holland**, incorporates the federal carbon tax into the province’s regulated maximum price for gasoline, diesel, heating oil and propane to allow wholesalers and retailers to pass along the carbon price imposed by the federal government.

Bill 13, *An Act to Amend the Local Governance Act*, introduced by Environment and Local Government Minister **Jeff Carr**, enables local governments to create bylaws imposing tourism accommodation levies on guests of hotels and other accommodation providers to help fund local tourism marketing and development projects.

Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicle Act*, introduced by Public Safety Minister **Carl Urquhart**, eliminates the requirement of front licence plates on passenger and light commercial vehicles.

The People’s Alliance introduced its first bill: Bill 18, *An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicle Act*. The bill, introduced by leader **Kris Austin**, implements a one-time vehicle registration requirement until there is a transfer in ownership and extends the annual certificate of inspection to two years.

On March 20, the House agreed to withdraw Bill 9, *An Act to Amend the Assessment Act*, previously introduced by **Gerry Lowe**, a member of the official Opposition. The bill would reformulate property tax assessment exemptions benefiting heavy industry. Citing confusion regarding the bill's applicability, it was withdrawn. A motion was subsequently passed by the House directing the Standing Committee on Law Amendments to undertake a study, including public consultations, and report back to the House with recommendations on whether to reduce or eliminate any property assessment or property taxation exemptions or benefits that apply to heavy industry.

### **Standing Committees**

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On January 16, the Standing Committees on Public Accounts and Crown Corporations, chaired by **Roger Melanson** and **Glen Savoie** respectively, met with Auditor General **Kim MacPherson** for the release of her *Report of the Auditor General of New Brunswick 2018, Volume II - Performance Audit and Volume III - Financial Audit*. Volume II presented performance audits on improving student performance and managing injured workers' claims. Volume III focused on year-end financial results and matters arising from the annual financial audit of the provincial government and Crown agencies.

The Standing Committee on Crown Corporations reviewed 11 provincial agencies, boards and commissions over six days in January and February. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts reviewed nine departments over six days in February.

On February 7, the Standing Committee on Procedure, Privileges and Legislative Officers, chaired by **Stewart Fairgrieve**, considered an investigative report presented by Ombud **Charles Murray** entitled *Failure to Protect*. The report released findings of patient mistreatment at the Restigouche Hospital Centre in Campbellton caused in part by chronic understaffing and negligent medical assessments.

The Standing Committee on Estimates and Fiscal Policy, chaired by Mr. Savoie, is scheduled to meet for three weeks in April to consider departmental estimates.

### **Interim Official Opposition Leader**

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Following former Premier **Brian Gallant's** resignation as leader of his party, **Denis Landry** was elected interim leader of the New Brunswick

Liberal Party and Leader of the Official Opposition on February 12. Mr. Landry was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1995 and previously served as Minister of Transportation, Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Human Resources and Minister of Justice and Public Safety. The Liberal Leadership Convention is scheduled for June 22.

### **Sitting Days and Standings**

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The House met from March 19 to 29 and is scheduled to resume sitting on May 7. The standings in the House are 22 Progressive Conservatives, 21 Liberals, three Greens, and three People's Alliance.

**Alicia R. Del Frate**  
Parliamentary Support Officer



## **Newfoundland and Labrador**

The House reconvened on March 4 for the continuation of the Third Session of the Forty-Eighth General Assembly.

The newly-elected Member for Topsail-Paradise, **Paul Dinn**, MHA, took his seat on the first day of the sitting.

### **Training for Members**

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During the break the Members of the House of Assembly underwent respectful workplace training, provided by Memorial University's Gardiner Centre, as recommended by the Privileges and Elections Committee in their November Interim Report.

## Standing Orders Amendments

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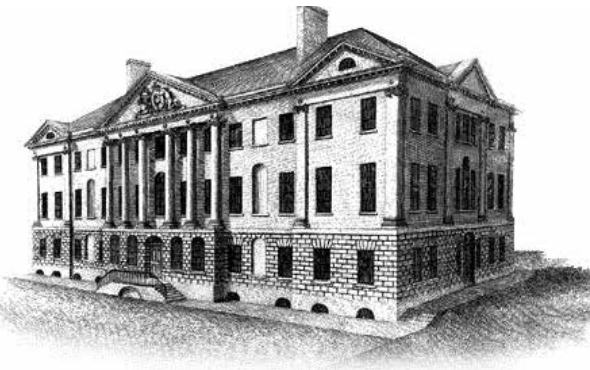
The House adopted permanently the provisional amendment introduced for the Spring sitting permitting ministers to respond to Petitions. This amendment has been well received by all members.

The House also amended the standing order relating to the rota for Private Members' Day to ensure that more members sitting in opposition have the opportunity to introduce a motion. The original rota was based on the Session whereas the amended allocation is based on the General Assembly.

The House prorogued on April 2 having passed 57 Bills and was set to convene on April 4 for the Throne Speech opening the Fourth Session of the Forty Eighth General Assembly.

The General Election is expected before the end of June.

**Elizabeth Murphy**  
Clerk Assistant



## Nova Scotia

### House of Assembly Tartan

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On April 5, 2019, the Nova Scotia House of Assembly passed the *House of Assembly Tartan Act*. This *Act* established a unique and official Tartan of the House of Assembly. The Speaker controls the use of the Tartan and penalties are provided for its unofficial use. The Tartan is also an emblem of the House of Assembly.

Section 4 of the *Act* describes the significance of the selected colors for the Tartan as follows: "The green in the Tartan represents the legislative chamber

where the Assembly meets, the red represents the Red Chamber, the black represents the Speaker's and the Clerk's robes, the yellow represents the gold Mace, the white represents the laws passed by the Assembly and the tan represents the sandstone exterior of Province House, the building where the Assembly conducts its business."

During 2019 there are many celebrations marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Province House and it is fitting and of significance that the House of Assembly gave itself an official tartan in time for Tartan Day on April 6.

### The Human Organ and Tissue Donation Act

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On April 2, 2019, the Premier as President of the Executive Council, introduced the *Human Organ and Tissue Donation Act*. This *Act* makes Nova Scotia the first jurisdiction in North America to adopt presumed consent for organ and tissue donation. Nova Scotians will have the option of opting out of the presumed consent if they so desire and persons under 19 along with those without decision-making capacity are exempt from the application of the proposed legislation unless a parent, guardian or substitute decision-maker opts them in. The *Act* is subject to proclamation and the Premier stated that proclamation would occur approximately 12 to 18 months after passage to provide opportunity for planning, public education and awareness. The public had a first opportunity to comment on the bill when it was before the Law Amendments Committee.

### Speaker's Rulings

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1) On March 27, 2019, the Leader of the Official Opposition raised a point of privilege alleging a series of threatening incidents against him by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. It was his submission, after setting out the fact situation, that there was sufficient evidence for the Speaker to rule that he had raised a *prima facie* question of privilege; and, should the Speaker so conclude, that he would move a resolution referring the matter to the Committee on Internal Affairs for study and report to the House.

The Speaker provided an opportunity for a response by the Minister who stated his differing version of the events that had taken place between himself and the Leader of the Official Opposition. The Speaker then heard from two Member witnesses and recessed the House to consider the matter.



The Speaker ruled that a *prima facie* case of breach of privilege was raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition and asked him to restate his motion to have the matter referred to the Committee on Internal Affairs. The motion was put to a vote and was defeated by the House thereby ending the matter.

2) On April 3, 2019, the Speaker gave a ruling regarding a point of privilege raised by the Premier on March 8. The Premier had stated that the Leader of the Official Opposition and the House Leader for that caucus had provided the House with misinformation that they should have known not to be true, thus deliberately misleading the House. The Speaker concluded that a *prima facie* point of privilege appeared to be arguable. However, when the Premier raised on his point of privilege, he did not propose a resolution for the consideration of the House. The Speaker indicated he was prepared to have the Premier now make his motion; however, prior to doing so, he provided an opportunity to the Leader of the Official Opposition and his House Leader to retract the allegations made and furthermore stated that if there was a retraction there would be no need for a resolution to be put before the House as the matter would thereupon be concluded. Both the Leader of the Official Opposition and the House Leader retracted the comments made and stated that it had not been their intention to mislead the House. The Speaker, in relying on *Beauchesne*, stated that the House was bound to accept the Member's words and that the matter was now concluded.

## Budget

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On March 26, 2019, Minister of Finance **Karen Casey** delivered her budget speech. Following the responses from the official Opposition and the third party, the estimates were automatically referred to the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

In accordance with the *Rules and Forms of Procedure*, five Ministers of Government's Estimates are considered in the Committee of the Whole on Supply, for a total of 40 hours and concurrently the Subcommittee on Supply considers the remaining Estimates in the order determined by the Minister leading the House at the time in the Red Chamber of the House. The selection of the five Ministers is determined by the House Leader of the Official Opposition in consultation with the Minister leading the House at the time.

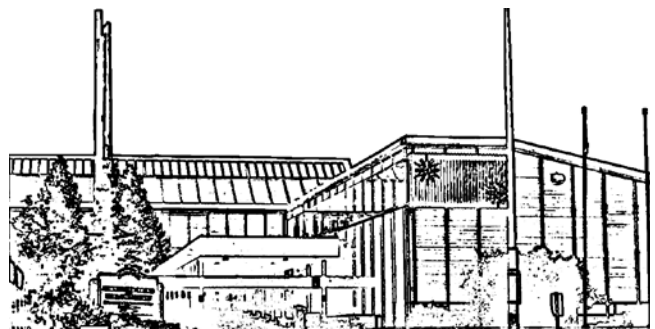
The total time for estimate consideration is 80 hours broken down into 40 hours in each committee. The committees can meet no more than four hours on any day.

The daily motion for the House to resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole on Supply is a debatable motion for no more than 45 minutes and no Member can speak for more than 15 minutes.

A Minister appearing before the Committee for consideration of the Minister's Estimates may have one to two support staff to assist in responding to questions.

**Annette M. Boucher**

Assistant Clerk



## Yukon

### Spring Sitting

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The 2019 Spring Sitting of the Second Session of the 34<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly began on March 7 and is scheduled to conclude on April 30, after 30 sitting days.

### Government Bills Introduced

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Pursuant to Standing Order 74, the following government bills were introduced by the fifth sitting day (the deadline for the introduction of government legislation to be dealt with during a given Sitting):

- Bill No. 29, *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*
- Bill No. 30, *Act to Amend the Education Labour Relations Act*
- Bill No. 31, *Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*
- Bill No. 32, *Act to Amend the Securities Act*

- Bill No. 33, *Yukon Government Carbon Price Rebate Implementation Act*
- Bill No. 208, *Third Appropriation Act 2018-19*
- Bill No. 209, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2019-20*
- Bill No. 210, *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*

### **In Remembrance of Ken McKinnon**

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On March 13, 2019, **Ken McKinnon** – tributed by the Whitehorse Star as “a beloved titan”, “a father of responsible government” and “a Yukoner through and through” – passed away. News of the former Commissioner’s death was communicated to the House on March 14 by Speaker **Nils Clarke**. The same day, a statement released by Premier **Sandy Silver** enumerated some of Mr. McKinnon’s key accomplishments and also noted that he had been “... a warm ambassador for the Yukon his entire life. His passing is a loss many Yukoners will feel deeply....”

In a statement released on March 18, Yukon Commissioner **Angélique Bernard** reviewed a number of Mr. McKinnon’s accomplishments and observed, “...Ken McKinnon is recognized for his extensive work done toward achieving responsible government, devolution and land claims for the Yukon and its people...”

Mr. McKinnon’s career in politics began in 1961, with his election at the age of 25 (the youngest-ever Member, at the time) to Yukon’s Territorial Council, as the Legislative Assembly was then known. Mr. McKinnon was re-elected in the general elections of 1967, 1970, and 1974. During his final term on Territorial Council, Mr. McKinnon served on the Executive Committee – the precursor of to Executive Council (Cabinet).

Mr. McKinnon had served as Yukon’s Commissioner – a role analogous to that of a provincial lieutenant governor – from 1986 to 1995.

Apart from politics, Mr. McKinnon also made significant contributions in the realms of sports and education. These contributions included serving as President of the first-ever Arctic Winter Games, and as Chancellor of Yukon College.

Mr. McKinnon had been in attendance at the December 13, 2018 celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of territorial party politics in Yukon. This celebration, detailed in Yukon’s preceding legislative report, had been hosted by Speaker Clarke in the foyer of the Yukon government administration building (the building

in which the Legislative Assembly is located), saw many current and former MLAs and Commissioners gather together to celebrate the official advent of party politics, which preceded by one year the achievement in 1979 of responsible government in Yukon.

### **Upcoming NDP Leadership Convention**

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As mentioned in Yukon’s preceding legislative report, on November 21, 2018, Third Party Leader **Liz Hanson**, the MLA for Whitehorse Centre, announced her plans to step down as Leader of Yukon’s NDP once a new leader has been chosen.

On February 1, 2019, Third Party House Leader **Kate White**, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, announced her intention to run for the party leadership. First elected to the Legislative Assembly in the October 2011 general territorial election, Ms. White was re-elected in the general election of November 2016.

The race officially began on February 4, and will conclude on May 4 with a leadership convention in Whitehorse.

At the time of writing, Ms. White – who together with Ms. Hanson forms the Third Party caucus – is the sole declared candidate for the leadership. Nominations close on April 18.

### **Retirement of Clerk**

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**Floyd McCormick** has served as the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly since March 2007. In August 2001, Mr. McCormick began his career at the Yukon Legislative Assembly as the Deputy Clerk. Prior to that time, Mr. McCormick had held positions including political commentator for CBC Yukon radio and the *Yukon News*, and political science instructor at Yukon College.

On January 7, 2019, Speaker Clarke issued a news release announcing Mr. McCormick’s intention to resign as Clerk, and noting that the Members’ Services Board (MSB) – an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly -- was commencing the recruitment process to select his successor. The members of MSB are Premier Silver, **Tracy-Anne McPhee** (Government House Leader, Minister of Justice and Minister of Education), official Opposition Member **Brad Cathers**, and Third Party Leader **Liz Hanson**.

Mr. McCormick’s final day as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly was May 3, 2019.

## New Clerk Announced

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On March 5, Speaker Clarke, in his role as Chair of the Members' Services Board, issued a news release announcing that the all-party committee had selected **Dan Cable** to be Mr. McCormick's successor as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Cable will officially assume the mantle of Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on May 4. On April 1, Mr. Cable joined the Legislative Assembly Office, to enjoy a period of overlap with the outgoing Clerk.

Mr. Cable had worked in the Yukon government's Department of Justice for 17 years, and served as the Department's Director of Policy and Communications for the past 13 years. As noted in the March 5 news release, Mr. Cable's "departmental responsibilities also included ministerial support and management of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy function at the Department of Justice."

Mr. Cable has an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of British Columbia, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Alaska.

## Youth Parliament

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Yukon's youth parliament program is being revived after a number of years of dormancy (a youth parliament was last held in the Yukon Legislative Assembly in April 2010).

While the call for participants in the youth parliament program went out territory-wide, most of the youth parliamentarians reside in the territorial capital of Whitehorse. Two of the 22 high school students who comprise the youth parliament are from the communities – one from Haines Junction, the other from Ross River.

On the evening of April 10, a welcome reception will be held for Yukon's youth parliamentarians. The following day, the youth parliamentarians will be "sworn-in" by Commissioner Bernard at the Commissioner's Office, Taylor House. The youth parliamentarians will receive a tour of the Legislative Assembly and an orientation to the building and observe part of a regular sitting of the Assembly, including the Daily Routine, and a portion of Orders of the Day. The youth parliamentarians will then hold caucus meetings to plan the next day's proceedings.

On the morning of April 12, there will be a panel discussion featuring representatives of all three parties in the Legislative Assembly. Ms. McPhee, Government House Leader, **Scott Kent**, Official Opposition House Leader, and Ms. White, Third Party House Leader, will discuss what it is like to be an MLA. Later that morning, there will be a sitting of the youth parliament in the Chamber. In the afternoon, there will be a mock media scrum, and discussion of the role of the media with members of the press gallery, after which the youth parliament will reconvene to debate two motions. Speaker Clarke will preside over both the morning and afternoon sittings of the youth parliament. The youth parliament will then conclude with a closing reception in the Members' Lounge.

**Linda Kolody**  
Deputy Clerk



## Québec

### Proceedings of the National Assembly

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#### *Composition of the Assembly*

On March 11, 2019, the Member for Marie-Victorin, **Catherine Fournier**, announced her decision to leave the Parti québécois caucus, which at the time formed the Second Opposition Group, to sit as an independent Member. Since then, the composition of the National Assembly has been as follows: Coalition avenir Québec, 75 Members; Quebec Liberal Party, 29 Members; Québec solidaire, 10 Members; Parti québécois, nine Members; and two independent Members.

### *Legislative agenda*

Since proceedings resumed on February 5, nine government bills have been introduced, including:

- Bill 5 - *An Act to amend the Education Act and other provisions regarding preschool education services for students 4 years of age*
- Bill 6 - *An Act to transfer responsibility for the registry of lobbyists to the Lobbyists Commissioner and to implement the Charbonneau Commission recommendation on the prescription period for bringing penal proceedings*
- Bill 9 - *An Act to increase Québec's socio-economic prosperity and adequately meet labour market needs through successful immigrant integration*
- Bill 10 - *An Act to amend the Pay Equity Act mainly to improve the pay equity audit process*

### *Rulings from the Chair*

February 5, 2019 – Dress code for Members participating in parliamentary proceedings.

Parliaments are places where tradition is sometimes more prominent than elsewhere. Their functioning is bound by rules, customs and practices that have been honed over time to ensure the orderly conduct of their proceedings.

In the National Assembly, the Members debate issues of vital importance for Québécois. It is therefore essential that ideas take precedence over other considerations, hence the importance of having a framework that gives all Members the opportunity to express themselves. This is why the Chair believes that any change to this framework must be approached carefully.

Traditionally, there have been no written rules dictating members' attire. Only Standing Order 32 sets out a general obligation for Members to keep order and decorum in the Assembly and refrain from any course of action that might disrupt the orderly conduct of its proceedings or infringe on another Member's freedom of speech. The Chair has already indicated that Members must avoid wearing clothes or accessories that could jeopardize another Member's freedom of speech or undermine the Assembly's decorum.

Despite the absence of a clear dress code, the standard observed for many years in the context of parliamentary debates in the National Assembly has

been that of so-called "business attire". In practice, during parliamentary proceedings, men are expected to wear a jacket and tie, and women, appropriate businesslike attire.

The Chair recognizes that, for some people, clothing is a way of defining themselves, an intrinsic part of their identity and personality. In this regard, Members have always enjoyed a certain leeway in how they dress. However, as is the case in other assemblies, one's attire cannot constitute a means of expression that circumvents the framework established by the Standing Orders.

A parliament is a unique venue, where debates allow differing and oftentimes diverging points of view to be voiced. Some form of framework is required to allow all Members to express themselves in a manner that is respectful of others. This arena, which inspires the collective imagination, is conducive to rituals and symbols, which play an important role within it.

This does not mean that parliaments are immune to change. Quite the contrary: it is desirable that they evolve with the societies they represent. While Parliament's transformation may be slow, the institution is of critical importance in a democratic society and, consequently, must adapt to contexts that are constantly evolving.

Although dress is not central to a parliament, it nonetheless reflects the demographics that make up the Assembly and the trends and nuances each person brings to it, underscores a certain individuality and can be considered a form of expression. Because of its nature and role, the Assembly must provide a framework that is flexible enough to allow each Member to exercise his or her duties as a representative, firm enough to regulate conflicts and political tensions, and a sufficient balance of consistency and adaptability to preserve its legitimacy.

Parliaments change with the various generations and cohorts of Members that come and go. The work environment, codes, standards and rules are thus likely to change, thereby transforming the institution.

Whenever such a desire for change calls for a practice within the parliamentary context to be eliminated or modified, there may be opposing views. Some may see it as undermining the institutional framework's credibility and legitimacy, while others

may see it as an opportunity to relax rules considered to be overly restrictive or conformist.

The Chair considers that it is not its place to decide the matter unilaterally. This issue should be decided collectively, after discussion among the parliamentarians. If applicable, the Chair would like the Members to reach a broad consensus, as they do whenever the possibility of reviewing parliamentary procedure is raised. Only after such discussions will the parliamentarians be able to conclude whether or not there is a desire to make changes to the functioning of the Assembly.

*March 20, 2019 – Recognition of the Second and Third Opposition Groups and their ranking within the Opposition*

At the beginning of the current legislature, discussions held among the various political parties represented in the Assembly led to the signing of an agreement addressing such matters as the concept of recognizing parties as parliamentary groups, the distribution of measures and the allocation of speaking times.

Following the Member for Marie-Victorin's decision to leave the parliamentary group formed by the Parti québécois (PQ) to sit as an independent Member, the President gave a ruling about the status of the Second and Third Opposition Groups and the distribution of measures and allocation of speaking times.

As the guardian of the rights and privileges of all Members of the National Assembly, the Chair had to modify the distribution of measures and allocation of speaking times in order to grant rights to the Member for Marie-Victorin. The longstanding practice observed in the Assembly has been that when a Member belonging to a parliamentary group leaves that group to sit as an independent Member, the measures recognized for that Member are generally taken from those allocated to the group to which the Member formerly belonged.

On the question of parliamentary Opposition group recognition and ranking, the terms of the agreement state that the parties agreed to recognize the Parti québécois as the Second Opposition Group and Québec solidaire as the Third Opposition Group for the duration of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, notwithstanding the provisions of National Assembly Standing Order

13.

The Assembly also adopted a temporary amendment to this Standing Order, which provides that each political party represented in the National Assembly following the October 1, 2018 general election constitutes a parliamentary group. However, as a result of the Member for Marie-Victorin's decision to sit as an independent Member, the parliamentary group formed by the Parti québécois now has fewer members than the parliamentary group formed by Québec solidaire. The question therefore was whether, under these circumstances, the Parti québécois could keep its title of Second Opposition Group.

The Chair wished to distinguish between two distinct concepts, the first being a party's recognition as a parliamentary group and the second being the parliamentary groups' ranking within the Opposition. The general election results are the determining factor in recognizing a party as a parliamentary group. When a political party meets the criteria set out in Standing Order 13, by either having at least 12 elected Members or obtaining at least 20% of the vote in the most recent general election, it forms a parliamentary group for the duration of the legislature, regardless of any changes that may arise over the course of that legislature. However, if, in the course of a legislature, 12 Members decided to group together and sit as a new political party, that party could not be recognized as a parliamentary group, because it would not have won seats in the last election or obtained votes as this party.

The Chair recalled that, since 2009, there have been two occasions on which the parties represented in the Assembly have agreed to change the criteria for recognizing parliamentary groups so that a party that did not meet the criteria provided for in the Standing Orders could still be considered a parliamentary group for the duration of the legislature. In both cases, the parliamentary groups were recognized for the duration of the legislature based on the most recent election results.

In light of these principles and precedents, it seemed clear to the Chair that the Parti québécois must continue to be recognized as a parliamentary group, since it continues to meet the criteria agreed on for the duration of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Legislature.

As regards the parliamentary groups' ranking

within the Opposition, the Chair recalled that, under the agreement reached for the duration of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, on the basis of the October 1, 2018 election results, the political parties represented in the Assembly agreed to recognize the Parti québécois as the Second Opposition Group and Québec solidaire as the Third Opposition Group.

It is important to point out that the order established in the agreement reflects the situation as it was at that time, that is, the Parti québécois and Québec solidaire each had 10 Members. It was only because both parties returned the same number of members in the general election that it was ultimately decided that the status of Second or Third Opposition Group would be assigned according to an objective criterion, namely the percentage of the vote obtained in the most recent election.

The agreement reached at the beginning of the legislature reflected the Assembly's composition at that time. However, the Chair stated that one could hardly argue that the agreement "froze" the Assembly in the state it was in at the beginning of the legislature, without regard for changes that might arise in its composition.

The Standing Orders provide that a Member who leaves a parliamentary group without joining another parliamentary group must sit as an Independent member and that, conversely, a Member sitting as an independent Member may join a parliamentary group. Furthermore, any Member may resign in the course of a legislature, giving rise to a by-election that can also change the Assembly's composition.

The Chair stated that it would be contradictory for parliamentary law to allow changes in the Assembly's composition in the course of a legislature while "freezing" this composition as it was at the beginning of that legislature. It would also be odd to allow the Chair to modify the distribution of oversight measures, which are also a part of the agreement, while "freezing" the groups' rankings. It is, therefore, difficult to justify that a party that now has nine members should occupy a higher rank than a party that has 10.

In determining a parliamentary group's ranking within the Opposition, the determining factor is the number of Members in that parliamentary group. This criterion is used in the National Assembly to establish which of two parliamentary groups will form the Official Opposition and which will form the

Second Opposition Group.

Never has the Chair had to decide what would happen if the Second Opposition Group were to have more Members than the Official Opposition in the course of a legislature. However, it recalled that the presiding officers of other Canadian legislative assemblies have had to rule on similar issues and have relied on the "number of Members" criterion to do so.

Just as the number of Members in a parliamentary group can change in the course of a legislature, the Chair concluded that the same is true for a parliamentary group's status within the Opposition. This is why, since the Parti québécois now has fewer Members than Québec solidaire, the Chair ruled that the latter would henceforth be the Second Opposition Group and the Parti québécois would be the Third Opposition Group.

The changes resulting from the modifications to the distribution of measures and the new seating plan of the National Assembly came into effect on March 21, 2019.

#### *Budget Speech*

On March 21, 2019, Éric Girard, Minister of Finance, delivered the Budget Speech. The estimates of expenditure for 2019-2020 were tabled on the same day. At the next sitting, on March 26, 2019, the parliamentarians concurred in interim supply and passed Bill 22, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2019-2020*. The following day, the Assembly began the 25-hour debate on the Budget Speech.

#### *New regulation respecting interparliamentary and international activities*

On February 28, 2019, the Office of the National Assembly adopted a new regulation respecting interparliamentary and international activities to improve their efficiency and ensure greater transparency.

Among the changes to ensure better accountability, the publication of a report on each interparliamentary and international activity, including the breakdown of costs incurred for the activity, will be available on the National Assembly website as soon as possible following each activity.

This regulation also stipulates that the National

Assembly will establish an all-party advisory committee whose mission will be to plan and coordinate the activities of the institution's interparliamentary and international relations. The committee will be chaired by the President of the Assembly and will be composed of the whip of each parliamentary group or, if a parliamentary group has no whip, of a Member appointed to act as the group's representative. It will be mandated to prepare the annual programming of interparliamentary and international relations activities, whose purpose will be to better integrate the topics likely to be addressed during parliamentary proceedings. Gender parity will be taken into account in the composition of the delegations of Members taking part in these activities.

In addition, the President will table the National Assembly's policy directions and objectives with regard to interparliamentary and international relations as well as the annual report on the activities and expenses of interparliamentary and international relations.

### **Committee Proceedings**

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Here are some highlights of the various mandates carried out by the parliamentary committees from January to March 2019.

#### *First deliberative meetings*

In February, each sectorial committee and the Committee on Public Administration (CPA) held their first deliberative meeting to allow the members to introduce themselves, to establish their steering committee's membership and to receive training on the workings of the parliamentary committees.

To conclude this meeting, a training session focussing on parliamentary procedure was also given to all committee members. This training aimed to present the rules of procedure pertaining to the various mandates carried out by committees.

#### *Special consultations and public hearings*

From January to March 2019, five committees met to launch special consultations and hold public hearings on bills. Two of these consultations will be presented in this section. The 42<sup>nd</sup> Legislature's first consultation, held on February 5-6, 2019, concerned Bill 3, *An Act to establish a single school tax rate*. The Committee on Public Finance (CPF) heard 10 individuals and organizations and received 14 briefs during these consultations.

For its part, the Committee on Health and Social Services (CHSS) held hearings on Bill 2, *An Act to tighten the regulation of cannabis*. This bill proposes to amend the *Cannabis Regulation Act*, which came into force in June 2018, in order to:

- raise the minimum age required to buy or possess cannabis or to be admitted to a cannabis retail outlet from 18 to 21 years of age;
- tighten the rules applicable to cannabis possession on certain premises (public places, college- and university-level educational institutions); and
- prohibit operating a cannabis retail outlet close to college- and university-level educational institutions.

The hearings were held on February 12, 13, 19 and 20, 2019. During these consultations, the CHSS members heard thirteen organizations and received 33 briefs.

During that same period, the Committee on Citizen Relations (CCR) held consultations and public hearings, from February 21 to 28, 2019, on Bill 9, *An Act to increase Québec's socio-economic prosperity and adequately meet labour market needs through successful immigrant integration*. This bill amends the *Québec Immigration Act* and the *Act respecting the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion* to provide the legislative basis required for the new government guidelines regarding selection, francization and integration of immigrants.

#### *Clause-by-clause consideration of bills*

Among the four bills given clause-by-clause consideration in committee, it should be noted that the Committee on Institutions (CI) began the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 1, *An Act to amend the rules governing the appointment and dismissal of the Anti-Corruption Commissioner, the Director General of the Sûreté du Québec and the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions*. This bill provides that these persons would henceforth be appointed by the National Assembly. Subject to passage of this bill, a proposed candidate for an above mentioned position would be appointed on a motion of the Premier and with the approval of two-thirds of the Members.

#### *Orders of initiative*

At we begin this legislature, two committees have decided to take on orders of initiative. In order to be carried out, this type of mandate must first be adopted by a majority of the committee members from each parliamentary group. Once the mandate

has been adopted, the committee organizes its own proceedings, so the amount of time spent on this type of mandate may vary.

The Committee on Culture and Education (CCE) adopted an order of initiative concerning the future of news media. During this mandate, the CCE intends to hold consultations to establish a clear profile of local news media and identify solutions regarding the following challenges:

- the financing of businesses and organizations to achieve tax fairness;
- the regional presence of the news media and promotion the local role of news;
- the sustainability of business models in the digital age; and
- the independence of the news media.

On March 28, the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy and Natural Resources (CAFENR) adopted an order of initiative regarding the impact on public health and the environment of the use of chemical products such as pesticides in the agriculture and agri-food industries.

#### *Election of Chairs*

On February 6, the Committee on Institutions (CI) elected **André Bachand** (Richmond) as its Chair to replace **Benoit Charette** (Deux-Montagnes), who was appointed Minister of the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change. For its part, the Committee on Citizen Relations (CCR) elected **MarieChantal Chasseé** (Châteauguay) as its new Chair to replace Mr. Bachand (Richmond).

#### **Sylvia Ford**

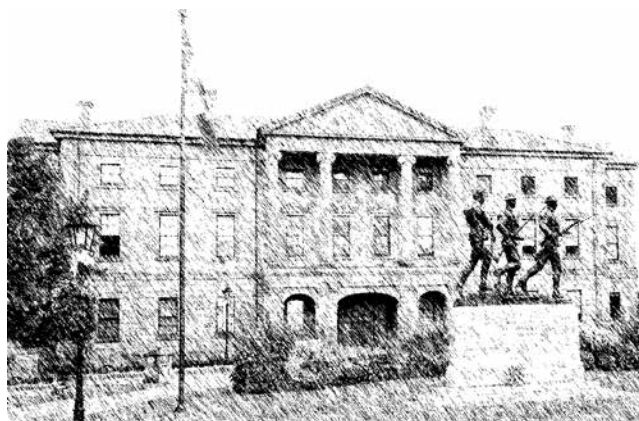
General Directorate for Parliamentary Affairs

Sittings Service

#### **Sabine Mekki**

General Directorate for Parliamentary Affairs

Committees Service



## Prince Edward Island

### **Dissolution of the 65<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

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On March 26, 2019, on the advice of Executive Council, Chief Justice **David Jenkins**, as Administrator of the province acting in place of Lieutenant Governor **Antoinette Perry**, dissolved the Legislative Assembly and ordered that writs be issued for a general election to take place on April 23, 2019.

### **General Election**

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The 2019 election will be carried out in districts that have changed since the last election in 2015. Upon recommendation of the Electoral Boundaries Commission in 2017, almost all of PEI's 27 electoral districts were adjusted in order to have a variance of less than 10% from the provincial average number of electors (3,700) within their boundaries. The only exception was the district of Evangeline - Miscouche, where a greater variance from the average was considered justified by the need to protect Acadian language, culture and tradition in the province. Several districts were renamed in the process. Under the *Electoral Boundaries Act*, an Electoral Boundaries Commission is established after every three general elections to review the districts of the province and report to the Legislative Assembly its recommendations on the area, boundaries, and names of the districts of the province.

As of April 1, 2019, Elections PEI listed 73 candidates as officially registered, as follows: 17 Green Party, two Independent, 23 Liberal Party, six New Democratic Party, and 25 Progressive Conservative Party.



Four members of the 65<sup>th</sup> General Assembly have opted not to reoffer in the 2019 election. Speaker **Francis (Buck) Watts** (District 8, Tracadie – Hillsborough Park) was first elected in 2007, re-elected in 2011 and 2015, and has served as Speaker since June, 2015. Deputy Speaker **Kathleen Casey** (District 14, Charlottetown – Lewis Point) was first elected in 2007, re-elected in 2011 and 2015, and served as Speaker from 2007 to 2011. **J. Alan McIsaac** (District 5, Vernon River – Stratford) was first elected in 2007, re-elected in 2011 and 2015, and served variously as Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture; Justice and Public Safety; and Agriculture and Fisheries. He also served as Government House Leader. **Allen Roach** (District 3, Montague – Kilmuir) was first elected in 2011 and re-elected in 2015, and served as Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, and subsequently as Minister of Finance.

### **Electoral System Referendum**

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As established by the 2018 *Electoral System Referendum Act*, a referendum on PEI's voting system will be held at the same time as the April 23 general election. Voters will receive two ballots: one to vote for the candidate of their choice in their district and another to vote "no" or "yes" in response to the referendum question: "Should Prince Edward Island change its voting system to a mixed member proportional voting system?"

For the result to be binding, the no or yes option must receive a majority of the overall vote and a majority in at least 60 per cent of the 27 districts. Should the "no" option prevail, PEI will continue to employ the first-past-the-post electoral system; should the "yes" option prevail, Government will be expected to take steps to implement the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system for the next general election.

Under an MMP voting system, as stipulated by the *Act*, the Legislative Assembly would be made up of 18 members representing an electoral district, and 9 members drawn from province-wide party lists. Voters will have two votes to cast at a general election. On the first part of the ballot, voters will indicate their preferred candidate for their local electoral district. The candidate with the most votes in the district wins, as is the case in the current First Past the Post system. On the second part of the ballot, voters will indicate their preferred candidate from a list of candidates provided by each party; they may choose a candidate from the same party as their district candidate, or a different party. These votes on the second part of the ballot

would be used to determine each party's province-wide popular vote, and the number of votes each candidate on the party list receives would determine their ranking. List seats are allocated proportionally, based on the popular vote each party receives on the second part of the ballot. The system is designed so that the list seats become "top-up" or compensatory seats to accommodate for disproportionate results in the local district elections. For example, if a party has won 30 per cent of the popular vote, and is entitled to three seats to bring it up to 30 per cent of the seats in the Legislative Assembly, its top three ranked list candidates will be considered elected.

The *Act* also establishes the Referendum Commissioner, who has the responsibility of public education and the disbursement of funds to opponent or proponent groups to promote the electoral system of their choosing. The opponent group "No What to Vote" and the proponent group "Vote Yes PEI" have registered as referendum advertisers and receive public funding in this regard.

### **New Progressive Conservative Party Leader**

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At a leadership convention on February 9, 2019, members of the Progressive Conservative Party of PEI elected **Dennis King** as party leader. Mr. King defeated four other leadership candidates. The leadership was previously held by Leader of the Official Opposition **James Aylward** (District 6, Stratford – Kinlock), who had resigned the party leadership role in September, 2018, but continued to serve as a member of the Legislative Assembly and is running in the 2019 general election. Mr. King has not previously been elected to the legislature, but has been nominated as the Progressive Conservative candidate in District 15, Brackley – Hunter River.

### **Retirement of Clerk of the Legislative Assembly**

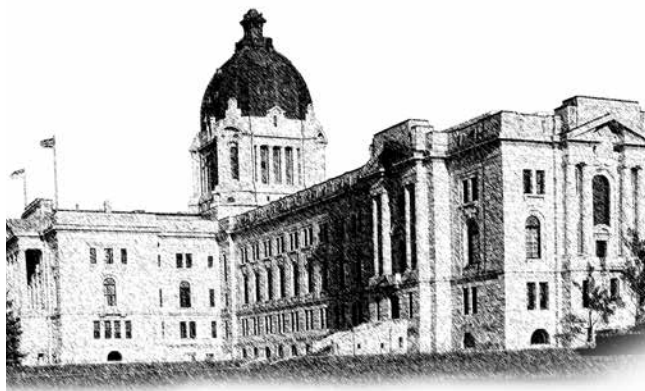
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On March 30, 2019, **Charles MacKay** officially retired as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. MacKay had worked at the Legislative Assembly for 33 years, and served as Clerk for 18 years. At a reception on March 7, many friends, coworkers, current and past members, and government personnel gathered to thank Mr. MacKay for his exemplary service and wish him well in his retirement. Notes of congratulation were sent by several colleagues from the Association of Clerks at the Table in Canada. In his career Mr. MacKay made significant contributions to parliamentary administration provincially, nationally and internationally.

On November 28, 2018, after a public competition, the Legislative Assembly unanimously adopted the appointment of **Joseph Jeffrey** as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly effective upon Mr. MacKay's retirement. This was the first time in PEI's history that an open competition was held for this position. Mr. Jeffrey formerly served as Director of Corporate Services for six years and Committee Clerk (both in the House and with Standing Committees). He also serves as Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Parliamentary Administration (CAPA).

**Ryan Reddin**

Clerk Assistant – Research and Committees



## Saskatchewan

### Budget

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The Third session of the Twenty-Eighth Legislature resumed on March 4, 2019. On March 20, 2019, the Minister of Finance, Donna Harpauer, presented the province's budget for 2019-20. The budget, entitled "The Right Balance," announced funding in government programs such as mental health, autism for children under six, home care, education, and intersection safety. The government said the "budget achieves the right balance by investing to help meet

the needs of a growing population and economy, while ensuring debt is managed responsibly."

The opposition called the budget off-balance and criticised the government for increasing debt. The opposition Finance critic, **Trent Wotherspoon**, moved an amendment to the budget debate motion on March 21, 2019. The amendment stated that the opposition "... disagrees with the government for tabling a budget that piles on debt, fails to invest in classrooms, and does nothing to reverse the damage to people and our economy caused by the increase and expansion of the PST."

On March 28, 2019, the amendment was defeated and 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.

### Board of Internal Economy Directives

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The Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) amended the annual indemnity and allowance directive. The directive now states that when a member is absent from a sitting of the Legislature for maternity, paternity, or adoption leave, no deduction from the annual indemnity will be made.

### Rule Change

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On April 1, 2019, the Legislative Assembly adopted changes to the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*. Rule 1(2), provides the authority for the Speaker to alter the rules and practices to accommodate members with a disability to fully participate in proceedings, was expanded to include members who are pregnant or ill, and allows members to care for their infants in the Chamber. Additionally, the Assembly adopted a rule to ensure that infants being cared for by a member are not regarded as a stranger.

**Stacey Ursulescu**

Procedural Clerk