



Presiding Officers hold Second Conference

The second annual conference of Canadian Presiding Officers was held in Vancouver on March 30 and 31, 1985.

The host of the conference, Speaker **Walter Davidson** of British Columbia, welcomed fellow Speakers and Deputy Speakers from seven provinces, both territories and the House of Commons. Speakers from Newfoundland and Ontario were unable to attend due to elections in their provinces while the presiding officers of the Senate and the province of Alberta were also absent due to previous commitments.

The British practice of choosing new Speakers in mid-Parliament from among experienced members was discussed, but Mr. Jerome doubted this would work in Canada for several reasons. For one thing retiring British Speakers are appointed virtually automatically to the House of Lords. No equivalent guarantee exists in Canada. In any event their customs are ill suited to a legislature where young members accept the speakership but may still be interested in a career outside of Parliament after they leave the chair.

he acknowledged it was not a "scientific" survey, the results indicated that two thirds of the 310 people who replied felt it was very important for the Speaker to be impartial in the chair. In response to another question constituents felt their chances of obtaining a serious hearing for their viewers in a Speaker's riding were better than if they were represented by either a government or opposition private member but less than if represented by a cabinet minister. A very large majority of respondents felt the bell-ringing incidents in Ottawa and Manitoba revealed a fundamental weakness in the parliamentary system.



The delegates and some 15 table officers were privileged to hear a former Speaker of the House of Commons **James Jerome**, reflect on some personal experiences based on his six years in the chair (1974-1980). He noted how important it was for Speakers to obtain from the Prime Minister an undertaking that reasonable constituent requests not be prejudiced by acceptance of the speakership.

Mr. Jerome discussed the difficulties in having a Speaker seek election as an independent candidate. In most cases Speakers who became independents could expect the disintegration of their party's local organization.

Arguments for and against creating a special constituency of Parliament Hill for the Speaker were considered. While Mr. Jerome thought there was much to recommend in such an idea, he observed that in the long run the independence of a Speaker derives more from his or her performance in office than from the way he is chosen.

Several Speakers including **John Bosley** of the House of Commons and **Richard Guay** of Quebec spoke of the need to educate the public about the role of the Speaker and the institution of Parliament. Speaker **James Walding** of Manitoba distributed the results of a constituency survey he mailed to some 8,000 households in his riding. While

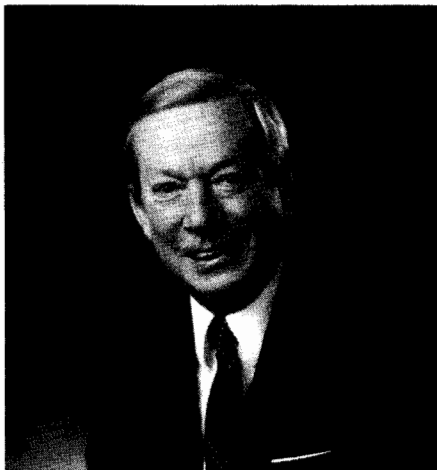
Complete results of the survey may be obtained by writing the Speaker's Office, Legislative Assembly, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 0V8.

Before adjourning on Sunday the Speakers compared notes on a few issues of mutual interest such as the political composition of the Boards of Internal Economy in various jurisdictions, postal charges for mailing provincial Hansards and policies regarding spousal travel. Although the time and site of the next conference have not been established Speaker Bosley suggested a comparative research paper would be useful as the basis for discussion at the next meeting.

Appointments

On March 19 Prime Minister **Brian Mulroney** announced the appointment of **Richard J. Doyle** to the Senate. Mr. Doyle, 62, a journalist, was editor emeritus of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* having been Editor since 1963 and Editor-in-chief from 1978-1983.

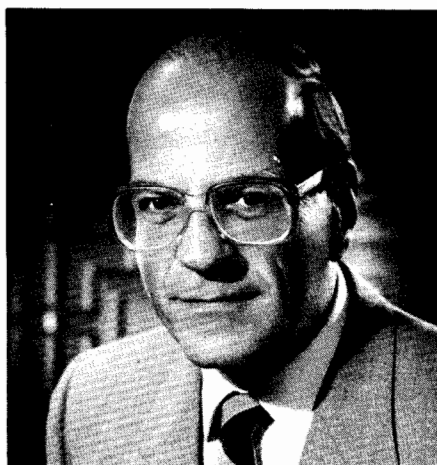
Another Senator was appointed on April 16. He is Dr. **Paul P. David**, founder of the Montreal Heart Institute, and its medical director from 1954 to 1984. He has also been an associate professor at the University of Montreal since 1957, and is the author of numerous works on medical subjects.



Richard Doyle (*Bedford Studio*)

Senator David becomes the third generation of his family appointed to the Upper House. His grandfather **L.O. David** was appointed by Prime Minister Laurier and his father, **Athanase David** was named by Prime Minister King.

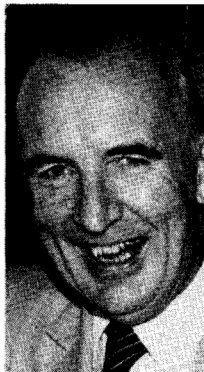
As of May 1 the standings in the Senate were 72 Liberals, 25 Progressive Conservatives, 3 Independents, 1 Liberal Independent and 3 vacancies (1 each in Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Ontario).



Paul David (*Larin Montréal*)

New Speaker in Newfoundland

Patrick McNicholas, the Progressive Conservative member for St. John's Centre was elected Speaker of the Newfoundland House of Assembly on April 25. Mr. McNicholas replaces **James Russell** who was named Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.



Patrick McNicholas

Around the Provincial Legislatures

The Progressive Conservative Party held onto the seat of Thunder Creek in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly when **Rick Swenson** defeated three other candidates in the March 27 by-election.

Mr. Swenson, 32, replaces **Colin Thatcher** who was removed from office after his conviction to life in prison for the murder of his former wife.

Shortly after the by-election another vacancy was created in Saskatchewan when the Conservative member for Regina North East, **Russ Sutor**, announced his resignation for "personal and business reasons". First elected in 1982 Mr. Sutor said business opportunities had presented themselves which would make it difficult for him "to maintain the level of service to constituents which I feel is important".

In Prince Edward Island Progressive Conservative Member of the Legislative Assembly, **Peter Pope**, crossed the floor to sit as an independent. Mr. Pope said he was leaving the party because he disagreed with the government's position on the decentralization of services. He thus becomes the first independent member in the province's history. The standings as of May 1, were: Progressive Conservatives 19, Liberals 12, and 1 independent.

On April 29 a by-election was held in the seat of Riverview for the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly.

The new member is **Hubert Seamans**, a Liberal. He took the seat away from the Conservatives who had held it for the past 33 years. The Premier of New Brunswick, **Richard Hatfield**, acknowledged that his leadership was a major factor in the defeat but said he would make a renewed effort to regain the confidence of the people of New Brunswick.



Hubert Seamans (*Canapress*)

In the Yukon a former member of the Legislative Assembly, **Willard Phelps**, was elected leader of the Progressive Conservative Party replacing **Chris Pearson** who announced last October he wanted to step down. Mr. Phelps, 43, a lawyer won on the first ballot defeating two other candidates. For the past five years Mr. Phelps has served as the Yukon government's Chief Land Claims negotiator.

The Liberal Party of New Brunswick also chose a new leader recently. **Frank McKenna**, 37, a lawyer from northern New Brunswick defeated his only rival, **Ray Frenette**, in a convention held on May 5, 1985.

Louis Philippe Beaubien (1903-1985)

The Conservative caucus lost one of its senior members when Senator Beaubien died recently. Appointed to the Senate by Prime Minister Diefenbaker in 1960, Mr. Beaubien had been an organizer and fund raiser for the party for many years.

Betty Dolin 1936-1985

In Manitoba Betty Dolin a former Minister of Labour, Minister of Urban Affairs and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, died on April 8, 1985. She was first elected to the legislature in 1981 and resigned from the Cabinet earlier this year when she became seriously ill with cancer.