

BC's new Legislature opens to mixed reviews



It is February 1898, 120 years ago, and Members of the 4th session of the 7th Parliament, led by Premier John Herbert Turner, stand stoically on the steps of the newly-constructed Parliament Buildings in Victoria, with young parliamentary pages seated respectfully below in the foreground. After nearly five years of construction, and the work of well over a hundred labourers and numerous skilled craftsmen, the Parliament Buildings were officially opened with great fanfare.

See Page 16 for more on this story and Francis Rattenbury, the Parliament Building's infamous architect.

Her Honour

The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

Thank You and Miscellany

Orders of the Day is published regularly throughout the year, and is circulated to Association members, all MLAs now serving in Legislature, other interested individuals and organizations.

Material for the newsletter is always welcome and should be sent in written form to:

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Payment can be sent to the above address.

Thanks to two organizations that have recently renewed their advertising in 'Orders of the Day' for another year.

Telus and Insurance Brokers Association of British Columbia have indicated their continued support for our newsletter and the Association. We appreciate our relationships with all of the long time supporters of OOTD.

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From the Editor's Desk

As most of you already appreciate my editorial policy at Orders of the Day is to walk the fence with both ears on the ground. Sustaining a bipartisan framework in a publication for armchair politicians is a balancing act. The same goes for identifying and exploiting issues that allow subscribers to engage beyond the traditional party lines that defined them in their professional lives.

Happily, such an issue is before us this year and I hope to exploit it in my effort to, as Penny states in this issue, "offer as many opportunities as possible for subscribers to engage with OOTD." A referendum on electoral reform will be held in November through mail-in ballot, with results binding at a threshold of 50 per cent plus one vote. The main question being asked in this referendum is whether BC should keep the current first past the post (FPTP) voting system, or adopt a system of proportional representation (PR).

As you know, efforts in the past to evolve beyond FPTP to some kind of PR system have failed. The debate will be vigorous and I am hoping you, the subscribers to OOTD, will jump in. Who better than you, veterans of FPTP victories and defeats, to share your wisdom of the ages.

On pages 8 and 9, two FPTP and PR veterans set the stage for that debate. They are Bruce Hallsor and Bill Tieleman. I want to thank them for getting us started. Your job in coming issues is to flood the letters pages with your views on this pivotal issue.

The Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia is strictly non-partisan, regardless of members' past or present political affiliation. Founded in 1987, the Association was formally established by an Act of the British Columbia Legislature on February 10, 1998.

Orders of the Day was conceived, named and produced in its early stages by Bob McClelland, former MLA and cabinet minister, following his retirement from office. Hugh Curtis ably helmed this publication up through May 2014.

A message from the President

Happy New Year Everyone

As I looked around at communities in BC I saw people celebrating Christmas in a myriad of ways.

Many of us celebrate New Years on January 1 using the Gregorian calendar, but we also see other New Year's celebrations throughout the year. For people of Jewish faith Rosh Hashanah is in September. The Sikh community celebrates Vaisakhi in April. The Hindu community's Diwali is in November.

Many of us have seen photos of the January Chinese New Year with the parade led by a very large red dragon. The Nisga'a people of the Nass Valley celebrate a lunar new year in February called Hobiye. Kwanzaa, while not officially New Years, is celebrated throughout the Americas by people of African heritage in the week between Christmas and New Years.

There are common themes that connect all of these celebrations. They are occasions where participants honour their customs and traditions and wish for peace and prosperity in the coming year. All of these New Years also involve food, friends and family.

Resolutions are made by many as well. Perhaps these are better called intentions. Here at OOTD we too have intentions for the coming year.

We intend to continue to bring you these excellent publications of OOTD. We intend to include items of interest about governance, politics, and former politicians as well as articles of more general interest.

We intend to offer as many opportunities as possible for subscribers to engage with OOTD. This includes encouraging everyone to write letters to the Editor or submit articles of current or historical interest. Articles that stimulate discussion are great. We intend to do all of this and more.

We need your help to make these intentions a reality. There are costs associated with OOTD and we need you to renew your memberships as soon as possible. Please encourage other former politicians you know who are not yet members, to join. We look forward to hearing from everyone this year.

Last year, we honoured the 100th anniversary of women winning the right to vote in BC. That celebration continues because 100 years ago, on January 24, 1918, the first woman was elected in BC. Mary Ellen Smith was elected and served with Premier Harlan Carey Brewster.



~ Penny Priddy

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The advertisement features a vibrant purple and blue hummingbird in flight, positioned over a stylized, glowing purple fiber optic cable that loops through the scene. The background is a soft, sparkling purple. On the right side, there are several small, overlapping images: a laptop displaying a man in a suit, a group of people in a meeting, and a woman in a red jacket. The overall aesthetic is modern and high-tech.

We want our news unbiased, but do we get it?

Publics around the world overwhelmingly agree that the news media should be unbiased in its coverage of political issues, according to a new Pew Research Center survey of 38 countries.

Yet, when asked how their news media are doing on reporting different political issues fairly, people are far more mixed in their sentiments, with many saying their media do not deliver. And, in many countries, there are sharp political differences in views of the media – with the largest gap among Americans.

The survey finds that a median of 75 per cent across 38 countries say it is never acceptable for a news organization to favour one political party over others when reporting the news. Just 20 per cent say this is sometimes okay. People in Europe show the greatest opposition to political bias in their news, including 89 per cent in Spain and 88 per cent in Greece who think this is unacceptable. In the United States, 78 per cent say the news media should never favour one political party over another. In only five countries do at least three-in-ten believe it is okay to favour one side.

While publics around the globe place a premium on politically unbiased news media, this is precisely the performance area where publics are least likely to say their news media are doing well. A median of only 52 per cent across the 38 nations polled say the news media in their country do a good job of reporting on political issues fairly, while 44 per cent say they do not. And although majorities of the public in 18 countries say their news media are performing well in this area, attitudes are more negative in the remaining 20 nations surveyed. The most critical are Spain, Greece, South Korea, Lebanon and Chile, where at least six-in-ten say their news media do not do well on reporting the news fairly.

News media receive considerably higher marks in other performance areas. Broad majorities say their news media do a good job of covering the most important stories (median of 73 per cent), reporting the news accurately (62 per cent), and reporting news about government leaders and officials (59 per cent). People in sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific are more satisfied with their news media, while Latin Americans are the most critical. The U.S. public tends to fall roughly in the middle across the different performance areas asked about.

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Within countries, political identification tends to be the strongest divider of media attitudes, more so than education, age or gender.

Political party systems vary considerably across countries, but one consistent measure for comparing political divides is support for the governing party or parties. Individuals who identify with the governing party or parties are categorized as supporters, everyone else as non-supporters.

In the U.S., this means that people who identify with the Republican Party, which currently controls all branches of the federal government, are considered governing party supporters. People who identify with the Democratic Party, say they are independent, identify with some other party or do not identify with any political party are categorized as non-supporters.

Using this approach, large gaps in ratings of the media emerge between governing party supporters and non-supporters.

On the question of whether their news media cover political issues fairly, for example, partisan differences appear in 20 of the 38 countries surveyed. In five countries, the gap is at least 20 percentage points, with the largest by far in the U.S. at 34 percentage points. The next highest partisan gap is in Israel, with a 26-point difference.

The U.S. is also one of only a few countries where governing party supporters are less satisfied with their news media than are non-supporters. In most countries, people who support the political party currently in power are more satisfied with the performance of their news media than those who do not support the governing party. For example, in Sweden, the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party are the two parties that currently form the governing coalition in the country. About eight-in-ten Swedes (82 per cent) who identify with these two parties say their news media do a good job of covering political issues fairly. Just 58 per cent of Swedes who do not identify with these two parties agree.

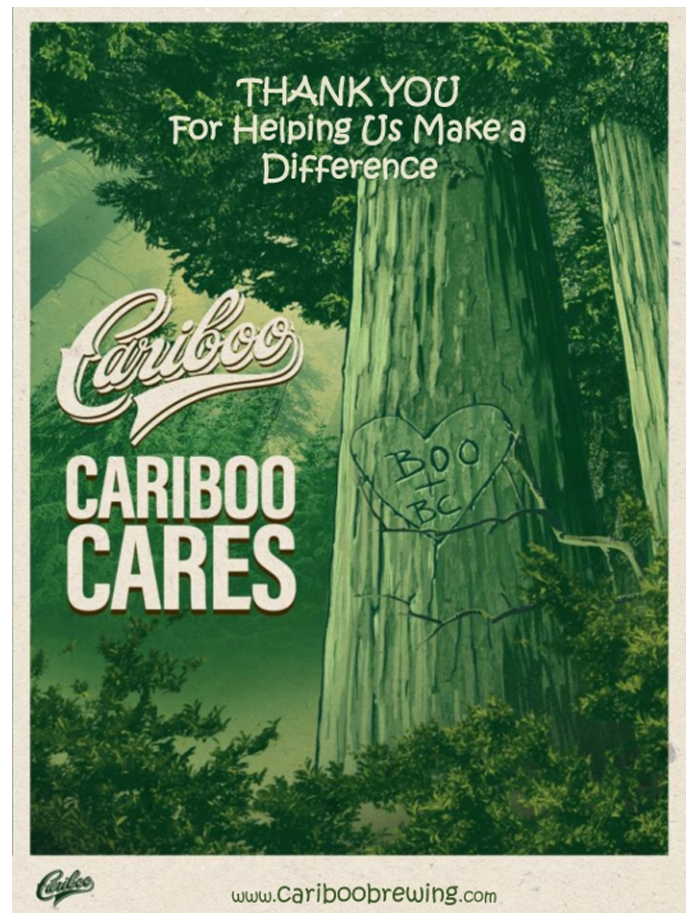
The partisan gaps found in the survey indicate that, rather than being consistently tied to a particular ideological position, satisfaction with the news media across the globe is more closely related to support for the party in power – whether that party is left or right. Public satisfaction with the news media also links closely to trust in one's national government and a sense that the economy is doing well, which reinforces the point that, for most countries surveyed here, satisfaction with the media

aligns with satisfaction on other country conditions rather than along a left-right spectrum.

Digital technology is influencing news habits across the globe, though its use is still far from universal. Overall, a median of 42 per cent of adults in the 38 countries surveyed say they get news on the internet at least once a day. In 14 countries, half or more adults get news online daily.

In general, internet access has been shown to be higher in wealthier countries, and this plays out to a greater likelihood of using the internet for news as well. For example, 61 per cent of those polled in Australia – which had a 2015 gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of \$46,271 – get news at least once a day through the internet. Just 20 per cent in Senegal, with a GDP per capita of \$2,421, do the same.

(Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social science research.)



What's in a name? Just ask the two Bill Smith(e)s

By Jim Hume

In its wisdom, or folly, the electorate in British Columbia has, on at least three occasions, selected newspaper reporters to the high office of Premier. Two were named William and both were named Smith and were distinguished in their early years by the letter "e". One was William Smith, the other William Smithe – with an "e". Both were immigrants. (The third was John Robson [1889-1892], but he's a story for another day.)

As soon as he was old enough, the Smith without the "e" changed his name to Amor de Cosmos – "Lover of the Universe." In the 1800s he owned, published and wrote for what is today known as The Times-Colonist. He served as Premier for two years from December 1872 to February 1874.

The second Smithe stayed with the name William, or Bill to his friends, from the day he was born in the picture-perfect village of Matfen, Northumberland, in 1842. He was first elected to the Legislature in 1871 and served as Premier from January 29, 1883 to the day he died in '87.

Overshadowed in the history books by the flamboyant headline creator de Cosmos, Premier Smithe arrived on Vancouver Island in 1862 with farming as his chosen career path – if a gold claim he held in the Cariboo didn't work out. He appears to have worked the claim intermittently for two years before giving up and returning to farming full time, with a stint as road commissioner in the Cowichan District in 1865 to supplement his income.

In his book Portraits of the Premiers, S.W. Jackman described Smithe as "extremely personable and lively, handsome and well mannered, in sum, a most agreeable and charming young man as well as being a hard working one." Although he doesn't name his sources, Jackman suggests Smithe "liked society – dances, picnicking and other forms of junketing... He also had a penchant for writing..." With those traditional requirements for a good reporter, he began contributing to local newspapers.

His early childhood and education may well have accounted for the adaptable side of Smithe's character. In the 2001 census in the UK, Matfen, his village of birth, listed a population of 495. Nearby Great Whittington, where he went to school, boasted 401. Both are located a few kilometers north of Hadrian's Wall, the great barrier the Romans built to keep illegal Scots out of England.

The sparsely populated Cowichan-Duncan area in the 1800s would not be unfamiliar to young Smithe although he did at one point take a look at big city life in San Francisco. He stayed 18 months, worked as reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle, and then returned to the Duncan area. In 1871 tossed his hat in that year's provincial election race. He topped the Cowichan poll with what today seems a laughable 58 votes – which was 29.59 percent of the votes cast in the riding.

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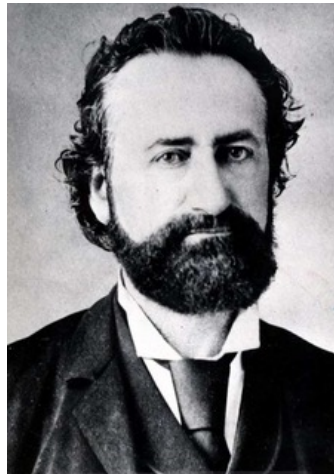
In six following elections Smithe continued to top polls, and was twice – in 1876 and in 1883 – re-elected by acclamation.

A four-year term as Premier doesn't sound like tenure today and it was unusual in the 1800s. One-year terms were fairly standard; two years were occasional and four years in the post was considered remarkable, especially for a young man who was not part of what we call "the establishment." His first and only campaign promise was that he would not pledge his support to any man. It should be remembered that it wasn't until the 1900s that party politics played any role in provincial politics.

Bill Smithe's 16 years in office, the last four as Premier, have been acknowledged as stable and prosperous. He is credited with persuading the federal government to take over the graving dock in Esquimalt although he died before the first ship HMS Cormorant used the facility.

He did, however, live to welcome the first passenger train from Montreal to the west coast as it pulled in to Port Moody on July 4, 1886. A month earlier, on June 13th, the designated terminal Vancouver – for which Premier Smithe had fought for years – had been destroyed by a disastrous fire. The city was just over two months old when the Daily News reported: "Probably never since the days of Pompei and Herculaneum was a town wiped out of existence so completely and suddenly as was Vancouver... The flames spread ... with amazing rapidity. The whole city was in flames less than 40 minutes after the first house was afire."

It wasn't until May, 1887, that a rebuilding Vancouver was able to welcome a trans-continental train.



Premier Smith / Amor de Cosmos



Premier Smithe

Premier Smithe had occupied his usual seat when the Legislature sat in January of '87, but was too ill to continue attending regularly. He died on March 28, and was honoured with "an official funeral" which included two days lying in state before "a great hearse with four horses, velvet and crepe" carried him away, first to church for the funeral service, then "the coffin was put on a train and taken to Somenos where he was interred in the Methodist burial ground."

Jackman also wrote: "The four years the Smithe government ruled in British Columbia were prosperous and happy ones. Later in the 19th Century they were often referred to as the best years the province had experienced up to that time."

Which leaves me wondering why it is we remember often the unstable "lover of the cosmos" Bill Smith without the "e", more fondly than we do the Bill Smithe with an "e" who gave the people confidence in stable government.

(More of Jim's great yarns can be found at his Old Islander blog – jimhume.ca.)



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Why proportional representation is right for BC

By Bruce Hallsor

I expect that all former MLAs would oppose having a voting system that results in local representatives not being able to effectively stand up for their communities, that encourages back room dealings and negotiations, and that allows a small group of MLAs to hold sway over the majority and ignore the majority.



That system is, of course, first past the post (FPTP).

Anybody who is concerned about the state of our democracy, who has witnessed voting participation rates drop, who has witnessed the growth of strong regional cleavages in our province, or who has witnessed MLAs be silenced on issues of importance to them or whipped into voting for something they or their constituents do not support, should welcome the opportunity to get rid of first past the post and adopt a more effective electoral system.

First past the post advocates would tell you that all is well and healthy with our democracy, and that change is dangerous. I think we all can agree that complacency is dangerous when we know that people are losing faith in their democratic institutions.

We know from empirical data that the vast majority of voters vote for the party and not the individual. We see this every election when experienced and star candidates and well-known MLAs are swept out by relative unknowns. As we have all been told, a good candidate may move the numbers at the margins, but most voters vote based on party affiliation, and not candidate characteristics. This is because, in our current system, major decisions are made by cabinet, or the leader, and MLAs are required to vote the party line even if their constituents overwhelmingly object to a decision. Few voters are mollified by the plea that the local MLA advocated really hard for their position in a closed-door caucus meeting.

It is a huge problem that FPTP exaggerates geographical divides in our province, leading to an us-vs.-them mentality that damages our ability to work out sensible policies, rather than ensuring that voices from across the political spectrum are heard from all corners of our province. In addition, because of these regional divisions, government itself is typically composed of MLAs from only some parts of the provinces, leaving other whole regions completely shut out of influence.

If stability is a virtue, then it is FPTP which fails to deliver. In a system where a five per cent swing in the vote can mean the difference between lonely opposition and absolute majority, BC has experienced huge policy lurches in the past based on very small swings in voter preference.

Take the labour code as one small example. The secret ballot was introduced by the Dave Barrett government, and eliminated by the Bill Bennett government. It was re-introduced under Mike Harcourt, and then removed again under Gordon Campbell. How is that stable? Other electoral systems may encourage parties to find room for long term compromise, rather than engage in cyclical policy lurches every decade or so.

We are often warned that a change in voting will lead to backroom politics, where a small minority of MLAs will hold sway over the majority. This is truly the pot calling the kettle black.

Whatever one thinks of the current confidence and supply agreement between the NDP and the Greens, it is anything but a backroom deal. It is out in the open. It has been published for all to read and be aware of. I think this compares pretty well to the true backroom compromises that happen in secret within the confines of majority governments.

No electoral system is perfect, and every one involves trade-offs and compromises. At its core, however, an electoral system is simply a way to translate votes into seats. Anybody who witnessed the 1996 election, where the losing party got a majority of seats, knows that our current method delivers unpredictable results that frequently don't reflect anything near the popular vote.

I believe that anyone who wants to improve our democracy, empower MLAs, and restore public respect to our institutions should be willing to look at alternatives to first past the post, and I urge former MLAs to keep an open mind as we learn about those options over the coming months.

(Bruce Hallsor, Q.C. is a former ministerial and caucus aide, and a former Director of Social Credit Caucus Research. He is managing partner of Crease Harman LLP, British Columbia's oldest law firm, and was a co-chair of the yes campaigns for Single Transferable Vote in 2005 and 2009.)

Why proportional representation is wrong for BC

By Bill Tieleman

"I used to be a fan of proportional representation, but I am not at all now I have seen it in action. Debate is almost non-existent and no one is apparently accountable to anybody apart from their political party bosses."

- Helen Suzman, South African anti-apartheid activist, 2004

Any one of several proposed proportional representation electoral systems would be a disproportionate disaster for British Columbia.

BC voters strongly decided that in the 2009 provincial referendum on the bizarre Single Transferable Vote electoral system, rejecting it by 61 per cent against just 39 per cent in favour.

Voters overwhelmingly believed our current first past the post system had served BC well for decades – not to mention the United Kingdom – and deserved to stay.

(In the 2005 referendum, STV received 57.7 per cent support – fortunately ex-Premier Gordon Campbell set stronger conditions for change: 60 per cent of the vote plus one across B.C. and a simple majority in favour in 60 per cent of ridings. STV didn't reach the first 60 per cent margin.)

But, we will nonetheless vote a third time on proportional representation – and on an electoral system or systems currently undefined for voters just months away from the mail-in ballot to be held by November 30, 2018.

Premier John Horgan's New Democratic Party campaigned on a promise to hold a referendum – and resisted unreasonable demands from Green Party leader Andrew Weaver to impose proportional representation without letting voters decide.

However, this time the winning margin is just 50 per cent plus one. And, the government may use a "ranked ballot" in the referendum – an unfair attempt to help the proportional representation side by putting several systems forward, with the least popular option dropping off and those voters' second choices then counted, and so on.

The reasons why proportional representation should be rejected again are many – and would easily fill this whole issue.

But in summary:

- Proportional representation would dramatically reduce the number of local, accountable elected representatives – especially in rural areas – and replace them with Members of the Legislative Assembly chosen solely by their political party internally – that puts parties ahead of voters;
- Proportional representation promotes extremist parties of the right and left as we have seen in Europe, with as little as 1 per cent to 5 per cent being enough to send candidates to the BC Legislature, giving them legitimacy, validity and a platform to further their cause;
- Proportional representation ensures perpetual minority governments, forcing the largest parties to make deals with fringe small parties, allowing them to decide who is premier, under what policies and with what cabinet ministers;
- Proportional representation MLAs chosen from the party list – to top up representatives to equal the popular vote – will have no geographic riding, no constituents and no voter accountability; and
- Urban ridings with their high populations will dominate elections – to the disadvantage of rural regions, since the popular vote will be critical.

Those and many more reasons are why I've joined with my former political opponent Suzanne Anton, ex-BC Liberal Attorney General, and neutral Bob Plecas, ex-BC deputy minister, to form the No BC Proportional Representation Society to vigorously oppose this electoral system. Your support is welcome!

(Bill Tieleman is president of West Star Communications, a strategy and communications consulting firm. He is one of three directors of the No BC Proportional Representation Society and served as president of No BC STV in the 2005 and 2009 campaigns. Bill was also communications director to former Premier Glen Clark in 1996.)



New outreach programs at the Legislature

The Parliamentary Education Office is pleased to be initiating two new programs this year. *Monday Morning Seniors' Tea & Tour* aims to bring BC seniors in for tea, breakfast, and a tour of the Parliament Buildings with one of the *Parliamentary Players*.

Guests will be toured by famed 'BC Architect' Francis Rattenbury, longest-serving MLA Thomas Uphill, or gold-rush pioneer Nellie Cashman. Breakfast starts right at 9 a.m. in our Parliamentary Dining Room with an assortment of fresh fruits, pastries, coffee and tea.

The group will then explore the grand, neo-Romanesque architecture of British Columbia's Parliament buildings, as well as learn about the history of British Columbia. If the house is sitting, visitors will conclude their tour by observing debate in the Legislative Assembly. The program provides a fun, inexpensive way for BC seniors to engage with the Legislative Assembly and explore the rich history of BC.

Also new this year is the *K-3 Little Legislators* program. The program builds on the new curriculum objectives and is centered on a more kinetic, hands-on approach for learning about the Legislative Assembly.

Participants will be introduced to the fundamental concepts of community, identity, rights and responsibilities, law-making and debate. The program begins with a tour and scavenger hunt of the buildings, where students will draw connections between the buildings, history, and the communities that came together to build BC. From there, the students will engage in a mock debate to introduce the basic concepts of parliamentary democracy. We introduce the basic concept of law, and its role in society.

The students will then assume assembly roles: MLAs, the Speaker, the Sergeant at Arms and the Lieutenant Governor; one member introduces a bill (free ice cream day, longer recess etc.) and the students carry the bill through all three readings, and eventually, Royal Assent.


Following the debate, the *Little Legislators* reflect on what they learned, their ideas about government and law-making, and how they can engage with their system of government.



At the Tea & Tour visitors can join historically preserved architect, Francis Rattenbury (Ian Simms), and a server (Amanda Cootes) in the Legislature Dining Room for a refreshing pause during their visit to the Parliament Buildings.

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Youth Parliament a resounding success

By Sky T. Losier
Premier
BC Youth Parliament

The 89th Session of the British Columbia Youth Parliament was a huge success and our members are looking forward to the year ahead.

From December 27th to the 31st, 97 youth between the ages of 16 and 21 gathered in the BC Legislative Assembly. These young citizens were the newly elected members of the 89th British Columbia Youth Parliament. Over the course of these five days, members debated and planned their activities for the upcoming year.

During 2018, the Youth Parliament will be running six regional parliaments in every corner of BC that will provide an opportunity for high school students to have hands-on experience learning and participating in the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy.

We will host events in Prince Rupert, Kelowna, Vancouver, Surrey, Squamish, and on Salt Spring Island. At the end of August, BCYP will run Camp Phoenix again. This year, 48 children, who would not otherwise have an opportunity to just be kids, will be offered a five-day sleep away summer camp.

In addition to these projects, members from across BC will be empowered and supported to go out into their communities and take the lead on projects that they are passionate about. These projects will help improve the communities our members call home, and serve the youth of BC as dictated by our motto, "Youth serving youth."

This year, the British Columbia Youth Parliament celebrated an important milestone. The 89th Session marked the first year that young women have been members for longer than they were denied entry. As early as the fifth session, resolutions had been introduced to admit female members. Shamefully, it was not until the 44th Session in 1974 that young women were first granted membership. Since then, we have continued to have outstanding young women serve as members, continually taking on leadership roles as House Leaders, and endlessly providing support to the organization as alumni.

The British Columbia Youth Parliament's annual session in December also represents the opportunity for 97 young people to get firsthand experience with the system that governs their lives. If we want British Columbia to remain a vibrant and functioning democracy, it is vital that our province has an engaged citizenry. In my (slightly biased) opinion, the members of BCYP represent our best hope at ensuring that a passion for parliamentary democracy remains alive in BC.



It would be remiss of me if I did not use this opportunity to thank the Association of Former MLAs of BC for their ongoing support of the BC Youth Parliament. The bond shared between our two organizations is a unique one, forged by our shared commitment to democracy, community service, and the people of BC.

Of course, if you ever have any questions about Youth Parliament, or if there is any way I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me via email (sky.losier@bcyp.org) or phone (250-221-0154).



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Question Period

offbeat news, humour, and things that make you go "hmm..."

Slice.ca recently posted an article entitled "35 Strange Canadian Laws You Didn't Know Existed" Below is a sampling.

Bagpipe Bylaw

Victoria has some pretty extensive regulations governing street performers, including a special section relating specifically to bagpipers. Along with rules laying out where and when pipers can pipe, there is also legislation stating that a bagpiper can't perform at "the same time as another street entertainer whose performance includes bagpipes."

Water mark

Lawmakers in Etobicoke, Ont., are big believers in bathtub safety, so much so that a local bylaw states that a bathtub should not be filled with more than three-and-a-half inches of water. Note to Etobicoke lawmakers: next time you take a bath, fill it with three-and-a-half inches of water and see how that works out for you...

Low Snowman

Souris, PEI, boasts a law making it illegal to build a snowman that is higher than 30 inches (two-and-a-half feet) tall. In Souris, there's apparently less likelihood of a snowman melting than being accidentally stomped under somebody's boot.

Climb Down

A typical childhood pastime in the rest of Canada has been outlawed in Oshawa, Ont., where it's illegal to climb a tree. According to the local bylaw, "No person shall interfere with a tree or part of a tree located on municipal property, including but not limited to attaching, affixing or placing upon in any manner any object or thing to a tree or part of a tree, and climbing the tree." So hurry up and climb down before the cops arrive!

Ice Cream Sunday

If you're ever in Ottawa on a Sunday and get a hankering for an ice cream cone, whatever you do, don't eat it on Bank Street. That's because eating ice cream on Bank Street on any other day of the week is perfectly fine, but Sundays? Against the law!

Comic Book Crime

Thanks to an obscure law in the Canadian Criminal Code dating back to the 1940s, it's illegal to possess, print, publish or sell a comic book that depicts any criminal act. As a criminal lawyer tells Global News: "The letter of the law is drafted sufficiently broadly so that virtually any superhero comic book that we're familiar with today would violate the letter of the law."

Slow Down

The town of Uxbridge, Ont., has strict limits regarding Internet speed. In fact, a local law limits Internet speed to 56k; anything faster, and you're a criminal! The 56k speed, by the way, was the average back in the mid-1990s, when dial-up modems were all the rage and the concept of WiFi was pure science fiction — so let's assume that Uxbridge is crawling with cyber criminals.

Rat Trick

In the Vancouver suburb of Port Coquitlam, rat lovers must confine themselves to owning no more than four of the critters; any more than that, and you can expect a visit from the constabulary. And, hopefully, a maid.

Shirt Order

If you hop in a cab in Halifax and see your driver is wearing a t-shirt and cut-off shorts — call 911! That's because a Halifax bylaw requires cab drivers to wear a "shirt or military type blouse with a collar and sleeves" along with "ankle-length trousers, or dress shorts which are worn within at least three inches of the knee."

Tied Up

It's a bad idea for a teenager to walk down Main Street in Fort Qu'Appelle, Sask., with untied shoes. Not only is there a good chance the teen might trip over those laces; he or she might also be thrown in the slammer for violating a local law prohibited untied shoes for teens on Main Street.

From the Horse's Mouth

Arguably the weirdest law in Canada is a still-existing Toronto bylaw that prohibits dragging a dead horse down Yonge Street on Sundays. You want to do it from Monday to Saturday? Hey, knock yourself out!

Len Norris



February 14, 1963

"Shall we decide who we'll vote for now ... or wait to be caught up in the emotional excitement of the hustings?"

2018 Dues and Subscriptions

Annual membership for former MLAs in the Association is \$60 (unchanged from previous years) and that includes the subscription fee for *Orders of the Day* (OOTD).

Fans of OOTD who are not Association members should send in a cheque for \$40 to remain on the newsletter subscription list.

Cheques should be made out to:

The Association of Former MLAs of BC

and mailed to:

PO Box 31009
University Heights PO
Victoria, BC
V8N 6J3

Member News

Please send news about your activities to ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com for the next newsletter.

Where Are They Now?

Colin Gabelmann

Each issue we ask a former Member of the Legislative Assembly a series of questions.

What drew them to public service; what lessons have they taken away; and, most important, what are they doing now.

This month we welcome Colin Gabelmann. He represented North Vancouver-Seymour from 1972 to 1975 and North Island from 1979 to 1996 in the Legislature. He served as Attorney General in the government of Premier Mike Harcourt.



1. What prompted you to seek public office?

I helped my stepfather put up CCF posters in the 1952 provincial election in Osoyoos at age eight. It's been non-stop politics ever since. In 1972, I lived in North Vancouver Seymour, which was represented by the competent and articulate Liberal, Barrie Clark. A group of active New Democrats and trade unionists suggested I run. Progressive Conservative Leader Derrill Warren, North Vancouver District Alderman Jim Poyner, Barrie and I waged a spirited campaign. Surprisingly, I won with 32.89 per cent and by about 1500 votes. Defeated in 1975 by Jack Davis (in a two-way race) I knew I wanted to run again. The opportunity arose in 1978 when, with redistribution, three seats were created from two on northern Vancouver Island. With the encouragement of many activists throughout North Island, I sought the nomination and was successful in the 1979 election and subsequently until retiring in 1996.

2. Which political figure most influenced you?

My many influences included M.J. Coldwell, Tommy Douglas, David Lewis and Tom Berger. I was fortunate to get to know them all relatively well. Driving Coldwell and later Lewis around BC on their speaking tours was particularly illuminating. And, sitting on the Federal Council of the NDP beginning at age 21 with Douglas as leader of the party and Lewis as its major intellectual force was a pretty rare education. Having said that, I think my life long political interest and values were shaped by my step-father, Fritz Gabelmann, who left Germany at 25 for Canada in 1928 with about 30 other young social democrats. They could see what was coming in Germany and knew that their idealism would not have thrived. They answered an advertisement for land in Penticton and

intended to establish a vegetarian commune. Most of them worked their way across the country to help pay the costs but the Great Depression halted their collective dreams.

3. Was it hard making the transition from private life to public life?

No.

4. What was your biggest challenge returning to private life?

Trying to learn to sleep more than five hours a night, but no real challenges of the kind so many of my colleagues encountered.

5. What is the biggest lesson that has stuck with you since being an MLA?

Stick to your principles. Never forget that issues are complex and require diligence and hard work to sort through. And, don't forget how important and how much harder it is to convey the reasons for decisions to the public, who often see the world in more black and white terms. Another lesson learned is the absolute necessity to make way for younger people to participate in the political process.

6. Tell us a bit about your active or part-time professional interests.

Since retiring in 1996 I have served on a variety of boards including the Pacific Racing Association, The Land Conservancy and the John Howard Society. I worked with two First Nations as they attempted to negotiate treaties. That work was both rewarding and frustrating; dealing with the federal and provincial bureaucracies was maddening.

7. Finally ... pet projects? Hobbies? And, the value of remaining involved in the Association and OOTD.

With Robin, I enjoy living in Campbell River and being involved in the community. We garden intensively (200 rhodos and endless vegetables). We love kayaking BC's beautiful coastal waters, downhill skiing at Sun Peaks, a lot of European (especially Greece) travelling, keeping up with world political and social issues and reading (in the little time remaining). Two grandchildren are the centre of our lives! I supported the initiative to start the retired MLAs' group and I have been a member ever since because I think we can all continue to learn from each other. I read OOTD every issue and enjoy it.

Business association hires AFMLABC V-P Bray

The Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) has hired a new interim Executive Director, former BC MLA and current AFMLABC Vice President Jeff Bray.



“I’m looking forward to supporting the great work the DVBA team is doing during this transition period,” says Jeff.

“We will work to continue providing the programs and services that support the vibrancy in downtown Victoria.”

Jeff Bray grew up in Vancouver. After graduating from UBC, Bray embarked on a 13-year career with the BC Government. In 2001, Bray was elected the MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill. More recently, Bray was the Manager of Government and Regulatory Affairs for Shaw in BC. Bray is currently President of Capital Public Affairs Inc., a public affairs consulting firm. Bray is Vice Chair of the Royal BC Museum Foundation, Vice Chair of the Garth Homer Society, Vice President of the Association of Former MLAs of BC, and is Vice President of the North Quadra Community Association.

“The DVBA Board appreciates Mr. Bray’s willingness to step in as an interim executive director for the organization for the next few months,” says DVBA Board Chair Suzanne Bradbury. “Jeff’s knowledge of the DVBA, his respect for the membership, and his strong relationships with DVBA

stakeholders make him well suited to steward the DVBA’s many exciting projects and initiatives through the first quarter of 2018.”

Bray will succeed Kerri Milton, who started with the DVBA in July 2016. Among Kerri’s accomplishments during her tenure with the DVBA are the rebranding of the Downtown Victoria Business Association, the completion of the Waddington Alley Lighting and Pop Up Art in the Square projects, launching Victoria’s first park and ride, and the start of the Shared Arts Space.

“The DVBA Board is grateful for the passion and energy that Kerri Milton brought to the role. Milton was instrumental in creating and managing many new initiatives that fulfilled the DVBA mandate of promoting the vitality and vibrancy of downtown Victoria and its business community. This included strengthening our ties with other downtown stakeholders, such as the City of Victoria, Tourism Victoria and the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority,” says Bradbury.

Executive search firm Davies Park has begun the search for a new Executive Director under the pre-existing contract with the goal of having a new Executive Director in the position by the end of the first quarter of 2018.

The DVBA improves the lines of communication between the business community, the community at large and the City of Victoria’s council and staff. It strives to create a vibrant community and a prosperous economic environment to make Downtown Victoria the region’s destination for business.

Letters

News stories appeared in late December that University Heights Shopping Centre, located at the intersection of Shelbourne and McKenzie in Victoria, will be undergoing a major redevelopment in the coming years.

Following a nationwide trend to reimagine traditional suburban shopping malls, the existing mall will be replaced by four buildings that will feature a mix of retail and 360 rental residences. I am old enough to remember when the mall was built (Victoria finally got a Kmart!) on a piece of land previously occupied by greenhouses and homes.

Normally I would view this news with fleeting interest, recognizing the evolution of real estate development as a necessity in our present day shortage of affordable rental housing. However, one of the casualties during construction will be a free standing building that is home to JJ Morgan Restaurant. (Full disclosure – the restaurant is owned and operated by my sister-in-law’s family.)

For more than 10 years, JJ Morgan was the weekly meeting place for OOTD production meetings. From 2004 to early 2014, I would meet Hugh Curtis every Saturday morning at 11 a.m. at the restaurant. He would pass along his stacks of handwritten articles and notes and I would offer my production drafts. We would discuss, sometimes passionately, the look of the upcoming issue (while sneaking out the side door for a cigarette halfway through the meeting.)

Many OOTD readers visited and sat in on those production meetings over the years. After Hugh’s passing in 2014, my meetings with Association Presidents Gillian Trumper and Penny Priddy would often be at JJ Morgan, at the same table that Hugh and I occupied for so many years.

Russell Eng, the owner of JJ Morgan, recently told me that the restaurant will continue to operate at its current location for the next few years. He will be looking for a new home for JJ Morgan as the inevitable day approaches.

The past few years have been dramatically different for OOTD production. Handwritten notes and hard copy proofs have been replaced by email attachments. Brian Kieran and I have our face to face meetings via Skype (a necessity now that he lives several thousand kilometres away) instead of across the table. To be honest, the newsletter production process is much more efficient in the age of pdfs and online video calling.

Time marches on. Evolution is inevitable, whether it is the production of a newsletter or the best use of a piece of land. But I will always have fond memories of meetings and meals at a restaurant table with new acquaintances – and an old friend.

Rob Lee

120 years ago

Admiration overshadowed by staggering cost

The Daily Colonist (Feb. 11, 1898) – Construction of the new Parliament Buildings was completed in 1897, but their official opening was delayed until February 10, 1898, to coincide with the opening of the 4th Session of the 7th Parliament.

The 33 elected Members of the Legislative Assembly who comprised the 7th Parliament were the first to sit in the newly built Legislative Chamber. After nearly five years of construction, and the work of well over a hundred labourers and numerous skilled craftsmen, the Parliament Buildings were officially opened with a ceremony and great fanfare.

To help mark the day, public schools were closed and all children were given a souvenir picture of the new Parliament Buildings. The province's leading newspaper, the Daily British Colonist, proclaimed that "the beauty of the structure calls forth the admiration of everyone who has seen it."

However, this good feeling was somewhat overshadowed when the final cost of the construction was tallied. At \$923,882.30, the Parliament Buildings had far surpassed their original budget. The high cost of the project would emerge as a key issue in the provincial general election later that year.

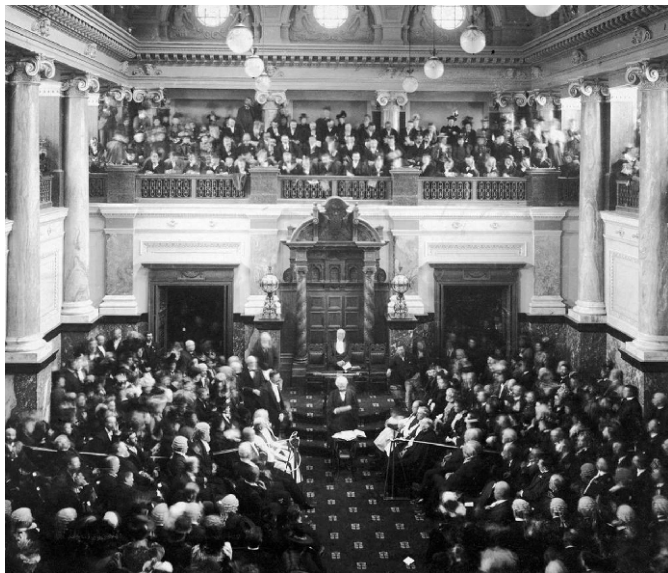
The original budget for the project was set at \$500,000. At the time, this was one-third of the province's entire annual revenue. The final cost, nearly double the budget estimate, was due to the challenges of a project of this size, including disputes with contractors and work stoppages.

The first load of stone had to be returned because architect Rattenbury realized it would be too dark for the north-facing main façade.

Although there was universal praise for the quality of the design and the workmanship, upon completion, opinion was divided. Most were understandably proud of the magnificent new building overlooking the harbour.

Others saw it as a wasteful extravagance at a time when the economy was beginning to weaken again. Skeptics could not imagine that there would ever be enough people in BC's government to fill the many empty corridors of the new building.

In spite of the budget controversy, the new Parliament Buildings were much admired. Upon his visit to Canada in 1901, the future King George V praised the Parliament Buildings as "one of the finest examples of architecture in the Dominion."



First session in the new Parliament Buildings



Francis Rattenbury

Francis Rattenbury's career was spent in BC where he designed many notable buildings. Divorced amid scandal, he was murdered in England at the age of 68 by his second wife's lover.

Born in 1867 in Leeds, England, Rattenbury began his architectural career with an apprenticeship in 1884 to the "Lockwood and Mawson Company" where he worked until he left for Canada.

In 1891, he arrived in Vancouver. The province, anxious to show its growing economic, social and political status, was engaged in an architectural competition to build a new legislative building in Victoria.

The new immigrant entered, signing his drawings with the pseudonym "A BC Architect," and won the competition. The grand scale of its 150-metre-long facade, central dome and two end pavilions, the richness of its white marble, and its use of the popular Romanesque style contributed to its being seen as an impressive monument for the new province.

Rattenbury's success in the competition garnered him many commissions in Victoria and other parts of the province, including additions to the Legislative Buildings in 1913–1915.