



2008 ANNUAL REPORT

This report provides an overview of the programs and activities of the Canadian Study of Parliament Group (CSPG) for the period between January 2008 and February 2009.

2008 HIGHLIGHTS

There are many highlights in what proved to be yet another successful year for the CSPG. The highlights include:

- ❖ the CSPG mini conference in December;
- ❖ the organization of three successful Parliamentary Business Seminars;
- ❖ the completion of the latest research paper under the aegis of the James R. Mallory Research Grant award;
- ❖ the conducting of the sixth annual National Student Essay competition;
- ❖ the provision of complimentary one year CSPG memberships for Interns from the various provincial Legislative Internship programs;
- ❖ the creation of an introductory letter of welcome for new CSPG members explaining the benefits of membership;
- ❖ a call for more papers in the series of papers on the Provincial and Territorial Legislatures;
- ❖ the presentation of a session at the annual Professional Development Seminar of the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada on the topic of collation of information on legislatures;
- ❖ the sponsoring of a session at the 2008 Canadian Political Science Association on Professor David Smith's prize winning book *The People's House of Commons*;
- ❖ publication in the Canadian Parliamentary Review of the Smith and Turnbull paper on the Nova Scotia Legislature commissioned by CSPG, along with presentation of the paper by Lori Turnbull at the Canadian Region Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Regional Conference held in Halifax; and
- ❖ a book signing by Peter H. Russell held in conjunction with his book *Two Cheers for Minority Government* at the 2008 AGM panel on minority government.

The Group also worked hard to streamline many of the administrative and financial practices, from enhancing Web site interactivity to modernizing accounting systems while incorporating a project-based focus in budgeting and activity planning. Additionally, the Group took measures to streamline operating costs to help reduce projected deficits.

The CSPG is thankful for the strong support it receives from its members and partners, whose contributions are noted below.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Support from the House of Commons

The House of Commons, through the Table Research Branch, continues to play a critical role in supporting the work of the Group through the provision of an annual financial contribution, in kind-support and – most importantly – staff assistance. For 2008, Sophie Descary, the Administrative Assistant based with the Table Research Branch, and Chloé O’Shaughnessy, a Procedural Clerk with the House of Commons, who acts as Executive Secretary, provided capable and invaluable assistance to the Group. Barbara Whittaker, Acting Deputy Principal Clerk, House of Commons, was also instrumental in offering advice and furthering CSPG projects.

Support from the Senate

CSPG also receives an annual financial contribution from the Senate of Canada, and the Group would like to express thanks for the continued ongoing support received from the Senate. CSPG is in the process of establishing a written agreement with the Senate concerning the financial contribution, modeled in part on the written arrangements in place with the House of Commons.

Finances

After another full year working with the new automated financial accounting system, the Group is in a better position to receive information and provide meaningful reports to the Board, allowing it to more actively monitor CSPG’s financial situation. Using the new system, information is being generated and monitored on an activity-by-activity basis, assisting event organizers and the Board as a whole in developing budgets for individual activities, evaluating financial results, and in making adjustments and strategic choices for the future.

The new service agreement between the Canadian Study of Parliament Group and the House of Commons for administrative and support services has had a significant impact on the end of year results for 2008. The Group continues to hold a significant reserve, which has been used to offset budgeted deficits in each of the past two years. Overall, the financial situation remains healthy and all of the financial controls are performing to expectations.

An audit has not yet been carried out for the 2008 fiscal year. Having received a much higher-than-expected quote from the audit firm, the Board is considering options for ensuring that appropriate assurance is provided without incurring costs that are unreasonable in relation to the size of the budget.

The Group would like to sincerely thank Sophie Descary for her work in implementing the new accounting system and Gilles Larocque (House of Commons – Finance) for helping with the accounting process. His expertise and knowledge is very much appreciated. Thanks are also extended to Treasurer Christine Trauttmansdorff for her leadership in raising awareness of programming costs and for provision of financial considerations on a per-activity basis.

Membership and Communications

The Group’s membership is presently at 499, as of February 2009.

The CSPG Web site remains the most crucial platform for broadly marketing activities and publications. It also serves as a communications gateway to membership. Improvements conducted in 2007 and 2008 now allow on-line registration and provision of notification for

events, publications, and contests by electronic mail. This process helps to ensure members are kept informed of CSPG's program of activities.

In order to provide a welcome to new CSPG members, as well as explaining the benefits of membership in CSPG, an introductory letter of welcome listing of the benefits of membership was created. It is now standard practice for this letter to be sent to all new members, signed by the CSPG President.

It came to the attention of the Board that although complimentary one-year memberships are provided to participants in the Parliamentary Internship Programme, there are also a number of legislative Internship programs in Canada at the provincial level as well. In order to provide parity, as well as encouraging an interest in legislatures, the CSPG Board agreed to provide one-year complimentary CSPG memberships to participants of the provincial legislative Internship programs. To date, Interns from the provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have accepted the complimentary memberships.

Discussions have also been undertaken with the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians to provide complimentary one-year memberships to new members of that organization, and at the time of writing, this dialogue is still underway.

To assist with rising operating costs, the membership fees were slightly increased effective January 2009, with regular membership fees increasing by \$10 from \$30 to \$40, and student membership fees increasing by \$5 from \$15 to \$20.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

In 2007 CSPG launched a major project aiming eventually to commission and publish original papers on all thirteen provincial and territorial legislatures in Canada. The project is designed to fill an important gap in the literature in that little up-to-date, authoritative material is available on many of Canada's parliamentary institutions for students, journalists or the public. The papers, which will be made available on the CSPG Web site, will provide basic information for each House on legislative structures and operations as well as analysis, including where appropriate, criticisms and suggestions for reform. The paper on the Nova Scotia House of Assembly has been published and the final version of the Manitoba paper is expected shortly. This past fall a request for proposals was widely circulated in the academic community for papers on other legislatures. Eight proposals were received and, subject to funding, the Research and Publications Committee was expecting to commission four or five papers early in 2009.

The paper on the Nova Scotia House, by Professors Jennifer Smith and Lori Turnbull was reprinted, in slightly modified form, in the summer 2008 issue of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review* in conjunction with the Halifax meeting of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association celebrating 250 years of representative government in Canada. In addition to publication of the paper, Professor Turnbull gave a presentation based on the paper to the delegates attending that same conference.

A number of enquiries were received about possible contributions to the CSPG *Parliamentary Perspectives* series of papers. At least one of these possibilities is being actively pursued.

CSPG sponsored a well-attended and well-received session at the meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association at the University of British Columbia in May. The session focused on Professor David Smith's prize winning book *The People's House of Commons*.

At the 2008 CSPG AGM, Peter Russell participated in a panel session on minority government and also autographed copies of his book *Two Cheers for Minority Government*.

National Student Essay Competition

The essay competition, for undergraduate and graduate students across Canada, entered its sixth annual competition in 2008. Students were once again invited to submit an essay addressing Parliament, legislatures or legislators in either English or French. For the 2008 competition, the selection committee received a total of 13 entries. This year's selection committee was composed of Dr. Jonathan Malloy (Carleton University), Dr. David Docherty, (Wilfrid Laurier University) and Dr. Tamara A. Small (Mount Allison University).

The graduate prize winner is Frances Ryan (Queen's) for her paper "The Ineffectiveness of Question Period" and the undergraduate prize winner is Jessica Nasrallah (Carleton) who wrote "To Vote or Not to Vote". The winners will each receive a prize of \$1000, and be honoured at the luncheon coinciding with the Group's Annual General Meeting. The prize winning essays will also appear on the CSPG Web site.

During the past year, further discussions were held with the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians regarding the prospect of a joint national essay contest sponsored by the two organizations, and discussions on this matter are ongoing.

James R. Mallory Research Grant

The members of the Mallory Prize Committee are: Graham White, F. Leslie Seidle, Tamara A. Small, Charles Mallory and Jennifer Smith.

In spring 2008, at the request of the CSPG, the Committee of the CSPG that deals with the James R. Mallory Research Grant undertook a review of the grant, paying particular attention to the financial aspect of it. Due note was taken of the fact that the first grant winner did not need to access the full amount of the grant. Moreover, it looked as if the second grant winner would not need to do so either. In this event, the committee recommended to the Board that in the third iteration of the award, the amount be scaled back, and the Board accepted the recommendation. The new figures are as follows:

\$8,000.00 research grant

- \$3,000.00 at selection
- \$3,000.00 at completion
- \$2,000.00 for travel and research expenses (receipts required)

In February 2009, the CSPG advertised the third Mallory Research Grant contest, the cut-off date for applications being March 1, 2009. At the time of writing, 15 applications have been received. The committee expects to propose the winning candidate in a few weeks.

In the meantime, the second winner of the grant, David Pond, has handed in his completed research. At the annual meeting of the CSPG on March 27, Pond will address the meeting on "The Impact of Parliamentary Officers on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy".

CONFERENCE AND SEMINARS

2008 December Conference in Ottawa

In December, the Group held a mini conference in Ottawa on the topic of “What Will the 40th Parliament Be Like?” Due to budgetary considerations, the conference was cut back from a full day of programming to a half day, which allowed the event to proceed without creating a financial deficit for hosting the event. The topic selected was very timely, given the autumn 2008 federal general election.

The morning kicked off with a ministerial address by the Honourable Steven Fletcher, Minister of State for Democratic Reform, in his inaugural address as a Minister of State. Following a short question and answer session, a lively panel discussion, consisting of panellists Martha Hall Findlay, Member of Parliament for Willowdale; Kady O'Malley from Maclean's and Editor of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review* Gary Levy. The panel was chaired by Dr. Luc JUILLET. The discussion touched on the challenges, expectations and realities of another successive federal minority Parliament, as well as the issues and choices facing the Governor General in dealing with the request for prorogation

Parliamentary Business Seminars

Each year, the CSPG organizes three seminars on topical issues relating to the Canadian Parliament for parliamentary relations specialists and others. These half-day seminars are held on Parliament Hill, and are usually structured as two separate discussion sessions related to the business of Parliament. Sessions typically involve presentations by experienced parliamentarians, journalists, officials from the Hill and public service, or academics with relevant expertise. They also provide an opportunity for audience-panel dialogue. Attendance at the seminars remains strong, averaging just under 120 participants per seminar in 2008. The CSPG takes pride in keeping the seminars very affordable, compared with other similar events: \$150 per seminar, or \$450 for the series of three seminars. A continental-style breakfast and buffet lunch are included. The CSPG is able to provide this service thanks to the generosity of speakers, who share their knowledge and experience without charge. Session topics, and the presenters who made the 2008-09 seminar program possible, are listed below:

May 2008 Seminar – Topic: “Key Players on Parliament Hill”

Session I: “A Day in the Life”

- Don Martin, National Affairs Columnist, National Post; and
- Senator Jim Munson, Senate of Canada

Session II: “House Leaders, Whips and Committee Chairs”

- The Honourable Don Boudria, former Member of Parliament for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell; and
- Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral, former Member of Parliament for Laval Centre.

November 2008 Seminar – Topic: “Privy Council Officer and Prime Minister's Office”

Session I: “Privy Council Office”

- Michael Chong, Member of Parliament for Wellington-Halton Hills;
- David Brown, Senior Associate, Public Policy Forum; and
- David C. Elder, Adjunct and Associate Professor, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University

Session II: "Prime Minister's Office"

- Senator Hugh Segal, Senate of Canada; and
- Senator Percy E. Downe, Senate of Canada

January 2009 Seminar – Topic: "Inside Committees"

Session I:

- Heather Lank, Principal Clerk, Senate of Canada;
- André Gagnon, Clerk Assistant, House of Commons; and
- Jean Cintrat, Director, Public Safety Canada

Session II:

- Senator Pierre Claude Nolin, Senate of Canada;
- Paul Dewar, Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre;
- The Honourable Joe Jordan, Senior Consultant, The Capital Hill Group; and
- Jack Stilborn, Principal Analyst, Library of Parliament - Retired

The people listed above, along with session moderators and our seminar organizers, made the 2008 seminar program a resounding success. Their willingness to contribute their time is greatly appreciated. The Parliamentary Business Seminars continue to provide a stimulating and informative experience, helping to foster learning and discussion about Parliament. Sincere thanks are expressed to the PBS Organizing Committee for creating yet another year of informative and stimulating seminars.

PARTNERSHIPS AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Speaking Tour Report

The Speaking Tour program, which was established in 1988, is a joint initiative of the CSPG and the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada. The CSPG fulfils the role of arranging for senior Procedural Clerks to speak to classes at Canadian universities about aspects of the Canadian parliamentary system.

Letters to universities were sent in the spring, with a follow up reminder in the fall. Requests were received from 8 universities and included multiple presentation requests. In total 11 presentations were provided, which were all fulfilled by Table Officers from the Senate and the House of Commons.

Teacher's Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy

The Teachers' Institute (TI) is a professional development program that brings 70 teachers from across Canada to Parliament Hill for a one week "behind the scenes" seminar designed to provide teachers with a sound understanding of Canada's parliamentary system. The TI celebrated its 12th anniversary this year. For the 8th year in a row, the Group announced at the Honours Banquet that it would provide a complimentary one-year membership to all educators attending the Teacher's Institute in February 2009. Reminders were sent to alumni from 2007, with copies of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, inviting them to re-join as members. The TI recognizes this contribution in their brochures, on their Web site and in participant's manuals.

Collation of Information on Legislatures

CSPG entered into an agreement in principle in 2007 with the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada to collate information on Canadian legislatures, with the information to be hosted on the CSPG Web site and updated annually. The information will consist of comparative data,

and will alleviate the need for those interested in legislatures to contact each jurisdiction individually to obtain this type of information.

In 2008, to further facilitate progress for this initiative, Dr. David Docherty undertook discussions with Charles Mackay, Clerk of the Prince Edward Island Legislative Assembly. Dr. Docherty then gave a presentation at the annual Professional Development Seminar of the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada, held in Winnipeg in August 2008. The project was discussed in further depth and provided an opportunity to raise issues, ask questions and clarify considerations for the joint hosting project. The project remains in ongoing status.

SPECIAL THANKS

The CSPG continues to owe a debt of gratitude to the outstanding support it receives from staff in the Table Research Branch of the House of Commons. The following individuals have played invaluable roles in supporting the Group's activities over the past year: Sophie Descary (Administrative Assistant), Chloé O'Shaughnessy (CSPG Executive Secretary) and Barbara Whittaker, Acting Deputy Principal Clerk, Publications). Thanks are expressed for the superlative assistance provided to CSPG.

On behalf of the Group, thanks are expressed to departing Board members – Jeff Heynen, Dr. F. Leslie Seidle, Till Heyde and Lawanda Willar for the unflagging energy and creativity which they have both brought to the organization. Their contributions will be missed. Jeff Heynen is a former President of CSPG, and served on the Executive for many years. His vision and enthusiasm will continue on in the many projects that were commenced during his term as President. Dr. F. Leslie Seidle participated on the Board for many years, and provided excellent advice as well as numerous contributions in the areas of publications and conferences. His wise counsel and wit will be very much missed. Till Heyde cheerfully served for many years as the Secretary-Treasurer for CSPG, and consistently provided superlative minutes and agendas for the Board, and his work greatly assisted the Board in keeping track of issues and in planning for the future. Lawanda Willar served on the Parliamentary Business Seminar Organizing Committee and her energy, enthusiasm and diligent work helped make the Parliamentary Business Seminars the success that they were.

Special thanks are also expressed to the Board and Executive of CPSG who work tirelessly to fulfill the objectives of the Group while raising the profile of and interest in public institutions such as Parliament and the provincial/territorial legislatures. This devotion to service is all the more remarkable, given that the Board and Executive are comprised of volunteers who lead very busy lives in the worlds of academia, parliamentary service and public service. Their dedication to public service is commendable, and without them, a huge void in the study and understanding of Parliament would exist. Therefore, it is appropriate to list their names, as well as applauding them for their efforts on behalf of CSPG: Dianne Brydon, Dr. David Docherty, Dr. Luc Juillet, Dr. Jonathan Malloy, Peggy Morgan, Dr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré, Dr. Tamara A. Small, Dr. Jennifer Smith, Christine Trauttmansdorff and Dr. Graham White. In particular thanks are expressed to Dr. Jonathan Malloy for attending events on behalf of the out-of-province CSPG President and for his leadership on the Conferences and Events Committee.

It has been my privilege and pleasure to work with such a talented Board and Executive. Over the past year, thanks to the hard work and planning of the Board, the Executive and the Treasurer, operating costs have been trimmed, and I am confident that CSPG will continue to operate as a successful and very highly regarded organization for many years in the future.

Patricia Chaychuk
President