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The Alberta Legislative Assembly

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The Canadian Study of Parliament Group (CSPG), as part of its efforts to foster knowledge and understanding of Canadian parliamentary institutions, is publishing a series of papers describing and analyzing the thirteen provincial and territorial legislatures. The papers are being made available free of charge, in both official languages, on the CSPG Web site. The views and opinions contained in these papers are those of the authors and are not necessarily reflective of those of the CSPG.

Introduction

The balanced or mixed constitution that underpins Westminster style parliaments and responsible government rests on the existence of both a loyal government and a loyal opposition. Lord Durham thought that the “great virtue of this constitution” is that it prevents “rule by clique or faction. Rather, [i]t was designed to institutionalize political opposition, to ensure that there was always a means to depose parties claiming supreme title to rule, even – perhaps especially – parties claiming to speak for the ‘nation’ or the ‘people’” (quoted in Ajzenstat, 1988,10).

In Durham’s view, competent opposition encourages thoughtful engagement in parliamentary debate by leaders with an eye to replacing the government, and allows for cooperation across the aisles by lessening the appeal of extreme politics (quoted in Craig, 2006, 58). An opposition must be capable of mounting serious and sustained debate in the chamber, pursuing the government during question period, and providing a respectable alternative to the incumbent executive.

As well as the partisan balance within the legislature, patterns of electoral competition also shape the character of an assembly. An expectation of regular alternation in the party that forms government is a key restraint on the executive of the day. The fear of one day being the loyal opposition may encourage moderation when government comes to shape House rules and may heighten the appeal of inter-party cooperation.

If a viable opposition and a reasonable expectation of change in government are keys to a balanced constitution, then Alberta has only sporadically enjoyed the sort of government Durham envisaged. Rather, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta is notable for a distribution of seats that has been very heavily tilted in favour of the governing party, particularly in recent times, as well as infrequent changes in the party forming government (3 in the last 80 years). The electoral and parliamentary weakness of the opposition robs the parliament of the dynamic of which Durham speaks; there is little protection from the rule of clique or faction. So much so that a senior government figure has cast doubt on the value of the Legislature, noting that its work could be done by the party caucus.

As elsewhere, the government sets the legislative agenda of the Assembly and controls the structure and remit of committees, their operation, and the level of resources available to Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and political parties. Yet long-term Tory dominance means there is little requirement to negotiate these matters or to consider what it might be like to labour under these rules as the Official Opposition. The government's main task is often to find useful work for the large number of backbenchers who might otherwise become unruly. As a result, caucus committees regularly complete the work that elsewhere belongs in legislative equivalents. The existence of policy oriented standing committees of the legislature, taken for granted in other similar systems, remains an open question in Alberta. On the other side of legislature, a handful of opposition MLAs are overwhelmed trying to deal with the demands of running the Assembly, reviewing legislature, fulfilling committee duties, and engaging with the public. They often find it difficult to hold the government accountable for its actions.

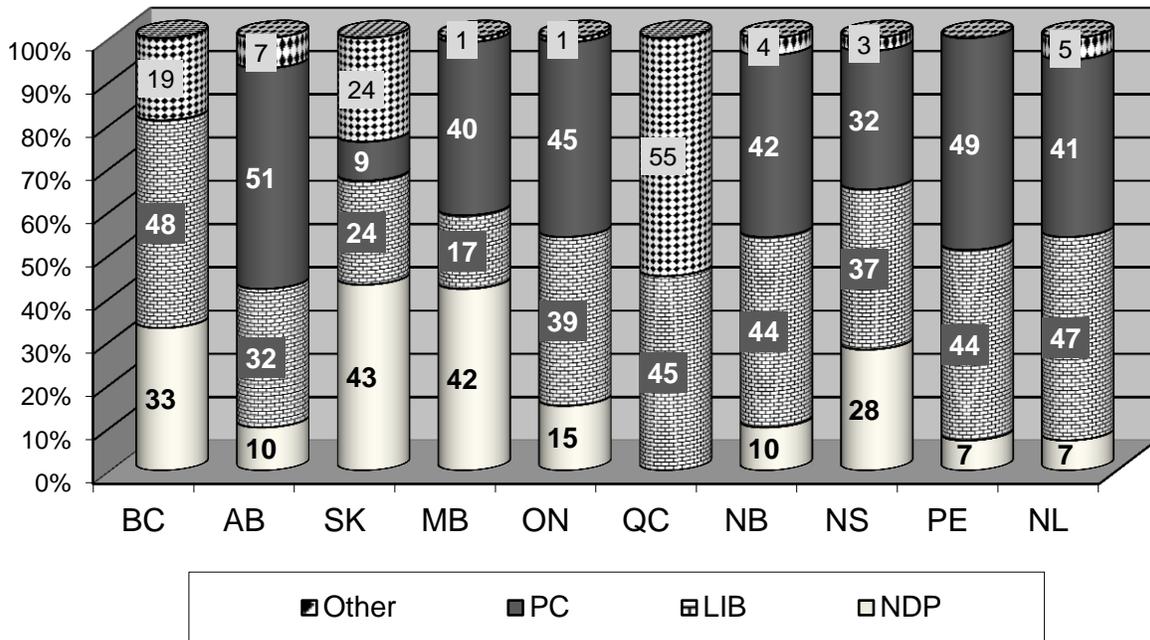
Massive government dominance of the legislature and the frequent presence of small opposition parties combined with little expectation of the government changing have produced in Alberta a parliament that is distinctive from others in the Westminster tradition. The link between the executive, legislature and people idealized in our understandings of responsible government is shaped nearly entirely by the government; a government that presumes it will govern forever. This heavily influences the operation of the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

Tory Electoral Dominance

Electoral competition in Alberta in some ways looks much like that found in other provinces. Across the century, Alberta has seen viable Liberal and New Democratic parties as well as the rise and decline of the United Farmers and Alberta and the Social Credit party, the Wildrose Party and many minor parties.¹ While the long-term dominance of the Tory dynasty is obvious in Figure One, so too is the relatively vibrant character of electoral competition, although the party has three times gained more than 50 percent of the popular vote, a rare outcome in any Single Member Plurality system (SMP).

¹ While remaining formally the Wildrose Alliance Political Association, the party decided to drop 'Alliance' from its informal name in June of 2011, and now goes by Wildrose Party.

Figure 1: Mean Popular Vote Shares, Provincial Elections (1993-2005)



Adapted from Stewart & Carty, 2006: 99-102 (figs. 3.1 to 3.3)

Continued one-party dominance does not appear to have done much to engage Albertans in the political process. They display some of the lowest levels of voter turnout of all Canadians, both at the provincial (as shown in Table 1) and federal level. In 2008 Alberta set a new record for low voter turnout in Canadian federal and provincial elections at just 41 percent. The 2012 election, perhaps driven by surging support for the Wildrose party, saw turnout increase to 54 percent of eligible voters. Given that surveys suggest that Albertans volunteer time and give to charity at rates higher than the Canadian average, this lack of political engagement does not reflect a lack of community spirit (Pickup et al. 2004)

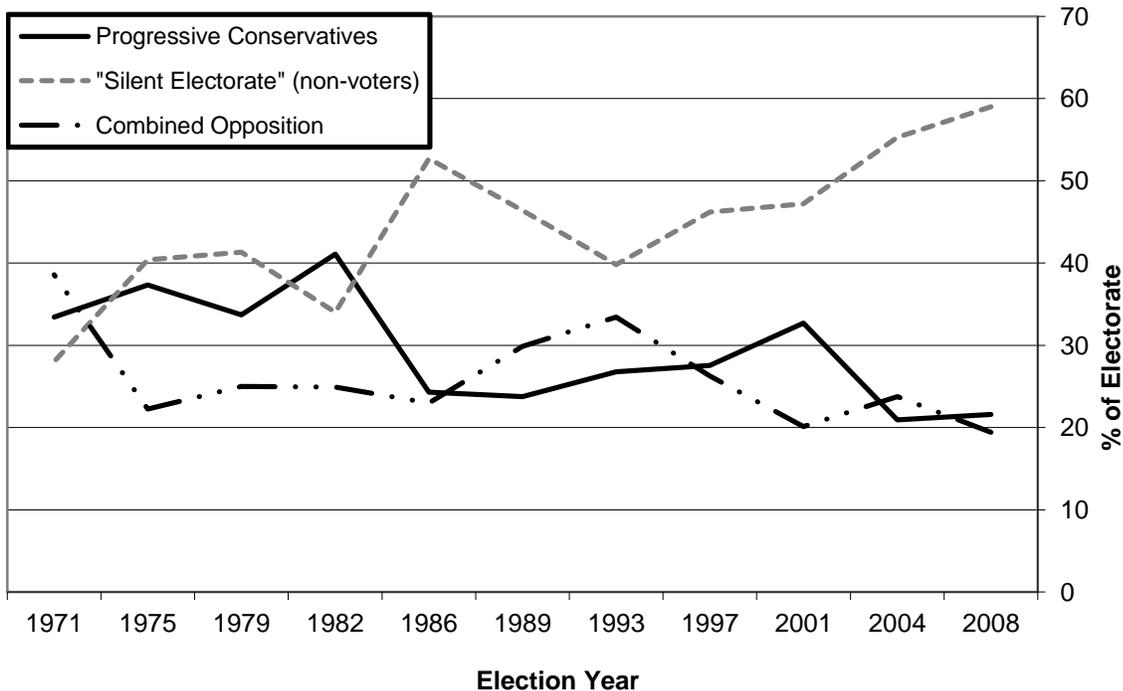
Table 1: Voter Turnout in Alberta, 1993 – 2012

YEAR	%
2012	54.4
2008	40.6
2004	44.7
2001	52.8
1997	52.8
1993	60.2

Source: Elections Alberta

Albertans divide their vote nearly evenly between the governing Tories and all opposition parties, as seen in Figure Two. In recent elections non-voters as a group have been roughly three times larger than those who voted for the governing Tories, or than for all those who voted for opposition parties combined. Surveys of voters and non-voters suggest that their support for political parties and leaders is not much different than for those who participate (Sayers and Stewart, 2009). There is much to suggest that the failure to vote is an expression of loyalty to the current regime (Hirschman, 1970).

Figure 2: Party Support by Eligible Voters in Alberta, 1971-2008



The Character and Composition of the Assembly, Caucuses and Cabinet

The electoral dominance of the Tories pales in comparison to the party's dominance of the legislature, reflecting in part the disproportionate rewards single member plurality voting accords the largest electoral party. This has given Tory governments extraordinary levels of dominance of the legislature and its workings. While it is true that some outlier elections - 1959, 1975 and 1979 – resulted in extraordinary government dominance, but overall the ratio is similar to that for Prince Edward Island, where the dynamics of a numerically small legislature and SMP have produced lopsided legislative outcomes (Mackinnon 2010, 29).

Table 2: Government and Opposition in Provincial Legislatures, 1945 – 2013²

Province	Average Seat Share Largest Party	Average Seat Share Second Party	Ratio Largest Party to Second Party
Newfoundland	73.89	23.22	3.18
Nova Scotia	59.60	25.60	2.33
New Brunswick	74.13	23.88	3.10
P.E.I.	82.00	17.00	4.82
Quebec	59.89	33.33	1.80
Ontario	59.56	27.44	2.17
Manitoba	56.33	38.00	1.48
Saskatchewan	69.25	28.50	2.43
Alberta	77.44	18.22	4.25
B.C.	65.00	32.88	1.98
Average	67.56	26.74	2.53

* Average of total government seats minus total seats of second largest party for the period. This is presented as a percentage in the next column and as a ratio in the final column.

Engelman notes four exceptions to this dominance in the 10 assemblies after the Second World War and until the 21st (1989), but his threshold is so low that he includes as an exception the six Progressive Conservatives under Lougheed in 1967 (Engelmann 1989, 110). Since then, total non-government MLA numbers have in general been higher, being above twenty except following the 2001 and 2007 elections. In terms of the official opposition, the Laurence Decore Liberals in 1993 had 32 MLAs (to the Tories 51), while the Grant Mitchell led Liberals of 1997

² Government dominance appears greater by this measure where the two largest opposition parties are similar in size.

were 18 in total. After a disastrous 2001 campaign led by Nancy MacBeth that produced only seven Liberals, Kevin Taft led 17 Liberals in opposition to the last Ralph Klein government after the 2004 election. After suffering at the hands of Ed Stelmach's lopsided victory in 2008 when only 11 opposition party MLAs were elected, the 28th legislature of 2012 saw the official opposition grow again. Seventeen Wildrose Party MLAs led by Danielle Smith were elected, the Liberals were reduced to 5 seats, while the New Democratic Party doubled its representation to four.

Numerical dominance means that the operation of parliamentary democracy in Alberta is very much at the discretion of the government. While it may consult with opposition parties, it has had the numbers to determine the operation of the legislature and access to resources enjoyed by MLA and party caucuses. A short list includes the role of Speaker, the structure of legislative committees, the character of *Standing Orders* (the formal rules of the Assembly agreed to by MLAs), and through the Members' Services committee, the allocation of resources to party leaders, party caucuses, and individual Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). When the current legislative numbers are compared in the four largest provinces the disparity between opposition members and backbench members of the governing party in Alberta stand out. Outside of cabinet there are 30 other Liberal MLAs in BC and 35 in the opposition ranks. Even in times when Ontario and Quebec have been in minority situations the number of opposition MLAs is substantially larger than the number of government backbenchers. In sharp contrast, after the 2012 election in Alberta the 26 opposition members confronted a government backbench of 35.³

While any political party might long for such circumstances, success presents its own set of peculiar challenges for the Tories. The lack of difference between the composition of the Tory caucus and the legislature blurs the lines between the two, and undercuts the perceived value of the Assembly. At the same time, large numbers of backbenchers need to be given tasks that keep them engaged and that further the objectives of the government. Disgruntled backbenchers with time on their hands are no friends of the party leadership, particularly when the numbers suggest that few will eventually make their way into cabinet.

³ The eight associate ministers are not included in the number of backbenchers and the number of opposition members is higher than it has been since the 1993 election. In 2002 the number of government party 'private members' in Alberta was higher than in Ontario and Quebec or any other province (Docherty, 2005: 125).

Legislative dominance allows the government to claim that it is fully representative of Alberta, because Albertans gave it such a large majority. At the same time, the lack of alternative, opposition voices limits the diversity of opinion in the Assembly. That is, a small opposition tends to magnify difficulties with treating the Assembly as somehow reflective of Albertan society and the issues facing Albertans. Former Premier Ralph Klein famously captured this and his disdain for the Assembly in his phrase 'dome disease':

I refer to dome disease as a disease of the legislature whereby you start to think that the most important thing in the world happens under the dome. It happens either under the dome in the nation's capital or in the legislatures. When you start to believe what the opposition, the media, the bureaucracy, and members of your own caucus say is the absolute truth, then you have dome disease..... It's only when you get out and about, do you find that ordinary people, the Marthas and the Henrys, the Mr. and Mrs. Grundys, of the world have different priorities altogether. They're talking about, oh building a new hockey rink, they're talking about the secondary highway, [and] they're talking about basic things that affect them on a day to day basis. My advice to my caucus was to get out from under the dome, avoid catching that terrible disease called dome disease and find out what the real people are thinking ... (Ralph Klein, 2008; see also Vivone 2010).

So profound is Tory dominance of the legislature, and so narrow the difference between the composition of the Tory caucus and the Assembly, that party leaders muse as to whether Albertans get value from keeping the legislature open. Dominance also leads the government to question why it should allow itself to be subjected to the scrutiny associated with committees, question period and legislative debate. As a prominent Conservative cabinet minister noted, "I am not sure of the value of the Leg. Albertans gave us a large majority, and we could fulfill the wishes of Albertans by simply making decisions in caucus. It costs a lot of money to keep the Assembly running, and the benefits are not obvious. What can it do that we could not do in caucus?" (Confidential interview, 2009).

Composition of the Assembly

In some respects the legislature is similar to other Canadian legislatures, with middle-aged white males numerically dominant. As in all Canadian legislatures, women hold a relatively small proportion of the seats.

Table 3: Composition of the Alberta Legislature after 2001 – 2012 Elections

Election Year	Party	No. of Seats	Women
2001	Progressive Conservative	74	15
	Alberta Liberals	7	2
	New Democratic Party	2	0
	Totals	83	17 (20.5%)
2004	Progressive Conservative	62	10
	Alberta Liberals	16	3
	New Democratic Party	4	0
	Alberta Alliance	1	0
	Totals	83	13 (15.7%)
2008	Progressive Conservative	72	14
	Alberta Liberals	9	2
	New Democratic Party	2	1
	Totals	83	17 (20.5%)
2012	Progressive Conservative	61	18
	Alberta Liberals	5	1
	New Democratic Party	4	1
	Wildrose	17	3
	Totals	87	23 (26.4%)

Despite leading the way in the initial election of women, as recently as 2010 Alberta ranked tenth amongst the provinces in women's representation. After the 2012 election women came close to matching their previous high of 27% in the legislature and ranked slightly above the Canadian average (see Table 4). In the previous high of 27% in 1997, Ralph Klein's success in convincing women to run in safe Conservative seats in Calgary and rural ridings was highlighted as key (Trimble and Arscott, 2003). In the 2012 election the two major parties were both led by women and in the governing Conservative caucus almost a third (29.5%) of the seats were held by women. However, as O'Neill explains in her examination of women in

Alberta politics “progress in one election can be followed by a setback in the next” (2013, 36-38).

Table 4: Gender Composition of Canadian Provincial Legislatures 2013

Province	Elected Women/Total Seats	Women as % Elected
Manitoba	15/57 (1 vacant)	26.8
Quebec	41/125	32.8
Ontario	28/107 (5 vacant)	27.5
British Columbia	32/85	37.6
Prince Edward Island	6/27	22.2
Nova Scotia	12/52 (2 vacant)	24.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	8/48	16.7
Saskatchewan	11/58	19.0
Alberta	23/87	26.4
New Brunswick	7/55	12.7
Total	183/701	26.1

Improved representation for women is by no means a given in the light of Tory unwillingness to be seen as controlling nominations and the small size of opposition parties more open to such moves. The official opposition Wildrose party to the right of the Tories had by far the smallest proportion of women candidates in the 2012 election at only 13% so future gains by this party may not be accompanied by an increase in the representation of women (O’Neill, 2013). The perception that legislative debate can be unwelcoming of women may reduce the appeal of political career for politically engaged women in Alberta (Trimble and Arscott, 2003).

Women’s representation in cabinet has also fluctuated. Despite some early success in gaining seats in the legislature, access to cabinet came late and increased slowly for women MLAs in Alberta (Trimble, 1998). Controversially, Premier Ed Stelmach appointed just two women to his first cabinet in 2006, both in relatively junior positions. He subsequently increased the number of women in his cabinet. In the cabinet of current premier Allison Redford, the level of representation is lower than in the PC caucus. Women account for just three members in the cabinet total of 18 and for only 1 of 8 Associate Ministers. As O’Neill notes, “In 2004 and 2008 ... the percentage of women in cabinet exceeded that among the party’s candidates by six and nine percentage points. Premier Redford’s selection of relatively few women, despite a significant number of women from which to choose, puts an end to the trend of women’s increasing cabinet representation” (2013, 48).

Committees of the Alberta Legislature and Cabinet

The structure and use of legislative and cabinet committees in Alberta has been dictated by successive Tory governments with only modest input from government party backbenchers or opposition party members. Some Tory governments have invoked reforms or pursued behaviour that has strengthened the Assembly, its committees and Question Period. Others have acted capriciously to limit the role of individual members, committees and the Assembly as a whole.

Personal animosity or concern to protect the party's control of provincial politics has sometimes encouraged a defensive approach to the role of the Assembly, limiting questioning of ministers, parliamentary debate, and the resources available to opposition MLAs. Some governments have relied more heavily on caucus committees, all but ignoring legislative committees. Nevertheless, as with other Canadian legislatures, there are a core set of committees required in order for the Legislative Assembly to do its work.

It is important to appreciate the difference between government committees, which include only MLAs from the government party and meet in secret from legislative committees which meet in public and are comprised of both government and opposition MLAs

Central Committees

The main business of the Assembly is driven by the decisions of three government committees, the Agenda and Priorities Committee, The Treasury Board and the Operations and Policy Committee. Executive control of the legislature is expressed through the first two of these committees, with the Premier chairing the first and a member of the second. These committees are designed in large part to contribute to the annual budget cycle, helping to match yearly budgets, three year business plans with government priorities and planning. Each of these committees includes backbench government MLAs in its ranks, if much reduced in number in recent years, providing an important linkage between the executive and legislature. For example, the current Agenda and Priorities committee of 14 members includes one backbench government MLA, down from four under Premier Stelmach.

The Agenda and Priorities Committee sets the strategic agenda for the government and reviews all major policy and legislative initiatives. The Treasury Board creates general management

policies for the provincial government and its agencies; it oversees government finances. It is a legislated committee, and as set out in the Financial Administration Act, it is required to “...formulate general management policies relating to the business and affairs of Crown and Provincial agencies, and perform any acts it considers necessary to ensure that those policies are carried out” (Government of Alberta, N.D.). The Operations and Policy Committee is chaired by the Deputy Premier and is responsible for ensuring that the government’s agenda is effectively and efficiently presented and executed.

Most of the committee work in the legislature is carried out by Committees of the Whole Assembly or House, which as the name implies, include all members of the Assembly. There are two such committees. The Committee of the Whole consists of all Members of the Legislative Assembly meeting to discuss specific clauses of a bill. Amendments to the contents of bills are considered during this stage. The committee meets after second reading and before third reading and is presided over by the Chair of Committees (usually the Deputy Speaker) or designate.

The Committee of Supply consists of all Members of the Legislative Assembly and meets to consider reports on estimates from Legislative Policy Committees and vote on the main budget estimates. Again, it is also presided over by the Chair of Committees (usually the Deputy Speaker) or designate. The government’s main budget estimates are initially reviewed by Legislative Policy Committees.

Standing Committees

Standing committees are permanent committees established by the *Standing Orders* and appointed at the start of each new Legislature. In Alberta, one set deal with parliamentary and administrative functions as shown in Table 5. A particular instance of this first type is the Special Standing Committee on Members’ Services that approves the annual estimates of the Legislative Assembly Office. A second set, Legislative Policy Committees seen in Table 6, play a more substantive legislative and policy role.

These committees are comprised of MLAs from all parties in the legislature and are therefore referred to as all-party committees. They are still heavily dominated by government members

and tend to meet infrequently. Tory MLAs control the agenda and rules and hence the quality of their work. Opposition MLAs are so few that they are stretched in their efforts to be effective on each committee on which they sit.

It is worth noting that among these committees, the Standing Committee on Private Bills reviews and reports to the Assembly on all petitions for Private Bills. Private Bills are initiated by an individual or group outside the legislature and only affect one or a few individuals, groups or organizations rather than the whole population (Alberta 2014). A search of the Hansard reveals 43 such bills since the founding of the Assembly in 1905. These are distinct from private member's bill discussed below, which are promoted by an MLA who is not a member of cabinet.

Select Special Committees are struck for a specific purpose. Once such a committee releases its report, its work is complete and the committee is disbanded unless otherwise directed by the Assembly. This might include hiring a parliamentary officer or allowing for a more detailed review of some legislation. In 2009 and 2013, the search for a new Chief Electoral Officer was conducted by such a committee, while in 2010 Select Committees organized the search for a new Auditor General and for an Ombudsman. Such a committee began reviewing proposed conflict of interest legislation in 2012.

Table 5: Standing Committees, Alberta Legislative Assembly

Session	Committee	Opposition MLAs
28 th Legislature, 2 nd Session (2014)	Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund	3 of 9
	Standing Committee on Legislative Offices	4 of 11
	Standing Committee on Private Bills	6 of 15
	Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing	5 of 15
	Standing Committee on Public Accounts	5 of 15
	Special Standing Committee on Members' Services	4 of 11

Legislative Committees

Due to continued Tory dominance, the distinction between legislative, cabinet, and caucus committees has often been blurred in Alberta. The government broadly accepted the notion that there was insufficient difference between the two to warrant too much emphasis on having a working system of Assembly committees. Ralph Klein's admonition to get beyond the 'dome'

was one way of dealing with this, encouraging PC MLAs to ignore the legislature and concentrate on their constituency work.

That said, committee work engages the talents of backbenchers and reduces the time available to assess and question government leaders and their policy choices. Government leaders attempting to engage their own backbenchers and seeing no threat from the opposition parties have widely interpreted the role of MLAs. As White notes, “Whatever the real life constraints on participation and influence of Alberta backbenchers... their position vis a vis cabinet unquestionably carries more force than elsewhere in Canada” (2005: 122). While these committees have worked well at times, they have been the object of heavy criticism when used by government to control the legislative agenda, particularly toward the end of the Klein Premiership (Blakeman, 2009).

During the Klein years, 1992 to 2006, there was a strong focus on caucus at the expense of the Assembly. Premier Klein utilized a number of Policy Standing Committees usually consisting solely of Tory MLAs. Although often referred to as cabinet policy committees, as Dunn explains “These committees are hybrids in that they include cabinet members, government caucus members, and occasionally non MLAs” (2006: 225). In fact backbenchers usually chaired these committees. Examples of these committees include Agriculture and Municipal Affairs, Economic Development and Finance, Education and Employment, Energy and Sustainable Development, and Justice and Government Services.

Policy Field Committees

Following his selection as Tory leader on December 3, 2006 Ed Stelmach announced as one of his top five priorities the goal of improving the transparency and openness of government. On March 7, 2007, Dave Hancock, Government House Leader, tabled an *All Party Agreement, Spring and Fall Sittings of the 2007 Session, Alberta Legislature*. This document was the result of negotiations with the other House Leaders, Liberal. Laurie Blakeman and New Democrat Ray Martin as well as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Ken Kowalski. These changes were introduced via *Standing Orders* (the formal rules of the Assembly agreed to by MLAs) for the new Session of the Legislative Assembly in March of 2007.

Legislative committees were introduced to bring the operation of the Assembly into line with other Westminster style parliaments. Changes to *Standing Orders* aimed to improve the process for private member's bill and increase their number. Supply debates were modified to improve accountability and transparency. Ministers and MLAs were given access to bureaucrats able to explain the more arcane elements of budgets on the floor of the House. Changes to the way in which estimates were considered facilitated discussion of issues that affect more than one ministry. However, the associated time limits on debate claimed by the government to ensure coverage of the supply bills were seen by opposition members as limiting oversight of government activity (Blakeman, 2009).

The agreement outlined a set of policy field standing committees to be added to the existing set of functional standing committees (see Table 6). The committees consisted of 11 members drawn from the House, with a chair from the government caucus and a deputy chair from an opposition party caucus. The government also introduced Bill 1, *Lobbyists Act*, aimed at registering and controlling those whose livelihood involved lobbying the government on behalf of others (Gravel, 2007). For the 27th Legislature following the 2008 election, in which the Tories strengthened their representation in the Assembly, the number of Policy Field Committees was expanded to five.

The new committees initially played an important role in shaping government policy. The Assembly was able to refer any bill to the relevant committee. Committees were given wide powers to consider any regulation, or amendment to regulations in its area of competency that affected government finances, as well as consider the extent and application of existing legislation. These committees were given priority over all other committees, could hold public hearings and were tasked with automatically reviewing the annual budgets of relevant departments and Crown corporations.

This added a new dimension to the Alberta Legislative Assembly, providing both members of the government caucus and most importantly, opposition party members, an opportunity to be involved in serious scrutiny and on occasion public hearings with respect to legislation. Yet the numerical dominance of Tory MLAs was always likely to circumscribe the capacity of the new committees to challenge the government, particularly around important issues such as budgets and supply debates. Opposition members were quick to point that the power of these committees was somewhat illusory given that comfortable majorities the government enjoyed on

each. Sharing questions and speaking time among the many members obviously resulted in a clear pattern of dominance for the governing party. Of course Alberta is not unique in this area (Docherty, 2005; White 2006).

As it happened, 2009-10 saw the first budget deficit in Alberta in 16 year, pushing the Tories to tighten control of fiscal policy and Supply debates in order to avoid embarrassment. The powerful central committees tasked with general oversight of government, Treasury Board and Agenda and Priorities Committee, took control of the budget process, largely usurping the functions of the Policy Field Committees. The presumption is that the Premier and senior Ministers wanted more direct control of this politically sensitive situation. As White notes more generally “Ministers do not wish to see independent, effective committees with substantial opposition representation challenging their power or causing political difficulties for them” (2006: 268-269). Still, these committees acted very much like legislative committees in other parliaments, advising cabinet on policy, with their operation funded from government revenues.

The arrival of Alison Redford as Tory leader and Premier in October 2011 saw minor changes made to Policy Field Committees. On October 25th, 2011, the Assembly passed a Government Motion to strike new Policy Field Committees for the Spring (5th) Session of the 27th Legislature (see Table 6). Yet further major changes followed the Tories 2012 election victory under Premier Redford. The government abolished the Policy Field Committees and replaced them with three large Legislative Policy Committees. This greatly reduced the role of backbenchers in policy formation.

In the initial meeting of one of the Legislative Policy Committees an Assembly official provided an indication of how quickly the practice of referring bills to Policy Field Committees for consideration had declined. When asked the last time a bill was referred to such a committee the response was ‘two years ago.’ (Meeting of the Committee on Alberta’s Economic Future, July 24, 2012).

Table 6: Legislative Committees, Alberta Legislative Assembly

Session	Policy Field (2008-2011)	Opposition MLAs
26 th Legislature, 3 rd Session (2007)	Community Services	3 of 11
	Government Services	3 of 11
	Managing Growth Pressures	3 of 11
	Resources and Environment	3 of 11
27 th Legislature, 1 st Session (2008)	Community Services	3 of 12
	Health	4 of 12
	Public Safety and Services	3 of 12
	Resources and Environment	3 of 12
	The Economy	4 of 12
27 th Legislature, 2 nd Session (2009)	Community Services	3 of 12
	Health	4 of 12
	Public Safety and Services	2 of 12
	Resources and Environment	4 of 12
	The Economy	2 of 12
27 th Legislature, 3 rd Session (2010)	Community Services	5 of 12
	Health	4 of 12
	Public Safety and Services	3 of 12
	Resources and Environment	3 of 12
	The Economy	4 of 12
27 th Legislature, 4 th Session (2011)	Community Services	5 of 12
	Health	5 of 12
	Public Safety and Services	4 of 12
	Resources and Environment	3 of 12
	The Economy	4 of 12
27 th Legislature, 5 th Session (2012)	Education	5 of 13
	Energy	4 of 12
	Community Development	5 of 12
	Finance	5 of 14
	Public Health and Safety	4 of 13
	Legislative Policy (2012-)	
28 th Legislature, 1 st and 2 nd Session (2012-14)	Alberta's Economic Future	6 of 18
	Families and Communities	6 of 18
	Resource Stewardship	8 of 18

Alberta now has a set of standing committees that looks much like that of other Westminster style legislatures. The relatively limited number of policy oriented committees does set the Assembly apart somewhat and allow the government to more easily control their work. The

committees have the power to summon witnesses, review regulations, look into matters related to their mandate on their own initiative as well as consider annual reports and estimates relating to the ministries in their portfolio. If the committees undertake an investigation and issue a report the government is required to respond within 150 days. Committees may also consider bills referred by the legislature; although to date this has only included some private member's bill (see Table 8).

Government Legislation and Private member's bill, Alberta Legislative Assembly

The Tory government controls the legislative agenda and determines the success or failure of Bills. The All Party House Leaders' Agreement of 2007 led to changes to private member's bill and supply debates aimed at improving the operation of the legislature via new committees. However, after the 2008 elections, the *Standing Orders* were modified to reverse some of these changes and were seen by some as favouring Tory backbenchers (Blakeman, 2009).

It is evident from Table 7 that after some initial enthusiasm, only light use has been made of the policy field and legislative policy standing committees. In all cases legislation is still considered by the Committee of the Whole – essentially the entire Legislature and therefore fully within government control as to the treatment given any Bill – but recently this has been the only committee to which bills are referred following second reading.

Table 7: Passage of Government Bills

Session	Introduced	Passed	Referred to Committee of the Whole	Referred to Standing Committee
26 th Legislature, 3 rd Session (2007)	56	55	55	4
27 th Legislature, 1 st Session (2008)	53	52	52	4
27 th Legislature, 2 nd Session (2009)	62	62	62	1
27 th Legislature, 3 rd Session (2010)	29	28	28	0
27 th Legislature, 4 th Session (2011)	27	26	26	0
27 th Legislature, 5 th Session (2012)	7	6	6	0
28 th Legislature, 1 st Session (2012-2013)	46	45	45	0

Private member's bills are those promoted by either a government party backbencher or a member of an opposition party. These bills are introduced and considered at 3 p.m. on Monday when the Assembly is in Session. Each MLA is allowed 1 bill and 2 motions per session. [The chances of having a bill considered by the House improve the higher it is placed on the *Order Paper*. A lottery is held to determine this order and which MLAs will be given the privilege of submitting a private member's bill for consideration by the House.

All MLAs are able to place a piece of paper on which their name is written into a hat (literally a hat) from which the Speaker makes a draw, with the various party House Leaders in attendance. The order in which names are drawn determines the order in which bills will be introduced and the number they receive. The MLA whose name is drawn first is given the first slot, Bill 201, and so on until all members in the draw have been given a bill number (Government bills are numbered from 1).

Members do not have to put their name in the draw, but in reality all do. The opportunity to bring an important or politically advantageous non-government bill to the Assembly encourages government backbenchers and opposition MLAs to participate and results in a brisk trade in positions on the *Order Paper*. If a member is assigned a position but cannot use it (does not have an idea for a bill) or his or her party thinks another bill would be of more value, a high and low position on the order list may be traded to increase the chances that a preferred bill will be introduced to the Assembly. There is even swapping of positions among opposition parties. Caucuses have a strong incentive to maximize their own chances of success while at the same time limiting that of other parties. The numerical dominance of the Tories gives government backbenchers a good shot at these positions.

Government control of the legislative agenda provides only a limited role for private member's bills. Generally there is substantive debate on five private member's bills a year. Occasionally the legislature will consider ten bills, but many may not receive anything more than first reading. This is because debate on private member's bills is limited to Mondays. There is a 'guillotine' process that guarantees 1 hour 20 minutes for the second reading with a required vote. If passed, the bill goes to the appropriate committee and is voted upon the following Monday with 1 hour appointed for debate. Despite sporadic attempts to facilitate the debate of private member's bills, their numbers remain modest, being in good years perhaps 25 percent of

bills introduced and in poor years closer to 10 percent. In the two decades after 1991, 41 have successfully negotiated the Assembly.

Table 8: Passage of Private Member's Bills, Alberta Legislative Assembly

Session	Introduced	Passed	Referred to Committee of the Whole	Referred to Standing Committee
26 th Legislature, 3 rd Session (2007)	16	2	2	1
27 th Legislature, 1 st Session (2008)	13	2	4	1
27 th Legislature, 2 nd Session (2009)	9	2	2	1
27 th Legislature, 3 rd Session (2010)	11	2	2	1
27 th Legislature, 4 th Session (2011)	8	1	2	0
27 th Legislature, 5 th Session (2012)	6	1	1	0
28 th Legislature, 1 st Session (2012-2013)	10	4	5	2

The statistical likelihood that they will win the lottery for positions and government control of the legislature agenda ensures private member's bill are dominated by Tory MLAs. In 2007, Bill 203, *Service Dog Act* (Lougheed) and Bill 212, *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* (Johnston) were both sponsored by Tories, as were Bill 201, *Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act* (Mitzel) and Bill 206, *Alberta Personal Income Tax (Physical Activity Credit) Amendment Act 2008* (Rodney) in 2008 passed the Assembly.

Again in 2009, Bill 203, *Local Authorities Election (Finance and Contribution Disclosure) Amendment Act, 2009* (Johnston) and Bill 205, *Election Finances and Contribution Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009* (Anderson) were sponsored by Tories. The bills that received Royal Assent in 2010, Bill 201, *Workers' Compensation (Firefighters) Amendment Act, 2010* (Rogers) Bill 202, *Mandatory Reporting of Child Pornography Act* (Forsyth), were both sponsored by Tory MLAs, although Forsyth soon thereafter bolted to the Wildrose. This trend continued under Redford as in 2012 -2013 both of the private member's bill passed were again sponsored by Conservative MLAs.

The Speaker

As with Speakers in other Westminster style parliaments, the Speaker of the Alberta Legislative Assembly oversees debate and enforces and interprets the rules and practices that are designed to ensure order and decorum in the House. The Legislative Assembly Office over which the Speaker presides fulfills a range of services. It is a sizable operation with an operations budget in 2013-14 of around \$71 million, up from the \$15 million reported by Engelmann for 1988-89 (Engelman 1989, 118).⁴ The Speaker is also the chief administrative officer of the Assembly and chairs the Special Standing Committee on Members' Service that determines the resources available to MLAs and political parties.

Until 1997 the government of the day selected the Speaker of the Assembly. This changed at the opening of the First Session of its 24th Legislature on Monday, April 14, 1997 with the requirements of an amended *Legislative Assembly Act*. In the second round of a secret ballot, the House elected Ken Kowalski as Speaker, ahead of Glenn Clegg and Don Tannas, with Gene Zwozdesky declining to accept nomination to contest for the position. The election of Kowalski was particularly notable since he had effectively been fired as deputy premier and removed from Cabinet (Vivone, 2009, 32). Media coverage portrayed his victory as a strong message to Premier Klein. As reporter Don Martin wrote "This was clearly a Conservative backbench revolt. And Klein knew it... The secret ballot gave Conservative MLAs their only opportunity to send an unfiltered, unsigned message of protest directly to Klein's mailbox" (Calgary Herald, 15 April 1997; A 17). Other elections have been less controversial. Kowalski was elected unopposed (acclaimed) as Speaker at the beginning of new Legislatures in 2001 and 2005, and defeated Liberal Laurie Blakeman in 2008. He retired from the legislature prior to the 2012 election.

On May 23, 2012 following the provincial election, MLA for Edmonton-Mill Creek Gene Zwozdesky was elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and made chair of the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services the following day. Mr. Zwozdesky had been elected for his sixth term at the provincial election on April 23, 2012.

⁴ See <http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/hr/branches.html>

MLA Compensation, Constituency Office Allowance and Legislative Resources

Compensation and allowances for MLAs have been a regular source of controversy in Alberta. Part of Ralph Klein's appeal following his first election victory in 1993 flowed from his decision to follow through on an election promise to cancel the MLA pension plan. After the 2008 election, Premier Ed Stelmach courted controversy when he increased compensation for cabinet by around 30 per cent, with ministers moving from \$142,000 to \$184,000, and the Premier from \$154,000 to \$213,000. Backbenchers' pay increased by 4.5 per cent to a base income of \$78,000 with stipends for committee work bringing this to over \$100,000 for many Tory MLAs.

The Members' Services Allowance in support of a MLAs constituency office and staff is calculated using a complex formula found in Appendix B. The formula was developed by the 2002/2003 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission in an attempt to calculate the difficulty of representing an electoral district. For each electoral division, the score takes account of area, population density, rural/urban ratio, dependent population, elected and appointed bodies, and distance to the legislature (Alberta 2003, Appendix D). These calculations produce a base allowance of around \$104,000 and an average constituency budget for 2012-13 of just over \$140,000 (McNeil, 2013).

Temporary residence allowances of \$1,930 per month are available to MLAs living more than 60 kilometres from the legislature. Those living outside Edmonton but fewer than 60 kilometres from the legislature may claim this allowance for a day in which they work more than 12 hours in Edmonton may claim a *per diem* of \$193 when the Assembly is in session. A 2007 report by auditor general Fred Dunn indicated that the combination of these two allowances provided an opportunity for 'double-dipping' on the part of MLAs. The Wildrose opposition kept this controversy alive throughout the 27th Legislature. In March of 2013, the members' services committee voted to remove the *per diem* as of September 1, 2013 (Henton, 2013).

Members have access to a car travel allowance of 42.5 cents per kilometre. Travel expenses of spouses accompanying members on legislative business within Alberta are provided for up to four trips and for specified international travel, for example, to international inter-parliamentary events. Home, office and cell phone charges are covered, and a \$950 health spending account is part of the MLA benefit plan. Security systems for home and office as well as printing, communication and promotional expenses are supported to one degree or another (Alberta 2003).

Controversy erupted in March of 2012 when it was discovered that the stipend for membership of Legislative committees was paid to MLAs even if the committee never or very rarely met. The Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing had not met since 2008, yet members had been collecting \$1,000 a month as part of the normal arrangement for compensation for committee work. As a result of the controversy, the government initiated a freeze on committee pay and requested members of the Privileges Committee to repay 6 months' worth of their allowance. The 'transition allowance' given to MLAs leaving office added further fuel to this fire both in the lead up to the 2012 election and afterward when it was revealed that 25 retiring or defeated MLAs were to collect a total of nearly \$11 million via this payout (CBC, 2012).

All this gave renewed impetus to the inquiry by Justice John Major into the compensation and benefit package for MLAs, initially appointed by Speaker Ken Kowalski on November 30, 2011. The fact that retiring Speaker Ken Kowalski and former Premier Ed Stelmach were to receive \$1.2 and \$1 million respectively sharpened attacks on MLA the transition allowance and MLA compensation generally. In an apparent concession to this and other concerns raised, the government chose to scale back many of Justice Major's suggestions (Alberta 2012), with Premier Redford accepting a slight drop in pay rather than accept an increase from \$217,000 to \$335,000 over two years (CBC 2012a). Alberta's MLAs now receive a salary of \$134,000 per year with additional allowances provided to the Premier, Speaker, cabinet ministers, party leaders, the Deputy Speaker, party leaders, house leaders and whips.⁵ Stipends for committee service were removed save for \$200 per meeting for Committee chairs.

In terms of other services, the Legislature Library research unit was disbanded in the early 1990s but the Library continues to offer support via access to various materials. Currently, Library staff are tasked with locating and providing '...non-partisan, authoritative, confidential and timely information and reference services to Members and their staff' (McNeil 2013), making use of a budget for 2012-13 of \$2,725,000 (see Appendix C). Research for committees is conducted by the Committee Research staff of the Committee Services branch, support for which comes via the Members' Services Committee (see Appendix D). Support for caucus research capacity captured in Table 8 accompanied the introduction of Policy Field committees

⁵ The premier receives an allowance of \$83,750 while cabinet ministers and the leader of the opposition receive \$67,000 and other party leaders \$30,150 (MLA Remuneration- Legislative Assembly of Alberta, April 2013).

in 2007 and now called Legislative Policy Committees (McNeil, 2013). A legislative internship program was created in the mid-1970s but abolished in the 1990s. There is an Alberta Student Ministerial Internship Program that provides up to 25 interns with a placement in a ministerial office.

The return of the Wildrose to the Legislature following the Calgary-Glenmore by-election in 2009 was accompanied by a number of controversial decisions by the Speaker. After the selection of the dynamic Danielle Smith as leader in October 2009, Wildrose was on occasion ahead of the Tories in opinion polls. Initially limited to just one member, Paul Hinman, floor-crossing by one time Tory MLAs Heather Forsyth, Rob Anderson and Guy Boutilier saw the caucus swell to four MLAs. The Wildrose caucus was larger than the two person New Democratic caucus which was nonetheless treated as a party in respect of access to resources.

Despite having two more MLAs than the two-person NDP caucus, the Speaker denied the party access to leadership funds (valued at around \$230,000) received by all parties in the legislature, noting that Smith did not hold a seat. Such a designation would have strengthened Wildrose's legislative and organizational presence and given it a more powerful voice in Question Period. As well, the Speaker's Office indicated that the party should not include quotes from Smith in its official caucus news releases (Fekete, 2010). This suggests that government considered Wildrose a threat. As Table 9 indicates, funding for the party was increased to a level normally enjoyed by the official opposition after the party returned 17 MLA at the 2012 election.

Table 9: Member and Party Resources, Alberta Legislative Assembly, 2013*

	Wildrose	Liberal	New Democrat	Progressive Conservative
MLAs 2012 Election	17	5	4	61 (34 backbenchers)
Leader's Allowance	\$505,444	\$252,722	\$252,722	--
Private Members	\$1,241,595	\$365,175	\$292,140	\$2,483,190
Committee Support	\$417,339	\$208,670	\$208,670	\$834,678
Calgary caucus office	\$83,584	--	--	--
Total Resources	\$2,247,962	\$826,567	\$753,532	\$3,317,868

*The funding rate per private member is \$73,035. Government figures include funding for its 34 private members and exclude ministerial allowances. Two former Tories now sit as Independents.

Table 9 also reveals that the government's access to financial resources easily outdistances that of the other parties. This even without consideration of the access Tory members of cabinet have to ministerial budgets, the approximately \$11,000,000 for the Office of the Premier and

another \$13,000,000 for the government's Public Affairs Bureau have often been used to promote government decisions. If the Premier's Office is included in the above calculation the Tories have access to \$14,317,868 or \$421,114 per private member (Alberta 2013 and 2014a).

Question Period

Question Period in a Westminster parliament is the central forum in which the opposition may challenge the government. Oral Question Period begins each day at 1:50 pm with questions being asked in an order pre-determined by the Speaker, usually in a process that includes discussion with the various party House Leaders. Precedence in this question order depends on party size and presupposes the centrality of the Official Opposition to the workings of the legislature.

During 2010, when the composition of the Assembly was 68 Progressive Conservative MLAs, 9 Liberal, 3 Wildrose, 2 New Democrats and 1 Independent, the question order was complex see (Appendix A). Since the success of the Wildrose in 2012, and the arrival of a new Speaker in Gene Zwodesky, the order has become much simpler (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Question Period Order, Alberta Legislative Assembly

Question order:

- 1st to 3rd, Leader of the Official Opposition or delegate, Wildrose caucus
- 4th, Liberal caucus
- 5th, New Democrat caucus
- 6th, Official Opposition, Wildrose caucus
- 7th, Government, PC caucus
- 8th, Official Opposition, Wildrose caucus
- 9th, Government, PC caucus
- 10th, Liberal caucus
- 11th, New Democrat caucus
- 12th, Official Opposition, Wildrose caucus
- 13th, Government, PC caucus
- 14th, Official Opposition, Wildrose caucus
- 15th, Government, PC caucus

- 16th, Official Opposition, Wildrose caucus
- 17th, Government, PC caucus
- 18th, Official Opposition, Wildrose caucus
- 19th, Government, PC caucus
- 20th, Official Opposition, Wildrose caucus
- 21st, Official Opposition, Wildrose caucus
- 22nd, Government, PC caucus

Pursuant to House Leaders' Agreement dated May 25, 2012.

On his selection as Liberal leader, David Swann made clear to his colleagues that he wished to bring greater decorum to proceedings in the Assembly, encouraging them not to interject during debates and Question Period (Swann 2009). The Liberal caucus struggled to make use of its access to the first questions as Official Opposition. Unlike in other parliaments, the caucus did not develop a series of related questions aimed at chasing down a particularly issue or embarrassing the government (Blakeman, 2009). Government members noted that the two person New Democrat caucus of Mason and Notley had been perhaps the most effective in using question period during this time (Hancock, 2009).

The selection of former Tory MLA Raj Sherman as leader of the Liberal party in September 2011 provided a noticeable uptick in the Liberal's public profile, in part due to his use of Question Period. The decline of the Liberals from 9 to five seats at the 2012 election, including the defection of Lethbridge MLA Bridget Pastoor in the November prior to the election, weakened the party's position. Since winning 17 seats to become the Official Opposition in 2012, Wildrose led by Danielle Smith has made good use of the legislature and Question Period to embarrass the government. Legislative debate in the Assembly is much livelier than for some time and the tone of Question Period regularly characterized as combative (CBC, 2013). Smith is something of a rarity in terms of her legislative performance helping her move to the government benches. If she were to become Premier, she would be only the second Leader of the Opposition to make that move, the other being Peter Lougheed.

Although Wildrose has made good use of Question Period, Figure 4 makes clear that almost a third of the questions asked during the allotted time period come from Tory backbenchers who have no wish to embarrass the government. As Docherty noted in his audit of Canadian

legislatures “Government questions, instead of being used to hold government to account, actually provide the government with a respite from heated opposition questions” (2005: 127) Opposition parties would like to see the number of questions available to PC members reduced, arguing that they have the opportunity to question ministers during caucus. The governing party has shown no indication of moving in this direction. Indeed in periods of small oppositions the number of questions might well be greater than the number of opposition MLAs.

Media Coverage of the Legislative Assembly

Sound and television recording were introduced into the legislature in March 1972, and those in the visitors’ gallery were allowed to take notes, a rarity in Westminster parliaments. An *Alberta Hansard* was also created that year and is now available in hardcopy and online. Question period has been televised since 1978, with live audio and video streaming of the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta’s afternoon sittings available live on the web since April 2007. The Daily Routine, including Oral Question Period, is broadcast live on CTV Two beginning at 1:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday during session. It is rebroadcast on Shaw Cable at 5 p.m. in Northern Alberta and 9:30 p.m. in Southern Alberta. Audio recordings of committee meetings are also available on the internet for the duration of the current session.

Engelmann (1989, 118) notes that in 1986 the provincial press gallery numbered forty. There has been a steady decline in the size of the press gallery at the Legislative Assembly across the last three decades. In the early 1990s, there were about 25 reporters covering the legislature year-round. There was strong competition for office space during high profile events. By 2013, the number of permanent journalists assigned to the legislature full time had dropped to around five. Coverage is heavily dependent on whether the legislature is in session, when about 10 reporters can be found in the gallery.

The core of reporting now belongs with the Edmonton Journal, which has 3 fulltime reporters at the legislature year round. The Calgary Herald also has one reporter based in the press gallery full time.⁶The CBC, Canadian Press as well as local radio and television stations each provide a reporter when the Assembly is in session, with some extra effort around events such as budget day. The Globe and Mail runs its Alberta office out of the press gallery rooms, but the paper's reporter covers much more than the legislature. In place of reporters at the Assembly many organizations are making use of the internet and social media to cover politics (Thomson,

⁶ Along with the Journal the Herald is a member of the Postmedia Network and makes use of some of its stories.

2013). There are two weekly newsletters that cover Alberta politics with a focus on 'The Leg', as it is affectionately known. Mark Lisac's *Insight into Government* (recently taken over by Ric Dolphin), and Paul McLoughlin's *Alberta Scan*.

The remarkable reduction in coverage over 20 years has altered the nature of legislative reporting. Once, to stay ahead of the pack, there was an incentive for reporters to search out stories through investigation. Now, with little competition, few resources and limited time, the focus is on the dynamics of the legislature – such as question period – and on government and opposition press conferences and releases. This loss of profile for legislative reporting limits its appeal as a career path for ambitious journalists. As a result, the scrutiny of provincial politics, from the bureaucracy through the legislature to the executive as well as of issues more broadly, is much reduced.

Conclusion

Many of the core elements of responsible government are either weak or missing from the Alberta legislature. This is not that unusual: it could be argued that central tenets of responsible government are more honoured in the breach than the observance in many Westminster style parliaments. But the extent and form of this failure in the Alberta case reflect its particular pattern of partisan competition. The numerical superiority of the Tories across the last 40 years and the lack of alternation in government have resulted in an assembly whose operation reflects choices made by governments unconcerned with what it would be like to labour as the opposition.

For four decades Tory governments have been free to modify the operation or practices of the legislature, often limiting its capacity to hold government to account. In recent years under Ralph Klein for example, the role of the legislature was reduced as the premier urged MLAs to get out from under the 'dome' in order to connect with Albertans. Legislative committees are weak, *Standing Orders* do little to constrain government, and good portions of the work done by legislatures in other jurisdictions occur within the government caucus. The introduction of measures to elect the Speaker by secret ballot and the institution of all member legislative policy committees have done relatively little to change legislative dynamics or limit executive power. Despite the dominance of one party, the demographic composition of the legislature is not that different from other Canadian parliaments, although the relative weakness of parties on the centre and left may have negative implications for the representation of women. The small size

of opposition parties ensures a lack of political diversity and limits the capacity of the legislature to hold the government accountable through the various parliamentary mechanisms such as committees. Often only a handful of members are available to oversee a well-entrenched and experienced government.

Under Premier Stelmach after 2006, the Assembly had been somewhat reinvigorated with the introduction of Policy Field Standing Committees and changes to private member's bill and the Supply debates. But these committees were only lightly used and when the government ran into budget difficulties in 2009-10 and again in 2010-11, it used its numbers to control debate in these committees and the legislature in order to limit embarrassment. Premier Redford reduced the number of committees and the role of backbenchers on the committees that remained. The Opposition members have had little success with private member's bill, with some complaining that changes to the *Standing Orders* in 2008 reversed most of the gains made in 2007.

The recent rise of the Wildrose party highlights the Speaker's capacity to control resources available to MLAs and political parties via the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services, where the government has a clear majority. Even when things were put right following the 2012 election, it may not be accidental that the financial resources per MLA provided to opposition parties is inversely related to what many would see as the perceived threat those parties pose to the governing Tories. Despite this, the growth of Wildrose after the 2012 election has resulted in much closer pursuit of the government in general debate and Question Period.

Appendix A: Oral Question Period, 27th Legislature, Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Question order on Day 1 and 3:

- 1st to 3rd, Leader of the Official Opposition or delegate (Liberal)
- 4th, Wildrose caucus
- 5th, Government caucus
- 6th, Official Opposition caucus
- 7th to 10th, alternate between Government caucus and Official Opposition
- 11th, New Democratic Party caucus
- 12th to 16th, alternate between Government caucus and Official Opposition
- 17th, Wildrose caucus
- 18th, New Democratic Party caucus
- Remaining, Government caucus.

Question order on Day 2:

- 1st to 3rd, Leader of the Official Opposition or delegate
- 4th, New Democratic Party caucus (reverses Wildrose and New Democrat positions of day 1)
- 5th, Government caucus
- 6th, Official Opposition caucus
- 7th to 10th, alternate between Government caucus and Official Opposition
- 11th, New Democratic Party caucus
- 12 to 16th, Wildrose caucus
- 17th, New Democratic Party caucus
- Remaining, Government caucus.

Question order on Day 4:

- 1st to 3rd, Leader of the Official Opposition or delegate
- 4th, Independent Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo
- 5th New Democratic Party caucus
- 6th, Official Opposition
- 7th, Government party caucus
- Remaining, use Day 2.

Appendix B: Calculations for MLA office funding

Funding for individual MLA offices is provided according to the following formula 9 (where E is the number of electors and C the number of citizens in an electorate):

(a) (i) \$26,552 for office operations

(ii) \$77,589 for staffing

plus (b) $\$1.22 \times (E \div 1.5)$

plus (c) $\$2,865 + \$0.0757 \times (C - 14,000)$

plus (d) an adjustment amount based on the table below and matrix scores.

MATRIX SCORE	ADJUSTMENT
-18 to 0	\$0
1 to 4	\$5,930
5 to 9	\$11,861
10 to 15	\$17,790
16 +	\$23,721

Appendix C: Legislative Assembly of Alberta Library Services

The Library's team of information specialists provides a confidential and non-partisan service. Library services include

- access to the Library's Catalogue on this website.
- an extensive collection of Alberta's weekly newspapers.
- long runs of Alberta's daily newspapers.
- a cross section of major national newspapers.
- a daily updating service which digests all the major Alberta newspapers.
- recording of daily news programs and daily Question Period.
- training in the use of electronic services
- government publications from all Canadian jurisdictions.
- statutes and regulations for all Canadian jurisdictions.

- subscriptions to periodicals of particular interest to Members.
- a broad range of texts on government and policy-related issues.
- notification to Members and staff of new materials in the Library
- extensive bibliographies on topics of current interest.
- research assistance drawing on a broad range of local and global resources.
- internal access to a broad range of electronic services including subscription databases

(see <http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/services.htm>)

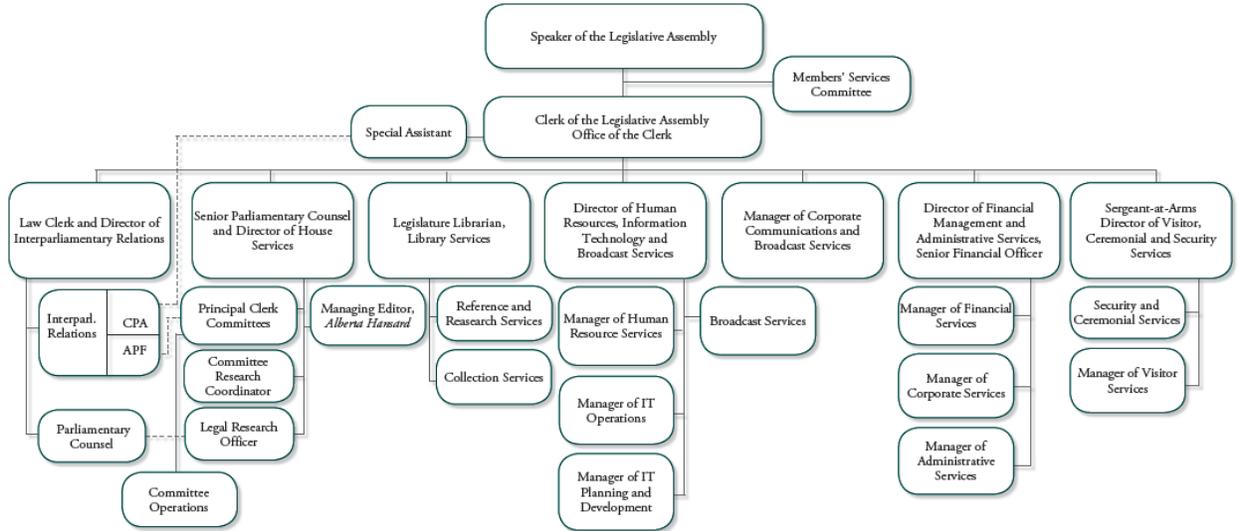
Appendix D: Members' Services

MLAs are provided with a number of services, allowances, and entitlements to facilitate their work as elected officials. Some include:

- Temporary residence allowances
- Travel allowances
- Telecommunications (constituency office, legislature office, residential, mobile)
- Insurance and general liability coverage
- Purchasing advice and services, provision of credit cards
- IT equipment, applications, network services, and support
- Information and records management advice and assistance
- Services to caucuses
- Human resource services and advice
- Centralized payroll and accounts payments processing
- Security services and advice

For details, see sections 12 through 38 of the Interim Members' Guide 2012 (Albert 2012a).

Appendix E: The Alberta Legislative Assembly



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