



Groupe canadien  
d'étude des parlements

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2015**

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This report provides an overview of the programs and activities of the Canadian Study of Parliament Group (CSPG) for 2015.

### **INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

The Canadian Study of Parliament Group has enjoyed close and fruitful relationships with its partners in the Parliament of Canada – the Senate, House of Commons and the Library of Parliament – and especially the Table Research Branch of the House of Commons, which has generously housed the CSPG secretariat for many years. In 2015, the service agreement with the House of Commons, first established in 2013, was renewed for 2016. The CSPG continued to work toward reducing its dependence on the support staff of the House of Commons Table Research Branch. We are extremely grateful for the support of the House of Commons, the Senate and the Library of Parliament.

On September 11, 2015, the CSPG held a special general meeting to eliminate the annual \$40 fee to be a member of the Group. According to the CSPG's Constitution, membership fees are established by the assembly of members and a meeting of all CSPG members is required to eliminate membership fees. The decision to eliminate the fee was taken mainly because of the costs of administering such fees.

### **FINANCES**

The CSPG ended 2015 with its finances in very good order, with a surplus of revenue over expenses. The surplus is lower than last year as expected as the Group continued to engage the services of a bookkeeping company to prepare its financial records. The use of a bookkeeper brings the Group more in line with its obligations under the service agreement with the House of Commons and maintains its level of accountability to the Group's finances. The Board will continue to assess the need to engage further resources to support its activities. Of note are the increase in the doctoral fellowship from \$3,000 to \$5,000, the elimination of the annual membership fee and the cancellation of the subscription to the *Canadian Parliamentary Review* for all members.

The CSPG once again engaged an audit for 2015. Due to administrative delays, the audit will be finalized in April. A copy of the report will be available on request. As in past years, the Board will consider and address the auditor's recommendations for improving internal controls. An audit for 2016 is also planned.

## **MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH**

The Group had more than 400 members at the end of 2015, as membership increased following the elimination of the membership fee.

The CSPG continues to recruit new members. We have found word-of-mouth to be the most effective way to recruit new members, and we urge existing members to continue to spread the word about CSPG activities and membership.

The Group's activities also draw Quebec Bar and Law Society of Upper Canada members. Quebec and Ontario lawyers have professional development requirements, and the CSPG's conferences and seminars satisfy these requirements. However, the use of email to advertise Group events to bar association members who are not CSPG members has been made more difficult by the coming into force of Canada's anti-spam legislation.

## **RECHERCH AND PUBLICATIONS**

### ***Provincial/Territorial Papers***

The CSPG program of commissioning and publishing original research on all 13 provincial and territorial legislatures in Canada continues under the guidance of former CSPG board member Graham White. Previously published papers are available on the CSPG website. Only two research papers have yet to be published on the website.

### ***National Student Essay Competition***

The CSPG holds an annual essay competition for CEGEP, college and university students. Students were once again invited to submit an essay addressing Parliament, legislatures or legislators in either English or French. The winner of the 2015 competition was Gwendolyn Moncrieff-Gould for her essay "Racial Minorities and the Representational Deficit: Barriers in the Federal Canadian Electoral System." Ms. Moncrieff-Gould received a prize of \$1,000.

### ***James R. Mallory Research Grant***

The James R. Mallory Research Grant was established in 2006 to honour one of the Group's most distinguished members. The research findings of the recipient are available to the public on the CSPG website. The 2015 Mallory Grant was awarded to Jacques Gagnon for his research project on family relations among politicians.

### **CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

The CSPG organized one conference and three seminars in 2015.

#### **Conference: Parliamentary Reform**

On May 22, 2015, the Canadian Study of Parliament Group held a conference on parliamentary reform. This conference is structured around four discussion panels that bring together parliamentary scholars, officials, and observers to assess the parliamentary reform 'state of play' in 2015. The CSPG also had the honour of welcoming Meg Russell, Professor of British and Comparative Politics and Deputy Director of the Constitution Unit, University College London, as a guest speaker.

#### **House Reforms of the Past: Measures, Outcomes, Lessons Learned**

Kelly Blidook, Professor  
Department of Political Science  
Memorial University

Gary Levy, Bell Chair in Canadian Parliamentary Democracy  
Carleton University

Jonathan Malloy, Professor  
Department of Political Science  
Carleton University

#### **Benefiting from Experience in the Provinces and Elsewhere**

Michel Bonsaint, Secretary General  
Quebec National Assembly

Paul Thomas, Doctoral Student  
University of Toronto

Graham White, Professor

Department of Political Science  
University of Toronto

**Senate Reform: Inevitable or Impossible?**

Blair Armitage, Principal Clerk  
Committees Directorate  
Senate of Canada

Louis Massicotte, Professor  
Department of Political Science  
Laval University

Benoît Pelletier, Professor  
Faculty of Law (Civil Law Section)  
University of Ottawa

**House of Commons Reform:  
Where Next?**

Jane Hilderman, Acting Director and Research Manager  
Samara Canada

Jack Stilborn, Retired  
Library of Parliament

Lori Turnbull, Professor  
Department of Political Science  
Dalhousie University

## ***Parliamentary Business Seminars***

Three parliamentary business seminars were held in 2015. Following a formula that is now well established, each CSPG seminar is usually divided into two parts. The first part is a technical briefing during which experts from the Hill, the government or other sectors share their knowledge and experience with the audience. During the second half, the Group strives to offer a political or parliamentary perspective of the topic in the form of a discussion panel with current and former parliamentarians.

### **January 23, 2015: The Budget in Parliament: More than Just Talk**

#### **Technical Briefing: The Budgetary Process**

Jean-Michel Catta  
Assistant Deputy Minister, Consultations and Communications Branch  
Finance Canada

Sandra Hassan  
Assistant Deputy Minister and Counsel,  
Law Branch, Finance Canada

Jeremy LeBlanc  
Principal Clerk (Acting)  
Journals Branch, House of Commons

Mark Mahabir  
Analyst, Economic and Trade Policy Section  
Library of Parliament

#### **Technical Briefing: Independent Fiscal Analysis**

Jean-Denis Fréchette  
Parliamentary Budget Officer, Library of Parliament

#### **Discussion Panel: Parliamentarians' Perspectives**

Guy Caron  
M.P. for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques (Quebec)  
Member of the Standing Committee on Finance

Hon. Monte Solberg  
Former M.P. for Medicine Hat (Alberta)  
Former member of the Standing Committee on Finance and former Cabinet Minister

## **March 20, 2015: Preparing for and Living Through an Election: The Public Service Perspective**

### **Supporting a Transition: A Public Service Perspective**

Allen Sutherland  
Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Machinery of Government  
Privy Council Office

### **Transition in Canada – Impressions from 2006**

Derek Burney  
Senior Strategic Advisor, Norton Rose Fulbright

### **How does Parliament Prepare for a New Government?**

Artour Sogomonian  
Legislative Clerk, Committees Directorate, Senate of Canada

Justin Barrette  
Officer, Administrative, Ceremonial and Protocol  
Office of the Usher of the Black Rod, Senate of Canada

Jeffrey Leblanc  
Principal Clerk, House of Commons

Ted Buglas  
Executive Director, Integrated Client Outreach and  
Digital Access, Library of Parliament

### **Electoral Preparedness at Elections Canada**

Marc Mayrand  
Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Canada

## **November 13, 2015: Lessons from the 41st Parliament and Prospects for the 42nd**

### **Lessons from the 41st Parliament**

Jeremy LeBlanc  
Acting Principal Clerk, Chamber Business and Parliamentary Publications  
House of Commons

Andre Barnes  
Analyst, Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs  
Library of Parliament

Jean-François Godbout  
Associate Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of Montreal

### **Lessons from the 41st Parliament: Media's Perspective**

Aaron Wherry  
Journalist, Maclean's

Kady O'Malley  
Journalist, Ottawa Citizen

### **Prospects for the 42nd Parliament**

Hon. Stockwell Day, P.C.  
Former M.P., Former Leader of the Opposition and Former President of the Treasury Board

Joe Comartin  
Former M.P. and Former Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### ***Speaking Tour***

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. Upon request, 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.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The CSPG's success relies on the work of numerous individuals, without whom it simply could not operate.

First, I want to thank the Board of Directors. Without these individuals, who freely give of their time and effort, there would be no CSPG. I am privileged to work with a team that is so knowledgeable about our parliamentary institutions and that is keen to share its knowledge of our democratic institutions. I would like to thank outgoing Board members Jack Stilborn, Jean Cintrat, Alex Smith and Carissima Mathen for their contributions over the past few years.

I would also like to thank the CSPG Secretariat. In 2015, we benefited from the support of Julie Majeau and Chantal Gilliland for administrative and logistical support during events. The Group also had occasional support from House of Commons staff during CSPG events.

Additionally, I would like to thank the presenters and panellists who generously agreed to share their knowledge and experience, thus ensuring the success of our events. In fact, thanks are due to all CSPG members and to everyone who attended the various CSPG activities—their participation is the reason the Group exists.

Michel Bédard  
President

Ottawa, March 18, 2016