



2007 ANNUAL REPORT

This report provides an overview of the programs and activities of the Canadian Study of Parliament Group for the period between January 2007 and February 2008.

2007 HIGHLIGHTS

There are many highlights in what proved to be yet another successful year for the CSPG. The highlights include: the CSPG annual conference in December; the organization of three successful Parliamentary Business Seminars; the launching of another round of the competition for the James R. Mallory Research Grant award; the signing of a service agreement with the House of Commons; the publication of a paper on bilingualism in the House of Commons as part of the *Parliamentary Perspective* series; the conducting of the fifth annual National Student Essay competition; and the commissioning of papers on the Nova Scotia House of Assembly and the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. These latter papers were presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association.

The Group also worked hard to streamline many of the administrative and financial practices, from enhancing Web site interactivity to modernizing accounting systems.

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 most of 2007, Sophie Descary, the Administrative Assistant based with the Table Research Branch, ably kept projects on schedule. The Group also welcomed Chloé O'Shaughnessy, a Procedural Clerk with the House of Commons, as Executive Secretary to the Group.

An important milestone was also achieved through the signing of a service agreement with the House of Commons to formalize arrangements regarding the administrative and organizational work performed by the Administrative Assistant and Procedural Clerk on behalf of CSPG. The service agreement marks the first time that the administrative support arrangements have been clarified and guaranteed in writing. CSPG is proud to continue its long association with the House of Commons, and looks forward to many years of a continued mutually beneficial relationship.

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.

Finances

After a full year working with the new automated financial accounting system the Group is in a better position to receive information and plan for future activities thanks to the information generated by the automated accounting system. Through the new system, more detailed financial information is available based on each activity undertaken, and these improvements will assist the Group in planning and adjusting level of activities in the future.

The new service agreement between the Canadian Study Group and the House of Commons for administrative and support services has made a significant impact on the end of year results for 2007. The financial situation remains healthy and all of the financial controls are performing to expectations.

The Group would like to sincerely thank Gilles Larocque for helping with the accounting process. His accounting expertise and knowledge is very much appreciated.

Membership and Communications

The Group's membership is presently at 531, as of February 2008.

The CSPG Web site remains the most crucial platform for broadly marketing the Group's activities and publications. It also serves as a communications gateway to membership. As such, work in the field of membership and communications was concentrated on continuing upgrades to the Web site during 2007.

Improvements made to the existing Web site now allow for on-line registration. A completely new site was developed during the course of 2007. It is currently in the final testing and verification phases, and should be launched during the first half of 2008.

A significant improvement built into the new Web site will be to allow members to register to receive notification of events, publications, and contests by electronic mail. This will help in ensuring that members are kept informed of the Group's programme of activities.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

CSPG published, as part of the *Parliamentary Perspectives* series, an original paper by Bruce Hicks of the University of Montreal on bilingualism in the House of Commons. Forty years after the landmark Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, this paper offers a timely look at the progress of bilingualism in Parliament. The paper reviews changes in French language and translation services in the Commons and reports the results of a recent survey of MPs and parliamentary candidates on language use in the House.

This past year also saw the launch of a major publication project on provincial and territorial legislatures. The premise is that little up-to-date, authoritative yet non-technical literature is available on many of Canada's parliamentary institutions for students, journalists or the public. This project aims to fill this gap by making available, on the CSPG Web site, papers on all 13 provincial and territorial legislatures. In addition to basic information on legislative structures

and operations, the paper will offer analysis, including, where appropriate, criticisms and suggestions for reform – of the key features of each House. Following a widely circulated call for proposals, the Board commissioned papers on the Manitoba Legislative Assembly by Emily Grafton, a Manitoba Legislative Intern, and on the Nova Scotia House of Assembly by Professors Jennifer Smith and Lori Turnbull of Dalhousie University. The papers were presented at a special CSPG session of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association in June at the University of Saskatchewan. The Nova Scotia paper has been published and the Manitoba paper is shortly to follow. A second call for proposals on other provincial/territorial legislatures was recently circulated.

National Student Essay Competition

The essay competition, for undergraduate and graduate students across Canada, entered its fifth annual competition in 2007. Students were once again invited to submit an essay addressing Parliament, legislatures or legislators in either English or French. For the 2007 competition, the selection committee received a total of 19 entries, which is down from previous years. 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 was Christopher Forrest (McGill) for his paper "Bringing Section 33 Back into the Constitutional Fold." The winner will receive a prize of \$1000, and be honoured at the luncheon coinciding with the Group's Annual General Meeting. The prize winning essay will also appear on the CSPG Web site. An undergraduate prize was not awarded.

The number of submissions received raises a concern. The Association of Former Parliamentarians, who also sponsors a national essay contest, has experienced a similar decline in the number of entries submitted for that competition. In order to encourage more submissions in the future, CSPG will be working with the Association of Former Parliamentarians to co-ordinate a single contest. Issues to be addressed include the timing and presentation of the award, the number of awards offered, the selection panel and the subject matter. It is hoped that a single contest incorporating both CSPG and the Association of Former Parliamentarians will be in place by the time of the 2009 CSPG AGM.

James R. Mallory Research Grant

The CSPG launched the second round of the competition for the James R. Mallory Research Grant for the Study of Parliament. The award, consisting of a \$10,000 grant, is named in honour of James R. Mallory, a distinguished member of the Department of Political Science at McGill University as well as a founder, former president and long-time member of the CSPG.

The winning applicant is David Pond, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto at Mississauga, Ontario. His project is "The Impact of Parliamentary Officers on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy: A Comparative Study of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development and the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario." The award was announced at the meeting of the CSPG in March 2007. Professor Pond has completed his interim report on the progress of his research, and will submit the paper in September 2008.

CONFERENCE AND SEMINARS

2007 December Conference in Ottawa

In December, the Group held its annual fall conference in Ottawa on the topic of “Parliament, Technology and Citizens”. The conference explored the growing use of the Internet and other technologies to connect MPs, legislatures and citizens together through Web sites, blogs, electronic consultations, and other innovations.

Panel I focused on the use of technology by legislators. Dr. Mary Francoli of Carleton University discussed MPs use of technology in Canada and Britain, Dr. Tamara A. Small of Mount Allison presented her research on MP blogs in the House of Commons, and Mr. Patrick Byrne of the Quebec National Assembly gave an overview of the many innovative uses of technology in the National Assembly. Dr. Jonathan Malloy moderated the panel.

A luncheon address was then given by Dr. Darin Barney, Canada Research Chair at McGill University. Dr. Barney emphasized how information and communication technologies are commonly used as a “means” to engage in political judgment, but only rarely examined as a matter or “object” for political judgment. He argues that ICTs shape how we live as citizens, and that the influence of information technology in our “technological society” is so pervasive that technology itself can be thought of as a legislator itself, one that influences our way of existing in and viewing the world and affecting our view of “the good” and “the good life”.

Panel II was organized on the theme of committee and other external consultations, with presentations by Mr. Joseph Peters of Ascentum, Mr. Blair Armitage of the Senate, and Mr. Jonathan Ferschau of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. Dr. F. Leslie Seidle moderated the panel. Each panelist spoke about initiatives they had been involved in, and the challenges and opportunities of using technology to enhance committee consultations and deliberations. Each also emphasized the vastly different work environment, resource implications, and other “behind the scenes” aspects of using technology in these areas.

The final panel, moderated by Dr. William Young the Librarian of Parliament, featured the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, MP for St. Paul’s, and Dr. Jonathan Rose of Queen’s University. Dr. Bennett discussed how parliamentarians can use technology to engage citizens, and emphasized in particular the need to change attitudes and expectations about the potential of technology. Dr. Rose spoke about the use of technology by the Ontario Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform, of which he was the Academic Director. Dr. Rose said that while the Assembly used many of the latest technologies in its work, traditional methods of face-to-face discussion remained of greater value to members in their decision-making process.

Conference participants included academics, practitioners, politicians and students, drawing both current CSPG members as well as newcomers to the Group, particularly from Internet and technology researchers.

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 2007. 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 2007-8 seminar program possible, are listed below:

April 11, 2007 Seminar

Session I: The New Focus on Accountability: Impacts on Parliament and You – Part 1

- Suzanne Legault, Research Fellow, Jarislowsky Chair, University of Ottawa;
- Brian O’Neal, Analyst, Parliamentary Information and Research Services, Library of Parliament ; and
- Dr. Susan Philips, Director, School of Public Policy and Administration, Carleton University.

Session II: The New Focus on Accountability: Impacts on Parliament and You – Part 2

- Sean Moore, Public Policy Advisor, Gowling Lafleur Henderson;
- Michael Nelson, Registrar of Lobbyists; and
- Joe Wild, Executive Director, Strategic Policy, Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat.

October 10, 2007 Seminar

Session I: Accessing the Information You Need

- Marie-Ève Belzile, Procedural Clerk, Journals, Senate of Canada;
- Cynthia Hubbertz, Associate Director (Acting), Information and Document Resource Service, Library of Parliament; and
- Barbara Whittaker, Acting Deputy Principal Clerk, Table Research Branch, House of Commons.

Session II: How Bills Become Law

- Till Heyde, Committee Clerk, Committees Directorate, Senate of Canada;
- Luc Juillet, Director, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa; and
- Colette Labrecque-Riel, Principal Clerk, Legislative Services, House of Commons

January 23, 2008 Seminar

Session I: Private Members’ Business and Parliamentary Returns – Technical Briefing

- Mark Audcent, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, Senate of Canada
- Bill Fleury, Director, Office of Parliamentary Returns, Privy Council Office
- Terence Moore, Procedural Clerk, Private Members’ Business Office, House of Commons

Session II: Private Members’ Business – In Practice

- Peter Adams, Former Member of Parliament, Peterborough
- The Hon. Mac Harb, Senator
- Judy Wasylycia-Leis, Member of Parliament, Winnipeg North

The people listed above, along with Session moderators and our seminar organizers, made the 2007 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.

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 September this year. This year Luc Fortin, Deputy Principal Clerk for the House of Commons, took on the responsibility of identifying appropriate speakers for each request. In all, CSPG received 12 requests for speakers, 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 100 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 11th anniversary this year. For the 7th 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 2007. Reminders were sent to alumni from 2006, with copies of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, inviting them to join on their own. 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 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. Discussions regarding the type and consistency of information to be provided are currently underway.

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), Nancy Hall (formerly CSPG Executive Secretary), Luc Fortin (Deputy Principal Clerk) and Chloé O'Shaughnessy (CSPG Executive Secretary). Thanks are expressed for the superlative assistance provided to CSPG.

On behalf of the Group, thanks are expressed to departing Board members – Dr. Chedly Belkhodja, Jack Stilborn and Treasurer Lyne Jutras - for the unflagging energy and creativity which they have both brought to the organization. Their contributions will be missed. 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, Till Heyde, Jeff Heynen, Dr. Jonathan Malloy, Peggy Morgan, Dr. F. Leslie Seidle, Dr. Tamara A. Small, Dr. Jennifer Smith, Dr. Graham White and Lawanda Willar. Job well done, everyone!

Patricia Chaychuk
President