

ONE LAND, MANY VOICES



CREATING THE NEW NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories



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Legislative Assembly Chamber

A MESSAGE FROM THE SPEAKER



Honourable Speaker Paul Delorey

The Place of the People

In 1999, the 13th Legislative Assembly commissioned and published *History in the Making: Under Northern Skies – The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories*. The creation of Nunavut in that year marked a major turning point in the history of public government in the Northwest Territories. *History in the Making* charts the political evolution of the NWT Legislative Assembly from the appointment and election of the first council in 1951 to the dissolution of the 13th Assembly – the last to include members from Nunavut.

The election of the 14th Legislative Assembly was, in many ways, a new beginning for the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. Efforts to establish a “Western Arctic” constitution and court challenges regarding the appropriate size and composition of the Territories’ electoral boundaries sent a clear signal that governance institutions in the NWT were still in a state of evolution.

This book, a follow-up to *History in the Making*, is titled *One Land, Many Voices*. The title is borrowed from the multi-lingual inscription on the Territories’ new mace, which is featured in its pages. *One Land, Many Voices* was also the title of the report on the review of the *Official Languages Act* undertaken by a special committee of the 14th Legislative Assembly. This report was one of the first, and arguably most important, legislative efforts undertaken by the Assembly post-division.

As the 16th Legislative Assembly draws to an end, it is worthwhile to take stock of the many things that have been accomplished since 1999. During this time the Legislative Assembly conducted two significant reviews of the *Official Languages Act*, enacted the legislation required to implement the historic *Thycho Agreement*, established a made-in-the-north *Human Rights Act* and Human Rights Commission, conducted a comprehensive review of the *Child and Family Services Act*, and enacted the *Species at Risk Act*. These are but a few of the many pieces of important legislation and debates that have dominated the work of this House.

It has been my distinct honour to preside over the debates in our Assembly since assuming the role of Speaker in 2004. During my seven years in the chair I have developed a deep appreciation for the unique system of parliamentary democracy that we practice in the NWT. Like any form of government, consensus government is far from perfect. However, it has proven to be the system that aligns most closely with the values of the diverse population our Assembly represents. One of my primary goals as Speaker has been to familiarize residents of the NWT who live outside its major centres with their system of public government. The Legislative Assembly broadcasting system, the Mace Outreach Tour, the Page Program, and Elders and Youth Parliaments are just a few of the ways that I have attempted to let all northerners, particularly our youth, experience our system of government up close and first hand.

The Legislative Assembly has both real and symbolic importance in the NWT. I have always felt that we,

as elected officials, need to be the change we want to bring about. Efforts to “green” the operations of our assembly, including the installation of low voltage lighting, the purchase of a hybrid vehicle, a goal of 80 percent reduction in paper usage, and the installation of a wood pellet boiler are all areas where we have tried to lead by example. In 2009, members of the legislature agreed collectively to eliminate the sale and serving of soft drinks within the Legislative Assembly. Members also agreed to eliminate the use of bottled water within the assembly. Although these gestures are largely symbolic in nature, I am proud that the most important symbol of public government in the NWT has shown the way on these issues of larger importance.

On behalf of the members of the 14th, 15th and 16th Legislative Assemblies of the Northwest Territories, I welcome all residents of and visitors to the Northwest Territories to enjoy the stories and photos included in the book. Every resident of the Northwest Territories should visit the Legislative Assembly at least once. Until that day comes, I hope this book will provide an appreciation for the important work that is done within these walls on behalf of all the people we represent.

Sincerely,



Hon. Paul Delorey
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
MLA Hay River North



Legislative Assembly, Yellowknife, 1986 *Credit: PW&S/NWT Archives*

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 1870-2010



First Council of the Legislative Assembly



Treaty 11 Credit: NWT Archives -
Rene Fumoleau

Photos seen at right: 15th Session, 3rd Council **L to R:** unidentified; Knut Lang of Aklavik, Rep. for Mackenzie [North]; L.H. Nicholson, Commissioner, RCMP; L.C. Audette, Chairman, Canadian Maritime Commission; R.G. Robertson, Deputy Minister, Northern Affairs and [Natural] Resources and Commissioner of the NWT; S.R. Porritt of Hay River, Rep. Mackenzie South; J.W. Goodall of Fort Simpson, Rep. for Mackenzie; H.M. Jones, Director, Indian Affairs Branch, Citizenship and Immigration; W.G. Brown, Chief, Territorial Division, Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, also Deputy Commissioner of the NWT. July 1958, Ottawa. 15th Session, 3rd Council Credit: NWT Leg. Assembly/NWT Archives

29th Session, 5th Council: Council of the NWT- February 1965.

Back Row L to R: W.G. Brown, unidentified, Stuart M. Hodgson, Air Marshall Hugh Campbell, 2 unidentified. Seated L to R: S.R. Porritt of Hay River; Pete Baker, Commissioner B.G. Sivertz, J.W. Goodall and Lyle R. Trimble Credit: NWT Leg. Assembly/NWT Archives

1870

- The Northwest Territories (NWT) is purchased by the Dominion of Canada for £300,000. The land mass includes what is now Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Yukon, Nunavut, Manitoba, parts of Ontario and Quebec, and the present-day NWT

1875

- The Parliament of Canada passes the *Northwest Territories Act* which governs the Legislative Assembly of the NWT to this day

1880

- NWT borders are extended to the North Pole

1883

- Regina becomes the capital of the NWT

1888

- First 22-member elected Legislative Assembly meets in Regina. Far northern districts are not represented

1891

- First NWT cabinet is formed

1897

- NWT gains control of public monies and the activities of the Legislative Assembly. A kind of responsible government is achieved under Premier Frederick Haultain, who believes the massive “North-West Territories” should be governed by a non-partisan administration

1898

- Yukon Territory is formed

1899

- Treaty 8 is signed between Queen Victoria and first nations in portions of what is now three provinces and the southern NWT

1905

- Alberta and Saskatchewan are created
- Federal government decides that a single Commissioner in Ottawa should administer the NWT

1919

- Administrative responsibility for the NWT is shared by the Commissioner and the federal Deputy Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs. The NWT Council remains inactive

1921

- Federal government appoints six Ottawa-based public service employees to the Territorial Council
- Treaty 11 is signed between King George V and first nations in what is now the western and northern NWT

1947

- John G. McNiven becomes the first northern resident to be appointed to the Territorial Council

1951

- 1st NWT Council where some members were elected and some appointed



15th Session, 3rd Council



29th Session, 5th Council



NWT Flag

- NWT Council increased to eight members, including three elected from the Mackenzie District (Mervyn Hardie, James Brodie, and Frank Carmichael)

1952

- David Searle elected as first Speaker

1954

- 2nd NWT Council appointed/elected

1956

- Official mace presented to the NWT Council by Governor General Vincent Massey

1957

- 3rd NWT Council appointed/elected
- NWT Council increased to 10 members, with half appointed and half elected

1960

- Federal government appoints people from outside the civil service to the NWT Council for the first time

1961

- 4th NWT Council appointed/elected

1963

- Two bills to divide the NWT are introduced in Parliament, but they die on the Order Paper

1964

- 5th NWT Council appointed/elected

1965

- Abe Okpik of Frobisher Bay (now Iqaluit) is the first Inuit member appointed to the NWT Council

1966

- Simonie Michael of the Eastern Arctic is the first Inuit member elected to the NWT Council
- NWT Council operates traveling sittings
- Carrothers Commission makes recommendations that shape the future of the NWT

1967

- 6th NWT Council appointed/elected; Chief John Tetlich is the first Dene member (appointed)
- Stuart Hodgson becomes the first NWT-based Commissioner
- Many province-like responsibilities are transferred to the NWT
- Yellowknife officially named as capital

1969

- Current flag of the NWT is introduced

1970

- 7th NWT Council elected/appointed; James Rabesca and Nick Sibbeston are the first elected Dene members
- Lena Pedersen becomes the first female member

1971

- The NWT assumes authority for the courts



John Parker and Georges Erasmus, Elks Hall meeting 1981, Yellowknife
 Credit: NWT Archives - Rene Fumoleau



Legislative Assembly, Yellowknife Inn, 1986-87 Credit: NWT Archives
 Northwest Territories Department of Public Works and Services



Swearing-in of Honourable Nellie Cournoyea. 1991
 Credit: PW&S/NWT Archives

1975

- 8th NWT Council/Assembly becomes first fully elected council of 15 members; the majority of members are aboriginal

1976

- Political development of the NWT is reviewed. NWT Council becomes officially known as the Legislative Assembly with a Speaker and three cabinet members

1977

- Willie Adams becomes the first NWT (later Nunavut) senator

1979

- 9th Legislative Assembly elected
- The Legislative Assembly holds sittings in Yellowknife hotels

1980

- George Braden becomes first elected Government Leader (equivalent of Premier)

1982

- Plebiscite on the creation of Nunavut; 56.5% of NWT residents vote in support of division

1983

- 10th Legislative Assembly elected
- Number of Legislative Assembly members increases to 24
- Commissioner John Parker transfers control of the public service to the Executive Council
- Deputy Commissioner is replaced by an additional elected member

1984

- Richard Nerysoo, a Gwich'in Dene, becomes the first aboriginal Government Leader (Premier)
- *Inuvialuit Land Claim Agreement* signed

1987

- 11th Legislative Assembly elected

- Management of the Executive branch transferred from Commissioner to Government Leader

1990

- Speaker Richard Nerysoo announces the decision to construct a permanent Legislative Assembly building
- The NWT has nine official languages: Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib (Tłıchǫ), English, French, Inuktitut, Loucheux (Gwich'in), North Slavey, and South Slavey

1991

- 12th Legislative Assembly elected; Nellie Cournoyea becomes first female premier (and first in the NWT to use that title)

1992

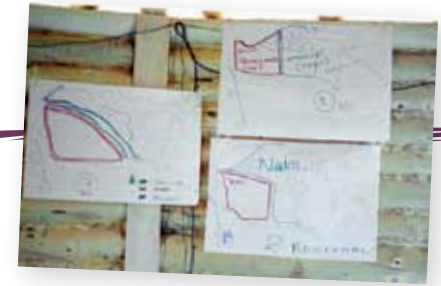
- Plebiscite endorses the proposed boundary between Nunavut and the western NWT
- *Gwich'in Land Claim Agreement* signed



Standing Committee on Legislation - September 1994



1st Youth Parliament, 1999



Drum Lake Dene National Assembly posters showing possible boundary lines for the division of the NWT, Credit: NWT Archives/Rene Fumoleau fonds

1993

- New Legislative Assembly building opens
- Parliament passes the *Nunavut Act*

1994

- Queen Elizabeth II dedicates the Legislative Assembly Chamber
- *Sahtu Dene and Métis Land Claim Agreement* signed

1995

- 13th Legislative Assembly elected

1996

- Poll supports keeping the name “Northwest Territories” for the new western territory after division

1997

- Financial resources and authority for territorial elections are transferred from the federal to the territorial government

1999

- Nunavut and new NWT created
- NWT adds the diamond, Arctic grayling and tamarack as territorial symbols
- First election with the NWT’s new electoral boundaries; 19 members elected to 14th Assembly
- Anthony (Tony) Whitford becomes first Speaker of the new NWT; Stephen Kakfwi becomes first premier of the new NWT

2002

- National Aboriginal Day celebrated in the NWT as statutory holiday for the first time

2003

- 15th Legislative Assembly elected
- The NWT has 11 official languages: Chipewyan, Cree, English, French, Gwich’in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey, and Tłıchǫ

2005

- Tłıchǫ land and self-government claim, signed in 2003, comes into effect

2006

- First mace tour visits Whatì

2007

- 16th Legislative Assembly elected

2008

- Legislative Assembly begins territorial television broadcasts of its proceedings in all official languages

2010

- 1st Elders Parliament



Walsh Lake, NT *Credit: Gaye Horn*

THE NEW NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 1999-

Demographics for the Northwest Territories, March 31, 1999:

Size: 3,376,698 square kilometres

Population: 61,402 (1996 Census)

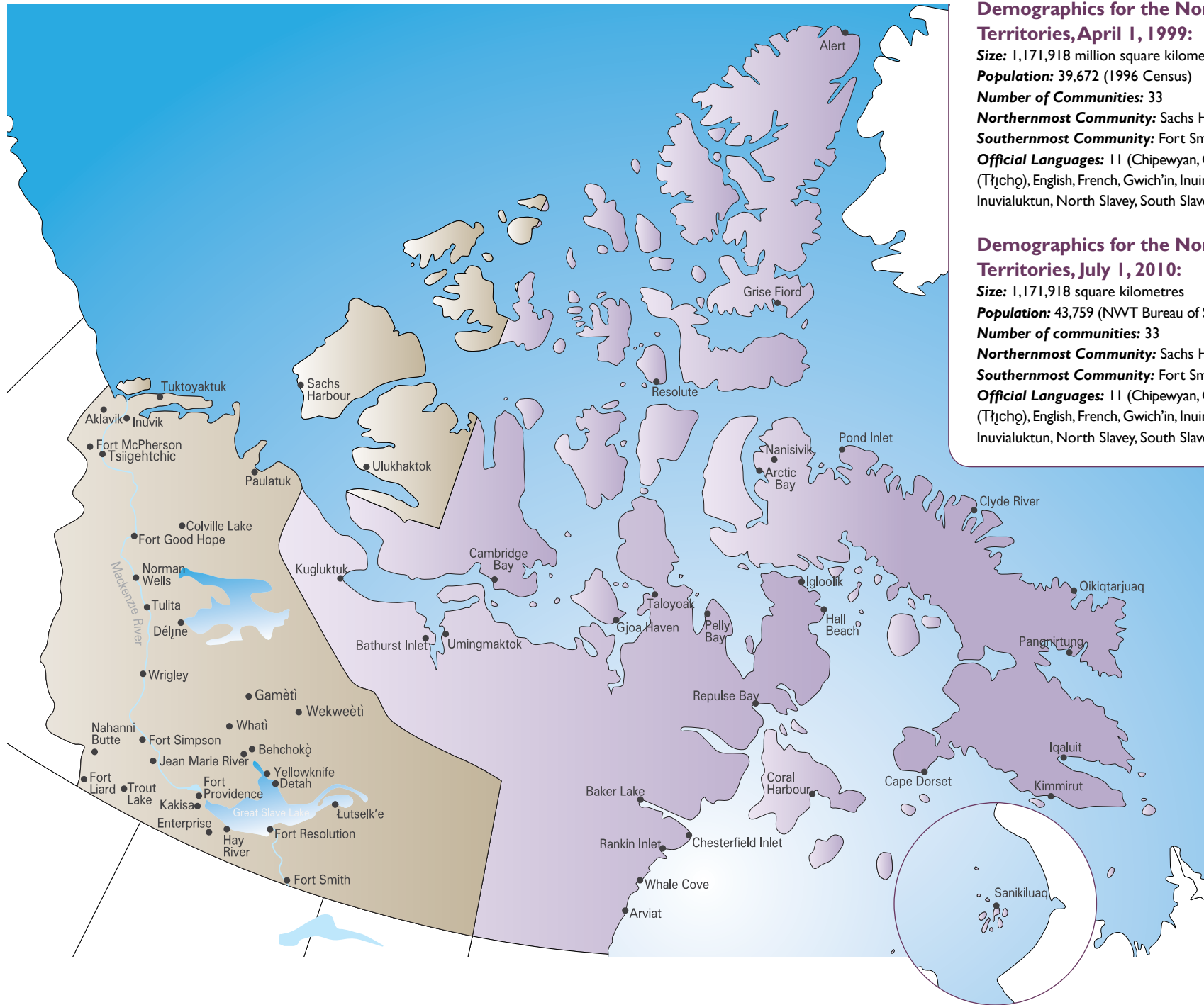
Number of Communities: 60

Northernmost Community: Grise Fiord

Southernmost Community: Sanikiluaq

Official Languages: 11 (Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib (Tłı̄chǫ), English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey)





Demographics for the Northwest Territories, April 1, 1999:

Size: 1,171,918 million square kilometres
Population: 39,672 (1996 Census)
Number of Communities: 33
Northernmost Community: Sachs Harbour
Southernmost Community: Fort Smith
Official Languages: 11 (Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib (Tłı̨chǫ), English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey)

Demographics for the Northwest Territories, July 1, 2010:

Size: 1,171,918 square kilometres
Population: 43,759 (NWT Bureau of Statistics, July 2010)
Number of communities: 33
Northernmost Community: Sachs Harbour
Southernmost Community: Fort Smith
Official Languages: 11 (Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib (Tłı̨chǫ), English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey)

A New Beginning

The new Northwest Territories was created on April 1, 1999, when Nunavut became its own territory. The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories continued under its previously established consensus system of government. For the remaining term of the 13th Assembly, until October 1999, the 24-member legislature was reduced to 14 members. The “western” members elected in 1995 remained in office to ensure political stability after division. The four western ministers, including the premier, retained their positions. Two more ministers were selected in March 1999, so the overall number of ministers was reduced from eight to six. The remaining regular members continued to form the “unofficial opposition”.

Members of the new Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly reconvened the seventh session of the 13th Legislative Assembly on April 13, 1999. The main agenda item was the presentation of the 1999-2000 budget. Constitutional issues and the timing of the next general election were also major topics of discussion.

Members met on September 7, 1999 for the eighth and final sitting of the 13th Legislative Assembly. The *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* was amended to increase the number of members from 14 to 19. Three additional seats were allocated to Yellowknife, while Hay River and Inuvik each gained one seat. The 13th Legislative Assembly dissolved on October 21, 1999 and the writ was issued for a general election on December 6, 1999.

New Name

In 1996, a campaign to find a new name for the Northwest Territories was defeated as 6,111 out of 6,734 respondents voted to keep the name Northwest Territories.

Two more attempts to rename the Northwest Territories were undertaken. In 2002, then-Premier Stephen Kakfwi appointed two members to make recommendations to the Assembly on a name change.

In 2004, Senator Nick Sibbeston began a campaign to rename the Northwest Territories. His office sent brochures to every household in the Northwest Territories, and he travelled to meet with people in the communities for their input.

These initiatives received little public support, and the name “Northwest Territories” remains.

Consensus Government

The Northwest Territories has no political parties; each member is elected as an “independent.” After a general election, the 19 elected members hold a Territorial Leadership Committee to choose a Speaker, a premier and six ministers. The remaining 11 members are known as regular members, and they form an “unofficial opposition”. Decisions are made through negotiation, debate, accommodation and compromise until a majority of members reach consensus. Within Canada, this style of governance is unique to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

A Rocky Start...

After division, the 14 electoral districts remaining in the Northwest Territories were substantially different in population, particularly in Yellowknife which had roughly 50 percent of the population but less than one third of the seats. Motions in the House to add seats for Yellowknife, or to redraw the existing Yellowknife electoral boundaries, were defeated. A group called the “Friends of Democracy” brought a case to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, in which they asked to have the existing electoral districts declared unconstitutional. Justice Mark de Weerdts found that the population variance of more than 25 percent on the average in some districts, notably in Yellowknife and Hay River, was unjustified. He held that the scale of disparity in voting power contravened the right to vote guaranteed in Section 3 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Justice de Weerdts declared parts of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* invalid. He initially gave the Assembly until April 1, 1999 to bring the *Act* in line with the *Charter*, but later extended the deadline to September 1, 1999.

The Government of the Northwest Territories did not appeal the decision, but some aboriginal groups did. They argued that amending the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* would prejudice the outcome of ongoing land claims and self-government negotiations, and wanted no changes in the composition of the Assembly until those negotiations were complete. Justice A. Foisy denied their appeal, finding that their interests were not prejudiced by Justice de Weerdts’s decision. He stated

that the fact that negotiations were underway was not sufficient reason to infringe the constitutionally-protected right to vote.

Bill 15: *An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* was introduced in March of 1999. This bill expanded the Legislative Assembly to 19 seats, adding three additional seats for Yellowknife, and one each for Hay River and Inuvik. The Standing Committee on Government Operations, which reviewed the bill, heard from some NWT residents that it would create a rift between urban and rural residents, and that it would allow Yellowknife and the larger centres to hold too much of the balance of power.

Despite their reservations, committee members determined that Bill 15 represented the best option to bring the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* in line with the *Charter*. They did, however, recommend a “sunset clause,” which would automatically repeal sections of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* upon dissolution of the 14th Assembly.

The Committee also recommended a “2-2-2” proposal for the selection of cabinet ministers, to ensure balanced geographical representation. The plan was for the House to elect two ministers from the northern constituencies, two from the southern constituencies, and two from Yellowknife. A further recommendation was to establish a Constitutional and Electoral Reform Commission.

The Committee recognized that if the Legislative Assembly did not pass Bill 15, the Northwest Territories would face a constitutional crisis: the Assembly would no longer have the constitutional authority to act after September 1, 1999.

Bill 15 was passed with the addition of the “sunset clause.” This was meant to provide a target date for a new Northwest Territories constitution, and to ensure that members of the 14th Assembly would reconsider their electoral boundaries. They found themselves in a new constitutional conundrum – if they did nothing, sections of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* would be repealed at the end of their term, and the Assembly’s authority to govern would revert to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, a federal appointee. All members agreed this couldn’t be allowed to happen.

After much consultation, the 14th Assembly found that they had two options: repeal the sunset clause (thereby making the 19-member Legislative Assembly and the new seats permanent), or extend the deadline for the sunset clause to take effect. Eventually it was decided to repeal the sunset clause and strike an Electoral Boundaries Commission to make timely and relevant recommendations. That was done, and the boundaries were minimally adjusted for the election of the 15th Legislative Assembly in 2003. The new electoral districts remain largely unchanged to this day.



Crown of Mace

THE MACE



Official Mace of the Northwest Territories

The current mace was unveiled on January 14, 2000. It was created by northern artists Bill Nasogaluak and Dolphus Cadieux, and Ontario artist Allyson Simmie. The design was selected to honour the previous mace and to reflect the new Northwest Territories after division. The mace is the symbol of the authority of the Legislative Assembly.

The former mace, designed and created in 1956 using many natural materials including a real narwhal tusk, lasted only four short years before

the tusk cracked and the mace had to be retired. An exact replica was built and was used for over thirty years. It is on display at the Legislative Assembly and is featured in our tours along with the new mace. The original mace is in storage at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

At the top of the mace, mounted on two silver ulus forming a tipi, is a 1.3-carat diamond. It is the first major gemstone mined from Ekati, Canada's first diamond mine. The ulu, a traditional cutting and

scraping tool, represents the Inuvialuit and Inuit people who live here. The tipi represents the Dene and Métis people of the Northwest Territories, and the house shape, cut out of the ulus, represents non-aboriginal residents. The tipi rests inside a crown of snowflakes, chosen to symbolize the people of the Northwest Territories: just as each snowflake is unique, so too is each person. The crown is a symbolic link to the British monarchy.



The language band below the crown bears the inscription “*One land, many voices*” in 10 of the official languages used in the Northwest Territories. The carvings in the six marble panels below the crown depict the cultures and wildlife of the Territories. The marble was quarried in the Northwest Territories.

The beadwork, by elder Rosie Firth of Fort McPherson, represents Delta braid. Delta braid is more commonly made of cloth and adorns parkas made in the Mackenzie Delta.



Clockwise from Left:
Front view of crown; 1.3 carat diamond; tipi, house and ulu setting.

Diamond Certification

In 1991 the discovery of diamonds vaulted the Northwest Territories into the ranks of the world’s most significant diamond producers, and put Yellowknife on the map as “the diamond capital of North America.” The Government of the Northwest Territories identified a need to distinguish its gemstones as uniquely Canadian, and in 2000, established a diamond certification program.

The certification process is the only program in the world that follows the stone from the mine to the jewellery counter. A certified NWT diamond comes with a Certificate of Origin and is engraved with a number that matches its certificate – and the guarantee that the diamond is mined, cut and polished in the Northwest Territories.

The polar bear trademark was developed as a special feature of certified Northwest Territories diamonds. An exclusive group of manufacturers laser-engraves a microscopic polar bear into each gem to mark it as authentic.

The world’s first occupational standards for diamond cutting and polishing were developed in the Northwest Territories by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and NWT Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification. Before diamond companies can build mines, they must ensure that negative environmental and social impacts will be minimized. As the public becomes more aware of conflicts related to diamonds in other parts of the world, Canadian diamonds will be popular not only for their clarity and brilliance, but because they are produced in an ethical manner.

The shaft is a stylized narwhal tusk, a feature of the former mace, and representative of the Northwest Territories' shared history with Nunavut. Porcupine quillwork adorns the bottom of the shaft, above the silver foot of the mace that is decorated with a depiction of the landscape of the Northwest Territories.

One of the most intriguing features of the Legislative Assembly's mace is its sound. When the mace is lifted, pebbles collected from each of the Northwest Territories' 33 communities rattle from inside the head, foot, and shaft, making a sound similar to a rainstick. This sound represents the voices of the people of the Northwest Territories, and evokes the saying on the mace's language band of "*One land, many voices.*"

The mace is 1.5 metres long and weighs 12 kilograms. When it is not in use in the Chamber, it rests on a stand made of white marble. The marble comes from the East Arm of Great Slave Lake, and represents ice and snow. An image of the Mackenzie River, flowing up to the Mackenzie Delta from the Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes, is carved into the marble. The circle of 33 nuggets of Yellowknife gold represents the communities of the Northwest Territories. The silver clusters of mountain avens that decorate the stand also have Yellowknife gold in their centres. The stones, almost four billion years old, are pieces of some of the oldest rock in the world.



Delta braid



Porcupine quillwork



Clockwise from Left: Silver foot; head of mace; language band

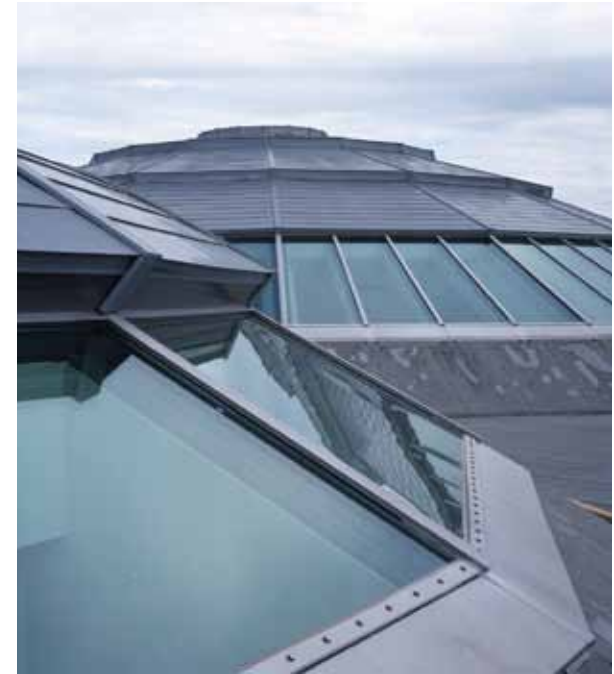


Legislative Assembly Public Gallery

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BUILDING AND ARTWORK



Legislative Assembly building



Chamber and Caucus domes

Building

The Legislative Assembly building, on the northeast shore of Frame Lake in Yellowknife, is a work of art in itself. Designed to complement the surrounding natural landscape, the building's circular shapes represent both the consensus style of government practiced in the Northwest Territories and the aboriginal cultures of northern Canada. The building was officially opened on November 17, 1993.

Since 1951, the Legislative Assembly has held sessions in federal committee rooms, northern classrooms, gymnasiums, banquet halls, hotels and other temporary locations. In 1990, Speaker

Richard Nerysoo announced the decision to construct a long-awaited permanent Legislative Assembly building.

Two Northwest Territories architectural and engineering firms, Pin Matthews and Ferguson Simek Clark, already well-known for their northern designs, worked with Matsuzaki Architects of Vancouver, B.C. to create a 46,600-square-foot building that reflects the people, cultures, and governance system of the Northwest Territories. Extra effort was made to preserve the natural surroundings of the area, symbolizing aboriginal peoples' traditional treatment of land.

Members from outside the capital city wanted to feel at home while in Yellowknife, so their offices were situated to provide a beautiful view of Frame Lake. Development on the capital area site has been limited in partnership with the City of Yellowknife. The Speaker has the only office with a view of the City of Yellowknife. This symbolizes the Speaker's leadership role as the person who welcomes dignitaries and visitors to the capital.

Members emphasized to the designers the importance of natural light in the new building, especially after long winter sittings in previous venues. Most rooms in the building have large



Great Hall



Zinc “rock”

windows, skylights, or even glass walls. The floor-to-ceiling windows looking into the Great Hall, as well as the windows between the Great Hall and the Chamber, highlight the concepts of openness and transparency in consensus government and the idea that the Great Hall and the Assembly are readily accessible to the people of the Northwest Territories. The Great Hall was designed to be well-used by the public and is open 362 days a year. People may use this space free of charge for a wide range of events, including concerts, cultural events and weddings.

The construction materials were chosen carefully with the idea of blending the building into the

landscape as much as possible. The pale wood and grey slate used throughout the interior reflect the colours of the natural landscape. Zinc, a metal mined in the Northwest Territories, was chosen for the roof and walls because of its insulating properties and its colour, which matches the rock that surrounds the building on three sides. Zinc colouring so closely resembles rock that the architects chose to make a mould in which to pour molten zinc. This zinc “rock” wraps around the entire building’s exterior, except in the front of the building where the floor-to-ceiling windows reveal the Great Hall.



Frieze



Speaker's Chair

The Chamber is at the heart of the building. The room is circular, representing our consensus system of government. The circle is also an important shape in aboriginal cultures: the tipi, the igloo, and the drum are all round, as are healing circles. This unique shape was chosen to avoid the confrontational appearance of most legislatures. Rather than opposing benches distanced two sword lengths apart, members' desks are arranged in a circle around the Speaker's chair, symbolizing a unity of purpose. Aboriginal artwork and a polar bear hide rug adorn the centre of the Chamber floor. The Speaker's chair and Clerk's table were both gifts from the Parliament of Canada.

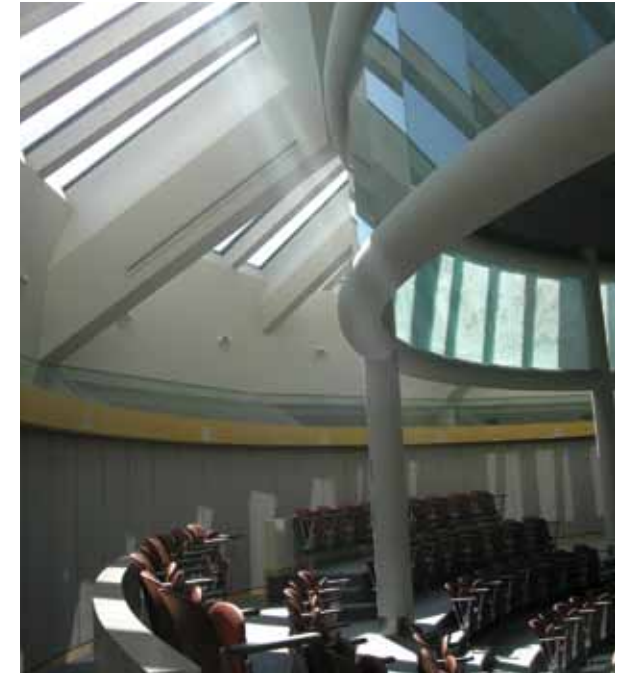
The carving on the top of the Speaker's chair was created by Inuvialuit artist Angus Cockney and is made of limestone from Norman Wells. The piece is titled "Arctic Inhabitants" and on its left side is the face of an elder. His hands, one of which holds a mask, are outstretched to two youths on the opposite side of the carving. This symbolizes elders passing on culture, traditions and language to future generations. The carved hair braid along the bottom represents women and the family. The zinc-sheeted wall behind the Speaker's chair was designed by northern artists Letia Lewis and John Farcy Jr. It is an artists' concept of land formations, and intrigues and challenges the imaginations of visitors.



Arctic Inhabitants carving



Caucus room



Public gallery

The translucent glass frieze was designed and crafted by Warren Carther, an internationally recognized glass artist from Winnipeg. It is made of recycled windshield glass and is a map of the regions of the Northwest Territories. The frieze depicts the colours of the seasons, from the blue and white colours of an ice floe in winter to warmer colours of spring and summer wildflowers and lichen. Facing west, the scene changes to an aerial view of the Mackenzie Mountains and autumn leaves. The frieze was put in to diffuse some of the natural light entering the Chamber while still allowing it to help light the building.

Similar to the Chamber, the circular shape of the second-floor Caucus room represents consensus government, as well as the people of the north. When all 19 members meet in this room, they meet as equals – they leave their portfolios and titles at the door. This is the one place where the Speaker, who presides over debates in the Chamber, can speak his/her mind with other members. Because of the room's circular shape, sound carries very well from one side of the room to the other, preventing members from having private discussions amongst themselves while another member is speaking. For this reason it has sometimes been called “the room of no secrets.”

The Public Gallery

The public gallery overlooking the Chamber was designed to allow people easy access to the members' deliberations. Created with ample seating, the public gallery is often filled with onlookers when the members are debating something of particular interest. Members of the public are free to come and go during a sitting day as long as they respect the rules of the gallery. These rules include remaining quiet even during controversial debates and not taking photographs during the proceedings, unless the Speaker's advance permission is requested and granted.

Artwork

The Northwest Territories is home to a vibrant arts community. More artists and craftspeople are combining natural materials and traditional crafts with modern styles and media. In the last 10 years, northern jewellery and fashion design have attracted attention throughout Canada and around the world.

The artwork gracing the hallways, walls and meeting rooms of the Legislative Assembly reflects the Northwest Territories' history, landscape, traditions, and its place within the Canadian cultural fabric. Most of the artwork is on public display and featured in Legislative Assembly tours. In addition to the work of commissioned artists, many of the pieces were gifts to the Legislative Assembly.

Unknown

Soapstone carving

Sculpture on loan from Education, Culture and Employment



Sculptures and Carvings

Soapstone Carvings

The soapstone carvings displayed throughout the building are the work of sculptors from the eastern half of the Northwest Territories that became Nunavut in 1999. The green soapstone typically comes from Baffin Island, and the black soapstone is from the mainland. Many of these carvings belonged to a larger collection that was subsequently transferred to Nunavut.

Judas Ullulaq

Soapstone carving

Presented to the Legislative Assembly in 1993



Sculpture of the North

The Sculpture of the North, in the Great Hall, is made of rare stromatolitic marble from the East Arm of Great Slave Lake. It was part of the Fédération franco-ténoise's larger art project on McAvoy Rock in Yellowknife's Old Town. This project brought together a team of aboriginal and francophone artists in 1999 to highlight the important links between French and aboriginal cultures in the Northwest Territories.

Sculpture of the North is the collaborative work of:
Sonny MacDonald, Métis, Fort Smith;
John Sabourin, Dene, Fort Simpson;
and **Eli Nasogaluak**, Inuvialuk, Tuktoyaktuk.



Display Cases

The display cases located throughout the building contain artifacts and carvings from all parts of the Northwest Territories. Visitors can view replicas of traditional tools made by artisans from the Beaufort Delta region, using the same materials as their ancestors. The moccasins, other leatherwork, miniature birch bark canoes and baskets were made in Fort Providence and Fort Liard. These items were once necessary for survival, but have now become art forms that younger generations learn from their elders.



Inuit tools



Moccasins and other leatherwork

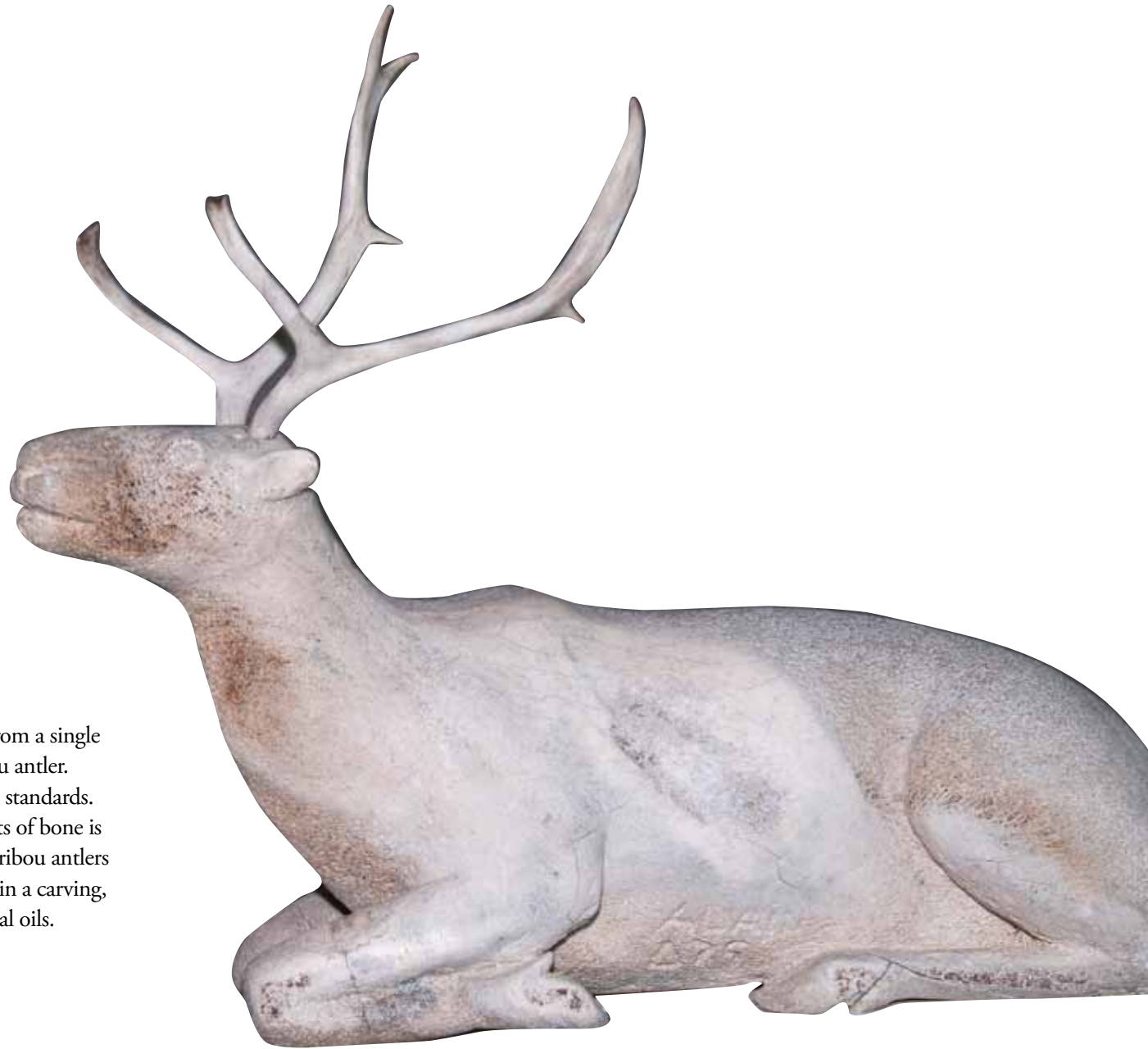
Alain Iyerak

Caribou carving, 1970

Sculpture on loan from Education,
Culture and Employment

Caribou Carving

The carving of a caribou at rest is made from a single bowhead whale vertebra and from caribou antler. It is a very large carving even by northern standards. The difference in the inner and outer parts of bone is visible: whalebone is porous, while the caribou antlers are dense. Before whalebone can be used in a carving, it must age to sufficiently release its natural oils. This process takes at least 100 years.



Paintings

A.Y. Jackson Paintings

The paintings decorating the back wall of the Caucus Room are the work of Group of Seven artist Alex Young (A.Y.) Jackson (1882-1974). Each painting depicts a northern landscape. It is believed to be the largest collection of A.Y. Jackson paintings in a single room in Canada. Federal Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs and former Commissioner of the Northwest Territories Gordon Robertson, in a 1961 draft letter to publishers who wanted to reproduce one of Jackson's paintings, expressed the intention to display these paintings in "a Territorial capital building within the Territories, when such a building is available." That would not happen for over 30 years.

In 1948, federal Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources and Commissioner of the NWT, Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, invited A.Y. Jackson to visit the Northwest Territories and paint in Yellowknife and the surrounding area. Jackson readily agreed, and in September 1949, the Eldorado mining company sponsored Jackson's trip north. Eldorado invited Jackson back in August of 1950, and again in 1952 to paint on the barrenlands north of Port Radium.

Jackson wrote about his experiences in the Northwest Territories in his 1959 autobiography, *A Painter's Country*, and in the journals he kept during his travels. He spent two weeks at Port Radium, at the east end of Great Bear Lake, in August 1949 and visited Yellowknife on his way back south. In a



A.Y. Jackson
Labine Point, NT
Field sketch in oil

Labine Point, NT
Oil on canvas





A.Y. Jackson
Consolidated Mine, NT
Oil on canvas

Jackfish Lake, NT
Oil on canvas

*Between Yellowknife and
Great Bear Lake, NT*
Oil on canvas



letter dated September 30, 1949, from the Ingraham Hotel in Yellowknife, Jackson told Dr. Keenleyside how much he enjoyed sketching Yellowknife's Giant, Negus and Con mines. He was impressed by the optimistic character of the "mining men" and by the local interest in arts and handicrafts, which still thrive across the Northwest Territories today. A modest, unassuming man, Jackson developed close ties with the community, particularly in Port Radium where he offered art lessons and regularly visited the school.

In all, Jackson completed seven paintings and five sketches from his trips north. He often worked on the spot, sketching and painting on sheets of plywood. Jackson agreed to sell some of his work to the NWT Council and to Eldorado for half the usual price. At that time, his oil paintings usually sold for up to \$600 and his sketches for approximately \$50. Today, A.Y. Jackson paintings fetch as much as \$760,000 at auctions.

The paintings and sketches were kept in the National Gallery in Ottawa. For a while, two paintings hung in the Prime Minister's residence at 24 Sussex Drive, and four were loaned to Government House. In 1954, *Yellowknife Bay* was displayed at exhibits in Toronto and Montreal.

In 1963, when political division of the Northwest Territories was contemplated, the federal government decided that the A.Y. Jackson paintings

A.Y. Jackson
West Bay Fault, NT
Oil on canvas

Yellowknife Bay, NT
Oil on canvas





A.Y. Jackson
Negus Mine, NT
 Oil on canvas

Negus Mine, NT
 Field sketch in oil

should become the property of the Government of the Northwest Territories. In 1967, Commissioner Stuart Hodgson and Deputy Commissioner John Parker collected four paintings and two sketches and transported them to Yellowknife on a Transair DC-7. For several months, the paintings remained in Parker's home until they were moved to the Cunningham Building. Hodgson and Parker were unaware of the particulars of the original purchase, and the painting *Negus Mine* was left behind in a deputy minister's office in Ottawa. In 1974, this painting was also sent to Yellowknife. In 1987 two more paintings were located in a Department of Environment office in Ottawa and both were shipped to Yellowknife.

Finally, all but two sketches from the original purchase were returned to the NWT. The sketch *Jackfish Lake* became the property of another owner, and the sketch *Old Con Camp* has never been found. The paintings were nearly destroyed when Yellowknife experienced a violent rainstorm while repairs were being done to a section of the Commissioner's roof in the summer of 1993. Tabletops and carpets were ruined, but fortunately, the water did not run down the walls.

When the Legislative Assembly building opened on November 17, 1993, the treasured collection finally found a permanent home in a territorial capital building.



Graeme Shaw

Past

2001

Graeme Shaw

The collage-style paintings in the Caucus Room are the work of artist Graeme Shaw. Born in Calgary, Shaw came north in 1980 to teach school in Edzo (now Behchokǝ). He spent much of his free time painting and sketching, and eventually left teaching to pursue a full-time career as an artist. He now lives in British Columbia.

The blue painting with a pale moon on the horizon represents the Northwest Territories' past. The owl in the tree on the right symbolizes carrying the wisdom of the past with us. The painting of the caribou on the barrenlands symbolizes the present, and how the people stand strong and steadfast on this land. In many Dene and Inuit cultures, the raven is a very respected spiritual animal. The bright painting of the raven flying into the sunrise symbolizes moving forward into the future with the raven's intelligence and dedication.



Graeme Shaw

Present

2001



Graeme Shaw
Future
2001



Bern Will Brown

Three paintings in the lower back hall are the work of artist Bern Will Brown. Originally from New York State, Brown moved to the Sahtu community of Colville Lake in the 1950s, which had a population of about 60 at the time. Brown came north as a Roman Catholic priest, but also served as a carpenter, mechanic, plumber, electrician, artist, pilot and author. Now in his 80s, he is a distinguished artist and author and still lives in Colville Lake. His works displayed at the Legislative Assembly are:

Hare Mother and Child, 1968 – a painting based on a photograph taken of a woman making birch bark baskets at Nahanni Butte in 1961.

Born to Lose, 1982 – a portrait of a young Dene woman that serves as a sobering comment on the north's time of rapid social change.

Brown also painted the scene of a family building an igloo.





Other Artists

Most of the artwork on the walls of the lower back hallway behind the Chamber is the work of northern artists. These paintings and prints were acquired by the Legislative Assembly from various art galleries and artists since the building opened in 1993.

Rosalee Prentice, Hay River
Alexandra Falls – Approximately 45 minutes southeast of Enterprise, the spectacular Alexandra and Louise Falls are well worth visiting on a drive along the Mackenzie Highway.



Archie Beaulieu, Behchokò
Mother of the Earth
Tundra Wolf
Sunrise Dancers



Helene Croft, Fort Smith

Ocean Sculpture

A Long Journey

Wendy Lee, formerly of Yellowknife

Calling the Moon



Antoine Mountain, Fort Good Hope

Moose Skin Boat – It takes eight moose hides to make a boat, and many weeks for the hide to completely dry before being used.

Jean Paul Lemieux

The Members' Lounge, located directly behind the Chamber, is reserved for members' exclusive use while the House is in session. The 12 prints decorating the walls of the Members' Lounge are the work of well-known Canadian artist Jean Paul Lemieux. Each painting represents a different province or territory of Canada, resulting in a visual journey across the country. Lemieux was commissioned to paint this series for Canada Post, which distributed limited-edition prints to each province and territory. Canada Post also created stamps from the images. A framed introduction by author Pierre Berton and preface by former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau round out the collection.

Nouveau-Brunswick



Territoires du Nord-Ouest



L to R: Agnes Iqqugaqtuq, Lea Makittuq, and Semona (Simona) Agnutingornerk, wool couching (tapestry), 1960s; **Irene Avaalaaqiaq**, Stroud Tapestry

Tapestries and Tuftings

In the late 1960s, artwork was commissioned to decorate the new buildings and offices of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The tapestries hanging at both ends of the hallway behind the Chamber are part of a set of four that once decorated the staircase of the Yellowknife Courthouse. Due to the high traffic that frequented the staircase, the tapestries were moved into storage until an appropriate place could be found to display them. The high ceilings and indirect lighting in the hall behind the Chamber of the new Legislative Assembly building made it an excellent location.

The tapestries are the work of Eastern Arctic craftswomen who wove them from various mixtures of wool. The brown tassels on the sides are made

of the outer guard hair of muskoxen, combined with qiviut, made from the muskoxen's soft, dense undercoat. Human hair is also interwoven, most visibly on the heads of the characters in the tapestry. Each tapestry has a different animal motif and symbolizes the Inuit people's connection to the land.

The boldly coloured stroud tapestries and wall hangings throughout the building depict the survival elements of traditional Inuit lifestyle: food, fuel, shelter, clothing and family. They are hand-stitched, showing off the highly specialized sewing skills of the Inuit people. In order to make useful footwear and clothing, the stitches had to be waterproof.



Moosehair Tufting

Moosehair tufting is an art form practiced by the South Slavey-speaking Dene of the southern part of the territory, particularly in communities such as Fort Providence, Hay River, and Jean Marie River. Young native artisans have been encouraged to learn the skill, but this ancient handicraft is becoming scarce.

The moosehair most suitable for tufting is winter fur, obtained between December and March. Usually 15 to 20 centimetres in length, it comes from the centre back of the animal. It is plucked from the pelt by hand,

sorted, washed and dyed. Only white hair is used. Natural dyes from berries, bark and leaves are still used, but commercial powdered dyes and crepe paper are also popular.

After dyeing, the hair is dried and ready for stitching. The pattern for the picture is drawn with a small stick dipped in a mixture of flour and water, onto velvet backed by canvas. These outlines are drawn freehand, so each picture is an original. About 15 to 20 strands of hair are held on the pattern, and a stitch is made

around the hair about a half-centimetre from the end and knotted at the back of the material, pulling the moosehair tight. The long part of the hair is clipped about a half-centimetre from the stitch, making the hair stand up in a brisk tuft. The remainder of the hair is used in the same fashion until the outline is filled in. The hair is sculpted with scissors, resulting in the finished product. The moosehair tuftings that decorate the walls of the lower back hallway were originally gifts to former Northwest Territories Commissioners. They were made in the 1960s.



Porcupine Quills and Sealskin

The porcupine quill picture is made of split quills that are dyed, braided and woven into designs.

The origin of the sealskin wall hanging is uncertain, but it is likely from one of the communities in the Eastern Arctic, where this type of seal is plentiful. It was presented to the Government of the Northwest Territories at a time when small fur manufacturing guilds thrived in small communities all across the North.

Quilt

The quilt on the wall of the back staircase was a gift to former Premier Stephen Kakfwi from the people of Délne, a small community in his riding, on the west shore of Great Bear Lake. It took 20 women eight months to complete. The quilt is entirely hand-stitched, with the exception of the thick moosehide at the top, which had to be machine-sewn to get a needle through it. In the Northwest Territories, traditional beaded flower patterns are for northern families similar to tartans for the Scottish. The patterns are handed down for generations and many families have a particular style and shape of flower that has been in the family for years. It is taboo to take someone else's flower and use it as your own. Some of the patches on this quilt are uppers from previously worn moccasins. If you look closely, you can find matching pairs.

Gifts from Provinces and Territories

When the Legislative Assembly building opened, many other jurisdictions presented gifts to the Speaker on this historic occasion. These beautiful gifts are displayed throughout the building.



Québec
Carving, Black owl
Foyer outside public gallery



Manitoba
Sculpture, Bison
Foyer outside public gallery



British Columbia
Carving, Kwagiulth Sun Mask clock
Chamber



New Brunswick
Sculpture, Gyrfalcon
Symbols display



Alberta
Carving, Coat of arms
Great Hall



Saskatchewan
Sergeant-at-Arm's chair
Chamber



The Yukon
Commemorative plaque
Foyer outside public gallery



Nova Scotia
Hooked tapestry, NWT crest
Caucus Room



Ontario
Glass art, "Pine Cluster"
Foyer outside public gallery

Newfoundland and Labrador

Silkscreen prints by Donna Clouston
Foyer outside public gallery



Prince Edward Island

Sketch, "Canada's Birthplace," by Henry Purdy
Foyer outside public gallery

As we move further into the 21st century, the artwork preserved at the Legislative Assembly will become increasingly important as part of the Northwest Territories' history. It will continue to reflect our place within the Canadian cultural fabric, our natural landscape, and the diverse cultures and valued traditions of the people the Legislative Assembly serves.



City of Yellowknife

Painting, "Yellowknife from Latham Island," by Sheila Hodgkinson
Foyer outside public gallery



British High Commissioner, Sir Nicholas Baine,

Painting, "Thames at Westminster," by Bert Wright
Foyer outside public gallery



David H. Searle
1975-1979



Robert H. MacQuarrie
1979-1980

Speakers' Portraits

The Speaker, elected by all members, is the highest authority in the Legislative Assembly, and represents the Assembly in all its powers and proceedings.

Housed on the second floor of the Legislative Assembly building are paintings of former Speakers. After completing their terms, former Speakers select an artist to paint their portrait. Currently, nine portraits hang in this area, dating from 1975 to 2003.

The paintings often incorporate distinctive features or clothing unique to the area the Speaker represented as a member: the Mackenzie River in the portrait of the Honourable Richard Nerysoo; the church in Fort Providence in the portrait of the Honourable Sam Gargan; and the robe worn by the Honourable Jeannie Marie-Jewell from Thebacha.

Each Speaker is given the opportunity to wear more traditional attire in the Chamber. If they choose to do so, the Legislative Assembly will have the artist of their choice create a garment for them, with the understanding that the garment will remain with the Assembly when their term is complete. Two of these unique outfits are on display in the Legislative Assembly building.

Speakers of the Legislative Assembly



Donald M. Stewart
1980-1987



Red Pedersen
1987-1989



Richard Nerysoo
1989-1991



Michael Ballantyne
1991-1993



Jeannie Marie-Jewell
1993-1994



Samuel Gargan
1995-2000

Speakers of the Legislative Assembly



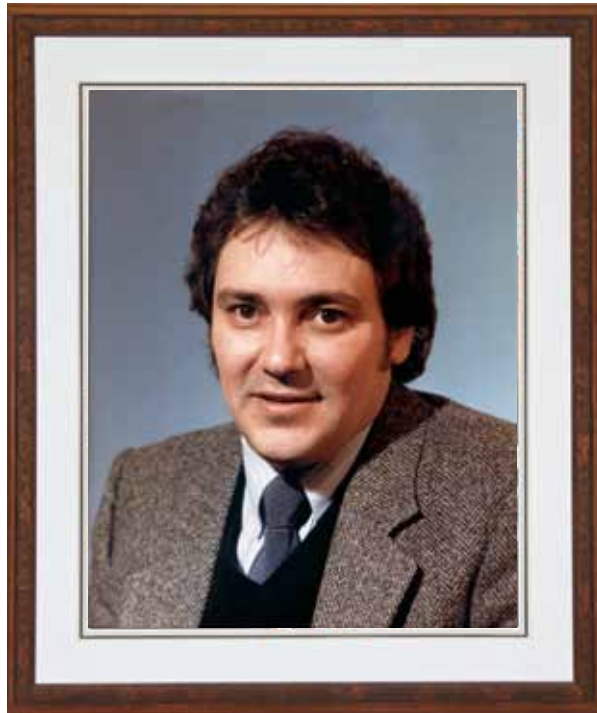
Anthony W.J. Whitford
2000-2003



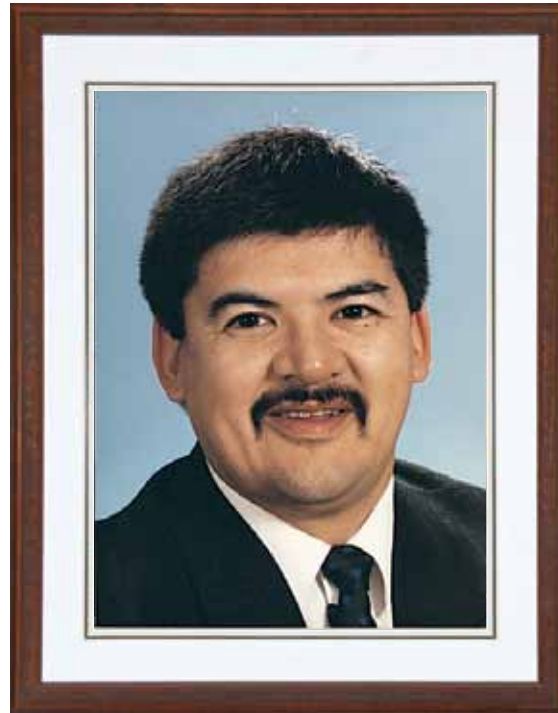
David Krutko
2003-2004



Paul Delorey
2004-2011



George Braden
1980-1983



Richard Nerysoo
1984-1985

Premiers' Portraits

The head of government in the Northwest Territories has been referred to as the premier since February of 1994 as a result of an amendment to the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*. Before 1980, the head of government was appointed by the Government of Canada and was referred to as the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

The role of the premier includes chairing cabinet meetings, assigning ministers their portfolios and disciplining ministers when required. The premier also develops consensus with other ministers and serves as their spokesperson on matters which do not fall within individual portfolios.

Premiers of the Legislative Assembly

The Legislative Assembly is in the process of commissioning premiers' portraits for all persons who have served in this role back to and including the first elected government leader, George Braden (1980). These portraits will hang in a prominent location in the Legislative Assembly building.



Nick Sibbeston
1985-1987



Dennis Patterson
1987-1991



Nellie Cournoyea
1991-1995



Don Morin
1995-1998



James Antoine
1998-2000

Premiers of the Legislative Assembly



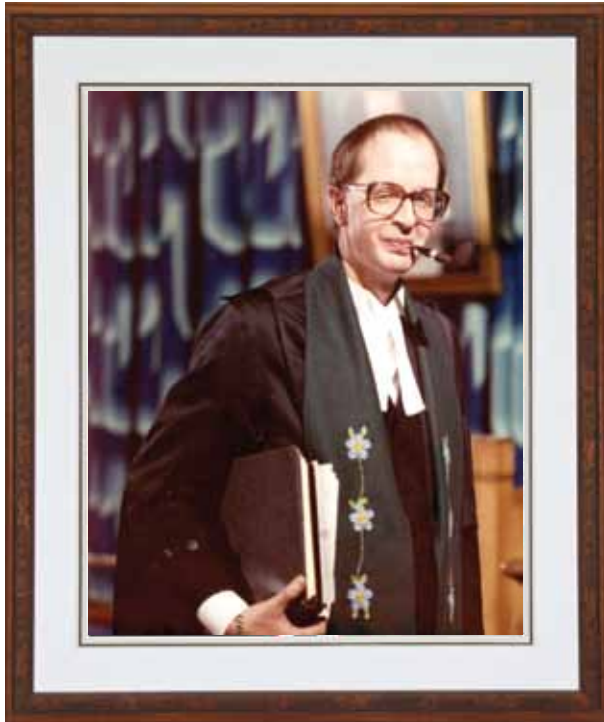
Stephen Kakfwi
2000-2003



Joe Handley
2003-2007



Floyd Roland
2007-present



Binx Remnant
1966-1982

Clerks of the Legislative Assembly

The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is the chief procedural advisor to the Speaker and the members of the assembly.

The position is responsible for a wide range of duties relating to the proceedings and official records of the assembly and its committees.

The clerk, as Deputy Minister, also has overall responsibility for services provided by the Legislative Assembly, including financial services, personnel and administrative services, research and library services, legislation, Hansard, broadcasting, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and visitors' services.

The clerk sits directly in front of the Speaker at the clerk's table and is assisted at the table by the

Deputy Clerk, Clerk of Committees, Clerk of Operations, and the Law Clerk. They keep the official records of the assembly and advise the Speaker and members on parliamentary and legal procedure.

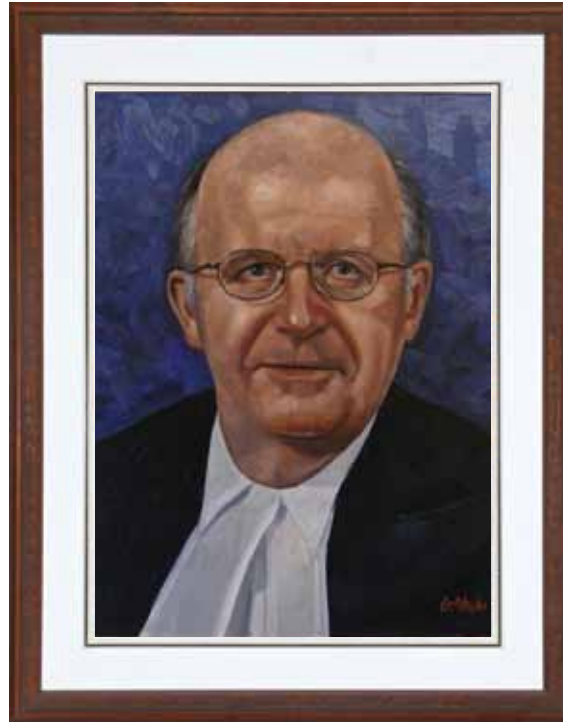
The clerk reports directly to the Speaker for the efficient administration of the assembly and its support services. The position is also responsible for annual budgeting for the assembly, planning, policy and staff development, and ensuring adequate financial and human resources are available to all committees. The Office of the Clerk provides administrative services to the Board of Management and other committees of the Legislative Assembly. The Office of the Clerk also coordinates all official parliamentary ceremonies and other formal events

Clerks of the Legislative Assembly

involving the Legislative Assembly, such as the official opening of the Legislative Assembly, election of the Speaker, swearing-in of members, and visiting parliamentarians.

Recognizing the importance of fostering a better understanding of the Northwest Territories and consensus style of government, the Office of the Clerk provides numerous pamphlets, information packages, educational videos, tours, and other promotional material.

The Office of the Clerk comprises the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of Committees, Clerk of Operations, Executive Administrative Assistant, Chamber and Committee Services Coordinator, Law Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, and the Public Affairs and Communications Advisor. Other divisions within the Office of the Clerk include Research and Library Services and Corporate Services.



David Hamilton
1983-2003



Tim Mercer
2003-present



Legislative Assembly library

Northwest Territories Legislative Library

The Northwest Territories' Legislative Library evolved from the Government Library of the Northwest Territories. The Government Library was established on May 9, 1973 and began operation in 1974. On March 5, 1992, a Record of Decision of the Legislative Assembly's Management and Services Board (now the Board of Management) directed that the Government Library be transferred from the Department of Culture and Communications to the Legislative Assembly under the authority of the Clerk. It became the Legislative Library on April 1, 1992, and moved to its current location in the new Legislative Assembly building in September 1993 prior to the official opening.

The library provides reference and information services to members of the Legislative Assembly and employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Some services are also available to the media, researchers, and the general public.

The Legislative Library maintains a collection of books, government publications, reports, periodicals and newspapers with a focus on northern and aboriginal studies, political science and public administration, and health and social services. The Legislative Library houses the original bills that are signed by the Commissioner after they receive assent, as well as a printed copy of Hansard.

It is the official depository for Government of the Northwest Territories publications and posts a complete list of the Northwest Territories government publications it receives. The Legislative Library also has selective depository status for Canadian federal government documents.

In keeping with the increasing trend for government departments to publish documents electronically, the Legislative Library is now archiving all relevant electronic publications produced by the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Library's online catalogue and Hansard transcripts can be accessed via the Legislative Assembly's website.



RCMP Change of Command Ceremony 2007

EVENTS IN THE GREAT HALL

The Great Hall, open 362 days a year and available for booking by any member of the public, often plays host to events from government ceremonies to musical concerts and weddings.



Top: Devolution Agreement-in-Principle Signing 2010; **Bottom L to R:** Election central 2007; Premier's Award Ceremony 2010



Kindergarten Christmas Trees

Every year during November and December, the Legislative Assembly bustles with kindergarten children. Since the official opening of the first permanent home of the Legislative Assembly in 1993, the Speaker has welcomed over 200 kindergarten students from Yellowknife, Detah and N'dilo to decorate trees every year. During their visit to the legislature, the students decorate a tree with handmade ornaments, meet their MLA, get a treat, and receive a short tour of the building. This program is very popular with members, students and teachers alike, and has become a Christmas tradition.

Christmas Lights Across Canada

This program was introduced by the National Capital Commission in 1985 to brighten the winter months with the light and colour of dozens of strings of Christmas lights. Initially, Parliament Hill was the only location to be illuminated, but the program has since grown to include Canada's 13 provinces and territories. On the same day every year, each capital city across Canada turns on Christmas lights at both their legislative and city hall grounds. The Legislative Assembly uses light-emitting diode (LED) lights to reduce electricity consumption. Every year on the first Thursday in December, people crowd into the Great Hall to be part of this nationwide celebration.



Top: St. Joseph's Kindergarten Class 2009; **Bottom:** Christmas Lights Across Canada 2010

Official Visits

Since Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II dedicated the Chamber during her royal visit in 1994, the Legislative Assembly has hosted many visiting dignitaries and high-profile figures from Canada and around the world. The Western Premiers' Conference was held in Yellowknife in 1998, and three Canadian Presiding Officers' conferences have been held at the Legislative Assembly since 1995. Both Governors General Adrienne Clarkson and Michaëlle Jean visited the Legislative Assembly and planted trees on the grounds. "For a Canadian, personal knowledge of the North...is indispensable," Clarkson said in her August 2000 address to the Legislative Assembly. "To be ignorant of the North... is to be ignorant of the greater portion of our country."



Clockwise from Left: Astronaut Julie Payette and Honourable Speaker Delorey; Former Governor General Michaëlle Jean meeting with Anthony Whitford, Joe Handley and Tim Mercer; Honourable Speaker Delorey and Former Governor General Michaëlle Jean

Bottom: Queen Elizabeth II visits the Legislative Assembly in 1994





Protests

In keeping with the ideals of consensus government, the Legislative Assembly avoids hosting events that are partisan in nature. However, as in all healthy democracies, the people of the Northwest Territories are free to express their views and beliefs in the form of public protest. Social and environmental advocacy groups regularly march to the Legislative Assembly to boost awareness of their issues. Protests are generally peaceful, with visitors abiding by the Speaker's rules for public demonstrations, and members often mingle with the crowd to hear peoples' concerns firsthand.





Mace Tour 2010: Clerk Tim Mercer, Honourable Speaker Paul Delorey, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Derek Edjericon, Commissioner George Tuccaro, Sergeant-at-Arms Brian Thagard, Speaker's Executive Assistant Sue Tkachuk, Public Affairs and Communications Advisor Danielle Mager

BRINGING THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY TO THE PEOPLE: THE SPEAKER'S OUTREACH PROGRAMS



Students at Bompas Elementary School, Fort Simpson, 2010



Boy with mace at Joseph Burr Tyrell School, Fort Smith, 2008



Students at Charles Tetcho School, Trout Lake, 2010

In a vast territory where the central political institution is distanced from the people it serves by hundreds and in some cases, thousands of kilometres of wilderness, outreach programs serve to familiarize Northwest Territories residents with the inner workings of consensus government and put a human face on what can otherwise seem a distant, impersonal institution.

Mace Tour

Just prior to the Legislative Assembly building's opening in 1993, the Assembly's sessional travels to communities were discontinued. Committees and

individual members still travel across the territory to hold public meetings and visit constituents, but these visits lack the ceremonial weight of the previous meetings. The Speaker designed the mace tour to recreate that sense of ceremony, and to showcase the Legislative Assembly's premier symbol of authority.

The first mace tour was held in 2003 in Whatì, a community of approximately 500 people in the Monfwi constituency. Since then, the mace has visited six other communities that do not enjoy ready access to the capital city. There are a total of 19 constituencies and 33 communities in the Northwest Territories, many of which are not on the road system.

The Speaker visits a different constituency with the mace every year.

The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and other Assembly staff accompany the Speaker on the tour. The group visits schools to display and give presentations about the mace and about the workings of the Legislative Assembly. The Speaker also meets with elders and holds a community feast where the mace is on display. The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for the care and protection of the mace during the tour. He or she guards it around the clock.



Youth Parliament 2009

Back row L to R: Dylan Short, Tyler Comeau, Josh Tordiff, Tyler Pilling, Shawn Gon, Morgan Unka, Teale MacIntosh, Garrett Ahenakew, Alex Smith
Front row L to R: Dwight McLeod, Alecia Lennie, Dana Harris, Mahalia Mackeinzo, Nha Ly, Taylor Raciborski, Katherine Sittichinli, Christine Gagnier

Youth Parliament

The Northwest Territories' consensus government system is unique within the Canadian context as well as across the globe. In an effort to help educate young northerners about consensus government, Youth Parliament was introduced in 1999 for grades 9 and 10 students throughout the Northwest Territories.

Through an application-based process, one young person is chosen from each constituency to spend a week at the Legislative Assembly, where the Youth Parliamentarians attend meetings and briefings



Youth Parliament 2008 Speaker Frankie Ranger and Honourable Speaker Delorey

to prepare for a mock session in the Chamber. This program teaches youth about their members' roles in the legislature, and about the work of the Legislative Assembly as a whole. It gives youth the memorable and exciting experience of debating issues of interest to them in a public forum. Due to the Northwest Territories' large land mass, many residents do not often meet people from other communities, so another of the many benefits of this program is the opportunity for young people to get to know others from all over the territory.

Youth Parliament Dates

Youth Parliament 1999: May 7–21, 1999

Youth Parliament 2000: *was not held this year*

Youth Parliament 2001: January 15–19, 2001

Youth Parliament 2002: February 3–8, 2002

Youth Parliament 2003: May 5–9, 2003

Youth Parliament 2004: May 3–7, 2004

Youth Parliament 2005: May 2–6, 2005

Youth Parliament 2006: May 1–5, 2006

Youth Parliament 2007: April 30–May 4, 2007

Youth Parliament 2008: April 20–25, 2008

Youth Parliament 2009: April 19–24, 2009

Youth Parliament 2011: May 2–6, 2011



Top: Former Commissioner Whitford with Youth Parliament 2007 participants; **Bottom L to R:** Youth Parliament 2007; Youth Parliament 2009 Regular Members





Elders Parliament 2010 Regular Members

L to R: John Norbert, Catherine Doctor, Lena Pedersen, Agnes McPherson, Esther Braden, Alvina Sibbeston, Therese Villeneuve, Felicito Domingo, Georgina Jacobson-Masuzumi, George Lessard and Cathy Pope



Elders Parliament 2010 Participants

Back row L to R: Tom Wright, John Norbert, Ted Blondin, Margaret Field, Lena Pedersen, Felicito Domingo, Georgina Jacobson-Masuzumi, Blake Lyons, George Lessard
Front row L to R: Cathy Pope, Alvina Sibbeston, Esther Braden, Therese Villeneuve, Agnes McPherson, Dawna O'Brien, Marjorie Elanik

Elders Parliament

The Legislative Assembly building is dedicated *“to the people of the north, to the wisdom of their elders and to the vision of their children.”* After 10 successful years of the Youth Parliament program, the Speaker felt that the “vision of their children” was being captured, but “the wisdom of their elders” had yet to be formally addressed. The Speaker designed the Elders Parliament program to allow seniors across the Northwest Territories to voice concerns on issues that are important to them, while showcasing the territory’s unique form of consensus government. The first Elders Parliament was held from May 2-7, 2010.

Much like Youth Parliament, Elders Parliament participants are chosen through an application-based

process. Any Northwest Territories resident over age 50 is eligible to apply. During their week at the legislature, the elders participate in meetings and receive presentations from various delegates. These activities prepare them for a mock session in the Chamber. During the inaugural Elders Parliament, the participants were given three days in the Chamber to voice their opinions. Their first opportunity was during a Territorial Leadership Committee, in which they nominated one another, or themselves, to sit as members of cabinet. Each nominee had 10 minutes to speak about what they would do if they were premier. Instead of a vote, nominees’ names were entered into a random draw to select a premier and cabinet ministers. The second opportunity to sit in the Chamber was a

round table discussion with the premier on political development in the territory. It allowed Premier Floyd Roland to hear the elders’ opinions, wisdom and knowledge, and to have a discussion on the topic. The third and final chance for the participants to sit in the Chamber was during the mock session. During the “session”, the elders presented their members’ and ministers’ statements and debated several motions of their choosing. One of the Elder Parliamentarians in May 2010 was Lena Pedersen, who became the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly’s first female member in 1970. Ms. Pedersen was a wonderful addition to an interesting and experienced group.

Television Broadcasting System

The Legislative Assembly has developed an extensive television broadcasting system. Sessions are broadcast in real time, in the floor language, to 30 of 33 communities, with plans to extend broadcasting to all communities in the near future. The first two hours of each sitting day are also recorded, interpreted into the Northwest Territories' official languages, and rebroadcast in the evenings. The Legislative Chamber accommodates up to three sets of interpreters at a time. Languages are rotated on a weekly basis, and the rebroadcasts are targeted to communities where the relevant languages are spoken. Sessions are also rebroadcast in English. The Legislative Assembly is the only legislature in Canada to broadcast its proceedings in such a wide variety of languages. Elders and Youth Parliaments are also re-broadcast throughout the NWT on the *Legislative Assembly Television Network (LATV)*.

Top: Broadcasting infrastructure in Nahanni Butte

Bottom: Honourable Speaker Delorey in the Legislative Assembly audio-visual room





Tours

The Legislative Assembly's Public Affairs section offers tours of the building once a day, with additional tours scheduled during the summer months. The Legislative Assembly building is open to the public throughout the year and accessible to visitors well beyond normal business hours. To cater to the high number of walk-in visitors, the Speaker introduced self-guided audio tours in May 2008.

Guided by an iPod audio recording and a station-by-station map, both available at the security desk, guests are provided information explaining consensus government and the official symbols of the Northwest Territories. The architectural features, symbolism, and history of one of the most unique legislatures in Canada are also highlighted. Self-guided audio tours are offered in nine official languages of the Northwest Territories, as well as in Japanese. The Japanese language recording was included to accommodate the large number of tourists who venture north each year to take in the beauty of the aurora borealis, also known as the northern lights.

Top: Honourable Speaker Delorey taking the audio tour
Bottom: Public Affairs Intern Jessica Fournier giving a tour



Chamber doors from the Great Hall

HEALTHY CHOICES AND GOING GREEN

As northern communities experience the impacts of global warming and the negative effects of high-sugar, low-fibre diets, the 16th Legislative Assembly has responded by promoting a corporate culture of environmental sustainability and healthy lifestyles.



Clockwise from Left: Derek Edjericon, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, Honourable Speaker Delorey, and Brian Thagard, Sergeant-at-Arms at the commissioning of the wood pellet boiler; Amount of paper no longer distributed daily to media booths during session but provided on website instead; Honourable Speaker Delorey and Sergeant-at-Arms Brian Thagard beside Legislative Assembly hybrid vehicle; Honourable Speaker Delorey participating in spring cleanup.



Drop the Pop

Since 2004, schools throughout the Northwest Territories have been eliminating high-sugar, carbonated soft drinks from classrooms to help students develop healthier lifestyles. Over the first six years of the campaign, participation in this program increased from 13 to 40 schools. The Legislative Assembly chose to join the campaign and added an environmental twist: on June 1, 2009 the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly announced that the Legislative Assembly would “drop the pop” and ban both pop and disposable water bottles from use in meetings, and from sale in the café.

Paper Savings

In an effort to make the 16th Assembly a greener one, the Legislative Assembly began to provide electronic access to tabled documents, ministers’ statements, and motions beginning with the spring sitting in 2009. By making documents available online, the Legislative Assembly hopes to cut its paper usage by 80 percent between 2008 and 2012. The Legislative Assembly has already significantly reduced committee and House paper use. Altogether, the Legislative Assembly used 450,000 fewer sheets of paper in 2009 than in 2008, representing a 55 percent reduction in paper use and steady progress toward the overall goal.

Wood Pellet Boiler

On February 22, 2010, crews began clearing a site at the north end of the Legislative Assembly building for the installation of a wood pellet boiler. It is estimated that this initiative will reduce annual diesel fuel consumption by over 82,000 litres, lower greenhouse gas emissions by 240 tonnes a year, and result in an annual cost savings of \$37,600. The wood pellet boiler was commissioned and officially put into use on October 29, 2010.

Clean Air Day Corporate Challenge

In 2010, Legislative Assembly staff won Ecology North’s Clean Air Day Corporate Challenge for having the highest number of employees who walked, rode their bikes or took the bus to work among Yellowknife organizations with 16 employees or more.

Spring Cleanup

Every spring, Legislative Assembly staff spend a day on the assembly grounds, cleaning up after the snow melts. There are always interesting finds, and sometimes an impromptu game of road hockey.

Website

The Legislative Assembly’s website, www.assembly.gov.nt.ca, receives more visitors every year. All static text is now provided in both English and French. Recently, additional House documents are being posted to the site, including ministers’ statements, motions, tabled documents, bills, orders of the day, and Hansard transcripts. Many regular members post their members’ statements to their individual web pages. Relying more heavily on providing information electronically through the website is another way the Legislative Assembly can reduce its paper use and environmental footprint.

E-petitions

The Legislative Assembly is now able to offer Northwest Territories residents the opportunity to create and sign electronic petitions. The Assembly is using similar rules to those applied to paper petitions – petitions still have to be sponsored by a member to be presented in the House – but now a larger number of people will have greater access to them. This is important because Northwest Territories communities are separated by large physical distances. The e-petitions site went live on October 27, 2010, and there was immediate interest in the new process. The first e-petition garnered 552 signatures in five business days and was presented in the House on November 3, 2010.



Honourable Speaker Delorey and the Philippine Ambassador in Speaker Delorey's office

MAKING INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Each Speaker of the Legislative Assembly serves as a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), an international organization that promotes parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance. Speakers, as well as other members, regularly attend meetings of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Speakers have travelled to Commonwealth countries as diverse as Tanzania, Fiji, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Malaysia, Guernsey, and Kenya, and also across Canada. They have met delegates from all over the world, and shared ideas and best practices on democratic governance. This sharing is important for two reasons: it reminds us that democracy is a choice, not an inevitability; and it allows the Northwest Territories to contribute knowledge to

other jurisdictions and to gain from them in kind. Discussing and sharing real experiences of setting up a consensus government system, or of conducting an election in a low-population-density area, is invaluable for those who may not have done it before.

The CPA holds Small Branches Conferences in conjunction with the plenary conferences. Members from more than 30 jurisdictions with populations up to 500,000 discuss political issues and the workings of parliamentary democracy in some of the world's smallest jurisdictions.

Forging international connections is especially important for unique and/or isolated institutions: we have much to learn from Guernsey, which has a consensus-style government; from Namibia,

which has a relatively small population and a low population density; and from each of the 54 member nations of the CPA, which all have a unique take on parliamentary democracy. Being one of only two jurisdictions in Canada with a consensus-style system of government, as well as one of Canada's lowest-population jurisdictions, means we sometimes have more in common with other countries than we do with other Canadian jurisdictions.

The Legislative Assembly has hosted one Canadian Regional Parliamentary Seminar and one Canadian Conference of Presiding Officers since division. Delegates came to Yellowknife to participate in dialogue about democratic governance and experience life in a unique part of Canada.



Canadian Presiding Officers Conference 2005 – Halifax, NS



Canadian Parliamentary Association Conference 2009 – Yellowknife, NT



Honourable Speaker Delorey and the Philippine Ambassador in the Chamber



Former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson (*fourth from left*) and former Commissioner Glenna Hansen (*at microphone*) at National Aboriginal Day 2006



Canadian Parliamentary Association Conference 2005 – Suva, Fiji

National Aboriginal Day

In 1996, the Governor General of Canada declared June 21 to be National Aboriginal Day. The Northwest Territories is the only jurisdiction in Canada to celebrate National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday, and first did so on June 21, 2002. The *National Aboriginal Day Act*, which made June 21 of every year a public holiday, was passed in 2001 in recognition of the cultures of the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories, their significant contributions to the Northwest Territories, and to celebrate and honour those cultures and contributions. Typical celebrations across the territory include bannock and fish fries, music, craft sales, many kinds of dancing (Métis reel, drum, hoop), and drumming.



Drummers at National Aboriginal Day 2010 in Yellowknife, credit: Kyle Thomas



16th Legislative Assembly

Back row L to R: Bob McLeod, MLA Yellowknife South; David Ramsay, MLA Kam Lake; Glen Abernethy, MLA Great Slave; Robert McLeod, MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes; Wendy Bisaro, MLA Frame Lake; Sandy Lee, MLA Range Lake; Paul Delorey, MLA Hay River North; Bob Bromley, MLA Weledeh; Michael McLeod, MLA Deh Cho; Jackie Jacobson, MLA Nunakput; Floyd Roland, MLA Inuvik Boot Lake. **Front row L to R:** Tom Beaulieu, MLA Tu Nedhe; Robert Hawkins, MLA Yellowknife Centre; Norman Yakeleya, MLA Sahtu; Michael Miltenberger, MLA Thebacha; Jackson Lafferty, MLA Monfwi; Jane Groenewegen, MLA Hay River South; Kevin Menicoche, MLA Nahendeh; David Krutko, MLA Mackenzie Delta

16TH, 15TH, AND 14TH ASSEMBLIES

The First Female Sergeant-at-Arms



The Honourable Anthony Whitford, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from 2000 to 2003, appointed the first female Sergeant-at-Arms in the Northwest Territories, Ms. Nicole Latour-Theede. As the first woman to hold the position, Ms. Latour-Theede was excited to accept the opportunity and brought a fresh perspective to her job. In her role as Sergeant-at-Arms she joined the select company of women who have served in this capacity elsewhere in Canada, including Ms. Mary McLaren, Usher of the Black Rod of the Senate of Canada, and fellow Sergeants-at-Arms Ms. Phyllis LeBlanc of New Brunswick and Ms. Elizabeth Gallagher of Newfoundland.



15th Legislative Assembly

Back row L to R: Jackson Lafferty, MLA Monfwi; Charles Dent, MLA Frame Lake; Michael McLeod, MLA Deh Cho; Bobby Villeneuve, MLA Tu Nedhe; Joseph Handley, MLA Weledeh; Sandy Lee, MLA Range Lake; Calvin Pokiak, MLA Nunakput; David Ramsay, MLA Kam Lake; Brendan Bell, MLA Yellowknife South; Bill Braden, MLA Great Slave; Robert McLeod, MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes; Floyd Roland, MLA Inuvik Boot Lake. **Front row L to R:** Robert Hawkins, MLA Yellowknife South; Michael Miltenberger, MLA Thebacha; Jane Groenewegen, MLA Hay River South; Paul Delorey, MLA Hay River North; Norman Yakeleya, MLA Sahtu; Kevin Menicoche, MLA Nahdendeh; David Krutko, MLA Mackenzie Delta



14th Legislative Assembly

Back row L to R: Jim Antoine, MLA Nahendeh; Stephen Kakfwi, MLA Sahtu; Paul Delorey, MLA Hay River North; Brendan Bell, MLA Yellowknife South; Vince Steen, MLA Nunakput; Roger Allen, MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes; Sandy Lee, MLA Range Lake; Floyd Roland, MLA Inuvik Boot Lake; Leon Lafferty, MLA North Slave; David Krutko, MLA Mackenzie Delta; Michael Miltenberger, MLA Thebacha; Charles Dent, MLA Frame Lake. **Front row L to R:** Michael McLeod, MLA Deh Cho; Anthony Whitford, MLA Kam Lake; Bill Braden, MLA Great Slave; Jane Groenewegen, MLA Hay River South; Steven Nitah, MLA Tu Nedhe; Jake Ootes, MLA Yellowknife Centre; Joe Handley, MLA Weledeh.

Legislative Page Program

Pages in the 13th century were youths who served people of rank, usually royalty or nobles. Today, in the Canadian parliamentary context, the word “page” denotes a youth who serves in a parliament or legislature running errands, carrying messages, and distributing printed material.

The Legislative Assembly employs about eight pages per day when it is in session. Pages play an important role, and provide many services to the members and officers of the Assembly. They provide drinking water and clean up the Chamber at the conclusion of each day’s proceedings; they distribute documents to members, and interpretation receivers to members of the public in the gallery; and they deliver messages to members and staff within and outside the Chamber.

The page program allows junior high school students with an interest in the legislative process or public affairs to see, firsthand, how the political system works and how public policy is decided by the Legislative Assembly. The page program is open to students from across the territory who are enrolled in school full-time, and achieve good academic performance. They work in the Chamber about 15 hours a week during sittings and are paid for their time. The cost of the program is borne by the Assembly.



Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure in Inuvik, NT, 2009

COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATURE

Committees are essential to the functioning of modern legislatures, because they allow members to consider issues in more focus and detail. In the Northwest Territories, committees meet both during and between sittings. Committees are where much of the legislative work happens, and members spend much more time in committees than they do in the House. There are five types of committees: the Committee of the Whole, standing committees, special committees, joint committees, and the Striking Committee.

The Committee of the Whole

This committee consists of all 19 members of the Legislative Assembly. It holds its meetings in the Chamber, but the proceedings are less formal and more flexible. The Deputy Speaker chairs the Committee of the Whole in place of the Speaker, assisted by two deputy chairs.

The Legislative Assembly refers many matters to the Committee of the Whole. All bills, with the exception of appropriation or financial bills, are referred to the committee after they are reported back by standing committees. This is a chance for members to discuss a bill in more detail, and offers a final opportunity for amendment.

All business discussed in Committee of the Whole is reported to the assembly by the Chair. The assembly then decides whether to accept the committee's report and to adopt the decisions made.

Standing Committees

Standing committees are permanent committees that carry out much of the work of the Assembly. They help ensure that all members can voice their opinions on issues. Each Assembly determines how it will divide up its work and assign tasks to standing committees that focus on specific areas of public administration: for example, health and social services; internal government operations; the environment, infrastructure and the economy. The 16th Legislative Assembly chose to create five standing committees as well as a Board of Management, which is responsible for the administration of the Legislative Assembly. These standing committees review all major policy changes and legislative initiatives before they reach the floor of the House.

In the Northwest Territories' consensus system of government there are no political parties. The regular members are sometimes said to form an "unofficial opposition". In recent years, assemblies have chosen to have seven cabinet ministers and eleven regular members. Only the regular members sit on standing committees. Due to the greater number of regular members and the resulting "balance" of power, the standing committees of the Legislative Assembly play an important and meaningful role.

Standing committees routinely hold public hearings on bills that are before them. Often the public hearings are only held in the capital, but for important or controversial legislation, the committee reviewing the bill may travel throughout the Northwest Territories. Committees try to ensure that anyone who has an

interest in commenting on the proposed legislation can do so. A small budget is often available to fly people in from outlying communities should they wish to appear before a committee. Hearings are advertised on the Assembly website, in newspapers, on television and radio, and sometimes in selected official languages to reach as wide an audience as possible.

Consensus government is generally more open and communicative than party politics. Certainly there is more communication between the regular members and cabinet than in any party system. To embody this idea of transparency, standing committees are opening more of their meetings to the public. There are still many times when it is necessary and appropriate to hold meetings privately (*in camera*), but where making discussions and information public does not unfairly affect third parties or compromise territorial interests (for example in the case of legal action and budgets), committees are trying to work more in the public eye.

Special Committees

Special committees are created as needed by assemblies. For example, the 11th Assembly established special committees to deal with the economy, constitutional reform, and aboriginal languages. The Special Committees on Health and Social Services; Housing; and Division were set up during the 12th Assembly. The 13th Assembly established a Special Committee on National Unity to co-ordinate consultations with Northwest Territories residents on national constitutional matters. As well, the Special Committee on Western Identity was formed to consider official symbols,

heraldry, and other matters arising from the creation of Nunavut. There were four special committees established during the 14th Legislative Assembly: the Special Committee on the Review of the *Official Languages Act*, the Special Committee on Conflict Process, the Special Committee on Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause, and the Special Joint Committee on Non-Tax-Based Community Affairs.

Assemblies determine specific responsibilities for each special committee and often identify a time frame for the completion of each committee's mandate.

Joint Committees

Similar to special committees, joint committees are established as needed by each assembly.



They often consist of both cabinet ministers and regular members, and consider broad issues that require both groups to work together closely. For example, the 16th Assembly created a Joint Committee on Climate Change, as well as a Committee on the Sustainability of Rural and Remote Communities.

Striking Committee

A striking committee, consisting of five regular members, recommends members for appointment to the various standing committees at the start of each assembly, and as vacancies occur. Assignments are generally based on areas of interest and expertise. A striking committee is established by motion at the beginning of each new Legislative Assembly. During the 16th Assembly, the Striking Committee consisted of the five standing committee chairs.



L to R: Special Committee on Official Languages, 14th Legislative Assembly; Standing Committee on Social Programs, 16th Legislative Assembly

Greater Accountability and Transparency

In the Northwest Territories, as in many other jurisdictions in Canada and abroad, there has been an increasing demand from the public for greater accountability and transparency within government and political institutions generally. One area of great public interest is the manner in which elected officials carry out their work and the details of the indemnities, allowances and expenses each member receives.

The Board of Management is responsible for the overall administration of the Legislative Assembly. The board provides the services necessary for members to carry out their duties and establishes policies regarding the conduct of members. In recent years, the Boards of Management of each Legislative Assembly have responded to public demands for greater openness by introducing numerous policy, legislative and regulatory changes specifically related to indemnities, allowances and expenses paid to each member each fiscal year. Board recommendations, which have been adopted by the Assembly, require reports detailing many of the members' expenses to be tabled in the Assembly annually. These reports are all public and many appear on the Assembly website, both allowing and encouraging greater public scrutiny.

Major Work of Committees

Reviews of the *Official Languages Act*

The Northwest Territories has 11 official languages: Chipewyan, Cree, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey, and Tłı̨chǫ.

The first review of the *Official Languages Act* began in 2001 with the establishment of a special committee. Two years of research, consultation and discussion culminated in a report which was presented in the House in 2003. The special committee made 65 recommendations that addressed strengthening policy and legislation, enhancing language service delivery, improving aboriginal language education and increasing human-resource language capacity. A bill to amend the *Official Languages Act* was prepared and the changes included a requirement to review the *Act* every five years. A minister was designated as responsible for the *Act* and an Aboriginal Languages Board was created to advise the minister.

“With the release of this report, the Special Committee urges all NWT citizens to open their hearts and their minds to reflect on the value of our languages and the cultures in which they are rooted. We must continue to invest in our languages as a means to building a healthy, sustainable society.”

– *Committee Chair Steven Nitah*



Standing Committee on Social Programs, *Child and Family Services Act* Review Tour, Ulukhaktok, NT, 2010

As required by legislation, the Standing Committee on Government Operations completed an additional review of the *Official Languages Act* in 2008. In its report, called *Reality Check: Securing a Future for the Official Languages of the Northwest Territories*, presented in the House in 2009, the committee found aboriginal languages to be in a “state of emergency”. Members recommended an Aboriginal Languages Protection Regime to foster the revitalization of aboriginal languages and secure their survival. The report recommended “designated language areas” to assist in planning language service delivery.

The committee recommended revising the *Act* to set out an official languages service-delivery model within government. A motion was

passed to support in principle the findings and recommendations of the report.

Pre-Budget Consultations

In an attempt to give the public another meaningful way to influence the Government of the Northwest Territories’ business planning and budget, in the fall of 2005 and 2006 members of the 15th Legislative Assembly’s Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight toured NWT communities for two weeks seeking input on government programs and spending. Residents were able to speak to the entire committee about their concerns, rather than just to their individual member. Members also had the opportunity to visit other ridings and gain firsthand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities faced by other northerners.



L to R: Standing Committee on Social Programs *Child and Family Services Act* Review Tour, 2010; David Krukto, MLA Mackenzie Delta, Bob Bromley, MLA Weledeh, Jackie Jacobson, MLA Nunakput, Glen Abernethy, MLA Great Slave, members of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure in Tulita, NT, 2009



Child and Family Services Act Review

The *Child and Family Services Act* governs child protection, apprehension, and fostering in the Northwest Territories. In 2010, the *Act* and its implementation were thoroughly reviewed by the Standing Committee on Social Programs. Its five members travelled to 10 communities for public hearings, and held focused meetings with stakeholders and care providers. The committee also received 52 written submissions before completing its report, titled *Building Stronger Families*.

People in the communities stressed the damage done by the residential school system and its impact on the

delivery of child and family services to the present day. Led by public input and reinforced by intensive research, the committee's 73 recommendations focused on empowering communities to take a greater role in child protection, using least-intrusive measures and extended family placements, and making alcohol and drug treatment programs more readily available and better supported.

Committee members envisioned their report leading to steady improvement of the child protection system, resulting in culturally appropriate methods and in the long run, stronger families requiring fewer public interventions.

Circle of Northern Leaders

In 2003, at the first Caucus meeting of the 15th Legislative Assembly, there was agreement among members that other leaders in the Northwest Territories should have a voice in setting the agenda for the 15th Assembly. This resulted in an historic gathering of aboriginal leaders, municipal government leaders, and the 19 MLAs. The K'atlodeeche First Nation hosted this gathering on the Hay River Dene Reserve over three days in April 2004. It became known as the Circle of Northern Leaders.

To ensure that all governments were treated as full participants, planning for the meeting was overseen by a steering committee led by Legislative Assembly Caucus chair Kevin Menicoche with representatives from aboriginal and municipal and territorial governments. The committee selected two independent co-chairs, former premier Jim Antoine and Ms. Joanne Barnaby.

Following the meeting of the Circle of Northern Leaders, the Caucus completed its strategic planning. Two documents came out of that process: the 15th Assembly's vision and goals, and a strategic plan for the government that identified specific actions pursuant to the goals identified. Both documents were released to the public in June 2004. Subsequent Circle of Northern Leaders meetings were held in Inuvik and Norman Wells in 2005 and 2006.



Budget Address, 2010

SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATIVE WORK

Perhaps the primary and most important function of a legislature is to make laws. Since division, significant pieces of legislation have been introduced or completely modernized, including:

Human Rights Act – 2002

In 2002, the Legislative Assembly passed the *Human Rights Act* to promote and protect human rights in the Northwest Territories. This act replaced the outdated *Fair Practices Act*, which provided only limited protections. The *Human Rights Act* prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, or nationality; sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity; family status, marital status, or family affiliation; social condition; religion or creed; political belief or association; a pardoned criminal conviction; disability; or age. The act provides a means to address human rights violations in the delivery of services, employment, tenancy agreements, and other aspects of everyday life. The act is implemented by a Human Rights Commission Adjudication Panel and a Director of Human Rights, all of whom are appointed on a merit basis for fixed terms by the Legislative Assembly.

Tłı̨chǫ Agreement – 2005

The *Tłı̨chǫ Agreement* came into effect on August 4, 2005. It is the first combined land, resource and self-government agreement in the Northwest Territories.

The *Tłı̨chǫ Agreement* applies to a block of approximately 39,000 square kilometres of land, including subsurface resources surrounding the four

Tłı̨chǫ communities of Behchokǫ, Whatı̨, Wekweètı̨ and Gamètı̨. This land is part of the Tłı̨chǫ people's traditional territory, Monfwi Gogha De Niitlee, as described by Chief Monfwi when Treaty 11 was signed in 1921.

The Legislative Assembly enacted three major pieces of legislation to support the implementation of the *Agreement*: the *Tłı̨chǫ Land Claim and Self-Government Act* (2003), the *Tłı̨chǫ Community Government Act* (2004), and the *Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency Act* (2005).

Elections and Plebiscites Act – 2007

In January of 2007, the Legislative Assembly adopted a new *Elections and Plebiscites Act*. As a result, the 2007 general territorial election marked a number of firsts in the history of the Northwest Territories. This was the first election held on a fixed date: as set out in the new act, elections are required every four years on the first Monday in October. The act also sets out the term of appointment for the Chief Electoral Officer; clarifies campaign rules and restrictions for both candidates and the public; and provides instructions regarding election expenses and contributions, reporting, and administration of a general election or plebiscite in the Northwest Territories.

The Northwest Territories continues to move forward, meeting the needs of citizens and candidates as they take part in this important aspect of parliamentary democracy. The *Elections and Plebiscites Act* was further amended in May 2010, allowing for special multi-district polls for students

and at remote work sites, as a means of ensuring everyone can vote across the diverse geographic range of the Northwest Territories.

Species at Risk (NWT) Act – 2009

The *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* helps identify, protect and assist the recovery of endangered species in the Northwest Territories through cooperative management. The process of drafting the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* involved a great deal of consultation with stakeholders, including aboriginal governments, wildlife co-management boards established under land claim agreements, and the general public. Public interest in the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* was high, and members of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure travelled to all regions to hold public hearings on the bill. They heard concerns from people across the Northwest Territories who worried this would adversely affect their hunting or land rights. The committee made several amendments to the bill reflecting northerners' concerns, and the amended bill became law on June 4, 2009.



People in public gallery, opening of the First Session of the 16th Legislative Assembly, 2007



Members in Caucus, 2011

Premiers Sign Northern Cooperation Accord

On September 3, 2003, the premiers of all three territories signed the Northern Cooperation Accord in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. This accord was intended to “promote cooperation between the three governments on matters of mutual concern and interest, to promote sharing of information relevant to such concerns and interests, and to enhance the working relationship among the three governments.” The accord has been renewed twice so far: in 2006 and 2009.

Other major pieces of legislation introduced or comprehensively redrafted since 1999 include:

- *Nursing Profession Act* – 2003
- *Midwifery Profession Act* – 2003
- *Municipal Statutes Replacement Act* – 2004
- *NWT Business Development Investment Corporation Act* – 2005
- *Pharmacy Act* – 2006
- *Public Health Act* – 2007
- *Workers’ Compensation Act* – 2007
- *Liquor Act* – 2007



Commissioner Tuccaro signing oath

COMMISSIONERS OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The Commissioner plays a pivotal role in the governance of the Northwest Territories. Appointed by the Governor-in-Council of Canada on the recommendation of the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is the federal government's representative in the NWT and the Northwest Territories' Chief Executive Officer. The Commissioner's position is established under the federal *Northwest Territories Act* and today exercises a function similar to a provincial Lieutenant Governor's.

The Commissioner administers the following legislative duties:

- Swearing-in of the members of the Legislative Assembly;
- Swearing-in of the members of the Executive Council upon recommendation of the members of the Legislative Assembly;
- Appointment of members of the Executive Council to ministerial portfolios on the advice of the Premier;
- Providing assent for bills after they are passed by the Legislative Assembly. A bill must be approved by the Commissioner before it becomes law;
- The reading of the speech to open the sessions of the Legislative Assembly;
- Signing of documents such as orders-in-council, Commissioner's warrants, statutory appointments and disposition of Commissioner's Lands.

In addition to performing legislative duties, the Commissioner serves as a link between the government and the people. Customary responsibilities include playing a ceremonial role as a representative of the Government of the Northwest Territories at official and landmark events.

Deputy Commissioner

The *Northwest Territories Act* also provides for the appointment of a Deputy Commissioner to act when the Commissioner is unable to do so, or when the office is vacant. The Deputy Commissioner serves as an alternate to the Commissioner, rather than an assistant or subordinate.

Commissioners

Dan Marion – 1999-2000
Glenna F. Hansen – 2000-2005
Anthony W. J. Whitford – 2005-2010
George L. Tuccaro – 2010-present

Deputy Commissioners

Cal Mains – 2001-2004
Anthony W. J. Whitford – 2004-2005
Margaret Thom – 2005-present



L to R, Top: Dan Marion, Glenna F. Hansen, Anthony W.J. Whitford, George L. Tuccaro.
Bottom: Commissioner Tuccaro swearing-in ceremony; Anthony W.J. Whitford and Honourable Speaker Delorey



Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in Chamber

ROYAL TOUR 2011

The Northwest Territories was delighted to host Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on their first visit to Canada following their April wedding. The royal couple visited the Yellowknife area from July 4-6, 2011. This was the first royal visit since Queen Elizabeth II visited in 1994. Prince William is the third generation of Windsors to tour the Northwest Territories: his father, Prince Charles, also visited in 1979.

The Northwest Territories was proud to showcase its beautiful landscape and the diversity of its culture, heritage and people. During the entire Canadian tour, emphasis was on the youth of Canada and this was certainly the case in the north.

The Northwest Territories program began with a public event at Somba K'e Civic Plaza. The couple greeted onlookers and visited with the crowds. They were able to observe Dene and Inuvialuit drumming and demonstrations of Dene hand games and Inuit games (such as the Inuit high kick). The Prince, cheered on by his wife, tried his hand in a ball hockey game between the NWT Youth Ambassadors and SideDoor youth centre participants and the royal couple were presented with their very own "Team Canada" hockey jerseys.

The Legislative Assembly was particularly honoured to host the royal couple as part of their busy program. The Duke and Duchess arrived at the Assembly in a motorcade, accompanied by the Honourable Premier Floyd Roland. The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, welcomed the royal guests and led them along the

walkway, lined with staff members excited to greet them as they entered the building. Entertainment was provided by the Kole Crook Fiddle Association and a children's choir from École J. H. Sissons school.

The Duke and Duchess were escorted into the Chamber where they met with members of the 2011 Youth Parliament and observed their debate. The youth voiced their views on the Northwest Territories educational system in a round table setting where they each had the opportunity to speak, and their Royal Highnesses listened with interest to the 20-minute debate. Watching from their seats in the Chamber were Members of the Assembly, while the gallery was filled with media, invited guests, and participants from the Legislative Assembly's inaugural 2010 Elders Parliament. The Youth Parliament debate was televised and broadcast throughout the Northwest Territories on the Legislative Assembly's regular television network, as well as being covered by various local, national, and international media.

The royal couple also had the opportunity to examine the Mace and learn more about the symbolism and artistry involved in its creation.

During the reception following the events in the Chamber, invited guests, MLAs, Youth Parliamentarians and Elder Parliamentarians mingled in the Great Hall, where they had the opportunity to personally meet and welcome the royal couple. The couple had a kind word and an interested question for everyone with whom they spoke. At the conclusion of the reception,

the Honourable Premier Floyd Roland presented the Duke and Duchess with some northern-mined diamonds as gifts: cufflinks for His Royal Highness and a diamond brooch for Her Royal Highness, all in the shape of the iconic polar bear.

On the last leg of their northern visit, the Royals boarded a float plane in Yellowknife's historic Old Town for a 20-minute flight to the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning at Blachford Lake Lodge. There, the Royals met with the Canadian Rangers and Junior Rangers. They also met with the staff and students of the Dechinta Centre, who showcased how the Centre integrates elements of traditional Aboriginal knowledge and learning into a university-accredited program. While there, the royal couple had the opportunity to participate in some truly Canadian activities: they paddled a canoe, ate arctic char and bannock on the shore of a northern lake, and watched demonstrations on the making of drymeat and the tanning of moose hides.



Youth Parliamentarian Emily Sturgeon speaking in Chamber with Regular Members in background



L to R, Top: Youth Parliamentarian debate in Chamber; Duke and Duchess of Cambridge with Speaker Paul Delorey
Bottom: Duke of Cambridge and Youth Parliamentarian Matt Nguyen Ha at reception; Viewing the Mace: Sergeant-at-Arms Brian Thagard, Clerk Tim Mercer, Speaker Paul Delorey, Duke of Cambridge, and Duchess of Cambridge

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