

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
Report to Canadians



2006





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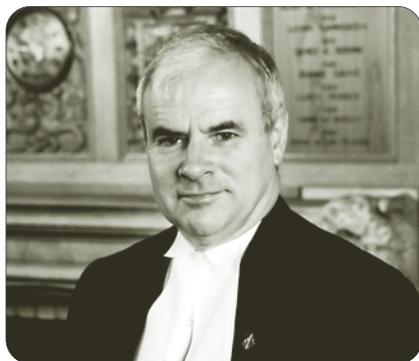
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Approved by the Board of Internal Economy



LETTER FROM THE SPEAKER



*The Honourable Peter Milliken, M.P.
Speaker of the House of Commons*

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS/BERNARD CLARK

As Speaker of the House of Commons, I am very pleased to present the *Report to Canadians 2006*, which highlights the work of Members of the House of Commons, and the activities of the House Administration in support of Members and the institution.

The past year was a time of adaptation and change for the House of Commons. For the first time in 25 years, a minority government was in power, and considerable public attention was focused on the Commons Chamber. Members and the House Administration developed new ways of working to ensure that the nation's business would continue to be conducted effectively. The 38th Parliament came to an end with the calling of the general election, a pivotal event in a parliamentary democracy.

Throughout 2005-2006, debate, decision and representation continued to be the foundation of Members' work as they met in the Commons Chamber to discuss legislation. Bills were presented on a wide range of subjects, from energy, health care and Internet technology, to marriage, retirement savings and employment. Members also asked questions of the government, represented constituents' views and brought national issues into the spotlight.

Outside the Chamber, Members studied legislation and issues in greater depth through their work on Commons committees. An important feature of committee work is the opportunity it offers for Canadians to express their views on the subjects under study. This past year, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade launched an e-consultation process (that is, a consultation via the Internet) to obtain public input on Canada's international policy statement.

Helping constituents is an essential part of a Member's activities. Constituents regularly contact Members for information about federal government programs or for assistance in dealing with federal departments. To increase access to information about the House of Commons, new features were added to the Parliament of Canada Web site, which received some 10 million visits in the past year.

On the international stage, Members met with colleagues from other countries to discuss issues of common interest and support democratic institutions. Trade, immigration and international responsibilities were just some of the topics on the agenda as Members and House officials met with representatives from such countries as the Russian Federation, China, and the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas.

To support Members in all of these activities, the Administration is grouped into five Service Areas offering specialized expertise in such fields as parliamentary procedure, human and financial resources, technology, law, security, building services and facilities management. Employees work diligently behind the scenes to provide Members with high-quality service and maintain the House of Commons as an institution.

The *Report to Canadians* provides a look into the activities of Members and the work of the House of Commons Administration. It is one component in the House of Commons' effort to increase the public's understanding of Canada's parliamentary system, and to maintain high standards of public-sector governance. I invite you to read the Report and learn more about the House of Commons by visiting the Parliament of Canada Web site.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Peter Milliken". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Peter Milliken, M.P.
Speaker of the House of Commons

WELCOME TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE

125th Anniversary of Hansard

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 4th May, 1880.

The Speaker took the Chair at Three
o'clock.

PRAYERS.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE DEBATES.
COMMITTEE'S REPORT PRESENTED.

*"Hansard exists, not for the
legislator alone but, in a real sense,
for the nation."*

*Former Parliamentary
Librarian and
Parliamentarian,
Martin Burrell, 1928*

*On May 4, 1880, the Official
Debates Reporting Branch
published its first record of the
debates in the House of Commons.
Hansard remains critical today not
only for Members and the smooth
functioning of Parliament, but also
for the historical record of Canada.
To honour this 125th anniversary,
the House of Commons is presenting
the history and accomplishments
of Hansard in this 2005–2006
annual report.*

The House of Commons is a place where Canadians can see democratic principles put into action. Elected representatives debate national issues, examine proposals for laws, and express the ideas and concerns of their constituents. It is a place of reflection and action, debate and decision. This work takes place not only in the green-carpeted Chamber that television has made familiar to Canadians, but in committee rooms, party caucus rooms and Members' offices. In all these areas of activity, Members of Parliament are supported by the employees of the House of Commons Administration.

This past year was marked by a key event in a democracy: an election. The 38th Parliament ended in November 2005, and Canadians went to the polls in January 2006, to elect their federal representatives. This *Report to Canadians* focuses on the work of Members and the House Administration from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006, and on the Administration's commitments for 2006–2007. The 39th Parliament, the work of new and returning Members and the support provided by the House Administration will be the subject of next year's report.

In this section of the *Report to Canadians*, you will find information on the composition of the House of Commons and the activities carried out by Members of Parliament.

THE WORK OF A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Members of the House of Commons have many roles: they make laws, bring Canadians' ideas and concerns to national attention, act as ombudspersons for their constituents, and represent Canada internationally.

In the Chamber — The Chamber is the focal point for the Commons' activities. Members debate and vote on proposals, table documents and petitions, ask questions of the government, and raise issues of importance to Canadians.

In committee — Members also serve on committees, where they examine bills, departmental expenditures and current issues in depth.

In their constituencies — Constituents contact their Members of Parliament to discuss matters of concern to them, and to ask for help regarding federal government programs and services.

On the international stage — Members have a role to play internationally by representing Canada's interests, promoting democratic institutions and strengthening ties with other countries.

PARTY MEMBERSHIP IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Members of Parliament are also members of their respective political parties. Senators and Members of the House of Commons who belong to the same party attend regular and special caucus meetings, where they raise issues on behalf of constituents, and discuss party policies and parliamentary strategy. While some Members sit as independents, most belong to one of four party caucuses. Listed alphabetically, these caucuses are the Bloc Québécois, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, and the New Democratic Party.



The House of Commons Chamber is a forum where national issues and legislation are debated.

PHOTO: © LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT/ROY GROGAN

PERIOD OF THE REPORT

April 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006

This report summarizes activities in the period corresponding to the standard government fiscal year.

PARLIAMENTARY SESSIONS COVERED IN THIS PERIOD

1st session, 38th Parliament

(partial, March 2005 – November 2005)

KEY DATES

November 29, 2005 – 38th Parliament dissolved

January 23, 2006 – 39th general election held

TOTAL NUMBER OF SITTING DAYS

2005–2006 84 days

At the end of the 38th Parliament, party membership in the House of Commons was distributed as follows:

	Lib.	Cons.	BQ	NDP	Ind.	Vacant	Total
Alberta	1	26			1		28
British Columbia	8	22		5		1	36
Prince Edward Island	4						4
Manitoba	3	7		3	1		14
New Brunswick	7	2		1			10
Nova Scotia	6	3		2			11
Ontario	74	23		7	2		106
Quebec	21		53			1	75
Saskatchewan	1	13					14
Newfoundland and Labrador	5	2					7
Nunavut	1						1
Northwest Territories	1						1
Yukon	1						1
National Total	133	98	53	18	4	2	308

Membership after the 39th general election is shown below:

	Cons.	Lib.	BQ	NDP	Ind.	Vacant	Total
Alberta	28						28
British Columbia	18	8		10			36
Prince Edward Island		4					4
Manitoba	8	3		3			14
New Brunswick	3	6		1			10
Nova Scotia	3	6		2			11
Ontario	40	54		12			106
Quebec	10	13	51		1		75
Saskatchewan	12	2					14
Newfoundland and Labrador	3	4					7
Nunavut		1					1
Northwest Territories				1			1
Yukon		1					1
National Total	125	102	51	29	1		308

For a more detailed breakdown of membership in the Commons, please consult the Parliament of Canada Web site (www.parl.gc.ca) under “Current Parliamentarians.”

A CLOSER LOOK AT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The Members of the House of the Commons are as diverse as the people they represent. Seated behind the desks in the Commons Chamber are men and women from many cultural backgrounds, with a wide variety of skills and experience.

The expertise that Members bring to their work spans generations. During the 38th Parliament, the average age of Members was 51, with the youngest Member being 25 and the oldest 73. Figures during the 39th Parliament are almost identical: the average age is 51, with the youngest Member being 26 and the oldest 72.

Members of Parliament have experience in a wide variety of fields, including law, business, agriculture, journalism, education, religion, economics and administration. For specific information about the occupation of Members from the current and past Parliaments, please visit the Parliament of Canada Web site (www.parl.gc.ca) under “Current Parliamentarians.”

The 38th Parliament had the most female Members ever elected — 65 seats were held by women. That number decreased slightly to 64 in the 39th Parliament.

Membership in the House includes the Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples of North America as well as the many nationalities who have made Canada their home. Over the past two Parliaments, approximately 12 percent of Members were born outside Canada in countries such as Greece, Italy, China, India, the United Kingdom, the United States, Tanzania, and Trinidad and Tobago.

HOW TO FIND YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Canadians can use their postal code to identify their Member of Parliament on the Parliament of Canada Web site at www.parl.gc.ca. This site also offers information about Members and their work. Fold-out inserts in the centre of this report show photographs of the Members who were elected to Canada's 38th and 39th Parliaments.

AT WORK IN THE CHAMBER

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

In addition to his duties in the Chamber, the Speaker represents the House of Commons in its relations with the Crown, the Senate and authorities outside Parliament. In this capacity, he welcomes many visiting dignitaries and delegations, and represents the House during national events and visits abroad. The Speaker also has the standard responsibilities of a Member of Parliament.

In general, the House of Commons follows a parliamentary calendar that establishes a schedule of sittings and adjournments running from September to June. These sittings and adjournments are grouped together into sessions. There can be several sessions in a Parliament or as few as one. The beginning of each session is highlighted by the Speech from the Throne, which outlines the government's commitments for that session.

In 2005–2006, the House continued its work as part of the first session of the 38th Parliament. On November 24, 2005, the Leader of the Official Opposition moved a motion of non-confidence which was put to a vote on November 28, 2005 and adopted. As a result, business ended on November 29, 2005, when the Governor General, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, dissolved Parliament and called a general election.

MAINTAINING ORDER IN THE HOUSE

The Speaker of the House of Commons maintains order in the Chamber and ensures that every Member respects the rules and practices of the House. The Speaker is elected by secret ballot.

The Speaker is assisted by three other Chair Occupants, who are selected from among the Members to serve as presiding officers. They help the Speaker ensure that the House follows the rules and traditions that govern it. The Speaker proposes candidates for the positions after consulting with the leaders of recognized political parties in the House. During the 38th Parliament, the Honourable Peter Milliken was Speaker and the following Members served as presiding officers: Chuck Strahl, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole; Marcel Proulx, Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole; and the Honourable Jean Augustine, Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole.

CREATING CANADA'S LAWS

Adopting and amending laws is one of the major functions of the House of Commons. Federal legislation starts out as a "bill," which is a proposal to create a new law or to amend an existing law. A bill must be approved (in identical form) by both the Senate and the House of Commons, and receive Royal Assent before it can become law. The time required to pass a bill can vary, depending on the urgency of the matter, its complexity and the degree of consensus among Members.

There are two main types of bills: public and private. Generally, public bills concern matters of public policy, such as agriculture or finance. They can be sponsored by the government and introduced by a Cabinet Minister (government bill), or sponsored by Private Members (any Member who is not a Minister). The latter is called a Private Member's public bill.

Private bills are designed to exempt an individual or group from the application of the law, such as a bill to incorporate a private company. For example, Bill S-25, *An Act to amend the Act of incorporation of The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada*, received Royal Assent on May 19, 2005.

Bills may also be introduced in the Senate. However, any bills to raise or spend public funds (known as money bills) must be introduced in the House of Commons.

From April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006, there were 45 government bills introduced in the House of Commons. This proposed legislation covered a range of social, economic and political issues, such as:

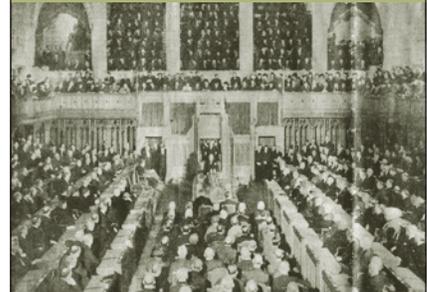
- burden of proof regarding proceeds of crime
- civil marriage
- election advertising
- helping Canadians deal with high energy costs
- Labrador Inuit land claims
- strengthening animal cruelty laws
- the prevention of street-racing
- wage earner protection as a result of bankrupt or insolvent companies

Over the past fiscal year, 121 Private Members' public bills were introduced. Like the legislation proposed by the government, these bills focused on a variety of issues of importance to the public, such as:

- changes to foreign property rules for retirement savings plans
- creating a national day of appreciation for members of the Canadian Forces, police officers, firefighters and others
- health-care services for autistic persons

PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE

An Impartial, Accurate Record



Hansard is a report of the debates in the House of Commons—not a verbatim transcript as many believe, but a record with slight alterations to make it more precise and readable. Editors can correct errors in figures, improve grammar and eliminate minor repetition. Members can do the same with their speeches; however, they can never, as tempting as it may occasionally be, change the substance and meaning of their words.

The name of the report comes from T.C. Hansard's Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, a reprint that began in 1812 of the speeches given in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Hansard is now used to designate the official debates of parliaments throughout the English-speaking world.

WINSTON CHURCHILL DELIVERING
A HISTORIC SPEECH, CAPTURED IN
HANSARD, DECEMBER 1941.

SOURCE: OTTAWA CITIZEN

LEGISLATIVE STATISTICS

GOVERNMENT BILLS
INTRODUCED IN 2005–2006 45

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BILLS
INTRODUCED IN 2005–2006 121

- increasing employment insurance benefit periods based on regional unemployment rates
- personal identity theft
- publishing information concerning youth charged as adults in criminal court
- regulating Voice over Internet Protocol services

As a result of changes to the Standing Orders in the 37th Parliament, more Private Members' public bills were approved in principle at second reading. Excluding Private Members' public bills changing the name of electoral districts, four Private Members' public bills received Royal Assent (and hence became law), in part due to the short duration of the 38th Parliament.

Members of the House of Commons can suggest amendments to bills. Over 1,000 motions of amendment were proposed at committee and report stages during the 38th Parliament.

A number of booklets and fact sheets are available that describe the legislative process in simple terms. *Inside Canada's Parliament*, *Guide to the Canadian House of Commons*, and *How Canadians Govern Themselves* are just some of the publications offered on the Parliament of Canada Web site. A recent addition to the site, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, by former Clerk of the House of Commons Robert Marleau and former Deputy Clerk Camille Montpetit, provides detailed explanations of the workings of the House of Commons.



Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, gives Royal Assent to legislation after it has been reviewed and approved by both the Senate and the House of Commons.

PHOTO: © SENATE OF CANADA

MAINTAINING RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

One of the most important functions of the House of Commons is to question the government about its policies and performance, and give it the opportunity to explain its actions. Members of Parliament carry out this role by asking questions during Question Period, submitting questions to the government in writing, and selecting topics for debate on specified days.

During each sitting day, 45 minutes are reserved for oral questions, or Question Period as it is more widely known. During this time, members of the opposition parties can ask questions of the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and committee chairpersons. Members of the government who are not in Cabinet may also pose questions. These questions concern the programs, policies and activities under the Cabinet's responsibility. Either a Minister or a parliamentary secretary responds. When detailed, lengthy or technical information is sought from the government, questions can be submitted in writing. The replies are subsequently tabled in the House of Commons.

Overall, 3,232 oral questions were posed and 133 written questions submitted in the past fiscal year. During this period, an average of 38 questions per sitting day were asked during Question Period.

Opposition parties can also raise issues of concern by selecting the topics for the House to debate on allotted days (also known as opposition or supply days). Each calendar year, 22 days are set aside to consider these motions sponsored by opposition Members. The allotted days are divided based on party representation and as a result of ongoing consultations among opposition parties. Over the past fiscal year, the issues discussed on allotted days included the following:

- a Canadian strategy for health
- a strategy to help older workers
- child care
- confidence in the government
- discrimination on the basis of political opinion
- employment insurance
- the 39th general election
- the *Access to Information Act*
- the Air India bombing
- the mandate of the Gomery Commission
- the sponsorship program
- the World Trade Organization

Members can also participate in special debates, referred to as “take-note debates,” which focus on important public issues. They are held after the ordinary hour of daily adjournment and usually continue late into the evening. In 2005–2006, the following topics were debated:

- Canada’s military mission in Afghanistan
- cross-border sale of drugs via the Internet
- democratic reform and citizens’ engagement
- RCMP and law enforcement



Journalists wait in the House of Commons foyer to speak to Members after Question Period.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS

PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE

The Power of the Printed Word



For centuries in the United Kingdom, Members' speeches were guarded out of fear they would not be well received by the Crown. Since reporters could be arrested for taking notes, they would rely on memory and, remarkably, commit the speeches to paper upon leaving the Chamber. In many legislatures, including Canada's, visitors still are not allowed to enter the galleries with pen and paper.

In 1837, Canadian reporters gained the right to record the debates. However, these records consisted of biased and incomplete newspaper reports, and compilations of articles nicknamed the Scrapbook Hansard. Eleven months after the first official Hansard in May 1880, a motion was called for its discontinuance. Some Members didn't want their speeches to be published; others didn't want to bear the expense of producing the reports.

Sir John A. Macdonald passionately argued, "I hope we shall not make such a relapse into barbarism as to throw over the only means by which after generations shall be able to learn... what were the moving impulses of the people and their representatives in Parliament." The speech was recorded in the debates, and the resolution defeated.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD IS SEATED IN THE FRONT ROW, BESIDE THE EMPTY CHAIR (1898).
SOURCE: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

- softwood lumber
- supply management
- U.S. Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

TABLING DOCUMENTS

Tabling a document is a formal way of presenting information to the House of Commons and putting it on the official public record. A variety of reports must be tabled, including the annual reports of various departments and agencies, non-judicial Order-in-Council appointments, and government responses to committee reports. Ministers can table any report or paper concerning matters related to the administrative responsibilities of the government.

In 2005–2006, 1,455 parliamentary documents were tabled in the House of Commons, including the *First Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities* (Gomery Commission), a *Report on Democratic Reform*, and the *Annual Report of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada*.

ESTABLISHING THE RULES FOR THE CHAMBER

The daily activities in the Chamber are managed according to a set of rules known as the Standing Orders as well as a series of practices and traditions, some of which came to Canada from Great Britain and some of which were developed here. The House of Commons continues to develop and modify its rules and practices to help it conduct business effectively. In 2005–2006, very few changes were made to the Standing Orders, but the House made permanent the rules governing Private Members' Business, which had been provisional in nature since March 2003. These rules represent a significant modification since they allow all Members of the House, with the exception of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, Cabinet Ministers and their parliamentary secretaries, to put forward a bill or a motion for debate and eventual vote in the House.

Rules and practices can also be changed through rulings or decisions by the Speaker. In some cases, when more extensive procedural research is not required, these rulings are delivered “on the spot” by the Speaker. When a more in-depth examination of the facts of the case, past practices and precedents is required, a written ruling is prepared. In the period of this report, the Speaker delivered 49 rulings, which dealt with such questions as:

- comments discrediting the reputation of a Senator
- committees’ authority to revoke an Order-in-Council appointment
- disclosure of in-camera proceedings
- improper use of fax lines by individuals or organizations with no affiliation with the House, and the registration of Internet domain names of certain Members of the House of Commons
- mailings and the use of Members’ mailing frank
- the alleged failure of the government to answer a question on the *Order Paper*
- the conduct of the House of Commons Ethics Commissioner



Speaker Milliken marks Flag Day against a backdrop of the original Canadian flag that flew from the Peace Tower in 1965.

PHOTO: © C. DIOTTE

COMMITTEES: EXAMINING BILLS AND ISSUES IN DEPTH

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FOR THE 38TH PARLIAMENT

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics
Agriculture and Agri-Food
Canadian Heritage
Citizenship and Immigration
Environment and Sustainable Development
Finance
Fisheries and Oceans
Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Government Operations and Estimates
Health
Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Industry, Natural Resources, Science and Technology
Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
National Defence and Veterans Affairs
Official Languages
Procedure and House Affairs
Public Accounts
Status of Women
Transport

STANDING JOINT COMMITTEES

Library of Parliament
Scrutiny of Regulations

Committee work makes up an important part of Members' activities. In committee, they study and amend bills, and examine departmental spending plans. Committees may also initiate their own inquiries and explore issues referred by the House relating to areas of public policy including defence, health and finance. Members may call on interested parties to submit briefs, and they may have to travel across Canada or abroad to hear from individuals and groups who have an interest in the subject under study. For example, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, as part of its study of the Canadian feature film industry, travelled to Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montréal and Halifax to hold hearings and conduct site visits. The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs travelled to several countries in order to examine electoral reform. At the conclusion of a study, the committee presents a report to the House with its views and recommendations. Committee work can involve, on average, four meetings or eight hours a week of sittings per Member.

Committees offer Canadians a close-up look at the work of Members and the role of Parliament, and provide an opportunity for public input. The Parliament of Canada Web site features committee schedules and contact information. ParlVU, a live Webcast service, carries televised House of Commons committee meetings and the audio from all other House of Commons committee meetings that are open to the public.

DETERMINING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The House of Commons has over 20 standing committees made up of about 12 members each. Representation on the committees is based on the party standings in the House of Commons.

Many Members sit on more than one committee. To determine membership, party whips submit lists of candidates to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (the whips are Members who inform other Members in the same party of House business and ensure their attendance in the Chamber and in committee). This Committee submits a final list to the House of Commons for approval.

Committees are usually chaired by members of the governing party. They are supported by a first vice-chair, who is a member of the Official Opposition party, and a second vice-chair, who is a member of an opposition party other than the Official Opposition. However, in the 38th Parliament, members of the Official Opposition chaired the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations, and the standing committees on Public Accounts; Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics; and Government Operations and Estimates. In the case of the House committees, the first and second vice-chairs were, respectively, members of the governing party and an opposition party other than the Official Opposition.

SUBJECTS UNDER STUDY

In addition to studying legislation, committees investigate many subjects of concern to a modern democracy. Their findings are published in reports. Over the past year, House of Commons committees held a total of 941 meetings and produced 159 reports. A full list is available on the Committees' page of the Parliament of Canada Web site, but the following subjects offer a glimpse of the range of issues examined:

- improving the security of government information technology systems
- Internet pharmacies
- liberalizing Canada's air policy and aviation industry
- Northern cod
- reducing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions
- the impact of the Internet, service providers and new technology on child pornography
- updating citizenship laws
- U.S. water diversion activities

COMMITTEE STATISTICS FOR 2005-2006

TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS	941
TOTAL NUMBER OF SITTING HOURS	1,597
TOTAL NUMBER OF WITNESSES	3,585
TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTS	159



House of Commons committees study issues and bills in depth, often calling on the expertise of witnesses from the public and private sectors.

PHOTO: © C. DIOTTE

TYPES OF COMMITTEES

Standing Committees

These are permanent committees that oversee the activities of government departments, study legislation and estimates, and carry out procedural and administrative responsibilities related to Parliament.

Special Committees

The House of Commons can appoint special committees to inquire into specific matters. They cease to exist after they have issued a final report or reached their deadline, or once a session has ended.

Legislative Committees

A legislative committee examines and inquires into bills referred to it by the House, and reports the bills back to the House with or without amendments.

Joint Committees

Joint committees are composed of Senators and Members of the House of Commons.

Subcommittees

Standing committees may delegate any or all of their powers to a subcommittee, except the power to report directly to the House of Commons.

COMMITTEE CONNECTIONS

The House is increasing its use of technology to help committees communicate with the public, and vice versa. For example, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade used Internet technology to conduct an e-consultation on the Government of Canada's International Policy Statement.

The Committees page on the Parliament of Canada Web site offers details on committee meetings, reports, membership, and information for and about witnesses. The site registered approximately 3.4 million visits between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

SERVING THEIR CONSTITUENTS

Members represent constituents' views and serve their interests in the Chamber, caucus and committee. They meet with constituents who have travelled to Ottawa and, when in the riding, Members talk to constituents about their concerns and attend a wide variety of local events. Members also help constituents in their dealings with the federal government on such matters as visas and passports, employment insurance and taxation.

Members are assisted in their work by their staff on Parliament Hill and in their constituency offices. Members from large or densely populated ridings may have more than one constituency office. High-speed Internet connections and other modern technology enable staff to work closely and stay on top of issues.

There are many ways for Canadians to reach their Member of Parliament, such as by writing postage-free, or contacting them by phone, e-mail or fax. The Parliament of Canada Web site features contact information for all Members of Parliament. Many Members offer toll-free telephone lines for their constituents, and many have Web sites providing information and answers to constituents' frequently asked questions.

Members also send regular mailings to constituents to inform them of their activities.

PRESENTING PETITIONS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Members can present petitions, on behalf of their constituents or other persons, to raise issues of public interest, or to ask Parliament to take action. Under the rules of the House of Commons, the government must table a response to a petition. In 2005–2006, 1,211 petitions and 1,576 government responses were tabled in the House (the second number is higher because some of these responses concerned petitions tabled at the start of the 38th Parliament in the previous fiscal year). The following list shows the top issues presented in the form of petitions:

- marriage – 793 petitions
- health (autism) – 119 petitions
- Canada Post – 69 petitions
- pornography – 21 petitions
- sexual exploitation of minors – 17 petitions

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Members of Parliament and Canadians can count on timely, accurate information from the Library of Parliament. The Library's Information Service can be reached toll-free at 1-866-599-4999.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION	52,400
DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED	314,500

VISITING PARLIAMENT HILL

The Library of Parliament's tours and interpretive programs introduce Canadians and people from around the world to the history and activities of Canada's Parliament.

TOTAL CENTRE BLOCK TOURS	11,841 (354,670 VISITORS)
TOTAL EAST BLOCK TOURS	1,294 (13,455 VISITORS)
TOTAL SCHOOL GROUP VISITS TO CENTRE BLOCK	1,751 (65,183 VISITORS)
TOTAL VISITORS TO PEACE TOWER AND MEMORIAL CHAMBER	247,168

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Young Canadians have a great opportunity to learn about Parliament first-hand by working as House of Commons pages or parliamentary guides. Each year, the House of Commons hires 40 students to serve as pages, and the Library of Parliament hires another 40 summer students to provide guided tours of Parliament. Application information is available on the Parliament of Canada Web site.



The central column in Confederation Hall, located at the main entrance to Parliament's Centre Block, commemorates the 50th anniversary of Confederation.

PHOTO: © LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT/
MONE PHOTOGRAPHY

BRINGING PARLIAMENT TO CANADIANS

Technology brings the House of Commons to television and computer screens across the country, enabling Canadians to watch the House from their homes, their offices and their classrooms. The House began broadcasting its proceedings nearly 30 years ago and, today, about one million Canadians tune into Chamber and committee activities each week on the Cable Public Affairs Channel, or CPAC. In the last fiscal year, CPAC broadcast about 1,200 hours of Chamber proceedings and 500 hours of committee proceedings.

The Parliament of Canada Web site (www.parl.gc.ca) is another popular source of facts about the Senate, the House of Commons and the Library of Parliament. Visitors can quickly find information on Members' activities, bills under consideration, committee activities, guided tours, and parliamentary activities. In 2005–2006, the site received close to 10 million visits.

ParlVU, the Webcast service maintained by the House, also carries live proceedings of the Commons, televised House of Commons committee meetings and live audio of all other House of Commons committee meetings that are open to the public. The ParlVU service allows Canadians to view or hear Members of the House of Commons whenever they meet to deliberate.

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

The Library of Parliament provides valuable assistance in serving Members of Parliament and Canadians. Library staff respond to hundreds of requests for information and reference services daily from Members' offices, parliamentary committees and associations, and parliamentary officials. The Library also employs specialists in law, economics and other fields to provide research and analysis services regarding legislation and public policy issues.

Through its public programs, the Library provides Canadians with information and services concerning Parliament, such as programs and products for teachers; print and electronic publications; guided tours; interpretive exhibits; and on-site and e-commerce boutiques.

ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

RECEIVING INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Foreign visits enable parliamentarians from around the world to discuss common issues, share ideas and knowledge, and learn from each other's experiences. These exchanges also strengthen Canada's ties with other countries and promote cooperation.

Parliamentary democracy, international responsibilities, trade, visa and immigration issues are frequent topics of discussion between parliamentarians, as are electoral reform, Aboriginal issues and environmental concerns.

The Parliament of Canada hosted the following official visits of foreign Speakers and delegations during the year:

- Chairman of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania
- President of the Senate of Malaysia
- Speaker of the House of Representatives of New Zealand
- President of the Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Finland
- Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Further to their diplomatic role of receiving world leaders and distinguished guests visiting the Parliament of Canada, the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Commons welcomed the President of Mali, Amadou Toumani Touré; the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vietnam, Phan Van Khai; and the President of the People's Republic of China, Hu Jintao. The Speakers also held courtesy calls with newly accredited Heads of Mission to Canada and Heads of Mission leaving the country. These meetings offer a unique opportunity to build direct parliamentary relations with representatives from other countries. The Speaker of the House of Commons held 68 courtesy calls in 2005–2006.

PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Parliamentary associations promote Canada's interests abroad and are composed of members of the Senate and House of Commons. The Parliament of Canada belongs to five bilateral associations (including the Canada-China Legislative Association and the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group) and seven multilateral associations (including the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association).

INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Interparliamentary groups strengthen relations between Canadian parliamentarians and those in the partner country, and promote cooperation and understanding between the nations concerned. Canada's Parliament is involved in four official interparliamentary groups with Germany, Israel, Italy and Ireland, respectively. The activities of these groups are supported through the membership fees of individual parliamentarians.

PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGES

Exchanges enable parliamentarians to enhance relations with other countries and share ideas, knowledge and experience. These exchanges can take several forms: visits to Canada by speaker-led foreign delegations; delegations of Canadian parliamentarians abroad headed by the House of Commons Speaker; and the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program, which enables senior parliamentary staff from foreign legislatures and other Canadian legislatures to learn about the functioning of Canada's Parliament.



Former Senate Speaker Dan Hays and House of Commons Speaker Peter Milliken welcomed many foreign dignitaries to Parliament in 2005–2006 to discuss common issues.

PHOTO: © C. DIOTTE

PROMOTING CANADA'S INTERESTS ABROAD

The Speaker, Members and Administration staff are regularly invited to visit other legislatures to discuss a variety of issues, foster links, and share knowledge and expertise. Over the past fiscal year, the Speaker of the House of Commons led official delegations to Australia, New Zealand, Scotland (as part of the G8 Speakers' Conference), the Czech Republic, Slovenia, the Russian Federation and Portugal. The various parliamentary associations to which the Parliament of Canada belongs were also active during the year, attending conferences and seminars or receiving their counterparts at meetings in Canada. Reports on these meetings are available on the Parliament of Canada Web site (www.parl.gc.ca) under "Interparliamentary Affairs."

HOSTING CONFERENCES

The Parliament of Canada regularly shares its perspectives with other legislatures by hosting international conferences. In June 2005, the Speaker of the House of Commons hosted a professional development seminar for provincial and territorial Speakers in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Canadian Regional Council. The Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Acting Clerk of the House of Commons made presentations on the role of the Speaker, preparations for first-time Speakers, and tools and procedures to ensure the smooth functioning of a legislature.

BEHIND THE SCENES: THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ADMINISTRATION

SUPPORTING MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Whether they are working on legislative issues on Parliament Hill, talking with constituents in their riding, or meeting with other legislators abroad, Members of Parliament are supported in their work by the staff of the House of Commons Administration.

The House of Commons Administration is made up of five Service Areas: Procedural Services; the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel; Information Services, Parliamentary Precinct Services; and Corporate Services. These areas, which draw on the equivalent of some 1,737 full-time employees, are accountable to the Clerk of the House of Commons, who reports to the Speaker, and serves as Secretary to the Board of Internal Economy. The first woman to serve as Clerk of the House of Commons, Audrey O'Brien, was appointed in October 2005 following a review of her nomination by a standing committee and a ratification vote in the House. Ms. O'Brien succeeded William C. Corbett, who retired after 26 years of dedicated service to the House.

The Board of Internal Economy governs the House Administration. The Board is chaired by the Speaker and made up of Members from all recognized political parties. It is responsible for all matters of financial and administrative policy affecting the House of Commons.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In the *Strategic Outlook for the 38th Parliament*, the House of Commons Administration presented four main objectives that reflect its vision, values and mandate, and provide a framework for its activities in support of Members. These objectives are as follows:

- I. Respond to the evolving role of Members
- II. Enhance ongoing services to Members and sustain the institution
- III. Promote understanding and support the advancement of legislative institutions
- IV. Apply the highest standards of public-sector governance in a parliamentary context

The following sections highlight the House Administration's key accomplishments achieved under these objectives in 2005–2006, and commitments for 2006–2007.

MAJOR-GENERAL MAURICE GASTON CLOUTIER (1935–2005)

The House of Commons lost its longest-serving Sergeant-at-Arms last year with the passing of Major-General M.G. "Gus" Cloutier. General Cloutier joined the House following a distinguished career in the Canadian Armed Forces and, for 27 years, performed the duties of his office with dignity, courtesy and a sense of humour. As Sergeant-at-Arms, he was responsible for security and building services and all ceremonial aspects of House tradition, of which the most public duty was to shoulder the ceremonial Mace during processions to and from the Commons Chamber. General Cloutier also served as Canadian Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen, coordinating her visits to Canada in 1994, 1997 and 2005 as well as her Golden Jubilee of 2002. He was respected throughout Canada's Parliament and is sorely missed.



General Cloutier.

TABLE RESEARCH BRANCH CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2005, the Table Research Branch of the House Administration marked its 25th anniversary. Established by the late Dr. C.B. Koester, former Clerk of the House of Commons, the Branch is the focal point for procedural expertise and advice, and produces publications, training and information for Members of Parliament, House staff and other wider audiences.



Newly elected Members attend orientation sessions where they learn about their roles and the services provided by the House Administration to support them in their work.

PHOTO: © C. DIOTTE

I. Responding to the Evolving Role of Members

While the institution is over a century old, the House of Commons is constantly evolving to meet the demands of a modern society by introducing new ways of conducting its activities, and connecting citizens to the work of Parliament. The House of Commons Administration supports this work by responding to the needs of Members of Parliament, providing new tools, refining procedures and making the most of new technologies.

SUPPORTING THE EVOLUTION OF PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICES AND RULES

- Many of the rules by which the House of Commons operates were adopted in an era of majority governments. The 38th Parliament was the first to have a minority government in over 25 years, and many of these rules were put to the test in this environment. The House Administration provided support and advice in applying the existing rules in new circumstances, and in drafting and implementing further changes to the Standing Orders. This support will continue to be provided in the 39th Parliament, which also has a minority government.

ENSURING A FLEXIBLE TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

- The Administration continued to ensure a responsive, robust and secure technology environment by
 - selecting a tool for managing video and audio assets of Chamber and committee proceedings;
 - upgrading the cabling, monitoring and control systems in the Chamber broadcast control room;
 - planning and implementing information technology services and infrastructure as part of the Long-Term Renovation Program for Parliament Hill; and
 - providing underground connectivity with buildings located on either side of Wellington Street, where Parliament's main buildings are located.

IMPROVING MEMBERS' ACCESS TO PARLIAMENTARY INFORMATION

- Work proceeded on the development of “Today in the House,” a Web site that will provide Members of Parliament, staff and the public with a central access point for information about the daily proceedings of the House of Commons. The House Administration will launch the initial phase of this site in 2006–2007.
- The House Administration, with its partners in the Senate, the Library of Parliament, and Public Works and Government Services Canada, created the *Parliamentary Information Services Vision and Strategy*, a critical first step in defining a collaborative approach to information management and enabling these institutions to work more closely for the benefit of parliamentarians, their staff and the public. Over the coming year, a new governance structure will be implemented for sharing this information.

INVOLVING CANADIANS IN THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS

- The House Administration introduced new features for the House of Commons Committees Web site to give users better access to committee reports, contact information and further details about the work of committees.
- An e-consultation toolkit was also piloted by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and will be introduced to committees at the beginning of the 39th Parliament. The toolkit is a platform of basic electronic consultation tools that have been developed to help committees wishing to use the Internet to consult Canadians.

II. Enhancing Ongoing Services to Members and Sustaining the Institution

One of the essential roles of the House Administration is to sustain the institution by improving the basic services and support systems required to meet Members' needs, and to provide the public with secure and appropriate access to these important national buildings. Over the past year, its activities in this regard have included planning for construction and emergency relocation, and producing documents and seminars to increase knowledge of parliamentary issues.

PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE

Got the Blues?



For many years, proceedings were typed on carbon sets for distribution to the printer, translation services, the press and Members. The copies sent to Cabinet Ministers and parliamentary secretaries after they had spoken in the Chamber were on blue paper, which is why the draft debates are still commonly referred to as the blues.

There are also the less well-known yellows, the reporters' copy from the French debates office; the greens, the English reporters' copy forwarded to the Press Gallery; and the whites, the final edited Hansard.

AN ENGLISH *HANSARD* REPORTER DICTATES HIS SHORTHAND NOTES TO AN AMANUENSIS, CREATING THE *GREENS* (CIRCA 1960S).
SOURCE: *OTTAWA CITIZEN*

PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE

On Time, Every Time



After the debates have concluded, sometimes already late in the evening, work continues through the night so that Hansard is available by 9:00 a.m. the next morning.

The transeditors change audio into text that is then edited, translated and proofread. The Publishing and Quality Assurance Officer oversees the process and makes the text available electronically.

The 9:00 a.m. deadline has consistently been met with dedication and precision, first by the Official Debates Reporting Branch, and now by Parliamentary Publications.

A REPORTING SERVICE EMPLOYEE MONITORS THE AUDIO RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS.

SOURCE: HOUSE OF COMMONS

RENOVATING THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- The House Administration contributed to the update of the Long-Term Vision and Plan for the Parliamentary Precinct and to the related implementation strategy. The plan sets out a program of major new construction and renovation work and was revised in response to new priorities.
- Renovations to the West Block commenced, as did plans for relocating occupants to allow major construction work to proceed. Interim accommodations will be developed for the relocation of all West Block functions over the next few years.
- In partnership with Public Works and Government Services Canada, the Administration continued to oversee the planning, design and installation of facilities, infrastructure and information technologies to support the relocation of Members of Parliament their staff and parliamentary functions.

IMPROVING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

- The House Administration is finalizing a new electronic form for purchasing office supplies in the constituency that will provide more timely service to Members. Implementation will occur in the upcoming fiscal year.
- The House Administration continued to refine its technology systems to improve the management of financial and human resources information and better support Members and the House Administration.
- Sustainable approaches and technologies to support real-time closed-captioning of proceedings were assessed, and the appropriate technology will be selected in the next fiscal year.

REFINING THE BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND RESUMPTION PLAN FOR THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

- The House Administration refined its Business Continuity and Resumption Plan to ensure that Parliament can readily relocate and resume its activities in case of emergency. Alternate sites for relocation were identified, and threat, risk and impact analyses were conducted for certain sites. Relocation plans and strategies were also developed for Chamber and constituency activities.

SUSTAINING THE INSTITUTION AND IMPROVING SERVICES

- Through the Election Readiness Program, the House Administration and the Library of Parliament provided new, returning and departing Members with services in the period surrounding the dissolution of the 38th Parliament and the opening of the 39th Parliament. Initiatives included a Web site concerning services to Members, a toll-free hotline, an information centre and service fair, and orientation sessions on administrative and procedural services. In the two months following the election, the information centre received over 674 visitors, and the telephone hotline responded to 1,393 requests.
- The House Administration developed documents on a range of parliamentary matters. For example, a guide to parliamentary associations was developed for association chairs; a new version of the *House of Commons Standing Orders* was introduced, highlighting provisional sections for easy reference; and e-versions of the *Practical Guide for Committees*, the *Glossary of Parliamentary Procedure*, and the *Practical Guide for Private Members' Business* were all updated.
- Throughout the past year, the House Administration and the Library of Parliament offered seminars to Members and their staff on various procedural subjects, such as the legislative process, financial procedures, and work in committees as well as in the Chamber. In the coming fiscal year, the Administration and Library will continue to support Members and their staff through seminars on such topics as Private Members' Business.

III. Promoting Understanding and Supporting the Advancement of Legislative Institutions

The House of Commons Administration supports Members of Parliament as they promote a greater understanding of Canada's parliamentary institutions. These activities can range from producing authoritative works on the House of Commons, to sharing the beauty of the Parliament Buildings via the Web. The Administration also provides valuable support to Members as they work with other legislatures around the world, sharing ideas and experiences with their counterparts, and helping existing and emerging legislative institutions.



Speaker Milliken welcomes participants to the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program, November 2005.

PHOTO: © K. RODIER

PARLIAMENT BY THE BOOK

Several publications were produced in print and online to explain the work of the House of Commons and Parliament to Canadians:

House of Commons Procedure and Practice

Compendium of Parliamentary Procedure

Annotated Standing Orders

UPDATING MAJOR PUBLICATIONS ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

- To continue to offer the public searchable access to essential procedural reference works, the House of Commons Administration updated or made available online a number of key documents which explain the procedures, history and traditions of the House of Commons.
- The first edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* — also known as *Marleau-Montpetit* after its authors — was launched on the Parliament of Canada Web site. Planning and research will proceed on a second edition in the coming year.
- Designed especially for the Internet, the *Compendium of Parliamentary Procedure* (which replaced the *Précis of Procedure*) was published and explains how the House and its committees function.
- Work was completed on the second edition of the *Annotated Standing Orders*, which provide commentary and a historical summary for each of the Standing Orders — the written rules of the House of Commons. A Web version of this publication will be launched in 2006–2007.

PROVIDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS AND OFFICIALS FROM CANADA AND ABROAD

- In partnership with the Senate of Canada and the Library of Parliament, the House Administration continued to offer its Parliamentary Officers' Study Program for senior parliamentary staff from other legislatures. In addition to English and French seminars, and in response to an increased level of cooperation within the Americas, the Parliament of Canada invited Brazil and the Spanish-speaking countries of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) to participate in a special Spanish program in late October 2005.
- The legislatures of Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay sent representatives to learn about the Canadian parliamentary system and discuss common challenges that parliamentary officers face. A special session of the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program will be held in 2006 for representatives of the new Afghan parliament.

- In August 2005, the Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Commons co-chaired the 2005 Professional Development Seminar of the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table, enabling Association members to increase their knowledge of the parliamentary system and procedure in Canada, and share best practices.

Sixty-five federal, provincial and territorial Clerks-at-the-Table attended, as well as several Clerks from Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

- From September 11 to 15, 2005, the Senate and the House of Commons hosted the 5th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Parliamentary Administration (CAPA). CAPA is a network for senior officers responsible for parliamentary administration in all Canadian parliaments. Members of CAPA provide services and direction in areas of administration, finance, human resources and information technology. The Conference held on Parliament Hill provided a unique forum for the participants to exchange information and share knowledge and practices related to parliamentary services.

SHARING PARLIAMENT'S HERITAGE WITH CANADIANS

- The House Administration launched the Heritage Collection Web site in the fall of 2005 to give Canadians easy access to authoritative information on the art, architecture and artefacts of Parliament. Heritage profiles of sculptures, ironwork and other features will be added to the site on an ongoing basis.
- To support the Year of the Veteran and to highlight a less well-known feature of the Parliament Buildings, the House Administration created a Web site profiling the Memorial Chamber. Launched in December 2005, the site offers a virtual tour of this serene yet stunning room which honours people who died in military service throughout Canada's history.

IV. Applying the Highest Standards of Public-Sector Governance in a Parliamentary Context

The House of Commons implements best practices and effective management processes, and promotes the responsible stewardship of its resources as part of its ongoing efforts to ensure its accountability and transparency to Canadians.

PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE

Technological Growth



The technology used to capture the proceedings changed very little until the mid-1980s. Reporters wrote in shorthand and then dictated their notes for transcription after leaving the Chamber.

The ability to record to cassette and transcribe to diskette were the first steps in a huge technological revolution. Transcribers were soon able to save to a network, eliminating the need for hundreds of diskettes per day. Cassettes were later abandoned when Hansard staff were able to access digital audio recordings of the Chamber from their personal computers.

In 2001, the House of Commons launched PRISM, a system capable of managing all aspects of information publishing, from the capture of the spoken word to the distribution of Hansard itself.

A REPORTING SECRETARY TRANSCRIBES FROM AUDIO CASSETTE.

SOURCE: DIGITAL NEWS, DECEMBER 1986

PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE

Worth a Thousand Words



Imagine using handwritten or machine shorthand to write over 200 words per minute and record four Members speaking at once. Parliamentary reporters could keep up that pace without even raising their heads to see who was speaking. A tape recorder could not capture all the voices clearly or distinguish the speakers.

During the first 110 years of Hansard reporting, reporters served 80-minute rotations: 10 minutes in the Chamber and 70 minutes outside the Chamber to sub-edit and dictate their notes, ensure the correct spelling of proper names and confirm the accuracy of quotations. Amazingly, teams of one French reporter and one English reporter could capture everything that was said in the Commons.

A HANSARD REPORTER TAKES OVER FROM HIS COLLEAGUE.

SOURCE: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

KEEPING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS SECURE

- The House Administration improved security by strengthening communications and integrating security activities with its partners in the Senate of Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In cooperation with the Senate Protective Services, the Administration introduced a common identification card for the Parliamentary Precinct. This identification card promotes ease of accessibility with enhanced security features. Upcoming security initiatives in 2006–2007 include “Security is Everybody’s Business,” a strategy to increase employees’ awareness of security issues.

STRENGTHENING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- In the past fiscal year, audit, evaluation and review activities focused on election preparedness, the credit card policy, environmental compliance and contracting. As well, the House Administration’s financial statements for 2004–2005 were audited. In 2006–2007, emphasis will be placed on the management of risks related to contracting and financial practices, both of which are now annual activities. Other upcoming assessments include conflict resolution, human resource data, business continuity management and the application of various policies.
- As part of a multi-year policy framework, the House Administration reviewed or began developing policies on such subjects as managing conflict of interest, classification, and accommodating employee needs to foster the full participation of all persons in the workplace. Policy activities in 2006–2007 will focus on employment equity and contracting.
- Recognizing the need for a life-cycle approach to managing its assets and ensuring their sustainability, the House Administration began the development of an asset management strategy.

MANAGING PARLIAMENTARY INFORMATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ASSETS

- The House of Commons Administration developed new methods of using technology to track key information on parliamentary associations and their membership. Software will be employed to produce reports for tabling in the Senate and the House of Commons, and for publishing on the Web.

- Using the *Members' Allowances and Services Manual* as a test case, the House Administration piloted software that allows it to update online information quickly and easily, and provide users with accurate and reliable data.
- The House Administration developed tools to manage and share critical information throughout the House of Commons, with parliamentary partners and through the Internet. These tools will enable information to be collected once and reused in many formats and publications, thereby preventing duplication of effort and ensuring greater accuracy of the information published. Initiatives included creating a “best practices” group to ensure publication standards; improving methods to track the use of time in the Chamber; and developing a consistent set of common terminology for storing, retrieving and managing procedural information.
- To give participants easy online access to registration and conference information, enhancements were made to Web sites for two major international conferences to be hosted next year by the Parliament of Canada: the 12th General Assembly of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Conference on Environment and Development, and the 52nd Annual Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.



Former Environment Minister Stéphane Dion presents an environmental award to representatives of the Partners for a Green Hill program.

PHOTO: © C. DIOTTE

SUSTAINING A MOTIVATED AND EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE

- As a pro-active measure to address the expected increase in retirement rates over the next few years, the House Administration continued to refine and introduce new human resources practices to ensure that it can maintain a highly skilled and motivated workforce. Competency profiles will continue to be introduced for all positions for the purposes of staffing and evaluation.
- In keeping with its human resources management strategy, the Administration developed an employment equity plan, which will be implemented in 2006–2007, and conducted developmental work to establish a conflict management resolution program.
- In addition to developing policies on occupational health and safety, and accident prevention programs, both of which will be implemented in the coming fiscal year, the House Administration undertook new initiatives to foster a healthy and safe work environment. These initiatives included monthly sessions on health-related topics, vaccination and blood pressure clinics, the introduction of fitness classes, and a health-risk assessment pilot.

PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE

Duty and Disaster



At approximately 9:00 p.m. on February 3, 1916, Members were in the Chamber, discussing the problem of transporting fresh fish.

The Hansard for that day notes a sudden interruption: "Mr. C.R. Stewart, Chief Doorkeeper of the House of Commons, came hurriedly into the Chamber and called out "There is a big fire in the reading room; everybody get out quickly'."

This dramatic moment was captured in the Debates because George Simpson, the loyal parliamentary reporter on duty, wrote it down and remained at his desk until the Speaker had left the Chamber. He then left himself, notebook in hand. That night at a nearby hotel, he dictated the events, and sent the text to the King's Printer like any other night.

GEORGE SIMPSON,
HANSARD REPORTER AND EDITOR
SOURCE: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ON THE HILL

- In June 2005, the first environmental awards ceremony involving the four institutions in the Partners for a Green Hill program (the Senate, the House of Commons, the Library of Parliament, and Public Works and Government Services) was held. The partners also received the Canadian Council of Ministers for the Environment 2005 Pollution Prevention Award.
- A chemical products review identified 15 cleaning products that can be replaced by one environmentally friendly option, thereby reducing the risk of chemical exposure and the accidental mixing of incompatible products. The Administration also expanded the paper towel composting program by implementing the recommendations of the Annual Waste Audit.
- Also initiated were a transit pass program allowing employees to purchase their bus pass through payroll deductions, and a Web-based carpooling program.

IN CONCLUSION

The House of Commons is a vibrant forum, where issues that affect the daily lives of Canadians are debated and decided. The activities described in this report offer a glimpse of the range of subjects dealt with over the year, and the many paths that Members follow in the course of their work, from the Commons Chamber and their Hill and constituency offices, to meetings across Canada and around the world.

The House of Commons is also a place that offers Canadians a variety of opportunities to participate in the parliamentary process. Whether watching debates in the Chamber galleries or on television, meeting with Members of Parliament or submitting petitions to be tabled in the House, Canadians are able to express their ideas and have them represented in a national meeting place. This direct link to democracy has helped to make our parliamentary system the envy of many nations. It is a system that has evolved over time and will continue to change to meet the needs of a modern society. Behind the scenes, the House Administration will continue to support Members, employing their skills and experience to strengthen the institution.

FINANCIAL REPORT*

Planned Versus Actual Spending by Authority

(in thousands of dollars)

2005-2006

Vote	Main Estimates	Governor General		Total Authorities	Actual Spending	Variance
		Warrants and Adjustments				
5 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES	241,595	17,302		258,897	237,868	21,029
(S) MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS **	106,465	(110)		106,355	106,355	0
(S) CONTRIBUTIONS TO EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS	35,161	(3,731)		31,430	31,430	0
SUBTOTAL	141,626	(3,841)		137,785	137,785	0
TOTAL	383,221	13,461		396,682	375,653	21,029

** Salaries and allowances of Officers and Members of the House of Commons under the Parliament of Canada Act and contributions to the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Account and the Members of Parliament Retirement Compensation Arrangements Account

Planned Versus Actual Spending by Program Activity

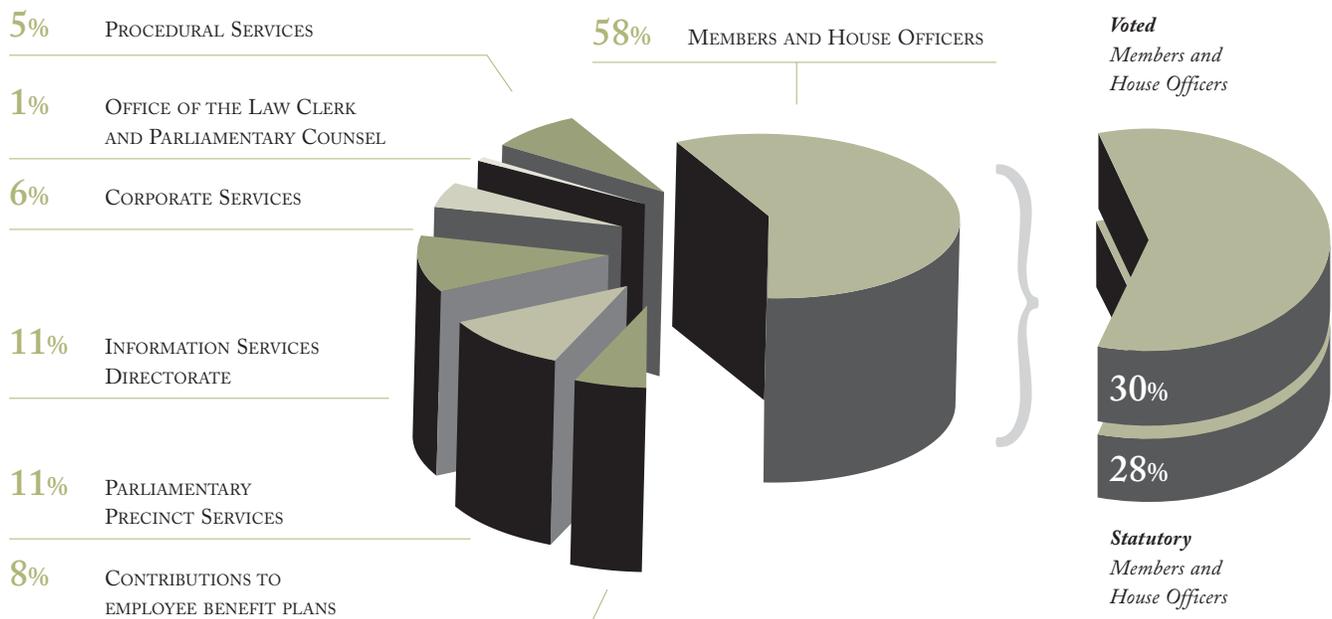
(in thousands of dollars)

2005-2006

Program Activity	Main Estimates	Governor General		Total Authorities	Actual Spending	Variance
		Warrants and Adjustments				
MEMBERS AND HOUSE OFFICERS	218,135	13,866		232,001	217,253	14,748
HOUSE ADMINISTRATION						
OFFICE OF THE LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL	2,358	119		2,477	2,476	1
PROCEDURAL SERVICES	23,442	702		24,144	18,617	5,527
PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT SERVICES	40,683	893		41,576	41,213	363
INFORMATION SERVICES DIRECTORATE	39,502	1,715		41,217	41,072	145
CORPORATE SERVICES	23,940	(103)		23,837	23,592	245
SUBTOTAL	129,925	3,326		133,251	126,970	6,281
CONTRIBUTIONS TO EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS	35,161	(3,731)		31,430	31,430	0
TOTAL	383,221	13,461		396,682	375,653	21,029

* Financial results may be subject to minor revisions.

2005-2006 Actual Spending by Service (in percentage)



*Financial results may be subject to minor revisions.

Increase in Main Estimates Over Previous Year

(in thousands of dollars)

Main Estimates

Vote	Program Name	2005-2006	2004-2005	Variance
5	PROGRAM EXPENDITURES:			
	MEMBERS AND HOUSE OFFICERS	111,670	101,786	9,884
	OFFICE OF THE LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL	2,358	2,139	219
	PROCEDURAL SERVICES	23,442	17,583	5,859
	PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT SERVICES	40,683	35,700	4,983
	INFORMATION SERVICES DIRECTORATE	39,502	34,088	5,414
	CORPORATE SERVICES	23,940	21,202	2,738
	SUBTOTAL	241,595	212,498	29,097
(S)	MEMBERS AND HOUSE OFFICERS	106,465	102,378	4,087
(S)	CONTRIBUTIONS TO EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS	35,161	31,687	3,474
	SUBTOTAL	141,626	134,065	7,561
	TOTAL	383,221	346,563	36,658

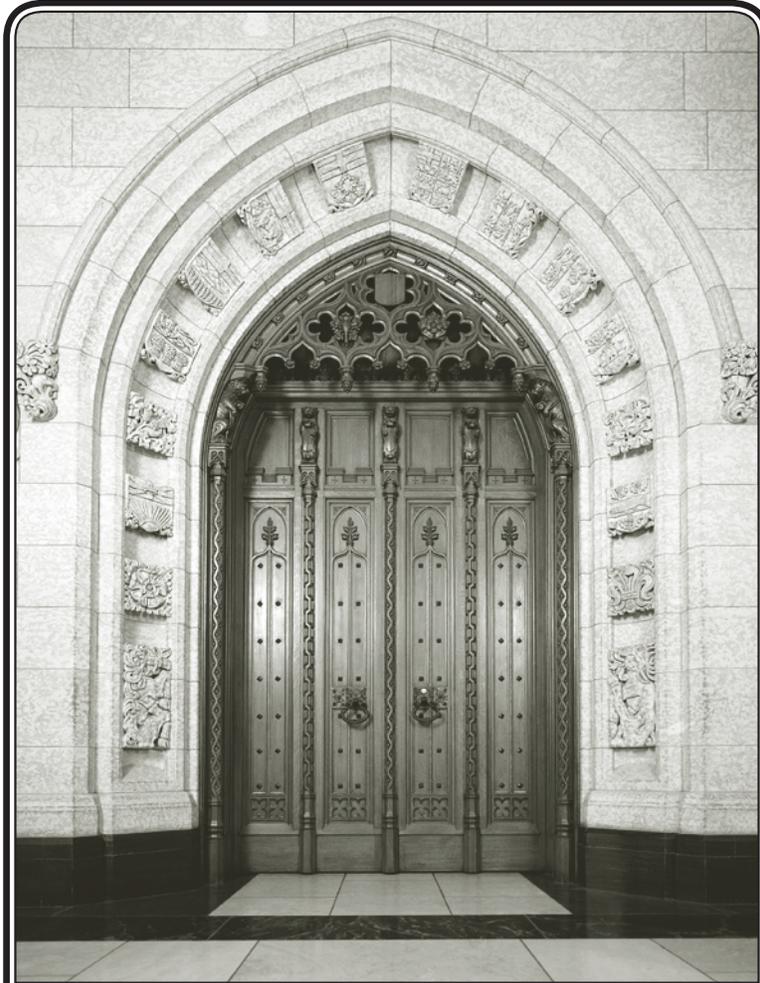
*Financial results may be subject to minor revisions.

Full-Time Equivalents – House Administration

Main Estimates

Program Sub-activity	2005-2006	2004-2005
OFFICE OF THE LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL	22	21
PROCEDURAL SERVICES	211	196
PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT SERVICES	725	697
INFORMATION SERVICES DIRECTORATE	471	471
CORPORATE SERVICES	308	300
TOTAL	1,737	1,685

**Financial results may be subject to minor revisions.*



Your Portal to a Wealth of Information

The fold-out inserts at the centre of this document include photographs of Members elected to Canada's Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Parliaments. Canadians can use their postal code to identify their Member of Parliament by visiting the Parliament of Canada Web site at:

www.parl.gc.ca

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