



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES



REPORT TO CANADIANS 2008

80th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Peace Tower and Centre Block

Peace—one of the values that Canadians cherish most dearly—is embodied in this prominent tower that forms the ceremonial entrance to the Parliament of Canada. Both the Senate and House of Commons chambers are housed in Parliament's Centre Block. Constructed following the Great Fire of 1916 that destroyed its predecessor (the Victoria Tower) and much of the original Parliament Building, the Peace Tower and Centre Block commemorate Canada's sacrifices in the First World War.

In 2007, Canada celebrated the 80th anniversary of this dedication, which took place in 1927 led by Prime Minister Mackenzie King. It is worth noting that the 1927 dedication was also the first live national radio broadcast in Canadian history.

The inscription on the central column of Confederation Hall reads:

ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA AS THE DOMINION OF CANADA THE PARLIAMENT AND PEOPLE DEDICATE THIS BUILDING IN PROCESS OF RECONSTRUCTION AFTER DAMAGE BY FIRE AS A MEMORIAL OF THE DEEDS OF THEIR FOREFATHERS AND OF THE VALOUR OF THOSE CANADIANS WHO IN THE GREAT WAR FOUGHT FOR THE LIBERTIES OF CANADA, OF THE EMPIRE AND OF HUMANITY.

Parliament Buildings, original Centre Block and Victoria Tower, completed in 1878 and destroyed by a fire in 1916.

PHOTO: © LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA / D.A. McLAUGHLIN / NATIONAL PHOTO COLLECTION / C-003760

February 3, 1916, firefighters worked to extinguish the Parliament on fire.

PHOTO: © FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES, FEB. 13, 1916 ISSUE. CREATED/PUBLISHED: NEW YORK : NEW YORK TIMES, CO., 1916

Aerial view of Parliament and Peace Tower during summer of 2007.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / CHRIS DIOTTE

*"In all my thought of the tower,
Peace was dominant.
I believe there is a quiet
peaceful dignity about it."*

Centre Block architect,
John A. Pearson



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THE HOUSE OF COMMONS REPORT TO CANADIANS 2008

Visit the House of Commons Heritage Collection
online at www.parl.gc.ca for more information
on the Parliament Buildings.

CONTACT US

Information Service,
Parliament of Canada,
Ottawa, Ontario,
K1A 0A9
info@parl.gc.ca

Toll-free (Canada): 1-866-599-4999
Telephone: 613-992-4793
TTY: 613-995-2266

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CENTRAL COLUMN OF CONFEDERATION HALL / HOC / CHRIS DIOTTE

Letter from the Speaker

The activities described in this 2008 edition of the *Report to Canadians* reflect a year of wide-ranging accomplishments for Members of the House of Commons, and the administration staff who support them.



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

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF
COMMONS /
BERNARD CLARK

Covering the fiscal year from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008, this annual report provides an overview of legislative activities during the 112 days the House sat. It also profiles the activities of Members in directly serving their constituents and in giving voice to the concerns of citizens in the House and its committees. The role that Members play in promoting Canada internationally is also profiled in this report, highlighting international visits as well as events in which the House has played host to visitors from abroad.

The House of Commons has a proud heritage of being flexible in responding to changing demands and expectations. It finds new ways to meet challenges. These same characteristics are reflected in the work of the House of Commons Administration, which is also reviewed in this annual report. Innovative business tools have been developed to respond to the evolving role of

Members and of the institution of Parliament. New approaches to using information technology are also described—innovations that herald the promise of efficient new ways for information to be published and shared.

The report outlines new and ongoing efforts to promote an understanding of Canada's legislative institutions, by offering an extensive range of training and information sessions, and by updating and maintaining valuable reference tools on parliamentary procedure for Members. Equally important, the House Administration is committed to upholding the highest standards of public-sector governance to ensure accountability and transparency to Canadians. A range of management processes and best practices have been implemented—steps to sustain a modern effective workforce, enhancements to manage and share data, as well as strategies to improve the management of information and the transfer of knowledge.

Reaching out to engage constituents is an integral part of the work of the House of Commons and Members of Parliament. This important work is highlighted throughout this year's *Report to Canadians*. From celebrating the 30th anniversary of the live television broadcasting of debates, to profiling the many programs that invite citizens to come to Parliament and participate in and learn from its proceedings, the House of Commons continues to find new ways to engage citizens and sustain a dialogue with Canadians.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Milliken". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter Milliken, M.P.

Speaker of the House of Commons



A Sense of Place and of Purpose: Canada's House of Commons

From the Peace Tower carillon that rings out over the nation's capital, to the scores of ornate stone carvings and gargoyles that keep watch from their berths, Canada's House of Commons is a place deeply rooted in symbols and tradition that express a profound sense of both place and purpose.

Visitors from around the world come to this Canadian landmark and admire how it is a building formed by a union of ideas. They see it in the distinctive architecture: the thin lancet windows and soaring spires; the smooth copper-clad rooftops; and the rough-carved stonemasonry. Even its location holds a special meaning: a meeting place of three rivers, perched on a rocky point overlooking fast-moving water, wooded land and urban landscapes, within sight of sacred meeting grounds that the Algonquin peoples have always called *Asinabka*, or "Place of Glare Rock."

All are witness to the *purpose* of this place. Canada's House of Commons is where Canadian values—democracy, justice, peace and integrity—are celebrated and defended. It is a place where national ideas take shape.

It is a place that is a legacy of our nation's founders and one that thrives and flourishes today by virtue of the support of the Canadian people. From all points on the compass, Members of Parliament come to this place and give voice to the hopes, ideas and concerns of the citizens they represent. They engage each other in debate, share ideas and make decisions that can affect the lives of millions. And in doing so, they exercise the democratic traditions that all citizens of this nation hold dear.

This 2008 edition of the House of Commons *Report to Canadians* showcases the accomplishments of Members of Parliament and the House Administration that supports them. It highlights the Administration's goals for the upcoming fiscal year and provides up-to-date information on membership in the House of Commons and the activities of Members.

PERIOD OF THIS REPORT:

April 1, 2007–March 31, 2008

TOTAL NUMBER OF SITTING DAYS:

112 days

OUTREACH PROFILE

OFFICE OF THE LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

Each year, the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel provides an articling position to a law student graduating in civil law or common law from a Canadian university. The Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel is also involved in other outreach projects, such as welcoming co-op students from Canadian law schools, and organizing conferences for Members on law and parliamentary-related matters.

Find Out More About Canada's Members of Parliament

For more than 140 years, Members of Parliament have participated in the development of Canadian democracy. Members represent the regional and local concerns of the citizens who elect them. They also represent Canada when travelling abroad on official business or when hosting visits by foreign dignitaries.

As federal lawmakers, their duties consist of activities in five areas:

Chamber activities—The Chamber is where all Members of the House of Commons meet to debate and vote on legislation, present documents and petitions, ask questions of the government and raise issues that are of importance to Canadians.

Committee work—Smaller groups of Members meet as committees of the House to examine issues in detail, studying proposed new laws and government policies and gathering input from citizens about various challenges currently facing the country.

Caucus activities—With the exception of a few independents, Members belong to a recognized political party whose structure and activities vary. Each party has its research staff which support politicians in their duties in the House and in committees.

Helping constituents—Constituents contact their Members of Parliament when they need help or have questions concerning federal programs and services.

Representing Canada—Members represent Canada abroad, strengthening ties with other countries and promoting democratic institutions.

"The buildings of Parliament Hill are the key note of our national being, expressing our intellectual and political ideas...The boundlessness of possibilities of the Gothic is one of the primary characteristics of the northern mind."

—Urban planner and theorist, Noulan Cauchon

OUTREACH PROFILE

PARLIAMENTARY GUIDE PROGRAM

Every year, visitors from all over Canada and around the world are guided through the historic corridors of the Parliament Buildings. These tours are provided by the Library of Parliament by bilingual guides selected from university students across Canada.

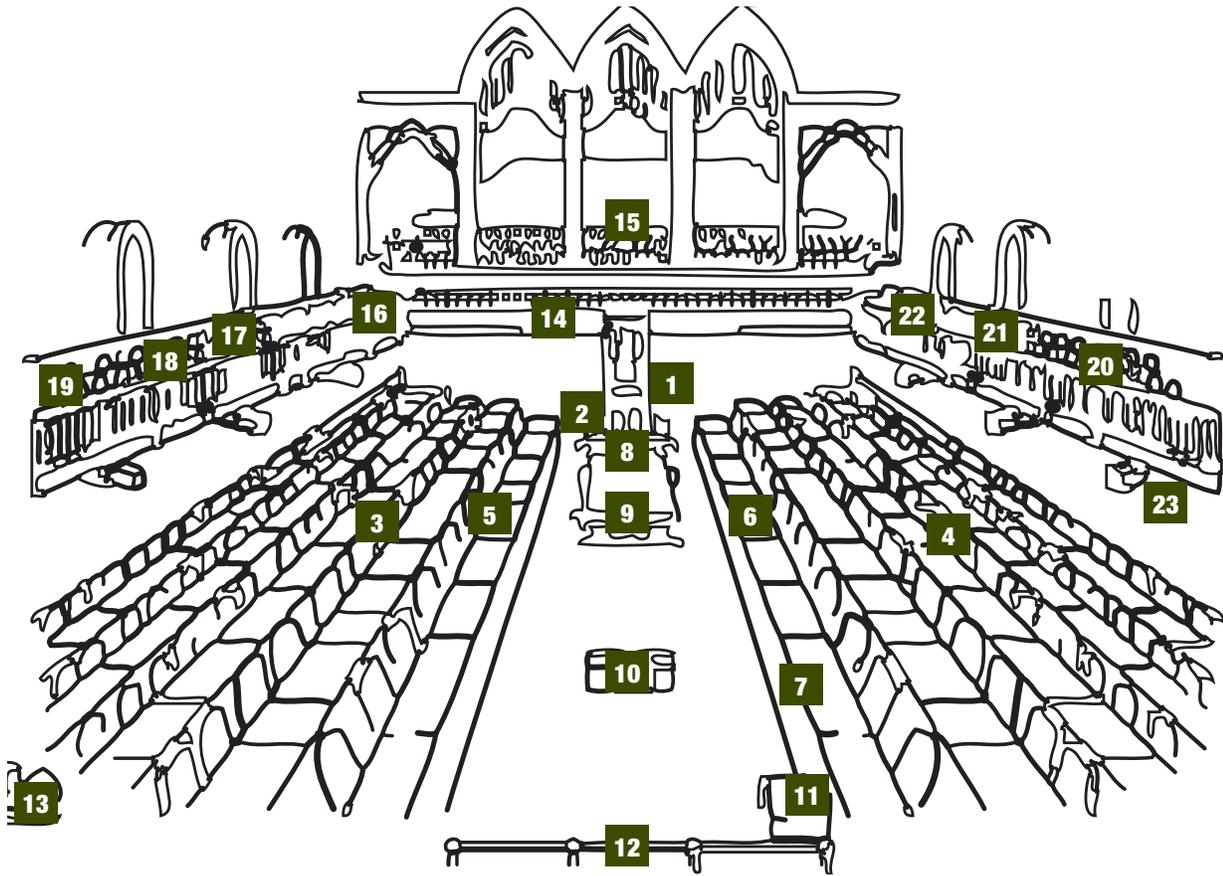
Throughout the year, tours are offered of the Centre Block (including the Senate and House of Commons), the Library of Parliament, the Peace Tower and the Memorial Chamber. In the summer months, senior parliamentary guides provide interpretation of the reconstructed historical rooms in Parliament's East Block, including the offices of Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald and his colleague, Sir George-Étienne Cartier.

The Guides interpret for visitors Canada's political history and legislative process, the art and architecture of the Parliament buildings.

PHOTO: © LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT / JANET BROOKS



House of Commons



FACTS ABOUT MEMBERS OF CANADA'S 39TH PARLIAMENT

Average age:	52
Youngest Member:	28
Oldest Member:	75
Number of Members elected for the first time (in 2006):	70
Number of seats in the House of Commons:	308
Number of seats held by women:	65
Number of seats held by Members born outside of Canada:	41
Number of seats held by Members of Inuit, Métis or First Nations origin:	5
Prevalence of occupations, rank overall of businessman/business woman:	Third
Prevalence of occupations, rank overall of farmer:	Second
Prevalence of occupations, rank overall of lawyer:	First

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Speaker | 12 The Bar |
| 2 Pages | 13 Interpreters |
| 3 Government Members* | 14 Press Gallery |
| 4 Opposition Members* | 15 Public Gallery |
| 5 Prime Minister | 16 Official Gallery |
| 6 Leader of the Official Opposition | 17 Leader of the Opposition's Gallery |
| 7 Leader of the Second Largest Party in Opposition | 18 Members' Gallery |
| 8 Clerk and Table Officers | 19 Members' Gallery |
| 9 Mace | 20 Members' Gallery |
| 10 Hansard Reporters | 21 Speaker's Gallery |
| 11 Sergeant-at-Arms | 22 Senate Gallery |
| | 23 T.V. Cameras |

* Depending on the number of MPs elected from each political party, government Members may be seated on the opposite side of the Chamber with opposition Members (or vice versa).

Party Membership

Members of Parliament belong to one of four recognized parties (listed alphabetically): the Bloc Québécois, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party. Members can also sit as independents.

Senators and Members of the House of Commons who belong to the same political party attend regular and special meetings of their party caucus, where they discuss party policies, parliamentary strategy and issues of concern to constituents.

Visit the Parliament of Canada Web site at www.parl.gc.ca for a detailed breakdown of the membership in the House of Commons.

Table: Party Standings in the House of Commons as of March 31, 2008.

	Cons.	Lib.	BQ	NDP	Ind.	Vacant	Total
Alberta	28						28
British Columbia	18	7		10	1		36
Manitoba	8	3		3			14
New Brunswick	3	6		1			10
Newfoundland and Labrador	3	4					7
Northwest Territories				1			1
Nova Scotia	2	6		2	1		11
Nunavut		1					1
Ontario	41	52		12		1	106
Prince Edward Island		4					4
Quebec	11	11	48	1	2	2	75
Saskatchewan	13	1					14
Yukon		1					1
National Total	127	96	48	30	4	3	308

OUTREACH PROFILE

PARLIAMENTARY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Parliamentary Internship Program has three aims: to provide Members of the House of Commons with highly qualified assistants; to provide university graduates an opportunity to learn about Parliament and federal politics first-hand; and to give the Program's graduates the skills and knowledge necessary to make a significant contribution to Canadian public life.

The Parliamentary Internship Program grew out of an initiative of Alfred Hales, Member of Parliament for Wellington, Ontario, from 1957 to 1974. To avoid what he referred to as partisan disputes, the Program was administered initially by the Canadian Political Science

Association, with the approval of the Speaker of the House and the House Leaders of all parties. The first group of interns was selected in 1969.

Since June 1997, the House has provided administrative support to this program. Ten candidates are selected every year from across Canada through a highly competitive process. Following an orientation period, five interns are assigned to the government party and five to the opposition parties, according to their representation in the House. After the winter adjournment, the interns move from one side of the House to serve the other. Specific positions are selected from a list of interested MPs. The work of the interns may include research, speechwriting, communication with constituents and preparation for question period and debates.

Reaching Out and Engaging Citizens

Outreach efforts are an important component of the work of the House of Commons. Canadian democracy is strengthened when citizens are given opportunities to learn more about how their Parliament works and how they can contribute. There are many avenues for Parliament to engage Canadians directly: sharing information; offering opportunities for citizens to provide input on bills during the legislative process; recruiting young Canadians to public service; and broadcasting proceedings to televisions and desktops across Canada and around the world.

Presenting Petitions

Members can present petitions on behalf of their constituents or other Canadians, to address 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 each petition.

In 2007–2008, there were 927 petitions presented in the House—of which 452 were in the 39th Parliament's First Session (during sittings from April 16 to June 20, 2007), and 475 were in the Second Session (during sittings from October 16, 2007 to March 31, 2008).

Tuning in to Parliament

The hard work of all the Members of the House of Commons is broadcast to Canadians and the world through both online Webcasts and television broadcasts.

ParlVU—the House of Commons' Webcast service—carries live proceedings of the Commons, televised committee meetings and live audio of all other House of Commons committee meetings that are open to the public.

In addition, approximately one million Canadians tune in each week to the Cable Public Affairs Channel (CPAC), which provides television broadcasts of House and committee proceedings as well as political and public affairs programming.

Up-to-date news and information on parliamentary affairs is also available online at the Parliament of Canada Web site (www.parl.gc.ca). Visitors can quickly locate information on

Members' activities, bills under consideration, committee activities and guided tours.

In 2007–2008, there were close to 7.6 million visits to the Parliament of Canada site.

Closed Captioning

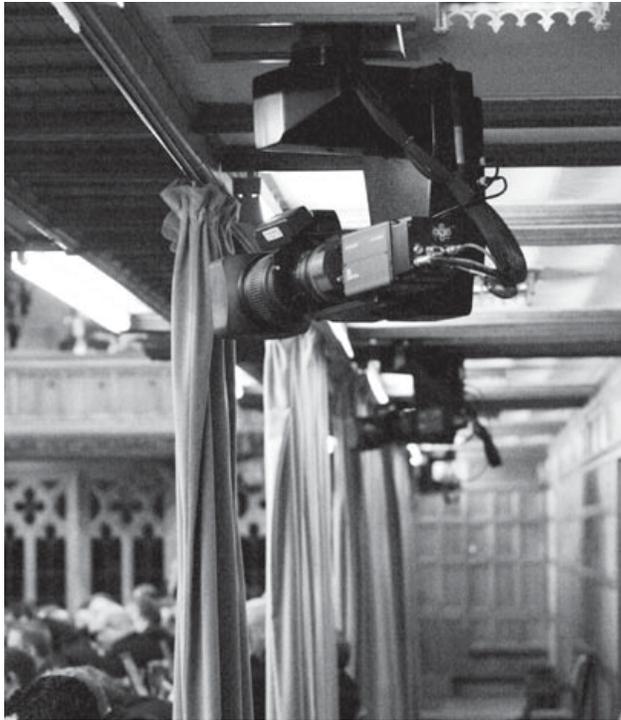
The House of Commons, in partnership with the Translation Bureau of Public Works and Government Services Canada, now provides French closed captioning for Question Period, thereby making the work of Parliamentarians more accessible to all Canadians.

OUTREACH PROFILE

ANNIVERSARY OF BROADCASTING HOUSE OF COMMONS PROCEEDINGS

Canada's House of Commons has a proud tradition of engaging its citizens. In 1977, Canada became the first legislature in the world to televise its proceedings gavel-to-gavel. October 17, 2007, marked the 30th anniversary of the first broadcast of House of Commons proceedings.

Building on that accomplishment, this year the House of Commons was the proud recipient of the 2007 Government Technology (GTEC) gold medal in the Federal Award Category of Service Delivery to Citizens in recognition of its leadership, innovation and excellence for ParlVU—a Webcast service that gives Canadians access to live and on-demand video and audio streams of House of Commons and Committee events.



The remote-controlled cameras of the House of Commons seize democracy at work.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / BERNARD THIBODEAU

The House of Commons is among the world's first legislatures to use state-of-the-art voice recognition technology to perform remote live closed captioning of its proceedings. With the introduction of this new service, the estimated three million deaf or hard-of-hearing Canadians will be able to follow Question Period live through the use of either English or French closed captioning.

Opening Its Doors to All

Canadian and international visitors alike learn about the House of Commons and Parliament through tours and interpretive programs.

Tour Statistics for 2007–2008

Total Centre Block tours:	12,184 (372,000 visitors)
Total East Block tours:	1,281 (11,355 visitors)
Total school group visits to Centre Block:	1,721 (62,881 visitors)
Total visitors to Peace Tower and Memorial Chamber:	261,344

OUTREACH PROFILE

PAGE PROGRAM CELEBRATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2008, the House of Commons is marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of its national Page Program. Open to Canadian students who have graduated from high school or CEGEP and are attending their first year of studies at one of the universities in the National Capital Region, the Program receives hundreds of applications each year. The 40 available positions are filled by a rigorous selection process, with successful candidates usually notified in early May.

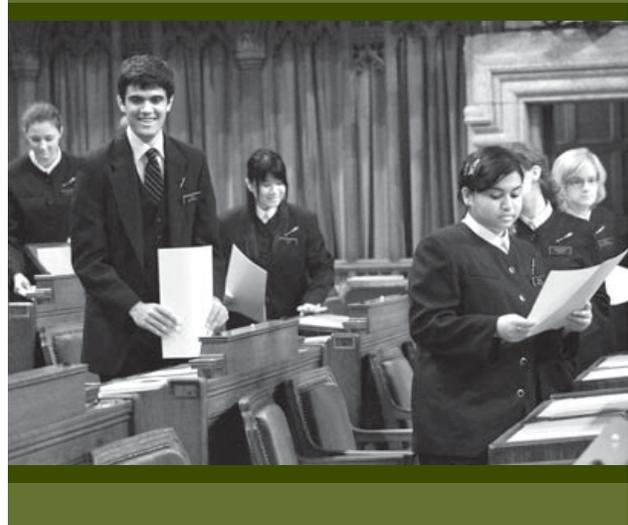
The modern-day program first started in 1978 through the efforts of former Speaker James Jerome and other Members of Parliament. It gives young Canadians a unique vantage point to learn about the daily operations and procedures of the House of Commons. During their time with the Program, pages also share their passion for what they are learning by meeting with various youth groups to explain their work in the House of Commons.

Welcoming the first group of pages to the House on October 10, 1978, Speaker Jerome expressed his hope "that in future years, the entire country will benefit from having these citizens back in the country, better equipped through education and through their exposure here to a practical knowledge of the Canadian House of Commons."

More than 1,000 students from across Canada have participated in the Page Program since 1978.

Pages' tasks include setting up the MPs' desks before Question Period.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / CHRIS DIOTTE



At Work in the House of Commons

The work of Canada's House of Commons adheres to a calendar that runs most years from late September through mid-June, with breaks to permit parliamentarians to work in their regions or ridings, or travel on official business. Meetings of the House of Commons are called sittings. These are grouped together into larger units known as sessions.

Featured prominently at the start of a new session is the Speech from the Throne, which is read by the Governor General. This is an important speech that establishes the government's agenda for that session of Parliament. A session ends when it is prorogued. It also ends when a Parliament is dissolved, in which case a general election is held and Canadians elect representatives to a new Parliament.

Role of the Speaker

The Speaker of the House of Commons maintains order and decorum in the Chamber and is responsible for ensuring that all Members respect the rules and practices of the House. Elected in a secret ballot by Members, the Speaker presides over Chamber proceedings and is also Chair of the Board of Internal Economy, overseeing the administration of the House. In addition, the Speaker is the spokesperson and the formal representative of the House when conducting business outside the House of Commons with the Senate, the Crown and other bodies at the national or international levels.

At the beginning of the 39th Parliament, the Hon. Peter Milliken was elected to serve as Speaker for the third consecutive time. Speaker Milliken is a member of the Official Opposition, but as Speaker he does not attend caucus meetings.

Following prorogation of the First Session of the 39th Parliament on September 14, 2007, the Second Session began on October 16, 2007. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker, the Hon. Bill Blaikie, continued in their positions and the other presiding officers, Mr. Royal Galipeau, Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole and Mr. Andrew Scheer, Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole, were re-elected by motions adopted in the House.

The Clerk, as the senior permanent official of the House and chief executive of the House Administration, advises and supports the Speaker and other chair occupants, the House and its committees in all procedural and administrative matters. The Clerk also keeps the official record of proceedings.



The Speaker reading the prayer at the beginning of a sitting with two pages at his side.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / CHRIS DIOTTE

Making Laws

Lawmaking is one of the most important functions of the House of Commons. Every piece of federal legislation first starts out as a bill, which is a proposal either to create a new law or to amend existing ones. A bill must be approved by the Senate and the House of Commons and receive Royal Assent before it becomes law. The time required to pass a bill can vary depending upon urgency, complexity and the degree of consensus among Members of the Senate and the House of Commons.

There are two main types of bills: public and private. Generally, public bills concern matters of public policy, such as finance or national security, while private bills, which are very rare, deal with private interests. Public bills can be divided into government bills, that is, those sponsored by the government and introduced by a Cabinet Minister, and Private Member's bills, sponsored by a Member who is not a Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary.

While some bills can be introduced in the Senate, all those that involve raising or spending public funds (known as money bills) must be introduced in the House of Commons.

Over the past fiscal year, 61 government bills were introduced in the House of Commons. These bills covered a range of social, economic and political issues, including:

- consultations with electors on their preferences for appointments to the Senate
- youth crime
- protection of the environment
- financial assistance for students
- development of Canada's seacoast and inland fisheries
- family homes situated on First Nation reserves.

From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008, 106 Private Members' public bills were introduced in the House of Commons. These bills focused on a wide range of issues, including:

- chemical pesticides for non-essential purposes
- sponsorship of relatives for immigration to Canada
- proposition for a Flag Day
- automated banking machine charges
- trafficking of human organs
- labelling of food products.

THE PARLIAMENTARY PRESS GALLERY

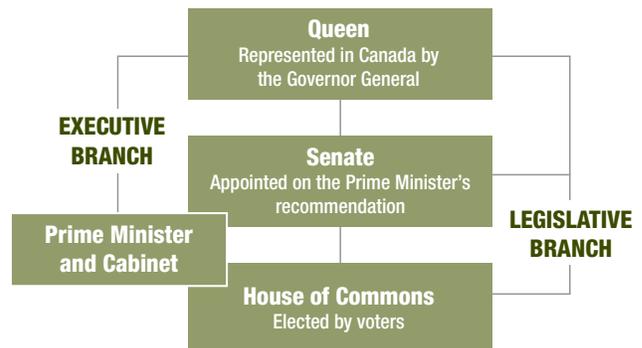


Journalists gathering in the House of Commons foyer to speak to Members after Question Period.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / BERNARD THIBODEAU

The interaction of Members with the media is an essential component in maintaining the transparency and accountability of Canada's democratic institutions. It is generally through the Parliamentary Press Gallery that this interaction takes place. This is a group of journalists assigned by media organizations to cover parliamentary events. In addition to undertaking independent research and investigations, Press Gallery members observe legislative debates and votes, interview political figures and attend press conferences and media scrums.

Canada's Parliamentary System



LEGISLATIVE STATISTICS FOR 2007–2008

Government bills introduced: 61

Private Members' public bills introduced: 106

A key component of the legislative process is that Members of Parliament have many opportunities to propose amendments to bills under consideration. In the period covered by this report, Members submitted over 680 motions in amendment at committee and report stages.

Question Period, Motions and Debates

A key function of the House of Commons is providing a forum for questioning the government about its actions and policies. Members of Parliament ask questions during Question Period, which takes place for 45 minutes on each sitting day. Members, primarily of the opposition parties, can ask questions of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers on matters within the administrative responsibilities of the government.

When detailed, lengthy or technical information is sought from the government, questions can be submitted in writing. The government's replies are subsequently tabled in the House of Commons.

There were 4,242 oral questions asked and 349 written questions submitted in the past year.

Opposition parties can also raise issues of concern by selecting topics for the House to debate on allotted days. These days are known as opposition or supply days. In each calendar year, 22 days are set aside for consideration of these motions sponsored by Members of opposition parties. The allotted days are allocated on the basis of party representation and after consultations among opposition parties. During the past year, Members discussed a variety of issues of public concern on allotted days, including Canada's mission in Afghanistan, climate change and the Kyoto Accord, as well as equalization payments and immigration.

Tabling Documents

In the House of Commons, tabling a document is a formal way of presenting information and making it a matter of official public record. Documents typically tabled include annual reports of various departments and agencies, documents concerning non-judicial Order-in-Council appointments, government responses to committee reports and other papers concerning matters related to the administrative responsibilities of the government (e.g., treaties with other countries). Collectively, these documents, along with others such as petitions and committee reports, are called sessional papers.

In 2007–2008, there were 1,743 sessional papers tabled in the House of Commons.



Members in the House of Commons, 39th Parliament.

PHOTO: © LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT / ROY GROGAN

Following the Rules

The daily activities in the Chamber are governed by a set of written rules known as the Standing Orders and by a body of practices and traditions. The House of Commons continues to develop and modify its rules and practices. In 2007–2008, amendments were made to the *Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons*, which forms part of the Standing Orders and addresses a variety of issues, including rules of conduct (i.e., expanding the definition of parliamentary business covered by the *Code* and clarifying the limitations on Members' activities), as well as contracting and the Members' disclosure statements.

House practice evolves in part through decisions by the Speaker called "rulings". These rulings involve the Speaker's interpretation of the rules and precedents of the House. In some cases, the Speaker delivers these rulings immediately from the chair when a point of order is raised by a Member. In others, the Speaker states that he will "take the matter under advisement". This means that a more in-depth examination of the facts is required so a written ruling is prepared after a review of past practices and precedents.

In the period of this report, the Speaker delivered 29 major rulings, which dealt with such questions as:

- obstruction of a Member
- the intimidation of committee witnesses
- premature disclosure of the Throne Speech
- the use of unparliamentary language in the Chamber
- violations of the financial prerogatives of the Crown
- the admissibility of bills and motions.

As well, for the first time since 1913, the Speaker was required by the House to issue a warrant, in this case to have Mr. Karlheinz Schreiber transferred from detention in Toronto to Ottawa so that he could appear as a witness before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

FIND YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

You can find your Member of Parliament either by entering your postal code on the main page of the Parliament of Canada Web site at www.parl.gc.ca, or by using the fold-out insert located in the centre of this report.

OUTREACH PROFILE

BUDDIES PROGRAM

The Buddies Program is a cooperative venture between Ottawa's Ridgemont High School and the House of Commons, offering students with disabilities the opportunity to acquire the skills that will help them find work in the future. The program runs throughout the school year and consists of one or two half-days a week. Participants in the program are involved in a range of special projects. Security Services also calls on the Buddies Program to help assemble their security booklet.

Volunteers of the Program with participants and the Clerk.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS



OUTREACH PROFILE

CITIZENS ADDRESSING HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMITTEES

Citizens can address Parliament as witnesses at committee meetings. Most witnesses are public servants, experts in a particular field, or representatives of groups and organizations. Private individuals, however, can also be witnesses. All serve to help Members better understand the topics they are studying and to provide suggestions on how to improve policy and legislation. Committees advertise their hearings on the Parliament of Canada Web site. Anyone interested in submitting a brief or making an appearance can contact the clerk of the committee they wish to address. For more information, visit the Parliament of Canada Web site (www.parl.gc.ca).

At Work in Committees

Committee work is an important part of Members' duties. It is here that Members study proposed legislation, amend bills and examine departmental spending plans. Committees can initiate their own inquiries or study issues referred to them by the House. These issues relate to areas of public policy such as the environment, defence and health.

Committees can ask interested parties to submit briefs and may travel across Canada or abroad to gather information and hear from individuals and groups with an interest in the subject. At the conclusion of a study, the committee may present a report to the House with its views and recommendations.

The House of Commons has 24 standing committees, each consisting of 12 Members, as well as 2 standing joint committees.

How Committee Members Are Selected

To determine membership on House committees, lists of candidates are prepared by the party whips. These lists are submitted to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which submits a final list to the House of Commons for approval.

Committee representation is based on party standings in the House of Commons. Most standing committees are chaired by members of the governing party. Each chair is assisted by a first vice-chair, who is a member of the Official Opposition, and a second vice-chair, who is a member of an opposition party other than the Official Opposition.

There are exceptions to this rule. The following are standing committees that are chaired by a member of the Official Opposition with a first vice-chair from the governing party and a second vice-chair from an opposition party other than the Official Opposition:

- Public Accounts
- Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics
- Status of Women
- Government Operations and Estimates
- Scrutiny of Regulations.

Legislative Process

FIRST READING

The bill is considered read for the first time and is printed.

SECOND READING

Members debate the bill's principle.

COMMITTEE STAGE

Committee members study the bill clause by clause.

REPORT STAGE

Members can make other amendments.

THIRD READING

Members debate and vote on the bill.

SENATE

The bill follows a similar process.

ROYAL ASSENT

The bill receives Royal Assent after being passed by both houses.

Committee Studies

In addition to studying legislation, committees investigate many subjects. Over the past year, House of Commons committees held a total of 1,087 meetings and produced 190 committee reports.

Visit the Parliament of Canada Web site at www.parl.gc.ca for a complete list of these reports (available on the respective committee's page or on the global committee page).

The following partial list offers a glimpse of the range of subjects studied by committees:

- the role of a public broadcaster in the 21st century
- taxation
- small craft harbours
- Canada's presence in Afghanistan
- prescription drugs
- the economic security of women
- Canada's trade and investment relations with the Arab states, the European Union and Southeast Asia
- Witness Protection Program
- the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*
- refugees
- counterfeiting and piracy of intellectual property
- the vitality of official language minority communities.

Unique Characteristics of Committee Work

By virtue of their smaller size relative to the Chamber, committees allow Members to examine complex matters in detail and help to develop their expertise in specific areas of public policy. Committees are also a forum where Members can hear from experts on a range of topics and have this information placed on the public record.

A committee is not a final decision-making body. When it has finished considering a matter, it presents its findings and recommendations in a report to the House. Committees can influence policies and decision-making, and their reports may include a request that the government provide a comprehensive response within 120 days.

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FOR THE 39TH 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 Development
Government Operations and Estimates
Health
Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Industry, Science and Technology
International Trade
Justice and Human Rights
National Defence
Natural Resources
Official Languages
Procedure and House Affairs
Public Accounts
Public Safety and National Security
Status of Women
Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Veterans Affairs

STANDING JOINT COMMITTEES

Library of Parliament
Scrutiny of Regulations

HOUSE COMMITTEE STATISTICS FOR 2007–2008

<i>Total number of meetings:</i>	1,087
<i>Total number of sitting hours:</i>	1,840
<i>Total number of witnesses:</i>	3,060
<i>Total number of reports:</i>	190

Organization of Committees

Every standing committee is led by a chair and two vice-chairs. The chair is the presiding officer and spokesperson, and casts a vote only when there is a tie. The chair's duties include maintaining order and decorum and deciding on questions of order and procedure, as well as leading the work of the committee.

The committee clerk is a non-partisan and independent officer who serves all members of a given committee. As an expert in the rules of the House of Commons, the clerk may be asked to advise on procedural questions. The clerk is the coordinator, organizer and liaison officer for the committee and is in frequent contact with members' staff, government departments and members of the public.

TYPES OF COMMITTEES

Standing Committee

A permanent committee that oversees the activities of government departments and studies proposed legislation and estimates.

Special Committee

Appointed by the House of Commons to inquire into specific matters; a special committee ceases to exist after it presents a final report to the House.

Legislative Committee

Studies a bill referred to it by the House and reports it back to the House with or without amendments. A legislative committee ceases to exist once the committee has submitted its report to the House.

Joint Committee

Consists of a proportionate number of Senators and Members of the House of Commons.

Subcommittee

A standing committee may delegate any or all of its powers to a subcommittee, except the power to report directly to the House of Commons.

Hansard is the official report of parliamentary debates. It is posted online on the Parliament of Canada Web site at www.parl.gc.ca, and published in hard-copy format.

OUTREACH PROFILE

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

In addition to the valuable support it provides to the Senate and the House of Commons, the Library of Parliament is an important resource for all Canadians. Accessing more than 17 linear kilometres of materials in the Library's collection, staff respond to hundreds of requests for information and reference services daily from Members' offices, as well as from parliamentary officials, committees and associations. Through its public programs, the Library also provides citizens with information and services concerning Parliament, such as programs and products for teachers, print and electronic publications, guided tours, exhibits and on-site and e-commerce parliamentary boutiques.

OUTREACH PROFILE

UNITED WAY

Every year, the House of Commons organizes fundraising events to support the United Way campaign. In 2000, employees contributed more than \$40,000—surpassing their objective by 15%. In 2005, employees more than doubled that sum, raising \$84,872 in contributions. And in 2007, this campaign raised \$109,479 in contributions.

The organizers of the United Way campaign reveal the partial amount collected in 2007 to the Clerk.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS



At Work Representing Canada Abroad

Through parliamentary diplomacy, Members of Parliament play an active role representing and promoting Canada on the international stage. From their participation at international conferences to their work promoting democracy as well as economic and social ties with developed and developing nations alike, Members help to advance Canada's interests.

The Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons also build parliamentary relationships with other countries by receiving courtesy calls from newly accredited ambassadors to Canada and keeping in regular contact with the diplomatic community in the capital.

The Speaker of the House of Commons held 48 such courtesy calls in 2007–2008.

Representing Canada's Interests and Sharing our Experience

The Speaker and Members are regularly invited to visit other legislatures to discuss common issues, foster relationships and share knowledge and expertise. At the invitation of his counterpart presiding officers, Speaker Milliken led official delegations to the following countries during 2007–2008:

- Trinidad and Tobago (April 2–5, 2007)
- Germany (October 8–13, 2007)

- Malaysia (November 1–9, 2007)
- Peru (March 15–20, 2008).

In addition, the Speaker participated in the following parliamentary conferences:

- G8 Speakers' Conference, Berlin and Potsdam, Germany (September 7–9, 2007)
- 19th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth, London, United Kingdom (January 2–6, 2008)
- Canadian Presiding Officers Conference, Quebec City (January 24–26, 2008)
- XVth Canada-Mexico Interparliamentary Meeting, Mazatlán, Mexico (February 17–19, 2008).



Group picture of participants in the XVth Canada-Mexico Interparliamentary Meeting, held in Mexico in February 2008.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS

Welcoming Foreign Parliamentarians and Dignitaries

In addition to their work abroad, the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons also serve as hosts to foreign parliamentarians and dignitaries visiting Canada. In 2007–2008, Parliament hosted the following official visits by foreign parliamentary speakers and delegations:

- The Honourable David Hawker, M.P., Speaker of the House of Representatives of Australia, and a parliamentary delegation (April 14–21, 2007)
- His Excellency Dr. Jaime José Matos da Gama, President of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic, and a parliamentary delegation (April 30–May 4, 2007)
- His Excellency Franco Marini, President of the Senate of the Italian Republic (September 4–7, 2007)
- The Right Honourable the Baroness Hayman, Lord Speaker of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (September 24–28, 2007)
- Her Excellency Jozefina Topalli, M.P., Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania, and a parliamentary delegation (October 14–20, 2007)
- His Excellency Degefe Bula, Speaker of the House of the Federation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and a parliamentary delegation (October 15–21, 2007)
- Her Excellency Katalin Szili, M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary, and a parliamentary delegation (October 28–November 1, 2007)
- His Excellency Wolfgang Ertlitz, President of the Federal Council of the Republic of Austria, and a parliamentary delegation (November 25–30, 2007)
- His Excellency Danzan Lundejantsan, Chairman of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia, and a parliamentary delegation (December 2–7, 2007)
- His Excellency Dr. Norbert Lammert, President of the Federal Parliament (Bundestag) of the Federal Republic of Germany (January 30–February 5, 2008)
- The Honourable Kathleen Casey, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island (February 12–13, 2008)
- The Honourable Roger Fitzgerald, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador (February 12–13, 2008).

By visiting abroad and by serving as host to foreign visits, parliamentarians share ideas with their counterparts from around the world, exploring common concerns and finding lasting solutions to problems. Frequent topics of discussion

OUTREACH PROFILE

PARLIAMENTARY OFFICERS' STUDY PROGRAM

Outreach at the House of Commons extends to an interparliamentary and international level through the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program. This program affords an opportunity for senior parliamentary staff from foreign legislatures and Canadian jurisdictions to learn about the functioning of the Parliament of Canada and, in turn, to reflect on their own practices. Hosted by the Senate, the House of Commons and the Library of Parliament, it provides participants the opportunity to observe, discuss and exchange views with senior Canadian parliamentary officials on the various procedural, administrative and research services provided to parliamentarians. Three such programs were held in 2007–2008, including one specifically for officials from the parliaments of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Participants in the session of the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program held in November 2007.

Standing from left to right:

Mr. Alistair Doherty (United Kingdom – House of Commons)

Ms. Marie Thérèse Soya (Cameroon – National Assembly)

Ms. Gloria Nakebu-Esiku (East African Legislative Assembly)

Mr. Sambo Sin (Cambodia – National Assembly)

Ms. Vuyokazi Hellen Mnana (South Africa – National Council of Provinces)

Mr. Jagdish Kumar (India – Council of States)

Mr. Ganbat Bayasgalan (Parliament of Mongolia)

Mr. Untung Djumadi (Indonesia – House of Representatives)

Sitting from left to right:

Ms. Elizabeth Watson (Parliament of Scotland)

Ms. Anca-Daniela Chesaru (Romania – Chamber of Deputies)

Mr. Brahm Dutt (India – House of the People)

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

Mr. Galal Al-Halali (Yemen – Consultative Council)

Mr. Manuel Mamadi Fati (Guinea-Bissau – National People's Assembly)

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / CHRIS DIOTTE



include parliamentary democracy, international security, agriculture, immigration, trade and investment, the environment and international development.

The Parliament of Canada is also a member of various parliamentary associations. Each of these associations holds conferences, seminars and meetings. These events offer Canadian parliamentarians further opportunities to promote Canada's interests abroad, and to maintain bilateral and multilateral relationships with other countries.

Many issues of concern to Members of Parliament and their constituents transcend national and regional borders. Canadian parliamentarians must take into account the views and interests of other countries. This is especially true in a globalized world in which decisions of international organizations can have an effect on the daily lives of their constituents. Here are examples of activities undertaken by Members of Parliament in this regard:

- The World Trade Organization (WTO) holds annual public events where participants from government, parliament, civil society, the business sector, academia and the media jointly reflect on the functioning of the multilateral trading system and analyze the institutional state of the WTO. As part of the 2007 program, a delegation participated in a panel on climate change, organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.



Visit in Canada of His Excellency Viktor Zubkov, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation with Speaker Milliken.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / CHRIS DIOTTE

CANADA'S CENTENNIAL FLAME



On January 1, 1967, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson launched Canada's 100th anniversary celebrations by lighting the Centennial Flame for the first time. Surrounded by the shields of Canada's provinces and territories, and joined by the water of the fountain, the Centennial Flame symbolizes our nation's unity from sea to sea.

An Act passed by Parliament in 1991 ensures that coins tossed into the Centennial Flame's fountain go to fund research by and about Canadians with disabilities.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / BERNARD THIBODEAU

DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

The Library of Parliament originated in the legislative libraries of Upper and Lower Canada, which were created in the 1790s. The two libraries were amalgamated when Upper and Lower Canada were united in 1841.



On April 25, 2007, the Speakers of the Senate and of the House of Commons were honoured to welcome His Excellency László Sólyom, President of the Republic of Hungary.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / CHRIS DIOTTE

- The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas sent a delegation to the 37th Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States. The main theme, *Energy for Sustainable Development*, was of particular interest to the delegation and their attendance allowed members to improve their understanding of issues of hemispheric interest.
- In meetings with United States governors and state legislators, members of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group advocated for measures that would be beneficial to Canadian business, such as the balanced implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.
- In 2007, Canadian NATO Parliamentary Assembly members worked with other delegates on examining issues such as the security repercussions of global warming, as well as the security ramifications related to the ability of certain nations to gain nuclear weapons. Canadian members were very active in debates on the subject of NATO's mission in Afghanistan.

Interparliamentary Groups

Interparliamentary groups strengthen relations between Canadian parliamentarians and their counterparts from other countries. These groups promote cooperation and understanding between nations. The Parliament of Canada is involved in official interparliamentary groups with Germany, Ireland, Israel and Italy. The activities of these groups are supported financially through the membership fees from individual parliamentarians.

PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATIONS

The Parliament of Canada belongs to five bilateral associations and seven multilateral associations.

Bilateral associations

- *Canada-China Legislative Association*
- *Canada-France Interparliamentary Association*
- *Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group*
- *Canada-United Kingdom Inter-Parliamentary Association*
- *Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group*

Multilateral associations

- *Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association*
- *Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association (including the delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly)*
- *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie*
- *Inter-Parliamentary Union*
- *NATO Parliamentary Association*
- *Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas*
- *Commonwealth Parliamentary Association*

Behind the Scenes: The House of Commons Administration

SUPPORTING MEMBERS, STRENGTHENING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Employees of the House of Commons Administration take great pride in their work, supporting Members of Parliament and strengthening the House of Commons by helping to advance the initiatives of parliamentarians.

Drawing on the professional support of over 1,800 employees, the House Administration has six service areas: Procedural Services; the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel; Information Services; Parliamentary Precinct Services; Finance Services; and Human Resources and Corporate Planning Services.

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

DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

The winning design for Canada's first Parliament was selected in 1859 in part because of its accommodation of both the press and the public. The design jury chair, Samuel Keefer, maintained that the design by Fuller & Jones was the only one that met both the aesthetic and practical requirements of the government in this respect.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

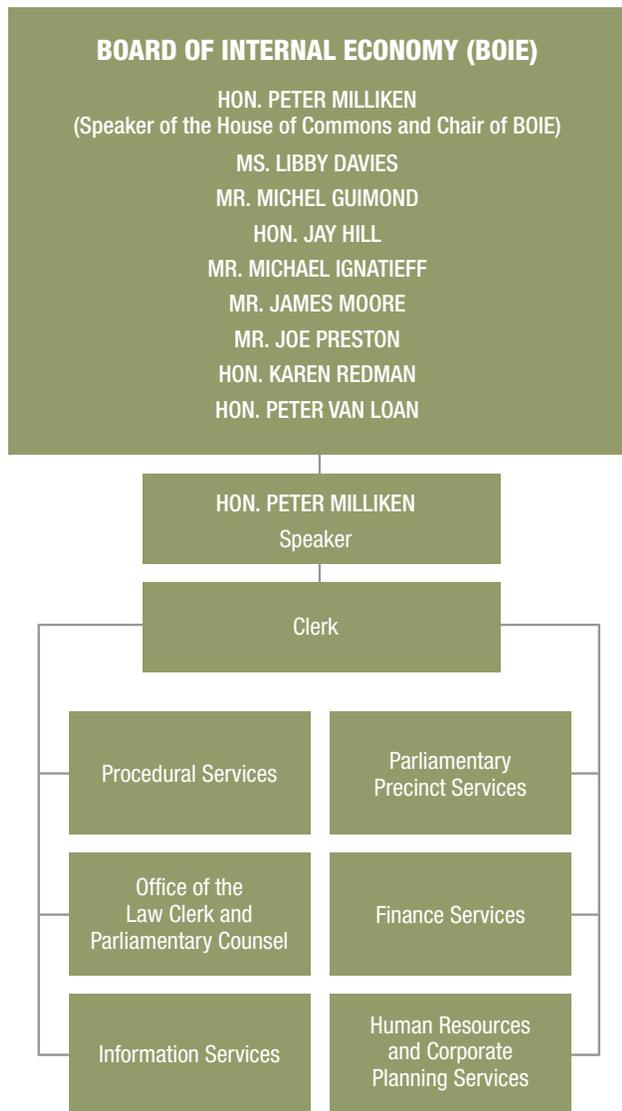


Standing from left to right: *Mr. Michel Guimond, M.P., Whip of the Bloc Québécois; Mr. Joe Preston, M.P. (CPC); Mr. Michael Ignatieff, M.P. (Lib.); Mr. James Moore, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics; Hon. Jay Hill, P.C., M.P., Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip; Ms. Audrey O'Brien, Clerk of the House of Commons; Hon. Peter Van Loan, P.C., M.P., Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform.*

Sitting from left to right: *Hon. Karen Redman, P.C., M.P., Whip of the Official Opposition; Hon. Peter Milliken, M.P., Speaker of the House of Commons and Chair of the Board of Internal Economy; Ms. Libby Davies, M.P., House Leader of the New Democratic Party.*

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / CHRIS DIOTTE

House of Commons Administration Organization Chart



OUTREACH PROFILE

CANADIAN STUDY OF PARLIAMENT GROUP

Founded in 1978, the Canadian Study of Parliament Group (CSPG) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that brings together parliamentary experts, academics and public servants with an interest in the role, function and reform of parliamentary institutions. This group organizes conferences, seminars and speaking tours and produces research publications that foster discussion and enhance knowledge of parliamentary government. Its operations are supported by the financial and voluntary contributions of its members and by the Senate and the House of Commons. CSPG membership is open to anyone with an interest in Parliament, parliamentary institutions and parliamentary affairs. Visit the Canadian Study of Parliament Group online at www.studyparliament.ca to learn more about the organization and its upcoming events.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

Canada's shortest Parliament lasted two months and six days (31st Parliament, from October 9, 1979 to December 14, 1979).

Canada's longest Parliament lasted five years, 10 months, 22 days (12th Parliament, from November 15, 1911 to October 6, 1917).

OUTREACH PROFILE

TEACHERS' INSTITUTE ON PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

First launched in 1996, this is a unique professional development program for teachers across Canada to learn more about parliamentary government and citizenship education. Every November, the program brings together approximately 70 educators to participate in an intensive week-long program on Parliament Hill, administered by the Library of Parliament.

Supporting Strategic Objectives

The *Strategic Outlook for the 39th Parliament*, published in 2006, identifies four strategic objectives for the House of Commons Administration that reflect its vision, values and mandate. It also provides a framework for its activities in support of Members.

The House Administration's strategic objectives are:

1. Respond to the evolving role of Members and the institution
2. Enhance ongoing services to Members and sustain the institution
3. Promote understanding and support the advancement of legislative institutions
4. Apply, in a parliamentary context, the highest standards of public-sector governance

This section of the *Report to Canadians* describes the House Administration's accomplishments during the 2007–2008 fiscal year in support of those objectives. It also identifies the Administration's major commitments for 2008–2009.

1. Responding to the Evolving Role of Members and the Institution

Canadian parliamentary democracy is always evolving in response to new challenges. The House of Commons Administration supports the efforts of all Members of Parliament to meet these challenges by providing new, innovative ways to access parliamentary information and by supporting the evolution of parliamentary practices and rules.

Supporting the Evolution of Parliamentary Practices and Rules

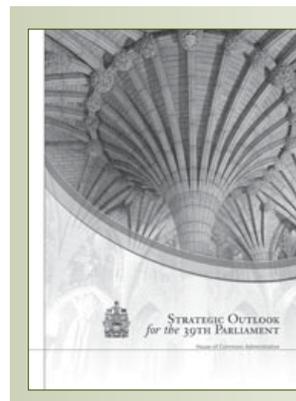
While the last year has seen only minor changes to the Standing Orders of the House, so many unusual and unprecedented events have occurred that there has been a significant impact on the precedents and practice. Updates are being made to procedural reference works and, in the meantime, procedural staff in the Administration stands ready to brief Members and their offices about the procedural options available to them in

managing their business to meet their specific objectives. These briefings are strictly for information purposes; planning strategy is not within the purview of the non-partisan Administration but rather the work of political party advisers and researchers.

Improving Members' Access to Parliamentary Information

The administrations of the Senate, the House of Commons and the Library of Parliament continue to be governed by the principles of a common, long-term vision and strategy for enhancing parliamentary information services throughout Parliament. In the coming year, the Parliamentary Information Management Working Group, representing all three institutions, will continue to develop a governance model that defines roles and responsibilities so that all participants can work together effectively.

The House Administration is ensuring that Members have access to desktop information management tools to support them in their work. In 2007–2008, Members were provided with on-demand access to televised and audio proceedings via the ParIVU service. The "Today in the House" service also provides online information on the daily activities of the House



The Strategic Outlook is prepared at the beginning of each Parliament and outlines to Members the House Administration's strategic orientation and key commitments for the duration of the Parliament based on their needs. The latest version of the Strategic Outlook is available on the Parliament of Canada Web site at www.parl.gc.ca.

of Commons, and this year, Members of Parliament were able to review the draft transcripts of proceedings (the “blues”) from their portable devices (PDAs).

Work is under way on the second phase of *Smart Book*, a software tool to help publish both paper and electronic documents and to improve document workflow for International and Interparliamentary Affairs. *Smart Book* will also be used to manage and publish articles for the Compendium of House of Commons Procedure, making it easier to update and maintain this important online resource.

The Parliamentary Precinct Network has recently been upgraded in most buildings to ensure a more reliable and manageable service platform for the delivery of information services. In 2008–2009, the House Administration will complete the implementation of a secure, reliable and central information storage environment for Members. In addition, network services for Members’ constituency offices are being renewed to provide fast and flexible communications services.

2. Enhancing Ongoing Services to Members and Sustaining the Institution

The House Administration has implemented a series of initiatives to enhance management and planning practices, as well as to upgrade technology services and facilities so that Members and employees can better serve Canadians in an efficient, effective manner.

Improving the Use and Application of Information Technology Services

By investing in technology services, improvements have been made to the financial and human resource systems of the House of Commons to make them more efficient in the management of information and in the way services are delivered.

This year, the House Administration completed the upgrade of the Human Resources Management System, making it easier for Members to maintain and manage resource-related information. In addition, a Human Resources Data Quality Program is being implemented to put in place controls, standards and processes to provide clients with higher quality information. Electronic forms used by Members for reporting travel expenses, hiring employees and other business-related activities have been modified to make them easier to use.

In 2008–2009, a pilot project will be launched so that Members can procure their office supplies electronically from their constituency offices and have their budgets updated simultaneously. Work will continue with the implementation of the Financial Management System upgrade and the Human Resources Data Quality Program. A Finance Data Quality Program will also be implemented in 2008–2009.

Improving the Committee Report Production Process

With its partners in the Library of Parliament and the Translation Bureau of Public Works and Government Services Canada, the House Administration reviewed and refined the process by which committee reports are produced. This initiative helped streamline decision-making and better coordinate the monitoring and timely production of the reports.

Managing the Members’ Orientation and Election Readiness Program

The Members’ Orientation and Election Readiness Program ensures the timely and coordinated delivery of administrative, financial and procedural information and services required by Members of Parliament before, during and after general elections and by-elections. Building on lessons learned from previous elections, the House Administration is implementing a more rigorous and structured governance approach and is improving services to new Members. The Program has recently become part of the Secretariat to the Board of Internal Economy.

Enhancements to Web Site for Committees

Building on the approach taken with the “Today in the House” service, enhancements have been made to the Web site for committees. These enhancements meet accessibility standards, provide a common “look and feel”, make it easier to maintain the site, and provide better access to information about committee activities, members and witnesses.

Guides for Chair Occupants and Table Officers

The House Administration prepared a new edition of a guide for Chair Occupants. Scheduled to be printed in 2008, *Practical Advice: Guide for Chair Occupants* will be available in an abridged format so that it can be accessed quickly by Presiding Officers when managing debates in the House.

OUTREACH PROFILE

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE) CONFERENCE

In 2008, Canada’s Parliament will continue its longstanding practice of hosting parliamentary conferences in different regions of the country. From September 18 to 21, Toronto will welcome 250 delegates from the 56 member countries of the OSCE. This conference will provide an opportunity for parliamentarians from around the world to reflect on the challenges faced by OSCE members.



Renovating the Parliamentary Precinct buildings.

PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / BERNARD THIBODEAU

Renovations of the Parliamentary Precinct

The House Administration continues to strive to meet the key objectives of the Long-Term Vision and Plan (LTVP) for the Parliamentary Precinct. This plan serves to ensure that Members are housed in facilities that meet the demands of a modern workplace while minimizing the impact of Parliamentary Precinct renovations on operations and services. In addition, the LTVP respects the historical significance and beauty of the Parliament Buildings and grounds—preserving them while preparing for future needs. The LTVP involves a close partnership with Public Works and Government Services Canada, since parliament is a tenant of the buildings of the Precinct and the Hill.

Planning continues on the major rehabilitation of the West Block, with restoration work underway on the southeast and north towers. Renovation work is progressing to provide interim space for Parliamentarians' offices and for committee rooms, displaced from the West Block to enable the rehabilitation of the building to proceed.

Business Continuity Planning

Ongoing planning ensures that the vital business of the Chamber and committees can continue in the event of an emergency situation in which the House of Commons is required to relocate. Critical service needs of all the areas of the House of Commons have been identified.

Supporting Parliamentary Security

To support security awareness activities within the Parliamentary Precinct, the House Administration published and conducted presentations on security tips and protocols.

This information is integrated into House of Commons security practices, and is maintained and assessed regularly.

The Parliamentary partnership of security representatives from the Senate, the House of Commons, and the RCMP provides strategic orientation on security issues to align with the Long-Term Vision and Plan of the Precinct, while maintaining appropriate security practices in daily operations.

3. Promoting Understanding and Supporting the Advancement of Legislative Institutions

Promoting a Broader Understanding of Parliament

To ensure a broader understanding of Parliament among a wide range of clients, including the media as well as professional and academic organizations, the House Administration is working on the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*—a comprehensive study of House of Commons procedural rules and precedents. The new edition, which is scheduled for publication in 2009, will take into account changes to the Standing Orders and practices of the House of Commons that have occurred since the first edition was published in 2000.

Providing Learning Opportunities

Training sessions on parliamentary procedure continue to be offered by the House Administration to a range of clients, including Members of the House of Commons and their staff. An in-depth, intensive version of this training is also provided to new senior staff of the House Administration. In conjunction with the Senate and the Canada School of Public Service, the House Administration provides training sessions explaining the functions and rules of Parliament to employees of the federal public service.

4. Applying, in a Parliamentary Context, the Highest Standards of Public-sector Governance

As part of ongoing efforts to ensure accountability and transparency to Canadians, the House of Commons implements a range of management processes and best practices that promote responsible stewardship of resources.

Implementing the Chief Financial Officer Model

With the renewed emphasis on sound financial management throughout the public and private sectors, the House

Visit the Parliament of Canada Web site at www.parl.gc.ca to learn more about the legislative process and the activities of the House of Commons.

Administration's Finance Services is implementing the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Model. Implementing this model will help ensure that the people and infrastructure are in place to provide the best possible service to Members. The CFO model will achieve this by:

- delivering effective financial strategies through modern systems, internal controls and best practices;
- generating high-quality, integrated financial information;
- measuring performance and identifying areas for improvement; and
- reducing transactional activity by leveraging technology.

The House Administration is implementing an integrated investment-planning framework. The framework enhances the planning process that ensures investments are made strategically, factoring in needs, costs, risks, sources of funding, investment options and intended impacts. In 2007–2008, the House of Commons initiated its first formal cycle of integrated investment planning, with the preparation of a Five-Year Investment Plan (2009–2013).

With respect to financial reporting, the House Administration's financial statements continue to be audited by an external firm. In 2007, an unqualified audit report was issued. As part of the CFO Model's objective to create the conditions for generating high-quality financial information, several quality assurance reviews were conducted, including financial and post-payment reviews.

Based on a multi-year policy plan that guides policy review and development, the House Administration reviewed the requirements and limits for delegation of authority and the rules governing official gifts, as well as the policy that governs the receipt, control and deposit of cash. A revised procurement policy is also being developed to control costs and risks associated with the procurement process.

Over the course of the 2008–2009 fiscal year, additional activities are scheduled as part of the multi-year policy plan. An asset management policy will be developed. This will establish a reporting and accountability framework to facilitate optimal asset performance. In addition, financial management and policy guides for committees, parliamentary associations and parliamentary exchanges will be examined, as well as policies governing the recovery of property and privileges of departing employees.

Sustaining a Modern and Effective Workforce

The House Administration continues to plan and implement a number of activities to ensure that it remains a competitive employer with a thriving workforce. Several initiatives have

OUTREACH PROFILE

PARTNERS FOR A GREEN HILL

Canadians consider environmental protection a core value and Parliament is gladly willing to do its part. Through a program called Partners for a Green Hill, established in 2004, the Senate, House of Commons and Library of Parliament joined forces to further good environmental stewardship of the Parliamentary Precinct. It is a commitment to preserve and enhance the Parliament Hill environment by implementing the "4Rs" of environmental protection: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rethink. It also aims to raise public awareness about the importance of preserving and protecting the environment—including the Parliamentary Precinct. The program involves all buildings within the Parliamentary Precinct housing more than 4,000 people who work in this area, including parliamentarians and their staff, employees of the Administration of the Senate, the House of Commons and the Library of Parliament, and the public.



been implemented to respond to the growing challenges in human resources management, including measures to attract new employees and support for the current workforce through training and leadership development. These steps will ensure that House Administration employees have the skills necessary to meet the needs of Members today and in the future.

Focus on Employees' Potential: Talent Management

Competency profiles were developed to reflect the skills required for managers, supervisors, language instructors and administrative positions within the House Administration. These profiles were based on information gathered at focus groups and in interviews conducted with incumbents and their managers. In addition, human resource specialists administered competency-based evaluation tools, conducted learning needs assessments, and provided individual and collective learning plans in various service areas.

The next year will see the alignment of the competency profiles with the development of a leadership program to ensure that all employees can deploy their talents and contribute to the success of the organization. A structured succession planning program will also allow the organization to ensure the transfers of knowledge and corporate memory, thus continuing to provide quality service and information to Members.

Focus on Client Requirements: Service Delivery

To address a shrinking pool of top talent, innovative programs were developed to attract new employees. Recruitment was promoted by participating in job fairs and posting job opportunities on the Parliament of Canada Web site, reaching more potential candidates and adapting to the culture of a new generation.

New initiatives in occupational health and safety include developing a corporate response plan to deal with pandemic situations, implementing health-risk assessments to assist staff in addressing work/life balance issues, and establishing an integrated conflict management system to foster a workplace where conflicts can be resolved in a constructive manner.

Focus on the Institution's Needs: Stewardship

The House of Commons aspires to become an environment of choice. Consultations were held regarding human resources policy development, in order to review and streamline key business processes and report on performance efficiently. A corporate report on employment equity, tabled at the Board of Internal Economy, defines strategic initiatives that will allow the organization to adjust its priorities to ensure that the House recruits and retains a proportional representation of the four designated employment equity groups. New reports on human resources management in the House Administration will be developed to provide accurate and timely data for optimal decision-making.

Ensuring Information Resources are Readily Available

The House Administration has established a central records office and has completed an inventory and review of current and archived print information. This review included developing and implementing a classification structure aligned with the House of Commons Subject Classification Scheme, as well as retention and disposition schedules.

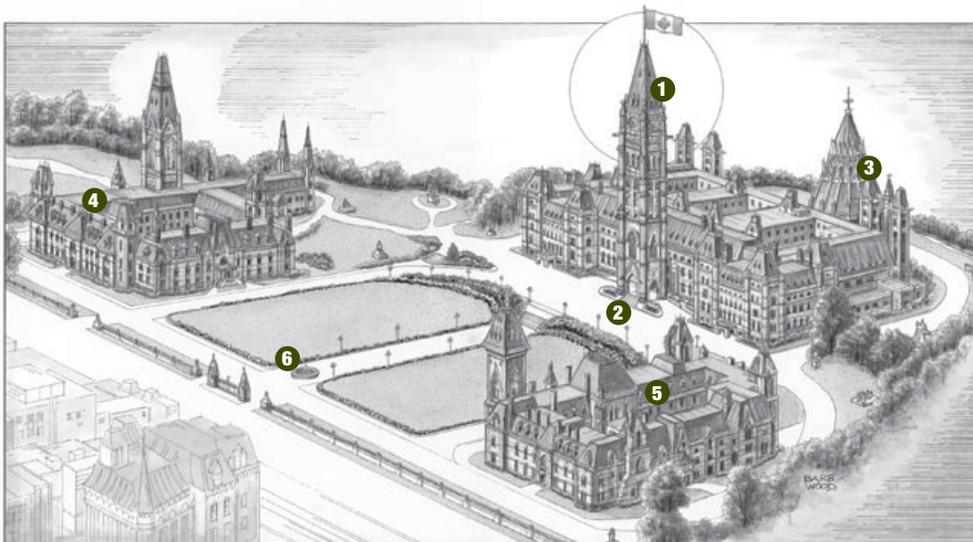
Environmental Management

Partners for a Green Hill will continue to promote new programs and initiatives to improve environmental management on Parliament Hill, including conducting a review of the use of chemical products, promoting the transit-pass program for employees, and expanding recycling programs to divert more waste from landfill sites. An audit of environmental management programs in 2007–2008 showed that the House maintained a rate of 83% diversion of waste products from landfill. Also, stringent environmental criteria have been incorporated into the tendering process for the purchase of paint.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

Since Confederation, Canada has been served by 12 Clerks of the House of Commons. Audrey O'Brien, the current Clerk, is the first woman to occupy the position.

Parliament Hill Plan



- 1 Peace Tower
- 2 Centre Block Main Entrance
- 3 The Library of Parliament
- 4 West Block
- 5 East Block
- 6 The Centennial Flame

GRAPHIC: LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT / BARB WOOD

Conclusion

From reaching out and engaging Canadians to representing Canada abroad, from sitting on committees to participating in debates in the Chamber, Members of Parliament uphold the values that citizens cherish and help shape the future of this nation. They represent Canadians by presenting the concerns of citizens in a national forum. They serve Canada on the world stage by meeting with other parliamentarians to discuss trade, democracy and other issues.

The “Outreach Profiles” featured throughout this annual report illustrate how Members, with the support of the House Administration, are helping to strengthen democracy by giving citizens opportunities to learn more about how their Parliament works and how they can contribute. Outreach encompasses a range of initiatives, including internships, cooperative placements and ventures, a study program, as well as the national Page Program.

The House of Commons Administration has continued to emphasize service delivery by finding new tools and ways of working. Innovations in how vital parliamentary information is accessed and shared, measures to ensure that the people and infrastructure are in place to provide the best possible service to Members, and investing in a talent management model to ensure that skilled workers are both attracted and retained by this institution—these are among the key initiatives undertaken by the House Administration. Not only do these efforts respond to existing requirements of Members and the public, they also help to ensure that needs will continue to be met in this evolving workplace.

The House of Commons has a proud tradition of serving Canadians. Over the coming year, Members will continue to serve citizens with the support of the House Administration.

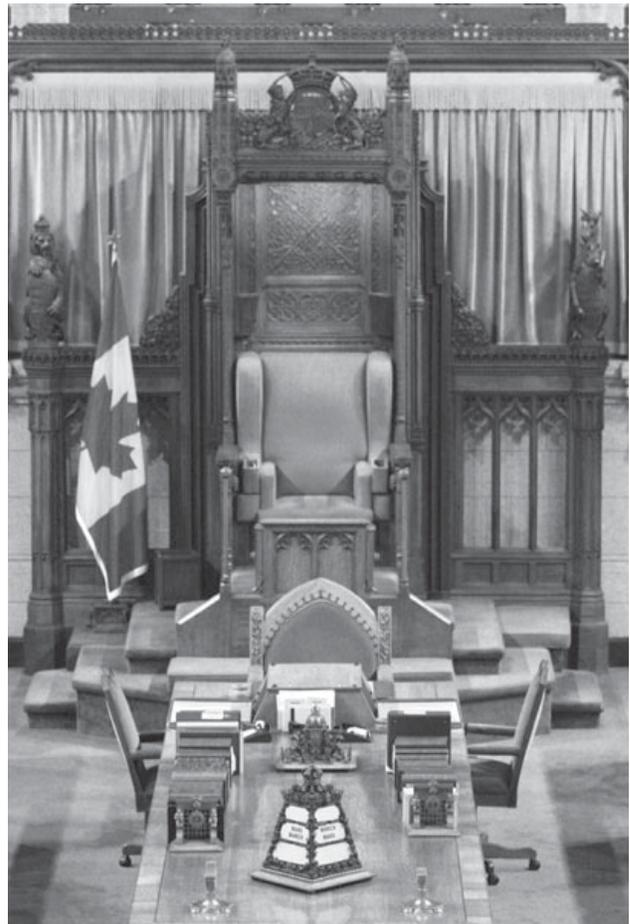


PHOTO: © HOUSE OF COMMONS / CHRIS DIOTTE

Financial Report*

Planned Versus Actual Spending by Authority

(in thousands of dollars)

2007-2008

Vote	Main Estimates	Supplementary Estimates and Adjustments	Total Authorities	Actual Spending	Variance
5 Program expenditures	263,640	11,813	275,453	264,302	11,151
(S) Members of the House of Commons **	111,844	(7,611)	104,233	104,233	0
(S) Contributions to employee benefit plans	35,047	(2,726)	32,321	32,321	0
SUBTOTAL	146,891	(10,337)	136,554	136,554	0
TOTAL	410,531	1,476	412,007	400,856	11,151

** 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

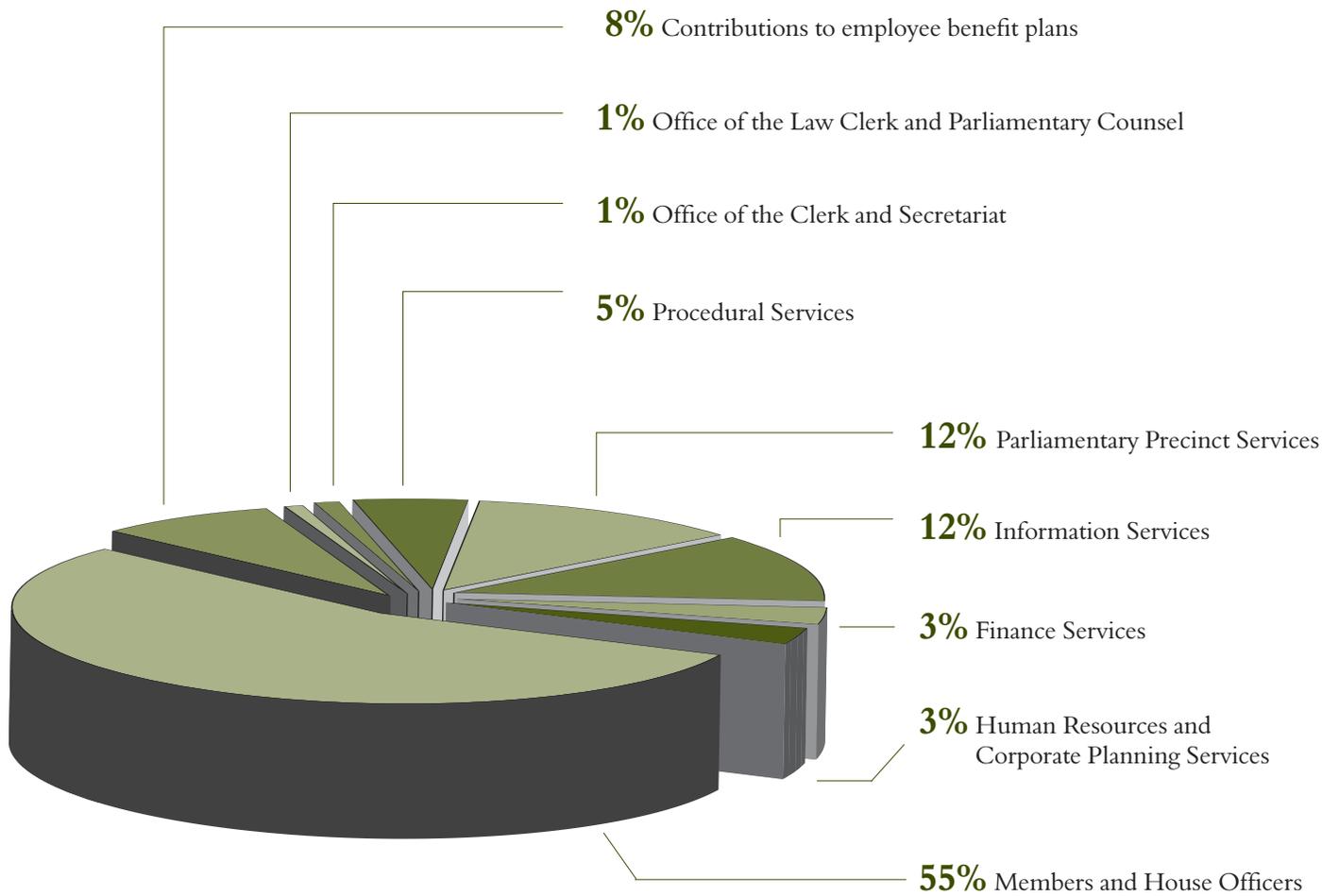
(in thousands of dollars)

2007-2008

Program Activity	Main Estimates	Supplementary Estimates and Adjustments	Total Authorities	Actual Spending	Variance
Members and House Officers	233,830	(5,577)	228,253	221,903	6,350
House Administration					
Office of the Clerk and Secretariat	1,714	55	1,769	1,755	14
Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel	2,641	252	2,893	2,892	1
Procedural Services	16,139	329	16,468	16,388	80
Standing Committees	5,000	250	5,250	1,333	3,917
Parliamentary Associations	2,210	885	3,095	2,501	594
Parliamentary Precinct Services	45,216	2,486	47,702	47,597	105
Information Services	44,336	5,438	49,774	49,763	11
Finance Services	12,447	(1,447)	11,000	10,963	37
Human Resources and Corporate Planning Services	11,951	1,531	13,482	13,440	42
SUBTOTAL	141,654	9,779	151,433	146,632	4,801
Contributions to employee benefit plans	35,047	(2,726)	32,321	32,321	0
TOTAL	410,531	1,476	412,007	400,856	11,151

* Financial results may be subject to minor revisions.

2007-2008 Actual Spending by Service (in percentage)



Increase in Main Estimates Over Previous Year

(in thousands of dollars)

Main Estimates

Vote	Program Name	2007-2008	2006-2007	Variance
5	Program expenditures:			
	Members and House Officers	121,986	117,268	4,718
	Office of the Clerk and Secretariat	1,714	0	1,714
	Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel	2,641	2,524	117
	Procedural Services	23,349	25,647	(2,298)
	Parliamentary Precinct Services	45,216	42,045	3,171
	Information Services	44,336	42,040	2,296
	Corporate Services ⁽¹⁾	0	26,788	(26,788)
	Finance Services	12,447	0	12,447
	Human Resources and Corporate Planning Services	11,951	0	11,951
	SUBTOTAL	263,640	256,312	7,328
(S)	Members and House Officers	111,844	109,397	2,447
(S)	Contributions to employee benefit plans	35,047	34,615	432
	SUBTOTAL	146,891	144,012	2,879
	TOTAL	410,531	400,324	10,207

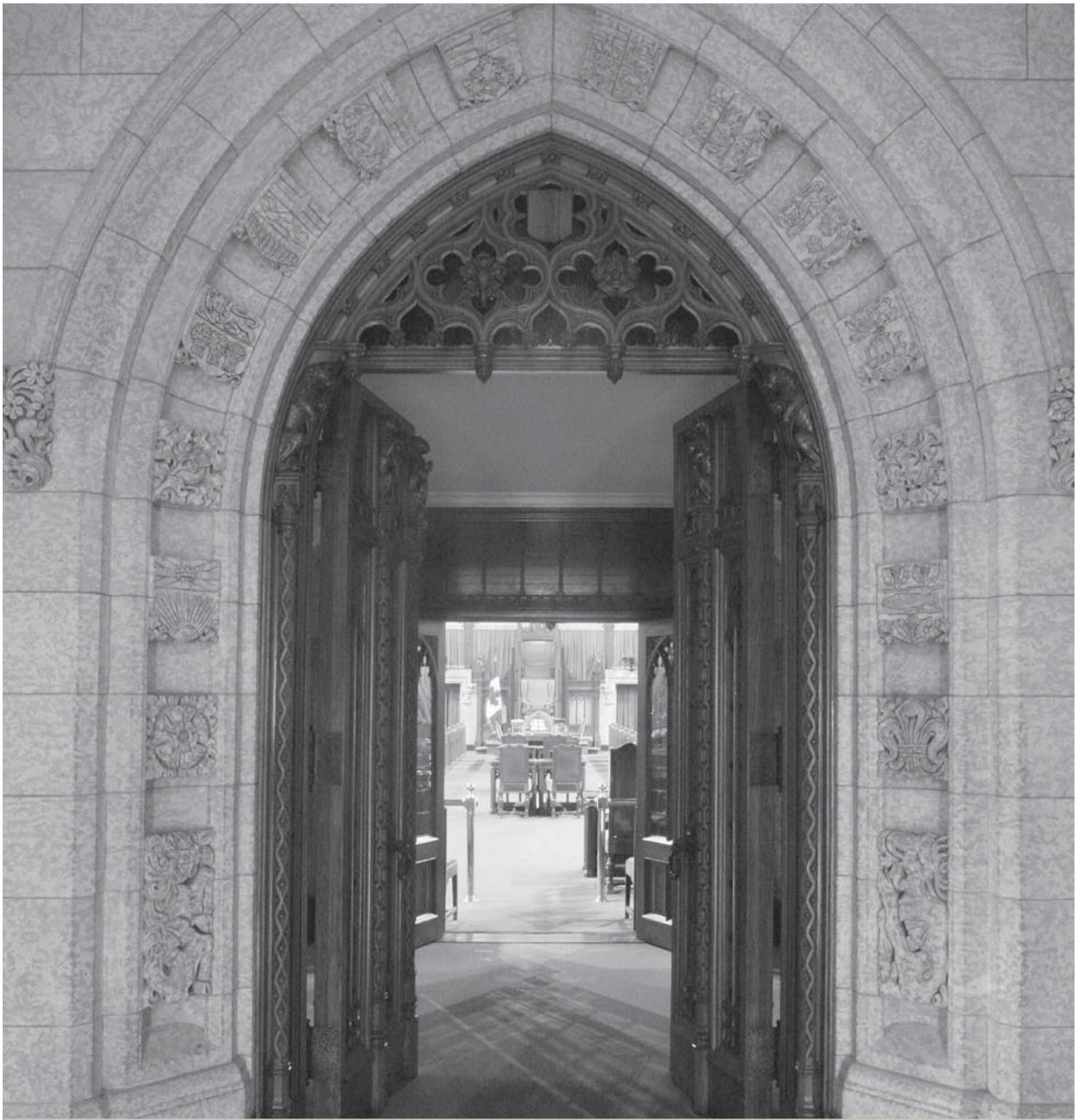
⁽¹⁾ Approved budget for Corporate Services was allocated among the Office of the Clerk and Secretariat, Parliamentary Precinct Services, Finance Services and Human Resources and Corporate Planning Services during fiscal year 2006-2007.

Full-Time Equivalents – House Administration

Main Estimates

Program Sub-activity	2007-2008	2006-2007
Office of the Clerk and Secretariat	19	–
Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel	25	24
Procedural Services	219	217
Parliamentary Precinct Services	822	737
Information Services	520	505
Corporate Services ⁽¹⁾	–	316
Finance Services	125	–
Human Resources and Corporate Planning Services	115	–
TOTAL	1,845	1,799

⁽¹⁾ Full-Time Equivalents for Corporate Services were allocated among the Office of the Clerk and Secretariat, Parliamentary Precinct Services, Finance Services and Human Resources and Corporate Planning Services during fiscal year 2006-2007.



YOUR PORTAL TO A WEALTH OF INFORMATION

The fold-out insert at the centre of this document includes photographs of Members elected to Canada's 39th Parliament. 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