Annual Report

of the

British Columbia Legislative Library

2007

Cover Story

Linocut print of the entrance to the Library by an unknown artist. The block was found in the attic in November 1985. The print appeared on the cover of the **British Columbia Library Association Bulletin, January 1955.**

May 26, 2008

The Honourable Bill Barisoff
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia
V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to present the Library's Annual Report for the year 2007. The report is submitted pursuant to order 116 of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, 1987.

In keeping with our efforts to provide more information to the Members of the Legislative Assembly via electronic services, this report will also be made electronically available on the Library's Intranet site.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Taylor
Director

Mandate and History

Well informed legislators and a well informed citizenry are fundamental to the democratic function, and are the very raison d'être of the British Columbia Legislative Library.

The Library was founded in 1863, eight years before British Columbia joined Canada. Originally the Provincial Library and Archives, it had a responsibility for supporting library service across the province. The British Columbia Library Association was founded in the office of the Legislative Librarian in 1911. In the 1950s the Provincial Archives became a separate institution. Later the role of supporting public libraries was transferred to the Public Library Services Branch. In 1974, the Library was mandated to focus on services for the Legislative Assembly. The name was changed from the Provincial Library to the Legislative Library, and was brought under the authority of the Speaker.

Today the primary goal is to provide advanced confidential and non-partisan reference and research support to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, their staff, Assembly staff, and the Press Gallery. Where there is no conflict with this goal, the Library also assists government employees and members of the public.

The Library's collection fuses rich print, microform and online resources. The print collection stretches 5.5 miles, and includes an extensive collection of historical and current BC government publications. The Library now supplements this printed material by downloading electronic BC government publications. Additionally, the Library produces materials for its legislative clients, including background papers and lists of important BC political facts, which it also makes publicly available on the Internet. The Library is increasingly purchasing access to online resources, and training our Legislative clients in their use. The *British Columbia Government Publications Monthly Checklist*, electronically distributed to over 200 libraries in the province, serves as a valuable tool in making those libraries aware of recent government publications.

Our Future

The Library today relies both on its extensive electronic resources, and on its physical collection that dates back more than 100 years. BC government publications make up a substantial portion of the collection. Many items are unique. The collection has significant historical, professional and cultural value to the people of British Columbia, containing as it does the published record of the provincial government.

The Library's first location was the "Birdcages". In 1898, it moved to the "new" Parliament Building to what is now the Clerk's Office. Our present building with its stunning architecture was completed in 1915. The passage of time has turned it into a heritage building. The passage of time has also seen the development of modern library amenities such as fire suppression and climate control. Without these, this historical collection is at risk, whether from catastrophic fire, or long, slow degradation. Relocation to a new permanent location, while retaining a service bureau in the Parliament Building, would be welcome.

The past decade has been one of revolutionary change in information technology. The Internet has changed the way people access information, and the kinds of services they expect from the Library. Desktop access has become the norm. It has enabled the Library to provide access to huge databases which give a far larger range of information than was possible in the past. Such fundamental changes in information technology inevitably lead to changes in an information-based organization such as the Library, and to the need for continuous self-evaluation and development, a process guided by the Library's strategic planning.

<u>Our Services</u>:

<u>Reference</u>

The Library's core business is to bring information seekers and information together. Priority goes to assisting MLAs and their staff in providing information they require in their legislative function, either in the House, in their Committee work, or in their constituencies, in particular finding materials they need, answering information questions, lending materials, borrowing materials on their behalf from other libraries, providing tours, orientation and training. These services are available also to Assembly staff and the Press Gallery and where there is no conflict with this goal, the Library assists government employees and members of the public.

While the total number of reference questions increased slightly from the previous year, the longer questions – those taking over 15 minutes – continued to show strong growth. This reflects a long term movement away from short answer questions, towards longer, more in-depth research questions.

Informal, one-on-one training has always been part of reference service. Formal, classroom style training was offered for the first time in 2007, aimed at caucus staff, in particular caucus research staff. Topics were chosen in consultation with these staff:

- Using Library Resources (What the Library can do for you)
- QP LegalEze (BC Legislation online)
- Researching Canadian Companies

There were two to three sessions for each topic, with very good feedback.

<u>Research</u>

This service, launched in 2006, was enhanced in 2007 and produced seven new background papers:

- Representing Rural and Remote Ridings
- The Site C Dam
- British Columbia 1858 (to mark the 2008 BC sesquicentennial year)
- Carbon Emissions Trading
- Historical Developments in BC Privacy Law
- Transit in BC
- Seniors' Housing Across Canada

<u>Electronic resources added in 2007</u>

Several new databases were added this year. All are available to our patrons, as well as staff. Additions include the very useful *GalleryWatch*, a collection of reports from the US Congressional Research Service. The Library's subscription to EBSCO's largest general academic database, *Academic Search*, was expanded to *Complete* level. *SocIndex*, a sociology specific database from EBSCO, was also added. We began subscribing to the *CSA Worldwide Political Science* Abstracts, a database of citations and abstracts in political science, international relations, law and public administration and policy. We also started subscribing to *Credo*, a collection of reference resources, and to *Early Canadiana Online*, with pre-1900 Canadian material.

Our clients now have online access to literally thousands of full-text journals, as well as newspapers, polling data, statistical information, statutes from all Canadian jurisdictions (and beyond), and electronic research and reference sources selected for their relevance to legislative and government researchers.

The use of electronic resources has risen sharply. Over the last two years, use of the Library Intranet by our clients has risen 126%.

<u>Collections:</u>

The Library's collection emphasizes areas that are of particular interest to our Legislative clients, such as political science, parliamentary affairs, public administration, social sciences, statistics, news and current affairs. We also maintain a strong collection of basic reference sources and legislation from Canadian and other jurisdictions. Government publications account for close to half of our collection.

<u>British Columbia government publications</u>

Almost 2,000 new BC Government titles were added to our collection during the year. Most government publishing is now done via the Internet, and these publications were downloaded to the Library's intranet site for permanent retention, bringing the online collection to well over 11,000. Most were also printed on acid-free paper for long term preservation.

Nearly 4,500 BC news releases were added in 2007, bringing the total to over 21,000. This collection includes news releases from the government, as well as from organizations, agencies and programs associated with government.

Card catalogue conversion project

Portions of our collection pre-date the 1991 acquisition of the online catalogue, with the card catalogue providing the only access. In order to provide our users with a single place to look for all titles, we decided to convert these catalogue entries from card to online. By the end of 2007, close to 18,000 brief records were created.

Strategic planning

Beginning in June, Library staff began a strategic planning process that culminated just before the end of the year with a planning document that will guide the Library through the next three years. Four main areas were addressed: client services (ongoing evaluation, innovation, access and promotion), staff training and engagement, infrastructure (collection development, space, systems, workflow and equipment), and collaboration (internal and external).

Staff training and professional development

A program of in-house professional development was started this year, with a session on Web 2.0 resources on the use of blogs, wikis, social tagging and other types of user created information.

In early March, one of our reference librarians attended the Northern Exposure to Leadership Institute, the ninth such institute to be held for librarians "with accomplishment in academic performance while in school, successful employment experience, and leadership potential" who are in the early years of their career. By coincidence, a librarian from our sister organization, the Ontario Legislative Library, also attended.

Conference attendance: the Library was represented at the annual conference of the BC Library Association, the Canadian Association. of Law Libraries, the Access Library Technology Conference, and the Ministry of Forest and Range sponsored conference on Information Management – the Past, the Present, the

Future. Several staff attended web conferences hosted by SirsiDynix, the company which provides our library catalogue system.

Other training was taken by staff on such topics as briefing note and business case preparation, and metadata standards and applications.

Participation in Legislative Assembly activities

Library staff participated in several Legislative Assembly committees, in particular the Environment Committee, the Occupational Safety and Health Committee, the Display Advisory Committee, the Web Administration Team and the Employee Newsletter.

Staff appreciation

The Library has built a reputation over many decades for its trustworthy information service. Strategic recruitment, ongoing training and development of its skilled staff will ensure that reputation lasts into the future. The Library is fortunate to have such skilled and dedicated staff, experts in the development of services and products tailored for its legislative clients.

Library Dome Gargoyle