Annual Report

of the

British Columbia Legislative Library

2008

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.*

March 9, 2009

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 2008.
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 Internet 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. Its first location was in the "Birdcages", the early wooden legislative buildings. In 1898, it moved to the "new" Parliament Buildings to what is now the Clerk's Office. Our present building with its stunning architecture was completed in 1915.

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 confidential and non-partisan reference and research support to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, their staff, Assembly staff, Independent Officers of the Legislature 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 over 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 specialized materials for its legislative clients, including bibliographies, background papers and briefs, and lists of important BC political facts, which are also made publicly available on the Internet. The Library has purchased access to many online resources, and provides training for our Legislative clients in their use. The *British Columbia Government Publications Monthly Checklist* serves as a valuable tool in making BC libraries aware of recent government publications.

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 library services they expect. 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.

The strategic plan that was completed at the end of 2007 was put into action in early 2008. Cross-departmental working committees were set up for collection development, digitization, systems, promotion, training/staff development and Internet/Intranet redesign. In addition to pursuing their mandates, these committees benefit the Library by way of increased staff participation and the development of expertise.

We have achieved many of our initial goals, and many of them are visible to our users:

- An enhanced catalogue with a simpler interface and cover art, book reviews, tables of contents, links to biographical material about the author, and more.
- Significant improvements to products such as the *New Book List* and the *BC Government Publications Monthly Checklist*, both now available via RSS feed.
- Posting of Library research material on the Internet for the benefit of all researchers, whether located in Victoria or not.

Our Services

Reference

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, intheir Committee work, or in their constituencies. The focus is on finding materials they need, answering information questions, lending materials,

borrowing materials on their behalf from other libraries, providing tours, orientation and training.

This year, the total number of reference questions increased by 17% from the year before, with longer, more complex questions showing the greatest increase at 36%. This reflects a willingness of our legislative clients to ask the library staff to take a greater role in the research process, as the Library continues to position itself as a central resource for any Assembly research operations. Almost all of this increase came from our legislative clients, but there was also increased use by the public. The number of books borrowed by MLAs and Legislative staff increased by over 50%.

More and more use is being made of our electronic resources. Page views on the library's Internet site rose by over 200% in 2008. This is most likely due to the new catalogue, and deeper mining of the Library site by Google. Referrals from Google rose by over 500% from the previous year.

Informal, one-on-one training has always been part of reference service. Formal, classroom style training was offered for the first time in 2007. These sessions continued to be very successful in 2008. Many were initiated by patron request, and the caucuses began to integrate library training sessions into their own training programs. As in other years, the Library was part of both intern training, and the Parliamentary Procedure workshops. Training sessions given included: BC Online, QP Legalese, Fact Checking, EStat, Business Resources, Finding Government Documents, and Using Major Databases.

Research

The Library continued to publish independent research at a similar pace to previous years. Four *Background Papers* and three *Background Briefs* were issued in 2008:

- *Mental Health Policies*
- *Physician Supply and Demand*
- *Addiction Treatment*
- *Vancouver Downtown Eastside Redevelopment Planning*
- *Smoking in Cars with Children*

- *Mining and First Nations*
- *Going for Gold: British Columbia Winter Olympic Medalists*

As well, *Current Issues* returned in 2008, with library staff producing seven of these bibliographies.

- *Amalgamating Police Services*
- *Books by BC MLAs*
- *Climate Change Plans*
- *Current Economic Trends*
- *Economic Impact of Invasive Species*
- *Food Self-Reliance*
- *Workplace Health*

Electronic resources added in 2008

Two database tools were added in 2008 to help staff and patrons make better use of our database subscriptions. *Webfeat* allows searching of all our subscription databases at once, and *Ebsco A-Z* allows users to find out if a particular journal is available in any of our databases.

A subscription to *BC Online* was obtained in 2008 and it received heavy use throughout the year. The Library also subscribed to *Refworks*, a research and citation management tool. Access to *Refworks* was extended to our prime clients, and training sessions were given on its use.

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.

Collections

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. 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 Internet site for permanent retention, bringing the online collection to 13,500. Most were also printed on acid-free paper for long term preservation.

Library Rotunda

Nearly 4,000 BC news releases were added in 2008, bringing the total to over 25,000. This searchable collection includes news releases from the government, as well as from affiliated organizations, agencies and programs.

In 2008, Google started indexing the Library's holdings in its public search engine, with the result that our holdings are showing up more and more in Google searches. Many of these publications are available in full text by clicking on links in our catalogue.

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 2008, brief records had been created for all of the commercially published titles in our collection. The focus of this work will now shift to those government publications that are not yet included in the electronic catalogue.

Cataloguing in Publication (CIP)

For many years, the Library participated in a cooperative National Library program by providing CIP for forthcoming BC government publications: pre-publication copies were sent to the Library, the material was catalogued and then published with that information included. This program was instituted to assist the library community: items were catalogued once, not repeatedly by each library that ordered a copy. In June, Library and Archives Canada issued more restrictive guidelines for including publications in the program. Use had already been trending lower. Since our enhanced catalogue now supports an Internet protocol (Z39.50), which enables libraries to download our catalogue records, the Library decided to discontinue CIP, following the lead of most other legislative libraries in Canada.

Participation in Legislative Assembly activities

Library staff participated in several Legislative Assembly committees this past year, in particular the Environment Committee, the Occupational Safety and Health Committee, the Display Advisory Committee, the Web

Administration Team and the Employee Newsletter Team.

Staff appreciation

The foundation for any institution is its staff. An institution becomes great when the staff are creative, innovative, and most of all, engaged, and these words aptly describe the staff of the Legislative Library today. On an ongoing basis, Library staff measure the products, the services and the way they are delivered against the needs of our clients and against the opportunities that information technology can offer in this digital age. These qualities create the forward looking synergies that keep the Library "best in class".

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