



Annual Report
of the
**British Columbia
Legislative Library**
2009



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.



April 20, 2010

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 2009. 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 website.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Gourlay
Acting Director

Organizational Overview

The Legislative Library provides enduring, non-partisan information services to the democratic institution of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia and its members.

Since 1863, the Legislative Library has provided library services to the Legislative Assembly. The composition and mandate of the library has evolved over time. The BC Provincial Archives and the Public Library Services Branch were both originally part of the library, later developing into independent institutions. In the 1970s the working name of the library was changed from the Provincial Library to the Legislative Library. In 1985 the library was brought under the administrative control of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, after spending its existence up to that point as part of a line ministry. Today, the primary purpose of the library is to meet the information needs of MLAs and other Assembly staff.

The library has a rich and varied collection of material, including the most comprehensive collection of BC government publications available anywhere. This collection is the history of the BC government, as expressed through its publications.

The library is established under the *Legislative Library Act*. The Legislative Librarian is responsible to the Speaker. As with the rest of the Assembly, this reporting takes place through the Clerk of the House.

The library is divided into three parts:

Reference: answering our clients questions, and providing current awareness services

Technical Services: selecting, acquiring, processing and maintaining the library's collections, both print and electronic

Administration and Systems: supporting the work of, and providing overall direction for the library.

The guiding principles of library services are non-partisanship and confidentiality.

The main purpose of the library is to serve what are defined as prime clients. These are MLAs, caucus staff, constituency staff, Assembly staff, the Lieutenant Governor's Office, staff of the Officers of the House, former MLAs, and members of the Press Gallery. As long as there is no conflict

with service to these clients, the library is also open to provincial government employees and members of the public.

The library fulfills its mission by providing the following services:

Reference and Research: This is the public service component of the library – answering our clients’ questions. There is no absolute difference between reference and research, but research questions more complex, and require more work on the part of the library’s staff. Prime clients are the heaviest users of the library. The library also answers questions from outside clients, including government employees and members of the public.

Current Awareness: These are library products that are distributed to our clients, helping them to stay on top of current events. Our primary current awareness services are Community News Update and Tables of Contents. Library staff also write background papers and bibliographies on topics of interest to our clients.

Training: The library provides training to prime clients on the use of library resources, and other information topics. This is done through classroom sessions in the Human Resources training lab, group tours, and one-on-one instruction.

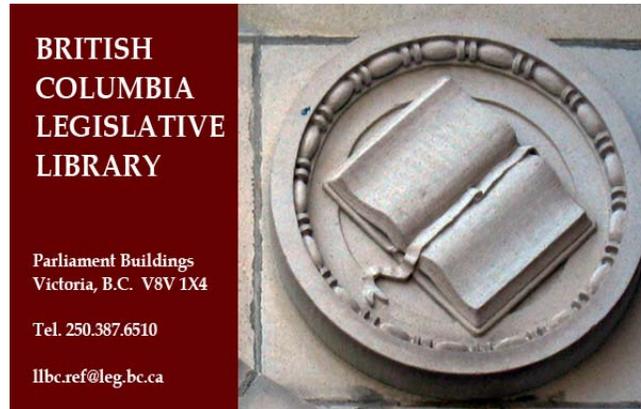
Library Collection: The library provides a collection of material to assist our clients and staff in the work they do. This collection is increasingly electronic, but there is still a very substantial historical collection in paper. Almost all of this paper collection has not been digitized. The library purchases subscriptions to large commercial databases, which clients can then access directly. Centralized purchasing of these databases through the library is substantially more cost effective than each area buying their own subscription. The library maintains a good collection of new books, and regularly purchases books that clients have requested.

Legislative Library Act, section 1:

The books, papers, furniture, stationary and other articles in possession of the Legislative Assembly on April 11, 1894, and all additions to that collection, belong to Her Majesty for the use of the Legislative Assembly, and are known as the Legislative Library of British Columbia.

Staffing

2009 saw the retirement of two of the most senior staff in the library: Wendy Carmichael, the Manager of Technical Services, and Jane Taylor, the Legislative Librarian. Together they gave many years of excellent service to the library and the Assembly, and we wish them all the best in their retirement.



Reference and Research

This is the public service component of the library, provided through the Reference Division. Reference staff interact with clients, and find the information needed to respond to client requests. The total number of reference questions received in 2009 was 3,408. This is a 31% increase over 2008. While the number of questions is an imprecise measurement, this could reflect the emphasis over the last few years on client outreach, and building client relationships.

New to reference service in 2009 was chat reference. This allows our clients to have a real-time web based discussion with a librarian. This is a convenience for our clients, allowing them to quickly contact the library while they are in their offices. The 'Have a Question?' buttons are available on the library's internet pages, and on every page of the library catalogue.



Circulation

Total circulation in 2009 was 3,477. This is a drop of 11% over the previous year. However, 2008 circulation was extremely high, and the 2009

circulation is well above the 2,300 average for the first 5 years of the decade. The number of new borrower cards issued in 2009 was 189, as compared to 140 in 2008. The library expects that over time, desktop access to electronic material will lead to a reduction in circulation.

Web Site

The library's web sites continue to be an important resource for prime clients, as well as the general public. Total page views in 2009 for the Internet site were 2,586,800 (excluding use by library staff). Views in 2008 were 1,372,633, and in 2007 they were only 334,421. Visits were 566,495 in 2009 (319,697 in 2008), including 275,775 from a recognized BC internet address. Of these visits, 18,692 were from a gov.bc.ca address.

Driving this increase is the library's collection of electronic BC government publications. The library maintains a central collection of publications from across the BC government. This collection currently contains over 15,000 new and historical electronic publications.

While the exact meaning of these statistics is difficult to interpret, it is clear that the library's web site has become a vital public resource, and usage has rapidly increased. It is expected that usage will not be able to continue such a rapid rate of increase. The usage and size of the library's web site is forcing consideration of a content management or database system to store and serve documents.



Training

While the library has always done tours and one-on-one training, in the past several years classroom-style training has become an important service. Thirteen sessions were offered in 2009, mostly to caucus staff. Sessions offered included Using QP Legaleze, Writing in Plain Language, Finding Government Publications, and Using Major Library Databases.

Electronic Resources

Large commercial databases of newspaper and magazine articles have become a vital resource of library staff and prime clients. In 2009 the library consolidated its database subscriptions, dropping a subscription to Ebsco and upgrading its subscription to Proquest. This gave clients much wider access to newspapers, including the Black Press group newspapers, papers from across Canada, and several of the major US newspapers. There were a total of 15,946 searches of Proquest in 2009, compared with 9,926 in 2008, for an increase of 61%.

Adding to its BC government publications collection, the library is digitizing older publications. This allows the most important historical BC government publications to be made available to everyone through the library's catalogue. This is a long term project that has begun with the digitizing of BC royal commissions.



Outreach

Making clients aware of library services is vital. As in any year, the emphasis in 2009 was on the library's prime clients. This outreach included orientation packages to all incoming MLAs. There was also some outreach to government clients, including an article in the @Work intranet newsletter.

MARC Records Project

The MARC records project was initiated in 2009. MARC is the format for the records of books and other material in library catalogues. The library collected all of the records in its catalogue that included links to electronic BC government publications. These publications are all stored on the library's website. Other libraries are now able to take these records, and add them to their own library catalogues. This instantly gives

their users access to all of the Legislative Library's electronic BC government publications.

Libraries that have loaded the records include the University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Northern British Columbia. The University of British Columbia is planning on loading the records into their catalogue as well.



Library Publications

The library published three background papers, three background briefs, and two current issues in 2009. These are short papers and bibliographies on topics of BC interest that have not been sufficiently covered elsewhere. Topics from 2009 include: *Flu Pandemics of the 20th Century, the BC Experience*; *Forest Tenure and Management in British Columbia*; *The International Use of the Single Transferable Vote*; *Timeline: The Road to the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games*; and *Political Families: A List of Related MLAs*.

In August 2009 the library published a book: *The Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry under the Inquiry Act and Significant Inquiries in British Columbia 1981-2005*, by Judith Antonik Bennett Harvey. This checklist continues the previous edition also compiled by Judi Bennett which was published in 1982, covering royal commissions from 1943-1980. The checklist, which is over 200 pages long, is also available free on the library's website.

From: [Political Families: A List of Related MLAs](#)
At least 27 families have sent more than one member to the BC legislature. These include Bennett (W.A.C. and Bill), Gibson (James Gordon and Gordon), McGeer (Gerry, Manfred, and Patrick), and Hagen (Rupert and Lois).