Annual Report

of the

British Columbia Legislative Library

2011

June 15, 2012

The Honourable Bill Barisoff

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament Buildings

Victoria, British Columbia

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Dear Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to present the Library's Annual Report for the year 2011. 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 divisions:

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 are 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

There were 2 more librarian retirements in 2011. Cindy Tanner, our acquisitions librarian, retired after 16 years of service, and Barbara Elford, a cataloguing librarian, retired after 11 years of service. Byron Plant, a researcher, transferred from the library to Clerk of Committees Research.

Reference

Continuing a general trend, questions from MLAs and other internal clients increased by 7% in 2011, even while overall questions declined by 4%. The decline was due to fewer questions from government and public clients. Questions that take a longer time to answer also continued to trend up, while quick answer questions went down.

Circulation

Print circulation declined by 3% in 2011. The library launched ebook circulation with licenses from two companies: Canadian Electronic Library, and Overdrive. Ebook circulation is currently a very small component of total library circulation, but the library sees mounting interest in this area of our collection. The unsettled nature of ebook publishing, and the relationship between ebook publishers and libraries, makes acquiring a substantial collection of ebooks problematic and expensive.

Training Sessions

Library staff ran 12 workshops for caucus staff in 2011. These included workshops on fact checking, legal research, and using RSS and iGoogle. Special sessions were also run for staff of the Ombudsperson and the Auditor General, as well as government librarians.

Electronic Resources

JSTOR was added to the library's databases in 2011. This database is primarily for researchers, and gives some historical depth to the library's journal holdings.

Use of Proquest, the library's primary subscription database, increased by almost 90% in 2011. Use of this product tends to vary widely from year to year, but has consistently trended up.

Table of Contents

There was a 49% jump in the number of articles requested in our Table of Contents service. This follows a 113% jump in the previous year. This product allows our clients to easily request articles from a selection of popular and relevant magazines.

Public Service Outreach

Library staff contributed articles to @work, the BC government intranet newsletter. These articles were on the rich history of BC and its public service.

BC Library Association

The 2011 BC Library Association conference was held in Victoria. Library staff participated in the conference, hosting a well-attended tour of the library and its collection. As well, a reception for library trustees was held in the library rotunda.

Web Site

Two new web pages were launched in 2011. The first is an internal site aimed at constituency assistants. This includes a webcast outlining library services available to constituency offices. The second is a public site containing the full text of all the BC royal commissions from 1872 to 1980. These commissions were digitized by the Legislative Library.

As expected, page views of the library's web site dropped in 2011. This was due to the electronic collection being made inaccessible to search engines in March. Total page views were still a considerable 2.1 million. Page views of the library's catalogue – excluding library staff – were 89,829 in 2011.

Looking Forward

The library has 3 main projects for 2012. Staff will be conducting a full review of the BC government publications collection policy. The policy has not been revised in full since before the rise of digital publishing. The library is going to investigate question tracking and knowledge base software for its reference service. Also, the library will continue to work on the implementation of digital collection management software to manage its large collection of BC government e-publications.