



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY of BRITISH COLUMBIA

1 SPEAKER'S CHAIR

The Speaker oversees the proceedings from the impressive carved oak chair at the south end of the Chamber. The Speaker makes sure that MLAs follow established rules of behaviour and parliamentary procedure. The Speaker is neutral and only votes to break a tie.

2 CLERK'S TABLE

The Clerk of the House and the Clerks Assistant sit at the Clerk's Table on the floor of the Chamber. The Clerks are permanent officers of the House who offer non-partisan advice on parliamentary procedure to the Speaker and all MLAs.

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for security at the Parliament Buildings, including the Legislative Chamber. The Sergeant-at-Arms is on hand during debates, seated next to the Bar of the House, to ensure the security of the MLAs and to enforce the Speaker's orders.

4 MACE

The mace is the symbol of the Legislative Assembly's authority to govern. It is placed on the Clerk's Table at the start of each sitting by the Sergeant-at-Arms which signifies that the House is in session with the monarch's full knowledge and consent.

5 BAR OF THE HOUSE

The Bar of the House is a brass bar that blocks entrance to the Chamber that cannot be crossed by anyone who is not an MLA, unless by invitation of the Speaker. The Bar of the House is a reminder of the MLAs authority to meet without the Crown's interference.

6 HANSARD

Hansard is the official report of the debates of the Legislative Assembly. MLA desks have microphones and the Chamber walls have television cameras for live broadcasting. Hansard is also available as a written report on the internet.

7 GOVERNMENT

A majority government is formed when one political party wins the majority of seats in the Assembly. A minority government occurs when a governing party does not win the majority of seats in an election, but has the support of a majority of the Members.

8 PREMIER

The Premier is the leader of the political party that is supported by the majority of Members in the Assembly and becomes the head of the provincial government. The Premier is also the President of the Executive Council made up of the Ministers of the Crown.

9 OPPOSITION

The political party in Opposition that wins the largest number of seats in an election becomes the Official Opposition. The primary role of the Official Opposition, and other smaller opposition parties and independent MLAs, is to question government actions and present alternatives to government policies.

10 LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

The Leader of the Official Opposition is the leader of the political party in Opposition with the largest number of seats after a general election.

11 PUBLIC GALLERY

Seats are available to the public in the galleries overlooking the Chamber to observe the work of the MLAs. The public are welcomed to the galleries whenever the House is sitting.

12 PRESS GALLERY

A term that refers to both the seats above the Speaker's Chair where reporters sit to watch the MLAs at work, as well as the group of reporters that cover the news of the Legislature.



Inside the Parliament Buildings in Victoria, British Columbia,
the 87 elected representatives – called Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) -
meet to shape the future of the province.