

40TH PARLIAMENT



**REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION
TO SASKATCHEWAN AND BRITISH COLUMBIA,
WESTERN CANADA, APRIL 2019**

June 2019

Presented by

Hon. Peter Watson MLA

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO SASKATCHEWAN AND BRITISH COLUMBIA, WESTERN CANADA

Introduction

Western Australia and Saskatchewan share a great number of similarities, including parliamentary institutions, socio-economic circumstances, issues of national-provincial relations, indigenous matters and cultural diversity. Both Western Australia and Saskatchewan are resource rich, have very extensive agricultural undertakings, deal with vast and often remote areas, experience some climatic extremes, and have medical, educational, and other challenges, particularly in remote areas.

At the parliamentary level, even though Saskatchewan is unicameral and Western Australia is bicameral, we have evolved from a similar background and have Houses and Committees operating under similar circumstances.

In 2012, the idea was mooted to establish a much closer association between the Parliaments of Saskatchewan and Western Australia by an exchange of delegations. The aim of this exchange program was to encourage practical professional development through learning from each other, examination of practices and by the sharing of information and experiences amongst members and parliamentary staff in the respective legislatures.

There have now been 4 delegations:

- Saskatchewan to Western Australia in September 2013;
- Western Australia to Saskatchewan in April 2014;
- Saskatchewan to Western Australia in September 2016; and
- Western Australia to Saskatchewan in April 2019.

A feature of the exchange program has been the pairing of each visiting member with a host member, so that the visiting member spends time in the host member's constituency.

Outline of Visit

Earlier this year the Presiding Officers sought expressions of interest from members to form a delegation to Saskatchewan.

This year's delegation to Saskatchewan (Delegation) comprised:

- Hon Martin Aldridge MLC, Member for Agricultural Region;
- Hon Diane Evers MLC, Member for South West Region;
- Mr Shane Love MLA, Member for Moore;
- Mr Scott Nalder, Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly; and
- Ms Christine Kain, Clerk Assistant (Committees) of the Legislative Council.

The main part of the exchange program took place in Saskatchewan, with a brief visit to British Columbia.

Saskatchewan

The Delegation was hosted by the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly from 15 to 27 April 2019. The Clerk, Mr Gregory Putz and his staff prepared an extensive and varied program for the Delegation. As the House was sitting when the Delegation arrived, the first three days covered the workings of the Parliament, including attendance of public hearings of committees.

The Western Australian Members were then invited to attend Government and Opposition Caucus Meetings. As with the previous visiting Delegation in 2014, the Delegation was introduced to the House to the same raucous approval (which involved Saskatchewan Members thumping on their desks as their form of greeting). On several occasions, the Western Australian Members viewed proceedings from the Chamber floor.

The Delegation had separate meetings with the following members of the Saskatchewan government:

- Hon Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan;
- Hon Greg Ottenbreit, Minister of Rural and Remote Health;
- Hon Warren Kaeding, Minister Responsible for First Nations, Metis and Northern Affairs;
- Hon Bronwyn Eyre, Minister of Energy & Resources; and
- Hon Dave Marit, Minister of Agriculture.

The Delegation also received detailed briefings from the following statutory officers:

- Mr Ron Barclay QC, Conflict of Interest Commissioner & Registrar of Lobbyists;
- Ms Mary McFadyen, Ombudsman; and
- Mr Ron Kruzeniski, Information and Privacy Commissioner.

In the evening on 18 April 2019, the Delegation attended an official dinner hosted by the Speaker, the Hon Mark Docherty, at Government House.

In the second week, the Western Australian Members were paired with Saskatchewan members who took them to their electorates where they visited institutions and organisations and gained an understanding of the local issues. The pairings were as follows:

WA Parliament Member

Hon. Martin Aldridge MLC

Hon. Diane Evers MLC

Mr Shane Love MLA

Saskatchewan Host Member

Hon. Warren Kaeding (Melville-Saltcoats) and
Mr Todd Goudy (Melfort)

Mr David Forbes (Saskatoon Centre)

Mr Dan D'Autremont (Cannington)

Further information about the Members' experiences can be found in their individual reports in the Appendices to this Report.

Staff Program

While the members spent time with their host members, Mr Scott Nalder and Ms Christine Kain undertook a professional development program at the Saskatchewan Legislature. The program included briefings and discussions about:

- the Legislative Assembly Service and its operations;
- parliamentary committees;
- Hansard and broadcasting services;
- Members' services;
- the role of Visitor Services, including public tours and school visits;
- the role and operation of the Board of Internal Economy, which has responsibility for the financial and administrative policies affecting the Legislative Assembly, its members and the Legislative Assembly Service;
- human resource matters; and
- budget setting for Parliament.

Historical, cultural and other visits

During the visit to Saskatchewan, the Delegation visited the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Heritage Centre and the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service (STAR) Air Ambulance.

The members of the Delegation were particularly honoured to attend the 41st Annual First Nations University of Canada Powwow. At the powwow, the Delegation participated in the opening ceremony as distinguished guests, alongside the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Mark Docherty.

British Columbia

On the return leg home, the Delegation visited the British Columbian Legislative Assembly in Victoria. On 29 April 2019 the Delegation had a meeting with Hon Darryl Plecas, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia and Ms Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. The Delegation also received a briefing from Parliamentary Counsel as to her role, and a briefing by senior parliamentary officers as to the Legislature's committee system. Following a luncheon hosted by the Speaker (attended by members of the British Columbian legislature, and a visiting delegation from the New Zealand House of Representatives) the Delegation was seated in the Speaker's Gallery where they were formally introduced to the House before viewing a very interesting and robust Oral Question Period.

The Delegation then met with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development, and discussed matters relevant to both jurisdictions, such as resource management and bushfire mitigation strategies.

Costs

As the funding arrangement for the Members' travel costs was that 50% was to be met by each Member, the cost paid by the Members was \$13,349.63. The cost paid by the Parliament, which included the other 50% for each of the members and the full cost for the staff members, was \$50,213.77 and is detailed as follows:

Airfares	\$ 25,484.35
Accommodation & Meals	\$ 18,871.19
Ground Transport	\$ 2,820.93
Allowances	\$ 2,580.00
Gifts	\$ 457.30

Conclusion

The Delegation Members were greatly appreciative of the warm hospitality shown by the Saskatchewan and British Columbian Parliaments. We sincerely thank the two legislatures and their staff for arranging interesting and informative programs. In particular the Delegation thank the Saskatchewan Members and staff for taking time out of their busy schedules to share their knowledge and experiences with the Western Australian Members.

It was a universal feeling by all participants that the exchange program with Saskatchewan should be continued and fostered as providing not only important professional development opportunities for individual members and staff, but also an invaluable forum for the free exchange of ideas and practices between the two Parliaments.

APPENDIX 1 - REPORT BY HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE MLC

APPENDIX 2 - REPORT BY HON DIANE EVERS MLC

APPENDIX 3 - REPORT BY MR SHANE LOVE MLA



Parliamentary Exchange to Western Canada – April 2019

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE MLC

The parliamentary relationship between the Canadian province of Saskatchewan and the Australian state of Western Australia dates back many decades, however the more recent initiative in the form of a parliamentary exchange commenced under Speaker Grant Woodhams in 2012.

Saskatchewan and Western Australia have many attributes in common including a rich history in agriculture, an increasing presence of minerals and resources in the local economy, a vast land mass in local contexts with distributed population creating challenges for the delivery of services, a Parliamentary system based on the Westminster tradition and a similar distaste in our respective national governments interest in our jurisdictions.

The 2019 delegation consisted of my parliamentary colleagues the Hon. Diane Evers MLC and Mr Shane Love MLA, and we were accompanied by Ms Christine Kain, Clerk Assistant (Committees) and Mr Scott Nalder (Deputy Clerk). The delegation spent most of its time in Saskatchewan with our host province, however a brief visit to British Columbia whilst in transit back to Australia allowed for a small program of meetings and events in the province's capital Victoria.



Picture: Members of the Western Australian delegation with Saskatchewan host members the Hon Mark Docherty MLA, Hon Warren Kaeding MLA, Mr Todd Goudy MLA, Mr David Forbes MLA, Mr Dan D'Autremont, Mr Greg Putz (Clerk) and other officers of the Legislative Assembly.

SASKATCHEWAN - REGINA

The delegation's arrival in Saskatchewan coincided with the resumption of the sitting for the Legislative Assembly following a short recess. This presented an excellent opportunity to see the legislature in action along with meeting with many of their elected members who were in the provincial capital for the sitting week.

Below is a summary of the key meetings held in Saskatchewan as part of the parliamentary program:

The **Clerk of the Assembly, Mr Greg Putz** was very generous with his time and advice throughout our visit. Our initial briefing with Mr Putz provided a comprehensive overview of the Assembly operations and the supporting Legislative Assembly Service. The Assembly sits 65 days per annum according to standing orders noting that the jurisdiction like many in Canada is unicameral. Mr Putz referred on several occasions to a major review of their committee system in 1999/2000 and reforms in 2003 which were modelled on the committee system adopted in Western Australia. Our visit to the Assembly allowed us to see the committee system in operation which is now quite different to what is operating in Western Australia. Mr Putz provided an overview of the Parliamentary Officers and their functions including the Provincial Auditor, Ombudsman, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Information and Privacy Commissioner, Electoral Commissioner and the Children and Youth Advocate. Mr Putz also canvassed the application of privilege in the Province as well as the role of the Parliamentary Counsel which is quite unique in comparison to our State. In a later briefing Mr Putz with the assistance of his Law Clerk provided a briefing on 'money bills' and the processes enacted by the legislature to identify and confirm a bill requiring an appropriation.

Our meeting with **Premier Scott Moe** early in our visit was worthwhile as it established for us the characteristics and challenges of the province well. Australian company BHP operates the largest potash mine in the world in Saskatchewan. The province has a 50% renewable energy target by 2030 which will be delivered by a combination of wind and solar technologies and 1 in 20 US houses is powered by Saskatchewan uranium. Premier Moe reflected on the work of the mining sector in the province, particularly in relation to their engagement with and employment of First Nations people which accounted for 47% of their resource workforce.

The delegation was invited to visit and meet with the **National Democratic Party Caucus** and **Saskatchewan Party Caucus** meetings.

Ms Mary McFadyen is the **Ombudsman** for the province and provided a thorough presentation of her responsibilities which included provincial agencies as well as some 780 local municipalities. Ms McFadyen employs 24 staff and has the power to subpoena and investigate relevant matters, reporting back to the Legislative Assembly.

The **Information and Privacy Commissioner** is **Mr Ron Kruzeniski QC**, whose role is not only to facilitate access under 'freedom of information' laws, but also to investigate breaches of privacy and to recommend improvements as to how government retains and uses data relating to its citizens. Mr Kruzeniski provided the delegation with some examples of his work to date and whilst his role is somewhat similar to our Information Commissioner his jurisdiction on privacy related matters does set his role apart.

Our meeting with the **Minister for Rural and Remote Health, The Hon. Greg Ottenbreit MLA** demonstrated the similarities between our two jurisdictions. Mr Ottenbreit reflected on recent changes to Canadian law providing for Voluntary Assisted Dying nationwide. Whilst referral and conscientious objection remained issues, the more significant issue remained

providing access in rural and remote locations. In contrast with the current debate in Australia, there was no sensitivity that I detected whilst in Canada to the 2016 law change. The use of technology in regional hospitals and transitioning small hospitals to primary health care centres were also common features of our healthcare systems.

The Hon. Warren Kaeding MLA is the **Minister for Government Relations, First Nations, Metis and Northern Affairs** and was also one of my host members during my visit. Mr Kaeding provided an extensive overview of First Nations issues in the province as well as the many treaties that have been executed which provide for land, hunting, fishing and trapping rights among others. The province currently has 2% of its land area under reserve which it intends to double in order to meet treaty obligations. The province did not exist when the six treaties were signed with Canada, despite this the province works with the national government to meet obligations. 50% of First Nations people live off reserve with many suffering from multi-generational trauma and disadvantage. Mr Kaeding discussed the challenges of delivering government services and even basic food to the remote north of the province.

The province's **Minister for Agriculture** is **The Hon. David Marit MLA** and is also responsible for the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation. Mr Marit advised the delegation that 40% of Canada's arable land was in Saskatchewan making it a major producer of the countries food and fibre, yet it faces some serious trading challenges, not the least being the fact that the province is land locked and relies upon neighbours to provide access on reasonable terms for transport but also from international trading conditions. Mr Marit observed that the average age of farmers in the province was falling and that it was the number 1 producer of lentils and canola in the world. With responsibility for crop insurance, Mr Marit provided an overview of the government funded insurance scheme which insures \$6 billion of agricultural risk in the province with a 74% subsidy from the national and provincial government.

Mr Ron Barclay QC is Saskatchewan's **Conflict of Interest Commissioner & Registrar of Lobbyists**. The position was created following scandals in the 1980's and among a range of functions is to provide advice to members on conflicts. The Commissioner meets with members on an annual basis and interestingly only members can make a complaint to the Commissioner on 'reasonable and probable grounds'. The Commissioner has undertaken two major inquiries in the past decade and has never encountered a 'claim of privilege' being made by a member in the course of an investigation.

The province's **Minister for Energy and Resources** is **The Hon. Bronwyn Eyre MLA**. Ms Eyre is also responsible for SaskEnergy and SaskWater. The meeting discussed the reliance of the provincial budget on royalties and taxes from the resources sector and the challenges this can create. The delegation discussed investment by BHP and Rio Tinto in Saskatchewan in potash and diamonds respectively. Saskatchewan is the highest taxing jurisdiction on resource projects in Canada with a mineral royalty as well as tax on profits charged. A discussion also ensued in relation to mineral rights and land tenure as well as reserve lands.

Whilst in the provincial capital Regina, the delegation also attended a welcome reception hosted by the **Speaker**, the **Hon. Mark Docherty MLA**, toured the parliamentary building, observed multiple sessions of the Assembly and its committees, a meeting with Mr Ryan Meili, Leader of the Opposition, attended a dinner reception at Government House, a visit to Moose Jaw a nearby regional centre, tour of the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service (STARS) air ambulance and attended a constituency event hosted by Mr Lyle Stewart MLA in Moose Jaw.

Among the highlights of the trip were the cultural events that were arranged for the delegation. The First Nations and Metis people were a focus of many conversations held in Saskatchewan and our jurisdictions unfortunately have a striking similarity in relation to aboriginal affairs, both from a historical perspective but also in terms of dealing with modern day challenges. The delegation attended a theatrical performance *Making Treaty 4* which through song and dance explored the historical and contemporary significance of the treaty, equality and reconciliation. The delegation was also fortunate to participate in and observe the First Nations University Spring Powwow. The delegation formed part of the official party in the stadium and was provided an opportunity to address those attending the event. I would like to recognise the efforts of the Hon. Mark Docherty and his constituency adviser Kristy Shaw who arranged these events and attended with the delegation.

SASKATCHEWAN – TIME TO HIT THE ROAD

After a week in the provincial capital it was time to say farewell to the delegation and hit the road with our host members.

I was initially hosted by the Hon. Warren Kaeding MLA, Member for Melville-Saltcoats. Warren was elected in April 2016 and whilst only in his first term currently serves as a Cabinet Minister. Mr Kaeding has a long history in agriculture in Canada and spent 10 years working for Hoechst AG, a chemical company with whom my Grandfather also worked for in Australia. My three days with Mr Kaeding included constituency and ministerial engagements, a visit to the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, a tour of a local Canola milling facility, a visit to a regional hospital and engagement with local Doctors on healthcare, a tour of a local agricultural manufacturing facility Vaderstad, a visit to a Rural Municipality and its local fire service, a visit to a local airport and inspection of aerial firefighting aircraft, a tour of a local agricultural supplier and meetings with several farmers within his constituency. As the Minister for First Nations and Metis, Mr Kaeding also facilitated a visit to the All Nations' Healing Hospital in Fort Qu'Appelle along with a local drug rehabilitation and transition facility for young men. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Warren and his wife Carla who hosted me during my visit and for their wonderful hospitality and kindness shown to me.

I was also hosted by Mr Todd Goudy MLA, Member for Melfort. Mr Goudy was elected to represent the seat of Melfort following a by-election in March 2018. Similar to Mr Kaeding, Mr Goudy comes from a background in agriculture and his rural constituency is heavily reliant on the success of this industry. During my time with Mr Goudy I attended an opening of a local women's refuge for victims of family and domestic violence, a local agricultural manufacturing facility Bourgault, a visit to the Star City Hutterite Colony farm, attended a local prayer breakfast hosted by Mr Goudy and Mr Ottenbreit, toured a proposed diamond mine north of Melfort with exploration well advanced by Rio Tinto, and attended a meeting with local General Practitioner's and the Minister for Rural and Remote Health. I would like to thank Todd and his wife Taniss and their family for their kindness and hospitality shown to me during my visit.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The delegation stopped briefly in British Columbia whilst transiting back to Australia via Vancouver.

The delegation met with officials from the Office of the Acting Clerk as well as the Speaker the Hon. Darryl Plecas MLA. Mr Speaker provided an in depth overview of the reform process he has embarked upon since becoming Speaker to raise parliamentary standards and conduct, and to improve public perceptions around the role of Parliamentarians. The Speaker hosted the delegation for lunch which coincided with a visiting delegation from the Parliament of New Zealand. The visit included observing parliamentary proceedings including question period and our last official engagement with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

CONCLUSION

I found the parliamentary exchange program to be of immense benefit to me in my role and personal development as a parliamentarian. It was clearly evident from the moment that we landed in Saskatchewan that the relationship between their province and our state is strong, enduring and dates back several decades.

I would like to express my thanks to my fellow delegates, Shane and Diane, and particularly the staff who travelled with us Christine and Scott. I would like to thank Rebecca Burton from the Office of the Clerk who managed our travel and itinerary to the finest of details.

I would also like to express my gratitude and thanks to the many staff at the legislatures of Saskatchewan and British Columbia who arranged such an insightful and well planned itinerary for the delegation. A special thanks must go to Monique Lovatt, Coordinator of Interparliamentary Relations and Protocol who assisted the delegation immensely throughout our visit.

Parliamentary Tour to Canada – Saskatchewan and British Columbia – April 2019
Hon. Diane Evers MLC

Introduction

Originally, I was sceptical that this tour was a reasonable use of taxpayer funds and my 50% contribution. I was encouraged to apply by those close to me, and so chose to make the most of the opportunity and be open to what I might learn. Very shortly into the excursion I was pleasantly surprised and eventually thoroughly impressed with the value of such exchanges of knowledge and experience.

Vancouver, British Columbia – 14th April

Prior to the parliament organised meetings and tours of the country, I organised meetings with two Councillors of the Vancouver Municipal Government (VMG). From this meeting I learned that:

- Vancouver has an 'empty homes tax' to discourage properties remaining vacant,
- The VMG has negotiated with AirBNB and other homeshare platforms, to ensure that all listings must have a business licence from the VMG and accommodation can only be offered from a primary residence.
- The VMG provide housing for the homeless in the form of stackable apartments.
- These apartments and other nearby buildings are heated using the heat from waste water at the sewerage treatment plant.
- In addition, there is a project to generate electricity from the temperature differences from the heated water and cooler water that is cooled through the ocean.
- Another idea the VRG are pursuing is 'Daylighting Streams'. This involves taking the naturally flowing water courses out of the pipes they had been put in to drain away from the city, and opening them up to daylight to bring back the environment and community aspects.
- I also learned that a nearby government, the Gibson Municipal Government, have undertaken a Natural Asset Management system to include in their financial accounts, not only the value of natural assets, but also the liability for repair and/or replacement should the natural asset diminish in value. For Perth, we could consider the liability we take on as we allow our aquifer to diminish in volume and quality.

In exchange for all of these ideas, I offered our taxi buyback legislation as they are soon to see the entry of ride sharing platforms. They already have a vehicle sharing system that seems to be working quite well.

Regina, Saskatchewan – 15th / 21st April

During the first week of our stay in Saskatchewan, we kept together as a group and met with various people within the Sask Parliament. Everyone refers to it as Sask (without much pronunciation of the 'k'). Even the party in government is known as the Sask Party. Being a unicameral legislature and roughly half the population of Western Australia, there was a noticeable size difference in the workings and operations of the Parliament, but they face many issues some of which are very similar to ours.

Internal to Parliament:

- Committees, representation, much of their questioning on Bills occurs in committees
- Ombudsman and whistle blower issues
- Parliamentary privilege and Privacy

- Conflicts of Interest
- Their unicameral system does reduce debate as does the limit of twenty hours total debate allowed for any Bill.

And external:

- Climate Change on a largely agricultural landscape and the recent introduction of a national carbon tax
- Indigenous populations with lower health and education outcomes, serious economic disadvantage, and social issues of violence, drugs, child support and others (to be addressed further below)
- Delivery of services to diverse and distant rural communities
- Tourism sector vying for wealthy international tourism when the bread and butter tourists remain mostly intra and inter provincial.
- Forests continuing to be harvested under criteria created under a different climate using modern equipment and technology at a rate that many of the population see as destructive and damaging to their future.
- Social issues changing in fits and starts throughout the community include:
 - The introduction of recreational cannabis
 - Abortion legislation
 - Voluntary Assisted Dying
 - Drug and alcohol dependency

One name that came up often in conversation through the week was Tommy Douglas. He was a federal Member of Parliament from 1935, resigning in 1944 to become Premier of Saskatchewan. As Premier he introduced the first universal health care program in Canada before stepping down in 1961 to lead the newly formed federal New Democratic Party and remained a federal MP until 1979. Known as the father of Canada's health care system, a statue of him was unveiled in 2010 by his grandson, Kiefer Sutherland, in Douglas's home town of Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

Treaty Four – Live Theatre – Friday 19th April

Many of the treaties with the First Nations were enacted in the late 1800s and most often referred to by a number. Treaty 4 covers much of lower Saskatchewan, along with Treaties 2,5,6,8 & 10, and covering the remainder. This performance covered the period in the time prior to the arrival of Europeans and carried through to the time when the treaty was written and on up to present day.

Even with the treaty in place, the First Peoples of the North American continent have suffered much of the same cultural and spiritual damage that our own Aboriginal people have gone through. Over and over through this study trip I learned just how much there is to be gained by looking at the rights and needs of First Peoples on all continents. Cultural imperialism or colonialism devastated many peoples and left an enormous gap to be addressed by ours and future generations.

Tour of RCMP and STARS – Saturday 20th April

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Academy at Regina exudes the pride and history associated with Canada's 'Mounties'. Although they no longer ride horses, nor wear the red serge uniform, other than for formal events, The Mounties are now the police across Canada, with the exception of some municipal districts where the governments prefer to have their own police force rather than contracting to the RCMP.

STARS, Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service, introduced two full time staffed helicopters in Regina to complement the existing airplane medical transport service. The helicopters are set up with medical professionals who also work in hospital ICU or ER, keeping their skills and knowledge at top level. The helicopters are set up to deliver the highest level of treatment and care possible while in flight.



First Nations Powwow Sunday 21st April

On Sunday, we were invited to not only attend, but take part in the Grand Parade to kick off the [First Nations University Celebration Powwow](#). This is an annual event in its forty-first year, bringing together First Nations Peoples from across the continent to take part in a weekend long cultural display with a drum and dance competition. Each weekend of the season, a powwow occurs in different locations with Regina holding the largest and longest running of the events.

We were invited into the Chiefs' tipi and given some of the cultural background of the event and the ceremonies that go with it. The dancing continued throughout the day to a loud, strong and continuous drumbeat and singing. The impressive display of colour, costumes and dance was unlike anything I'd seen before, and seemed to give the participants a strong connection to their culture.

I had the opportunity to spend a bit more time with the Saskatchewan Speaker, Mark Docherty, at the Powwow. Mark was the first graduate of the First Nations University with a degree in Science, and although he is not First Nations, he is an avid supporter of First Nations culture and of opportunities to improve outcomes for the indigenous people. The indigenous people of Canada include, First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The Métis are descendants of the early Europeans and original inhabitants of North America and are recognised as distinct from other First Nations Peoples.

Recreational Cannabis shop

I took the opportunity to stop in at a cannabis shop to see how the introduction of recreational cannabis was managed in Saskatchewan, Canada. A few steps into the shop and I was greeted by a person checking the ID of every entrant. The shop was clean and well-lit with display tables, posters and a small amount of product in small plastic boxes chained to the tables with small openings for customers to smell for freshness and quality. A helpful sales assistant was available to answer my questions.

As per the legislation, packaging must be childproof, although this was questionable, however the significant amount of packaging did seem over the top considering the small amounts being sold. The availability of varieties and quantity was limited by a slow regulation process allowing growers into the market. The moisture content, which seemed to be a frequent complaint of on-line reviews, was determined by legislation to ensure no bacteria was present in the product.

While in the shop I noticed the patrons came from a considerable range of age groups and apparently varied socio-economic demographics. The place had a feel for me of an optometrist's shop - that is, somewhat clinical but friendly.

Saskatoon and other, Saskatchewan – 22nd / 26th April

Monday - Following on from our week in Regina as one group, we were matched up with an MLA to have a look at other areas and issues around the Province. My host, David Forbes MLA, had been a Member of Parliament since 2001. He was a member of the Government until 2007, and a Minister of Environment and Minister of Labour while in Government. He will not be running again in 2021.

David provided an excellent overview of Saskatoon, introducing me to many of the people he has worked with over the years and providing opportunities to experience the Province from his view.

Monday – I started Monday with Yens Pederson MLA, a new member having only recently been elected in a bi-election. He took me to see a third generation crop and cattle farmer and his son in an area west of Regina where I learned about the native grasses, saw bison rubbing stones and saw tipi circles of the stones used to hold down the sides of the bison hide tipis over 100 years ago.

We then visited a First Nations renewable energy generation facility with one wind tower and 800kw solar panel generation with funding for a 10mw solar installation in the near future. The First Nations Peoples have treaties going back to the 1880s and also have an exemption from both federal and provincial income tax on reserve lands. The reserve lands having either been set aside in the original treaty or purchased subsequently. The exemption from income tax is to fund the provision of education and other services delivered by the First Nations Band. From what I understand, there is a separate Indigenous Education system running in parallel to the general Saskatchewan system.

Tuesday – My host, David, and I started the day with a tour of the University of Saskatchewan and their Synchrotron, or particle accelerator. This is light source equipment that can move electrons to a speed where they would get to the moon in under a minute. The different waves of light then spin off the equipment at different points where it can be used for varying scientific research programs.

We met with a First Nations friend of David working in economic development with a plan for a private hospital to cater to wealthy Americans, as Canadians cannot pay privately for a service within Canada that is provided under the Canadian medical system. We then met a previous candidate for the opposition New Democratic Party, Nettie Wiebe. She is an organic farmer and author of numerous papers and educational texts on social issues related to farmland ownership and food. There seem to be similar food production issues in Canada that we face here, productivity, quality, security, adaptation to climate change and overreliance on pesticides and synthetic fertilisers.

Wednesday – We headed off early for Prince Albert and the forested areas of the province, for a meeting with the Ministry of Environment Forest Service Branch. Here I heard a story similar to WA forestry; clearfelling on seventy-year rotation as that is the average time between natural fires, 'mimicking nature', replant where necessary, some areas first time clear-felled since mechanisation, 'consultation' with First Peoples asking where they want to preserve.

All in all, it seems to be 'working' as well as it does here, harvested timber is getting progressively smaller with less recoverable timber, community activism is increasing to preserve more of the forest, mechanisation allows for ever faster harvesting operations, in addition, Saskatchewan has a considerably larger resource and significantly greater proportion of the local economy. There is a considerably greater First Nations involvement as well, as in the middle to north of the province, other than hunting our tourism, most jobs are pretty much related to forestry or mining.

On return to Saskatoon, I met up with a friend from WA who organised a visit to a Hutterite Community. Similar to an Amish farm, the Hutterites focus much on family and their religion, while eschewing the technical progress of modern life. They had however recently received state funded support for an automated milking machine for their 100 or so milking cows. The barn kept cows can now walk over to be milked whenever they choose and the machine scanner sends them away if they have too recently been milked. The Hutterites supply the communities of Saskatchewan with milk, butter, eggs, chickens, pork and other goods in season, living a simple life where everyone works for the success of the community.

Thursday – Started the day at the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority ([SREDA](#)) forum to get an idea of the issues and opportunities facing Saskatchewan. As expected the presentations were dominated by mining interests. Big business, oil, uranium – with a plan to keep doing what is already being done, but more. The set up for the forum was excellent with 400 or so participants set up at tables around a centre stage, with the MC role performed by an actor playing the role as a newsreader.

David and I then went to Wanuskewen Reserve, a First Nations tourist venture and historical site of a bison jump where a young member of the band (tribe) dressed in bison skin would get accepted by the herd and then lead them toward the cliff as other members of the band would chase them into a panic. The landscape at this location was welcome relief to the vast areas of very flat plains. The cliff fell steeply into a 'coolie', a gully or steep ravine, with walking tracks, a stream and beaver cut small trees.

In the evening, I attended a community event focussed on forests and logging impacts. It reminded me very much of our own forest campaigners, only this group seems to be in the early stages of getting their voice heard. Like our forest industry, mechanisation has taken away many of the jobs, and sped up the process of clearing native forests. There is growing awareness and concern that individuals and community organisations will need to work together and expand their reach to have any impact on protecting the environment.

Friday – Following on from the community forest event of the previous evening, I was invited to an interview on community radio to discuss forests, farms, rural regeneration, climate change, and related topics. The vibe was very similar to South West WA. We headed back to Regina afterwards for a meeting with [Tourism](#) Saskatchewan.

With regard to tourism, there is one vastly different aspect when comparing Saskatchewan to Western Australia, and that is our coastline. Keeping this aside, again we see similarities. The majority of tourists in Sask are interprovince and intraprovince. They aim to increase the number of wealthy American tourists coming for the hunting or fishing experience, and as one might imagine there is plenty of competition for this sector. Tourism Saskatchewan is also trying to build the rural experience with farmstays or food tours, and First Nations cultural experience opportunities, but there is a long way to go on this.

Victoria, Vancouver Island, British Columbia

Saturday – We visited a farmers’ market, but being the early days of spring at a high latitude, it was held indoor and had very little fresh produce. The seasonal variation of Saskatchewan plays a significant role in farming and social life that has a far lesser impact here in WA. We then travelled as a group back to British Columbia and out to Victoria on Vancouver Island. An island 460km long and significant forest cover, with few roads up through the island and many locations accessible only by water. Unfortunately, although there are some protected areas of forest on the island, there is much concern that most of the old growth is gone.

Sunday – A rest day, and whale watching tour where we were treated to the uncommon event of three different pods of transient orcas coming together in one place. It was a real treat, and something to remember. From a tourism perspective it brought home the impact of success in the whale watching industry and more broadly the whole tourism aspect of nature tourism. People will travel to see natural settings and events on a continuous and recurrent basis, whereas destroying a natural environment for profit can only be done once.

I spent the remainder of the day learning from global Greens contacts some of the challenges they face. The Canadian election later this year will be hotly contested as social and environmental defenders come up against those who are unhappy with the recent introduction of a price on carbon starting price of \$15 per ton of CO₂, rising to \$38 by 2022.

While our Australian delegation was in Victoria, it just happened that a New Zealand delegation was also visiting, so I took the opportunity to meet up on Sunday evening with one of the three British Columbian Green MPs, Sonia Furstenau, and Jan Logie, a third term Green MP from New Zealand. We had much in common and spent considerable time discussing the issues and challenges facing First Nations Peoples. It seems that very similar challenges are facing all of us, and it may take a global effort to make a difference. Sonia spoke of one Indigenous community, the Namgis First Nation, Alert Bay on Cormorant Island BC, where they have not had single child taken away from their parents in twelve years. Positive outcomes in one small community, where actions to address difficult issues are working, could be expanded to address the issue in all of our countries.



Exchange of ideas, leading to actions and outcomes, are one of the strong benefits of study trips such as this. Across the globe we face many of the same challenges, and face to face discussion can give an entirely new perspective and lead to positive change in all participating countries.

Monday – We visited with the British Columbian Parliament and had a good number of interesting exchanges with the Speaker, Members and staff. Following the 2017 election, the New Democratic Party was able to come to an arrangement with the Green Party to support a minority government,

however, choosing a speaker would lose their majority. They offered the role of Speaker to a member of the opposition Liberal Party which was accepted, and the Liberal Party revoked the new Speaker's membership. The Speaker, Darryl Plecas, had been a criminologist and University faculty member for thirty-four years prior to being elected in 2013, as well as having been an appointed judge. He is not averse to challenging inappropriate actions.

A meeting with the Agriculture and Fisheries Ministries raised some issues similar to ours such as human encroachment and the development of good agricultural land, as well as differences. Seafood and timber form a large part of BC exports in addition to agricultural products and value added food products. Timber of \$15 billion was exported in 2018, one third of all exports. Although the changing climate bringing the influx of pine beetle and worsening fire impacts is presenting a serious challenge to the industry.

Conclusion

I would recommend a study trip such as this to other Members as it provides the opportunity to see a greater picture of our place in the world, and how influences from one jurisdiction can impact on others. Sharing of information, including programs and policies, face to face can increase the likelihood of creating positive change.

Monday afternoon we began the lengthy journey back to WA.

Shane Love MLA Report to Parliament: 2019 Saskatchewan Exchange



I was pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in the 2019 Parliamentary Exchange with Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

This unique program commenced as a result of collaboration between (amongst others) my predecessor as Member for Moore, then Speaker Hon Grant Woodhams and members of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly including former Speaker Hon Dan D’Autremont MLA.

The exchange allows Members and officers of Parliament to observe the operation of other Westminster systems. Members are also able to become familiar with issues facing host Saskatchewan MPs in their electorates. The provinces of Western Canada with their relatively sparse population and rich resources hold enough similarity to Western Australia to be relevant whilst also providing many different and unique challenges.

The tour spent the bulk of its time in Saskatchewan but also briefly visited British Columbia. In both parliaments we were warmly welcomed by Members and staff.

The overarching report compiled for Parliament has outlined the common sections of the exchange, so while echoing and supporting that report I will confine my comments to some personal reflections on the exchange, especially concerning the time spent in the Riding of Cannington with Hon Dan D’Autremont

Legislative Assembly Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is a unicameral parliament operating within a most impressive building. At the time of its founding optimism was high in the Province, with a view that the population would grow greatly in coming years. This failed to occur but in the meantime the construction of its fine parliament house, known locally simply as “the Ledge” was completed.

Saskatchewan politics is dominated by the (Sask) Saskatchewan Party an amalgam of two earlier conservative groups. The voting system for a single house tends to lock out smaller parties and the only other party represented in the House are the now much smaller New Democrats.

Apart from observing the processes of the Parliament there was an opportunity to observe the operation of the parties. The Western Australian group was made to feel very welcome and we were generously instructed by many members including the Premier Mr Scott Moe.

It was particularly pleasing that Saskatchewan members facilitated our interaction with elements of their lay parties and we were pleased to be invited to attend a Sask Party event in nearby Moosejaw. Here we were able to observe true grassroots politics in action. The political parties especially the Sask Party enjoy a level of community support and participation far in excess to any I have observed in Western Australia.

Members were also invited to attend meetings with community interest groups such as the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association. On the face of it snowmobiling is not a recreation familiar to or relevant to Western Australians! But as a regional MP who represents an electorate with significant off road vehicle usage the interaction was actually very interesting and instructive.

Saskatchewan has a high aboriginal population comprising The First Nation and Metis people. A distinct people in some Western provinces, the Métis were created by intermarriage between European fur traders and First Nations women. Together the two groups make up a significant proportion, approximately 16% of the population. Powwow is a ceremonial dance and culture event that has become a popular way for First Nations people to celebrate their heritage. The Western Australian delegation were privileged to be invited to attend a major powwow as honoured guests.



The leader of the Western Australian delegation Hon Martin Aldridge was invited to speak at the ceremony and impressed attendees with his words and acknowledgment of country. Participating in this event was certainly a highlight of the exchange.

Hon Dan D'Autremont and his Riding of Cannington

One of the most valuable aspects of the exchange program is the opportunity to immerse yourself in the life of the people of the Province as a guest of a Saskatchewan MLA.

I was fortunate to be teamed with a particularly experienced and successful MLA Hon Dan D'Autremont, who is MLA for the Cannington Riding. This is a rural riding in the southeast corner of the province with borders to Manitoba to the east and North Dakota to the South. Dan's base is in the small town of Alida near to where his family has farmed for generations.



Dan's biography notes he is *one of the "Original Eight" founding members of the Saskatchewan Party, Dan was first elected to the Legislature in 1991. He was re-elected in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2016.*

In opposition, Dan served as critic for Highways, Education, Energy and Mines, Health, SaskTel, ITO, SLGA and SGI. While critic for the SLGA, Dan also worked closely with the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority and First Nations. He served as the chair of the caucus' Crown Corporations Committee and vice-chair of the legislature's Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Since the Saskatchewan Party formed government, Dan has served as Minister responsible for SLGA, Government Services, and ITO. He has also served as Government House Leader, co-chair of the Legislation and Regulation Review Committee, as a member of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies, and as a member of the Public Accounts Committee.

For the 27th Legislature, Dan served as Speaker of Legislative Assembly, chair of the Board of Internal Economy, the Privileges Committee, and the House Services Committee. He is currently a member of the Private Bills Committee, and he was previously a member of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Dan is truly impressive person with a wealth of knowledge and experience in both the nitty gritty of party politics and also the processes and traditions of Parliament. He has an intimate knowledge of his Riding and appears to be on a first name basis with most of his nearly 10 000 constituents!

As member Dan has worked hard to transform what was a closely contested seat into the safest seat in the province. At the last election he gained in excess of 84% of the vote.

Cannington shares many characteristics with the electorate of Moore with significant grain production predominantly canola and wheat. There is no one major centre and there are many small rural communities. When we left Western Australia, canola planting was underway in Moore and it was surreal to find the same activity occurring on the prairies at the exact opposite climatic point. Add to this the spectacle of headers stripping wheat that had been just thawed from under feet of snow and I must admit to feeling I had stepped through the looking glass into a topsy-turvy world.

OILS AND GAS

Saskatchewan and Cannington Riding has a long history of oil and to a lesser extent gas production. In fact, Saskatchewan is Canada's second-largest oil producing province, accounting for 15% of the country's total crude oil production, and it is the third-largest natural gas producing province in Canada. Saskatchewan's first commercial crude oil discovery was made in 1944 many of the major oil pools in Saskatchewan were discovered as a result of an intensive exploration effort in the mid-1950s and early 1960s. The oil industry is extensive in Cannington with many wells and associated infrastructure spread across the landscape. Fracking of these wells is common.

Many of the communities in the riding are dependent on the oil industry for employment. As in Moore farming operations have increased in scale over the years with consequential lessening of labour demands in that industry.

Similar to the mining boom in WA an oil boom occurred recently in Saskatchewan until the oil price tumbled in around 2014. The population of Cannington swelled and accommodation was short. This led to a development boom that has seen the laying out of new civil infrastructure and buildings. Investments made at the peak of the boom now lie largely idle and in some cases stranded, for instance I was accommodated in a multi-story hotel where on some nights I appeared to be the only guest. I was told that the local municipality had outlain millions of dollars on expansion of its sewerage treatment plant and reticulation in expectation of significant expansion. Now it has been caught by the end of boom retraction in population leaving a local community struggling to pay for costly little used upgrades, driving up rates to an unsustainable level.

This is not unlike the story in some WA mining towns.

The Moore electorate also has a reasonably long exposure to the gas and to a lesser extent the oil industry especially in the vicinity of Dongara and there has been some fracking conducted in the electorate. I was therefore interested in how Saskatchewan communities dealt with the interaction of the petroleum and gas industry with agriculture; something of concern to many of my constituents.



Dan arranged a number of onsite visits to production facilities and extensively outlined the long history of coexistence between the industries in his area. The evidence presented was that the two industries can comfortably coexist provided that each respects the rights of the other.

PORT AND TRADE

Saskatchewan is a landlocked province however this does not mean it has no ports. Dan arranged a visit to Ceres Global Ag. Corp Northgate. This facility is a transport and export hub for grain and other commodities on the Canadian and US border. From here goods are railed across the United States and as far south as Mexico. I must admit I had never fully appreciated the role of a port that did not involve water borne transport, but here international trade takes place every day and it appears the management have a fascinating role in marketing and arranging transport of product to a myriad of land based destinations as well as to ports in the US. Some very interesting and amusing anecdotes were shared regarding the ongoing relationship issues with the US border authorities!

While in Saskatchewan we were also made aware that access to ocean ports in British Columbia and the East Coast for the export of oil was very problematic with policies in some provinces and federally being used to limit the development of pipelines. A carbon tax was also just being imposed by the federal government to the frustration of the Saskatchewanans.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WA has 137 local governments; Saskatchewan currently has 774. Large urban city councils such as Regina are governed by The Cities Act, while the remaining municipalities are governed by The Municipalities Act. Given how ratepayers groan under the ever growing yoke of council rates in WA, how can a system with five times as many local government and a population of less than half ever be sustainable?

I won't pretend to know the answer but from my observation it seems the system works remarkably well because it turns on its head many of the accepted practices of local government here. Local government tends to have control of local water and sewerage which is not the norm in WA. City organisations are highly professional and well-resourced in a model quite familiar to WA.

In regard to smaller rural municipalities, forget about councillors not being involved in operations, they run everything and the often work voluntarily to repair, improve and replace infrastructure. Only a bare minimum of staff are employed and the elected members pay close attention to costs and actively manage the organisation. Rates are often very low indeed. There is also a third of local government, Organized Hamlets, administered by the rural municipality in which the hamlet is located. Voters of an organized hamlet may elect a three-member management board that reports to the rural municipality council. Some organized hamlets may be designated a division and be represented by a division councillor on the rural municipality council.

Perhaps WA can learn from Saskatchewan.

FIRST NATIONS

In Cannington there are also three First Nations Reservations. I was fortunate to visit two of these White Bear and Ocean Man. The bands on the reservations hold regular elections to determine the chiefs and council in a way very similar to other local governments.

Ocean Man is a relatively small band which was reformed in 1990 following a century of a forced amalgamation with the larger White Bear and also a third band Pheasant Rump.

Members of the bands are those persons known as having status ie they are registered and recorded as being the descendants of people who were part of the original treaty groups of over a century ago.

The disadvantage facing First Nations People in Saskatchewan is strikingly similar to that faced by Aboriginal people in Western Australia, however the governance of the bands provides a significant advance over the legal and social conditions of both non status First Nations people in Saskatchewan and aboriginal people in Western Australia. This is a view shared in conversation by Chief Connie Big Eagle of Ocean Man, a most impressive and energetic leader who was very interested in the plight of her Australian brothers and sisters.

Since regaining their distinct identity in 1990 her band has grown from over 300 to 800 people due to a high birth-rate. Providing opportunity for the young is a key driver for Connie. With leadership such as seen at Ocean Man I have every reason to be optimistic for the first nation people of Saskatchewan.



CONCLUSION

Spending several days in the riding provided many opportunities for interaction with so many constituents. I invariably found the people of Saskatchewan to be approachable and much more likely to talk about politics and social issues than is the case in WA. A visit to a local diner would often end in an engaged discussion with a number of locals.

Throughout regional WA we have seen the introduction and development of Mens Sheds to provide a contact point to break the social isolation felt by many older men in our communities. This would not be needed in the communities I visited with Dan. Men in Saskatchewan in general are far more socially at ease and do not appear to lack a willingness to engage in a range of topics beyond the narrow band of sport work and sex favoured by their WA counterparts!

In conclusion I would like to thank Hon Dan D'Autremont and his wonderful staff, all the Members of Parliament involved in the exchange, the Speaker Hon Mark Docherty and Clerk Mr Greg Putz of Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly and Speaker Hon Darryl Plecas and acting Clerk Kate Ryan-Lloyd British Columbia Legislative Assembly.

Most of all my thanks go to the brilliant staff members of the Saskatchewan Parliament including but not limited to Monique, Kathy, Hayley and Sheila who not only facilitated a fulsome learning experience but provided a warm relaxed and thoroughly enjoyed social program, putting aside their own time to do so.

Finally, I wish to thank the Parliament of Western Australia for the opportunity to participate in the exchange. I would also wish to acknowledge my colleagues; delegation leader Hon Martin Aldridge MLC and Hon Diane Evers MLC, Mr Scott Nalder and Ms. Christine Kain, I thank them for their fellowship and professional approach.



Shane Love MLA Member for Moore