

Hansard Transcripts and Broadcasts

Complete first drafts—called the Blues—of debates in the House and in Committees are uploaded to the Assembly website in batches as they are completed, almost always within an hour of the words being spoken. Within three hours after debate ends enhanced versions of the complete Blues are uploaded to the Assembly’s website.

Final transcripts—Finals—of each sitting are also available on the website. These are completed in a reasonable period on a rolling basis. Bound volumes of Hansard are available at the Legislative Assembly Library and at major academic libraries in the province.

Draft transcripts of parliamentary committee proceedings are normally available on the Legislative Assembly website the same day. Draft transcripts of travelling committee proceedings are available within a few days. Final transcripts are on the website within a week of committee meetings taking place.

Business of the Legislative Assembly, including Committee of the Whole and Committee of Supply, are broadcast live with video. Select Standing and Special Committees are broadcast live with audio only.

Hansard Broadcasting’s broadcast signal is provided free of charge to all cable television companies, and live legislative broadcasts of proceedings are available in most locations around the province. Consult local TV listings for channels and times. When the House is in session, Question Period is rebroadcast shortly after the end of the broadcast of live proceedings from the Legislative Assembly. Question Period rebroadcast is followed by the broadcast of House proceedings from the Douglas Fir and Birch rooms.

For information on channel guides, broadcast schedules and links to podcasts and live and archived webcasts, please go to the Hansard home page at www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/hansard-services.

Visiting the Legislative Assembly

WE WELCOME VISITORS.

Free tours of British Columbia’s Parliament Buildings are available Monday through Friday throughout the year, and seven days a week in the summer months.

To see MLAs in action, visitors are welcome in the public galleries of the Legislative Chamber whenever the House is sitting. Please note that the galleries are often full during Question Period – the 30-minute period every Monday to Thursday when MLAs ask questions about government activities.

For further details, visit www.leg.bc.ca or contact:

Parliamentary Education Office
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4
250.387.8669

PEO@leg.bc.ca

To visit the Parliament Buildings, go to www.leg.bc.ca/tours or contact:

Parliamentary Tour Program
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4
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Tours@leg.bc.ca



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Hansard: The Official Report of Debates



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Hansard: The Official Report of Debates

What is Hansard?

Hansard is the informal name for the Official Report of Debates for the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. Hansard Services records, transcribes and prints the debates of the Legislative Assembly and its parliamentary committees. As a unit of Hansard Services, Hansard Broadcasting televises live proceedings from the Legislative Chamber and committee rooms, as well as providing live webcasts over the Internet. Committee of Supply or Committee of the Whole proceedings in the Douglas Fir Room are also webcast live over the Internet and broadcast at the conclusion of morning and afternoon sittings. Audio podcasts of Question Period are available on the Internet. All broadcasts are later available as archived video.

Hansard is a common feature of Commonwealth parliaments and legislatures around the world.

Hansard's Mission

Hansard Services supports the work of the members, officers and staff of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia and fosters public awareness and understanding of the legislative process by making the proceedings of the House and its committees accessible to all British Columbians.

A Brief History of Hansard

The name Hansard dates back to early nineteenth century Britain when Luke Hansard and his son Thomas, printers to the British Parliament, produced a transcript of proceedings. Published as Debates, this service continued under private contract until 1908, when the British Parliament began producing a publicly funded record of debate.

The name Hansard was later attached to these reports in formal recognition of the Hansard family's contribution. It remains the informal name given the reports.

The Canadian House of Commons has had a complete Hansard since 1880. British Columbia's Hansard, first introduced in 1970, became a complete report in 1972. Since 1991 House proceedings have also been televised live and in full, with closed-captioning for the hearing impaired added in 1994.

DID YOU KNOW...

Hansard is "a full report, in the first person, of all speakers alike, a full report being defined as one 'which, though not strictly verbatim, is substantially the verbatim report, with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected, but which on the other hand leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or illustrates the argument.'" Written in 1907 for the U.K. Parliament, this statement of Hansard policy still applies throughout the Commonwealth.

How Hansard is Broadcast

Hansard begins with a digital recording of all debates. Console operators located in the House or in committee rooms switch on microphones as each MLA is recognized by the Speaker or Chair and begins to speak. Console operators make annotations to each audio file, correctly identifying the member(s) speaking and the House or committee business underway.

Automated equipment in the Chamber streamlines the gavel-to-gavel broadcast of Assembly proceedings.

Robotic cameras linked to the microphone system focus on each MLA as they are recognized in the Chamber and allow Hansard Broadcasting staff to make last-minute adjustments to each shot prior to going on air. When cameras are in position, a computer signals the recall of the name, party label and riding (or Cabinet portfolio) of the selected member. Hansard Broadcasting staff insert this information on-screen, as well as inserting scrolling information bars at the bottom of the screen to improve public understanding of the House proceedings or committee business underway.

The broadcast is enhanced by a closed-captioning service on both cable signal and webcast.

How Hansard is Edited

Hansard Services editors receive the digital recording in five-minute audio files for transcription and editing. These files go through a four-stage process, from transcription to final proof. Editors ensure legislative procedure is represented clearly, remove repetitions and redundancies and correct obvious errors. Editors and Researchers ensure Hansard remains a substantially verbatim account of what takes place during debates in the Legislative Chamber or in committees. At peak production Hansard processes over 16,000 words an hour. A comprehensive index of all House and committee proceedings is produced and published on the website.

