

STAINED GLASS IN THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

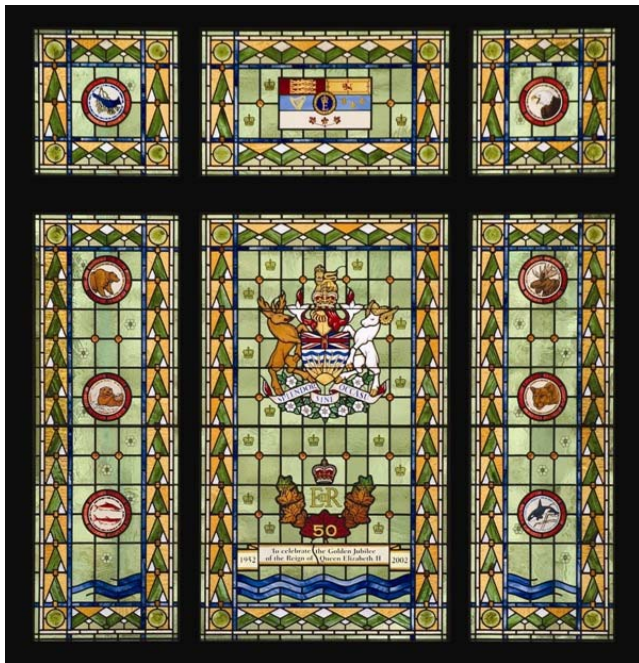
The halls of the Parliament Buildings are lined by more than 100 beautiful leaded and stained glass windows. Many of these windows were installed prior to the opening of the Parliament Buildings in 1898, making them more than 110 years old.

The architect, Francis Rattenbury, commissioned the windows to celebrate a variety of themes. Windows in the stairwells include quotes from famous writers and honour early philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato. Panes outside of the Legislative Chamber pay tribute to the arts and sciences, and windows on the second floor incorporate the emblems of Canada's earliest provinces.

One of the largest and most beautiful windows is the Diamond Jubilee Window. Created by Powell Brothers Ltd. of Leeds, England, it celebrates the 60th year of the reign of Queen Victoria.



Diamond Jubilee Window - 1897



Golden Jubilee Window - 2002

When construction of the Legislative Library began in 1912, the window was taken from its original location on the second floor and placed in the cellar for safe-keeping. Incredibly, it remained forgotten in the cellar for nearly 62 years before being rediscovered! After extensive repairs, it was placed in the Reception Hall for display.

The building's newest window, the Golden Jubilee Window, was designed and fabricated by Edward Schaefer and Thomas Mercer of Victoria to celebrate the 50th year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The window features many of British Columbia's provincial symbols and was unveiled by Her Majesty in 2002.

The process of making stained glass has not changed much in the past thousand years. Pieces of coloured glass are cut and assembled in a design of lead channels called 'comes'. The molten glass is coloured by the addition of metal oxides- iron is used to create green, cobalt for blue, and gold for pinks and rubies. The glass can be further decorated with vitreous paints, etched, or stained transparent yellow with silver nitrate. It is from this last technique that the term 'stained glass' originates.