



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Learning Resources
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
Parliamentary Education Office
Victoria, British Columbia
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Glossary of Terms

A

Act

A bill that has passed third reading by the Legislative Assembly and has received Royal Assent. Also see [Law](#); [Bill](#).

Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne

A formal message to the Lieutenant Governor expressing the thanks of the Legislative Assembly for the Speech from the Throne. Moved by a government party supporter, and debated in the House, it is also known as the Throne Speech debate. The Address in Reply may not exceed six sitting days. Also see [Speech from the Throne](#).

Adjournment

The end of a meeting of the Legislative Assembly or committee (e.g. at the end of a sitting day). All business not concluded at the time of adjournment may be resumed at the next sitting.

Adjournment of Debate

A suspension by the Legislative Assembly of a debate before the matter has been decided. The item remains on the Orders of the Day and may be taken up again at a later date.

Administrator

The Chief Justice of British Columbia, or a designate, who assumes the powers of the Lieutenant Governor if they are absent. The Administrator may read the Speech from the Throne and grant Royal Assent to bills. They are appointed by the Governor General under section 67 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

Amendment

A proposal to change the text of a bill by inserting new text, by deleting text, or both. Amendments must be introduced by motion and must be approved by the House before the proposed change takes effect.

Assembly Branches

The different administrative units of the Legislative Assembly. They include the Office of the Speaker, Office of the Clerk, Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, Parliamentary Committees Office, Financial Services, Payroll Services, Hansard Services, Information Technology, Parliamentary Education Office, Capital Projects, Legislative Facilities, and the Legislative Library.

B

Backbencher

The informal name of a Member of the Legislative Assembly who is not a minister. Also see [Private Member](#).

Bar of the House

A brass bar across the entrance to the Legislative Chamber that cannot be crossed by anyone who is either not a Member of the Legislative Assembly or has not been invited by the Speaker to do so.

Bells

The ringing of the bells (chimes) signifies the following activities: sitting of the Legislative Assembly (one long chime), division or quorum in the Legislative Chamber (three chimes), division or quorum in Section A of Committee of Supply (four chimes). The electric chime system is also used to signify a meeting of Cabinet or of a party caucus. Each caucus has a different chime.

Bill

Proposed legislation introduced by a Member to the Legislative Assembly for its consideration and approval. It becomes an Act when passed by the Legislative Assembly and given Royal Assent.

Birdcages

The nickname of the colonial-era government buildings built on the site of the present Parliament Buildings between 1859 and 1864 and so named for their eclectic and unconventional architectural style.

Black Rod

A ceremonial rod the Sergeant-at-Arms carries when accompanying the Lieutenant Governor into the Legislative Chamber to deliver the Speech from the Throne or to grant Royal Assent.

Blues

The preliminary transcript of the debates of the Legislative Assembly produced by Hansard Services. The draft version of this transcript has a light blue background, the revised version has a darker blue background, and the final transcript has a white background. For the “Blue Book,” see [Estimates](#).

Budget

The government’s overview of its fiscal, economic and social policies for the forthcoming fiscal year. The Minister of Finance must introduce the budget (known as the budget speech or budget

address) and table the main Estimates in the Legislative Assembly on the third Tuesday in February.

Budget Debate

The general debate on the government's fiscal, economic and social policies that follows the Minister of Finance's budget introduction. The debate on the Minister's motion, "That the Speaker do now leave the Chair for the House to go into Committee of Supply," continues for a maximum of 6 sitting days and at least 8 sittings and concludes with a vote on the motion. This voting on this motion is considered a confidence vote.

By-election

An election held between general elections to fill an empty seat in the Legislative Assembly. When a Member of the Legislative Assembly resigns, is disqualified from sitting, dies, or is successfully recalled, a by-election is held. More than one by-election can be held on the same day.

C

Cabinet

The executive of government, consisting of the Premier and ministers. The Cabinet is responsible for the administration of government and the establishment of its policy. Also known formally and legally as the Executive Council. For the legal powers of Cabinet, see [Executive Council](#); [Lieutenant Governor in Council](#).

Cabinet Minister

Customarily, a Member of the Legislative Assembly in the governing party appointed to the Executive Council by the Lieutenant Governor on the advice of the Premier.

Casting Vote

In the event of a tied vote, the deciding vote is given to the Speaker or a committee Chair in order to break the tie.

Caucus

Members of the Legislative Assembly from the same political party.

Clerk of the House

The chief procedural and administrative adviser to the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Clerk is responsible for maintaining all official Legislative Assembly documents and for the day-to-day management of Assembly branches.

Clerk's Table

Where the Clerk of the House and Clerks Assistant sit in the Legislative Chamber. The Clerk's Table is in front of the Speaker's Chair. This serves as the business centre of the parliamentary process. The mace must be placed on the Clerk's Table for the Legislative Assembly to meet.

At the start of each sitting the Sergeant-at-Arms must place the mace on the Clerk's Table. During Committee of Supply and Committee of the Whole House, the mace is placed on ornamental brass brackets below the Clerk's Table.

Clerks Assistant

The Legislative Assembly staff who assist the Clerk of the House with administrative responsibilities and procedural duties.

Coat of Arms

A symbol of our colonial origins and our geographic location. The stag and ram represent the former colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. King Edward VII originally granted the shield in 1906, and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II granted the remaining elements of the Coat of Arms on October 15, 1987.

Committee of Supply

A committee of all the Members of the Legislative Assembly, presided over by the Deputy Speaker or by a committee Chair. The Committee of Supply is responsible for reviewing and approving the government's spending plans as presented in the Estimates. The mace is placed on ornamental brass brackets below the Clerk's Table during the Committee of Supply.

Committee of the Whole House

A committee of all the Members of the Legislative Assembly, presided over by the Deputy Speaker or by a committee Chair. Also known as Committee of the Whole, it is responsible for examining each section of a bill or any other matter referred to it by the House. The mace is placed on ornamental brass brackets below the Clerk's Table during the Committee of the Whole House.

Committees

- (1) A group composed of Members of the Legislative Assembly who are appointed and authorized by the Legislative Assembly to investigate and report on specific issues of importance to British Columbians.
- (2) A general term that can refer to the Committee of the Whole House, the Committee of Supply, or a parliamentary Committee.

Commonwealth

An association made up of countries with historic or colonial ties to the former British Empire.

Confidence Motion

A motion in which the Legislative Assembly expresses its support for a government or a minister. Votes on the Speech from the Throne and the budget speech are deemed to be confidence motions. If the government loses a vote on a confidence motion, they are said to have lost the confidence of the Legislative Assembly and are expected to resign. Also see [Speech from the Throne](#); [Budget](#).

Consolidated Revenue Fund

The account where the government deposits taxes and other revenues it has collected. It is also the account that government withdraws the money it requires to cover its expenditures.

Constituency

A specific geographical area entitled to elect a representative to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Currently, there are 87 constituencies in British Columbia. Also see [Riding](#); [Electoral District](#).

Constituency Office

Offices for Members of the Legislative Assembly within their constituency, oftentimes used to connect constituents with government services and their Member. Depending on the geographical size of their constituency, a Member may have more than one constituency office.

Convention

The unwritten rules governing the actions of the Legislative Assembly. They are based on long standing traditions that originate with from the Westminster model of parliamentary government.

Crossing the Floor

When a Member of the Legislative Assembly changes political party allegiance during a sitting of the Legislative Assembly. A Member crossing the floor may choose to sit as an independent or as a member of a different party.

Crown

The term expressing the legal authority of the monarch, who, under Canada's constitution, is the supreme authority. The provincial government in British Columbia acts in the name of the Crown by, for example, administering public lands legally owned by the Crown. The monarch is His Majesty King Charles III.

Crown Corporation

Corporate entity established or acquired by the provincial government to provide services or goods to the public. B.C. Hydro and B.C. Ferries are examples of Crown corporations.

D

Decorum

The appropriate behaviour and conduct of Members of the Legislative Assembly when participating in Legislative Assembly business. Decorum is established through both the Standing Orders and through convention.

Dissolution

A proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor that ends a Parliament. It is followed by a provincial general election. Members of the Legislative Assembly cease holding their seats upon dissolution. The Premier advises the Lieutenant Governor to proclaim a dissolution.

Division

A recorded standing vote taken upon request by a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Members divide into two groups, the 'yeas' or 'nays,' and the names of the Members for and against a proposition are read into the record and formally recorded in the Votes and Proceedings. In British Columbia, there is no option to abstain from voting when a division is called. Also see [Nemine Contradicente](#).

E

Electoral District

The formal name for the geographic area of the province that elects one Member of the Legislative Assembly. There are 87 electoral districts in British Columbia. Also see [Constituency](#); [Riding](#).

Estimates

The expenditure plans (or budget) of all government departments, consisting of the main Estimates tabled annually and Supplementary Estimates tabled as required. Reviewing Estimates is the work of the Committee of Supply. The print version of the Estimates is commonly referred to as the "blue book".

Executive Council

The Premier and ministers acting in a formal and legal capacity to carry out their executive powers. The Executive Council is created by section 9 of the provincial *Constitution Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 66*. It is the institution through which the government as a whole formally gives advice to the Lieutenant Governor. Also see [Cabinet](#); [Lieutenant Governor in Council](#).

F

Federalism

A system of government in which a constitution specifies and divides powers between a national federal government and local, provincial, and/or territorial governments.

First Reading

The introduction of a bill to the Legislative Assembly. The Member of the Legislative Assembly sponsoring the bill introduces the proposed law to the House and explains its purpose. The bill is not debated, but Members of the Legislative Assembly vote on whether to accept it for further debate. If approved, it is assigned a number and scheduled for second reading.

Fiscal Year

The financial reporting period for the provincial government and most other public sector organizations. It begins on April 1 and concludes on March 31.

Free Vote

A vote during which party discipline is not imposed on individual Members of the Legislative Assembly. Also see [Party Discipline](#).

G

General Election

Elections called on the same date for all electoral districts to elect all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Governing Party

Governing parties are political parties supported by a majority of Members of the Legislative Assembly. A majority government results from a general election where one political party wins the majority of seats in the Legislative Assembly. The leader of the governing party is known as the Premier.

H

Hansard Services

Commonly known as Hansard, it is the Assembly branch that produces the official verbatim transcript of what is said in the Legislative Assembly and in its committees, which is available online. Hansard Services also broadcasts live proceedings in the Legislative Chamber, as well as

the live audio of committee meetings, both online and on television. All recorded proceedings are available online as a video or podcast.

House

The informal name for the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Chamber.

House Leader

A Member of the Legislative Assembly from a recognized party and designated by the party's caucus to manage the party's business in the House.

I

Inaugural Speech

Newly elected Members of the Legislative Assembly may use their first speech to introduce their constituency and describe issues of interest for those they are representing.

Independent Private Member

A Member of the Legislative Assembly who is not affiliated with a political party or who does not belong to a recognized political party.

J

Journals

The official record of the Legislative Assembly's proceedings and decisions. The Journals are compiled from the daily Votes and Proceedings. They are indexed and published by the Office of the Clerk at the end of each session.

L

Law

A bill that has passed all stages in the House, has received Royal Assent and has been proclaimed. Also see [Act](#); [Bill](#).

Leader of a Recognized Political Party

A Member of the Legislative Assembly other than the Premier or Leader of the Official Opposition, who is the leader of a political party that is represented in the Legislative Assembly with two or more members.

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. The Official Opposition is also known as His Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Legislation

Laws enacted by or on the authority of the Legislative Assembly. Also see [Act](#); [Bill](#).

Legislative Assembly

The lawmaking body of British Columbia, consisting of all the elected Members of the Legislative Assembly, as constituted under the provincial *Constitution Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 66*. The primary roles of the Legislative Assembly are to make laws, approve finances, and scrutinize the government.

Legislative Assembly Management Committee

The governing body of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. Chaired by the Speaker, the committee derives its powers from the *Legislative Assembly Management Committee Act R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 258*, and is responsible for the Legislative Assembly's financial and administrative policies.

Legislative Chamber

The room where the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly take place, located on the second floor in the centre block of the Parliament Buildings. Informally known as the Chamber or the House.

Legislative Precinct

The buildings and grounds occupied by the Members of the Legislative Assembly and staff for the purpose of their parliamentary duties, excluding constituency offices.

Legislature

- (1) Formally, the Lieutenant Governor acting on behalf of the Legislative Assembly.
- (2) The term commonly used to refer to the Parliament Buildings.

Lieutenant Governor

The Lieutenant Governor is appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister of Canada, for a term of no less than five years, to represent the Queen in British Columbia. The Lieutenant Governor's approval is needed for a bill to become law. See [Royal Assent](#).

Lieutenant Governor in Council

The Lieutenant Governor acting by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council. Also see [Cabinet](#).

M

Mace

An ornamented club symbolizing the authority of the Legislative Assembly. When the House is in session, the mace rests on the Clerk's Table. When it is in place, the House is authorized to function, and proceedings can begin.

Message

A formal communication from the Lieutenant Governor that accompanies government bills.

Minister of State

A minister that is appointed to support a Cabinet minister with specific areas in their portfolio. As a minister, they are formal members of the Executive Council.

Ministry

A public organization that implements laws and policies on behalf of the government. A Cabinet minister is responsible for ensuring that a ministry within their portfolio is well managed and serving the public interest.

MLA

The abbreviation for Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Motion

A formal proposal moved by a Member of the Legislative Assembly that seeks to elicit a decision from the Legislative Assembly or a committee. A motion initiates all business undertaken by the House. Motions can be introduced without prior notice or with notice being given on the Orders of the Day.

N

Nemine Contradicente

A Latin phrase that means "without dissent" or "no one dissenting." It is used when a division is called and no Member of the Legislative Assembly votes in opposition.

Notice of Motion

A formal written announcement of an intention to bring a proposal before the Legislative Assembly (as required by certain Standing Orders) and placed in the Orders of the Day.

O

Oath of Allegiance

Pursuant to the *Constitution Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 66*, every Member of the Legislative Assembly is required to take an oath of allegiance to the Crown, or instead make a solemn affirmation or declaration, before the Lieutenant Governor or a person authorized by the Lieutenant Governor to administer the oath (usually the Clerk of the House before taking their seat in the Legislative Assembly).

Official Opposition

The opposition party that holds the largest number of seats following an election becomes the Official Opposition, also known as His Majesty's Loyal Opposition. The Official Opposition contributes to the overall effectiveness of the Legislative Assembly by monitoring the Cabinet and encouraging the government to make well-planned and appropriate decisions.

Opposition

Members of the Legislative Assembly who are not members of the governing party are considered to be members of the opposition. This includes members of the Official Opposition, members of the Third Party, and Independent Private Members. Members of the opposition are expected to question government actions and present alternatives to government policies.

Opposition Critic

A Member of the Legislative Assembly in an opposition party who is responsible for presenting their party's policies in a certain area and commenting on those of the government. Also see [Shadow Cabinet](#).

Oral Questions by Members

The formal name used in the Standing Orders for the 30-minute proceeding held every Monday to Thursday while the Legislative Assembly is in session. Also see [Question Period](#).

Order in Council

An order issued by the Lieutenant Governor in Council regarding the administration of government, appointments to office, and other legislative or regulatory matters.

Orders of the Day

All items of business on the agenda of the Legislative Assembly that may be brought forward on a particular day. This agenda is updated daily by the Office of the Clerk.

Out of Order

A statement, motion, or remark made by a Member of the Legislative Assembly during parliamentary business that is contrary to the Standing Orders or to the rules of parliamentary procedure.

P

Parliament

- (1) The period of time between general elections, composed of a number of sessions that are made up of individual sittings of the House. These periods are numbered consecutively (e.g. Thirty-ninth Parliament, Fourth Session).
- (2) Term commonly used to refer to the Legislative Assembly.

Parliament Buildings

The buildings housing the Legislative Chamber, the offices of Members of the Legislative Assembly and their staff, and the Legislative Library. The current buildings were designed by Francis M. Rattenbury and opened in 1898.

Parliamentary Calendar

The schedule showing the dates when the Legislative Assembly is expected to meet according to Standing Order 2(2).

Parliamentary Committees

Parliamentary committees are appointed by the Legislative Assembly to undertake business on behalf of the House. Committees are comprised of small groups of Private Members who have been appointed by the Legislative Assembly and must report their findings back to the House. There are two types of parliamentary committees: select standing committees and special committees.

Parliamentary Secretary

A Private Member of the governing party that is appointed to assist a Cabinet minister with specific areas of their portfolio. Unlike Cabinet ministers and ministers of state, Parliamentary Secretaries are not members of the Executive Council.

Party Discipline

The ability of a political party to consistently show support for a position taken by their leader. A party whip is tasked with enforcing party discipline. Also see [Free Vote](#).

Petition

A tool for the public to have direct access to the Legislative Assembly. A petition is a request, opinion, or position from an individual or a group that is put forward to the Legislative Assembly for some action. A petition may only be presented to the House by a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Point of Order

A parliamentary procedure used by Members of the Legislative Assembly to draw the Speaker's attention to any departure from the Standing Orders or customary procedures. It is decided on by the Speaker. Also see [Standing Orders](#).

Political Party

A group of people sharing a common ideology and set of goals that puts forward candidates for election to the Legislative Assembly. In order to appear on a ballot in an election, a political party must be registered with Elections B.C.

Portfolio

The responsibilities and duties of a minister for a government ministry or policy area.

Prayers and Reflections

The first sitting of the day begins with an interfaith prayer or a reflection by a Member of the Legislative Assembly, or occasionally, a visiting spiritual leader.

Precedent

A ruling or practice that guides subsequent decisions on questions of a similar nature.

Premier

The leader of the governing party, head of the provincial government, and President of the Executive Council.

Presiding Officer

The Member of the Legislative Assembly who presides over House or committee proceedings, such as the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Assistant Deputy Speaker, or Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

Press Gallery

- (1) The seats above the Speaker's Chair where reporters sit to watch the parliamentary proceedings.
- (2) The group of reporters that cover the news of the Legislative Assembly.

Private Bill

A bill sponsored and introduced by a Private Member that seeks to exempt an individual or group from the application of the law, or that gives special/additional powers or benefits to an individual or group.

Private Member

A Member of the Legislative Assembly who does not serve as a Cabinet minister or as Speaker. Also see [Backbencher](#).

Private Members' Time

Subject to Standing Orders 25 and 25a, Members of the Legislative Assembly who are not in the Cabinet may participate in debate on Private Members' statements, motions, or Private Members' bills.

Private Members' Statements

Each sitting day, up to six Private Members may make two-minute statements on topics of their choice. These statements take place before Oral Question Period, pursuant to Standing Order 25B. They are also known as Two-Minute Statements.

Privilege

The rights of the Legislative Assembly collectively and by each Member of the Legislative Assembly individually, without which Members could not effectively carry out their duties.

Proclamation

An official notice or order issued by the Lieutenant Governor. A Parliament starts by proclamation from the Lieutenant Governor on the advice of the Premier.

Prorogation

The closing of a parliamentary session by the Lieutenant Governor. The Legislative Assembly stands prorogued until summoned for the opening day of a new session. When prorogued, all the work of the Assembly, including parliamentary committees, is halted.

Public Bill

A proposed law, usually presented by a Cabinet minister, to the Legislative Assembly for consideration and approval. Only a public bill introduced by a Cabinet minister, with an accompanying message from the Lieutenant Governor, may propose a tax or a spending measure. A public bill introduced by a Member who is not a Cabinet minister is known as “a public bill in the hands of a Private Member.”

Public Gallery

Seating areas in the Legislative Chamber set aside for the public, Members’ and the Speaker’s guests, students, and visitors who wish to observe a sitting. Also see [Press Gallery](#); [Legislative Chamber](#).

Q

Question Period

A 30-minute proceeding held every Monday to Thursday while the Legislative Assembly is in session. Members of the Legislative Assembly question Cabinet ministers and the Premier about government priorities and policies. Question period is formally known as Oral Questions by Members.

Quorum

The minimum number of Members of the Legislative Assembly required for the Legislative Assembly or a committee to proceed with its business. Quorum is ten Members in the Legislative Assembly, but for parliamentary committees, quorum is a majority of committee members.

R

Recess

A temporary break from Legislative Assembly or committee proceedings.

Recognized Political Party

A political party with at least two elected Members of the Legislative Assembly that are not in the government or official opposition parties. With this recognition, a political party can have its Members hold positions such as Leader of a Recognized Political Party, House Leader, Whip, and Caucus Chair. Also see [Political Party](#).

Regulation

Subordinate legislation made under the authority of a law. Sometimes referred to as delegated legislation, regulations are made by people or organizations that the Legislative Assembly has delegated that authority to.

Resolution

A motion adopted by the Legislative Assembly in order to make a declaration of opinion or purpose without ordering or requiring a particular course of action. Resolutions are typically phrased to suggest that the government initiate a certain measure, such as “That, in the opinion of the Legislative Assembly, the government should consider....”

Responsible Government

The principle where Cabinet collectively, and Cabinet ministers individually, are accountable and answerable to the Legislative Assembly for the actions of the government.

Riding

The informal name for a geographic area represented by a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Also see [Constituency](#); [Electoral District](#).

Routine Business

The daily business of the Legislative Assembly that occurs before the Orders of the Day, as outlined in the Standing Orders. The following items are examples of routine business: Prayers and Reflections, Introduction of Bills, Statements by Members, Oral Question Period, Presenting Petitions, Reading and Receiving Petitions, Presenting Reports by Committees.

Royal Assent

The ceremony where the Lieutenant Governor approves a bill passed by the Legislative Assembly. In order to have legal effect, all bills must be given Royal Assent after they have passed third reading. The Lieutenant Governor assents to bills on behalf of the Queen. A bill will become a law following Royal Assent unless otherwise stated in the text of the bill.

S

Second Reading

The stage of a bill when Members of the Legislative Assembly consider the bill’s general principles and goals. After the bill passes second reading, specific sections are debated in committee stage by the Committee of the Whole House.

Select Standing Committees

Select standing (permanent) committees are a type of parliamentary committee that are authorized by the Legislative Assembly to investigate and report on social and economic issues of importance to British Columbians (e.g., health or finance and government services) for a session.

Sergeant-at-Arms

A permanent officer of the Legislative Assembly. The Sergeant-at-Arms holds ceremonial, security, and administrative responsibilities.

Session

A parliamentary time period that begins with the Speech from the Throne and ends with prorogation or dissolution.

Sessional Order

A temporary order governing the conduct and business in the Legislative Assembly that applies only to the session in which it was adopted. Also see [Standing Orders](#).

Sessional Paper

A document tabled in the Legislative Assembly or deposited with the Clerk of the House during a session and entered into the Votes and Proceedings.

Shadow Cabinet

Members of the opposition assigned to watch specific ministries very closely and to represent the opposition party's position in debates about that ministry's plans and activities. Also see [Opposition Critic](#).

Sitting

A parliamentary time period that refers to the morning, afternoon, and/or evening in which the Legislative Assembly meets during a session. Also see [Parliament](#).

Speaker

The Member of the Legislative Assembly elected by the rest of the Legislative Assembly through a secret ballot at the opening of a new parliament (or if there is a vacancy) to preside over its proceedings and to ensure the rules and procedures of the House are followed. Upon their election, the Speaker adopts a non-partisan position to House duties and political issues of the day. As Chair of the Legislative Assembly Management Committee, the Speaker is also responsible for the administration of the Legislative Assembly.

Speaker's Chair

A carved oak chair at the south end of the Legislative Chamber where the Speaker oversees Legislative Assembly proceedings.

Speaker's Procession

A procession led by the Sergeant-at-Arms and consisting of the Speaker, followed by the Clerks, which enters the Legislative Chamber at the start of each sitting. The Speaker is in ceremonial dress, often wearing a tricorne hat and a black silk robe. The Sergeant-at-Arms carries the mace and places it on the Clerk's Table.

Speaker's Ruling

A formal decision made by the Speaker on a procedural question or matter before the Legislative Assembly.

Special Committees

Special committees are a type of parliamentary committee established by the Legislative Assembly to examine specific issues and problems. These committees cease to exist once their examination is completed and they have reported back to the House. They may also recommend appointments for independent statutory officers, such as the Auditor General or the Ombudsperson.

Speech from the Throne

A speech read by the Lieutenant Governor at the start of a new session. It is a broad outline of the government's plans and priorities for the coming fiscal year. The Speech from the Throne is commonly known as the Throne Speech. Also see [Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne](#).

Standing Orders

Written rules adopted by the Legislative Assembly to govern its proceedings and the proceedings of committees. They may only be altered or repealed by a decision of the House.

Statute

- (1) An alternate name for an Act or law.
- (2) An Act that has been formally approved by the Legislature.

Statutory Officer

A person serving the Legislative Assembly in a position for a term fixed by statute. The officer helps the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public monitor and assess government programs, procedures and performance, and they each play an important role in the process of holding the government accountable to the Legislative Assembly.

Strangers

Term used to refer to all persons who are not Members of the Legislative Assembly, infants in the care of Members, officers or staff of the House, as defined by the Standing Orders.

Supply Act

In its final form, a Supply Act authorizes government expenditure following a complete review of the Estimates. If all Estimates have not been passed by the House before the end of the fiscal year (March 31), an interim supply bill enables government to meet its financial commitments. A supply bill can only be introduced by a Cabinet minister. Also see [Budget](#).

T

Third Reading

The final reading stage of a bill by the Legislative Assembly. It is the last opportunity for Members of the Legislative Assembly to debate the bill before a final vote.

Tricorn Hat

Part of the ceremonial attire worn by the Speaker. Tricorn hats gained popularity in the 17th and 18th centuries and were often used by both military and civilian officials in the English Parliament. The Speaker often wears a tricorn hat when entering and exiting the Chamber. The Speaker places the hat on a wooden stand next to the Speaker's Chair while seated.

V

Vote of Confidence

Also referred to as a confidence motion, a vote of confidence is a motion where the Legislative Assembly expresses its support for the performance of a government or a minister. Votes on the Speech from the Throne and the budget speech are deemed to be confidence motions. If the government loses a vote on a confidence motion, they are said to have lost the confidence of the Legislative Assembly and are expected to resign. Also see [Speech from the Throne](#); [Budget](#).

Votes and Proceedings

The official record of the decisions and proceedings of the Legislative Assembly on the previous day, prepared by the Office of the Clerk. It is similar to minutes, and includes a listing of all bills introduced, documents tabled, motions introduced, decisions of the House, and the results of any votes for that day.

W

Westminster Model

A system of parliamentary government originating in England, characterized by a symbolic head of state (the Crown) and a political executive that are members of and directly responsible to an elected legislative body.

Whip

A Member of the Legislative Assembly whose role is to keep other members of the same party informed about House business and to ensure their attendance in the House, especially when a vote is held. This position is also known as the Party Whip.



For additional information or to order publications, please
contact:

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
Parliamentary Education Office
Room 144, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4

Phone: 250-387-8669

Facsimile: 250-356-5981

E-mail: PEO@leg.bc.ca

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