

# BCTI Gazette

A Parliamentary Education Newsletter for BC Teachers



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Volume 17 April 2023

read time: 9-14 minutes

## British Columbia Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy

# 2023 Fall Institute

OCTOBER 17–21



Participate in a unique professional development program at the Parliament Buildings in our provincial capital.

Learn about parliamentary democracy and become champions of citizenship education. Return to your school with an enhanced understanding of British Columbia's political system.

Meet with the Speaker of the House, MLAs, senior public officials and have a behind-the-scenes tour of your Parliament Buildings. Collaborate and share with your colleagues from across the province!

**Participants are not expected to know everything about Parliament before applying. We welcome all teachers who are curious to learn.**



**Application  
Deadline**

June 30, 2023

[leg.bc.ca/bcti](https://leg.bc.ca/bcti)

# Financial Estimates

Written by Andrew Hutchings, Parliamentary Education Office Research Co-Op

Budget day in British Columbia – which typically occurs on the fourth Tuesday in February – was on February 28, marking the widely anticipated reveal of the government’s estimated financial expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget unveiling is an important moment for MLAs, lobbyists, media, and citizens alike, as the budget funds the government’s priorities for the year by reinforcing the intentions outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

Some MLAs and journalists participated in a “lockup” to gain early access to the budget, in which they must remain incommunicado with the outside world until the Minister of Finance, Hon. Katrine Conroy, formally delivered the budget speech and tabled the estimates. But what exactly are the estimates, and what goes into estimating the massive and complex expenditures of such a large province?

Budget day is not the beginning of the cycle but, rather, an important part of parliamentary and public accountability. The *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* requires the government to be accountable for how it spends public money.



The budget requires approval from the Legislative Assembly, which involves intense debate and scrutiny in [Committee of Supply](#) (estimates debate) as the opposition questions each Minister for their Ministry’s proposed spending. During the estimates debate, which can be very wide-ranging, Ministers are supported by senior Ministry officials who help inform the Minister’s answers to questions. Once all of the questions have been posed, Members vote on each individual estimate.

A final supply bill is introduced in the House when all individual estimates have been voted on. This bill authorizes the withdrawal of funds from the [Consolidated Revenue Fund](#) for the government to initiate expenditures that were approved during the estimates debate.

The government is expected to sufficiently accommodate a variety of essential services with a limited sum of money based on projections of future financial needs. Predicting the finances of the province is a difficult task and must also consider any unexpected revenue in addition to expenditures. This difficult decision-making process is well expressed in a classroom learning resource available on the Legislative Assembly website:

<https://www.leg.bc.ca/content-peo/Lesson-Plans/Creating-A-Budget-Who-Wants-Pie-English.pdf>.

The spring sitting period of the [Legislative Assembly](#) focusses a great deal on the estimates debate, which is currently underway. MLAs undertake the complex task of examining and approving the funds necessary to ensure that provincial essential services can operate and that the public service can continue to provide services to all British Columbians.

**If you are enjoying this Gazette, we encourage you to share it with your colleagues. If you have received this from a colleague, please subscribe by emailing**

[PEO@leg.bc.ca](mailto:PEO@leg.bc.ca)

# Parliamentary Play & Tour for Schools

A new offering at the Legislative Assembly of B.C.

Written by Nicholas Guerreiro, Player Information Assistant

Looking for a new and exciting way to connect kids with Parliament? Sign up your class for the *Parliamentary Play & Tour for Schools*, an interactive new program that includes a guided tour of the Parliament Buildings and a travelling historical play on the Legislative Precinct. New this year, the program will run from May 22 to the end of June.

The *Parliamentary Play & Tour for Schools* begins weekly at 10:45 a.m. at the rear library steps. From there, the group will join a performance of *My Place in Politics*. This is an interactive, student-friendly travelling play that whisks audiences back in time to 1947. They will meet suffragists, students, and the participants of the Chocolate Bar Strike, who will teach them about different ways that Canadians have advocated for change. After the play, students will have an opportunity to ask questions and chat with the characters. Then, they will have an indoor guided tour focusing on how change is made at the Parliament Buildings. The whole program is free and will run about 80 minutes total.



While the *Parliamentary Play & Tour for Schools* is fun for all grades, it has been designed with the grades 5 and 6 social studies curricula in mind. The play focuses on participation and representation in B.C.'s system of government and how groups developed a plan of action to address issues like discrimination, inequality, and the fight for human rights. The play also fits neatly into the grade 10 social studies curriculum, with a particular emphasis on how advocacy helped to address discriminatory policies in Canada. The program is also a good fit for drama classes, and our young actors can speak with students about their training and experiences as emerging professionals in the performing arts. Following the play and tour, teachers will receive a package of extension activities and resources engaging students to use historical thinking strategies.

Journeying back in time to witness the events and movements that shaped British Columbia is easy. Just sign up for the *Parliamentary Play & Tour for Schools* by visiting the Legislative Assembly website:

<https://www.leg.bc.ca/content-peo/Pages/Parliamentary-PlayandTour.aspx>

## Significant Dates



- 1991 - Rita Johnston, MLA for Surrey-Newton, becomes the first woman Premier in Canadian history.



- 2016 - the Kermode Bear, also known as the Spirit Bear, becomes British Columbia's provincial mammal.



# Notice of Virtual Speaker in the Schools

The Virtual Speaker in the Schools Program encourages students to engage in democracy and consider contributing to their communities by becoming parliamentarians when they grow up.

The Honourable Raj Chouhan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, will meet with students from across British Columbia for a 45-minute virtual classroom session. The Speaker encourages all young people to become engaged in democracy and the parliamentary process.

After a short introduction to the work of the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker participates in an open Q and A with the students. Classes are requested to send in three questions in advance of the virtual visit, and then individual students are encouraged to come up to the computer's microphone/camera and pose their queries directly to the Speaker. Find out more about the [Role of the Speaker](#) with our Fact Sheets, available in both French and English!

Contact [PEO@leg.bc.ca](mailto:PEO@leg.bc.ca) directly to find out more about reserving a virtual session with the Speaker. Visits are typically scheduled on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m.



If you are planning on attending the 2023 Spring Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association conference in Whistler in May, pop by the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia's exhibitor booth.

*We would love to see you and share our resources*



# Spend the Day this Summer at the Legislative Assembly



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Tours, Treats, and Travelling Plays

Written by Daniel Saretsky, Tour Information Assistant

If you are in Victoria this summer, be sure to stop by the Parliament Buildings as there is so much to do! Chat with a friendly tour guide or join a guided tour of the inside of the Parliament Buildings or sit down for a meal at the Parliamentary Dining Room or pick up a snack at the Grab-and-Go, or a gift from the Parliamentary Gift Shop, or even take a trip into the past with our Travelling Plays.

The historic Parliament Buildings is a place concerned with the “[here and now](#)” and the “[way back when.](#)” Learn about both on a free tour. Starting on Victoria Day, May 22, guided tours will run every thirty minutes, seven days a week until September 4, 2023. Join one of our tour guides as they roam the halls, sharing stories of the building’s rich past and ever-evolving present. If you’re more of a free spirit, take a booklet in one of 20 languages and strike out on your own, exploring the buildings on a self-guided tour.

Once you’ve finished visiting the Parliamentary Gift Shop and exited the building, you may notice something odd: an architect in a bowler hat arguing with his assistant, a suffragist chatting with schoolchildren on the library steps, or a crowd of eager kids chanting for the right to buy a five-cent chocolate bar. These characters are part of the Parliamentary Players program that invites young actors to “[bring history to life](#)” on the Legislative Precinct for nearly 25 years.

In the summer, the Parliamentary Players burst onto the lawns in the [Parliament Past and Present Travelling Plays](#). These free half-hour theatrical adventures whisk visitors around the buildings and back in time. Younger guests should make sure to see [My Place in Politics](#), in which a Grade 6 student gets involved in 1947’s infamous chocolate bar strike, inspiring them to start a political career of their own. Or learn about the history of the Legislative Precinct from time immemorial to today in [A House for Democracy](#). Last summer, the plays were seen by over 3,200 people.



After the play, your belly may start to grumble, and you remember it’s nearly lunchtime. Perhaps you think your visit to the Parliament Buildings is coming to a close, but not to worry. The Legislative Precinct can fill your belly as well as your mind. Make a reservation for lunch at the Parliamentary Dining Room for a tasty meal, or if you’re looking for something more casual, stop by the Grab-and-Go for a cappuccino and an ice cream sandwich. By the time you’re finally taking a last look at the green copper domes of the buildings as you stroll up Government Street, you realize you’ve been here all afternoon. The Legislative Assembly has something for everyone, so come on over and spend the day!

# Personal Development Resources for Educators

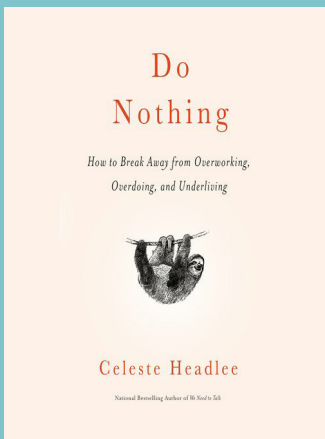
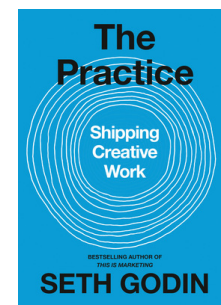
Professional development book reviews by Kirk Longpré, retired educator, BCTI alumnus, facilitator, former Education Steering Committee member. Included here are some resources that provide inspirational personal development ideas for busy educators.

Pressfield, Steven. (2022). **Put Your Ass Where Your Heart Wants to Be.** Sarsaparilla Media; **Turning Pro: Tap Your Inner Power and Create Your Life's Work.** Black Irish Pub.; (2011). **Do the Work.** Black Irish Pub.; (2004). **The War of Art: Break Through Blocks and Win Your Inner Battles.** Black Irish Pub.

Written by best-selling fiction and non-fiction author Steven Pressfield, these four books are designed to get you unstuck, and get you moving. Each short book will take you from the start to the finish of any long-form project, whether it is a creative project, a business venture, a philanthropic enterprise, the acquisition of physical fitness, or just putting everything you have into the work you're already doing. The principles can be applied to any form of creative endeavour or the pursuit of any objective.

Godin, Seth. (2020). **The Practice: Shipping Creative Work.** Portfolio/Penguin.

This book spoke to me about what we, as educators, are trying to accomplish. It is a user's manual for people who want to lead or create, for people who seek to teach, to innovate, and to solve interesting problems. *The Practice* is a must read if you are going to do creative work and change the status quo.



Headlee, Celeste. (2020). **Do Nothing: How to Break Away from Overworking, Overdoing, and Under Living.** Harmony Books.

Drawing on extensive research from history, neuroscience and social science, Headlee presents realistic solutions for how we can reclaim our health and humanity. This book is a call to work smarter and accomplish more by doing less. For busy educators, she offers a sound reminder to take the time to stop, connect with others, and forge real bonds vital for building community and fostering empathy.

Price, Catherine. (2021). **The Power of Fun: How to Feel Alive Again.** Dial Press.

If you are feeling exhausted, unproductive, and burned out, this book is for you. In her evidence-based, practical, and inspirational book Price explains that a more fun-filled life is not about shirking responsibilities. It's about reorienting yourself toward things that energize you. She explains how we can still be conscientious citizens who are improving the world, but having fun can give us more energy with which to do so. This book is full of practical strategies, worksheets, quizzes and additional resources.



**Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the above article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect that of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.**

# Coronation

His Majesty [King Charles III](#) will be coronated in London in May. The origins of the coronation ceremony can be traced back more than 1,000 years. While many of the components of the ceremony are religious in nature, past coronations were seen as an important sign of legitimacy for a new king or queen, as there were often several individuals with competing claims for the throne. Today, the only portion of the ceremony that directly relates to Canada and the 14 other realms is when the monarch takes the coronation oath, in which he swears to govern the peoples of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth realms “[according to their respective laws and customs](#)”.

After the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, four coronation ceremonies were held over the next 52 years: those of King Edward VII (1902), King George V (1911), King George VI (1937), and Queen Elizabeth II (1953). On each of these occasions, the coronation was marked with elaborate decorations on the façade of the Parliament Buildings and events that drew tens of thousands of people to the front lawns, which have, since the opening of the Parliament Buildings in 1898, served as a site for people to celebrate special occasions, mark significant historical moments or protest important issues.

Celebration arches appear to have been a common feature of special occasions in Victoria in the late 1800s and early 1900s. They were often built by different community groups and placed around Victoria, B.C. Photos from the coronations of 1902 and 1911 show examples of these arches on the Legislative Precinct, including a recreation of the old bastions from Fort Victoria. Photos from later coronations, such as that of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, show the elaborate decorations on the exterior of the buildings, including a large crown and the initials ‘E’ and ‘R’ for [Elizabeth Regina](#), or Queen Elizabeth in Latin. Special lights on the exterior of the buildings were also a feature of each coronation. Although these lights are a common sight today, as the Parliament Buildings have been illuminated nightly for over 50 years, the tradition of having these lights stretches back to 1897 when they were first installed to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

To get a sense of what each of the coronation events looked like, we can go back in time by reading digitized copies of the [British Colonist](#), which is known today as the [Times Colonist](#).

## British Colonist – August 10, 1902

### Edward VII Crowned – Victorians and Visitors Spend the Day in Rejoicing – A Host of Attractions That Gave Pleasure to All.

The British Colonist reported that the coronation day in Victoria “will go down in history among those who enjoyed it as one of the happiest of their lives.” Bands from around British Columbia and even Seattle came to Victoria to perform in locations around the city. In the evening, they assembled for a grand finale on the steps of the Parliament Buildings. The day was also marked with church services, a lacrosse tournament, a military procession and naval parade, and a number of 21-gun salutes by artillery regiments and naval vessels off of the Canadian Forces Pacific base in Esquimalt.



## British Colonist - June 23, 1911

### Loyalty Shown by Victorians – Yesterday’s Celebration of Epoch-Making Event Proves Greatest in the History of the City – Record Crowds Take Part in Festivities Signifying Approval by Marked Display of Enthusiasm.

After a parade through the city in honour of King George V, the day wrapped up with bands and concerts performing on the front steps of the Parliament Buildings and a large fireworks display in the Inner Harbour. The newspaper reported that all of the “city’s fifty thousand people and a few more” participated in the carnival-like festivities that went well past midnight.

Image G-07092 courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.

### British Colonist - May 13, 1937

#### King George VI and Consort Crowned – Love and Loyalty to Their Majesties Shown Abundantly – Coronation Crowds Here Are Happy

The Daily Colonist of May 13, 1937 reported that over 10,000 spectators gathered on the lawns of the Parliament Buildings to observe the festivities in honour of King George VI. In addition to the usual features, such as the 21-gun salute and military marches, those in attendance listened to a recorded speech from the king. The newspaper also reported the birth of three “coronation babies” in the local hospital.

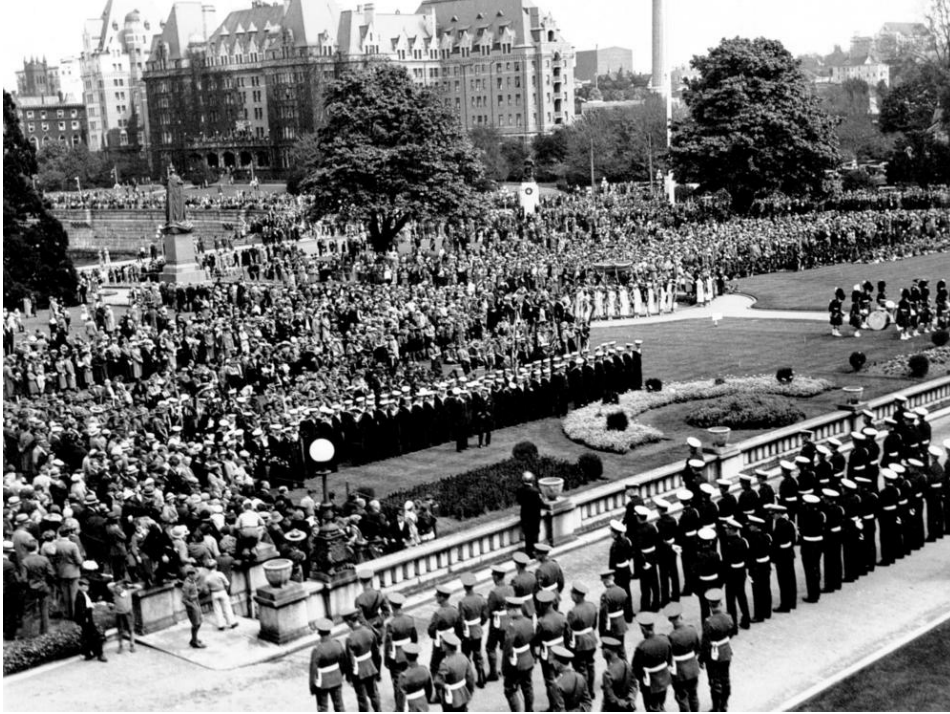


Image A-02905 courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.

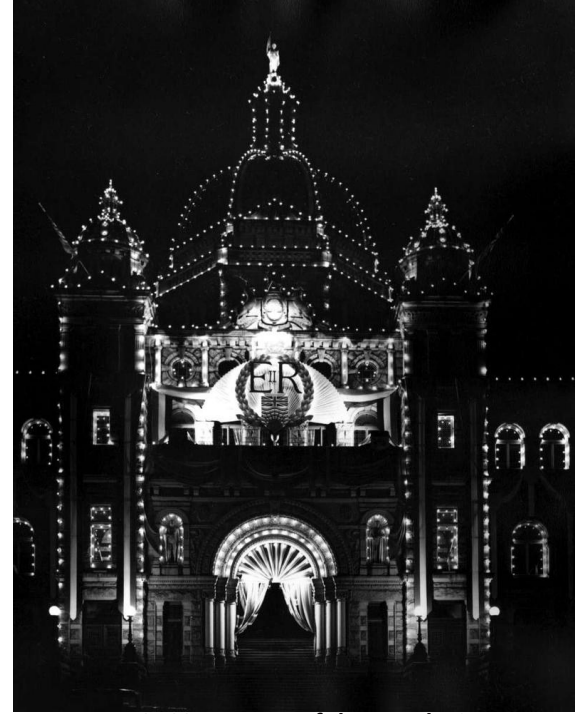
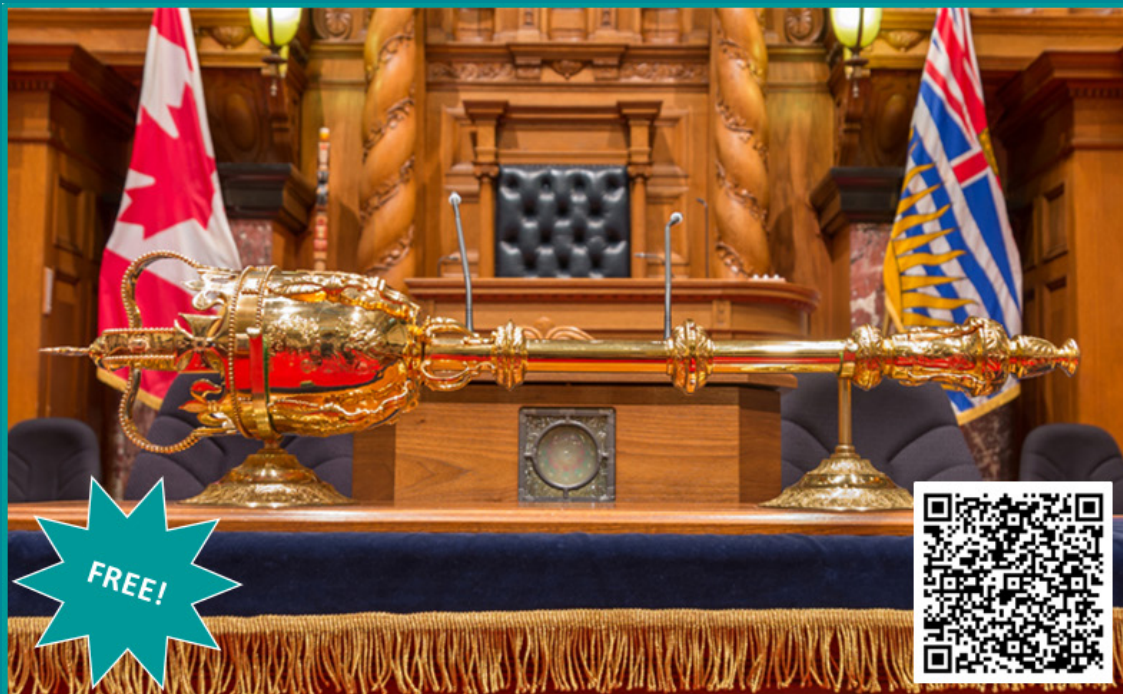


Image NA-40568 courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.

### British Colonist – June 3, 1953

#### City Celebrates in Style, Parade to Fireworks – Threat of Rain Holds Off: Outdoor Events Fill Busy Day

After four days of events, the British Colonist reported that nearly 40,000 people crowded the streets of downtown Victoria to watch the parade, led by 1,400 members of the Royal Canadian Navy, a dozen marching bands, and over 20 military and naval marching units. The parade worked its way past the front of the elaborately decorated Parliament Buildings before concluding with a 42-gun salute and large fireworks display. Students who were at school received a medallion in honour of the coronation and “heard talks from principals on the full meaning of the crowning of a monarch at school assemblies.”



FREE!



Ever wondered how a medieval weapon evolved to become a symbol of parliament today? Find out in

## Maces Past & Present

2:00 pm-3:00 pm

Wednesday June 14

On Zoom or in person at the  
Legislative Library

Register at [BCLeg.ca/tours](https://www.bclg.ca/tours)



# Thanks for Asking!

*Grade 11 students from Reynolds Secondary asked us:*

**Who represents the Speaker's riding in the Legislative Assembly? Does the Speaker have the same responsibilities as the other MLA's to his/her/their riding?**

**The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of B.C. still represents their riding. This means that they still maintain the same responsibilities to their constituents as the other MLAs.**

**Does the Speaker vote on bills or other things?**

**The Speaker does not participate in debates nor votes on motions before the House except when there is a tie in the House.**

**What types of votes can lead to a government losing confidence?**

**The two main votes that are considered a vote of confidence are on the Throne Speech and the Budget. If the government loses either of these two votes, it means that the government has lost the confidence of the Members of the Legislative Assembly to govern.**

**What types of behaviours can get an MLA ejected from the House by the Speaker?**

**MLAs conduct is governed by the Standing Orders 19, 20 and 21, it explains that a Member may be suspended or removed from the House if their behaviour is deemed "grossly disorderly" by the Speaker.**



## Parliamentary Trivia!

**Q. In what year was the first public elementary school established in BC?**

Check out [Discover Your Legislature](#) to find the answer. The first correct answer will win a water bottle from the Parliamentary Gift Shop! Email [PEO@leg.bc.ca](mailto:PEO@leg.bc.ca) to submit.

We wrote this newsletter in the Parliament Buildings, which are located on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen-speaking (Le-KWUNG-en) peoples. Now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, these Coast Salish peoples have a rich culture and history dating back thousands of years.

We are thankful to live and work here.

