

Home of the Legislative Assembly

November 17, 1993 marked the official opening of the first permanent home of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. In a natural setting on the shores of Frame Lake, the Legislative Assembly building is a short walk from the center of Yellowknife. The building belongs to all the people of the Northwest Territories. It is here that Members, elected by the people of the North, carry out the people's business.

During construction, prime importance was placed on maintaining the natural landscape surrounding the building - the trees, the rock outcrops, the peat bog foreground and the lakeshore. The Capital Site Area, which includes the Legislative Assembly building, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, and City Hall, is representative of a variety of northern ecosystems. The foreground to the Legislative Assembly Building is a large, expansive peat bog abundant with native wildflowers and grasses. Black spruce, tamarack and white birch trees continue to flourish near the walkway to the Legislature's entrance. To the west and north, the Precambrian shield meets the edge of the lake. Small mammals, birds and waterfowl continue to inhabit the area, as they did before the Legislative Assembly was constructed.

Territorial architects Ferguson Simek Clark/Pin Matthews in association with Matsuzaki Architects Inc. of Vancouver designed the 46,000-square-foot building. Construction of the building began in 1990. The building is anchored to the ground by a wall of indigenous stone. The walls are clad in both sheet and cast zinc panels, lightly tinted with green glazing. Zinc shingles cover the domed roofs and form the undulating roof edge. Zinc louvers with operable panels provide natural ventilation to each office. The zinc material was selected because it was mined in the North and because of its subtle weathering qualities.

As visitors enter the building, they are welcomed by the Great Hall. It is a spacious public meeting area, which is well lit thanks to the tall windows. From here, visitors can enjoy a view of Yellowknife's downtown.

The wood in the building is primarily white maple with sycamore added in the Chamber, on Members' desks and in the Speaker's office.

The primary focus of the building is the Chamber, announced by the shallow dome, which floats gently over adjacent treetops. Its circular shape represents both the cultural traditions of northern people and their unique form of consensus government.

Secondary in importance is the Caucus meeting room. The Caucus room, with its unique acoustical qualities, provides space for a full seating of the MLAs. Offices for Members and staff radiate out from the Chamber and Caucus room and each has its own distinct view of Frame Lake.

Artists from across the NWT were invited to submit proposals to work in collaboration with southern glass and zinc artisans. Letia Lewis of Yellowknife and John Farcey Jr. of Fort Providence were selected to work on the zinc wall behind the Speaker's Chair.

Throughout the building, natural light filters through the skylights surrounding the perimeters of the Chamber and Caucus Room. Glass partitions used to separate these areas offer an excellent opportunity to present northern artistic themes, rendered directly on the glass. Warren Carther of Winnipeg and Angus Cockney of Yellowknife worked on the translucent glass frieze

that diffuses the natural light coming into the Chamber, leaving occupants conscious of the changing daylight conditions outside.

The building contains the offices of the Speaker, the Premier, the Executive Council, Regular Members and their support staff. In addition, there are meeting rooms and public spaces to facilitate contact between MLAs, constituents, organizations and the people of the NWT.

History of the Legislative Assembly

When the Northwest Territories became part of Canada in 1870, it included what are now the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, northern Ontario and northern Québec. The Arctic Islands were added in 1880. During this period, the Northwest Territories had government based on two key concepts of Canadian democracy - representation and responsibility. Its Legislative Assembly was fully elected and from 1897, the Assembly had a formally constituted Executive Council, which was accountable to the Assembly for the conduct of government.

The federal government created the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905 after receiving pressure from the Northwest Territories Council. The remaining Northwest Territories reverted back to the status of a colony run from Ottawa as it had been in the early 1870's.

The *Northwest Territories Act* (NWT Act) had provided for a four-member appointed Council to assist the federally appointed Commissioner but no members were named to the Council until 1921. All were federal civil servants living in Ottawa. The appointed Council acted more as an interdepartmental committee than as a legislative body.

No Northerners were named to the Council until 1947, when J.G. McNiven of Yellowknife was appointed. In 1951, there was a tentative return to representative government when the *NWT Act* was amended to permit three elected Members from the Mackenzie District to join five appointed Members. The Council began to alternate sittings between Ottawa and Northern communities.

By 1966, elected Members formed a majority on the Council with seven elected and five appointed. The first elected members from the eastern Arctic, including the first Inuit Member, took their seats.

By this time, political awareness in the North had increased and there was strong dissatisfaction with the system. The Territorial Council asked for an inquiry into the North's political future and, in 1966, the Carrothers Commission, with former Commissioner John H. Parker as a member, submitted its report after traveling across the Territories to talk to residents.

Most of the Commission's recommendations were accepted by the federal government early in 1967 and formed the basis for a gradual return to responsible government. The seat of government was moved from Ottawa to Yellowknife, a resident civil service was developed, Ottawa devolved many provincial-type responsibilities and the NWT Council began to move towards becoming a fully elected Legislative Assembly.

By 1970, only four federal appointees remained on the 14-member Council. Amendments to the *NWT Act* allowed Council to decide the qualifications of electors and its Members, to set their indemnities and to develop a separate Consolidated Revenue Fund. By 1975, a standing

committee system had developed and the Standing Committee on Finance was given the right to scrutinize the territorial budget.

In 1975, the first fully-elected Council since 1905 took office. Dene, Métis and Inuit Members were the majority on the 15-seat Council. The Council, which was referred to as the Legislative Assembly after 1976, chose its own Speaker and named two members to the Executive Committee. The Commissioner no longer presided over Assembly sessions, as had been customary in earlier Councils. The 8th Assembly amended the Council Ordinance and lobbied the Federal government for authority to set the number of constituencies between 15 and 25. The number was subsequently set at 22.

The 22 Members elected to the 9th Assembly in October 1979 accelerated the movement towards responsible government. The Assembly named seven of its Members to sit on the Executive Committee (now called the Executive Council). Only three portfolios were still held by the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner and, by the end of the 9th Assembly, two of those were transferred to elected Members. The Deputy Commissioner's position on the Executive Council was replaced by an eighth elected member in 1983.

The Assembly created a Special Committee to review education in the NWT and at the same time a plebiscite was held on the question of dividing the Northwest Territories. Members played an active role in reviewing the territorial budget and in setting spending priorities. The first territorial Finance Minister was appointed and presided over the preparation of budgets. The Assembly lobbied strongly for the protection of Indigenous rights in the new Canadian constitution, traveling to Ottawa en masse, and received approval-in-principle from the federal government for division of the Northwest Territories.

The Assembly accepted an electoral district boundaries commission report recommending that two of the larger constituencies be divided to create a total of 24 ridings. Territorial voters went to the polls on November 21, 1983 to elect 24 Members to the 10th Legislative Assembly. It met for the first time in Yellowknife in January 1984. During the 10th Assembly, Commissioner Parker announced he would no longer sit with elected Members in the House or participate in debates as one step toward fully responsible government.

On January 30, 1986, Commissioner Parker turned over chairmanship of the Executive Council to the Government House Leader and transferred responsibility for the Public Service to the Executive Council. The 10th Legislative Assembly was dissolved in 1987 and an election was held on October 5, 1987 to choose the 24 Members of the 11th Legislative Assembly.

After their first session, Members of the 11th Assembly elected an Executive Council, or Cabinet, with a majority of Ministers of Indigenous descent.

The Legislative Assembly also gave the new Government Leader authority for the overall management and direction of the Executive branch of government and the right to take any disciplinary action he or she deemed necessary with respect to the conduct of Ministers.

The first order of business for Members of the 12th Assembly was to elect a Speaker. For the first time, this process was done in public. The public also had the chance to view the election of the Government Leader and the Members of the Executive Council.

In February 1994, Members passed a motion officially changing the title of Government Leader to Premier.

The 24 members of the 13th Legislative Assembly were chosen in an election on October 16, 1995. Again the election of the Speaker, the Premier, and the seven Cabinet Ministers were held in a public forum. A new Premier was elected in December 1998, following the resignation of the former Premier.

On February 15, 1999, 19 Members were elected to serve on the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly. However, Members were not sworn in until April 1st.

On April 1, 1999 two new territories, Nunavut and a new Northwest Territories, were created in Canada's North. The 19 Members elected in Nunavut officially took office. In the NWT, the 14 western Members of the 13th Legislative Assembly remained in office.

In July 1999, Members agreed that 19 Members would be elected on December 6th, 1999 to the 14th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

On December 6th, 1999, 19 Members were elected to the 14th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the first Assembly chosen in the NWT following division. Members of the 15th Legislative Assembly were elected on November 24, 2003. Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly were elected on October 1, 2007. Members of the 17th Assembly were elected on October 3, 2011, and Members of the 18th Assembly were elected on October 3, 2011. The Legislative Assembly is currently in its 19th Assembly, the Members were elected on October 1st, 2019.

Commissioner of the Northwest Territories

On June 14, 2017, Margaret Thom was named the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. The Commissioner plays a very important role in the governance of the Northwest Territories. Appointed by the Governor-in-Council of Canada on the recommendation of the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is the federal government's representative in the NWT and the Northwest Territories' Chief Executive Officer.

The position of Commissioner, created by the federal *Northwest Territories Act*, is equivalent to the role of a Lieutenant Governor in the provinces.

The legislative duties of the Commissioner:

- Swearing-in of the Members of the Legislative Assembly;
- Swearing-in of the Members of the Executive Council under the recommendation of the Members of the Legislative Assembly;
- Appointing Members of the Executive Council to ministerial portfolios on the advice of the Premier;
- Providing assent for bills after they are passed by the Legislative Assembly (Note: A bill must be approved by the Commissioner before it becomes law);
- The reading of the speech to open the sessions of the Legislative Assembly; and
- Signing documents such as orders-in-council, Commissioners' warrants, statutory appointments, and disposition of Commissioner's Lands.

The Commissioner also serves as a link between the government and the people. The Commissioner often attends events and performs a ceremonial role as a representative of the Government of Northwest Territories.

History of the Role of the Commissioner

Originally, the Executive consisted of only the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Assistant Commissioner. None were responsible directly to the Legislative Assembly for the conduct of government. The Commissioner was in charge of all Cabinet proceedings. Increasingly, elected members assumed leadership roles, while the Commissioner's duties became similar to the role of Lieutenant Governor for the Provinces. During the 10th Legislative Assembly (1983 - 1987), the Government Leader became chairperson of the Executive Council, and the Commissioner no longer attended sittings of the Assembly. All ministerial portfolios were assigned to elected Members.

Although the Commissioner still officially opens each session and provides assent to bills, the role of the Commissioner has become mostly ceremonial.

Legally, the Federal government still has power to disallow territorial Acts for a period of up to one year after passage and the Commissioner, a civil servant reporting to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, is still the Chief Executive Officer of the Government of Northwest Territories. Although the Commissioner must assent to laws, no territorial Act has ever been disallowed by the Federal Government.

Commissioners of the NWT

Commissioner	Date Appointed	Date Retired
Margaret Thom	June 26, 2017	Present
George L. Tuccaro	May 28, 2010	May 10, 2016
Anthony W.J. Whitford	April 22, 2005	April 28, 2010
Glenna Hansen	March 31, 2000	April 7, 2005
Daniel Joseph Marion	March 26, 1999	March 31, 2000
Helen Maksagak	January 16, 1995	March 26, 1999
Daniel L. Norris	October 2, 1989	September 30, 1994
John Havelock Parker	April 15, 1979	July 31, 1989
Stuart Milton Hodgson	March 2, 1967	April 6, 1979
Bent G. Sivertz	July 12, 1963	January 16, 1967

R. Gordon Robertson	November 15, 1953	July 12, 1963
Maj. Gen. Hugh A. Young	November 14, 1950	November 15, 1953
Dr. Hugh L. Keenleyside	January 14, 1947	September 24, 1950
Dr. Charles Camsell	December 3, 1936	December 3, 1946
Hugh H. Rowatt	March 31, 1931	April 30, 1934
William W. Cory	June 27, 1919	February 17, 1931
Lt. Col. Frederick D. White	August 24, 1905	1919

Operations of the Legislative Assembly

Although the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories does not have the same legislative powers as the Assemblies of the provinces, it acts, in most respects, as a provincial legislature.

Legally, the Federal government still has power to disallow territorial Acts for a period of up to one year after passage and the Commissioner, a civil servant reporting to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, is still the Chief Executive Officer of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Although the Commissioner must assent to laws, no territorial Act has ever been disallowed by the Federal Government.

Increasingly, elected members have assumed a leadership role, while the Commissioner's duties have become similar to the role of Lieutenant Governor for the Provinces. Ministers introduce bills and the Assembly has the power to approve or reject legislation. Regular Members may also introduce bills, excluding bills that necessitate an expense of public funds.

Members of the Legislative Assembly debate, pass motions, and advise the Executive; they discuss and enact legislation, approve funds for various public services and present petitions on behalf of their constituents. Members also question the Executive to obtain information on its progress in carrying out their direction or on other matters of public interest.

Standing and Special Committee activities have become a major part of Members' responsibilities. Special Committees are set up by the Assembly to gather information and public input on particular issues or subjects and report to the Assembly, which then debates and either adopts or changes their recommendations. Standing Committees deal with Assembly business of a continuing nature.

During session, the Assembly operates according to standard parliamentary rules for debate, with some modifications to allow for northern circumstances. The Assembly frequently refers questions to Committee of the Whole, where a more informal discussion can take place. This is well suited to an Assembly where Members do not represent political parties and decisions are made by consensus.



Sessions are held for approximately 14 weeks of the year, depending on the amount of business to be dealt with. The longest session of the year is the budget session, held early in the year when Members review the Government's annual budget.

In Yellowknife, the Legislative Assembly's facilities include the Chamber, meeting and caucus rooms, and offices for MLAs and staff. The Clerk of the Assembly and their staff provide professional advice on parliamentary procedures to the Speaker, chairmen of Committees and individual MLAs. The Office of the Legislative Assembly also provides services to Members in the areas of finance and administration, research and public affairs.

English, French and nine Indigenous languages of the Northwest Territories may be spoken in the Legislative Assembly, with simultaneous interpretation provided by trained language specialists. Interpretation of seven of the official languages is provided daily, on a rotating basis.

What is Consensus Government?

The Northwest Territories is one of only two jurisdictions in Canada with a consensus system of government instead of one based on party politics. In our system, all Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are elected as independents. Shortly after the election, all Members meet as a Caucus to set priorities for that Assembly. The Caucus remains active throughout their term as the forum where all Members meet as equals.

Members who are not in Cabinet are referred to as Regular Members. They become the "unofficial opposition." They are responsible, through questioning in the House and the work of standing committees, for holding the government accountable and responsive to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Compared to the party system, there is much more communication between Regular Members and Cabinet. All legislation, major policies, and proposed budgets pass through the Regular Members' standing committees before coming to the House. This gives Members a chance to make changes and put their "fingerprints" on initiatives before they're made public, unlike in other systems. This influence comes at a price for Regular Members: they often get advance notice of announcements and issues before the public does, but can't tell their constituents.

The 11 Regular Members also hold the balance of power, as only seven Cabinet Ministers are elected. A Cabinet that ignores the direction favored by the majority soon runs into trouble. Even so, consensus government does not mean that unanimous agreement is necessary for decisions to be made, motions passed, and legislation enacted. A simple majority carries the vote.

Election of the Speaker, Premier, and Ministers

Once elected, Members hold a territorial leadership meeting at the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife. The first order of business is the election of the Speaker by secret ballot. This reflects the importance of the Speaker, who presides over the Assembly as a whole and enforces the rules.

The next task is electing the Premier. Members have many discussions behind the scenes as candidates measure their support leading up to the election, which has been held in public since the 12th Assembly. Candidates are nominated and given 20 minutes to present their platforms. Then the floor is opened for a limited number of questions from each Member, and a secret ballot vote is held. Sometimes it takes several ballots before any candidate receives more than 50% of the votes.

The election of six more Cabinet ministers comes next. Again candidates are nominated and outline their platforms in public before a secret ballot vote takes place. After meeting with their team of ministers, the Premier assigns them to head up one or more departments.

Some Members choose not to accept nominations to Cabinet because they prefer to be free to ask tough questions of ministers in the House and before standing committees. They feel they can better represent their constituents as Regular Members.

It rarely happens, but the Premier and/or Cabinet ministers can be removed by the passing of a motion of non-confidence in the House. Motions of censure are a less extreme measure that can put the Premier or minister under considerable public pressure.

The Creation of a New Northwest Territories

On April 1, 1999 a new Northwest Territories was created when new boundaries were drawn in Canada's North. Two new territories, a new NWT and Nunavut (which means "our land" in Inuktitut), were created. This change marked the first significant change to the map of Canada since Newfoundland joined Confederation in 1949.

The motivation for creating two new territories in Canada's North stemmed from the people of Nunavut's desire to have their own government, one that is closer to the people and more culturally based including the use of Inuktitut as the working language of the new government.

Dean A.W.R. Carrothers was appointed by the federal government to head up a commission to study the development of government in the Northwest Territories. After the completion of the study in 1966, the Commission recommended that the NWT should not divide into two territories. This slowed the discussion of the issue for a few years.

In 1976, the issue was re-ignited when the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (the main political Inuit organization of the time) proposed the creation of Nunavut as part of the comprehensive Inuit land claim settlement, including the Inuvialuit area of the Beaufort Sea. Later that year, due to development pressure in their region, the Inuvialuit split from the ITC and pursued their own land claim.

That same year, a federal electoral boundary commission recommended two electoral districts for the Northwest Territories: Nunatsiak and the Western Arctic. The recommended changes were in effect in time for the 1979 federal election.

Over the next 12 months, many groups submitted suggestions as to where a dividing line could be drawn if the NWT were to separate into two territories. The Dene Nation (the organization representing Dene in the western part of the Northwest Territories) proposed dividing the NWT into three territories. The Métis Association suggested extending the Manitoba/Saskatchewan boundary northward. At the end of 1977 the NWT Inuit Land Claims Commission made a recommendation to the Federal Government that a new territory and government called Nunavut be established.

That same year, the Legislative Assembly's Special Committee on Unity reported a lack of consensus in the NWT for the continuation of one territory. Members of the Legislative Assembly voted 16-1 in favor of creating two new territories.

In 1981, MLAs agreed to put the division question to the people of the NWT. Voters were asked, "Do you think the Northwest Territories should be divided?" The plebiscite on dividing the NWT was held on April 14, 1982 and 56.6 per cent of the voters supported the idea, with the vote in Nunavut being very high in favor. Over the next 10 years the Federal Government announced its support of Nunavut, boundaries were agreed to and then disagreed upon, and a boundary plebiscite was called and canceled. In February 1992, the Executive Council set May 4 as the date for Northerners to vote on a proposed boundary, known as the Parker line, for creating two new territories. A slim majority supported the proposed boundary with high voter turnout in Nunavut and considerably lower turnout in the West.

In November 1992, the Inuit overwhelmingly approved the Nunavut Final Land Claim Agreement and took a huge step towards realizing their dream of the new territory of Nunavut and their own government. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Northwest Territories Government Leader Nellie Cournoyea, and Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut President Paul Quassa signed the deal in Iqaluit in May 1993. Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut was the organization that negotiated the Inuit land claim and has since been replaced by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

Members of the 13th Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories (1995-1999) were responsible for the overwhelming task of establishing two new territories. Some tasks included passing legislation to allow for the creation of the new territories and transferring responsibility for programs and services to the new Nunavut Government in time for April 1st, 1999.

Differences between Provincial Governments and our Territorial Government

The main difference between a Province and a Territory has to do with the Canadian Constitution. The Territories are not included in the amending formula used to change Canada's constitution, only the Parliament of Canada and the provinces are. This means that the Territorial Governments are not protected by the constitution. The *Constitution Act* of 1982 granted each province the power to amend its own constitution. The constitution of the Northwest Territories is the *Northwest Territories Act*, which is a federal statute. Therefore, only the Parliament of Canada has the right to amend the provisions of the *Act*, and amend the constitution of the Northwest Territories.

It used to be that the responsibilities for resource management and other economic and social contributors in the Northwest Territories fell under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. However, in 2015, the NWT underwent “devolution”, and the Federal Government transferred these responsibilities to the Territory. This gave the NWT the ability to conduct its own affairs, much like the ability of a province.

What has not changed since devolution are the economic, social, and demographic realities that are associated with an immense geographic area with a small population. The Territories account for approximately 40 percent of Canada’s land mass, but are home to less than 150,000 people, or 0.4 percent of Canada’s population. As a result, the financial resources of the Territories differ from the Provinces in the form of the Territorial Formula Financing Transfer Program. This formula allows residents of the Territories access to public services similar to those offered by the provinces at a comparable level of taxation.

In summary, the 2 reasons that differentiate a Territory from a province are:

- A large Geographic Area with a relatively small population; and
- Federal Acts that control the existence and powers of local governments.

There are several other areas in which the power of the territories is not the same as that of the provinces. A province is allowed to borrow money solely on credit, while the NWT’s power to borrow is subject to the approval of the Governor-in-Council. As well, the power of the territories to incorporate companies is restricted so that certain companies, such as those in the telephone or air transportation business, cannot be incorporated under a *Territorial Act*. Another difference between the provinces and the Northwest Territories is the style of Government. The Northwest Territories and Nunavut practice Consensus Government, while Yukon and the provinces run on a political party system.

Should the Northwest Territories wish to pursue provincial status, it will be necessary to amend the Constitution of Canada. This will require consent of the Parliament of Canada and a double majority from the provinces – seven of ten provinces with at least 50 percent of the population of Canada.

The Legislative Process: How a Bill becomes a Law

There are two main types of bills: public and private. In general, a public bill is concerned with matters of public policy, while a private bill relates to matters of a particular interest or benefit to a person or persons, including corporations. This fact sheet will focus on the process followed for **public bills**.

Stages of a Bill

Notice of Introduction - The Executive Council Minister or Member that sponsors a bill must give 48 hours’ notice that they intend to introduce a bill in the Legislative Assembly by giving Notice of First Reading.

First Reading - After the 48 hour notice period has lapsed, the Minister or Member sponsoring the bill reads out the title of the bill and moves that the bill “be now read for the first time”. If the motion on First Reading is adopted, the bill is numbered, printed and distributed so that Members and the public can have full access to it.

Second Reading - This is a very important step in the legislative process. The Minister or Member sponsoring the bill outlines the reasons why people of the Northwest Territories need such a bill. Other members can also make comments on the bill.

When the debate has ended, Members are asked to vote on whether the bill should be read a second time and sent to a committee. The second reading is important because Members decide whether they think the bill is a good idea. The bill is defeated if a majority of the Members of the Legislative Assembly vote against the second reading.

Committee Stage - A committee, consisting of Regular Members, studies the bill carefully. They may ask experts on the subject matter to be witnesses and give their opinions on it. This review process is also open to the public. The committee often holds public hearings, or receives written submissions on bills. Based on these suggestions, the committee may decide to change or amend parts of the bill. The committee writes a report outlining any changes that may have been made to the bill and sends it back to the Legislative Assembly. The committee has 120 days to complete its review and report back to the Legislative Assembly.

Report Stage - All Members can suggest changes to the bill at this stage. Members vote for or against proposed changes and finally vote on whether the bill should proceed for a third reading.

Third Reading – The Minister or Member sponsoring the bill moves that the bill be read a third time. This is usually the last chance for Members to debate the bill. If the majority of Members vote to pass the bill, it proceeds to the final stage.

Assent and Proclamation – Once the Legislative Assembly passes the bill it must be approved by the Commissioner before it can become law. This approval is called Assent. Normally, the Commissioner grants Assent on the floor of the Legislative Assembly although the Commissioner may also write a letter to the Speaker indicating Assent has been granted. In these instances, the Speaker reads the letter to the Members in the Chamber.

A bill now becomes a law.

The Mace

Steeped in symbolism and ceremony, the use of the Mace dates back centuries to traditions in the Parliaments of the British Commonwealth. Originally designed to be a weapon to protect Kings and Queens, over time, the Mace has become a symbol of respect for our governing institutions.

Without the Mace, no proceedings may take place in the Chamber. The Mace is the symbol of the authority of the Legislative Assembly and its Speaker. When the Legislative Assembly is in session, each day begins with the procession of the Speaker and the Mace into the Chamber. The Sergeant-at-Arms carries the mace with honor and pride, placing it on a special stand located in the centre of the Chamber. The Mace remains in the stand until the Assembly adjourns for the day, at which time the Sergeant-at-Arms carries it out.

The NWT received its first mace in 1956. It was presented to the Northwest Territories Council by the then-Governor General of Canada, the Right Honourable Vincent Massey. Nine Inuit craftsmen from Cape Dorset, a community that is now a part of the new Nunavut Territory, created the original mace. Working together for 21 days under the direction of well-known artist James Houston, the artisans created a magnificent object of native copper, whalebone, narwhal tusk, muskox horns, Yellowknife gold, Fort Providence porcupine quillwork and oak wood salvaged from the wreck of the HMS Fury led by British Explorer, Sir William Parry. The completed mace was 1.7 metres in length and weighed 15 kilograms.

In the late 1950s, the Council held its meetings in various communities across the North. The constant handling, shipping, and temperature and humidity changes took its toll on the delicate natural materials of the Mace. After three short years, the original mace was retired to preserve its priceless heritage. It now resides in the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife.

A more durable replica was produced, replacing many natural elements with gold plated brass. Delicate materials that remained to highlight the design include a narwhal tusk, muskox horns and porcupine quillwork. The replica mace served the Legislative Assembly for 40 years from 1959 to 1999.

On April 1, 1999, the Northwest Territories bid farewell to the eastern Arctic as it moved off to become the territory of Nunavut. In that same year, the Legislative Assembly of the NWT commissioned three well-known northern artists to design and create a new mace that would be representative of the new Northwest Territories.

Dubbed the "Snowflake Team", Bill Nasogaluak, Dolphus Cadieux and Allyson M. Simmie began to create one of the most ornate and unique designs in mace history. The three artists, who have worked as a team on previous projects, have examples of their master skills in painting, carving and metalwork displayed around the world. Combining their skills, cultural backgrounds and artistic knowledge, this incredible team – combined with the expertise of some of Canada's top silversmiths – produced a masterpiece of priceless art for the people of the Northwest Territories.

Composed mainly of silver and bronze, to ensure durability, the Mace measures 1.5 metres in length and weighs 12 kilograms.

The top of the Mace glistens with an elaborate composite of snowflakes designed to create the illusion of one large, three-dimensional snowflake. As a universal element in the North, the snowflake was chosen for its unique features. Every particle has a six-sided crystalline structure, which give it strength and a firm foundation, yet there are no two snowflakes exactly alike. The snowflake crown symbolizes the people of the Northwest Territories – their strength, diversity and the common bond of a new territory and a new age. It also recognizes the respect that northerners have for the traditional link with the British monarchy.

Nestled within the snowflake crown is a golden orb that represents many images significant to the North – the midnight sun, the circle of life and the world of which we are all a part. On top of the orb sits a silver crosspiece, which together forms an ulu, a tipi and a house. This represents the cultures of the NWT – the Inuvialuit, the Dene/Métis and the many non-aboriginals from around the world who have made the NWT their home. On the top of the crosspiece and the very top of the Mace is a 1.31 carat diamond from Canada's first diamond mine. It is also one of the first diamonds to be cut at the NWT's first diamond cutting and polishing centre.

Beneath the snowflake crown is a band of silver engraved with the words "One land, many voices". The phrase is written in the 10 languages – Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Gwich'in, North Slavey, South Slavey, Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun, English and French – used in the Northwest Territories. Below the band is the head of the Mace – a commanding circular panel of carved glacier-spun, stromatolitic marble from the shores of Great Slave Lake. The six high relief panels are inlaid in silver and depict northern scenes representing the wildlife and cultures of the NWT. Each panel alternates between a vertical and a horizontal design.

Directly beneath the carved head is a band of beadwork designed to resemble a Delta braid pattern. Beadwork is a traditional art form of the Dene/Métis and Delta braid is a traditional fabric art of the Inuvialuit from the Mackenzie Delta region near Inuvik. Rosie Firth, an elder from Fort McPherson, created this vibrant piece of beadwork.

The shaft of the Mace is a bronze cast of a stylized narwhal tusk. Although narwhals in Canada are primarily found in Nunavut, the tusk replicates the real ones used in the previous maces and was included as a way of honoring our history as a legislature and our ties with Nunavut. It is a way of carrying the past into the future.

Further along the shaft is another element of Dene/Métis heritage – porcupine quillwork. Sarah Hardisty, an elder from Jean Marie River, created this colourful piece.

The final section of the Mace features a six-sided foot of silver carved in shallow relief. As you follow it around, the carving depicts an endless view of the entire landscape of the Northwest Territories from north to south.

The most stunning feature of this mace – and what makes it truly unique – is its sound. Within the language band, the shaft, and the foot, are tiny pebbles collected from the 33 communities in the NWT. When the Mace is moved, the shifting of the pebbles creates a magical sound similar to a rainstick. To achieve this special sound, the interior of the foot is divided into five compartments and the interior of the shaft is imbedded with 12 bronze spikes, specially set at 30-degree angles to achieve maximum tone. This stunning sound represents the united voices of the people and serves as a reminder of the role of the Legislative Assembly.



The display stand created for the new mace is made from white marble, representing the snow that is a major part of life in the North. Carved into the marble are the images of the mighty Mackenzie River and the two major lakes in the NWT – Great Slave and Great Bear. This portrays the lifeline of the land from the Mackenzie Delta near the Arctic Ocean to the famous Pelican Rapids at Fort Smith.

Adorning the land are images of the territorial flower – the mountain avens – fashioned in silver and NWT gold. Surrounding the flowers are clusters of the oldest rock in the world. This rock, found on an island in the Acasta River near Great Bear Lake, has been dated as 3.962 billion years old. Located between the images of the two lakes are 33 gold nuggets from Con Mine, in Yellowknife. Arranged in a circle, the nuggets represent the strength and unity of the 33 communities of the NWT.

The Mace Tour

As an educational outreach program of the Speakers' Office, the Mace Tour connects the Legislative Assembly and its elected officials to NWT communities that do not have direct access to the Legislative Assembly building in Yellowknife.

Overall, the Mace Tour serves to personalize the Legislative Assembly and its officials while educating NWT's youth and residents about consensus government, the Legislative Assembly, Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's), and staff of the Office of the Clerk.

Since its 2006 inception, the Mace of the Legislative Assembly has travelled to 11 of NWT's 33 communities including Whati, Hay River, K'at'l'odeeche First Nation, Fort Resolution, Sachs Harbour, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Nahanni Butte, Smbaa K'e, Fort Good Hope, and Norman Wells.

During the Mace Tour, which may be 1 to 3 days in length, the Speaker, the constituency's MLA, the Clerk, the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Public Affairs and Communications Advisor travel together to a community to visit schools and provide presentations about the Legislative Assembly. The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for explaining the legislative importance of the Mace and its art and symbolism.

The Mace Tour is an annual event and eventually all of NWT's 33 communities will be visited.

The Executive Council

When we speak of the government we usually mean the Executive Council, or Cabinet. Like other forms of government, our parliamentary system has three branches: the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary. The executive branch proposes laws, the legislative branch approves laws, and the judiciary applies them through the courts. The Cabinet is the executive branch, but because it is made up of the elected members of the Assembly, the executive and legislative branches overlap. The Executive Council is the senior decision-making body of the Government of Northwest Territories and is made up of a Premier and six Ministers, all of whom are elected by all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Premier

The head of government in the Northwest Territories has been referred to as Premier since February of 1994 as a result of an amendment to the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*. Before 1980, the head of government was appointed by the Government of Canada and was referred to as the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

The role of Premier includes chairing Cabinet meetings, assigning portfolios to ministers and disciplining ministers. The Premier also develops consensus with other ministers and serves as their spokesperson on matters that do not fall within individual portfolios.

The Ministers

Whether during session of the Legislative Assembly or other times of the year, the Executive Council is responsible for the day-to-day administration of government. In doing so, Ministers work with the whole Caucus, with other Ministers, or as individuals. Throughout the year, they discuss policy, consider new laws, and work on budget estimates. Individually, they are department heads, making sure the laws administered by their departments are enforced. Administrative department heads, called Deputy Ministers, report directly to the Ministers. It is the Ministers' responsibility to take the general directions established by the Assembly, develop policies which must be ratified by the Executive Council, make decisions on how the policies are to be put into action and ensure the administration follows through.

Responding to the needs of the public, Ministers introduce legislation relating to their department's responsibilities. They must answer questions in the Legislative Assembly about their department's activities and budgets.

The Executive Council has its own internal committees and support branches. There are several special and advisory secretariats for co-ordination and input in areas such as intergovernmental affairs, aboriginal rights and constitutional development, and regional operations.

Changes Over the Years

Originally, the Executive consisted of only the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Assistant Commissioner. None were responsible directly to the Legislative Assembly for the conduct of government. The Commissioner was in charge of all Cabinet proceedings.

In 1975, the Legislative Assembly recommended that two elected Members sit on an Executive Committee. A third elected Member was added in 1976.

These Members held department portfolios and advised the Commissioner on policy matters concerning their departments. Their involvement with policy at the executive level was an important step towards responsible government.

By 1981, both the number and responsibilities of elected Executive Committee members had increased. Seven elected Members, the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner formed the Executive. A major step was taken that year when one Member, George Braden, was named Leader of the Elected Executive and another, Tom Butters, Minister of Finance.

In 1983, the Deputy Commissioner was removed from the Executive Council and replaced by an additional elected Member. In 1984, the Commissioner stopped sitting with elected members during sessions. A year later, he gave up being chairman of the Executive Council, to be replaced in that position by the Government Leader, who had until that year been known as the Leader of the Elected Executive.

During the Tenth Legislative Assembly (1983 - 1987), the Government Leader became chairperson of the Executive Council, and the Commissioner gave up attending sittings of the Assembly. All ministerial portfolios were assigned to elected Members.

In February 1994, the Assembly agreed to change the title of Government Leader to Premier.

Although the Commissioner still officially opens each session and provides assent to bills, the role of the Commissioner has become mostly ceremonial.

Legally, the Federal government still has power to disallow territorial Acts for a period of up to one year after passage and the Commissioner, a civil servant reporting to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, is still the Chief Executive Officer of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Although the Commissioner must assent to laws, no territorial Act has ever been disallowed by the Federal Government.

Increasingly, elected members have assumed a leadership role, while the Commissioner's duties have become similar to the role of Lieutenant Governor for the Provinces.

Committees of the Legislative Assembly

Committees have become an essential part of modern legislatures. They make the NWT Legislative Assembly more effective by allowing Members to look at issues in a detailed way. Committees occasionally travel to various parts of the Northwest Territories thereby taking the Legislature to the people. Committees can meet during Sessions or between Sessions. The Legislative Assembly has three types of committees - **Committee of the Whole, Standing Committees and Special Committees.**

Committee of the Whole

This committee consists of all the Members of the Assembly. It is the Assembly itself - but the proceedings are not as formal and have more flexible rules. The Deputy Speaker chairs Committee of the Whole in place of the Speaker. There are also two Deputy Chairpersons who assist the Chair of Committee of the Whole.

The Legislative Assembly refers many matters to the Committee of the Whole. For instance, all Bills are brought to the Committee after Second Reading where they are looked at very carefully and possibly changed.

All business discussed in Committee of the Whole is reported to the Assembly by the Chairman. The Assembly then decides whether to accept the Committee's report and whether to adopt the decisions made in Committee of the Whole.

Standing Committees

Standing Committees carry out much of the work of the Assembly, saving Members a considerable amount of time during sessions. They also help to ensure that all Members have the opportunity to voice their opinions on each issue.

The 18th Legislative Assembly has five Standing Committees and the Board of Management.

The Committees are:

- Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight;
- Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment;
- Standing Committee on Government Operations;
- Standing Committee on Social Development; and
- Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures.

The **Board of Management**, chaired by the Speaker, administers the Assembly support services and advises the Legislature on matters such as Members' indemnities, benefits and allowances, and provide for the management and operation of the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

Special Committees

Special committees are created as needed by the Assembly. The Legislative Assembly determines the specific responsibilities of each special committee and identifies a specific time frame for the completion of their mandate.

For example, the 11th Assembly established three special committees to deal with each of the following matters: the northern economy; constitutional reform; and aboriginal languages. The Special Committee on Health and Social Services, Special Committee on Housing and the Special Committee on Division were set up during the 12th Assembly.

The 13th Assembly established a Special Committee on National Unity to co-ordinate consultations with Northerners on national constitutional matters. As well, the Special Committee on Western Identity was established to consider official symbols, heraldry, and other matters of identity as a result of the creation of the new Northwest Territories after division.

The 14th Assembly established Special Committees on the review of the *Official Languages Act*; the Implementation of Self-government and the Sunset Clause; non tax-based Community Affairs; and the Conflict Process.

The 15th and 16th Assemblies did not establish any Special Committees.

The 17th Assembly established the Special Committee on Transition Matters, which completed a report consisting of four parts: State of the NWT Economy and its Implications for GNWT Revenues, The Decision-Making Environment, Recommendations on Transition Processes and Consensus Government, and Recommendations on Priorities for the 18th Legislative Assembly.

The 18th Assembly established two special committees: The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women and the Special Committee on Transition Matters.

The 19th Assembly has not established any Special Committees thus far.

For more information on the Committees of the 19th Legislative Assembly, please visit our website: <https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/committees-19th-assembly>

Hansard

What is Hansard?

Hansard is the name of the daily printed record of the Legislative Assembly's proceedings. The Canadian House of Commons, and all Canadian provinces and territories, produce their own Hansard.

Why do we have Hansard and who uses it?

Hansard provides a public, accessible, permanent, and near word-for-word record of what the Members of the Legislative Assembly discuss while they're in Session.

Through Hansard, NWT residents can review House proceedings, including commitments from the Cabinet and Regular Members, questions asked by MLAs on behalf of their constituents, reviews of the budget, debate of bills, and more. Hansard is used by media professionals, researchers, employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories, community governments and groups, and the public.

Where can I read Hansard?

You can read and search the official NWT Hansard on the Legislative Assembly website. Online records are available starting with the first session of the 14th Assembly: <https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/documents-proceedings/hansard>. The Legislative Assembly Library holds Hansard records going back to December 1951. These records are open to the public to access.

Why is it called 'Hansard'?

In 1803, Thomas Curson Hansard was one of the first publishers to print a record of the proceedings of the British Parliament.

For the rest of the 19th century, the Hansard family continued to publish their record as a private business. The British House of Commons took over production in 1909, over a century after Thomas Hansard's first publication.

Today, the Official Report of the British Parliament is known by Thomas Hansard's name, and the records are a public service expected of Commonwealth parliaments for transparency and accessibility.

How is Hansard produced?

When the Legislative Assembly is in session, proceedings are recorded and broadcast on television and radio. A team of transcriptionists use the recordings to transcribe the proceedings. The Hansard Editor work with the rest of the Hansard team to make sure that Hansard is an accurate and useful record of what happens in the House.

When the transcriptionists have finished their part of the job, the Hansard Editor from the Clerk's Office looks over the document, checks it against the recording and makes corrections to grammar, spelling, or style, without affecting the meaning of what was said during session.

A draft version of Hansard, called "the Blues," is available to the public the next day, and MLA's may check the document and request corrections. Traditionally printed on blue paper, the blues are available the following morning after a sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Final, edited Hansards are published on the Legislative Assembly's website.

Broadcasting at the Legislative Assembly

The proceedings that take place inside the Chamber and through public meetings occur because the people of the NWT elected Members of the Legislative Assembly to represent them. It is the responsibility of the Legislative Assembly to ensure that these discussions are heard by the people of the NWT. As we continue to enter a more digital age, the Legislative Assembly has prioritized utilizing new technology to expand our broadcasting abilities. This



expansion means that residents of the Northwest Territories will be able to connect with the happenings in the Legislature faster than ever before. People of the Northwest Territories have the right to remain informed about the proceedings in the Chamber regardless of their location in the Territory, as the discussions and decisions made by the Members will ultimately affect all residents of the NWT in their day-to-day lives.

On January 17, 2018, the Legislative Assembly made available a live standing committee meeting with our first broadcast with updated web streaming capabilities which included simultaneous broadcast on the Legislative Assembly website, Legislative Assembly Facebook page, and the Legislative Assembly Youtube channel.

On February 7, 2018, the 5th day of the 18th Assembly, we streamed our first session with the new configuration in which we also added a simultaneous broadcast to Twitter. This broadcast brought the Legislative Assembly broadcasting to the forefront of modern governmental communications, as no other Legislature in Canada at the time was streaming their live content to the three major social media platforms in addition to a corporate site.

The newly updated web streaming configuration allows legislative broadcasting to stream full session days in their entirety. Previously streamed content from the Assembly is available for viewing, up to a year after initial broadcast, on the Assembly website at:

<https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/documentsproceedings/broadcasting>.

Legislative content is also always available for viewing on the Assembly Youtube channel at: www.youtube.com/LegAssemblyNWT.

When the Assembly is in session, legislative broadcasting continues to operate a live broadcast for 2hrs each session day, on Bell Satellite channel 413, as well as Shaw channels 289 and 489. NorthwestTel Community Television carries channel 709 for Yellowknife and Fort Smith viewers. We also continue to broadcast those same 2 hours as interpreted session content in three alternating languages other than English each week that the Assembly is in session. Live broadcasts are recorded and provided as replay content on day of airing as well as between active sessions of the Assembly. We also rebroadcast committee meetings and special events when time and personnel allow. The Office of the Clerk is committed to maintaining this high level of broadcasting, with the goals to continue to expand increasing public participation in the Legislative process.

Roles of an MLA

Members of the Legislative Assembly, or MLAs, are elected to represent one of 19 districts of the Northwest Territories called ridings or constituencies. MLAs represent their constituents at the territorial level.

MLAs help create and amend laws, act as spokespeople for their constituents, and help solve problems. It is the duty of an MLA to represent everyone in their ridings, regardless of how their constituents voted.

When they take office, MLAs swear a statutory oath. They are also bound to follow the Members' Conduct Guidelines.

If you wanted to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly, here is what you could expect:

In the Legislative Assembly

In the course of their work in the House, Members typically:

- Make statements in the Legislative Assembly about important issues
- Exchange ideas with other MLAs
- Ask questions of cabinet ministers to ensure accountability
- State their views on legislation
- Introduce bills about issues important to their constituents or the MLA
- Participate in standing committees which monitor and provide advice to ministers responsible in particular areas, such as social programs, economic development, or government operations
- Participate in special committees created to deal with major issues
- Participate in Caucus, in which all members are included as equals regardless of their other roles as cabinet ministers, Speaker, or committee chairs
- Present petitions from the public in the House
- Meet with groups who have special concerns or interests in specific areas
- Talk with the media to help keep the public informed
- Keep in touch with constituents to find out what they think about issues
- Follow current events by reading reports, attending meetings and conferences, and monitoring the media

An active role in the community

Members travel in their ridings often, and many live in their home communities. It is quite common for Members' families to remain there while the MLAs travel to Yellowknife to work in the Legislative Assembly.

MLAs normally have at least one office in their riding where constituents can meet with them or speak with staff, discuss problems and get information about the Legislative Assembly or government agencies.

Constituents often ask their MLA for information, or to help with housing, education, or many other matters. The Member can try to help solve the problem by speaking to the proper government department or minister. The MLA usually knows exactly who to call to avoid confusion and save time.

Members are often asked to open public buildings, make speeches to community groups, and attend performances or anniversaries. They generally attend as many as possible, as it helps them keep in touch with how people feel about various issues.

Sergeant-at-Arms

Sergeants-at-Arms first made their appearance as far back as the 13th century as bodyguards or armed servants of the Kings and Queens. By the 15th century, one Sergeant-at-Arms was appointed to the House of Commons on behalf of the Monarchy. Soon, however, the Commons was able to choose its own Sergeant-at-Arms to attend to the Speaker and Commons in general. Today, the Sergeant-at-Arms still attends to the Speaker and the Legislative

Assembly. The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for the security of the Speaker, Members, staff and guests of the Legislative Assembly.

One of the main duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms is the care and custody of the Mace. In the Speaker's Parade (or Procession) that begins each day's session, the Sergeant-at-Arms leads the Speaker, the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, the Clerk of Committees, and two Pages into the Legislative Assembly Chamber. The Sergeant-at-Arms carries the Mace on their right shoulder and then places it in a special stand in front of the Clerks Table, where it remains throughout the sitting as a symbol of the Assembly's authority. When in the Chamber, the Sergeant-at-Arms sits at the end of the Chamber opposite the Speaker.

Another duty of the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Assembly is to administer the Page program at the Legislature. The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for establishing the work schedule, standards of behavior, supplying uniforms and the general day-to-day supervision of the program.

Pages of the Legislative Assembly

Long ago, a page was a young person from a noble family who served a king, a lord or a lady. Pages learned how to use weapons and do other jobs for their masters. More recently, parliamentary pages have worked in the House of Commons carrying messages, running errands, and distributing printed material, not unlike the current tasks of pages all over Canada. However, for many years after Confederation, it was customary for the House of Commons to choose boys, often as young as eleven years of age, from the Ottawa-Hull region to serve in this capacity. During those years, pages were required to be small, no taller than 5'6". Parliamentarians were concerned that larger boys might obscure their view during debates. Uniforms were provided in one size only and were handed down from those leaving to new recruits. In 1971, the Senate hired the first two female pages.

Today, about eight pages are employed when the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly is in session. They provide essential services to the Members and Officers of the Legislature. The page program is designed to allow junior high school students who are developing an interest in the legislative process or in public affairs, an opportunity to see, first-hand, how public policy is decided by the Legislative Assembly. Pages go to school full-time and work in the Chamber about 15-hours a week. Pages must have a good all-round performance at school and good self-discipline

The broad range of tasks a page performs include:

- Preparing for and cleaning up after each sitting of the Legislature;
- Distributing documents in the Legislative Chamber;
- Receiving and delivering items in and outside the Chamber as directed; and
- Distributing translation receivers.

When the Legislative Assembly is in session, pages sit at various places around the Chamber. The pages must watch for the Members' call and respond accordingly.

The Speaker



The Speaker, elected by all Members, assumes the position of highest authority in the Legislative Assembly, and represents the Legislature in all its powers and proceedings. The duties of the office fall into three categories.

First, the Speaker acts as a spokesperson of the Assembly in its relations with authorities outside the Legislature. Often, the Speaker officially welcomes visitors to the Legislative Assembly.

Second, the Speaker presides over the sitting of the Assembly and enforces the rules, order and conduct of business. The Speaker controls debates in the Chamber and ensures that Members follow the rules and practices of the Legislative Assembly as they ask or answer questions, debate or vote. The key aspects of being Speaker are authority and impartiality. The Speaker does not take part in debates, ask or answer questions, or vote, except to present the Legislative Assembly's budget or to break a tie. All questions and statements during a formal sitting must be directed through the Speaker.

Third, the Speaker is responsible for the daily administration of the Legislative Assembly. The many Legislative Assembly employees who provide services for the Members report to the Speaker. If the Speaker cannot be in the Legislative Assembly Chamber, the Deputy Speaker will assume the role of Speaker.

In carrying out their duties, the Speaker is assisted by the Clerk's Office. The Clerk is the chief procedural advisor to the Speaker and to Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Clerk is responsible for a wide range of duties relating to the proceedings and official records of the Assembly and its committees.

The Clerk sits directly in front of the Speaker at the Clerks Table. The Deputy Clerks, the Clerk of Committees, Operation Assistant Clerk and the Law Clerk provide assistance to the Clerk. They keep the official records of the Assembly and advise the Speaker and Members on parliamentary and legal procedure.

Like all Members of the Legislative Assembly, Speakers are first elected in one of the 19 territorial constituencies. Members elect the Speaker by secret ballot at the beginning of the first legislative session following a Territorial election or at any time a vacancy occurs.

The Speaker also attends to the many tasks of being an MLA, such as responding to the concerns of their constituents.

Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Trivia

1. Who sits in the large chair in the Chamber? (*the Speaker*)
2. If the Speaker wishes to address the Premier in the Chamber, would the Speaker turn left or right? (*Right*)
3. What year did Nunavut become its own Territory? (*April 1, 1999*)
4. How many Members are in the Legislative Assembly? (*19*)
5. How many Regular Members are there in the Legislative Assembly? (*11*)
6. How many Ministers are there in the Legislative Assembly? (*6 & the Premier*)
7. Who makes up the Executive Council? (*The 6 Cabinet Ministers & the Premier*)
8. Where can you read everything that is said in the house? (*Hansard*)
9. Where does the name Hansard come from? (*a Family name, Luke Hansard, the 2nd printer for the House of Parliament in London*)
10. What year did the seat of government move from Ottawa to the NWT? (*1967*)
11. What year did the Legislative Assembly building open? (*November 17, 1993*)
12. What year was the first Legislative Assembly a fully-elected council? (*1975*)
13. Who is responsible for the care and custody of the Mace? (*Sergeant-at-Arms*)
14. Who are the youngest people that work in the Legislative Assembly Chamber? (*Pages*)
15. What is the agenda of a sitting day called? (*Orders of the Day*)
16. How many political parties are there in the NWT? (*None!*)
17. What type of Government is practiced in the NWT? (*Consensus Government*)
18. What is the NWT's territorial tree? (*Tamarak*)
19. What is the NWT's territorial fish? (*Arctic Grayling*)
20. What is the NWT's territorial bird? (*Gyrfalcon*)
21. What is the NWT's territorial gemstone? (*Diamond*)
22. What is the NWT's territorial mineral? (*Gold*)
23. What is the NWT's territorial flower? (*Mountain Avens*)
24. Who sits in front of the Speaker in the Chamber? (*Clerks*)
25. What does the Arctic Fox represent on the NWT Flag and coat of arms? (*The fur trading industry*)
26. What do the blue panels on the NWT flag represent? (*The bodies of water in the NWT*)
27. What year was the NWT flag designed? (*1969*)
28. Who designed the NWT flag? (*Robert Bessant of Manitoba, he was 17 years old*)
29. Who is our current Premier? (*The Honourable Caroline Cochrane*)

30. Who is the current Speaker of the Northwest Territories? (*Frederick Blake Jr.*)
31. What does the wavy blue line on the NWT coat of arms and flag represent? (*The Northwest Passage*)
32. Who was the first woman MLA elected in the NWT? (*Lena Pedersen, 7th Legislative Assembly, Central Arctic, 1970*)
33. How many Official Languages does the NWT have? (*11- Chipewyan, Cree, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey, & Tłı̄chq*)