

Building Tour Outline

Alberta Legislature

Legislature Building

- Alberta became a province of Canada in 1905. The Legislature Building was built from 1907 to 1912 on a site near the old Fort Edmonton.
- The building was designed in an ornate style called beaux arts, which was popular during the first part of the 20th century and is similar to many other capital buildings built in Canada and the U.S.A. during that time.
- The outside of the building features two types of stone. The bottom is granite from Vancouver Island, Canada; the top sections and pillars are sandstone from near Calgary, Alberta, and Ohio, U.S.A.

The Rotunda (Second Floor)

- The rotunda contains over 2,000 tonnes of marble from Quebec, Canada. The solid marble pillars weigh 16 tonnes each.
- The present fountain was built in 1959 to mark the first official visit of Queen Elizabeth II, Canada's Queen and Head of the Commonwealth.
- The Regimental Colours, which resemble flags, circling the rotunda represent Alberta's military units that served in Canada's wars.
- The rolls of honour list the names of provincial public servants who fought during the world wars. Memorial plaques list those who died in battle.
- The statue on the northwest side of the rotunda is of Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria, after whom the province was named.
- The statue on the northeast side of the rotunda is of Chief Crowfoot, a key figure in the peaceful settlement of western Canada in the late 1800s.
- The Legislature Library (beyond the Grand Staircase) was established in 1906 and was once the largest library in Alberta. It is open to the public, but today it is mostly used as a reference library for the Members of the Assembly and provincial public servants.

Third Floor

- At the top of the Grand Staircase are the main doors to the Legislative Assembly Chamber. The doors were hand carved from solid red mahogany from Belize.
- The Alberta Coat of Arms above the doors is also mahogany and took about 500 hours to carve.

Portraits of Alberta Premiers

- Along the northeast wall are the portraits of Alberta's past Premiers. The different style of each painting reflects the individual portrait choice of each Premier.
- Included in the collection is Alberta's first Premier, Alexander Rutherford, who founded the University of Alberta, and Ernest Manning, Alberta's longest serving Premier, who held office for 25 years (1943-68).

Portraits of Alberta Lieutenant Governors

- Along the northwest wall are the portraits of Alberta's past Lieutenant Governors. The Lieutenant Governor is the Queen's representative in the province and grants royal assent to laws passed by the Legislature.
- In the portraits the British Civil Dress uniform is decorated with gold braid—11 to 19 karat gold-filled wire—weighing about 12 kilograms.
- The paintings include the Honourable Ralph Steinhauer, Canada's first Lieutenant Governor of aboriginal ancestry (1974-79), and the Honourable Helen Hunley, Alberta's first female Lieutenant Governor (1985-91).

The Mace Case

- The Mace is a symbol of the Legislative Assembly's authority to make laws and is carried into the Chamber each day the Assembly meets. Alberta's original Mace (top of case) was made quickly out of a variety of scrap materials in time for the initial meeting of the first Legislature. It ended up being used for 50 years.
- Alberta's current Mace (bottom of case) was created in 1955 and is made of 5.7 kilograms (200 ounces) of silver overlaid with gold and hand-etched with wild roses and other Alberta emblems.
- The ceremonial sword is pewter and steel. It was worn by the Sergeant-at-Arms, who is responsible for security in the Chamber and galleries, until 1987 when a new sword was donated.
- The Black Rod, donated by the Royal Canadian Legion in 1998, is used by the Sergeant-at-Arms when escorting the Lieutenant Governor into the Chamber. It features ebony from Sri Lanka, sterling silver accents, and a 1905 British gold coin donated by the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Fourth Floor

- Portraits of King George V and Queen Mary hang on the south wall. They were the reigning monarchs when the Legislature Building was first opened.
- The north walls feature portraits of past Speakers of the Assembly and the Lieutenant Governors of the Northwest Territories, which Alberta was a part of before becoming a province.

The Legislative Chamber

- The galleries overlooking the Chamber are open to the public during afternoon and evening sessions and can seat approximately 215 people.
- The Chamber ceiling is lit by over 600 light bulbs.
- The elected Members sit in the desks on either side of the Chamber. The political party with the most representatives forms the government; all other parties form the opposition. Each desk has a microphone that is used to broadcast the proceedings and to produce a printed public record called *Alberta Hansard*. Televised proceedings of the Assembly began in 1972.
- The portraits on the walls are of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The green marble in the Chamber is from Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
- At the south end is the Speaker's Chair and canopy. The Speaker is a Member chosen by secret ballot by all the Members to preside over the debate during meetings of the Assembly.
- The table in front of the Speaker's Chair is where the Mace is placed during meetings of the Assembly and where officers who assist with the business of the Assembly are seated.

Fifth Floor

- The Carillon Room, used presently as a meeting room, was previously the home of the carillon, which was installed in 1967 to honour Canada's centennial. Prior to 1967 this room was used as the provincial museum. The stained glass is the same type as in the Chamber. In the plaster mouldings you can see an egg-and-dart motif, an ancient Greek symbol for the cycle of life and death.
- On the north side of the floor is an acoustic curiosity called the Magic Spot. The sound of the water fountain in the rotunda below is reflected through the Grand Staircase and off the dome and seems to drop from above the listener.
- Near the entrance to the east wing are the portraits of the Alberta's Famous Five. These five women were instrumental in changing Canadian law in 1929 to include women as persons in matters of rights and privileges.
- In 1917 Roberta MacAdams was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta as one of the representatives of the soldiers overseas. She became one of the first women in the British Empire to serve as a Member of Parliament, a title she shared with Louise McKinney. During her short service she became the first woman in the British Empire to introduce a piece of legislation. MacAdams served until 1921.
- In the top of the dome are five palm trees grown from seeds believed to have been donated to the Legislature by the U.S. state of California in 1932.