

# BUILT TO LAST

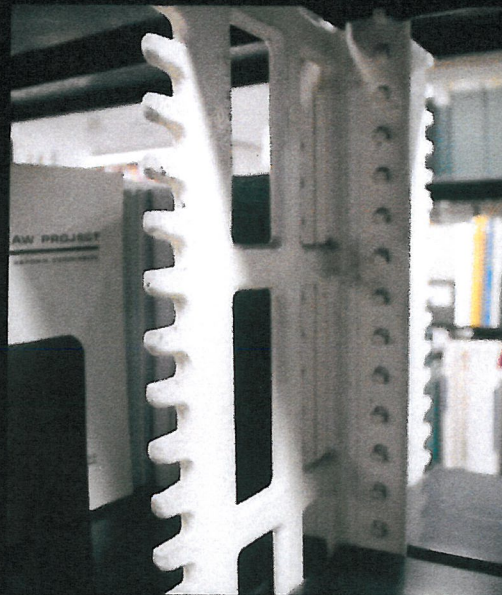
The Legislative Library: Celebrating 100 Years  
in the North Wing of the Legislative Building, 1912 - 2012



LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY OF ONTARIO



*Built to Last* tells the story of the Legislative Library's facility in the North Wing of the Ontario Legislative Building. It is a companion to *From Ashes to Steel* which documented the destruction by fire and water of the earlier Library facility in the West Wing.



Detail of Library book stack showing no deterioration after 100 years of use.



**Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario**



**Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario**

# Built to Last

The Legislative Library: Celebrating 100 Years  
in the North Wing of the Legislative Building, 1912-2012

Susanne Hynes, Joanne Robertson, Elias Chiddicks  
Legislative Library, Legislative Assembly of Ontario  
Toronto  
2012



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## Foreword

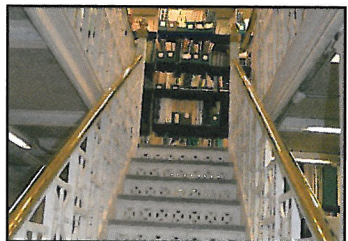
As places of study, research and contemplation, the physical settings of libraries are often just as important as the collections they house. Just as the role of the legislature and Ontario's MPPs has changed over the past one hundred years, so too has the housing of its Legislative Library. This book chronicles those changes.



Completed in 1912 following the devastating fire of 1909, the Library's designers used the latest in ideas and innovations to ensure that it would stand the test of time. Its solid backbone of steel and marble and its unique layout created a foundation that has allowed the structure to change and adapt to meet the needs of the MPPs and staff who use it and the Library staff who work in it.



First and foremost the Library was designed to house its growing collection. It reached a peak in the 1990s, well beyond the number of years that Librarian Avern Pardoe had dreamed that it would be able to manage in the new location. With the increase in electronic publishing, the digitization of older materials and the growth of information on the internet, we no longer measure the collection in volumes. Today we focus on making information accessible. This means that the library doesn't have to own a book or document in order to make it available to Members.



How the Library is used by Members and by staff has also changed over the years. Where ample space was once made available for MPPs to visit the Library, today most requests are made via email and access to information is available at the desktop or on mobile smartphones or tablets. The needs of Library staff have also changed as technology and new and different ways of working have evolved.

Our celebration of the Library's 100th anniversary in the North Wing is a reflection of all that has happened and changed over the past 100 years and a recognition that change will continue. What has never changed, however, is the high level of service provided by the Library and Research staff and the pride they show in their service to Members and in being part of the Legislative Assembly. We are indeed Built to Last.

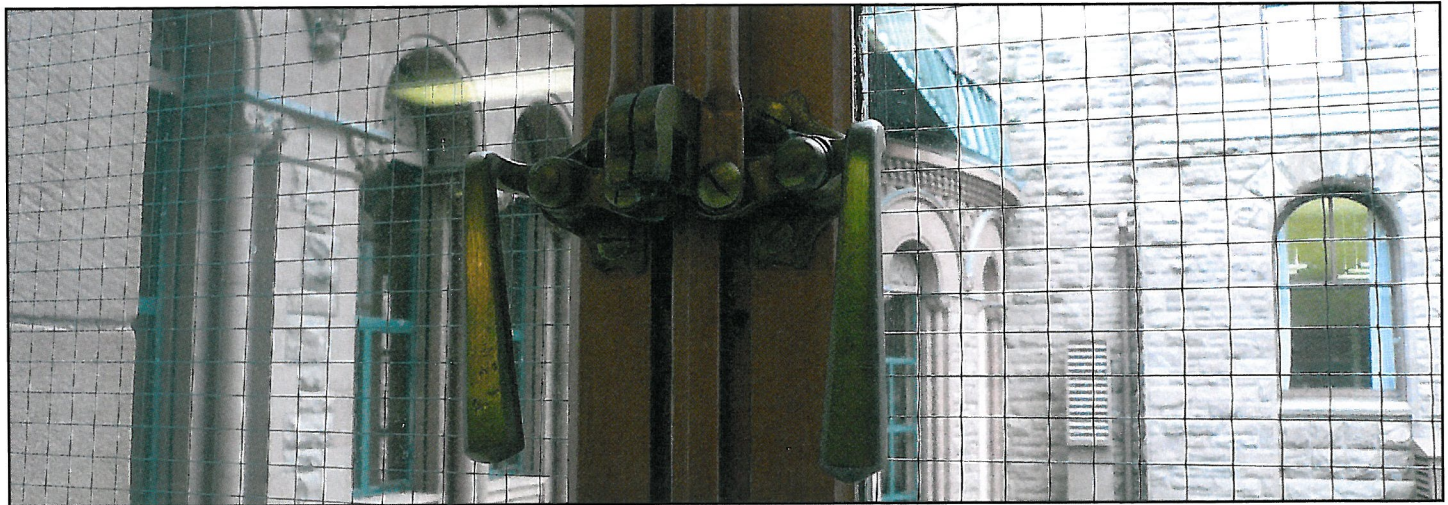
*Vicki Whitmell*

Executive Director, iDivision and Legislative Librarian



# Contents

Introduction	1	The Library's Primary Task: Serving Legislators	15
Outgrowing its Space	2	Progress and Heritage	17
Planning the Library in the North Wing	3	The Book Stacks	21
Requisites of a Library Book Stack	6	Service Areas	22
Building and Furnishing the North Wing	8	Reading Areas	27
The Library in 1912	9	Work Areas and Equipment	30
We Shall be Ready for Them	11	Staff Photograph	33
Renewal	13	Sources	34



Metal hardware on the Library's windows dates to 1912. The view, above, from the Reference Desk window is of the exterior of the fireproof corridor leading from the Main Building to the Library.



## Introduction

In the center of Canada's largest city, amongst the vertical sprawl of modern skyscrapers, sits a century-old library that has kept its relevance and purpose with the help of a visionary, thoughtful design. Indeed, the Ontario Legislative Library, planned by architect George Gouinlock and librarian Avern Pardoe, retains the same floor plan and many of the unique architectural features envisioned more than 100 years ago.

The new Library was designed as a replacement for its predecessor, which had been located in the old West Wing of the main Legislative Building. The new facility became a necessity when, in 1909, fire destroyed the Wing and most of the Library's collection. The new Library made use of an innovative—and fireproof—central book stack built and designed by Snead and Company Iron Works, famous for its earlier assignment at the U.S. Library of Congress. The resulting facilities were so “satisfactory” and practical in Avern Pardoe's muted but sincere praise that this system and layout remains essentially unaltered today.

There is no record of a celebration at the 1912 opening of the Library. Therefore, in 2012, Library staff are marking its centenary with this book, a speaker series, special tours of the Library and a number of other tributes.

*Built to Last* tells the story of the Legislative Library's 100 years in the North Wing and provides a record of the facility as it exists in 2012. We hope that this book will be of interest to our descendants when they celebrate the 200th anniversary in 2112.

*Susanne Hynes, Joanne Robertson and Elias Chiddicks*

*Built to Last* is a companion to the 2009 photo book, *From Ashes to Steel*, the story of the 1909 fire.



Hundreds of people turned out to watch as flames engulfed the West Wing of the Legislative Building on September 1, 1909.



A grand fireproof corridor with a magnificent skylight and elaborate doorways connects the main building to the Library.



## Outgrowing its Space

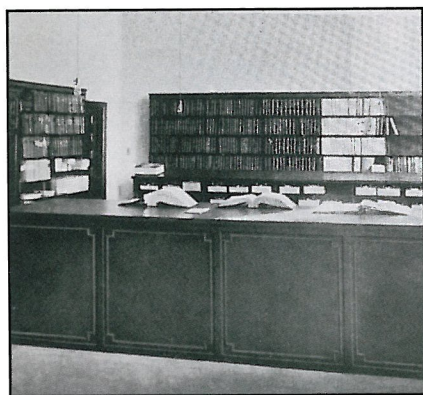


In September and October 1912, the Ontario Legislative Library moved into specially designed facilities in the new North Wing of the Ontario Legislative Building. The Library shifted its operations over the course of five weeks, as the collection and the librarians' equipment and files were gradually moved.

From 1893 to 1909, the Legislative Library had occupied space in the West Wing of the Legislative Building. While this space had the advantage of being proximate to the Library's clients, it had a number of drawbacks. It could no longer accommodate the collection that grew from 40,000 volumes in 1893 to almost 100,000 in 1909. Overflow was housed in an annex and books were often boxed and stored when space ran out. In 1904 the Librarian noticed that the floor of the annex was becoming uneven and subsequently the Library's ceiling cracked,

in part because of the weight of the books stored above the annex. The facility was very dusty and books were subject to harm from water and natural elements, either from broken pipes or windows kept open for ventilation or blown open by storms. Light fixtures did not properly illuminate the alcoves in the Library. Fire was also a distinct fear in a facility with floors, bookstacks, and desks constructed of wood, and that contained many other combustible materials, not the least of them a large newspaper collection.

As the years passed and the facility in the West Wing became ever more inadequate, the Legislative Librarian, Avern Pardoe, nurtured the hope that better facilities would be provided and kept his eyes open for innovations in library design.



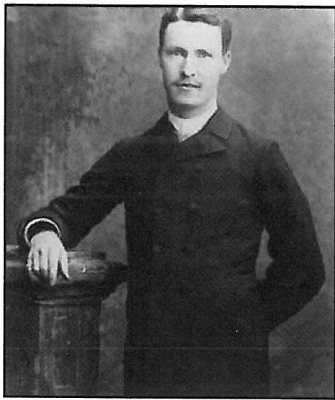
### Photos

Top: The Library in the West Wing of the Legislative Building circa 1900. Source: City of Toronto Archives: Fonds 1587, Series 409, Item 27

Middle: The Librarian's office in the new Library, circa 1912. Source: Snead and Company Iron Works, 1913.

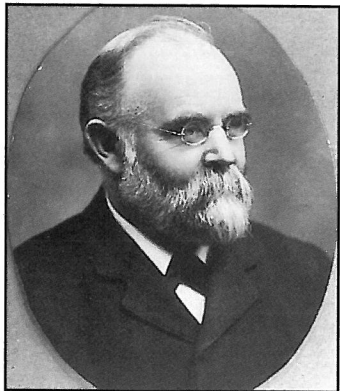
Bottom: The burned out shell of the West Wing of the Legislative Building on September 1, 1909. The Library was destroyed and 90% of its collection lost in the flames and water.

## Planning the Library in the North Wing



George Wallace Gouinlock,  
Architect

By 1908 Pardoe's plans for a new facility—with space for the growing collection and appropriate conditions for its preservation, storage, and use—were well under way. George Wallace Gouinlock, a prominent Toronto architect, was engaged to design and supervise the construction of a new wing on the north side of the Legislative Building. The intention was to provide a new library for the use of the Parliament and additional office space. Pardoe's correspondence with Gouinlock concerned layout, shelving, lighting, library fittings, furniture, windows, and ventilation.



Avern Pardoe, Legislative Librarian

The main drawings and specifications were prepared in 1909. In his design, Gouinlock took into consideration the Wing's compatibility with the existing main building, the needs of the Legislative Library, and the necessity of making the structure as fireproof as possible. The North Wing was to be kept to four storeys, in part so as not to obscure too much of the main building. The exterior facades of New Brunswick sandstone were chosen to harmonize with

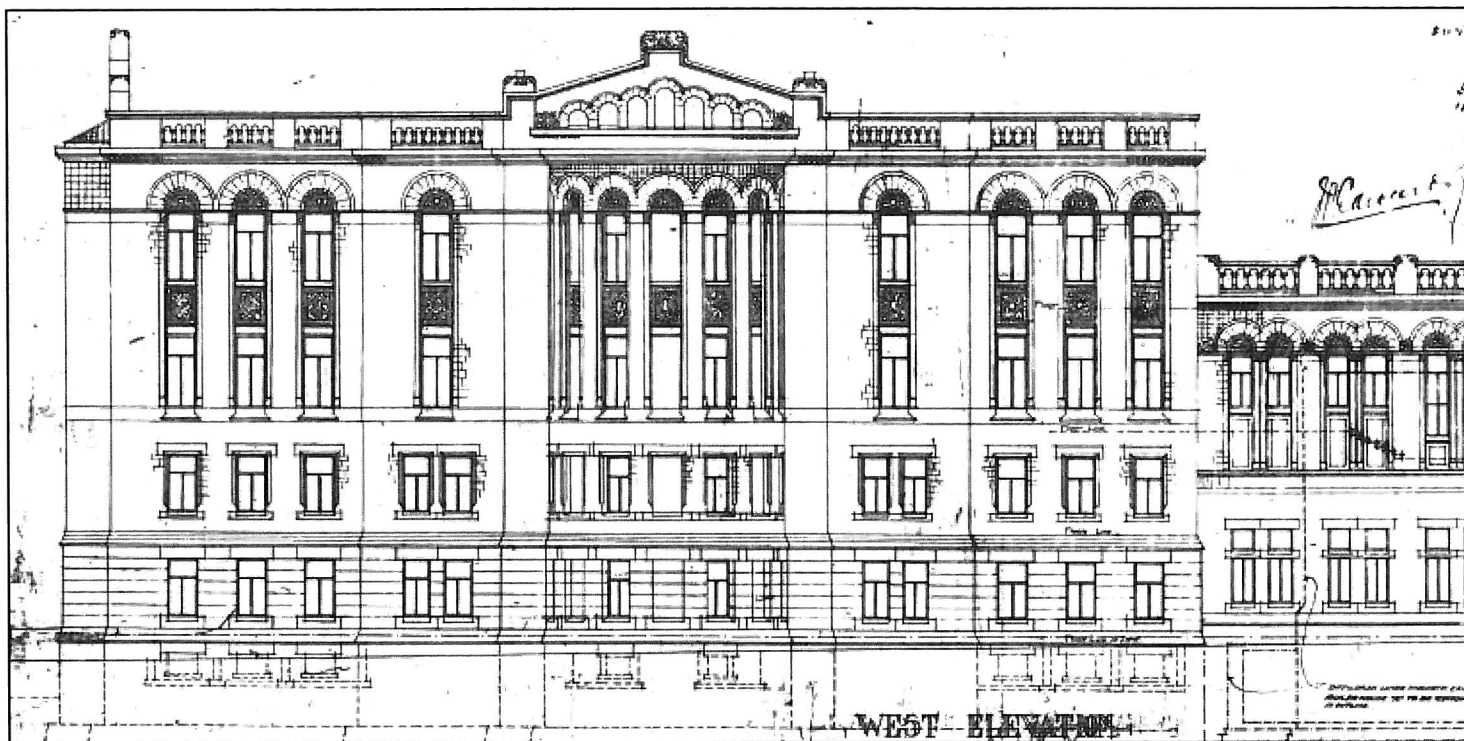
the stone of the existing building. The use of rock-faced stone, round arch openings and carvings were in character with the Richardsonian Romanesque style of the main building.

Much thought and effort went into the fireproofing elements: hollow fire tile construction, drop beams and girders encased with fireproof terra cotta tiles, and exterior windows equipped with rolling steel shutters which would close automatically when exposed to a certain degree of heat. All exterior window frames and sash were to be made of steel and the down-pipes of wrought-iron. Fasteners for the windows were to be bronze metal handles mounted on bronze plates.

It was decided to adopt a design for the Library's book stacks that, at the time, was considered very innovative. Many great libraries were being built at the turn of the century and Snead and Company Iron Works, Ltd. of New Jersey was one of the main suppliers of metal book stacks. They designed and built stacks in the United States for the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and the Widener Memorial Library at Harvard University and, in Canada, for the British Columbia Provincial Library, the Ottawa Public Library, Victoria College Library, and the Saskatchewan Legislative Library.

OFFICE & LIBRARY ADDITION  
PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS  
TORONTO.





**Above:** Details from architectural drawings show the west elevation of the North Wing. Note that to accommodate the bookstacks, third and fourth storeys have greater height than the lower ones.

**Below:** Signatures of the architect, George Gouinlock, and contractor, Fred Holmes.

By Geo. W. Gouinlock signature hereunder, Geo. W. Gouinlock  
 hereby identify this as one of the  
 plans or drawings referred to in the  
 Contract executed by Me and bearing  
 date the 8th day of March  
 A. D. 19 10

WITNESS:

Fred Holmes  
 President

Geo. W. Gouinlock

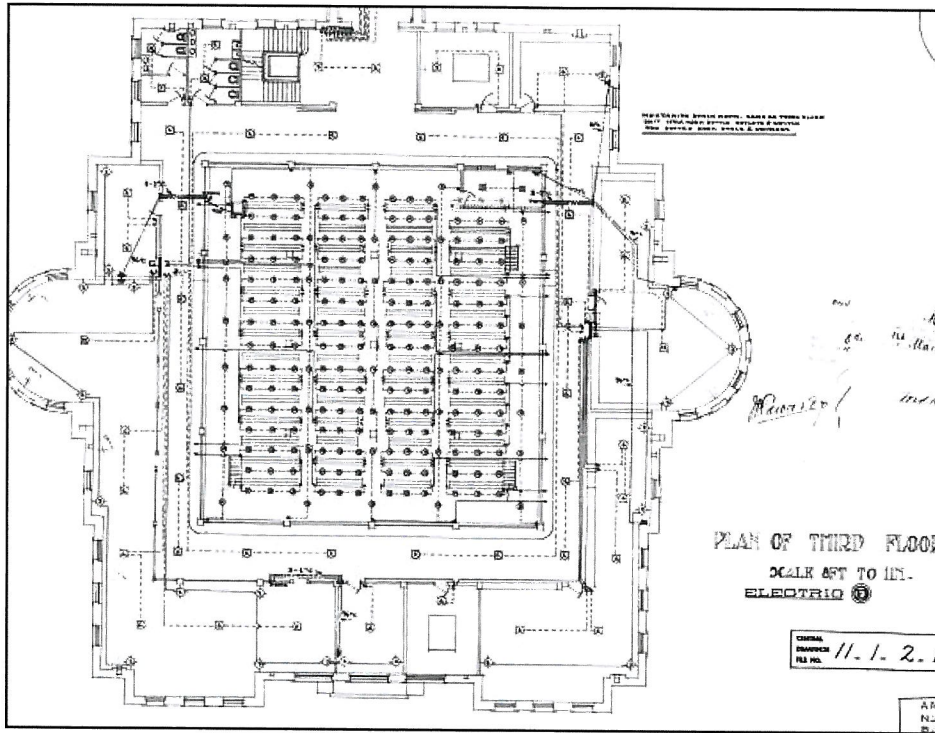
NEW LIBRARY ADDITIONS  
 PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS  
 TORONTO

ELECTRIC NO. K FIXTURES

Scale 1/4 Full Size  
 June 1912

Geo. W. Gouinlock Architect  
 Toronto

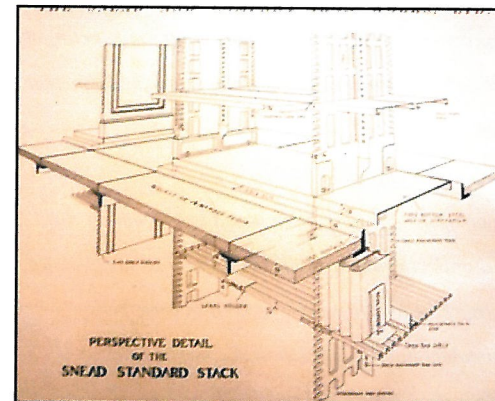
Drawing No 213



Ontario's new Legislative Library was planned around a central book stack with reading and work areas in the periphery, a design made possible in the early 20th century because of the increasing availability and flexibility of electric lighting.

Gouinlock's floor plan above located the book stacks in the centre and detailed the wiring for electric lights in the stacks and other areas. Snead was contracted to supply the metal shelves, flooring, and staircases for the stacks which were to be made continuous over four levels. Movable steel shelving units that would accommodate changing needs were planned.

The chosen deck flooring was a blue-white marble that was incombustible, strong, easy to clean, and light reflective. The framing was constructed using rolled-steel angles, T's and bars. The main girders of the floor framing were bolted to the vertical shelf supports to provide durability and maximum fireproofing.

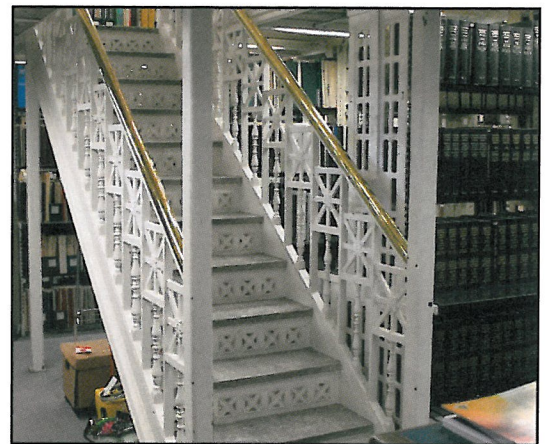


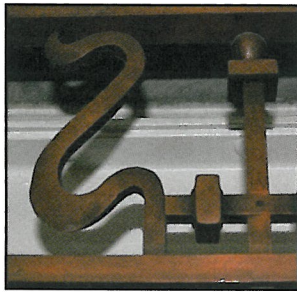


# *Requisites of a Library Book Stack*

1. *Accommodation for books of every variety, size, and kind of binding.*
2. *Shelves easily and quickly adjustable and interchangeable by any library attendant and readily and compactly stowed away close at hand when temporarily displaced.*
3. *Permitting every desirable classification, arrangement and rearrangement of the books at will.*
4. *Affording free and instant access to any volume at any time.*
5. *Having not only certain main corridors, stairs and lifts for direct access to the books and for free communication both laterally and vertically throughout the stack in its several tiers, but readily yielding additional passages anywhere.*
6. *Proper supports for books on partially filled shelves.*
7. *Maximum capacity and capability of indefinite extension.*
8. *All surfaces permanently smooth and rounded to prevent injury to books or papers and protection from corrosion.*
9. *Fireproof throughout.*
10. *Thoroughly and safely illuminated by day and by night.*
11. *Naturally clean and readily kept free from accumulated dust.*
12. *Furnishing no lodgment or comfort to book pests.*
13. *Immunity from injury from leaky roof or ceiling.*
14. *Even temperature and ventilation not only throughout the stack in general but throughout the individual shelves and their supports, so that practically the only obstruction to free circulation of air and light is offered by the books themselves.*
15. *Free, easy and direct communication at will in any direction throughout the stack for the convenience of the attendants.*
16. *Convenience for all sorts of appropriate work everywhere in the stack, including direct access to books by readers when desirable as in the "open shelf" room, and in the placing at convenient points of desks, cabinets, etc.*
17. *The fewest separate parts or pieces and the simplest construction consistent with strength and rigidity.*
18. *Location in close communication with reading, cataloguing and delivery rooms.*

Snead and Company. *Book Stack and Shelving for Libraries*, 1908. p.3

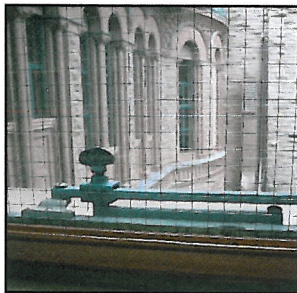




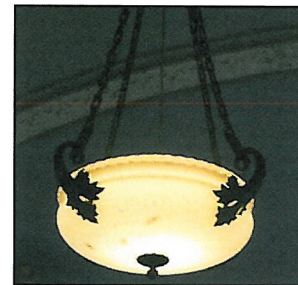
Ornamentation enhances the "wire fencing" enclosing the stacks on the fourth floor.



Gates to the fourth floor stacks echo the rectilinear motif of mezzanine railings.



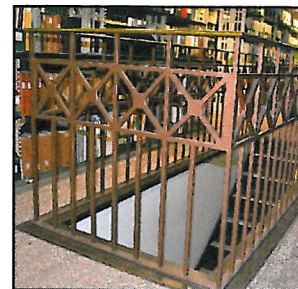
Original Library window frames, painted a copper colour in the 1990s. The exterior of the fireproof corridor connecting the Library to the Main Building can be seen from this window by the Reference Desk.



This light fixture, designed in 1912, still illuminates the grand corridor leading from the Legislative Building to the Library.



Bronze cast leaf motifs, dating from 1912, surmount mezzanine railing posts.



This railing, enclosing the south west internal stack stairway leading to the fourth floor, echoes the motif on the mezzanine railings.



The coat of arms of the Province, cast by Canada Foundry Company in 1912, is featured on all four corners of the mezzanine railing.



Brass finials top the newel posts on the original stack staircases. The risers are metal and the marble treads are of the same material as the stack decks.



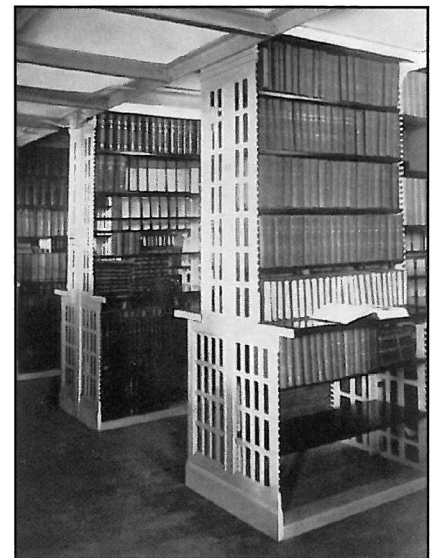
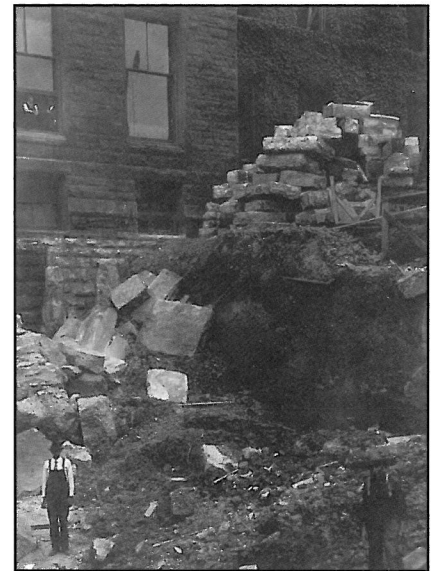
## Building and Furnishing the North Wing

When the West Wing of the Legislative Building was consumed in flames on September 1, 1909, it took with it the Library and most of its collection. The old fears about fire proved to be well-founded. Within a few days, the Library moved across the street to 4 Queen's Park Crescent, temporary quarters that were cramped, ill-lit and far from the clientele, leading to great frustration for Members of the Provincial Parliament and Library staff alike.

How fortunate that preparation for the construction of the new North Wing was already in full swing. A contract in the amount of \$8,500.00 had been let on May 5, 1909 for the excavation of the foundations to Edward J. Breen and Patrick Berford of St. Catharines. Concrete footings, walls, and piers were constructed by A. Gordon & Co., Toronto under a contract for \$15,895.00 dated July 6, 1909. A contract of \$517,534.00 for the construction of the new Wing was let out to Fred Holmes & Son, Limited

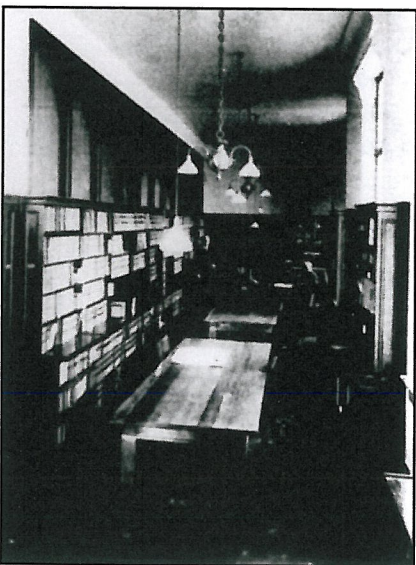
on March 5, 1910. Work was to be completed by January 1, 1912. Chadwick Bros., Ltd. supplied and installed the light fixtures. Snead lists the total expense of the Legislative Library as \$750,000, suggesting that the book stacks may have cost in the vicinity of \$200,000.

Work generally proceeded on schedule, and in 1912 the North Wing was occupied, although work on interior fittings, partitions and furniture proceeded into 1913.





CENTRAL VIEW OF BOOKSTACK, THIRD FLOOR  
Newspaper Counter entirely surrounds the stack, serving the triple  
out storage space for bound newspaper volumes, and a long consulti  
ONTARIO PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, TORONTO, ONT.



## The Library in 1912

In his 1912 Annual Report, Avern Pardoe indicated that the new Library was very satisfactory. He commented on the “absence of show features” as the plan was a very practical one, whereas “in some modern Library buildings millions have been spent for rare architectural effect and at the expense of convenience and efficiency.”

The main entrance to the Library was at its south end via the fireproof hall leading from the mid-level of the grand staircase in the Legislative Building. The 1912 floor plan does not show a public service desk at the front door: readers must have been expected to walk in and turn towards the west to access the Assistant Librarian’s office or the east to access the Reading Room.

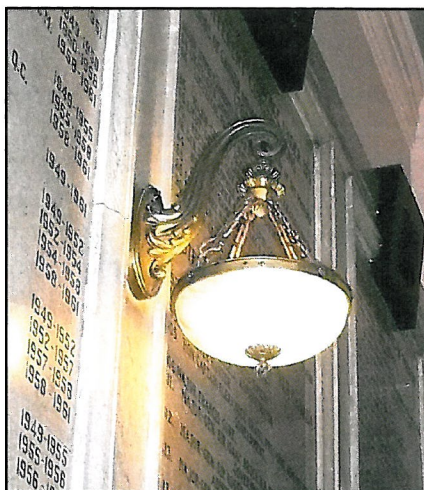
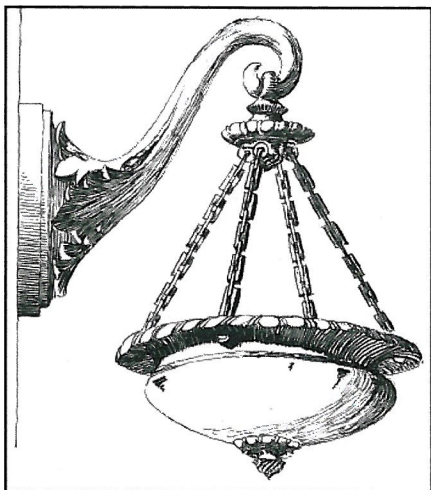
The continuous central stack had four levels, two levels per building storey. On the main floor of the Library, the stack was surrounded by a wide counter which served as a consulting table, a storage space for bound newspaper volumes, and a barrier

to the stacks. Four breaks in this counter provided stack access.

The mezzanine level featured a decorative bronze railing with medallions of the Ontario coat of arms, made by the Canada Foundry Company, in the four corners. Flooring inside and surrounding the stacks on the main floor was the same blue-white marble used on the upper decks of the stacks and in the grand corridor leading from the Main Building to the Library. A brass railing defined the edge of the stack surround and separated it from the reading areas on the north and east sides of the Library. The Reading Room in the bay on the east side was open to the rest of the Library. Law reports occupied the opposite west and north sides and were enclosed by walls, as was the Librarian’s workroom in the west bay.

Pardoe was concerned that books and documents were disappearing from the fourth floor because there were no barriers between the stacks and offices occupied by non-library





personnel. As prevention, iron grilles and gates were installed by Page Wire and Fence of Walkerville, Ontario in 1914.

Some of the light fixtures specially designed in 1912 for the North Wing, such as those on the left, are still in use.

Perhaps the greatest tribute to the people involved in planning and constructing the Library is the fact that the use of the Library's space in 1912 is almost identical to its use today. The stacks, Members' Reading Room, and Librarian's workroom are all located in the same areas. While office and reading areas were moved from time to time in response to changing needs, the essential concept of a library collection surrounded by areas for work and consultation has proven its worth over 100 years. The actual book stacks have not changed and have required very little maintenance since their installation. Other original elements such as the mezzanine railings, upper security grills, and window hardware are extant today.



**Photo bottom left:** An early photo of the fireproof corridor with the steel doors partly closed. Source: City of Toronto Archives: Fonds 1244, Item 1131

## We Shall be Ready for Them

Library facilities received very little attention over the next half century. After the 1914 installation of the iron grille around the third level of the stacks to protect them from "attrition," most of the work done to the Library premises can be described as ordinary maintenance: painting, installation of new steel shelving, plumbing work, refinishing of the floors, and roof repairs. During those years, the Library shared its premises with other tenants, variously the Department of Education, the Provincial Secretary's Department, the Registrar General and the Department of Health.

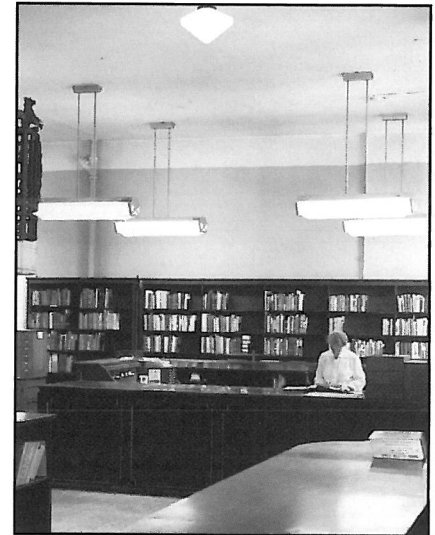
During the depression years, the library appropriation was reduced from \$11,500 to \$4,100. The available funds were spent on the book collection while purchases of furniture and equipment were almost completely eliminated, a policy that left the library in a state of shabbiness.

In 1949, the Library received a thorough paint job and improvements to the lighting. A new ventilation

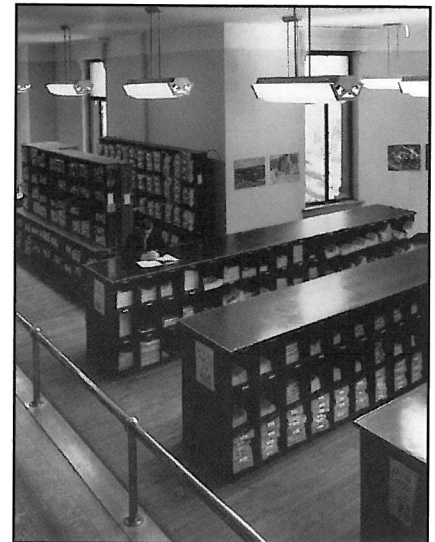
system was installed for the top floor of the book stacks in late 1955, and an intercom system in 1958. By the 1950s, the Department of Education was occupying the entire northeast end of the Wing, leaving the Library without reading rooms for clients or office space for staff. Finally in January 1963, after many complaints the Department moved out. Jean Kerfoot, Legislative Librarian, noted in the 1963 Annual Report:

"We look to the future eagerly. The Department's move to larger quarters has released sorely needed office space on the third floor and will allow the Library to be self-contained once more. By rearranging our space we shall now be able to provide an office for the Librarian, a workroom, periodicals room and a proper reading room. Both staff and readers should be much more comfortable and service greatly expedited."

"The Department of Public Works has suggested that a complete refurbishing of the Library is a distinct possibility. We shall be ready for them."



The original Librarian's desk seen in the 1915 Snead book was still in place in 1952, as shown in this photo.

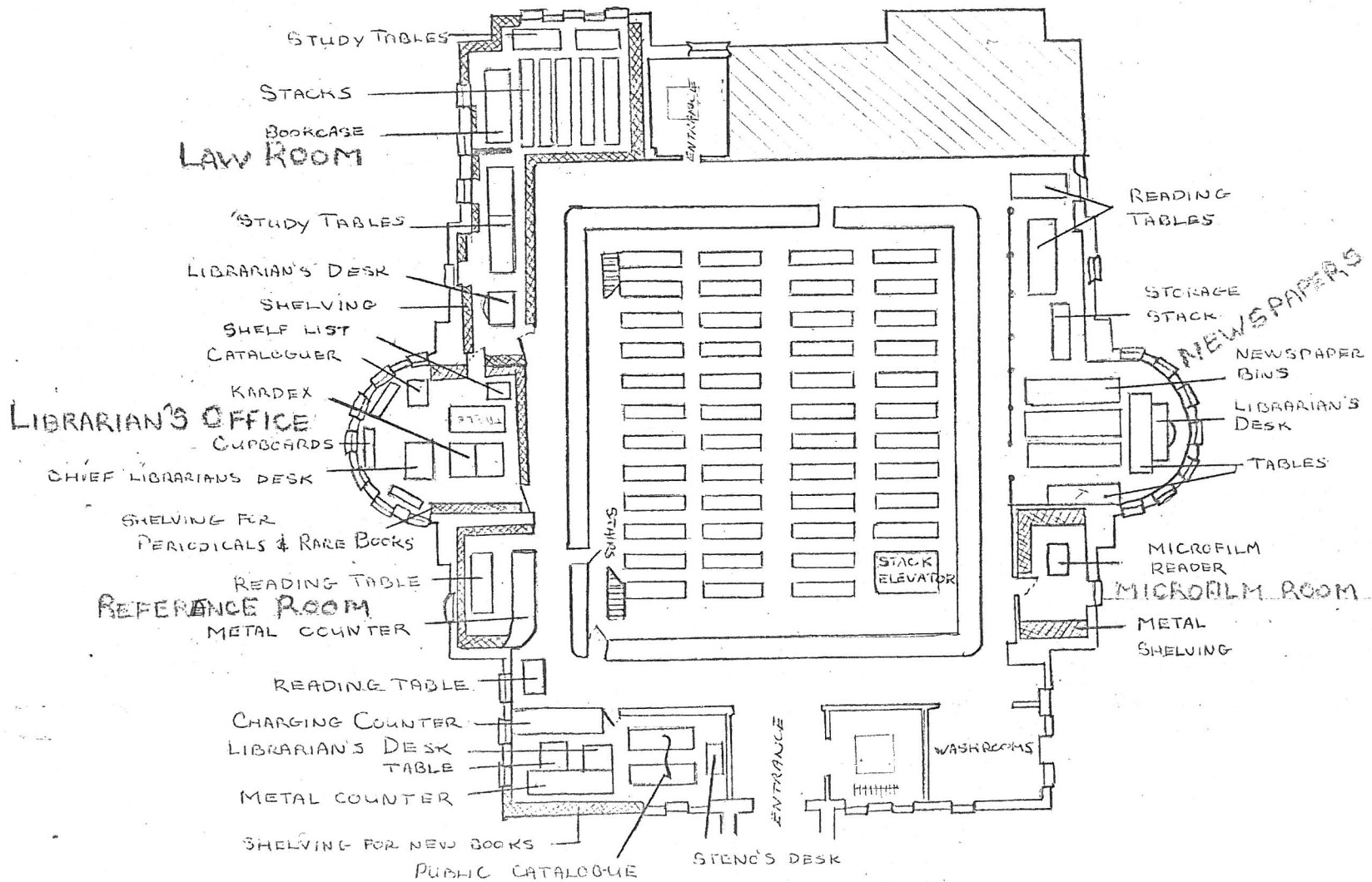


Newspaper cabinets stood on wood flooring. Note the light fixtures installed in the 1940s and the original brass rail.



LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY  
BEFORE RENOVATION — 1965

Drawn Jan 1968



## Renewal

By 1965 the Library had grown dingy. Furniture was outdated and splintered. The internal elevator had been deemed unsafe for use, leaving staff without direct access to the 3rd and 4th level of stacks. The original unfinished wood flooring added to the dust problem and the marble floors were noisy and hard on the feet. The Department of Public Works agreed to recover the floors and also recommended new lighting.

This gave Librarian Jean Kerfoot the opportunity to have the space on the perimeter of the steel book stacks redesigned. Her goal was to provide proper storage for the collection, adequate and comfortable reading areas for clients, and efficient office space for staff. The redesign included a handsome Members' Reading Room with seating space for 22 people. The west bay area was furnished as a lounge, while the rest of the floor was taken up with study carrels featuring locking cupboards on both sides where Members could secure their papers should the bells call them back to the House.

Office space was designed so that cataloguing and documents librarians were close to the reference and charging desks, better enabling them to assist with clients at busy times. The administrative area included the Librarian's office, and an area for sorting mail, processing documents, and storing supplies.

New display and shelving units were installed in the newspaper and periodicals section, allowing the display of the Library's 300 periodicals for the first time. This area included what had been the Members' Reading Room in the east bay. A hanging file unit was designed to display the

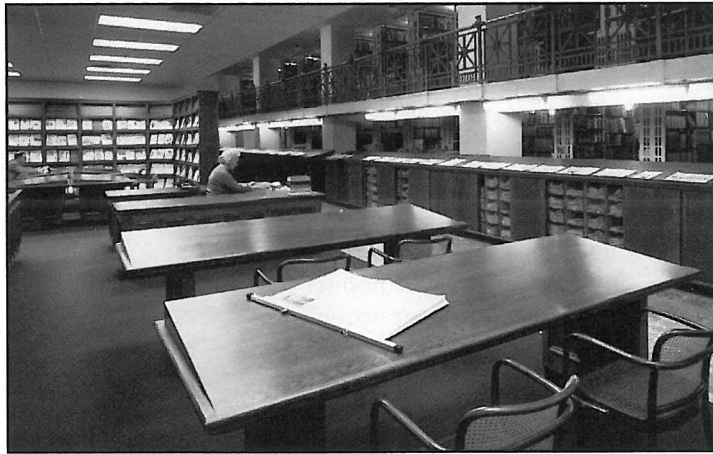
Library's 230 Ontario daily and weekly newspapers. The redesigned Law Room, enclosed with glass doors on each end, was furnished with a librarian's desk, a consultation table and six study desks. A new layout of double faced-shelving increased book capacity by fifty percent. Air conditioning was installed and new counters, covered in blue Naugahyde, were built around the stacks. The ceiling on the perimeter was dropped "to create a warmer atmosphere" and a blue-green corridor carpet was laid.

The book stacks installed after the 1909 fire remained in place. A new staircase was installed, going from the third floor mezzanine stack area to the fourth floor, and the bronze railing was polished.

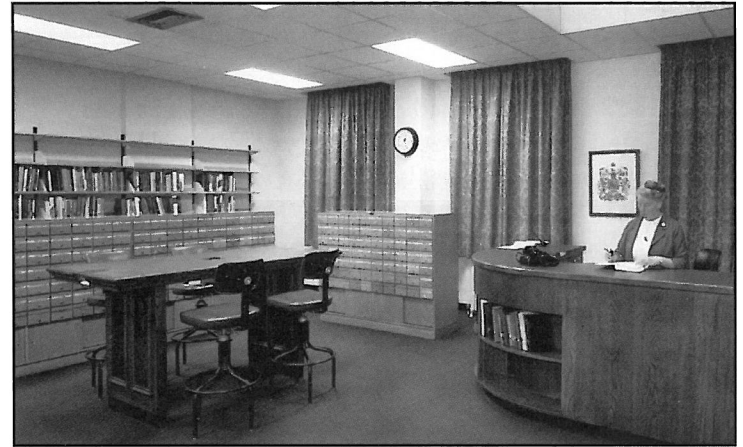
The official opening ceremony for the renovated Library took place on February 1, 1967. Speaker Donald Hugo Morrow cut a ribbon held by the Minister of Public Works and Miss Kerfoot. The Hon. Robert Welch, Minister of Government Services, addressed the Members briefly. A pleasant coffee party followed in the Members' Reading Room.

In the following year, a few more improvements were made. New table lamps were purchased for the Members' Reading Room. Three newspaper reading desks were installed on the 3rd level where most of the bound newspapers were stored. New lighting in the stacks was gradually installed, as funds became available.

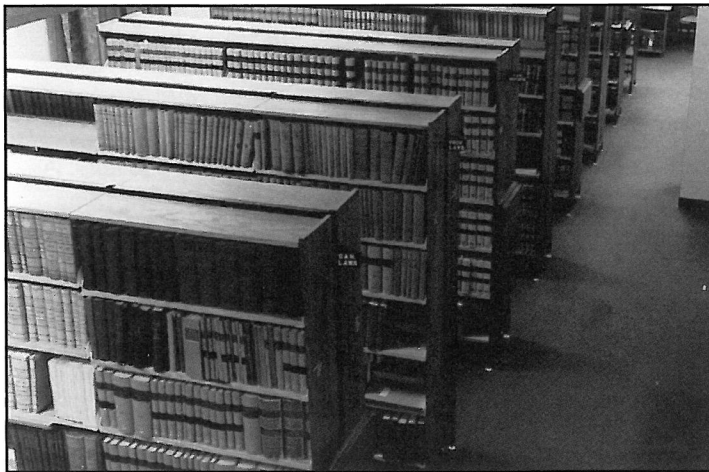




The east periodicals and reading area. Large consultation tables with angled tops were designed for reading newspapers. The caned chairs are still in use in 2012.



The Inquiry Desk in the southwest corner was located near the card catalogue. The dropped ceiling housed air conditioning and newly installed fluorescent lighting.



Law reports shelving units installed in 1965 are still in use in 2012.



Law Room doors and northwest corner of the stacks showing the original mezzanine railings and corner crest. Stack counter shelving is newly panelled.

## The Library's Primary Task: Serving Legislators

Improvements in the 1970s were minor. Annual Reports from that decade highlight the addition of a new chime bell, new carpeting, new lighting and the additions of new technology throughout. Of great excitement was the acquisition in 1970 of a Dennison coin-operated copying machine, which was declared to be a "boon to the general public" as it allowed them to create their own copies without staff assistance.

When the outside of the North Wing was sandblasted in 1972 to renew the exterior, staff were surprised by large iron shutters that "crashed down sealing off any light." At the time, "no one knew of the presence of these shutters, nor [could] anyone imagine their function." These were none other than the 1912 shutters designed to close in the event of a fire. They were sealed in place when the outside restoration was completed.

During the 1960s and 1970s, a number of committees and commissions examined the role of the Legislative Library and issued reports that ultimately led to extensive changes to Library facilities and services to Members. The Ontario Commission on the Legislature, set up in 1972 and better known as the Camp Commission, made sweeping recommendations about the Legislative Assembly. The Commission's 1973 *Second Report* specifically addressed the Legislative Library, noting that it did not focus on the needs of Members but rather had evolved into an "adjunct" to a series of ministries. The Commission recommended that the Library "located as it is in the Legislature and serving its Members, should be developed along lines that are essentially legislative." In his 1977 Report, *Present Problems and Future Potential*, Parliamentary Librarian Erik Spicer

made more than 30 recommendations about the Library's budget, staffing, and operations. In his chapter on space he said:

"Shelving, counters, stands, storage cupboards, display racks and other furniture in the Library are of such high quality that efforts should be made to preserve them."

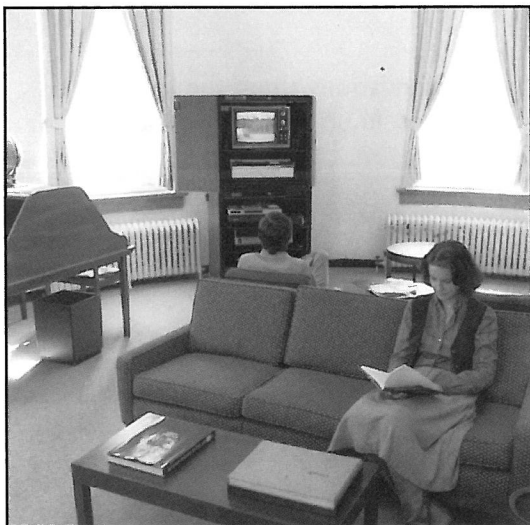
"...we emphasize that office and working space are already problems. The only office is that of the Legislative Librarian whose secretary sits next door, without privacy, in a workroom used by others, and communicates with the Librarian through a hatch. The Senior Librarian's 'office' is a tiny area with a window accessible through the cataloguing room."

Recommendations were made regarding space for a research service, clipping file, staff offices (including some expansion to the fourth floor), and the Members' Reading Room. The resources of the Library were very intentionally to be focussed on the needs of Members.

In 1980, under the leadership of Brian Land, the newly appointed Director, plans were completed for a renovation to implement the recommendations of the Camp and Spicer Reports. They focused on redesign of perimeter areas, taking into consideration the needs of Members and the expanding number of employees. Consultations were held with the Information and Reference Service and Collections Development as well as the Chief of the Legislative Library Service.

Most of the renovation took place during the summer of

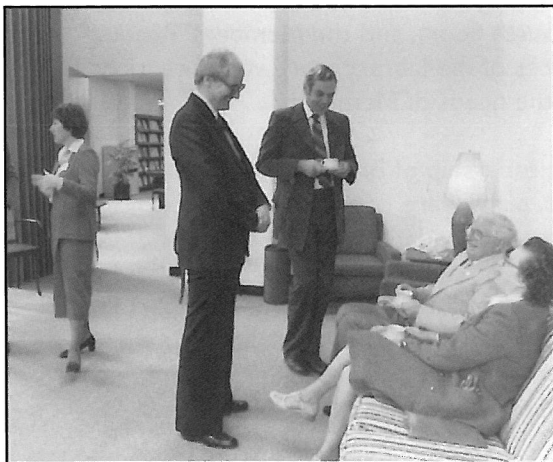




The Members' Reading Room was redecorated and equipped with a video tape player to allow Members to watch recorded proceedings from the Legislature.



Members toured the new workroom as well as public areas of the Library.



Left: At the Open House Brian Land, Legislative Librarian, is seen talking to Hugh Edighofer, Deputy Speaker, Hon. John Stokes, Speaker and Jean Kerfoot Allen, Former Legislative Librarian.



Right: Librarian Susan Waintman is giving MPP James Renwick a tour.

1980. Library staff was moved to temporary locations on the lower floors and every effort was made to ensure that services were maintained. The Ministry of Government Services and Milne and Nicholls Ltd. completed the construction.

Executive offices for the Library were set up on the west and north sides of the fourth floor. The main entrance was made more functional and attractive. New entry doors were installed and the circulation desk was placed directly in front of the doors. To allow staff efficient stack access from this desk, an additional break was made in the peripheral stack counter. New desks were built for the reference and newspaper/periodical areas.

The Members' Reading Room was moved back to its original position on the east side of the building to free up needed space on the west side for library staff offices and work areas. Included in the improvements were a new staff meeting room and kitchen in the northeast corner, and brighter, larger, and more functional office space. The Law Room doors were also removed to make the legal collection more accessible.

## Progress and Heritage

The years following the major 1980 renovation featured a continuous set of updates and enhancements to serve the growing staff, their expanding duties, and changes in work routines brought about by technology.

The *Spicer Report* raised issues relating to rare and aging books and documents in the collection. Many Library volumes were degrading because of improper storage conditions. As part of a preservation program begun in 1982, a security enclosure was constructed in the northeast corner of the fourth floor of the stacks to protect rare books.

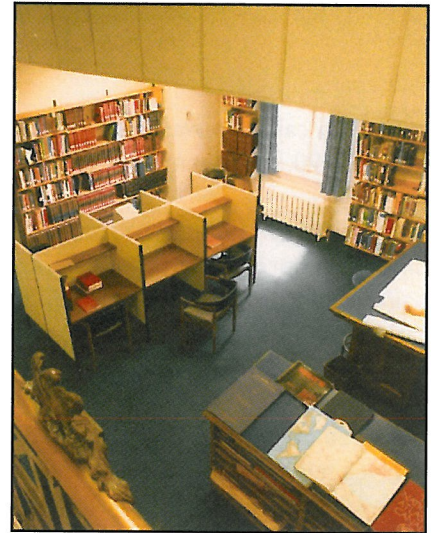
By the mid-eighties the Library had expanded to the point (both in terms of employee numbers and collection size) that it occupied space in four different locations: Legislative Building, Whitney Block, 700 Bay Street, and 180 Bloor Street West.

The 1986-87 Annual Report mentions the challenges of this setup where the “dispersal of facilities makes face-to-face communication, daily working

relationships and interdepartmental activities more difficult.” Two consulting firms were hired to report on space utilization in both the Legislative Building and Whitney Block.

In 1986/87, the “overcrowding of staff office and work space reached critical dimensions” as the Library waited for the Legislative Assembly’s space-planning survey to conclude. In the following year both consultants reported on the need and direction for space efficiencies. As a result, additional space on the fourth floor of the North Wing and in Whitney Block was given to the Library. By the end of 1993, the Library was able to consolidate its operations into two locations.

During the 1990s, Library carpets were replaced twice. Inevitably, Library services were interrupted as books and shelving had to be shifted. In the first replacement in 1990, books were removed from the shelves and boxed so the shelves could be moved, a job that took many hours and had to be done with precision. Moving heavy



In 1997 consultation tables and the carpet echoed the blue Naugahyde installed on the stack perimeter counters in 1965.



Consulting the Reference Collection. 1984.



microfilm cabinets was another especially challenging aspect of the 1990 improvements.

Learning from the interruptions in 1990, the Library took a different approach to the 1998 carpet replacement and paint job. It was decided to lift entire ranges of shelving rather than boxing, labelling, and then reshelving the books. The Library carefully scheduled the renovation to take place during the weekends to ensure services would continue during the week. Unfortunately, one of the shelves fell over because the movers had underestimated the weight of the law books and overestimated the structural integrity of the shelving. As a consequence the rest of the movable shelving units were wrapped in plastic before they were to be moved. The renovation was capped off when the workers found themselves locked in the Library on a Friday evening. One of the construction workers had to climb out of a Library window, where he encountered two security guards. Fortunately, despite these wrinkles the work was completed successfully.

Throughout the 1990s, Precinct Properties ran a project focussing on the restoration of historic details within the Library. The dropped ceiling, which had been installed in the 1960s to allow for air conditioning, was reduced slightly, and new openings allowed the entire height of the Library's windows to show. Many of the Library's large windows were also restored during this process, under the management of then-Director Mary Dickerson. Precinct Properties also worked to determine original paint colours by carefully removing layers from the walls. In 2012, the Members' Reading Room walls are painted in a heritage green.

In 2012 blue Naugahyde still covers the stack perimeter counters, almost 50 years after its installation. It has informed the subsequent colour choices for new carpets, public service desks and study and consultation tables. Blue accents the neutral walls, wood panelled counters, reference shelving and furniture in public areas.

Technology changed the way work is done in the Library. Public service desks and work stations were replaced to accommodate video screens, computers and keyboards. In the 1980s each work station had two rotary dial telephones, one a dedicated intercom, the other for incoming and outgoing telephone calls. Desks that accommodate keyboards and monitors as well as extra wiring have replaced earlier models that were designed for typewriters and handwritten documents.

For a time there was a dedicated "Terminal Room" where Librarians could go to conduct expensive searches of databases such as Dialog and LexisNexis. When all Library staff desks were equipped with personal computers, the Terminal Room was dismantled and made into a dedicated office.

In the past 20 years the Library has been damaged by water a number of times. On July 7, 1997 a crack in an asphalt seal on a six-inch pipe running through the roof allowed water to leak onto the books on the fourth floor mezzanine level. In 2003 a clogged float in a drain on the roof caused water to back up and ultimately wet the same area. On occasion water has seeped through grout and onto the marble floor or fallen from the dropped ceiling



**1998**  
Raising the stacks to install new carpets.



**1998**  
Painting was done on the weekends to minimize disruption.



**1998**  
The carpet was laid out and measured in the north parking area before being installed in the Library.



**1998**  
The Reference Collection was protected by plastic. But work went on.



onto the reference collection on the third floor. The reported cause in each case was the deterioration of the North Wing's roof drainage system. Since repairs were completed no further water damage has occurred.

Late in the evening of October 11, 2009, some mechanical equipment on the roof of the North Wing caught fire. Fortunately, the fire was spotted quickly by a passer-by and fire crews were able to extinguish it without damage, except to the piece of equipment itself. The water used to put the fire out ran harmlessly off the repaired roof and no part of the Library's collection was affected.

In 2012 the Legislative Library occupies space in the North Wing and the first and third floors of Whitney Block. While most of the furnishings are of late twentieth and early twenty-first century vintage, many pieces from earlier days can still be found. A work table on the northwest corner of the second floor of the stacks resembles the reading tables in the 1950s law room. Cane back "café" chairs from 1965 are strategically placed in the stacks. Rare book cabinets, periodical shelving and consultation tables date from the same period. The mezzanine railings, heritage paint colours, and 100 year-old windows also pay tribute to this history. But it could be said that the Library's heritage in the North Wing is most evident in the floor plan of the third floor and the central stacks.

Jean Kerfoot's 1965 words still ring true in 2012:

*"there is nothing here of a wasteful or extravagant nature but only provision for the best and most economical care of an important collection and a standard of comfort and service to which the Members of the Legislature should be entitled."*

The remainder of this book illustrates the evolution of the Library's public service and work areas, its furniture, lighting and equipment.



This work table in the stacks dates back at least fifty years and the cane chair is 47 years old in 2012.



Fire trucks dousing the flames on the roof in 2009. Lights are on in Library as seen through its windows on the third floor.



Damage was limited to the structure and interior of the cooling towers on the roof of the North Wing.



# The Book Stacks



The original book stacks, flooring and stairs built by Sned and Company are still in place in 2012.

In 1908 Sned & Company listed 18 requisites of a library book stack (see page 6) that informed the design and construction of stacks in the Ontario Legislative Library and many other major North American libraries. Those stacks are largely unchanged 100 years after their construction, a testament to the foresight and commitment of their designers and builders.

## Photos

Top: Fourth floor and mezzanine. 1912 metal fencing and railings are intact.

At right: Original marble flooring, steel stacks and stair sides with brass rails also date to 1912.





## Service Areas



Public service areas in the Library have evolved in response to client needs, staff levels, and changes in technology. Style and placement of furnishings has varied similarly. While Library renovation has usually been constrained by limited budgets, a renewed interest in the building's heritage has led to new inspiration for colour and ornamentation

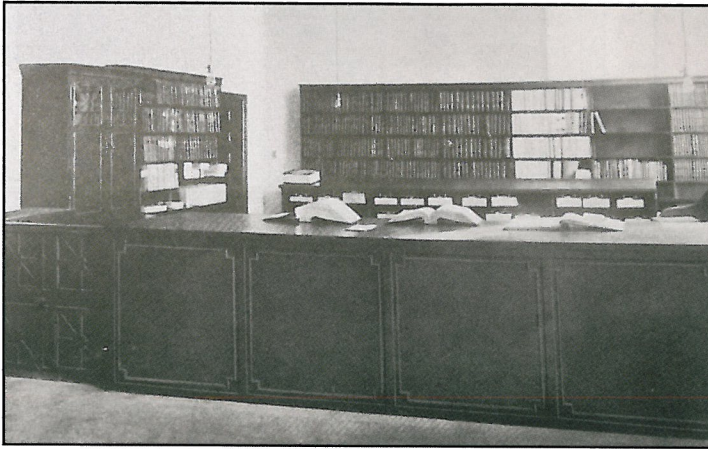
On April 7, 2003, a new circulation desk was installed. Its design was informed by the rectilinear architectural details in the mezzanine railings and the wood details in the main building. Built of walnut with a brass reveal under the top counter and maple inlay it was carefully designed to house two staff, electronic equipment and supplies.

In the upper right photograph MPP David Zimmer picks up a book at the Circulation Desk.



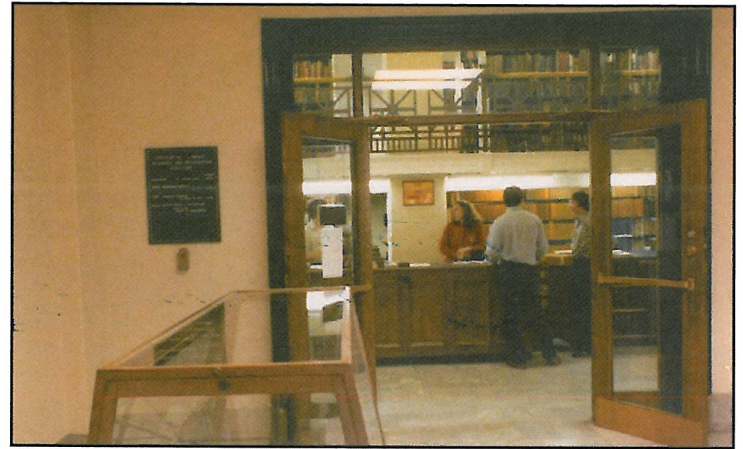


## Inquiry Desk



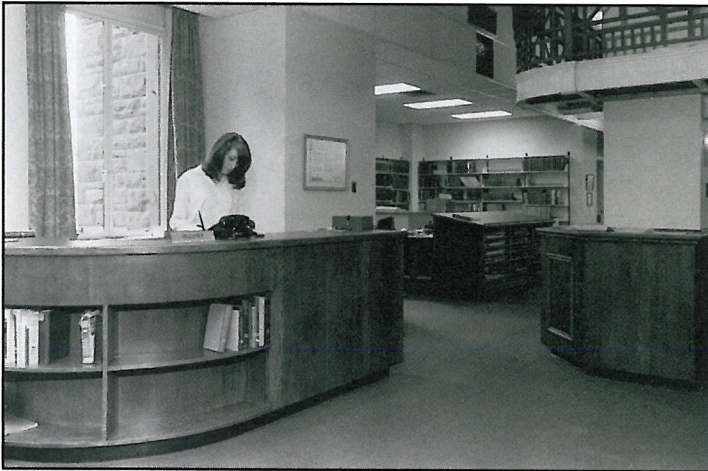
**1913**

Floor plans of the Library before the 1965 renovation show a charging desk located to the left of the entrance. Situated nearby were the public catalogue, shelving for new books, and desks for a librarian and a stenographer to assist clients at the charging desk.



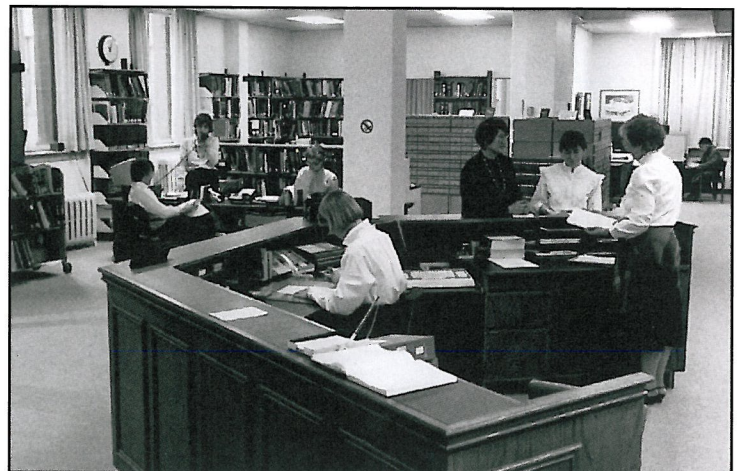
**1977**

A new, compact circulation desk was located immediately inside the library entrance, and was the first point of contact for clients. Staff assigned to this desk fielded telephone queries and could also assist clients using the card catalogue.



**1965**

A new specially designed "J" shaped charging desk was installed during the 1965 renovation, in almost the same location as its predecessor. "The charging desk ...will be the nerve centre of the library... It is within easy reach of all the most important tools for answering questions and all telephone calls come in here."

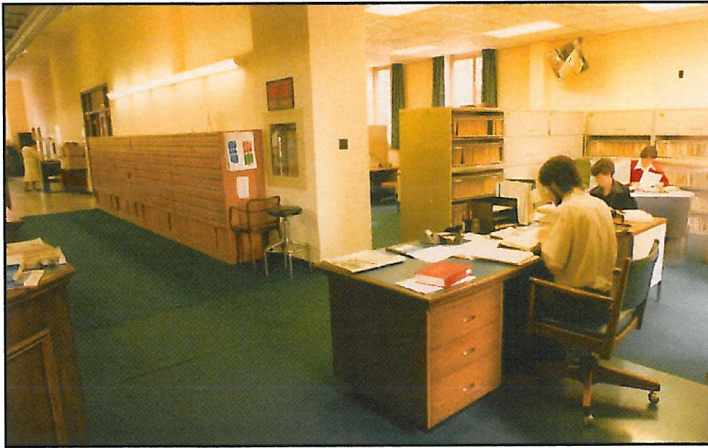


**1981**

A brighter and more functional entranceway and a display case were installed and the circulation desk, with the same moulding, trim and Naugahyde used throughout the library, was redesigned to provide more work and storage space .

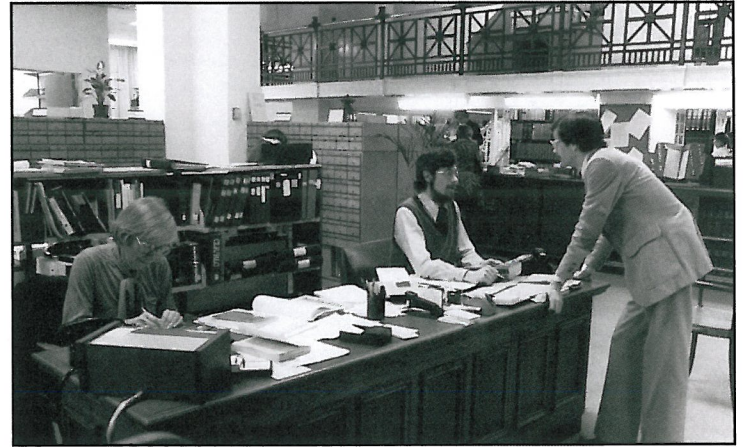


## Reference Desk



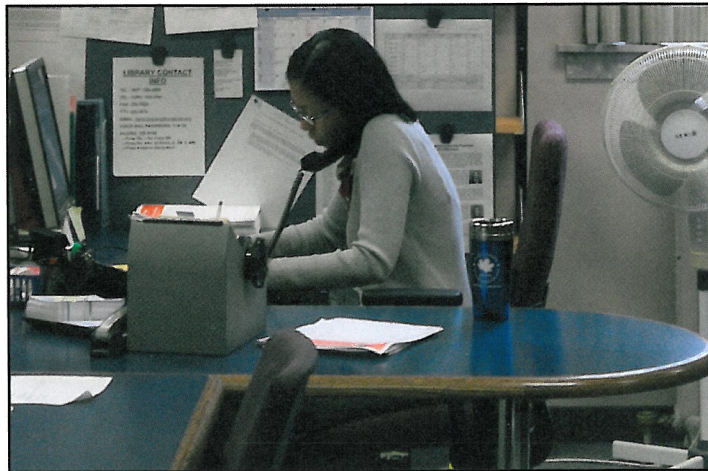
**1979**

Before the recommendations of the *Spicer Report* were implemented, the on-duty librarian occupied a desk in an open area near other Library staff. Close by were the card catalogue, clipping file, reference and government documents collections-- all essential tools for answering question in the pre-internet era.



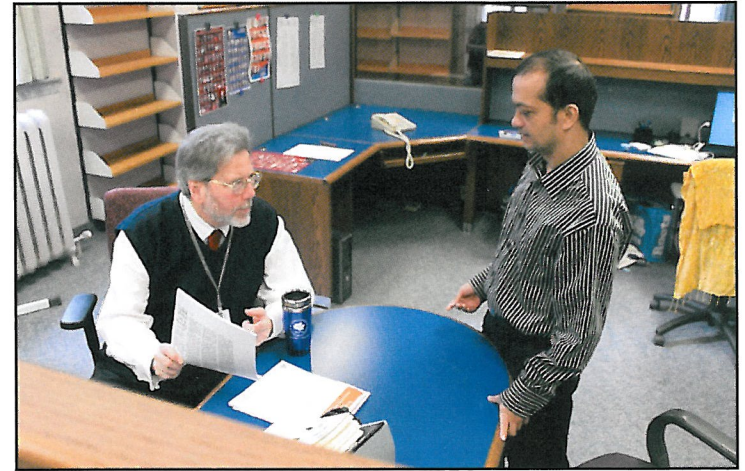
**1981**

In the 1980 renovation the reference area moved from the west corridor to a space just inside the front doors. An open wood-panelled desk, situated close to a core reference collection was manned by two librarians with dedicated phone lines. Later in the 1980s computers were added.



**2012**

The 2012 Reference Desk was designed and installed in the late 1990s to accommodate two librarians. Clients who visit the Library in person are taken to a nearby consultation room for the reference interview.

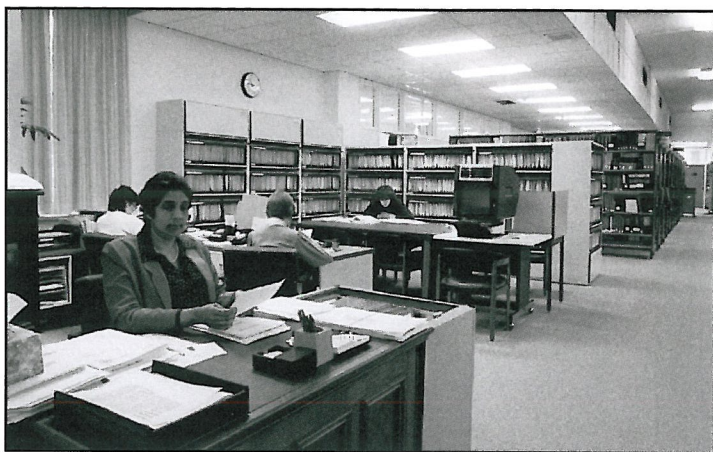


**2012**

In the 1990s this area became known as "the Bunker". It was occupied by two reference librarians, up to four circulation technicians, and a dedicated computer for searching online catalogues and databases. Walls outside the bunker held the core reference collections. In 2012 this collection has been weeded and most reference questions are answered using online resources.

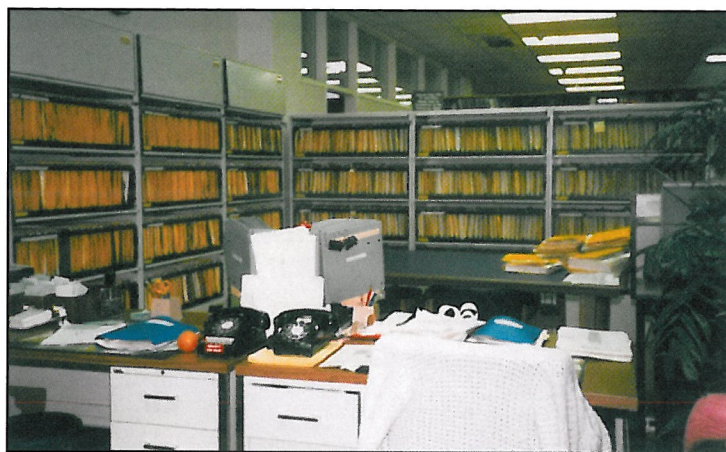


## Current Data File



**1981**

One of the key services in the 1980s and 1990s was the Current Data File -- located in the southwest corner in this photograph. Several staff were needed to select, classify and file newspaper clippings.



**1981**

Staff desks were equipped with two rotary dial telephones: one for phone calls and the other a dedicated intercom. Immediately behind the phones is the "Stripdex" which functioned as the authority file for subject headings assigned to clippings.



**1981**

Carrels for study, some equipped with microfiche readers, were located near the clippings. In this photograph the Head of Information and Reference Services, Mary Dickerson, is talking to a staff member, Roz Austin.



**2012**

Today the clipping file has been reduced to a single bank of filing cabinets. Clients and staff alike are finding news items on the internet and in online databases that are full text searchable.



## Periodicals and Newspapers



**1953**

Cabinets are stacked high with Ontario newspapers. The marble floor is separated from the wood floor by a brass rail.



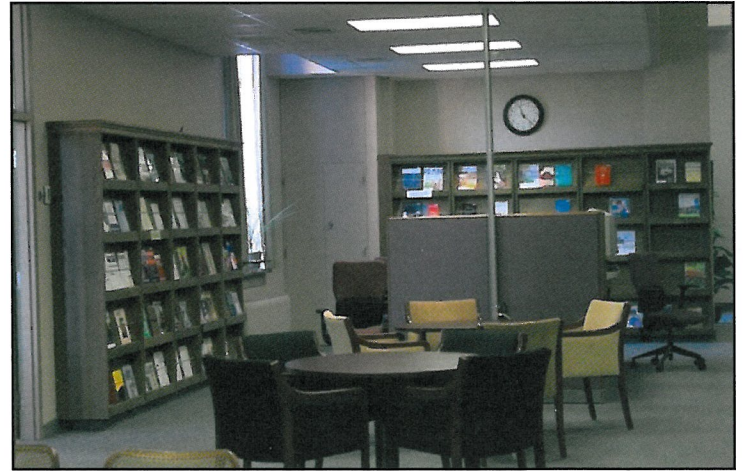
**2012**

The same area of the Library is carpeted and a dropped ceiling houses air conditioning and lighting.



**1981**

The Periodicals Desk was staffed to serve the large collection of magazines and newsletters.



**2012**

Seating areas for clients have replaced the service desk and the periodicals collection has shrunk in response to the availability of online resources.



## Reading Areas

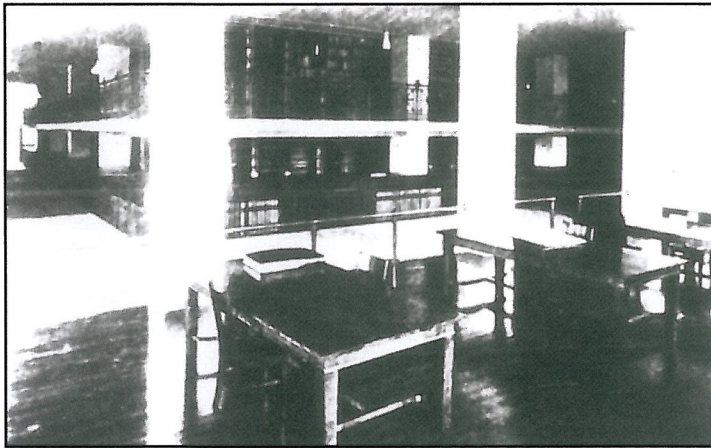


At its opening, the Library's reading room was not separated from the rest of the Library. Instead, railings that surrounded parts of the centre stacks were used to delineate the various reading areas. After about 50 years, the combination of loud wooden and marble floors, increasing traffic levels, and a wish for more privacy led to major changes in the 1965 renovation. A decade after these improvements the *Spicer Report* found the Reading Room was "little used." Members used it to "get away from the phone" or "to practice speeches."

The *Report* inspired a shift to a quiet and calming room for Members to relax and read, rather than an area used to conduct substantive research as it had been in earlier years.

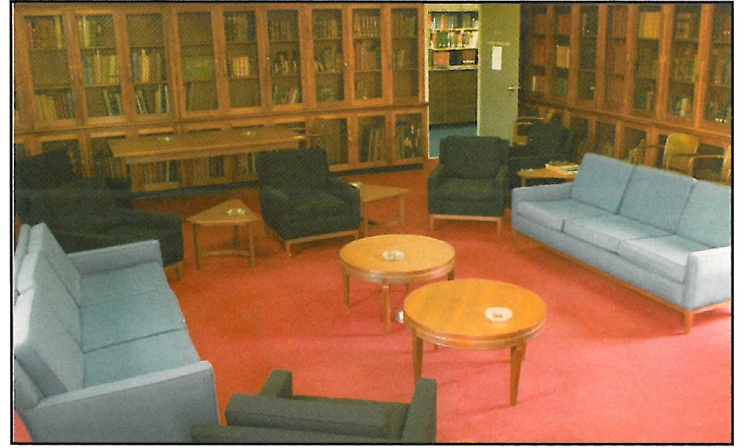
Today, the room has been restored to period colours and is furnished with comfortable seating, a television and a work area with a computer. It has been made wi-fi accessible so Members can use their smart phones to stay in contact.





**1913**

Having moved from a dark library where the design forced members to sit in the poorly illuminated interior, the new reading room in the North Wing was a huge improvement. Located in the east bay, the room's massive windows allowed for "an abundance of light and air."



**1970s**

The new Reading Room was the Library's "pleasantest and most spacious room." Shifted to the west bay in 1965, it was fully closed in and incorporated a thoroughly modern colour scheme, including red carpet and black curtains, described as giving a "somewhat sumptuous air." Note the presence of glass ash trays on every table.



**1966**

The new west Members' Reading Room featured "custom-made carrels so that opposing members may sit either side and not be overlooked" while an eye height cupboard divided into two and allowed each member to lock papers in their half and keep the key if the division bell suddenly called them both to the floor of the House. This was necessary as many members did not yet have offices in government buildings.



**1990s**

In response to the *Spicer Report's* recommendation about the need for staff spaces on the west side, the Members' Reading Room was once again moved to its original location in the east bay, where it is located today. This room featured softer colours, cushioned furniture, and, with the loss of space, the carrels which Spicer indicated were no longer used by members were removed.



## Reading Areas Today



Wing chairs in the northeast corner have the benefit of beautiful natural light from the large original windows.



This public work table is near the reference and legal collections in the southwest corner. Behind it is one of the Rare Book Cabinets.



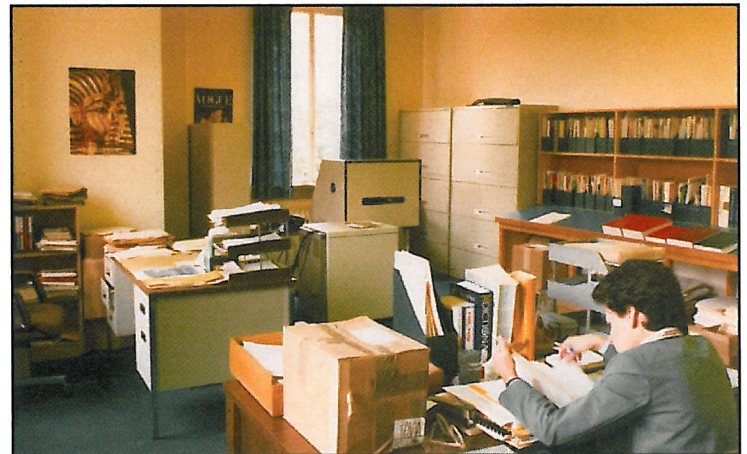
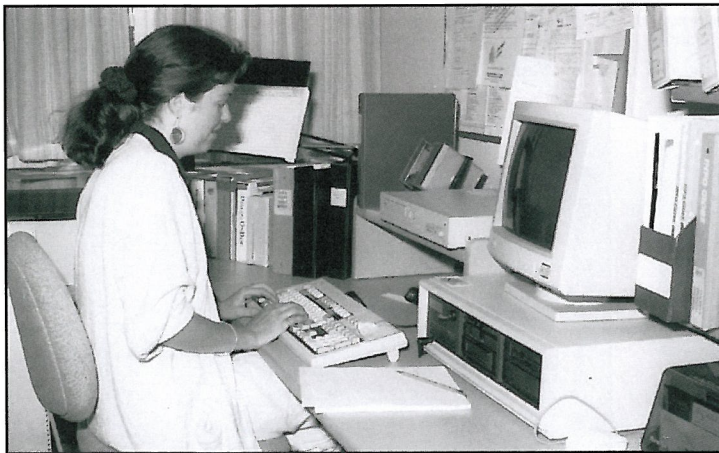
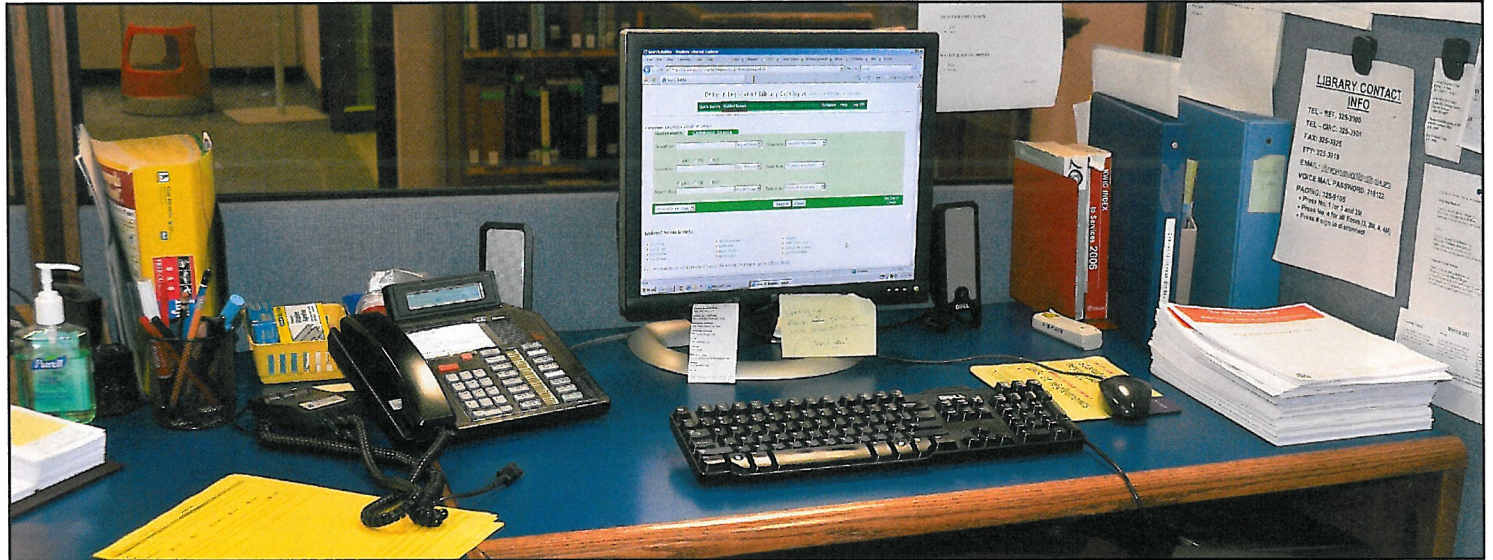
Comfortable chairs are provided so clients can consult the popular reading collection, Great Reads.



In 2012 client carrels are equipped with computers and printers.



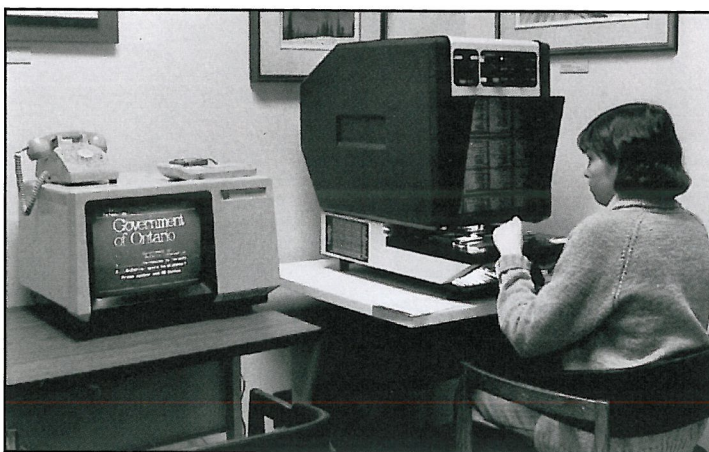
## Work Areas and Equipment



Work areas have changed in response to technology. Evidence of crowded conditions and inadequate furniture is provided by the photo, bottom right, from 1979. Files and papers are everywhere and telephones nowhere to be seen. In the lower left photo from the early 1990s, a librarian is doing a search of an online database in the "Terminal Room."

In 2012 high definition monitors and computers with access to the internet and many paid databases are standard equipment. The work station in the photo at the top is the Reference Desk. The computer monitor is showing the online Library catalogue and on the right is a stack of *Toronto Press Today*, the Library's very popular daily print press clipping compendium.





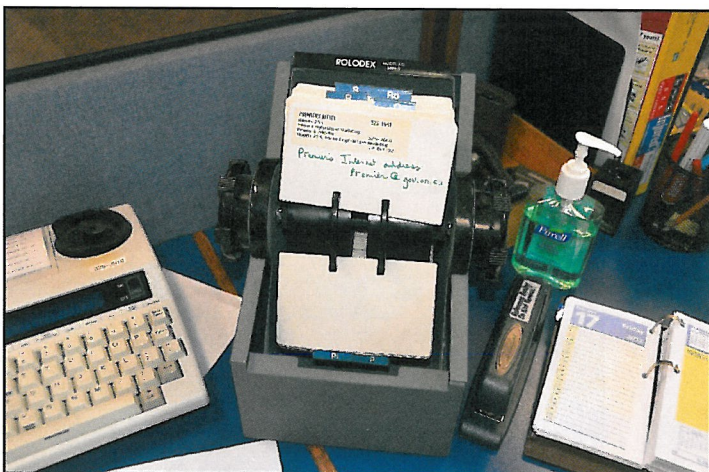
**1984**

A staff member is using the microfilm reader. The Telidon monitor at left was a pre-internet interactive communication device providing access to Government of Ontario information.



**2012**

The fax machine which was in constant use in the 1990s is hardly used in 2012. Its functions have been replaced by email and other forms of electronic messaging.



**2012**

The Rolodex at the reference desk is a relic of earlier times. To its left is the TTY device which allows communication with the disabled.



**2012**

Between the 1970s and early 2000s photocopiers were heavily used to reproduce print documents. Today they receive print orders from staff computers, scan and save to various file formats, collate, staple and produce copies in colour as well as black and white.

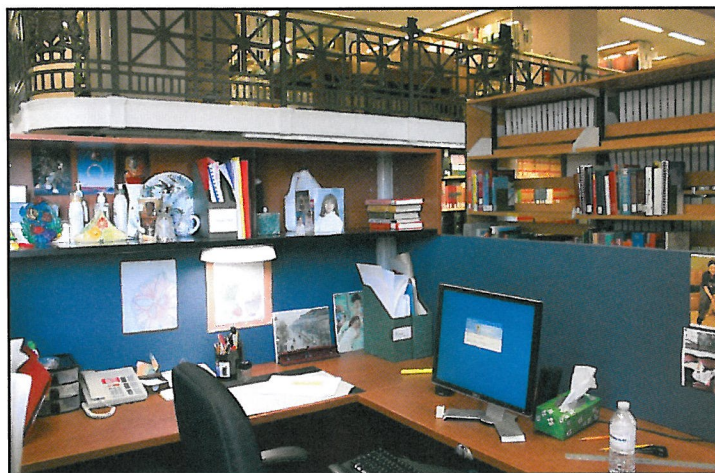




The Library Staff Room is used for presentations, meetings and staff parties. The television monitor is used to view the internet, PowerPoint and other software as well as television programs.



In 2012 the Executive Director of the Information and Technology Services Division (iDivision), Vicki Whitmell, is also the Legislative Librarian. Her boardroom is located in Room 1413 Whitney Block across the street from the Legislative Building. On its walls hang portraits of all of Ontario's Legislative Librarians.



The old Law Room area is now home to seven work stations.



The Executive Director occupies this office which has a view of Queen's Park Crescent and the east portico of the Legislative Building. The office is part of a suite that includes the boardroom shown above.





### Legislative Library and Legislative Research Service Staff Photo 2011

Row 1: Susan Swift, Vicki Whitmell, Joanne Robertson, Rosie Salvo, Toni Ariganello, Jerry Richmond, Donna Burton, Assunta Calcagno, Claudette Henry, Lorraine Luski  
Row 2: Rick Sage, Peter Ellinger, Karen Wierucki, Margaret Heslin, Sandra Craig, Darinka Tomic, Julie Anderson, Mercedes Lee, Janey Chen  
Row 3: Frank Piekietko, Sidra Sabzwari, Allice Hong, Arvin Gopaul, Teri-Lynn Janveau, Erica Anderson, Eileen Lewis, Tharmika Vilvanathan, Wendy Reynolds, Yasuko Enosawa, Terrence Teixeira  
Row 4: Izabela Hryniewicka, Larry Johnston, Janice Cole Mabee, Ivan Menezes, June Pae, Linda Campbell, Evelyn Chan, Kim Dean, Yolanda Le Fort, Carrie Hull, Christopher Evans  
Row 5: Ray McLellan, Avrum Fenson, Anne Marzalik, Andrew McNaught, Susan Viets, Pramila Thakur, Candace Chan, Susanne Hynes, Philip Kaye, David Reynolds, Elaine Campbell, Brian Tobin



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Watson, Fiona: *Library History Files*.

## Photos

Legislative Library Photo Collection

Yasuko Enosawa

Elias Chiddicks

Susanne Hynes



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Joanne Robertson is Ontario Government Documents Technician and has worked at the Library since 1990. Her work supports the Library's print and electronic Ontario government documents collection.

Elias Chiddicks is a fourth year legal studies student at the University of Waterloo. In the winter of 2012 he worked as a co-op student with the Legislative Research Service.







*It should be emphasized that the position of the Legislative Library will be permanent as long as the Assembly remains in its present location.*

*There is nothing suggested here of a wasteful or extravagant nature but only provision for the best and most economical care of an important collection and a standard of comfort and service to which the Members of the Legislature should be entitled.*

*After all, good research facilities make for informed legislators and informed legislators are the first step to good government.*

Jean Kerfoot, Legislative Librarian

**Photo at left:** Volumes of the Debates of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario are visible through the 100 year old stair railings.

**Cover Photo:** The North Wing of the Legislative Building, winter 2012.