



**MANITOBA
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST
COMMISSIONER**

Dr. William Norrie, Q.C.

2008-2009

William Norrie C.M. O.M. Q.C. LL.D (Wpg.), LL.D.(Man.) D..P.M. (PLM)
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December 28, 2009.

The Honourable George Hicke
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Province of Manitoba
Rm. 244-Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Mb. R3C 0V8


Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to present my report to you pursuant to the *Legislative and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Act*.

Copies will be made available to you for distribution to all Members of the Assembly.

I would also like to thank you personally for your friendship and for your interest in seeing that the Act meets its purpose and for your availability to meet or speak with me when required.

Sincerely yours,


William Norrie Q.C.
Conflict of Interest Commissioner

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Members will be aware that legislative guidelines have been adopted by all democratic countries in the Western World to prevent the possibility of private gain taking place in public office.

As a result, under the provisions of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Act, every member of the Legislature is required within 15 days of the beginning of each session of the Legislature to file with the clerk of the Legislative Assembly a statement disclosing assets and interests in accordance with section 12 of the act.

In addition every member is required to meet with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to review the statement and to seek advice, should it be required, regarding his/her obligations under the Act.

It should be noted that it is highly recommended that the last provision, a personal meeting with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, should be required only once in a calendar year.

I am pleased to report that I have received excellent cooperation from the members of the house. At this time 36 members of the House have fulfilled their obligations by filing their necessary statements and meeting with me in a telephone interview. There remain 18 members who have filed their necessary documents but have not yet been able to conclude telephone interviews. I trust that this will be done shortly in 2010.

During the year I also received questions from a number of individual members regarding their obligations under the act. These involved questions regarding the advisability of putting certain business interests in trust and the acceptance of gifts or privileges from members of the public.

In regard to the matter of trusts, a submission by the Integrity Commissioner (Conflict of Interest Commissioner) for Nunavut, Mr. Norman Pickell, will be of interest to members and might warrant inclusion in the Manitoba act. He suggests that the following wording be included in their Conflict of Interest Act:


"the trustees (*of a blind trust*) shall not consult with the Minister with respect to managing a trust property unless the Integrity Commissioner has authorized the consultation and the consultation is with respect to a proposed or threatened event that might have a material effect on the trust."

The question of the receipt of gifts or privileges is one which has been widely debated across Canada and was the subject of discussion at meetings of the Conflict of Interest Commissioners (CCOIN) in Whitehorse, Yukon, last September 10-13, 2009.

It was determined that gifts can only be received by members when they cannot be construed to influence in any way the opinions or voting record of the said member. Gifts "in kind" such as airline tickets or accommodation also fall under the same regulations.

In closing I would like to thank the members of the house for their cooperation during my term as Conflict of Interest Commissioner. I would also like to thank Mr. Fred Bryans and Ms. Holly Mackling from the Office of the Administration and Finance Branch of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba for their assistance over the past year.

Respectfully submitted,


William Norrie C.M., O.M., Q.C.

