

# Hansard Publications and Guidelines for Corrections by Members

## The Hansard Transcript

The "Official Report of Debates" (also commonly referred to as "Hansard," in reference to the family printing firm that published the debates of the U.K. House of Commons in the 19th century) is a transcript of Members' speeches during proceedings of the Assembly and its parliamentary committees.

The transcript plays an important role in supporting the Members in the conduct of their business by providing a record of their comments on the business of the day. It also has an important historical role, providing, in the words of Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, "the only means by which after generations shall be able to learn what were the subjects of interest engaging our attention, what was the style of speaking and the style of thought and what were the moving impulses of the people and their representatives in Parliament" (Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 7 March 1881).

## Substantially verbatim

According to Standing Order 120, the Assembly's Hansard transcript shall be a "substantially verbatim" report of the debates of the House and its parliamentary committees.

While a strictly verbatim report would include every single word spoken by Members during proceedings, Hansard Services follows the established practice of the U.K. House of Commons and other parliamentary jurisdictions, as described by Erskine May:

*The Official Report is a full report, in the first person, of all speakers alike, a full report being defined as one "which, though not strictly verbatim, is substantially the verbatim report, with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected, but which on the other hand leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or illustrates the argument." (25ed. §7.19, p. 151; see also House of Commons Procedure and Practice, 3rd ed., p. 270)*

## Editorial Guidelines

Hansard editors operate within a set of strict editorial guidelines when producing this transcript. These guidelines ensure that the transcripts accurately reflect what was said and the manner in which it was said, while simultaneously ensuring clear communication of the speaker's meaning.

Hansard staff apply a light hand when making editorial changes, confining themselves to correcting grammar and syntax when this can be done with minimal changes to the Member's words. Repetitions, false starts, and self-corrections may be removed in the interests of clarity and readability, and obvious errors (i.e. those that an average listener would recognize, such as a mispronounced word) may be corrected, provided the error did not give rise to discussion in the House.

## Publications

### Blues Transcripts

A preliminary draft transcript is produced for each sitting of the House. When the House splits into two or more concurrent sections, a separate draft transcript is produced for the proceedings in each venue.

These draft transcripts are referred to as the Blues because they were originally printed on blue paper to distinguish them from the final transcript, which was printed on white paper. Although the drafts are now published digitally, they retain their name and a blue background.

The Blues are posted online incrementally throughout a sitting, starting approximately one hour after the sitting begins. The complete Blues are typically available online one hour after adjournment. On days when the House sits in multiple sections, the complete Blues are typically available within two hours of adjournment.

The Blues may be viewed on the Debates (Hansard) page of the Legislative Assembly website, accessible from the Assembly's home page.

## Revised Blues

Following publication of the Blues, the transcript is further revised and edited before final publication.

An updated version of the transcript, the revised Blues, will be published online following additional proofreading and review.

Once the updated Blues have been posted, only very minor changes are made by Hansard staff before publication of the final transcript – typically only formatting and style changes.

## Final Transcripts

Final Hansard transcripts are published online for each sitting of the House. The transcripts of proceedings of the Committee of the Whole or the Committee of Supply held in other venues are appended at the end of the transcript of Chamber debates.

Final transcripts are posted to the Debates (Hansard) page of the Legislative Assembly website, replacing the draft Blues version.

## Parliamentary Committee Transcripts

Transcripts of parliamentary committees are produced in a manner similar to House proceedings, with the publication of Blues, revised Blues and final official transcripts.

Production of the House transcripts takes priority, so production of committee transcripts may be interrupted until the House transcript has been completed. Depending on levels of House activity, draft committee transcripts are usually available the same day as a committee meeting takes place.

Transcripts for parliamentary committees may be found on the [Committee Meetings](#) page of the Legislative Assembly website.

## Working with Hansard

Any assistance that Members and their staff can provide Hansard Services in ensuring the accuracy of names, titles, technical terms and quotations is greatly appreciated, particularly when visitors in the gallery are introduced.

In order to meet our production deadlines, Hansard Services research staff will often directly contact Members' offices with requests for this information.

Members are also encouraged to provide Hansard Services with copies of any material they read out in the House.

Speaking notes and introductions may be emailed to [research.hansard@leg.bc.ca](mailto:research.hansard@leg.bc.ca) or sent in hard copy to Hansard Services through Sergeant-at-Arms chamber staff.

All Hansard staff are bound to confidentiality by their oath of employment, and Members' correspondence is treated with the highest discretion.

## Corrections

Members are encouraged to review the Blues and advise Hansard Services if they believe they have been inaccurately reported. Members should restrict themselves to reporting misheard words or other transcription errors and are not able to polish, improve or otherwise rewrite their speeches.

To request a correction, Members can contact Hansard Services by email at [hansard.services@leg.bc.ca](mailto:hansard.services@leg.bc.ca) or by phone at 250-387-3681.

To ensure requests can be reviewed prior to the publication of the final transcript, corrections for morning sittings should be submitted by 4 p.m. the day following the sitting, and corrections for afternoon sittings should be submitted by noon the second day following the sitting.

All requests for corrections are subject to approval by the Director of Hansard Services, in accordance with Hansard's substantially verbatim reporting guidelines.