



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# The Clerk

## Role and Nomination Process

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April 2026

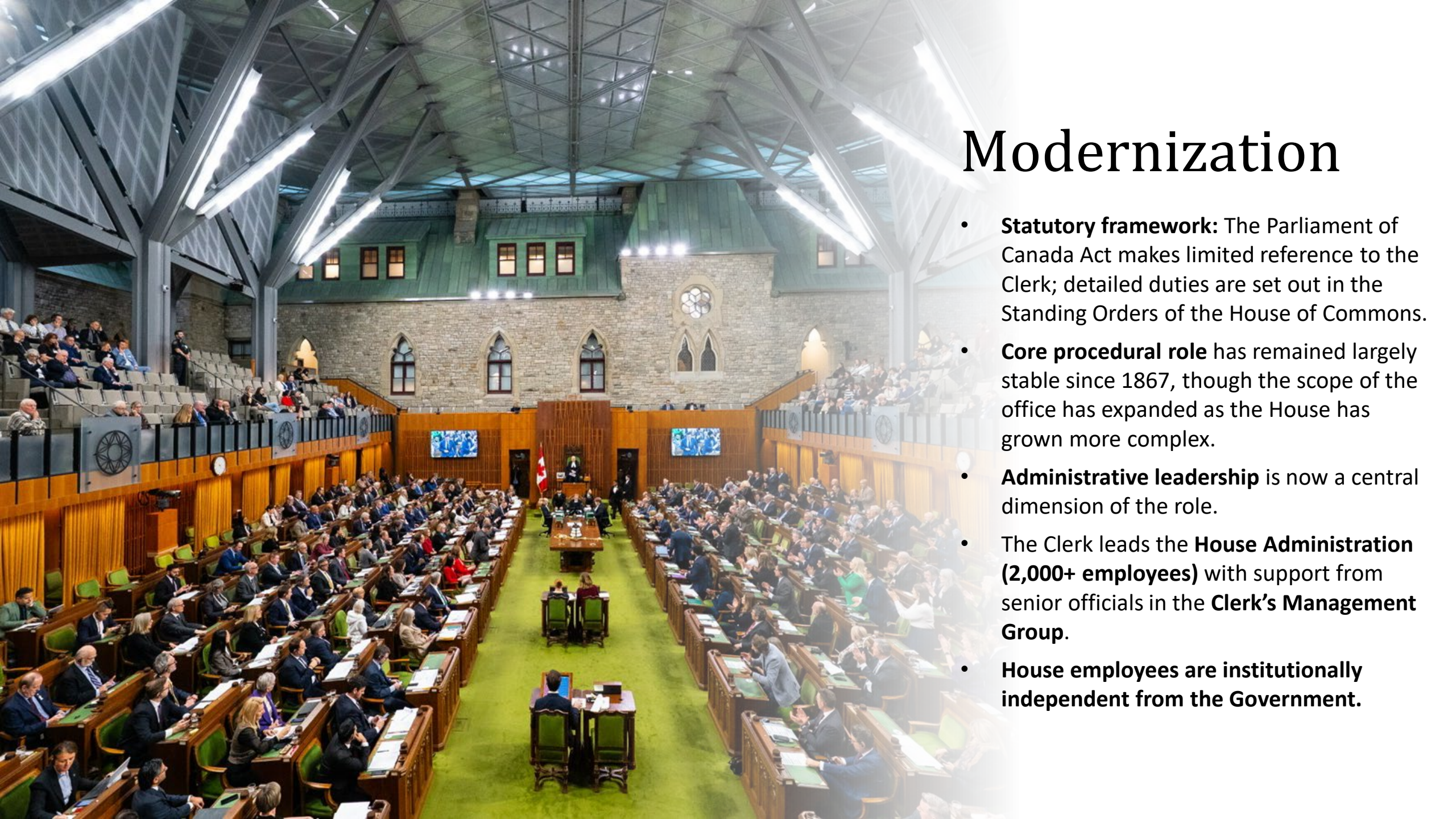
# Origins of the Office

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- **Clerkship** rooted in the medieval English model (first formal appointment: 1363)
- **Early evolution** from record-keeper to procedural adviser by the 17th century
- **1642 incident (Charles I)** illustrates enduring function: preservation of parliamentary privilege through record
- **Core identity established early:** guardian of record, continuity, and institutional memory







# Modernization

- **Statutory framework:** The Parliament of Canada Act makes limited reference to the Clerk; detailed duties are set out in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons.
- **Core procedural role** has remained largely stable since 1867, though the scope of the office has expanded as the House has grown more complex.
- **Administrative leadership** is now a central dimension of the role.
- The Clerk leads the **House Administration (2,000+ employees)** with support from senior officials in the **Clerk's Management Group**.
- **House employees are institutionally independent from the Government.**

# Structure

## Board of Internal Economy

### Clerk of the House of Commons

Audit and Improvement

Corporate Communications

Curatorial Services

Press Gallery Secretariat

### Procedural Services

Committees and Legislative Services

House Proceedings

International and Interparliamentary Affairs

Parliamentary Information and Publications

### Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel

Legal Services

Legislation Services

### Administrative Services

Digital Services and Real Property

Finance Services

Human Resources Services

Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms and Corporate Security

Parliamentary Precinct Operations





# History of the Nomination Process

- **Gradual transition** from politically influenced appointments to a **professional, non-partisan career model**
- **Development of internal succession planning and structured training for procedural clerks**
- **Introduction of formal parliamentary scrutiny in 2001** (Standing Order 111.1)
- **Executive appointment authority retained**, but now exercised within a **framework of committee review and House ratification**
- **Increasing expectation of cross-party consultation to reinforce institutional legitimacy**

# Nominations based on reputation

1867-1902



William Burns Lindsay



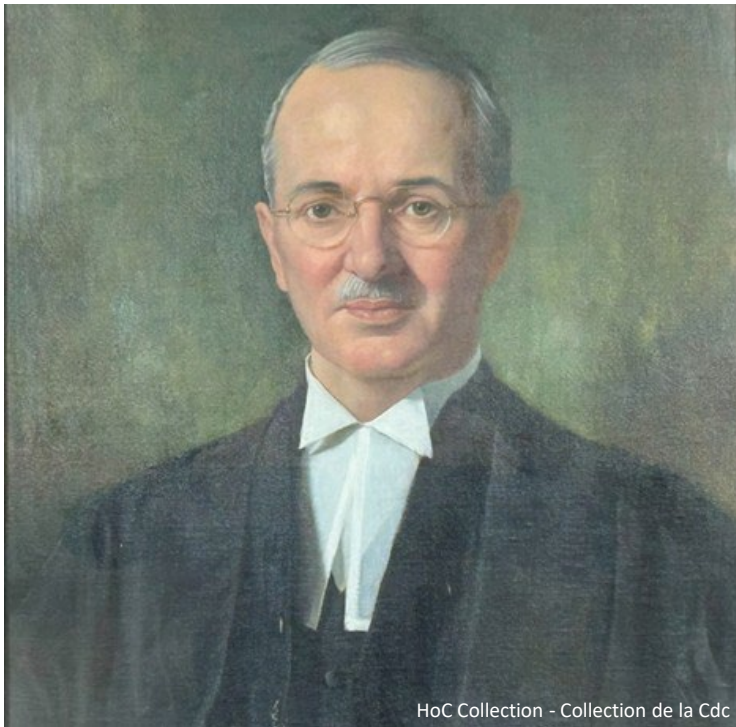
Alfred Patrick



John George Bourinot

# Political Nominations

1902-1979



HoC Collection - Collection de la Cdc

Arthur Beauchesne



Léon J. Raymond



Alistair Fraser

# Career nominations

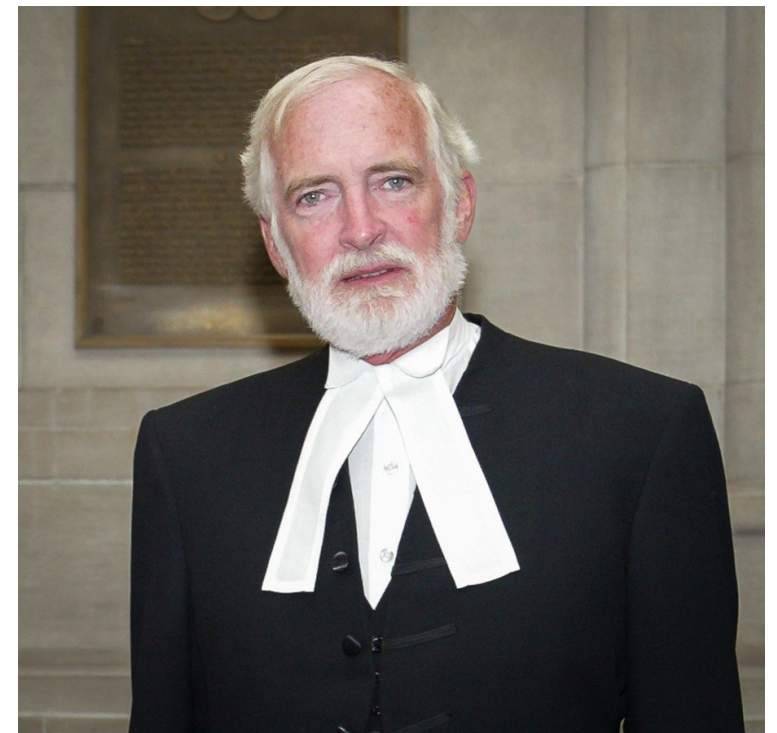
1979-2001



Charles Beverley Koester



Robert Marleau



William Corbett

# Modern Nomination Process

2001-present



Audrey O'Brien



Charles Robert



Eric Janse



## Summary of current practice

- **Government conducts the selection process (Governor in Council appointment)**
- **Nomination automatically referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (SO 111.1)**
- **Committee review precedes House ratification**
- **Final appointment formalized by Order in Council**
- **Recent practice has included structured cross-party consultation prior to ratification**
- **Model combines executive appointment authority with parliamentary legitimacy mechanisms**

# QUESTIONS