



Report

**Visit of the Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C.,
Speaker of the Senate,
and a Parliamentary Delegation,
People's Republic of China**

January 4-8, 2016

At the invitation of His Excellency ZHANG Dejiang, Chair of the National Peoples' Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC), the Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C., Speaker of the Senate, led a parliamentary delegation on an official visit to the People's Republic of China from January 4 to 8, 2016.

The delegation has the honour of tabling its

Report

The official delegation, led by Speaker George J. Furey, Q.C., was comprised of the following members:

- The Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C., Speaker of the Senate;
- The Honourable Joseph A. Day, Senator;
- The Honourable Pana Merchant, Senator;
- The Honourable Ghislain Maltais, Senator;
- The Honourable Victor Oh, Senator;
- Mr. Stuart Barnable, Chief of Staff to the Speaker; and
- Mr. Simon Larouche, Secretary to the delegation.

Background – China

China is an East Asian country with 22,000 km of land borders shared with 14 countries, and a coastline of 18,000 km on the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, and the South China Sea. With a population of 1.4 billion, it is the most populous country in the world and also a geopolitical and economic power.

At the heart of its political system, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has been the country's dominant institution since 1949. It now has over 86 million members. The CPC exercises its power and influence at all levels, including national, provincial, and municipal administrative structures such as the National People's Congress (NPC). According to the state constitution, the NPC is the highest representation of the Chinese people. It is a unicameral legislative body with approximately 3,000 elected members. The CPC is the dominant party in the NPC (with over 70% of the elected members), although there are also independent members and some delegates representing non-communist parties.

Canada and China have maintained dynamic and diverse ties since well before establishing diplomatic relations in 1990. China is the world's second largest economy and Canada's second largest trading partner overall after the United States. Given its size and tremendous growth, the Chinese market provides significant opportunities to Canadian companies in a wide range of sectors. Finally, cultural ties between the two countries are stronger now than ever before; over 1.5 million Canadians are of Chinese origin, and Mandarin is the third most spoken language in Canada after English and French.

Objectives

The delegation visited three cities while in China: Beijing, Xi'an (Shaanxi Province) and Shanghai. The objectives were to:

- enhance relations between Canada and China;
- encourage ongoing parliamentary dialogue by further promoting parliamentary exchanges at the national, provincial, and municipal levels;
- highlight the range of Canada's interests in the region;
- discuss foreign policies with respect to issues of international and mutual interest.

Beijing

In Beijing, the delegation met with His Excellency LI Yuanchao, Vice President of the People's Republic of China; His Excellency ZHANG Dejiang, Chairman of the National People's Congress; CHEN Changzhi, Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress; HAO Ping, Vice Minister of Education; and SONG Tao, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China.

Meeting with His Excellency LI Yuanchao, Vice President of the People's Republic of China

The Vice President pointed out the wide range of interests shared by Canada and China, as well as the great potential for cooperation and exchange between the two countries. He added that China's relations with the new Canadian government started well with a productive meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the G20 Summit and the telephone conversation between the Canadian Prime Minister and Prime Minister Li Keqiang. In the Vice President's view, the relationship between the two countries has reached a promising stage with cooperation possible in many areas: oil, natural gas, potash, the environment, the manufacturing of machinery and advanced technologies, finances, high-speed trains (in Canada), education, and tourism. He indicated that China wishes to reach a trade agreement with Canada as soon as possible.

In terms of the possibility of a trade agreement, Speaker Furey pointed out that discussions have already started and added that the new government is interested in continuing trade negotiations. The Vice President also explained that China is focusing on its own internal development: this includes modernization and the doubling of the country's GDP by 2020 from the 2010 level. To achieve this, China needs a peaceful external environment.

Meeting with His Excellency ZHANG Dejiang, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

Chairman Zhang welcomed Speaker Furey and the Canadian parliamentary delegation, which was not only the first official visit to China of 2016, but also the first Canadian delegation since the election of the new government in October 2015. The Chairman voiced his satisfaction with the quality of bilateral and inter-parliamentary relations, noting the work of the Canada-China Legislative Association. He stressed the unique

career of Canadian doctor Norman Bethune, who, in his view, is a clear example of the considerable impact a single individual can have on the diplomatic relations between two countries.

After a short presentation by each of the Canadian senators, a discussion followed on the many cooperation initiatives that exist between the two countries. Chairman Zhang was very optimistic about the future of China-Canada relations. He stated that the two countries are now ready for a new strategic partnership and a trade agreement, and cited as examples the recent agreements between China and South Korea and Australia. He further commented that trade relations must develop in the energy, natural resources, and environmental protection sectors.

Chairman Zhang also noted that differences of opinion must not diminish dialogue and the important exchange of ideas. The Tibet and Taiwan issues were discussed; he said his hope is that Canada respects the One China Policy. Speaker Furey was pleased with the excellent relations between the two countries and supported trade negotiations with China, a major economic partner.

The differences between the two countries were discussed, including population, surface area, and GDP. Chairman Zhang talked about China's extensive progress over the past three decades to become the world's second largest economy.

Chairman Zhang touched on the agenda items for the next Communist Party Congress in March 2016, at which many important decisions would be made for the next five years.

Meeting with CHEN Changzhi, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

Mr. Chen welcomed the delegation and commented that, in his view, the visit represented another step toward improved inter-parliamentary cooperation; he also expressed his gratitude for the organization of the Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (Vancouver, January 17 to 21, 2016). Mr. Chen stated that Canada is a priority partner in his country's economic development and that the Canadian Senate and the Canada-China Legislative Association have a major role to play in the development of China-Canada relations. Representatives from three Chinese state corporations participated in the meeting.

Meeting with HAO Ping, Vice Minister of Education

Mr. Hao described the Chinese education system, which includes a wide network of primary and secondary schools (over 500,000) and institutions of higher education (over 1,000 universities and colleges), and the structure of the Ministry of Education. Mr. Hao also indicated that cooperation between China and Canada's provinces is remarkable. The Canadian ambassador added that cooperation in this area is so active that it is difficult for his staff to follow all the related projects and initiatives. Mr. Hao also presented the various objectives of China's education reforms, which include: (1) improving the quality of higher level education; (2) promoting innovation and entrepreneurship; (3) promoting better integration of physical activity in school

programs; and (4) encouraging international cooperation. The main challenges of the Chinese education system and the solutions brought forward by these reforms were highlighted.

Speaker Furey expressed his wish to increase enrollment of Chinese students in Canadian universities. The Vice Minister and the Speaker discussed how Canadian parliamentarians can help to achieve this objective.

Mr. Hao presented the people-to-people Chinese consultations that it maintains with many Western countries (e.g. the United Kingdom, France, the United States, and Germany), seeking to strengthen relationships in the areas of culture, education, science, technology, health, and sport. The Canadian delegation expressed its willingness to implement the consultation process between the two countries. Speaker Furey encouraged the two governments to discuss the matter.

Finally, the Canadian ambassador spoke to the many challenges that China has overcome in education since his first posting in 1984. He added that the Canadian government hopes to further promote winter sports, such as hockey, if Beijing hosts the Winter Olympics in 2022.

Meeting with SONG Tao, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China

Mr. Song indicated that he was pleased to meet with the senators. He highlighted the importance of positive relations between political parties internationally in addition to the traditional relations between states and within international organizations. They talked about recent Chinese history, the impact of its economic development in the past 30 years, and the role of the Communist Party of China in political institutions. Mr. Song expressed his hope that stronger China-Canada relations will lead to a new economic and trade agreement between the two countries.

Other activities

The delegation participated in two roundtable discussions organized by the Canadian Embassy in Beijing. The first meeting was with members of Chinese civil society dealing with the rights of HIV-positive people, persons with disabilities, and homosexuals; violence against women; gender equality; and the environment. The second meeting was with members of the Canadian business community in Beijing. This meeting enabled the delegation to better understand the challenges, the opportunities, and the business reality of Canadian companies wanting to establish themselves and grow in the Chinese market.

The delegation visited the Canadian International School of Beijing at the invitation of its president, Dr. Francis Pang. Speaker Furey delivered a speech to over 200 Chinese students on the Canadian parliamentary system and the role of the Senate.

The delegation also visited the non-governmental organization One Plus One, which supports persons with disabilities and helps them to succeed in society. In addition to the above-mentioned meetings and site visits, the delegation visited the Great Hall of the People and the Palace Museum (Forbidden City).

Xi'an

In Xi'an (Shaanxi Province), the delegation met with His Excellency ZHAO Zhengyong, Party Secretary of Shaanxi and Chairman of the Shaanxi Provincial People's Congress.

Meeting with His Excellency ZHAO Zheng Yong, Chairman of the Shaanxi Provincial People's Congress

From the outset, Chairman Zhao indicated that he was pleased with the inclusion of the 1,000-year-old city of Xi'an on the itinerary of the Canadian delegation. This historic capital of the Chinese empire is now one of the country's most dynamic economic pillars. He explained that environmental conservation is a major priority for the central and local governments. He added that this visit will enhance cooperation between China and Canada, particularly in terms of tourism. Discussions are currently underway to increase the number of flights between Xi'an and Canada.

Speaker Furey stated that Canada has a long history of friendly relations with China and that the new Canadian government will continue this tradition. Dr. Norman Bethune was remembered. Senator Maltais and Senator Merchant, respectively, stressed the excellence of the Quebec company Bombardier in aeronautics and Saskatchewan's expertise in carbon capture.

Other visits

The delegation also visited the Museum of Qin Terra-Cotta Warriors and Horses, the Xi'an Muslim Quarter and Great Mosque, and the South Gate City Wall.

Shanghai

In Shanghai, the delegation met with Her Excellency YIN Yicui, Chairwoman of the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress.

Meeting with Her Excellency YIN Yicui, Chairwoman of the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress

The Chairwoman recalled the 2015 celebrations marking the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Canada; she said she was thrilled that a Canadian delegation was the first official visit of 2016, noting that Shanghai is a sister city of both Montreal and Quebec City. The Chairwoman highlighted the importance of China's trade relations with Canada; there are over 200 Canadian companies in the Yangtze River delta. She presented the unique advantages and challenges of a city as populous and vibrant as Shanghai. Chairwoman Yin and Speaker Furey talked about the economic vitality of the City of Shanghai as well as the importance of public transportation (over 10 million users per day). The senators took turns introducing their respective provinces and the benefits of their economies.

Other visits

At the residence of Canada's Consul General in Shanghai, the delegation met with representatives from the Canadian business community who shared their experiences of doing business in the Yangtze River delta region. The delegation also visited the offices of three Canadian organizations which have been successful in China: the Canada Beef International Institute, which promotes bringing Canadian beef to the Chinese market; Wood Canada, which educates Chinese builders and legislators about the benefits of using wood as construction material; and Manulife-Sinochem, which has set itself apart over several decades in China's insurance industry. The delegation also toured the Shanghai Oriental TV Tower.

Acknowledgments

The members of the delegation wish to thank M. WU Heng, Deputy Director of the Education, Science, Culture and Health Committee of the National People's Congress and Vice Chinese Chair of the China-Canada Legislative Association, who accompanied the delegation throughout the visit. Thanks also go to the Chinese Ambassador in Canada, His Excellency LUO Zhaohui, and the members of his staff for their help in planning this visit.

The staff of both the Canadian Embassy in Beijing and the Canadian Consulate General in Shanghai were each exceptionally helpful. Special thanks go to Mr. Guy St-Jacques, Ambassador of Canada to China and to Mr. Weldon Epp, Consul General of Canada in Shanghai. Thanks also go to Ms. Cindy Termorshuizen, Mr. Mark Selby, Ms. Vivian Zhao, Mr. Troy Muller, Mr. Ryan Baerg, Ms. Lee Kane, and Ms. Marilène Gourdeau-Bussière.

Finally, the delegates wish to thank Global Affairs Canada and the Library of Parliament for all the documentation provided as part of the preparation for their visit.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C.
Speaker of the Senate

Travel Costs

Visit of the Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C., Speaker of the Senate, and a Parliamentary Delegation, People's Republic of China

TRAVEL	\$ 68,010.93
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ACCOMMODATION	\$ 261.31
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PER DIEMS	\$ 3,139.21
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PROTOCOL	\$ 2,240.86
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MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 3,896.36
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TOTAL	\$ 77,748.67
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