



Report

**Visit of the Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C.,
Speaker of the Senate,
Scotland and England, United Kingdom**

October 12-16, 2016

The Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C., Speaker of the Senate, visited Scotland and England from October 12 to 16, 2016.

The delegation has the honour to present its

Report

The official delegation was comprised of the following members:

- The Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C., Speaker of the Senate;
- Mrs. Karen Furey;
- Mr. Charles Robert, Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments;
- Mr. Michel Patrice, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel and Chief Parliamentary Precinct Services Officer; and
- Ms. Évelyne Côté, Secretary to the Delegation.

Background – United Kingdom

In June 2016, the United Kingdom held a referendum to decide whether or not to retain membership in the European Union. 51.9% of Britons voted to leave. The result took many by surprise, and the repercussions are being felt both in the UK and internationally. The country is now divided: Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to remain, while England and Wales voted to leave. In response to the referendum result, Prime Minister David Cameron announced that he would step down, and was replaced by Theresa May.

It is still quite difficult to predict all the potential impacts of the UK's decision to leave the European Union; much depends on what the relationship between the UK and the EU will be once the separation is official. However, it is worth noting that once the UK leaves, the EU's population will decrease by 12%, its GDP by 16%, and its budget by 10%.

Prime Minister May has announced that she is considering invoking Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty by late March 2017. Once Article 50 is invoked, the UK will have two years to work out and finalize its departure terms. The Brexit vote and related issues will have a considerable impact on Canadian interests since merchandise trade with the UK accounts for 25% of trade with the European Union.

The United Kingdom and Canada maintain a close relationship based on deep shared traditions and history, common values, and strong economic ties. This relationship is enhanced by partnerships in numerous international forums and the fact that both countries prioritize security, defence, and intelligence co-operation.

Objectives

The main objectives of the visit to Scotland were to:

- strengthen ties between the Senate of Canada and the Scottish Parliament;

- discuss various issues surrounding governance, security, and the financial framework of parliamentary institutions;
- encourage ongoing parliamentary dialogue by further promoting parliamentary exchanges; and
- promote educational exchanges.

The main objectives of the visit to England were to:

- strengthen ties with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the monarchy; and
- strengthen ties between the Senate of Canada and the House of Lords by discussing matters related to parliamentary governance, long-term renovation projects, and security.

Meetings – Scotland

While visiting Edinburgh, Scotland, the delegation met with:

- Mr. Ken Macintosh, MSP, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament;
- Ms. Becky Thomson, Head of Security of the Scottish Parliament;
- Ms. Lisbeth Craig, Financial Controller of the Scottish Parliament, and Ms. Mairi Pearson, Head of Allowances of the Scottish Parliament;
- Mr. Simon Wakefield, Head of Research and Knowledge of the Scottish Parliament and Senior Official with the Scottish Parliament Information Centre; and
- Ms. Suzi Macpherson and Ms. Camilla Kidner, senior researchers with the Scottish Parliament.

Meeting with Mr. Ken Macintosh, MSP, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament

The Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament warmly welcomed Speaker Furey. He said that while the Canadian parliamentary system is a federal rather than a devolved parliamentary system, there are many similarities between both systems and he was pleased to have the opportunity to become more familiar with them.

The Speaker and the Presiding Officer began by discussing their roles within their respective parliaments. Presiding Officer Macintosh informed Speaker Furey that the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament is elected by his peers and automatically becomes independent. He added that since he must maintain the confidence of all his peers, it is impossible for him to involve himself in political matters or debate. He went on to explain that in the event of a tie, he must vote for the status quo and that since he was elected in May 2016, he has had to vote on two occasions. Speaker Furey explained that unlike the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Speaker of the Senate is appointed by the Prime Minister. He added that while the Speaker may get involved in debate and may vote, he or she must be the first to vote.

Discussion then turned to Brexit and its potential future impact. Presiding Officer Macintosh said that he believes that the referendum was extremely fractious within the UK and Scotland and created several divisions across the country. He added that the Brexit outcome revived talk of a referendum on Scottish independence at a time when

this constitutional battle had just begun to settle down. He said that for many Scots, the outcome was very frustrating since it gave them the impression that their democratic authority was not respected.

Meeting with Ms. Becky Thomson, Head of Security of the Scottish Parliament

The meeting with Ms. Thomson was an opportunity to discuss security. Ms. Thompson provided a guided tour of the various security measures put in place in recent years. She told the Speaker that in response to the attack on Parliament Hill in 2014, the Scottish Parliament conducted a comprehensive evaluation of its security policies and measures. She added that the murder of pro-EU Labour MP Jo Cox in June 2016 had a major impact on Scottish MSPs and on how they felt about the security measures that the Scottish Parliament was attempting to put in place. She mentioned that following the referendum, there was an increase in the number of pro-Scottish independence demonstrations and that this considerably changed the type of risk facing the Scottish Parliament and its security service.

Speaker Furey told Ms. Thomson that the attack in Ottawa led to a re-evaluation of security measures within the parliamentary precinct, just as in Scotland. One of the recommendations was to combine the separate security services that existed on Parliament Hill at that time. The new service, the *Parliamentary Protective Service*, is now under the authority of both Speakers.

Ms. Thomson and Speaker Furey then discussed the security measures in place in the Scottish Parliament. The Police Service of Scotland is responsible for security outside the parliamentary grounds, while the parliamentary administration has a team of security officers dedicated to security within Parliament. Ms. Thomson added that since the parliamentary building is relatively new, it was not difficult to install new security systems. She did point out that it is a complex building and that they are currently trying to find ways to streamline procedures for emergency evacuations.

Ms. Thomson then discussed the UK's threat level, stating that it was raised to "severe" in August 2016. She added that if it were to reach the next level, "critical," certain security policies would be expected to change, such as decreasing the number of building entrances and requiring everyone entering the building, including MSPs and parliamentary staff, to be screened.

Speaker Furey and Ms. Thomson then discussed the difficulty of engaging parliamentarians who could facilitate the implementation of new policies. This can be a challenge as some equate instituting new security measures to establishing barriers which distances them from the people they serve.

Meeting with Ms. Lisbeth Craig, Financial Controller of the Scottish Parliament, and Ms. Mairi Pearson, Head of Allowances of the Scottish Parliament

Speaker Furey thanked Ms. Craig and Ms. Pearson for agreeing to meet with him to discuss various financial policies and parliamentary allowances. Ms. Craig briefly outlined her role and the Scottish Parliament's financial policies. She discussed the parliamentary budget, including the individual budgets of each MSP and institutional

expenditures. She then went over the annual budget planning exercise and the various provisions to be taken before it is finally approved by the Finance and Constitution Committee and introduced in Parliament for adoption.

Ms. Pearson explained her team's role within the Scottish Parliament. She added that allowances and payments to MSPs covered travel, housing for those living more than 30 miles from Parliament, staff, and office expenses such as translation and telecommunications. All invoices must be submitted to her team, and all claims are compiled and published each quarter. She said that this policy was established in 2007 in response to intense media pressure. She went on to say that all MSPs are aware of this policy and, by the same token, the risks. She believes that as a result, claims are usually legitimate.

The meeting concluded with Ms. Pearson outlining the salary and allowance review process that must be conducted following each election.

Meeting with Mr. Simon Wakefield, Head of Research and Knowledge of the Scottish Parliament and senior official with the Scottish Parliament Information Centre

The meeting with Mr. Wakefield gave Speaker Furey a better understanding of the Scottish Parliament Information Centre and the wide range of services it provides to MSPs and the Administration. Mr. Wakefield said that one of the Centre's key roles is to provide its clients with impartial and unbiased analysis and information. He said that this can prove challenging at times since the requests received from parliamentarians may be partisan in nature. He noted that the briefing documents they prepare are available online and that the Scottish media have often referred to them in the past.

One of the primary objectives of the Information Centre is to collaborate with universities and academics in order to provide added value to parliamentary business. Mr. Wakefield told Speaker Furey that there have been several initiatives such as opening a dialogue with universities to discuss the kind of support that could be helpful to Parliament and the potential range of services that universities could provide, as well as Parliament hiring PhD students.

Mr. Wakefield then mentioned that it was preparing to organize breakfast sessions on Brexit and that it expected to launch a campaign to recruit several academic researchers. He added that the universities are usually highly engaged and appreciate the opportunity to take part in this kind of research.

Meeting with Ms. Suzi Macpherson and Ms. Camilla Kidner, senior researchers with the Scottish Parliament

This meeting was an opportunity to discuss the Scottish school system and to learn more about education in Scotland. Ms. Macpherson and Ms. Kidner began by explaining the differences between the public and private systems, adding that private schools account for less than 4% of all schools. While most public schools are Catholic, there are also some Jewish and Episcopalian schools. She said that the curriculum for excellence begins at age 3 and ends at 18. In support of this curriculum, the

government provides 600 hours of educational services per year to all children between 3 and 4 years of age. They said that private schools are not obligated to follow the Scottish curriculum and that many of them have opted instead to follow the curriculum used in England or ones used internationally.

The discussion moved on to adolescent education and school abandonment. At the age of 16, students may officially stop attending school. Between 16 and 19, Scottish students may attend three types of institutions: vocational schools, colleges, and universities. The secondary school drop-out rate is between 2% and 5%. However, between 25% and 30% of students who begin college or university do not complete their program.

Speaker Furey then asked about tuition. He was informed that education was free, including university undergraduate programs as long as the student was educated entirely in Scotland. Ms. Macpherson and Ms. Kidner added that tuition for graduate programs was the responsibility of the students and that most of them are able to access student loans. The Speaker also learned that a growing number of European students are now attending school in Scotland given the recent increase in English tuition and make up 10% of the student body.

The meeting ended with everyone agreeing on the importance of education and how much a country benefits by investing in education for its young people.

Activities

During his stay in Edinburgh, Speaker Furey had the opportunity to attend a working lunch with Mr. Lewis Macdonald, MSP and Deputy Convener of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee; and Sir Paul Grice, Clerk and Chief Executive of the Scottish Parliament, during which they discussed the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee's current study of Brexit's impact on Scotland.

Meetings – England

While in England, the Speaker met with:

- Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II;
- The Right Honourable the Lord Fowler, Lord Speaker of the House of Lords; and
- Mr. David Beamish, Clerk of the Parliaments.

Personal Audience with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

One of the primary objectives of the visit to England was to strengthen the ties between the monarchy and Canada's Parliament. Speaker Furey had the honour of being invited to a personal audience with Her Majesty. The audience was organized in connection with the blessing and dedication of the newly restored Black Rod of the Senate of Canada. The restoration, a sesquicentennial project approved by the Queen, took place over the summer of 2016 and was conducted by the artisans and conservation experts at Windsor Castle. The blessing was performed by the Right Reverend David Conner in St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle on Saturday, October 15, 2016, and was

attended by Mr. Terry Pendry, LVO, BEM, Stud Groom to Her Majesty the Queen; Lieutenant General David Leaky, CMG, CBE, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod; and Mr. Adrian Smith, LVO, Assistant to the Master of the Household “C,” who completed the restoration of the Black Rod.

Meeting with Lord Fowler, Lord Speaker of the House of Lords, and Mr. David Beamish, Clerk of the Parliaments

This meeting was an opportunity for Speaker Furey to meet with his counterpart in the House of Lords, Lord Fowler, who succeeded Baroness D’Souza in September 2016. Lord Fowler was accompanied by Mr. David Beamish, Clerk of the Parliaments.

Speaker Furey and Lord Fowler discussed the changes being made to the Senate of Canada. Speaker Furey briefly outlined the new appointment process for senators and how new senators are expected to be independent and not members of a party caucus. He added that it is an extremely interesting time to be working within such an institution. Lord Fowler added that change could also come to the House of Lords since there has been tremendous debate about reducing the number of Lords (the House of Lords now has over 800 members, which is 150 more than the membership of the House of Commons). Lord Fowler said that there was talk of reducing the number in 2001, but no change was made since the initiative did not receive much support at that time.

Speaker Furey and Lord Fowler then discussed Brexit and what it will mean for the British Parliament. They also discussed the “Great Repeal Bill,” which Prime Minister Theresa May’s government will introduce in Parliament in 2017 to trigger the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union.

The discussion then turned to the restoration of the Palace of Westminster. Mr. Beamish said that it would be more expensive to remain within the Palace during the renovations than to relocate. The House of Commons and House of Lords will therefore relocate to two separate buildings for the duration of the renovations.

Lastly, the issue of security was raised. Speaker Furey learned that the British Parliament had a new Parliamentary Security Director, who was responsible for responding to physical terror threats and cyber threats and for ensuring the personal security of parliamentarians.

Other Business

During his stay in England, Speaker Furey had the opportunity to meet the new Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Ms. Janice Charrette, who gave a presentation on the current political situation in the United Kingdom following the Brexit referendum.

Acknowledgements

The members of the Canadian delegation wish to thank Mr. Ken Macintosh, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, for his warm welcome as well as the team at the Office of International Relations.

The members of the delegation are also grateful to Mr. Terry Pendry, LVO, BEM, for his support throughout the preparations for the activities at Windsor Castle. The delegation also wishes to thank the staff at the High Commission in London for facilitating the visit.

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, to Scotland and England, United Kingdom

TRAVEL	\$ 35,665.25
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ACCOMMODATION	\$ 5,974.02
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PER DIEMS	\$ 2,914.93
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PROTOCOL	\$ 1,465.12
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MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 35.00
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TOTAL	\$ 46,054.32
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