



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation regarding
the Bilateral Visit to the United Kingdom**

**Canadian Branch of the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)**

London, United Kingdom

March 8 - 13, 2014

Report

A delegation of the Federal Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) visited London, United Kingdom from March 8 – 13, 2014. Canadian Branch was represented by the following delegation:

- Mr. Joe Preston, MP, Chair of the Canadian Branch, leader of the delegation;
- The Honourable Raynell Andreychuk, Senator.

The delegation was assisted by Elizabeth Kingston, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Branch of the CPA.

The objectives of the visit to London, United Kingdom are based on the Caribbean Initiative, a project launched by the CPA Federal Branch and endorsed by all provinces and territories across Canada. The project aims to provide a framework that allows the legislatures of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to establish working relationships with legislatures in the Commonwealth Caribbean, along the lines of those undertaken between the Australian and the Pacific regions of CPA. The purpose of the project would be to increase cooperation between parliaments, including the sharing of ideas and best practices. In particular, the visit to London was purposely inspired to inform the British Foreign Office of the project initiated by the CPA and to seek the endorsement of not only the Foreign office but also of British Parliamentarians of the participation of the Overseas Territories in the twinning initiative. Those Overseas Territories of the Caribbean concerned are the following: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos.

As a background, the Caribbean British Overseas Territories remain under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the United Kingdom. Most of these countries operate on a modified version of the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, each with slightly different levels of autonomy from the United Kingdom. Queen Elizabeth II acts as the Head of State in each territory and appoints a Governor to exercise her power. Each of the overseas territories has its own legal system independent of the United Kingdom and no official representation in the Westminster Parliament. They are overseen by the Foreign Office, which directly provides assistance in the areas of training, equipment and staff in order to build police capacity as well as handling the daily processing of visa applications.

A: Meeting with the British - Canadian All Party Parliamentary Group – Westminster Parliament:

The delegation initially met with the executive members of the Canada – United Kingdom All Party Parliamentary Group which included Andrew Rosindell, Chair of All Party Group as well as Sir Richard Ottoway, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

All agreed that much support could be lent to the Caribbean Initiative as introduced by the Canadian Branch of the CPA. Such projects as post-election seminars, sharing of technical and administrative resources, legislative drafting assistance were discussed as being timely and well accepted. Moreover, it was stated that Canada and the United Kingdom should be doing more on a bilateral level and such a project would lend itself nicely to an even greater spirit of cooperation.

Following the meeting, the delegation had the opportunity to attend the service at Westminster Abbey to commemorate Commonwealth Day. Following the service, the delegation then travelled to Malborough House to attend a reception in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, again to honour Commonwealth Day.

B. Meeting with Kathryn Seabrook – Joint Head – Caribbean and Bermuda Section, Overseas Territories Directorate – Foreign Office:

The delegation had the opportunity to seek the direct permission of the Foreign Office to engage the British Overseas Territories of the Caribbean during the course of this meeting. The Chair, Mr. Preston presented the proposal and received a most positive response in looking to further engage with Canada on this issue. Ms. Seabrook mentioned in particular that the Governors would be most appreciative of an increased linkage with Canada, particularly noting support they require in the areas of policing, judicial training, legislative drafting, public accounts as well as post-secondary education. As a result, it was firmly agreed at the conclusion of the meeting that in promoting the Caribbean initiative, the Canadian Branch of the CPA would be most welcome to engage the Overseas Territories in the twinning efforts.

C. Meeting with the British – Overseas Territories All Party Group chaired by Andrew Rosindell, M.P.:

The delegation then met with the British – Overseas Territories All Party Group and explained the purpose and intent of the Caribbean Initiative. Again, there was enthusiasm expressed for the initiative and endorsement for the project. Members of the Group were pleased to hear that the Foreign office had also given acceptance to having the Canadian Branch of the CPA approach the Overseas Territories, inviting them to partake in the Twinning Initiative.

D. Meeting with Vijay Krishnarayan, Director Commonwealth Foundation and Shantal Munro-Knight , Executive Director of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre:

The Commonwealth Foundation is one of the Commonwealth's three intergovernmental agencies alongside the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth of Learning. Its principal mandate is to develop the capacity of civil society and to strive for more effective, responsive and accountable governance with civil society participation, thereby contributing to improved development outcomes.

The Foundation is working with its Caribbean partner, the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) to establish a Caribbean Consultative Working Group (CCWG).

Currently there is no structured mechanism for civil society engagement with regional Caribbean policy makers.

As a result of this partnership in working to strengthen governance structures within the Caribbean and to increase dialogue among the partner nations, the Caribbean Twinning Initiative was welcomed, realizing that it could play a constructive role in furthering the aims and objectives of the project.

E: Meeting with the CPA Secretariat:

The delegation had the opportunity to meet with officials of the CPA Secretariat, namely Joe Omorodion, Director of Finance and Meenakshi Dhar, Director of Programs. They welcomed the Twinning Initiative Program, commenting on the success of a similar program in Australia and expressed support in providing any assistance that might assist in furthering the work already undertaken.

In closing, the delegation would like to thank those from the Canadian High Commission in London whose contribution led to a most successful outcome and in particular, High Commissioner Gordon Campbell., and Scott Proudfoot, Minister Counsellor Political & Public Affairs. The delegation would also like to thank representatives from DFATD and the Library of Parliament who assisted in the preparation of the necessary briefing materials.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Joe Preston, M.P.

Chair

Federal Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

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| ASSOCIATION | Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) |
| ACTIVITY | Bilateral visit to the United Kingdom |
| DESTINATION | London, United Kingdom |
| DATES | March 8-13, 2014 |
| DELEGATION | |
| SENATE | Hon. Raynell Andreychuk, Senator |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS | Mr. Joe Preston, M.P. |
| STAFF | Ms. Elizabeth Kingston, Executive Secretary |
| TRANSPORTATION | \$3,686.76 |
| ACCOMMODATION | \$5,980.24 |
| HOSPITALITY | \$0.00 |
| PER DIEMS | \$1,308.23 |
| OFFICIAL GIFTS | \$0.00 |
| MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES | \$0.00 |
| TOTAL | \$10,975.23 |