



Report

**Visit of the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella,
Speaker of the Senate,
and a Parliamentary Delegation,
London, United Kingdom,**

October 18-19, 2013

The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate, and a Parliamentary Delegation visited London, United Kingdom, from October 18 to 19, 2013.

The delegation has the honour of tabling its

Report

The official delegation led by Speaker Noël A. Kinsella comprised the following members:

The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate;

The Honourable David Smith, P.C., Senator;

Mr. Joe Preston, M.P.; and

Ms. Janelle Feldstein, Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the Senate, and
Secretary to the Delegation.

Objectives of the Visit

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is a forum which enables parliamentarians to contribute to the development of best parliamentary practices and effective policies. This is done through discussion, exchanging information and, sharing experiences and debating policies. The CPA is recognized by Commonwealth Heads of Government and intergovernmental agencies as an organization which promotes the advancement of parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance. In 2003, governments bound themselves to an underlying set of Commonwealth principles based on a CPA initiative to define the proper relationships between the arms of government.

Proposals for reform of the House of Lords are of significant interest to Canadian parliamentarians, as are the governance issues of both Houses of Parliament. The right to remove or suspend a member is particularly pertinent.

Plans for the disposition of real estate by the Department of Foreign Affairs are proceeding. Canada House is one such asset and some interest has been expressed in finding ways to retain this property.

Consequently, the delegation had the following objectives for its visit:

- to discuss a range of issues regarding the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association,
- to examine reform proposals for the House of Lords and parliamentary governance issues, and
- to discuss the possible disposition of Canadian assets in London.

Meetings

The delegation met with: Dr. William Shija, Secretary-General of the CPA; Rhodri Walters, Reading Clerk of the House of Lords; Charlotte Restorick, Parliamentary Secretary to Sir Alan Haselhurst MP, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Executive Committee; David Beamish, Clerk of the Parliaments; Brendan Keith, Registrar of Lords Interests; Duncan Sagar, former Parliamentary Secretary to the Clerk of the Parliaments; and Gordon Campbell, High Commissioner for Canada to the United Kingdom.

Meeting with Dr. William Shija, Secretary-General of the CPA

The President of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Mr. Joe Preston, M.P. and the Vice-President of the Canadian Branch of the CPA, the Honourable David Smith, P.C., Senator, accompanied the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate of Canada and Honorary Co-Chairperson of the Canadian Branch of the CPA, to meet with Dr. William Shija, Secretary-General of the CPA, at the CPA Secretariat.

The Canadian delegation was warmly welcomed by the Secretary-General, who introduced the staff of the Secretariat to the Canadian delegation. The Secretary General provided a general overview of the work undertaken by the CPA since its meeting in South Africa.

The Speaker of the Senate raised the matter of the democratic challenges faced by the Commonwealth Association in different theatres of the world, including Sri Lanka, and outlined the concerns expressed in Canada concerning the situation in Sri Lanka by Canadian civil society, the Canadian government and within the Canadian Branch of the CPA.

The upcoming heads of governments of the Commonwealth meeting being hosted by the government of Sri Lanka was discussed. The Speaker of the Senate expressed the view that it is very important that the members of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association express solidarity at this time with our legislative colleagues in Commonwealth countries where democracy is facing challenges.

Dr. Shija outlined some of the initiatives that he has taken in this regard. Mention was made of looking to “twin” parliamentarians in South Africa with their colleagues in Sri Lanka. Mr. Joe Preston reviewed the CPA discussions in this regard as explored during the recent meeting in South Africa. Senator David Smith added to the consensus and added that there is a model for CPA intervention in cases where democracy is challenged in member states of the CPA.

The issue of Sri Lanka holding the CPA presidency was discussed. Senator Smith added the upcoming meeting being hosted by the Republic of Cameroon causes concern.

Speaker Kinsella drew to the Secretary-General's attention the Parliamentary Officers Study Programme delivered by the Parliament of Canada and invited the Secretary-General to make nominations of member parliaments which he thinks might benefit from participating in this successful programme.

Discussion was held on the matter of the audit that is being prepared in relation to the CPA Secretariat. The Secretary-General indicated that the terms and scope of this financial audit should be ready for approval in February 2014.

Speaker Kinsella raised the topic of a "performance audit" of the CPA. General discussion was held on this subject.

Meeting with Rhodri Walters, Reading Clerk of the House of Lords, and Charlotte Restorick, Parliamentary Secretary to Sir Alan Haselhurst MP, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Executive Committee

A bilateral Canada / UK meeting was held with representatives of the UK House of Lords and the House of Commons on common CPA concerns.

The excellent speech made by the distinguished Sir Alan Haselhurst was discussed. Technical issues concerning the charity status and obligations of CPA pursuant to UK charity legislation was reviewed. The situation of the CPA treasurer from Swaziland was discussed and note was taken of his recent re-election to parliament in his country.

Discussion was held on the question of a specific programme audit for the CPA. The views of Lord Speaker Baroness Frances D'Souza on this matter were discussed and supported by Speaker Kinsella.

Meeting with David Beamish, Clerk of the Parliaments, Rhodri Walters, Reading Clerk of the House of Lords, Brendan Keith, Registrar of Lords Interests, and Duncan Sagar, former Parliamentary Secretary to the Clerk of the Parliaments

A productive meeting was held with David Beamish and procedural officers on a number of important parliamentary procedural matters.

Member of Parliament Joe Preston, Chair of the Canadian House of Commons Procedural Affairs Committee, raised a number of issues related to the House of Commons.

Speaker Kinsella sought advice on the relationship of a committee clerk to a given committee. It is the view at Westminster that a meeting of a committee without its clerk would not be a formal committee meeting, but rather an informal meeting of some members.

Discussion was held on how the House of Lords dealt with the matter of Members' expense claims and related communication challenges.

Speaker Kinsella inquired about the practice in each House on the matter of exercising the right to suspend a member. The existence of such a right was confirmed. While the

House of Commons had exercised this right more recently, the House of Lords use of this right had occurred in the distant past. A useful discussion was held on this matter with specific reference being made to a recent detailed study by a committee of the House.

Meeting with High Commissioner Gordon Campbell

An important and productive meeting was held at Canada House with Canada's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Gordon Campbell. The High Commissioner provided a fulsome briefing of the strategic plan that is set out to renew Canada House and to acquire additional space in connected buildings at Trafalgar Square. The global plan will involve the selling of the Residence at Grosvenor Square and result in significant savings for the London operation which will be anchored in a renewed and expanded Canada House.

Speaker Kinsella proposed that a group from Canada's civil society might be formed as "Friends of Canada House" to facilitate a first class renewal with the participation of funds from the private sector.

Acknowledgements

The members of the Canadian delegation wish to thank Dr. Shija, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, for his warm welcome and thoughtful comments.

The frank discussions with officials were very helpful to the members of the delegation and we express our deep appreciation to them for taking time from their busy schedules to assist us.

Finally, the members of the delegation wish to thank High Commissioner Campbell for providing useful insight and the staff of the Canadian High Commission in London, particularly Gillian Licari, for their cooperation during the visit.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella
Speaker of the Senate

Travel Costs

Visit of the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate,
and a Parliamentary Delegation, London, United Kingdom.

TRAVEL	\$ 12,236.04
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 3,780.94
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,746.58
PROTOCOL	\$ 0
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 66.50
TOTAL	\$ 17,830.06