



**“Restoring Faith in the Political Process: Tackling
Corruption,
Upholding Human Rights, the role of the Media”**

London, UK

January 22-28, 2006

The Parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association that participated in the CPA UK Branch Seminar on “Restoring Faith in the Political Process: Tackling Corruption, Upholding Human Rights, the role of the Media” held in London, UK from January 22-28, 2006 is honoured to present its report.

Report

The Canadian Branch was represented by the Honourable Terry M. Mercer, CFRE, Senator (Northend Halifax – Nova Scotia).

The following branches were in attendance: Australia, Canada, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Malta, Maldives, Mauritius, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago and Zambia.

While the major benefit of all CPA Conferences is the relationship we are able to build with the other delegates around the Commonwealth, each day of this conference was built around several themes followed on day two, three and four by workshops reviewing various aspects of the theme.

The Opening Session was developed around a panel discussion entitled “Restoring the crucial link between Parliament and the people”.

It was acknowledged that the link between politicians and the people they represent is strained at best. However, the knowledge barrier has largely been overcome. With the use of computers and the internet knowledge does not just reside with the older more experienced but is available to all. It was also noted that participation in political parties is in serious decline. There was also broad support for more emphasis on Parliament/Politics in the public school system.

Day two was built around a panel discussion themed “Corruption: The Challenge of Eradication”. Governance “the process and institutions through which decisions are made and authority in the country is exercised” is important. Without good governance few countries can make progress to eradicate corruption.

It was estimated that \$148 billion USD per year is lost in Africa to corruption and \$410 billion USD lost to bribery in government contracts. “Corruption is not a victimless crime”.

This session was followed by three workshops covering the following topics:

- (A) “Eradication: The Role of Parliamentarians”
- (B) “Has Democracy the Strength to Mount the Challenge?”
- (C) “Eradication: Measuring Success”

The third day had two panel discussions entitled “Human Rights: Terrorism & Civil Liberties” and “Human Rights: The Challenge for 2006 & the Role of NGO”.

These were followed by workshops:

- (D) “The Role of NGOs”
- (E) “Human Rights: A Necessary Casualty in the War Against Terror”
- (F) “Will the Ballot Box Even Prevail Against the Bomb?”

The fourth day also had two panel discussions built around the themes “The Role of the Media in the Political Process” and “Ethics and Journalism”.

Three workshops followed entitled:

(G) “Can the Media Serve as a Weapon Against Corruption?”

(H) “Politician and Journalist – Who Controls Whom?”

(I) “Can the Media Help Restore Faith in the Political Process?”

Day five was reserved for the Closing Plenary.

Handouts

I have placed a number of the handouts with the CPA Secretariat here in Ottawa, copies are available on request.

Other Meetings

While in London I attended a post election reception hosted by the Canadian High Commission at Canada House.

I also attended the funeral for Mr. Glyn Berry the Canadian Diplomat killed in Afghanistan. It was a very moving service and a fitting tribute to a great Canadian public servant.

Respectfully submitted,

Honourable Terry M. Mercer, Senator
Canadian (Federal) Branch
of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

Travel Costs

NAME OF ASSOCIATION	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Canadian Branch
ACTIVITY	CPA UK Branch Seminar
DESTINATION	London (U.K.)
DATES	January 22–28, 2006
NAMES OF SENATORS	Honourable Terry M. Mercer, Senator
NAMES OF MEMBERS	
NAMES OF STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$4,975.90
ACCOMMODATION	\$0
HOSPITALITY	\$0
PER DIEMS	\$283.79
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$0
TOTAL	\$5,259.69