



Report

**Visit of the Honourable Andrew Scheer, M.P.,
Speaker of the House of Commons,
United Kingdom**

January 19-20, 2015

The Honourable Andrew Scheer, M.P., Speaker of the House of Commons, conducted an official visit to the United Kingdom from January 19 to 20, 2015.

The Speaker has the honour to present his

Report

The Canadian delegation was comprised of the following members:

- The Honourable Andrew Scheer, M.P., Speaker of the House of Commons;
- Mr. Marc Bosc, Acting Clerk of the House of Commons; and
- Mr. Darryl Whitehead, Senior Advisor to the Speaker.

Context

The United Kingdom is a Constitutional Monarchy with an estimated population of 64.09 million. In this bicameral Parliament, the House of Commons is constituted by Members elected by direct universal suffrage for five-year terms. The Prime Minister and the government are formed by a majority vote of elected Members and is currently a coalition of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Parties. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of State and has been since her accession in 1952. Legislative powers are exercised by the House of Commons, a lower chamber made up of the 659 elected Members, and the House of Lords, the upper chamber made up of 791 peers who are largely appointed.

The current government is led by Prime Minister David Cameron. He leads a coalition formed following the parliamentary elections on May 6, 2010 in which Cameron's Conservative Party took 36.1% of the popular vote and 306 seats. As no one party secured the 326 seats required of a majority government, there was a "hung parliament" for only the second time since World War II. Since the previous Labour government under PM Gordon Brown was unable to secure the needed support from smaller parties to achieve a majority of votes, Brown presented his resignation as PM and the Queen invited Cameron to form government and become PM. A coalition with the Liberal Democrats was announced on May 12th and endured until the dissolution of Parliament.

As a result of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, the current Parliament dissolved on March 30, 2015 and an election will be held on May 7, 2015. Given the current fractured state of the electorate it is anticipated that the election will return another hung parliament.

Canada's relationship with the United Kingdom (U.K.) is rooted in their common history and shared values. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a founding member of NATO and the Commonwealth, and a member of the European Union, the U.K. is one of Canada's key partners in addressing global issues and advancing Canada's international priorities.

Objectives of the visit:

The main objective of the visit was to discuss security of the parliamentary precinct, an issue of common interest to both the Parliament of Canada and the Palace of Westminster. Speaker Scheer also had the opportunity to exchange ideas relating to parliamentary governance and to review recent procedural and administrative changes at the House of Commons. In addition, the Speaker held talks on a range of issues including trade.

Meetings

During his visit to the United Kingdom, the Speaker met with:

- The Right Honourable John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons;
- His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Lockwood Smith, KNZM, Ph. D., High Commissioner of New Zealand to the United Kingdom;
- The Right Honourable Greg Hands MP, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Security;
- Mr. Lawrence Ward, Serjeant at Arms;
- Detective Chief Superintendent Sandra Looby, Metropolitan Police Service Operational Command Unit Commander for the Parliamentary Estate; and
- Mr. Paul Martin CBE, Director of Parliamentary Security.

Meeting with the Right Honourable John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons

Speaker Bercow hosted a lunch for the delegation in his formal dining room. A number of other Parliamentarians were in attendance, including both Members and Peers. The informal conversation over lunch covered a number of topics including security, reflections on the forthcoming U.K. election, and some of the characteristics of the Scottish Assembly.

Meeting with His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Lockwood Smith, KNZM, Ph. D., High Commissioner of New Zealand to the United Kingdom

His Excellency met the Speaker at his Office within the New Zealand High Commission. As the High Commissioner was a former presiding officer of the New Zealand legislature, a brief discussion took place on some of the recent developments in New Zealand politics. The High Commissioner then provided an update regarding his work in London and the priorities he has undertaken. The discussion concluded with a conversation about the evolving nature of Pacific trade and the impacts on both Canada and New Zealand.

Meeting with the Right Honourable Greg Hands MP, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Security

The delegation was also able to meet with the Right Honourable Greg Hands MP, Deputy Whip of the coalition government and Chairman of the Joint Committee on Security. The Joint Committee is an informal arrangement that allows Members the ability to feed information back into the security system. The leadership of the

Committee are the whips or deputy whips and they meet regularly with the administrative heads of the security system. Issues that often come up include broad considerations like access or governance and more specific cases like threats to a particular Members' safety or that of his/her staff. The Deputy Whip believed that the informal nature of the committee was a strength as it enabled issues of safety and security to be dealt with outside of the partisan political sphere.

Meeting with Mr. Lawrence Ward, Serjeant at Arms

The Serjeant at Arms met with the delegation in his office and began by providing his best wishes to then Canadian Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers. He commented that Mr. Vickers had certainly raised the overall public profile of the office of Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Ward spoke at length about where his office fits into the constellation within security provision. Broadly put, his office seeks to protect parliamentary privileges within the provision of security by working as an intermediary between Members and security providers. While there are many challenges he felt that the system at least enabled voices to be heard and considered – that there was always an outlet for those in disagreement.

Meeting with Detective Chief Superintendent Sandra Looby, Metropolitan Police Service Operational Command Unit Commander for the Parliamentary Estate

Ms. Looby provided the delegation with an extensive overview of the role of the Metropolitan Police Service and its role providing security and policing to the Parliamentary precinct. She also spoke about the advantages of being able to rely on the additional resources of the Met to backfill as necessary should security needs merit an increased presence. Challenges were also discussed and Ms. Looby spoke at length about the unique nature of the Parliamentary Estate and the impacts that these characteristics have on her role. After an informative presentation and discussion, the delegation was given a tour of several screening stations and shown how Parliamentarians, staff, and visitors are able to gain safe access to the grounds. Some recent upgrades were also discussed as a means of demonstrating the current approach and philosophy.

Meeting with Mr. Paul Martin CBE, Director of Parliamentary Security

Mr. Martin met the delegation in his office at Westminster. After a brief introduction to his position, its responsibilities, and a “typical” day, Mr. Martin provided his perspective on the provision of Parliamentary security at Westminster. Topics included the historical evolution of the British model, challenges that it currently faces, and evolutions presently underway both operationally and administratively. As a result of his rich experience within the security sector, Mr. Martin provided many important insights about threats and appropriate pre-emptive measures that can be taken by agencies providing security to high profile targets. Mr. Martin was also very generous with his time in responding to questions from the delegation regarding some of the security measures being proposed in Canada.

Other activities

The Speaker was able to meet with a leading think tank, the Centre for Social Justice. After a short presentation about the nature of his position, the Speaker participated in an extended question and answer period with the staff of the organization. The staff members were surprisingly well informed about North American politics and posed many insightful questions to the Speaker. The Speaker also had the opportunity to join a delegation of the Canada-United Kingdom Inter-Parliamentary Association for a courtesy call on the Right Honourable William Hague, MP, First Secretary of State and Leader of the House of Commons and for a dinner with members of the Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees.

Acknowledgements

The Speaker would like to thank the staff of the High Commission of Canada in London for their assistance in preparing the visit. Special thanks to Mrs. Gillian Licari, Head of VIP Visits Unit and Political Officer and to Ms. Alison Game, Inward Visits Manager, Overseas Office, House of Commons for helping to facilitate access for the delegation and for her patient shepherding of the delegation from meeting to meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Andrew Scheer, M.P.,
Speaker of the House of Commons

Travel Costs

Visit of the Honourable Andrew Scheer, M.P., Speaker of the House of Commons, United Kingdom

TRAVEL	\$ 1,243.03
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 5,833.91
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,315.32
PROTOCOL	\$ 367.96
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 0
TOTAL	\$ 8,760.22