



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation regarding
the Bilateral Visit to Jamaica, the Republic of Trinidad and
Tobago, and Barbados**

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

**Kingston, Jamaica; Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago and
Bridgetown, Barbados**

April 3 – 10, 2013

Report

A delegation of the Federal Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) visited Jamaica, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados from April 3 – 10, 2013. The Canadian Branch was represented by the following delegation:

- Mr. Joe Preston, MP, Chair of the Canadian Branch, leader of the delegation;
- The Honourable Pierrette Ringuette, Senator;
- The Honourable Ghislain Maltais, Senator; and
- Mr. Daryl Kramp, MP.

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

The objectives of the visit to the Caribbean 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.

A. Meeting with the Jamaican Houses of Parliament

The Parliament of Jamaica is a bicameral body, composed of an appointed Senate and an elected House of Representatives. The Senate comprises 21 senators while the House of Representatives is made up of 63 Members of Parliament, who are elected to five-year terms.

The delegation had the unique opportunity to attend the ceremonial opening Parliament on Thursday, April 4, 2013, and to witness the Throne Speech delivered by His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen, ON, GCMG, CD, Governor General.

Entitled, Jamaica: Going for Growth and Development, the speech highlighted the country's recent celebration of 50 years of independence, its vulnerability to natural disasters, and the major priority to secure an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to ensure that the country would have the necessary financial resources from various sources and to enable the country to meet the agreed economic targets. Also, while looking to diversify its tourism markets, it is also moving to deepen linkages

with other key industries such as manufacturing and agriculture with a view to earning more from the tourism sector, while ensuring that such assets remain in the country.

Following the delivery of the Speech from the Throne, the delegation was given the honour to present its twinning proposal to all assembled members of both Houses of Parliament. Mr. Joe Preston, M.P., explained the purpose and intent of the proposal and answered any questions. The proposal was unanimously endorsed by all parliamentarians, including the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson-Miller. The Prime Minister, in her remarks, noted most specifically the excellent cooperation in the area of military training and cooperation between Canada and Jamaica, and suggested that areas of increased cooperation could involve agriculture, technology, parliamentary practice and procedure, and relationship development at the parliamentary level. Mr. Preston then explained the role of the Federal Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), in looking to organize and monitor the various twinning relationships established between the Caribbean countries and the provinces and territories across Canada, all the while providing advice and assistance on any matter that would be considered a federal jurisdiction.

B. Blue and Crow Mountains National Park

While in Jamaica, the delegation had the opportunity to visit the Blue and Crow Mountains National Park, representing one of the country's most prominent natural areas. Established in 1993, it is recognized as a unique ecosystem, and its mission is two-fold: to manage the Park for its natural, cultural and recreational values by striking the right balance between biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development.

Within the Park is the military centre of Newcastle, established by the British in 1840. It is now used as a training camp for soldiers and recruits of the Jamaica Defence Force. The location was chosen by Major General Sir William Gomm, the Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica at the time, who noted that yellow fever, a major cause of death among British troops, occurred less frequently in the cool of the mountains. The visit to the centre served to highlight the ongoing cooperation of Canada and Jamaica in the area of defence training and diplomacy.

The delegation then travelled to Trinidad and Tobago to seek the endorsement of its Parliament with respect to the twinning initiative.

C. Meeting with Senator the Honourable Timothy Hamel-Smith, President of the Senate and the Honourable Mark Wade, Speaker of the House

The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago consists of the elected House of Representatives, which has 41 members elected for a five-year term in single-seat constituencies, and the Senate, which has 31 members appointed by the President: 16 Government Senators appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister, 6 Opposition

Senators appointed on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and 9 Independent Senators appointed by the President to represent other sectors of civil society.

Both Speakers remarked on the tremendous relationship that exists between Canada and Trinidad and Tobago particularly at the parliamentary level and noted that Trinidad and Tobago is arguably the most active CPA branch in all of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Mr. Joe Preston went on to explain the intent and purpose of the Parliamentary twinning initiative, and made the request that Trinidad and Tobago become an active participant. The request was enthusiastically received by both Speakers and later ratified by a committee of parliamentarians. The areas of potential interest included the sharing of resources and intellectual capital, an examination of the role of parliamentarians with a view to enhancing their participation in parliamentary activities, an examination and comparison of the Standing Orders of each legislature, training of parliamentarians as to their role both as representatives of their constituents as well as legislators.

The issue of including the British Overseas Territories was raised and it was expressed that both Canada and Trinidad and Tobago would like to see them included in the initiative. The Westminster Parliament has also expressed an interest in participating in the programme.

Mr. Preston then stated that the reporting mechanism would be accomplished through the Regional Council meetings of both Canada and the Caribbean, which take place in July of each year. Funding possibilities would be explored through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Development (DFATD), as well as the World Bank, the IMF, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

D. Site Visit to PCS Nitrogen Trinidad

Following the meeting with Parliamentarians and the endorsement of the Twinning Initiative Project, the delegation visited the PCS Model Farm and Agricultural Resource Centre, owned and operated by PCS Trinidad, a subsidiary of Potash Corporation, based out of Saskatchewan. PCS Nitrogen, based in Trinidad, is one of the world's largest nitrogen complexes, consisting of four ammonia and one urea plant and placed due to the plentiful and reasonably priced natural gas resources of the country.

The ammonia produced at the plant is made into nitrogen solutions for fertilizers while the nitric acid is used in the making of synthetic fibers and plastics, and the urea used to produce fertilizers and feed supplements. In essence, the production of these nutrients leads to better overall food production.

The PCS Model Farm, located near the plant site, was established in 2008 to bolster the professional nature of the farming community in Trinidad by providing assistance to become better food producers and the tools to become better crop growers. In essence, the PCS Model Farm aims to teach farmers, students and the public how

advanced farming techniques and the responsible use of fertilizer can produce more and healthier crops. It focuses on techniques that can boost crop yields, strengthen the nation's agricultural practices, help develop self-sufficiency in food production and stimulate job creation.

Following the visit to Trinidad and Tobago, the delegation then travelled to Barbados to seek the endorsement of the Parliament of Barbados to participate in the Twinning Initiative.

E. Parliament of Barbados - Meeting with the President of the Senate, Senator Kerry Ann Ifill

The Parliament of Barbados is bicameral in composition and is formally made up of an appointed Senate and an elected House of Assembly. The Senate is made up of twenty-one Senators and the Queen (therein represented by the Governor-General) while the House consists of thirty MPs in addition to the Honourable Speaker of the House.

Mr. Preston explained to the President of the Senate and accompanying delegation of parliamentarians the intent of the project and it received a positive response from the participants. Those assembled stated that they would be pleased to promote the project amongst all Caribbean Commonwealth countries at the upcoming meeting in Antigua. In addition, Barbados thought that a twinning relationship with the province of Nova Scotia would be beneficial given the long history of trade relations that has historically existed between the two. It was also noted that Canada and Barbados share a long-established political and trade relationship and closer partnering with their Canadian counterparts would only enhance an already vibrant relationship.

F. Meeting with Sir Shridath Ramphal – former Commonwealth Secretary-General 1975 – 1990:

The delegation had the unique opportunity to meet with Sir Shridath “Sonny” Rampal while in Bridgetown Barbados. Sir Ramphal was the second Commonwealth Secretary-General and the first to come from a developing country, namely Guyana. He became Secretary-General of the Commonwealth in June 1975 on unanimous election by the heads of its member governments and was subsequently re-elected on two occasions, in 1979 in Zambia and then in 1983, in New Delhi.

During his time as Secretary-General, the number of countries in the Commonwealth grew from 34 to 49, representing nearly one-third of the international community of nations and one quarter of the world’s population. Issues of his time most notably were a rise in concern of global issues for peace and security and of political, economic and social justice, including the need to reduce tension and reverse the arms race, and the struggle for freedom and dignity in South Africa during the Apartheid era.

The hallmarks of his time include the 1977 Gleneagles Agreement isolating apartheid South Africa from international sport and the Commonwealth contribution to Zimbabwe's emergence to democratic independence in 1980.

Mr. Preston explained the purpose of the visit to Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados as a means to inform Caribbean countries of the Commonwealth of the Canadian initiative to twin province and territories with their Caribbean counterparts, and to seek the specific endorsement of these Parliaments to participate in the programme. Mr. Preston was pleased to report that all Parliaments visited were in complete agreement to participate.

Sir Ramphal stated that such programmes are of tremendous importance to the CPA, as they represent another level of co-mingling, and another means of spreading a sense of community within the Commonwealth. Moreover, he stated that the Commonwealth connection for the Caribbean is a vital distinguishing feature from its geographical neighbour, South America, and it is important that this connection be enhanced. Sir Ramphal also shared with the delegation that he felt the Caribbean can only benefit from a twinning arrangement, especially at a time when there appears to be a certain lack of commitment to an integration of the region, as noted in the difficult CARICOM agreement discussions.

With respect to the future of the Commonwealth in general, Sir Ramphal stated that Canada and Australia in particular have a major role to play. He noted that the world needs the Commonwealth, as it is unlike any other organization. He applauded the position Canada is taking with respect to Sri Lanka, and noted that the Commonwealth as a whole should take action when principles as espoused in the Commonwealth Charter are being violated. He noted that Canada has steered by principle and has helped to pull others along.

G. Visit to PROPEL – Promotion of Regional Opportunities for Produce through Enterprises and Linkages

The delegation then visited the Promotion of Regional Opportunities for Produce through Enterprises and Linkages (PROPEL) project, a 5-year, \$20 million sustainable economic growth project which aims to increase the value of Caribbean fresh produce accessing high-value markets in the Caribbean, and internationally. The project is being implemented in eight Caribbean countries from March 2012 to March 2017 and involves collaboration with private sector buyers, up to 28,000 farmers and producers, other value chains, and business service providers to facilitate the safe, effective and efficient movement of fresh produce from producers to buyers.

This project is designed to reduce significantly the food import bill of \$5 billion USD throughout the Caribbean by focusing on a market-driven agricultural production. The delegation was told that this project has shown much benefit to the region as it has

been demonstrated that more people are turning to agricultural production as a means to supplement their incomes, while seeing a higher level of technology to enhance production yields.

In closing, the delegation would like to thank particularly those from the High Commissions whose contributions led to a most successful outcome and in particular, High Commissioner Robert Ready and Alistair Walbaum from the Canadian High Commission in Jamaica, High Commissioner Gerard Latulippe and Commission staff at the Canadian High Commission in Trinidad and Tobago, and finally High Commissioner Richard Hanley and Debbie Derosiers from the Canadian High Commission in Bridgetown, Barbados. 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

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
ACTIVITY	Bilateral Visit to Jamaica, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados
DESTINATION	Kingston, Jamaica; Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago and Bridgetown, Barbados
DATES	April 3-10, 2013
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Ghislain Maltais, Senator and Hon. Pierrette Ringuette, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Joe Preston, M.P. and Mr. Daryl Kramp, M.P.
STAFF	Elizabeth Kingston, Executive Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$13,198.67
ACCOMMODATION	\$7,708.12
HOSPITALITY	\$1,122.39
PER DIEMS	\$3,176.05
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$1,316.83
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$574.21
TOTAL	\$27,096.27

