



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting
its participation in the 2018 Westminster Seminar on
Effective Parliaments**

**Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary
Association**

**London, United Kingdom
November 26 to 30, 2018**

Report

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz, M.P., and Mr. Dane Lloyd, M.P., attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's 2018 Westminster Seminar on Effective Parliaments, on behalf of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, in London, United Kingdom from November 26 to 30, 2018.

Participants at this seminar included 70 delegates who were either elected representatives or clerks from 32 Commonwealth Countries.

Purpose:

To strengthen the knowledge, skills and confidence of first-term Members of Parliament and newly-appointed clerks on the core aspects of their work in the areas of parliamentary practice and procedure within a Westminster framework.

The panels, sessions and discussions focused on a variety of topics relevant to Westminster-style democracies throughout the Commonwealth.

OBJECTIVE:

For parliamentarians and clerks to have an enhanced ability to deliver effective oversight, scrutiny and representation in their respective parliaments.

Output 1:

Parliamentarians and clerks will have a deeper understanding of what makes an effective parliament in the context of both Westminster and other Commonwealth Parliaments.

Output 2:

Parliamentarians and clerks will increase their network and have opportunities to learn from counterparts from across the Commonwealth.

Output 3:

Parliamentarians and clerks will further their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, increasing their capacity.

Specific topics discussed:

- The Political Scene at Westminster;
- The Modern Parliamentarian
- The Political Scene across the Commonwealth
- Pressures on a Parliamentarian
- The Impact of Committees
- Behavior and Etiquette
- The Role of the Speaker in Effective Parliaments

- Holding the Prime Minister to Account
- Spotlight on The UK Public Accounts Committee

Summary

Both MPs had the opportunity to learn about the procedures and practices currently in place in Westminster's Parliament, and were able to discuss different challenges faced by Commonwealth parliamentarians. They played an active role in the discussions and in exchanging best practices, and Ms. Dzerowicz took part in a panel discussion on "The Modern Parliamentarian". The two delegates found it especially valuable to learn more about the key differences between Canadian and Westminster rules of debate and the structural differences in committee.

Day 1

The first session of the day kicked off with introductions from delegates stating the three things that mean the most to them. Overwhelmingly the delegates emphasized family and their roles as parliamentarians and clerks.

The political landscape in the UK is constantly changing and in the second session of the day it was useful to hear the perspectives of James Duddridge, M.P., and the Rt. Hon. David Hanson, M.P., on the EU referendum of 2016, how the Brexit deal negotiations are progressing and the importance of the Commonwealth to the UK. Although different in their approach to Brexit, both speakers highlighted the importance of representing their constituents and finding a way to bring the country together. While Brexit takes up much column space in the UK media, UK parliamentarians continue to work tirelessly on the issues which mean the most to their constituents, including security, public health and economic prosperity.

In Session 3, Bim Afolami, M.P., and James Frith, M.P., from the UK Parliament, and Ms. Julie Dzerowicz, M.P., from the Parliament of Canada spoke about what parliamentarians need to do to be "modern parliamentarians". Bim Afolami, M.P., a self-proclaimed "Son of the Commonwealth", elected at the age of 31 in the constituency of Hitchin and Harpenden, spoke of his Nigerian heritage,. With experience in finance and business, Bim explained how he keeps in touch with issues concerning people outside the 'Westminster Village' and key business issues affecting the livelihoods of citizens. For Bim, being a "modern parliamentarian" means being flexible and adaptable to change.

Julie Dzerowicz, M.P., spoke about how a "modern parliamentarian" has to get to the grassroots and ask people questions about what matters to them. Constituents need to see their elected representatives working hard for them and getting things done. James Frith, M.P., from the UK Parliament spoke about his parents who were both public servants, his life as a businessman in a social enterprise, and his family which embraces two religions. As he explained, social mobility and progress need to be products of hard work – and parliamentarians need to be agents of change.

Leading on from this, delegates gained an insight into the political scene across the Commonwealth. The Hon. Curtis Pitt, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, Australia, explained the challenges facing Australia, including solving high energy prices and navigating relationships with key trading partners such as China and

the United States of America. Syeda Uzma Qadri, Member of the Provincial Assembly in Punjab, Pakistan, gave an impassioned speech about the great responsibility parliamentarians carry to do good and facilitate positive change for others. The Hon. Norbert Loizeau, Member of the National Assembly, Seychelles, gave delegates an insight into the Seychelles. Finally, Hon Laadi Ayii Ayamba, M.P., from Ghana spoke about her 40 years spent in politics and the extensive experience she has gained across a wide range of issues. In particular, she spoke about giving women opportunities to facilitate positive change and supporting parents in making good decisions for their children.

In her keynote address, the Leader of the House of Commons, the Rt. Hon. Andrea Leadsom, M.P., spoke about the procedural responsibilities of her role. As Leader of the House of Commons, she is the Government's spokesperson in Parliament and Parliament's spokesperson in Government. One of her flagship projects is introducing a new grievance procedure for the UK Parliament's 15,000 members of staff on behalf of the Prime Minister.

The final session of the day offered delegates a chance to share their aims and the outcomes they hoped to take away from the Westminster Seminar 2018. A delegate spoke about her learnings from previous CPA UK training events and her wish to motivate others to take advantage of such opportunities. Delegates spoke about the usefulness of hearing from UK parliamentarians about Brexit, of connecting with colleagues from across the Commonwealth and of learning how to be more effective in office.

Day 2

The second day of the Westminster Seminar 2018 focused on the roles of parliamentarians and clerks through two separate programmes.

The first session of the clerk programme started with a session on the importance of the role of clerks and optimizing their interactions with parliaments and parliamentarians. The next session explored how clerks balance the need to be politically sensitive with the principle of impartiality. Later in the day, the visiting clerks spent time examining the use of technology in communicating their work and used virtual reality glasses to explore how technology can be effectively used by committees. Finally, Sir David Natzler, KCB, Clerk of the House of Commons, recounted his experiences as the principal constitutional adviser to the House, of the challenges facing clerks and of the use of parliamentary privilege.

The first session of the programme for parliamentarians kicked off with group work exploring the most high pressure aspects of being a parliamentarian. Alex Norris, M.P., Dr. Roberta Blackman-Woods, M.P., and Adam Holloway, M.P., asked the groups to share their own personal experiences and work through solutions together. Balancing constituents' expectations with parliamentary work was a common issue. Delegates spent time with UK parliamentarian Justin Madders, M.P., and the Hon. Anna Watson, Acting Opposition Whip from the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in Australia, discussing courtesy and consideration in the debating chamber and parliamentary privilege.

Following this, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Rt. Hon. John Bercow, M.P., spoke about keeping order in the House of Commons as a referee but not a player over

the last nine years. The Speaker must find a way of accommodating increasing numbers of parliamentarians wishing to speak on the floor of the House, while standing up for the rights of the House of Commons. He spoke about his efforts to modernize the parliamentary estate by introducing a nursery and education centre, and of keeping the customs that matter.

Clerks and parliamentarians came together to share their expertise during a joint discussion about the influence of committees and their role in policy scrutiny. Stephen Twigg, M.P., Chair of the International Development Committee, spoke about the evolution of select committees in the UK and seeking cross-party consensus on key thematic and country-specific issues. The Hon. Audrey Vidot of the Seychelles presented information about the committee structure in the Seychelles, and how committees address key issues by going out to visit and meet people. Dr. Hannah White, Deputy Director of the Institute for Government, spoke about the importance of the select committee system in counteracting party politics.

Finally, delegates participated in a session about parliamentary security and education outreach, and a session with the former Presidents of Botswana and Mozambique, H.E. Festus Mogae and H.E. Joaquim Chissano, on working towards an Aids-Free Generation.

Day 3

The third morning was split into two programmes for parliamentarians and clerks focusing on how to communicate effectively. Kate Faragher, Director of Bespoke Skills, presented to parliamentarians about being a commanding presence in a room, how to prepare for media interviews and how to communicate messages effectively. She later worked with clerks on developing assertiveness and confidence when engaging with parliamentarians.

A highlight of the parliamentary week in the UK Parliament was Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs). The Rt. Hon. Lord Boateng of Akyem and Wembley led a session on how PMQs gives MPs an opportunity to hold the Prime Minister to account and the way in which this is facilitated. The session included an analysis of that day's PMQ session.

The joint sessions later in the day brought together both the parliamentarians and clerks to examine how the Government is held to account via the legislative process, the Public Accounts Committee and Select Committee work. The final session of the day was a mock committee hearing with Kenneth Bryan, Member of Parliament for the Cayman Island Government Legislative Assembly, chairing the session and Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE, giving evidence about the modern day slavery act in the UK. Huw Yardley, Clerk of the Health Committee in the UK Parliament, facilitated the session with observations and suggestions about the committee proceedings. Such suggestions included making questions to witnesses concise, drawing out points the witness says and ensuring witnesses are held to account.

Day 4

On Day 4, the Westminster Seminar travelled to Cardiff, Wales, to spend a day in the National Assembly for Wales learning about this legislature.

The day started with a warm welcome from Elin Jones, AM, Speaker of the National Assembly for Wales, who spoke about her role and current Assembly reforms. Rhun ap

lorwerth, AM, Chair, CPA Wales Branch, spoke frankly and expansively about the political scene in Wales, and Manon Antoniazzi, CEO and Clerk of the Assembly, spoke about staffing and the business it supports. Delegates had many questions to ask the panel including the renaissance of local languages and the future of Wales as a devolved legislature. Delyth Lewis, Youth Parliament Project Manager then spoke about introducing a Youth Parliament for Wales after consulting over 5,000 young people. Using their feedback, the Youth Parliament was designed to follow the format of the National Assembly for Wales and to enable young people to influence issues that are important to them.

Delegates were then taken on a tour of the impressive Senedd building by the Tour Manager, who explained the design of the building and how it is accessible to all members of the public seven days a week. The beautiful golden mace has a Commonwealth link as it was presented to the Assembly by the Parliament of New South Wales at the ceremony to mark the official opening of the Assembly Building, the Senedd, in Cardiff on St David's Day in 2006.

In the optional public engagement session, Dr. Non Gwilym, Head of Communications, and Kevin Davies, Head of Public Engagement, spoke about the challenges facing the National Assembly for Wales. Some of these include increasing public awareness about the responsibilities of the Assembly and clarifying the distinct roles of the Assembly and the Welsh Government.

The visit to the National Assembly for Wales showcased how a relatively new parliament can do things differently. The modern design of the chamber and offices means it is fully accessible to all, and features including natural ventilation and passive systems to heat and cool the building reduce its carbon footprint.

Day 5

On the final morning of the Westminster Seminar, parliamentarians visited UK Members of Parliament in their constituencies and clerks met with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority.

Small groups of parliamentarians visited Dr. Rupa Huq, M.P. for Ealing Central and Acton, Julia Lopez, M.P. for Hornchurch and Upminster, Andrew Rosindell, M.P. for Romford, Ruth Cadbury, M.P. for Brentford and Isleworth, Virendra Sharma, M.P. for Ealing and Southall, Karen Buck, M.P. for Westminster North, the Rt. Hon. Tom Brake, M.P. for Carshalton and Wallington, Bambos Charalambous, M.P. for Enfield Southgate, the Rt. Hon. Emily Thornberry, M.P. for Islington and South Finsbury, and Steve Reed, M.P. for Croydon North.

After lunch, the parliamentarians and clerks came together for a feedback session and afternoon tea in the Cholmondeley Room with the Rt. Hon. Lord Haselhurst who spoke of opportunities created by the network formed from this year's cohort of delegates, and urged everyone to keep in touch.

In conclusion, the delegates of the CPA Canadian Branch would like to thank CPA UK for hosting this Seminar.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi, M.P.
Chair of the Canadian Branch of the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	67th Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure
DESTINATION	London, United Kingdom
DATES	November 26 to 30, 2018
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Julie Dzerowicz, M.P. Mr. Dane Lloyd, M.P.
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$3,785.56
ACCOMMODATION	\$4,751.32
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$1,567.19
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$1,029.25
TOTAL	\$11,133.32