



Report

Visit of the Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C., Speaker of the Senate, and a Parliamentary Delegation, France

June 30 to July 5, 2016

The Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C., Speaker of the Senate, led a parliamentary delegation on an official visit to France from June 30 to July 5, 2016.

The delegation has the honour of tabling its

Report

The official delegation was composed of the following members:

- The Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C., Speaker of the Senate;
- Mrs. Karen Furey;
- The Honourable Elizabeth Marshall, Senator;
- The Honourable Fabian Manning, Senator;
- Mr. Charles Robert, Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments;
- Mr. Stuart Barnable, Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the Senate; and
- Ms. Marie-Eve Belzile, Secretary to the delegation.

Background – France

A presidential republic headed by President François Hollande, France has a population of approximately 63.9 million. The president is elected by direct universal suffrage and may serve no more than two consecutive five-year terms. He or she appoints the prime minister, who then forms the Council of Ministers. Legislative power is vested in a bicameral parliament, which consists of the Senate (348 senators) and the National Assembly (577 deputies).

The election of President Hollande in May 2012 was followed by the Socialist Party winning a majority in the National Assembly. However, major political tensions have since eroded the government's popularity. Nicolas Sarkozy, the former president, heads the opposition party, The Republicans. With the most recent renewal of the Upper House in 2014, the opposition party controls the Senate as well as several cities, departments and regions. Recent years have also seen the growing popularity of the National Front, a far-right party led by Marine Le Pen.

The refugee and migrant crisis in Europe is stoking populist sentiment to the point that its perceived impact on national security is dominating political rhetoric. Following the attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, designated by its Arabic acronym Daesh in France), the President of the Republic reiterated the importance and priority his government places on national security, and insisted on the need to fight terrorism. He declared a state of emergency and increased security measures. The state of emergency was renewed following further attacks in early 2016.

France is a major partner for Canada on key issues of foreign policy and good governance and in the economic, trade and cultural spheres. The third largest foreign investor in Canada -- notably in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta -- France is also Canada's third largest trading partner in Europe and eighth in the world. These partnerships are supported by cooperation agreements between government departments. As well,

numerous government and parliamentary visits enhance these partnerships. The number of such agreements between Canadian provinces and France and its regions is growing.

France and Canada also share a strong commitment to the duty to remember the casualties of the First and Second World Wars. In July 2016, the two countries commemorated the centenary of the Battles of the Somme and Beaumont-Hamel. To highlight the important role Canada and Newfoundland played in these battles, the Government of Canada held commemorative ceremonies in France at the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial, the Thiepval Memorial and the Courcellette Canadian Memorial.

A few days before Speaker Furey's visit, the United Kingdom, a key ally of France and Canada, particularly in the negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), held a referendum about its status within the European Union (EU). With 51.9% voting to leave the EU, BREXIT won in a divided kingdom. The economic, political and financial effects of an EU withdrawal on the United Kingdom and its economic partners were extensively discussed during Speaker Furey's visit.

Objectives

The purpose of the visit was to highlight the significant contribution of Newfoundlanders during the Battles of the Somme and Beaumont-Hamel at a ceremony commemorating the 100th anniversary of the two battles. In addition, the visit served to strengthen the ties between Canada and France, to promote the potential benefits of ratifying CETA, to encourage ongoing dialogue to promote parliamentary exchanges, and to share best practices with respect to parliamentary security, parliamentary privilege and the budget process. The visit also aimed to promote educational exchanges.

In addition to providing the delegates with an opportunity to discuss the French political situation and foreign policies of common interest, the visit gave the delegation a better understanding of how the French parliamentary system and its procedures work, as well as the initiatives and activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Meetings

In Paris, France, the delegation met with:

- Mr. Gérard Larcher, President of the Senate;
- Mr. Jean-Marc Todeschini, Minister of State for Veterans and Remembrance, attached to the Minister of Defence;
- Ms. Michèle André, Senator, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee;
- Ms. Claudine Lepage, Senator, Chair of the France-Canada Friendship Group;
- Mr. Dominique Bailly, Senator and Questeur;
- Mr. Alain Richard, Senator, Vice-Chair of the Senate Ethics Committee;
- Ms. Catherine Coutelle, M.P., Chair of the France-Canada Interparliamentary Association;
- General Jean-Pierre Moulinié, Military Commander of the Luxembourg Palace;

- Mr. Jean-Charles André, Secretary General of the Questure;
- Mr. Emmanuel Triboulet, Manager of the Senate Finance Committee; and
- Ms. Marianne Bay, Director of Visitor Services and Security, Council of the Questure.

Meeting with Mr. Gérard Larcher, President of the Senate

The delegation met with the President of the French Senate, Mr. Gérard Larcher, at the Luxembourg Palace, where the French Senate now sits. Speaker Furey took advantage of the opportunity to discuss with his counterpart the institutional function and role of the Senate in France and in Canada as well as the dispute resolution process between the upper and lower chambers of the Republic's parliament.

They then discussed governance, political transparency and ethics. Speaker Furey noted that a comprehensive audit of senators' spending was recently conducted at the request of the Senate of Canada. For his part, President Larcher commented on the composition and role of the French Senate Ethics Committee, formed in 2009 on his own initiative.

CETA and economic relations between Canada and the European Union were also discussed. Speaker Furey reiterated Canada's message about the importance of this agreement and France's support of its ratification. President Larcher pointed out that there was no particular obstacle between France and Canada impeding the ratification of the agreement. However, he noted the political and economic shock caused by BREXIT, which could hamper CETA's study and ratification.

Discussion then turned to Canada's role in, and commitment to, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Both parties discussed the Ukraine crisis and the Minsk accords and the sanctions imposed on Russia. They also briefly talked about the refugee crisis and migration problems in Europe.

Senator Manning raised the issue of terrorism, a threat requiring a global strategy. President Larcher agreed, saying that France has been particularly affected. He spoke about radicalization and the need to find political solutions to the lingering conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East. He took the opportunity to thank Canada for its support to France in Africa.

Lastly, Speaker Furey reiterated the importance of parliamentary friendship groups, the work of which contributes to maintaining a continuous and constructive dialogue and fostering interparliamentary and intergovernmental collaboration between the countries. In the same vein, Speaker Furey, along with the Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments, Charles Robert, took the opportunity to ask the French Senate to support a collaborative project between Canada and France to highlight Canada's contribution to the First World War. The project, championed by Canadian Senator, the Honourable Serge Joyal, would take place in 2017 to commemorate the centennial of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Meeting with Mr. Jean-Marc Todeschini, Minister of State for Veterans and Remembrance, attached to the Minister of Defence

Members of the delegation met with the French Minister of State for Veterans and Remembrance, Jean-Marc Todeschini, at the Ministry of Defence. The meeting was an opportunity to thank the Minister of State for attending and participating in the commemorative events for the Battles of the Somme and Beaumont-Hamel, demonstrating the importance of Canada to France. The delegates also reiterated the historical significance of the First World War and its commemoration for Newfoundlanders.

The 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, which takes place in April 2017, was discussed, with both parties promising to hold special events involving the active participation of their respective countries.

Speaker Furey then discussed the political situation resulting from BREXIT and its impact on the ratification of CETA. The Minister of State explained that France and the United Kingdom are major trading partners and that, in his opinion, the emergence of new trade negotiations between the two countries, following BREXIT, are unavoidable and could slow the CETA study. He also pointed out that France considers CETA, like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), to be joint agreements requiring the approval of the French Parliament for ratification. Lastly, the Minister of State added that another obstacle to a quick ratification of CETA could result from the fact that in fall 2016, France, like Germany, will be preparing for presidential, legislative and senatorial elections scheduled for 2017.

Speaker Furey restated the importance of ratifying CETA and stressed Canada's determination to quickly implement this agreement, which is expected to generate significant economic benefits for Canadians and EU citizens alike.

Meeting with Ms. Michèle André, Senator, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee

The delegation met with Ms. Michèle André, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, and Mr. Emmanuel Triboulet, Head of the Secretariat, to discuss the role of the Senate in the budget process.

The powers of the Canadian Senate with respect to money bills have often been a matter of discussion in Parliament. The meeting provided an opportunity for study and comparison between the different practices.

Senator André explained that finance bills in France are governed by the Constitutional By-law on Budget Acts (LOLF), which is distinct from ordinary law and sometimes compared to a financial constitution. It contains provisions relating to the presentation of budget acts; their review, content and implementation; and, notably, Parliament's means of control over public finance.

As in Canada, money bills in France are government bills. They are first introduced in the National Assembly and then sent to the Senate. Parliament has a maximum of 70 days to review and approve bills. An accelerated procedure resulting from the creation of a joint committee may be implemented if sections of a bill are still being debated after the time limit has passed. If the members of the joint committee agree on a common text, it is adopted; otherwise, after a new reading in each chamber, the National Assembly has the final say.

Within each chamber, the chairs and rapporteurs of the finance committees have powers of investigation, analysis and recommendation. If necessary, amending budget acts, which modify the initial budget act, may be introduced. Finally, execution of the previous year's budget is verified and set out in a budget review act. The examination of the budget review act measures the performance of public policies.

This presentation gave rise to a number of exchanges where senators pointed out the similarities and differences compared to the Canadian process, and then questioned some practices to better understand the issues.

Lastly, Mr. Robert Del Picchia, Senator and member of the Friendship Group and the French Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) joined the meeting to briefly comment on and promote Canadian and French participation in the IPU.

Meeting with Ms. Claudine Lepage, Senator, Chair of the France-Canada Friendship Group

The delegation met with Claudine Lepage, Senator and Chair of the France-Canada Friendship Group, at a business luncheon, along with Catherine Coutelle, M.P., Chair of the France-Canada Interparliamentary Association, as well as several French senators and members of parliament.

The luncheon was an opportunity for delegates to discuss Canadian-French collaboration, the 44th annual meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Association, and issues of common interest. Ms. Lepage pointed out that these exchanges are especially important because they encourage and promote interparliamentary and intergovernmental collaboration between Canada and France.

Meeting with Mr. Dominique Bailly, Senator, Questeur

The French Senate establishes the role of the Council of the Questure and its questeurs. In particular, the Council of the Questure manages physical and administrative issues for the Senate and has financial, regulatory and appointment authorities that can be exercised jointly with the President of the Senate. The questors intervene in the internal and external security of the Senate by delegation of the President. They also have extensive regulatory power over the police in the Luxembourg Gardens.

The members of the Canadian Senate delegation met the Senate Questeur, Mr. Dominique Bailly, Senator, accompanied by Mr. Jean-Charles André, Secretary General of the Questure in the Senate; Ms. Marianne Bay, Director of Visitor Services and Security for the Council of the Questure; and General Jean-Pierre Moulinié, Military Commander of the Luxembourg Palace.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss measures that aim to ensure the security of the parliamentary buildings while preserving access to the public.

The two sides first discussed their respective security practices and the various decision-making protocols employed in case of incidents. Following the recent terrorist

attacks in France, the senators asked whether the security arrangements in the French Senate had been changed.

The Secretary General of the Questure pointed out that there was a policy to control vehicles, people, mail and the surrounding area. He explained that the French armed forces assigned part of the Republican Guard to the Senate. In addition, civilian staff is present and controls access to the Senate as well as the security of the Luxembourg Gardens.

Lastly, the security of senators in their constituencies was briefly discussed.

Meeting with Mr. Alain Richard, Senator, Vice-Chair of the Senate Ethics Committee

The members of the Senate delegation met with Senator Alain Richard, Vice-Chair of the Senate Ethics Committee. Relatively new, the committee was created in 2009 by Senate President Gérard Larcher. The meeting focused on existing ethics and parliamentary privilege mechanisms in the French Senate.

Speaker Furey began by briefly describing the rules governing ethics and conduct at the Senate of Canada. He talked about the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code* and the role and responsibilities of the Senate Ethics Officer.

Senator Richard said that the Senate Ethics Committee is empowered to provide guidance on any ethical issue concerning the conduct of senators in the performance of their duties and the workings of the Senate. As a result, the Chair or the Vice-Chair may be requested by a senator to provide guidance. The Senate Bureau or the President of the Senate may also refer to the Committee any potential conflict of interest brought to their attention. The Committee's determinations are not binding.

Over the course of its deliberations, the Committee developed a mechanism to prevent and address conflicts of interest involving senators, which was implemented in 2014.

Lastly, the two sides discussed the composition of the Committee, the duty of senators to be transparent and, the publishing of internal processes for declaring senators' activities and interests and the sanctions that may be imposed on senators, where appropriate, in keeping with parliamentary immunities.

Other activities

The delegation was recognized in a public session by the Presiding Officer, Mr. Jean-Claude Gaudin, Deputy President of the Senate, and the senators in the Senate chamber.

100th anniversary of the Battles of the Somme and Beaumont-Hamel

Canada and France share a strong commitment to the duty to remember the casualties of the First and Second World Wars. In July 2016, the two countries commemorated the centenary of the Battles of Beaumont-Hamel and Courcelette, in which the members of the Senate delegation participated.

Important commemorative ceremonies took place on July 1 and 2, 2016, in France at the Thiepval Memorial, the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial and the Courcelette Canadian Memorial. The fact that the Senate delegation was composed of senators from Newfoundland and Labrador was a testament to the enduring interest and memories among senators, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and Canadians concerning the sacrifices made during the First World War.

Each year, Newfoundlanders observe Memorial Day on the same day as Canada Day in honour of the hundreds of Newfoundland Regiment members who lost their lives at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, and during the First World War. The Battle of the Somme was the most devastating and decisive of all the battles in which the Newfoundland Regiment participated in the First World War. The sacrifice of these young men who left to defend their homeland has marked generations and is still remembered by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador today.

Beaumont-Hamel

Inspired by the emblem of the Newfoundland Regiment, a bronze caribou at the top of the monument looks out over the battlefield. The memorial pays tribute to all Newfoundlanders who fought in the First World War, including those with no known grave.

Newfoundlanders gained an unparalleled reputation as solid fighters. In recognition of their courage and actions, they were renamed the Royal Newfoundland Regiment by King George V in 1917.

The commemorative ceremony, which was attended by the Senate delegation as well as English, French and Canadian senior officials, members of the public and several soldiers, took place at the foot of the memorial near the trenches dug 100 years earlier. The ceremony included speeches, songs and the laying of wreaths. Speaker Furey laid a commemorative wreath on behalf of the Senate of Canada.

Courcelette

The Battle of Courcelette was the first major attack of the 22nd Battalion, the only French-language infantry unit within the Canadian and British armies.

The ceremony took place at the Canadian Memorial, which is located in the middle of a circular park alongside a road. The Senate delegation joined the public, soldiers, and Canadian and French officials in honouring the memory of veterans. Speaker Furey, accompanied by Senator Marshall and Senator Manning, laid a commemorative wreath on behalf of the Senate of Canada.

Thanks to their bravery during the First World War, Canadian soldiers earned an unwavering reputation as courageous, skilled fighters.

Cité internationale universitaire de Paris and the Maison des étudiants canadiens

To promote and deepen their understanding of the ties that bind France and Canada in terms of educational exchanges and cooperation, the delegates visited the Canadian Students' House (MEC) in the Cité universitaire internationale de Paris. The delegates met with Ms. Carine Camby, Delegate-General of the Cité internationale universitaire de

Paris and Mr. Louis Jolin, Director of the MEC, who explained their roles as well as the origin and functioning of the Cité and its various houses.

The delegation's visit was also an opportunity to reaffirm Canada's commitment to the MEC, which is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year. The MEC was made possible through a generous donation from Canadian Senator Joseph-Marcelin Wilson in 1926.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Canada is an active member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). A permanent delegation represents and promotes Canadian interests within the organization.

The delegates met with Her Excellency Michelle d'Auray, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the OECD at a business luncheon where they discussed the permanent delegation's role, priorities, initiatives, and issues relating to BREXIT and CETA between Canada and the European Union in connection with the OECD and France.

Acknowledgements

The members of the delegation wish to thank Mr. Gérard Larcher, President of the French Senate, as well as the France-Canada Friendship Group, chaired by Ms. Claudine Lepage, Senator, for their warm welcome and generous hospitality. The delegation also wishes to thank the protocol staff of the Luxembourg Palace who ensured that the visit went smoothly.

The members of the delegation also express their gratitude to the staff of the Canadian Embassy in Paris for their assistance prior to the visit and during the meetings, and for accompanying them throughout. In this regard, the delegates recognize the unconditional support and availability of the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Ambassador of Canada to France. Special thanks go to Mr. Marc Berthiaume, for the quality of the meetings, Mr. Alexandre Mussely-Bedard for the smooth visit, and Ms. Hélène Halatcheff for the preparations involving the delegates' participation in the commemorative celebrations at Beaumont-Hamel and Courcellette.

Finally, the delegates wish to thank Global Affairs Canada and the Library of Parliament for all the documentation provided as part of the preparation for their visit.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C.,
Speaker of the Senate

Travel Costs

Visit of the Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C., Speaker of the Senate, and a Parliamentary Delegation, France

TRAVEL	\$ 40,726.05
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 18,554.26
PER DIEMS	\$ 5,974.38
PROTOCOL	\$ 1,597.84
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 2,241.75
TOTAL	\$ 69,094.28