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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation to the 65th Westminster Seminar on  
Parliamentary Practice and Procedure**

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

**London, United Kingdom**

**November 21 to 25, 2016**

## **Report**

Mr. Anthony Rota M.P. and Mr. John Nater M.P. attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's 65th Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure on behalf of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association that was held in London, United Kingdom from 21-25 November, 2016.

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

**Purpose:** To strengthen the knowledge, skills and confidence of first-term Members of Parliament and newly-appointed Clerks in the core aspects of their work of parliamentary practice and procedure with a Westminster framework.

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

### **Objectives:**

1. To provide an overview of the leadership and administrative functions of Parliament with the purpose of ensuring good governance.
2. To promote an understanding of parliamentary practice and procedure with reference to legislating and scrutinising the executive, as well as ethics, standards and accountability.
3. To clarify the role and responsibilities of parliamentarians in balancing their commitments as either a Minister or backbencher, their work in the constituency / community, party discipline and transparency, cross-party relations.
4. To develop skills and abilities to carry out the work of a parliamentarian / Clerk with specific reference to committee work, parliamentary questions, engagement with the public, media and other stakeholders.
5. To explore the several sources of information and advice available to Members / Clerks.
6. To provide an opportunity for first-term parliamentarians and newly-appointed Clerks to network with their counterparts from across the Commonwealth.

### **Specific topics discussed:**

- Current challenges within the framework of the Westminster Parliamentary System including discussions on reforms to the House of Lords, the Backbench Business Committee, the digitization of Parliament, and the role of Select Committees.
- Overview of the legislative process and business of the House

- Parliamentary administration, finance and governance
- Role of Members of Parliament, the Loyal Opposition, a Committee Member and role of the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Speaker of the House of Lords
- Parliament in the 21st century: a discussion on the effects of Brexit on the Commonwealth
- • Party discipline in Parliament and the role of the Whip in the UK Parliament
- The legislative process: pre-legislative scrutiny and committee stage
- The role of individual MPs and how their voices are heard in Parliament: amendments, adjournment debates, parliamentary questions and motions
- Role and purpose of the secondary Chamber, Westminster Hall
- Prime Minister's Questions
- • Accountable Parliament: Parliamentary Ethics and Standards
- Parliament in the age of modern democracy: educational tools and outreach
- Engaging with stakeholders: Media, NGOs, CSOs and constituents
- Private Members' business

## **Summary**

Both MPs have had the opportunity to learn about the procedures and practices currently in place in Westminster's Parliament as well as discuss the challenges faced by delegates from other Commonwealth countries, including those faced by Canada's Parliament.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi, M.P.

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

## **Travel Costs**

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| <b>ASSOCIATION</b>    | Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) |
| <b>ACTIVITY</b>       | 65th Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure    |
| <b>DESTINATION</b>    | London, United Kingdom  |
| <b>DATES</b>          | November 21 to 25, 2016   |
| <b>DELEGATION</b>     |   |
| SENATE                |   |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS      | Mr. John Nater, M.P.<br>Mr. Anthony Rota, M.P.                      |
| STAFF                 |   |
| <b>TRANSPORTATION</b> | \$2,391.64  |
| <b>ACCOMMODATION</b>  | \$3,301.23  |
| <b>HOSPITALITY</b>    | \$0.00  |
| <b>PER DIEMS</b>      | \$1,261.76  |
| <b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b> | \$0.00  |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>  | \$ 936.54   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>\$7,891.17</b>   |