

FEEDBACK REPORT

ON

***PARLIAMENTARY
ADMINISTRATION***

FROM

31.10.2011 TO 11.11.2011

AT

***THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF
PARLIAMENTARY ADMINISTRATION
(RIPA), LONDON***

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The training program on 'Parliamentary Administration' was organized by the 'Royal Institute of Parliamentary Administration London' from 31st October to 11th November, 2011. The undersigned, along with five other participants from Rajya Sabha Secretariat attended the programme. There were total 10 participants out of which 06 were from India and 02 from South Africa and one each from Timor Leste and Nigeria.

Mr. Ian Church, Course Director welcomed the participants in his opening address and provided them with essential information about the existing facilities and amenities . He also briefed about the course contents as well as the profiles of eminent faculty members.

The contents of the course were found to be very valuable & befitting and a good endeavor was made in selecting the topics to cater to the needs of all the nominated officers of the Secretariat from the different services.

The basic purpose of the training was to give exposure & broaden the knowledge of the trainees so that they can contribute in the efficient working of the Parliamentary Democracy through increased understanding of democratic governance & its working. It further desired to enhance the efficiency to such a level where making a comparative study about the Indian and the British Parliament in an explicit, comprehensive and informative manner becomes possible.

Key Note Speakers with their Profiles & topics covered

Ian Church : - **(Director of Studies):-** He is a retired editor of Hansard (Reporting) and served in House of Commons for 38 years. He was instrumental in introducing on-line facility that resulted in creation of UK Parliament website. He delivered a lecture on **“The Administrative structure of Westminster Parliament”** and accompanied with us for having a show around of the UK Parliament, the Supreme Court & the headquarters of CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association).

Gavin Drewry : - Mr. Gavin Drewry is Professor of Public Administration and Director of the Centre for Political studies at Royal Holloway, University of London . He spoke about the **‘Reform of Parliament and the Public Sector’** in his lecture and elucidates the trainees about the role of public sector in terms of globalization and privatization and its impact on the legislative process that lead in enacting favorable laws by the U.K. Parliament.

Jonathan Seller : - Mr. Jonathan Seller is Deputy Director of Human Resources and he spoke on the topic of **“Human Resource Management in the House of Lords”**. He gave a first hand report on the Management Board, Staff Numbers, Types of Employees and Types of Employment etc. He also told their Office Aims/ Objectives, Pay & Perks of the employees, their responsibilities & challenges they face in the day-to-day working in the House of Lords.

Paul Dillon-Robinson: - Mr. Paul Dillion-Robinson is Director of Internal Audit and he spoke at length about ***“The Office of the Chief Executive and the Work of Internal Audit”***. He gave an insight into the Office of the Chief Executive of the House of Commons. He mainly focused on the services and Management Board of the House of Commons. Also on the sidelines, he emphasized on the Work of Internal Audit, its coverage and issues.

Bob Twigger: - Mr. Bob Twigger is Director of Information Services for members in the House of Commons Library and has a vast research experience in Public information and Education services. He enunciated the concept & importance of information in a very comprehensive style during his lecture on ***“The Information services in the House of Commons.”***

Simon Burton: - Mr. Simon Burton spoke about ***“The Constitutional position of the House of Lords - and how it is changing”***. Mr. Burton enlightened the trainees about the House of Lords, its composition, Administration and Costs, Organizing the Business and also, Change/Reform in the House of Lords. He also addressed other significant areas like legislation, its stages, Administration of House of Lords, the Process of passing a Bill and making a new law. He covered all basic aspects in a very significant and expressive manner.

Ferges Reid: - Mr. Reid has rich experience in working on the Select Committees on health, foreign affairs, standard & privileges and culture, media and sports. He shared his knowledge with us on two subjects, namely ***“The Select Committee system in the House of Commons”*** & ***“The work of House of Commons Table Office”***.

Tim Williams: - Mr. Tim Williams was a former civil servant having wide experience in the Department of Trade & Industry, regional policy, aerospace and overseas affairs before becoming the Parliamentary Clerk. He served under both Conservative and Labour Administration. He spoke about **‘The Government’s interface with the Parliament- the role of a Government department’s Parliamentary Clerk’** and shared his complex experiences in a simplified hilarious way.

Nick Beech: - Mr Nick Beech is a sub-editor of the House of Commons Hansard (Reporting). He enlightened the trainees with the history of reporting & printing & its evolution over the years in the UK Parliament. He mentioned that the job of Hansard is aimed at retaining the true meaning of the words said, increase clarity and at the same time lose redundancy & eliminate repetitiveness. He also elaborated upon a new initiative introduced recently of making the Hansard online to facilitate awareness amongst the masses & ensure transparency.

Andrew Walker: - Mr. Andrew Walker is a Director General (Resources) in the British Parliament and made us aware with the aspects of **“Efficient management of human resources”** within the available budget, infrastructure & scope, more so in the light of a government directive to cut costs by approx. 10% in the next 3 years. He also elaborated on the need, importance & implementation of **“Financial control & Accountability at the Westminster Parliament”**.

THE U.K. PARLIAMENT

The UK Parliament is one of the oldest representative assemblies in the world, having its origins in the mid-13th Century and comprises members from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Parliament is the highest legislative authority in the United Kingdom – the institution responsible for making and repealing UK law. It consists of three constituent parts :- House of Commons , House of Lords & the Crown (Queen)

Members of the House of Commons are directly elected by the people of the United Kingdom in General Elections for a period of 5 years. The House of Commons is traditionally regarded as the lower house, but it is the main parliamentary arena for political battle. A Government can only remain in office for as long as it has the support of a majority in the House of Commons. The House of Commons has primacy over the non-elected House of Lords. 'Money bills', concerned solely with taxation and public expenditure, are always introduced in the Commons and must be passed by the Lords promptly and without amendment.

The House of Lords is the second chamber of the U.K. Parliament. Members of the House of Lords (known as 'peers') consist of Lords Spiritual (senior bishops) and Lords Temporal (law peers). Law Lords (senior judges) also sit as Lords Temporal. Members of the House of Lords are not elected. Originally, they were drawn from the various groups of senior and influential nobility in Britain, who advised the monarch. The House of Lords used to be a Court of Final Appeal before the setting up of Supreme Court.

HOUSE OF LORDS



House of Lords Chamber

Members of the House of Lords are known as "Lords of Parliament". The House of Lords does not have a fixed number of members and consists of "Lords Spiritual" and "Lords Temporal". The Lords Spiritual are the 2 archbishops and 24 most senior bishops of the Church of England, while the Lords Temporal are current Life Peers, as well as 90 Hereditary Peers and 2 Great Officers of State.

Lords Spiritual are "Lords of Parliament" (and not peers) so long as they continue to occupy their ecclesiastical positions, whereas Lords Temporal serve for life. The House of Lords is not currently an elected body. Red is the principal colour for furnishings & fabrics throughout the House of Lords.

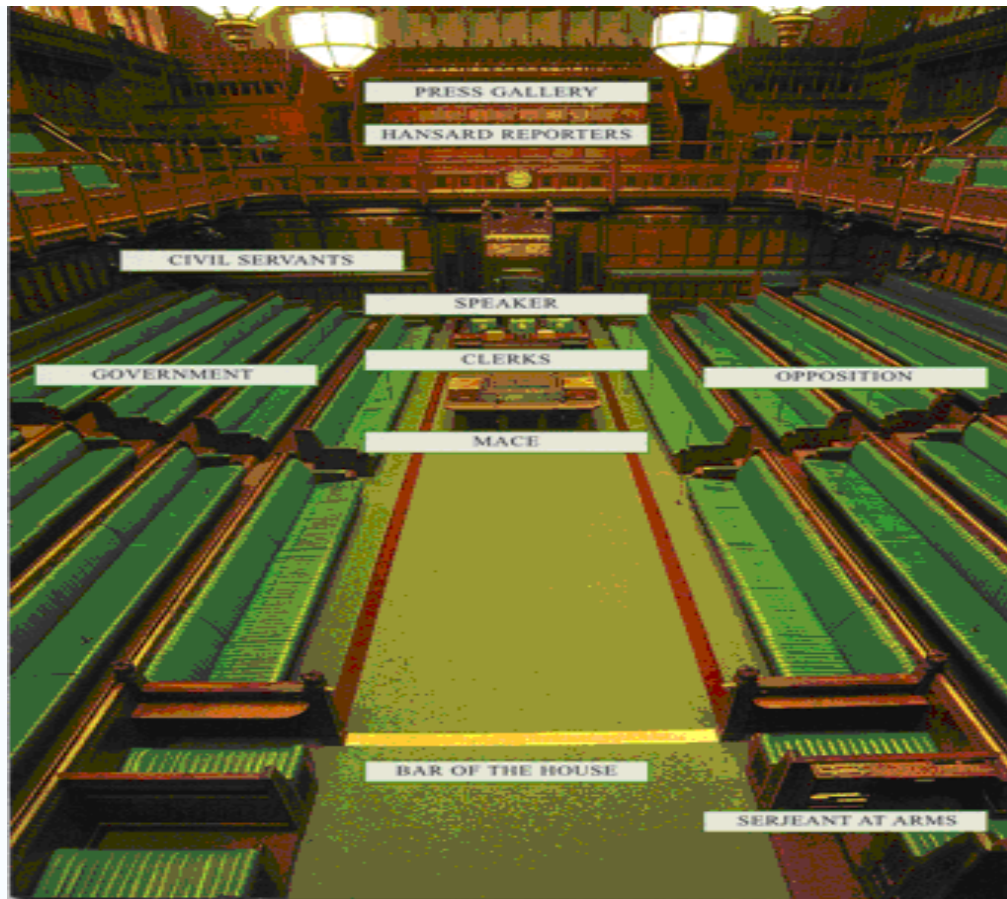
In the House of Lords, members need not seek the recognition of the presiding officer before speaking, as is done in the House of Commons. Speeches in the House of Lords are addressed to the House as a whole ("My Lords") rather than to the Presiding officer alone (as is the custom in the Lower House).

The Lords Chamber is the site of many formal ceremonies, the most famous of which is the State opening of Parliament known as the Queen's Address. During the State Opening, the Sovereign [Her Majesty, the Queen], seated on the Throne in the Lords Chamber and in the presence of both Houses of Parliament, delivers a speech outlining the Government's agenda for the upcoming Parliamentary session.

The Queen when comes to address the Parliament comes in the Royal coach. The Imperial Crown, which is otherwise kept in the London Tower museum in safe custody, is specially brought to be worn by Her Majesty for such special occasions. On reaching the Westminster, The Queen then goes into the Robbing room where she prepares for the Royal procession and towards the House of Lords Chamber where the Royal throne is placed.

As per the customary tradition, once the Queen is seated on the Throne, the Usher of the Black Rod proceed towards the House of Commons & smashes / knocks at the doors of House thrice that signifies in a symbolic manner; the first for the Speaker, second for the Government and third for the opposition. After that, the Speaker along with the Commoners reach the bar of the House of Lords standing from where they hear 'Gracious Speech' addressed by Her Majesty the Queen of England.

HOUSE OF COMMONS



House of Commons Chamber

The House of Commons Chamber was rebuilt to a design by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott after it was damaged during the Second World War. The new Chamber was built in a style that was in keeping with the Chamber that had been destroyed. The layout of the Chamber consists of two sets of green benches that are opposite to each other. There is a table in the middle and the Speaker's Chair at one end. This arrangement means that the Government and Opposition MPs sit facing each other. MPs sitting in the first row on either side are known as the front benchers & the rest are known as back benchers. The Chamber is actually quite small and many of the objects in the Chamber, such as the Speaker's Chair, were gifts from Commonwealth countries.

When there is division in the House of Commons, MPs leave their seats and walk into whichever division lobby corresponds to the way they want to vote. If they want to vote yes, they go into the Aye Lobby on the right of the Speaker behind the Government benches & vice versa on the left of the Speaker, behind the Opposition benches.

All MPs desirous of speaking on the floor of the house had to stand from their seat to draw the attention of Hon'ble Speaker, the Presiding Officer. All speeches made here are addressed to the Presiding Officer. Green is the principal colour for furnishings and fabrics throughout the House of Commons.

Reforms in UK Parliament :-

- *Devolution of power from the British Parliament to The Scottish Parliament, The Wales Parliament and The North Ireland Assembly.*
- *Provision of elected Mayor in the UK and introduction of electoral reforms systems that are being used for different elections.*
- *House of Lords Act 1999 enacted by the Parliament which excluded all but 92 hereditary peers. Further reforms w.r.t their election is in pipeline.*
- *The Human Right Act 1988 and Freedom of Information Act were other legislations enacted and passed by the Parliament.*
- *Establishment of full fledged Supreme Court for British Government.*
- *Approval for adoption of single European Currency.*

Sergeant at Arms: --

The Sergeant at Arms ensures the order and security of the House of Commons. The office of Sergeant at Arms goes back to 1415 A.D and the reign of Henry V when the Sergeant was responsible for carrying out the orders of the House of Commons, including making arrests. Today he performs several ceremonial duties that date back to the early days of the office. He carries the mace in the Speaker's Procession each day and also into the House of Lords during the State Opening of Parliament. The Sergeant at Arms is the only person in the House of Commons allowed to carry a sword.

Black Rod (The Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod):-

The Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod is responsible for accommodation, security and services in the House of Lords. He has a chair in the House of Lords and wears a distinctive black costume. He summons the Commons to attend the Queen's speech and leads them to the Lords to hear the Queen's Speech.

He is known to the public for the important role he plays in the ceremony of the State Opening of Parliament, when as part of the ritual, he approaches the doors to the chamber of the House of Commons to make his summons when they are slammed in his face. This is to symbolise the Commons' independence of the Sovereign. Black Rod then strikes the door three times with his staff; the first for the Speaker, second for the Government and third for the opposition.

The Mace :-

A mace is a staff of office symbolising authority. In the House of Commons the Mace is a symbol of Royal Authority: it represents the power and authority that the monarchy has delegated to the House of Commons in the past. The Mace lies on the table in front of the Speaker when Members are debating. When the chamber is in session, the Mace is put under the table. The Mace is carried in and out of the chamber by the Sergeant at Arms in a procession at the beginning and end of each day. Without the Mace in position, the House cannot sit and debate. The House of Lords has two Maces.

SECURITY

During the course period , valuable inputs on security were gathered by the undersigned based on queries asked, video clippings shown & on spot analysis of security arrangements seen during the show around of UK Parliament as well as when seeing it in session .

As a nominated trainee from the Parliament Security Service, the main area of focus remained on studying the security set-up of British Parliament. Since security of a vital installation is based on its prevailing threat perception, it was noticed that the level of Security at the British Parliament is on a much lower scale then that of Indian Parliament, but was very streamlined & systematic in its approach. The visitors are even allowed to take their mobiles and cameras inside the Westminster Palace.

It was noticed by the undersigned that in the Westminster Place, the security is divided into two distinguished zones namely Outer and Inner premises. Outer precincts are taken care of by a unit of Metro Police, London while the inner precincts are manned by the Doorkeepers.

The senior officer of Metro police reports to the Sergeant at Arms for implementing proper law and order in the outer precincts. The access control, searching of men and material, carrying out of anti-sabotage check, Issuance of passes to the visitors for entering into the Parliament, their searching and frisking and regulation of vehicles after proper search and parking etc are the prime responsibility of Metro police. Minor incidents are dealt by the Sergeant at Arms and the Black Rod in the inner premises and Metro police take up the major problems / incidents that disrupt the proceedings of either House. The sergeant-at- arms actually has a seat allotted to him inside the chamber during the session.

A standard operating drill on the lines of Airport security is exercised by the security personnel, which includes searching, frisking and passing of personal belongings through the X-ray baggage scanner to rule out any unwarranted material being taken into the Parliament. Boom-Barriers and Road blockers are installed at all the entry and exit gates. All the vehicles of MPs and senior officers passing through these gates have to stop for checking that is carried out by the Under Vehicle Surveillance System [UVSS] before heading towards the parking lot.

The passes are issued for the Central Lobby to those visitors who wish to see their MPs and it is the responsibility of the concerned MP to arrange a pass in his name for witnessing the proceedings of the House. These passes are issued by the Doorkeepers after the endorsement made by the Sergeant at Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod for the concerned House. The visitors are guided by the Doorkeepers up to the visitor & other galleries, where Doorkeepers are deployed to monitor their activities. There is a token counter at the entrance of the gallery where visitors can deposit their personal belongings such as mobile, camera etc.

At the Westminster, Show-around duties are conducted by professional & qualified guides which puts an emphatic impression on the minds of visitors, whereas in our context it is done by the PSS officials.

The British Parliament security system is so designed that the democratic values are not diminished from the fear of any incident and maximum no. of people get the opportunity to witness the proceedings easily. The Security system is strengthened in a way not to create any impediment but acts as a facilitator.

Conclusion

Overall, the Course was very useful, informative, stress free and rejuvenating as it provided an exposure to the British Parliament & its norms & procedures. It is suggested that a separate course / exchange programme on the “ Functioning of Security to facilitate working of Democracy” for the officials of Parliament Security Service may please be organized so that emanating dangers arising out in the regime of terrorist era may be exterminated.