

**FEED BACK ON THE CUSTOMISED TRAINING PROGRAMME ON
PARLIAMENTARY ADMINISTRATION AT RIPA INTERNATIONAL, LONDON
(19th OCTOBER TO 30TH OCTOBER, 2009)**

I was nominated to attend the customized "Training Programme on Parliamentary Administration" at RIPA International, 17, Rochester Row, London, United Kingdom alongwith eleven other officers drawn from various Services of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. The group was led by Shri S.D. Nautiyal, Director.

We were received at the Heathrow Airport, London on 18th October by an official of Indian High Commission, who arranged for cabs to take the group to the President Hotel, Russel Square, London where we stayed during the full period of the Training Programme.

On Monday, the 19th October, 2009, Mr. Ian Church, Director of Studies welcomed all the members of the group at the Training Programme at 9.30 A.M. Ms. Jenna Hollaney, Programme Co-ordinator was also present on the occasion. This was followed by a brief introductory session wherein each officer introduced himself/herself briefly mentioning about his/her official duties.

The purpose of the training programme was to (i) acquaint us with current operations and procedures at Westminster (British Parliament), (ii) familiarize with the trends and approaches in both the Houses of Parliament so that we can see our own Parliament against that background, and (iii) invite us to bring our problems to the course and present them directly to experts from the House of Commons and House of Lords to hear their views on a possible way ahead. The topics covered in the training programme included: The British Constitution; Parliament, Politicians and Media; Information Services; Human Resource Management Services; Reporting the proceedings; the Select/Standing Committees; Financial Control and Accountability etc. Besides, Mr. Ian Church, Former Editor, Hansard the House of Commons, some other distinguished and experienced persons working in different fields, departments, services of the British Parliament namely, Rober Ingram, Prof. Gavin Drewry, Paul Dillon Robinson, Geoff Embleton, Rob Clements, Rhodri Walters, Fergus Reid, Neck Beech, Loraine Midda delivered lectures or made presentations in this training programme.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT

There are certain distinct aspects of the British Parliament. There exists no provision for a joint sitting of the Parliament of the United Kingdom nor is there any scheme like MPLADS available to the British Parliamentarians for local area development. The timings of the sittings of both the Houses differ every day. Unlike our Committee System, Select Committees proceedings in Westminster are open for media and general public.

REPORTING, EDITING AND PUBLICATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

'Hansard' is the official name given to the verbatim recording of the proceedings of both the Houses of the British Parliament. In fact, it is quite interesting that 'Hansard' is the name of the family which was given contract to publish Parliamentary Debates in the 18th Century.

The official Report i.e., 'Hansard' is very important publication, which though not strictly verbatim, is substantially the verbatim report with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected but which on the other hand leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or illustrates the argument.

All the proceedings are recorded by Reporters and given to Transcribers for typing. Thereafter, all the typed copies are sent to Sub-Editors for editing, etc. Members of the Parliament, if they so desire, may check and make only minor changes in the transcripts of the speeches delivered by them within a period of three hours' before the text of the speeches is sent for final printing. However, no substantial alterations can be made to meaning of what was said in the House. The Person, who joins the service as a Reporter or Sub-Editor goes up to the cadre of an Editor over the period of time by getting promotions.

VISIT TO THE HOUSES OR PARLIAMENT

A guided tour through the Palace of Westminster and the Houses of Parliament was arranged by the RIPA. All the participants visited the Parliament on Monday, 26th October, 2009 with the Director of Studies, Mr. Ian Church. We were taken around the building and explained the historical importance of each and every part of it. Different items of furniture and other furnishings have been contributed by the Commonwealth Countries for the Chamber of the House of Commons. India and Pakistan have given two identical ornamental doors.

The Chambers of both the Houses are moderately sized. No specific seats are allotted to Members. Every day, both the Speakers of House of Commons and the House of Lords move in a formal procession to attend their respective Houses.

We also got an opportunity to witness the live proceedings of the House of Commons on 29th October, 2009. We also visited the headquarters of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) alongwith the Course Director, Mr. Ian Church on 29th October, 2009. We also had a meeting with the Director of CPA. A lecture on the objectives of the Association was followed by lively interaction on issues faced by CPA.

Before I conclude, I would like to make a specific mention about our group Leader, Shri S.D. Nautiyal, Director. He had been very caring and co-operative throughout the course of our training programme in London. We really enjoyed our stay in London under his able guidance.

I also take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to the Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha, Hon'ble Dr. V.K. Agnihotri and our Joint Secretary, Shri S.K. Kathuria for having afforded me this opportunity to take part in the "Training Programme on Parliamentary Administration" at RIPA International, London. The programme was very interesting, educative and interactive. I would also like to thank Officers of the Training Unit, Conference and Protocol Section and all other Sections of the Secretariat which were related directly or indirectly in making excellent arrangements for our journey and stay at London.

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