

ferences devote special attention to matters of domestic or regional interest which would be less appropriate at the main conferences of the Association. It is hoped that Area and Regional Conferences will be developed in other parts of the Commonwealth.

Parliamentary Delegations Branches also maintain contact through visits by delegations and individual Members. The practice is growing whereby certain Branches regularly send delegations of their Members to other parts of the Commonwealth. Visits by individual Members are also on the increase.

PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

The General Council and the United Kingdom Branch of the CPA are joint hosts to a Course on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure, held at Westminster in the spring of each year. This course has become established as one of the most valuable services enjoyed by Members. Starting as a course of instruction for Members in independent or newly independent Legislatures, it has developed as a symposium allowing exchange of ideas and pooling of experience. Some 25 Members from different Parliaments of the Commonwealth attend by invitation each year and the course has proved to have particular value for Speakers.

PUBLICATIONS

The office of the General Council regularly produces *The Parliamentarian* (Journal of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth) and the *Report on World Affairs*. Both are available on sale to non-members.

The Parliamentarian, published quarterly, contains articles, book reviews and book lists on subjects of parliamentary and constitutional interest. Each issue also contains reports on the major proceedings in the sovereign Parliaments of the Commonwealth. It is authoritative and unique in the field of Commonwealth affairs.

Report on World Affairs, also published quarterly, contains impartial, factual accounts of events in the organizations, regions, and countries of the world. Its contributors are authorities in their fields.

The *Report*, which is in its 49th year of publication, provides Members with reliable background material of special relevance to debates on foreign affairs. It has, moreover, built up a wide circulation among academic libraries and specialists who, while not Members of the Association, make a study of foreign affairs.

Reports and Memoranda, reports produced by the secretariat include the Report of the General Meeting of the Association and the Annual Report of the General Council. Information memoranda of special interest to Parliamentarians are compiled from time to time.

HEADQUARTERS

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Editor of Publications and Deputy Secretary-General

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Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Aims · Constitution · Activities

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COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

AIMS

The CPA is an association of Commonwealth Parliamentarians who, irrespective of race, religion or culture, are united in the Commonwealth by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and the rights of the individual citizen, and pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy.

The CPA exists to promote Commonwealth understanding and respect for parliamentary institutions. It pursues these objectives by organizing annual Commonwealth and regional conferences and the interchange of parliamentary delegations. It provides the sole machinery for regular consultation between Commonwealth MPs, and its meetings are occasions when experience is shared and common problems discussed in a spirit which is unique in the councils of the world.

HISTORY

The Association was founded in 1911 and it has evolved with the Commonwealth. In the first period of its history its affairs were handled by the United Kingdom Branch. In 1948-49 its name was changed from Empire Parliamentary Association to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and it was agreed that the affairs of the Association should be managed by a General Council, on which all Branches are represented directly or indirectly. The Constitution, then drawn up, was approved by the first General Meeting of the Association, held in Wellington in 1950. It was revised in 1961.

At the General Meeting of the Association held in Kampala, Uganda in 1967, the Constitution was further amended. The major purpose of this amendment was to establish the Executive Committee of the General Council which is described below.

The Association now comprises 87 Branches, excluding the Branches in those Parliaments which are at present in abeyance.

CONSTITUTION

Membership A Member of any Legislature in which a Branch has been formed is entitled to

become a Member of the CPA without election. Most Branches require their Members to pay a small annual subscription. On ceasing to belong to a Legislature a Member may apply for Associate status. He can no longer, however, be a full Member.

Branches The Association is composed of different categories of Branches. The type of Branch and its representation on the General Council depend on the degree of sovereignty or of self-government exercised by the Parliament in which it has been formed, or on the constitutional position of the Legislature in the federations of the Commonwealth.

Every Branch is autonomous. Its Secretary is usually the Clerk or Clerk Assistant of the Legislature. The Presiding Officers of the Legislative Chambers are normally the Branch Presidents, while the leaders of the parliamentary parties are the Vice-Presidents.

The affairs of each Branch are controlled by an Executive Committee, representative of all main parties or groups, elected annually by Members. The Committee chooses its own Chairman and approves its own Rules within the terms of the Association's Constitution.

General Council The Constitution of the Association vests the management of the Association's affairs in the General Council, which reports annually to the General Meeting of the Association. Councillors are appointed by Branches or groups of Branches in such a way as to ensure that all have a voice in its management. The Officers of the General Council are the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Honorary Treasurer, and a permanent Secretary-General.

The General Council elects the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Honorary Treasurer annually. The practice has become established that the Chairman will be chosen from the Branch which is host to the annual conference, and the Vice-Chairman from the Branch which will be host in the succeeding year.

Committees of the Council The Executive Committee of the General Council, appointed in November 1967, exercising the authority delegated to it by the General Council, has power to take such action as it deems necessary in furtherance of the aims of the Association but subject to the provisions of the Constitution and to the ultimate approval of the General Council.

The Executive Committee consisting of not less than twelve and not more than fifteen members has an elected Chairman, and, in addition to the *ex-officio* members, seven elected regional representatives. The present composition of the Executive Committee is set out at the end of this leaflet.

Secretary-General The Secretary-General and the secretariat in the Office of the General Council, Westminster, London, are responsible for the headquarters and administration of the affairs of the Association under the direction of the Executive Committee and the General Council. The Secretary-General is Secretary to the annual plenary conferences of the Association and maintains close relations with all the Branches. The Editor of Publications is responsible for publishing the quarterlies and reports described in this leaflet.

Finances The finances of the Association are contributed annually by the Branches on a basis agreed by them with the General Council.

PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

Parliamentary facilities Members visiting Commonwealth countries in which a Branch of the Association exists are normally allowed parliamentary facilities, especially in the form of access to galleries, lobbies and dining and smoking rooms, for the purpose of hearing debates and meeting other Members of the Association.

Introductions Branches readily assist in arranging introductions and hospitality for visiting Members. A letter from the Branch Secretary is helpful in this and other contexts.

Travel Fares at considerably reduced rates are available to Members, and in some cases their families, travelling by train in several countries of the Commonwealth.

Publications All Members are entitled to receive free and post free *The Parliamentarian* (Journal of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth), and, subject to the direction of the General Council, such other publications, reports and memoranda as are produced.

Special information The Secretary-General and the secretariat are always ready to provide information of parliamentary interest to Members.

ACTIVITIES

Conferences Since its foundation the Association has held conferences in various parts of the Commonwealth. Since the Second World War plenary conferences have been held in:

1948 London
1950 Wellington
1952 Ottawa
1954 Nairobi
1957 New Delhi
1959 Canberra
1961 London

The General Meeting of the Association in Canberra in 1959 adopted the recommendation of the General Council that conferences should be held annually in future. This decision, after being referred to all Branches, was approved by the General Meeting in London in 1961.

Conferences have since been held in:

1962 Lagos
1963 Kuala Lumpur
1964 Kingston
1965 Wellington
1966 Ottawa
1967 Kampala

The conference will take place in Nassau, The Bahamas, in 1968 and in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, in 1969.

The conferences, normally lasting a week, debate matters of immediate concern and importance to the Commonwealth. Among subjects recently discussed have been Africa in world affairs, world peace, economic co-operation, Britain, the Commonwealth and the EEC, problems of underdeveloped territories, aspects of parliamentary government, and technical and educational co-operation.

Resolutions are not moved during CPA conferences. The free exchange of information and opinions usually results, however, in a consensus emerging. A short report on the main views expressed in the course of the conference debates is promptly prepared and dispatched by the General Council secretariat after each conference. Subsequently the verbatim record of the conference proceedings is published and circulated to all Delegates and Branches and to Members of the Association who apply for it.

Area and Regional Conferences Branches in Australia, in Canada, and in the Caribbean regularly arrange conferences in their respective countries or regions. The agendas for these con-

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