



VISIT TO

THE UNITED KINGDOM

AND

THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

APRIL-MAY 2003

REPORT BY

SENATOR THE HON. PAUL CALVERT

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

[Tabled 10 August 2004]

BACKGROUND

The President of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Paul Calvert, visited the United Kingdom in April 2003 for discussions with the Presiding Officers of the United Kingdom Parliament, and to undertake duties connected with the ANZAC Day Commemorations in Great Britain. Subsequently, the President visited the Republic of Ireland for discussions with the Presiding Officers of the Irish Parliament.

The President was accompanied on the visit by his wife, Mrs Jill Calvert, and by his Private Secretary.

ITINERARY

The President and his party visited London from 24 April to 3 May, Cardiff from 3 to 4 May and Dublin from 4 to 8 May.

UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON

On ANZAC Day, the President attended the Dawn Service at the Australian memorial, Battersea Park, and gave the occasional address.

Subsequently, the President attended a Service in the Crypt of St Paul's Cathedral, and together with the Prime Minister of New Zealand, laid wreaths at the Gallipoli Memorial, in memory of Australian and New Zealand servicemen.

Later, the President participated in the ANZAC Day March in Whitehall, and laid a wreath on behalf of the Government and People of Australia at the Cenotaph.

Afterwards, the President attended a Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving to mark ANZAC Day, at Westminster Abbey, and read the poem *The Last to Leave* by Leon Gellert, an Australian soldier who was wounded at Gallipoli in 1915.

On subsequent days, the President visited an Australian produce display in Knightsbridge, and held discussions with Mr Tim Bennett, Deputy President of the National Farmers' Union, on the foot and mouth disease outbreak in Britain.

The President visited the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat for discussions with officials, and with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon. Danna Vale, MP, visited the site of the new Australian War Memorial at Hyde Park.

The President called on Alderman (now Sir) Gavyn Arthur, Lord Mayor of the City of London, at the Mansion House.

The President visited the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Hon. Michael Martin, MP, at the Palace of Westminster.

During his visit to the House of Lords, the President held discussions with –

- The Lord Brabazon of Tara, Principal Deputy Chairman of Committees;
- Sir Michael Davies, KCB, Clerk of the Parliaments;
- Mr Rhodri Walters, Clerk of Committees and of the Overseas Office; and
- Brigadier Hedley Duncan, MBE, Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod.

Very useful discussions were held on parliamentary procedure and on the security challenges facing legislative buildings.

The President attended a Lunch given by the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Irvine of Lairg, PC, and attended by the Leaders of the Government and the Opposition and other senior Peers.

The President attended Question Time in the House of Lords with the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, Lieutenant General Sir Michael Willcocks, KCB.

The President, subsequently received the United Kingdom Government's Rural Adviser, The Lord Haskins, at Australia House.

CARDIFF

The President called on the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Councillor Russell Goodway.

The President was shown the rejuvenation of the Cardiff harbour, including the Cardiff Bay Barrage, a significant initiative to manage seafront erosion.

The President also visited Cardiff Sports Village and, in the evening, attended the central tally room for the general elections for the Welsh Assembly.

The President had discussions with Mr Gareth Jones, Head of the Common Agricultural Policy Division, and Mr Tony Edwards, Chief Veterinary Officer.

He later visited the Welsh Assembly and attended a working lunch given by the Clerk, Mr Paul Silk, and later visited the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff.

IRELAND

DUBLIN

In Dublin, the President visited the Department of Agriculture and Food at Kildare House for a discussion on how the Irish Government instituted protections to its livestock following the foot and mouth outbreak in Britain, and, subsequently, the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources for discussion on salmon farming and cod quotas.

Subsequently, the President visited the Irish Development Agency for an overview of innovation and investment policy, and Enterprise Ireland, for a briefing on new Irish export initiatives, particularly in the area of communications.

IRISH PARLIAMENT

The President visited the House of the Oireachtas (Parliament) at Leinster House.

He had discussions with –

- The Leader of the Fianna Fail Senate Group
- The Leader of the Fine Gael Senate Group
- The Leader of the Labour Senate Group
- The Leader of the Independent Senate Group

and a briefing from the Superintendent of the House on security arrangements at Leinster House.

The President and his party attended a Lunch given by the Cathaoirleach (Chairman) of the Senate, Senator Rory Kiely, and attended Question Time in the Senate.

Afterwards, the President called on the Ceann Comhairle (Speaker) of the Dail, Dr Rory O’Hanlon, TD, and viewed a debate in the House.

Later, the President paid a courtesy call on the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Dermot Lacy.

The President gave a Reception for members of the Irish Parliament and other Australians involved in business and investment in Ireland.

CONCLUSION

The visits to both the United Kingdom and Irish Parliaments, and the Welsh Assembly, were very useful, in particular the comprehensive briefings on security and approaches to the difficult balance of access for the public with appropriate levels of protection against attacks on democracy.

I was privileged to participate in the commemorative events to mark ANZAC Day 2003 in London, and was reminded how important this event is to the Australian and New Zealand diaspora.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I very much appreciated the hospitality shown to me in London by my counterpart, the then Lord Chancellor and Speaker of the House of Lords, the Lord Irvine of Lairg, PC.

In Dublin, I appreciated the generous welcome given to me by the Cathaoirleach of the Senead Eireann (Chairman of the Irish Senate), Senator Rory Kiely.

The Australian High Commission in London and the Australian Embassy in Dublin did much to ensure the arrangements for the visits to both countries went smoothly, and I particularly record my thanks to His Excellency Mr Michael L'Estrange, High Commissioner in London, and Ms Liz Lindores, Visits Director at Australia House; and to His Excellency Dr the Hon. John Herron, Ambassador at Dublin, and his Embassy staff.

PAUL CALVERT
PRESIDENT

August 2004