

Canadian Parliamentary Institute 2018 Ottawa

I had the pleasure of attending the Canadian Parliamentary Teacher's Institute in Ottawa, Ontario November 4-9th 2018. I was one of the 4 teachers selected to attend from the province of Manitoba. There were approximately 75 teachers from across Canada in attendance for this teacher institute.

The conference is an intensive week immersed in the Canadian Parliamentary process. It gives teachers an inside look at the Canadian Parliamentary process and unprecedented access to places the average Canadian citizen would not get to see during a trip to parliament. It started on Sunday when we were welcomed to the Lord Elgin hotel and quite quickly thrown into the hectic schedule of events. Every day was rich with learning experiences as we would head out of our hotel at approximately 7:20 a.m. and return around 6:30-7:00 p.m. each night. All sessions required mandatory participation.

The most valuable component of this teacher institute was the connections that were made to teaching about citizenship in the classroom. Many learning experiences were provided that were natural connections to our Social Studies curriculums. We had the fortune of meeting with many different panels of experts who shared their wealth of knowledge about the Canadian Parliamentary process. There were many highlights of the week, our group was fortunate to have the opportunity to spend 30 minutes with Prime Minister Trudeau and ask questions we had and no topic was off limits. We also were taken on a tour of the Governor General's residence and had the opportunity to spend time with the Governor General herself Julie Payette. At the Governor General's residence, we were informed our new ways to connect with the Governor General where a class can even skype with her to ask questions.

The 4 participants from Manitoba also had an opportunity to connect with a senator from Manitoba Marilou McPhedran. She spent a lot of time answering any questions we had also provided us with the opportunity to attend the historic apology by Prime Minister Trudeau to Jewish Canadians for turning back the St. Louis ship filled with Jewish refugees some who did not survive. It was an amazing experience to witness history with my fellow educators.

The Parliamentary Institute is an exceptional opportunity for educators of any grade level. It is an excellent way to see fresh ideas to incorporate ways to

promote active citizenship in the classroom, local community and global citizenship. Thank you for providing the opportunity to attend by providing funds for a substitute.

Sandra Melnic