

Thoughts on Commonwealth Youth Parliament 8

Never has it been so reinforced to me, the honour I have to be a Canadian woman and the absolute privilege I have to live in beautiful British Columbia. I thank the members of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament for the most appreciated reminder. It was a pleasure to have met you all in my home province and I cannot wait to visit and explore your wonderful countries.

This month I was extremely fortunate to represent Canada at the Commonwealth Youth Parliament 8 in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. As participants, we acted as recently elected MPs in the country of "Commonwealth Land", a fabricated country modelled loosely on my home province of BC. This mock parliament gave youth parliamentarians from all over the Commonwealth the chance to partake in the running of a government.

I was extremely fortunate to have the experience of acting as Shadow Health Minister. It really was a fantastic experience to play the critic. This appointment challenged me to reflect on my true job in the BC provincial health care system, and made me more aware of areas which could be improved upon and how protocol could be better. I know from this experience alone that I will constantly be looking at health care and thinking of ideas that will progress this ministry to better serve the public.

The most tremendous part of this event was the continual flow of ideas encouraged by the ever accepting value of free speech. Not once did I feel that my voice or thoughts were not important; that my opinion wasn't wanted or appreciated. There was a certain air to this crowd of individuals that welcomed different views and difficult conversations. The amount of respect for everyone's thoughts was incredible and it was a privilege to be surrounded by such a group.

I do believe that the conversations, friendships and unity founded in Victoria amongst the youth parliamentarians and the various delegates does not stop there. I know that they are the foundations for lifelong partnerships which will continue to broaden each of our minds and challenge us to think and act innovatively. Together our voices are amplified and we become stronger than we are alone.

I would like to thank the BC Legislature for hosting us youth parliamentarians and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for organising this event. Also a special thanks to the the Honourable Judith Guichon for hosting a stunning dinner party.

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