

An MP's day is always different

A day in the life of Mark Holland in Ottawa

There's no such thing as a typical day for an MP in Ottawa. Every day is different. What follows, however, is Mark's agenda for one day, Tuesday, October 26, which gives some idea of an MP's life in Ottawa. A future Mark Holland Report will outline a day in the constituency.

2:30 a.m. Mark arrives at a hotel in the national capital after driving from the constituency. Normally he arrives Monday, but because the House had no business that day, he spent it in the riding. He grabs a few hours sleep.

6:00 a.m. Mark wakes and gets ready for a **7:30 a.m.** meeting of committee chairs and vice chairs with the Whip's office. As Mark is vice chair of public accounts, he must attend. The meeting discusses committee strategy.

8:00 a.m. Mark and other members of the Liberal Caucus Committee on Cities and Communities meet with representatives of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities over breakfast. They discuss the federal government's plans to provide a share of gas tax revenues to municipalities, among other issues.

9:00 a.m. Mark delivers a speech to the Association of Canadian Financial Officers, filling in for Treasury Board President MP Reg Alcock, who was unable to attend. Mark emphasizes eliminating waste from government spending, and shifting spending from areas of low priority to high priorities.

10:00 a.m. Mark is on House Duty, which means he could be called at any minute to sit in the House if quorum is needed. Unless called, he's still able to carry out appointments. He spends an hour with his French instructor, Réjean Caron, working to improve his French. Although bilingualism is not a requirement for being an MP, some French knowledge helps to make an MP more effective in the Ottawa environment.

Time	Event
8:00 am	Meeting of committee chairs and vice chairs - Whip (253-D Centre Block) CCC - with Federation of Canadian Municipalities - note changed location (362 East Block)
9:00	9:15am-9:55am Event for Reg Alcock - Association of Canadian Financial Officers (NAC - Panorama Room)
10:00	House Duty
11:00	Meet Jeffrey Monty, President and CEO of Meeting with Paramedics (473 W/D)
12:00 pm	Energy Dialogue Group meeting - lunch (60 Parliamentary Restaurant)
1:00	Review & sign correspondence (473 W)
2:00	Question Period (House)



Mark addresses the financial officers

11:00 a.m. Mark meets with several national organizations. These groups typically have an Ottawa office to bring their concerns to the government's attention. He meets first with Jeffrey Monty, President of Tree Canada Foundation, to discuss environmental issues. This is followed at **11:30 a.m.** by a meeting with representatives from the Paramedic Association of Canada who have travelled from across Canada to for an annual day of discussions with MPs when they raise issues affecting paramedics and ambulance personnel.



Mark practices French with his instructor, Réjean Caron.



Representatives from paramedics across Canada came to Ottawa to speak to MPs.



Mark meets with Andrew Ignatieff and Gordon Cummings about international development issues.

12 noon. Mark attends a lunch meeting with MPs and members of the Energy Dialogue Group. This group has representatives from a range of energy producing industries such as petroleum, nuclear, wind, solar and emerging renewable forms of energy.

1:30 p.m. Mark grabs a few moments to review and sign correspondence that has been prepared by staff. One of these letters is a joint letter with another MP to Justice Minister Irwin Cotler urging him to reintroduce a bill that increases the penalties for cruelty to animals.

2:00 p.m. Mark attends Question Period, which takes place from 2 - 3 p.m. Monday to Thursday and from 11 - 12 on Friday. The first 15 minutes is taken up by one-minute statements by MPs. Mark has requested to make a statement congratulating Olympic athlete Perdita Felicien, an Ajax-Pickering constituent. Mark is the eighth Liberal in line to make a statement, and there isn't time. He makes the statement the following day. After the statements, the remaining 45 minutes are oral questions, usually posed by opposition MPs to cabinet ministers or their parliamentary secretaries. Government MPs have fewer slots to ask questions. The event is largely staged with questions and answers usually prepared in advance. The opposition's aim is to embarrass the government for the television cameras rather than to obtain

information. Questions aimed at obtaining information are usually tabled at a different time in written form.

3 p.m. Mark returns to his office to meet with representatives of Canadian Council for International Cooperation, an umbrella group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in overseas aid. They want Canada to be more focused in its efforts to alleviate global poverty.

3:30 p.m. Mark rushes off to a meeting of the Public Accounts standing committee, on which he is vice chair. Among its tasks is examining reports by the Auditor General, who reviews government programs to ensure that taxpayers get value for money. This meeting discusses the committee's future agenda. Opposition MPs want more emphasis on the sponsorship affair. Mark wants greater emphasis on a broader range of government programs.

5:30 p.m. Mark meets with representatives of the Greater Toronto Airport Authority to discuss concerns about aviation in the Toronto area including concerns about a potential airport in Pickering.

6:00 p.m. Mark takes more time to review correspondence from constituents, as well as other information that has arrived during the day. He waits for the bells to ring to call MPs to a vote in the House.

6:15 p.m. Bells start ringing to indicate votes in 15 minutes, and MPs start heading for the House. As Mark's office is in the nearby West Block, he continues working until the last possible minute and rushes through a tunnel to the chamber. If MPs are late, they don't get to vote. At **6:30 p.m.** voting begins, and MPs stand to indicate if they are for or against, sitting down when their name is called out. Votes are only recorded in this way if enough members request it. This vote is on a Conservative non-binding motion criticizing the government's defence policy. It is worded in such a way that none of the other parties can support it.

7:15 p.m. Mark and several MP friends drop in on a reception organized by the Association of Canadian Financial Officers. Receptions provide MPs and staff an opportunity to unwind after a busy day and to socialize. They also provide a chance to make contacts and to discuss issues affecting the organizations that sponsor them.

7:45 p.m. Mark and his MP friends make their way over to the Museum of Civilization in Gatineau where there is a reception and VIP preview screening of the CBC political intrigue mini-series H20, in which Paul Gross plays the Canadian Prime Minister. He returns to his hotel at **9:00 p.m.** to change and make his daily phone call to his family.

9:45 p.m. Mark and another MP work out at the House of Commons exercise room. The lifestyle of MPs often leads to health problems, and Mark makes an effort to stay in physical shape.

Around midnight. Mark returns to his hotel and unwinds with a bit of television before catching a few hours sleep. The following day starts with an 8 a.m. meeting of the GTA caucus.

October 26, 2004

7 a.m.		
	Meeting of committee chairs and vice chairs - Whip (253-D Centre Block)	
8 a.m.	CCC - with Federation of Canadian Municipalities (362 East Block)	
9 a.m.	9:15 - 9:55 - Speak on behalf of Reg Alcock - Association of Canadian Financial Officers (NAC - Panorama Room)	
10 a.m.	House Duty	French (473 WB)
11 a.m.		Meet Jeffrey Monty, President and CEO of Tree Canada Foundation (473 WB)
		Meet Paramedics (473 WB)
12 p.m.		Energy Dialogue Group meeting - lunch (Parliamentary Restaurant)
1 p.m.		Review & sign correspondence (473 WB)
2 p.m.	Question Period (House)	
3 p.m.	CCIC - discuss global poverty and Canada's development aid (473 WB)	
	Public Accounts committee - future committee business (209 WB)	
4 p.m.		
5 p.m.		
	GTAA - airport issues (473 WB)	
6 p.m.	Review & sign correspondence (473 WB)	
	Vote - opposition motion on armed forces (bells @ 6:15) (House)	H2O reception & VIP preview - Paul Gross (theatre Museum of Civilization, Gatineau)
7 p.m.	Reception - Cdn. Association Financial Officers (Museum of Civilization)	

8 p.m.		
9 p.m.	Phone home	
	Exercise	
10 p.m.		