

# USHER OF THE BLACK ROD

## CHAIN OF OFFICE

**The Hon. The Speaker:** Honourable senators, I have the honour and pleasure to advise you that last Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, Her Majesty the Queen was graciously pleased to bestow a chain of office upon the Usher of the Black Rod. This ceremony took place at Windsor Castle, and the Queen herself personally conferred the chain on our Usher, Superintendent Greg Peters, MVO. The Clerk of the Senate and I had the distinct honour of witnessing this special event.

The Black Rod's chain had already been blessed by the Dean of St. George's Chapel, the Right Reverend David Conner KCVO at a dedication service Saturday afternoon.

With the bestowal of this chain of office, the Senate joins a centuries-old tradition that is part of our Westminster parliamentary heritage. In the House of Lords the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod has had such a chain of office since 1566.

Honourable senators, this splendid silver chain of office has been designed specifically for the Senate Black Rod in collaboration with the Canadian Heraldic Authority. It has at the front a blue enamelled pendant, an annulus bearing the Royal Crown and inscribed with the motto of Canada "A mari usque ad mare". Within this annulus is a quatrefoil at the centre of which is a gold sovereign covered by the Royal Cypher EIIR. The reverse of the roundel displays a gold Sovereign coin. The back of the chain also has a pendant; it is the new badge of Parliament which uses the shield of the Royal Arms of Canada with the crossed maces of the Senate and House of Commons.

November 25, 2014

The Sergeant of Arms in the other place has had a chain of office since Confederation, and indeed the Legislative Assembly of Canada before Confederation possessed the same chain. Discussion about providing a similar chain for the Black Rod to acknowledge its historic role has been ongoing for years until now. Given that the position of the Usher of the Black Rod is the third longest continuously held State office in Canada, the creation of this chain of office is an important addition to our national symbols of authority. Its design reinforces the Black Rod's link between the Crown and Parliament, especially the Senate.

The chain of office will be worn during important state ceremonies such as the installation of a new Governor General and the Opening of Parliament, as well as the official welcome ceremonies by foreign heads of state and heads of government.

I am sure all senators will join me in expressing deep gratitude to Her Majesty the Queen for graciously bestowing this great honour upon this House. I would ask for leave to table a description of the chain of office prepared by the Deputy Chief Herald of Canada.