

Stéphane Doucette-Préville, Parliamentary Page



Stéphane Doucette-Préville had just graduated from École Maurice-Lavallée, a Francophone school in Edmonton, when he joined the House of Commons' Page Program in September 2006.

Each year, the Page Program gives forty students from across Canada the chance to learn about the legislative branch in person. In the House of Commons, the pages assist MPs of all political parties with daily tasks, such as photocopying and answering phones. On the floor of the Commons Chamber — during debates and Question Period, for example — they retrieve documents and run messages between members of the assembly.

As a page, I have learned, number one, that there is a lot of cooperation between the different political parties. The confrontation between parties during Question Period often makes the news on television — but Question Period is only forty-five minutes of the day. The rest of the day is spent expressing views on issues that affect Canadians and debating laws. In the end, MPs try to agree. They want to vote on what's good for all Canadian citizens.

I think people are sometimes not aware of the responsibilities of MPs. But I've found that MPs deserve respect. They work under a lot of stress and they work very long hours. On top of attending the proceedings of the House of Commons, they work on committees and they answer questions from their constituents. It's not an easy job. They have to be really committed to do it.

What is the most memorable thing about being a page? Certain things, every day, I find memorable — like being on the floor of the House of Commons during Question Period and, every Wednesday, singing the national anthem. Not every Canadian will have the chance to do that. It is very special.

Stéphane Doucette-Préville spent one year in Ottawa as part of the House of Commons' Page Program. "One of my favourite interests is politics, and when I was going to high school, my favourite class was social studies. I'm very excited to be part of a textbook for my favourite subject."



"I'll also remember special events, like playing a soccer game against the MPs. Seeing the MPs out of the work environment and getting to talk with them — plus for me, soccer is my favourite sport — I thought that was really fun and incredible."



What has Stéphane learned about the role of MPs from his firsthand experience of the House of Commons?

Why do you think people have different views about the job MPs do?

