

**SPEAKING NOTES
THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF A RECEPTION MARKING THE
RETIREMENT OF SENATOR CATHERINE CALLBECK**

**SPEAKER'S CHAMBERS
JUNE 18, 2014**

Senator Callbeck,
Honourable Senators and Members of the House of Commons,
Friends and Family,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the historic chambers of the Speaker of the Senate where, after seventeen years of outstanding service to the Senate, we are gathered to mark the impending departure of the Honourable Catherine Callbeck.

Even before her appointment to the Senate, the accomplishments of Senator Callbeck comprise a record of public service and political precedents that have enriched and inspired a great number of Canadians.

In 1974, in her home province of Prince Edward Island, Senator Callbeck became the second woman elected to the Legislative Assembly and the youngest woman ever to be appointed a provincial Cabinet Minister. She served as the first female Minister of Health & Social Services, Minister Responsible for the Disabled, and Minister Responsible for Non-Status Indians, beginning a long and passionate interest in health and social justice which she has pursued to this day.

She was elected as the Member of Parliament for Malpeque in 1988, becoming the second woman from the Island ever to be elected to the House of

Commons. Five years later, she became the first female premier of Prince Edward Island and the first woman to be elected premier in Canada.

Through all these milestones, she has never been one-of-a kind because of gender; rather, Senator Callbeck has always been one-of-a kind because of her character. Throughout her parliamentary career, she has continued to volunteer her time and experience on numerous boards and with charitable, educational and public service organisations at all levels. She has been particularly generous with her personal time in mentoring many young women wanting to pursue a career in politics.

It was in the autumn of 1997, under Prime Minister Jean Chretien, that Senator Callbeck was called to the Senate. Senator, I invite you to turn your thoughts back to October 22 of that year, when you gave your maiden speech in the Senate. You took that opportunity to draw the Chamber's attention to a particular sentiment expressed in the Speech from the Throne: "The fact that we have demonstrated our ability to set ambitious goals and achieve them ... gives us new confidence to set higher goals and succeed".

Although you were referring to our achievements and attitude as a country, perhaps this might also serve as an apt description of your own character and career – never complacent, always moving forward, and continually seeking new and better ways to do good and to do it well.

It might be said that Senator Callbeck took to the Upper Chamber like a PEI potato takes to the soil – growing quickly, seemingly everywhere, and suddenly a full plate. She immediately went to work in committees and soon became a leading voice. Senator Callbeck has played a particularly longstanding and integral role in the work of the Standing Senate Committees on Social Affairs, Science and

Technology, as well as participating actively on the National Finance Committee, and on Agriculture and Forestry. For the past year she has devoted much of her time and energy to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, to which she has brought an experienced and practical voice in light of her extensive background in the retail business and her many years as a business educator.

During her seventeen years with the Senate, she contributed to important studies and compelling reports on diverse issues of national importance. These include the impact of income, education and other social factors on the health of Canadians; the accessibility of post-secondary education; mental illness and addiction; and increasing Canadian innovation and competitiveness in the agriculture industry.

Her diverse capabilities and deep contributions have been recognized over the years with a plethora of awards, including induction into the Canadian Women in Politics Hall of Fame, being named as one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women by the Women's Executive Network, and being awarded an honorary Doctorate of Laws by her alma mater, Mount Allison University.

Senator Callbeck, I would offer a penny for your thoughts, but due in part to your work with the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, that coin is no longer in circulation! Your voice in the Senate certainly has been of great value over the years and it is my pleasure to now invite you to the podium to share a few words with us.

Thank you.