

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF A RECEPTION FOR
CANADIAN MUSEUMS DAY ON PARLIAMENT HILL**

**SPEAKER'S DINING ROOM
NOVEMBER 18, 2014**

Dr. McAvity,

Ms. Noble,

Ms. Murgatroyd,

Honourable Senators and Members of the House of Commons,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen:

Good evening and welcome to the historic Chambers of the Speaker of the Senate. This room and indeed all of Parliament may be seen as a living museum: it serves as a home to notable pieces of our heritage and also as a stage for decisions which shape the story of our country. It is therefore fitting that we have gathered here to celebrate Canadian Museums Day.

This annual event is important because it provides an opportunity for leading museum professionals to gather with federal legislators, in

order to discuss how we can collaborate more effectively on our shared goal of strengthening Canada's museum sector.

Museums enrich our communities, our economy, and our culture. They preserve our past on a physical level and make these important artefacts accessible to everyone. They provide a gathering place for curiosity, collaboration and conversation between different peoples and perspectives. And they present valuable educational opportunities for both Canadians and visitors to better understand the events, individuals and ideas which gave rise to our country today.

In all these ways, our museums strengthen our sense of national identity. They are also particularly attractive to those who travel between our cities and those who visit our shores from afar, significantly benefitting both the local and national economy. Finally, by revealing the past along with its patterns and lessons, our museums inspire us to build on our achievements and to innovate in bold new directions.

Canada is internationally renowned for the quality and variety of our museums. The Canadian Museums Association and our Parliament both have vital roles to play in supporting and building on this tradition of excellence.

For 67 years, the Canadian Museums Association has worked across the country to promote and advance our museums, both within Canada as well as through partnerships with institutions in other

countries. Its 2,000 member organizations reflect the diversity of Canadians and their interests. They range from large metropolitan galleries to small centres in rural communities, and they include science centres, art galleries, aquariums, zoos, archives, and sports halls-of-fame.

Our Parliament shares an interesting connection with museums. After the fire of 1916 which destroyed the original Centre Block, the Victoria Memorial Museum -- today the Canadian Museum of Nature -- served for four years as the location for both the House of Commons and the Senate. The surrounding environs of an actual museum doubtless reminded those Senators and MPs of the historical weight of their responsibilities and decisions.

In 2014, parliamentarians still face frequent reminders of the wider context and deeper implications of what we do. Some of these can be found inside Parliament, such as the table in the Speaker's Office where Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II signed the Royal Proclamation of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Other reminders lie a bit further from the Hill, but in plain sight to any parliamentarian who steps outside: they are the numerous world-class museums located right on the doorstep of our National Capital Region. These include the National Gallery, the Canadian Museum of

History, the Canadian Museum of Nature, the Canadian Science and Technology Museum, and many others.

2014 has been a landmark year for museums in our country, with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights officially opening two months ago in Winnipeg. This achievement is particularly relevant to Canadian Museums Day on Parliament Hill. Having been established through the enactment of a bill amending the *Canadian Museums Act*, this initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration between parliamentarians and the museum sector.

The success and growth of Canadian museums is no accident. It has been nurtured and guided by a national network of talented experts and dedicated museum directors, many of whom are with us today in this room. The Canadian Museums Association continues to provide the leadership and vision which have made our museums the pride of Canada and the envy of the world.

The Association President, Ms. Nancy Noble, has been a tireless and prolific figure in the museum sector for 25 years, and she has done particularly innovative work in recent years in her role as CEO of the Museum of Vancouver. Please join me in welcoming Ms. Noble to share some words with us today. Thank you.