

**NOTES FOR A TOAST TO BE GIVEN
BY SPEAKER KINSELLA ON THE OCCASION
OF A DINNER HOSTED BY THE CANADIAN
HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE UNITED KINGDOM**

20 FEBRUARY 2011

High Commissioner Campbell,
Speaker Scheer,
Honourable Parliamentarians,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please join me in raising a toast to High Commissioner Campbell and his staff at the High Commission in London. Your Excellency, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for hosting this dinner. These events afford us a welcome opportunity to truly get to know one another. Yours has been a distinguished and successful career in the public service. I am certain that your former experiences as both mayor of Vancouver and Premier of British Columbia are serving you well in your new post – both in your professional work as well as the adjustment to the British climate.

Canada and the United Kingdom enjoy a long-standing and profound relationship, built on a long, shared history and common traditions. It is always a pleasure to visit the place of origin of the Canadian parliamentary system. Canada has closer ties with the United Kingdom more than with any other country, and today over 11 million Canadians – roughly one third of our entire population – have ancestral links to the U.K.

Of course, these links are centred on one person – and the Head of State of both our nations. February 6th, 2011 marked the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty

Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as the Queen of Canada, making 2012 Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee. The only other time Canada has celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of a reigning sovereign was in 1897 for Queen Victoria.

This anniversary provides a unique opportunity to reflect on our heritage as Canadians and to celebrate the past 60 years of the Queen's staunch dedication to her duties. To honour Her Majesty's legacy, some 60,000 Diamond Jubilee medals will be awarded throughout the year to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their communities.

Tomorrow, Speaker Scheer and I will have the highest honour of being granted an audience with the Queen, where we will be relaying congratulatory messages from Canadian Members of Parliament. These messages were written by parliamentarians from across the country and range of the political spectrum – an indication that Canadians are proud to celebrate the Queen's reign, who for 60 years has truly exemplified public service.

Given the historic ties between our two countries, Canadian parliamentarians are keen to foster improved understanding between us. In addition to our shared parliamentary history and sovereign, we have a mutual respect for basic values such as the rule of law and human rights in common. These ideals underpin our deep-rooted relationship, and are evident in our cooperation in a number of international organizations.

For example, Canada and the U.K. are the only two countries to participate in NATO, the G8, and G20 and the Commonwealth. We also work closely together within the United Nations, the World Bank, and the OECD in support of our international development goals.

Most recently, our bilateral relationship was further bolstered by the signing of the Canada–United Kingdom Joint Declaration. The Declaration, signed by Prime Ministers Harper and Cameron in Ottawa in September 2011, acknowledges the bonds that have been forged between our countries through our history of strategic partnership during times of peace and conflict, and promotes renewed commitments to prosperity, security, and development cooperation. I was present at the official signing of the Declaration, and I can say with certainty that Canada and the U.K. are dedicated to further deepening an already excellent relationship.

My last visit to the U.K. took place in January 2008 – amidst the early days of the global financial crisis. Four years later, we continue to face significant challenges to economic growth and stability, challenges that can only be overcome through close cooperation. Our strong relationship enables us to explore innovative solutions. Parliamentary exchanges, such as this, also allow us to gain a deeper, more personal understanding of the situation in each other’s country.

In closing, I would like to thank High Commissioner Campbell once again for his generous hospitality. Please join me in raising a toast to the strength of the Canada–U.K. relationship!

Cheers.