

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF A PRESENTATION TO
THE HONOURABLE MARCEL PRUD'HOMME, P.C.
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF CUBA**

MAY 5, 2009

Mr. President,
Senator Prud'homme,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen:

Mr. President, I want to say how pleased and delighted my colleagues in the Senate of Canada and I are to have you with us today.

We live in a time of historic change in the world, when new personalities and new ideas bring with them the possibility of improved relations both among nations of the Americas and farther abroad.

While we hope for improved relations between all countries, those who, like you, have devoted their careers to diplomacy know that strong relations will not come overnight, but can be built only through sustained communication over many years.

Canada and Cuba have demonstrated this type of relationship. Our longstanding relations were never broken, even during the darkest days of the Cold War. Canadian prime ministers and ministers have visited Cuba over the decades, and President Fidel Castro and Cuban ministers have also visited Canada.

If the principle of sustaining dialogue above all else applies to relations between governments, it certainly also applies to relations between peoples, and even more so between parliamentarians whose job it is to translate into words and deeds the concerns of their constituents.

For more than four decades, first as a Member of Parliament and later as a member of the Senate of Canada, Senator Marcel Prud'homme has demonstrated his commitment to the dialogue between legislators around the world. He has done a great deal to promote friendly relations with Cuba, including founding the Canada-Cuba Inter-parliamentary Group.

We are confident these good relations will continue for the foreseeable future, and we share in your recognition of the tremendous contribution of Senator Prud'homme in strengthening the bonds between our two countries.