

**Speaking Notes**  
**The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella**  
**Speaker of the Senate**

**On the occasion a farewell reception in honour of**  
**Her Excellency the Governor General and His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond**

**Ottawa**  
**September 28, 2010**

Your Excellencies,  
Speaker Milliken,  
Honourable Senators and Members of the House of Commons,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Parliament and to the Hall of Honour, where we are gathered this afternoon to honour Their Excellencies Michaëlle Jean and Jean-Daniel Lafond.

As the Speaker of the Senate of Canada, it is a great pleasure for me to convey, on behalf of my honourable colleagues in the Senate, our fondest expression of gratitude to Their Excellencies.

The service of our Governor General to Canadians from coast to coast to coast has been marked by a profound determination to foster positive change. Her Excellency will long be remembered not only for her hopeful strength, but for the depth and warmth of her compassion. These are attributes for which Canadians have a great appreciation.

On September 27, 2005, Her Excellency's investiture ceremony was held in the Senate Chamber. It was my great pleasure to attend that ceremony and to hear Her Excellency set forth the course she intended to navigate during her tenure as Governor General. It was an address delivered with great eloquence, humour and passion. Her Excellency spoke of her desire to protect the environment, to promote Canadian culture and to provide young people with more and better opportunities.

It was clear to those of us in attendance that we were in the presence of a stirring communicator, one with the rare gift of speaking from the heart.

Our Governor General more than fulfilled the mandate that she set forth for herself. Engaging in a tireless schedule, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean and His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond brought boundless energy and creativity to this task.

The list of programs that Their Excellencies have established and promoted is truly remarkable. To mention just a few examples, we have the "Can We Talk" Youth Dialogue series, an open forum meant to engage and validate the ideas of young people in Canada; an Order of Canada mentorship program; and an Art Matters program, creating an open dialogue about the challenges facing culture in our society. There were also numerous conferences whose goal was the betterment and empowerment of women.

The role of Commander-in-Chief is one which does not receive the attention it merits. Madame Jean's tenure as Commander-in-Chief was not during the best of times. However, difficult times seem only to call forward individuals equal to their undertaking, who find within themselves the strength and capabilities required.

That has certainly been the case with our Governor General. I cannot begin to put into words what Her Excellency's dignity, warmth and compassion have meant to the families of our Forces. It has not simply been Her Excellency's generosity of time, but more importantly, her generosity of spirit.

As an Honorary Captain of the NAVRES, I shared in your pride in witnessing Her Majesty's Canadian ships arrive in Haiti shortly after disaster struck. These ships were loaded with as much in the way of supplies as they could carry. Along with the essentials, including first aid, generators and food, were many donations, such as clothing and toys. I have heard that the response, in terms of donations on the part of Canadians, was and continues to be, overwhelming.

Perhaps this speaks to the closeness that Canadians feel with Her Excellency, that her pain was our pain, and her strength and perseverance was our cue to act and commit our resources to this monumental humanitarian cause.

Truly Her Excellency is the embodiment of the best of the Canadian dream: proud and cognizant of her roots, willing to share her manifold talents with those around her for the betterment of her community, strong, hopeful and determined, yet graceful and empathetic.

On behalf of the Senate and all Canadians, it gives me great pleasure to wish you both the very best in your next pursuit. It has great challenges, but there is no question that Your Excellencies are equal to the task.

It is my pleasure and honour to invite Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean to say a few words.