

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF A LITERARY CELEBRATION IN HONOUR
OF THE HONOURABLE SERGE JOYAL AND HIS BOOK
*LE MYTHE DE NAPOLEON AU CANADA FRANÇAIS***

**SPEAKER'S DINING ROOM
27 NOVEMBER 2013**

Your Excellency Ambassador Zeller,

Senator Joyal,

Madam Chair of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association and Members
of the Executive,

Members of the Légion d'honneur,

Honourable Senators and Members of the House of Commons,

Distinguished guests,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Senate of Canada and to the Speaker's
Chambers where we are gathered to celebrate the most recent *magnus opus* of the
Honourable Senator Serge Joyal entitled *Le Mythe de Napoléon au Canada
Français*.

In the context of what is obviously a book about Canadian history, I wish to
draw to your attention one of the features of these chambers, notably the Latin
inscriptions carved in wood above the doorways. The one above the South
entrance, *Sapere aude*, was written by the popular Roman poet Horace more than
2000 years ago. It is a personal favourite of mine and has been translated as "Dare
to be wise". There are a number of different interpretations, but it may be taken as
a challenge. It is a challenge which Senator Joyal routinely accepts in his writings.

Napoleon never set foot in North America. However, his influence is seen in the development of Quebec's legal system. The Civil Code of Lower Canada was legislation that governed civil law in Quebec from August 1, 1866 through to December 31, 1993, and was inspired in part by the Napoleonic Code.

Beyond these known facts, there is a Napoleonic myth inextricably linked to the historical fabric of French Canada and of the province of Quebec. Senator Joyal sheds light on this in *Le Mythe de Napoléon au Canada français*, which describes the manner in which French-Canadian society appropriated, and to a certain degree reinvented, the figure of Napoleon.

Relying on exhaustive research and a historical account as surprising as it is enthralling, Senator Joyal brings our attention to the mark made by Napoleon on the collective imagination of French-Canadians, adding to that the various ways he has been represented over time.

This masterpiece is a reflection of Senator Joyal's rich expertise, combining his love of history, his extensive political experience and his passion for *le fait français*. It is a significant contribution to the historiography of French Canada.