

**TOAST GIVEN BY SPEAKER KINSELLA
AT A DINNER HOSTED BY CANADA'S AMBASSADOR
TO RUSSIA, RALPH LYSYSHYN**

Privet (Pree-vyeht)

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our host Ambassador Ralph Lysyshyn and his staff for their seamless efforts in preparation for our visit. Your gracious hospitality and extensive knowledge have made this visit deeply rewarding for both myself and my colleagues.

Canada is fortunate to be represented by Ambassador Lysyshyn in Russia, as he has extensive experience and knowledge of Canada-Russia affairs. Over thirty years ago, Ambassador Lysyshyn began his distinguished career in the Foreign Service with a posting to Moscow. He was then posted to Nigeria and then Washington, where he specialized in arms control and disarmament. A few years ago, Ambassador Lysyshyn took leave from the Foreign Service to work with an NGO on good governance in federal systems, whose projects also brought him back to Russia. After he returned to the Foreign Service, he was posted to Moscow in 2006. Since then, he has worked towards promoting the Canadian high tech industry, as well as small to medium Canadian enterprises working in Russia.

As Ambassador Lysyshyn can surely attest to, Canadian-Russian relations have significantly evolved over the years and have entered a period of dynamic growth. As the year 2007 marks the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries, it is important to celebrate the accomplishments of our partnership.

As two countries with vast northern landscapes and multi-ethnic societies, Canada and Russia continue to cooperate in the context of the Arctic Council to ensure that northern peoples are able to maintain their culture and way of life. Canada and Russia are both concerned about the impact climate change is having in the Arctic and are committed to striking a balance between economic development and environmental sustainability in the region, as manifested by their cooperation in the Arctic and North Working Group of the Canada-Russia Intergovernmental Economic Commission.

Meanwhile, Canada and Russia's economic relationship continues to thrive. Bilateral trade between our two countries has nearly doubled over the past two years and multibillion dollar investments are currently in the works. More importantly, business networks between our two countries are being forged through increased contact. In March of this year, the first ever Canada-Russia Business Summit was held in Ottawa with over three hundred

participants in attendance. Canadians were honoured to meet special guest Vladislav Tretyak, the famed Russian goalie in the 1972 Canada Russia hockey summit, who is now a member of the Duma and co-chair of the Canada Russia Parliamentary Friendship Group.

In addition to our common love of sports, Canadians and Russians share a great appreciation for the arts. Indeed, this year also marked the 50th anniversary of Glenn Gould's tour of the Soviet Union, which took place in 1957. In recent years, Canadian artists have been increasingly featured in the Russian cultural scene. In 2004, the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg hosted their first exhibit focusing on Canadian painter, Tom Thompson. This was followed up by an exhibit featuring the works of the successful Canadian artist Jean-Paul Riopelle in the summer of 2006.

Parliamentary exchanges also serve to foster, as well as reflect, the deepening ties between our two countries. These meetings have afforded us the opportunity to address issues of mutual concern, as well as focus on areas in which our relationship could develop, including the importance of promoting people to people ties. These visits further complement high level diplomatic engagement between Canada and Russia, as well as other avenues for political association between our two countries, such as the Canada-Russia Parliamentary Friendship Group.

In closing, let me offer a toast to Ambassador Ralph Lysyshyn. On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to say that we greatly appreciate your warm hospitality and efforts in facilitating our wonderful visit here. Your commitment to developing new areas of cooperation between our two countries is of great benefit to Canadians and Russians alike. Our discussions here today will bear fruit in the coming months and years, as the friendship and mutual understanding between our two countries continues to evolve.

Spasibo (Spah-see'-bah)