

SPEAKING NOTES

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

**On the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Carved Corbel
In the likeness of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**

**Ottawa
December 9, 2010**

Your Excellency,
Prime Minister,
Ministers,
Honourable Senators and Members of Parliament,
Dominion Sculptor,
Distinguished Guests,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Senate of Canada and to the Senate Foyer, where we are gathered today for the official unveiling of the carved corbel of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada. With the Christmas season upon us, this is akin to unwrapping a gift, a gift to Parliament and to all those who will pass this way in the years to come.

The Senate Foyer has many decorative elements reflective of the Crown of Canada. As we look around the space, Royal Portraits dominate the walls, including the one behind me of Her Majesty. In addition, we have the carved likenesses of each of the Queens and Kings of Canada since Confederation, beginning with Queen Victoria and King Edward VII facing one another in the arch to the west of the entrance to the Senate Chamber. King George V and King

Edward VIII have the centre arch, while King George VI will soon be joined by the carving we will see shortly, that of his daughter Queen Elizabeth II, in the arch to the east of the Chamber entrance.

The history of the corbels in this room is brief. They were first commissioned in 1950 with Mr. Cléophas Soucy as the artist, although he unfortunately passed away before beginning the work. The likenesses of George V and Edward VIII were carved by William Oosterhoff, while the others were the work of Eleanor Milne.

Mr. Phil White, Canada's fifth Dominion Sculptor, is the artist behind today's 6th corbel. His work can be found and appreciated not only in the Parliament Buildings, but in Rideau Hall, the chancellery of the Canadian Heraldic Authority and the Canadian War Museum. When I approached him in 2009 about this particular work, he took up the cause with great enthusiasm. He produced a maquette in short order, with photographs being taken and approved by Her Majesty. I was delighted to be present when Her Majesty unveiled the maquette on June 30 at Government House here in Ottawa during the Royal tour.

With regard to his creative process, Mr. White advised me that the greatest challenge is to breathe a sense of life into the raw material and to convey to the viewer an impression of the real person. He added, and I quote: "My hope is that I have managed to interpret to Canadians a sense of the vitality and personality of this extraordinary woman, and have reinforced her lasting connection with our country."

It is also noteworthy that we are also gathered at a time of historical significance, just two days before the 79th anniversary of the *Statute of Westminster*. That was a pivotal moment in Canada's road to independence, with our relationship with the Crown becoming Canada's to choose. I am pleased that our choice was to continue with the monarchy and it was in 1953 that we changed the title of our monarch to "Queen of Canada" to recognize our direct relationship with the Crown.

The unveiling of the sculpture today will mark the completion of the corbels on the northern arches, with the arches at the south end of the Foyer remaining ready to receive the likenesses of our future Canadian sovereigns.

As a final note, we also commissioned a stained glass window as a Diamond Jubilee project which will feature Canada's two Queens, Victoria and Elizabeth II, both of whom will have celebrated their Diamond Jubilees. Her Majesty unveiled this design on the same day as the maquette. After its installation during the Jubilee year, the stained glass window will readily be seen from here in the Foyer as it will replace the one to my left above the entrance to the Senate.

Thank you again for joining us today for this special occasion.