

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF A RECEPTION CELEBRATING THE
ARRIVAL OF THE OLYMPIC TORCH ON PARLIAMENT HILL**

OTTAWA, DECEMBER 10, 2009

Speaker Milliken,
The Honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of State (Sport)
Honourable Senators and Members of Parliament,
Olympic athletes,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are gathered here today to welcome the Olympic flame to Parliament Hill. Starting in Greece, it has traveled halfway around the world, just the beginning of its journey as it has already gone from coast to coast to coast across Canada and is now on its way back to British Columbia again.

The Olympic flame and the Torch which carries it is a powerful symbol of peace and unity between the nations and peoples of the world. It is also a symbol of fierce competition and equally fierce friendships formed before, during and after that competition.

Those who participate in Olympic events have worked hard to reach the pinnacle of their sports. To the young athletes gathered here today, you have our support and our admiration. We recognize that you have dedicated yourselves to the sports and competition at which you excel. In turn, you should know that your passion will be the inspiration for generations which follow, just as you were inspired by those who scaled the Olympic peaks before you.

Many Canadians have been privileged to be torch bearers, and many more have been privileged to watch as the Olympic flame passed through their communities. It has been almost

22 years since people in Canada have had the opportunity to see the flame on its way to open the Games. That was for the winter games in Calgary. Before that, Olympic torchbearers brought the flame to open the summer games in Montreal in 1976, another 12 years earlier.

The Olympics themselves have become a symbol of excellence in competition, and just being in the presence of the Olympic flame gives people a closer connection to the achievements of the past and to the events soon to come.

The Olympic flame represents the Olympic spirit, and that spirit is alive and well in Canada. Know that we are behind you in your pursuit of excellence, that we ask only that you do your best and that Canadians wish you well. Above all, take with you the certain knowledge that we are proud of all of you.