

NOTES FOR A TOAST GIVEN BY

**THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA,
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

**AT A LUNCHEON HOSTED BY LEADERS OF THE
PARTIES PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS OF THE SENATE**

MAY 19, 2009

Distinguished Guests,
Fellow Parliamentarians,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of my colleagues I would like to make a toast. We are very pleased to be here with you today, and I would like to extend our gratitude for all that you have done to make our visit an enjoyable one.

Even though it has only been a short time since we arrived in your beautiful country, we have been welcomed in such a way that will create lasting memories. It is no wonder that Canadians who have visited your country in the past always remark about the famous Romanian hospitality that greeted them upon arrival. It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to build on these positive visits today.

Let me begin by saying what a delight it was to visit your Palace of the Parliament today. It is certainly a building of great historical and cultural significance for your country. I hope to one day soon have the opportunity to

welcome many of you to the Canadian Parliament located in our capital city, Ottawa.

Today, Canada and Romania enjoy excellent bilateral relations as members of NATO, La Francophonie, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Canadians are very encouraged by Romania's commitment to multilateralism, and we were pleased with your accession to full EU member status in 2007.

I am also pleased to note that bilateral relations between our parliaments have grown closer over the past number of years. Canada has had the honour of being host to several Romanian delegations in the past, which participated in seminars discussing the differences and similarities that exist between the Canadian and Romanian parliamentary processes.

What we noticed during those encounters, and what we have observed first-hand over the past few days, is the speed at which Romania has undergone political and economic change. Your country is increasingly becoming a political and economic leader in Southeastern Europe, and a country that Canada is proud to partner with.

One of the specific areas in which Canada and Romania have partnered is in the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan. Canada, like Romania, has been actively involved in pursuing peace and justice in this previously war-torn country. Unfortunately, Canada, like Romania, has also suffered great losses in this pursuit. Canadians have the deepest respect and admiration for the honour and dedication that Romanian men and women have shown while participating in the mission in Afghanistan.

It is this spirit of shared sacrifice, common priorities, and mutual interest upon which our relationship rests. Ours is a relationship that has been developing quickly over the past two decades, and it is one that we hope to build on here today.

Parliamentary exchanges such as these provide us with the opportunity to do just that. They present an opportunity not only to learn from one another, but also to understand each other better. Although electronic communications have allowed parliamentarians to communicate instantaneously across oceans, nothing compares to the relationships that are built through personal encounters.

I look forward to our future discussions together. I have no doubt that they will be positive and productive.