

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

ON THE OCCASION OF A RECEPTION MARKING  
ST. JOHN AMBULANCE DAY ON THE HILL

ABORIGINAL ROOM (160-S)  
APRIL 23, 2013

Speaker Scheer,  
Chancellor Arthur,  
M. Laurencelle,  
Honourable Senators and Members of the House of Commons,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Parliament of Canada and to the Aboriginal Room where we are gathered to mark St. John Ambulance Day on the Hill. I should note that St. John Ambulance is one facet of the Order of Saint John, of which Her Majesty the Queen is the Sovereign and His Excellency the Governor General is the Prior and Chief Officer.

In addition to being Speaker of the Senate, I have the honour of being a Knight of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem – also known as the Order of St. John.

The Order of Saint John has a long and noble history in Canada reaching back to the late 1800's, with immigrants from England bringing their skills and interests with them. The formal establishment of a Canadian ambulance division came in 1909 and there was a rapid expansion across the country in the next few years. This led to a Brigade, transformed to a Commandery and finally elevation to a Priory in 1946. Today, it is one of the largest charitable organizations in Canada.

The Order's 25, 000 members perform more than two million volunteer hours annually.

While volunteers have contributed millions of hours of their time each year to assist those most in need in this country, the Order of Saint John provides worldwide assistance and care to all in need, without discrimination. Examples which come readily to mind are South Africa during Apartheid and the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem which continues to care for Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities every day.

The many contributions made by the Order of Saint John to humanitarian good works around the world are admired not only for their selflessness, but also for their professionalism and competence. The world truly owes the Order a debt of gratitude for these selfless actions.

Participation in humanitarian works is at the core of what it means to be Canadian. The Order of St. John in Canada is an organization dedicated to encouraging active and informed citizens, as well as to relieving sickness and injury. Its members espouse Canadian values through works of service for the greater good.

Volunteers form the backbone of the organization. It is through their dedicated and selfless efforts that the primary mission of the Order of Saint John as a humanitarian organization is fulfilled on a daily basis, not just in Canada but around the world. From saving lives to caring for the sick and injured, the Order of Saint John promotes values which transcend cultures and borders.

The services provided come in many forms. St. John Ambulance Canada is perhaps best known for CPR training, first aid and emergency response, as well as its therapy dog program. It is a body instantly recognizable everywhere in Canada and it enjoys well-deserved universal support.

In closing, I hope you will join me in thanking them and particularly today's life-saving award recipients for their continuing good work in helping to ensure the health and well-being of all Canadians.

Thanky-you