

Speaking Notes
The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella
Speaker of the Senate

14th World Scout Moot

Senate Chamber, Ottawa
13 August 2013

Speaker Cormier,
Monsieur Champagne,
Monsieur Gauvin,
Mr. Nowlan,
Monsieur Perreault,
Rovers and Scouts,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome all of you this afternoon to this magnificent chamber, which is a source of great pride for all Canadians. I was very pleased to participate in “Scouts day on the Hill” earlier this year and I am delighted that you are able to visit Canada and the Senate. Please take a moment to look around and contemplate the splendor of this place, to appreciate it as it rightly deserves to be.

À l'intérieur de cette somptueuse pièce au plafond cathédrale, d'énormes chandeliers en bronze noir attirent le regard. Chacun d'entre eux pèse deux tonnes. Ils sont à l'image de l'importance de ce qui se transige ici, c'est-à-dire les affaires du pays. Vous remarquerez ensuite le plafond à caissons, orné de feuilles d'or, aux symboles qui représentent le Canada, la France, l'Angleterre, l'Écosse, l'Irlande et le pays de Galles.

Circling the room are carvings which include griffons, lions, otters and unicorns – a fabled bestiary contained within the carved oak panels and limestone friezes.

Though contemplation of the carvings is a treat to the senses and an invitation to the imagination, the eight paintings hanging on the walls summon us back to reality. Commissioned by a fellow New Brunswicker, Lord Beaverbrook, they depict scenes of the First World War and serve as reminders to lawmakers of the importance of wise government.

Tout cela évoque l'histoire du Canada. J'aimerais vous parler brièvement des origines du Sénat en tant qu'institution et de son rôle. Et pour ceux d'entre vous qui se posent la question, il y aura peut-être un test à la fin.

At the Quebec Conference of 1864, the Fathers of Confederation designed what would become the Parliament of Canada. Inspired by the British model they adapted it to the Canadian context, and gave it the power to make laws for “Peace, Order and Good Government.”

Our Parliament consists of 3 elements: the Sovereign; the Senate, whose members are currently appointed; and the House of Commons, whose members are elected.

Le Sénat compte aujourd'hui 105 membres issus de divers milieux et représentant toutes les provinces et tous les territoires.

Le rôle principal du Sénat consiste à servir de contrepoids pour la gouvernance de notre fédération.

This balancing reflects everything senators do. It can be seen in each of our institution's three primary roles, which are: representation, investigation and legislation.

In its representative role, the Senate reflects the regional and cultural makeup of Canada. Senators represent all regions and provinces of the country, with over half of the Senate seats representing the less populated regions of our land. Canada's three founding peoples – Aboriginal, British and French – are represented in the Senate, along with many of our nation's ethnic communities.

Plus de 30 % des sénateurs sont des femmes, la proportion la plus élevée de toutes les chambres hautes au monde. Ainsi le Sénat compte actuellement 38 sénatrices. La représentation, cependant, ne se limite pas uniquement aux circonscriptions géographiques. Certains sénateurs se font aussi les porte-parole d'autres groupes, par exemple, les anciens combattants, les aînés, les jeunes ou même les prisonniers.

The Senate's second role is that of investigation. Many senators are chosen because they demonstrated leadership in their communities. They bring vast knowledge and experience as they explore, promote awareness and seek Canadian views on a wide range of issues. Much of their investigative work takes place within the framework of the Senate committee structure.

Often described as the heart and soul of the Senate, committees turn the spotlight on social, political and economic issues of importance to Canada and its citizens. You have just come to this Chamber from your own Parliamentary committee work and thus have a better understanding of what is involved.

Quand ils se penchent sur une question, les comités tiennent des audiences pour recueillir toute l'information pertinente et convoquent ministres,

fonctionnaires, spécialistes, organisations et particuliers pour leur poser des questions qui ne sont pas toujours faciles. Il y a lieu de croire que, dans des dossiers controversés comme l'euthanasie et le suicide assisté, les sénateurs nommés jouissent d'une plus grande marge de manœuvre pour en examiner tous les aspects et tous les points de vue ou y sont peut-être plus disposés que les députés élus de la Chambre des communes.

This brings me to the third role of the Senate: legislation.

Recognizing that every system needs checks and balances, Canada's Constitution requires both the Senate and the House of Commons to approve legislation separately. This dual-chamber structure ensures that laws are not passed too quickly and that interested parties have a chance to express their views. The result is that laws passed are generally more effective and longer-lasting. Another factor in its favour is that the Senate is often able to spend the time necessary to conduct more in-depth studies.

Dans les faits, le Sénat examine et parfois corrige et améliore les mesures proposées par la Chambre des communes, jouant ainsi son rôle de « chambre de second examen objectif », pour citer sir John A. Macdonald.

Note that the Senate may also initiate changes to the law through the introduction and passage of bills, just as is done by the House of Commons, with the exception that no bill originating in the Senate can require the expenditure of public funds. Naturally, the House of Commons must also pass the bill before it becomes law.

Turning briefly to my own role as Speaker of the Senate, the primary responsibility under the Rules of the Senate is to “preserve order and decorum and to decide points of order subject to an appeal to the Senate.”

Le Président est aussi appelé à assumer de nombreuses fonctions diplomatiques au pays et à l'étranger. Recevoir des dignitaires en visite, accueillir officiellement des groupes et des associations, représenter à l'occasion le premier ministre ou des ministres fédéraux, tout cela fait partie des fonctions courantes du Président du Sénat. Le Président est également appelé à se déplacer, notamment pour diriger des délégations parlementaires en visite officielle à l'étranger.

The Senate brings together a talented and diverse group of men and women who have excelled in almost every discipline. It is representative of our nation's fabric, welcoming women, aboriginals, and cultural minorities. It is an institution whose careful analysis, informed debate and reasoned commentary underpin the Canadian body politic.

For my part, I am extremely proud to belong to a legislative assembly possessed of a long and noble tradition of representation and investigation.

La bonne gouvernance permet à une société de canaliser ses forces pour le bien commun. Pour cette raison, il est très important que les jeunes de tous les pays soient renseignés sur leur gouvernement afin de pouvoir devenir des citoyens responsables.

The knowledge and exposure gained from travels such as yours today encourages a better understanding and appreciation of other nations. It also encourages greater community involvement, leadership, and citizenship.

This is why programs such as the World Scout Moot are so important. Through it, participants gain direct experience, including a deeper understanding and appreciation for history, culture, and government institutions. This experience better enables you to contribute to, and perhaps to participate in, your own nation

as informed citizens. The ties you develop with other Scouts during the course of this adventure will last a lifetime.

De nombreux parlementaires gardent un souvenir formidable de leurs années de scoutisme pendant leur jeunesse. La formation l'an dernier du Groupe d'amitié parlementaire Scouts Canada montre l'importance que garde ce mouvement dans notre société.

Since 1907 Scouts Canada has been fostering the values of loyalty, citizenship and service. For over a century the scout movement has played a central role in preparing the youth of Canada to become the leaders of tomorrow.

We will not forget the pioneering work of Lord Baden-Powell and those early scouts in Canada and around the world, who helped to establish this noble organization. Their foresight and dynamism have served as the cornerstone of a group that brings together youth from across the globe.

Un nombre incalculable de Canadiens ont été castors, louveteaux ou scouts et ont profité de la multitude de programmes offerts par Scouts Canada. Issu de la Boy Scouts Association, le scoutisme a été un exemple d'inclusion et de coopération, deux valeurs canadiennes par excellence.

On a personal note I experienced many happy and instructive years as a youth in Scouting. It started as a member of a Wolf Cub Pack where I served as the Senior Sixer and continued on into a Scout Troop where I earned the Queen's Scout Badge. It was a great privilege to be a member of a Rover Group which met Lady Baden Powell while attending the World Scout Jamboree in Sutton Park, England in 1957.

Scouts Canada a joué un rôle important dans ma vie, et je suis convaincu que cette organisation prendra part pendant longtemps encore à la vie et au développement de notre pays.

Thank you all for your interest and participation in this wonderful organization.