

The Honourable Noel Kinsella
Speaker of the Senate

Speaking Notes to the CIAJ
September 14th, 2006 - 7:15 Senate Lobby

Mesdames et messieurs. Ladies and Gentlemen.

It's a real pleasure for me to join you today and to formally welcome you to the nation's Parliament. My colleague, the Honourable Peter Milliken, who is Speaker of the other place, is representing Canadians in Russia as we speak, and asks me to send you his regrets that he cannot join me to personally welcome you today.

Let me begin by thanking the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice, which has been organizing this legislative drafting conference for the past 13 years, since 1989.

Conferences, such as this series, are very important to the life of a profession.

This year, the focus of your conference is "Drafting for Diversity: A Singular Challenge".

As the Canadian community becomes more diverse, the challenges of accommodating a wider range of interests grow.

This conference tackles a number of aspects of social diversity of particular relevance to you.

By talking to each other you identify the problems that are common and shared by all, and you are also able to discern which problems are unique and special to your home organizations.

Since the Senate is the only upper Chamber in the country, perhaps we face a few more of those unique problems than most, with a few more unique opportunities attached.

With respect to shared problems, attending conferences such as this one allows us to discuss our various perspectives and pool solutions, and thus forge a common response to issues that leaves all of us in a better position.

Professional conferences also allow people to meet socially and to develop an esprit de corps for the profession.

You get to know each other and are able to exchange and cooperate throughout the year through the electronic means that our modern world affords.

Of course, in addition to the benefit to Canada, you each personally benefit from the rich exchanges that membership in such accomplished organizations as the CIAJ permits.

I also want you to know how much WE the parliamentarians appreciate your professionalism and work throughout the year.

Canada gains when there is a cohesive body of professionals, legislative drafters in your case.

In a sense, you are the eminences grises of the legislative process.

Thanks to you, the legislators have bills to discuss, grist for their mill.

Canada and the provinces have superb statute books, perhaps the best in the world, and it is thanks to you.

Most of you have had the advantages of developing your art in Canada, which offers a centralized system of drafting and requires the use of two official languages in many jurisdictions. This requirement is one example of diversity; having two legal systems within the country is another.

As a professional group, you have to know how to convert these advantages into results of which you can be most proud.

Once again, I am very glad to see you gathered here this evening, I hope that your deliberations today and tomorrow will prove to be fruitful and I also hope that you are having a good time.

Thank you
Merci