

**A TOAST GIVEN BY SPEAKER KINSELLA  
TO THE SPEAKER  
OF THE SEJM OF POLAND**

Your Excellency Speaker Dorn, honourable Senators, ladies and gentlemen:

Czesc (Chesh),

This is only the latest in a series of exchanges between our parliaments, and we are pleased to build on the work that has already been done.

Speaker Dorn, it is a particular pleasure to meet you. Your long experience as a parliamentarian, as a minister, and as deputy prime minister is a benefit to us all.

The purpose of the visit by this Canadian parliamentary delegation is to continue building ties between our parliaments. The national parliamentary traditions of Canada date back 140 years, and we are always eager to share the benefits of this long history. At the same time, it would be arrogant to think that we cannot learn from other parliaments.

Poland has made astonishing progress since the dramatic events of 1989 and 1990. In what is a relatively short time, you have become a full-fledged member of the European Union, and our ally in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. You have also developed your parliamentary institutions.

Canada was glad to have the opportunity to help Poland during its transition to democracy and a market economy. Now, we work as partners. Our armed forces are fighting together in Afghanistan. Trade between us has increased rapidly, and last year it surpassed one billion Canadian dollars – which is about 2.6 billion zlotych.<sup>(1)</sup> In addition, more and more Canadian firms are investing in Poland.

Given that Canada and Poland share many of the same goals, it is important for our parliamentarians to understand each other. To this end, we cooperate through organizations such as the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, *l'Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie*, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Within the Canadian Parliament we also have the Canada-Poland Friendship Group.

Canada has always believed that such international cooperation can go a long way to ensuring stability in the world. That is why long-term commitments – not only through international organizations, but also at the bilateral level – are so important. In the case of our two countries, we are aided by the fact that there are substantial numbers of Canadians of Polish ancestry, many of whom have maintained contact with their ancestral home.

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(1) Zlotych is the plural of zloty – the Polish currency.

Speaker Dorn, we are very grateful to have this opportunity to discuss with you the workings of our respective institutions, the political situation in our countries, and the challenges we expect to face over the next few years. By gaining a better understanding of each other's country, we will better be able to make wise decisions on the many issues in which we have common concerns. Be assured that once we have returned home, we will continue to follow events in Poland.

In closing, I would like to thank you once again for your charming hospitality. I hope to see in Ottawa in the near future. On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to raise a toast to our Polish hosts.

Dziękuję bardzo (Zhe-koo'-yay bahrd'-zoh)