

Speech Notes

Sharon CARSTAIRS*

Bonsoir Mesdames et Messieurs. Good evening ladies and gentlemen. It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Parliament of Canada, and to this reception.

I welcome you on behalf of all of my colleagues, the Senators of Canada, and particularly on behalf of the Speaker of the Senate, the Honourable Dan Hays.

Speaker Hays has asked me to transmit his warmest welcome to all of you, and a special welcome to those of you from his home province of Alberta. In the same vein, I wish to extend my special greetings to those of you who are from my friendly province of Manitoba.

J'ose espérer que cette réception saura clôturer gracieusement une première journée de délibérations sûrement complexes et intenses.

Je suis personnellement ravie de voir l'éventail des sujets que vous abordez : l'éthique et la diversité entre autres. Je constate que la communauté rédactionnelle marche de pas avec celle des parlementaires pour faire avancer des valeurs qui aboutiront à une meilleure société pour les canadiennes et canadiens.

En ce sens, le sénateur Oliver vous a parlé ce midi de l'importance des minorités visibles au sein de votre clientèle. Je ne manquerai donc pas ma chance de souligner que vous vous devez d'accorder la même

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importance concernant l'intégration en milieu de travail des personnes handicapées, soit en tant que patron, collègue ou client.

My roles as a minister of the Crown, and as a legislator on both the Government and Opposition benches, have given me considerable insight into the important role you play as legislative drafters.

In parliamentary committees, Ministers and their policy advisors are the witnesses called upon to defend the Government's legislative proposals. However, the fairness, clarity and elegance with which the drafter has rendered the client's policies are one of the major underpinnings of their case, and will undoubtedly affect the warmth with which legislation is received by parliamentarians. It may even affect the success or failure of a bill.

As we know, Canada is a large country: the larger half of a continent; peopled by women and men living rural and urban lifestyles, who are Aboriginal, French-speaking, English-speaking and members of visible minorities.

In the face of the challenges posed by such diversity, we generally seem to be achieving our stated constitutional goal of "peace, order and good government". In my view, we have achieved, as a society, a first-class body of laws of which we can be proud. Thank you for your contribution to that heritage.

En vous accueillant au Parlement du Canada pour cette conférence, et en vous accueillant ici ce soir, vos parlementaires, les représentants et représentantes du peuple canadien, vous témoignent leur reconnaissance et estime.

Again, I offer you my congratulations and best wishes for a successful and productive conference.