

Office of the  
Prime Minister



Cabinet du  
Premier ministre

Notes for an Address  
Notes d'allocution

Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Premier ministre du Canada

**UNDER EMBARGO**  
**SOUS EMBARGO**

**Victoria, British Columbia**  
**Victoria, Colombie-Britannique**

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**Mr. Speaker of the Legislative Assembly,  
The Honourable Bill Barisoff,  
Premier of the Province of British Columbia,  
The Honourable Gordon Campbell,  
Leader of the Opposition,  
The Honourable Carole James.  
Distinguished Members  
of the Legislative Assembly.  
Mesdames et Messieurs,  
Ladies and gentlemen.**

**C'est un immense plaisir  
d'être ici avec vous aujourd'hui,  
dans le cadre de cette célébration  
de votre province  
et de notre pays.**

**It is an enormous pleasure  
to be here  
with you today,  
at this moment of great celebration  
for your province,  
and our country.**

**I've often said that  
The best thing about being Prime Minister  
is the unparalleled opportunity  
I have to travel  
the length and breadth  
of this land  
and to meet the wonderful people  
who call it home.**

**Today, in these travels  
I am undertaking a first.  
In all the years since 1871**

**When British Columbia  
made that momentous decision  
To join the new Dominion  
And truly make it a country from sea to sea  
No Prime Minister  
Has ever formally addressed  
This great Assembly.**

**And I want to thank  
the speaker of the house  
for providing me  
with this special opportunity.**

**All of you do me,  
And your country,  
a great honour.**

So here we are  
in the Legislative Assembly  
of British Columbia.

British Columbia.  
Canadians from coast to coast to coast  
Have known you for decades  
By the slogan on your licence plates  
– “Beautiful British Columbia.”

It is no exaggeration.

The natural beauty  
is almost always  
the first thing  
people notice about British Columbia  
when they arrive.

The famous Canadian  
historian and essayist,  
Stephen Leacock,  
put it rather well  
a long time ago.

Describing his maiden trip  
to B.C.  
in his book, My Discovery of the West,  
he recounted a question  
that had been posed to him  
at a Canadian Club function  
in Vancouver:

“[I was asked] why  
I had never visited  
the province before.

“I [said] that,  
like so many other people,  
I had never come to it  
because I didn’t realize  
how wonderful it was.

If I had known  
what it was like  
I wouldn’t have been  
content with a mere visit.

I would have been born here.”

B.C.’s unmatched beauty  
And its promise of a better life  
Has never lost its power  
To enchant and to enthrall.

And to draw ever more newcomers  
To its sparkling Pacific shore.

**It began with the myriad nations  
Of our First Peoples  
Whose spirit  
Has animated this land  
For thousands of years.**

**It continued with the great explorers:  
John Finley,  
Simon Fraser,  
Alexander Mackenzie,  
David Thompson,**

**Those who sought to connect it  
To the wider economic forces  
Of the continent.**

**It captured the imagination  
of the generation of adventurers  
who travelled enormous distances,  
when gold was discovered  
on the Fraser River.**

**And it was in Craigellachie  
where the last spike  
of the Canadian Pacific Railway  
– the single most important  
– nation-building project  
– in the history of our country  
was driven.**

**And, ladies and gentlemen,  
British Columbia is still calling out  
- now to all the peoples of the world.**

**From a sparsely populated  
outpost of our country,  
B.C. has become  
The third-largest province  
– boasting one of the  
– most cosmopolitan and liveable cities  
– on Earth,  
– still growing fast  
– and leading Canada's way  
– into a new century  
– that will be defined  
– by the opportunities in the Asia-Pacific  
– for which British Columbia  
– is Canada's Gateway.**

**How the generation of 1871  
- John Foster McCreight, Amor de Cosmos and all the rest,  
Must marvel at the British Columbia of 2010,**

**The British Columbia  
With the talent  
And the energy  
And the capability  
to host huge,**

world-class events  
like the Olympic Games  
that will be opened tomorrow.

You know,  
Events like these  
have a significance beyond themselves.

They serve  
as historic markers  
of where a community is going,  
of how its people see themselves.

For instance,  
To visit British Columbia  
and Vancouver even now  
is to be reminded of Expo '86.

Most of you  
will recall  
that World's Fair,  
and what it meant.

At a time when Asia  
Was beginning to demonstrate  
Its capacity to become  
a future economic powerhouse  
That event  
Put your province  
And our country  
On the map of the Pacific.

That World's Fair showcased  
this part of our country  
– and we all remember  
– the surge in investment and population  
– that followed.

But,  
it also changed  
British Columbia.

British Columbia became bolder,  
stronger,  
possessed of the shining confidence  
that is the consequence of success,  
and so necessary  
to scale even higher summits.

Now, you are calling the world back  
Once again,  
And in even more spectacular fashion.

During the Olympic and Paralympic Games,  
sixty-eight hundred  
athletes and team officials,  
ten thousand reporters  
and a quarter million spectators  
will gather in Vancouver and Whistler.

**By any measure,  
these are remarkable gatherings.**

**Yet, a mere recitation  
of the numbers  
hardly does them justice.**

**The 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games  
have been an unparalleled  
organizational and logistical undertaking.**

**They will be  
simply  
the most ambitious  
sporting event  
ever held on Canadian soil.**

**The work of the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee,  
– in conjunction with its  
– partners at all levels of government,  
– is itself a feat worthy  
– of the ancient Olympiads  
– that these Games honour.**

**Like the earlier Expo,  
this is a tremendous accomplishment.**

**And also like it,  
we cannot yet know,  
how these Games  
will change us all,  
or what their legacy will be.**

**But we do know this,  
Ladies and gentlemen:  
That British Columbia  
has made enormous strides  
in the early years  
of the 21st century.**

**It has grown exponentially,  
gathered economic strength,  
and become more important in Confederation  
than at any time in our history.**

**And it is not hard to predict  
That, in some distant year,  
When British Columbians  
reflect upon these Games  
you will see them  
as an affirmation  
of what you have achieved  
and as your point of departure  
– into a new and exciting era.**

**On behalf of the Government of Canada  
– and indeed all Canadians –  
I'd like to thank everyone involved**

**in the organization  
of the 2010 Olympic Games  
and those who have supported them,  
including you right here in this Chamber**

**for a job well done -  
For a job very well done!**

**Je veux aussi vous dire  
que tous les Canadiens  
et toutes les Canadiennes  
sont fiers d'être partenaires  
de ces Jeux.**

**Que ce soit sous la forme  
de l'infrastructure des lieux,  
de fonds patrimoniaux,  
d'événements culturels,  
ou d'ententes de sécurité essentielles,  
tous les Canadiens  
- par l'intermédiaire du gouvernement du Canada -  
ont fait les investissements requis  
pour assurer  
que l'événement soit  
de classe mondiale,  
car ces Jeux sont  
les Jeux du Canada.**

**I also want to tell you  
That all Canadians  
Are proud to be partners  
In these Games.**

**Be it in the form  
of venue infrastructure,  
legacy funds,  
cultural events,  
or the essential  
security arrangements,**

**all Canadians  
- through the Government of Canada -  
have made the investments  
needed to ensure  
a world-class event.**

**Because while Vancouver and Whistler  
may be the staging grounds  
of the 2010 Olympic and  
Paralympic Winter Games,**

**let there be no doubt**  
– as Premier Campbell said himself  
– in December  
– when we welcomed  
– the Olympic flame to Parliament Hill  
– “these Games are Canada’s Games.”

For, ladies and gentlemen,  
While British Columbia will have on display  
During these Games

Everything of which you are so proud,  
The thing most visible,  
Once our national teams and athletes appear on the stage  
Will be B.C.'s greatest attribute  
And its great asset  
- that is,  
- that British Columbia it is part of Canada.

It is all of Canada  
that will be cheering  
our athletes on.

It is all Canadians  
- from Cape Race  
- to Nootka Sound  
- to the men and women  
- standing on guard at Alert in Nunavut -

who will be glued  
to their television sets,  
not just cheering for our athletes  
but feeling with them,  
every step of the way.

In this great striving among the nations  
- that is no less serious or determined  
- for being undertaken  
- in a spirit of goodwill

Canadian athletes  
will create now,  
the yesterdays  
that we shall all savour  
in our tomorrows,  
the stories of which  
we shall remind each other,  
the feats of courage,  
commitment and fair play  
that we shall offer  
to our children  
and our children's children  
as examples  
when they ask:

"What does it mean  
to be Canadian?"

And then we shall feel  
that warm glow of pride.  
As we should,  
As Canadians.  
Patriotism, ladies and gentlemen,  
Patriotism as Canadians,  
Should not make us feel  
The least bit shy or embarrassed.



I know that thoughts of grandeur  
And boisterous displays of nationalism  
We tend to associate with others.

And,  
over the centuries,  
things have been done  
around the world  
in the name of  
of national pride  
or love of country  
that would have been better  
left undone.

Yet, we should never cast aside  
Our pride in a country so wonderful  
in a land we are so fortunate  
to call home  
merely because  
the notion has sometimes been abused.

There is nothing wrong,  
and there is much  
that is right,  
in celebrating together  
when our fellow citizens

- perceiving some splendid star high above us
- willingly pay the cost
- and take the chance
- to stretch forth their hands
- to try
- to touch it
- for that one shining moment.

For, no good thing  
is without risk,  
no ideal can be reached  
without sacrifice.

Ask any Olympian who  
wears the Maple Leaf.

But that Maple Leaf,  
We must remember,  
Symbolizes more  
than just the athletes who wear it

It symbolizes the country we love.  
It symbolizes the Canada,  
Our Canada,  
That has shown during this global recession  
And will show during these Games,

That it can compete  
And win  
Against the very best.

The Canada, our Canada,  
Where those other citizens who where the Maple Leaf,  
Our armed forces,  
Serve, and have served,  
never for conquest and advantage,  
but simply to spread our gifts  
of freedom, democracy and justice,  
to make the world a little safer,  
a little better,  
as they are doing in Afghanistan;  
to give some hope to others  
to rescue our fellow citizens  
as they have done  
so spectacularly  
in Haiti.

That Canada, our Canada,  
That has given so generously to Haiti,  
Not because we think  
We will gain some power or some return  
But because our country is  
at its heart,  
Compassionate and generous,  
Not only with our fellow citizens  
But with our fellow human beings  
As well.

And we recognize this  
Not to claim that our Canada  
Is perfect.

But when we have done wrong,  
And we truly have on occasion,  
- The Chinese head tax,  
The Indian residential schools  
- We have tried to learn from those wrongs  
And to make amends.

And, that, my fellow Canadians,  
Learning from our history,  
We have discovered is the better way to build our country.  
It has made us history's benefactors,  
Instead of its prisoners.

Le Canada,  
notre magnifique pays,  
où nous accueillons le monde,  
non seulement pour les Jeux olympiques,  
mais dans le cadre de notre identité propre.

Car tous les pays,  
quand ils viendront,  
retrouveront leurs frères et sœurs  
parmi nous,  
des Canadiens et des Canadiennes,  
qui sont venus  
de tous les coins de la planète  
et qui continuent à venir,  
mettant de côté les vieilles querelles  
et embrassant un avenir commun, ensemble.

Canada,  
Our magnificent land,  
To which we are welcoming the world,  
Not just for the Olympic Games,  
But as part of our very identity.

Because all nations,  
when they come here,  
Will already find their brothers and sisters among us,  
Canadians,  
who have arrived  
From every corner of the planet  
And continue to come  
To put aside old quarrels  
And to embrace a common future  
together.

And so,  
When we,  
In our national anthem,  
ask God to keep our land glorious and free,  
We mean all of us,  
All men and women  
Who choose to be Canadians  
Of equal worth,  
Not just in His eyes  
But in each other's.

Canada, Our Canada  
Is truly worthy of our pride  
And our patriotism.

So let us hold our flag high,  
at our embassies and our aid bases,  
our outposts and our vessels,  
our stadiums and our venues,  
even our homes,  
during these Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Games.

But not just for these Games,  
Also for the G8, the G20,  
The North American Leader's Summit  
The visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

And any other great occasion,  
- not only as a symbol of how appreciative  
- we are for all we have,  
- but also as a sign of welcome to the world.

Let it be a cheerful  
red and white reminder  
of a quiet and humble patriotism,  
that, while making  
no claims on its neighbours,  
is ever ready  
to stand on guard  
for itself.

**We will ask the world  
to forgive us  
this uncharacteristic outburst  
of patriotism,  
of our pride,  
to be part of a country  
that is strong, confident,  
and tall among the nations.**

**And we will let our flag wave here in British Columbia  
- Beautiful British Columbia –  
over the podium of the 2010 Winter Games.**

**This truly is  
British Columbia's Golden Moment.**

**And it is also  
Canada's time to shine.**

**Merci beaucoup.**

**Thank you, And God bless Canada.**