

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.