



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **VISIT OF THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER**

Statement by:

The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

## THE SENATE

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### VISIT OF THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER

**Hon. Patricia Bovey:** Honourable senators, the Senate of Canada recently received a very real honour.

Our Speaker was invited to address the Latvian Parliament on September 14 as part of his official trip to France and Latvia. As Senator Doyle said yesterday, he and I had the privilege of being part of that delegation.

First we visited three sites on the Caribou Trail in France. These truly moving and humbling memorials are impressive tributes to the many First World War losses of Newfoundlanders.

In Latvia, we visited Canada's 450 troops at the recently established multinational base at Adazi, just outside Riga. We held meetings with the Speaker of the Latvian Parliament, several ministers and with parliamentary committee chairs. It was an informative and substantive visit.

A highlight was Speaker Furey's address to the Saeima. He was the first international leader to be invited to address their parliament since 2012. His address was excellent and extremely well received as he recounted the long and deep friendship between Canada and Latvia through the trials, upheavals and high points of their history over past decades.

He noted that Canada early recognized Latvia's 1991 independence and was one of the first to vote for their entry into NATO. He also noted with gratitude that Latvia was the first EU country to ratify CETA, and spoke of the pride we have in our troops leading

the current military project in Latvia. It was abundantly obvious that the camaraderie among the NATO member troops working with Latvia from Canada, Spain, Albania, Italy, Poland and Slovenia was exceptional and the morale was high.

Speaker Furey discussed the ongoing deepening of our partnership and friendship and the shared pride between our countries, including the significant contributions of the Latvian diaspora in Canada to Canadian culture and the Canadian and Latvian joint university research projects and exchanges.

Every word was heard and appreciated. Uncharacteristic of the Latvian Parliament, Speaker Furey was given a standing ovation.

Thank you, Speaker, for flying our flag as you did in all our meetings and for your impressive and acclaimed address. You are rightly held in high esteem and in turn so, too, is our Senate and Canada.

We also extend our thanks and appreciation to our Latvian hosts. Honourable senators, their welcome was so warm that we were at a loss for words to say an adequate thank you.

As we celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Canada's togetherness as a nation, Latvia is on the eve of their one hundredth anniversary of independence next year, which will be celebrated with music festivals throughout the year, the highlight day being November 18, 2018.

We wish all Latvians the very best for each of their festivities.

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