

His Honour  
The Honourable David C. Onley, O.Ont.

**SPEAKING NOTES  
FOR THE FLAG RAISING CEREMONY  
ON UNITED EMPIRE LOYALIST DAY**

Legislative Building, Toronto  
Wednesday 19 June 2013

*Check against delivery*

Good morning!

As Chief Aide de Camp to the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, it is my privilege to deliver his greeting on his behalf. His Honour regrets not being able to join you in person but hopes this will not dampen today's celebration.

I bring you greetings in the name of Her Majesty The Queen, and extend a warm welcome to Queen's Park. I'm delighted to join you today as we celebrate Ontario's Loyalist roots.

As descendents of Loyalists who sought sanctuary in these lands north of the border, you have every right to be proud of the decisive role they played in the creation of this province.

The United Empire Loyalists valued British institutions and rejected the new republican system south of the border.

For this, they paid a huge price. Persecuted after the War of Independence, they must have wondered what sort of life would await them in the wilderness to which they came.

But they had the will to start over, and set about creating new homes and communities along the southern border that stretched from Cornwall in the east to Windsor in the west.

Though they had lost practically everything materially, the Loyalists brought courage and resourcefulness, loyalty and vision. Before long, they had birthed a new province and had a Lieutenant Governor and Legislative Assembly to lead it.

Each year on June 19<sup>th</sup>, we gather here to celebrate United Empire Loyalist Day. We gather here, because the Loyalists helped lay the foundations of Ontario. We celebrate now, because on this date in 1791 this province came into being.

Exactly 222 years ago today, the *Constitutional Act* received Royal Assent, and this province was born.

It was the presence of the Loyalists, then 10,000 strong, that literally put this province on the map. From the beginning, their story and our province's story have been intertwined.

Though small in number, those Loyalists left a deep imprint on this province. Thanks to them, we have a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy in Ontario.

With their support, our first Lieutenant Governor, John Graves Simcoe, introduced such institutions as the Courts, trial by jury, English common law, and freehold land tenure. And he abolished slavery in Upper Canada, long before it was abolished in the British Empire or the United States.

The Lieutenant Governor, as many of you know, is a proud descendent of United Empire Loyalists. In fact, both he and his wife and have Loyalist roots in the Niagara Region.

As UEL descendants, you should be proud of the formative role the Loyalists played in this province. But I would suggest that all Ontarians are actually heirs of the Loyalist legacy.

The gifts the Loyalists gave us are still much valued today. People flock here from around the world, drawn by the civic structures the Loyalists helped to create. Rarely have the actions of so few contributed to the well being of so many.

We are all in their debt. So on behalf of all Ontarians, I thank the United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada, and the Toronto Branch in particular, for keeping this legacy alive.

And I encourage you to transmit your own respect for the Loyalists to new generations, so that all Ontarians will come to know and appreciate the shoulders upon which we stand.

Thank you.