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44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

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Monday, November 22, 2021

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 22, 2021

The House met at 1 p.m.

FIRST SESSION—44TH PARLIAMENT

• (1305)

[*English*]

The 43rd Parliament having been dissolved by proclamation on Sunday, August 15, 2021, and writs having been issued and returned, a new Parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Monday, November 22, 2021, and did accordingly meet on that day.

Monday, November 22, 2021

This being the day on which Parliament was convoked by proclamation of Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada for the dispatch of business, and the members of the House being assembled:

Charles Robert, Clerk of the House of Commons, read to the House a letter from the Administrative Secretary to the Governor General informing him that the Deputy Governor General would proceed to the Senate chamber today at one o'clock to open the first session of the 44th Parliament of Canada.

A message was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Honourable Members of the House of Commons:

It is the desire of the Right Honourable Deputy of Her Excellency the Governor General that this honourable House attend him immediately in the Senate chamber.

Accordingly, the House went up to the Senate chamber, where the Speaker of the Senate said:

Honourable Members of the Senate, Members of the House of Commons:

I have it in command to let you know that Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada does not see fit to declare the causes of her summoning the present Parliament of Canada until a Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen, according to law; but tomorrow afternoon, Tuesday, November 23, at the hour of one o'clock, Her Excellency will declare the causes of her calling this Parliament.

And the House being returned to the Commons chamber:

The Clerk of the House: Honourable members, pursuant to Standing Order 3, I invite Mr. Plamondon, member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, to take the chair as the member presiding over the election of the Speaker.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Hello everyone.

[*English*]

I am very happy to be with you today.

[*Translation*]

This is the 12th time that I have been elected and the fifth time that I have had the pleasure of presiding over the election of the Speaker.

Before the election, a journalist asked me if I had thought long and hard about seeking election. I told him that I had. I realized that Joe Biden and I were the same age. If he was able to run the United States, I should be able to run a riding.

After the election, the same journalist asked me if that was my last election campaign. After giving it some thought, I answered that I would run only two or three more times.

I apologize for speaking only in French for the time being. If I were to speak in English, I think you would still need interpretation. I will say a few words in English shortly.

Earlier, when we were entering, a member asked me what it takes to stay in shape and do this job at my age with such determination and so forth. I gave him three pieces of advice. I told him to eat what he does not want to eat, drink what he does not want to drink and to do the exercises that he does not want to do.

Let us turn our attention to serious matters.

[*English*]

Hon. members should have received by email last night the list of candidates for the speakership, the list of members who have withdrawn and the list of members who are ineligible as candidates. Those lists are available at the table if members wish to consider them before the vote.

[*Translation*]

Before we continue, I would invite those members whose names are still on the ballot but who do not wish to be considered for election to kindly rise and inform the Chair accordingly.

Election of Speaker

Since no member has risen, pursuant to Standing Order 3.1, the House must proceed to the speeches of candidates for Speaker. I would ask you to listen closely to these speeches.

Notwithstanding any Standing Order, any procedure or any practice adopted by this House, and to help the newly elected members identify the candidates for the office of Speaker, I will recognize in alphabetical order each candidate by name and electoral district.

[*English*]

When the last candidate to address the House completes his or her speech, I will leave the chair for 30 minutes, after which members will proceed to the election of the Speaker.

[*Translation*]

I will now call upon Mr. Marc Dalton, the hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, to speak for not more than five minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): *Bonjour*, colleagues. Good afternoon. *Tansi*.

It is great to be here with you all today.

[*Translation*]

First, I would like to congratulate each and every one of you on your victory in September's general election. It is a great honour to work with you here in Canada's Parliament no matter which party you belong to.

[*English*]

I send my congratulations to everyone on their election to Parliament, especially the 49 newly elected members of Parliament.

I would like to thank the residents of Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge for re-electing me and giving me the privilege and responsibility to be their voice in our nation's capital.

Members, as I speak, British Columbia is in a state of emergency. Much of our infrastructure has collapsed. Critical transportation links to the Lower Mainland have been cut off. Lives have been lost. Communities are isolated. Gas is being rationed, and shelves in many places are bare. I am confident that as we begin this new Parliament, all members of this House will want to work together to help British Columbia get back on its feet.

I am a teacher by profession. One of the first times I came to Ottawa was for the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy, which was actually started by a previous speaker. Teachers come from across Canada to get a behind-the-scenes look at what happens here in Parliament, meeting with MPs, senators, media and clerks.

[*Translation*]

This experience left quite a mark on me and gave me the will and the ambition to become a member of Parliament. I started at the provincial level by running for the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

[*English*]

One of the responsibilities I had was Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole, which is the equivalent of Assistant Deputy Speaker, providing me valuable experience for the speakership.

Colleagues, I was raised in a Royal Canadian Air Force family, born in Germany and grew up on bases across Canada: Chibougamau and Valcartier, Quebec; Beaverlodge and Red Deer, Alberta; Clinton, Ontario; and Vancouver Island. I have been to every province and two of the territories. I also served as a communications reservist in the Canadian Armed Forces. I love our country, and I am dedicated to the nation of Canada.

I am Métis on my father's side. My indigenous ancestry is deeply meaningful to me. I am a member of the Métis Nation B.C. and, more locally, Golden Ears Métis Society.

There are about two million first nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada. This has been a year of grieving for indigenous peoples as we become more aware of the abuses of the Indian residential schools. I have aunts and uncles who attended these schools as day students. As Speaker, I would seek ways to honour our indigenous peoples and look for opportunities to advance reconciliation within Parliament.

[*Translation*]

I am a Beaudouin on my mother's side. Our roots go back to the early days of New France, and we are one of the first families of Quebec and Canada. My francophone side is very important to me. When I was an MLA, I represented British Columbia at the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. Before the last election, I sat on the Standing Committee on Official Languages. I understand the desire to protect the French language. As Speaker, I would support the rights and privileges of all members to express themselves in French.

[*English*]

There are some very important issues facing us that will soon be before the Speaker. I was troubled by recent reports about the toxic workplace and lack of impartiality in the office of the Clerk. First, everyone deserves a safe, respectful, fair and functional workplace. This is the pinnacle of workplaces and thus must uphold the highest standards as an example. Second, all members deserve a Speaker and Clerk who act with complete impartiality. These matters need swift, thorough and transparent investigations.

If elected Speaker, I will have an open-door policy and look for ways to connect with all members. I view the role of the Speaker as an opportunity to serve members, not to be dictatorial or prescriptive, but to protect the rights and privileges of members of Parliament. The speakership is an extremely important position in our parliamentary democracy and for upholding our liberties. I salute the excellent candidates who are vying to be Speaker today. I would be deeply honoured to be members' first choice.

*Election of Speaker**[Translation]*

Thank you very much for listening.

• (1345)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Before we move on to the second candidate, I would like to say a few words to my family from this exalted throne, because I forgot to do so when we started. My best to my whole family, my supporters and the voters in my riding, and especially to my partner of 27 years, who is currently battling cancer and is courageously staying the course. I am sure you will all join me in sending her our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

I now invite the hon. member for West Nova to speak for not more than five minutes.

[English]

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): It is an honour for me to stand before dear colleagues today to address my candidacy for Speaker of the House of Commons in this 44th Parliament. First, let me take a moment to sincerely congratulate each and every member for being elected or re-elected to represent their constituents in the House of Commons. It will truly be an honour and a privilege to serve with all members.

[Translation]

I want to thank my fellow West Nova citizens for once again placing their trust in me to represent them in Ottawa. It is an honour and a privilege to represent them here in the House.

To those colleagues who do not know me personally, I am a proud Acadian from Par-en-Bas, or Argyle, the oldest Nova Scotian region that is still Acadian. My family has lived there since 1653. My father was a fisherman his whole life, and my mother took care of my two younger brothers and me. I married Anne, my high-school sweetheart, and we have two sons, André and Alec, of whom we are very proud.

[English]

Today, I am running to be Speaker because I strongly believe that I have the ability and experience to assist members in the discharge of their responsibilities to Canadians.

Before being elected as the member of Parliament for West Nova in 2019, I was an MLA in Nova Scotia for 16 years, where I served as minister of agriculture and fisheries, minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, minister of health, and then opposition House leader for close to 10 years.

[Translation]

Since arriving in the House of Commons, I have had the opportunity to meet many colleagues from all parties. I have enjoyed working with you on House committees and all-party committees.

That is why I am sure I would be able to carry out my duties as Speaker to uphold the powers and privileges of the House and also to advance and ensure respect for every member's opinion and right to speak.

[English]

Those who know me know that I have a very calm French Acadian demeanour and that I work well with others. In fact, these are traits that are strongly tied to my Acadian roots. We, as Nova Scotian Acadians, learned, once we returned home from exile, to remain calm and non-confrontational and to continuously strive for consensus, no matter the situation we have found ourselves in. As an elected official, I continue to embody these traits of being a good listener and peacekeeper in my daily work, and I know they guide me in how I treat my constituents, my colleagues and my staff.

The last Parliament was undoubtedly a difficult one, given the unprecedented health crisis we have been travelling through, but also due to the many revelations of a difficult work environment that were emerging at the centre of our democratic system. For me, it was becoming clearer, day by day, that our institution may be in trouble, and for this reason, I do not want to sit on the sidelines. These issues concern all of us and should in no way be tinged with partisanship. I believe I can lead an all-party approach and put my skill, ability and experience to work to prevent these issues from escalating and, more important, to turn the tide by seriously reviewing and resolving the issues before us.

[Translation]

As elected members of the House, we have a duty to ensure that the health of our democracy is maintained and respected at all times. We must also ensure that we elect a Speaker who will serve as a protector and will not yield to partisan influence. The Speaker has the responsibility and the privilege of setting an example at all times, and it is a task that I am committed to carrying out in order to ensure that our institution works properly.

[English]

Canadians made a clear choice in the past election to elect another minority government, and they are expecting all of us to work together. As a member of Parliament, I respect that, and I will continue to do so. I will strongly collaborate with all of my colleagues to make sure that this 44th Parliament is focused on the needs of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

To my hon. colleagues, I pledge to be a servant of the House, to enable them to navigate the House of Commons in the safest and most effective way possible and to ensure their rights and privileges as members of the House of Commons are protected at all times. I want to ensure that the work and values of this chamber reflect the expectations Canadians have for the institution that is at the centre of our democracy. Above all, I want to ensure that at the end of this parliamentary session each one of my hon. colleagues will be able to confidently look back and proudly say that it was productive and positive.

Canadians have sacrificed a lot during the last two years. They want and deserve an efficient Parliament, and I know that all members want that too.

I humbly ask my colleagues for their vote today, and I thank them for their attention and trust.

Election of Speaker

• (1350)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I will now call upon Joël Godin, the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): I am thankful for the opportunity to address my colleagues this afternoon.

[*Translation*]

I want to begin by congratulating all members of the House who were elected on September 20. You won, so congratulations.

To all the new members, I wish to offer my full co-operation and assure them that they can count on me to help them any way I can with their new duties.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the voters of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for electing me a third time. I thank them for the trust they have placed in me.

I would also like to point out, Mr. Chair and member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, that you are the longest continually serving member of this House with this twelfth consecutive term. This is noteworthy, and I must congratulate you on it.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the Speaker of the 43rd Parliament. He did an excellent job managing the pandemic, despite its unpredictable nature. He successfully met the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 health crisis.

[*English*]

We will soon be voting to choose the Speaker of the House. For our new colleagues, today will be their first vote. We must select someone we can trust to accompany us over the course of our mandate. It is important to choose someone who is committed every day to having our rights and parliamentary privileges respected as they should be, and someone who will let us do our work to improve the lives of all Canadian citizens.

[*Translation*]

Considering the experience we have gained in managing the COVID-19 pandemic, our institution must now ensure that it has the resources, and especially the technology, needed to adapt quickly. We must secure the resources needed to continue our work and maintain our effectiveness. We must ensure that our institution maintains good practices, while bearing in mind that there is always room for improvement.

[*English*]

We can and we should become better.

[*Translation*]

Deciding on the Speaker of the House of Commons must not be driven by our political affiliations. It must focus on the ability to plan, manage and develop a plan with a functional vision for Parliament.

Our Speaker needs to be someone who has a sense of fairness and respect and such qualities as the integrity and ability to be

adaptable so as to interpret the rules in a way that respects the rights of all parliamentarians. He or she must protect current good practices and draw inspiration from what is done elsewhere in order to make them even better.

[*English*]

I believe I am the right person to fulfill this role.

[*Translation*]

I would like to become your Speaker here in the House of Commons. I do not do this on a whim. I have given this a lot of thought and have made my intentions known for several years.

[*English*]

As Speaker of the House of Commons, I will work with each of you to maintain the decorum of our institution.

[*Translation*]

I will lead by example by listening to the discussions in this chamber, and I will invite you to do the same to ensure that each member of this House can be heard.

• (1355)

[*English*]

I will take responsibility for making decisions based on the existing rules and will be inspired by jurisprudence while respecting the rights of each member.

[*Translation*]

As Speaker of the House of Commons, I will have a zero tolerance policy for any show of disrespect between colleagues, employees or any other person associated with this Parliament.

I would like to note that we must have the best technological tools to make our work more efficient and effective.

[*English*]

We must plan so we can be ready to face the next crisis. We must implement mechanisms that respect and protect our members of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Finally, we must reinforce respect for our country's two official languages, English and French. That must start here in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

In closing, I would like to thank you in advance for your support.

[*Translation*]

I look forward to working with each and every one of you.

[*English*]

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I will now call upon Mrs. Carol Hughes, the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksasing, to address the House for five minutes.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksasing, NDP): *Merci.*

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the unceded territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin nation. If members would indulge me, I would also like to send a message of condolence and healing thoughts to the community of Constance Lake First Nation, which is struggling with multiple confirmed and suspected cases of blastomycosis, which has led to a growing number of hospitalizations, the loss of community members, and a search for answers about the source of exposure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am very pleased that the people of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasung put their trust in me once again and sent me back here to the House to continue working with you all to build a better Canada for them.

I also want to congratulate each one of you for having earned the trust of your constituents. I am happy to see many familiar faces, and I look forward to getting to know those of you who are newly elected.

[*English*]

I am confident that you will benefit from the experience of your colleagues, not only in your party's caucus but throughout Parliament, in the same way that I did when I was new to this place. That was 13 years ago.

Since first being elected, I have served on several committees. In the last two Parliaments, I served as Assistant Deputy Speaker. I gained much experience within that role, and I believe that with your support I will be able to fulfill the position of Speaker.

In my time in the chair, I have overseen numerous scenarios, including some challenging moments. Some of my decisions even resulted in New Democrats across the country questioning my loyalties to the party, which I took as a feather in my cap. I feel this speaks to my ability to be fair and steadfast in the position. That is why, when I wrote to you recently, I stressed that I am fair, open-minded and impartial. More than that, I am hopeful.

I understand, as most of you do, that there is more that ties us together than divides us. Even in this institution, which is built around the notion of division of opinion, circumstances can be shared across party lines as easily as they are within them. I believe that it is time for us to identify more commonalities even as we discuss big, potentially divisive issues. We can all see that discourse has been strained throughout society and that civility is more elusive than ever. It is important for us to consider that and act accordingly if we are to lead.

I make that point since the common narrative outside of Parliament is that this place does not work or is dysfunctional in some way. While many of us might provide an eloquent defence as to why that is not always the case, the fact is that the perception exists, is widespread and has only grown in recent years. Part of that may be sensationalism, but the narrative is persistent enough that we are best served to take it seriously and do our best to rehabilitate this institution's reputation.

One way that can occur is to change the habits of this place. I would argue that selecting a Speaker outside from outside the tradi-

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tional governing parties is an important step in that direction. It would send the message that the desire for change is being matched with action.

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

I would also say that selecting a woman as Speaker would be another important step in that direction. When I look around the House, I am encouraged by all of the young faces. I think it is important for Parliament to reflect the diversity of our population, and young members full of enthusiasm and energy are significant assets.

It is unbelievable to me that so many of you have never seen a woman as Speaker of the House. It has been 37 years since Jeanne Sauvé's historic tenure as Speaker came to an end. With each new Parliament, her achievement fades further into the past, and the glass ceiling has been restored. Will we have to wait even longer?

[*English*]

As so much of society changes to value the roles and contributions of women, will Parliament remain an old boys' club? If so, is that why little seems to change in a positive direction with respect to the institution's reputation among Canadians?

Alternately, I think it is important that Parliament elect a woman Speaker so that young women can see themselves represented in our work in another meaningful way. I believe it might help to lower the temperature during impassioned moments of debate, but I would also add that I am personally more than prepared for the to-and-fro of heated debate. I have come from the labour movement, where I have extensive experience helping resolve disputes in an elbows-up environment.

In closing, I would remind members that Canadians are looking to us to make Parliament work in a way that will deliver results to them. I believe that choosing a Speaker from a smaller party sends a clear signal that we are prepared to do things differently. It would serve as a symbol of the kind of co-operation we are capable of and should strive for.

[*Translation*]

This is why I am asking members for their support.

[*English*]

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I will now call on Ms. Elizabeth May, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, to address the House for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, thank you for giving me the floor today. It is an honour.

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[English]

I want to start by acknowledging that we are on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin peoples and the Anishinabeg nation.

[Translation]

Like the rest of my colleagues, I too would like to congratulate everyone, including both newly elected and re-elected members. It is a great honour for us all.

I would like to say that we make up a community, a small political village. We must therefore work together respectfully.

[English]

We all know this, and we work together, I think, quite well. I agree with some of the comments my other colleagues have made.

I also want to thank the constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands for their extraordinary generosity and support. That I take my place here after a fourth election is extraordinary, but I also want to share, as my hon. colleague did earlier, what we have been through in British Columbia recently. They are so far away, but I see my hon. friend from Abbotsford, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola and my friend from Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. Those are the ridings that have taken the biggest wallop. Those are the ridings for which our hearts break, where people have lost their farms and others are still missing. Yes, we have to work together and we have to do it better. I extend condolences to everyone touched by the tragedies.

[Translation]

I am especially grateful to the member for Nipissing—Timiskaming. I have complete faith in his abilities. He has done great work, and his performance during the pandemic was excellent.

[English]

I think the hon. member for Nipissing—Timiskaming would have my vote if I were not running, and may have my vote anyway, because I do not stand here to ask members for their votes, but for their attention. This Parliament has suffered for many decades from a mistake, a mistake that was made in 1980 when the wonderful then speaker of the House, the Right Hon. Jeanne Sauvé, said she could not really see across the chamber well enough to know who was rising to speak. As a simple favour, she asked if the party whips would prepare a list for her so she could follow that.

Do members know that we are the only Parliament in the Westminster parliamentary system of dozens of countries around the world where the Speaker has voluntarily given authority over to backroom political people? Every one of the members had their face in front of the voters and every one of the members answered questions from electors, yet the running of this House is increasingly threatened by backroom political people who make key decisions about our day-to-day lives.

• (1405)

[Translation]

I think the power wielded by major political parties is a threat to our parliamentary democracy.

[English]

Members of Parliament have complained of this in the past. I think of our friend the late Mark Warawa, member of Parliament for Langley-Aldergrove. He was denied the right to make a 60-second statement under Standing Order 31 by his party whip, who said he could not say those things. He was brave enough to complain of it to our friend who was Speaker at the time, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

The decision of the Speaker at the time was that it would be a violation if a party whip stopped someone from speaking, but the Speaker, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, said that he did not attempt to pursue his rights; he did not stand to attempt to catch the Speaker's eye.

Whoever takes the chair in this place to become Speaker, I beg us all to support that Speaker in regaining the authorities and powers a Speaker must have. In the parliament of Westminster last week, it was a beautiful thing to see, when Sir Lindsay Hoyle took the Prime Minister of the U.K., the Right Honourable Boris Johnson, apart limb from limb for breaking the rules of the House. The Speaker said to the Prime Minister, "I am in charge in this place and you are not following our rules."

[Translation]

In closing, I just want to say that democracy is sacred. We must protect the rights of smaller parties and every single member. That is the Speaker's duty and reason for being.

[English]

We have challenges ahead of us in this minority Parliament.

[Translation]

I am referring to climate change and the pandemic, among others. We must work together, and we need a Speaker who will protect our rights.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I will now call upon Alexandra Mendès, the hon. member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would like to point out that, as dean, your remarkable 37 years of uninterrupted service to Parliament is equal to the amount of time it has been since a woman has occupied the chair, and we must admit that is a significant number of years. I am sure you will agree, Mr. Chair, that it is starting to feel like a long time.

The fact that I am a woman is not the only thing I would bring to the table. What I hope to bring to this position is a unique vision of this House. I am not here to oppose anyone. I am here because I hold certain beliefs that I think could provide another way of approaching our responsibilities as parliamentarians.

Of the 30 million people in Canada, we are the 338 who have been chosen to pass legislation for the present and, more than ever, the future of Canadians. Since I was elected the first time, I have been acutely aware of the incredible honour bestowed upon me by my constituents in Brossard—Saint-Lambert and of the responsibility that I have undertaken to fulfill.

[*English*]

Some of those responsibilities include, and depend on, the constant quest for truthfulness and common good.

As we start this 44th Parliament since Confederation, after close to two years of a public health emergency that changed so much of what we took for granted, I also believe one of our responsibilities is to find joy in the work we do. Loving what we do, this place where we do it and the people who help us do it, for me, are fundamental aspects of a successful parliamentary life.

I associate some of the more meaningful hours I have experienced in this House with debates where members strove to find shared goals. From emergency legislation to support and sustain Canadians through the pandemic, from reconciliation to the right to repair, and from climate change to the Uighur genocide, the 43rd Parliament did allow us to engage in lively and constructive debates.

It cannot and should not be all about insults and accusations, about “gotcha” moments and questionable statements.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

What I take from these moments is that we are perfectly capable of rising above partisan bickering when the situation calls for it and that the sense of humour of some members can spice up dry conversations that are sometimes too technical. The ability to find the right words is an art that I admire, and many of my colleagues are experts in that art. Our debates should always exemplify the art of public speaking, and should therefore be conducted with mutual respect and follow the basic rules of courtesy.

First and foremost, we are here to pass good laws. Although we all do essential work in our ridings, our primary role is that of legislator, and it takes a team effort to keep our discussions courteous, especially when there are dissenting opinions.

[*English*]

Holding the government to account is the essential element of parliamentary democracy. No government is immune from the necessary scrutiny of its proposed legislation and its management of the public accounts. However, Canadians have told us time and time again that they expect us to do this with far more civility than they see in this place most days.

It is often said that teachers feel a certain dread when bringing students to Parliament or showing them snippets of parliamentary debate. It is also said that our behaviour in this House is so abhorrent that the message it sends to students is exactly the opposite of what teachers would like to convey.

I will go a step further with this. Sometimes, and I am hardly blameless, I listen to the heckling and the insults that fly around the

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House, particularly during question period, and I ask myself if this how we want to be remembered, or if this is the legacy we would like to leave behind once our time here comes to an end. I have concluded that, for me, the answer to those questions is a resounding no.

Members can reject me if they must, but should I be given the honour of being elected to the Chair, I would strive with all my might to bring dignity to our debates.

[*Translation*]

Dignity is a principle that is very important to me. No one in this House, whether a parliamentarian or someone else, should be deprived of their dignity as a human being. Let us humbly thank the pages who bring us a glass of water or a lectern. Let us be aware and respectful of the tremendous work done by the interpreters. Let us recognize the sensitive nature of the task that falls to the table officers. Finally, let us remember that, despite our differences, we are all here for one purpose: to pass good legislation.

Joy is also a principle that is extremely important to me, and the joy of music is an endless source of wonder. I dream of creating a parliamentary choir, a goal I have had ever since I learned that several European parliaments have one and that they visit one another.

[*English*]

Over my many years in this place, I have heard people, including journalists, staff and sometimes new members, suggest that some of the traditions and rituals we observe here are silly, arcane or outdated. I tend to disagree, but it does not mean we should not try to create new rituals that, in turn, will become traditions. This is the people's House and we are only temporary occupants and guardians of it.

[*Translation*]

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I now call upon the final speaker, Mr. Anthony Rota, the hon. member for Nipissing—Timiskaming, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

• (1415)

Hon. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am honoured to be here.

Hello.

[*English*]

If you are coming into this chamber for the first time, welcome.

[*Translation*]

To those returning to the House, welcome back.

*Election of Speaker**[English]*

To all of you, congratulations in earning the confidence of your constituents. I was first elected as a member in 2004, yet after all this time, I am still in awe of this place and immensely honoured to represent the people of Nipissing—Timiskaming and to work with each and every one of you from all sides of the political spectrum.

[Translation]

From the first time I was elected, I have always been accessible and open to talking with my colleagues, regardless of their political affiliation. It is my intention to maintain this collegial approach regardless of the result of the vote. If you choose to place your confidence in me by re-electing me as Speaker, I assure you my door will remain open to everyone.

[English]

Over the last few weeks, I have had the opportunity to speak with many of you. Thank you for taking the time to discuss what you believe is working in these halls and especially how you believe we can improve the operations of Parliament. Every single member in this House has the right to voice his or her opinions and to be heard. Maintaining a balance between the right to express oneself while respecting the dignity of others is fundamental.

[Translation]

It will be hard to go over all of my qualities in the few minutes I have been given this afternoon. Those returning to the House have seen me in action over the past few years. I am confident that as Speaker I was firm, fair and respectful.

[English]

During the 43rd Parliament, my primary focus was unexpectedly to ensure that the House of Commons remained operational and that parliamentary work continued amidst the challenges of the global pandemic. It was a massive technical undertaking that could honestly not have been achieved without all of us, staff and members, working together to make sure that it happened. For that, I am very grateful to everyone in this chamber.

As presiding officer, it fell to me to provide guidance and support to members as well as adapt to the unusual circumstances. I believe I was successful on both fronts. The terms that I heard when speaking to many of you described my performance as firm, respectful, effective and above all else, fair.

[Translation]

I will continue to meet regularly with the House leaders, the whips and, of course, all members to ensure that our institution has harmonious parliamentary procedures that are based on co-operation and, above all, respect.

Canada is a bilingual country. It is vital that the Speaker of the House be fluent in both French and English. Learning a language is very important, but the secret to understanding a people is to experience their culture and understand what it means to live that culture on a day-to-day basis.

[English]

Working collaboratively, we can continue to fine-tune the decorum process and overall operations in the House. There is always room for improvement. I have a great deal of respect for this institution and all its members and believe that every one of us should take part in improving our procedure.

[Translation]

I am running for Speaker of the House of Commons once again, and I am committed to working with each and every one of you.

[English]

I will continue to work with all members because I believe deeply that once the Speaker is elected, he or she is the Speaker for all members.

[Translation]

On this momentous afternoon, I respectfully invite you all to vote for me.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I noticed that several speakers spoke about new members. I know there are many. I am certain that one of them will beat my record because they are starting out at an earlier age than I did.

I would like to use an anecdote to give you a small piece of advice. As I already mentioned, when I was elected in 1984, cell phones, the Internet and faxes did not exist. It was another world, a paradise. What we were afraid of at the time was meeting with the national press. When we did, we immediately understood that journalists were completely objective. Things went well. You, the new members, will have to deal with the infamous social networks, which can harbour malice, insults, harassment and more. They are not easy to contend with.

In my riding, there was an old mayor who was always being confronted by his citizens. At every municipal council meeting, he was questioned, insulted and harassed, and then he would leave. One day, as he was leaving a meeting, a woman asked him if he was fed up and tired of being insulted, harassed and questioned. He replied, “My dear lady, a good politician is like a monument. Sometimes, a little dog passes by, pees on the monument and then continues on its way. It does not really hurt the monument, but it does the little dog a lot of good.”

Therefore, dear young MPs, be the monuments.

● (1420)

[English]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Before I suspend the sitting for 30 minutes, may I bring to the attention of hon. members that the bells calling the members back to the House will be rung for not more than five minutes.

[Translation]

The sitting of the House is suspended to the call of the Chair in 30 minutes.

Choose wisely.

Election of Speaker

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 2:22 p.m.)

• (1500)

[*English*]

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 2:58 p.m.)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Pursuant to the Standing Orders, the House will now proceed to elect a Speaker.

[*Translation*]

The names of the eligible candidates are listed in alphabetical order on the ballot. After the Clerk has unsealed the ballots, I will suggest to the House a procedure that will accelerate the voting process.

[*English*]

We are now prepared to begin to vote according to the provisions of Standing Order 4. Please allow me to outline the procedure for all hon. members.

In order to vote, I will ask that members leave their desks, exit through the curtains and form a line in the corridor behind the chair, where a table official will issue a ballot paper to each member. Members will then come to the table using the doors on the left and right sides of the chair on their respective sides of the House.

[*Translation*]

I know that members are happy to see each other again, but we must follow the health and safety protocols. I would remind members to wear their mask at all times and maintain physical distancing.

After casting their ballots, members are asked to leave the voting area and avoid gathering on the floor of the House. They may return to their seat or leave the House while they await the results.

[*English*]

The names of the candidates for the election are listed in alphabetical order on the ballot. To vote, you must rank the candidates in order of preference, placing the number “1” in the space next to your first choice candidate, the number “2” next to your second choice candidate, and so on, until you have ranked all candidates for whom you wish to vote. Please note that it is not necessary to rank all candidates.

[*Translation*]

The polling booths are now open to vote.

(Members were issued ballots, and marked their ballots in secret, at voting stations)

• (1530)

[*English*]

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): All members having voted, I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

[*Translation*]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Before I suspend the sitting, I wish to remind hon. members that, when the counting has been completed, the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for about 10 minutes. The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 3:33 p.m.)

• (1635)

[*English*]

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 4:35 p.m.)

(The Clerk of the House having provided the Presiding Officer with the name of the member having received a majority of the votes cast:)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): It is my duty to inform the House that a Speaker of this House has been duly elected. It is with great pleasure that I do now invite the hon. member for the electoral district of Nipissing—Timiskaming to take the chair.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

(The Presiding Officer having vacated the chair, and the mace having been laid under the table, the right hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition conducted Mr. Anthony Rota from his seat in the House to the chair.)

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I humbly thank all hon. members in this House for the great honour they have bestowed upon me in selecting me as Speaker.

[*The Speaker spoke in Ojibwa and provided the following text:*]

Meegwetch. Anthony Rota nindishinikaaz, Nipissing-Timiskaming ndojeba.

[*The Speaker provided the following translation:*]

Thank you. My name is Anthony Rota. I am from Nipissing-Timiskaming.

[*English*]

Thank you again for the confidence that you have placed in me as Speaker for a second term. I am very honoured to be up here, both politically and personally. This is something I know I will treasure for the rest of my life. I guess one of the good things about being Speaker is that I probably upset both sides equally, so I appreciate your working this out.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank the dean of the House, the hon. member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, who gets a real kick out of sitting here. He did a great job. Just like the other two times I was elected, I was very happy to see him in the chair and to hear his announcements. I must say that he made a very good choice.

Election of Speaker

[English]

I want to congratulate the other members who let their names stand.

[Translation]

It is not always easy for someone to put their name on a ballot and get votes. Having the courage to do so and the desire to change things is, in my view, very important. We all recently put our names on a ballot and participated in an election. This is not always easy, because even though someone thinks they are the best candidate, they are not always chosen.

That is why I would like to thank the hon. member for Port-neuf—Jacques-Cartier for standing for Speaker.

[English]

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

The hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking.

The hon. member for West Nova.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

The hon. member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert.

Thank you for expressing your interest in this position, and for showing that you care about how business is done in the chamber and on the Hill.

I really want to thank a group that often gets overlooked, which is the staff and the clerks. They worked hard to make sure that we could be here today, and that we did it in an orderly and safe manner.

[Translation]

I thank all members for putting their trust in me to serve them during this 44th Parliament. I promise to be fair and respectful.

Once again, I thank the clerks and the staff on Parliament Hill whose hard work made it possible for us to be here today. Let us give them a round of applause.

I want to point out to all members that Canadians are always able to follow what is happening in the House. They can watch us on television or their computer, or they can see us on the news.

I would like to remind members of a verse of one of my favourite songs, *L'escalier* by Paul Piché. I see that the members of the Bloc Québécois and the hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage are pleased with my choice.

A framed copy of that verse hangs on the wall of my office. I will refrain from singing it because I do not want to everyone to clear out.

The chorus says, and I quote:

Children are not truly bad,

Though they may misbehave from time to time.

They may spit or lie or steal,

Because they can do anything that they are taught.

When I do my work as an MP or as Speaker, I think about those words. I invite all members to think about them too, because children see what we are doing in the House. We need to make sure that we teach those children and all Canadians the right way to do things.

• (1645)

[English]

I want to also thank all the members who took the time to speak with me over the last few weeks. I want to thank all of you who took the time to call me back. I got to know many of you and I encourage you to reach out to members not only in your own party, but in other parties, because you would be surprised at what you find out about each other. We have a lot in common even if we are on different sides of the floor. Sometimes when we are on the same side of the floor we have differences, but it does not mean we cannot be friends and we cannot work together.

I found out something that was very interesting and that kind of came as a surprise. The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo and I have common roots. We are not directly related, but our ancestors, his parents and my grandparents, come from the same little town in the mountains of southern Italy. I just want to say to everyone here and to the folks back in the old country:

[The Speaker spoke in Italian]

[Translation]

Someone who is extremely important to me is my wife, as I am sure every member of Parliament who has a spouse would agree. As I look up into the gallery, I see Chantal, who has always been there for me.

Our spouses go through things that most Canadians and most people never experience, yet they always support us and stand by us. We are most grateful to our spouses for that. I thank all the spouses, and especially Chantal.

[English]

One of the things that I know the leaders of both the government and the opposition feel very strongly about is children, so I want to reach out to my daughter who is studying on the other side of the pond. She cannot be here today, but I know she is watching on CPAC, so I say to Samantha that I love her dearly.

There are a lot of benefits to being the Speaker, but there are also some things that I cannot do as Speaker during a regular session. One is that I cannot do an S.O. 31 and recognize special people in my riding. If I could do an S.O. 31, what I would do is thank the constituents who elected me in September. I am very honoured that they would choose me to represent them here in the House. To the people of Nipissing—Timiskaming, if I could do an S.O. 31 I would tell them “thank you”. I would then thank all the volunteers who were there, who showed up every day and who helped on a regular basis. If I could do an S.O. 31, I would say “thank you” to all the volunteers.

Sometimes we get to this place and we look back and wonder, “How did we get here?” I remember back in 2004 trying to get in as a candidate. I have this history of having more than one person get on by acclamation. I kind of look to them and think, “That would be great.” I had four the first time. In an S.O. 31, I would point out three people who have been there with me right from the beginning of my nomination. Peter and Barb have been there. They are great organizers and have done an amazing job. Garth, one of the elder statesmen, as I call him, in North Bay, is in his 80s now. I know he is watching, and he is going to love this. I say that I love him and I thank him very much for everything he has done. Without the three of them working together, and the whole team coming together, I am not sure I would have gotten the nomination on my own or who would be up here giving a speech right now. I want to thank them.

As I said, as the Speaker I will not be able to do S.O. 31s and would not be able to deliver these messages. I want to remind members that one rule in the House is that one cannot do indirectly what one cannot do directly, so I just want to make sure we will be enforcing that in the coming months.

I have been told that my minute is up. I am glad somebody is watching the timer.

Now that we have a Speaker, it is time to get back to work.

Once again I thank you. *Meegwetch.*

• (1650)

We will go to the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government and all members of this House, congratulations on your re-election.

[*English*]

In the House we have members who have served for decades and those who are starting their very first term. We have women and men representing every part of this country and every community that makes it strong. They have once again chosen these members to help guide our shared work. I congratulate them.

I also want to take a moment to recognize all of our colleagues who ran for this position. I thank them for their dedication to this institution and to our democracy.

[*Translation*]

For me personally, today is the fifth time I have had the honour of being elected to the House at the beginning of a new Parliament. I would like to take this opportunity, since I also cannot take part in statements by members, to thank the voters of Papineau who have placed their trust in me once again. I will always work diligently to represent them and their interests.

[*English*]

For more than a dozen years, I have had the privilege of serving as a member of the House. We have come together in times of tragedy and celebrated in times of joy. We have stepped forward on the path of reconciliation. We have fought through a pandemic that engulfed our world.

Election of Speaker

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

As we are carrying out our duties, debate can get heated at times, as members know.

Mr. Speaker, we elected you to help us remain civil in our debates and to remind us that we are all here for the same reason: to serve Canadians. These days, that is more important than ever.

[*English*]

In September, Canadians chose a Parliament that would work together to get big things done, to put this pandemic behind us, to build a resilient economy and good middle-class jobs, to fight climate change and to continue walking the road of reconciliation. It is no small thing to build a better and stronger future, so there will be moments when we will get caught up in heated debate. When that happens, we will have the Speaker to guide us back on track.

This is a historic moment of change and opportunity for our country. I know the Speaker will help us rise to meet it.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, my friend, and congratulations once again.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Congratulations, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

I congratulate the Speaker on his victory in the election. It is a sign of confidence from his colleagues on all sides of the chamber. I congratulate him, as well, on another election to represent his home community of Nipissing—Timiskaming.

[*Translation*]

Congratulations again on the hard work you do in your riding.

[*English*]

The Speaker represents the will of the chamber, and indeed the will of the people. This is the people's House, and too often, whether in northern Ontario or from one ocean to the other, people feel left out of these debates. The Speaker has been able to preside through the difficult time of the pandemic, making sure the light of our democracy did not flicker during this time.

[*Translation*]

This was a difficult year for our Parliament and for everyone here today. I truly appreciate the work you did during the pandemic.

[*English*]

There is a light on the horizon. Is it not wonderful to see a full chamber of the House of Commons again?

Election of Speaker

I would be lying if I did not say I was hoping for a few more seats on this side of the chamber, or to be on that side to be honest, but I want the Speaker to continue his work standing up for our democracy, not just to make sure we can participate in debates during the pandemic, but to make sure the will of Parliament is defended in court in Canada.

[*Translation*]

It was a testament to your leadership and loyalty to the House of Commons, and I certainly appreciated this, in the face of the cover-ups during the previous Parliament. I hope that this Parliament will be more open and transparent.

[*English*]

I will say this in a full House of Commons today, at the start of the 44th of Parliament, with you returning as Speaker, that we on all sides of this chamber owe it to all communities, all sectors and all Canadians to ensure their voices are heard in this chamber.

Whether it is families in Abbotsford right now worrying about their future, worrying about the rebuilding of that beautiful province, whether it is new Afghan interpreters being welcomed into communities after the efforts of veterans and non-profits across the country or whether it is small business owners worried about the future, we as a Parliament, on all sides, regardless of political stripe, regardless of where we come from to be here in Ottawa, every Canadian deserves a voice in this chamber.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

As the Leader of the Opposition and on behalf of my members, I hope we can engage in respectful debates that are focused on the well-being of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[*English*]

On behalf of the Conservative opposition, Mr. Speaker, I wish you well and ask you to continue your resolute defence of our parliamentary democracy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my sincerest congratulations on behalf of all members of the Bloc Québécois. Being voted in once is a trial, but being voted in a second time speaks to the members' satisfaction with what you accomplished during your previous term. I congratulate you on this and commend you for your reference to Paul Piché, someone whose beliefs would fit right in in our caucus.

We have not been together in the House for five months, and we could debate whether those five months were worthwhile, but it is undeniable that during that time, things changed for some of us and for Quebec.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the voters of Beloeil—Chambly and the voters in all of the Bloc Québécois ridings, which have remained the same as they were five months ago.

I also want to welcome the three newly elected members: the member for Mirabel, the member for Trois-Rivières and the member for Terrebonne.

You will understand that we are compassionate people, so I am a bit concerned about the fact that there seem to be members in some political parties whose health is rather delicate. I hope they will take care of themselves, because we would not want to compromise our ability to ensure that everyone in Parliament is indeed double vaccinated unless they are medically exempt.

Mr. Speaker, I gladly, willingly and graciously offer a very clear commitment from all members of the Bloc Québécois, especially our whip and our leader, to collaborate to the fullest extent to ensure that the work of this place is always done in the best way possible in the interest of all Quebecers. We will do so out of respect for the rules and the people.

In closing, allow me once again, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, to offer you our sincerest congratulations and, above all, if I may say so, our friendship.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I first want to acknowledge that we are gathered on the unceded traditional territories of the Algonquin nation.

I also want to take a moment, as Remembrance Day has just passed, to acknowledge the veterans and thank them for the democracy and freedom we are able to exercise today.

I am also very honoured to be in this chamber again. I hope that it is not lost on the returning members what an incredible honour it is to be in this room, to be in this chamber, to represent the people of their constituencies. I welcome them back. I congratulate the returning members and the newly elected members.

I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge our newly elected members who represent a really special part of our movement and our party: the member for Nunavut, the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam as well as the member for Edmonton Griesbach. I want to congratulate all the candidates who put their name forward and thank them for doing that, which is, of course, difficult to do.

I want to take a moment to particularly acknowledge the member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking. I look forward to her returning to her duties as Assistant Deputy Speaker.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Now that we have elected a Speaker of the House, we want to get back to work. We have our work cut out for us. We all know that a number of crises, such as the climate crisis and the housing crisis, are taking a heavy toll across the country. We must act.

[English]

I am looking forward, now that we have a newly elected returning Speaker, to getting back to work, to work on things on which Canadians need us to work. The climate crisis is hitting hard, and we have seen the impacts throughout this year. Particularly right now in B.C., my province, we are seeing a devastating impact of this climate crisis. My heart goes out to the communities that are hardest hit. We know we need to act.

I call on everyone in the House to come together to find solutions to reduce emissions, to create good jobs and to invest in the infrastructure. For communities that are hard hit by climate crises, by extreme weather that is becoming more and more common, we need to ensure they have the infrastructure to be more resilient, and we need to prevent the disasters we have seen from happening again.

We also want to ensure that people who are struggling get the help they need. There are certain clawbacks they are facing right now which make their lives worse than before the pandemic. That cannot be allowed to continue.

[Translation]

As we have always said, we are ready to work together. We are keen to find ways to work together. One thing remains clear, however: we will never stop fighting for Canadians, fighting to help them improve their quality of life.

That is exactly what we are going to do.

[English]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, at this point in the proceedings, only leaders of parties duly recognized in the House of Commons may address the House.

The member is not the leader of a party duly recognized in the House.

Opening of Parliament

The Speaker: Good point. Give me a minute. I will make sure we get this right.

Normally, after an election, permission to address the House is granted at this point. However, if anyone disputes that, we must seek the unanimous consent of the House.

Do we have the unanimous consent of the House to allow the hon. member for Kitchener Centre to address the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[English]

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received the following message:

Rideau Hall

Ottawa

November 17, 2021

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that Their Excellencies the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, Governor General of Canada and Mr. Whit Grant Fraser will arrive at the Senate of Canada Building at 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday, the 23rd day of November, 2021.

When it has been indicated that all is in readiness, Her Excellency the Governor General will proceed to the Chamber of the Senate to formally open the First Session of the Forty-Fourth Parliament of Canada.

Yours sincerely,

Ian McCowan

● (1710)

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 12:15 p.m., at which time the House will proceed to the Senate, where Her Excellency will open the first session of the 44th Parliament.

(The House adjourned at 5:12 p.m.)

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