



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, January 30, 2001**

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1420)

[*English*]

## SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

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

Mr. Speaker, Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the Senate.

Accordingly the Speaker with the House proceeded to the Senate chamber.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

*And the House being returned to the Commons chamber:*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I have the honour to report that, the House having attended on Her Excellency the Governor General in the Senate chamber, I informed Her Excellency that the choice of Speaker had fallen upon me. On your behalf, I made the usual claim for your privileges which Her Excellency was pleased to confirm to you.

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## OATHS OF OFFICE

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-1, respecting the administration of oaths of office.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that when this House did attend Her Excellency this day in the Senate chamber, Her Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both houses of Parliament. To prevent mistakes I have obtained a copy which is as follows:

*Honourable Members of the Senate,  
Members of the House of Commons,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:*

It is my great pleasure to greet you on this first day of the 37th Parliament since Confederation. The vital relationship that exists between the Canadian people and Parliament is what we celebrate today through history, custom and symbolism.

I also have the pleasure of welcoming new members to the House of Commons, and I want all parliamentarians to know how deeply I appreciate the ideals that motivate you to serve your country. I also appreciate the sacrifices brought on by your task and made in the name of the common good and of leadership. And in a healthy democracy, leadership can come from everyone, because it is a sense of really knowing what you want and what you can contribute.

A little more than a year ago, I became Canada's 26th Governor General. I set out as the main objective of my first year in office to visit every province and territory and to meet as many Canadians as possible, wherever they live and make their lives—to engage in a true dialogue with them. I have seen many places that Canadians have decided to call home, from big cities to small hamlets, from the Island of Montreal to Ellesmere Island.

But what we call home is more than a place name on a map. It is our belonging to a community of ideas and ideals; it is the knowledge that we can say something and be listened to, and the conviction that we can respect, rely upon and help each other.

Meeting Canadians across the country has given me the opportunity to hear about the different challenges we face. Looking at these issues, we of course remember that we have demonstrated, time and time again, that we have the self-confidence to act, and to act successfully. Change does not frighten us—we have always harnessed it to our advantage.

It is often said that our country's strength lies in its diversity. Why is this so? Because diversity imposes serious responsibilities. Indeed, if we accept our place in a rich and successful society, we must also acknowledge and engage with the parts of our society that are less advantaged.

### *Opening of Parliament*

The Government has been given a third mandate by Canadians. In leading Canada into the new millennium, its overarching goal will continue to be to build a stronger, ever more inclusive Canada and secure a higher quality of life for all Canadians. In pursuing this aim, the Government will carry out the commitments set out in its election platform.

Canada is proud, optimistic and strong. The Government has achieved the critical objective of restoring the nation's finances. The economy continues its longest period of economic expansion since the 1960s. Inflation and interest rates are low and stable. More than two million new jobs have been created since 1993. Significant new investments are being made in children and youth, in innovation and skills, in health care, and in the environment.

As we enter this new century, Canada and Canadians face the challenges of competing in a faster-paced, technology-driven world economy. Of responding to economic uncertainty among our trading partners. Of continuing to strengthen the fabric of our society in an era of increasing globalization. And of advancing our Canadian interests and values in the international arena.

We must ensure that every region, every province and territory, every community, and every citizen has a strong voice and can contribute to building our nation. To bring the benefits of our prosperity to all communities, whether urban, rural, Northern or remote. To promote innovation, growth and development in all parts of our economy, including our agricultural and resource sectors and our manufacturing and service industries.

Canadians must rise to these challenges. Success in our more interdependent and complex world will require the contribution of all Canadians. The Government of Canada, for its part, will focus on:

building a world-leading economy driven by innovation, ideas and talent;

creating a more inclusive society where children get the right start in life, where quality health services are available to all, and where Canadians enjoy strong and safe communities;

ensuring a clean, healthy environment for Canadians and the preservation of our natural spaces; and

enhancing our Canadian voice in the world and our shared sense of citizenship.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Government of Canada will be guided by the values of Canadians. It will work with other levels of government, the private and voluntary sectors, and individual citizens.

It will continue to set bold goals and work toward them in a pragmatic, step-by-step way. It will continue to be a prudent

steward of the nation's finances as it focusses on the priorities of Canadians. Its efforts will be affordable and sustainable. The Government reaffirms its commitment to balanced budgets.

To assist the Government in fulfilling its responsibilities, Canada must have a public service distinguished by excellence and equipped with the skills for a knowledge economy and society. The Government will seek bright, motivated young women and men to accept the challenge of serving their country in the federal public service. The Government is committed to the reforms needed for the Public Service of Canada to continue evolving and adapting. These reforms will ensure that the Public Service is innovative, dynamic and reflective of the diversity of the country—able to attract and develop the talent needed to serve Canadians in the 21st century.

The Government will help to create opportunity for Canadians and ensure that opportunity is shared by all. This is the Canadian Way for the 21st century.

### **Creating Opportunity**

An innovative economy is essential to creating opportunity for Canadians.

An innovative economy is driven by research and development. It requires a highly skilled work force and investments in new technology. A business environment and tax policies that encourage smart risk taking and entrepreneurship and that reward success. An attractive environment for investment. And a strong global brand for Canadian excellence.

An innovative economy is one where the benefits of new ideas are shared by every sector and every region—from East to West to North, from office workers to farm families.

Canada has laid a solid foundation for success in the new economy. Our economic fundamentals are among the best in the world. Spiralling debt and deficits have been replaced by social and economic investments, tax cuts and debt repayments. On January 1st of this year, most elements of the Government's comprehensive and broad-based package of \$100 billion in tax relief took effect.

We are better positioned than at any time in the last three decades to seize the opportunities of the global economy and to weather a short-term slowing of growth experienced by Canada's major trading partners.

### **Innovation**

To secure our continued success in the 21st century, Canadians must be among the first to generate new knowledge and put it to use.

Our objective should be no less than to be recognized as one of the most innovative countries in the world. Achieving this will

require a comprehensive approach and the support and participation of all governments, businesses, educational institutions, and individual Canadians.

We must strive for Canada to become one of the top five countries for research and development performance by 2010. This is a challenge for all Canadians, but in particular for the private sector as the largest research investor in Canada.

As its contribution, the Government will at least double the current federal investment in research and development by 2010. In making new investments, the Government will:

continue to pursue excellence in Canadian research by strengthening the research capacity of Canadian universities and government laboratories and institutions;

accelerate Canada's ability to commercialize research discoveries, turning them into new products and services; and

pursue a global strategy for Canadian science and technology, supporting more collaborative international research at the frontiers of knowledge.

New federal investments will include strategically targeted research that is co-ordinated with partners. These investments will directly benefit Canadians in areas such as health, water quality, the environment, natural resources management, and oceans research. Among its investments, the Government will increase support for the development of new technologies to assist Canadians with disabilities.

Research in life sciences will benefit all of Canada, particularly our agricultural and rural economies. The Government will help Canada's agricultural sector move beyond crisis management—leading to more genuine diversification and value-added growth, new investments and employment, better land use, and high standards of environmental stewardship and food safety.

### **Skills and Learning**

Canada will only realize its full potential by investing aggressively in the skills and talents of its people.

To succeed in the knowledge economy, Canada will need people with advanced skills and entrepreneurial spirit. Canada's youth are optimistic, technologically savvy, globally connected and the most highly educated generation in our history. The Government will continue to help young Canadians contribute to their country, gain employment, and apply their business and creative skills.

Building a skilled work force must be a national effort. The Government of Canada will work with provinces and territories and with non-governmental organizations to ensure that all Canadians, young and old, can achieve their learning goals. Canada must see at least one million more adults pursue learning opportunities during the next five years.

### *Opening of Parliament*

The Government will also help adults who want to improve their skills, but who may face difficulty in finding the time or resources to do this while providing for themselves and their families. It will create Registered Individual Learning Accounts to make it easier for Canadians to finance their learning. And it will improve the loans that are available to part-time students, so more workers can learn while they earn.

Some Canadians face particular challenges in upgrading their skills and enhancing their education. The Government will take steps to make it easier for them to access skills and learning.

Youth at risk are among the most likely to drop out of school or to have difficulty in making the transition from school to work. The Government will work with its partners to ensure support for youth who particularly need help staying in school or getting their first job.

Today, many Canadian adults lack the higher literacy skills needed in the new economy. The Government of Canada will invite the provinces and territories along with the private sector and voluntary organizations to launch a national initiative with the goal of significantly increasing the proportion of adults with these higher-level skills.

Persons with disabilities face barriers to full participation in the economy and society. The Government of Canada will work with the provinces and territories and other partners toward a comprehensive labour-market strategy for persons with disabilities.

Increasing numbers of Aboriginal people are developing their business skills and competing in the new economy. The Government will work with Aboriginal people to help strengthen their entrepreneurial and business expertise.

Immigrants have enriched Canada with their ideas and talents. The Government will take steps to help Canada attract the skilled workers it needs. It will also work in co-operation with the provinces and territories to secure better recognition of the foreign credentials of new Canadians and their more rapid integration into society. The Government will re-introduce changes to immigration legislation to streamline and improve the immigration system.

### **Connecting Canadians**

The Government has helped to make Canada one of the most connected countries in the world, yet the speed of change continues to accelerate. Canada must continue to develop and strengthen its information infrastructure.

The private sector today is expanding high-speed access to the Internet in many regions. The National Broadband Task Force will advise the Government on how Canadians together can achieve the

### *Opening of Parliament*

critical goal of making broadband access widely available to citizens, businesses, public institutions and to all communities in Canada by 2004.

The Government will continue to support the Community Access Program and SchoolNet, ensuring that Canadians, their communities and their schools can have an on-ramp to the information highway. These programs are critical to Canada's effort to close the digital divide, particularly in rural, remote, Northern and Aboriginal communities. The Government will also enhance SchoolNet, focussing on creating more and better learning content on-line.

The Government will continue to work toward putting its services on-line by 2004, to better connect with citizens.

It will also modernize federal privacy law to safeguard the personal information of Canadians and provide better copyright protection for new ideas and knowledge.

### **Trade and Investment**

The Government's investments in innovation, skills and connectivity, as well as its reduction of corporate taxes and improved treatment of capital gains, are making Canada one of the most attractive places to invest and to do business. In addition, the Government will:

ensure that Canadian laws and regulations remain among the most modern and progressive in the world, including those for intellectual property and competitiveness; and

re-introduce legislation to promote a strong and efficient financial services sector that will benefit the Canadian economy and all Canadians.

The Government will work closely with the United States, Canada's most important trading partner, to maintain secure and efficient access to each other's markets. It will continue the joint work begun to modernize the shared border.

At the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City this April, the Government will advance work toward creating the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

The Government will also launch a branding strategy to raise awareness of the advantages of investing in Canada. As part of this effort, the Government will continue its successful Team Canada trade missions and launch Investment Team Canada missions to the United States and Europe.

### **Sharing Opportunity**

The Canadian Way recognizes that economic and social success must be pursued together. We cannot build a prosperous society in the absence of economic growth. We cannot lead in innovation and new ideas without healthy and secure citizens. We must not pursue

our interests in the world without strengthening our distinct culture and values here at home.

Nowhere is the creation and sharing of opportunity more important than for Aboriginal people. Too many continue to live in poverty, without the tools they need to build a better future for themselves or their communities. As a country, we must be direct about the magnitude of the challenge and ambitious in our commitment to tackle the most pressing problems facing Aboriginal people. Reaching our objectives will take time, but we must not be deterred by the length of the journey or the obstacles that we may encounter along the way.

The Government is committed to strengthening its relationship with Aboriginal people. It will support First Nations communities in strengthening governance, including implementing more effective and transparent administrative practices. And it will work to ensure that basic needs are met for jobs, health, education, housing and infrastructure. This commitment will be reflected in all the Government's priorities.

### **Children and Families**

Securing a good start in life for children is the only way to ensure that they are ready to learn, to seize opportunity as adults, and to contribute to the building of their country.

There was a time in Canada when retirement often meant facing a new life of hardship. A generation ago, Canadians set a national goal to eliminate poverty among seniors, and we have made significant progress.

There was a time in this country when falling sick meant risking one's life savings. Working together, Canadians built a national, publicly funded health care system to ensure access to quality care for every citizen regardless of income.

There was a time when losing a job also meant immediate loss of income for workers and their families. And so Canadians created Employment Insurance.

Now Canadians must undertake another national project—to ensure that no Canadian child suffers the debilitating effects of poverty.

Canadians and their governments have already taken significant steps in this direction.

A strong economy and job creation have been essential to reducing poverty and ensuring that families have the resources to care for their children. But economic growth alone is not enough. Governments also have a key role to play in helping families left behind and in providing support to families and children.

All governments have put in place a range of measures to help families and children. The National Child Benefit is the corner-

stone of our collective efforts to provide children with a better start. It is the single most important social program to be introduced in this country since medicare in the 1960s. The Government of Canada's contribution to the National Child Benefit will continue to rise over the next four years.

Most recently, the Government of Canada and provinces and territories launched the Early Childhood Development initiative to expand and improve access to services for all families and children. The Government of Canada is investing more than \$2 billion in this initiative over five years. As part of this agreement, governments will begin reporting to Canadians on the outcomes of their programs and services for children. These reports will give the Government of Canada and its partners the information they need to take whatever additional steps are necessary to provide Canadian children with a better start in life.

The Government of Canada will also take immediate action with its partners where the challenges are greatest.

Single parents and their children often face special challenges overcoming poverty. The governments of Canada, New Brunswick and British Columbia have been testing new approaches to help single parents become more self-sufficient. The Government of Canada is prepared to test innovations with other provinces and territories, with the longer-term aim of developing new measures that help these parents overcome poverty.

The Government will work with its partners on modernizing the laws for child support, custody, and access—to ensure that these work in the best interests of children in cases of family breakdown.

It will improve the support available to parents and caregivers in times of family crisis. No Canadian should have to choose between keeping their job and providing palliative care to a child. The Government will take steps to enable parents to provide care to a gravely ill child without fear of sudden income or job loss.

In securing a better future for Aboriginal children, the Government will work with First Nations to improve and expand the early childhood development programs and services available in their communities. It will also expand significantly the Aboriginal Head Start program, to better prepare more Aboriginal children for school and help those with special needs.

The Government of Canada will also co-operate with Aboriginal communities and provinces and territories on the measures required to reduce the number of Aboriginal newborns affected by fetal alcohol syndrome. No child should experience this syndrome, but Canada's immediate aim must be to significantly reduce its incidence in the Aboriginal population by the end of this decade.

### **Good Health and Quality Care**

A healthy Canadian society is built on the health and well-being of individual Canadians and the health of our communities.

### *Opening of Parliament*

Canadians place a high priority on good health and on their health care system. We know that our system of medicare, which ensures access to needed services regardless of income or place of residence, is vital to our quality of life. It is a Canadian advantage and deeply valued by all citizens.

The Government of Canada will uphold the Canada Health Act. It will work with the provinces and territories to ensure that all governments continue to fulfil their commitment to the principles of medicare.

Governments in Canada have come together to strengthen and renew Canada's health care system. Last September, First Ministers affirmed the commitment of their governments to the principles of the Canada Health Act and endorsed a health action plan that will enable them to move forward in building a modern, integrated and sustainable health system for Canadians.

Over the next three years, governments will take concrete action to reform and support innovation in primary care, to adopt modern health information technologies, and to purchase needed diagnostic and medical equipment. For its part, the Government of Canada is committing more than \$21 billion in new funding to the provinces and territories over five years through the Canada Health and Social Transfer.

The Government will also champion community-based health promotion and disease prevention measures.

It will strengthen its efforts to encourage physical fitness and participation in sport, and take further steps to combat substance abuse, reduce tobacco consumption, prevent injuries and promote mental health.

It will advance progress on disease prevention, focussing in particular on reducing the incidence of preventable diabetes and tuberculosis—especially among Aboriginal people, who suffer disproportionately from these diseases.

The Government will also provide a further major increase in funding to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The new funding will enable the Institutes to enhance their research into disease prevention and treatment, the determinants of health, and health system effectiveness.

Building on the health action plan's commitment to public reporting, the Government of Canada will work with the provinces and territories to create a citizens' council on health care quality. This council will ensure that the public's perspective is considered in developing meaningful indicators of health system performance.

As public reporting begins on how the health system is meeting the needs of Canadians, governments will use this information to continue to move forward with the renewal of medicare.

*Opening of Parliament*

**A Clean Environment**

Canada is blessed by the beauty of its vast landscape and the wealth of its natural resources. But with this blessing comes the responsibility to ensure its preservation. A healthy environment is an essential part of a sustainable economy and our quality of life.

The Government's focus will be on the three priorities of clean air, clean water, and the conservation of Canada's natural spaces.

Last December, the Government of Canada signed an agreement with the United States to significantly reduce the emissions that cause smog. This agreement will lead to a 90 percent reduction in smog-causing vehicle emissions by 2010, bringing cleaner air to millions of citizens in both countries. The Government will move quickly to implement this agreement and other measures, working with the provinces and territories to achieve cleaner air.

It is Canada's responsibility, as steward of one of the world's largest supplies of fresh water, to protect this critical resource. Safeguarding our water is a shared task among governments, industry and individual Canadians. The Government of Canada will fulfil its direct responsibilities for water, including the safety of water supplies on reserves and federal lands.

The Government will also lead in developing stronger national guidelines for water quality by enhancing scientific research and continuing its collaboration with partners. Drawing on expertise within the Government and from across Canada, it will significantly strengthen the role of the National Water Research Institute.

It will fund improvements to municipal water and waste water systems through the federal-provincial-municipal Infrastructure Canada program.

It will also invest in research and development and advanced information systems to enable better land use and protect surface and ground water supplies from the impact of industrial and agricultural operations.

Canadians are the guardians of a significant percentage of the world's wilderness and wildlife. The Government will invest in the creation of new national parks and implement a plan to restore existing parks to ecological health. It will work with its partners toward more integrated, sustainable management of Canada's oceans. And it will re-introduce legislation for marine conservation areas and to protect species at risk.

As part of its efforts to promote global sustainable development, the Government will ensure that Canada does its part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It will work with its provincial and territorial partners to implement the recently announced first national business plan on climate change.

To safeguard Canadians from toxic substances and environmental contaminants, the Government will also strengthen laws, research efforts and other measures for health protection. This will

include the development of appropriate standards that reflect the special vulnerabilities of children.

**Strong and Safe Communities**

Strong and safe communities are an essential part of the fabric of our society. They are critical to providing Canadians with the security to build a better future for themselves and their families. They are also important to attracting talented people from around the world to come and make their home here.

Canadian communities of all sizes—whether urban or rural, Aboriginal or multicultural—face diverse challenges and have unique needs. The Government of Canada will strive to ensure that, wherever possible, its actions and programs are co-ordinated to help build local solutions to local challenges. It will work with partners across Canada to launch a dialogue on the opportunities and challenges facing urban centres. It will co-operate with provincial and municipal partners to help improve public transit infrastructure. And it will help to stimulate the creation of more affordable rental housing.

Ensuring that Canada's communities are safe is an important element of fostering and attracting the talented people needed for success in the new economy. Crime rates in Canada have fallen steadily for almost a decade.

The Government of Canada will continue to work with provinces and territories, communities, and all its partners to implement a balanced approach to addressing crime—focussing on prevention as much as punishment, strengthening penalties for serious crime, and considering the needs of victims.

The Government will focus on safeguarding Canadians from new and emerging forms of crime. It will take aggressive steps to combat organized crime, including the creation of stronger anti-gang laws and measures to protect members of the justice system from intimidation. It will provide enhanced law enforcement tools to deal with emerging threats to security, such as cybercrime and terrorism. It will act to safeguard children from crime, including criminals on the Internet. The Government will take steps to ensure that our laws protect children from those who would prey on their vulnerability.

The Government will re-introduce legislation to change how the justice system deals with young offenders. It will encourage alternatives to custody for non-violent offenders, emphasizing rehabilitation and re-integration into society, while toughening consequences for more violent youth.

Working with the provinces, territories and communities, the Government of Canada will strengthen the capacity of local communities to deal with conflict, prevent crime, and address drug abuse.

It is a tragic reality that too many Aboriginal people are finding themselves in conflict with the law. Canada must take the measures

needed to significantly reduce the percentage of Aboriginal people entering the criminal justice system, so that within a generation it is no higher than the Canadian average.

### **Vibrant Canadian Culture**

Canada is defined by far more than its political boundaries or economic relationships. In these times of rapid change and globalization, it is more important than ever that we know who we are as Canadians and what brings us together.

The focus of our cultural policies for the future must be on excellence in the creative process, diverse Canadian content, and access to the arts and heritage for all Canadians.

Both the English and French networks of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation have long been cornerstones of Canadian cultural policy. The CBC helps connect Canadians to each other, their history and their country. It reaches all parts of Canada, from big cities to small towns to Northern and Aboriginal communities. It provides a distinctive Canadian voice in both official languages and important opportunities for our creative people. The Government will increase its support to help the CBC fulfil its distinct role as a public broadcaster serving all Canadians.

The Government will assist the book-publishing and sound-recording sectors to make the transition to the new economy. It will continue to support the development of digital content for the Internet and other new media in French and English. And it will work to expand international markets for Canadian cultural products and services.

Communities across Canada are increasingly recognizing the importance of arts and heritage for their quality of life and ability to attract talent, investment and tourism. The Government of Canada will continue to work with the private and not-for-profit sectors and other governments to strengthen Canada's cultural infrastructure. It will help communities to develop arts and heritage programs that are sustainable and relevant to their diverse circumstances and aspirations.

### **Creating and Sharing Opportunities Globally**

The well-being of Canada and Canadians depends on global human security, prosperity and development.

The Government of Canada is committed to working with its international partners to promote international peace and security by enhancing the mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution. It will work to strengthen global governance as well as existing and new multilateral institutions. These include the G-20—a new forum of which Canada is the first chair—which is striving to enhance the stability of the world economy and ensure that globalization benefits all its participants.

### *Opening of Parliament*

The Government will increase Canada's official development assistance and use these new investments to advance efforts to reduce international poverty and to strengthen democracy, justice and social stability worldwide.

Canadians have become leaders in harnessing the power of technology to build a more inclusive society. This experience serves as a powerful model for the world. Through its participation on the Digital Opportunities Task Force established by the G-8 nations and through its own investments in developing countries, Canada will contribute to closing the global digital divide.

The Government will continue Canada's proud record of peace-keeping. In Budget 2000, the Government provided funding increases for the Canadian Forces to help ensure that they are equipped and prepared to respond quickly to calls for help at home and abroad.

The Summit of the Americas this year presents an exceptional opportunity to promote a balanced and coherent vision for deepening co-operation among the nations of the Western hemisphere. The summit declaration and action plan will support Canada's interest in strengthening democracy and human rights, expanding commerce through the Free Trade Area of the Americas initiative, increasing people's access to the benefits of growth, and providing opportunities for all nations in the Americas to improve the quality of life of their citizens.

At the Summit of the Americas and as chair of the G-8 in 2002, Canada will work to expand opportunities for more countries to participate in the benefits of globalization, while pressing for peace and security in the world.

### **Celebrating Our Canadian Citizenship**

Canada was born of a noble vision and an act of will.

Our Canadian citizenship has been built over time through the experiences we have shared:

When together we celebrate the successes of our scientists, scholars, athletes and artists, our leaders on the world stage, and our peacekeepers. And when we remember and honour our war veterans.

When we visit other parts of our country or when we travel abroad and see ourselves through the eyes of others.

When every year thousands of new Canadians stand proudly with their families to take on the responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.

When we come together to help each other in tough times. And when millions of Canadians volunteer their time and energy to make their communities a better place.

*Opening of Parliament*

The Government will help Canadians to strengthen their bonds of mutual understanding and respect, to celebrate their achievements and history, and to exercise their shared citizenship.

It will continue to expand exchange programs for young Canadians to reach its goal of 100,000 exchanges each year.

Canada's linguistic duality is fundamental to our Canadian identity and is a key element of our vibrant society. The protection and promotion of our two official languages is a priority of the Government—from coast to coast. The Government reaffirms its commitment to support sustainable official language minority communities and a strong French culture and language. And it will mobilize its efforts to ensure that all Canadians can interact with the Government of Canada in either official language.

The institutions of Government will continue to be strengthened. Since 1993, the Government has taken a range of measures to enable members of Parliament to more effectively represent the views of their constituents. MPs have participated in pre-budget consultations, at the end of which recommendations were made to the Government. Moreover, private members' bills from the House and Senate have been taken into account more often and considered with greater attention than at any time in the past.

In this new session of Parliament, the Government will make further proposals to improve procedures in the House and Senate. Among other measures, voting procedures will be modernized in the House of Commons and, to assist parliamentarians in carrying out their duties, the Government intends to increase the resources of the Library of Parliament to better serve the research needs of standing committees of the House and Senate.

Every Canadian is called upon to make a contribution to building our country. To ensure that the promise of Canada becomes an even greater reality in the 21st century. And to ensure that our Canadian Way remains the best example of what is possible when women and men of every race and creed come together in community in search of a better future.

*Members of the House of Commons:*

You will be asked to appropriate the funds required to carry out the services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

*Honourable Members of the Senate and*

*Members of the House of Commons:*

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.)** moved:

That the speech of Her Excellency the Governor General, delivered this day from the throne to the two houses of Parliament, be taken into consideration later today.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1535)

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the following members have been appointed as members of the Board of Internal Economy for the purposes and under the provisions of the act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act, Chapter 32, *Statutes of Canada, 1997*, namely: Mr. Boudria and Mr. Mitchell, members of the Queen's Privy Council; Ms. Catterall and Mr. Saada, representatives of the government caucus; Mr. Strahl and Mr. Reynolds, representatives of the Canadian Alliance caucus; Mr. Bergeron, representative of the Bloc Québécois; Mr. Blaikie, representative of the New Democratic caucus; and Mr. MacKay, representative of the Progressive Conservative caucus.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** I move:

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be appointed to prepare and report lists of Members to compose the Standing and Standing Joint Committees of this House and that the Committee be composed of Mr. Bergeron, Mr. Borotsik, Mrs. Catterall, Mr. Godin, Mr. Guimond, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Lee, Mr. Macklin, Mr. McNally, Mrs. Parrish, Mr. Regan, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Saada, Mr. Strahl and Ms. Tiribassi.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE**

## APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Mr. Bob Kilger, member for the electoral district of Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh, be appointed Deputy Speaker and chairman of committees of the whole House.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

## APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Mr. Réginald Bélair, member for the electoral district of Timmins—James Bay, be appointed Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

## APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Ms. Eleni Bakopanos, member for the electoral district of Ahuntsic, be appointed assistant deputy chairman of committees of the whole House.

*The Address*

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

• (1540)

[Translation]

**SUPPLY**

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this House consider the business of supply at its next sitting.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It is my duty to inform the House that a total of eight days will be allotted for the supply period ending March 26, 2001.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

## ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House proceeded to the consideration of the speech delivered by Her Excellency the Governor General at the opening of the session.

**Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Northumberland, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of pride and humility that I move the motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to pay my humble respects to Her Excellency the Governor General and thank Her Excellency for delivering the speech today.

As well, I would like to thank the Right Hon. Prime Minister for bestowing this honour upon me and the riding of Northumberland to bring forward the motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to thank the people of Northumberland who have placed their trust and confidence in me to represent their interests in the House. As their member, I vow to work in conjunction with my colleagues to address the concerns and challenges that we face today and in the future.

To my predecessor, the hon. Christine Stewart, I extend my personal regards for her 12 years of dedicated service to her riding, to her colleagues and to her nation. She has been an inspiration to all of us. On behalf of my colleagues I thank her for giving so much to so many.

I would like to thank my family who are with me today for their endless motivation, inspiration and support. I am reminded of the importance of family and it is a value I cherish. Today's speech has demonstrated the commitment of the government to support families and children.

To you, Mr. Speaker, I extend my sincere congratulations on your election as Speaker of the House. You have earned the confidence and support of your colleagues to guide us through the many complex issues that face us.

Today, as I reflect on the history that surrounds this Chamber and the Fathers of Confederation, I am reminded of a lawyer who practised law for 15 years in the riding of Northumberland, who bore the name James Cockburn. On November 6, 1867, he was unanimously chosen as the first Speaker of the House. Indeed Northumberland has strong roots within Confederation and to the Speaker's chair.

It is a privilege to say that I hail from one of the best ridings in the country. Northumberland is a picturesque riding, with vast rolling land and freshwater lakes to the north and south borders. Along the east and west borders of Northumberland we have the Trent Severn waterway and the Ganaraska River, both opening into Lake Ontario.

These bodies of water remind all of my constituents that fresh, clean water is something to be cherished and enjoyed. This is part of the positive quality of life experienced in Northumberland and it needs to be preserved so it may be shared with others.

• (1545)

Canada, as a country with one of the largest masses of fresh water in the world, needs to continue to demonstrate its commitment to the environment and to protect this great natural resource. Fresh water is our future.

In my riding we rely heavily upon natural resources to ensure the success of one of our largest industries, and that is agriculture. I know firsthand the farming way of life because I come from five generations of farmers. I am proud to say that my great great-grandfather introduced the first Holstein cattle into Northumberland in 1884. Since then we have come a long way, yet there is much work to be done.

Our rural voices must continue to be strong in supporting our food supply system, for agriculture is not only a way of life in my riding, it is a way of life for so many across this great nation of ours.

We cannot stand by and allow the family farm to die. We must as a government provide support for the farming community in their time of need.

I am very pleased to see today that our government has pledged to work with the agricultural community to move beyond crisis management, to support them in their time of need and to ensure that family farms that helped build our nation prosper once again.

*The Address*

As a member of this House and a representative of the people of Northumberland, I have pledged to bring forward the concerns of my constituents on the issue of agriculture. It is important that we continue to support the family farm, which has been a cornerstone of our Canadian heritage.

I am very optimistic when envisioning our future. In today's knowledge based economy, innovation and creative thinking are the currency of success. Our government is investing in today's pioneers because they are the architects of our future.

By such investment in knowledge and innovation, we are laying down a strong foundation for a stronger nation. The building blocks of our foundation are found in our youth and to make them strong requires education and opportunity.

With the introduction of programs, such as the Canadian opportunities strategy, the Canadian government is opening more doors to post-secondary education than ever before. The Canadian millennium scholarships are the centre of this strategy and will provide more than 100,000 scholarships to low and middle income students for the next 10 years.

As a government, we are strengthening the institutions where learning and research take place. Canadian universities and laboratories will benefit from programs, such as the Canada foundation for innovation and the networks of centres of excellence, as a means of expanding future opportunities through education.

Locally in my riding, I have taken the initiative to integrate technology, research and innovation through the municipal, provincial and federal governments. I have launched a research, innovation and technology advisory committee to establish seamless connections between all levels of government and all aspects of our community. By bringing together these key groups my constituents have the opportunity to work together to shape the vision of our future as a riding.

Today's throne speech exemplifies the commitment by the government to Canadians young and old.

• (1550)

We have once again demonstrated our ability as a government to respond to the needs of Canadians while maintaining fiscal responsibility. The speech not only affirms Canada's position at the forefront of a knowledge based economy, but it stresses that concerns about health care and early childhood development shall be answered by the government.

We have demonstrated time and time again that we are a government that supports all those in our society while looking after the fiscal needs of our country. As a government we continue to reflect the Liberal values on which we were elected.

We are a growing country, a country of which to be proud. We are a nation that has again been named the best country in the world in which to live. We are a country where people are recognized for

their cultural diversity, varying interests and are motivated toward keeping Canada the best country in the world in which to live.

In conclusion, I would like to remind all hon. members of the House, regardless of our party loyalties, that Canadians from coast to coast have spoken. We have been chosen to hear their voices, address their concerns and instil confidence in them that we are fighting the same battle, the battle to make Canada the very best.

I extend to you, Mr. Speaker, and all members of the House my best wishes. I am certain that this parliament will stand as the best in history. Let us leave our legacy now to drive the future.

I hereby move, seconded by the hon. member for Laval East, that the following address be presented to Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada:

To Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, a Member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Canada, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Military Merit, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada.

May it please Your Excellency:

We, Her Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the House of Commons of Canada, in parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Laval East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members on both sides of the House for the warm welcome they have given me this afternoon.

Her Excellency the Governor General has read the Speech from the Throne. I have no doubt all of my colleagues in this House would like her to know how moved they were by the great dignity with which she read it.

• (1555)

I would like, if I may, to congratulate as well the member for Northumberland on the excellent speech he has just delivered. His interest in Canada and his hopes for the future do him honour.

I would like to thank our Prime Minister for honouring Laval East by asking me to second the motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. It is a real joy for me, especially since, for a number of years, in the mid 1980s, I sat way up in the press gallery following the proceedings of the House. I loved every minute of it. I can understand why the journalists who were there at the time are still there today.

It is therefore a real delight to find myself here on the floor of the House of Commons and, although I have come down from the stands to be here, I consider it a promotion.

Let us not forget that, during the latest election, our friends opposite, the hon. members of the Bloc, tried unsuccessfully to present themselves as the sole defenders of Quebec. The people of

*The Address*

Laval East gave me a majority, and this government has received its third mandate in a row—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member from Laval East has the floor. This is her first speech in the House and perhaps all of us could listen to it.

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard:** On behalf of all my colleagues, I want to thank the people of Quebec and assure them of our intention to fully defend their interests during this mandate.

The riding of Laval East offers many challenges. Canada is a vast country, and I have noticed that several of us do not know my riding well.

Laval, in the province of Quebec, is the name of a renowned university, but it is first and foremost a great city, located on an island near Montreal. The city of Laval is buzzing with economic activity. I must say that the infrastructure program put in place by the government is a valuable tool for growth and development at the disposal of our local decision makers in Laval.

Laval's economic development cannot be dissociated from that of the greater Montreal area. It has been stimulated by the Canadian action strategy for the greater Montreal area and very sizeable federal investments exceeding \$1.5 billion. These measures have helped consolidate the economic base of the Montreal region, and Laval has benefited from that.

Laval East is one of three ridings located on the island of Laval. It is an urban area bordered by two rivers, but it also includes a large agricultural area.

When travelling on certain secondary roads around Laval in September, one feels that one is in the country, seeing the vast fields and mounds of cabbages on farmers' trailers.

All this to say that Laval East and the entire city of Laval are more than just a suburb.

• (1600)

That is why the priorities announced in today's Speech from the Throne coincide perfectly with those of the people living in Laval East, who want to work on their island.

My riding welcomes the government's initiatives to promote a new economy based on research and development.

The high tech sector has been taking on increasing importance in Laval in recent years. The government's continued emphasis on developing new technologies augurs well for the biotechnology, pharmaceutical and computer industries. One has only to think of

the Institut Armand Frappier, which offers leading-edge training at the master's and doctoral levels.

The partnership with industry approach has been a winning one for this new economy, with its emphasis on innovation and new global markets.

In my humble opinion, the Speech from the Throne reflects a vision of modern society focused on the family, youth and the less fortunate, a lasting Liberal vision.

The Speech from the Throne outlines an action plan for the future, based on a Canadian way of doing things. The tax breaks promised last fall took effect one month ago. It has been reassuring to see that they have been driven by a sense of fairness and responsibility, and that low income Canadians, particularly families with children, have been the principal beneficiaries.

The government has also shown that it was able to react quickly and introduce short term measures, such as last fall's rebate to low income Canadians for heating costs.

I can tell you that this measure was extremely well received in Laval East, where seniors are having a very hard time coping with the increase in heating costs.

As a lawyer who had to deal with heart-wrenching matrimonial disputes, I am glad to see that my government is concerned about the help being provided to single-parent families and the best interests of the children when a family breaks down.

Increasing the child benefit and introducing a one-year parental leave are just some of the concrete measures that will be taken to ensure a brighter future for our children.

During the election campaign, I also came to realize how important the health agreement signed last September was to my constituents of Laval East, who are however still wondering how this agreement will be implemented by the provincial government.

The commitment of our government to take concrete measures during the next three years to promote health and prevent illnesses is crucial to our aging population.

Also, the way our government keeps insisting on maintaining a medicare system where all patients, rich or poor, are equal is certainly reassuring for all of us.

By acting to fight organized crime and protect the public against new forms of intimidation, the government is showing how responsible it is. We all remember the panic created by the murder attempt against reporter Michel Auger. This truly reflects the terror a large segment of our population is living under.

As another sign of openness, the government insists on helping more adults develop advanced skills. Therefore, it will create

*The Address*

registered individual learning accounts. Throughout his public life, our Prime Minister has shown deep concern for labour force training.

• (1605)

In a motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne in 1965, which was submitted at the request of Prime Minister Pearson, the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Lafleche said:

For the past 50 years, the Liberal Party has always been at the forefront of social policy in Canada and it will show vision and determination to retrain displaced workers and promote manpower mobility, so that every part of Canada can become a comfortable place for each and every citizen.

Such was the vision of our Prime Minister back in 1965, a vision that has since been updated to include the notion of lifelong learning and to better reflect the concerns of today's society.

In a recent book on the life of the late Right Honourable Pierre Trudeau, an eminent Canadian, Jim Coutts, wrote the following:

[*English*]

There are only two kinds of political leaders: those who want to be somebody and those who want to do something.

[*Translation*]

Our Prime Minister is proving to us that he is still pursuing goals. His determination, some 30 years after entering politics, to put in place measures to help workers be better equipped to face today's challenges is proof that, in politics, determination is what counts.

I do not have the same number of years as our Prime Minister to achieve my goals. He entered politics at age 29, which is not my case. So, I hope you will forgive me if I am impatient at times during this mandate and I apologize in advance for it.

In conclusion, I am confident that we as parliamentarians have the ability to go beyond partisanship to make ours a better society. Today's Speech from the Throne is eloquent when it comes to preserving our future.

Therefore, it is with enthusiasm that I support the motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

[*English*]

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the member spoke of a modern society being built which all Canadians will be able to enjoy. Modern society is based on eating.

In this throne speech there is no mention whatsoever of a farm income crisis or of concrete steps being taken to reduce and alleviate the ongoing crisis. What is there by way of concrete steps to address the farm income crisis?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Laval East who wants to protect Quebecers' interests without engaging into partisanship.

On page 18 of the Speech from the Throne it says, and I quote:

The Government reaffirms its commitment to support sustainable official language minority communities and a strong French culture and language—

The government refers to sustainable official language communities. Which are Canada's official language communities that are not sustainable and that the government wants to abandon?

• (1610)

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard:** Mr. Speaker, allow me to reaffirm our dedication to the cause of bilingualism in Canada.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on page 11 of the Speech from the Throne I have found the most arrogant statement I have heard in a long time. It reads:

There was a time when losing a job also meant immediate loss of income for workers and their families. And so Canadians created Employment Insurance.

How can a government say such a thing? How can the member defend such a statement when the employment insurance plan is the plan that has created the most poverty in Canada in the last 50 years?

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard:** Mr. Speaker, if I remember correctly, it was the Bloc Québécois that blocked the bill—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

[*English*]

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to say that we have done something unusual today. Never before have we had a proposer or a seconder questioned in the House of Commons. It is a precedent. Also, never before on the first day in the House of Commons has a member of parliament blocked the Bloc Québécois like that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to let the member know that she ought to have realized that the alleged employment insurance bill could not have been blocked by the Bloc Québécois because it was never tabled in the House. There has been no vote on this matter. It would however have been interesting to see the government table such a bill to find out what people thought—

*The Address*

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I remind hon. members that this was a maiden speech.

[*Translation*]

The Chair has recognized the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie for questions and comments. The member then said he was rising on a point of order. If he has a question or a comment, he has the floor. He can speak now if he so wishes.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe:** It will be all, Mr. Speaker.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say that never before on the day of the Speech from the Throne in the House of Commons have hon. members questioned one another. Coming from the leader of the Bloc Québécois and from the Parti Québécois, this attitude is as irritating as the whole rag business.

[*English*]

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If this is parliamentary reform then we have a long, hard session ahead of us.

**The Speaker:** I do not think that is a point of order.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I find it difficult to understand that the Prime Minister would be pleased that we innovate by asking questions and then blame hon. members who do so. As for the “rag”, he should not be sorry that, for once, a sovereigntist is seeing red.

[*English*]

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition I

extend our congratulations to Her Excellency the Governor General on her presentation of the Speech from the Throne, and to you also.

I can see we are moving along lines of precedent here, with the government once again at fractious odds with the Bloc and the official opposition continuing to be seen as the group that brings peace, order and good government.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to congratulate the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Acting Chairman and the Assistant Deputy Chairman of the Committees of the Whole House on their appointments.

[*English*]

I also extend congratulations to the members for Laval East and for Northumberland on their enlightened speeches and the presence of their families here today. That support is so treasured by all of us.

I also acknowledge, as I move to adjourn, that Canadians see stormy economic waters ahead. Tomorrow I would like to talk about charting a safe course through those waters. I now move to adjourn the debate.

(On motion of Mr. Day the debate was adjourned)

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Speaker:** Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 4.17 p.m.)





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