



FACT SHEET:

The First Days of the 42nd Parliament

After a general election, Parliament is summoned in the Sovereign's name by the Governor General. On the day appointed by proclamation for the meeting of the new Parliament, the Members, who have already taken an oath of allegiance, elect a Speaker by secret ballot (see related [Fact Sheet](#)). Once elected, the Speaker—escorted by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition—takes the Chair, thanks the Members for electing him or her and adjourns the House until the next day.

Speech from the Throne and Address in Reply

The next day, at the time appointed for the formal opening of the new Parliament, the new Speaker, accompanied by the Members, formally announces his or her election at the Bar of the Senate Chamber. The Speaker of the Senate replies on behalf of the Governor General, acknowledging the Speaker's election and confirming the traditional rights and privileges of the House.

The Speech from the Throne, customarily read by the Governor General, follows immediately in the Senate Chamber and announces the newly elected government's general program for the parliamentary session that will follow.

Pro forma Bill

When the Members return to the Commons Chamber, and before proceeding to the consideration of the Speech from the Throne, the House gives first reading to the *pro forma* Bill C-1, *An Act respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office*. Typically, the Bill is introduced by the Prime Minister; it receives first reading, but is not proceeded with any further during the session. Its purpose is to assert the independence of the House of Commons and its right to choose its own business and to deliberate without reference to the causes of summons as expressed in the Speech from the Throne.

Report of Speech from the Throne

The Speaker reports to the House on the Speech from the Throne, informing the House that “to prevent mistakes” a copy of the Speech has been obtained; its text is published in the *Debates*. A motion is then moved, usually by the Prime Minister, for the Speech from the Throne to be considered “later this day”; it is usually adopted without debate or amendment.

Board of Internal Economy and Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Several procedural formalities usually take place before considering the Speech from the Throne, including the announcement of appointments to the Board of Internal Economy and the creation of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which is charged with acting as a striking committee for all standing committees and standing joint committees.

Other Chair Occupants

The Speaker of the House consults with the leaders of each of the recognized parties before announcing to the House the names of the Members he or she considers to be qualified for the positions of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole; Assistant Deputy Speaker and Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole; and Assistant Deputy Speaker and Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole. These announcements may be made on the day of the Speech from the Throne, but may also be made on subsequent days. Once the Speaker announces the name of a Member, the question is put to the House for a decision without debate.

Order for Supply

In addition, the Standing Orders require that, at the start of each session, the House designate, by means of a motion, a continuing Order of the Day for the consideration of the business of supply. The designation of a continuing order for supply follows on the statement usually found in the Speech from the Throne informing Members that they “will be asked to appropriate the funds required to carry out the services and expenditures authorized by Parliament”. The continuing order for supply also allows the government to designate supply days, also known as “allotted days” or “opposition days”, when the House considers motions sponsored by Members of opposition parties within the broader supply framework.

Debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne

These items of business are followed immediately by the commencement of the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, which is traditionally moved and seconded by government backbenchers.

Once the first two speeches are made, the Leader of the Opposition typically moves the adjournment of the debate on the Address in Reply and the Government House Leader moves the adjournment of the House.

The Standing Orders allow for up to six days of debate on the Address in Reply. The six days do not have to occur consecutively. If an amendment and a subamendment are proposed in the course of the debate, a vote on the subamendment occurs at the end of the second day and a vote on the amendment occurs at the end of the fourth day. A vote on the main motion is held at the end of the sixth day.

Reference: [House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Second Edition, 2009](#)

For more information:

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