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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, December 3, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 3, 2015

•(1335)

[*Translation*]

FIRST SESSION—42ND PARLIAMENT

The 41st Parliament having been dissolved by proclamation on August 2, 2015, and writs having been issued and returned, a new Parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Thursday, December 3, 2015, and did accordingly meet on that day.

Thursday, December 3, 2015

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

Marc Bosc, Acting Clerk of the House of Commons, read to the House a letter from the Secretary to the Governor General informing him that the Deputy Governor General would proceed to the Senate chamber today at 1 p.m. to open the first session of the 42nd Parliament of Canada on the afternoon of Thursday, December 3, 2015, at Ottawa.

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 the Deputy to His Excellency the Governor General of Canada that this honourable House attend her immediately in the chamber of the Senate.

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 His Excellency the Governor General of Canada does not see fit to declare the causes of his summoning the present Parliament of Canada until a Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen, according to law; but tomorrow, Friday, December 4, at 3:00 in the afternoon, His Excellency will declare the causes of his calling this Parliament.

•(1310)

[*English*]

And the House being returned to the Commons chamber:

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

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Colleagues, this is the third time that I have had the honour of taking the chair and I must confess that I am really beginning to enjoy it. Considering the welcome you have just given me, I should have run for the position of Speaker, for goodness' sake.

From this prestigious chair, I would like to take a moment before we begin the official ceremony and thank my constituents in the riding of Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, who have given me my tenth consecutive term. I have been in this House for 31 years now. As I have said on many occasions, I am proud that I have had the best job in the world for 31 years.

I would also like to acknowledge my family, my partner Manon, as well as my children, Lucie, Catherine and Steve, my partner's son, who have always supported my political career. In fact, one of my daughters is here today.

I also want to congratulate each and every one of you, as well as those running for the position of Speaker. You have all contributed to the development of our democracy, one of the most envied democracies in the world.

We will now proceed to the election of the Speaker. Most of the ceremony will take place in French, which will allow you the opportunity to appreciate the work of the House of Commons interpreters. Even if I were to proceed in English, you would still need interpretation, so I will speak only briefly in English.

The list of members who have withdrawn or who are ineligible as candidates has been placed on each member's desk and is available at the table.

[*English*]

The list of candidates has been placed on each member's desk and is also available at the table.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 3.1, the House must proceed to the speeches of candidates for Speaker.

Election of Speaker

[Translation]

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 Denis Paradis, the hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): My dear colleagues, first of all I would like to congratulate all new and returning MPs. I would also like to thank the House of Commons staff for the helpful orientation sessions.

I applaud the diversity of Canada's House of Commons. All of us are here to voice our constituents' needs and concerns in this place. We must now continue to be passionate in our debates while being very respectful.

[English]

The position of Speaker is based on three pillars. I will call the first pillar procedure and decorum. Canadians have entrusted each person in this chamber, opposition and government, with the responsibility to work together to find the best way for our nation to meet the challenges we face. However, we can only do this effectively if we conduct our work with fundamental respect for one another.

Maintaining essential decorum will be a critical role for the next Speaker. Canadians have been disappointed that question period remains just that, question period. They expect a question and answer period.

The second pillar is the administration of the House and its services. The House has an annual budget of over \$400 million. It is important to have someone with skills and experience to administer the House.

We also face increased security concerns in the House. Our mission is to protect the security of Parliament while at the same time allowing Canadians to continue to have access to Parliament. It is their House.

We also face another very important challenge, the family challenge. MPs are younger, and so are their families. After all, we are in 2015. This must be addressed.

● (1340)

[Translation]

The third pillar is parliamentary diplomacy. Canada wants to have a stronger voice on the international stage. We need to do more, both within Canada and abroad. We, as parliamentarians, need to become true ambassadors throughout the world.

Here at home, we also need to think about making our work more accessible to Canadians. For example, perhaps our committees might consider holding meetings in various parts of the country, whether it be in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal or Moncton. That would allow us to better connect with Canadians.

Who am I to request the honour of becoming your Speaker? I have been the member of Parliament for Brome-Missisquoi for 11 years. I was the minister for financial institutions and La Francophonie and the minister of state for Latin America and Africa.

[English]

It was as a member of Parliament that I created an MP-to-MP student exchange summer work program. This co-operation among parliamentarians provided thousands of students with the opportunity to live and work in a different region of the country while learning the other official language.

Why not once again see an MP from Gaspésie, for example, exchange 10 students with an MP from Calgary?

I am also a lawyer, and I was a president of the Quebec Bar association. I have always worked in Canada, and abroad, to uphold the values of democracy, human rights, and good governance.

[Translation]

I also co-wrote the rules of procedure for Quebec's administrative tribunals.

[English]

I have always been in business. I also co-founded a law firm specializing in agricultural law, and I started a vineyard, which is now the second largest in Quebec.

In closing, the Speaker is many things: our referee, our ambassador to other parliaments, and the protector of our rights and privileges. My door will always be open to all members. Inside, they will find a Speaker with an open mind and an open heart.

[Translation]

We are a big family. I want to forge the necessary ties of friendship among us. I said friendship, not necessarily love. Do not worry. I will still continue to refer to all of you as "honourable members". I would like to preside over a Parliament in which all members work together in harmony.

I want to tell you how proud I am to sit here in the House with all of you. I ask you to support my bid.

[English]

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I will now call upon Yasmin Ratansi, the hon. member for Don Valley East, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

● (1345)

[Translation]

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Dear colleagues, my name is Yasmin Ratansi, and I would like to have the honour of serving as the Speaker of the House of Commons. Let me tell you why.

*Election of Speaker**[English]*

Before I do that, I would like to pay tribute to the member for Ottawa—Vanier, who has been my friend and mentor. I am sorry that his health has not allowed him to stay in the race, because I believe he would have made an excellent Speaker.

I would like to thank all the colleagues for putting their names forward for the position of Speaker. This position is very closely linked to the history of the House of Commons, which dates back 600 years.

The duty of the Speaker is to make sound decisions based on the rules of Parliament and Standing Orders without preference for political affiliation or popularity. I would balance the rights of the majority and the minority. I would be assertive and fair and ensure a more collegial environment, but at the same time, I would not take myself too seriously. As the shortest of the candidates seeking to fill this role, I understand some of the challenges that lie ahead.

From my experience as a member of Parliament, I believe that it is absolutely critical for the Speaker to have a comprehensive knowledge of government spending and operations. This skill is the foundation of the efficient and effective governance of our chamber.

I bring my professional background and training as a chartered professional accountant. I also bring my previous experience as the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates and vice-chair of the procedure and house affairs committee. These committees are the building blocks of a well-run Parliament.

[Translation]

I have been a member of various parliamentary standing committees, where I gained a lot of invaluable experience and a great deal of knowledge about government accounts and how to make the government accountable for its spending. I have a good understanding of how the Board of Internal Economy works.

[English]

The role of the Speaker is also about maintaining and defending the rights and privileges of members, including the rights to freedom of speech. I pledge to follow the Westminster model and return Parliament to a place of mutual respect and understanding.

We must be an example to our constituents from coast to coast to coast that we value the diversity and pluralism that is the hallmark of Canada. The business of Canada is too important for us to slide into negative attacks, irrelevant answers, and hyper-partisanship.

[Translation]

I will ensure that the procedures of the House of Commons are open and transparent, since this is very important to the Canadians who elected us in October.

[English]

Many of you who have known me for some time know that I do not back away from debate or responsibility. In fact, throughout my professional life, I have walked on many roads less taken.

[Translation]

I want to assure those members who do not know me that I will follow the rules and make fair decisions. I will maintain order and decorum.

[English]

I cannot fail to mention that, if elected, I would be only the second woman to serve as Speaker. In 1980, Jeanne Sauvé became Canada's first woman Speaker when Canada's prime minister was Pierre Elliott Trudeau. That was three decades ago. In 2015, if elected, I would be the second woman Speaker, this time serving under the current Prime Minister, the hon. member for Papineau.

Hon. members, this is the only time that we vote in secret. The reason is to ensure that there is no outside influence. If I earn your support today as Speaker, you will have a person who understands the business of government and the principles of governance of this chamber. You will have someone who knows the rules of procedure and who will make fair and impartial decisions.

● (1350)

Most important, members will have a Speaker who values and respects diversity. After all, I speak seven languages and understand linguistic and cultural nuances.

I know that all of us want a better future for Canada.

[Translation]

We will build it together.

[English]

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I will now call upon Geoff Regan, the hon. member for the electoral district of Halifax West, to address the House for five minutes.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Chair, my dear colleagues, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak today on this very special occasion of the House beginning.

I want to thank the dean of the House for presiding over this election today.

It is always an exciting time when a new Parliament opens, both for new and returning members, and it is something one always remembers.

[Translation]

It is a privilege for me to stand before you today in the House, and it is a privilege to once again be a member of this House. We must never forget that this is a privilege.

I would like to recognize the other excellent candidates. Everyone here in the House was sorry to hear that the fifth candidate had to withdraw, because he would have made a wonderful Speaker.

I want to congratulate all of the new and returning members of Parliament. I know how nice a break can be, but it is also nice to come back. I hope we are all able to do meaningful work here. If I, in my role as Speaker, were able to help all members do meaningful work, that alone would give meaning to my work.

Election of Speaker

I must now humbly talk about my experience in the House. I have been a member of Parliament for 18 years. I have learned that people across this country have different opinions and that even within parties, members reflect their constituents' different points of view. This helps us to respect other members' right to express opinions that differ from ours.

[English]

I have sat in all corners of this House. I think that will help me appreciate the different perspectives of all members, on all sides.

I have been a government backbencher, I have been parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, I have been a minister, and I have been an opposition critic.

Over the past number of weeks, it has been a great pleasure to talk with so many members. I have heard from so many members of their desire for a better atmosphere in this place, for greater respect to be shown among members of Parliament, on all sides, to make this a place where representatives of the people have a real say in the decisions of government, and where our work can have real meaning.

I believe the Speaker should lead discussions about how to reform our procedures to achieve these things and to have measures that ensure that members are better able to focus on their work and carry out their duties, both in Ottawa and in their ridings.

After all, this is the people's chamber and, through them, this is our chamber.

If we achieve this, then I believe that our work would be meaningful for us all and, more important, meaningful for all Canadians.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I will now call upon Bruce Stanton, the hon. member for the electoral district of Simcoe North, to address the House for five minutes.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Chair, this being the first opportunity I have to speak in the 42nd Parliament, I would like to thank the people of Simcoe North for electing me to a fourth term.

• (1355)

[Translation]

I would also like to congratulate all members on their electoral victory. I would especially like to welcome members who are taking their seats in the House of Commons for the very first time.

[English]

We all share the responsibility given us this past October to be the voice of our constituents in this place. It is upon that responsibility that the House provides the rights and privileges, such that all members can fulfill that solemn obligation.

[Translation]

The Speaker is the guardian of those rights and privileges and as such ensures that all members may speak freely.

[English]

The rules, practices, and conventions we follow here, which have evolved since our very first Parliament in 1867, are our best, most current means for assuring that members can honour their parliamentary obligations, that the precious time of members is used efficiently, and that the House can reach decisions on the questions before it in a fair and methodical fashion.

[Translation]

It is those same rules that inform the Speaker's rulings on procedural matters and questions of privilege. Those rules are more specifically those you put in place to conduct the business of the House. The Speaker is at the service of the House and its members. As such, he must enforce those rules in a fair and methodical fashion.

[English]

Therefore, the person whom members choose for Speaker for the duration of this Parliament should have the experience and know-how to uphold those important responsibilities.

In the 28 years of my career before public life, I worked my way up and ultimately led our successful tourism business, which was built on the durable relations with customers, staff, suppliers, and the broader community.

[Translation]

When I arrived here in 2006, I did not speak a word of French. I signed up for a course and continue to take courses to this day in order to master the language. It was a promise I made during my first election campaign nearly 10 years ago. It is my way of paying tribute to my riding's proud Franco-Ontarian heritage. I will be forever proud of this accomplishment.

[English]

The last seven of my nearly ten years of service in Parliament have involved procedural matters of the House, first as the chair of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, from 2008 to 2011, and throughout the last Parliament, when I had the privilege to serve eight to ten hours per week as a presiding officer in the House under the wing of the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. I thank him for giving me the opportunity to learn and become a competent member of his team. This is a role that demands constant attention during debate; knowing which MPs are trying to get the eye of the chair; allowing members to finish an important thought or phrase before interrupting at the end of their allotted time; making eye contact when recognizing a member to speak; and knowing the names of MPs and also the names of their ridings. These are relatively minor but effective gestures and examples of the approach I take to maintaining decorum and conveying my respect to the members I serve.

[Translation]

It is essential to know and understand the procedures and practices of the House. I earned those skills in the performance of my duties in the last Parliament. I can assure you that becoming Speaker would be a natural progression for me and that I would humbly accept the responsibilities entrusted to me.

*Election of Speaker**[English]*

With me as Speaker, members will have my undivided attention and commitment in protecting and guarding their privileges and rights as members, and in abiding in the supremacy of Parliament as an institution, Canada's institution, and our foremost voice for Canadians.

[Translation]

I thank hon. members for their consideration today, and I would be honoured to have their support.

[English]

I thank hon. members for their consideration today, and I would be honoured to have their support.

● (1400)

[Translation]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Before I suspend the sitting for 30 minutes, I wish to remind hon. members that the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes. The sitting is suspended for 30 minutes, to the call of the Chair.

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

● (1430)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 2:34 p.m.)

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

● (1435)

[English]

The names of the eligible candidates for the election are listed on the ballot in alphabetical order.

[Translation]

After the Acting Clerk has unsealed the ballots, I will suggest to the House a procedure that will accelerate the voting process.

[English]

We will now prepare to begin to vote according to the new provisions of Standing Order 4 adopted by the House during the last session. Please allow me to outline the new procedure for all hon. members.

[Translation]

The candidates are listed in alphabetical order on the ballot. To vote, you will rank the candidates in order of preference by recording the number "1" beside your first choice, the number "2" beside your second choice, and so on, until you have indicated all your choices. Please note that you do not have to rank all the candidates. Indicate your first, second, third or fourth choice, in order of preference. You may choose to vote for just one candidate.

[English]

In order to vote, I will ask that members leave their desks, exit through the curtains, and come to the table using the doors on the left and right sides of the chair on their respective sides of the House. The clerk will issue to each member a ballot paper.

[Translation]

After casting their ballots, members are asked to leave the voting area.

The polling booths are now open to vote.

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

● (1505)

[English]

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): If any hon. members have not yet voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now.

[Translation]

All members having voted, I do now instruct the Acting Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots, after I have cast my ballot.

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Before I suspend the sitting, I wish to inform the hon. members that, when the counting has been completed, the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded.

[English]

The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 3:05 p.m.)

● (1605)

[Translation]

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 4:05 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): Order, please. It is my duty to inform the House that a Speaker of this House has been duly elected. Let us have a round of applause for all of the House staff who helped me today.

[English]

It is with great pleasure that I do now invite the hon. member for the electoral district of Halifax West 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. Regan from his seat in the House to the chair.)

Election of Speaker

The Speaker: Hon. members, I beg to return my humble acknowledgements to the House for the great honour you have been pleased to confer upon me by choosing me to be the Speaker.

This is a very humbling experience. I want to note at the beginning that it is almost 100 years since an MP from Atlantic Canada has been the Speaker of this House.

I first want to send my love to my wife Kelly, who could not be here today on this our 22nd wedding anniversary. However, I am delighted to have my mom and dad here today.

I very much look forward to working with our new Prime Minister, the other party leaders, with the House leaders, with every member and for every member of this House. I look forward to working with them to build a positive working environment for all, and I hope we will have meaningful, respectful debate.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

I am so pleased to know that I can count on our most distinguished Acting Clerk and his deputies. I know that we will all appreciate the good work of all House of Commons employees.

You have given me an important responsibility, and I will need your support. We must elevate the tone in the House and restore decorum. Mutual respect, despite our differences, is essential.

[*English*]

My role as your Speaker is to be fair, and I want to assure all of you that I intend to be fair and I intend to be firm. I will not tolerate heckling. We do not need it. We will not tolerate unparliamentary conduct.

After the fire in this building in 1916, construction began, and it took 60 years to finish the carvings on the stone on the inside of this building. Members have seen the paintings as well. When we look at those carvings and we walk these halls, we see how many of them depict people from this country working, the toil of our citizens. We think of the toil that built this place, that built our democracy. We think also, when we see the remembrances here, of the 116,000 Canadians who are buried overseas, who fought so that we could speak freely here and express our different opinions. Let us here resolve to conduct ourselves in this place that we might be worthy of the sacrifices they made.

I want to conclude by congratulating every member and welcoming them to the 42nd Parliament of Canada.

And the mace having been laid upon the table:

• (1615)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first opportunity to address Canadians from this my new seat in this august chamber, allow me, before I congratulate you, to thank all Canadians for sending 338 strong individuals to be their representatives in the House. All of us in the House will strive every day to be worthy of the trust they have placed in us individually and collectively.

[*Translation*]

In particular, I would like to take a moment to thank the people of Papineau for having placed their trust in me a third time. They will remain at the heart of everything I do.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, my esteemed colleague and long-time friend, for having been selected to fill this extremely important role. Maintaining order in the House of Commons is no easy task. The Speaker must ensure that our parliamentary rules and traditions are respected, and defend the rights and privileges of all members, including the right to speak freely.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, you bring tremendous experience to this role of Speaker. Clearly, you will have the confidence of all of our hon. colleagues.

To my knowledge, only two women in the history of Canada have had the dubious distinction of being the daughter, the wife, and the mother of a member of Parliament. One of those women is my mother; the other is the Speaker's, whom we see here today. It is in the spirit of openness and transparency that I disclose that familial connection. I had to get that story in before the Speaker starts telling me what I can and cannot say.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank all my esteemed colleagues who ran for the position of Speaker. Canadians are extremely lucky to have such passionate, dedicated people in this place, and I think we can all agree that when it comes to those qualities, no one has more passion and dedication than our friend and colleague from Ottawa—Vanier.

We all need to work together to restore faith and trust in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, I know you will play a role in this effort by promoting respectful, thoughtful debate between members on both sides of the House.

[*English*]

Moving forward, I know that it is important that we have constructive debates in this place on issues that Canadians have told us matter to them. We will work hard to promote more openness across government. We will give Canadians and all members a voice in Ottawa and in this chamber. This also means greater independence of committees, reforming question period, and more free votes.

[*Translation*]

We have already taken action, and we will do more in the coming weeks and months.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your election today.

[*English*]

It is an immense honour and responsibility for which you are uniquely suited.

I look forward to working with you and with all members in this House as we strive to build an even greater country together.

•(1620)

The Speaker: I thank the Prime Minister, and I recognize the hon. leader of the official opposition.

[Translation]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and the members of the Conservative caucus, I would like to sincerely congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the House of Commons.

[English]

Also, happy anniversary to you and Kelly. You get extra brownie points for that one.

Mr. Speaker, you now hold an office that is almost as old as Parliament itself. The earliest year for which a presiding officer has been identified is 1258. In that year, Peter de Montfort presided over the parliament held in Oxford.

The uninterrupted history of the office of Speaker began in 1376 when Sir Peter de la Mare presided over what is known as the “Good Parliament”. The next parliament was styled the “Bad Parliament”. Of course, the titles “Good” and “Bad” had nothing to do with the performance of the administrations of the day, but were more a reflection on the efforts of the members of those parliaments to keep the government in check.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that my colleagues and I, who make up Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, will work hard to earn you the reputation of the Speaker of what historians will one day refer to as “the great Parliament”. That means that you can count on our co-operation at all times and in all circumstances.

On that same note, I would like to tell the Prime Minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, that he too can also count on our co-operation and support when he is acting in the best interest of Canadians.

What is more, if the Prime Minister is wondering what I am prepared to do if he does not act in the best interest of Canadians, then I would tell him to “just watch me”.

Congratulations once again, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

The Speaker: I thank the hon. leader of the official opposition.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Outremont.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, Canada's progressive opposition, I would like to congratulate you on winning the election today. Know that you can always count on our co-operation. As you so eloquently stated, the Speaker plays an essential role in ensuring that all members of the House are always treated fairly.

•(1625)

[English]

We listened carefully, Mr. Speaker, as you said that we will no longer be hearing the type of heckling that we have heard in the past here in this House. You are going to have our support every step of

Election of Speaker

the way. I remember that when Jack Layton made me his House leader, he said that we would undertake never to heckle the way it had been done in the past. Journalists laughed and said that would last about three days. However, it lasted the whole Parliament.

The NDP will back you on that, Mr. Speaker, and will be there with you every step of the way.

[Translation]

I have had the opportunity on more than one occasion to test the level of mutual respect between your role and ours. I can assure you that this is a two-way street and that the NDP will always do its part. We will always support you. We know that we all have a responsibility to respect the institution of Parliament. It is the responsibility of all 338 members of the House.

[English]

In the coming session, there will be vigorous debate on important issues, whether it be health care; poverty; or first nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. I can say that we have attended to an important sea change here in this Parliament because there is a larger number of first nations, Inuit, and Métis people in this chamber than ever before in its history. We can all be so proud.

[Translation]

The government made some ambitious promises during the election campaign. Of course, it is our responsibility to ensure that it now turns words into action. The NDP is a progressive opposition that is prepared to help the new government bring about and respect the change that Canadians are longing for.

[English]

New Democrats will constructively oppose the new government. We will propose solutions and offer help to achieve the type of constructive change that Canadians want. Our caucus looks forward to working with you, Mr. Speaker. New Democrats will always stand on principle as we move forward with hope and optimism.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Outremont.

I recognize the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of the Bloc Québécois caucus, I want to congratulate you on being elected to the prestigious office of Speaker of the House of Commons. I also want to pay respect to the member for Don Valley East, the member for Brome—Missisquoi and the member for Simcoe North for putting their names forward. That is always touching to see.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would also like to express our respect and compassion for our colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, who worked hard in his bid for the position of Speaker and who is now waging his own serious battle. I want our esteemed colleague to know that he has our full support.

Opening of Parliament

Mr. Speaker, I assure you that you will have our full co-operation in upholding our democracy and having meaningful, respectful debates in the House. The House can also count on us to work diligently to protect and promote the interests, rights, and privileges of all the voters who put their trust in us. We are excited and hopeful to hear you talk about meaningful, respectful debate. You can count on our co-operation.

* * *

• (1630)

[*English*]

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

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

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

November 30, 2015

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada and Her Excellency Sharon Johnston will arrive at the Peace Tower at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, the 4th day of December, 2015.

When it has been indicated that all is in readiness, Their Excellencies will proceed to the Chamber of the Senate to formally open the First Session of the Forty-Second Parliament of Canada.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Wallace

[*Translation*]

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2:30 p.m., at which time the House will proceed to the Senate, where His Excellency will open the first session of the 42nd Parliament.

(The House adjourned at 4:36 p.m.)

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