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43rd PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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Thursday, December 5, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 5, 2019

The House met at 9 a.m.

[*Translation*]

FIRST SESSION—43RD PARLIAMENT

• (0905)

[*English*]

The 42nd Parliament having been dissolved by proclamation on Wednesday, September 11, 2019, and writs having been issued and returned, a new Parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Thursday, December 5, 2019, and did accordingly meet on that day.

Thursday, December 5, 2019

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

Charles Robert, Clerk of the House of Commons, read to the House a letter from the Administrative Secretary to the Governor General informing him that the Deputy Governor General would proceed to the Senate chamber today at nine o'clock to open the first session of the 43rd Parliament of Canada.

• (0940)

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

Honourable Members of the House of Commons:

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

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

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

I have it in command to let you know that Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada does not see fit to declare the causes of her summoning the present Parliament of Canada until a Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen, according to law; but this afternoon at 3:30 p.m., Her Excellency will declare the causes of her calling this Parliament.

And the House being returned to the Commons chamber:

The Clerk of the House: Honourable members, pursuant to Standing Order 3, I invite Mr. 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 THE SPEAKER

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I am very pleased to preside over the election for a fourth time in Parliament. It is becoming a habit, and I admit that I quite like this magnificent chair. I will speak mainly in French, which will give you an opportunity to appreciate the extraordinary interpreters that we have here in the House of Commons.

Before the official ceremony begins, allow me to acknowledge my family, who are certainly watching, as well as the constituents of Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, who put their trust in me for the 11th consecutive time in 35 years.

I learned after the fact that being elected 11 consecutive times ties the record set by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1904. This has not happened for 115 years.

I also want to acknowledge my staff, who have done extraordinary work with me for many years, as well as all constituents.

I congratulate and welcome all the new members.

New members will discover that it all goes by so fast. When I was first elected, there were no cellphones, no computers, no fax machines. It was heaven.

Let us begin.

[*English*]

The list of members who have withdrawn or who are ineligible as candidates is available at the table.

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

[*Translation*]

Before proceeding, 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.

The five members will therefore remain on the ballot.

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

*Election of the Speaker**[English]*

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

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.

Now I invite Joël Godin, the hon. member for the electoral district of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

• (0945)

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Hon. Presiding Officer, esteemed colleagues, thank you.

[English]

Let me begin by congratulating the women and men here in this chamber who have been chosen to represent all the regions of Canada. All the energy and efforts you invested have given you this opportunity to represent the citizens of your constituency, to your credit.

I would also like to take this opportunity to offer my deepest condolences to the Speaker of the 42nd Parliament of Canada and to his family following the passing of his father, the Hon. Gerald Regan.

[Translation]

I inherited my passion from my grandfather, Louis-Philippe-Antoine Bélanger, who was a member of the House of Commons in 1962. I am very honoured I was able to make this dream a reality by being elected in 2015 and re-elected for a second term this past October. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the citizens of the beautiful riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for placing their trust in me.

We, the elected members of the House of Commons, have a great deal of passion. We have a great desire to help improve Canadians' lives and to leave a better world for future generations. As a father, that is very important to me.

In our group of elected members, there are just as many differences as there are similarities, both among individuals and the parties that we represent. Canada's democratic system makes it possible to welcome this diversity, and this system is the envy of many other countries.

[English]

The dictionary defines “democracy” as a system of government in which all the people of a country can vote to elect their representatives. In his well-known Gettysburg address, American president Abraham Lincoln said that democracy is government “of the people, by the people, for the people”. The words ending this quote are the ones that we must never forget in our work: “for the people”.

[Translation]

Many issues will surely spark heated debate in the House. That is a sign of a healthy democracy. Therefore, bring on the debates—but let them be respectful and equitable. I have great regard for all my colleagues. I respect their commitment and their efforts. For my part, I pledge to respond promptly to members' needs by seeking effective solutions.

[English]

In the strategic plan for 2019-2022, the values of the House administration are defined as impartiality, excellence, accountability, our people and teamwork. These values mean a great deal to me.

There are several high-quality people here today looking to sit in the Speaker's chair, so why choose me? To be a Speaker of the House and someone who meets the highest standards of our institution, one needs to have the qualities of a mediator and be able to listen; show respect, judgment and leadership; be open-minded and loyal; have integrity; and on occasion, deal with things with humour.

[Translation]

I sincerely believe that I am fully qualified to become Speaker. I will draw on my vast experience working as director of sales for a private television station; creating my trade relations business, AJC Communication; serving as a municipal councillor; serving as a policy adviser in a provincial minister's office; and sitting on numerous boards for organizations such as the Children's Wish Foundation and Laval University's Rouge et Or, not to mention my many years coaching all kinds of sports.

• (0950)

[English]

As well, in the name of fairness, here is something to consider before you make your final choice. The official languages of Canada are English and French. The last time the duties of the Speaker of this House were given to a francophone born in Quebec goes back to more than 65 years ago. It would only be fair to elect a Speaker born in a Lower Canada province, in this case Quebec, and one who speaks French. It would be an honour for me to receive the support of the members of the House.

I sincerely thank you for your attention and consideration.

[Translation]

I wish everyone a good 43rd Parliament.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I now invite Carol Hughes, the hon. member for the electoral district of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I would like to start by acknowledging that we are on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

I congratulate everyone on being elected to this chamber.

[*English*]

I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to the voters of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasung for placing their trust in me once again to be their representative and voice here in Parliament.

Like all of you, I did not get here without a lot of assistance. I am thinking of the campaign teams, volunteers, donors and core supporters who do so much to invigorate the democratic process and determine the shape of Parliament. These people exist across the political spectrum and are the heartbeat of our political discourse. With that, I extend a huge thank you to all those individuals who have worked so hard to get us here today.

I also send a special shout-out to my good friend Bill McBain, who has managed three of my campaigns with an infectious, positive attitude and a sense of humility that sets him apart.

Most of us also benefit from the strong support we receive from our families, and my situation is no different. My husband Kieth, daughter Mindy and her family, along with my son Shawn, who is here today, provide me with a stable foundation that allows me to dedicate the time needed for these endeavours. Last but not least are my staff, who kept my offices going during the election. This support is invaluable and irreplaceable, so I thank you for indulging me as I acknowledge these special people.

We have heard that this Parliament faces a strong challenge from Canadians who want us to make the hand that we have been dealt work. A big part of that will run right through the Speaker's chair. There is no question that decorum in the chamber can be a challenge, and this is an area I believe we can all greatly improve upon.

While we are five candidates who are asking you for your support for the Speaker's role, each one of us brings unique qualities from our past experiences that can help you understand how we might approach the role.

Over the years, I have gained many skills within the banking, mental health and education fields, as well as the criminal justice system. However, I came to politics by way of the labour movement, which is where I had the opportunity to gain experience in dispute resolution and employee-management relations. That work trained me in mediation and trained me to focus on commonalities as a productive starting point for difficult discussions. I believe my skills in this area could help foster more goodwill among all parties.

I know that running from the fourth party position can be seen as unrealistic by some. Adding to that the fact that, if elected, I would be only the second woman to serve as Speaker makes this candidacy a long shot by any standard. However, I believe that choosing a Speaker from a smaller party sends a clear signal that we are prepared to do things differently, and it would serve as a symbol of the kind of co-operation we can be capable of and that we are serious about making this Parliament work. That is what Quebeckers and Canadians have asked for.

Electing a woman as Speaker would do just that, but I am not standing here merely as a woman candidate: I am here because I can do the job. It has been 35 years since this place had its one and only female Speaker, Jeanne Sauvé, who was actually appointed.

Election of the Speaker

We know that research has shown time and again that women excel in politics, do things a little differently and bring valuable perspective to the process.

● (0955)

[*Translation*]

Furthermore, I have experience. In my time as Assistant Deputy Speaker in the previous Parliament, I believe I proved to be impartial, fair and open-minded. I can be decisive when required, and I have a natural inclination to seek consensus before making important rulings. I am also known for being a thorough and diligent worker, two qualities that will serve me well in the Speaker's chair.

[*English*]

If elected Speaker, I will work to develop clear lines of communication between the parties to ensure we are doing our very best to present a Parliament that Canadians and Quebeckers can be proud of. This will help us maximize our time spent in the chamber and give us more time to attend to the multitude of demands we face while in Ottawa.

I thank you for your patience, offer my best wishes to my colleagues who are also standing for Speaker, and once again congratulate you on your elections.

No matter the results, I look forward to working with all of you in the 43rd Parliament and delivering the results that Canadians demand and deserve.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I now call upon Geoff Regan, the hon. member of the electoral district of Halifax West, to address the House for no more than five minutes.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Good morning, colleagues, and congratulations to you all as we gather for this first sitting of the 43rd Parliament.

Some of you are taking your seats in the House for the first time. Some, like me, have had the honour to be re-elected by their constituents, and in some cases, as I once experienced, after an involuntary sabbatical. All of us are here because we want to make a positive difference in the lives of our fellow Canadians.

[*Translation*]

I also had the privilege of serving the House of Commons as Speaker during the 42nd Parliament, and I would be pleased to put that experience to use serving the House of Commons and its members. This morning, I would like to point out, as did the others, that my friends, the other candidates, are all outstanding.

Election of the Speaker

During my time as Speaker, I sought, with the support of many members, to maintain and promote decorum in the House and to limit, when necessary, any behaviour that might have undermined respect for this institution and its members. If you do me the honour of selecting me as Speaker, I will continue to stand up for the dignity of Parliament and the rights of its members. Taxpayers expect us, their representatives, to be professional and to honour the office to which they elected us.

[*English*]

If you assign these responsibilities to me again, while remembering that the Speaker is the servant of the House, I will continue to use the tools at my disposal.

Our constituents look to every member to take the responsibility of self-control. I have often heard from people who were unhappy with the noise and disrespect that has too often occurred. It is up to each of us and to the House leadership teams, as well as the party leaders themselves, to improve decorum in this place and enhance the image of our democracy.

To exercise their rights and to carry out their responsibilities, members rely on the support of the House of Commons administration, which exists to provide them and their staff with the services they need. Quite simply, the MP is the administration's core business. That is why, throughout the 42nd Parliament, a number of measures were put in place to improve the support available to members of Parliament so that we could all better serve our constituents. That is what it is all about, after all.

From the updated orientation program to new on-site service centres and buildings here in Ottawa that offer members and their staff in-person support related to various operational services, the House administration has been focusing its resources on its reason for being: the MP.

It has been almost a year since members first sat in this interim chamber that now fills the former courtyard of West Block, and preparations for the much-needed rehabilitation of Centre Block are under way. As members and the other occupants of West Block settle in, improvements continue to be made to provide MPs with as modern a workplace as possible.

● (1000)

[*Translation*]

As Speaker, I will get members involved in the restoration project to ensure that the renovated Parliament building meets their needs. I believe that initial consultations with the people who will be using the space are essential to the success of the building's restoration.

During the 42nd Parliament, I worked hard to fulfill my responsibilities as Speaker of the House, and I believe I was able to do that with some measure of success.

I hope that you, my colleagues, will entrust me with the responsibility of serving the House of Commons and its members during the 43rd Parliament.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): I will now invite Anthony Rota, the hon. member for the electoral district of Nipissing—Timiskaming, to speak for no more than five minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Good morning. For all of you coming into this chamber for the first time, welcome.

[*Translation*]

For all those returning to the House of Commons, welcome back.

[*English*]

I congratulate all of you on earning the confidence of the constituents in your ridings. Undoubtedly, you will represent them well in this chamber.

I was first elected in 2004 and have been through three minority governments. Since then, I have developed a real appreciation for what we are about to experience. However, after all these years I am still in awe of this place and immensely honoured to represent the people of Nipissing—Timiskaming and to work with each and every one of you.

[*Translation*]

This morning, we will be holding a second, very important election, to select the Speaker of the House.

Ever since I was first elected, I have made myself available and open to discussion with my colleagues of all political stripes. If elected Speaker, I would maintain that approach. My door will always be open.

[*English*]

Over the last weeks I have had the opportunity to speak with many of you. Thank you for taking the time to discuss with me what you believe is working in these revered halls, and especially how you believe we can improve the operations of Parliament. I look forward to working with you should I be elected as Speaker.

The concern expressed most often by you was maintaining order and respect within the chamber. The Standing Orders and precedents have a lot to do with how we can enforce decorum. However, the pertinent factor to maintaining decorum is how the rules are implemented and enforced by the Speaker. Maintaining a balance between the right to express oneself and respecting the dignity of others is key. The Speaker's personality is a core component to ensuring that we have a respectful House.

● (1005)

[*Translation*]

It would be hard for me to list my skills and abilities in the few minutes I have left. Members returning to the House got to see me in action over the past four years. I am confident that my performance as Assistant Deputy Speaker was firm, respectful and, above all else, fair.

[*English*]

For those of you who are new to this place, I encourage you to speak with those who have seen me in my role as Assistant Deputy Speaker and to discuss my ability while I was in the chair. The terms that I hear when many of my colleagues describe my performance are firm, respectful, effective and, above all else, fair.

Many of you suggested having more activities whereby we could get to know each other. One very simple example that I am committed to implementing is having regular gatherings with small groups of MPs from different parties to get to know each other on a personal level. It is a practice that I was very familiar with under Speaker Peter Milliken, and that I plan to continue.

One of my first actions will be adopting an idea put forward by the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, who came up with a great suggestion: a suggestion box. Members will be able to continue to submit ideas on how we can improve the House. If elected, I will be installing one as soon as I can get one built.

All members of the House have the right to a voice and for their opinion to be heard.

[*Translation*]

I will encourage more meetings between the House leaders, the whips and, needless to say, the members, to ensure that our institution has harmonious parliamentary procedures that are based on cooperation and, above all, respect.

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

[*English*]

Working collaboratively, we can improve the decorum, process and overall operations of the House. I have a great deal of respect for this institution and all of its members, and believe that all members should take part in improving our procedures.

The upcoming parliamentary session will certainly be interesting. Canadians have chosen us to come to Ottawa to represent them and to perform our duties to the best of our abilities.

[*Translation*]

I am running for Speaker of the House of Commons, and I am ready to work with each and every one of you. On this momentous morning, I respectfully invite you all to vote for me.

[*English*]

I respectfully ask for your vote this morning.

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

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Chair, it is an honour to speak in this chamber, as you well know. For the next few minutes I am going to provide some thoughts for members' consideration in choosing our Speaker for this 43rd Parliament.

First, let me take a moment to congratulate all those taking their seats for the first time in this House of Commons and all those who were re-elected in October. It will be a privilege to serve with you all.

I can recall my first days here as an MP and the great sense of wonder as the reality began to sink in as to how it was that I found

Election of the Speaker

myself here. As we begin our duties it is right that we ask not just how we got here, but why we are here.

Whether in government or in opposition, we have a duty. We are here to oversee, question and hold to account the undertakings of government and Parliament on behalf of, and for, Canadians. The ability of the members to do this depends on our Standing Orders and practices and the interpretation of them by the Speaker.

I am running to be your Speaker because I believe I can assist all members in the discharge of their responsibilities to Canadians. I promise impartiality and respect for all members at all times.

[*Translation*]

I have occupied this role since 2011.

I was the Assistant Deputy Speaker under the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, then Deputy Speaker under the hon. member for Halifax West. It was an honour to work with them.

Before entering politics, I ran our family business, a family-oriented resort and convention centre in southern Ontario's cottage country. That is where I learned what it means to be a good employer and to foster a culture of equality and respect for clients, colleagues, suppliers and even competitors. That experience has served me well as an MP, and I will put it to work for you as your Speaker.

Returning MPs may remember that when I first came to the House of Commons in 2006, I did not speak a word of French. I have since taken classes through the House of Commons language training service, and I can now function comfortably in my second language, which I am constantly seeking to improve.

As Speaker, I pledge to make French and English my and my office's working languages on a daily basis both here in the House and elsewhere.

● (1010)

[*English*]

Discussion of the speakership rightly tends to focus on procedure and proceedings in this chamber, but the Speaker has another role that should be part of members' consideration as they mark their ballot today, and that is the well-being of Parliament as a community. We all have our differences and we are here to express them in a civil and courteous way.

My pledge to you is that I will work to foster our community and a respectful tone and decorum in this chamber so that at the end of this Parliament, whether it be long or short, members will be able to say that their experience in this 43rd Parliament was a positive one, that their friendships stretch beyond party boundaries and, when members return to their ridings, that the work of this chamber reflects the expectations Canadians have for their Parliament.

Election of the Speaker

We should never let up in our pursuit of strengthening Parliament and ensuring its members are well served, because if we can do that, our constituents will also be well served.

[*Translation*]

I am seeking your support, and I thank you for your attention.

[*English*]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Before I suspend the sitting for 30 minutes, I bring to the attention of 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 to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 10:12 a.m.)

● (1045)

[*Translation*]

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 10:45 a.m.)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Pursuant to the Standing Orders, the House will now proceed to elect a Speaker. The names of the eligible candidates are listed on the ballot in alphabetical order.

[*English*]

After the Clerk has opened the envelope containing the ballots, I will suggest a method of proceeding that will help to accelerate the voting process.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk will issue the ballots.

[*English*]

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

[*Translation*]

The names of the candidates for the election 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.

[*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. A clerk will issue to each member a ballot paper.

● (1050)

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

[*Translation*]

The polling booths are now open to vote.

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

● (1115)

[*English*]

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

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

[*Translation*]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): Before I suspend the sitting, may I bring to the attention of members that when the counting of the ballots 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 11:18 a.m.)

● (1230)

[*Translation*]

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12:32 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. I think everyone saw the white smoke.

A number of members have asked me how I could keep my seat for 35 years in a row through 11 elections. I have three little pieces of advice.

First, you need to be able to manage your frustrations, because politics is one frustration after another. You will come to know this, especially the new members.

Second, I would say that you must be prepared and speak intelligently. I would like to share a story. In the first month after my arrival in 1984, I made three statements, two of which contradicted my party's platform. At my first caucus meeting, an old senator told me that he wanted to talk to me. I say “old”, but I would not consider him very old today. He brought me to his office and asked if I wanted to stay in politics for a long time. I told him yes. He told me to look at the wall, where a magnificent stuffed fish was mounted. He told me that had the fish kept its mouth shut, it would still be alive.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon): He added that it was pretty much the same in politics.

The third thing I would like to say is that you should get into politics because you like to serve, because you like your constituents and because you are dedicated. Never get into politics for recognition. If you are looking for recognition, you would be better off getting a nice dog.

[English]

It is my duty to inform the House that a Speaker of this House has been duly elected. It is with great pleasure that I do now invite the hon. member for the electoral district of Nipissing—Timiskaming to take the chair.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

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

● (1235)

[Translation]

The Speaker: Hon. members, I wish to express my humble gratitude to the House for the great honour it has conferred upon me by choosing me as the Speaker.

[English]

While I was waiting, I put down a few notes. I want to say thanks, *merci beaucoup* and *meegwetch* to all members.

[Translation]

I would first like to congratulate the four other candidates.

[English]

Congratulations and a heartfelt thanks to the member for Halifax West, who allowed me in the last session to be Assistant Deputy Speaker. It was an honour then, and I owe a great deal to him personally.

Congratulations to the hon. member for Simcoe North, who as Deputy Speaker was an amazing person to follow and to ask for guidance.

I congratulate the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kawaskasing, who served with me as Assistant Deputy Speaker and did amazing work. Again, I thank her for letting her name stand.

● (1240)

[Translation]

I also wish to thank the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for putting his name forward. It is a true honour to have a fellow MP stand as a candidate, knowing that he has no experience in this position, because he wants to do more in the House. I thank him for putting his name forward.

[English]

Maybe I should not include my own name in that, but there were five very good choices. It was not easy, so I thank all members for taking the time in going through it and coming up with a decision that was very favourable. I thank them for coming out to do this.

Election of the Speaker

[Translation]

I also want to thank the dean of the House, the hon. member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, for presiding over this election. He acquitted himself admirably. He is getting used to it, since he has done it for several years. Congratulations.

There is also another group that we can never thank enough, the table officers. Thank you for overseeing the election.

[English]

Again, I want to thank all members for giving me the biggest honour of my political career in being chosen as Speaker. I want to thank them for the confidence they have placed in me. I hope I will not disappoint them and that they remember I am here to serve them and make sure that everything runs well for all of us so that we can conduct the business of Parliament to ensure that it works well. My promise is to be fair, to be non-partisan and to do my best in the House, at members' service.

I ask members to indulge me for a moment. Some may not understand what I am about to say, but I am very proud to be the first Speaker of Italian descent to sit in this chair. I am sorry the translators will not be able to help with this.

[Speaker spoke in Italian]

[Translation]

We have children—not all of us—family and friends who regularly watch us on television.

[English]

I have promised that I will be fair to the best of my ability and will try to make sure that everything runs smoothly. I ask one favour of all members: to just think every time they get up and to make sure that our friends, family, children and parents are all proud of us when we are in the House. That is all I ask.

Speaking of children, my daughter would have been here today, but she wrote her last exam this morning. I am very proud of her. She is graduating from university, so I am very thrilled. Samantha means the world to me. I just want to say to Samantha that I love her and am proud of her.

This is where it gets tough. I am looking up, although I know I am not supposed to look up at the gallery. I am allowed to now; I can do whatever I want. There is a very special lady sitting up there, my wife Chantal.

[Translation]

My wife, Chantal, is here. It is not always easy to be married to a member of Parliament or anyone in politics. It is hard not to take it personally when insults are hurled at the person we love.

I thank Chantal and all the spouses who know what political life in Canada is all about. I applaud them for staying married or remaining with their partners and I sincerely thank them on behalf of all of us here.

Now the time has come to work for our constituents, for Parliament and for Canada.

*Election of the Speaker**[English]**And the mace having been laid upon the table:*

● (1245)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government and all of our colleagues in the House, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you on your election. Today's vote speaks to the confidence the members have in you.

I would also like to begin by thanking our esteemed colleagues who ran for the position. Canadians are fortunate to have such dedicated people serving them in Parliament. I would be remiss not to give a special thanks to our dear friend from Halifax West, who has served the House extraordinarily well and honourably for the past four years as Speaker.

[Translation]

As I rise for the first time in this 43rd Parliament, I would like to take a few moments to thank the people of my riding of Papineau, who once again placed their trust in me. I have been representing them in the House for over 10 years, and they again expressed their confidence in me for a fourth time during this past election. I sincerely thank them, and I will work hard to properly represent them, as always.

In October, Canadians placed their trust in us. They are counting on us to represent not only their interests, but also their values. I know that in recent months, the 338 members who are here in the House today had the privilege of meeting Canadians across the country.

Regardless of political stripe, we have all seen the values that unite us. Canadians are hard-working, generous and ambitious. They are involved in their communities. They help those in need.

● (1250)

[English]

However, this does not mean that Canadians agree on everything. In a country as big and diverse as ours, it is normal for people to disagree and engage in heated debate. Canadians meet each other with respect and understanding. When it is time to make things happen for their family or their community, they know how to put their differences aside. They expect nothing less from their members of Parliament, and rightly so.

They sent us here with clear instructions to work together to make life better for them, to keep our communities safe and our economy growing, to protect our environment and to create more opportunities for people to get ahead. Common ground does exist in this Parliament, and I know we can build on it.

Mr. Speaker, in the best of worlds, the Leader of the Opposition and I would not have had to put you in that chair. We would respect your wishes and leave you seated among us, but I am afraid the House needs you.

[Translation]

I have had the privilege of serving in the House of Commons for over 10 years now, and I know that debates can quickly become

very heated. My colleagues on both sides of the House know that too.

[English]

Every member in the House has a responsibility to respect the civility of this place. Canadians chose each and every one of us to be guardians of this Parliament, and we must live up to the distinct privilege that comes from serving Canadians.

I am a third-generation parliamentarian, and what that emphasizes to me personally, as it does for many people in the House who have had friends, mentors and family members sit here, is that we get to occupy these seats for a blink in time in the life of this country. We occupy positions of extraordinary privilege in representing tens of thousands of our fellow citizens, being their voice and serving them directly. While we occupy these extraordinary seats, it is on us to continue to strive every day to represent them and serve them well.

However, while I know that every member will strive to ensure constructive and therefore productive debates, there will be times when our differences will get the best of us and we will get carried away. We will then look to you, Mr. Speaker, Parliament's referee, to keep us in line. I know you to be uniquely qualified to assume this role, a belief that obviously many of our colleagues in the House share as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to sincerely congratulate you on your election. You are more than worthy of this honour. I thank you and wish you the best of luck.

The Speaker: Thank you, Prime Minister.*[English]*

I recognize the leader of the official opposition.

[Translation]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and my party, I offer you my heartfelt congratulations on your election. You can count on my collaboration in your duties.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise in the House and on behalf of the Conservative caucus to congratulate you on your election.

As this is my first time rising in the 43rd Parliament, I would also like to congratulate each and every one of my 337 colleagues here in having respectively won the right and the responsibility of representing their constituents in the House. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the voters of Regina—Qu'Appelle for their continued confidence in me to be their elected representative.

I will not repeat the words of the Prime Minister, but I too would like to congratulate the other candidates who ran for Speaker. They all acquitted themselves with dignity and grace, and gave members of the House a difficult choice in voting. I thank them for their participation, and I again thank the member for Halifax West for presiding over the previous Parliament with such great ability.

The Speaker must serve the House first. It is the Speaker's responsibility to ensure that all members can exercise their rights and privileges in the House. The Speaker's authority comes from all members, and that allows the House to function properly.

Mr. Speaker, the robes you will put back on, having had a set from the previous Parliament, are symbols of a few things: the neutral colours of black and white denote your detachment from party affiliation, and the old-style Queen's Counsel robes and wig bag are a sign of the unbreaking traditions that are the foundation of parliamentary practice.

Mr. Speaker, you will represent the collective rights and responsibilities of members while you are in the chair, but you will also represent our Parliament in several ways around the world. I have great confidence that you will do so with the dignity and professionalism that being the Speaker of a G7 country warrants.

Many people have run for Speaker in the past, and many of the formulas the Speaker reads at various times in this place come from a very famous Speaker, William Lenthall, who was Speaker in 1640. He had a very famous quote. When the king demanded to know the whereabouts of certain members of Parliament who had committed treason, he replied, "May it please Your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here, and I humbly beg Your Majesty's pardon that I cannot give any other answer than this to what Your Majesty is pleased to demand of me."

While William Lenthall was Speaker in 1640, he presided over what became known as "the Long Parliament". That Parliament lasted over 10 years. Thankfully, here in Canada we do not have to worry about that anymore. With the results of the last election, Mr. Speaker, you may well be presiding over a short Parliament, but you can count on our co-operation on one thing: Regardless of the length of this Parliament, the Conservative Party will do its best to make sure that it is a productive Parliament on behalf of the Canadians we serve.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you and offer congratulations to your wife, Chantal. I did not realize you are the first Speaker of Italian origin, so *cent'anni*.

• (1255)

The Speaker: I want to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and I will translate, for any of you who are wondering what he toasted. He did not want the 10 years, but he said "*cent'anni*", which means 100 years.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you will not be surprised to hear that I want to mark this moment as my first time ever speaking in the House. This is a tremendous honour for me, and I will surely cherish this memory for the rest of my days.

I want to start by expressing my immense gratitude to the voters of Beloeil—Chambly for putting their trust in me, as well as to the voters of Quebec for putting their trust in the biggest delegation of Bloc Québécois members since the 2008 election. I am deeply

Election of the Speaker

grateful to the voters of Quebec. We fully understand the nuances of the mandate we have been given.

Naturally, I want to extend my heartiest congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker. We had a chance to talk briefly over the past few days. I already know, especially after hearing your speech, that you are richly endowed with all the dignity that the position calls for and that you will also command the respect of all members, including the Bloc Québécois MPs, as I can assure you right from the start.

On our side, we are committed to ensuring that our work is conducted at all times with dignity and with respect for the institution and our colleagues, with whom I believe we may on occasion have a few differences of opinion. However, differences of opinion can never justify unacceptable or unkind behaviour towards voters, who have given a mandate to every one of the 338 people here. You can count on the Bloc Québécois' co-operation in that regard, and if you find it necessary to intervene, we will be attentive in every way.

Finally, I also want to say that we are committed to working in a positive manner and, naturally, to addressing issues with the interests of Quebec in mind, but not against the interests of Canada. In that spirit, we will have a positive attitude, in every respect, towards all our colleagues in the House. I would like to reiterate my heartfelt congratulations and thank you for listening.

• (1300)

The Speaker: I would like to thank the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

[*English*]

I recognize the hon. member for Burnaby South.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the New Democratic Party and its MPs, I would like to congratulate you. You have a very important role to play, and I am certain you will do it.

[*English*]

I congratulate all members in this House, as well as all Canadians who participated in the election. I congratulate them on having the opportunity and privilege to serve in this House.

I am truly honoured and humbled to again have the honour to serve the people of Burnaby South, and I want to thank them for continuing to put their confidence in me.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank all the other candidates and congratulate them on being nominated and participating.

Opening of Parliament

[*English*]

Particularly, I want to thank the member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking for putting her name forward. I agree with the member about the importance of women being in positions of power. It would have been a beautiful thing to see her in this seat, but again, congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to highlight the fact that Canadians sent a pretty powerful message in this election by sending us here in a minority government. A lot of responsibility will fall on your shoulders, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that in a minority government all voices are heard and all voices are respected. While Canadians sent a message of a minority government, they also sent a message that they want us to work together, but not just for any purpose. They want Parliament to work for people, because those at the top have had too powerful a voice for far too long.

I call on you, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the people have a voice in this chamber, that the people of Canada are who we work for. I congratulate you on your election and congratulate all members on returning. I look forward to working in this minority government and making sure that the government serves the will and the needs of the people who brought us here.

The Speaker: I want to thank the hon. member for Burnaby South for his kind words.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this is my first time calling you that, and I want to congratulate you.

I would also like to congratulate all my colleagues.

[*English*]

It is an honour for me to have the opportunity to speak in the beginning of our first hours in the 43rd Parliament. I want to begin by acknowledging that every single day we will meet on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin peoples. To them, we all say *meegwetch* for patience and tolerance and hospitality. Let us hope that is one of the issues on which we can agree and that we make progress in this Parliament toward true reconciliation.

I also want to thank the voters of Saanich—Gulf Islands. It is indeed an honour to stand here representing such an extraordinary place and such deeply engaged citizens as live in Saanich—Gulf Islands. Permit me as well specifically to thank the voters of Frederickton and the voters of Nanaimo—Ladysmith that I no longer sit alone in a corner over there, but with three in a corner over here. It is extremely exciting progress.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

Now I would like to talk about respect, about discipline in the House of Commons, about our dignity and about the rights that the Speaker of the House must safeguard for us.

[*English*]

As the hon. leader of the official opposition has pointed out, the job of the Speaker is to protect the rights of every single member of

Parliament. In this place, in Westminster parliamentary democracy, all members of Parliament are equal. The Prime Minister is seen as first among equals. We turn to the Speaker to protect those rights and protect our essential equality.

The biggest threat to our equality as individual members of Parliament is the political party system, which increasingly imposes itself on the traditions of Westminster parliamentary democracy. Some members may know this, and for those new members of Parliament who may not know, we are the only parliament in the Westminster democratic tradition where the choice of who speaks has been voluntarily ceded by many Speakers to party whips. In every other Westminster parliamentary tradition and House, it is the Speaker only who decides which member of Parliament may be acknowledged to have the floor of this place.

I would hope that we could work together to ensure that we push back the partisanship that gets in our way and find ways, human to human, each to each, with respect and dignity and, may I say, love, and find ways to work together. We do it always recognizing that it is you, Mr. Speaker, who protects our right to speak, to speak our minds and to speak on behalf of our ridings and our constituents, not with pre-prepared messages from party whips behind the doors. We are here as equals. We have a right to speak.

I ask all parties to join in an effort to recognize that the problem of heckling, lack of discipline and lack of respect does not come because we cannot control ourselves.

[*Translation*]

We, as individuals, are not the source of the problem. The problem arises from the fact that politics is ruled by partisanship. I would love to see all my colleagues urge their caucus and their whip to let us behave the way we ought to behave.

[*English*]

As the Speaker has already said, let us act in this place in the way we want our children, our nieces, our nephews and our grandchildren to see us on television.

To you, Mr. Speaker, my most sincere congratulations. Thank you.

Again to my friend from Halifax West, I thank him for the years he has put in as Speaker. He did a wonderful job.

Let us hope for the best in the 43rd Parliament, hope that we find ways to work together.

The Speaker: As the hon. member's humble servant, I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

[*Translation*]

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

[English]

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

November 28, 2019

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada will arrive at the Senate of Canada Building at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, the 5th day of December, 2019.

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

Yours sincerely,

Assunta Di Lorenzo
Secretary to the Governor General and Herald Chancellor

● (1310)

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: The sitting is suspended until 2:30 p.m., at which time the House will proceed to the Senate where Her Excellency will open the first session of the 43rd Parliament.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 1:09 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The sitting of the House resumed at 3:02 p.m.)

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

Mr. Speaker, it is the pleasure of Her Excellency the Governor General that this honourable House attend her immediately in the chamber of the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber:

● (1610)

[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 on me, and in your names and on your behalf, I made the usual claim for your privileges, which Her Excellency was pleased to confirm to you.

* * *

● (1630)

OATHS OF OFFICE

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-1, an act respecting the administration of oaths of office.

(Motions 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 the House of Commons did attend Her Excellency the Governor General this day in the Senate chamber, Her Excellency was

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pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament. To prevent mistakes I have obtained a copy, which is as follows:

Honourable Senators, members of the House of Commons, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to address this first session of Canada's 43rd Parliament.

I would like to welcome the 98 new members of this assembly and to welcome back returning members.

Your predecessors first sat in Parliament in November 1867. Canada was barely five months old. On the scale of world history, we are still very young, yet much has happened in the world since then. We have matured, and we are here—strong and free. There has been no civil war, no foreign armies marching on our soil. There have been agreements and differences along the way, and lots of arguments, yes, most of them delivered with much eloquence in this very chamber.

There are many reasons for our stability. First, the millions of us, whether we are from here or chose to come and live here, share the same desire. We wish to live freely and in peace and harmony. This quest is a bedrock of our nation and informs almost everything we do. We may differ in many ways, yet we move forward as if we were one people, looking for equal opportunities and common ground. This is not by accident, but by choice. It is who we are.

And remember as well that our fortunes have relied often on the knowledge and the strategies of the indigenous peoples – what I call indigenous genius, which allowed this nation to thrive. Their deep understanding of our natural world, their intense sense of community, should continue to affect what we do here.

For the good of our communities and the future of our children,

Kkidji mkwènimaganiwawatch missiwè anichinapèk achitch nigan abinoudjichak kè pimadiziwatch.

Reconciliation must continue.

The second bedrock of our stability is our parliamentary system. Your work is vital, because through it, we decide what we really want as a nation. The network of laws and traditions that define what it means to be Canadian safeguards our way of life and paves the way for the future we desire. Your role in the democratic process is a privilege and a responsibility. I know that you embrace it, respecting the wishes and protecting the rights of us all.

Because we serve every single Canadian. Canadians of all genders, faiths, languages, customs or skin colours, it is perhaps the most noble undertaking we are entrusted with.

And we share the same planet. We know that we are inextricably bound to the same space-time continuum and on board the same planetary spaceship. If we put our brains, our smarts, our altruistic capabilities together, we can do a lot of good. We can help improve the lives of people in our communities, diminish the gaps and inequities here and elsewhere, and have a better chance at tackling serious and pressing issues like climate change, poverty, inequalities and human rights, because global issues know no borders, no time-line and truly need our attention.

Opening of Parliament

I am certain that by working together, no challenges are too big. I am convinced that anyone can rise to any occasion if they are willing to work with others to reach a higher goal and to do what is right for the common good.

This fall, Canadians went to the polls, and they returned a minority Parliament to Ottawa. This is the will of the people, and you have been chosen to act on it.

And so we open this 43rd Parliament with a call for unity in the pursuit of common goals and aspirations.

Here in this beautiful chamber, we recognize that Canada's Senate is increasingly non-partisan, and measures will be taken to help it continue along that path. We are joined by the dedicated public servants who have vowed to work tirelessly on behalf of the people.

Canadians have sent a clear message: from young people to seniors, they want their parliamentarians to work together on the issues that matter most to them.

In this election, parliamentarians received a mandate from the people of Canada, which ministers will carry out. It is a mandate to fight climate change, strengthen the middle class, walk the road of reconciliation, keep Canadians safe and healthy, and position Canada for success in an uncertain world.

These are not simple tasks, but they are achievable if you stay focused on the people who sent you here: moms and dads, grandparents and students, new Canadians, business owners, and workers—people from all walks of life.

Every one of them expects their parliamentarians to get to work and deliver on a plan that moves our country forward for all Canadians, including women, members of visible and linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ2 communities.

While your approaches may differ, you share the common belief that government should try, whenever possible, to make life better for Canadians.

That includes better health care and affordable housing; lower taxes for the middle class and those who need it most; investments in infrastructure, public transit, science and innovation; less gun violence, and a real plan to fight climate change while creating good, well-paying jobs.

These are but a few areas where this Parliament can make a real difference in the lives of Canadians.

And as much as they have instructed you to work together, Canadians have also spoken clearly about the importance of their regions and their local needs.

The government has heard Canadians' concerns that the world is increasingly uncertain and that the economy is changing, and in this context, regional needs and differences really matter. Today's regional economic concerns are both justified and important.

The government will work with provinces, territories, municipalities, indigenous groups, stakeholders, industry, and Canadians to find solutions.

With dialogue and cooperation, all regions of this country can overcome the challenges of today and realize their full potential in the modern economy.

As the government pursues an ambitious plan to move Canada forward, parliamentarians can draw inspiration from Canadians themselves. Canadians have elected you to do important work, and they model—in actions big and small—how you can be effective parliamentarians.

Neighbours helping neighbours.

Putting community first.

Finding common ground, forging bonds, and working together.

It is in that distinctly Canadian spirit of collaboration that the government and this Parliament will build on the progress of the last mandate and deliver a better Canada for all Canadians.

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Canada's children and grandchildren will judge this generation by its action—or inaction—on the defining challenge of the time: climate change.

From forest fires and floods to ocean pollution and coastal erosion, Canadians are living the impact of climate change every day. The science is clear, and it has been for decades.

A clear majority of Canadians voted for ambitious climate action now, and this is what the government will deliver. It will continue to protect the environment and preserve Canada's natural legacy, and it will do so in a way that grows the economy and makes life more affordable.

The government will set a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This goal is ambitious but necessary, for both environmental protection and economic growth.

The government will continue to lead in ensuring a price on pollution everywhere in this country, working with partners to further reduce emissions.

The government will also help to make energy-efficient homes more affordable and introduce measures to build clean, efficient, and affordable communities; make it easier for people to choose zero-emission vehicles; work to make clean, affordable power available in every Canadian community; work with businesses to make Canada the best place to start and grow a clean technology company; and provide help for people displaced by climate-related disasters.

The government will also act to preserve Canada's natural legacy, protecting 25% of Canada's land and 25% of Canada's oceans by 2025. Further, it will continue efforts to reduce plastic pollution, and use nature-based solutions to fight climate change—including planting two billion trees to clean the air and make our communities greener.

And while the government takes strong action to fight climate change, it will also work just as hard to get Canadian resources to new markets and offer unwavering support to the hard-working women and men in Canada's natural resources sectors, many of whom have faced tough times recently.

STRENGTHENING THE MIDDLE CLASS

Canada's experience proves that economic growth is the surest way to maintain a good quality of life for citizens.

Over the past four years, Canada has seen tremendous growth, and through it all, the government has worked to ensure that all Canadians benefit from Canada's economic success—cutting taxes, reducing poverty and creating over a million jobs.

And in this new mandate, the government will provide even greater support to the middle class and to the most vulnerable Canadians by pursuing tax fairness, continuing to invest in people and growing the economy.

As its first act, the government will cut taxes for all but the wealthiest Canadians, giving more money to middle-class families and those who need it most.

The government will also act on housing. After drastically reducing poverty across the country in the last mandate, the government will continue its crucial investments in affordable housing. It will also make it easier for more people to buy their first home.

The government will give families more time and money to help raise their kids and make before- and after-school care more accessible and affordable. It will cut the cost of cellular and wireless services by 25%. It will strengthen the pensions that so many seniors rely on and increase the federal minimum wage.

Understanding that an educated Canada is a successful Canada, the government will give more support to students, be they new graduates struggling with loan repayment or be they heading back to school mid-career to learn new skills.

The government will also continue delivering on an economic agenda that will grow a modern Canadian economy.

This means moving forward with the new NAFTA to maintain a strong and integrated North American economy. On this and other trade agreements, those in the supply management sectors will be fully and fairly compensated, with many farmers in the dairy sector receiving their first cheques this month.

To ensure fairness for all in the new digital space, the government will review the rules currently in place.

The government will remove additional barriers to domestic and international trade for businesses and farmers, continue with ambitious investments in infrastructure and reduce red tape so that it is easier to create and run a start-up or small business.

Opening of Parliament

And the government will pursue a responsible fiscal plan to keep the economy strong and growing.

WALKING THE ROAD OF RECONCILIATION

Every single person in Canada deserves a real and fair chance at success—and that must include indigenous people.

In 2015, the government promised a new relationship with indigenous peoples—one that would help deliver a better quality of life for their families and communities.

Real progress has been made over the past four years, including the elimination of 87 long-term drinking water advisories, equity in funding for first nations K-12 education, the passage of historic legislation to protect indigenous languages and affirm indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services, and the completion of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

But we know there is still much work to do.

Reconciliation with indigenous people remains a core priority for this government, and it will continue to move forward as a partner on the journey of reconciliation. Indeed, when indigenous people experience better outcomes, all Canadians benefit.

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Among other things, the government will take action to codevelop and introduce legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the first year of the new mandate, continue the work of eliminating all long-term drinking water advisories on reserves by 2021 and ensure safe drinking water in first nations communities. It will codevelop new legislation to ensure that indigenous people have access to high-quality, culturally relevant health care and mental health services and it will continue work to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' calls for justice, in partnership with first nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The government will work with indigenous communities to close the infrastructure gap by 2030 and will continue to move forward together to ensure that indigenous peoples are in control of their own destiny and are making decisions about their communities. It will take new steps to ensure the government is living up to the spirit and intent of treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements made with indigenous peoples; ensure that indigenous people who were harmed under the discriminatory child welfare system are compensated in a way that is both fair and timely; and continue to invest in indigenous priorities, in collaboration with indigenous partners.

The path to reconciliation is long, but in its actions and interactions, the government will continue to walk it with first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

KEEPING CANADIANS SAFE AND HEALTHY

Wherever they live—in small rural communities or in big cities; in the foothills of the Rockies or the fishing villages along our coastlines; in the far north or along the Canada-U.S. border—all Canadians want to make Canada a better place for themselves, their children and their communities.

But there are challenges in making that better future a reality.

Year after year, headline after headline, Canadians have seen first-hand the devastating effects of gun violence. Too many lives have been lost, too many families shattered. It is time to show courage, and strengthen gun control.

The government will crack down on gun crime, banning military-style assault rifles and taking steps to introduce a buy-back program. Municipalities and communities that want to ban handguns will be able to do so, and the government will invest to help cities fight gang-related violence.

We are on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the horrific killing of 14 women at École Polytechnique in Montreal, a day when all Canadians pause to remember and honour those women who were killed because of their gender. And we take stock of the harm that gender-based violence continues to do to Canadian society.

The government will take greater steps to address gender-based violence in Canada, building on the gender-based violence strategy and working with partners to develop a national action plan.

Ensuring a better quality of life for Canadians also involves putting the right support in place so that when people are sick, they can get the help they need.

The government will strengthen health care and work with the provinces and territories to make sure all Canadians get the high-quality care they deserve.

It will work with provinces, territories, health professionals and experts in industry and academia to make sure that all Canadians can access a primary care family doctor; partner with provinces, territories, and health professionals to introduce mental health standards in the workplace and to make sure that Canadians are able to get mental health care when they need it; and make it easier for people to get the help they need when it comes to opioids and substance abuse. Canadians have seen the widespread harm caused by opioid use in this country. More needs to be done, and more will be done.

Too often, Canadians who fall sick suffer twice: once from becoming ill, and again from financial hardship caused by the cost of their medications.

Given this reality, pharmacare is the key missing piece of universal health care in this country. The government will take steps to introduce and implement national pharmacare so that Canadians have the drug coverage they need.

Finally, the government will continue to recognize its solemn duty to those who choose to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces.

In the last mandate, the government invested more than \$10 billion to deliver better outcomes for Canada's veterans.

And in this new Parliament, the government will build on that work by improving mental health care supports and helping to ensure that every homeless veteran has a place to call home.

POSITIONING CANADA FOR SUCCESS IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

Canadians expect their leaders to stand up for the values and interests that are core to Canada's prosperity and security—democracy, human rights, and respect for international law. Canadians expect the government to position Canada and Canadians for success in the world.

As Canada is a trading nation, the government will seek out opportunities for Canadian commerce, ingenuity, and enterprise.

As a coalition builder, the government will build partnerships with like-minded countries to put Canada's expertise to work on a global scale, in areas like the promotion of democracy and human rights, the fight against climate change and for environmental protection, and the development and ethical use of artificial intelligence.

As an ally, the government will contribute to multilateral efforts to make the world more safe, just, prosperous, and sustainable. The government will renew Canada's commitment to NATO and United Nations peacekeeping. It will stand up for rules-based international order when that order is put in question, particularly when it comes to matters of trade and digital policy, and it will continue to ensure that Canada's voice is present at the UN, notably on the UN Security Council.

Finally, as a compassionate partner, the government will provide targeted resources for international development assistance, including investments in education and gender equality. It will help the world's poorest and most vulnerable people live better lives and become strong partners for Canada in turn.

Parliamentarians, Canadians are counting on you to fight climate change, strengthen the middle class, walk the road of reconciliation, keep Canadians safe and healthy and position Canada for success in an uncertain world.

And with goodwill, humility and a willingness to collaborate, you can do just that. You can raise the bar on what politics is like in this country. After all, the government knows it needs to work with other parliamentarians to deliver results.

The mandate of this recent election is a starting point, not the final word. The government is open to new ideas from all parliamentarians, stakeholders, public servants, and Canadians. Ideas like universal dental care are worth exploring, and I encourage Parliament to look into this.

Whether it's fighting money laundering or making parental benefits tax-free, there are good ideas across parties, and this government is ready to learn from you and work with you in the years ahead.

Some believe that minority governments are incapable of getting things done, but Canada's history tells us otherwise.

Canada's Parliament is one of the most enduring and vital institutions in the democratic world. It has delivered a tremendous way of life for the Canadian people—through crisis and prosperity, through majority and minority governments.

On December 31, 1966, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson welcomed Canada's centennial new year and lit the centennial flame in front of the Parliament Buildings for the first time. In his remarks he said:

"Tonight we begin a new chapter in our country's story. Let the record of that chapter be one of co-operation and not conflict; of dedication and not division; of service, not self; of what we can give, not what we can get. Let us work together as Canadians to make our country worthy of its honoured past and certain of its proud future."

Business of Supply

In this 43rd Parliament, you will disagree on many things, but you will agree on a great many more. Focus on your shared purpose: making life better for the people you serve.

Never forget that it is an honour to sit in this Parliament. Prove to Canadians that you are worthy holders of these seats and worthy stewards of this place.

Members of the House of Commons: you will be asked to appropriate the funds to carry out the services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

Honourable members of the Senate and members of the House of Commons: as you carry out your duties and exercise your responsibilities, may you be guided by Divine Providence.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.) moved:

That the speech of Her Excellency, delivered this day from the Throne to the two Houses of Parliament, be taken into consideration later this day.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 55(1), and at the request of the government, the Chair has ordered the printing of a special Order Paper giving notice of a government motion. I now lay upon the table the relevant document.

* * *

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 Parliament of Canada Act, subsection 50(2): Hon. Dominic LeBlanc and Hon. Pablo Rodriguez, members of the Queen's Privy Council; Hon. Mark Holland and Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, representatives of the government caucus; Hon. Candice Bergen and Hon. Mark Strahl, representatives of the Conservative Party caucus; Ms. Claude DeBellefeuille, representative of the Bloc Québécois party caucus; and Mr. Peter Julian, representative of the New Democratic Party caucus.

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the Business of Supply be considered at the next sitting of the House.

The Address

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, while I have the floor, having been a page here myself in 1984, I am very pleased to welcome the new cohort of pages. I want to thank them in advance for the work they will be doing and the important services they will be providing to the House.

[English]

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that a total of one day will be allotted to the supply period ending December 10, 2019.

* * *

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2019-20

A message from Her Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (A) for the year ending March 31, 2020, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe that you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That,

a) notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, until Tuesday, December 10, 2019,

i. Standing Order 81(5) be replaced with the following:

Supplementary estimates shall be deemed referred to a committee of the whole House immediately after they are presented in the House. A committee of the whole shall consider and shall report, or shall be deemed to have reported, the same back to the House not later than one sitting day before the final sitting or the last allotted day in the current period.

On a day appointed by a minister of the crown, consideration of the supplementary estimates shall be taken up by a committee of the whole at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment, for a period of time not exceeding four hours.

During the time provided for consideration of estimates, no member shall be recognized for more than 15 minutes at a time and the member shall not speak in debate for more than 10 minutes during that period.

The fifteen minutes may be used both for debate and for posing questions to the minister of the crown or a parliamentary secretary acting on behalf of the minister. When the member is recognized, he or she shall indicate how the 15 minutes is to be apportioned.

At the conclusion of the time provided for the consideration of the business pursuant to this section, the committee shall rise, the estimates shall be deemed reported and the House shall immediately adjourn to the next sitting day.”;

(ii) Standing Order 81(14)(a) be amended by replacing the words “to restore or reinstate any item in the estimates” with the following:

“twenty-four hours’ written notice shall be given to restore or reinstate any item in the estimates”;

(iii) Standing Order 54(1) be amended by adding the following:

“Notice respecting a motion to restore or reinstate any item in the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the financial year ending March 31, 2020, shall be laid on the table, or filed with the Clerk, within four hours after the completion of consideration of said supplementary estimates in committee of the whole and be printed in the Notice Paper of that day.”;

• (1640)

[Translation]

b) notwithstanding Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to present its report on the pre-budget consultations no later than February 28, 2020;

c) notwithstanding the provisions of any Standing Order, for the duration of this session, when a recorded division is to be held on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, except recorded divisions deferred to the conclusion of Oral Questions, the bells to call in the members shall be sounded for not more than 30 minutes;

d) on Thursday, December 5, 2019, the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment until the debate has been adjourned on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne;

e) on Friday, December 6, 2019, the House shall meet at 9:30 a.m. to allow a member of each recognized party and a member from the Green Party to each make a statement not exceeding five minutes on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the events at École Polytechnique in Montreal after which the House shall observe a moment of silence and then proceed to the Orders of the Day.

The Speaker: Does the hon. minister have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[Translation]

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.

Mrs. Lyne Bessette (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I am a little bit nervous.

I would like to begin my speech by taking a moment to congratulate the Speaker on his election. It is very clear that he will be a fair and impartial Speaker who will be respected by parliamentarians and Canadians.

I am honoured to be here in the House of Commons today to represent the people of Brome—Missisquoi. I would like to thank them for putting their trust in me and electing me as their MP. I am really grateful to them and I will work hard to properly represent all Canadians while I am in office.

When I made the decision to go into politics, I had three objectives: to help others, to listen to people and to try to make a difference. I want to bring everything I learned in sports to the public sector so that I can be even closer to the people. I believe that the government has the same approach in that it wants to build on its achievements and on what it has learned in order to become closer to Canadians and better meet their needs.

Over the past four years, the Liberal government has made real progress by taking action to invest in the middle class, grow an economy that works for everyone and protect the environment. However, there is still much to do. In October, Canadians made the choice to move forward and focus on the progress that has been made, while reminding parliamentarians of the importance of working together, putting the community first and finding common ground.

As Her Excellency the Governor General said, Canadians have given us a mandate to govern the country, but we cannot fulfill that mandate unless we work together. Our government is committed to working with the other parties in the House, as well as with provincial and municipal governments, to deliver the best possible results for Canadians.

Canadians want a government that focuses on the issues that matter to them, like strengthening the middle class and helping those most in need, fighting against climate change and protecting the health and safety of Canadians.

In this throne speech, our government committed to taking meaningful action on the defining challenge of the time: climate change. The government will set a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. I realize that this is an ambitious target, but it is necessary if we want to protect our environment and maintain Canada's economic growth.

Speaking of the environment, the government will take action to preserve Canada's natural legacy. My constituents in Brome—Misisquoi will surely be happy to hear this, since the two transboundary lakes in our beautiful riding, Lake Memphremagog and Lake Champlain, supply drinking water to our communities. Thanks to our government's commitment to making our communities greener, cleaning the air and using nature-based solutions to fight climate change, we can proudly look forward to a greener future for our communities.

Speaking of communities, we cannot forget that our constituents face different social and economic challenges. Our government is committing to quickly cut taxes for Canadians, which will give more money to middle-class families and those who need it most.

The solutions to the problems and challenges of the future will have to be found by the future leaders of Canada. Therefore, our government will give more support to students, be they new graduates struggling with loan repayment, or be they heading back to school to learn new skills. That is why our government is committed to being there for Canadian students.

• (1645)

However, before they become students, they are children who need services and their parents' presence. That is why our government has pledged to give families more time and money to help raise the Canadians of tomorrow. To that end, our government is committed to making child care services more accessible and affordable.

The government cares about our seniors and Canadian workers. The government will foster their well-being in two ways: by increasing pensions and the federal minimum wage.

The Address

The government has also announced that it will continue to invest in affordable housing and will make it easier for people to buy a first home, which will help Canadians have a roof over their heads.

Finally, our government will lighten the financial burden on households by cutting the cost of cell and wireless services by 25%.

The well-being of Canadians is not just about income, work-life balance or access to housing. It is also about access to the care they need when they need it. That is why our government is going to work together with the provinces and territories to improve health care for Canadians by making it easier to get a family doctor and by bringing in workplace mental health standards.

As stated in the Speech from the Throne, often Canadians who fall sick suffer twice: once from becoming ill, and again from financial hardship caused by the cost of their medications. That is why our government is committed to taking steps to introduce and implement a national pharmacare program.

Since the beginning of my speech I have been talking about members of the Canadian community, but who are they exactly?

They are young people, seniors, workers, students and parents. They are also innovators, farmers, artists and entrepreneurs. They are our families and neighbours. In order for everyone to thrive and for Canada to thrive with them, our government needs an economic agenda aimed at building a modern economy for Canada.

How do we build a modern economy? It is by maintaining a flourishing, integrated North American economy; by reviewing the rules around the new digital environment to ensure fairness for all; by eliminating domestic and international trade barriers, investing in infrastructure and facilitating the creation and growth of start-ups and small businesses; and by implementing a financial plan for keeping our economy strong and growing. That is exactly what our government pledged to do in this throne speech.

The Canadian community also includes indigenous peoples, who all too often face challenges that are more specific than I have covered in my speech. However, as Her Excellency the Governor General noted, it is indigenous genius that allowed our country to thrive and grow. The knowledge held by indigenous peoples, along with their sense of community, should continue to guide our actions.

The Address

If we are to continue relying on the knowledge of indigenous peoples, we must continue and step up the reconciliation efforts undertaken in the previous Parliament. This is why our government has made reconciliation with indigenous peoples one of its core priorities and will continue work to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' calls for justice.

I am particularly proud of our commitment to develop and introduce legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the first year of the new mandate.

Indigenous peoples have been living in poor conditions for too long.

● (1650)

That is why our government is committed to continuing the work of eliminating all long-term drinking water advisories on reserve by 2021 and ensuring safe drinking water in first nations communities. That is also why the government will work with indigenous communities to close the infrastructure gap by 2030 and will introduce legislation to ensure that indigenous peoples have access to high-quality, culturally relevant health care and mental health services.

Our government will continue to work with indigenous peoples to develop and adopt these measures, as well as measures to ensure that the government is living up to the spirit and intent of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements made with indigenous peoples.

As I mentioned earlier, Canadians want a government that will keep them safe. Accordingly, the government is committed to taking greater steps to address gender-based violence in Canada, whether it is by working with partners to implement a national action plan or building on the gender-based violence strategy.

Gun crime is a terrible reality in Canada. That is why the government will ban military-style assault rifles and enable municipalities and communities to ban handguns if they wish.

Right from the beginning of my speech, I have been talking about "community" in both the local and the national sense. We must remember that we live in an increasingly interconnected world. That means Canada has a role to play in the global community. Canadians are generous and deeply compassionate. They believe it is important to share, and they care about the environment.

As the Governor General said, Canadians expect their leaders to stand up for their values and interests here at home and around the world. That is why I applaud our government's announcement about building partnerships with countries that share our values and our vision so the whole world can benefit from Canada's expertise in areas like environmental protection, fighting climate change, and promoting human rights and democracy.

I personally believe that the government's interest in marginalized populations, those most in need, can also apply internationally. I think the government shares my point of view, since it just committed to contributing resources to international development, in-

cluding investments in education and gender equality, while helping the poorest and most vulnerable people live better lives.

On a more personal note, I have faith in our regions, our youth, our creators and our entrepreneurs. The people around us must remain our top priority and serve as our inspiration in our day-to-day work. I have worked hard in recent years to get where I am today. I have been determined and have pushed my limits my entire life, but always with the support of those around me. As a member of Parliament, I intend to make rapid progress, with the same strength and determination I have shown in the past. That is why I have faith in our government. I believe it is the best way for me to move my constituency and my country forward.

If there is one thing I learned from my experience as an athlete, it is that it is much easier to make progress as a team than to go it alone. More often than not, the accomplishments are that much sweeter. I am very excited to work with members from both sides of the House to improve life for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (1655)

I move, seconded by the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country that the following address be presented to Her Excellency, the Governor General of Canada:

To Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Canada, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Military Merit, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces, 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.

● (1700)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, allow me to thank all the voters in the riding of Beauce, which I am very proud to represent. It is a hotbed of entrepreneurship. Small and medium-sized businesses are a key pillar of our economy, especially in the regions. SMEs provide jobs for hundreds of thousands of people and create wealth across the country.

Sadly, this government has launched a direct attack on them by claiming they are being used to pay less tax. That is an insult, given that we know these are often family businesses that are struggling to stay afloat. Indeed, one of the things that these roughly 200,000 SMEs want is for the government to cut the red tape that is keeping them from succeeding.

Will the government finally understand this and help Canadian SMEs, instead of insulting them and standing in their way?

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I said in my speech, the government's goal is really to work as a team. I think that we will examine all concerns as a team and that we will be able to come up with a solution.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the fight against climate change is one of the government's priorities. Back home in the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé, like everywhere else, we are already feeling the worst effects of climate change. The rate of shoreline erosion in Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia is increasing and farmers' crops are being affected by the unpredictable climate. It is clear that the government is trying to please everyone by attempting to combine the economic growth of certain polluting industries with the fight against climate change. Obviously, those are two battles that cannot be waged simultaneously. We need to invest in areas other than the Trans Mountains of this world.

How does the government plan to meet its ambitious climate targets if it continues to invest in projects that are harmful to our environment?

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I certainly understand her view because I come from a riding where there are many lakes, rivers and other bodies of water. We have the same problems, and that is a question that I too will be asking the government. I think that we will be able to find solutions together.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your preferment and congratulate my friend, the hon. member, on her speech.

I can appreciate the member's exuberance, although I do not share it. Canadians need action and they need it right now. We have heard these words before.

I have some questions. Will the government act now on reconciliation and stop dragging indigenous kids to court? Will the government act now on climate change and not wait until 2050? Will the government act now on affordable housing, including social housing? Will the government act on a pharmacare system that is truly national, public and comprehensive?

• (1705)

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Mr. Speaker, the government is ready to put in the effort needed for the environment. We know there is a lot to do, but we are ready. We definitely want to work together to try to achieve the goals we have put on paper, and we want them to be real.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with my first-ever question in the House of Commons, I would like to thank the people of Kildonan—St. Paul. They elected me on a

The Address

mandate to fight for everyday Canadians, and that is exactly what I plan to do.

As we know, there are troubling economic times on the horizon, and we heard today that the government's only plan is to spend more taxpayers' dollars, yet while reckless government spending is at a record high, it has done nothing to help people get ahead.

Nearly half of all Canadians are only \$200 away from not being able to pay their bills. Meanwhile, the Liberal government is only making life more expensive and jeopardizing the futures of everyday Canadians and young Canadians. While extra costs might not matter to millionaires like the Prime Minister and many of his colleagues, we know that Canadians cannot afford for life to get more expensive. That is the reality.

Can the member opposite tell us why the Liberal agenda is so out of touch with the financial challenges facing Canadian families?

The Speaker: Before we go to the answer, I want to remind hon. members that taking personal slights at people does not really help things. I would point that out and hopefully that will work.

The hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi.

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Mr. Speaker, the government has been doing a lot of work to try to reduce taxes and income tax for middle-class families, and we will keep going in that direction.

Hopefully, we can all work together to make everybody happy, which is almost impossible, but we will try to reach equality and unity.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to the people of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for placing their trust in me on October 21. They sent me here to do a job, and I will do everything in my power to do it well.

They say that good health is life's greatest treasure, and the throne speech includes some great health-related intentions. We are happy about that because many of our constituents have shared their concerns about health care with us. The thing is, the government has to walk the talk, and those good intentions need to turn into solutions.

One way to do that is to respect Quebec's jurisdiction by increasing federal transfers to the provinces, which bear the brunt of rising health costs.

At Monday's Council of the Federation meeting, the Government of Quebec and Canadian provincial governments agreed to call for increased health transfers.

Will the government commit to doing as they ask?

The Address

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

It is hard for me to answer it; however, having been an Olympic athlete for so many years, I can say that health is important to me and has a very big impact on my life. I can assure the hon. member that when it comes to health, the government will do what it takes to try to help the provinces ensure that Canadians are healthy and able to fully enjoy their wonderful country.

• (1710)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Before resuming debate, I want to remind everyone to keep an eye on the Speaker while giving a speech. I have a clock here that tells how much time we have left. Normally, if it is a 20-minute speech, I will give you a five-minute signal, then three and then one. If it is a 10-minute speech, I will go with three and then one, so it gives you an idea of where it is at. I know some of you are new and this is something that takes a while to catch up with, but I thought I would make it easier. It helps us all stay on time and makes life a little more pleasant for all of us.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to offer you my congratulations on being elected today. You play a central role in the work that we all do here, and I wish you well.

[*Member spoke in Salish and provided the following text:*]

Tanúyap. Áma s7ats?xentumúlhana! Ch'ich'iyit tula te shishalh.

[*Member provided the following translation:*]

Everyone, it's good seeing all of you. Greetings from the Shishalh.

[*English*]

It is an honour to rise in this chamber today and to second the motion of my esteemed colleague, the member for Brome—Missisquoi, regarding the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Canadians have delivered to the government an ambitious mandate to improve their lives, strengthen this country and bolster Canada's place in the world. Today's Speech from the Throne provides our government with a road map on how to get there. Over the next few minutes, I will speak with pride to this House about some of the details of how we plan to navigate through this road map.

First, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the people of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country. They have given me the privilege to serve them in the House of Commons as their member of Parliament. I want to thank my constituents for placing their trust in me. I am grateful to my constituents from all corners of our large and diverse riding. I would like to recognize the thriving communities in Pemberton, up the Sunshine Coast and on Bowen Island. Every day I take my seat in

this chamber, I will never forget why I am here: to serve the people in my constituency and to help build a better Canada.

Before going further, I would also like to give special thanks to my family, especially my partner Nicole, who have supported me in this endeavour, often doing the hard work behind the scenes, which is often a thankless job.

Indeed, I believe the Speech from the Throne has provided us all with a reminder of the responsibilities that have been entrusted to us. Millions of Canadians cast their votes in the election this October, and they have sent us all a very clear message. Canadians want their politicians to put the public interest first. They want us to work together on the things that matter to them, to their families and to their communities. They have elected a minority government with an important agenda: to fight climate change; to strengthen the middle class and help create good, well-paying jobs; to make life more affordable for Canadians; to continue firmly on the path of reconciliation with indigenous peoples; to keep our citizens safe on our streets with less gun violence; to strengthen our health care system and modernize it for the 21st century; to provide more affordable housing; to provide investments in infrastructure, public transit, science and innovation; and to secure Canada's place in the world. These are just some of the important challenges that lie ahead of us. They are challenges not just for the government, but for all parliamentarians. It is that simple. We all have a mandate to find common ground in this Parliament.

The government is ready to work hard to make historic progress in all these areas. I am confident that, with goodwill, my colleagues from all sides of the House can work together to make the changes that Canadians want. Indeed, I know we can come together as parliamentarians. I have seen it in my work before being elected to this House. As an environmental and natural resource management lawyer, I have seen first-hand what can happen when people collaborate. I have supported governments around the world to improve the management of aquatic ecosystems, as well as the governance of natural resource sectors, on behalf of the United Nations and other international development agencies. I have represented first nations, municipalities, small businesses and non-profits on environmental and corporate legal matters.

It is not unusual for people to come to the table with very different interests, but it is also not unrealistic for them to walk away with a shared agenda and common goals. It happens in communities throughout the country. It can happen here in the House of Commons. That spirit of co-operation can also happen as leaders throughout our country work together to find solutions to our shared challenges.

As someone who was born and raised in West Vancouver and the Sunshine Coast, I am proud that the Speech from the Throne has spoken clearly about the importance of all of our country's regions and their local needs. This government knows that the economic concerns being felt by Canadians in our regions are real. It is listening to Canadians in those regions.

● (1715)

On this, Canadians can be sure that the government will work with provinces, territories, municipalities, indigenous groups, stakeholders, industries and Canadians to find solutions.

There is no greater challenge facing this country, and indeed this world, than fighting climate change. The science on this growing threat to our planet is clear. It is undeniable. Already we are seeing the effects: devastating floods and forest fires, coastal erosion and pollution of our oceans.

The changes to the world we know now will only grow worse, spiralling faster and faster in the coming years and decades. We are leaving a world to our children and our grandchildren that could be much different from the world in which we have grown up. We recognize this threat. We must act. We must do our best to fight this threat.

I believe strongly in this government's pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. I am committed to building upon this groundbreaking plan to ensure that Canadian businesses will seize upon the immense economic opportunities that are involved in the transition to the clean economy of the 21st century.

Over the past four years, our government has provided national leadership to take action on climate change. In October's election, a clear majority of Canadians voted in favour of ambitious climate action.

The Speech from the Throne has made it clear that this government will deliver. We will set a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Our goal will be ambitious but necessary as we protect the environment while we grow the economy. We have already taken the lead in ensuring that there is a price on pollution throughout the country. We will continue working with our partners to reduce emissions in the years ahead.

There are many other important measures that this government will take. We will help make energy-efficient homes more affordable. We will make it easier for Canadians to buy zero-emission vehicles. Whistler is already leading the way in this in changing our transportation habits. Last month, I attended the electric vehicle sustainability summit in Whistler, B.C., to talk about how governments and companies could work together to achieve our zero-emission targets.

We will work toward making clean and affordable power available in all our communities. We will work with companies in the transition to the clean technology future. An example of this is Huron Clean Energy in Squamish, which is facing the climate crisis head on. It is just one example of the companies providing the technology and the solutions we need in our transition to the low-carbon economy. Their leadership in the field of carbon capture is turning our home riding into a hub for clean technology.

The Address

Over the last four years, our country has experienced strong growth, but too many Canadians have difficulty keeping up with the rising cost of living. Our government is determined to take action to make life more affordable for Canadians. The Speech from the Throne has identified some of the areas where we will be taking action on behalf of our citizens.

We will cut taxes for all Canadians except the wealthiest. This will provide more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadians who need it the most.

We will continue to take action with significant investments in affordable housing. Too many Canadians are unable to buy their first home. We will also introduce measures to make it easier for more people to purchase their homes.

This government will take action to ease the concerns faced by workers, families and seniors. We will assist parents with the time and money they need to raise their children. We will support students as they bear the costs of higher education and skills training. We will increase the federal minimum wage. We will reduce cellphone bills by 25%. We will strengthen pensions for our seniors.

As we take these measures, we will press ahead with an economic agenda that benefits all Canadians in the years ahead.

Our government is committed to moving ahead with the new NAFTA with the United States and Mexico. We will continue to make significant investments in infrastructure throughout the country. We will work to tear down the trade barriers now faced by businesses and farmers when they look to achieve success both internationally and domestically.

As we are doing all this, our government will stay focused on growing the economy with a fiscal plan that is responsible.

● (1720)

The Speech from the Throne has placed a great emphasis on another key pillar of this government's agenda. Four years ago we promised to put Canada on a path toward reconciliation with indigenous peoples. For far too long our country neglected to take the actions necessary to give indigenous peoples a real shot at success. We said that must change, and we took the first steps on that road to reconciliation.

It is a long road, but we have seen real progress in just four years. Eighty-seven long-term drinking water advisories have been eliminated. There is greater equity in funding for first nations education. Parliament has passed legislation to protect indigenous languages and affirm indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls held important hearings and delivered its report. However, this is just a beginning. The work toward reconciliation has not ended.

The Address

This government is committed to doing more, and I will mention some examples. We will work toward eliminating all long-term drinking water advisories on reserve by 2021. We will codevelop and introduce legislation to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the first year of our mandate. We will codevelop legislation so that indigenous peoples have access to culturally relevant and high-quality mental health care and quality health care services. We will ensure that indigenous peoples who grew up and were harmed under a child welfare system that has been discriminatory will be compensated in a fair and timely manner. As well, we will live up to the spirit and intent of treaties, agreements and other arrangements with indigenous peoples.

One of any government's top responsibilities is to provide a place for its citizens where they can feel safe and where their quality of life is good. In recent years, Canadians have increasingly seen stories in the media about deaths in their communities as a result of gun violence. Each of these violent episodes has been a tragedy. Too many Canadians have been killed. Too many relatives have grieved the loss of a loved one. Our government has pledged to act.

We will crack down on the gun crime that is haunting too many of our communities. We will ban military-style assault rifles and take steps to introduce a buyback program for the weapons. We will work toward giving municipalities that want to ban handguns the ability to do so.

In each of our communities and, indeed, within our own families, there is often no issue more important as the ability to access high-quality health care. For many decades now, Canadians have recognized that a publicly funded universal health care system, medicare, is what makes us strong as a country.

As we head into 2020, more than half a century after the birth of medicare, it is important that we all work together as Canadians to strengthen and to modernize it. The Speech from the Throne has laid out an ambitious but achievable agenda to make that happen. Our government will be working with the provinces and territories to strengthen the health care system so that Canadians get the service they deserve.

Too many Canadians cannot get access to primary care family doctors and to mental health care. We will work with provinces, territories and health professionals to change that.

The scourge of opioid and substance abuse has also cost too many lives and shattered too many families. We need to do more to help people struggling with their addictions.

Finally, it is time to bring medicare into the 21st century. Modern-day medicine means physicians are increasingly able to treat their patients through medication, and yet too many patients who fall ill are unable to afford the costly prescriptions they are prescribed and they become even more sick. This is just not fair.

As the Speech from the Throne says, pharmacare has become the key missing piece of universal health care in this country. Our government will take steps to introduce and implement a national pharmacare program so that Canadians have the drug coverage they need. I look forward to all members of this House working together to achieve this historic objective.

• (1725)

As we look toward improving the lives of Canadians, we must never forget that we have a responsibility to also promote our core values on the international stage. Those values include the promotion of democracy, protection of human rights and respect for international law. Our government will work in the tradition of being a coalition builder globally in these areas. We will stand up for rules-based international order and we will renew our commitment to NATO and to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Canada's voice will be heard at the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council.

We will not forget that Canadians are a compassionate people. We will provide targeted funds for international development, including for education and gender equality.

I would like to conclude by returning to where I began my remarks. Canadians have sent us here to work constructively on their behalf. As the Speech from the Throne reminds us, our role in this democratic process is a privilege and a responsibility. Indeed, we have been reminded that we are here to serve everyone, regardless of gender, faith, language, custom or skin colour. We are here to make a better Canada. I believe the Speech from the Throne has provided us all with a road map of how to travel that route, and I would encourage members to join together and work in collaboration as we move forward.

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to rise here today in the House of Commons to represent the interests of Regina—Wascana. Canada is more divided than ever before. Deep cracks are showing in our confederation. Under the Liberals, our economy has been bleeding jobs, particularly in the natural resources sector. The Prime Minister has overseen the cancellation of more than \$100 billion in investment in energy projects, largely because of concerns over the no-more-pipelines bill, Bill C-69, and the tanker ban bill, Bill C-48.

A spokesperson for the Montreal Economic Institute said recently, "People are giving up on Canada as a safe place to invest in natural resources.... It's seen as a very hostile environment now."

People in my riding and my province of Saskatchewan are concerned that no one in the Liberal government is listening. There is absolutely nothing concrete in today's throne speech to address these very real concerns. Can the member opposite please tell the House what the government will do to repair the damage that it has done to the resource sector and to national unity?

The Address

• (1730)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, over the last four years, we have brought in a new way of assessing industrial projects through the Impact Assessment Act. This is a piece of legislation that went through a long period of consultation and negotiation, and we now have an ability to assess projects in a way that is not only going to assess the impacts but also do it in a time-bound manner.

We need to have certainty in these types of projects so we can ensure that we hear the voices, that we can properly assess the projects, and that good projects can actually get built. That is what we accomplished through this new legislation. This is what is going to serve us well going forward, so we actually have those projects built.

In addition to that, this government has heard loud and clear the concerns of different regions of the country. For that reason, we have focused on having different members of our caucus be the eyes and ears within western Canada and Quebec. That is going to be a major focus going forward.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue for putting their trust in me.

As a member from an agricultural region, I was pleased, and relieved even, that the government committed to fully compensating supply-managed farmers in today's throne speech. I wish to commend the affirmation that some dairy farmers will receive their first cheques before the end of this month, especially since the Bloc Québécois worked so hard to resolve this issue. Having worked closely with the Fédération régionale de l'UPA d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, I know that what our farmers want, even more than compensation, is for there to be no more breaches in supply management in our trade agreements.

Will the government commit to putting a stop to such breaches in supply management in all trade agreements going forward?

[English]

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to working hard on behalf of farmers, supply management, dairy farmers and producers. That is why, when we negotiated the new NAFTA, we included ways of compensating the supply-managed farmers for the increase in people who will be accessing our markets.

In going forward, we will be focused on working with all Canadians to strengthen the industries we currently have and support the development of new industries. For that reason, we will be focused on creating the conditions to move forward in the future and benefit from the clean energy economy of the 21st century.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand in the House for the first time and represent the constituents of Edmonton Strathcona, who were kind enough to trust me to represent them.

Students in Alberta are really suffering. The cost of university and college is skyrocketing and young people are unable to pay for their education. They are graduating with crippling debt of

over \$27,000, and worse than that, the federal government has been profiting off the backs of our kids. The government has given away billions to the most profitable corporations by forgiving their loans while keeping students on the hook. Why was there nothing in this throne speech to help Canada's young people, who are struggling with student debt?

• (1735)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, the concerns of all Canadians, especially students, are top of mind for this government. For that reason, in our platform we committed that students would not have to pay back their loans until they make \$35,000. This will make a very big difference for people. They will not be charged interest on their loans until they are in a position to repay them. It is really important that we create the conditions for success for young people as they move into their new careers.

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by congratulating my fellow MPs in this room for their hard-earned election wins, as well as the Speaker for his election today.

I am proud to stand here today to speak on behalf of the great people of Port Moody—Coquitlam. I want to take this opportunity to thank them with all my heart for putting their trust in me to represent them here in the House of Commons.

My desire as a member of Parliament is to improve the quality of the lives of my constituents and to help them prosper. Home ownership is a basic aspect of individual security and flourishing. The residents in my riding are worried about the cost of living, and buying a home is often out of reach for young people and families, even those with substantial savings.

The throne speech did not address the concerns raised by many in my riding about the mortgage stress test. The housing plan the government put forward will do nothing to help the hard-working Canadians in my community who dream of buying a home.

Will the member opposite tell the House when the government will put forward a real plan that will address and resolve the reality that people are living through in my riding?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, housing affordability is a top concern throughout the country, but particularly in the Lower Mainland, and for this reason we have committed to increasing the first-time home buyer incentive. This will make life more affordable for people buying their first homes.

Going forward, Liberals are also going to be looking at developing more affordable housing through the national housing strategy. It is a 10-year, \$40-billion plan for real action in investments so everybody has a safe place to live and a roof over their head.

*Business of the House**[Translation]*

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all the members who have taken part in this debate.

[English]

Congratulations to the members of Parliament who gave speeches and asked questions of those two members. I must say, my preference was for the questions more than the speeches, but we will hear more about that tomorrow. Obviously, I have a different perspective on the throne speech we all heard today, but I think it would be more appropriate for me to expound on that tomorrow instead of today.

I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform all hon. colleagues that tomorrow shall be the first day of debate for the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

[Translation]

I would also like to note that the House will meet tomorrow morning at 9:30 for the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Polytechnique massacre in Montreal.

On Monday, we will resume the address debate, and then the House will resolve itself into committee of the whole to study supplementary estimates (A), which were tabled earlier today. Next Wednesday, Thursday and Friday shall be days for the address debate. Next Tuesday shall be an allotted day.

In closing, I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

● (1740)

[English]

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made earlier today, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9:30 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 5:40 p.m.)

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