

SITTING RESUMED

The house resumed at 4.45 p.m.

PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT

A message was delivered by Major C. R. Lamoureux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable the Deputy Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

Whereupon the Deputy Governor General was pleased to close the first session of the twenty-eighth parliament of Canada with the following speech:

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

The first session of the twenty-eighth Parliament was noteworthy both for the importance of the measures carried into law, and for the preparations set under way for further action in this Parliament.

Canadians were saddened during this session by the death of a distinguished and much respected former Governor General, Field Marshal The Right Honourable The Earl Alexander of Tunis. His gallant leadership in war and his devoted public service in peace won His Lordship the respect and affection of all Canadians.

Appreciative of the need for the effective administration of our public affairs, you approved far-reaching changes in the organization of the Government and its departments, and procedures by which each of the chambers of Parliament discharges its public duties. The Departments of Regional Economic Expansion, Communications, and Supply and Services were established. The rules of the House of Commons have undergone fundamental reform so that the Members of that chamber may undertake a more profound scrutiny of public affairs. Research assistance was provided to the leaders of the Opposition parties to enable them to better discharge their vital responsibilities.

Amongst the most important legislative contributions to the preservation of Canadian unity were steps taken to reduce inequalities of language rights and economic opportunities. The Official Languages Act recognized the right of Canadians to deal with federal government institutions in French or English. To combat regional economic disparities, you sanctioned the creation of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and the enactment of the Regional Development Incentives Act.

During the session, the Government re-convened the Federal-Provincial Constitutional Conference to consider changes which a century of experience and the challenges of our time demand in our basic constitutional structures. Wide ranging proposals for constitutional reform continued to be studied by heads of governments and by their official representatives.

In pursuance of its objectives of justice and equality, the Government proposed a policy within which Canada's Indian peoples might overcome the

Prorogation of Parliament

discrimination, economic, legal and social, under which they have long suffered.

The Government has, as a result of its review of external and defence policies, undertaken fresh departures in foreign policy. It decided to re-align Canadian forces within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Negotiations were commenced with representatives of the People's Republic of China with the aim of establishing formal diplomatic relations with that government. Discussions between Canada and the Holy See resulted in the decision to exchange representation at the ambassadorial level. Canadian ministerial missions visited Japan and Latin America to explore possibilities of increased trade, investment and closer co-operation.

The Prime Minister attended the Conference in London of Commonwealth Prime Ministers and visited Washington at the invitation of the President of the United States. He and his colleagues received a number of leaders of other countries, including the Presidents of Niger and Tanzania; the Prime Ministers of Barbados, Lesotho, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand; the Foreign Ministers of the United Arab Republic, Belgium, Israel, Germany, Britain, Dahomey, Gabon, the Soviet Union, Italy and Burma; and the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and NATO.

Inflation continues to threaten the economy. Through fiscal and monetary policies, the establishment of a Prices and Incomes Commission, and strict control of its own expenditures, the Government is attempting to reduce the upward pressure on prices. Continued care by the Government and matching concern at other levels of government and in the private economy will be necessary, however, to contain cost and price increases within the limits of increased productivity.

The Canadian dollar has remained strong during a period of uncertainty in world foreign exchange markets. As one step toward the establishment of a larger liquidity base for international trade, you have approved changes in the Bretton Woods Agreement to establish special drawing rights.

You have also approved amendments to the Customs Tariff for the purpose of implementing Canadian undertakings in the Kennedy Round Trade negotiations. At the same time, you approved the Anti-Dumping Act and the creation of an anti-dumping tribunal to protect Canadian producers from unfair trading practices. As a further aid to the competitive position of Canadian producers on world markets, you have established the Export Development Corporation with broad financial powers to facilitate sales to foreign customers.

You have approved amendments to the Estate Tax Act, and to the gift tax provisions of the Income Tax Act, which will ensure a fairer distribution of the burden of taxation. Other amendments to the Income Tax Act with relation to insurance and banking institutions will have the same effect.

The Government has initiated a thorough review of the present social security system and of veterans' pensions. Parliament has approved amendments to the National Housing Act to expand the powers of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to assist limited dividend and non-profit housing companies. You also increased the funds available for housing loans to individuals and revised the terms on which such loans may be made.