

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 7, 1978

The House met at 2 p.m.

● (1407)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA

APPOINTMENT OF EDWARD SCHREYER—RETIREMENT OF JULES LÉGER

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to advise the House that Her Majesty the Queen, this morning in London, approved the recommendation by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) that Mr. Edward Schreyer be appointed the next Governor General of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: Those of us who have served in the House of Commons for a period of time well remember the vigorous young member who served the interests of his province and region so well during the four years he spent in Ottawa before returning to the west to become premier of Manitoba.

At only 43 years of age, he now takes on the deep national responsibilities of a new office which symbolizes such a vital link between the different parts of Canada and gives evidence of the cultural and linguistic character of the country.

Mr. Schreyer's background itself is almost a manifestation of the Canadianism, if I may use that word, which developed as this land was being settled. He was born during the depression to a Manitoba farm family of German descent. While growing up in the west, he became familiar with German, Polish and Ukrainian and while serving as a member of parliament was quick to take advantage of the opportunity to learn French, a language in which he is now fluent.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: In his political career, while lending his efforts to improving the conditions of daily life for Canadians generally, he has always had a particular concern and compassion for the native people and those whose opportunities have been limited by factors outside their control.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Schreyer has a feeling for all of Canada and possesses qualities which I am sure will bring the same sense of understanding and excellence to this high position as was possessed by his predecessors.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, to his Excellency the Right Hon. Jules Léger, and Madame Léger, we would offer our deep gratitude and affection for their warm and enthusiastic contribution to our country and its unity.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: The word "distinguished" is the exact description of their performance, and I think all members would wish to salute their courage and dedication in the past five years. We extend to them our best wishes for many more happy years together.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to receive, as I am sure the House is, the announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) of the approval of Her Majesty, this morning, of the recommendation by the Prime Minister for the appointment of Mr. Schreyer as next Governor General of Canada. I am sure he will do a good job in that role, and on behalf of my colleagues I want to wish him well.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to pay a tribute to Madame Léger and the Governor General for the services they have rendered to Canadians during difficult times.

[English]

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I think hon. members will understand why I am particularly pleased to congratulate our new Governor General and, if I may say so in this context, the Government of Canada for its very wise selection.

As the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) has already indicated, Edward Schreyer—a man we know well as Ed—served not only in a distinguished way in this House for a number of years, but in an equally distinguished way performed his responsibilities as premier of the province of Manitoba.

As has already been indicated, I think it is very important at this particular point in our history that we have a Governor General who not only speaks our two official languages but who is, himself, not of either English or French ancestry but comes from that broader, third dimension in Canadian history which is so important to our past and will be so important to our future.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!