

went into the law and politics and I regret, more than I can say, that he did not live to see me take the Oath of Office today, in the Chamber in which he served with such dedication and distinction.

Now, in the proud tradition of service that motivates so many people across this country, I look forward, as the representative of Canada's head of state, to using this office to articulate the beliefs and hopes of all Canadians.

While it would be presumptuous of me, in these opening moments, to define all I hope to accomplish, I speak as one who loves my country and has an abiding respect for her people. I look forward to the opportunity to champion the issues about which Canadians care deeply: service to the community, environmental responsibility, the ongoing struggle to conquer illiteracy, the needs of the aged.

As the role of Governor General has evolved over the years, it has mirrored changes to the monarchy of which it is a part. It has been important in our maturing sense of ourselves as Canadians and it has been influenced by the different personalities and interests of the people who have held the office.

I now have the opportunity—and the solemn responsibility—to enhance and reflect the pride Canadians have in this country—and to reflect, as well, our concerns as we face the uncertainties of everyday life and the challenge of our future together as a nation.

The task ahead is made easier because I will be supported—as I have been for more than 30 years—by my wife Gerda. She brings to this role, as to all that she does, enormous gifts of energy, intellect and the warmth that lights the lives of all of us fortunate enough to be members of her family or of her

legion of friends. As well, I shall be challenged to live up to the expectations of my sons, John and Carl, as of all of Canada's young men and women.

In all that I do I shall, of course, respect the mandate and responsibility that belongs to you, as Members of the Parliament of Canada, to dispose of the nation's business. My years among you have left me with friendships that I treasure. They have given me great respect for all those—from town councillor to parliamentarian—who believe in Canada's democratic system and give it new life and meaning each day.

I have a profound appreciation of your sovereignty as the people's chosen representatives, and will protect it every possible way throughout my term of service.

I ask you to join me as we celebrate the best of the past and, even more important, as we continue to create the future. We must confront the things that divide us and work even harder on those that bring us closer. We must reaffirm the generosity of spirit that has always been, and will always be, the best we have in us—as individuals, and as a nation.

On that future day when I leave this office, I will have succeeded if Canadians have a stronger sense of themselves and each other; if we have shared more fully both our joys and our sorrows. I will have been genuinely useful if I have contributed to our nationhood and to the remarkable system on which it is founded.

When my task is completed, I can hope only I will have been judged worthy of the Sovereign I represent, the tradition of which I become a part, the distinguished company that preceded me, and the Canadian people I am here to serve. May that wish be granted, with the help of Almighty God.

---