

Internal Economy Commission

Canada's record in official development assistance has on the whole been constructive. My government recognizes the continuing need for these programs, including support for the cost-effective and valuable humanitarian work done internationally by our voluntary and non-governmental organizations. But it is striking to observe how much hardship has occurred, how much debt burden has increased, how much economic activity has been held back in developing countries because of world recession, unstable markets and trade barriers. A successful attack on these problems will accelerate economic development and social progress in many of these countries. The alleviation of unconscionable human misery will result.

During this session, you will be asked to address this and other commitments and responsibilities of Canada in the world. A special parliamentary committee will conduct a full review of the main components and objectives of our international relations.

My government is convinced that Canada's defence forces urgently require a new definition of their role in keeping with present day conditions. The strategic context in which we defend our own territory and that of our allies has changed considerably since the early 1970s, when the government last carefully considered this matter. My Ministers are undertaking a comprehensive examination of these matters. The purpose is to clarify the mandate of our military and to give them the resources they need to do their job.

A Time For Renewal

This new Parliament is an historic opportunity to overcome past divisions in our country, and to purge the spirit of confrontation from the conduct of the nation's affairs.

The purpose of my government is to renew the confidence of Canadians that Parliament is truly the voice of the people, that government is their servant, and that federalism is the means to harmonize and preserve the splendid diversity of this land.

Above all, my government will enlist the active support and participation of Canadians themselves as we search for a new way of addressing our national responsibilities: a consensus in our economic life, tolerance in our national life, and a deep commitment to social justice and peace, at home and in the rest of world.

Members of the House of Commons:

You will be asked to appropriate the funds required for the services and payments authorized by Parliament.

Honourable Members of the Senate,

Members of the House of Commons:

In the great tasks of national reconciliation, economic renewal, and social justice to which you are called in this Parliament, may Divine Providence guide your every effort.

[Translation]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister) moved:

That the speech of Her Excellency the Governor General, delivered this day from the throne of the two Houses of Parliament, be taken into consideration at the next sitting of the House.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL ECONOMY COMMISSIONERS

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister) presented the following message from Her Excellency the Governor General:

The Governor General transmits to the House of Commons a certified copy of an approved Order in Council appointing the Hon. Roch La Salle, Minister of

Public Works, the Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn, Minister of State (Government House Leader), the Hon. Robert R. de Cotret, President of the Treasury Board, and the Hon. Barbara Jean McDougall, Minister of State (Finance), to act with the Speaker of the House of Commons as Commissioners for the purposes and under the provisions of Chapter H-9 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1970, entitled: An Act respecting the House of Commons.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a question of privilege with respect to the commissioners of Internal Economy and in particular I want to refer to the ninth report of the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure which was tabled in this House in 1983. It dealt specifically with the appointment of the commissioners of Internal Economy.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the special committee to re-examine the standing orders and procedure was set up in the last Parliament following the lengthy bell ringing.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am in some difficulty. The Hon. Member may wish to rise on a question of order and he may have a question of order, but I have to tell him that he does not have a question of privilege so far. I suggest, if the Member wishes to be heard, that he please rise on a question of order so that I may hear him.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I will rise on a question of order, but I think this is a matter which affects the privileges of all Members and I think, when I pursue my argument, you will see that it does touch the privileges of all Members.

In any case, in the last Parliament, as Mr. Speaker knows, we set up a special committee to re-examine the rules and procedures of this House following the lengthy bell ringing incident that was initiated by the Conservatives. That committee was set up and dealt with ten reports. One of those reports is the ninth report dealing with the commissioners of Internal Economy.

At the present time these commissioners, as you pointed out, are appointed in accordance with the House of Commons Act which stipulates that the commissioners must be Privy Councillors, but there is no requirement that the commissioners must be Privy Councillors in the Cabinet. Nor is there any requirement that the commissioners must be Privy Councillors on the Government side.

Since these commissioners are responsible for the services for all Members of this House—our offices, our staff, our machinery, our telephones, our travel—the committee felt that it was essential that these commissioners be appointed by all Members of the House and represent all Members of the House.

That ninth report was a unanimous report. Ten of the 12 Conservative Members who served on that committee from time to time are back in this House. Three of them are in the Cabinet, three who supported unanimously this report. I believe I am the sole Liberal surviving from that committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allmand: It surprises me, Mr. Speaker, because I would think that the 10 who survived on the other side would have