

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker: Hon. members, I want to express to the House my humble thanks for the honour it has kindly conferred upon me by choosing me as Speaker.

[*English*]

Hon. members, I beg to return my humble acknowledgements to the House for the honour which it has been pleased to confer upon me by choosing me to be Speaker.

[*Translation*]

Like my illustrious predecessor, whom I take pleasure in thanking on your behalf, I am acutely aware of my responsibility, and that of each and every member of the House, for seeing to it that the voice of the citizens we represent is heard in this House.

It is through you that the country as a whole expresses itself, and it is Parliament which most completely reflects the aspirations of the whole nation. My responsibility is merely to ensure that everyone can speak freely, without constraints. The rules, whose respect I must secure, must serve one purpose only: that of enhancing freedom of speech, the very foundation of parliamentary democracy.

I take up that heavy task in all humility, aware of my limitations, and endeavouring to delineate exactly what role you are asking me to play so that this assembly can toil for the greater good of Canada as a whole.

● (1015)

[*English*]

You will have noticed that neither the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) nor the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) applied all the force that is customary when putting a Speaker in the chair. Perhaps that is because I did not hesitate as much as I should have, knowing only too well that when this House expresses its will, no hon. member—least of all this one—would dare to escape what is so obviously a duty.

Nevertheless, I approach this awesome responsibility with true humility. The honour which is accorded to this office is such as to sustain the authority of any incumbent, weak or strong alike, and it is from this that I draw my confidence, as I do from your indulgence and your good will which I know, in turn, I will have to earn. But for the time being I am sure that I can count on your co-operation and your knowledge of our rules so that this Parliament can be an efficient and harmonious one.

I thank the right hon. Prime Minister for his graciousness in announcing my designation, and I am grateful to him today for having proposed me, as I am to the right hon. Leader of the Opposition and to the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Broadbent) for having supported me.

[*Translation*]

I thank all hon. members for their support and I assure them of my wholehearted co-operation. I express the wish that, together, we can work under the eye of our fellow citizens for

Opening of the Session

the unity of our country and the defence of democratic freedoms. In addition, I want to thank my electors of Laval-des-Rapides who were the first to trust me and who even now, I hope, will still support me in my new responsibilities. May I be allowed, despite the solemnity of the occasion, and perhaps because of it, to thank my husband and my son for their support, day by day, without which nothing in my political commitment would have been possible.

[*English*]

SITTING SUSPENDED

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I suggest, Madam Speaker, that this sitting be suspended until eleven o'clock this morning.

Madam Speaker: The House has heard the suggestion of the right hon. Prime Minister. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: This House stands suspended until eleven o'clock this morning.

At 10.20 a.m. the sitting was suspended until 11 a.m. this day.

● (1100)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 11 a.m.

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● (1105)

OPENING OF THE SESSION

Madam Speaker read a communication from the Governor General's Secretary announcing that His Excellency the Governor General of Canada would proceed to the Senate chamber at eleven o'clock on this day for the purpose of formally opening the session of the Dominion Parliament.

A message was delivered by Colonel T. G. Bowie, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

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

Accordingly, Madam Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber. Then the Hon. Jeanne Sauvé, Speaker of the House of Commons, said:

May it please Your Excellency,

The House of Commons have elected me their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me.

If in the performance of those duties I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me, and not to the Commons, whose servant I am, and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their Queen and country, humbly claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to Your Excellency's person at all seasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from Your Excellency the most favourable construction.

The Honourable the Speaker of the Senate, addressing the Honourable the Speaker of the House of Commons, then said:

Madam Speaker, I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General of Canada to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of