

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 27, 1974

[English]

SECOND SESSION—TWENTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT—OPENING

The Parliament which had been prorogued on the twenty-sixth day of February, 1974, met this day at Ottawa for the dispatch of business.

The House met at eleven o'clock, the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. Speaker read a communication from the Secretary to the Governor General, announcing that His Excellency the Governor General would proceed to the Senate chamber at 10.40 a.m. on this day for the purpose of formally opening the second session of the twenty-ninth Parliament of Canada.

A message was delivered by Major A. G. Vandelay, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Mr. Speaker, His Excellency the 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.

● (1150)

And the House being returned to the Commons chamber:

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[Translation]

OATHS OF OFFICE

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-1, respecting the administration of oaths of office.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

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[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House did attend His Excellency the Governor General this day in the Senate Chamber, His Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament. To prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy, which is as follows:

[French text]

Honourable Members of the Senate,
Members of the House of Commons,

I have the honour to welcome you to the Second Session of the 29th Parliament of Canada.

In addressing you for the first time, I should like to express my feeling of honour at having been chosen Her Majesty's representative in Canada. As I said at the time of my investiture, the office which I have the honour to hold has a continuous history of three and a half centuries. I am anticipating with pleasure the opportunity to travel in Canada and to meet citizens from all walks of life.

We look forward to the visit of Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, for whom all Canadians have a great affection. She will be in Canada from June 25th to June 30th to present new colours to the Toronto Scottish and to the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada; Her Majesty is Colonel-in-Chief of both regiments.

[English text]

I speak to you at a time of serious disturbance in the international economic situation, arising from problems of supply and price of certain commodities, particularly oil.

Most countries, developed and developing, witnessed significant economic expansion in 1973. The economic prospects for 1974 seemed, until recently, no less encouraging. The reduction of the amount of oil exported by some of the major producing countries and the increase in price has brought a sudden and dramatic change in this situation.

For the developing countries of the world, the increased cost of oil has in many cases wiped out the small margins on which they depended for economic development and better means to support their growing populations. For the industrialized countries, of which Canada is one of the few close to being self-reliant in oil and energy generally, it means that many of them will incur large balance of payments deficits and will have to find means of financing them. For the world as a whole, it could mean an over-all reduction in demand with a consequent depressing effect on economic activity.

The Government attaches the highest importance to solving these problems through concerted international action and co-ordination of national policies. The meeting of the major oil importing countries was a first step in this direction. It will be followed by meetings with the oil producing states and the developing countries. The United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other international organizations will also become actively involved.

In working toward a solution of these international economic problems the major consuming countries must recognize the legitimate aspirations of all the producing countries to utilize their resources to assist in their own national economic development. But the developed world, as well as the resource-rich countries of the developing world, must also take increasingly vigorous steps to reduce disparities between themselves and the less developed and less fortunate nations.

[French text]

While the developments affecting the supply and price of oil are in part the product of special circumstances, the underlying situation thus set in relief is much more general. Food prices have risen sharply as a result of the growth of world population on which has been superimposed serious crop failures in a number of countries. The prices of other internationally-traded commodities have also increased following the simultaneous upsurge in economic activity in all industrialized countries. The increases in the food and commodity sectors have moreover, led to increases in other prices producing generalized inflationary pressures.

No country has been immune from the increase in prices experienced in 1973 and which is continuing in 1974. The phenomenon is world-wide, not an isolated one affecting this or that country alone.

All countries, including Canada, have rejected a deliberately planned slowdown in economic activity as a means to fight inflation. Some