

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 14, 1980

• (0935)

FIRST SESSION—THIRTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT

[English]

The Thirty-first Parliament having been dissolved by proclamation on Friday, December 14, 1979, and writs having been issued and returned, a new Parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Monday, April 14, 1980, and did accordingly meet on that day.

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This being the day on which Parliament is convoked by proclamation of His Excellency the Governor General of Canada for the dispatch of business, and the members of the House being assembled:

Marcel R. Pelletier, Esquire, the Clerk Assistant of the House of Commons, read to the House a letter from the administrative secretary to the Governor General informing him that the Honourable Bora Laskin, Chief Justice of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, would proceed to the Senate chamber to open the first session of the Thirty-second Parliament of Canada on Monday, the 14th April, at 9.30 o'clock.

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

Members of the House of Commons:

It is the desire of the Honourable the Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General of Canada that this honourable House attend him immediately in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the House went up to the Senate chamber, when the Speaker of the Senate said:

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

I have it in command to let you know that His Excellency the Governor General of Canada does not see fit to declare the causes of his summoning the present Parliament of Canada until a Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen, according to law; but this morning at the hour of 10.45 o'clock His Excellency will declare the causes of his calling Parliament.

● (1000)

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

HON. JEANNE SAUVÉ, MEMBER FOR THE ELECTORAL DISTRICT
OF LAVAL-DES-RAPIDES

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Pelletier, on this first opportunity to meet in the Thirty-second Parliament, I am sure all hon. members would wish to join me in extending our very best wishes for a speedy recovery to the Clerk of the House of Commons, Dr. Koester, who underwent surgery two weeks ago. I understand he is making excellent progress and, thanks to our television facilities, he will be watching our proceedings today with his usual keen interest.

Our business this morning, sir, is perhaps the most important collective decision our parties can make in the life of a Parliament. The choice by members of one of their peers to guide the House of Commons is really second only in importance to the choice Canadians make when they elect their own representatives. The confidence placed in the Speaker by all members is vital to the operation of this House and to the manner in which it discharges its responsibilities to the electors.

Today, as we make our choice, we also make history in this chamber. For the first time, the Canadian House of Commons is being invited to choose a woman to hold this high position.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: This task is a fresh and welcome one in a new Parliament which ushers in a new decade.

[Translation]

While our candidate for Speaker today has unique significance as the first woman, the hon. member for Laval-des-Rapides also brings to the position the tradition of quality to which this House has become accustomed in her predecessors. Her experience in a highly successful career in Canadian broadcasting, on the political hustings, in the federal cabinet and in Parliament for more than seven years all combine to offer this House much more than procedural expertise. Our hon. friend is a fighter—a fighter for fair play; for the free expression of opinion and extension of knowledge; for compromise and the judgment of common sense over emotion. She is also a fighter in the front lines for her country. And all this is done with a combination of determination, patience and grace. That description, Mr. Pelletier, seems to me a fitting job description for one who would sit as the moderator of our debates in this chamber.