

Speech from the Throne

House of Commons to Her Majesty's person and government, and not doubting that their proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper and prudence, he grants and upon all occasions will recognize and allow their constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the Commons shall have ready access to His Excellency upon all reasonable occasions, and that their proceedings as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favourable construction.

Then His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to open parliament by a speech from the throne.

And the house being returned to the Commons chamber:

• (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to report that, the house having attended on His Excellency the Governor General in the Senate chamber, I informed His Excellency that the choice of Speaker had fallen upon me, and, in your names, and on your behalf, I made the usual claim for your privileges, which His Excellency was pleased to confirm to you.

OATHS OF OFFICE

[Translation]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. C-1, respecting the administration of oaths of office.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

[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:

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

I have the honour to welcome you to the first session of the 28th Parliament of Canada.

Across the land there are great expectations of what this Parliament will produce. My Ministers recognize the responsibility for leadership which these hopes entail. They are determined to do all that they can to carry out the mandate they received from the people of Canada in the recent general election. They recognize their duty to ensure that the wishes of Canadians concerning their Government be fulfilled as quickly and as completely as the general advantage will allow. At the same time my Government is conscious that aspirations and their realization have to be tempered by a sober awareness of reality. In the complexities of modern society, effective programs take time to

[Mr. Speaker.]

develop and more time to implement. At all stages they require financial and intellectual resources which are not unlimited and must be used with careful planning and the hard judgement of priorities. It is a simple fact of life that everything cannot be done at once.

My Government has planned the legislative program of this first session in the context of a Parliament of normal duration. To make way for the consideration in later sessions of new programs that Ministers are already developing, it is proposed, during the current session, to elucidate priorities and to set in motion new policies. Of equal importance, though of far less drama, Parliament will be asked to deal with a host of matters essential to the smooth and up-to-date functioning of government which were not disposed of in the previous Parliament. My Government considers that its first responsibility, and the first responsibility of this Parliament, is to clear the accumulation of essential legislative adjustments, improvements and modernizations left over from the last Parliament. Unless they are cleared up promptly, efficient public administration and the effective operation of the Canadian economy and society will be hampered.

My Ministers believe that much of the delay and difficulty in the handling of Parliamentary business during recent years could have been avoided or reduced by the improvement of Parliamentary rules and procedures. It is their view that Canadians feel that Parliament is too far removed from the people it serves; its operations are too slow and ponderous; its deliberations are often insufficiently informed and its decisions are too few and too much delayed. In order that Parliamentary institutions may retain the confidence of the people, and in order that they may cope successfully with the vast scope and complexity of government today, it is essential that provision be made for legislative machinery that can act speedily on the large number of varied, detailed and complicated legislative, financial and policy questions that will be the normal, and indeed the growing, Parliamentary program of the future. My Government accords the greatest importance to Parliamentary reform and, to this end and as a matter of the highest priority, it has already had useful discussions with representatives of Opposition parties concerning changes in the rules and procedures of the House of Commons.

So that the Official Opposition, to which we in Canada give formal recognition as a vital part of our democratic process, as well as the other parties in opposition, may be in a position to cope more effectively with the heavy load of action and decision each session must face, you will be asked to make new provision for the Official Opposition, and the other parties in their Parliamentary role. You will also be asked to consider additional facilities for the better discharge of the functions of Parliament generally.

My Government is deeply and irrevocably committed to the objectives of a just society and a prosperous economy in a peaceful world. My Ministers believe that the unity of the country is fundamental to the attainment of these goals, as—indeed—to the enjoyment by each Canadian of the maximum possible liberty, happiness and material well-being. Constitutional reform remains the best long-term guarantee of Canadian unity and my Ministers are directing officials in discussions with the Provinces which are proceeding well and will, through a series of intergovernmental