

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.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

His Excellency the Governor General was then pleased to open the First Session of the Twenty-seventh Parliament with the following speech:

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

I welcome you to the first session of the Twenty-seventh Parliament of Canada. As we meet on the eve of our Centennial year, it is fitting to reaffirm the values and purposes that unite all our people, and to work, with resolution and patriotism for their realization. We should be very proud to be Canadians.

Our country is continuing to make economic and social progress while playing a responsible role in world affairs. As a member of the United Nations, as a member of the Commonwealth of which our beloved Queen is the Head, and as a partner in the North Atlantic Alliance, Canada will strive to make the greatest possible contribution to improve international relations and assure peace with justice to all peoples. Our capacity for national achievement, like that of other countries, depends on the peace and prosperity of the world community.

Canada will continue strongly to support the efforts of Britain, the Commonwealth and the international community to bring an end to the present illegal situation in Rhodesia. My Prime Minister has recently attended a meeting of Commonwealth leaders in Nigeria, at which this critical issue was discussed and the value of the Commonwealth as a multi-racial association confirmed.

The recent official visit to the Caribbean region made by the Prime Minister reflects the importance my Government attaches to strengthening relationships in economic matters between Canada and the Commonwealth countries in this area.

In the United Nations, Canada will continue its efforts, in concert with other countries, to develop means of keeping the peace and strengthening the influence of the world organization. My Government will also do everything it can to assist in finding a basis for negotiating a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam conflict. We shall do our utmost through the United Nations and the Disarmament Committee to foster arrangements for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and for progress towards disarmament. For the security of the North Atlantic community and the stability of Europe, my Government will seek to preserve and strengthen the unity and effectiveness of the North Atlantic Alliance.

International objectives must be pursued by economic and social as well as political means. My Government will recommend to Parliament further measures to improve and develop international economic conditions and to strengthen the Canadian economy.

My Government intends progressively to develop its external aid programs. You will be asked to approve Canada's participation in the Asian Development Bank.

My Government recognizes that Canada has an obligation to share in efforts to prevent or limit armed conflict. Our object, within the limits of our capacity, must be to improve the prospects of world peace and prosperity.

My Government will continue to strengthen the capacity of the integrated Canadian Defence Forces to provide for the security of Canada and to contribute abroad to the preservation of peace. Amendments to the National Defence Act will be laid before you.

The preservation and strengthening of Canadian identity and unity is the most important trust and responsibility of Parliament and of my Government. That unity rests on a Canadianism based upon the two main cultural strands, British and French, enriched by the contributions of other cultural groups, and recognizing the essential contribution of all to the development of Canadian identity.

The approach of the Centennial of Confederation makes it of the utmost importance that Canadians in all parts of the country should look to Ottawa as its true capital where they can feel at home. To this end my Government will continue to work toward the broadening of the bilingual character of the public service. The national capital should increasingly reflect the nature of the Canadian society.