

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 reasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from Your Excellency the most favourable construction.

**The Hon. the Speaker of the Senate** answered:

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

#### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

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

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 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 judgment 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.