



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, October 4, 2004**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 4, 2004

## FIRST SESSION—38TH PARLIAMENT

•(1110)

[*Translation*]

The 37th Parliament having been dissolved by proclamation on Sunday, May 23, 2004, and writs having been issued and returned, a new Parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Monday, October 4, 2004, and did accordingly meet on that day.

Monday, October 4, 2004

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

William C. Corbett, Clerk of the House of Commons, read to the House a letter from the Administrative Secretary to the Governor General informing him that the Deputy Governor General would proceed to the Senate chamber today at 11 o'clock to open the first session of the 38th Parliament of Canada.

A message was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Members of the House of Commons:

It is the desire of the Honourable the Deputy to Her 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, where 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 Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada does not see fit to declare the causes of her summoning the present Parliament of Canada until a Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen, according to law; but tomorrow afternoon, Tuesday October 5, at the hour of three o'clock Her Excellency will declare the causes of her calling Parliament.

*And the House being returned to the Commons chamber:*

**The Clerk of the House:** Pursuant to Standing Order 3, I would ask Mr. Bill Blaikie, member for the electoral district of Elmwood—Transcona, to take the chair.

•(1130)

[*English*]

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER

**The Presiding Officer (Hon. Bill Blaikie):** Before I begin the proceedings I want to say what an honour it is for me today to be able to preside over the election of the Speaker. I did not think, when I was a member of the famed McGrath committee of 20 years ago when we recommended that the dean of the House of Commons conduct the election of the Speaker, that I would ever be in such a position to do so, but I welcome the opportunity.

Of course we are heading into a very unique Parliament and today we begin the challenge of meeting the expectations of the Canadian people that we will work constructively together in the way that they want us to do so.

The list of members who have withdrawn or who are ineligible as candidates has been placed on each member's desk and is available at the table.

[*Translation*]

The list of those members who are eligible as candidates has also been placed on each member's desk. It is available at the table as well.

Before proceeding, I would invite those members whose names are on the ballot and who do not wish to be considered for election to kindly rise and inform the Chair accordingly.

[*English*]

Are there any members who so wish to inform the Chair?

**Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.):** I want to join with my colleagues in expressing our appreciation for your 35 years of service, now sitting as our dean presiding over these moments.

After some serious consideration of this moment, I would like to say that reflecting on the nature and the character of this Parliament which we are about to endure, the 38th Parliament, I think it would be wise that a person of great character, quality and commitment to the Speaker's chair assume that role. Of course we have a very historic occasion with some great progress in parliamentary reform that is occurring.

I would like to defer my name and will be throwing my support to that man of character, the member for Kingston and the Islands.

*Election of Speaker*

**The Presiding Officer (Hon. Bill Blaikie):** I would say to the member that this is not an opportunity for endorsements. This is an opportunity to withdraw your name.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** I am sure that I informed the proper officials that I did not wish to run for Speaker. I so confirm today and withdraw my name from the list.

[*English*]

**The Presiding Officer (Hon. Bill Blaikie):** The hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso.

● (1135)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** I would be pleased, to the comfort of the House, to have my name struck from the ballot.

**The Presiding Officer (Hon. Bill Blaikie):** Thank you.

The hon. member for Random—Burin—St. George's.

**Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** I also wish to have my name removed from the list. My name being there has more to do with Canada Post than with my desire to be Speaker.

**The Presiding Officer (Hon. Bill Blaikie):** The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Essex.

**Hon. Jerry Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex, Lib.):** I will admit that I was late getting my forms back and that is why my name is on the list, but I am grateful to now say thanks to my constituents for electing me and allowing me to come back and spend time in the House.

I also would congratulate you, sir, on your position and would ask that my name be withdrawn.

**The Presiding Officer (Hon. Bill Blaikie):** The hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** I will be brief. I simply want to withdraw my name from the list.

[*English*]

**The Presiding Officer (Hon. Bill Blaikie):** I kind of like it up here and I am sorry that my time here is going to be so short.

Hon. members are aware that there is now only one name on the list of eligible candidates for Speaker. The House is in a peculiar situation as there are no precedents that spell out how to proceed when there is only one candidate for the speakership, but as we know, the House can do many things by unanimous consent. I am in the hands of hon. members. Is there unanimous consent to dispense with the speech by the candidate and the one hour suspension of the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Presiding Officer (Hon. Bill Blaikie):** Is there unanimous consent to dispense with the secret ballot and declare the candidate elected?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Presiding Officer (Hon. Bill Blaikie):** I congratulate the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and will do so physically in a moment.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

(The Presiding Officer having vacated the chair, and the mace having been laid under the table, conducted Mr. Peter Milliken from his seat in the House to the chair)

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I want to return my humble acknowledgments to the House for the great honour you have conferred upon me in electing me to be your Speaker.

Those words are formal ones that I am supposed to say at the beginning of Parliament and that each newly elected Speaker has to say, so I want to make sure I have them correct, but I want also to thank each one of you, my colleagues, for having chosen me to be your Speaker once again.

[*Translation*]

I had the great honour and pleasure of serving as Speaker during the last Parliament. I greatly appreciated the support and help I received from the members of all the parties in this House during those years and earlier as well when I was Deputy Speaker during the 36th Parliament.

● (1140)

[*English*]

For the 38th Parliament to be here and to have a chance to work with you again of course is a great honour. I very much appreciate your support today in the withdrawal of all of you from being candidates, which is very flattering and for which I thank you, and for the chance to work with you again as we embark on what I have no doubt will be a very interesting Parliament. Whether it is long or short, it will be something in which we will have great fun throughout.

**An hon. member:** Four years.

**The Speaker:** However long, it will be an enjoyable experience for all of us. I hope we have the privilege of working together as we did in the last Parliament, sharing experiences here in the House and of course in the committees of the House and in the various meetings we have together.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank the voters in Kingston and the Islands who re-elected me.

[*English*]

Being Speaker is a wonderful privilege because not only do you have the privilege of serving as a member of Parliament for a constituency of about 95,000 electors but you also have the privilege of serving another constituency of 307 other electors in the House. That part of the job is entertaining too.

All of us share experiences as representatives of a constituency in our great country and all of us will work together to do the best we can for our constituents by our service in this House.

I am very grateful that the electors of my riding have chosen to send me back to this House. Of course if any of you want to come to Kingston you are always welcome to visit the city. I would be more than happy to show you around, assuming I am there, but when there are breaks in the House we might go. You are very welcome to come.

[Translation]

I invite you to visit Kingston. It is a beautiful city not very far from Ottawa.

[English]

The other group I would like to thank today is my family, who have come here in some numbers to be present for this occasion. My mother is here, Peg Milliken, and four of my sisters, Ann Campbell, Kathy McIlquham, Amanda Milliken and Elizabeth McLean. I believe my brother, Bill Milliken, has arrived, and my sister-in-law Pat Milliken and two of my brothers-in-law, Ross McIlquham and James McLean. They are all in the gallery at the far end. I am delighted they are here.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** Only my mother is willing to stand but that is all right.

Their support of course in elections is very important for me. Many of them live in Kingston and help. Some of them live in other constituencies and some of you have mentioned that to me. It is always a pleasure to welcome them to Ottawa. I am glad they came today.

Finally, I want to say how much I am looking forward to working with each one of you.

[Translation]

I hope our time here will be very interesting and that cooperation will prevail on both sides of the House. I am here to help you. As I will say tomorrow, I am truly a servant of the House. I am at your service to help you in your work and I hope to do so often over the coming weeks.

[English]

To each of you I express my congratulations on your own election, my delight at being able to work with you again and my pleasure at you having honoured me by choosing me to be your Speaker. Thank you very much.

*And the mace having been laid upon the table:*

**Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know I speak for all the people in this caucus, in your riding and throughout the House when I say that your success today is well earned.

Would you tell me, Mr. Speaker, if I am allowed to speak?

**The Speaker:** Yes.

**Right Hon. Paul Martin:** Now I can.

Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to hear your speech of recognition and gratitude. All of us in the House would have liked to have heard

### *Election of Speaker*

your campaign speech. I would have liked to have known what your promises were going to be.

We are delighted that you acknowledged your family in the gallery. We all hope that you will give us the same privilege. I remember you called me out of order in the last House for that very thing.

•(1145)

**The Speaker:** The Prime Minister now knows that Speakers are allowed to do those things but others cannot.

**Right Hon. Paul Martin:** Mr. Speaker, you preside now over the first minority Commons in 25 years. When you return to your office you will find an appropriate congratulatory gift. We have sent you an extra strength bottle of painkillers. I hope you use them well.

I believe it is more than symbolic that the first act of this 38th Parliament was to re-elect a Speaker who during his first term was recognized and praised for his impartiality and his constructive approach to resolving disputes.

[Translation]

The challenge that confronts all members of our minority in the Commons is straightforward. It is to make this Parliament work for Canadians and to do so we will need to be able to forge a consensus. We will need to be constructive.

Mr. Speaker, you will face new challenges in this Parliament, as will all of us in the House. Minority government means increased responsibilities for you and for those of us in the government caucus, and indeed for all members.

The government can no longer be certain that it will secure passage of legislation. The opposition parties can no longer simply vote against government bills without consequence.

[English]

The dynamic has changed but change is often invigorating. As we begin the work of the 38th Parliament, I want you and all Canadians to know that we as a government are committed to doing what it takes to achieve progress for the people of this country.

I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, and I wish you sound judgment and ample patience as you again take up your important duties.

[Translation]

**Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, speaking personally and on behalf of all the Conservative members of this Parliament, I would like to offer my congratulations on your election today.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I noted that it is tradition that you are pushed into the Chair with some reluctance by the Prime Minister and myself. I must tell you, though, as much as I admire your performance and abilities, your reluctance was not very convincing.

*Election of Speaker*

We all know the reason for that. We know that you do love this job. Over the years, on several different occasions, we have had the opportunity to talk about the job. I remember we had dinner and lunch, and would often banter about these kinds of things. What I learned in those days was not just your interest in the Speaker's position but your love of procedure and rules.

I was always very impressed with your knowledge of Erskine May, Beauchesne's and all of the various ins and outs of the Standing Orders. Of course, it made me wonder a great deal about you. It did obviously eminently qualify you on the surface for the job, but you have demonstrated a much greater qualification than just these academic credentials.

You have demonstrated in the past four years an exceptional ability as Speaker. It is reflected in the vote today and the unanimity. The job obviously loves you, and you should take a great deal of honour and pleasure from the fact that you would get the unanimous support of every member of every caucus. I can certainly tell you, as leaders, we would appreciate the unanimous support of just our own caucuses. You have achieved a tremendous endorsement today because of the job you have done in the past.

As the Prime Minister alluded to, and I will try not to comment too much on what the Prime Minister said today, we of course will try to ensure that we work by consensus rather than governing as if we have a majority, to quote an infamous phrase.

Mr. Speaker, you will face, as you know, some challenging times. You are going to face a new situation and also some new rules. You can be assured on my part, and I am sure the part of all of my colleagues, that we will give you our fullest and reasonable cooperation in all of the difficult tasks you have to perform. We wish you wisdom and patience in your own deliberations.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate you on your election. In the past, we have learned to work together and I believe we have done so with mutual respect, responsibility and rigour. We must be guided by a desire to agree on how to disagree. God knows this will be important in this minority Parliament. We must demonstrate rigour, and so must you, to the fullest extent. You can count on the support of all members of the Bloc to assist you in your duties, which are not easy.

Of course, we shall assume our responsibilities consistently in every vote that takes place here, as we have always done. We in the Bloc have never had a stubborn, blindly partisan attitude that we must oppose something because it comes from the red party, the blues, the greens, the purples or the party with little yellow dots. All proposals merit attention, regardless of who makes them.

Our only criterion, in the Bloc, is whether the proposals being made are in the best interests of Quebecers, no matter whether they come from the Liberals, the Conservatives, the NDP or ourselves. The new rules of Parliament will give all parties more opportunity for initiative. I believe we shall see the end of the unilateralism that has too often characterized the Liberal government. They will have to have a more respectful attitude toward the opposition parties.

Of course, we wish to work by means of consensus. Still, it sometimes happens that a consensus is impossible. You, Mr. Speaker, will have to determine who has the majority and who does not on a certain number of points. You will be faced with new rules. I know that from now on, deputy speakers will no longer be appointed by the government, but that you will propose them and the House will ratify them. That is greater democracy, which is what the people asked for in the June 28 election. We must always respect the will of the people, which is to have a Liberal government, albeit in a minority position, and an opposition that has an equally legitimate mandate to represent them here. You can count on our support, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the last time you said my name, I was among the spectators and not a member of this House. I am delighted to be here now as an elected representative. Thank you very much.

[*English*]

I want to acknowledge first of all the role that was just played by the dean of the House and to indicate that it is typical of the role that the New Democratic Party will be able to play in the future in pulling perhaps disparate points of view together around a common cause, the first act of which was your acclamation, Mr. Speaker.

Your acclamation sends a very strong signal that the members of the House wish to work together in order to achieve common objectives. I think it is going to place before you a challenge the likes of which has not been seen for quite some time. In actual fact, on each and every vote the results will by no means be predetermined.

This is going to put you and all members of the House into an interesting position. We are all going to have to work a lot harder. We are going to have to be considering the will of Canadians a lot more carefully because nothing will be prescribed in advance.

Our role as a political party will be to pursue our perspectives, and to hope and count on you to ensure that your wisdom, your eyesight and your intuition will cause you to notice that we are down at the far end of the chamber wishing to raise our points of view.

In addition, we will not to be facing a House of Commons with proposals coming simply from the government. We will be having proposals for interesting legislation and initiatives emerging from all parts of the House, and certainly from this corner. It will be very important that your judgment and your role here ensure that all members of the House are able to bring forward effectively the kind of recommendations that Canadians want to see, and to allow the votes and decisions to reflect that broad consensus of Canadians that exists out there.

*Opening of Parliament***OPENING OF PARLIAMENT**

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received, which is as follows:

Rideau Hall

September 27, 2004

Mr. Speaker

I have the honour to inform you that Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada and His Excellency John Ralston Saul will arrive at the Peace Tower at 15:00 on Tuesday, the 5th of October, 2004.

When it has been indicated that all is in readiness, Their Excellencies will proceed to the Chamber of the Senate to formally open the First Session of the Thirty-Eighth Parliament of Canada.

Yours sincerely,

Curtis Barlow  
Deputy Secretary

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 3 p.m., at which time the House will proceed to the Senate where Her Excellency will open the first session of the 38th Parliament.

(The House adjourned at 11:59 a.m.)

•(1155)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend to you my congratulations and a cordial welcome. Let me assure you that we will be working hard in the interest of all Canadians, as will all the members of this Parliament. I expect to have many interesting discussions with you and my new House of Commons colleagues.

**The Speaker:** I would like to thank the leaders of all parties in the House for their kind remarks.

[*English*]

I want to reiterate how important it is for the role of the Speaker to have the cooperation of all hon. members, their support and enthusiastic endorsement of the Speaker's rulings. I look forward to that very much from all sides of the House.



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