



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, October 16, 2007**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

The House met at 6:30 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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## OPENING OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 39TH PARLIAMENT

The Parliament which had been prorogued on September 14, 2007, met this day at Ottawa for the dispatch of business.

The House met at 6:30 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

The Speaker read a communication from the Secretary to the Governor General announcing that Their Excellencies, the Governor General and Jean-Daniel Lafond, would arrive at the Peace Tower at 6:35 p.m. on Tuesday, October 16, 2007, and that when it was indicated that all was in readiness Their Excellencies would proceed to the chamber of the Senate to formally open the second session of the 39th Parliament of Canada.

\* \* \*

● (1830)

[*English*]

### VACANCIES

TORONTO CENTRE, WILLOWDALE, VANCOUVER QUADRA, ROBerval—  
LAC-SAINT-JEAN, DESNETHÉ—MISSINIPPI—CHURCHILL RIVER

**The Speaker:** It is my duty to inform the House that vacancies have occurred in the representation, namely: Mr. Bill Graham, member for the electoral district of Toronto Centre, by resignation effective July 2, 2007; Mr. Jim Peterson, member for the electoral district of Willowdale, by resignation effective July 12, 2007; Mr. Stephen Owen, member for the electoral district of Vancouver Quadra, by resignation effective July 27, 2007; Mr. Michel Gauthier, member for the electoral district of Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, by resignation effective July 29, 2007; Mr. Gary Merasty, member for the electoral district of Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River by resignation effective August 31, 2007.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to subsection 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I have addressed my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of writs for the election of new members to fill these vacancies.

### NEW MEMBER

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mrs. Ève-Mary Thaï Thi Lac, member for the electoral district of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

\* \* \*

### NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mrs. Ève-Mary Thaï Thi Lac, member for the electoral district of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, introduced by Mr. Gilles Duceppe and Mr. Michel Guimond.

\* \* \*

● (1835)

### NEW MEMBER

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Thomas Mulcair, member for the electoral district of Outremont.

\* \* \*

### NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Thomas Mulcair, Member for the electoral district of Outremont, introduced by Mr. Jack Layton and Mr. Yvon Godin.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED LEAK OF THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It may be that today the spin doctors and the media manipulators have gone too far.

A number of media outlets, including the Canadian Press, the CBC and others are reporting that copies of the Speech from the Throne, which members of Parliament are about to hear in the other place, were leaked to the media across Ottawa more than two hours in advance.

Copious details have been discussed in news broadcasts ever since without the knowledge of members of Parliament.

*Business of the House*

This is a flagrant contempt of Parliament. Parliament needs to know exactly who was engaged in this improper and premature release of the throne speech. Was it accidental? If not, who authorized it and at what level will the responsibility be shouldered?

Mr. Speaker, the references in Marleau and Montpetit and in Maingot are very clear. I will not trouble you with the details now, but I am happy to make those citations later if you require them.

However, I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that if you find a prima facie case of privilege in this case, that the details of a throne speech have been prematurely leaked in advance, then I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I believe that everyone is quite familiar that the government would genuinely be concerned about any suggestion that there had been any premature leak of the throne speech. I saw the same reports that the Liberal House leader saw and was very troubled by them myself, as I know was everyone in our government troubled by them. It is not our practice to leak, in any case, and I think everyone is well aware of the practice of the government in that regard.

I will observe that sadly the leak coincided with perhaps just a few 15 minutes after those speeches were made available as they are on convention advanced to the other party leaders.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

• (1840)

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. House leader for the official opposition have something else to contribute on this point?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. The hon. gentleman can be assured that the information was in the hands of the media before the event that he refers to.

**The Speaker:** I thank the two House leaders for their contribution. I will of course look into the matter in due course and report back to the House if as and when necessary.

\* \* \*

• (1845)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**The Speaker:** Order. It appears we have a few moments and to save time later I will inform members of something they are just aching to hear about now.

As hon. members know, our Standing Orders provide for the continuance of private members' business from session to session within a Parliament.

The list for the consideration of private members' business established on April 7, 2006, continues from the last session to this session notwithstanding prorogation.

As such, all items of private members' business originating in the House of Commons that were listed on the order paper during the previous session are reinstated to the order paper and shall be deemed to have been considered and approved at all stages completed at the time of prorogation of the first session.

[*Translation*]

Generally speaking, in practical terms, this also means that those items on the Order of Precedence remain on the Order of Precedence or, as the case may be, are referred to committee or sent to the Senate.

However, there is one item that cannot be left on the Order of Precedence. Pursuant to Standing Order 87(1), Parliamentary secretaries who are ineligible by virtue of their office to be put on the Order of Precedence will be dropped to the bottom of the list for the consideration of private members' business, where they will remain as long as they hold those offices.

Consequently, the item in the name of the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Motion M-302, is withdrawn from the Order of Precedence.

[*English*]

With regard to the remaining items on the order of precedence let me remind the House of the specifics since the House is scheduled to resume its daily private members' business hour starting tomorrow.

At prorogation, there were seven private members' bills originating in the House of Commons adopted at second reading and referred to committee. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 86.1:

[*Translation*]

Bill C-207, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for new graduates working in designated regions), is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Finance;

Bill C-265, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (qualification for and entitlement to benefits), is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities;

[*English*]

Bill C-305, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (exemption from taxation of 50% of United States social security payments to Canadian residents), is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Finance;

[*Translation*]

Bill C-327, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act (reduction of violence in television broadcasts), is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage;

[*English*]

Bill C-343, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (motor vehicle theft), is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights;

Bill C-377, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development; and

Bill C-428, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (methamphetamine), is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Bills deemed introduced, read the first time, read the second time and referred to a committee)

[*Translation*]

Furthermore, four Private Members' bills originating in the House of Commons had been read the third time and passed. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 86.1, the following bills are deemed adopted at all stages and passed by the House:

Bill C-280, An Act to Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (coming into force of sections 110, 111 and 171);

[*English*]

Bill C-292, An Act to implement the Kelowna Accord;

Bill C-293, An Act respecting the provision of official development assistance abroad; and

Bill C-299, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (identification information obtained by fraud or false pretence).

Accordingly, a message will be sent to inform the Senate that this House has adopted these four bills.

Hon. members will find at their desks an explanatory note recapitulating these remarks. The Table officers are available to answer any further questions that hon. members may have.

I trust that these measures will assist the House in understanding how private members' business will be conducted in this second session of the 39th Parliament.

(Bills deemed adopted at all stages and passed by the House)

\* \* \*

### OPENING OF SESSION

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

Mr. Speaker, Her Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

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

\* \* \*

● (2000)

### ORDER PAPER

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that in accordance with representations made by the government pursuant to Standing Order 55(1) I have caused to be publicized a special order paper giving notice of two government bills.

[*Translation*]

I therefore lay the relevant document upon the table.

### *The Address*

#### OATHS OF OFFICE

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce C-1, respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office.

(Motions deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

#### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that when this House did attend Her Excellency the Governor General this day in the Senate chamber, Her 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 Senators,  
Members of the House of Commons,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I would like to address the first words in this chamber to the members of the Canadian Forces, some of whom are present here today. Their commitment and courage in the name of justice, equality and freedom—whose benefits are not accorded to all peoples in the world—are worthy of our utmost respect.

The Speech from the Throne is an important moment in our country's democratic life. Through the Speech from the Throne, the Government shares its vision with Canadians. And it is thus that we open the Second Session of the Thirty Ninth Parliament today.

Fifty years ago, on October 14, 1957, during her first visit to Canada as its Sovereign, and for the first time in Canadian history, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II opened the First Session of the Twenty-Third Parliament.

This room is filled with history, and we mark history again this year as we celebrate a number of anniversaries. I think, in particular, of the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in the British Empire. I also think of the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Citizenship Act on January 1, 1947. And I think of the 40th anniversary of the Order of Canada, whose one hundredth investiture ceremony we will soon be celebrating at Rideau Hall.

And although Canada is a young country, its history is marked by our unwavering willingness—which I was touched to see all across Canada—to be and to continue to be a generous society. A society that is concerned about the well being of others. A society that is protective of the spirit of this bountiful land, a deep respect learned from Aboriginal peoples. A society that is committed to finding solutions to today's challenges. A society that is open to creation and quick to innovate. A society that is filled with young people who have an unprecedented openness to the world.

#### **Strong Leadership. A Better Canada.**

Canada is the greatest country in the world, a nation of enormous potential built through the imagination and dedication of ordinary Canadians. Canadians who have worked hard to build a better life for their families. Canadians who have joined with their neighbours to create a society founded on peace and prosperity.

*The Address*

Canada is their legacy to us.

Canadians expect their government to help them build on this legacy. They want a government that sets clear goals and delivers concrete results. A government that is accountable. A government that puts Canadians and their families first.

Our Government has worked hard to meet these expectations. Canadians now have more money in their pockets because taxes have been cut. Families now have real choice in child care through the Universal Child Care Benefit. Canadians now have a government committed to helping them get the medical care they need more quickly. A government that is tackling crime and making neighbourhoods safer.

The results are clear: the economy is strong, the government is clean and the country is united.

Now is the time to continue building a better Canada. In the next session, our Government will focus on five clear priorities: strengthening Canada's sovereignty and place in the world; building a stronger federation; providing effective economic leadership; continuing to tackle crime; and improving our environment.

**Strengthening Canada's Sovereignty and Place in the World**

Canada is built on a common heritage of values, which Canadians have fought and died to defend. It is a country that continues to attract newcomers seeking refuge and opportunity, who see Canada as a place where they can work hard, raise families and live in freedom. Our Government is resolved to uphold this heritage by protecting our sovereignty at home and living by our values abroad.

The Arctic is an essential part of Canada's history. One of our Fathers of Confederation, D'Arcy McGee, spoke of Canada as a northern nation, bounded by the blue rim of the ocean. Canadians see in our North an expression of our deepest aspirations: our sense of exploration, the beauty and the bounty of our land, and our limitless potential.

But the North needs new attention. New opportunities are emerging across the Arctic, and new challenges from other shores. Our Government will bring forward an integrated northern strategy focused on strengthening Canada's sovereignty, protecting our environmental heritage, promoting economic and social development, and improving and devolving governance, so that northerners have greater control over their destinies.

To take advantage of the North's vast opportunities, northerners must be able to meet their basic needs. Our Government will work to continue to improve living conditions in the North for First Nations and Inuit through better housing.

Our Government will build a world-class arctic research station that will be on the cutting edge of arctic issues, including environmental science and resource development. This station will be built by Canadians, in Canada's Arctic, and it will be there to serve the world.

As part of asserting sovereignty in the Arctic, our Government will complete comprehensive mapping of Canada's Arctic seabed. Never before has this part of Canada's ocean floor been fully mapped.

Defending our sovereignty in the North also demands that we maintain the capacity to act. New arctic patrol ships and expanded aerial surveillance will guard Canada's Far North and the Northwest Passage. As well, the size and capabilities of the Arctic Rangers will be expanded to better patrol our vast Arctic territory.

Ensuring our capacity to defend Canada's sovereignty is at the heart of the Government's efforts to rebuild the Canadian Forces. Canada's men and women in uniform risk their lives for their country, and deserve the equipment and training required for a first-class, modern military. Our Government will modernize Canada's military to provide effective surveillance and protection for all of our country, cooperate in the defence of North America, and meet our responsibilities abroad to the United Nations and our allies. Further, recognizing the important role that the Reserves play in this modernization, our Government will work with the provinces and territories to bring forward a comprehensive plan to modernize reservist reinstatement policies.

At the same time as our Government rebuilds to meet our future needs, it will continue to improve support for our veterans who have contributed so much to defending Canada in the past.

Rebuilding our capabilities and standing up for our sovereignty have sent a clear message to the world: Canada is back as a credible player on the international stage. Our Government believes that focus and action, rather than rhetoric and posturing, are restoring our influence in global affairs. Guided by our shared values of democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law, our Government will continue Canada's international leadership through concrete actions that bring results.

A commitment to action means that Canada must make common cause with those fighting for the values we uphold. Our Government will immediately call upon Parliament to confer honorary citizenship on Aung San Suu Kyi. Her long struggle to bring freedom and democracy to the people of Burma has made her the embodiment of these ideals and an inspiration to all of us.

Nowhere is Canada making a difference more clearly than in Afghanistan. Canada has joined the United Nations-sanctioned mission in Afghanistan because it is noble and necessary. Canadians understand that development and security go hand in hand. Without security, there can be no humanitarian aid, no reconstruction and no democratic development. Progress will be slow, but our efforts are bearing fruit. There is no better measure of this progress than the four million Afghan boys and two million girls who can dream of a better future because they now go to school.

*The Address*

The Canadian Forces mission has been approved by Parliament until February 2009, and our Government has made clear to Canadians and our allies that any future military deployments must also be supported by a majority of parliamentarians. In the coming session, members will be asked to vote on the future of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan. This decision should honour the dedication and sacrifice of Canada's development workers, diplomats and men and women in uniform. It should ensure that progress in Afghanistan is not lost and that our international commitments and reputation are upheld.

Our Government does not believe that Canada should simply abandon the people of Afghanistan after February 2009. Canada should build on its accomplishments and shift to accelerate the training of the Afghan army and police so that the Afghan government can defend its own sovereignty. This will not be completed by February 2009, but our Government believes this objective should be achievable by 2011, the end of the period covered by the Afghanistan Compact. Our Government has appointed an independent panel to advise Canadians on how best to proceed given these considerations.

In our own neighbourhood, the Americas, Canada is back playing an active role. The Canadian model of constitutional democracy and economic openness combined with social safety nets, equitable wealth creation and sharing across regions has much to offer those countries struggling to build a better future.

Canada's efforts in Haiti are a compelling example of how we can work with our neighbours to ensure security and development. Canadians understand that our country has a responsibility to help countries struggling to make a better life for their people—particularly in promoting democratic governance in fragile states. In Haiti and elsewhere, our Government will bring greater focus and effectiveness to Canada's international assistance to ensure that Canadians' money is well spent.

The best hope for fostering development and our common security in the hemisphere and beyond is through bolstering international trade. Through renewed focus on trade and investment arrangements, Canada has already secured a deal with the European Free Trade Association, the first new agreement in more than half a decade. Our Government will keep advancing Canada's trade interests in the Americas and around the world to open up new markets for Canada's innovators.

**Strengthening the Federation and our Democratic Institutions**

Next year we mark important anniversaries spanning our country and its history. We will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City. Canada was born in French, reflected in the presence of francophones throughout Canada, and in Parliament's recognition that the Québécois form a nation within our united country. We will also celebrate the 250th anniversary of the establishment of Nova Scotia's representative assembly, which marks the birth of Canadian parliamentary democracy, and the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Crown Colony of British Columbia.

John A. Macdonald, George-Étienne Cartier and the other Fathers of Confederation brought many peoples and regions together to

create a federation that has served Canadians well for 140 years. Our Government is committed to strengthening that union: it has concentrated on its national role by reinvesting in neglected federal responsibilities, such as trade, defence, public safety and security. It has put fiscal relations with provinces and territories on a principled basis and increased the level of transfers to support quality health care and social services.

Our Government believes that the constitutional jurisdiction of each order of government should be respected. To this end, guided by our federalism of openness, our Government will introduce legislation to place formal limits on the use of the federal spending power for new shared-cost programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. This legislation will allow provinces and territories to opt out with reasonable compensation if they offer compatible programs.

Our Government will also pursue the federal government's rightful leadership in strengthening Canada's economic union. Despite the globalization of markets, Canada still has a long way to go to establish free trade among our provinces. It is often harder to move goods and services across provincial boundaries than across our international borders. This hurts our competitive position but, more importantly, it is just not the way a country should work. Our Government will consider how to use the federal trade and commerce power to make our economic union work better for Canadians.

Canadians understand that the federation is only as strong as the democratic institutions that underpin it. Our Government believes that Canada is not well served by the Senate in its current form. To ensure that our institutions reflect our shared commitment to democracy, our Government will continue its agenda of democratic reform by reintroducing important pieces of legislation from the last session, including direct consultations with voters on the selection of Senators and limitations on their tenure. In addition, the integrity of our federal voting system will be further strengthened through measures to confirm the visual identification of voters.

Our Government supports Canada's linguistic duality. It will renew its commitment to official languages in Canada by developing a strategy for the next phase of the Action Plan for Official Languages.

Our Government remains committed to improving the lives of Canada's Aboriginal people. The Government will reintroduce legislation to guarantee to people living on reserve the same protections other Canadians enjoy under the Canadian Human Rights Act. Our Government will also present legislation on specific claims, which will finally bring fairness and timely resolution to the claims process.

Our Government recently concluded a final settlement on Indian Residential Schools and will launch a commission for truth and reconciliation. The Prime Minister, on behalf of our Government, will use this occasion to make a statement of apology to close this sad chapter in our history.

**Providing Effective Economic Leadership for a Prosperous Future**

*The Address*

This is a time of economic uncertainty and volatility in the wider world. While the economic fundamentals of our country are strong, Canada is not immune from this turbulence. Canadians understand these challenges and want a government that is a competent and effective manager of the economy.

With Advantage Canada, our Government has laid out a sensible economic plan to secure better-paying jobs and solid growth for Canadians. The Minister of Finance will soon provide a Fall Economic and Fiscal Update, which will outline the next steps in that plan to ensure that Canada has a modern infrastructure, an innovative and entrepreneurial business environment, and a tax system that rewards hard work—all based on a foundation of sound fiscal management.

As part of ensuring economic security for Canadians, our Government will bring forward a long-term plan of broad-based tax relief for individuals, businesses and families—including following through on its commitment to a further cut to the GST. To complement this, our Government will support Canadian researchers and innovators in developing new ideas and bringing them to the marketplace through Canada's Science and Technology Strategy. Our Government will improve the protection of cultural and intellectual property rights in Canada, including copyright reform. Our Government will also take measures to improve the governance and management of the Employment Insurance Account.

The bedrock of our workforce is middle-class Canadians and their families. These families worry about the rising costs of higher education and the expense of caring for elderly parents. They worry about affordable housing and the number of homeless people on our streets. Our Government is committed to helping Canadian families meet their needs. The Working Income Tax Benefit will help Canadians get back into the workforce, and the registered disability savings plan will help families care for children with severe disabilities. Our Government will continue to invest in our families and our future, and will help those seeking to break free from the cycles of homelessness and poverty.

Our Government will announce an infrastructure program, the Building Canada Plan, to support our long-term growth. By investing in our transport and trade hubs, including the Windsor–Detroit corridor and the Atlantic and Pacific gateways, our Government will help rebuild our fundamentals for continued growth.

The result will be safer roads and bridges, shorter commutes, more competitive business, improved cultural infrastructure and a better quality of life for all Canadians.

Our Government will stand up for Canada's traditional industries. Key sectors including forestry, fisheries, manufacturing and tourism are facing challenges. Our Government has taken action to support workers as these industries adjust to global conditions and will continue to do so in the next session.

The agricultural sector will benefit from our Government's promotion of biofuels and the new Growing Forward agricultural framework. Our Government will recognize the views of farmers, as expressed in the recent plebiscite on barley, by enacting marketing choice. Together with our Government's strong support for Canada's

supply-managed system, these approaches will deliver stable, predictable and bankable support for farm families.

Our mining and resource sectors present extraordinary opportunities across Canada, and our Government will help move forward by providing a single window for major project approvals. With these increased opportunities for employment, our Government will continue to foster partnerships that help Aboriginal people get the skills and training to take advantage of these job prospects in the North and across Canada.

**Tackling Crime and Strengthening the Security of Canadians**

Canada was founded on the principles of peace, order and good government. This is the birthright of all Canadians; yet Canadians feel less safe today and rightly worry about the security of their neighbourhoods and the country. There is no greater responsibility for a government than to protect this right to safety and security.

In the last session, our Government introduced important and timely legislation to tackle violent crime. Unfortunately much of this legislation did not pass. That is not good enough to maintain the confidence of Canadians. Our Government will immediately reintroduce these measures with a single, comprehensive Tackling Violent Crime bill to protect Canadians and their communities from violent criminals and predators. This will include measures on the age of protection, impaired driving, dangerous offenders and stricter bail and mandatory prison sentences for those who commit gun crimes. Canadians expect prompt passage of this crucial legislation.

Our Government will go further with a Safer Communities strategy to deal with the critical intersection of drug, youth and property crime. Our Government will strengthen the Youth Criminal Justice Act to ensure that young offenders who commit serious crimes are held accountable to victims and their communities. Our Government will introduce tough new laws to tackle property crime, including the serious problem of auto theft. New measures to address elder abuse and to curb identity theft will also be introduced. Our Government will implement the National Anti-Drug Strategy giving law enforcement agencies powers to take on those who produce and push drugs on our streets.

In addition to tougher laws, our Government will provide targeted support to communities and victims. It will help families and local communities in steering vulnerable youth away from a life of drugs and crime, and the Anti-Drug Strategy will help to treat those suffering from drug addiction. It will again ask Parliament to repeal the wasteful long-gun registry. Our Government will also ensure effective law enforcement—starting with resources to recruit 2,500 more officers to police our streets.

*The Address*

The concern of Canadians in protecting our communities extends naturally to protecting our country against threats to our national security: those who would attack the peaceful pluralism of our society through acts of terrorism. Canada has experienced the tragedy of terrorism before. The report from the public inquiry into the Air India bombing will be an important contribution to safeguarding the lives of Canadians in the future.

Our Government will address Canadians directly on the challenge of protecting our free and open society with a statement on national security. The Government will introduce legislation to make sure that Canada has the tools it needs to stop those who would threaten our cities, communities and families, including measures to strengthen the Anti-Terrorism Act and to respond to the Supreme Court decision on security certificates.

**Improving the Environment and Health of Canadians**

Threats to our environment are a clear and present danger that now confronts governments around the world. This is nowhere more evident than in the growing challenge of climate change.

Our Government believes that action is needed now to ensure our quality of life, particularly for those most vulnerable to health threats from the environment—our children and seniors.

Climate change is a global issue and requires a global solution. Our Government believes strongly that an effective global approach to greenhouse gas emissions must have binding targets that apply to all major emitters, including Canada. Canada has already engaged the international community at APEC, the G8 and the United Nations and will continue to press for a new international agreement that cuts global emissions in half by 2050.

As we pursue a global consensus, Canada is acting even more aggressively at home. Our Government will implement our national strategy to reduce Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions 60 to 70 percent by 2050. There will be a 20 percent reduction by 2020. Our Government will bring forward the elements from Canada's Clean Air Act, which had all-party consensus, for parliamentary consideration.

This strategy will institute binding national regulations on greenhouse gas emissions across all major industrial sectors—with requirements for emissions reductions starting this year. Our Government will also bring forward the first ever national air pollution regulations. In so doing, our Government will put Canada at the forefront of clean technologies to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Our Government will also establish a carbon emissions trading market that will give business the incentive to run cleaner, greener operations.

At the end of 2005, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions were 33 percent above the Kyoto commitment. It is now widely understood that, because of inaction on greenhouse gases over the last decade, Canada's emissions cannot be brought to the level required under the Kyoto Protocol within the compliance period, which begins on January 1, 2008, just 77 days from now.

The world is moving on to address climate change and the environment, and Canada intends to help lead the effort at home and abroad.

Beyond regulating greenhouse gases and air pollution, our Government has also acted to protect sensitive areas, including a massive expansion of Nahanni National Park, and preserving the Great Bear Rainforest, Point Pleasant Park and Stanley Park. Through our new infrastructure plan, our Government will promote a cleaner environment by investing in public transport and water treatment, and by cleaning up contaminated sites. A new water strategy will be implemented to help clean up our major lakes and oceans and to improve access to safe drinking water for First Nations.

In the past, environmental legislation and regulation have had little impact because they have lacked an effective enforcement regime. In the coming session, our Government will bolster the protection of our water and land through tougher environmental enforcement that will make polluters accountable.

Environmental protection is not just about protecting nature. It is about the health of Canadians. Recent events have called into question the safety of basic products such as food for our families and toys for our children.

Our Government shares the concern of parents about the safety of consumer products and food. Canadians should expect the same standards of quality from imported goods as they do from products made at home. The Government will introduce measures on food and product safety to ensure that families have confidence in the quality and safety of what they buy.

**Conclusion: The North Star**

Canadians can be proud of their country and its achievements. Working together we have built a nation that is prosperous and safe; a land where merit trumps privilege; a place where people from around the world live in harmony; a federation that is united at home and respected abroad.

Like the North Star, Canada has been a guide to other nations; through difficult times, Canada has shone as an example of what a people joined in common purpose can achieve. Yet Canada's greatest strength lies in its energy and determination to move forward and build a better future.

Our Government is committed to strong leadership to realize that future. A Canada proud of its leadership in the world and confident in its economic future. A Canada built on a strong federation and a robust democracy. A Canada that is safe for our families and healthy for our children.

Canadians, standing on a proud history, look onto a horizon as limitless as the promise of our country. It is up to us to build on the legacy we have inherited, to seize the opportunities of the future, and to bring about an even better Canada for our children.

May your deliberations be guided by Divine Providence, may your wisdom and patriotism enlarge the prosperity of the country and promote in every way the well-being of its people.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC)** moved:

*The Address*

That the Speech of Her Excellency the Governor General, delivered this day from the Throne to both Houses of Parliament, be taken into consideration later this day.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the business of supply be considered at the next sitting of the House.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

● (2005)

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** It is my duty to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 81(10)(b), five days shall be allotted to the business of supply, ending on December 10, 2007.

\* \* \*

[English]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the following changes be made to the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs: Mr. Dominic LeBlanc for Mr. Stephen Owen and Mr. Pierre Lemieux for Mr. Jay Hill.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

[English]

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

The House proceeded to the consideration of the speech delivered by Her Excellency the Governor General at the opening of the session.

**Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking Her Excellency the Governor General for graciously reading the Speech from the Throne. Her delivery once again was superb.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my family: my wife, Sandra, and our three children, Fabian Jr., Mark, and Heather. Their

continued love and support during almost 15 years of political life is a never-ending source of strength for me.

I would also like to thank my constituents in the riding of Avalon, in the wonderful province of Newfoundland and Labrador, for giving me their confidence and trust. It is my great honour and privilege to represent them in this honourable House.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Prime Minister for having asked me to move the government's motion in support of the Speech from the Throne.

It is a visionary document that sets out our agenda not just for the upcoming session of Parliament but for the long term future of Canada. Our agenda is focused on building a stronger, safer, better Canada that works for all of us.

In the first session of Parliament, we delivered on the following commitments, which we made to Canadians in the last federal election.

We passed the Federal Accountability Act, the toughest anti-corruption legislation in Canadian history.

We cut taxes right across the board, including the GST.

We started cracking down on gun, gang and drug crime.

We provided direct benefits to families with the universal child care benefit.

We worked with the provinces and territories to develop patient wait time guarantees.

We took concrete action to protect and improve the environment.

We restored fiscal balance by increasing equalization payments and funding the large social transfers on an equal per capita cash basis.

We revived Canada's traditional leadership role on the international stage.

I think members would agree that this is an impressive list of accomplishments for a minority government, but as today's Speech from the Throne demonstrates, we have only just begin to build a better, safer Canada.

Our government will focus on five core priorities in the upcoming session of Parliament. These priorities will build on the successes we have achieved so far.

First, our government will continue to strengthen Canada's sovereignty and security. Gone are the days of neglecting the Canadian Forces. Gone are the days of ignoring challenges to our sovereignty and of pursuing a weak and indecisive foreign policy.

I have had the privilege of talking to many of our men and women in uniform, especially those from my native Newfoundland and Labrador. I have heard them relate their experiences of how they are indeed making a positive difference throughout the world in places less fortunate than Canada, such as Afghanistan. They are assured of our government's continued support for their efforts to make our world a safer place, for ours is a government that takes these responsibilities seriously.

*The Address*

That is why we will do more to assert and defend our sovereignty in the Arctic, and to ensure that Canada's foreign policy defends our interests and projects the values we hold dear: democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law.

● (2010)

Second, our government will continue to strengthen our federation. Canada, I am pleased to report, is more united today than it has been in four decades, but we need to do more to undo the damage done to federalism by our predecessors.

Our government will work to place formal limits on the use of federal spending for new shared cost programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. We will also push ahead with democratizing the Senate by reintroducing legislation that would lower Senate terms from 45 years to 8 years. We will give Canadians a voice in selecting their representatives in the upper chamber.

Third, our government will continue to provide effective economic leadership. Building upon our tax cutting success from the first session, we will bring forward a long term plan of further broad-based tax relief for individuals, businesses and families.

We will also continue supporting Canadian workers in troubled sectors like manufacturing, forestry, agriculture, tourism and fisheries as their industries adjust to evolving international economic conditions.

Fourth, we will continue tackling an issue ranking Canadians from coast to coast to coast: crime. In addition to reintroducing our anti-violent crime measures that were blocked by the opposition in the last session, our government will undertake new initiatives aimed at cracking down on young offenders and property crime.

We will also take action to ensure Canadians are protected from terrorism, the bane of democratic free societies in our modern age.

As the Governor General rightly noted, peace, order and good government are the principles upon which Canada was founded. Our government is going to work hard to ensure that they prevail over those who would wreak havoc in our communities.

Last, but certainly not least, we will continue protecting and improving Canada's most important natural resource, our environment. Canadians have made it clear. They are fed up with lofty words masking inaction. They want policies that make real measurable improvements to the environment. Our government has heard this call and we are acting.

In addition to taking a leading role in the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, our government will bring forward the first ever national air pollution regulations. We will strengthen enforcement to punish those who pollute our water and land.

Our government is intent on building a better Canada through strong leadership. In the weeks and months ahead we are going to continue delivering on the issues that matter most to ordinary Canadians. We urge the opposition parties to support our efforts. Of course, as we are all aware, it is their prerogative not to, but they should consider their choice very carefully. Canadians do not want an election. They want us to govern this country. They want strong leadership and a better, safer Canada.

● (2015)

It is an honour, therefore, to move, seconded by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, that the following address be presented to Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada.

To Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Canada, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Military Merit, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada.

May it please Your Excellency:

We, Her Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the House of Commons of Canada in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to National Poverty and Homelessness Week, it is very sad that there is nothing in the throne speech to address the most vulnerable in our society.

Will the hon. member please let us know what the government will do to help people with low incomes, people who are ailing with diseases and on long waiting lists and people who are disabled? What will it do to help the homeless, the most vulnerable in our society?

**Mr. Fabian Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member has witnessed in the past 18 months that this government has done more for families in Canada than the previous government did in 14 years.

Families have been a priority for the government. Ordinary Canadians have been a priority for the government. I assure the Canadian public tonight that the efforts we have put forward in the last 18 months will continue now as we start this session of the House of Commons.

● (2020)

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for 13 years the previous government did absolutely nothing on the environment. Could the hon. member comment on what the government intends to do about the environment, once and for all?

**Mr. Fabian Manning:** Mr. Speaker, Canadians listened for 13 years to nothing.

In the past 18 months we have put forward a plan to address the concerns of our environment, ensuring at the same time that jobs in Canada are protected. That is our priority because we cannot clean up the environment unless we have a good, solid economy to do so.

We look forward to bringing forth legislation in the House. More than that, we look forward, and the Canadian public looks forward, to having the support of the crowd on that side of the House in our effort to straighten it up.

*The Address*

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question for my hon. colleague also has to do with climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. I note that the government is suggesting that there would be a 60% or perhaps a 70% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050, despite the fact that international experts—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for London—Fanshawe has the floor.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, it is a 60% reduction, despite the fact that international experts have been very clear that there must be a reduction of 80% by 2050. Further, the government is talking about reductions by the year 2020. That is 13 years from now.

Does the government intend to wait 13 long years before it acts, despite the fact that we must act immediately? Is the government trying to rival the record that the Liberals set by doing nothing for 13 years?

**Mr. Fabian Manning:** Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of unnecessary talk that Canadians are sick of. What Canadians are interested in is a plan. It is a plan that the government will be putting forward after 13 years of inaction.

If the government aims for 70% and people are upset because we do not reach 80%, then I say to all hon. members that our plan is in place. Our plan will ask for the support of the House to be put in place. The government will aim for 70% and we will aim for 80%. I say stay tuned.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, funding for affordable housing has declined by \$700 million. In large urban centres all over Quebec and elsewhere, people are having a hard time finding places to live. They are paying a great deal of money for affordable housing.

Why has the government not said anything about people who need help with affordable housing? Is that not utterly shameful?

• (2025)

[*English*]

**Mr. Fabian Manning:** Mr. Speaker, we have assisted people with housing throughout Canada. I said earlier that we have put families first. The government has invested millions of dollars ensuring that families are protected, that families receive housing, and children have a clean and safe place in which to live and go to school. Those efforts will continue.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find this absolutely rich that here we have the member for Avalon who so dishonoured his own constituents in Newfoundland and Labrador that his reply to the Speech from the Throne is absolutely ludicrous.

We have a government that says it is strengthening the union, but at the same time it tries to set up an agreement with one province to the dismay of another. All that government is trying to do is to divide one province and setting one province against another.

I challenge the member for Avalon, who is now looking to be so bad in his own riding, to actually stand up and say yes to the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador and yes to the people of Canada, that the government will actually do something for the province and not sit back and make enemies of them all.

**Mr. Fabian Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments from the member opposite. Over the past couple of months I watched as the members for South Shore—St. Margaret's and Central Nova from Nova Scotia worked with the provincial government in trying to reach an agreement to satisfy the people of Nova Scotia.

I say here tonight that I, as the member for Avalon from the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and my two colleagues are ready, willing and able to work with the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the premier of Newfoundland and Labrador to assist in any way we can to find an agreement between the Government of Canada and the government of Newfoundland and Labrador. We are more than willing to do so.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for the past five years Canadian manufacturers have lost over 250,000 jobs. The Canadian dollar has increased. There are issues around the lack of sectoral strategies. The previous Liberal administration promised an auto policy but it did not deliver. In fact, one of its members, the minister of industry at that time, flip-flopped and crossed the floor to the Conservatives in order to pursue an aggressive strategy to sign a deal with Korea that will cost the manufacturers and auto jobs in Ontario.

Why has the government abandoned a unanimous report from the industry committee that included 22 recommendations that were agreed to by all parties, including his party. Where are those recommendations? Where are the supports for the manufacturers across this country? Why is there no auto policy? Why are the Conservatives continuing to move toward trade deals that would cost Canadians their jobs?

**Mr. Fabian Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I find it amazing. Canada is enjoying the lowest employment rate in 33 years. We are working with manufacturers across the country. We are working with the people in agriculture, in the forest industry and in the fishing industry. It was addressed today in the throne speech and it will be addressed by the government over the next number of months. We will continue to work with Canadians to ensure jobs are created throughout Canada from coast to coast. The answer is in the numbers and the answer is that we are enjoying the lowest unemployment rate in 33 years.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise here tonight in the House of Commons, to second the motion for the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

*The Address*

[English]

I would like to thank my wife Audrey and each of my children, my four daughters and my son, for all their support in my work as an MP. I also thank the good people of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for the confidence they have placed in me. It is an honour to represent them here in the House and in government.

I compliment the Governor General for her excellent delivery of the Speech from the Throne and I thank the Prime Minister for once again granting me and my riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell the great honour of replying to the Speech from the Throne.

The first speech I made in the House was to move the motion for our government's maiden throne speech which was aptly titled "Turning a New Leaf". When Canadians went to the polls in January, almost two years ago, they did so with a singular purpose: to demand change.

Disgusted with all the scandals, fed up with wasteful spending and weak leadership and demoralized by Canada's diminished role on the international stage, men and women from across our great country stood up and said enough. They demanded clean, accountable government, lower taxes, new laws cracking down on crime, choice in child care, better access to health care and strong decisive leadership at home and abroad.

In the last session of Parliament we delivered real results on all of those fronts.

Last spring we delivered a budget that restored fiscal balance and once again we kept spending focused on results and reduced taxes for working Canadians and their families.

Among the accomplishments of our Conservative budget: the marriage penalty, out of the tax system; income splitting for seniors, a truly great initiative; the lifetime capital gains exemption for farmers and small business owners, up; and taxes for families with children, down.

Tax freedom day is the day that Canadians stop working to pay taxes and start working for themselves and their families. Because of our budgets, tax freedom day arrived four days earlier this year and it will be earlier again next year.

Recently our government released an update on the health of the Canadian economy. The good news contained in its pages far outstripped our expectations. Indeed, thanks to our government's sound fiscal management, we were able to announce one of the largest debt reductions in history: \$14.2 billion and that is on top of the \$13.2 billion we paid down last year. Less debt means less interest.

Whereas the Liberals think these savings belong in government coffers, Conservatives believe they belong in the pockets of hard-working Canadian taxpayers. Thanks to our government's tax back guarantee, that is exactly where they will go, \$725 million in fact in the form of personal income tax cuts.

It may be a minority Parliament where the Liberals, NDP and Bloc hold most of the seats, but this Parliament's accomplishments have been thoroughly Conservative: a lower GST; tax relief for commuters, students, trades people, seniors; kids' sports; tax relief

for parents with children; a child care plan that focuses money on families directly instead of on a day care bureaucracy.

A national plan to preserve ecologically sensitive lands, a regulatory regime which, for the first time, reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions are Conservative accomplishments.

Fixed dates for federal elections, tougher laws against crime and more support for victims are Conservative accomplishments.

More support for veterans, boosting the military to better defend our country at home and protect our interests abroad and refocusing Canada's foreign policy to promote freedom, democracy and human rights are Conservative accomplishments. The list goes on.

Today, through Her Excellency, the Governor General, our government laid out the five core priorities in our long term agenda to build the stronger, safer country Canadians deserve.

● (2030)

To this end, in the next session of Parliament we will focus on strengthening Canada's sovereignty and security, modernizing the federation and our democratic institutions, providing effective economic leadership for a prosperous future, tackling crime and making our communities safer, and improving the environment and the health of Canadians.

While Her Excellency was thorough and clear in her explanation of the government's agenda, I would like to draw attention to a few aspects in particular. First and foremost, I am delighted that our government will continue in its drive to provide the military with the equipment and training it needs to do the job. I joined the military at the age of 17 and was honoured to serve our great country in uniform for 20 years. The dedication, professionalism and courage of our men and women of the Canadian Forces is a source of great pride for Canadians across the country. When I speak to my former military colleagues, I hear the same message time and time again, "We cannot remember when we have had a better ally in Ottawa".

As the Prime Minister himself has said on many occasions, Canada is back. This is due in no small part to our reinvigorated Canadian Forces proudly and selflessly standing up for freedom, democracy and human rights around the world. As I have said previously in the House, our government is standing up for our military men and women because they bravely stand up for Canada each and every day.

*The Address*

● (2035)

[*Translation*]

As for modernizing our federation, everyone knows that federal-provincial relations suffered considerably under the previous government. Instead of working constructively with its provincial and territorial partners, the government tried to impose its will, thereby seriously undermining national unity.

I am proud to say that, thanks to our government's policy of open and flexible federalism, that sad chapter in the history of intergovernmental relations is drawing to a close.

The Speech from the Throne confirms our intention to strengthen national unity by placing formal limits on the use of the federal spending power. We will do away with the rigid, centralizing dogma of the previous government.

As a Franco-Ontarian myself, and a member representing a riding with more than 60,000 Franco-Ontarians, I am delighted that the government is reaffirming its support for Canada's linguistic duality.

Developing a strategy for the next phase of the Action Plan for Official Languages will serve to strengthen both official languages and bilingualism in Canada, from coast to coast to coast.

[*English*]

I am the member of Parliament for the largely rural riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and farmers are a key component of my riding's economy and way of life. I meet with farmers all the time and, as such, I know and understand the challenges facing our farmers. Under the previous government, their needs fell on deaf ears. Now they have a government in Ottawa that is not just listening but delivering real results.

Uncertainty for the future has been replaced by stable, predictable and bankable support for Canadian farm families. It is for all of those reasons and many more that I am pleased to support and second the motion proposed by my colleague from Avalon.

In the days ahead, I urge my opposition colleagues to support the throne speech. Canadians have been clear: They do not want an election. They want us to govern, to provide leadership and to make Canada better for all of us. It is up to the opposition, however, to determine whether Canadians will be heading back to the polls this fall.

[*Translation*]

I sincerely hope that the opposition members will respect the will of Canadians: let us govern, rather than simply posture, and help our government to make Canada the stronger, safer and better place that Canadians deserve.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Bloc Québécois members have repeatedly pointed out to the government in this House that many cities, and even smaller towns, are going through a process of industrial obsolescence. People who have held jobs for 5, 10 or 15 years in economic sectors such as the textile sector, where competition is stiff, are losing their jobs.

We in the Bloc, and particularly our colleague, the member for Chambly—Borduas, have called for an older worker assistance program, the sort of program formerly known as POWA. Labour

congresses, employers and all those who stand with workers who have lost their jobs have called for an older worker assistance program.

Why has the government turned a deaf ear and remained insensitive to these workers who are losing their jobs? Why are there no concrete measures to help older workers?

● (2040)

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[*English*]

First, let me comment on how positive the Speech from the Throne was. It was clear and unequivocal. In our Speech from the Throne in the first session of this Parliament, we identified five priorities and we delivered. Canadians are happy. The opposition is not. In this throne speech our government has identified five more priorities and we will deliver. Canadians are happy. The opposition is not.

Regarding our economy under the leadership of our Prime Minister and our government, our economy is strong, and it is growing. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years.

**Hon. Garth Turner (Halton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the member opposite is in the light that Canadians must be shaking their heads at one of the most tepid and vacuous speeches from the throne they have ever heard. It makes us wonder why in fact there was a Speech from the Throne when nothing but a regurgitated agenda has been put forward.

Both the member who seconded the motion and the member who put forward the motion said that the government does not want an election and if the opposition does not support the throne speech, there will be an election.

Could the member explain to the people of Canada why we cannot do our jobs as members of Parliament, as members of the opposition? Why can we not look at these pieces of legislation and make amendments where necessary, improve the legislation if necessary and oppose the legislation where necessary? It does not mean that Canadians have to go to an election. Are you trying to bully the House? Are you trying to bully Canadians?

**The Speaker:** I would remind hon. members they must address their remarks through the Chair, not to one another.

The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell now has the floor and I am sure he will observe the rules in every respect.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has made it very clear that the Speech from the Throne indicates where the Conservative government is heading with respect to better serving Canadians and better serving Canada. It contains our five priorities. You can vote for the Speech from the Throne. We hope you do. You are Canadians as well—

**The Speaker:** I know the hon. member knows I cannot vote unless there is a tie, so I invite him to address his remarks through the Chair and avoid that kind of confrontation.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I was following my colleague's bad example.

*The Address*

I would invite my colleague to vote in favour of the throne speech to avoid an election. It contains many good things for Canadians. It contains what Canadians want and what they are asking of the government. Members should vote in favour of the throne speech.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we must note that the throne speech is an important marker and clearly signals the direction that the government chooses to take. The challenge we currently have is that there are some glaring oversights.

Today on Parliament Hill we saw a very powerful demonstration called “Make Poverty History”. First nations, the Council of Canadians, and poverty action groups gathered on the Hill to talk about first nations poverty.

The Liberals imposed a 2% funding cap in 1996 and that funding cap continues to be in place under the Conservative government. I would ask my colleague precisely what is in the throne speech that will signal an end to the crushing poverty that is faced by first nations, Métis and Inuit across this country?

● (2045)

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that our government is interested in all Canadians, including those who find themselves in situations of poverty. Within the throne speech are initiatives outlining that we will be working for Canadians who find themselves in poverty, particularly on aboriginal reserves. We spoke about improving housing and providing affordable housing. We spoke about providing tax cuts for Canadians from which everyone will benefit.

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member on the tremendous speech he made before the House this evening.

I was very encouraged that the Speech from the Throne brought attention to very specific justice measures once again, bills that were passed democratically by the House but unfortunately were held up in the unelected red chamber.

Does the hon. member think the Senate has any moral or democratic grounds whatsoever to hold up those justice measures that were democratically passed by the House? I would like to know if the member has any advice regarding the red chamber.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, what Canadians saw in the first session of this Parliament was obstruction both in the House and in the Senate with the delaying of bills. Bills that passed in the House moved to the Liberal dominated Senate, but under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition they stagnated, much to the shame of that party.

Canadians have asked for change. They want a government that is going to get tough on crime, get tough with criminals. We are tabling

legislation to do so, and the Senate and the House of Commons have a responsibility to pass those bills.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the comments made by the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and I would like to ask him a simple question. He indicated his interest in our veterans.

[*English*]

The hon. member will know, given his profound understanding of the concern of soldiers, that before the last election the Prime Minister, his leader, wrote a letter to Joyce Carter in which he promised that immediately after the election the government would proceed with the extension of all VIP programs to spouses of deceased veterans.

Rather than flowery talk about very general ideas and concepts that he has in his mind, I ask the member to deal with this one specific issue. Will he, as a member of Parliament, live up to the commitment that the Prime Minister, his leader, made and honour the commitment to veterans and their spouses? I want a very simple answer, yes or no. The devil is in the details. The hon. member has an obligation to stand up for all veterans and their spouses, and for Joyce Carter. Will he or will he not do it?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, let me say one thing. We stand up for our veterans. We stand on the side of veterans. We have done more for our veterans than the party on the other side ever did in 13 years. Not only that, we stand with our soldiers in Afghanistan. That is clear.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

(On motion of the Hon. Stéphane Dion, the debate was adjourned)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

(Motion agreed to)

● (2050)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:49 p.m.)



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