

MOVING
FORWARD
TOGETHER



SPEECH
FROM THE
THRONE

TO OPEN
THE FIRST SESSION
OF THE

43rd

PARLIAMENT
OF CANADA

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Honourable Senators, Members of the House of Commons, Ladies and gentlemen,



It is my pleasure to address this first session of Canada's 43rd Parliament. I would like to welcome the 98 new members of this assembly and to welcome back returning members.

Your predecessors first sat in Parliament in November 1867. Canada was barely five months old. On the scale of world history, we are still very young. Yet much has happened in the world since then. We have matured, and we are here – strong and free. There has been no civil war, no foreign armies marching on our soil. There have been agreements and differences along the way, and lots of arguments, yes, most of them delivered with much eloquence in this very chamber.

There are many reasons for our stability. First, the millions of us, whether we are from here or chose to come and live here, we share the same desire. We wish to live freely and in peace and harmony. This quest is a bedrock of our nation and informs almost everything we do. We may differ in many ways, yet we move forward as if we were one people, looking for equal opportunities and common ground. This is not by accident, but by choice. It is who we are.

And remember, as well, that our fortunes have relied often on the knowledge and the strategies of the Indigenous Peoples – what I call Indigenous genius, that allowed this nation to thrive. Their deep understanding of our natural world, their intense sense of community, should continue to affect what we do here.

For the good of our communities and the future of our children.

Kkidji mkwènimaganiwiwatch missiwè anichinapèk achitch nigan abinoudjichak kè pimadiziwatch.

Reconciliation must continue.

The second bedrock of our stability is our parliamentary system. Your work is vital, because through it, we decide what we really want as a nation. The network of laws and traditions that define what it means to be Canadian safeguards our way of life and paves the way for the future we desire. Your role in the democratic process is a privilege and a responsibility. I know that you embrace it, respecting the wishes and protecting the rights of us all.

Because we serve every single Canadian. Canadians of all genders, faiths, languages, customs or skin colours. It is perhaps the most noble undertaking we are entrusted with.

And we share the same planet. We know that we are inextricably bound to the same space-time continuum and on board the same planetary spaceship. If we put our brains and smarts and altruistic capabilities together, we can do a lot of good. We can help improve the lives of people in our communities, diminish the gaps and inequities here and elsewhere, and have a better chance at tackling serious and pressing issues like climate change, poverty, inequalities and human rights, because global issues know no borders, no timeline and truly need our attention.

I am certain that by working together, no challenges are too big. I am convinced that anyone can rise to any occasion if they are willing to work with others, to reach a higher goal and to do what is right for the common good.

OPENING



This fall, Canadians went to the polls. And they returned a minority Parliament to Ottawa. This is the will of the people, and you have been chosen to act on it.

And so we open this 43rd Parliament with a call for unity in the pursuit of common goals and aspirations.

Here in this beautiful chamber, we recognize that Canada's Senate is increasingly non-partisan, and measures will be taken to help it continue along that path. We are joined by the dedicated public servants who have vowed to work tirelessly on behalf of the people.

Canadians have sent a clear message: from young people to seniors, they want their Parliamentarians to work together on the issues that matter most to them.

In this election, Parliamentarians received a mandate from the people of Canada which Ministers will carry out. It is a mandate to fight climate change, strengthen the middle class, walk the road of reconciliation, keep Canadians safe and healthy, and position Canada for success in an uncertain world.

These are not simple tasks. But they are achievable if you stay focused on the people who sent you here. Moms and dads. Grandparents and students. New Canadians, business owners, and workers. People from all walks of life.

Every one of them expects their Parliamentarians to get to work, and deliver on a plan that moves our country forward for all Canadians, including women, members of visible and linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ2 communities.

While your approaches may differ, you share the common belief that government should try, whenever possible, to make life better for Canadians.

That includes better healthcare and affordable housing. Lower taxes for the middle class and those who need it most. Investments in infrastructure, public transit, science and innovation. Less gun violence, and a real plan to fight climate change while creating good, well-paying jobs.

These are but a few areas where this Parliament can make a real difference in the lives of Canadians.

And as much as they have instructed you to work together, Canadians have also spoken clearly about the importance of their regions and their local needs.

The Government has heard Canadians' concerns that the world is increasingly uncertain and that the economy is changing. And in this context, regional needs and differences really matter. Today's regional economic concerns are both justified and important.

The Government will work with provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous groups, stakeholders, industry and Canadians to find solutions.

With dialogue and cooperation, all regions of this country can overcome the challenges of today, and realize their full potential in the modern economy.

As the Government pursues an ambitious plan to move Canada forward, Parliamentarians can draw inspiration from Canadians themselves. Canadians have elected you to do important work, and they model – in actions big and small – how you can be effective Parliamentarians.

Neighbours helping neighbours.

Putting community first.

Finding common ground, forging bonds, and working together.

It is in that distinctly Canadian spirit of collaboration that the Government and this Parliament will build on the progress of the last mandate, and deliver a better Canada for all Canadians.

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE



Canada's children and grandchildren will judge this generation by its action – or inaction – on the defining challenge of the time: climate change.

From forest fires and floods, to ocean pollution and coastal erosion, Canadians are living the impact of climate change every day. The science is clear, and it has been for decades.

A clear majority of Canadians voted for ambitious climate action now. And that is what the Government will deliver. It will continue to protect the environment and preserve Canada's natural legacy. And it will do so in a way that grows the economy and makes life more affordable.

The Government will set a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This goal is ambitious, but necessary – for both environmental protection and economic growth.

The Government will continue to lead in ensuring a price on pollution everywhere in this country, working with partners to further reduce emissions.

The Government will also:

- help to make energy efficient homes more affordable, and introduce measures to build clean, efficient, and affordable communities;
- make it easier for people to choose zero-emission vehicles;

- work to make clean, affordable power available in every Canadian community;
- work with businesses to make Canada the best place to start and grow a clean technology company; and
- provide help for people displaced by climate-related disasters.

The Government will also act to preserve Canada's natural legacy, protecting 25 percent of Canada's land and 25 percent of Canada's oceans by 2025. Further, it will continue efforts to reduce plastic pollution, and use nature-based solutions to fight climate change – including planting two billion trees to clean the air and make our communities greener.

And while the Government takes strong action to fight climate change, it will also work just as hard to get Canadian resources to new markets, and offer unwavering support to the hardworking women and men in Canada's natural resources sectors, many of whom have faced tough times recently.

STRENGTHENING THE MIDDLE CLASS



Canada's experience proves that economic growth is the surest way to maintain a good quality of life for citizens.

Over the past four years, Canada has seen tremendous growth. And through it all, the Government has worked to ensure that all Canadians benefit from Canada's economic success – cutting taxes, reducing poverty, and creating over a million jobs.

And in this new mandate, the Government will provide even greater support to the middle class and the most vulnerable Canadians by pursuing tax fairness, continuing to invest in people, and growing the economy.

As its first act, the Government will cut taxes for all but the wealthiest Canadians, giving more money to middle class families and those who need it most.

The Government will also act on housing. After drastically reducing poverty across the country in the last mandate, the Government will continue its crucial investments in affordable housing. It will also make it easier for more people to buy their first home.

The Government will give families more time and money to help raise their kids, and make before and after school care more accessible and affordable. It will cut the cost of cell and wireless services by 25 percent. It will strengthen the pensions that so many seniors rely on, and increase the federal minimum wage.

Understanding that an educated Canada is a successful Canada, the Government will give more support to students, be they new graduates struggling with loan repayment, or be they heading back to school mid-career to learn new skills.

The Government will also continue delivering on an economic agenda that will grow a modern Canadian economy.

This means moving forward with the new NAFTA to maintain a strong and integrated North American economy. On this and other trade agreements, those in the supply management sectors will be fully and fairly compensated, with many farmers in the dairy sector receiving their first cheques this month.

To ensure fairness for all in the new digital space, the Government will review the rules currently in place.

The Government will remove additional barriers to domestic and international trade for businesses and farmers, continue with ambitious investments in infrastructure, and reduce red tape so that it is easier to create and run a start-up or small business.

And the Government will pursue a responsible fiscal plan to keep the economy strong and growing.

WALKING THE ROAD OF RECONCILIATION



Every single person in Canada deserves a real and fair chance at success – and that must include Indigenous people.

In 2015, the Government promised a new relationship with Indigenous Peoples – one that would help deliver a better quality of life for their families and communities.

Real progress has been made over the past four years, including the elimination of 87 long-term drinking water advisories, equity in funding for First Nations K-12 education, the passage of historic legislation to protect Indigenous languages and affirm Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services, and the completion of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

But we know there is still much work to do.

Reconciliation with Indigenous people remains a core priority for this Government, and it will continue to move forward as a partner on the journey of reconciliation. Indeed, when Indigenous people experience better outcomes, all Canadians benefit.

Among other things, the Government will:

- take action to co-develop and introduce legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the first year of the new mandate;

- continue the work of eliminating all long-term drinking water advisories on reserve by 2021, and ensure safe drinking water in First Nations communities;
- co-develop new legislation to ensure that Indigenous people have access to high-quality, culturally relevant health care and mental health services;
- continue work to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice, in partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples;
- work with Indigenous communities to close the infrastructure gap by 2030;
- continue to move forward together to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are in control of their own destiny and making decisions about their communities;
- take new steps to ensure the Government is living up to the spirit and intent of treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements made with Indigenous Peoples;
- ensure that Indigenous people who were harmed under the discriminatory child welfare system are compensated in a way that is both fair and timely; and
- continue to invest in Indigenous priorities, in collaboration with Indigenous partners.

The path to reconciliation is long. But in its actions and interactions the Government will continue to walk it with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

KEEPING CANADIANS SAFE AND HEALTHY



Wherever they live – in small rural communities or in big cities; in the foothills of the Rockies or the fishing villages along our coastlines; in the Far North or along the Canada-US border – all Canadians want to make Canada a better place for themselves, their children, and their communities.

But there are challenges in making that better future a reality.

Year after year, headline after headline, Canadians have seen firsthand the devastating effects of gun violence. Too many lives lost, too many families shattered. It is time to show courage, and strengthen gun control.

The Government will crack down on gun crime, banning military-style assault rifles and taking steps to introduce a buy-back program. Municipalities and communities that want to ban handguns will be able to do so. And the Government will invest to help cities fight gang-related violence.

We are on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the horrific killing of 14 women at l'École Polytechnique in Montréal, a day when all Canadians pause to remember and honour those women who were killed because of their gender. And we take stock of the harm that gender-based violence continues to do to Canadian society.

The Government will take greater steps to address gender-based violence in Canada, building on the Gender-Based Violence Strategy and working with partners to develop a National Action Plan.

Ensuring a better quality of life for Canadians also involves putting the right support in place so that when people are sick, they can get the help they need.

The Government will strengthen health care and work with the provinces and territories to make sure all Canadians get the high-quality care they deserve. It will:

- work with provinces, territories, health professionals and experts in industry and academia to make sure that all Canadians can access a primary care family doctor;
- partner with provinces, territories, and health professionals to introduce mental health standards in the workplace, and to make sure that Canadians are able to get mental health care when they need it; and
- make it easier for people to get the help they need when it comes to opioids and substance abuse. Canadians have seen the widespread harm caused by opioid use in this country. More needs to be done, and more will be done.

Too often, Canadians who fall sick suffer twice: once from becoming ill, and again from financial hardship caused by the cost of their medications.

Given this reality, pharmacare is the key missing piece of universal health care in this country. The Government will take steps to introduce and implement national pharmacare so that Canadians have the drug coverage they need.

Finally, the Government will continue to recognize its solemn duty to those who choose to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces.

In the last mandate, the Government invested more than \$10 billion to deliver better outcomes for Canada's veterans.

And in this new Parliament, the Government will build on that work by improving mental health care supports, and helping ensure that every homeless veteran has a place to call home.

POSITIONING CANADA FOR SUCCESS IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD



Canadians expect their leaders to stand up for the values and interests that are core to Canada's prosperity and security – democracy, human rights, and respect for international law. Canadians expect the Government to position Canada and Canadians for success in the world.

As a trading nation, the Government will seek out opportunities for Canadian commerce, ingenuity, and enterprise.

As a coalition-builder, the Government will build partnerships with like-minded countries to put Canada's expertise to work on a global scale, in areas like the promotion of democracy and human rights, the fight against climate change and for environmental protection, and the development and ethical use of artificial intelligence.

As an ally, the Government will contribute to multilateral efforts to make the world more safe, just, prosperous, and sustainable. The Government will renew Canada's commitment to NATO and United Nations peacekeeping. It will stand up for the rules-based international order when that order is put in question, particularly when it comes to matters of trade and digital policy. And it will continue to ensure that Canada's voice is present at the UN, notably on the UN Security Council.

Finally, as a compassionate partner, the Government will provide targeted resources for international development assistance, including investments in education and gender equality. It will help the world's poorest and most vulnerable people live better lives and become strong partners for Canada in turn.

CONCLUSION



Parliamentarians: Canadians are counting on you to fight climate change, strengthen the middle class, walk the road of reconciliation, keep Canadians safe and healthy, and position Canada for success in an uncertain world.

And with goodwill, humility, and a willingness to collaborate, you can do just that. You can raise the bar on what politics is like in this country. After all, the Government knows it needs to work with other Parliamentarians to deliver results.

The mandate of this recent election is a starting point, not the final word. The Government is open to new ideas from all Parliamentarians, stakeholders, public servants, and Canadians – ideas like universal dental care are worth exploring, and I encourage Parliament to look into this.

Whether it's fighting money laundering or making parental benefits tax-free, there are good ideas across parties, and this Government is ready to learn from you and work with you in the years ahead.

Some believe that minority governments are incapable of getting things done. But Canada's history tells us otherwise.

Canada's Parliament is one of the most enduring and vital institutions in the democratic world. It has delivered a tremendous way of life for the Canadian people – through crisis and prosperity, through majority and minority governments.

On December 31, 1966, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson welcomed Canada's centennial New Year and lit the Centennial Flame in front of the Parliament buildings for the first time. In his remarks he said:

“Tonight we begin a new chapter in our country’s story. Let the record of that chapter be one of co-operation and not conflict; of dedication and not division; of service, not self; of what we can give, not what we can get. Let us work together as Canadians to make our country worthy of its honoured past and certain of its proud future.”

In this 43rd Parliament, you will disagree on many things. But you will agree on a great many more. Focus on your shared purpose: making life better for the people you serve.

Never forget that it is an honour to sit in this Parliament. Prove to Canadians that you are worthy holders of these seats, and worthy stewards of this place.

Members of the House of Commons: you will be asked to appropriate the funds to carry out the services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

Honourable Members of the Senate and Members of the House of Commons: as you carry out your duties and exercise your responsibilities, may you be guided by Divine Providence.