

PRAYERS.

The Honourable the Speaker informed the Senate that a communication had been received from the Secretary to the Governor General.

The communication was then read by the Honourable the Speaker, as follows:—

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
OTTAWA

23rd October 1969

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that His Excellency the Governor General will arrive at the Main Entrance of the Parliament Buildings at 10.30 a.m. on this day Thursday the 23rd of October, 1969, and when it has been signified that all is in readiness, will proceed to the Chamber of the Senate to open formally the Second Session of the Twenty-eighth Parliament of Canada.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ESMOND BUTLER,

Secretary to the Governor General.

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate,
Ottawa.

Ordered, That the communication do lie on the Table.

The Honourable the Speaker having put the question whether the Senate do now adjourn during pleasure to await the arrival of His Excellency the Governor General, it was—

Resolved in the affirmative.

After awhile, His Excellency the Governor General having come and being seated upon the Throne—

The Honourable the Speaker commanded the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to proceed to the House of Commons and acquaint that House that:—

“It is the pleasure of His Excellency the Governor General that they attend him immediately in the Senate Chamber.”

The House of Commons being come.

His Excellency the Governor General was then pleased to open the Session by a gracious Speech to both Houses, as follows:—

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

I have the honour to welcome you to the Second Session of the 28th Parliament of Canada and to present, on behalf of the Government, various matters which it wishes to lay before you.

Before doing so, may I say that, notwithstanding some unresolved problems which affect our collectivity, and notwithstanding the fears of people of little faith, it was encouraging to find, in the course of recent visits which my wife and I have made to Canadians in all ten Provinces and in the Arctic Islands, that their sense of identity, and of the potential which Canada offers to them and to their children, is strong and healthy.

I was also pleased to make a goodwill tour of the four Commonwealth countries of the Caribbean: Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. These visits abroad were made on the advice of the Government and with the encouragement of Her Majesty.

May I say, too, that Her Majesty's interest in Canada, and in Canadians and their affairs, will bring the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to Manitoba and to the Northwest Territories in July of next year to join in the celebration of their centennials.

Canada is a fortunate country, blessed by nature and spared by war, but we are not immune from the effects of conflicts in other parts of the globe. Our world has become so compact, so interdependent, that all humanity is wounded by an outbreak of violence in any corner of the earth. Whether it be in Vietnam, Nigeria, or the Middle East, suffering in any part of the world disturbs the whole international community and affects Canada as a responsible member of that community.

Although we must be aware of the effects of these upheavals on our own country, we are even more concerned about the damage inflicted on the prospects for world peace and the spread of misery and deprivation. The means at our disposal for bringing these conflicts to an end are necessarily limited, but the Government is making full use of its opportunities to help reduce international tension.

We will continue to be an active member of the United Nations. After a quarter of a century of radical changes in its functions and membership, the U.N. needs to be revitalised and strengthened. Canada is presenting its proposals for reform to the present session of the General Assembly.

As weapons become more destructive and weapons' testing more dangerous, the Government is assigning a higher priority to its efforts in the field of arms control. One barrier to a ban on underground nuclear tests has been the difficulty of verifying that it is being observed. As a practical step towards such a ban, Canada has proposed an international exchange of seismic information.

As long as differences between peoples are permitted to degenerate into hatred and violence, we cannot remain unmoved by appeals for help from the victims of wars. At the International Red Cross Conference last month, the Canadian Government gained acceptance of a principle which it has long supported whereby the Red Cross will be permitted to provide relief during civil wars to civilians on both sides.

In addition to our work in international organizations, we are intensifying our direct contacts with many of the governments and peoples of Latin America, Africa and Asia. At this session you will be asked to consider a bill to create a Canadian International Development Research Centre which will bring together Canadian and foreign experts on the problems of developing economies.

A disturbing element in many countries of the world has been the rising tide of unrest, particularly among young people. It has expressed itself in many ways, in public debate, in peaceful protest and sometimes in violence. Our profound disapproval of the excesses must not blind us to deeply felt and legitimate aspirations. Many citizens in our own country believe that they are entitled to assume greater responsibility for the destiny of our society. Such demands, insofar as they do not conflict with the general welfare, are the expression of a truly democratic ideal. They must be satisfied if our society is to attain its goals of peace and justice.

The Government believes that the time has come to extend the franchise in federal elections and it will therefore recommend to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections of the House of Commons that the voting age be lowered to eighteen.

Changes will be proposed in the legislation governing the Northern Territories which will improve the representational character of their Councils.

If the rights and interests of individuals and groups are to be safeguarded, they must be accurately reflected in the political structure of this country and in its basic blueprint, the Constitution.

The Government therefore attaches the greatest importance to the revision of the Constitution and to the progress achieved by the Constitutional Conference. The last meeting of the Conference provided an opportunity for particularly productive discussions, and the Government is determined to spare no effort to ensure the success of this vital task.

History, geography and economics have placed certain of our citizens at a disadvantage. Under legislation enacted during the last session of Parliament, the Government is establishing programs to reduce these inequalities.

The Official Languages Act, which provides for the use of French and English in federal government institutions wherever the composition of the population justifies it, will permit the exercise of essential language rights within a society which recognizes and welcomes a rich diversity of race, religion and cultural traditions.

This resolve to achieve linguistic equality will have its counterpart in social and economic life. During the last session, Parliament enacted legislation which will enable the Government, with the co-operation of the Provinces, to set up programs to reduce regional disparities in employment opportunities and average incomes. In fact, despite the general cutback in its expenditures, the Government, recognizing the overriding urgency of these programs, has decided to allocate an increasing proportion of its revenues to them.

The necessity for raising the level of employment of Canadians of Indian descent and other less favoured citizens will also receive special attention.

Changes in the patterns of need in our society call for a more equitable social policy which will offer assistance and security to people unable to work or to provide for themselves and their families. A white paper on social security will be presented together with a proposal concerning the reorganization of the unemployment insurance program.

Satisfactory relations between labour and management are of critical importance to our social and economic progress. The Government is devoting greater attention to the problems and possibilities of industrial relations and will be putting forward for your consideration amendments to the legislation governing collective bargaining in the industries within federal jurisdiction.

There are many obstacles to be overcome if we are to achieve our economic goals, but inflation is undoubtedly the most serious and the most difficult to control. If we fail to control it, the consequences could rapidly prove disastrous, especially—but not only—for those whose incomes are already low.

In recent months the Government has urged both the public and the private sectors to adopt special measures to combat the dangers of inflation. These measures, which the Government has itself adopted, must be applied by all if further restraints are to be avoided.

You will also be called upon to study proposals for tax reform aimed at a fairer distribution of the tax burden combined with favourable conditions for growth in the national economy. The structure of our tax system must be adapted to reflect more accurately the true circumstances of individual Canadians and of business organizations in our modern society.

One of Canada's most valuable assets is undeniably the richness and variety of her material resources. In some cases, production has increased substantially and outstripped demand; grain is one of the commodities of which reserves have piled up, causing financial hardship to a good many farmers.

Increasing production of grain in many countries has contributed to a decline in our international grain trade and in world grain prices. This reduction of markets and prices has been of utmost concern to the Government, which intends to continue its search for new outlets for Canadian grain and its efforts to improve international co-operation and to re-establish orderly marketing. In addition, you will be asked to consider amendments to the Canada Grain Act which are intended to make our products more competitive in world markets.

The competitive position of Canadian fisheries must also be strengthened, not only through new licensing and marketing arrangements, but also by extending Canada's exclusive fishing zones.

Our resources are immense, but they are not inexhaustible. Although we must encourage their development, we must also conserve them and regulate their use. Water is among the most precious of these resources. The evidence of past failure to rehabilitate our water resources is there for all to see—befouled water, despoiled beaches, rotting marine vegetation, and diminished fishing. The Government has made known its views on this serious problem, and has begun urgent discussions with the Provinces. Upon their completion, the Government will introduce legislation which will enable it, in co-operation with the Provinces, to improve and preserve our water resources. Thus may we assure ourselves of their continuing benefit for our own domestic use, industrial expansion, and recreation.

While the Atlantic and the Pacific retain their traditional importance for Canada, the Arctic Ocean and its coastal regions may soon enter a period of rapid economic development. Much of this development will undoubtedly occur on the islands of the Canadian archipelago, or in the adjoining continental shelf whose resources, under international law, we have the exclusive right to explore and exploit. With resource development, and the benefits it entails, may come grave danger to the balance of plant and animal life on land and in the sea, which is particularly precarious in the harsh polar regions. While encouraging such development, we must fulfil our responsibility to preserve these areas, as yet undespoiled and essentially in a state of nature. The Government will introduce legislation setting out the measures necessary to prevent pollution in the Arctic Seas. It is also considering other methods of protecting Canada's ocean coasts.

Through the United Nations and its agencies Canada is seeking to establish a system to combat the pollution of international waters which threatens so many forms of life on this planet.

Our aim is a strong and productive country soundly equipped to face the future; but we are equally concerned with the individual Canadian, his rights and his interests. The Government regards national progress and individual fulfilment as indivisible components of its mandate.

The size, complexity and fallibility of the structures that technology imposes on modern societies are often in conflict with the protection and development of individual values. The workings of both private and public institutions may endanger the individual's free expression of his unique personality. He must therefore be protected from anything that jeopardizes his rights or limits his personal development.

To this end, Criminal Code amendments will be submitted to you that would regulate wire-tapping and other invasions of the individual's privacy, and reform the present law governing detention before trial. Bills will be submitted to make federal tribunals more accessible and responsive, and to ensure fair treatment in expropriation cases. There will also be a bill to create a national law reform commission whose task will be the improvement and modernization of the law and its administration at the federal level.

You will also be asked to review the large body of legislation applying to companies and financial institutions. To enhance the position of the consumer in the market place, the Government will ask you to augment our body of consumer protection law. There will be proposals dealing with consumer credit, packaging and labelling, identification of the fibre content of textile products and motor vehicle safety.

In the field of housing, despite the difficulties of inflation, the objective is to construct one million new housing units in five years. The Government will play its part in achieving that objective while emphasizing measures to satisfy the needs of low income families. This and related programs will stimulate social progress, employment, economic growth and urban improvement. They are a recognition of the need for every citizen to live in healthy and pleasant surroundings.

I have mentioned some of the important subjects of legislation which you will be asked to consider at this session. You will also be invited to discuss a number of aspects of long range national policy.

In addition to solving her immediate problems, Canada must be prepared to face the coming challenges of the post industrial era. This calls for a systematic appraisal of Canadian society and of the basic principles that are to guide it. During the past twelve months, the Government has begun this lengthy task. During this session a number of reports and white papers will be presented as part of a comprehensive revision of Government policy. You will thus be invited to examine the Government's findings concerning external affairs, defence, tax reform, citizenship, social security, information, and postal service.

In these documents the Government will define its goals and the means by which it proposes to achieve them, but it believes there is also a need for informed public discussion before bills are drafted in their final form, and before any far-reaching measures are taken.

A more intensive consideration of national policies by Parliament is in keeping with the spirit of the recent reforms in the rules of the House of Commons. These new rules will demonstrate that Parliamentary traditions can adapt to the changed circumstances of contemporary life while continuing to respect the fundamental principles of popular representation.

They are evidence of our common desire to modernize our institutions so that they will satisfy the needs and aspirations of our citizens, and thus enable us to work together in harmony and with renewed energy to ensure the progress and greatness of Canada.

Members of the House of Commons:

During this session, you will be asked to grant the necessary funds for the services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

The Prime Minister will lay before you today a list of bills that will be submitted to you during the session.

May Divine Providence enlighten your deliberations.

The Commons withdrew.

His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to retire.

The sitting of the Senate was resumed.

The Honourable Senator Langlois presented to the Senate a Bill S-1, intituled: "An Act relating to Railways".

The Bill was read the first time.