



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, November 18, 2008**

—  
**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 18, 2008

## FIRST SESSION—40TH PARLIAMENT

•(1005)

[English]

The 39th Parliament having been dissolved by proclamation on Sunday, September 7, 2008, and writs having been issued and returned, a new Parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Tuesday, November 18, 2008, and did accordingly meet on that day.

Tuesday, November 18, 2009

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

Audrey O'Brien, Clerk of the House of Commons, read to the House a letter from the Secretary to the Governor General informing her that the Deputy Governor General would proceed to the Senate chamber today at 10 o'clock to open the first session of the 40th Parliament of Canada.

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

Honourable members of the House of Commons:

It is the desire of the Honourable the Deputy Governor General that this honourable House attend her immediately in the Senate chamber.

Accordingly, the House went up to the Senate chamber, where the Speaker of the Senate said:

Honourable Members of the Senate, Members of the House of Commons,

I have it in command to let you know that Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada does not see fit to declare the causes of her summoning the present Parliament of Canada until a Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen, according to law; but tomorrow, Wednesday, November 19, 2008 at 1:30 in the afternoon, Her Excellency will declare the causes of her calling this Parliament

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

**The Clerk of the House:** Pursuant to Standing Order 3, I invite Mr. Louis Plamondon, member for the electoral district of Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, to take the chair as the member presiding.

•(1025)

[Translation]

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** First of all, I would like to thank you for this token of appreciation. I would also like to congratulate the 308 hon. members who were elected on October 14.

I would also like to take this opportunity to send particular greetings to my constituents in Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour and to express my thanks for the confidence they have shown in me by electing me for an eighth consecutive mandate. I wish them to know what an honour and a privilege it is for me to serve them in this House.

I would also like to greet the delegation from my riding present in the gallery who have honoured me with their presence here today in Ottawa, and to express my thanks from the chair to my life companion and my children for being so understanding of the many hours I have been away from home during my 25 years of political life.

As you have noticed, the bulk of this ceremony will take place in French, for three reasons. The first: it is my mother tongue and very dear to my heart. The second: it will enable many of you to appreciate the impeccable work done by the interpreters in this House. And third: if I attempted to preside over this ceremony in the language of Shakespeare, with my heavy accent, you would still need interpretation.

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

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

[English]

Before we begin, I want to invite any member whose name is on the list of candidates but who does not want to stand for election to rise and inform the Chair accordingly.

The hon. member for Peterborough.

•(1030)

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Despite the overwhelming amount of support and warmth that I am receiving from this part of the House, I wish to withdraw my name.

*Election of Speaker*

[Translation]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ):** Although my colleagues would have liked me to be a candidate, I wish to withdraw my name from the list.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC):** I wish to withdraw my name from the eligibility list.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** I wish to withdraw my name from the eligibility list.

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC):** It is an honour to be in the chamber with my esteemed colleagues and an honour to be considered for this position. However, seeing the august list of colleagues who have put their names forward and who have prepared and worked hard for this opportunity and seeing that my letter to the Clerk apparently did not arrive, I wish to withdraw my name.

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** Although I know it will be a great disappointment to my colleagues, I too will be withdrawing my name.

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** I withdraw my name from the list.

**Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC):** I too would ask politely that my name be withdrawn from the list.

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Following those statements, the list of candidates is revised accordingly.

[Translation]

I ask members for a little more decorum, please.

Pursuant to Standing Order 3.1, the House must proceed to the speeches from each candidate for the office of the Speaker. Notwithstanding any standing order or any usual procedure and practice adopted by this House and to help the newly elected members to identify the candidates for the office of Speaker, I will recognize in alphabetical order each candidate by name and by electoral district.

• (1035)

[English]

When the last candidate to address the House completes his speech I will leave the chair for one hour after which members will proceed to the election of the Speaker.

[Translation]

I will indicate to the candidates when they have 30 seconds remaining in their allotted five minutes.

I now call upon the hon. Mauril Bélanger, member for Ottawa—Vanier, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating all of my colleagues who have been re-elected, but I would especially like to congratulate the new, first-time members who will participate in this House, which is an incredibly important institution in our country. Congratulations, and I wish you well.

Three times now, Canadians have elected a Parliament—including this 40th one—in which no party has a majority. Canadians expect us to learn how to better work together. I dare say that one of the best

ways to work together is to improve the decorum, civility and respect for others we must have in this House.

I am not saying that everyone must agree, because this is a partisan house. It is a place where we defend principles and ideals, and there will surely be heated debates and so forth.

However, I think that Canadians are expecting all of us to be better behaved.

[English]

I have been here for 13 years now and I have seen a gradual decline in the level of civility, the lack of respect for each other and I believe Canadians expect more. I am not the only one who believes that.

Members may recall, those members who were here when the Hon. Ed Broadbent spoke one of the last times before leaving, what Mr. Broadbent said in 2005. He said:

Those who will remain after the next election...should give some serious thought to the decline in civility in the debate that has occurred in the House of Commons and which occurs daily in question period. If I were a teacher, I would not want to bring high school students into question period any longer.

[Translation]

I think that those of us in the House, as well as Canadians in general, are eager to see an improvement in decorum and in the tone of our debates. Each of us has a part to play to make this happen. However, I believe that the Speaker also plays a role. I want to say that if I should become Speaker, I would ensure that the rules are applied fairly and that the level of debate and mutual respect improve every day, week and month.

[English]

There is another way in which this lack of civility, and sometimes animosity, manifests itself outside the House, which needs to be addressed. I know this will not be very popular among members but I am talking about 10 percenters. For people who are listening to us, I will explain what this is. Most Canadians know that members of Parliament have the privilege of sending printed material to every home in their riding four times a year. However, what people may not know is that we are also entitled to send printed material to 10% of the homes in our riding any number of times and this is paid for by the House budget.

What has happened over the last few years is that we have taken to sending these 10 percenters to other members' ridings and they have quite often turned into methods of an attack of sitting MPs, always at public expense. It is not an appropriate use of members' privileges and it is not an appropriate use of taxpayer money. I would try to endeavour to ensure we are limited to sending those out in our own riding as is appropriate.

• (1040)

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, there is another reason why I have not withdrawn my candidacy today. It has to do with Canada's linguistic duality. I would like to quote another very honourable Canadian, the Right Hon. Joe Clark, who said:

I learned the other official language here, learned it in my fashion. That helped me understand that the distinct society is not a dead phrase in a constitution, but the living reality of most of French-speaking Canada, and a defining feature of our history and our future.

I believe that all members in this House should be able to address their Speaker without the help of an intermediary. We must remember that the Speaker has a protocol role and acts as our representative to Canadians.

I have sat on both sides of the House and had experience both in cabinet and on the Board of Internal Economy. Backed by the Clerk's excellent team, I believe that I can do the work needed and elevate the level of debate in this House to the benefit of us all, to the benefit of all Canadians and to the benefit of our profession.

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** I now call upon Mr. Joe Comartin, the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** I would like to congratulate all of the returning members of Parliament and a special welcome to the new members of Parliament.

[Translation]

For the new members who do not know me, I was elected to this House in 2000 after practising as a lawyer in the courts of Ontario for 27 years. After I was elected, I spent considerable time serving on the environment, justice and public safety committees, as well as other committees. I was elected deputy leader by my caucus, and I worked a great deal on the rules of this House.

[English]

I believe the role of the Speaker is quite clear and quite simple. It is set out in article 10 of our rules of this chamber. It says that the responsibility of the Speaker is to maintain order and decorum in this chamber. Beyond that, it is my belief that the Speaker has the responsibility to protect the rights and privileges of every member in the House.

I have been an advocate for causes and people since I was in elementary school. I propose that I would continue that role in this chamber as Speaker, if elected, and I would insist that those rights and privileges, that we, more than any other Canadian, have a right to, are guaranteed absolutely in this chamber at all times.

There are other roles the Speaker must play and the Speaker has responsibilities. Our security issues as members must be further addressed. Budgetary issues need to be addressed and I pledge to the chamber that I will be reviewing those should I be elected.

I want to go back to the issue of decorum. I do not believe there is anybody who has been in this chamber for any period of time who believes that the decorum, the order in this chamber, has not deteriorated. I ask members to look inside their hearts and minds and say otherwise to me. We all have a responsibility that goes with those rights and privileges to conduct ourselves with decorum in this chamber. We have not done that.

I do not wish to see the Speaker abdicate responsibility but I say to all members in this chamber that they cannot abdicate their individual responsibilities.

### *Election of Speaker*

In those committees to which I referred I have worked closely with members of all parties and I have done the same in this chamber.

● (1045)

[Translation]

I am absolutely certain that I will continue to work closely with all members. I am absolutely certain that it is possible to change the conduct and decorum in this House.

I have travelled and visited other parliaments, including those in England and Australia. I have seen the reforms they have introduced. We need to do the same thing here, and I am absolutely certain that we can. I invite you to support me and help me make a change. Thank you.

**Mr. Barry Devolin (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Good morning, dear colleagues. Recently, a number of members have asked me two questions. The first was “Do you speak French?” The second was “Do you have the necessary experience to serve as the Speaker of the House?” Those are good questions, and here are my answers.

I came to Ottawa more than 25 years ago to attend university. Since then, I have devoted most of my time to the legislative process. I studied political science at two universities, one in Canada and the other in the United States. I served as the director of research for a federal political party. I was chief of staff for two provincial ministers. I was an advisor to a premier of Ontario. I have been a member of this House for four years, and I have chaired the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. As you can see, I have a great deal of experience in this area. In addition, I have lived in Europe and Asia. I believe that my experience will help me be a strong ambassador for Parliament and for Canada.

[English]

Those are the two questions that I have been asked most frequently since I put my name forward 10 days ago. However, there are two other questions that I also need to address to you: number one, why am I running for Speaker; and number two, why should you support me.

I am running for Speaker because I think we need a change in that chair. I have the greatest respect and affection for the member for Kingston and the Islands, but I profoundly disagree with his House management style. I think we need to re-establish decorum and civility in this place. However, unlike some of the other challengers, I think that this is a responsibility that falls to all of us as members of this place. We need to work together. We need to demand of each other that we will show respect and that we will establish a decorum that will allow us to welcome our constituents, our children and our grandchildren to come to this place.

*Election of Speaker*

I do not share the notion that this is a top-down exercise, that somehow by choosing a new Speaker there is a new sheriff in town, that somehow the solution is for the Speaker to lay out discipline, to crack the whip and make sure that members do what they are supposed to do. Quite the contrary, I think this ought to be a bottom-up exercise. I think all of us ought to expect and demand a level of respect from our colleagues that Canadians across Canada would demand in their workplace. There is no other place I can think of where people are routinely exposed to the kind of verbal abuse that takes place in this house of Parliament.

My riding is relatively close to here and as a result, lots of school groups from my riding visit Ottawa. Obviously I want to meet with these groups while they are in town, but I always try to meet with them before they attend question period because I want to prepare them. I explain to them what is going on and what they are going to see. In fact, I make excuses for what goes on in this place, and I do not think that is reasonable.

Over the last four years, I have sat in this House and have behaved myself, and I have looked around and seen many other members in all four caucuses do the same thing. I do not accept the notion that what goes on here is inevitable. I do not accept the notion that there is nothing we can do about it.

A lot of people have talked about decorum. Two weeks ago I took the time to sit down and write out a plan. Many of you have seen this plan. I am proposing three things.

First, there are four people who sit in that chair and they need to work together. Like a curling team, the skip is important, but if the other players are not using the same strategy, it will not work.

Second, I have said that we need to start at the periphery and move towards the centre. While it may be impossible to exercise the kind of control that is needed in question period with 300 rowdy members in here, I do think there are many other times, when there are only a dozen or 20 of us in our places, that the rules could be implemented and we could build momentum and move towards the centre.

Third, I have said that we ought to develop a code of conduct to lay out basic expectations for members in terms of what their behaviour ought to be. Rotary International has the four-way test. I think we can come up with something similar. I ask you for your support in doing that.

• (1050)

[Translation]

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** I will now call upon Royal Galipeau, the hon. member for the electoral district of Ottawa—Orléans, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC):** Mr. Chair, allow me to congratulate the people of the Richelieu valley on expressing their continued confidence in you for the eighth time. Thanks to them, you are the dean of the House of Commons.

[English]

I am honoured by the continuing confidence of the good and wise people of Ottawa—Orléans who have returned me to this House.

This is the first time in 136 years that they have re-elected a Conservative MP.

We are all political creatures here and most of us enjoy campaigning. That is the process that brought us here. This morning seven of us are facing the rest of you, the most astute electors in the country.

[Translation]

Quite honestly, I stand before you in the spirit of modesty, not ambition.

[English]

I am keenly aware that 181 of you have more experience in this House than I do. I have followed with keen interest the intense campaigns for the speakership, and I note the value now given to decorum. I, too, endorse the concept. I agree that the lack of decorum in the 38th and 39th Parliaments did not inspire Canadians. One evening from that chair, I reminded the House that Boy Scouts were in the gallery. They look to us as role models. “Decorum” may rhyme with “vacuum”, but it does not thrive in one.

Respect for the Standing Orders is very important; so are the traditions. Yet, the Speaker does not make the rules; the House does. The Speaker is simply a servant of the House.

[Translation]

How can the Speaker enforce the Standing Orders? He cannot. Rather, he must inspire all of his colleagues and tell them that proper conduct is in their best interest.

[English]

Canada has had 34 Speakers since Confederation. I have known 11 of them. I worked for the 27th and the 30th, and worked with the 34th.

[Translation]

The most adept of them all was the late Lucien Lamoureux, who presided over the acrimonious debates of the 26th, 27th and 29th Parliaments, all of which were minority Parliaments.

• (1055)

[English]

What was special about Speaker Lamoureux? First he served as Deputy Speaker, so he knew the Standing Orders and he understood our traditions. He was rigorously impartial.

[Translation]

He possessed a fine command of the nuances of both French and English.

[English]

Above all, he graciously imposed his authority with humour often of the self-deprecating kind.

What do I offer? A small measure of the same, I hope.

In the last Parliament, 235 of you participated in my election as a deputy Speaker. You then witnessed decorum first hand. You witnessed the straight application of the rules, but with a light touch. You never saw me embarrass a rookie MP with the rule book.

*Election of Speaker*

[Translation]

Rather, I invited members who needed guidance to speak to me while the camera was pointed elsewhere. Above all, while members were speaking, I gave them my full attention. Occasionally, I asked others to do the same.

[English]

The oldest tradition tied to the speakership is that the likely Speaker resists the invitation. As much as we must respect our traditions, we also must understand them.

The first tradition that those of us who seek your confidence should respect is that we should not covet the office. You will understand, therefore, that I did not campaign for it. My respect of this tradition is paramount, perhaps at my own peril.

I hope that my affection and utmost respect for this place provides you with a certain measure of assurance that I do understand my responsibilities as your servant.

[Translation]

Those hoping for decorum may take comfort in that.

[English]

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** I will now invite hon. Peter Milliken, the hon. member for the electoral district of Kingston and the Islands to address the House for not more than five minutes.

[Translation]

**Hon. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** My dear colleagues, it is a pleasure to be here in this House once again as the 40th Parliament begins.

[English]

Last October, Canadians elected their third minority government in four years. So, here we are sitting in this House having the privilege and responsibility of serving our fellow citizens in Parliament. We have an important decision to make today in choosing one of us to preside over this House during this Parliament.

[Translation]

You have before you a number of candidates from three of the parties represented in the House, all of whom have expressed the desire to represent you as your Speaker. They wish to offer their services to the House because, as has been mentioned, the Speaker is a servant of the House.

[English]

I have no doubt that the other hon. members who have let their names stand for this position have all done so because they are motivated by a sincere concern for making Parliament work. It is, after all, the role of the Speaker to preside in the House and try to make our House effective and functional. These motives as well as their previous experience, I am sure, have helped them get elected as representatives of the people in their constituencies, as has been the case for all of us in this House.

That being said, in my view, in a minority House there are certain circumstances that require expertise, not merely experience, and I think it is important to have these two reflected in the choice of

Speaker. A minority government or Parliament brings with it a series of challenges, politically, of course, but also on the logistical, administrative and procedural side.

In this Parliament we will have a number of challenges. In my view, a minority Parliament is best served by a Speaker who can balance the rights of the members to fulfill their parliamentary obligations with the necessity of maintaining order in the House, and there is a balance between these two.

There have been many concerns expressed by other colleagues who are presenting their names today and in the media concerning the issue of decorum in this chamber. I agree that decorum has gone down somewhat, but I do not believe that is uncommon in a minority Parliament, because there is a lot of competition going on in the House.

These issues are going to be raised here, and there is bound to be some disorder when issues are raised, but the person who is elected to be the Speaker must be able to count on hon. members to share in the responsibility for maintaining order in the House. It is all of our responsibility to do that.

Without the goodwill and express support of members on all sides, it is very difficult for a person occupying the chair to in fact impose order. In my view no amount of interference or chastisement of members will impose order that does not exist, unless the members themselves wish to have order in the House, so it is important that we work together in that connection.

● (1100)

[Translation]

If you do me the honour of selecting me to be Speaker of the House, I will bring to the task not only my 20 years of experience as a member, but also my experience, since 2001, as Speaker. Despite being a member of the opposition, I presided over the previous Parliament because the members elected me Speaker. I appreciate the support I received when I was elected in 2006, and I hope to be given another mandate for this Parliament.

[English]

I thank you for all your past support in doing this job. It would have been impossible for a Speaker to continue working without the support of all members. The Speaker is the servant of the House.

For your past support, I thank you. I hope that you will continue to keep me in this job to work as your Speaker in this Parliament. I would appreciate the opportunity. I enjoy working with every one of you.

[Translation]

I truly appreciate your support in past years. Thank you very much.

[English]

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** I will now call upon Mr. Andrew Scheer, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, to address the House for not more than five minutes.

*Election of Speaker*

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** I welcome all the new members who are taking their seats for the first time today. I can tell them that the sense of profound awe they might be feeling will not wear off any time soon. I still feel it every time I walk into this place, whether it is the beginning of a session or right in the middle of one.

[Translation]

I would also like to congratulate all members. It is a great honour and privilege to be elected. Welcome to the 40th Parliament.

I would like to discuss the role of the Speaker as I see it. I would also like to talk about the Speaker's historic role and my qualifications. I will begin by thanking the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for giving me the opportunity to be one of the presiding officers during the last Parliament.

[English]

It was a great honour and a true privilege to work with him in the last Parliament. I can think of no better teacher when it comes to learning about the history, the sense of importance of the institution and the many Standing Orders and precedents. Although I never subscribed to *Hansard* when I was in high school, I certainly share some of the same affinities for the history of this place that he does.

Tomorrow, whichever candidate you select to become the Speaker of the House will claim on our behalf all the rights and privileges that members of the House of Commons have enjoyed for centuries. In so doing, he will be reaffirming the tradition of independence that the Commons has enjoyed.

Speaker Lenthall of the House of Commons in Westminster put it best in 1642. When King Charles marched into the Commons and demanded that the Speaker tell him the whereabouts of five members he wished to have arrested, the Speaker replied, "May it please Your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here".

[Translation]

In my view, that is the primary role of the Speaker. The Speaker must serve the House first. It is the Speaker's responsibility to ensure that all members can exercise their rights and privileges in the House. The Speaker's authority comes from all the members, and that allows the House to function properly.

[English]

That brings me to the central role played by the Speaker in the day to day management of the House.

First and foremost, the Speaker must be impartial, fair and non-partisan.

As I mentioned, in the last Parliament, I was fortunate enough to serve in the Speaker's chair as one of the Assistant Deputy Speakers. In that capacity I gained a profound respect not only for the House itself and the rules and precedents that ensured its orderly operation, but for the members themselves. This ties in with the issue of decorum that many of you have raised with me on the phone. In campaigning, I wrote some letters and emails and I telephoned you. I was going to go door knocking at the Marriott last night, but I thought that might be going over the top.

You have all mentioned that decorum is important to you, that we need to have a new sense of civility in the House. Serving in the Speaker's chair really helped me appreciate that. I came to understand a bit more that we all come from different political parties and have much different ideological beliefs. However, what I truly came to appreciate was the fact that we all had the same goal. We all want Canada to be a better place. We disagree on how to do that, but we all genuinely want the quality of life for all Canadians to be the best it can possibly be. If we remember that throughout the debates and throughout committee work, it will make it easier to respect the rules of civility and decorum.

In that capacity I believe there may be the need for a different approach to some of those issues. Question period is the window of Parliament for most Canadians. That is where most Canadians watch the work we do, as it certainly gets the most visibility, and that is where the biggest problem arises with decorum.

In the last Parliament I was fortunate enough to also serve with Mr. Bill Blaikie, the dean of the House at the time and the member for Elmwood—Transcona. He had a much larger presence in the chair. He certainly had a more booming voice and a more assertive tone at times when needed.

I think the Speaker could work with the House leaders and the whips to establish that kind of tone early on in Parliament so members of Parliament could not only police themselves, but also have a role in the chair that would help them do that when they perhaps lose sight of the goals of civility, and I intend to do that. I would try to establish early on some indications of zero tolerance, if you will, when people crossed the line to help them in the future.

• (1105)

[Translation]

For my francophone colleagues, I would add that I know that the Speaker must be able to communicate in both official languages. I can say that, as soon as I was first elected, I began taking courses to work on my French. I was in an immersion program in high school and since then, I have learned the subjunctive, despite the imperfect nature of my discourse.

I thank you for your attention and would be honoured to have your support.

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** I now invite the final candidate, Mervin Tweed, the hon. member for the riding of Brandon—Souris, to speak for not more than five minutes.

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate everyone who was re-elected and welcome all new members. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my constituents in Brandon—Souris for their unfailing support.

[English]

I am honoured to be considered for the very important role of Speaker of the House.



Like many of you, I have served at the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government, serving in many roles, including deputy reeve, minister of industry, trade and tourism and chair of the very productive transport, infrastructure and communities committee. In over 17 years of political life, I have experienced the highs and lows of forming a government and forming an opposition, which gives me a unique perspective and an understanding of the balance a Speaker must preserve in a progressive chamber. These insights and experiences on both sides of the House have taught me the benefits of working with all parties in a constructive manner, and as your Speaker I will continue to do so.

Colleagues, over the last several years, we have experienced a severe decline in decorum in this wonderful chamber, and I believe I have a plan to correct this unfortunate situation.

As your Speaker, I would immediately meet with all House leaders and we would agree on a go-forward plan, re-establishing the current rules and enforcing them without fear or favour.

[Translation]

I believe the Speaker of the House has a crucial role to play in preserving decorum in this House.

[English]

However, a Speaker cannot do this alone. Above all other reasons, the pursuit of the position is to ensure that our Canadian democracy is delivered in a productive and respectful way. I have always tried to treat all members with respect and I believe that if you asked those who have worked with me were asked, they would say the same.

As Speaker, I will commit to all members of this chamber to be accessible to members at all times.

● (1110)

[Translation]

As Speaker, I will serve as every member's Speaker, regardless of their party colours, and I promise to be accessible to each and every one of you.

[English]

I have experience from years of public service, I have demonstrated a non-partisan demeanour throughout my career and I will fully commit every hour of my day to this important position. I will work to restore decorum in the House while treating all with respect.

Today, we, as members of Parliament, have an opportunity to prove to Canadians that the 40th sitting of the Parliament of Canada will be one where very much needed decorum and respect are once again the order of the day.

By electing me as your Speaker, you will provide me with the confidence and direction to conduct the orders of the House according to time tested rules. I have been serving Canadians with respect and dignity for the better part of my adult life and I will continue this ethic should my name be the final one chosen today.

I humbly submit my name for your consideration.

### *Election of Speaker*

[Translation]

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Before I suspend the sitting for one hour may I bring to the attention of hon. members that the bells to call members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes.

The sitting is therefore suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:11 a.m.)

● (1220)

#### SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12:20 p.m.)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Order, please. Pursuant to the Standing Orders, the House will now proceed to elect a Speaker.

[English]

A revised list of those members who are eligible as candidates has been placed in each polling station and at the table.

[Translation]

I would like the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring the ballot box to the Chair for inspection and to allow the Clerk of the House to inspect and secure the ballot box.

After the Clerk has unsealed the ballots, I will suggest a method of proceeding which will help to accelerate the voting process.

As we are about to begin the voting procedure, may I remind all members to print the first and last name of their candidate on their ballot paper.

I would suggest that members leave their desk, exit through the curtains and come to the table using the doors on the left or right side of the Chair on their respective side of the House. A clerk will issue a ballot paper to each member.

[English]

After casting their ballots, hon. members are asked to leave the voting area.

[Translation]

The polling booths are now open to vote.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

● (1245)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** If there are any hon. members who have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now.

[English]

All members having voted, I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

*Election of Speaker*

[Translation]

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Before I suspend the sitting may I bring to the attention of hon. members that, when the counting of ballots has been completed, the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes.

The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 12:47 p.m.)

•(1315)

[English]

## SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 1:18 p.m.)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Order. It is my duty to inform the House that a second ballot will be necessary.

[Translation]

The names of members eligible for the second ballot are as follows:

Mauril Bélanger

Joe Comartin

Barry Devolin

Peter Milliken

Andrew Scheer

Mervin Tweed

If any members whose names I have just read wish to withdraw as a candidate for the second ballot, would they please rise in their places and state their reasons.

For the benefit of hon. members, the revised alphabetical list of candidates for the second ballot will be placed in each polling station.

May I please have the ballot box, Sergeant-at-Arms?

Before asking the hon. members to vote and while the Clerk is unsealing the ballots, I would like to point out that the second ballot will be a different colour and that the list of candidates for this ballot has been placed in the polling stations.

The polling stations are now open. The members may now vote.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

•(1340)

[English]

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** If there are any hon. members who have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now.

[Translation]

All members having voted, I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

[English]

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Before I suspend the sitting, may I bring to the attention of hon. members that when the counting of the ballots has been completed, the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes.

The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 1:31 p.m.)

•(1405)

## SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 2:08 p.m.)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Order, please. It is my duty to inform the House that another ballot will be necessary.

The names of members eligible for the next ballot are as follows:

Joe Comartin

Barry Devolin

Peter Milliken

Andrew Scheer

Mervin Tweed

[Translation]

If any members whose names I have just read wish to withdraw as a candidate for the next ballot, would they please rise in their places and do so. Do any candidates wish to withdraw?

For the benefit of hon. members a revised alphabetical list of candidates for the next ballot will be placed in each polling station.

[English]

While the clerk is unsealing the ballots, may I once again indicate that this ballot will be in a different colour and the list of names of candidates on this ballot has been placed in each polling station.

[Translation]

The members may now vote.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

•(1425)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** If there are any hon. members who have not yet voted and who wish to do so, will they please vote now.

All members having voted I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Before suspending the sitting, may I bring to the attention of members that when the counting of the ballots has been completed, the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes.

*Election of Speaker*

The House is suspended to the call of the Chair.  
(The sitting of the House was suspended at 2:29 p.m.)

• (1455)  
[English]

## SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 2:54 p.m.)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Order, please. It is my duty to inform the House that another ballot will be necessary.  
[Translation]

The names of members eligible for the next ballot are as follows:

Joe Comartin

Peter Milliken

Andrew Scheer

Mervin Tweed

If any members whose names I have just read wish to withdraw as candidates for the next ballot, will they please rise in their places and do so.

For the benefit of hon. members, a revised alphabetical list of candidates for the next ballot will be placed in each polling station.

Can the ballot box be brought in?

[English]

While the clerk is unsealing the ballots, may I once again indicate that this ballot will be in a different colour and the list of names of candidates on this ballot has been placed in each polling station.

[Translation]

The polling booths are now open.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

• (1515)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** If there are any hon. members who have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now?

All members having voted, I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

[English]

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 3:15 p.m.)

• (1535)

[Translation]

## SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 3:36 p.m.)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** It is my duty to inform the House that another ballot will be necessary.

[English]

The names of members eligible for the next ballot are as follows:

Peter Milliken

Andrew Scheer

Mervin Tweed

[Translation]

For the benefit of hon. members, a revised alphabetical list of candidates for the next ballot will be placed in each polling station.

[English]

While the clerk is unsealing the ballots, may I once again indicate that this ballot will be a different colour and a list of the names of the candidates on the ballot has been placed at each polling station.

[Translation]

The polling booths are now open.

[English]

The polling booths are now open.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations)

• (1555)

[Translation]

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Order, please. If any hon. members have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now.

All members having voted, I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots, after I have cast my ballot.

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 3:56 p.m.)

• (1615)

## SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 4:16 p.m.)

(The Clerk of the House having provided the Presiding Officer with the name of the member having received a majority of the votes cast:)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** Order, please. It is my duty to inform the House that a Speaker of the House has been duly elected.

It is with great pleasure that I invite the hon. member for the electoral district of Kingston and the Islands to take the chair now.

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

[English]

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** I now invite the right hon. Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to escort the hon. Peter Milliken to the chair.

*Election of Speaker*

(The Presiding Officer having vacated the chair, and the mace having been laid under the table, the right hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition conducted Mr. Peter Milliken from his seat in the House to the chair)

• (1620)

**The Presiding Officer (Mr. Louis Plamondon):** I now invite the right hon. Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to escort to the Hon. Peter Milliken to the chair.

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I beg to return my humble acknowledgement to the House for the great honour you have been pleased to confer upon me by choosing me to be your Speaker.

[*English*]

Thank you very much, my dear colleagues. It is a pleasure to be back here. I have looked forward to it for a while now, since the election was over on October 14. As I said earlier today in my remarks to you, I want to thank you for your support today, but also to welcome the new members to the House.

[*Translation*]

I know that there are more than 60 new members. Welcome to the House and I hope that your experience as members in this wonderful place will be great for both you and the constituents who elected you.

[*English*]

I want to also thank the electors of Kingston and the Islands who returned me to the House again. I see there are a number of us from the class of '88 here today. I know we have all enjoyed the experience except that we are dwindling in numbers. That is part of it, but the experience on the whole is excellent. I want to say what a treat it has been to work in the House of Commons for all these years and to be back after this last election.

I want to thank the electors of Kingston and the Islands for sending me back once more. It is a pleasure working with them and serving them in the House.

I also want to thank you for all the support you have given me over the last seven years as your Speaker. I have enjoyed my opportunities to meet and discuss issues with you.

[*Translation*]

Sometimes each party has a different opinion on certain questions asked of the Speaker. However, even that provides us with an opportunity to share ideas and work together.

I hope that the party leaders in the House and I, and all of the other members, if necessary, can start working together tomorrow as usual to organize House business, at least from a procedural point of view.

[*English*]

I hope we can arrange to make the chamber more orderly and I know the new members will urge their noisier colleagues to tone things down so we can have quieter, more productive chamber. That is our hope.

Finally, if I may, I would like to point out the presence of my family members in the gallery today. I usually do this on this

occasion. My mother is here for the fourth time for this election. Three of my sisters and my brother are also here, Katherine, Amanda, Elizabeth and Bill. I am delighted they are here, and I see some of my in-laws as well as my niece and nephew. I thank them for being here today.

[*Translation*]

It is always a bit of a show here in the House and I am sure they have enjoyed it.

[*English*]

To all members, I express my profound thanks. Might I suggest that if, after a few other comments, members would care to drop by the office behind here for a little refreshment, we would be pleased to welcome all hon. members.

Before the Prime Minister speaks, there is one little procedural matter to deal with.

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

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on behalf of the government for your re-election as Speaker of this House. It is a well-deserved honour.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, once again, as the Leader of the Opposition and I led you forward, you demonstrated your fierce reluctance to take this post. I would point out to everyone that if it looked tough leading you to the chair in these past five minutes, imagine what it was like over the past five hours.

Mr. Speaker, your re-election for the fourth time is an affirmation of the confidence your colleagues have in your abilities. Your fellow parliamentarians have by secret ballot entrusted you with the all important duty of overseeing the proceedings of this chamber. You have demonstrated each and every time, time and time again, under different circumstances, why they have entrusted you with these responsibilities. You have demonstrated in seven years an in-depth knowledge of parliamentary procedure and treated all members with respect, and you have demonstrated a commitment to fairness.

[*Translation*]

Although we are not members of the same political party, we do share the desire to defend the interests of Canadian workers and Canadian families.

[*English*]

As members of Parliament, especially in times like these, especially in a minority Parliament, it is our foremost duty to work for the common good.

[*Translation*]

Today I believe a clear message has been sent. Your colleagues have expressed their desire to see better order prevail in this House, and I am confident that you will ensure that our debates are productive and civilized.

*Election of Speaker*

[English]

In closing, once again, I know I speak for all members of the government side when I congratulate you on your re-election. I can assure you that on the government side, Mr. Speaker, we will do our utmost to make your sometimes very difficult job as easy as we can make it.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** I thank the right hon. Prime Minister.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, may I begin by congratulating all the hon. colleagues who were candidates for this position of such fundamental responsibility in our democracy. I trust that you will take into account all the recommendations they have made in their speeches. Some of those recommendations were really extremely pertinent.

I would like to add my personal congratulations on your re-election which, as the Prime Minister has said, is indicative of the respect your colleagues have for you.

[English]

At a time when Canada has a minority government and is facing economic turmoil, we need to have cooperation more than ever. We need to have decorum and mutual respect. We all count on you to help this House with that. It is a responsibility that we must all share as well. You may count on the official opposition to do everything to ensure that Canadians will have the House they deserve in these tough times.

[Translation]

The people of this country are really very fortunate to be able to count on someone with your depth of experience. You have a great love for this institution, and a profound knowledge of it, dating back to your student days in Kingston and at Laval—which have been referred to often. It will be a great pleasure to work with you and you can count on the cooperation of the official opposition.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. leader of the official opposition.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your fourth election to the chair.

I also want to congratulate all the candidates for this important position.

I do not know how long your term will run. You know that your term runs no longer than our own and that no one can predict how long this Parliament will last, although I hope it will be at least a few months.

That said, I believe that we must improve the way we do business in this House. Everyone has called for greater decorum and more discipline. I believe that all parties have a duty to help make things better.

In the days to come, we at least will be making a number of proposals to ensure that all members conduct themselves in a more exemplary way and so that procedures are expedited, for example, when votes are held. I believe there are many improvements we can make. I know from past experience that we can work with you. Rest assured that we will help in any way we can.

Again, congratulations.

• (1630)

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. leader of the Bloc Québécois.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, you tried to find me on the other side, but I am over here this time, and I am very happy about that.

Congratulations, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to commend all the members who stood for election to the Speaker's chair. We are very fortunate that a group of members decided to step forward, because it is a reflection of the calibre of the members in this House. I extend my sincere thanks to all those who chose to take part in this election.

[English]

We are very fortunate to have members of Parliament of high quality who have stepped forward in this contest for the Speaker's role. It is a testimony to the wisdom of the electorate to have sent such members forward.

I could not help but note that two former New Democrats were quoted by candidates in the election, Ed Broadbent and Bill Blaikie. I thought that was interesting and significant. I certainly want to indicate that we all miss Bill Blaikie here in the House. It somehow does not seem quite the same without him here. I want to thank him again for his service.

One thing that became very clear to all of us, and which was raised in this discussion, is that we need to do a better job on behalf of Canadians to represent the kind of dignified and respectful debate that they look for in the House of Commons. I believe there may be a new sense that we are intent on doing that. I want to encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to use the powers that you have at your disposal to ensure that happens.

I want to make a commitment on behalf of New Democrats that we will do our very best to live up to the standard that was set out in the debate we have just had here.

Let us hope we can live up to the expectations of those Canadians who are counting on us to do some very important work in the months ahead.

[Translation]

Thank you very much and congratulations, once again.

[English]

**The Speaker:** I thank the leader of the New Democratic Party for his kind comments.

I appreciate the fact that all members have referred to order in the Chamber. The other candidates who were running today mentioned this regularly in their speeches. I will be glad to be working with the members who participated in the election as candidates to encourage additional cooperation in this sphere among all hon. members.

[Translation]

I would like to thank all of the candidates for their work during our little campaign for the speakership.

*Opening of Parliament**[English]***OPENING OF PARLIAMENT**

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

Rideau Hall  
Ottawa

November 14, 2008

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, will arrive at the Peace Tower at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, the 19th day of November, 2008.

When it has been indicated that all is in readiness, Her Excellency will proceed to the Chamber of the Senate to formally open the First Session of the 40th Parliament of Canada.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila-Marie Cook

The Secretary to the Governor General and Herald Chancellor

● (1635)

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m., at which time the House will proceed to the Senate where Her Excellency will open the first session of the 40th Parliament.

(The House adjourned at 4:36 p.m.)

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