



Fact Sheet

House of Commons

OPENING OF A NEW SESSION

Speech from the Throne

- The opening of a session is marked by the reading of the Speech from the Throne, usually by the Governor General on behalf of the Queen, in the Senate Chamber.
- The Speech from the Throne is prepared by the Government. It sets forth in some detail the Government's view of the condition of the country and provides an indication of what legislation the Government intends to bring forward.
- The Speaker formally reports to the House on the Speech from the Throne, the text of which is printed in *Hansard*.

The Address debate

- Usually on the same day or day following the Throne Speech, the House begins the Debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.
- Up to six days of debate take place on the motion for the Address in Reply, which is moved and seconded by government backbenchers.

In the House

- Members may start submitting items of business for the new session on the date prorogation is proclaimed and the beginning of the new session is announced.
- If the session is the second or subsequent session of a Parliament, some business from the previous session may be reinstated by a decision of the House. *Provisional Standing Orders, in force until June 30, 2004, provide that at the beginning of the 3rd Session of the 37th Parliament, all items of Private Members' business will be reinstated.*

In committees

- Before a committee can begin its work at the beginning of a new session, its members must be appointed and a Chair selected. Committee membership is established by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs within the first 10 sitting days of each session.
- For standing committees, the election of the Chair takes place at a committee's first meeting of the session.
- The House may choose to reconstitute a special committee or re-adopt an order of reference to a standing committee at the beginning of the new session so that work already begun may be completed.

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