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# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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FIRST SESSION

FORTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE

## **Votes and Proceedings**

**of the Assembly**

**Wednesday, 21 May 2014 — No. 2**

**President of the National Assembly:**  
**Mr. Jacques Chagnon**

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**QUÉBEC**



The Assembly was called to order at 3.11 o'clock p.m.

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Moment of reflection

Mr. President informed the Assembly that the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor would now deliver the Opening Address of the Session.

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The Honourable Lieutenant-Governor entered the National Assembly and, being seated in the Chair, was pleased to open the Session by the following Address:

Mr. President of the National Assembly,  
Mr. Premier,  
Mr. Leader of the Official Opposition,  
Mr. Leader of the Second Opposition Group,  
Madam Member for Gouin,  
Ministers,  
Members of the National Assembly,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

With the opening of the 41<sup>st</sup> Legislature of our Assembly, we are about to embark on a new chapter of our parliamentary history.

I congratulate all the Members of the National Assembly for gaining the trust of their fellow-citizens, and I have no doubt that you have the generosity, ability to listen and sense of duty required to represent them with justice and dignity.

Representing one's fellow-citizens is a noble calling, of which you all understand the importance.

Likewise, choosing one's representatives is a great privilege, as you also know. A privilege that, still today, is granted to only a small fraction of the Earth's population.

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As we open a new Legislature, my thoughts go out to peoples who do not have the right to elect their own governments, and for whom what we are doing today is absolutely impossible.

Let us appreciate our good fortune to be living in a democracy.

On April 7, in a fundamental demonstration of democratic expression, Quebecers elected as their government a party that had been the Official Opposition during the previous Legislature.

Although it won enough seats to form a majority government, it will be facing a strong opposition.

There are new Members present from each party, and I welcome them warmly. I am well aware that, for newcomers, moments like these are filled with emotion.

Fortunately, they can count on their more experienced colleagues to help them become familiar with the workings of their new environment, the National Assembly.

Some of you will have noticed the absence of one new MNA, the Member for Saint-Jérôme, who fell victim to an unfortunate accident and has been hospitalized. On behalf of everyone, I wish him a swift recovery and hope to see him take his seat in the Assembly as soon as possible.

With a new Legislature before us and numerous challenges facing Québec, the message I wish to convey to you today is above all one of confidence.

Mr. Premier, I wish you every success in leading your government. The objectives you have set are ambitious, but realistic.

The Government is facing a serious problem with regard to public finances. Stringent budget measures will be required to correct the situation. Government programs will have to be re-evaluated, and the budgetary deficit quickly absorbed.

As far as possible, however, the actions taken by the Government must not cause a reduction in services to the population.

The health and education sectors, in particular, will be asked to do their part, since these two sectors alone account for a very large part of Québec's total budget.

Rapid action must also be taken with regard to such areas as municipal governance, pension plans, and end-of-life care.

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Other aspects of the Government's program will be taken up in the Assembly. These include proposed measures concerning the transparency of government actions and the integrity of public institutions.

Measures designed to revitalize the economy and support the regions and small and medium-sized businesses also come to mind.

Hence, as the Government strives to eliminate the deficit, it will propose the means it sees as most effective for stimulating economic growth and employment.

"Yes, we can" is the call the Government is sending out to all Quebecers, a reminder that prosperity is within our reach.

Mr. Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Leader of the Second Opposition Group, and Members of the opposition — all of you have an essential role to play.

As our parliamentary system is based on free debate of the issues, the Government's vision must necessarily come up against a conflicting point of view; it is this shock of ideas that sheds light on the path Québec is to follow.

While these vigorous but respectful debates sometimes cause sparks to fly in this House, they should nonetheless take on the spirit of true collaboration during committee work and in other forums.

It is important to remember that Québec is a great democracy. Our parliament is one of the oldest in the world, and we are extremely proud of it. Québec is a dynamic society involved in all the major issues that are defining the future.

In many areas, we are among the world's leaders. Québec possesses everything it needs to continue its development. And your role is to ensure that this development is carried out in such a way as to help improve the lives of all Quebecers.

It remains for me to wish you all the best of success in the course of the mandate you have received from the public. You were elected to give expression to objectives and convictions that do honour to you, even though they may differ from person to person. In conclusion, it is my hope that the people of Québec will be the chief beneficiaries of the parliamentary work you are about to begin.

Thank you for your attention, and good luck in your work.

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The Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor was pleased to retire.

Mr. President took the Chair.

Mr. Couillard, Premier, then delivered the Opening Speech of the Session on behalf of the Government.

At the end of his address, Mr. Couillard, Premier, moved, –That this Assembly approves the general policy of the Government.

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At 4.28 o'clock p.m., Mr. President adjourned the Assembly until Thursday, 22 May 2014, at 9.45 o'clock a.m.

**JACQUES CHAGNON**

*President*