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# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF QUÉBEC

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FIRST SESSION

FORTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE

## **Votes and Proceedings**

**of the Assembly**

**Wednesday, 28 November 2018 — No. 2**

**President of the National Assembly:  
Mr. François Paradis**

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The Assembly was called to order at 3.04 o'clock p.m.

Moment of reflection

The President informed the Assembly that his Honour the Lieutenant-Governor would deliver the Opening Address of the Session.

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His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor entered the National Assembly and, once seated in the Chair, read the following Opening Address:

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

We are gathered in the House today to open a new chapter of our democratic and parliamentary life.

I would like to begin by congratulating all of the Members of this 42nd Legislature, those who are newly elected and those who have been re-elected. The citizens of Québec have chosen to put their trust in you... a great honour indeed.

As Québec citizens, we are fortunate to be able to elect our representatives, who are called to sit in the National Assembly to work toward our society's well-being, in a free, democratic social context.

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You are these representatives, summoned to legislate in order to build an inclusive Québec, open to all. However, the mandate entrusted to you also includes great responsibility.

You will have to face many challenges...and I am certain that you will do so with grandeur and dignity.

Recently, we celebrated the 225th anniversary of parliamentary life in Québec. Our parliamentary system's history has been turbulent at times, but we must remember that, in the 19th century, the Members of the House of Assembly fought long and hard to build a modern, democratic state.

We inherited an immense privilege from them. It is our duty to take pride in this legacy and to honour their memory.

The October 1 election brought a record number of women into the National Assembly. A few days later, the new Government formed a Cabinet marked by gender parity. We should be delighted and proud of this progress, despite the fact that much work remains to be done to attract more women to active politics.

The efforts of all political parties and Quebecers' firm will in this regard are to be commended.

Many newly elected Members will be sitting in this House. I bid them welcome and wish them every success in their new duties.

Allow me to applaud and congratulate Mr. François Legault, newly elected to the office of Premier of Québec. Mr. Premier, let me assure you that you have my full cooperation in carrying out your important mandate.

I would also like to pay tribute to and congratulate Mr. Pierre Arcand, Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Pascal Bérubé, Leader of the Second Opposition Group and Mrs. Manon Massé, Leader of the Third Opposition Group.

The Opposition's role has always been considered essential for maintaining a free, democratic society. Québec voters have elected a multi-faceted Opposition, comprising three opposition parties, each of which holds at least ten seats and has a distinct political view. Some may see this as a sign that Québec society is becoming increasingly pluralist, but we should also see it as an opportunity to enrich our debates.

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Without your help, without the ideas you bring to parliamentary debates, the fertile seeds of a modern society striving for justice and progress cannot flourish.

In this last election, the electorate clearly expressed its will to bring to power a party that has never before formed the Government. This is the first time, since 1976, that Quebecers have turned to a new option...a fact that warrants mention.

This historic event comes at a time when Québec faces major challenges, but also has tremendous opportunities. Our economy is healthy and we have appropriate means, we believe, to look optimistically to the future. However, we must ensure that all Quebecers benefit from this situation.

Governing and legislating are not easy tasks, and the Government will most certainly encounter many diverging, converging and opposing political choices along the way.

Nonetheless, Quebecers' interests and concerns must be central to decision-making, which, in turn, must be marked by integrity, humanity and compassion.

I am sure the Government is fully aware of that fact and, in a moment, I will give the floor to the Premier, who will clarify these priorities.

Quebecers have elected a majority Government, whose members will have a certain amount of leeway in implementing their policies and the changes they wish to make to the State. However, this freedom of action is not absolute.

Challenging ideas is the very basis of democracy, our democracy. We can only welcome the fact that a variety of viewpoints will be expressed during this Legislature.

The multi-party Opposition voted in by Quebecers constitutes an opportunity to enrich the many debates to come in this Assembly.

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Such debates will nevertheless require Members to be respectful in the face of different opinions and courteous when asking their questions. Regardless of our political allegiances, we must all respect the men and women who, aware of their social obligations, devote part of their life to public service.

They may have opposing policies and different approaches, but they are committed to serving the nation's higher interests.

Your dedication and efforts, ladies and gentlemen, Members, merit my thanks and the respect of all.

Holding office is a great and noble duty. I encourage you to be proud. Be worthy of the expectations voters have of you. Be vigilant in ensuring that the voices of all Québec citizens continue to be heard.

In closing, let me reiterate my wish for every success in carrying out your duties during this Legislature.

There is much work ahead, but I am confident that you will perform it with dignity and dedication. The people have placed their trust in you. I am certain you will prove worthy of it.

I wish you a pleasant session and a productive 42nd Legislature.

Thank you.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor withdrew.

The President took the Chair.

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

At the end of his speech, Mr. Legault, Premier, moved that the Assembly approve the Government's general policy.

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At 4.38 o'clock p.m., the President adjourned the Assembly until Thursday, 29 November 2018 at 9.40 o'clock a.m.

**FRANÇOIS PARADIS**

*President*