



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

SECOND SESSION

THIRTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

Votes and Proceedings

of the Assembly

Wednesday, 23 February 2011 — No. 1

**President of the National Assembly:
Mr. Yvon Vallières**

QUÉBEC

The Assembly was called to order at 2.08 o'clock p.m.

Moment of reflection

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

The Honourable the 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,
Madam Leader of the Official Opposition,
Mr. Leader of the Second Opposition Group,
Mr. Member for Mercier,
Members of the Executive Council,
Members of the National Assembly,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Practically two years have passed since we began the proceedings of this Assembly elected on 8 December 2008. We had then opened the First Session of the 39th Legislature of the National Assembly.

We are here today to mark the beginning of the Second Session of this same Legislature. We are thus entering into a new and important stage in the conduct of parliamentary proceedings.

In a few minutes, the Premier of Québec, Mr. Jean Charest, will deliver his Opening Speech. He will set forth the Government's vision, recall the steps that we have taken collectively and bring to our attention the challenges that Québec faces. The Premier will elaborate on the orientations and major initiatives he intends to implement during the upcoming session so that our society progresses. The Opening Speech will thus underline the key elements of future proceedings and the perspective in which the Government wishes to carry them out.

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One of the great challenges that Québec must take up is that of education, guarantor for our future and essential to our development. Québec must further invest in the dissemination of knowledge to ensure a competent workforce that meets market requirements. By the same token, we will need to revitalize our economy in order to create jobs and wealth, the only way to maintain our standard of living and our social safety net. Economic development will have to be undertaken with an unfailing concern for the protection of the environment, particularly as regards the implementation of this great project that is the Northern Plan. This new session will give the Government the opportunity to set forth the methods it intends to use to ensure the proper management of our resources, not only for ourselves but for future generations. Furthermore, the Government will present initiatives aiming to improve our health system as well as the quality of life of our seniors. In the Opening Speech, the Premier will further elaborate on the measures he intends to take to reach all of these objectives.

For their part, the Official Opposition and the other groups sitting in opposition have an essential mission in our democratic system. They must continue to be vigilant and question, on behalf of the citizens, the Government's proposals and initiatives. The debates that take place in our Parliament constitute the basis and very foundation of our democracy. They must however be held with the civility and mutual respect that we expect in a society such as ours. I trust that the next session will be exemplary in this regard.

The parliamentary work that will be carried out in the coming months will take place in an Assembly that is not quite the same as in January 2009. Several high-calibre Members left us after having made an immense contribution to our debates. Among them, a person whom everyone will miss, Mr. Claude Béchar, a man in whom everyone foresaw a brilliant future. May he inspire us all by the determination and dedication that so aptly characterized him.

Others, to whom we wish a fruitful term of office, have taken over and will surely bring, through their competence and good will, a marked contribution to democratic life.

The programme of the session we are entering upon is challenging but remains a reflection of Quebecers' wishes. Several legislative texts and budget statements will be submitted for analysis and discussion in the Assembly. I trust that this Assembly will contribute in a constructive manner to the implementation of the Government's projects. One thing that we can definitely confirm is that all of you, Members of the National Assembly, have a point in common: you have chosen the public service and the collective interest. You devote all of your energy toward earning and keeping the trust of your constituents.

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On this opening day of a new session, I wish to underline the quality of the commitment of each of you. It is thanks to your dedication that our democracy works and thrives. All Quebecers should be proud of their democratic tradition and of the institutions that uphold it. This pride, we owe it first and foremost to those who have chosen to devote their talent to parliamentary life.

I wish you all the success you deserve in defending your ideas. And above all, may this new session of the 39th Legislature meet the hopes and expectations of all of our fellow citizens.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor was pleased to retire.

Mr. President took the Chair.

Mr. Charest, Premier, then delivered the Opening Speech of the Second Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature.

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

At 3.27 o'clock p.m., Mr. President adjourned the Assembly until Thursday, 24 February 2011, at 9.45 o'clock a.m.

YVON VALLIÈRES

President