

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Each new session of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia is formally opened with the reading of the Speech from the Throne. The speech is written by the government of the day to explain why the Legislative Assembly is being assembled and to outline the government's broad goals for the coming legislative session.

Canada's parliamentary system of government is based on the United Kingdom's Westminster system, where the Monarch or a representative of the Crown has been opening Parliament since the early 16th Century. This tradition is continued in our province today by the Lieutenant Governor, the representative of Her Majesty the Queen of Canada in British Columbia, who reads the Speech from the Throne to open Parliament.

The day of the Speech from the Throne is rich with ceremony and tradition. Cannons are brought into the Harbour for a 15-gun salute, which is fired as the Lieutenant Governor inspects the Guard of Honour on the front driveway. The Lieutenant Governor then enters the Parliament Buildings through the Ceremonial Entrance and proceeds to the Legislative Chamber where the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are assembled to hear the speech.



The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC
Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia



The Lieutenant Governor on the day of the Speech from the Throne

Once the Speech from the Throne has been read, the MLAs have six sitting-days to debate the government's goals for the year ahead. This debate is called Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

After the debate on the speech has ended, MLAs vote to support or defeat the Throne Speech. This vote is very important, as it displays the Legislative Assembly's support for the government. If a government loses this vote, they are said to have lost the confidence of the Legislative Assembly and, by tradition, would be expected to resign.