

# THE THRONE SPEECH



Each new session of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia is formally opened with the reading of the Speech from the Throne. The throne 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 provincial representative of the monarch, who reads the Speech from the Throne to open parliament.

The day of the Speech from the Throne is typically rich with ceremony and tradition. Cannons are brought into Victoria's inner harbour for a 15 gun salute, which is fired as the Lieutenant Governor inspects a Guard of Honour along the front driveway of the Parliament Buildings.



*The Lieutenant Governor reading the Speech from the Throne on February 12, 2019*



*The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia*

The Lieutenant Governor then enters the Parliament Buildings through the Ceremonial Entrance and proceeds to the Legislative Chamber where Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), their invited guests, and members of the press have assembled to hear the speech.

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 the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, and is started by a government motion supporting the Speech from the Throne.

Opposition MLAs may take this opportunity to propose amendments critical of the priorities outlined by the government in the throne speech. The vote on whether to adopt such an amendment is very important, as it displays the Legislative Assembly's support for the government. If a government loses the vote, they are said to have lost the confidence of the Legislative Assembly and, by tradition, must resign.

