

# Trudeau promises “nation-to-nation relationship” with Indigenous peoples

The speech from the throne officially launched the Justin Trudeau era in Parliament on December 4th with a general sketch that was heavy on social policy but light on details about the government's broader economic plan or its timetable for action.

The brief speech read by Gov. Gen. David Johnston echoed the same optimistic themes of the winning Liberal campaign; openness and diversity.

It promised a new spirit of civility in Parliament, in which all members – on the government and opposition benches – will be “honoured, respected and heard.”

“Canada succeeds in large part because here, diverse perspectives and different opinions are celebrated, not silenced,” Johnston said.

“Parliament shall be no exception.”

The assembled guests inside the Senate and in the surrounding halls appeared to be carefully selected to reflect the spirit of the document.

Several new Canadians, including Syrian refugees, and local high school students, greeted Johnston and Trudeau as they walked to the Senate. The speech made specific mention of a promise to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by February 2016.

“As a country, we are strengthened in many ways: by our shared experiences, by the diversity that inspires both Canada and the world and by the way that we treat each other,” Johnston read.

Inside the Senate, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde had a prominent seat at the front near Trudeau and Johnston.

The speech said the government would create a new “nation-to-nation relationship” with Indigenous peoples, saying it was a path to economic growth.

It also promised to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on residential schools and to launch an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

The speech expanded on other well-worn themes that were central to the Liberals' victory in the Oct. 19 election, but provided few signals as to when it wanted to achieve its objectives.

It reiterated Trudeau's pledge to cut the tax rate for middle-income earners

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