

*Election of Speaker*

courage, that are so essential in a speaker of the House of Commons. The four years of his experience as Deputy Speaker would only add to his value were he now promoted to the position of Speaker. It is not for the Opposition to choose a Speaker; it is for Parliament as a whole. But I think it would have been most appropriate if the Prime Minister, in declining to follow the practice that has so long prevailed, had favoured the House with an explanation of why he had cast aside in this instance the hon. member for Shefford. We on this side, while offering no objection at all to the selection made—indeed, while honouring our fellow member, the hon. member for Gaspé—do feel that we are entitled to be told why the practice in the case that I have just mentioned, where the duties had been so conspicuously well fulfilled, has not been observed.

We open now the Fourteenth Parliament. One could not venture a desire for that Parliament the realization of which is more vital to us all than that the discharge of its functions will be characterized by that dignity, that devotion to the public interest, that regard for the public weal and for our traditions, our history, our past and our future, that has characterized the Parliaments that have gone. I believe that in the hon. member for Gaspé we start well on that path. I believe he will contribute well to our following it, and if it is the desire of the House that he be chosen as Speaker, I assure him that on our part we shall pay him the respect and deference that is his due and that is due to any who occupy that exalted post.

Hon. T. A. CRERAR (Leader of the Progressive Party): Mr. Northrup, this is one of the most important matters that can come before the House for consideration. The position of Speaker is, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) has pointed out, one of very great responsibility; one that has attaching to it much of the tradition upon which our free parliamentary institutions have developed. It is indeed a very responsible post. I do not wish to associate myself with all that my right hon. friend the member for Grenville (Mr. Meighen) has said; with some of his criticisms I would, perhaps, be inclined to agree. At any rate, I have to say this: the Government, of course, are entitled to the selection of the Speaker. That being the case, they have made an excellent choice in the hon. member for

[Mr. Meighen.]

Gaspé (Mr. Lemieux). He has been associated with this House for a great many years and is well acquainted with parliamentary procedure. In this Parliament, I am reminded, there are over one hundred new members; and I have no doubt that that excellent good humour, that patience and consideration which have always characterized the hon. member for Gaspé will enable him to assist these new members in the preparatory stages of their parliamentary work.

I agree entirely with the observation made by the Prime Minister, and also alluded to by my hon. friend from Grenville, who leads the official Opposition, that the British practice, whereby the speaker-ship of the House of Commons does not change with the election of a new Parliament, might very well be introduced into our assembly. There is much to commend that practice. We were fortunate in the Speaker we had in the last House of Commons. We were fortunate, too, in the Deputy Speaker of that House, the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Boivin). I recall the facility with which the hon. member for Shefford could dispose of that multitude of Bills having to do with divorce which come from across the way, and I would like to have seen that energy applied to the conduct of the general business of this House. I have no doubt, however, that my hon. friend from Gaspé will do equally well, and I can promise him that so far as the "dilapidated annex" in this corner of the Chamber is concerned, we shall give him our very best support. I am sure that the choice will prove a happy one, and I have no doubt that the very important business of the House will, under the aegis of the hon. member for Gaspé, be conducted with due regard to all the traditions of the high office he is about to fill.

The Clerk of the House declared the motion carried in the affirmative, nemine contradicente, and Honourable Rodolphe Lemieux, member for the electoral division of Gaspé, duly elected to the Chair of the House.

Honourable Mr. Lemieux was conducted from his seat in the House to the Speaker's Chair by Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King and Hon. W. S. Fielding.

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT said: Madame; Fellow Members of the House of Commons: I must thank you from the bottom of my heart for the very high honour you have unanimously bestowed upon me. I know