

House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT

Speaker: The Honourable Roland Michener

FIRST SESSION—TWENTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

The twenty-third parliament having been prorogued on the first day of February, 1958, and dissolved by proclamation on the same day, and writs having been issued and returned, a new parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Monday, May 12, 1958, and did accordingly meet on that day.

Monday, May 12, 1958

This being the day on which parliament is convoked by proclamation of His Excellency the Governor General for the dispatch of business, and the members of the house being assembled:

Léon J. Raymond, Esquire, O.B.E., the Clerk of the House, read to the house a letter from the secretary to the Governor General informing him that the Honourable Patrick Kerwin, Chief Justice of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, would proceed to the Senate chamber to open the first session of the twenty-fourth parliament of Canada on Monday, the twelfth of May, at eleven o'clock.

A message was delivered by Major C. R. Lamoureux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Members of the House of Commons:

The Honourable the Deputy Governor General desires the immediate attendance of honourable members in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the house went up to the Senate chamber, when the Speaker of the Senate said:

Honourable Members of the Senate,
and Members of the House of Commons:

I have it in command to let you know that His Excellency the Governor General does not see fit to declare the causes of his summoning the present parliament of Canada until the Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen according to law, but this afternoon, at the hour of three o'clock, His Excellency will declare the causes of calling this parliament.

And the house being returned to the Commons chamber:

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ELECTION OF SPEAKER

MR. ROLAND MICHENER, MEMBER FOR THE
ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF ST. PAUL'S

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Raymond, in the light of the experience of the last few minutes, all hon. members realize that the traditional and constitutional requirement for the formal setting up as an operating body of the House of Commons demands the appointment of a Speaker. The choice of a Speaker is one of those responsibilities which more than anything else conduces to the regularity of our proceedings, to the assurance that the assembly shall be orderly in its operation, and above all that the prerogative rights and privileges of members of the commons shall be scrupulously maintained and preserved. Whoever is chosen Speaker will have much to do with determining the order of the proceedings of the house, the assurance that they are businesslike and efficient; and also, as I said a moment ago, he will determine whether the rights of minorities shall be preserved, without which parliament, under our traditions, cannot attain its responsibilities.

There are certain requirements that through the years have been referred to as necessary in the person of the member amongst us who is chosen to be the first commoner. One is that he shall be absolutely impartial; that is a fundamental requisite without which the discharge of his responsibilities would not be in keeping with the extent of those responsibilities. Whenever a government has a large majority it is more than ever important that he who is chosen shall, in every particular,