

Election of Speaker

which a Speaker must hold if he is to maintain the confidence of all hon. members of this house, I am sure that each one of us understands that it is our responsibility as members of this parliament and as Canadians to put aside all such things in an effort to face up to the job which is before us.

I was interested in the remarks made by the Prime Minister and also by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to a permanent speaker. We trust that during this parliament we might give attention to the necessary action which would provide for this house a permanent speaker, and thus not only add to the respect of the office but also assist the holder of that office in the performance of his duties. Remembering that rules are made to be obeyed, we will to a man give Mr. Lambert our full support.

I am sure no one knows better than Mr. Lambert himself that the fulfilling of this office will not be easy in this house of minorities, but I assure him of the co-operation and support of all the members of our group.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Raymond, according to long established custom, we join with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Transport and the leader of the official opposition in supporting the nomination of a Speaker for this parliament.

On this solemn but, I am sure it is correct to say, happy occasion I feel that the environs of this house are surrounded by the draperies of history and with recollections of what that history means to us all. This ritual without rule, this ceremony without catalogue, represents our witness to a thousand years of history that forged our parliamentary and democratic institutions. Throughout the centuries these have been threatened on numerous occasions, the last time by those exponents of despotic rule, Hitler and Mussolini. Fortunately for us and future generations, millions gave their lives in defence of these institutions. We express our gratitude and honour their memory in our allegiance to parliamentary institutions, practice and procedure. Election to the office of Speaker is the greatest honour and privilege within the gift of this house; a unique office, with a distinctive tradition.

At this point, Mr. Raymond, I wish to associate the occupants of this most important corner of the house with the tribute paid by the Prime Minister and the leader of the official opposition to the former speaker. I am sure he had the respect and affection of all of us, and we will long remember our association with him in this house. We trust that in the future we will see some improvement in the procedure with respect to the election of the Speaker of this house. I have often

[Mr. Thompson.]

thought, Mr. Raymond, that it was most inhuman to expect a person to practice impartiality in this house and then thrust him on the hustings to fight an election on a partisan basis. I hope we will become more mature and accept the British practice in a form acceptable to our Canadian procedures in this respect.

Election to the office of Speaker is a great honour and privilege. Today there is a house very different from those in which I have had the privilege of sitting since my election in 1945. Here we have a minority government, and I was very interested to hear the leader of the official opposition recognize the fact that there were a number of minority parties. Consequently our Speaker is presented with a situation that will require him to tax his wisdom and tether his impatience.

It is the responsibility and duty of the Speaker to protect the individual rights of each member of this house and the rights of all groups that are in a minority position. I think it is quite correct to say that this parliament represents a particular challenge to our Speaker and all the members of this house. However, we believe that in Mr. Lambert, the hon. member for Edmonton West, we have a Speaker who will endeavour to carry out his responsibilities with complete impartiality as the champion of this legislature, which is his prime function.

In conclusion, I join with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Transport and the leader of the official opposition in supporting the election of Mr. Lambert, the member for Edmonton West, as Speaker of this parliament, and extend to him the co-operation of this group in the practice of those parliamentary principles to which we all subscribe. We sincerely wish him every success, and trust that his term of office as Speaker will add lustre to the office and to our parliamentary history and Canadian traditions.

(Translation):

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): Mr. Raymond, the Liberal opposition has no objection to the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) being elected as Speaker of the House of Commons.

The Speaker's position is most important, as the Prime Minister just indicated, due to the nature of the function he has to fulfil in this house, because parliament itself may not operate without a Speaker. Indeed, that position is even more important than that of Prime Minister, because, if he thinks that the Prime Minister is infringing the rules of the house, the Speaker can and should call him to order.

There is also another point which should be brought to the attention of the house. The Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition