

made an especial study of the procedure and rules of the House, and has on all occasions manifested a very complete acquaintance with them. It is, therefore, with the greatest pleasure, and in the confident hope that the selection will command your approval that I move, seconded by Mr. Foster:

That Thomas Simpson Sproule, Esquire, member representing the electoral district of the East Riding of the county of Grey, do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Dr. Flint, it is the privilege of every administration, after a general election, especially when the administration has such a large majority at its back as the present administration has, to select from the members elected one who, in their opinion, is a fit and proper person to discharge the important duties of Speaker of this House. My hon. friend (Mr. Borden) has just moved that our old friend and colleague, Dr. Sproule, be elected Speaker as the candidate selected by the government. I have no exception to take to anything that has been said by my hon. friend opposite (Mr. Borden) in his appreciation of the merits of Dr. Sproule. On the other hand, I cannot but say, and I must say it with frankness, that I am surprised at the selection which has been made by the government, not from any want of qualification on the part of the hon. member, not that I mean to say anything derogatory to him—far from it—but from the circumstances out of which the present administration has come into office. In England, in the mother and model of all parliaments, it is an established rule, unwritten, but with the force of written law, that whenever a man has been selected and elected as Speaker, he is Speaker for ever—elected after a new election, re-elected again until removed by death or disabled by disease. That system has certainly a good deal to be said in favour of it, and ought to commend itself to the judgment of the House in preference to our own. The system which has been followed in England has this advantage, that it trains the occupant of the Chair for the great position he has to maintain, and that he learns from the experience of every year, and of every parliament. We know ourselves from what has taken place in this House that however well qualified to act as Speaker a man may be by training, and by education, he has much to learn from actual experience in the Chair.

These things occurred to me when I had the honour to occupy the seat now occupied by my hon. friend (Mr. Borden) and after the general election of 1903 I communicated with the Hon. Mr. Sutherland, who had been Speaker in the parliament of 1904, and asked him to again become the Speaker

Mr. BORDEN.

of this House. For reasons personal to himself, and for political reasons as well he would not accept, and I communicated my application, and the reasons for its refusal by Mr. Sutherland at the first opportunity. Then on my own motion, my hon. friend from Bonaventure (Mr. Marcil) was elected and filled the Chair with ever increasing dignity, impartiality and ability. After the election which has just taken place, and in which the principle fought for by the victorious party was the maintenance of British institutions, which were very much threatened, it appears, by the possible acceptance by the Canadian people of a harmless and innocent trade agreement, it would have seemed to me that the first thing to be done by my hon. friend was to put himself in accord as much as possible with British institutions, and that according to British precedent he would have moved into the Chair my hon. friend the member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcil). British institutions, now that the victory has been won, are relegated to the backyard, there to be buried in dust and ignominy, to be resurrected and polished and re-furbished whenever a new election occurs. We have been familiar with such things in the past. Loyalty has always served a good purpose for the Conservative party in election times—and has then been forgotten.

Since, however, the principle of British institutions is to be departed from on this occasion, perhaps it is quite in the fitness of things that the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) should be selected to be the Speaker of this House. I repeat that I have no exception to take to what has been said by my hon. friend (Mr. Borden) as to the ability of the hon. member for East Grey. He and I are among the oldest members of the House; we have been sitting opposite one another for many years—if my memory serves me aright, for more than 30 years. I can bear testimony that he is able, painstaking, hardworking, conscientious according to his light, although his light is not my light. But, Sir, my hon. friend is of the human race, and therefore is not perfect. He would not, I think, find fault with me if I should say that in my estimation he has some weaknesses, but after an acquaintance with him of 30 years I must say in all kindness to him, that the only fault I find with him, the only weakness I find in him is that he is a Tory, a Tory of the Tories, the very quintessence of Toryism. I do not say that in anger, I say it in sorrow, and deep sorrow, but I know it is not his fault, it is his misfortune, he could not be anything else, even if he tried. But I am sure, at all events I hope, that when he takes the Chair in this House he will leave on the floor of it his Toryism, that his Toryism will not ascend the Chair, and