

Election of Speaker

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Fraser, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to second the Prime Minister's nomination of the member for Stormont-Dundas as Speaker for this first session of the twenty eighth parliament.

[Translation]

Mr. Lamoureux, who was elected Speaker at the first session of the 27th Parliament, has always since then discharged that important office with tact, diplomacy, firmness and with complete and scrupulous impartiality.

[English]

Coupled with these qualities has been an innate wisdom, comprehension and respect for the parliamentary process, for parliament and the rights of members of parliament.

I might mention, sir, that at Mr. Lamoureux's election the Prime Minister of the day addressed his words to the then Clerk, Mr. Raymond. Today, only a short time later, although the procedure is the same you, Mr. Fraser, have succeeded Mr. Raymond and at the opening of this new session I take the occasion to wish you well.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: The appointment of a permanent Speaker remains one of the necessary objectives of parliamentary procedure and parliamentary improvement. I hope we can all agree upon the urgency of taking action in this regard. I hope also I will be forgiven for saying here that I am proud of the role played by the members of the Progressive Conservative party in Stormont-Dundas in order that Mr. Lamoureux could come to parliament bearing as much as possible the stamp of non-partisan approval. But the traditional rights of party supporters to nominate candidates in Stormont-Dundas must not be forgotten. Therefore it is urgent in that respect as well as for the regulation of parliamentary procedure that early consideration be given to alternative methods of removing the election of the Speaker from partisan considerations.

• (11:00 a.m.)

[Translation]

I am glad to say it again: The choice of Mr. Lamoureux is a happy one. His past rulings show the attachment and the respect he has for the institution whose standing orders he had to apply. While men come and

go, the continuity of institutions ensures the survival, the strength of democracy.

But the institutions must keep abreast of the times—and the same is true of parliament—and in that sense, I think that when the office of Speaker becomes permanent, we will have taken a step forward.

[English]

The Speaker is the chief officer of parliament. He has been the bulwark of the privileges of parliament and its members. In the continuity of the office of Speaker and its progressive removal from the exigencies of partisan conflict lie the best guarantees of parliament's survival as the basic institution of freedom. In the eyes of the Speaker there are no parties in parliament, there are only members equal as to rights and privileges, equally entitled to consideration. It is this which makes parliament the supreme instrument of man's designing for the defence of freedom.

Mr. Lamoureux has been and I am sure will continue to remain an outstanding exponent of these great principles and traditions. Personally and on behalf of the members of this party in the house I extend to him my congratulations, anticipating the outcome of the motion with great confidence, and my best wishes as he resumes his most important duties at the opening of this session of parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Fraser, we already have had the experience and the pleasure of having Mr. Lamoureux as a Speaker, and he has always displayed fairness, kindness and wisdom. What more could we ask of the man who is now our Speaker?

[English]

I note, Mr. Fraser, that Mr. Lamoureux is sitting in the opposition benches of the chamber, determined to show his independence even before he is officially elected Speaker. This is perhaps characteristic of the man's sense of propriety, and humour as well.

I want to agree with the right hon. Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition on behalf of my colleagues and myself with the necessity of constitutional arrangements in respect of a permanent Speaker in this house, without any constituency in the land being deprived of the opportunity of an electoral contest. That step will receive all