House of Commons Debates

FIRST SESSION—TWELFTH PARLIAMENT.

. HOUSE OF COMMONS

WEDNESDAY, November 15, 1911.

To-day being the first day of the meeting of the first session of the Twelfth Parliament for the despatch of business, Thomas Barnard Flint, Esq., M.A., LL.B., D.C.L., Clerk of the House of Commons, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Robert Smith, sergeant-at-arms, Jean Baptiste Rene Laplante, Esq., assistant clerk, and Arthur Henry O'Brien, M.A., law clerk, commissioners appointed by Dedimus Potestatem for administering the oath to members of the House of Commons, all attending according to their duty, James G. Foley, Esq., Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, delivered to the said Thomas Barnard Flint a roll containing a list of the names of such members as had been returned to serve in this parliament.

The aforesaid commissioners did administer the oath to the members who were present, which being done, and the members having subscribed to the roll containing the oath, they repaired to their seats.

The Clerk of the House said: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received the following communication from the secretary of His Royal Highness, the Governor General:

Office of the Governor General's Secretary, Canada.

Ottawa, Nov. 16, 1911.

Sir,—I am commanded by His Royal Highness the Governor General to inform you that the Chief Justice of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber to open the session of the Dominion parliament, on Wednesday the 15th inst., at three o'clock.

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,
H. C. LOWTHER, Lieut.-Colonel,
Governor General's Secretary.

The Clerk of the House of Commons.

A message was delivered by J. de St. Denis LeMoine, Esq., Acting Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod:

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

It is the desire of His Honour the Deputy of His Royal Highness the Governor General that you attend him forthwith in the Senate Chamber.

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

Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate:
Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

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

And the House being returned:

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

Hon. R. L. BORDEN (Prime Minister). Dr. Flint, as the representative of the Crown has just reminded us, with the commencement of a new parliament, it becomes necessary for this House to elect a Speaker. It is not necessary to remind the House that the Speaker occupies a position of very great dignity and importance. In the earlier days of constitutional development he was not only the spokesman of the House of Commons, but he was the champion of their rights against aggression or invasion by the Crown when the rights of the representatives of the people in parliament had not been so firmly established, and were not so clearly understood as they are at present. But in these later days the chief function of the Speaker is to preside over the deliberations and debates of this House, and that the position calls for qualities of intellect, and of temperament, and for experience in the rules and procedure of the House is undoubted. The Speaker must represent fairly both sides of the House, and he must be impartial, firm, courteous, and, above all, patient. I submit to you the name of Thomas Simpson Sproule, member for East Grey, as one who possesses all these qualities in an eminent degree. Dr. Sproule has been a member of this House in every parliament since 1878. He has sat with almost every minister of the Crown who has been a member of any government since confederation. His devotion to his public duties has been pre-eminent, and those of us who have been his colleagues in the past know that he has