House of Commons Debates

FIRST SESSION—TENTH PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, January 11, 1905.

To-day being the first day of the meeting of the first session of the Tenth Parliament for the despatch of business.—Thomas Barnard Flint, Esquire, LL.D., D.C.L., Clerk of the House of Commons, and Lieut.-Col. Henry Robert Smith, Serjeant-at-Arms, commissioners appointed by Dedimus Potestatem for administering the oath to members of the House of Commons, all attending and according to their duty, Henri G. LaMothe, Esquire, Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, delivered to the said Thomas Barnard Flint, Esquire, 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 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 Excellency the Governor General :

Ottawa, December 28, 1904.

Sir,—I am directed by His Excellency the Governor General to inform you that the Chief Justice of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor, will proceed to the Senate Chamber to open the session of the Dominion parliament on Wednesday, the 11th proximo at 3 o'clock p.m.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) J. HANBURY-WILLIAMS, Colonel.

Gov. Gen.'s Secretary.

The Clerk of the House of Commons.

A message was delivered by Ernest John Chambers, Esquire, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod :

Gentlemen of the House of Commons :

His Honour the Deputy of His Excellency the Governor desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the Chamber of the honourable the Senate.

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 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, to-morrow, at the hour of three o'clock in the afternoon, His Excellency will declare the causes of his calling this parliament.

And the House being returned.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister). Mr. Flint, the first duty which devolves on this House at the opening of this new parliament is to at once proceed to the election of a Speaker. I need hardly remark that the position of Speaker of this House, under our parliamentary system of government, is second to none, is, in fact, equal to the highest in the gift of either the Crown or the people. In the first place, the Speaker of the House of Commons is the channel of communication between the House and the Crown ; he is the mouthpiece of this assembly ; and, in the olden' time, in the earlier parts of the history of the motherland, when the relations of the Crown and parliament were not as clear and as well defined as they are at the present moment, this part of the duties of the Speaker was of paramount importance. But we live in calmer and happier days, and the duties which the Speaker performs in this line are, we may say, only perfunctory. But, on the other hand, the duties which the Speaker has to perform as presiding officer of this House have increased importance. These duties require special qualifications which it is not always easy to find combined in the same person. In the first place, it is expected of him who fills this chair that he shall be of a mind at once judicial and fair, that both sides of the House and all parties may expect at his hand a uniform and fair treatment. It is expected of him also that he shall be well versed in parliamentary law. I have to submit to the House that in our judgment, and I believe in the judgment of all, Mr. Robert Franklin Sutherland, member for the north riding of Essex, is well qualified in all

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