

New speaker of the House

John Bosley, a Conservative member of Parliament from Toronto, has been named speaker of the House of Commons by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

The appointment will not become effective until Parliament reconvenes on November 5 and Mr. Bosley is officially elected by his peers. His appointment has been endorsed by Liberal leader John Turner and New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent. His quiet manner, eloquence, keen intelligence and unfailing politeness have made him a favourite with all three parties ever since he was first elected.

Mr. Bosley, 37, will replace former Liberal member of Parliament Lloyd Francis.

Background

Born in Toronto in 1947 and educated at Crescent School and Upper Canada College, Mr. Bosley served two terms as a Toronto alderman before becoming involved in federal politics. He has served as director of the Canadian Council on Unity and the St. Lawrence Centre.

Mr. Bosley is bilingual and was first elected to Parliament in 1979 for the riding of Don Valley West. During Joe Clark's term as prime minister, Mr. Bosley served as parliamentary secretary to Mr. Clark and then as the Conservative Party's external relations and culture critic.

He was vice-chairman of the Progressive Conservative task force on Revenue Canada and in 1981 he was appointed a member of the committee that set out the party's strategy on the Constitution.

Role of speaker

Tradition dictates the speaker should have served as a back bencher for a time to learn the rules of the House, and also that he or she be bilingual.

The speaker is considered important in determining the way the House of Commons operates. The speaker sets the tone and pace and is able to influence the conduct of the members in the House.

The speaker is expected to be impartial to all parties. In the current situation Mr. Bosley must be careful to protect the rights of the 71-member opposition, ensuring that it is not swamped under the large Conservative majority.

He will also face demands from his former fellow back benchers who will be expecting more time than ever for their questions during question period. Normally, most of the 45-minute time period is allotted to questions from opposition members of Parliament.

William Davis retires as premier of Ontario

Ontario Premier William Davis surprised close friends, advisers and cabinet colleagues, when he announced his retirement from politics on October 8.

Even senior cabinet ministers who had been called that morning to attend an afternoon meeting, expected to sign an order-in-council required to issue an election writ for a November 22, provincial election. Now, there will be no election until next spring at the earliest.



Premier William Davis

Making the announcement in an emotional statement to the press and his supporters after the cabinet meeting, Mr. Davis said he was leaving political life to spend more time with his family and because "it is time for new leadership in the Progressive Conservative Party".

"This is not the end of an era in Ontario politics, because eras are never shaped by any single human being," said Mr. Davis. "This is the beginning of a new approach, new personalities and perhaps some new directions," he added.

Long career

William Grenville Davis was born in Brampton, Ontario on July 30, 1929. He attended local schools, the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall and was called to the Ontario Bar in 1955. He practised general law with a Brampton firm until his first election.

As a young lawyer, he became actively involved in politics. He has served on the Peel Board of Education and worked for member of the provincial Parliament Thomas

L. Kennedy for a number of years.

In the 1959 provincial election when he was 29, the constituency of Peel became vacant and Mr. Davis decided to run for the seat. He now represents Brampton.

After Mr. Davis had served as a back bencher for a number of years, Premier John Robarts made him vice-chairman of Ontario Hydro, and later minister of education. He became the province's eighteenth premier on March 1, 1971 and began by completely reorganizing the government structures.

Since becoming premier of Ontario, Mr. Davis has fought four elections, winning majorities in 1971 and 1981 and minorities in 1975 and 1977.

Style of government

Governing to Mr. Davis was not a matter of exerting his political will on an unwilling populace. He usually tested the public mood and gained political consensus for his policies before he acted. He became known for his willingness to listen to all sides, and adopt ideas for their practicality rather than their philosophy.

Taking control of Ontario after the inflationary boom days of the 1960s, Mr. Davis had to steer through some of its roughest times. Under his leadership, government expanded and then shrank. The deficit grew to pay for social programs and then was held in line.

An intense nationalist, Mr. Davis always argued that what was good for Canada was good for Ontario. He stood tough against eight of his fellow premiers to back former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau on the Constitution, prodded by his belief in the need for a strong national government to hold Canada together, even if it meant less independence for the provinces.

With his retirement, Mr. Davis said he intends to become "actively involved in some pursuit which will be both challenging and demanding". He also added that he had no specific plans at the moment.

He is considered an intensely private man with a strong sense of family and deeply-held moral convictions. He is married to Kathleen Mackay and has five children.

The Conservative Party executive is expected to meet in the near future to arrange a leadership convention, probably in January. The new leader will automatically become premier.

Meanwhile, the provincial legislature has resumed as scheduled on October 9 for the fall session. Mr. Davis will stay on as leader until a new leader is elected.