

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 15, 1967

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

NEW MEMBER

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the house that the Clerk of the House has received from the chief electoral officer certificate of the election and return of Hon. Robert L. Stanfield, for the electoral district of Colchester-Hants.

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield, member for the electoral district of Colchester-Hants, introduced by Hon. Michael Starr and Hon. Théogène Ricard.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME TO NEW LEADER OF OPPOSITION

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have already congratulated my hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition on his accession to the leadership of his party, and I should like to congratulate him today on his election to the House of Commons and the taking of his seat in this chamber. In offering congratulations, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could call attention to the fact that he is succeeding in Colchester-Hants a member of quiet sincerity and friendly disposition who had won the affection of all members of this house who knew him.

It is interesting, at least it was interesting to me during the deep research I have conducted on this subject in the last few hours, to realize that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is the third member of his party who has held this post in the last 30 years who had previously served as premier of his province. I can assure the hon. gentleman of my design and my desire to co-operate with him in every possible way, as of course should be the case between two men who are endeavouring to serve the country in the two most important positions in the House of Commons.

• (2:40 p.m.)

I hasten to add, Mr. Speaker, that I do not include in that offer of co-operation the realization of the hon. gentleman's announced patriotic duty to bring about without delay a general election. I consider it my patriotic duty to save the country from a general election for as long as possible, though I do not expect any co-operation from the other side of that high endeavour.

The hon. gentleman assured Canadians the other night in a television broadcast that, among other things, he was anxious to make parliament work more effectively. I look forward to working with him in every way I can in the achievement of this important goal. There are other ways in which, subject to our different parliamentary and party responsibilities, I know we will be able to collaborate; but whether in collaboration or in criticism, in approval or in disapproval, I know the hon. gentleman who has now taken his seat is actuated, as I hope and believe we all are in this house, only by a desire and a resolve to serve Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: In that spirit, Mr. Speaker, we on this side convey to him our best wishes as he takes on new and important responsibilities in this house.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the members of this party would like to associate themselves with the comments of the right hon. Prime Minister in extending a welcome to the Leader of the Opposition. I want to assure him that those around him are not as blue as they appear at the moment.

Mr. MacEwan: You can say that again.

Mr. Douglas: I also want to tell him that his very easy admission to this house is not to be taken as a precedent, and that we will endeavour to make his next entry into the house more difficult. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic party had two reasons for hoping that the Leader of the Opposition would enter the house quickly. The first is that we feel that in our parliamentary system it is much more expedient to have the leaders of the political parties in the