

which are likely to enable him to command equally the confidence of the house as a whole. The experience gained in the office of whip, in dealing with members of all parties in the house, in adjusting differences as they arise, and in doing what is necessary to facilitate and expedite the business of the house, should prove to be an invaluable asset to one who occupies the position of Speaker. The position of chief whip in the English parliament, and indeed I may say also in our parliament, is one which is recognized as being almost on a par with that of a minister of the crown. One who over a period of years renders faithful service in such a position, a service which is not to his party only, but to the whole house, has a right, I think, to feel that his services will, if the occasion arises, be suitably recognized by the House of Commons as a whole.

I might mention that Mr. Casgrain has had considerable experience in the practice of law, and has the honour of having been for many years a king's counsel. I am sure my right hon. friend, the leader of the opposition, will agree with me that a legal training, while not absolutely essential, is, nevertheless, of great assistance to one who occupies the position of Speaker. The questions that arise, the legal and constitutional points that have to be considered, the decisions that have to be quickly made, are all of a character which demand of the occupant of the chair a trained and disciplined mind and make of great advantage legal experience where it can be found.

With respect to any possible question of partisanship may I say that there is a noble tradition in the legal profession of Canada, as of other parts of the British Empire, that where members of the bar receive appointment to the bench they leave behind their partisanship and adopt a judicial character which is beyond question. That tradition, I think, is equally true of those who have been strong party men and have come later to occupy the position of Speaker in the House of Commons. I believe it will be equally true of the hon. member for Charlevoix-Saguenay, when he leaves the floor of the house to ascend the steps which taken him to the chair.

May I mention that the hon. member for Charlevoix-Saguenay also has what I regret to say most of us have not, a fluent command of both the official languages of parliament. Like so many of his compatriots, he not only has a perfect knowledge of his own language, but can put to shame many of his English-speaking associates in the facility of expression which he has in their tongue. That, I am sure, is a qualification which will be appreciated by hon. members of this house.

I might mention other qualifications, but I shall content myself with saying that I believe Mr. Casgrain possesses the character and has in his personality those qualities, which will enable him to discharge the duties of Speaker of this house to the satisfaction of all hon. members, and will perform those duties with impartiality and dignity. I therefore move, seconded by Mr. Lapointe:

That Pierre-François Casgrain, member representing the electoral district of Charlevoix-Saguenay, do take the chair of this house as Speaker.

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): "Sir, we are met together to exercise a very important privilege of this house." Those are the words of Lord John Russell; therefore we may take them as being singularly apposite to what I have to say.

It is a long established custom in this house—in fact it has become almost a rule of law—that a member of French descent should follow in the Speaker's chair a member of British descent, and that they should alternate in the holding of that high office. As the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) has said, that rule has been departed from on few occasions. The rule is salutary; it should be observed, and on this occasion it is the right of a member of French descent to be elected to the chair of this house. That I think, cannot be gainsaid. And it is a matter of satisfaction to every member of this chamber that on the government side there are large numbers of men qualified by experience, by training and by knowledge to occupy that high office.

The duties of a Speaker are very onerous. In my short time in this house I have been frequently impressed by the fact that as yet we have not been able to appreciate the value of tradition. The newness of our desks, the surroundings of this building, are not conducive to memory of great traditions. The old House of Commons called up more traditions than this building does; it could not help but do so. When one thinks, in the great house at Westminster, of what noble traditions are called into being and what imaginary pictures must pass through the minds of the men who occupy seats in that chamber, one realizes that in a new country we suffer from many things, not the least of which is the lack of great traditions. But we are making traditions; as we make precedents we create traditions. The stories that are told from man to man; the tales that are circulated with respect to the sayings of this or