

guidance and direction of eight different Speakers, four of them belonging to one political party, and four having their origin in another political party. Our system of Speakership here is different from that which obtains in Great Britain; each has its advantages, and, perhaps, each has some disadvantages. I made allusion to my own experience simply to follow it with the remark that it gives me great pleasure to say that during thirty-four years of service under eight different Speakers I have found that these Speakers have worthily upheld the traditions which cluster around the Speaker's Chair; that, under their guidance and direction, the balances have been fairly held as between the two political parties, and that equal justice has been dealt out to both. If disadvantages and difficulties have existed in connection with the Speaker's tenure of office it may be said to their credit that they have overcome them, and that they have maintained the dignity of the office according to its traditions.

To-day I have the honour to submit the name of Albert Sévigny, Esq., member for the county of Dorchester, as Speaker of this House. Dr. Sévigny, who, comparatively speaking, is one of the youngest of our members, has, during the short period of his service in this House, by his pleasant personality, by his culture, by his affability and capacity, won for himself the respect and esteem of gentlemen on both sides of the House. I have every hope and confidence, and not the least doubt, that the hon. gentleman who is soon, I hope, to take his place in the Speaker's Chair, will uphold the honour, dignity and traditions of that important office. I beg to move, therefore, seconded by the Hon. Thomas Chase Casgrain:

That Albert Sévigny, Esq., member for the Electoral District of Dorchester, do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Dr. Flint, to those who followed closely the labours of the House last session, it became evident that the health of the then Speaker was failing him, and would no longer enable him to fulfil the arduous duties of the Chair. We were not surprised, therefore, to learn that the hon. gentleman had been summoned to that higher sphere, the Upper Chamber. Since Confederation, it has been the privilege of the Administration in office to select the member of the House who should be the presiding officer, and to

[Sir George Foster.]

make that selection from among the most prominent and most devoted of its followers. It has been stated by the hon. gentleman who leads the House in the absence of the Prime Minister—who, we hope, will soon recover from his illness and again take his place in the House—that our system of appointing the Speaker is different from the British system. In some respects it is. I am not sure that our system is not inferior to the British system; in any case, I agree with all that my hon. friend has said as to the character and ability of those of our colleagues who have in years past had the honour of being Speakers of the Canadian House of Commons. My hon. friend has spoken of his having had the privilege of sitting in this House under eight different Speakers. I am a little older than he—not only in point of years, but in point of service as well—a privilege of which I am not at all proud; in fact, I would, if possible, pass it over to him. At any rate, it has been my privilege to serve under eight or nine different Speakers, and I can bear out all that my hon. friend has said as to the manner in which they have upheld the dignity of the office. Whether they have been of one political party or of another, they have performed their duties to their own credit, to the great advantage of the House of Commons, and to the honour of the Canadian people.

As has been stated by my hon. friend, our first duty to-day is to select a new presiding officer for the House of Commons. My hon. friend has told us that the Government's choice has fallen on the hon. member for Dorchester (Mr. Sévigny). Considering the circumstances of his coming into this House, I think it is a fit sequence that he should be elected to the higher office of Speaker. When Dr. Sproule took the Speaker's Chair he was an ardent Tory; the hon. member for Dorchester when he came to this House was an ardent Nationalist. As extremes always meet, it seems to be fitting that Mr. Speaker Sévigny should follow Mr. Speaker Sproule. And what an evolution this is since the year 1911! If, in the year 1911, the Nationalist candidate in the county of Dorchester, now the Conservative member for the same county, had heard the prediction that he would accept an office, either high or low, from a Conservative Government presided over by Sir Robert Borden, I am sure that the hon. gentleman would have been the very first to protest