

Election of Speaker

kind of view is represented, it is essential that the most extreme views, whether revolutionary or reactionary, heretical or orthodox, novel or commonplace, popular or unpopular, should be given an opportunity of making themselves heard. To allow clamour and disturbance to drown free expression of sentiment is to nullify the whole purpose of a deliberative assembly. Whatever the sentiments of the majority may be, the right of a minority, however small, to state its case and put forward its arguments, is undeniable. The House of Commons is not a public meeting, a conference or a convention, where opposition can be stifled by disturbance or silenced by shouting. History records many instances of the failure of representative assemblies to listen to the voice of reason and to be overborne by concerted, pre-arranged or even spontaneous, noise and violence. This is a danger from which our great assembly—

He is referring to Westminster.

—is not wholly free and it must be carefully guarded against as time goes on. Upon the Speaker of the House of Commons, this most important duty is specifically placed and in his hands, to that extent, rests the future destiny and usefulness of the oldest and greatest deliberative assembly of the world.

I apply those words to this house.

Now, sir, in the ordinary course of events the British system differs from ours in that there it is the custom that the same Speaker continues as long as he retains his seat in the house. I have not conducted any extensive research in this regard but as far back as 1922 the prime minister of that day, Right Hon. Mackenzie King, spoke of the possibility of there being a permanent Speaker. I think that has been a subject that has been discussed in successive parliaments. There has been some widespread support given to it. Had the last speaker, Hon. Roland Michener, been re-elected then the house might have felt the opportunity should have been given it to express itself in regard to this subject. However, in the light of the electoral results any suggestion of that kind becomes theoretical.

So far as the Speaker is concerned, his functions are to preside over this house, to be zealous in the maintenance of the privileges of parliament, and to ensure that the rights of minorities and individual members are preserved. The discharge of these functions requires fairness and tact, firmness and impartiality, and it will not be lost sight of that we do have a number of minorities in this parliament. The Speaker must maintain order amid the clashing sabres of debate. The Speaker must preserve inviolate the traditions of parliamentary government in principle as well as in spirit, for this is the traditional heritage of freedom.

A recital such as this has been made at the opening of all parliaments, and would almost lead one to believe that a paragon of all the perfections would have to be chosen. However, we try to secure unanimity of agreement in the choice of a Speaker, in the choice

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

of an hon. member who represents in his person these purposes and objectives.

It is traditional in our system to choose a Speaker of one parliament who is of English origin, alternating with a Speaker of French origin. Many descendants of the French race have gone to various parts of Canada where they made valuable contributions in local spheres. The man whose name I present for the consideration of the house is among these and also goes back in his roots to the province of Quebec. His father went west many years ago and, should the house accept this nomination, it will be the first time such recognition will have been given to one of French origin representing a constituency outside Quebec.

To meet these qualifications I propose that the House of Commons give consideration to accepting Marcel Joseph Aime Lambert as Speaker. He possesses qualifications similar to those held by the Speaker of the last parliament. He was born in the province of Alberta. He is a Rhodes scholar and a barrister at law. He was first elected to parliament in 1957 and has since taken a prominent part in the deliberations of this house. I should also mention that he is a distinguished veteran of the second world war, who participated in the glory and grandeur of Dieppe where he was taken prisoner, and if he is chosen he will be the first of the veterans of the second world war to have attained so exalted a position.

Therefore, Mr. Raymond, I ask the house to accept the nomination of Mr. Marcel Lambert as an able and proper person to be Speaker of this twenty fifth parliament.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Balcer):

That Marcel Joseph Aime Lambert, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Edmonton West, do take the chair of this house as Speaker.

(Translation):

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Raymond, it gives me great pleasure to second the motion of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker). In my opinion, Mr. Lambert is totally qualified to fulfil the important duties of Speaker of this house, in which he will be called upon to serve his country once again, if this house concurs in the Prime Minister's motion.

I am convinced, as every right-minded person in this place is, that, in this function, he will be a credit to the people of Edmonton West and to the French speaking Canadians, especially those living outside the province of Quebec.

In nominating Mr. Lambert, the Prime Minister is asking the house to maintain a tradition of the utmost importance to the full development of national unity in this