

*Election of Speaker*

of several gentlemen who were mentioned for the office of Speaker, and that great editor of the Times mentioned the five different qualifications which, in his opinion, a Speaker should possess. One of these was imperturbability, good temper, tact, patience and urbanity, and another, a previous legal training if possible. That was in the middle of the nineteenth century. In my own judgment, a Speaker should, by training, experience and character, command the confidence and esteem of his fellow members, for he is the Speaker both of and for the members of this house collectively and not of the government. He must be impartial as befits a judge who applies the rules of procedure to each case as it may arise, without regard to party or the position of the member concerned. While deliberate, he must be firm. While having due regard to the position of ministers of state, he must be possessed of courage to apply the rules to the members on terms of their absolute equality. In that regard we may recall the example of Lenthall, a Speaker of the mother of parliaments, who, in 1640, when Charles took his chair and demanded the whereabouts of the five members, replied: "Your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as the house is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here, and I humbly beg Your Majesty's pardon that I cannot give any other answer than this to what Your Majesty is pleased to demand of me." The Speaker must be jealous of the reputation of this house, maintaining its great traditions and the dignity of his office.

It is difficult, indeed impossible, to find among our members one possessed of all these qualifications, but in the member for the Yukon (Mr. Black) we have a gentleman who has the experience of nearly a decade of service as a member of our chamber, where he has acquired an extensive knowledge of our rules and the practice and procedure of this house. His career at the bar has been creditable, ensuring knowledge of the law and custom of our constitution. He has served with distinction as administrator of the federal power in the unorganized territory of the Yukon and thus acquired knowledge of the conduct of the business of government. For several years he knew the vicissitudes and hardships of war and learned the value of discipline, and attention to detail.

In the confidence that he will discharge the onerous duties and responsibilities of the high office and worthily maintain its great traditions with honour and distinction to himself and to the increasing satisfaction of the mem-

bers of this house, I do now move, seconded by Mr. Guthrie:

That George Black, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Yukon, do take the chair as Speaker of this Commons House of the seventeenth parliament of Canada.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Beauchesne, to the name which the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) has just placed in nomination as that of the person to be chosen as Speaker of this house, I have no exception whatever to take. Indeed, I wish to join with him in my expression of appreciation of the many splendid personal qualities as well as professional abilities of the gentleman whom he has just nominated as Speaker.

I should like also to associate myself in cordial agreement with all that the Prime Minister has said in reference to the great importance of the office of Speaker of the House of Commons.

As the Prime Minister has said, in olden times the office had a twofold function which made it in at least one particular different from what it is to-day. The relation between the commons and the sovereign was not always what it happily is at the present time in all parts of the British Empire, and particularly what it is between the commons and His Majesty's representative in Canada. The function of being the link between the commons and the crown calls for little in the way of comment at the present time. However, as presiding officer of this house, as the custodian of its honour, of its rights and privileges, the Speaker's position does place a very great responsibility upon whoever occupies that office, and it also does demand much in the way of high character and ability. As the Prime Minister has just said, the Speaker must be possessed of calm judgment, discretion, the power of quick decision, tact and patience, and, I might add, possibly also of a sense of humour, and an understanding in large measure of human nature. These are many virtues to be possessed by one man. I believe that the hon. member from the Yukon (Mr. Black) does possess these qualities in large measure.

There is, above all others, one quality which is demanded of the hon. gentleman who occupies the position of Speaker, and that is the quality of impartiality. The position of Speaker is in many respects identical with that of a judge. Indeed, in the old country the Speaker's office is regarded more or less as a judicial position. There the Speaker is paid a salary equal to that paid to the highest judges in the realm. Under

[Mr. Bennett.]