

House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT

Speaker: The Honourable Marcel Lambert

FIRST SESSION—TWENTY FIFTH PARLIAMENT

The twenty fourth parliament having been dissolved by proclamation on Thursday, April 19, and writs having been issued and returned, a new parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Thursday, September 27, 1962, and did accordingly meet on that day.

Thursday, September 27, 1962

This being the day on which parliament is convoked by proclamation of His Excellency the Governor General for the dispatch of business, and the members of the house being assembled:

Léon J. Raymond, Esquire, O.B.E., the Clerk of the House, read to the house a letter from the secretary to the Governor General informing him that the Honourable Patrick Kerwin, Chief Justice of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, would proceed to the Senate chamber to open the first session of the twenty fifth parliament of Canada on Thursday, the twenty seventh day of September, at eleven o'clock.

A message was delivered by Major C. R. Lamoureux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Members of the House of Commons:

The Honourable the Deputy Governor General desires the immediate attendance of honourable members in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the house went up to the Senate chamber, when the Speaker of the Senate said:

Honourable Members of the Senate,
and Members of the House of Commons:

I have it in command to let you know that His Excellency the Governor General does not see fit to declare the causes of his summoning the present parliament of Canada until the Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen according to law, but this afternoon, at the hour of three o'clock, His Excellency will declare the causes of calling this parliament.

And the house being returned to the Commons chamber:

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

MR. MARCEL LAMBERT, MEMBER FOR THE
ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF EDMONTON WEST

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Raymond, I know all hon.

members are awaiting the speech from the throne. However, until a Speaker is elected there is no one to speak for or communicate with Her Majesty's representatives. We have been advised by the Honourable the deputy Governor General that we cannot be informed of the reasons for convening parliament until a Speaker has been chosen. Indeed, the House of Commons does not come into existence until a Speaker has been chosen.

The office of Speaker is a position of high dignity, one of the great inheritances of British tradition and institutions. In the early days the Speaker had to face the King. That is one of the reasons that today we continue more or less to force him to take his position as Speaker when he is chosen. His office requires courage, tact and great wisdom. Indeed, the records of history are replete with the names of great commoners who took their stand on behalf of freedom and its implementation by the House of Commons. The Speaker continues to be the custodian of the privileges and the honour of parliament. His ancient title, of course, is based on the fact that he was chosen by his fellow members to speak for them either to the sovereign or generally. His fidelity to parliament and the things it stands for must be unquestioned, and in the dispatch of his duties his impartiality unquestionable. He must be one who understands human frailties, wise and above all he must be patient, and have high intellectual qualities.

Last evening I picked up two volumes by Lord Ullswater, for many years Speaker of the British House of Commons. I think in his concluding paragraph he has summarized the position of the Speaker. I will quote those words:

Upon the maintenance of order and decorum in any assembly the free expression of opinions depends. In a democratic assembly, where every