

ELECTION OF A SPEAKER.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD, addressing himself to the Clerk, said: Mr. Patrick, I have the honour to move that the Hon. Joseph Godéric Blanchet, the member representing the electoral district of the county of Lévis do take the Chair of this House as Speaker. To those hon. gentlemen who have been in Parliament for some time, it should not be requisite for me to state the peculiar qualifications and fitness of the gentleman whose name I have just proposed for the office of Speaker. I will say generally that Mr. Blanchet, the hon. member for Lévis, has had great parliamentary experience. From 1861 until the Confederation of the Provinces, he was a member of the Parliament of the late Province of Canada, and those who had the privilege of knowing him during that long period can fully appreciate his good qualities. Since Confederation he has had varied experience, not only in the House of Commons of Canada, but in the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Quebec. His experience has not been merely a parliamentary one, but for eight years he presided as Speaker over the Legislative Assembly of his native Province, where, I am warranted in saying, his conduct received the approbation and general acceptance from both sides of that body. He has shown, Mr. Patrick, as a member of this House, great aptitude in discussing all questions of constitutional law and parliamentary practice; indeed his experience as a Speaker and a member has enabled him to take a position as an authority in the House of Commons, as well as in the Provincial Legislature, on all such questions. I move that he take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

MR. TILLEY: I have the honour Mr. Patrick, of seconding the nomination of the hon. member for Lévis as Speaker.

MR. MACKENZIE: Mr. Patrick, before indicating the course I propose to take in regard to the Speakership, I desire to express my astonishment at the nomination the hon. gentleman has made. We all, who were in the House in 1873, the House elected in 1872, recollect that the hon. gentleman, in proposing the Speaker of the previous House, gave it

as an expression of his opinion that the practice continued in England for many years of electing the previous Speaker until something should withdraw that previous Speaker from public life, by obtaining a peerage or otherwise, should be introduced into this country, and the hon. gentleman, in pursuit of that view which he took, and had a right to take, and which was in itself intelligible enough, proposed Mr. Cockburn, the Speaker of the previous Parliament. I had supposed, as a matter of course, that the hon. gentleman who now leads this House would take the same course now that he had taken in 1873, especially as he himself commended the action of the late Speaker, my hon. friend the member for Gloucester (Mr. Anglin), as being above all suspicion of partizanship. He eulogised that hon. gentleman last year, on the occasion of a somewhat similar motion, as being a very excellent Speaker; one who had discharged the duties which devolved upon him with the greatest impartiality. I expected, therefore, as the natural result of the stand taken by the hon. gentleman, that he would to-day have proposed my hon. friend the member for Gloucester as the Speaker of this Parliament. Hon. gentlemen will see that it is very difficult to understand how the hon. gentleman could have escaped the responsibility of taking this course, and, but for the adroitness which the hon. gentleman exhibits in changing positions with marvellous rapidity in everything political, no doubt we would have had that motion made. As the hon. gentleman has not chosen to do that, under all the circumstances I do not think it will devolve upon me to move any amendment to the motion, and I will only say, therefore, in reference to the motion which the hon. gentleman has made, that it would be difficult for him to name any hon. gentleman on his side of the House who could give greater satisfaction to myself and the members behind me on this side of the House. I have no doubt that the hon. gentleman who has been proposed as the Speaker will discharge the high and onerous duties devolving upon him with faithfulness and conscientiousness, and that none will have reason to complain of his conduct as presiding officer of the House. It will be my duty, and the duty of those who