

sound and firm judgment, a judicial mind, and a thorough knowledge of the customs and usages of Parliament; and above all, the proper discharge of the duties of the office requires from the Speaker absolute impartiality and fairness in his decisions.

I submit to the members of this House that in all these respects the hon. member for West Ontario (Mr. Edgar) is eminently endowed, and that he is a proper person to be the Speaker of this House. All the members of this House who sat in the last Parliament—and there are still a few—all those who sat in the previous Parliament will agree with me that in the hands of the member for West Ontario (Mr. Edgar) the honour and dignity of this House, the sound traditions of parliamentary government, and the rights and privileges of individual members will be in safe keeping. All will agree with me, that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Edgar) will discharge the duties appertaining to his office with favour to none and without fear of any, and they will agree, too, that he will be in every respect, as the office implies, the First Commoner of the land. Therefore, Dr. Bourinot, it is with great pleasure that I move, seconded by Sir Richard Cartwright:

That the Hon. James David Edgar, Esq., member representing the Electoral District of the West Riding of the County of Ontario, do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I do not rise for the purpose of raising any question with regard to the nomination which has just so ably been placed before the House by the hon. the leader of the Government. I have no doubt that the duties of the high office of Speaker of the House of Commons will be discharged with great ability and with great impartiality by the hon. gentleman who has just been named. But I desire to express my regret, and the regret of gentlemen on this side of the House, that it has been found necessary to depart from the time-honoured precedent of having the Speaker alternately French and English. I think I am quite safe in saying that it has been, if not the uniform, the all but uniform practice of this House, that the Speaker during one Parliament should be of one nationality, and the Speaker of the succeeding Parliament of another nationality. As I said before, while taking no exception to the high qualifications of the gentleman who has been named for the position of Speaker, I wish to express my regret that it has been found at all necessary to depart from the precedent which has so long been the practice of this House.

The motion being put to the House,

The Clerk of the House (Dr. Bourinot) declared the motion carried in the affirmative, nemine contradicente; and James David Edgar, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of West Ontario, duly elected to the Chair of the House.

Mr. LAURIER.

Mr. Edgar was conducted from his seat in the House to the Speaker's Chair by the First Minister (Mr. Laurier) and Sir Richard Cartwright.

Mr. SPEAKER ELECT. I beg to tender to this House my sincere and hearty thanks for the high honour they have conferred upon me by electing me as their Speaker. It will be my pleasure, as well as my duty, to endeavour to deserve that high honour by dealing with all questions which come before me in my official character, with firmness and with impartiality. I am fully sensible of my unfitness for the position, but I rely confidently upon the co-operation of hon. members on both sides of the House to assist me in maintaining our rules and regulations, in vindicating our rights and privileges, and in preserving the freedom and dignity of debate, according to ancient usages.

The Serjeant-at-Arms (Col. Smith) then placed the Mace on the Table of the House.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier) moved the adjournment of the House.

Motion agreed to, and House adjourned at 3.45 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, 20th August, 1896.

The SPEAKER Elect having taken the Chair,

PRAYERS.

A Message was delivered by René Edouard Kimber, Esquire, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod:

Mr. SPEAKER,—

His Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this Honourable House in the Senate Chamber.

Accordingly the House went up to the Senate Chamber.

Then the Honourable James David Edgar, Speaker Elect, said:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:—

The House of Commons have elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me.

If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me, and not to the Commons, whose servant I am, and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their Queen and country, humbly claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their de-