

Election of Speaker

[English]

It therefore gives me immense pleasure and pride to move, seconded by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), that Jeanne Sauvé, member for the electoral district of Laval-des-Rapides, do take the chair of this House as Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1005)

[Translation]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Pelletier, first of all I wish to say that, together with my party, I echo the wishes the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has expressed concerning Dr. Koester. We all hope that he will be with us again soon and return to carry out his duties as Clerk of the House of Commons.

[English]

I am very pleased and honoured to second the nomination of the hon. member for Laval-des-Rapides (Madam Sauvé) to the position of Speaker of this House of Commons.

As you know, Mr. Pelletier, and as hon. members of the House know, it was not very long ago that we went through a similar ceremony. I can certainly say that some of us would have preferred not to have repeated the procedure with quite this rapidity. That is, nonetheless, the way of democratic elections in this country, and we are very well served by the nomination made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) which I am honoured to second.

As custodian of the rights and the privileges of all hon. members of the House of Commons—and, indeed, as the custodian of the rights of Parliament itself—the Speaker occupies a significant and central role in the functioning of our democracy. Naturally, there are certain qualities and requirements which the nature of the job itself demands of the person elected to this position. A thorough knowledge of the rules, orders and precedents of this House is essential, as is fluency in both of our official languages. Great amounts of patience, courage, wisdom, firmness and compassion are all needed in maintaining order during the heat of debate and in arbitrating parliamentary problems. Needless to say, a sense of proportion and a sense of humour will be great assets.

More fundamental and important than all of these, however, is the Speaker's ability to exercise rigorous and scrupulous impartiality in all matters. The Speaker is the servant of the whole House, not just the governing party, and is duty bound to abandon all traces of normal party affiliation and thereby practice and achieve an impartial and judicious rule. Only in this way can the respect and good will of the House be maintained and democracy well served.

[Translation]

During her many years in the House, the elected member for Laval-des-Rapides demonstrated considerable interest in

all the problems Parliament and Canada had to face, and she was very active both as a member of the House and minister. As the right hon. Prime Minister indicated, she had a distinguished career as a journalist and is highly respected everywhere in Canada.

[English]

I have no doubt that Madam Sauvé is fully cognizant of the onerous responsibilities that we are asking her to assume, responsibilities which may well weigh more heavily upon her in this House and in this period of the nation's history than was the case with her predecessors. I am confident, however, that Madam Sauvé possesses sufficient of the qualities needed for the Speakership and will serve this House with honour and distinction. I, therefore, have no hesitation, and indeed am deeply honoured to second the nomination of the hon. member for Laval-des-Rapides, hon. Jeanne Sauvé, as Speaker of this Thirty-second Parliament of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1010)

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Pelletier, I would like to begin by expressing, on behalf of all my colleagues, the very warmest wishes to Dr. Koester for a speedy and complete recovery from his unfortunate operation.

[Translation]

Mr. Pelletier, on behalf of my colleagues, I wish also to congratulate the hon. member for Laval-des-Rapides (Madam Sauvé) on her nomination as Speaker of the House of Commons. I am sure that because of her many years of experience as a parliamentarian she is very well suited for her new duties. The office of Speaker of the House of Commons is most important, because the Speaker is responsible for the spirit of fairness and impartiality which must prevail in all our proceedings.

[English]

It is, therefore, in our self-interest on both sides of this House to wish her well. I do so with even greater emphasis today because she is the first woman in Canadian history to assume the honour and responsibility of being Speaker in the House of Commons of Canada. We wish her well, indeed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk Assistant of the House of Commons declared the motion carried in the affirmative, *nemine contradicente*, and Jeanne Sauvé, member for the electoral district of Laval-des-Rapides, duly elected to the chair of the House.

Madam Sauvé was conducted from her seat in the House to the Speaker's chair by Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau and Right Hon. Joe Clark.