

Election of Speaker

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members of the House of Commons, I beg to return my humble acknowledgments for the great honour you have been pleased to confer upon me in electing me as your Speaker. These traditional words used by my predecessors in the chair are no mere formality. They express the deep appreciation which I have for your confidence, particularly as it has been given a second time within the short space of seven months.

I thank the right hon. Prime Minister for the generous, yes, even embarrassing words in which he proposed my name, and also the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the C.C.F. party for their gracious endorsement.

We are a House of Commons very different from the last; but although there have been greater changes than usual among the hon. members and in the proportions of the parties, the principles of parliamentary procedure and the fine traditions of the house remain intact. It will be my aim and my duty as the servant of the house, and with your approval, to uphold these principles and traditions, securing to each hon. member the right to express his opinions within the limits necessary to preserve decorum; protecting the recognized privileges of hon. members, of minorities and of the house itself; facilitating the transaction of public business in an orderly manner and with due economy of time and, above all, seeking to be fair and impartial in such decisions as you entrust to me.

If these are also your objectives, as I think they are, I ask for your patience and co-operation in approaching them. Success will not be unrelated to your moods—and these have been known to change between Monday and Friday—and also to your will, which is the final arbiter in all matters in the House of Commons.

(Translation):

My dear colleagues, allow me to thank you for this expression of confidence and to say that it will always be a pleasure for me to hear hon. members speak in the beautiful tongue of Bossuet, Racine or Corneille, for which I have always had the greatest admiration, even though I cannot express myself perfectly in that language.

Be assured that you may, at all times, count on my impartial enforcement of the standing orders of the house, which, in their basic provisions, have been handed down to us, by custom and tradition, from the Anglo-Norman monarchy of which all of us in Canada are the proud inheritors.

[Mr. Argue.]

(Text):

SITTING SUSPENDED

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, without making a formal motion at this time might I suggest the suspension of the sitting until three o'clock this afternoon.

At 11.50 a.m. the sitting was suspended until 3 p.m. this day.

SITTING RESUMED

The house resumed at three o'clock.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

Mr. Speaker read a communication from the Governor General's secretary announcing that His Excellency the Governor General would proceed to the Senate chamber at three o'clock on this day, for the purpose of formally opening the session of the dominion parliament.

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

Mr. Speaker, His Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable house in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the house went up to the Senate.

Then Hon. Roland Michener, Speaker of the House of Commons, said:

May it please Your Excellency:

The House of Commons have elected me 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 debates, access to Your Excellency's person at all reasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from Your Excellency the most favourable construction.

The Honourable the Speaker of the Senate, addressing the Honourable the Speaker of the House of Commons, then said:

Mr. Speaker, I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the House of Commons to Her Majesty's person and government, and not doubting that their proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper and prudence, he grants and upon all occasions will recognize and allow their constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the Commons shall have ready access to His Excellency upon all reasonable occasions, and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favourable construction.