

# House of Commons Debates

## OFFICIAL REPORT

### FIRST SESSION—NINETEENTH PARLIAMENT

The eighteenth parliament having been dissolved by proclamation on Thursday, January 25, and writs having been issued and returned, a new parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Thursday, May 16, 1940, and did accordingly meet on that day.

Speaker: The Honourable JAMES ALLISON GLEN

#### Thursday, May 16, 1940

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

Arthur Beauchesne, Esquire, C.M.G., M.A., K.C., F.R.S.C., the Clerk of the House, read to the house a letter from the Assistant Secretary to the Governor General informing him that the Honourable Mr. Justice Oswald Smith Crockett, in his capacity as Deputy Administrator, would proceed to the Senate chamber on Thursday, the 16th of May, at 12 noon, to open the session.

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

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

His Honour, the Deputy of His Excellency the Administrator, desires the immediate attendance of this honourable house 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 Gentlemen of the Senate:

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

I have it in command to let you know that His Excellency the Administrator 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 in the afternoon, His Excellency will declare the causes of calling this parliament.

And the members being returned to the Commons chamber:

#### ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Doctor Beauchesne, at the beginning of a new parliament the first duty of the Commons is to ascertain the reasons why

the king's representative—who at the moment happens to be His Excellency the Administrator—has summoned its members to meet him in parliament. We have just been told in another place that his excellency does not see fit to disclose the causes until, in accordance with custom, this house has elected its Speaker. As a matter of fact, until a Speaker has been chosen, the Commons is not yet constituted as a house. Parliament itself cannot be said to be properly constituted until the House of Commons has chosen its Speaker. Therefore our immediate duty is to proceed to elect a Speaker.

As hon. members who have been in previous parliaments are well aware, the custom in the Canadian parliament in the selection of a Speaker is somewhat different from that which is followed at Westminster, the customs of which parliament, in most particulars, we usually follow. At Westminster the practice is to do the Speaker of the previous house the honour of reelecting him at each succeeding parliament, provided that he retains his seat in the House of Commons. I recall particularly the occasion on which Mr. Speaker Lowther of the British House of Commons visited Canada and on behalf of the parliamentary association presented this House of Commons with the chair since occupied by the Speaker and which is a replica of the Speaker's chair at Westminster. Mr. Speaker Lowther informed us, addressing the members from the floor of this house, that for sixteen years he had been Speaker of the House of Commons at Westminster and that during that period of time he had not once left the precincts of the house while either house of parliament was in session. Here in Canada we have followed the practice of electing a new Speaker at the beginning of each parliament. There have been but three exceptions in this house: Mr. Speaker Cockburn, Mr. Speaker Rhodes and Mr. Speaker Lemieux were all reappointed Speakers at a succeeding parliament.