

Election of Speaker

before the monarch in his own chosen chamber, and there to demand, on behalf of the people of the nation who had dared to get themselves elected into a House of Commons and, furthermore, dared to try to have a say in how the country might be run—a development which was not particularly popular with the monarch at the time—meant that Speakers were not very popular with the monarch at the time and in fact one of them, on this mission on behalf of democracy, was beheaded.

I say that so that my reluctance in coming to the Chair will be understood, and I have no illusions that on many days during the course of this Parliament that would be a fate which would seem quite acceptable as far as most members of the House of Commons are concerned; and, in fact, on some days there will be some who will be glad to take a hand at the axe.

In any case, I am happy to say that the reception which we now receive in the other place is much more cordial. Nevertheless, even this afternoon my first obligation on your behalf will be to appear before the representative of Her Majesty to demand, on our behalf, the rights and privileges we require to carry out our business as elected representatives, freedom of speech in this assembly and the right to carry out, free from interference from Her Majesty or any other powers, our business on behalf of the electors of the country.

[*Translation*]

Needless to say, it is a great honour to be elected as a member of the House of Commons. And if it is an honour to gain approval from the supreme judges within our democratic system, our fellow citizens, it is an even greater one to be chosen by hon. members to preside over these important sittings.

● (1125)

[*English*]

It is an honour and an obligation which I accept with humility. I accept it on your behalf and I make the commitment to you, as I did five years ago, that I will place the obligation above every other consideration, whether it be of party politics, of family, of friends, or whatever. It is an obligation which I place above every other. I said then that it was one that I never expected to fulfil. Certainly, I never expected that I would be standing here attempting to fulfil it a second time.

In conclusion, may I say, in thanking the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Clark), the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Trudeau), the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) and the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Roy), that it is not possible for any Speaker to preside over this chamber without the good will of the members. Furthermore, it is only possible to succeed, or hope to succeed, on the basis of your desire that the meetings be orderly.

I cannot help but conclude that we have taken a step in these last five years, in introducing television into our proceedings, which has placed us, I believe, in the forefront of the

[*Mr. Speaker.*]

democratic nations of the world, because the essence and the fundamental principle of democratic government is that it takes place in the open, in full view of the citizens. Television has made that possible in our society in a way that no other single step has been able to accomplish in our history. It has offered us the opportunity to participate together as citizens in this process, but it has also placed upon us the obligation to see to it that in this chamber, where often opinions clash, our meetings are exemplary, not only in the content of our dealings but also in our attitude and our conduct toward each other.

I say to you that it is with your good will and your consensus that we will be able to have such meetings. My ability to preside over them always rests in your hands. This will never change, and the minute I lose that good will or that confidence I shall not be able to preside. It is you who make it possible to preside and I offer you my co-operation, as I have tried to give it in the past, because I do believe that together we will make this one of the great Parliaments of our country. I thank you again for the confidence you have placed in me.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SITTING SUSPENDED

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the sitting be suspended until 3 p.m. this day.

Mr. Speaker: It has been suggested by the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) that the sitting be suspended until three o'clock this afternoon. Is the House agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Accordingly, the sitting is suspended until three o'clock this afternoon.

At 11.26 a.m. the sitting was suspended until 3 p.m. this day.

● (1510)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 3 p.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

Mr. Speaker read a communication from the Governor General's secretary announcing that His Excellency the Administrator of the Government of Canada 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 Colonel T. G. Bowie, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows: