

THE CANADIAN MIRROR

OF PARLIAMENT.

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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

June 14, 1841.

The House met according to Proclamation.

At 12 o'clock the Hon. Levis P. Sherwood, Thomas Kirkpatrick and William Hepburne, Esquires, commissioners appointed by his Excellency the Governor General to administer the oath prescribed by the statute to the members elect, proceeded to administer the same, and the members present having been sworn in due form, the clerk of the House of Assembly then read the proclamation of his Excellency summoning the Provincial Parliament, and also the 33d section of the Act of Union, which directs that upon the assembling of the House they should proceed at once to the choice of a Speaker.

Mr. MORRIS then rose, and after a few preliminary observations proposed that Mr. A. Cuvillier be the Speaker of that house.

Mr. MERRITT seconded the nomination, and in doing so observed that it was with much satisfaction he seconded the motion of the hon. gentleman, because he believed the gentleman who had been proposed would fill the situation with dignity and ability, and would also, from his well known liberal principles and his acquaintance with the affairs of legislation, give entire satisfaction to the great body of the people of Canada; and it was with the greater pleasure that he seconded the present motion as it was the first which would appear upon their records, and having for its object the appointment of a gentleman to the most important station in that house, who was a resident of that part of Canada which was heretofore called Lower Canada, between which and this portion of the Province there had hitherto existed a broad and unnatural distinction in sentiment and feeling, and that distinction he hoped now to see entirely obliterated.

Col. PRINCE said he would also support the nomination, and he did so with great pleasure, as he believed the gentleman who had been proposed was, from his acquaintance with parliamentary practice and usages, and from his political principles, which he understood to be those of moderate reform, he believed he was a gentleman calculated in every respect to do honor to their choice, and to fill the chair with dignity and ability. He (Col. Prince) considered it a duty which they owed to that class of the constituency of Canada which had selected that hon. gentleman (Mr. Cuvillier) as their representative, and of which class that hon. gentleman himself was one, that their brethren in this portion of the province of Canada should hold out the hand of fellowship to them and to show that on our part a disposition exists to act with cordiality and good feeling. He (Col. Prince) for one would hold out this act of the appointment of Mr. Cuvillier to be their Speaker as an earnest of his intention to meet his friends from that part which was Lower Canada with confidence and friendship, with no disposition to meet in hostile encounter, but to labor together for the public good, throwing aside all party animosity and all ill feeling, for he considered that the prosperity of the country generally is the best and truest mark at which they should

aim. He (Col. Prince) was also happy if he (Mr. Price) would infinitely prefer an opportunity of paying a compliment to administration formed of Tories altogether, his own constituency, the greater proportion than one of Tories and Reformers joined, of whom were French Canadians, by supporting the nomination of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Cuvillier). Thus much he (Col. Prince) thought it necessary to say in reference to the appointment of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Cuvillier). He hoped he might be indulged before closing his remarks in paying a merited tribute of respect to the late Speaker of the house of Assembly of Upper Canada. He would merely say that if the hon. gentleman now proposed, when placed in the chair of that house, should follow the same course of conduct as that pursued by Sir Allan McNab, they would have no reason to be dissatisfied with their choice.

Mr. HINCKS said, that in order to prevent the possibility of any misunderstanding with regard to his vote, he felt it a duty which he owed to his constituents to give his reasons why he felt great pleasure in supporting the present motion. He (Mr. Hincks) had taken peculiar pains to ascertain the political views and opinions of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Cuvillier) in order to form a decision as to whether he would give him his support. He felt perfectly well assured, upon authority which he could not doubt, (and he wished the House to be put in possession of the circumstance, that he might be set right if his information upon this point were incorrect,) that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Cuvillier) disapproved of many of the articles of the Union Bill; and further, that he had no confidence whatever in the present administration. These were points in which he perfectly coincided with the hon. gentleman; and these were the grounds upon which he would, with great pleasure, support the nomination of the hon. gentleman; and he was desirous that the country should be put in possession of these facts.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT said that after the speech which had been made by the hon. member from Oxford, he should feel it his duty to move an amendment. After hearing a declaration such as that which had just been made by the hon. member, he thought that house should pause before concurring in the motion which had been made. A well merited compliment had been paid to the gentleman who had formerly filled the Speaker's chair in the House of Assembly of Upper Canada, and he believed the choice of the present house could not call upon a better man. He would therefore take the liberty of moving in amendment, that Sir Allan N. McNab be the Speaker.

Mr. JOHNSON stated that he believed there must be some misapprehension on the part of the hon. member who had moved the amendment, he believed his hon. friend from Oxford had no intention of imputing to Mr. Cuvillier a want of confidence in the administration of his Excellency the Governor General, to so large an extent as the hon. mover seemed, from his remarks, to imply.

Mr. PRICE observed that he had reason to believe that the hon. gentleman who had been proposed as Speaker is an advocate of Responsible Government, as set forth in Lord Durham's Report; for his own part,

he (Mr. Price) would infinitely prefer an opportunity of paying a compliment to administration formed of Tories altogether, his own constituency, the greater proportion than one of Tories and Reformers joined, of whom were French Canadians, by supporting the nomination of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Cuvillier). Thus much he (Col. Prince) thought it necessary to say in reference to the appointment of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Cuvillier). He hoped he might be indulged before closing his remarks in paying a merited tribute of respect to the late Speaker of the house of Assembly of Upper Canada. He would merely say that if the hon. gentleman now proposed, when placed in the chair of that house, should follow the same course of conduct as that pursued by Sir Allan McNab, they would have no reason to be dissatisfied with their choice.

Col. PRINCE desired that the hon. member would explain what a tory is, confidence in an administration of that nature.

Mr. ROBLIN said he regretted extremely, that the hon. gentleman from Oxford should have introduced the discussion of the abstract principle of Responsible Government at the present moment. Whether Mr. Cuvillier has confidence in the present administration or not, he (Mr. Roblin) had confidence in him and would support the original motion for his appointment.

Mr. THORBURN said he perfectly concurred in the language which had just fallen from the hon. gentleman from Prince Edwards. Mr. CUVILLIER is well known to the people of Canada as a gentleman of consistency as well as liberality in his political conduct, and possesses the full confidence of all who are entitled to be called Reformers. He (Mr. Thorburn) thought it would be highly inexpedient and improper to press a question of this kind at this moment. Mr. Cuvillier would, he had no doubt, fill the situation of Speaker of that House with credit to himself and to the House. He had long been a member of a Legislative body, and was well acquainted with all the duties pertaining to the office of Speaker. If ever there was a time when a place offering should be made, now is the time, (hear, hear,) and if there is any thing wrong in the administration of the Government, let it be discussed in a proper manner and at a fitting time; but let us not embarrass our proceedings at the very outset by captious and uncalled-for reprimands. The hon. gentleman should not take the House by surprize. He (Mr. Thorburn) would yield to no one in purity of intention, and whilst he admitted the truth of the maxim "to err is human," he would nevertheless not permit himself to be in any way connected with any thing which was not honorable and right, as far as he was capable of judging. He was ready to bear testimony to the upright and honorable manner in which the late Speaker discharged the duties of his office; although differing from that gentleman in political opinions, he was ready to accord him the praise of having always acted in the most honorable manner. In fact no one is better qualified than that hon. gentleman for the duties of the station; but at the same time he (Mr. Thorburn) felt it to be his duty to support the nomination of Mr. Cuvillier, and for this reason: because he would extend the right hand of fellowship to our fellow Colonists in the lower branch of the Province; and as the Parliament had been called to meet within the upper part of the Province, he would reciprocate the favor by confiding the Speakership upon a Lower Canada member.

Mr. HINCKS said, he believed the observations he had made had been entirely misinterpreted. He felt it his duty to state the reasons why he supported the nomination of