

# House of Commons Debates

## FIRST SESSION—EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

The Seventh Parliament of the Dominion, which had been prorogued from the twenty-third day of April, 1896, and thence from time to time, was dissolved by proclamation on the 24th day of April, 1896, and writs having been issued and returned, a new Parliament was summoned to meet for the despatch of business on Wednesday, the 19th day of August, 1896, and did accordingly meet on that day.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, 19th August, 1896.

On which day, being the first day of the meeting of the First Session of the Eighth Parliament, for the despatch of business, John George Bourinot, Esquire, Clerk of the House of Commons, Henry Robert Smith and François Fortunat Rouleau, Esquires, Commissioners appointed by *Dedimus Potestatem* for administering the Oath to Members of the House of Commons, all attending according to their duty, Samuel E. St. O. Chapleau, Esquire, Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, delivered to the said John George Bourinot, a Roll containing a List of the names of such Members as had been returned to serve in this Parliament, together with Certificates of Returns of Members for the Electoral Districts of Quebec East, Oxford, South Riding, York (O.), North Riding, Kings (N.S.), Brome, Quebec (County), Queen's West (P.E.I.), Portneuf, Shelburne and Queen's (N.S.), and St. John and Iberville.

The aforesaid Commissioners did administer the Oath to the Members who were present,—which being done, and the Members having subscribed the Roll containing the Oath, they repaired to their seats.

A Message was delivered by René Edouard Kimber, Esquire, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod :—

*Gentlemen :*

The Honourable Sir Henry Strong, Deputy Governor, desires the immediate attendance of this Honourable House in the Senate Chamber.

Accordingly, the House went up to the Senate, when the Speaker of the Senate said :—

*Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate, and  
Gentlemen of the House of Commons :*

I have it in command to let you know that His Excellency the Governor General 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 to-morrow, at Three o'clock in the afternoon, His Excellency will declare the causes of calling this Parliament.

And the Members being returned,

### ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier). Dr. Bourinot, in accordance with the intimation conveyed by the representative of the Crown, and in accordance with the long-established usage of Parliament, the duty now devolves upon this House—fresh as it is from the people—to elect a Speaker. It would be mere presumption on my part to remind hon. gentlemen that the Speakership of the House of Commons is one of the most important offices under our parliamentary system of government. The Speaker is the channel of communication between the Commons and the Crown. He is the spokesman of the Commons. It is his duty on every occasion when the Commons think proper, to address the Crown, to convey the messages which the House wishes to convey, whether they be in approval or dissent, or whether they be expressions of joy or of grief. He is in that respect pre-eminently the Speaker of the House of Commons. In the olden days, when the nature of the relations between the Crown and the Commons were somewhat hazy and undefined, these functions of the Speaker, as we know, were of paramount importance; but in the later centuries, as the relations between the Crown and the Commons have been more clearly defined and better understood, those special duties, though of course still continuing, have lost some of their degree of importance. But the Speaker is also the presiding officer of this House, and, as time has developed our parliamentary system of government, we have found that the duties of the Speaker, as presiding officer of the House, are now the chief duties of the office. The experience of all parliaments, and especially the experience of the Mother of all Parliaments, as well as our own experience, has taught us that the discharge of these duties requires, on the part of the presiding officer of this House, a