

Election of Speaker

for the great honour you have been pleased to confer upon me in electing me as your Speaker. These are almost hallowed and traditional words directed to his colleagues by a member of the house when he is newly elected to this position. After listening to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and those gentlemen who followed them speak with regard to the awesome requirements of this position, and having heard those things which have been said about me—or which I gather were being said about me, for I fail to see them—I wish to thank you one and all for this public expression of your confidence in me. May I simply say that I hope I merit this confidence. I wish to thank all those who privately have wished me well and have said so many nice things about me. I also wish to thank my family for having supported me in my career to date. I feel that this house has conferred a special honour upon my province, upon my city and upon my constituency in naming me the presiding officer of the House of Commons. On their behalf I wish to thank you.

If there can be said to be an undertaking or an engagement by a newly elected Speaker, I feel that I can do no better than to quote the words of my illustrious predecessor, who I am pleased to see in this house today, on the occasion of his re-election as speaker on May 12, 1958:

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.

I realize that the composition of this house has changed although, as may be recalled, in 1957 when I first entered it the general balance of members was not dissimilar. I am sure there may be some rather rapid exchanges and that the cross-fire may become rather acute at times but, of course, all within the rules. In these exchanges as, perhaps haltingly at times, I will deal with the business of the house, I would hope that you not make me your primary target and that if you have any sharpshooting to do you either pick on somebody else or, as the duck shooting season is now open, you practice your marksmanship outside the confines of this house.

I hope we shall have productive days ahead of us within the rules of the house, which I would commend to all hon. members, particularly those who have been elected for the first time, and I trust that we shall conduct the business of the house with dispatch and ef-

[Mr. Speaker.]

ficiency but with free and unfettered discussion.

Again I wish to thank you all for the honour which you have conferred upon me.

SITTING SUSPENDED

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to address you for the first time in your new capacity in the high position to which you have been called, and to suggest that this sitting be now suspended, to resume at three o'clock this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: The house has heard the suggestion of the Prime Minister that this sitting be suspended until three o'clock this day. Is it the pleasure of the house to concur in this suggestion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the sitting suspended until the ringing of the bells at 3 p.m. this day.

At 12.10 p.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, it is the pleasure of His Excellency the Governor General that this honourable house attend him immediately in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the house went up to the Senate chamber. Then Hon. Marcel Lambert, Speaker of the House of Commons, said:

Then Hon. Marcel Lambert, 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 seasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from Your Excellency the most favourable construction.