

That the hon. Edgar N. Rhodes, Member for the electoral district of Cumberland, take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

Sir WILFRID LAURLIER: Mr. Northrup, we meet under conditions of some peculiar novelty. We do not meet under the rules of the House because those rules say that this House shall meet at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. We do not meet under the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor-General, because the Governor-General, while fixing the date of the meeting of Parliament, did not fix the hour. Of course, Parliament, though elected by the people, has to be called by the Governor-General. It is within His Excellency's privilege to summon it at any time and for any time he pleases, and to fix the hour also. It has pleased him to call Parliament for the 18th March, but he has not fixed the hour. He might have said that we should meet at 11 o'clock of the morning or at the same hour in the evening, and we would have to obey his command. I think, therefore, that under such circumstances the House is irregularly called. But on this side of the Chamber we do not want for that reason to raise any objection; all we are anxious to do is to expedite business as far as we can. I merely say, as a word of friendly criticism to my Rt. Hon. friend on the other side of the House, that it would have been more regular if when summoning Parliament, the hour had been stated.

Having said this much, not by way of offensive criticism but merely to emphasize the desirability of at all times following the law, I now come to the motion which has just been moved by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister. The motion is that the member for Cumberland be elected Speaker of this House. I may frankly say at once that I would rather see the member for Cumberland in the Chair than on the floor of this Chamber. On the floor, from past experience, he was not above party spirit. I do not blame him too much for that, although I think some of the views he held were blameable. As to his action in the Chair in the past, however, I have nothing but what is complimentary to say of his administration and his conduct. Mr. Rhodes occupied the Chair of this House last session, and previous to that discharged the duties of Deputy Speaker. Both as Deputy Speaker and as Speaker of this House he certainly was entitled to the encomium which has just been passed upon him by the Prime Minister. For he performed his duties with impartiality, which

[Sir Robert Borden.]

is the first qualification for the Speakership of this House, with dignity, and with full knowledge of Parliamentary law. Having given that evidence of his fitness for the office, it is with great pleasure that we on this side of the House agree to the motion.

Rt. Hon. Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Just one word in reply to what the right hon. leader of the Opposition has said. I am confident, speaking from recollection, that the Order in Council which provided for the issuance of the Proclamation summoning Parliament did name 11 o'clock of the forenoon, but I am not at all sure about the Proclamation itself. If the latter did not name the hour, according to my recollection it departed from the terms of the Order in Council, and the omission was unfortunate.

The Clerk: It has been moved by the Right Honourable the Prime Minister that the Hon. Edgar Rhodes take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

There being no other nomination I declare the Hon. Edgar N. Rhodes, member for the electoral district of Cumberland, duly elected to the Chair as Speaker of this House.

Hon. Mr. Rhodes was conducted from his seat in the House to the Speaker's Chair by Sir Robert Borden and Hon. F. B. Carvell.

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT said: I beg to tender to this House my sincere and hearty thanks for the high honour it has conferred upon me by again electing me as its Speaker. It shall be my pleasure, as well as my duty, to endeavour to deserve that high honour by dealing with all questions which come before me in my official character with firmness and with impartiality. I am fully sensible of my unfitness for the position, but I rely confidently upon the co-operation of honourable members on both sides of this House to assist me in maintaining and in preserving our rights and privileges, and in preserving the freedom and dignity of debate according to ancient usage.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

APPOINTMENT OF WILLIAM BARTON NORTHROP, M.A., K.C., ANNOUNCED.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that William Barton Northrup, Esquire, M.A., K.C., has been appointed Clerk of the House in the place of Thomas Barnard Flint, Esquire, M.A., LL.B., D.C.L., retired.