

House of Commons Debates

FIRST SESSION—NINTH PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, February 6, 1901.

To-day being the first day of the meeting of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament for the despatch of business,—Sir John George Bourinot, K.C.M.G., LL.D., D.C.L., Clerk of the House of Commons, and Lieut.-Col. Henry Robert Smith, Serjeant-at-Arms, Commissioners appointed by *Dedimus Potestatem* for administering the Oath to Members of the House of Commons, all attending according to their duty, Henri G. LaMothe, Esquire, Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, delivered to the said Sir John George Bourinot, a Roll containing a list of the names of such members as had been returned to serve in this parliament.

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 Mr. Justice Gwynne, in his capacity as 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:

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 the hour of three o'clock in the afternoon, His Excellency will declare the causes of his calling this parliament.

And the House being returned,

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The PRIME MINISTER (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). Sir John Bourinot, it is probably in the minds of all the members now assembled on the floor of this House that the unfortunate circumstance of the recent

demise of the great and noble lady who was for more than sixty years our Sovereign, should call from us, as our first duty, the adoption of an address to His Majesty the King, conveying to himself and the Royal Family the expression of our deep condolence for the great loss they have sustained—a loss which is not theirs alone, but which I am sure is the loss of all British subjects the whole world over. But I would remind hon. members at the same time that this House has no voice and can take no action except through the Speaker of the House, and that practically it has no existence for business until a Speaker has been elected. So, from the very necessity of the case, our first duty must be to elect a Speaker. I would also remind the House that our next duty, according to parliamentary usage, is to hear from His Excellency the Governor General the reasons why he has thought fit to summon us together. When this double duty has been performed, I am sure it will be very appropriate—and in this I express the views of all the members of this House—that we should pass such an address as I have just alluded to. Therefore, I here and now invite the House to proceed at once to the election of a Speaker, and I suggest as a fit and proper person for the occupancy of that high office—the highest in the gift of the House of Commons—Louis Philippe Brodeur, member for the electoral district of Rouville. The cheers which have just met the name of Mr. Brodeur are an evidence that his acceptance of this high office will be acceptable at all events to this side of the House, and I venture to hope that it will be equally acceptable to the other side. We have endeavoured in this country to follow as closely as possible the parliamentary system of Great Britain, where the accumulated experience of many centuries has brought that system well nigh to perfection. In one particular, however, and a very important one, we have departed from that system. In England, when once a Speaker is elected, he is elected practically for life. He is continued in office from parliament to parliament, and occupies the Chair so long as he has a seat in the House. We have adopted another system. With us it has become almost an article of the unwritten law of parliament that with a new parliament there should be a new Speaker. Of course, a good deal might be