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35th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, January 17, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 17, 1994

FIRST SESSION—35TH PARLIAMENT

[English]

The 34th Parliament having been dissolved by proclamation on Wednesday, September 8, 1993, and writs having been issued and returned, a new Parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on Monday, January 17, 1994, and did accordingly meet on that day.

Monday, January 17, 1994

This being the day on which Parliament was convoked by proclamation of His Excellency the Governor General of Canada for the dispatch of business, and the members of the House being assembled:

Robert Marleau, Esquire, Clerk of the House of Commons, read to the House a letter from the Deputy Secretary to the Governor General informing him that the Right Honourable Antonio Lamer, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, would proceed to the Senate chamber to open the first session of the 35th Parliament of Canada on Monday, January 17, 1994, at Ottawa.

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Members of the House of Commons:

It is the desire of the Honourable the Deputy to His Excellency the Governor General of Canada that this honourable House attend him immediately in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the House went up to the Senate chamber, where the Speaker of the Senate said:

Honourable Members of the Senate, Members 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 a Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen, according to law; but tomorrow, Tuesday, January 18, 1994 at three o'clock in the afternoon, His Excellency will declare the causes of his calling Parliament.

(1125)

[Translation]

And the House being returned to the Commons Chamber:

The Clerk of the House: Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 3, I invite Mr. Hopkins, member for the electoral district of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, to take the chair as the member presiding.

* * *

[English]

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Before we begin our actual order of the day, I would like to thank representatives from all parties in the House who have worked with us in preparation for this election today. I want to thank the Clerk and the staff of the House for their attention to the many details. I want to express my appreciation to the Sergeant-at-Arms, his staff and the constables of this House of Commons who serve this place so well.

I want to welcome all of the new members to Canada's 35th Parliament and welcome back former members.

[Translation]

Thank you very much, and good luck and good voting.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Standing Orders, the House will now proceed to elect a Speaker.

[English]

The candidates whose names will appear on the first ballot are as follows:

Allmand, Warren	Milliken, Peter
Anawak, Jack	Nunziata, John
Gauthier, Jean-Robert	Parent, Gilbert
Harper, Elijah	Simmons, Roger
McLaughlin, Audrey	Terrana, Anna
McWhinney, Ted	Wood, Bob

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, first I want to give you my undertaking that I will not heckle you during your tenure in the chair. Second, I would ask that my name be removed from the list as it was inadvertently left on.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): I want to thank the hon. member for his comments. However, the deadline for the Clerk to accept a request by a member to withdraw as a candidate was 6 p.m. yesterday evening. Although it is now too late to amend the list before the first ballot, the House has heard and will no doubt take good note of the member's request.

(1130)

In accordance with the standing orders, the list of members who have withdrawn or who are ineligible as candidates has been placed on each member's desk and is also available at the table.

Election of Speaker

The list of those members who are eligible as candidates has also been placed on each member's desk. It is available at the table as well and is being placed in each polling station.

After the Clerk has unsealed the ballots, I will suggest a method of proceeding which will help to accelerate the voting process.

As we are now prepared to begin the voting procedure, may I remind all hon. members to print the first and last name of their candidate on the ballot paper. I will suggest that members leave their desks, exit through the curtains and come to the table using the doors on my left and on my right of the chair on their respective sides of the House. A clerk will issue to each member a ballot paper. After casting their ballot hon. members are asked to leave the voting area so that there will be no congestion and those voting will have privacy.

After casting their ballot hon. members are asked to leave the voting area immediately.

The polling booths are now open to vote.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

(1155)

[*Translation*]

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order, please. If there are any hon. members who have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now?

[*English*]

All members having voted I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order. Before I suspend the sitting may I bring to the attention of hon. members that when the counting of ballots has been completed, the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes. The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 12.01 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 12.46 p.m.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order. I must say that your conduct is excellent. May it continue in future days.

[*Translation*]

It is my duty to inform the House that a second ballot will be necessary.

The names of the members who are eligible for the second ballot are as follows:

Allmand, Warren
Gauthier, Jean-Robert
Milliken, Peter

Parent, Gilbert
Simmons, Roger

[*English*]

If any members whose names I have just read wish to withdraw as candidates for the second ballot, will they please rise in their places and state their reasons?

For the benefit of hon. members, a revised alphabetical list of candidates for the second ballot will be placed in each polling station within the next five minutes, at which time the voting will commence.

I would like to explain at this time that these lists will actually be printed in about the next four minutes.

(1250)

Before asking hon. members to proceed to cast their ballots and while the Clerk is unsealing the ballots, may I indicate that the second ballot will be a different colour and that lists of names of candidates on this ballot have been placed in each polling station.

The polling booths are now open.

(1315)

[*Translation*]

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order, please. If there are any honourable members who have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now?

[*English*]

All members having voted, I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

Order, please. Would the members in the House please be seated.

Before I suspend the sitting may I bring to the attention of hon. members that when the counting of the ballots has been completed the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes.

[*Translation*]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(At 1.19 p.m. the sitting of the House was suspended.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 1.46 p.m.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): It is my duty to inform the House that a third ballot will be necessary.

The names of members eligible for the third ballot are as follows:

Election of Speaker

Allmand, Warren
Gauthier, Jean-Robert

Milliken, Peter
Parent, Gilbert

[*English*]

If any members whose names I have just read wish to withdraw as candidates for the third ballot, will they please rise in their places and do so?

For the benefit of hon. members a revised alphabetical list of candidates for the third ballot will be placed in each polling station within the next five minutes at which time the voting will commence. May I ask all hon. members to please remain seated until the printed list comes back to the House. It will just be a couple of minutes.

(1350)

Order, please. Will the members in the House please be seated?

While the Clerk is unsealing the ballots, may I once again indicate that the third ballot will be of a different colour and that lists of names of candidates on this ballot have been placed in each polling station.

The polling booths are now open.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

(1420)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order, please. Will the members please take their seats? Order, please.

If there are any hon. members who have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now?

All members having voted I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

I regret to inform the hon. member that no points of order can be raised during the process of the election of the Speaker.

Before I suspend the sitting, may I bring to the attention of hon. members that when the counting of the ballots has been completed, the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes.

[*Translation*]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(At 2.23 p.m. the sitting of the House was suspended.)

[*English*]

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 2.52 p.m.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): It is my duty to inform the House that another ballot will be necessary.

The names of the members eligible for the next ballot are as follows:

Allmand, Warren
Parent, Gilbert

Gauthier, Jean-Robert

(1455)

If any member whose name I have just read wishes to withdraw as a candidate for the next ballot, will he please rise in his place and do so.

For the benefit of hon. members, a revised alphabetical list of candidates for the next ballot will be placed at each polling station within the next five minutes, at which time the voting will commence.

I would also like to remind hon. members to move away from the voting area after they have voted so that we do not have any congestion, invading other people's privacy while they vote.

Order, please. Will members please be seated.

While the Clerk is unsealing the ballots may I once again indicate that this ballot will be of a different colour and that lists of names of candidates on this ballot have been placed in each polling station.

The polling booths are now open.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

(1520)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Would the members who are standing on the floor please take their seats?

If there are any hon. members who have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now?

All members having voted I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Before I suspend the sitting may I bring to the attention of hon. members that when the counting of ballots has been completed, the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes.

[*Translation*]

The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 3.25 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 3.50 p.m.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): It is my duty to inform the House that another ballot will be necessary.

[*English*]

The names of members eligible for the next ballot are as follows:

Gauthier, Jean-Robert

Parent, Gilbert

Election of Speaker

If any member, whose name I have just read, wishes to withdraw as a candidate on the next ballot, will he please rise in his place and do so?

For the benefit of hon. members a revised alphabetical list of candidates for the next ballot will be placed in each polling station within the next five minutes, at which time voting will commence.

(1555)

Order, please. While the Clerk is unsealing the ballots may I once again indicate that this ballot will be of a different colour and that lists of names of candidates on the ballot have been placed in each polling station.

[Translation]

The polling booths are now open.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

(1620)

[English]

If there are any hon. members who have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now?

[Translation]

All members having voted, I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

[English]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order. Before I suspend the sitting may I bring to the attention of hon. members that when the counting of the ballots has been completed, the bells to call the members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes. The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 4.21 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 4.49 p.m.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order. It is my duty to inform the House that another ballot will be necessary.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order, please. I can understand the enthusiasm.

The names of eligible members on the next ballot are as follows:

Gauthier, Jean-Robert

Parent, Gilbert

Will the members standing please take their seats? I have to ask this question.

If any hon. member, whose name I have just read, wishes to withdraw as a candidate on the next ballot, will he please rise in his place and do so?

(1655)

For the benefit of hon. members, a revised alphabetical list of candidates for the next ballot will be placed in each polling station within the next few minutes, at which time the voting will commence.

While the Clerk is unsealing the ballots may I once again indicate that this ballot will be of a different colour and that lists of names of candidates on this ballot have been placed in each polling station. I will give the Clerk a chance to do his work.

(Members were issued ballots and marked their ballots in secret at voting stations.)

(1725)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order. If there are any hon. members who have not voted and wish to do so, will they please vote now?

All members having voted I do now instruct the Clerk to proceed with the counting of the ballots after I have cast my ballot.

Before I suspend the sitting may I bring to the attention of members that when the counting of the ballots is being completed the bells to call members back to the House will be sounded for not more than five minutes.

[Translation]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(At 5.30 p.m. the sitting of the House was suspended.)

[English]

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 5.52 p.m.

The Clerk of the House having provided the Presiding Officer with the name of the member having received a majority of the votes cast:

The Presiding Officer (Mr. Hopkins): Order, please. I get the distinct impression that if this were to go on much longer, someone might end up shooting the messenger.

Just by way of a word before we leave, I want to thank all members for their gracious attention today. I have to say to all members of the House and to all Canadians out there who have been watching the proceedings today for the election of a Speaker for Canada's 35th Parliament that as far as your presiding officer in the chair is concerned, it has been the longest resume I have ever written for a short-term job.

It is my duty to inform the House that a Speaker of this House has been duly elected.

[*Translation*]

It is with great pleasure that I invite the hon. member for the electoral district of Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold, Mr. Gilbert Parent, to take the chair now.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

(1800)

[*English*]

(The Presiding Officer having vacated the chair, and the mace having been laid under the table, conducted Mr. Parent from his seat in the House to the chair.)

The Speaker: My dear colleagues, hon. members, I beg to return my humble acknowledgements to the House for the great honour you have been pleased to confer upon me by choosing me to be your Speaker.

And the mace having been laid upon the table:

The Speaker: These words are spoken by all new Speakers in Parliaments throughout the Commonwealth. They bring us back always to our roots and always to our traditions.

I thank you for the confidence that you have shown in me. I do accept this honour with great joy and, I must admit, a bit of trepidation. On your behalf I want to thank our colleagues who chose to let their names stand and who took part in the process established by this House for the election of our Speaker. I want especially to salute my dear friend and colleague of 16 years, a great member of Parliament, Jean-Robert Gauthier.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I ask the House to join in the expression of a very special note of thanks to the retiring Speaker, the hon. John Fraser, who has served this House with distinction and dignity.

The last passage in Disraeli's diary before he left home to take his seat in the House of Commons reads:

I am now as one leaving a secure haven for an unknown sea. What will the next 12 months produce?

These words are pretty close to my feelings at this moment, but I take great comfort in the comments which have been made in the last few weeks about the necessity to restore dignity and respect in the House.

The hon. Audrey McLaughlin has referred to the fact, and I am quoting, that "the reputation of Parliament has suffered from unacceptable behaviour in the past".

The hon. Jean Charest has said: "We are going to remain open to any new ideas of doing things differently".

Mr. Manning has expressed strong belief in the necessity to stop "the circus-like atmosphere which sometimes has prevailed in the House".

Election of Speaker

The hon. Herb Gray has stressed that "parliamentary reform is an important part of the government's plan".

[*Translation*]

The hon. Lucien Bouchard emphasized the word "civility" to describe the quality of the proceedings in the House. All in all, it does seem that despite differences in wording, all participants in the debates of the House put a spirit of co-operation and respect among their highest aspirations.

[*English*]

In this House of Commons one event affects another and what we anticipate really seldom occurs, but what we least expect generally happens. My colleagues, this is bound to take place in an environment which contains many contradictions.

Out of courtesy we refer to each other, and rightly so, as hon. members. Yet perhaps never in our history have we enjoyed a less favourable opinion on the part of our fellow Canadians.

(1805)

We sit in this House of Commons, yet it is our wish not to be common but to rise to the heights required of us by circumstance and history. My colleagues, I hope that in all of our conduct and speeches in the House of Commons we may remember that we are not here because of some merit on our part but because free men and free women have faith in us, have faith in the principles which we put forward in election campaigns and, yes, have faith in our parliamentary way of life.

[*Translation*]

When Madam Speaker Jeanne Sauvé first addressed this House as Speaker, she stated the following and I quote: "It is through you that the country as a whole expresses itself, and it is Parliament which most completely reflects the aspirations of the whole nation."

I humbly accept this heavy responsibility, mindful of my limitations. I will endeavor to be equal to the task which you have bestowed upon me so that this assembly may work for the greater good of all of Canada.

[*English*]

I thank the clerks. I thank all House of Commons staff on whom we are going to be depending for this 35th Parliament.

I am told that a riding can expect to have a Speaker of the House of Commons represent it every millennium so this is an historic day for my constituents of Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold who have seen fit to return me to this place.

I might say, with my wife in the House and my children watching, it is a very proud day indeed for me and for my family and I do thank you all most respectfully.

Election of Speaker

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by congratulating you on your election.

[English]

It was quite a day for all of us, for all politicians. Now we know that every vote is very important.

[Translation]

I would also like to congratulate Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier and the other candidates for this office. Indeed, it is because of the quality of the candidates in the running that it took us an entire afternoon to elect a Speaker.

[English]

It is a good omen for you, Mr. Speaker, because you have earned it. You sweated a lot all afternoon, but I can tell you that my party and I will support you. It is the desire of all members of the House to make sure that this Parliament will bring a new mood to this House, and you will play a very big role.

[Translation]

If we want to win the trust of all Canadians, it is extremely important that we show this country's institutions, especially the House of Commons, the respect they deserve. Your task, Mr. Speaker, will be to help us make this House what it rightly should be, namely the living room of the nation, the place where all ideas are discussed.

[English]

It has to be a place where everyone can speak freely, express the wishes and the views of himself and his electorate, but at the end of the day it will be the nation that will win.

(1810)

I wish you the best of luck. You can count on our support and friendship. Good luck.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, speaking on behalf of the Official Opposition and of all my colleagues, it is a pleasure and indeed an honour to offer you my sincere congratulations on your well-deserved election to the important position of Speaker of the House of Commons. It was an arduous undertaking.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank all the members who expressed an interest in this position and who campaigned with the courtesy and generosity appropriate to the circumstances.

I may say that the members of this House have acknowledged your great experience and also your personal qualities which

will be particularly useful in the context in which we will be working and where we all hope to maintain the standards of a democratic debate, a debate which may be heated, as controversial ideas are raised, but which should never descend to the level of personal attacks, something which we must avoid.

We understand the significance of your duties, which include defending the rights of members and especially the rights and integrity of Parliament and the parliamentary system, so that we can engage in a thorough analysis of the major issues facing us today in Quebec and Canada.

Finally, I can assure you that throughout, you will have the full co-operation of the Bloc Québécois.

[English]

I would like to say in English that we also pledge full and total co-operation in the fulfilment of your so important task.

We also thank very much those candidates, our colleagues, who showed enough interest in the function to submit their names as candidates in this very important election we had today. It was a courageous thing to do. They will retain our full confidence in their work as members of Parliament.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I too want to extend on behalf of hon. members our congratulations and best wishes to you. I also want to extend our gratitude to your wife and family for the sacrifices which they make to enable you to be the servant of this place.

As the presiding officer of this Parliament we anticipate that you will play a key role in the reform of our procedures and activities. As a presiding member of the Board of Internal Economy we anticipate that you will play a key role in the reform of the financing of this institution. As you discharge your duties in all of these areas we pledge to you our full support and co-operation.

Again, congratulations and best wishes, Mr. Speaker, on your term.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the free spirits in this corner I want to join with the others in pledging our support in the months ahead and wishing you well, particularly with the difficult decisions you will be asked to make from time to time.

Our congratulations go out to our colleagues who let their names stand in this surprisingly lengthy election procedure. We recognize that today is a new era in Canadian politics. This is exemplified by your election, Mr. Speaker, by the new government, a new House of Commons, and 205 new members. This is a great opportunity to change the way this House has done business.

Opening of Parliament

On behalf of my colleagues, as I say the free spirits, we pledge our support to you and this House to make this place work as positively as possible.

The Speaker: This House is always in need of free spirits.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in congratulating you and wishing you well, may I seek your assurance that you will do your utmost in introducing electronic voting in this House so as to bring this House up to speed with modern times and technology.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: The hon. member will know that I got here by not promising anything.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, everybody has heard enough from me so far today but I would like to congratulate you first of all and wish you well.

To all of the candidates go our very best wishes and our sincere thanks for the seriousness which they showed toward this great institution of our country. I want to thank each one of them for their deep interest.

I particularly want to thank the members of this House for their conduct throughout the day and for the friendliness that

was shown here today. I sensed a very good rapport within this House and I hope that will continue as we debate the issues in good spirit. I wish all the new members all the best in their careers and good wishes to those who have returned.

In you, Mr. Speaker, the integrity of this House rests to a large degree but it also rests with each and every one of us on the floor of this House. The Speaker cannot do it all by himself. We need the co-operation of all members to do it so we have to conduct ourselves in a decent fashion in this place.

If we do that there is no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, but that you will carry the rest of the load.

* * *

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

The Speaker read a communication from the Secretary to the Governor General announcing that His Excellency the Governor General of Canada would proceed to the Senate chamber for the purpose of opening the first session of the 35th Parliament.

The Speaker: Well, this has been some day.

My colleagues, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 3 p.m. at which time the House will proceed to the Senate where His Excellency will open the first session of the 35th Parliament.

(The House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.)

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Opening of Parliament