



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume L

FIRST SESSION

Number 1

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Monday

April 12, 2021

Members met in the Assembly Chamber on the afternoon of April 12, 2021, for the Election of a Speaker.

CLERK (Barnes): Members, I want to remind everyone that under the guidance from the chief medical officer of Health, masks have to be worn at all times, except you can remove them during debate and then put them back on.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

Madam Clerk, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has arrived.

CLERK: Admit Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor that all present be seated.

CLERK: Members of the House of Assembly:

A proclamation has been issued by Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, under the Great Seal of the Province, which reads as follows:

TO: Sandra Barnes, Clerk of the House of Assembly and Kim Hawley George, Clerk Assistant of the House of Assembly (Acting)

GREETING;

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS on Monday, April 12, 2021, I will administer the Oaths or Affirmations of Allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Oaths or Affirmations of Office to the persons elected to be Members of the House of Assembly;

AND WHEREAS I think fit to summon the 50th General Assembly for the dispatch of business and for the Members of the House of Assembly to proceed to elect their choice of Speaker;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, do authorize and direct you, the said Sandra Barnes and Kim Hawley George, or either of you, to signify to the Members of the said House of Assembly to assemble for the

dispatch of business on Monday, April 12, 2021, at 3 in the afternoon, and that it is my pleasure that they should proceed to choose some person to be their Speaker and to present such person on that day for my approbation.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(Sergeant-at-Arms escorts Her Honour from the Chamber.)

CLERK: Please be seated.

At the close of nominations for the Office of the Speaker at 4:30 p.m., Friday, April 9, 2021, five candidates put their names forward.

The candidates, in alphabetical order by surname, are: MHA Derek Bennett, Member for the District of Lewisporte - Twillingate; MHA Paul Dinn, Member for the District of Topsail - Paradise; MHA Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Member for the District of Placentia - St. Mary's; MHA Scott Reid, Member for the District of St. George's - Humber; and MHA Brian Warr, Member for the District Baie Verte - Green Bay.

Members of the House of Assembly, pursuant to the Lieutenant-Governor's direction and the *Standing Orders* of this Assembly, it is my duty to call upon you to elect a Member to preside over your deliberations as Speaker. Before beginning the election, I will briefly outline the process to be followed, as set out in the *Standing Orders* of the House; the voting process has been modified to respect Public Health guidelines.

For each round of balloting, Members will be guided by Table Officers. We will start with the Members seated in the middle area of the Chamber and then proceed through the first, second and third risers on either side, in that order. When advised by the Table Officers, Members should proceed through the side doors adjacent to the Speaker's gallery, on the side on which you are seated, proceed down the hallway and into the Chamber foyer or the scrum area. The floor in the hallway and the scrum area is marked for appropriate physical distancing.

In the scrum area, you will be directed, one at a time, to the table where the Law Clerk will issue you a ballot. You will be provided with a pen

and asked to initial a list to verify that you have received the ballot. Please hold on to the pen you are given and take it with you to the ballot box, which will be located here in the middle of the Chamber. Once you have your ballot, enter the Chamber through the centre doors and proceed, one at a time, to the table located in the centre. In the voting booth, please indicate your choice for Speaker by marking an X next to the appropriate name and then deposit your ballot in the box next to the voting booth.

Once you have voted, please leave the Chamber, only those Members who have been identified by their caucus to witness the voting process should remain in the Chamber. The bells will be rung to summon the Members back when the results are ready.

When all Members wishing to vote have done so, the House will recess while the Clerks withdraw to count the vote.

A majority of the votes cast is required to elect the Speaker. If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the least number of votes will be removed from the ballot and there will be another ballot. If candidates receive the same number of votes, there will be another ballot. Immediately before the start of the second, and any subsequent ballot, a Member who wishes to withdraw will be given an opportunity to do so. When the count of each ballot is complete, a 10-minute bell will ring to call Members back to the Chamber.

In preparation for the vote, we will now place the table in the Chamber and then the Sergeant-at-Arms will inspect the ballot box.

We will now begin the voting process. Please remain in your seat until you are guided by the Table Officers.

Seeing there are no Members left to vote, the Clerks will now withdraw and count the ballots.

The House will recess until the bells are rung to summon the Members back.

Recess

CLERK: Members of the House of Assembly, following the first ballot, pursuant to Standing

Order 4(14), the following are the remaining candidates for the election of the Speaker of the 50th General Assembly: No one candidate received a majority of the votes cast. They are, in alphabetical order by surname: MHA Derek Bennett, MHA Paul Dinn, MHA Scott Reid and MHA Brian Warr.

Before we proceed to a second ballot, is there any candidate who wishes to withdraw?

We will now proceed to the second ballot. First, I ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to open and inspect the ballot box.

The voting process will now begin. We will follow exactly the same format as before, starting with the Members who are sitting in the centre and moving outwards to the third risers.

If you can, please exit the Chamber, especially anybody who's sitting in the centre. It's important.

We will start now.

All Members who wish to vote have voted.

Seeing that there are no Members left to vote, the Clerks will withdraw to count the ballots. The House will stay in recess and the bells will be rung to summon the Members when the results are ready.

We are now in recess.

Recess

CLERK: Members of the House of Assembly, further to suborder 4(11) of our *Standing Orders*, I declare MHA Derek Bennett, the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate, elected as Speaker for the 50th General Assembly.

(Applause.)

(The Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition escort the new Speaker to the Speaker's Chair.)

SPEAKER (Bennett): I have to say this is quite a surprise, but more so, I'm very honoured to become Speaker for the 50th General Assembly.

I'd just like to start by saying a few thank-yous. First of all, congratulations and thank you to all my colleagues who also put their names forward: MHA Dinn, MHA Gambin-Walsh, MHA Warr and also former Speaker Reid, which also today is celebrating his birthday; I wish him a happy birthday.

I'd also like to say some personal thanks. First of all, to my family – I may get a bit emotional here, I have to be honest with you, but it's such an honoured day. First of all, to my wife Tina who is watching from an apartment, as everybody here today couldn't bring their family with them but I'm sure they're all here, spiritually, with you and watching from back at home.

To my daughter Catherine, my son Jonathan, his wife Robyn and to my two grandchildren that mean the world to me. I don't get to see them often because of COVID regulations, but I'm sure they're watching today, too. I just want to let you know, Sadie and Andy, Poppy loves you.

To the people that first elected me, the people in the beautiful and scenic District of Lewisporte - Twillingate that had the faith in me back in 2015 to elect me to the 48th General Assembly and then again in 2019 and in the most recent election. First of all, I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them, to my campaign team, to everyone that helped me to get here.

Like everyone, nobody would be here today without the love and support and the contributions to volunteer work that everybody came forward to make sure that each and every one of us got elected here today.

As I said, it is a great honour to sit in this Chair. I did have the honour to sit as Deputy Speaker, previously, and I found it to be a great learning experience, sitting besides such other great Speakers prior.

One thing I did learn is that we're here together to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have to, more than ever, unify and work closely together. We all have our own political stripes and everything else, but the people of Newfoundland and Labrador want a strong government. I have every bit of

confidence in every person here today that we will unite and work together in order to make sure that it's for the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

To the new Members that I forgot to mention, welcome, everyone, to the House of Assembly. It's going to be a steep learning curve for everyone, but it is a very enjoyable experience and it's a very rewarding experience to serve the people of each and every district throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

During debate and also during regular legislative work, there are times that things get heated and there are times that people get a little bit excited and a little bit hot, just because they're so passionate about the happenings in their districts and also throughout the province. We always have to keep it respectful to all Members of the House. People across Newfoundland and Labrador look upon us as leaders and we have to lead by example. As your new Speaker, I will be strictly enforcing that people show respect to each other. Everybody has a right to their opinions and to debate, but I'd like for it to be done, and I will make sure it's done, in a respectful way.

Again, I just want to say a big thank you to everyone for your support in putting me in this seat today and the confidence that you have in me that I will represent you to the best of my ability.

Before I close, I'd just like to say a thank you to our Clerk and all the team at the House of Assembly, including those that are behind the scenes in the Broadcast and those in Hansard, and obviously our security people. It's definitely a team effort and everybody working together to make sure that it's run as smoothly as possible.

Again, I thank you. I'm truly, truly honoured. As I mentioned earlier, I'm the youngest of 15 and growing up we definitely worked for everything we had. I'm sure my mom and dad are looking down proudly on where I've grown and how I've developed over the years, and I'm sure everyone else here, too. Again, thank you.

Without further ado, we'll get down to work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Our next order of business, as everyone knows, the passing of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, so now we're going to have a moment of silence for him.

On behalf of Members and staff of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador, I would like to express our sincerest condolences to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Royal Family on the passing of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh.

While we mourn His Royal Highness Prince Philip, I would like to pay tribute to his memory by reflecting on his importance to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the time he spent here. His first visit to the province was from November 11 to 12, 1951, as he accompanied Her Majesty – at the time, Princess Elizabeth, Duchess of Edinburgh – who was visiting on behalf of her ailing father. During that visit, Prince Philip attended many memorial ceremonies throughout St. John's, including a visit to the St. John's War Memorial and Government House.

Prince Philip's most recent visit was in 1997 during the momentous occasion of the 500th anniversary of John Cabot's arrival, during which time he toured both Newfoundland and Labrador with Her Majesty, to great fanfare and excitement in the cities and towns visited on this tour.

It should also be noted that our Legislature, contained within Confederation Building, sits on a thoroughfare named in honour of His Royal Highness: Prince Philip Drive.

May we remember him fondly as we proudly serve Her Majesty in doing the work of the people of this great province.

As a Legislature and as a province, our prayers remain with Her Majesty and the Royal Family in the difficult time ahead.

I now ask all Members to join me in observing a moment of silence in honour of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

Please stand.

(Moment of silence.)

Thank you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has arrived.

SPEAKER: Please admit Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(The Speaker leaves the Chair.)

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor takes the Chair.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor that all present be seated.

PREMIER A. FUREY: May it please Your Honour, the House of Assembly, agreeable to Your Honour's command, have proceeded to the choice of Speaker and have elected Mr. Derek Bennett, the Member for the District of Lewisporte - Twillingate, to that office, and by their direction I present him for the approbation of Your Honour.

HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR (Judy May Foote, PC, ONL): On behalf of Her Majesty, I assure you of my sense of your efficiency and I do most fully approve and confirm you as Speaker.

SPEAKER: Your Honour having approved the choice of this House in constituting me as their Speaker, it now becomes my duty in the name of the representatives of Her Majesty's loyal subjects, the people of the province, respectfully to claim of Your Honour their accustomed rights and privileges, especially that they shall have freedom of speech in their debates, that they may be free from arrest during their attendance in Parliament, and that I, as Speaker, may have full access to Your Honour's presence at all reasonable times and that they have confirmed to them all their ancient rights and privileges which have been confirmed to them by Your Honour's predecessors.

HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR: Speaker, I do confirm this House, on behalf of Her Majesty, in the

enjoyment of all its ancient and undoubted rights and privileges.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor leaves the Chamber, the Speaker returns to the Chair.)

SPEAKER: Please be seated.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you and congratulations, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to advise the House that we will bring forward a motion to appoint a Deputy Speaker at a later time.

SPEAKER: The Government House Leader advised that they will be deferring the appointment of a Deputy Speaker.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, again, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House do now stand adjourned until Thursday, April 15, at 10 a.m.

SPEAKER: All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

This House now stands adjourned until Thursday, April 15, at 10 a.m.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 10 a.m.