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1901-05-09

House of Representatives.

PROCLAMATION

Honorable members assembled at half-past eleven a.m., in a chamber in the western annexe of the Exhibition-building, Melbourne, pursuant to the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor-General convening Parliament.

The Clerk read the proclamation.

WRITS

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The Clerk announced that he had received from the Secretary to the Prime Minister the following letter : -

Commonwealth of Australia,

Prime Minister,

Melbourne, 8th May, 1901.

SIR,

I have the honor, by direction of the Right Honorable the Prime Minister, to forward, here with, the Writs of Election of 75 members to serve in the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ATLEE HUNT, Secretary.

The Clerk, House of Representatives, Melbourne.

The writs were indorsed with certificates showing that the following gentlemen were duly elected for the States and districts set opposite their respective names, viz. : -

Frederick William Bamford, Esq., for the Electorate of Herbert, in the State of Queensland.

Right Hon. Edmund Barton, P.O., K.C., for the Electorate of Hunter, in the State of New South Wales.

Egerton Lee Batchelor, Esq., for the State of South Australia.

Sir John Langdon Bonython, Kt., for the State of South Australia.

Right Hon. Sir Edward Nicholas Coventry Braddon, P.O., K.C.M.G., for the State of Tasmania.

Thomas Brown, Esq., for the Electorate of Canobolas, in the State of New South Wales.

Donald Norman Cameron, Esq., for the State of Tasmania.

John. Moore Chanter, Esq., for the Electorate of Riverina, in the State of New South Wales.

Austin Chapman, Esq., for the Electorate of Eden-Monaro, in the State of New South Wales.

Francis Clarke, Esq., for the Electorate of Cowper, in the State of New South Wales.

Alfred Hugh Conroy, Esq., for the Electorate of Werriwa, in the State of New South Wales.

Joseph Cook, Esq., for the Electorate of Parramatta, in the State of New South Wales.

James Newton Haxton Hume Cook, Esq., for the Electorate of Bourke, in the State of Victoria.

Samuel Winter Cooke, Esq., for the Electorate of Wannon, in the State of Victoria.

Richard Armstrong Crouch, Esq., for the Electorate of Corio, in the State of Victoria.

George Alexander Cruickshank, Esq., for the Electorate of Gwydir, in the State of New South Wales.

Alfred Deakin, Esq., for the Electorate of Ballarat, in the State of Victoria.

George Bertrand Edwards, Esq., for the Electorate of South Sydney, in the State of New Wales.

Richard Edwards, Esq., for the Electorate of Oxley, in the State of Queensland.

Thomas Thomson Ewing, Esq., for the Electorate of Richmond, in the State of New South Wales.

Andrew Fisher, Esq., for the Electorate of Wide Bay, in the State of Queensland.

Right Hon. Sir John Forrest, P.C., G.C.M.G., for the Electorate of Swan, in the State of Western Australia.

James Mackinnon Fowler, Esq., for the Electorate of Perth, in the State of Western Australia.

George Warburton Fuller, Esq., for the Electorate of Illawarra, in the State of New South Wales.

Hon. Sir Philip Oakley Fysh, K.C.M.G., for the State of Tasmania.

Patrick McMahon Glynn, Esq., for the State of South Australia.

Arthur Champion Groom, Esq., for the Electorate of Flinders, in the State of Victoria.

William Henry Groom, Esq., for the Electorate of Darling Downs, in the State of Queensland.

Robert Harper, Esq., for the Electorate of Mernda, in the State of Victoria.

Henry Bournes Higgins, Esq., for the Electorate of Northern Melbourne, in the State of Victoria.
 Frederick William Holder, Esq., for the State of South Australia.
 William Morris Hughes, Esq., for the Electorate of West Sydney, in the State of New South Wales.
 Isaac Alfred Isaacs, Esq., for the Electorate of Indi, in the State of Victoria.
 Thomas Kennedy, Esq., for the Electorate of Moira, in the State of Victoria.
 Right Hon. Charles Cameron Kingston, P.O., for the State of South Australia.
 John Waters Kirwan, Esq., for the Electorate of Kalgoorlie, in the State of Western Australia.
 William Knox, Esq., for the Electorate of Kooyong, in the State of Victoria.
 Hon. Sir William John Lyne, K.C.M.G., for the Electorate of Hume, in the State of New South Wales.
 Thomas Macdonald-paterson, Esq., for the Electorate of Brisbane, in the State of Queensland.
 Hugh Mahon, Esq., for the Electorate of Coolgardie, in the State of Western Australia.
 James Chester Manifold, Esq., for the Electorate of Corangamite, in the State of Victoria.
 Samuel Mauger, Esq., for the Electorate of Melbourne Ports, in the State of Victoria.
 James Whiteside McCay, Esq., for the Electorate of Corinella, in the State of Victoria.
 James Hiers McColl, Esq., for the Electorate of Echuca, in the State of Victoria.
 Charles McDonald, Esq., for the Electorate of Kennedy, in the State of Queensland.
 Sir Malcolm Donald McEacharn, Kt., for the Electorate of Melbourne, in the State of Victoria.
 Allan McLean, Esq., for the Electorate of Gippsland, in the State of Victoria.
 Francis Edward McLean, Esq., for the Electorate of Lang, in the State of New South Wales.
 Sir William McMillan, K.C.M.G., for the Electorate of Wentworth, in the State of New South Wales.
 King O'Malley, Esq., for the State of Tasmania.
 James Page, Esq., for the Electorate of Maranoa, in the State of Queensland.
 Alexander Paterson, Esq., for the Electorate of Capricornia, in the State of Queensland.
 Pharez Phillips, Esq., for the Electorate of Wimmera, in the State of Victoria.
 Frederick William Piesse, Esq., for the State of Tasmania.
 Alexander Poynton, Esq., for the State of South Australia.
 Sir John Quick, Kt., for the Electorate of Bendigo, in the State of Victoria.
 Right Hon. George Houston Reid, P.C., K.C., for the Electorate of East Sydney, in the State of New South Wales,
 James Black Ronald, Esq., for the Electorate of Southern Melbourne, in the State of Victoria.
 Charles Carty Salmon, Esq., for the Electorate of Laanecoorie, in the State of Victoria.
 William Bowie Stewart Campbell Sawers, Esq., for the Electorate of New England, in the State of New South Wales.
 Thomas Skene, Esq., for the Electorate of Grampians, in the State of Victoria.
 Bruce Smith, Esq., for the Electorate of Parkes, in the State of New South Wales.
 Sydney Smith, Esq., for the Electorate of Macquarie, in the State of New South Wales.
 Elias Solomon, Esq., for the Electorate of Fremantle, in the State of Western Australia.
 Vaiben Louis Solomon, Esq., for the State of South Australia.
 William Guthrie Spence, Esq., for the Electorate of Darling, in the State of New South Wales.
 Josiah Thomas, Esq., for the Electorate of Barrier, in the State of New South Wales.
 Dugald Thomson, Esq., for the Electorate of North Sydney, in the State of New South Wales.
 Frank Gwynne Tudor, Esq., for the Electorate of Yarra, in the State of Victoria.
 Right Hon. Sir George Turner, P.C., K.C.M.G., for the Electorate of Balaclava, in the State of Victoria.
 David Watkins, Esq., for the Electorate of Newcastle, in the State of New South Wales.
 John Christian Watson, Esq., for the Electorate of Bland, in the State of New South Wales.
 James Wilkinson, Esq., for the Electorate of Moreton, in the State of Queensland.
 William Henry Wilks, Esq., for the Electorate of Dalley, in the State of New South Wales.
 Henry Willis, Esq., for the Electorate of Robertson, in the State of New South Wales.

VALIDATION OF ELECTIONS

The Clerk read proclamations by His Excellency the Governor-General, validating the election, notwithstanding various formalities, of certain members to serve in the House of Representatives for the States of Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland, and Western Australia.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

The Usher of the Black Rod being announced, was admitted, and delivered the message that " His Royal

Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York, authorized by virtue of the commission of His Most Gracious Majesty King Edward the Seventh, desires the immediate attendance of honorable members to hear the commission read."

Honorable members attended accordingly, and His Majesty's commission (vide p. 6) having been read by the Clerk of the. Parliaments,

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF CORNWALL AND YORK, HIS MAJESTY'S HIGH COMMISSIONER,

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said : - " Gentlemen of the Senate and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives : " My beloved and deeply lamented grandmother, Queen Victoria, had desired to mark the importance of the opening of this the first Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, and to manifest her special interest in all that concerns the welfare of her loyal subjects in Australia, by granting to me a special commission to open the First Session. " That commission had been duly signed before the sad event which has plunged the whole empire into mourning, and the King, my dear father, fully sharing Her late Majesty's wishes, decided to give effect to them, although His Majesty stated, on the occasion of his opening his first Parliament, that a separation from his son at such a time could not be otherwise than deeply painful to him. " His Majesty has been pleased to consent to this separation, moved by his sense of the loyalty and devotion which prompted the generous aid afforded by all the colonies in the South African War, both in its earlier and more recent stages, and of the splendid bravery of the colonial troops. It is also His Majesty's wish to acknowledge the readiness with which the ships of the special Australasian Squadron were placed at his disposal for service in China, and the valuable assistance rendered there by the naval contingents of the several colonies. "His Majesty further desired in this way to testify to his heartfelt gratitude for the warm sympathy extended by every part of his dominions to himself and his family in the irreparable loss they have sustained by the death of his beloved mother. "His Majesty has watched with the deepest interest the social and material progress made by his people in Australia, and has seen with thankfulness and heartfelt satisfaction the completion of that political union of which this Parliament is the embodiment. "The King is satisfied that the wisdom and patriotism which have characterized the exercise of the wide powers of self government hitherto enjoyed by the colonies will continue to be displayed in the exercise of the still wider powers with which the united Commonwealth has been endowed. His Majesty feels assured that the enjoyment of these powers will, if possible, enhance that loyalty and devotion to his throne and empire of which the people of Australia have already given such signal proofs. " It is His Majesty's earnest prayer that this union so happily achieved may, under God's blessing, prove an instrument for still further promoting the welfare and advancement of his subjects in Australia, and for the strengthening and consolidation of his empire. "Gentlemen of the Senate and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives : " It affords me much pleasure to convey to you this message from His Majesty. I now, in his name, and on his behalf, declare this Parliament open."

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Calling of Parliament

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL informed honorable members that he had been desired by His Majesty's High Commissioner to acquaint them with His Excellency's intention, when they had been sworn and had elected their Speaker, to declare to them the causes of the Parliament being called.

MEMBERS SWORN

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The following honorable members then made and subscribed the oath of allegiance : -

Right Hon. Edmund Barton, P.C., K.C., Hunter, New South Wales, Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs.

Hon. Alfred Deakin, Ballarat, Victoria. Attorney General.

Hon. Sir William John Lyne, K.C.M.G.. Hume, New South Wales, Minister for Home Affairs.

Right Hon. Sir George Turner, P.C., K.C.M.G., Balaclava, Victoria, Treasurer.

Right Hon. Charles Cameron Kingston, P.C., South Australia, Minister for Trade and Customs.

Right Hon. Sir John Forrest, P.C., G.C.M.G., Swan, Western Australia, Minister for Defence.

Hon. Sir Philip Oakley Fysh, K.C.M.G., Tasmania, Minister, without portfolio.

Frederick William Bamford, Esq., Herbert, Queensland.

Egerton Lee Batchelor, Esq., South Australia.
Sir JohnLangdon Bonython, Kt., South Australia.
Right Hon. Sir Edward Nicholas Coventry Braddon, P.C., K.C.M.G., Tasmania.
Thomas Brown, Esq., Canobolas, New South Wales.
Donald Norman Cameron, Esq., Tasmania.
John Moore Chanter, Esq., Riverina, New South Wales.
Austin Chapman, Esq., Eden-Monaro, New South Wales.
Francis Clarke, Esq., Cowper, New South Wales.
Alfred Hugh Conroy, Esq., Werriwa, New South Wales.
Joseph Cook, Esq., Parramatta, New South Wales.
James Newton Haxton Hume Cook, Esq., Bourke, Victoria.
Samuel Winter Cooke, Esq. , Wannon, , Victoria.
Richard Armstrong Crouch, Esq., Corio, Victoria.
George Alexander Cruickshank, Esq., Gwydir, New South Wales.
George Bertrand Edwards, Esq., South Sydney, New South Wales.
Richard Edwards, Esq., Oxley, Queensland.
Thomas Thomson Ewing, Esq., Richmond, New South Wales.
Andrew Fisher, Esq., Wide Bay, Queensland.
James Mackinnon Fowler, Esq., Perth, Western Australia.
George Warburton Fuller, Esq., Illawarra, New South Wales.
Patrick McMahon Glynn, Esq., South . Australia.
Arthur Champion Groom, Esq., Flinders, Victoria.
William Henry Groom, Esq., Darling Downs, Queensland.
Robert Harper, Esq., Mernda, Victoria.
Henry Bournes Higgins, Esq., Northern Melbourne, Victoria.
Frederick William Holder, Esq., South Australia.
William Morris Hughes, Esq., West Sydney, New South Wales.
Isaac. Alf red Isaacs, Esq., Indi, Victoria.
Thomas Kennedy, Esq., Moira, Victoria.
John Waters Kirwan, Esq., Kalgoorlie, Western Australia.
William Knox, Esq., Kooyong, Victoria.
Thomas Macdonald-paterson, Esq., Brisbane, Queensland.
James Chester Manifold, Esq., Corangamite, Victoria.
Samuel Mauger, Esq., Melbourne Ports, Victoria.
James Whiteside McCay, Esq., Corinella, Victoria.
James Hiers McColl Esq., Echuca, Victoria.
Charles McDonald, Esq., Kennedy, Queensland.
Sir MalcolmDonald McEacharn, Kt., Melbourne, Victoria.
Allan McLean, Esq., Gippsland, Victoria.
Francis Edward McLean, Esq., Lang, New South Wales.
Sir WilliamMcMillan, K.C.M.G., Wentworth, New South Wales.
King O'Malley, Esq., Tasmania.
James Page, Esq., Maranoa, Queensland.
Alexander Paterson, Esq., Capricornia, Queensland.
Pharez Phillips, Esq., Wimmera, Victoria.
Frederick William Piesse, Esq., Tasmania.
Alexander Poynton, Esq., South Australia.
Sir JohnQuick, Kt., Bendigo, Victoria.
James Black Ronald, Esq., Southern Melbourne, Victoria.
Charles Carty Salmon, Esq., Laanecoorie, Victoria.
William Bowie Stewart Campbell Sawers, Esq., New England, New South Wales.
Thomas Skene, Grampians, Esq., Victoria.
Bruce Smith, Esq., Parkes, New South Wales.

Sydney Smith, Esq., Macquarie, New South Wales.
Elias Solomon, Esq., Fremantle, Western Australia.
Vaiben Louis Solomon, Esq., South Australia.
William Guthrie Spence, Esq., Darling, New South Wales.
Josiah Thomas, Esq., Barrier, New South Wales.
Dugald Thomson, Esq., North Sydney, New South Wales.
Frank Gwynne Tudor, Esq., Yarra, Victoria.
David Watkins, Esq., Newcastle, New South Wales.
John Christian Watson, Esq., Bland, New South Wales.
James Wilkinson, Esq., Moreton, Queensland.
William Henry Wilks, Esq., Dalley-, New South Wales.
Henry Willis, Esq., Robertson, New South Wales.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR - GENERAL requested honorable members to proceed to their place of sitting for the purpose of electing their Speaker, and thereafter to present him for His Excellency's approval at such time and place as he might afterwards appoint.

HIS MAJESTY'S HIGH COMMISSIONER and HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL having retired,

Honorable members proceeded to the Houses of Parliament, in Spring-street, and there re-assembled at half -past two o'clock p.m.

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Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- I move -

That Mr. Frederick William Holder do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

The position to which I propose that Mr. Holder should be elected is a magnificent one, but I think that the honour will be accorded to him unanimously, because honorable members will agree that in electing him to preside over the deliberations of this House we shall be putting the right man into the right place. Many honorable members have known Mr. Holder for a much longer time than that during which I have known him ; but I feel sure that all will agree that the part he has played in the advancement of the federation of the Australian States has been a great one. If he had been physically a little stronger I think his voice and his presence would have been more generally heard and felt throughout the States, but he was prevented from taking the opportunity to make himself more generally known, for this reason, and because of responsibilities which he could not forsake. So far as the representatives from the State of Queensland are concerned, we are unanimously of opinion that, in electing Mr.

Holder to the position of honour in which I have proposed he shall be placed, we shall be choosing a man who will do great credit to it. He is known for his suavity and urbanity of manner; he is unquestionably a man of great judgment and of large experience; and although some may- regard his nicely balanced mind and quiet demeanour as perhaps an evidence of weakness of character, I am sure that in his heart and breast there rests the ability and vitality to be firm, strong, and diplomatic. In electing Mr. Holder, Ave shall be choosing a Speaker who will fill the position with credit to this assembly, with much honour to himself, and with dignity to the Commonwealth.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I have great pleasure in seconding the motion. In common with, I think, all other honorable members of this House, I feel that Mr. Holder has, by his services in the cause of Federation, amply deserved all the confidence we can possibly place in him. I feel that he will rule over our proceedings with that dignity and that even-handed justice which are so especially required on the part of a Speaker. The only regret that I have in this connexion is that in electing Mr. Holder to the Speakership, we shall lose his valuable services on the floor of the House. I believe the feeling is general 071 both sides of the chamber that Mr. Holder, by reason of his eminent qualifications, deserves the high position to which it is proposed that he shall be elected. I think that I can say for those who will sit on the left of the chair that we are entirely in favour of Mr. Holder's election, and that we shall be highly gratified to see it come to pass.

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Mr BRUCE SMITH

-I had intended to give a silent vote upon this motion, in the expectation that some honorable member who had not been mentioned as a candidate for this high office would have drawn attention to a circumstance connected with this election, which I think every well wisher of our political institutions must have felt grieved at. Every honorable member must have become aware that, quite contrary to expectation, circular letters have been sent round to members of both Houses, inviting them, in very polite terms, to give their support to the candidates, or rather to some of the candidates, for the two very exalted positions of Speaker of the House of Representatives and President of the Senate. I am not speaking now from personal motives, although my name was mentioned as that of a possible candidate for the Speakership; but I desire, at this initial stage in our federal history, to record my individual protest against a system which seems to me wholly unbecoming to the new order of things upon which we have entered. A great many honorable members, and a great many people who are not members of this assembly, hoped that in dealing with Commonwealth affairs we were going to enter into a higher and rarer political atmosphere; but I am sorry to find that some of those who most fervently expressed that hope have joined in the encouragement of a state of things, which, as one of the first steps in our federal history, has very much disappointed me. I cannot think, for a moment, that such eminent parliamentarians as Mr. Speaker Brand, Mr. Speaker Peel, or Mr. Speaker Gully, would have lent themselves to a practice of the kind to which I allude, and from what I know of the history of the House of Commons - and I am sure that a fuller knowledge of the inner history of that great institution would satisfy every honorable member on the subjects - I am persuaded that any attempt at a practice of this sort would have been fatal to an aspirant to the Speakership there. A circular letter has been freely handed round among members which, having seen it myself, I am bound to say comes as nearly as possible, to being what, among commercial people, would be regarded as a business circular, setting forth in the plainest terms the merits of the candidate, and making an appeal for support to his candidature. Inasmuch as the positions of Speaker of the House of Representatives and President of the Senate of this great Commonwealth are next to that of the Governor-General, the two highest offices in the land, it is just as undesirable that this mode of procedure should be adopted here, as it would be undesirable that it should be adopted in regard to the choosing of the Chief Justice of the Commonwealth. Without desiring in any way to express the opinion of honorable members, as one who has taken a very active interest in the struggle for the consummation of this great Australian union, as one who has looked forward with deep, and I may say profound, pleasure, and a sense of honour, to occupying a seat in one or other of the Houses, and as one who expected to see realized the higher and rarer atmosphere of which so much has been said in the various States, I am bound to say that I am very much disappointed that any member should succeed by virtue of such a practice as that to which I refer. I have nothing to say of an invidious character. I speak in the most abstract way. But I do hope that when this House and when the Senate have settled down to work out the history of the Commonwealth, they will, in the most emphatic manner, in the future, deprecate this practice as strongly and as unhesitatingly as they may feel sure it would have been deprecated in the old country. I satisfy myself with recording my individual protest against the practice, expressing the wish that we may never hear of it being indulged in during the future history of this country.

Mr Chapman

- Far better than private touting at any rate.

Mr CAMERON

- I desire to express my deep regret that Mr. Holder is the only candidate for the Speakership. I always understood that he was an ardent freetrader, and, if that be so, it would have been far better in the interests of freetrade had he remained on the floor of the House. Another gentleman who was a candidate has withdrawn, and therefore this proceeding is of course merely formal. We know that it must be so. I deeply regret it; and had that other honorable member not withdrawn his candidature, I should have voted in his favour.

Mr HOLDER

- I respectfully submit myself to the will of the House.

Members of the House calling Mr. Holder to the chair, he was taken out of his place by Mr.

Macdonald-paterson and Sir Edward Braddon and conducted to the chair.

Then Mr. Speaker elect, standing on the upper step, said - I must express, as deeply and clearly as words will permit, my deep sense of the obligation which rests upon me in consequence of the honour which the

House has unanimously conferred upon me. I recognise the importance of the position to which I have been summoned, and I realize at least some of its responsibilities as well as its high honour. I shall seek as time may go by to maintain the high reputation which the office of Speaker has hitherto borne in all parts of our great Empire. I am quite sure that though honorable members will have to express their deep and earnest convictions on the various matters that come before the House they will express them with due respect to our standing orders. I rely, as I am sure I have a right to rely, upon the earnest support and assistance of every member of this House to assist me in maintaining order according to our regulations. I am glad to be able to thank the Government for the excellent staff they have placed at our disposal, and I am quite sure that by their aid, and with the support of honorable members, I shall be able to fulfil, at least to some extent, those anticipations which have been so kindly expressed. I thank honorable members for the honour they have done me.

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Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I have to express to you, Mr. Speaker, in conjunction with one of my honorable friends opposite, who will follow me, the entire congratulations of this House upon the position of dignity and honour to which you have attained. There is no man who has been a keen watcher of the progress of the federal movement in Australia who has not become conscious years ago of the strength and force and also the persuasive influence which your advocacy has given to that movement. Many of us have gone through that long and arduous struggle with conflicting feelings and emotions, but those who were first in the fight were always able to put a strong reliance upon each other, and in that strong reliance upon you, sir, I have always found myself to be justified. Your long Parliamentary experience and your known acquaintance with Parliamentary usage and practice, I take it, will be considered to eminently justify the selection of this House. It is true that my honorable friend, who proposed you for this office, has made reference to the amiability which in some quarters might be mistaken for weakness. But I am one of those who believe that courtesy is the first condition of dignity, without which dignity the respect of a great free representative assembly cannot be commanded. And so I have no fear for the future, Sir, in that courtesy of yours which is your natural characteristic, and which is demanded of every speaker by the traditions and usages and the every day conditions of Parliamentary action. The speaker who is not courteous to all members of the House cannot expect their consistent support, for an affront offered to one is an affront offered to all. That, however, we cannot expect from you, but so much to the contrary. We are confident from your past that you will uphold all that is valuable in Parliamentary precedent, all that is right and just in Parliamentary action, by a firmness which is perfectly compatible with that courtesy we all know you to possess. I must express, also, my personal gratification. From a long acquaintance with you - a friendship, I hope I may say - I am able to say to those who do not know you as well perhaps as I do, that we are electing to the Chair of this House a gentleman and an honourable and upright man.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- On behalf of the right honorable member for East Sydney, who is prevented through illness from being here to-day - an illness which, I am sure, will be deplored by honorable members on both sides of the House - I have the honour, on behalf of the Opposition in this Chamber, to give you, Mr. Speaker, a hearty welcome to that high and dignified position to which you have been elected. It is with mixed feelings, if you will not misunderstand me, that I welcome you to that chair. Though it is an honour to our party that one of our number should have been selected for that great and high office, it is an undoubted loss to us to be deprived of one of our most brilliant members. I agree with the right honorable gentleman who has just sat down that we have in the chair not only a man who is well versed in parliamentary practice, but also a gentleman of highly honorable character - and character is, in the long run, the test of public life. I also know, although you are a loss to our side, that for many years you have undertaken arduous duties in the Assembly of South Australia; and it is a consolation to know that now you are resting and becoming non-partisan in the strictest sense, you will have an opportunity of recruiting your health. I hope that the duties of that chair will not be so extremely onerous as have been the duties of Speakers in some Parliaments in Australia, and that you will be able to keep us within reasonable hours in the performance of our legislative functions. It is a matter of congratulation that, at this the first event in our parliamentary career, no acrimonious debate has taken place, and that you are elected our Speaker

and the First Commoner of Australia by the unanimous consent of this Chamber. On behalf of the Opposition, Sir, I heartily congratulate you on your dignity.

Mr WATSON

- I have been deputed by the members of the labour party to offer you, Mr. Speaker, their most sincere congratulations upon your accession to your present high office. After the eulogy that has been passed upon you I do not know that it is necessary to say more than this - that although only a few members of the party to which I belong have had an opportunity of knowing you as a Member of Parliament, your reputation has spread throughout the various States of Australia to such an extent, as to inspire us with the full hope and belief that you will do more than honour to the position you now occupy. I can assure you that so far as the labour party is concerned you will have every assistance in the observance of those rules which are so necessary to the maintenance of the liberties of the members of this House.

Mr SPEAKER

- I thank the Prime Minister, and the other two honorable members who have spoken for their congratulations ; and I can only reiterate my determination as far as I can to rise to the heights to which all too kindly honorable members have desired that I should attain.

Mr. BARTON(Hunter - Minister for External Affairs). - I am commissioned to say that His Excellency the Governor General will receive this House for the purpose of presenting their Speaker to him at four o'clock this afternoon, at the Executive Council Chamber in the Treasury Buildings. I ask Mr. Speaker to leave the chair now until a quarter to four, in order that honorable members may attend with him at four o'clock. I will also ask honorable members to be so kind as to afterwards form a quorum to permit of my moving the adjournment of the House until to-morrow, when His Excellency the Governor-General will attend to declare the cause of our being summoned.

Mr SPEAKER

- I shall leave the chair until ten minutes to four, and I will ask honorable members to be present in sufficient numbers to accompany me to wait upon the Governor-General.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CONGRATULATIONS

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The House having re-assembled, Mr. BARTON (Hunter - Minister for External Affairs). - Before we proceed to present Mr. Speaker to the Governor-General, I would like to say that I have received a most pleasing telegram from West Australia. It is from the Premier of that colony, Mr. G. Throssell, find is as follows : -

On behalf of Western Australia I desire to express the ardent hope that the meeting of the Commonwealth Parliament, inaugurated to-day and so auspiciously presided over by His Royal Highness, may be the precursor of a new era of Prosperity for United Australia, and earn for the Parliament of the Commonwealth the honour and respect of the empire. Western Australia will watch your proceedings with the deepest interest.

I have caused the following reply to be sent : -

Your graceful congratulations are most acceptable to the Federal Ministry and Parliament. The hopes of Western Australia for the prosperity pf the Commonwealth are most welcome, and are fully shared by a Parliament whose ideal will be to sustain the honour and deserve the respect of Australia and the empire.

PRESENTATION OF MR. SPEAKER TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

The House proceeded to the Executive Council Chamber, Treasury Buildings, there to present Mr. Speaker to His Excellency the Governor-General.

The House having re-assembled,

Mr. SPEAKERsaid I have to report that, together with a number of honorable members, I proceeded this afternoon to the Executive Council Chamber in the Treasury buildings, and presented myself to His Excellency the Governor-General as the choice of the House of Representatives, whereupon His Excellency was pleased to address me in the following terms : -

Mr Speaker

- It is with much pleasure that I learn of the choice made by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth Parliament, and of your appointment to the high and honorable position of Speaker of that Chamber. I have every confidence that you will fill the office in a worthy and dignified manner.

HOPETOUN,

Governor-General. 9th May, 1901.
CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES
Mr SPEAKER

- His Excellency the Governor General has handed me the following cablegram which he has received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies :-

His Majesty's Government welcomes the new Parliament that to-day takes its place among the great legislative bodies of the British Empire. They feel confident it will be a faithful interpreter of the aspirations of a free and loyal people, and they trust that its deliberations will promote the happiness, prosperity, and unity of the whole continent of Australia.

I have also just now received from the Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly the following telegram :- Presbyterian General Assembly, now in session, have united in special prayers for, and now offer congratulations to, first Parliament of Australian Commonwealth.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I take it that the House will concur with me in saying that the telegram received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies will receive proper attention. I shall ask His Excellency the Governor-General to send a suitable answer, which, I hope, will have the approval of the House. I shall also ask Mr. Speaker to answer the telegram sent from the Presbyterian Assembly.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Calling of Parliament - Standing Orders - Occupation of State Houses or Parliament by Federal Parliament

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - The Governor-General will attend to-morrow morning at eleven, o'clock to deliver the causes of summoning this Parliament ; and I have therefore to move -

That the House at its rising do adjourn until to-morrow at ten minutes before eleven o'clock.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I take advantage of this motion to ask the Prime Minister a question. It has reference to the standing orders. I understand that the honorable gentleman has been engaged for some time past in framing a new set of standing orders, and I should like to ask if he purposes distributing them, and, if so, when.- The question is one of some importance. I understand that the standing orders will differ very materially from those of any particular State; and, therefore, it seems to me that it would be well if honorable members had them to peruse before we are called upon to deal with them.

Mr. HIGGINS(North Melbourne).Before the Prime Minister answers, I wish to ask him if he can inform the House how soon the members of the Federal Parliament are to have the privileges of the library and the other rooms of this House 1

Honorable Members. - Hear, hear.

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Mr HIGGINS

- I may say I ask this question because, yesterday, I wanted to bring a book away with me for reading, and that is a privilege that always in my experience has been allowed to members of the State Parliament. I was informed, courteously, of course, by the librarian that he had received no instructions to extend this privilege to any member of the Federal Parliament. I am quite sure there are no members of this House, or of this Parliament, who wish in any way to infringe upon the privileges of members of the Victorian Parliament. We wish that they should have every privilege in this building which it is possible to afford, but we are at present put in the awkward position of not knowing where we are. We wish to know the limits of our privileges, in order that we may not be found encroaching on the rights of other gentlemen.

Mr. BARTON(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs), in reply. - As to the inquiry of the honorable member for Parramatta (Mr. Cook), I may say this, that while I have, in conjunction with the officers at the head of the tables, drafted a provisional set of standing orders, there is no idea of attempting to impose standing orders on this House without its own consent. As soon as possible a Standing Orders Committee will be elected. With regard to the draft standing orders, they will be laid on the table to-morrow, and distributed

at once. The intention of the Government is that, as there must be some understood rules of Parliament to which honorable members can conveniently refer in the meantime, before the Standing Orders Committee can be elected and sit, we shall ask honorable members to allow Mr. Speaker to accept these provisional standing orders as a guide to procedure until the Standing Orders Committee have dealt with the subject.

Mr Cook

- Without debate ?

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Mr BARTON

- It is the desire of honorable members on all sides that an adjournment should take place from to-morrow until the 21st inst. By that time honorable members will have had an opportunity of reading the standing orders ; but I take it that honorable members will not be anxious to have two debates on them, one then, and another when the Standing Orders Committee bring the standing orders up for decision, and I therefore invite the forbearance and confidence of the House in assenting to the interim rule of these standing orders for Mr. Speaker's guidance until we can appoint a committee, but no longer. I can assure my honorable friend that these draft standing orders do not go beyond the length of any standing orders in existence in the Parliaments of Australia. As honorable members have not the rules of the House of Commons at their hands, and, as we must have some rules which are more or less familiar to them, it was thought that a compilation which endeavoured to interweave what were thought the best of those of the various Parliaments would be accepted on all hands as a reasonable guide until the Standing Orders Committee could deal with the matter. That is what we propose to do. Then as to the privileges of the library, the honorable member for North Melbourne (Mr. Higgins), has asked a seasonable question. I might make this statement : On 10th April, I received a letter from the Premier of Victoria, asking the Federal Government to exercise its choice between two places of meeting, one being rooms prepared at the Exhibition Building, and the other being this House and its precincts; After due consideration in Cabinet, I communicated with Mr. Peacock, and stated that the Federal Government would prefer to occupy this building. This was followed up by an ordinary Executive minute in vague terms - necessarily vague at the time, because the actual terms had not been settled - in which authority was simply taken by the Government of the Commonwealth to occupy this building, that of course being subject to Executive communication between the two Governments. Subsequently, there having been some little want of understanding, which was quite natural under the circumstances perhaps, I had an interview with Mr. Peacock, and with the Speaker of ' the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, Mr. Mason. It was understood that, upon the result of the conversation then held, an Executive minute would be prepared, and passed through by the Government of the State of Victoria, defining certain terms which we had discussed, and which included a complete sharing of the privileges usually enjoyed by the members of the State Parliament, such as the use of the library, the refreshment-room, the billiard-room, the gardens, and so on. As honorable members know, the celebrations have intervened, and I do not think we can take it hardly of the Premier of Victoria that we have not yet received that Executive minute, though I rather wish that we had received it. In the meantime we have exercised the option for the occupation of the building, and, as a matter of honour between us and Victoria, I take it that we are certainly entitled to an effective occupation. Honorable members, I think, fully understand that on the conversations which have taken place, and the option which was exercised by us, they are entitled to the occupation of the library and other appurtenances of this House in common with members of the Victorian Legislature. I would, however, ask honorable gentlemen not to be too pressing, for a day or two, for the occupation of other rooms, because as honorable members of the State Parliament have been occupying the rooms of this building ever since its construction, many years ago, there may naturally be a little feeling of homesickness about leaving them, and one does not therefore want to press these matters too abruptly or too unkindly. In the meantime, I shall do my utmost to secure that honorable members have the best accommodation possible. Certainly they are entitled to the privilege of occupying the refreshment-room, the library, the billiard-room, and other places which I have mentioned, but always on the understanding that equal facilities are afforded to the members of the Victorian Parliament. That is the position as it stands now. As for yourself, Mr. Speaker, I take it that it is a matter of honour with Victoria that the offer of this building should not be an empty gift, and that, therefore, in your high position as the representative

and spokesman of this House, you are entitled at once to have the necessary accommodation prepared for you.

Mr McDONALD

- Mr. Speaker - -

An Honorable Member. - The Premier has spoken in reply.

Mr McDONALD

- I cannot help that.

Mr SPEAKER

- The Prime Minister having replied, I can allow no further debate.

Mr McDONALD

- Then, under the circumstances, I shall be compelled to move that your ruling, Sir, be disagreed with.

Just now this is purely an informal House, and, under such circumstances, I must maintain my rights.

Mr SPEAKER

- I recognise that there are some difficulties connected with our present position : but, until the Standing Orders are laid on the table, I must ask honorable members to observe such rules as are common to the procedure of every legislative body.

Mr McDONALD

- I ask that, under these circumstances, the privileges of honorable members-

Mr BARTON

- I must point out to my honorable friend that the absence of rules does not mean that we must have disorder, and I think it is a common rule of Parliament that when the mover of a question has replied the debate is concluded.

Mr McDONALD

-It is not so in Queensland. There we are allowed the privilege of speaking, and we should have that privilege here. I intend to assert my privileges in this House, and I do not care at what cost. I wish to treat this House with the fullest respect; but while I desire to do this--

Mr SPEAKER

- I must ask the honorable gentleman to resume his seat.

Mr McDONALD

- I am going to. stand out for my rights, and I do not care what the cost may be. I claim my right to say a few words now.

Mr BARTON

- May I ask my honorable friend for a moment's hearing? The carrying of the motion which has been moved will not conclude our proceedings to-day; there will be the further motion - "That this House do now adjourn," - and the honorable member can speak to it.

Mr McDONALD

- You, sir, have granted the Prime Minister the privilege of saying a word or two, and I could have said what I wished to say in just as short a time.

Mr SPEAKER

- I cannot allow a debate at this stage.

Mr McDONALD

- It is not a question of debate at all.

Honorable Members. - Chair !

Mr McDONALD

- It is no use calling out " Chair." "We have neither rules, nor anything else, at the present time. It is only as a matter of courtesy that one is allowed to speak at all at the present time.

Mr SPEAKER

- I would again ask the honorable member to resume his seat. I shall have to ask the Prime Minister to protect the Chair if the honorable member persists in continuing his remarks.

Mr McDONALD

- I do not know how he is going to protect the Chair if I like to continue my protest.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

Proposed Standing Orders

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Motion by Mr. Barton proposed -

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr McDONALD

- I understand; that this is the stage at which I can say a word or two. We were distinctly told by the Premier that the object the Government had in view was to take the Standing Orders of the Legislatures of the various States, and from them to formulate Standing Orders for the conduct of business in this House: Having said that, the right honorable gentleman objected to my saying anything at all, simply because he had spoken in reply. It is a common thing in the Queensland Assembly for an honorable member to speak after the mover of a motion has spoken in reply ; and, under the circumstances, I might have been excused for trying to take the opportunity to speak. I did not wish to put you, Mr. Speaker, in any uncomfortable position, or to be disrespectful to this House. What I wanted to know was this : We are going to meet here to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock without any Standing Orders. We do not know even what a quorum is. There may be ten members present, or there may be a full House.

Mr Barton

- The Constitution enacts what a. quorum shall be.

Mr McDONALD

- Well, that may be so; but, at any rate, we are expected to deal to-morrow morning - almost in a few minutes - with standing orders of a temporary character, and the Premier asks us to take them without debate.

Mr Barton

- I did not say so. I said that I should lay the proposed standing orders on the table to-morrow morning, that they would be afterwards distributed, and that, when we met on the 21st, I should ask honorable members to accept those standing orders for the short interval that must elapse before the Standing Orders Committee can get to work.

Mr McDONALD

- If my memory does not deceive me, the right honorable gentleman said that he hoped there would not be two debates on the standing orders.

Mr Barton

- Hear, hear.

Mr McDONALD

- I think that is the very reason why we should have the proposed standing orders the first thing to-morrow morning.

Mr Barton

- Honorable members will have them then.

Mr McDONALD

- I am sorry that the Government did not lay them on the table to-night, so that by to-morrow morning we might know exactly what they contain.

The right honorable gentleman does not for one moment suppose that when we get the standing orders we shall be able to take in at a glance exactly what is proposed. There may be very objectionable features in them, and, as I have had considerable difficulties in connexion with standing orders in another State, I am not going to allow any standing orders to pass in this House without entering my protest against them.

Honorable Members. - Oh!

Mr McDONALD

- I was going to say, without entering my protest against such standing orders as I may consider undesirable. In some of the States there are in force the most iniquitous standing orders that were ever framed in any British speaking community ; and how am I to know at the present time, seeing what a conservative mind the Prime Minister has, that we may not be asked to pass such standing orders to-morrow ? Under the circumstances, I want to have the opportunity to look through any standing orders that may be proposed. The question I desired to ask the Prime Minister was : Will an opportunity be given us to do so! Will the right honorable gentleman try to let honorable members have copies of the standing

orders to-night, so that we may have an opportunity to glance over them before to-morrow morning ?

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

, in reply. - Even a gentleman of a conservative turn of mind is entitled to have ordinary allowances made to him. I am not aware that my mind is conservative. It has been miscalled so, in spite of my statements to the contrary, by some who do not know me, and who do not understand me.

An Honorable Member. - And who do not know the meaning of the word.

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Mr BARTON

- And who do not know the meaning of the word. There never was, and there is not now, any intention of thrusting the proposed standing orders upon honorable members without consideration. I never said that that would be done, though I have been misrepresented as saying so. It is not, however, customary at a sitting like this, when the election of a Speaker, his presentation to the Governor-General, and the consequent adjournment, is the business of the House, to take steps for the active prosecution of parliamentary work. It may be so in Queensland, but it is not so in most Parliaments. I shall lay the standing orders upon the table of the House at what I take to be the proper time - - to-morrow's sitting. I shall then move to have them printed, but honorable members will not be asked to assent to even their temporary adoption until they have had them for several days, and have had every opportunity to read them.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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16:40:00

House adjourned at 4.40 p.m.