

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

Yon — *24th*
FIFTH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION.

23
OPENING OF THE LOCAL HOUSE YESTERDAY.

(By Our Own Reporters.)

The First Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Legislature of Ontario was informally opened yesterday by His Honour Lieutenant-Governor Robinson. Long before the appointed hour, 3 o'clock, the Speaker's and ladies' galleries were crowded with visitors, while a number took seats on the floor of the House at the invitation of the members. The Lieutenant-Governor, attended by Captain Geddes, A.D.C., arrived at 3:05 o'clock. The body guard was a detachment of the Governor-General's Body Guard, under command of Major Denison. When His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor had taken his seat on the Throne,

Mr. PARDEE, addressing the House, read the following:—

"I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor to state that he does not see fit to declare the causes of his summoning the present Legislature of this Province until a Speaker of this House shall have been chosen according to law; but to-morrow, at the hour of three o'clock in the afternoon, he will declare the causes of his calling this Legislature."

The Lieutenant-Governor then withdrew.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

Mr. MOWAT then said:—The duty which this House has now to perform is the selection of the Speaker of the House. It has been customary that this motion should be made by a member of the Government, and accordingly we have considered whom we should recommend to this House for the present occasion, and the conclusion we have arrived at is that Colonel Clarke, the Speaker of the last Parliament, should be elected to the Speakership. I make, therefore, the motion to that effect. (Cheers.) There are other names which it was right for us to think of before arriving at any conclusion, and which we have thought of—though I don't know that any of these would have accepted the appointment if one of them had been selected. Not that I am saying that any member of this House has taken any steps to that end. We felt sure in coming to the decision that whatever name we might choose to propose to the House would be cordially assented to by our friends, and we hope that it will have as hearty concurrence from hon. gentlemen opposite. Col. Clarke has been Speaker four years, and he has discharged the duties devolving upon him in this House, as well as those other duties, in a manner to give general satisfaction. (Hear, hear.) The gentleman has no enemies, but a great many friends on this side of the House—indeed we are all his friends—and I hope there are also many on the other side of the House who are his friends also. (Cheers.) He has managed to gain for himself from each side of the House a very large amount of esteem, and he has the further advantage of having four years' experience in the office. The office is one which cannot be adequately sustained without experience, and Col. Clarke has the advantage derived from four years' impartial occupancy of the position. Indeed, so strongly is it felt in England that experience is needful to adequately filling the position that it is customary for the Imperial Parliament to re-elect Speakers, so that there are cases where Speakers have occupied the position eighteen, fifteen, and once for thirty-four years. That has been found on the whole a desirable thing in the public interest in a Parliament of 600 or 700 members, and surely the same consideration should have weight here. There are other reasons why, during this Parliament, it is expedient that we should have an experienced man in the chair; and in full view of all I make the motion, and it will give me very great pleasure to find that it is adopted with perfect unanimity. I move that the Hon. Charles Clarke, member for the Centre Riding of Wellington, do take the chair of this House as Speaker.

Mr. BAXTER said:—It will not be necessary for me to say very much to the members of this House who occupied seats in it during the last Parliament on the choice that has been made. We are all quite satisfied with the impartial, able, and dignified manner in which Colonel Clarke has discharged his duties. I am sure his re-election by the members of this House will be hailed with satisfaction. After what has been said by the Attorney-General it will not be necessary for me to say much, as he is well known. I have, therefore, great pleasure in seconding the motion made, that Col. Clarke be re-elected Speaker of this House.

Mr. MEREDITH—One would judge from

what has been said that some explanation were necessary from the hon. gentlemen opposite with reference to the election of Mr. Clarke. We have heard something of names of hon. gentlemen mentioned in the public press—the member for North York was frequently mentioned as the gentleman upon whom this dignity might fall. I have no doubt then, also, that there are other hon. gentlemen whom it appears have been thought of, but not thought worthy to occupy the higher position, and then there is the gentleman who occupies the position here of being one of the charter members. His name was mentioned in connection with the Speakership, but so far as we are concerned I am pleased to say that the election is one that commends itself to this side of the House. (Applause.) Col. Clarke has occupied the position four years with dignity and impartiality. I recognize the importance of the rule which the Attorney-General has laid down, which has existed in England, and which has not always been observed here. Two qualities are mainly necessary to fill the position with acceptability—dignity and impartiality. I am glad to say that Col. Clarke possesses both these qualifications, although upon one or two occasions in the last Parliament I had occasion to differ from him in regard to his ruling; but I am free to confess that these were occasions upon which there might fairly be a difference of opinion, and that his decision did not for a moment differ from that of an impartial ruling. The only objection to Mr. Clarke is that he is a strong Reformer. (Laughter.) I have therefore pleasure in saying that this side of the House cordially endorses what has been proposed by the Government, and we shall endeavour to assist him in the discharge of his duties as Speaker of this House.

The Clerk of the House, Col. Gillmor, called for the vote, and declared Mr. Clarke elected Speaker without a dissentient vote.

The SPEAKER then took the chair and returned his warmest thanks for the great honour of his election a second time to occupy the chair. Upon accepting the office he could appreciate more thoroughly the responsibilities which arose from it than he could four years ago. He hoped that the members would extend to him the support they had given him the past four years. It could not have otherwise arisen than that some members should differ from him, but he had simply wished to carry out the rules, maintain the credit, rights, and privileges which had guided the House so long. While striving to maintain the dignity and order of the House in the future, he trusted he might receive the cooperation of every member of this House.

The House then adjourned.