

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: Monday, April 14, 1997 1:30 p.m.
Date: 97/04/14

[The Mace was on a cushion below the Table]

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise, please.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated April 1, 1997, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date]

THE CLERK: Please be seated.

Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! All rise, please.
His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, H.A. "Bud" Olson, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

HIS HONOUR: Please be seated.

MR. HAVELOCK (Provincial Secretary): Hon. members, I am commanded by His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to inform you that he does not see fit to declare the causes of the summoning of the present Legislature of this province until a Speaker of this Assembly shall have been chosen according to law. He therefore is pleased to retire from this Assembly, to return at a subsequent hour tomorrow to declare the causes of the calling of this Legislature.

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise, please.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Lieutenant Governor and the Premier left the Chamber]

THE CLERK: Please be seated.

Election of a Speaker

THE CLERK: Hon. members, pursuant to the Lieutenant Governor's direction and section 16(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act nominations are invited for the office of the Speaker of this Assembly.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. It is a pleasure and a privilege to nominate my colleague, friend, and teacher, Glen Clegg, for Speaker of this House.

I have known Glen since 1993, when I came into the House as a rookie. When you sit beside someone for hours on end, you get to know that person. Glen spent many hours answering my questions and explaining procedures and rules of this House.

Glen started his political experience in October 1967 as a member of council for the municipal district of Fairview, serving as reeve for 14 years. In 1986 he resigned his position with the MD of Fairview to run as a candidate for the provincial

government as MLA. Glen was elected in 1986 and re-elected in 1989, 1993, and again in March of this year.

I know that Glen will be a very capable Speaker of this House. He has demonstrated his ability to keep order in the House while acting as Deputy Chairman of Committees. Glen has shown me that he has great judgment. His integrity is unquestionable, and his good common sense will be a definite asset to him and to the members of the Legislature.

In closing, I ask all Members of the Legislative Assembly to give Glen their support. Thank you.

THE CLERK: Mr. Clegg, do you wish to accept the nomination?

MR. CLEGG: Thank you. It is an absolute pleasure to accept that nomination.

MRS. LAING: Mr. Clerk, it's my privilege to nominate the hon. Member for Highwood, Mr. Don Tannas.

Mr. Tannas served as the Deputy Speaker in the last session very adequately and very well, and we'd like to recommend him. Thank you.

THE CLERK: Mr. Tannas, do you wish to accept the nomination?

MR. TANNAS: I accept the nomination.

MS HALEY: Mr. Clerk, I'm pleased and honoured today to nominate one of our colleagues for the position of Speaker. This gentleman, first elected in 1979, has just succeeded at the polls for the sixth time. He has served with dignity and integrity not only his constituents and this Legislature but indeed all Albertans.

In addition to serving on numerous boards and committees, he has been minister of the environment, public safety services, career development and employment, public works, and Economic Development and Tourism. He has served as Deputy Premier and Government House Leader.

In his capacity as Government House Leader he successfully and amicably negotiated some of the most historic reforms in the history of our Legislature. Most notably, this election that we are participating in today was one of the key reforms that resulted from those negotiations. He was able to negotiate a provision for private members to have six two-minute statements per week and a fast-track approach to give more weight and meaning to private members' Bills and motions.

Without question, our Speaker's most important role is right here in this Assembly, but he or she must also be able to represent us on a national and an international level at the Canadian Parliamentary Association and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. This gentleman has worked on our behalf on both the national and the international stages. He was one of our representatives at the 1994 Canadian internal trade discussions and was one of 12 signatories to the environment and sustainable development documents that were ultimately endorsed by the United Nations Assembly. As well, he was Alberta's signatory to the volunteer exchange agreement between our province and Hokkaido, Japan.

Throughout his distinguished career he has received numerous awards and honours, but the one that has given him the greatest satisfaction was being named an honorary chief of the Alexis First Nation Stoney Indian band in 1993. The translation of his Indian name is white man with a kind heart.

This man believes that all MLAs play a fundamental role in our

democracy, that this Legislature is truly our home away from home and should be a Chamber of respect, of honour, and of integrity. It must in fact be an environment in which all of us can function freely on behalf of our constituents. The Speaker has a vital role to play in ensuring that that is what happens here.

It is indeed a privilege for me to nominate Ken Kowalski, the Member for Barrhead-Westlock, to the position of Speaker.

THE CLERK: Mr. Kowalski, do you wish to accept the nomination?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Clerk, I would with honour.

MR. MITCHELL: It's an honour and a privilege for me to nominate Gene Zwozdesky to the position of Speaker.

Gene was first elected in 1993, and many of us who have been in this Legislature over that period of time know Mr. Zwozdesky to have the capability to do this job and know – and I think this is very important – the respect that he holds for this Legislative Assembly and for the people within this Assembly.

Mr. Zwozdesky's background outside the Legislature simply supports his capability for doing this job inside the Legislature. He has had extensive business experience, experience in the arts and cultural community, and has been well experienced in managing and chairing significant organizations.

I will say that without doubt as Speaker Mr. Zwozdesky, with his strong sense of integrity, will honour this Legislature, will honour the people within this Legislature, and will ensure that the people of Alberta are very well served by this Legislative Assembly.

THE CLERK: Mr. Zwozdesky, do you wish to accept the nomination?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Clerk, I want to sincerely thank our hon. opposition leader for his confidence in and words of confidence for this member and for his subsequent nomination. I also want to thank the members of my own caucus as well as other colleagues in this House for their indications of support or potential support. While I support the free election of a Speaker for this Assembly and have personally expressed my interest in serving in that nonpartisan role, I have given the matter due consideration and have now concluded that interests greater than those of any personal nature are probably better served in this instance if I withdraw my name from the nomination slate. Therefore, once again with deepest thanks to our hon. opposition leader for his kind words and for the nomination, with regret I respectfully decline the nomination.

Thank you.

THE CLERK: Are there further nominations for the position of Speaker? If not, I declare the nominations closed.

The nominees for the position of Speaker are Mr. Glen Clegg, Mr. Ken Kowalski, and Mr. Don Tannas.

Voting will commence after the list of nominees is posted in each voting booth.

[The lists of candidates were posted]

THE CLERK: Hon. members, the voting will now begin. Members will vote by printing the first and last names of their preferred candidate on the ballot paper and then placing their

completed ballot in the ballot box, which is on the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk.

[Members voted from 1:50 p.m. to 1:58 p.m.]

THE CLERK: Have all members voted who wished to do so? If that's the case, then we will retire to count the ballots.

[Ballots were counted from 1:58 p.m. to 2:08 p.m.]

THE CLERK: Hon. members, the results of the first ballot for the election of Speaker: the number of ballots cast for the election of Speaker, 83; the number of spoiled ballots, 0; the number of votes required to achieve the 50 percent plus one majority, 42. No candidate received the majority of votes cast.

Mr. Don Tannas received the least number of total votes cast. Mr. Tannas's name will therefore be excluded from the second ballot. The names on the second ballot will be Mr. Glen Clegg and Mr. Ken Kowalski. Voting will commence once we have the names listed in the ballot booths.

[The lists of candidates were posted]

THE CLERK: Voting will now begin on the second ballot for the election of Speaker. Again members will vote by printing the first and last names of their preferred candidate on the ballot paper and then placing the ballot in the ballot box on the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk.

[Members voted from 2:11 p.m. to 2:19 p.m.]

THE CLERK: Hon. members, have all those voted who wish to do so?

If so, we'll retire to count the second ballots.

[Ballots were counted from 2:19 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.]

THE CLERK: Hon. members, the results of the second ballot for the election of Speaker are as follows: the number of ballots cast, 83; the number of spoiled ballots, 0; the number of votes required to achieve the 50 percent plus one majority is 42; the member having received the majority of votes cast, Mr. Ken Kowalski. Mr. Ken Kowalski is hereby declared the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the 24th Legislature. [applause]

[The Speaker, with apparent reluctance, was escorted to the Chair by Mr. Klein and Mr. Mitchell]

THE SPEAKER: To my colleagues in the Alberta Legislative Assembly. In August of 1993 we had the privilege in this Assembly of changing the format for the election of the Speaker by providing a provision for the election of the Speaker by the members by way of secret ballot. That was a major reform in this Assembly and is one that we were all proud of at the time. Little did I realize at that time that several years would go by and I would have my name come forward before this Assembly for the election of the Speaker. I want to let each and every one of you know that I am sincerely thankful for this expression of support.

I want to sincerely thank my two colleagues, Mr. Don Tannas and Mr. Glen Clegg, for allowing their names to stand for a democratic process. They are fine gentlemen, gentlemen of integrity. They are friends of mine and people whom I respect

very, very sincerely. I want to thank them again for allowing their names to come forward.

To Mr. Zwozdesky, who was nominated and declined the nomination. I'm sure that in the last number of days he spent a great deal of time thinking about the possibility and what he would do should he be nominated. He's a class gentleman, a gentleman of respect, and I want to thank him as well for allowing his name to come forward.

This Assembly is the highest court in the land in the province of Alberta. The 83 men and women who have made their way into this Assembly did it by allowing their names to stand, one for a nomination meeting and then for the election. We're here to represent all the people of Alberta. It's the greatest honour that anyone in the province of Alberta could have. There are nearly 3 million Albertans of different backgrounds, different traditions, different aspirations, but this is our home. This is the home for 83 MLAs in the province of Alberta. This is the place that is worthy of respect for all of us. I sincerely hope that I will do you honour for the honour that you've given me today, and I sincerely hope that we will find a great deal of respect in this Assembly for one another and that integrity and honour will always be the words we will use in conducting our daily affairs in this Assembly.

So, again, thank you. Thank you very much. You are looking at perhaps the most surprised person in Alberta today. [applause]

[The Sergeant-at-Arms placed the Mace on the Table]

head:

Prayers

THE SPEAKER: I'll ask you to stand while we have the prayer of the day.

Let us pray.

Dear God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask Thy guidance in order that truth and justice may prevail in all our judgments.

Amen.

Please be seated.

Election of a Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees

THE SPEAKER: May we now have unanimous consent to proceed with the election of a Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of this Assembly?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, pursuant to section 17(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act nominations are invited for the office of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of this Assembly.

We will now open the process for the nomination leading to the position of Deputy Speaker.

MRS. GORDON: Mr. Speaker, I am both pleased and proud to stand before this Assembly to nominate as Deputy Speaker the hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont, Denis Herard.

First elected in 1993, he has worked hard and long not only for this government and for Albertans but for the Legislative Assembly as well. He has served in many capacities and on numerous committees, including chair of the Health Facilities Review Committee, vice-chair of the heritage savings trust fund committee, and chair of the business involvement in education

implementation team, and as co-chair of the minister's technology committee he was instrumental in the position of chief information officer being created. The hon. member has an extensive background, some 32 years, in telecommunications and computer technology, and on many occasions many of us have utilized his expertise wisely.

Along with the late Dr. Harry Sohal the hon. member also served as deputy Deputy Chairman of Committees and on numerous occasions presided most capably as Chairman and Deputy Speaker. As Deputy Speaker this term he will conscientiously uphold parliamentary traditions and bring forth a sense of responsibility for parliamentary decorum. As elected members we will be well served, as I know he will work diligently to ensure that individual needs of all members are accommodated yet will provide a balanced, impartial application of our Standing Orders and other parliamentary authorities.

Members, I have no hesitation in bringing forward this nomination and would ask for your consideration and support. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mrs. Gordon.

Mr. Herard, would you accept the nomination?

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin by first thanking the Member for Lacombe-Stettler for her kind words of nomination and also thanks for the memories with respect to Dr. Sohal, our colleague and former Member for Calgary-McCall.

It's an honour to accept the nomination for Deputy Speaker.

MRS. LAING: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to nominate the hon. Member for Highwood, Mr. Don Tannas, for the position of Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Tannas was elected in 1989 and 1993. He has a strong interest in the parliamentary process and is very knowledgeable in this field. He has served one term as Deputy Speaker and has represented this Legislative Assembly with distinction.

I would ask my colleagues to consider Mr. Tannas for the position of Deputy Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mrs. Laing.

Mr. Tannas, would you accept the nomination?

MR. TANNAS: Thank you. I'm proud to accept the nomination.

THE SPEAKER: Members of the Assembly, would there be additional nominations? The Government House Leader.

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to nominate a dear friend and colleague for the position of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees, the hon. Member for Dunvegan.

I won't bother to go through his extensive experience. I think that was expounded upon earlier quite effectively by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

THE SPEAKER: The Government House Leader has nominated the hon. Member for Dunvegan, Mr. Clegg, for the position of Deputy Speaker. Mr. Clegg, will you accept the nomination?

MR. CLEGG: Well, I certainly want to thank the hon. member for nominating me, but I will decline that nomination.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, would there be additional nominations? Our rules do not require that question being asked three times.

Then we will now proceed to the election of the position of Deputy Speaker with two hon. members having their names before us.

Hon. members, until the names are on the sheets of paper in front of the polling booths, the House is in Assembly with the Speaker in the Chair, but let's have a very informal environment as we anticipate this.

[The lists of candidates were posted]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, the voting will now begin for the position of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees.

[Members voted from 2:43 p.m. to 2:50 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: Have all members voted who wished to vote?

Let's just take a break now until we're called back into the House.

[Ballots were counted from 2:50 p.m. to 3 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK: The results of the first ballot for the election of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees: number of ballots cast, 82; number of spoiled ballots, 0; number of votes required to achieve the 50 percent plus one majority, 42; the member having received the majority of votes cast, Mr. Don Tannas. Mr. Tannas is hereby declared the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the 24th Legislature. [applause]

THE SPEAKER: Mr. Tannas, congratulations on your election as Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. I'm sure that all members will join with me in giving you a rousing round of applause again. [applause]

Mr. Herard, may we thank you for allowing your name to stand in this very important aspect of the democratic process. Can we congratulate our fellow colleague as well. [applause]

May we now have unanimous consent to proceed to the election of a Deputy Chairman of Committees for this Assembly?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Election of a Deputy Chairman of Committees

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, pursuant to section 17(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act nominations are invited for the office of Deputy Chairman of Committees.

Mrs. Fritz.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am privileged and honoured to nominate my colleague the MLA for Lacombe-Stettler for the position of Deputy Chairman of Committees.

As many of you know, my colleague showed a strong commitment to public service when she was first elected to Lacombe town council in 1986. Her involvement continued when she was elected as mayor of Lacombe in 1989, a position which she returned to by acclamation in 1992. The Member for Lacombe-Stettler left a very worthwhile, rewarding position as mayor to continue her public service at the provincial level. She was first elected on June 15, 1993, to the Alberta Legislature and again on March 11, 1997, for a second term as MLA for the Lacombe-Stettler constituency.

My colleague is well known in this Legislature for her hard work and commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all Albertans through her extensive work on committees such as the chair of the Lotteries Review Committee and the chair of the Co-ordinating Council of Foundations. I believe this experience combined with her active involvement in sponsoring both government and private members' Bills in the House have provided her with the skills to be successful in this position. I strongly urge the members of this Assembly to support my nomination for this dynamic woman as Deputy Chairman of Committees.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Mrs. Gordon, do you wish to accept the nomination?

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I accept the nomination and thank my colleague for her kind words.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, would there be additional nominations for the position of Deputy Chairman of Committees? Tradition in this Assembly says that the Speaker should only call that question once rather than three times, as is normally the case in some other rules of order.

So I wish to congratulate Mrs. Gordon and hereby declare her elected Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Legislative Assembly for the 24th Legislature. [applause]

Hon. members, may we have consent to destroy all ballots and documents related to the election of Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees, and Deputy Chairman of Committees?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: You've elected for the first time in the history of this Assembly, someone has told me, a Speaker from north of Highway 16 or the city of Edmonton. That perhaps is a different sort of thing.

May you all have a wonderful afternoon.

[At 3:05 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Tuesday at 3 p.m.]