

**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.