

CLERK: Please be seated.

At the close of nominations for the Office of Speaker at 4:30 p.m., Thursday, December 17, 2015, two candidates put their names forward. The candidates, in alphabetical order, are Mr. Tom Osborne and Mr. Scott Reid.

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.

Would the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Pages please place the voting booths and ballot box in position? Would the Pages please distribute the list of candidates to all members' desks and place one in each voting booth?

Before beginning the election, I will briefly outline the process to be followed, as set out in the Standing Orders of the House. Members will be asked to proceed from the back or third row of desks on their respective sides of the House and file past the Speaker's Chair to the head of the Clerk's Table. At the Table, each member will be given a ballot and asked to initial a list to verify that he or she has received it.

In the voting booth, please print or write legibly the surname of the candidate you support on the ballot paper, place it in the ballot box at the end of the Clerk's Table and return to your place. You can only vote for one candidate. So please do not list or rank the candidates, and only write the surname of one candidate on the ballot.

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 both candidates receive the same number of votes, there will be another ballot.

Immediately before the start of the second or any subsequent ballot, a member who wishes to withdraw will be given an opportunity to do so. When the count of the ballot is completed, a five-minute bell will ring to call members back to the Chamber. In preparation for the vote, the Sergeant-at-Arms will inspect and lock the ballot box.

The list of candidates should be now with each member and in each of the two voting booths. We will now proceed with the beginning of the voting procedure. I now ask those members who wish to cast ballots to proceed from the back or the third row of your seating on your respective sides and then file past the Chair to the Clerk's Table where the Clerk Assistant will give you a ballot, check your name off the list and then please initial the list next to your name to indicate that you have received a ballot. Proceed to the voting booth, write your choice on the ballot, fold it and then put in the ballot box.

CLERK: It is my understanding that all members have now voted. The House will recess to the call of the bells, while the Clerks at the Table count the ballots. The bells will ring for five minutes to recall members to the Chamber when the results of the ballot are to be announced.

Thank you very much.

Recess

CLERK: Accordingly, further to suborder 4(11) of the Standing Orders, I declare Mr. Tom Osborne, Member for the District of Waterford Valley, as Speaker for the Forty-Eighth General Assembly.

(Applause.)

(The hon. the Premier and the hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition lead Mr. Osborne to the Speaker's Chair.)

MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): Thank you, everybody.

I have some brief remarks. There is a parliamentary custom that the Speaker is supposed to resist while being dragged to the Chair by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I tried to look as though I was resisting.

The truth is this is a position that I have wanted for some time and I believe everybody who sat in the House prior to the election would have known that this is certainly the position that I wanted. All current members, based on the calls that I made two or three weeks ago seeking your support, I think it is no surprise that this was the position that I aspired to.

It is indeed an honour to be elected as your Speaker. I will thank my opponent today because together we helped make history. This is the first time in this Province's history that there was an elected Speaker to the House of Assembly, so I thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. SPEAKER: I want to assure all members that it is my intention to be fair and impartial as I preside over the deliberations in this Chamber. I also intend to bring a greater level of decorum and a higher degree of respect to the manner in which we conduct the people's business.

There are forty members in this Legislature. It is indeed a huge honour to be selected by the people of the Province to represent our respective districts. The people of the Province have an expectation of us, and that is that we conduct our business in this Legislature professionally. I hope that, collectively, we are able to restore a greater level of respect for what this Legislature stands for and our roles in this Legislature.

For our new members, the task that lies ahead of you may at times seem daunting, but you will quickly transition into your roles and responsibility. I am certain you will have a greater understanding very soon of how the legislative process works.

I want to let all of you know that I am available to each and every member who has questions or seek guidance. The Speaker's office is open to assist all members of the House.

I also want to congratulate all members for being elected. To our new Premier, to the ministers who have been chosen to represent the Crown, to the leaders of the Opposition and the Third Party, you also have very important roles to play in our Chamber.

I want to recognize as well the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair who today, as the Premier presents her name, will take on the role of Deputy Speaker and as well to the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands who will take on the role of Deputy Chair of Committees. I know together we will make a great team in the operations of the House of Assembly.

(Applause.)

MR. SPEAKER: I want to recognize my wife Daphne, my children Rhiannon, Reegan, Spencer and Casey, as well as our parents and other members of our family and friends who have joined us today for the special occasion.

It is also customary to recognize former members of the Legislature when they visit us. It so happens that the former Member for St. John's West who also happens to be known as my mother, Sheila Osborne, is sitting in the Speaker's gallery.

(Applause.)

MR. SPEAKER: Yesterday, when I was explaining to Rhiannon and Reegan that I was running for Speaker and that there was going to be a vote today in the House, they had some questions: What does the Speaker do? I replied that we help with the operation of the House and keep decorum. We help with decisions that are made with the motions put forward in legislation.

Like what? I said: Well, if there is a vote in the House, I preside over the vote. So the next question: Are you going to have an office? I said: Yes, I will have an office. Will you have a bowl of candy in your office?

(Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKER: I said: Well, I am not sure. So I was advised that my first role of business is to ensure that I have a vote to make sure that there is a bowl of candy in the office.

All those in favour, say 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

That being our first order of business, I want to wish members a wonderful Christmas. I am going to point out one other individual who is in the gallery today. My assistant has been with me nineteen years, Susan Elliott. I know what little hair I have left will probably be gone because she does not like the attention, but she has helped me operate my office and helped ensure that I continue to be re-elected, so I wanted to point her out today as well.

I want to wish all members a wonderful Christmas. I want to as well thank the staff of the House of Assembly who see us through – the Pages, the Commissionaires, the folks in the Broadcast Centre, Hansard, to political staff, and certainly to all public servants. To those that are at home watching the proceedings today, I wish you a very wonderful Christmas indeed.

Again, thank you to all members of the House for bestowing upon me this honour. I will serve you well.