



Francis SCARPALEGGIA



*M.P. for Lac-Saint-Louis
Speaker of the House of Commons*

On May 26, I was elected the 40th Speaker of the House of Commons. It is a great honour and responsibility, but I want you to know that I remain always the committed Member of Parliament for Lac-Saint-Louis.

The election of the Speaker is the very first order of business when the House of Commons meets after a general election. With the Speaker's chair empty, the election is presided over by the Member of Parliament with the most unbroken years of service.



Before the vote, MPs running for Speaker are called on to give a short speech to the assembled House.

The vote is conducted using a ranked ballot. In other words, each MP indicates their first,

second, and third choices on a single ballot.

If no candidate is the first choice of a majority of MPs, the candidate who received the least number of first-choice votes drops off. The second choices of those who chose the eliminated candidate as their first choice are then distributed over the remaining candidates. If this still fails to allow any candidate to cross the 50-percent threshold, the new last-placed candidate is dropped, and the process continues until someone achieves a majority.

The newly elected Speaker serves for the full length of the Parliament; that is, until the next general election.

When the result of the vote is announced, the winning candidate, feigning resistance, is "dragged" to the Speaker's chair by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition. These theatrics mimic the early days of parliamentary democracy when MPs were justifiably reluctant to serve as Speaker. In those days, the King or Queen

still held much power and would at times show their displeasure with the House of Commons by punishing — sometimes fatally — the House's representative and messenger, the Speaker.

The Speaker's main role is to maintain order in the House by ensuring its rules, conventions and traditions are properly followed.

This new role does not alter my duty or ability to represent you. I remain your Member of Parliament in every sense, just as before. I and my office continue to be available to assist you in your dealings with federal government departments and services. I also remain fully present in the community.



What does change is that I must now be non-partisan. As the standard-bearer for the House as a whole, I must show the impartiality required to sustain the trust and goodwill of MPs of all parties. However, while I cannot reveal any partisan opinions or comment on legislation that is before the House, I can nonetheless speak privately to members of the government or the opposition about legislation and policies. I can also raise problems a constituent may be having with a government department. I therefore encourage you to keep contacting me with your views and concerns or if you need help resolving a matter with the federal government.

In addition to presiding over debates including the daily Question Period, the Speaker is the Chair of the Board of Internal Economy which oversees the operations of the Parliamentary Precinct (i.e. Parliament Hill) which includes approximately 2,500 employees. The precinct encompasses an array of services including security, finance, research and analysis, administration, procedural and legal affairs, human resources, broadcasting and communications, building management, food services, etc.

The Speaker also fulfills a diplomatic role. I will be meeting regularly with foreign ambassadors and Speakers of other countries, especially, but not exclusively, those of the

Commonwealth and La Francophonie. Most recently, I had the opportunity to connect virtually with Ukraine's Speaker, Ruslan Stefanchuk. I will be hosting Speaker Stefanchuk at this fall's meeting of G7 Speakers in Ottawa. Although Ukraine is not a member of the G7, the G7 countries are vital allies of Ukraine in its war against Russian aggression. The Speaker's diplomatic activities often dovetail with the priorities of the Department of Global Affairs.

Because it is not physically possible for one person to sit the Speaker's chair all day long — a typical day in the House runs from 10am until 6:30pm —, one of my first decisions was to appoint a Deputy Speaker (Conservative Tom Kmiec) and two Assistant Deputy Speakers (Liberal Alexandra Mendès and Conservative John Nater).

It is my sincere hope that the foregoing provides useful context on my new role and serves at the same time to reassure you that I continue to function as your loyal representative in Parliament.

Finally, you can follow my activities as Speaker on social media, namely on Instagram (@hocspeaker). You can also continue to follow my activities as the Member of Parliament for Lac-Saint-Louis through my usual social media accounts.

I wish all a pleasant end of summer and a safe return to school and work in the fall.



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