



SPEAKER AND OTHER PRESIDING OFFICERS

Speaker and Other Presiding Officers

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More information on the Speaker and Other Presiding Officers

SPEAKER AND OTHER PRESIDING OFFICERS

The Speaker is the Member elected by the Members of the House of Commons to preside over proceedings in the Chamber. He or she is responsible for maintaining order and decorum in the Chamber. The Speaker also oversees the administration of the House and is the spokesperson and representative of the House of Commons.

Speaker – Representative Role

The Speaker represents the Commons in all its powers, proceedings and dignity and is the guardian of the rights and privileges of the House. The Speaker represents the House in its relations with the Senate, the Crown and other bodies outside the House of Commons. Messages, correspondence and documents addressed to the House of Commons are communicated to it through the Speaker.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Speaker – Representative Role

Speaker – Procedural Role

The Speaker's authority and responsibilities as Presiding Officer in the House of Commons flow in large part from the *Constitution* and from the Standing Orders, the written rules of the House. The Speaker may exercise only those powers conferred by the House, within the limits established by the House itself.

The Speaker is responsible for regulating debate and preserving order in accordance with the rules of the House and for deciding any matters of procedure that may arise.

The Speaker must at all times show, and be seen to show, the impartiality required to maintain the trust and goodwill of the House and does not vote except in case of a tie. The actions of the Speaker may not be criticized in debate or by any means except by way of a motion put before the House. As well, the Standing Orders prohibit any debate on decisions of the Speaker and prohibit any appeal of a Speaker's decision to the House.

DETAILED ARTICLES

Speaker – Procedural Role

Casting Vote of the Speaker

Speaker's Rulings

Clerk and other staff in the Chamber

Speaker – Administrative Role

The Speaker is the head of the House of Commons administration and is responsible for its overall direction and management. *The Parliament of Canada Act* provides that all matters of administrative and financial policy affecting the House are overseen by the Board of Internal Economy, composed of Members from all recognized parties in the House (i.e., 12 or more Members) and chaired by the Speaker.

DETAILED ARTICLES

Speaker – Administrative Role

Board of Internal Economy

Clerk and other staff in the Chamber

Election of the Speaker of the House

The Constitution Act, 1867 requires the election of the Speaker at the beginning of a Parliament and again any time a vacancy occurs. At the beginning of a new Parliament, the Speech from the Throne will not be read until the Speaker has been elected. No other business can come before the House until the election has taken place and the Speaker has taken the Chair.

The process for the election of the Speaker, which takes place by secret ballot, is laid out in the Standing Orders. The rules for the Speaker's election provide for a series of run-off ballots among all eligible candidates for Speaker, until one candidate receives an absolute majority of the votes cast.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Election of the Speaker of the House

Deputy Speaker

The House also elects a Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole at the commencement of every Parliament or from time to time as required. The Deputy Speaker serves in that capacity until the end of a Parliament.

The Deputy Speaker is not elected by secret ballot, instead the Speaker, after consultation with the leaders of each of the officially recognized parties, announces the name of a Member he or she considers to be qualified for the position. The motion is deemed to have been moved and seconded and the question is put without debate or amendment.

The Deputy Speaker replaces the Speaker when the latter is unavoidably absent. The Deputy Speaker also takes the Chair when the House sits as a Committee of the Whole and, on occasion, chairs legislative committees.

The Member chosen as Deputy Speaker usually has full and practical knowledge of the official language that is not that of the current Speaker of the House.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Deputy Speaker

Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole and Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

At the beginning of every session, and from time to time as necessary, the House elects, by motion, a Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole and an Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole, either of whom may replace the Deputy Speaker in the Chair during his or her absence.

The Deputy Chair and Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole also serve as members of the Panel of Chairs for legislative committees.

DETAILED ARTICLE

Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole and Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MORE INFORMATION ON THE SPEAKER AND OTHER PRESIDING OFFICERS:

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, ed. Robert Marleau & Camille Montpetit, (2000)

Chapter 7, The Speaker and Other Presiding Officers of the House

Chapter 6, The Physical and Administrative Setting

Chapter 5, Parliamentary Procedure

Chapter 3, Privileges and Immunities

Standing Orders of the House of Commons, (February, 2005)

Chapter I, Presiding Officers

Chapter XVI, House Administration

Speaker of the House of Commons, Parliamentary website, About Parliament/People section – Biography and Speaker's website

Inside Canada's Parliament, Parliamentary website, About Parliament section

Find this and other articles on House of Commons procedure by visiting the *Compendium of Procedure* Web site at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/compendium-e>.

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