

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

A CHANGE OF SPEAKER

This note sets out the procedure to be followed on the retirement of the Speaker. It assumes that the Speaker retires in the course of a Parliament, as recommended by the Select Committee on Procedure in 1971/72. The changes in the procedure to be followed if the Speaker retires at the dissolution of a Parliament are set out in the last paragraph.

The process is started by an announcement in the House by the Speaker that he intends to retire on a certain date. The Leader of the House responds to this announcement by expressing his regret and setting out the procedures that will be followed for the election of a new Speaker. The statement made by the Leader of the House in 1976 is attached at Flag A.

The Prime Minister then makes a submission to The Queen informing her that the Speaker has announced his retirement and seeking her authority to proceed to the election of a new Speaker. The submission made in 1976 is attached at Flag B. Wide consultations are then held on the choice of a new Speaker. The Prime Minister will normally consult the Chief Whip and Leader of the House, and the Chief Whip will consult both the Opposition and the backbenchers of his own Party. It is therefore wise for the Private Office to arrange an early meeting between the Prime Minister, Chief Whip, and Leader of the House. Once a name has been identified a submission to The Queen can be prepared. Two drafts should be produced: the first should assume that the candidate will be elected unanimously by the House (Flag C); the second assumes that the election is opposed (Flag D). Both of these submissions are sent to the Palace in advance of the election because one of them will have to be approved at very short notice (see below). The letter sent by No.10 to the Palace covering these submissions in 1983 is at Flag E.

On the day of the Speaker's retirement business is as follows:

- (a) A statement by the Speaker of about 5-10 minutes in which he takes leave of the House.

- (b) A speech by the Prime Minister in which he/she moves a motion of thanks to the retiring Speaker. The Private Secretary to the Prime Minister should ask the Chief Whip's office to produce a draft motion in consultation with the Leader of the House. Once this has been cleared by the Prime Minister, the Chief Whip's office should be asked to arrange for the motion to be tabled. The motions moved in 1976 and 1983 are attached at Flag F. The Leader of the Opposition replies to this speech and a number of other Members usually speak as well. The question is then put by the Speaker and agreed.
- (c) The Prime Minister then informs the House that The Queen has given leave for the election of a new Speaker (the form of words used in 1976 is at Flag G). The Father of the House then moves the election of the chosen candidate. Other speakers may propose other candidates as amendments to the motion but it is rare for the chosen candidate not to be elected unanimously.
- (d) The Speaker-elect takes the chair and the Prime Minister makes a speech of congratulation, followed by the Leaders of the Opposition Parties and other speakers.
- (e) The Prime Minister then informs the House that it is Her Majesty's pleasure that the House should present their Speaker at a certain time in the House of Peers for Royal Approbation and the sitting is suspended. The length of the suspension is determined by the need for The Queen to approve the election of the new Speaker by initialling one of the Prime Minister's submissions and signing documents submitted by the Lord Chancellor, all of which would normally have been sent to the Palace in advance. Normally the election of the Speaker will have been completed by 3.30 pm and the House can be called to the Lords by 4.30 pm. The Private Secretary to the Prime Minister should fix the length of the suspension in consultation with the Private Secretary to The Queen, and the offices of the Chief Whip and Leader of the House.

- (f) After the Speaker has been presented for Royal Approbation in the Lords, the House meets again and a motion for a Humble Address praying Her Majesty to confer some mark of royal favour on the retiring Speaker is passed, usually unanimously. The motion used in 1983 is at Flag H. It should be possible to use this form of words on all future occasions. The Chief Whip's office should be asked to arrange for the motion to be tabled.
- (g) The House then adjourns.

It is clear from the above that one of the Prime Minister's Private Secretaries should inform The Queen's Private Secretary as soon as the new Speaker has been elected. The Queen can then initial the Prime Minister's submission seeking her approval for the Speaker's election and sign the Lord Chancellor's documents. These are then returned post haste so that the Lord Chancellor can signify Her Majesty's approval in the House of Lords.

Following the election of the Speaker and the passing of the Humble Address ((f) above) a submission is sent immediately to the Palace seeking The Queen's approval for the granting of an honour to the retiring Speaker. This refers to the Humble Address that will be presented to her. The standard form of words is at Flag I. No written reply is made to the Humble Address itself. The approval by The Queen of the Prime Minister's submission seeking an honour for the retiring Speaker is the only answer required. The Vice Chamberlain reports this to the House on behalf of the Prime Minister, and the Chief Whip's office should be asked to arrange this. The standard form of words is at Flag J. In 1976 and 1983 written replies to the Humble Address were prepared and were approved by The Queen, but it is clear from the precedents of 1951 and 1959 that the only reply needed is The Queen's approval of the Prime Minister's submission.

If the Speaker retires at the dissolution of a Parliament, the procedures are different. The motion of thanks is moved before the dissolution; the first business of the new Parliament is the election of the new Speaker, when the Father of the House takes the Chair; the Royal Approbation takes place on the second day of

the Parliament; and the motion for the Humble Address is moved some time subsequently. The Government effectively has only the period between the General Election and the meeting of the new Parliament to consult on the choice of the new Speaker; this is a very tight timetable and it can cause considerable problems.

C. F. S. Rickett

August 1983

The Prime Minister: In my view—
 [Interruption.] Sweden? When I dis-
 cussed this with the Prime Minister of
 Sweden yesterday, he was able to point
 out—[Interruption.] I was asked about
 Sweden. The Swedish Prime Minister was
 able to point out that there is a very
 large—

Mr. Skinner: Save the steel jobs.

The Prime Minister:—thriving, high-
 priced market for Sweden's principal pro-
 ducts—forestry products: timber, pulp
 and paper.

However, I say finally in regard to my
 hon. Friend's question, in which he said
 that we should not seek solutions solely
 in Europe, that he knows that we are not
 doing that. He knows, for example—
 [Interruption.] When the extremists on
 both sides have finished their laughing, I
 shall finish the answer. We are not seek-
 ing the solution solely within Europe. The
 Rambouillet Summit included the six
 leading industrial nations, covering three
 continents. My hon. Friend will know
 of the conference that we had with the
 Commonwealth, and our proposals there.
 He is totally wrong in saying that we are
 seeking a solution solely within Europe.
 But if we try to seek a solution without
 Europe, we shall not find one.

Several hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have a short
 statement to make to the House.

* MR. SPEAKER (RETIREMENT)

Mr. Speaker: I have to tell the House
 that I have today informed Her Majesty
 the Queen of my intention to relinquish
 the office of Speaker. I propose to do
 so on 3rd February next, the tenth Sitting
 day from today. This is in accordance
 with Standing Order No. 103A and the
 First Report of the Select Committee on
 Procedure, during the Session 1971-72,
 ordered to be printed on 26th January
 1972.

The Lord President of the Council and
 Leader of the House of Commons (Mr.
 Edward Short): The whole House, Mr.
 Speaker, will have learned with very
 much regret of your decision to relin-
 quish your office. I understand that it is
 your own wish that there should be no

speeches on this occasion, but there will,
 of course, be an opportunity to speak on
 your retirement later. However, I think
 that it would be for the convenience of
 the House now that I should outline the
 procedure for electing your successor, in
 accordance with Standing Order No.
 103A.

On Tuesday 3rd February I understand
 Mr. Speaker, that you would wish to
 make a statement to the House. After
 this, the usual motion to mark your
 long and distinguished service will be
 moved. That motion will also give the
 House the opportunity to pay its tributes
 to you.

Accordingly, after your statement and
 the following speeches, I would propose
 that the House will then proceed imme-
 diately to the election of a new Speaker
 under the procedure laid down under
 Standing Order No. 103A with you, Mr.
 Speaker, still in the Chair. After you
 have put the Question, or Questions, as a
 result of which the new Speaker will be
 elected, you will leave the Chair and
 the Speaker-Elect will then be conducted
 to the Chair. Thereafter the procedure
 will follow that of previous occasions.





10 Downing Street
Whitehall

Mr. Wilson, with his humble duty to The Queen, begs to advise Your Majesty that the Right Honourable John Selwyn Brooke Lloyd, C.H., C.B.E., T.D., Q.C., D.L., M.P., Speaker of the House of Commons, having acquainted Your Majesty of his desire to resign with effect from Tuesday, 3 February 1976, has so informed the House of Commons. Mr. Wilson recommends that Your Majesty be graciously pleased to accept the resignation of Mr. Lloyd.

Mr. Wilson begs that authority may be given for an announcement to be made in the House of Commons on Tuesday, 3 February 1976 that Your Majesty directs the House to proceed with a new Election, and that permission be given to signify, after the Election, that it be Your Majesty's pleasure that the new Speaker be presented in the House of Lords at a given time for Your Majesty's gracious approval.

22 January 1976

Mr. Wilson, with his humble duty to The Queen,
has the honour to acquaint Your Majesty that, by a
Resolution passed nemine contradicente by the House
of Commons today, the Right Honourable Thomas George
Thomas, M.P., has been appointed Speaker of the House,
and Mr. Wilson humbly submits this appointment for
Your Majesty's most gracious approval.

(SIGNED) HAROLD WILSON

3 February 1976

ALTERNATIVE SUBMISSION
PREPARED IN CASE MR. GEORGE
THOMAS WAS NOT ELECTED
UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Wilson, with his humble duty to The Queen,
has the honour to acquaint Your Majesty that, by a
Resolution passed by the House of Commons today,
the Right Honourable Thomas George Thomas, M.P.,
has been appointed Speaker of the House, and
Mr. Wilson humbly submits this appointment for
Your Majesty's most gracious approval.

(SIGNED) HAROLD WILSON

3 February 1976

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PRCM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>1593</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract/Item details: <i>Flag E attached to Note for the Record dated August 1983</i>	
CLOSED FOR YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	<i>17/3/2014 G-Gray</i>
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
MISSING	
NUMBER NOT USED	

Instructions for completion of Dummy Card

Use **Black Pen** to complete form

Use the card for one piece/item number only

Enter the Department, Series and Piece/Item references clearly
e.g.

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>GRA 168</i>
PIECE/ITEM <i>49</i> (ONE PIECE/ITEM NUMBER ONLY)

Please Sign and Date in the box adjacent to the description that applies to the document being replaced by the Dummy Card

If the document is Closed under a FOI exemption, enter the number of years closed. See the TNA guidance *Preparation of records for transfer to The National Archives*, section 18.2

The box described as 'Missing' is for TNA use only (it will apply to a document that is not in its proper place after it has been transferred to TNA)

1976

That this House tenders its gratitude to the Right Honourable Selwyn Lloyd for his skilful, reasonable and firm guidance of our affairs; offers thanks for his personal kindnesses, hospitality and friendship; records appreciation of the clarity of his decisions and his success in achieving fairness to all Members; and unite in wishing him well on his retirement from the chair to which he has brought such distinction.

1983

That the thanks of this House be given to the Right Honourable George Thomas for the great distinction with which he has upheld the traditions of the Speakership during the past seven years; that he be assured that his unvarying fairness, personal kindness and dedication to the House have earned him its respect and affection; and that all Members unite in wishing him every happiness in his retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I have to acquaint the House that Her Majesty, having been informed of the wish of Mr. Speaker to relinquish his office, gives leave to the House to proceed forthwith to the choice of a new Speaker.

Hansard - Thursday, 23 June 1983

175

Mr. Speaker Thomas (Retirement)

23 JUN

MR. SPEAKER THOMAS (RETIREMENT)

Resolved nemine contradicente,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty that she will be most graciously pleased to confer some signal mark of her Royal Favour upon the Right honourable George Thomas for his eminent services during the important period in which with such distinguished ability and dignity he presided in the Chair of this House.—[*Mr. Biffen.*]



10 DOWNING STREET

FLAG I
Aye
-
R

Mrs Thatcher, with her humble duty to The Queen,
begs to report that the House of Commons has this day resolved
that an humble Address be presented to Your Majesty praying
that Your Majesty be graciously pleased to confer some signal
mark of the Royal favour upon the Right Honourable Thomas
George Thomas for his eminent services during the period in
which he has presided in the Chair. The Address will reach
Your Majesty in due course through the usual channel and
Mrs Thatcher humbly recommends to Your Majesty that in
accordance with custom the prayer of the Address be granted
and that the dignity of a Viscountcy of the United Kingdom be
conferred upon Mr Thomas.

Margaret Thatcher

23 June 1983

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock.

PRAYERS.

1 Mr Speaker Thomas's Retirement (Answer to an Address).—The Vice-Chamberlain of the Household acquainted the House, on behalf of the Prime Minister, That the Address of 23rd June, praying Her Majesty that she will be most graciously pleased to confer some signal mark of her Royal Favour upon the Right honourable Thomas George Thomas for his eminent services during the important period in which with such distinguished ability and dignity he presided in the Chair of this House, had been presented to Her Majesty, and Her Majesty had been pleased to receive the same very graciously, and had commanded him to acquaint this House that Her Majesty is desirous, in compliance with the request of her Faithful Commons, to confer upon the Right honourable Thomas George Thomas some signal mark of her Royal Favour.

2 Republic of Korea (Resolution).—Mr Speaker acquainted the House, That he had received a unanimous Resolution from the Assembly of the Republic of Korea, as follows :

In commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between Great Britain and Korea on 26th November 1883 which provided for the formal opening of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea,

Noting with satisfaction that the traditional bonds of friendship subsisting between the people of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea have been continuously strengthened on the basis of common respect for freedom, justice and peace ;

Never forgetting the fact that hundreds of British officers and men laid down their lives in the defence of Korean freedom and peace in the early 1950s ;

1. Wishes to record its deep appreciation of the noble sacrifices made by the British soldiers in the Korean War and for the positive support consistently extended to the Republic of Korea by the government and people of the United Kingdom in international forums ;

2. Trusts that the Parliament of the United Kingdom will continue its support to the Republic of Korea in its efforts to bring about stability, development and early peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula ;

3. Resolves to send this resolution to the Parliament of the United Kingdom in the name of the Korean people to further enhance friendly and co-operative relations between the two countries in political, economic, cultural and all other fields on the basis of the principles of reciprocity and equality in the years to come.

3 Accounts and Papers.—Several Papers were presented (see Appendix).

4 Adjournment.—A Motion was made, and the Question being proposed, That this House do now adjourn—(Mr Alastair Goodlad) ;

And it being Eleven o'clock, Mr Speaker interrupted the proceedings, pursuant to Standing Order No. 5 (Friday Sittings).

L