



THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, THE RIGHT HON. JOHN EVELYN DENISON, ELECTED APRIL 30, 1857.  
FROM THE "ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS."



STATUE OF THE EARL OF CHATHAM, IN ST. STEPHEN'S HALL.



STATUE OF CHARLES JAMES FOX, IN ST. STEPHEN'S HALL.

**THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.**—This great officer must have been anciently, as at present, the organ or spokesman of the Commons, although in modern times he is more occupied in presiding over the deliberations of the House than in delivering speeches in their behalf. Amongst the duties of the Speaker are the following:—To read to the Sovereign petitions or addresses from the Commons; and to deliver, in the Royal presence, whether at the Palace or in the House of Lords, such speeches as are usually made on behalf of the Commons; to manage in the name of the House, where counsel, witnesses, or prisoners, are at the bar; to reprimand persons who have incurred the displeasure of the House; to issue warrants of committal or release for breaches of privilege; to communicate in writing with any parties, when so instructed by the House; to exercise vigilance in reference to private bills, especially with a view to protect property in general, or the rights of individuals, from undue encroachment or injury; to express the thanks or approbation of the Commons to distinguished personages; to control and regulate the subordinate officers of the House; to entertain the members at dinner, in due succession, and at stated periods; to adjourn the House at four o'clock, if forty members be not present; to appoint tellers on divisions. The Speaker must abstain from debating, unless in Committees of the whole House. As Chairman of the House his duties are the same as those of any other President of a deliberative assembly. When Parliament is about to be prorogued, it is customary for the Speaker to address to the Sovereign, in the House of Lords, a speech, recapitulating the proceedings of the Session. He is chosen by the House of Commons from amongst its own members, subject to the approval of the Crown, and holds his office till the dissolution of the Parliament in which he was elected. His salary is £6000 a year, exclusive of a furnished

residence. At the end of his official labours he is generally rewarded by a peerage, and a pension of £4000 for two lives. He is a member of the Privy Council, and entitled to rank after Barons. Until the year 1853, business, generally speaking, could not be transacted in his absence, though to this rule there was an exception in the year 1606, a prisoner being released by order of the House during the illness of a Speaker. In August, 1853, however, it was resolved that, during the unavoidable absence of the Speaker, the Chairman of Committees of the whole House should preside in his stead. Should a member persevere in breaches of order, the Speaker may "name" him, as it is called—a course uniformly followed by the Speaker of the House. In extreme cases the Speaker may order members or others into custody until the pleasure of the House be signified. On divisions, when the numbers happen to be equal, he gives the casting vote, but he never otherwise votes.

**THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.**—The Lord Chancellor is the Keeper of the Great Seal, and by virtue of that office he becomes, on the bare delivery of the seal to him by the Sovereign, Speaker of the House of Lords. He is usually, but not necessarily, a Peer. There has always been a Deputy Speaker, and formerly there were two or more; but since the year 1851 there has been only one. The Chairman in Committees generally fills this office. In the absence of the Lord Chancellor and of the Deputy Speaker, it is competent to the House to appoint any noble Lord to take the woolsack. The Speaker is the organ or mouthpiece of the House, and it therefore is his duty to represent their Lordships in their collective capacity when holding intercourse with other public bodies or with individuals. He has not a casting vote upon divisions, for, should the numbers prove equal, the not contents prevail. The Deputy Speaker of the Lords is appointed by the Crown.