

A GALLERY OF PERSONALITY,
ALEKSANDER EDWARD KIERZKOWSKI

The two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Aleksander Edward Kierzkowski, the first elected representative to the Canadian Parliament of Polish heritage, was celebrated in the Parliament of Canada.

Aleksander Edward Kierzkowski was born in the Great Principality of Poznań on November 21, 1816. He belonged to a family with a military tradition. In 1831, Aleksander E. Kierzkowski took part in the November Uprising – the uprising ended in defeat and Kierzkowski was forced to flee from Poland. He found refuge in Paris and there began his studies, which he completed as a construction engineer. In 1841, he immigrated to the USA and one year later moved to Canada.

In the terms of the Constitution of July 1, 1867, as a Confederation of three British colonies, Canada became a Dominion, composed of the four provinces Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Aleksander E. Kierzkowski was elected in the Liberal Party to the House of Commons, newly formed in 1867, for the District of Saint-Hyacinthe.

Aleksander Kierzkowski, as a Polish patriot, soldier, construction engineer, Director of the Lower Canada Agricultural Society, Justice of the Peace, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Richelieu District Militia and Assistant Quartermaster-General of the Fifth Military District of Canada East, played an important role in politics for Canada as well as for the Polish community and Poland. It is also noteworthy that Aleksander E. Kierzkowski and Alfred Xerxes Rambau are recognized as the first Canadians to fly by balloon in 1856. Aleksander Edward Kierzkowski died on July 4, 1870, in Saint-Ours, carrying out the function of Member of Parliament to the time of his death.



The Parliament of Canada, Ottawa. Photograph courtesy Anna Ronij.



Left. Guests look at the Kierzkowski Exhibition

Photograph courtesy Sam Garcia.

Below. Guests among the parliamentarians.

Photograph courtesy Anna Ronij.



On October 19, 2016, elected representatives of the House of Commons and members of the Polish community came to the Parliament for a celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Aleksander E. Kierzkowski.

Anthony Rota greeted the guests in the name of the Parliamentary Speaker. He noted that his mother is an Italian, his grandfather came from England, and in this way he made a connection to multicultural Canada. He said that these people gave up everything to travel to Canada. Canada is a model for the humanitarian treatment of arriving immigrants, also respecting their cultural traditions. Canada venerates its immigrant ancestors: "... stands on their shoulders- on their efforts", continuing their work.

The elected representatives of the Canadian House of Commons thanked immigrants from Poland for making such a large contribution to the shared culture. From the very beginning, the immigrants had brought their concept for the building of parliamentarianism. They not only did well for themselves financially, but afterwards they did not subscribe to a life of consumerism, rather instead to public service. Five thousand veterans settled in Canada.

The benefits of immigration are clear, both for Canada and for the immigrants. Poles immediately give their energy and their inventiveness to the development of the Canadian economy, joining Canadian society, mindful of the fact that in it they are able to build a life for their families and cultural communities.

An exhibition devoted to the life and political and social activities of Aleksander E. Kierzkowski accompanied the celebrations. The presentation of the exhibition was a collaborative effort by the Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., Łukasz Weremiuk, Embassy of the Republic of Poland; the Chair of the Canada-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group, elected representative Peter Fonseca; and the President of the Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor, Jerzy Barycki, whose passion is the worldwide promotion of well known Poles and Poland; as well as the Polish Combatants' Association.

Anna Ronij

Translated by Frank Simpson, 25.11.2016.



Chair of the Canada-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group, Peter Fonseca. Photograph courtesy Anna Ronij.



Assistant Deputy Speaker and Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole, Anthony Rota. Photograph courtesy Sam Garcia.



Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., Łukasz Weremiuk. Photograph courtesy Sam Garcia.



MP Brain Masse speaks. Behind him, from the left: Peter Fonseca, Anthony Rota, Łukasz Weremiuk, Jerzy Barycki, Andrzej Ruta, Ludwik Klimkowski. Photograph courtesy Sam Garcia



President of the SPK, Andrzej Ruta. Photograph courtesy Sam Garcia.



President of the Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor, Jerzy Barycki. Photograph courtesy Sam Garcia.



Members of Parliament and Members of the Canada-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group. Photograph courtesy Sam Garcia.



Guests in the Parliament. Photograph courtesy Sam Garcia.