

Thursday, 21st January, 1909.

The Senate met at half past Two o'clock in the afternoon.

The Members convened were:—

The Honourable JAMES KIRKPATRICK KERR, Speaker

The Honourable Messieurs

Baird,	Dessaulles,	Legris,	Riley,
Beith,	Domville,	Lougheed,	Robertson,
Béique,	Douglas,	MacKay (Alma),	Ross (Middlesex),
Bolduc,	Drummond	MacKeen,	Ross (Halifax),
Bowell	(Sir George),	McDonald (C.B.),	Ross (Moosejaw),
(Sir Mackenzie),	Edwards,	McGregor,	Scott,
Campbell,	Ellis,	McHugh,	Talbot,
Cartwright	Ferguson,	McKay (Truro),	Tessier,
(Sir Richard),	Fiset,	McLaren,	Thibaudeau
Casgrain,	Forget,	McMillan,	(de La Vallière),
Choquette,	Frost,	McMullen,	Thibaudeau
Cloran,	Gibson,	McSweeney,	(Rigaud),
Coffey,	Gillmor,	Miller,	Thompson,
Comeau,	Godbout,	Montplaisir,	Watson,
Costigan,	Jaffray,	Owens,	Wilson,
Cox,	Jones,	Perley,	Wood,
Dandurand,	King,	Poirier,	Yeo,
Davis,	Kirchhoffer,	Power,	Young.
Derbyshire,			

The Honourable the Speaker presented to the Senate a communication from the Governor General's Secretary.

The same was then read by the Clerk, and it is as follows:—

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SECRETARY, CANADA.

OTTAWA, 20th January, 1909.

SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that His Excellency the Governor General will proceed to the Senate Chamber, to formally open the Session of the Dominion Parliament, on Thursday, the 21st instant, at 3 o'clock.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. HANBURY-WILLIAMS, Colonel,

Governor General's Secretary.

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate.

The Senate was adjourned during pleasure.

His Excellency the Governor General having arrived, and being seated on the Throne.

The Honourable the Speaker commanded the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to proceed to the House of Commons and acquaint that House that,—“It is His Excellency’s pleasure that they attend him immediately in the Senate.”

Who being come, with their Speaker,

The Honourable Charles Marcil said:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

The House of Commons has elected me their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me.

If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me, and not to the Commons, whose servant I am, and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their King and Country, humbly claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to Your Excellency’s person at all seasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from Your Excellency the most favourable consideration.

The Honourable the Speaker of the Senate then said:—

MR. SPEAKER,—I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General to declare to you that he fully confides in the duty and attachment of the House of Commons to His Majesty’s Person and Government; and not doubting that their proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper and prudence, he grants, and upon all occasions will recognize and allow their constitutional privileges. I am commanded also to assure you, that the Commons shall have ready access to His Excellency upon all seasonable occasions, and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favourable construction.

His Excellency the Governor General was then pleased to open the Session with the following Gracious Speech to both Houses:—

Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate:

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

In welcoming you to the performance of your duties at the first Session of a new Parliament, I desire to acknowledge with devout thankfulness the abundant harvest with which Divine Providence has again blessed us.

The Quebec Tercentenary festivities in July, which were honoured by the gracious presence of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, as representing His Majesty, marked an epoch in the history of the Dominion. The generous support given to this National Celebration by the Federal Parliament and Provincial Legislatures, and by the peoples of Canada, of the other Dominions and of the United Kingdom, emphasized the community of sympathy which binds the various parts of the British Empire to each other, and to the throne and Person of His Majesty the King. The presence of representatives from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland, and from the great and friendly Republics of France and the United States, with the ships of war of the three Nations, served not only to add lustre to the occasion, but to provide an assurance of increasing amity and peace.

I have much pleasure in announcing that a Treaty relating to the Great Lakes and other International Waterways has been agreed upon between His Majesty and the Government of the United States of America and is now awaiting ratification. Both countries are to be congratulated on having arrived at an amicable settlement which I trust will remove during the life-time of the Treaty many vexed questions from the field of controversy. The Treaty and papers relating thereto will be laid before you in due course.

A little more than a year ago, the whole civilized world entered into a period of commercial, industrial and financial depression, which may not yet have completely spent its force; signs there are, however, that it is gradually passing away. Whilst it is hardly disputable that owing to the abundance and elasticity of her resources Canada has suffered less than other nations, this depression has seriously affected our trade, producing an appreciable shrinkage in the public revenue, and calling for exceptional caution in the administration of our national affairs.

The rapid settlement of the new provinces calls for new lines of transportation. The construction of the Transcontinental Railway has been vigorously pressed forward during the last year. The line was open for the carrying of the crops from Winnipeg to the Battle River, a distance of 675 miles.

Exploratory surveys for a railway from the western wheat fields to Hudson's Bay are being pushed energetically. Four parties have been at work since August last. Upon their report it will be possible to reach a decision as to both the route to be followed and the approximate cost. The provision of the Dominion Lands Act of last session for the sale of pre-emptions and purchased homesteads has created a new source of revenue that will be sufficient to bear the cost of the railway to Hudson's Bay without burdening the ordinary revenue. From September 1st, when the Act came into force, until January 1st, sales of pre-emptions and purchased homesteads have amounted to over two million acres, all subject to homestead settlement conditions.

The total volume of immigration has not reached the high figure of previous years, but the number of those seeking homes on our unoccupied lands has been fully maintained during the last season, and, owing to the ever closer supervision of the immigration branch of the public service, the character of these new inhabitants of Canada seems to be of the highest, and promises no small addition to the wealth of the country.

The Government of the United Kingdom having expressed its willingness to include a representative of Canada among its delegates to the Conference, held at Shanghai, to investigate the opium trade, my Government has been pleased to welcome an offer so significant of Canada's growing importance, and on its recommendation the Government of the United Kingdom has accordingly appointed a member of the Dominion Parliament to be a member of the Commission.

Representatives of Canada participated lately in the permanent establishment and organization of the International Institute of Agriculture, with its headquarters at Rome, an event of interest to our country in whose economic system Agriculture plays so great a part. It is gratifying to note that among the forty-eight States adhering to the Institute recognition of Canada's agricultural importance was shown by election of our representatives to some of the highest offices of the Institute.

The appalling calamity which has befallen Sicily and Southern Italy and caused a total destruction of life and property absolutely unprecedented and unequalled in the long series of historic disasters, has induced my Government to offer assistance for the immediate relief of the hundreds of thousands of sufferers who were helpless against famine and all its consequent horrors. I confidently hope that you will approve its action.

In pursuance of an announcement made during the concluding Session of last Parliament, a Commission was appointed to examine the various lines of railway connected with the Intercolonial Railway and which might become valuable feeders thereto. The report of this Commission has been received and will be placed before you.

The Commissioner appointed for investigating the conduct of officers in the Department of Marine and Fisheries has concluded his labour, but has not yet reported. His report, however, is expected at an early date and when received will be placed in your hands.

A measure will be submitted to you, based upon similar legislation enacted in 1906 by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, aiming at the repression of the payment of secret commissions and gratuities both in public and private business.

You will be asked to consider measures relative to Insurance, the Civil Service Immigration, Naturalization and other subjects.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

The accounts of the last year will be laid before you.

The estimates for the coming year will be submitted at an early date; they have been prepared with a due regard for economy consistent with the requirements of the public service.

Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate:

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

I pray Divine Providence that it may guide your deliberations, and that they may tend to a further increase in the prosperity of our country and the well-being of our people.

His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to retire, and the House of Commons withdrew.

After some time the Senate was resumed.

PRAYERS were read.

The Right Honourable Sir Richard Cartwright presented to the Senate a Bill intituled: "An Act relating to Railways."

The said Bill was read a first time.

The Honourable the Speaker informed the Senate that a copy of His Excellency's Speech had been left in his hands.

The same was then read by His Honour the Speaker.

On motion of the Right Honourable Sir Richard Cartwright, seconded by the Honourable Mr. Dandurand, it was

Ordered, That the Speech of His Excellency the Governor General be taken into consideration by the Senate on Tuesday next.

With leave of the Senate,

The Right Honourable Sir Richard Cartwright moved, seconded by the Honourable Mr. Dandurand,

That pursuant to Rule 77, the following Senators: the Honourable Sir Mackenzie Bowell, the Honourable Messieurs Gibson, Lougheed, Béique, Miller, Power, Watson, Casgrain and Ferguson, be appointed a Committee of Selection to nominate senators to serve on the several Standing Committees during the present Session, and to report with all convenient speed the names of the senators so nominated, and

that Rule 24a be suspended in so far as it relates to the said motion.

The question of concurrence being put thereon, the same was resolved in the affirmative, and

Ordered accordingly.

On motion of the Right Honourable Sir Richard Cartwright, seconded by the Honourable Mr. Dandurand, it was

Ordered, That all the Senators present during this Session be appointed a Committee to consider the Orders and Customs of the Senate and Privileges of Parliament, and that the said Committee have leave to meet in the Senate Chamber, when and as often as they please.

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