

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT!

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

FRIDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1864.

In accordance with the proclamation to that effect, His Excellency the Governor General proceeded in state to the Legislative Council Chamber, accompanied by his staff. On account of the severity of the weather, His Excellency was pleased to dispense with the attendance of the troops who usually line the streets, and was merely accompanied by his guard of honor. The Speaker of the Council entered the House a few minutes before three o'clock, and precisely at three o'clock His Excellency was announced. Having taken his seat on the Throne, the Speaker despatched the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to summon the Legislative Assembly. In a few minutes the Speaker of that House appeared at the bar, followed by a large number of members. His Excellency then delivered the following speech, in English and French—

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

I am happy again to meet you in Parliament, and I feel confident that during the Session now commenced your best attention will be bestowed on legislation for the public welfare.

I have taken steps for carrying into effect the Acts passed during last Session for the organization of the Militia Force of the Province, and I will continue my best efforts for the attainment of so important an object.

The period is approaching when, by the conditions of the Treaty of Reciprocity between Her Majesty and the United States of America, this notice for the determination of its provisions may be given at the option of either party. I have not failed to give my best attention to the subject of this Treaty, and of the great interests affected by it.

Your attention will be invited to measures designed, by the improvement of our existing system of inland water communication, to attract to the channel of the St. Lawrence a larger share than we have heretofore enjoyed of the great and rapidly growing commerce of the Western Lakes.

You will also be invited to consider the expediency of providing for such improvements of the Canals constructed to obviate the natural impediments to the navigation of the Ottawa River as will, it is believed, without involving a heavy outlay, greatly accelerate the development of the extensive and valuable territory drained by that noble stream and its tributaries.

Unforeseen obstacles have retarded the survey of the route of the proposed Railway between this Province and the Sister Colonies of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Arrangements are, however, now in progress which, I trust, will soon lead to the execution of this preliminary work, the result of which will enable all parties to form a more satisfactory estimate than is possible at present of the expense and practicability of the proposed undertaking.

The condition of the vast region lying to the north-west of the settled portions of the Province is daily becoming a question of greater interest.

I have considered it advisable to open a correspondence with the Imperial Government, with a view to arrive at a precise definition of the Geographical Boundaries of Canada in that direction.

Such a definition of Boundary is a desirable preliminary to further proceedings with respect to the vast tracts of land in that quarter belonging to Canada, but not yet brought under the action of our political and municipal system.

The construction of the Public Buildings at Ottawa, since the resumption of work last Spring, has been prosecuted with so much diligence as to justify me in announcing to the Officers of the Civil Service the intended early removal thither of the Seat of Government, in pursuance of Her Majesty's selection of that city as the future capital of Canada.

The discoveries of gold and other valuable ores within the Province which have recently been made, and which have attracted very general attention, appear to call for legislation, both as regards the more systematic and perfect

development of our mineral wealth, and the rights as well of the public as of private individuals connected with it.

I would also suggest to you the expediency of making legislative provision for ensuring a more efficient system of investigation into cases of shipwrecks occurring on or near the sea coasts of the Province, as well as of similar disasters which, though occurring elsewhere, may, from the nature of the attending circumstances seem calculated to affect the reputation of our marine service.

A fresh contract for our Ocean Mail Steamship Service has been entered into on terms which will be submitted for your consideration, and will, I believe, be found to combine efficiency, economy and safety.

I would further invite your attention to the state of the existing laws relative to Parliamentary elections, to Bankrupt and Insolvent Debtors—to the Administration of Justice—to the encouragement of Agriculture and of the Fisheries—to the registration of titles to real estate and to the granting of Patents for inventions.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The Public Accounts for the past year will be laid before you, as also estimates for the supplies required for the current year.

These estimates will be found to have been prepared with a careful attention to economy.

I rejoice that I am enabled to inform you that the Revenue of the past year considerably exceeded the estimate submitted to you last Session, whilst the aggregate expenditure for the Public Service of the year was less than the estimated amount.

Notwithstanding these gratifying results, however, there was a large excess of expenditure over income, and as the revenue derivable from existing sources is clearly inadequate to meet the unavoidable annual charges on the Public Treasury, measures will be submitted for your consideration calculated to equalize the annual income with the annual expenditure of the country.

HONORABLE GENTLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN,

I commit the affairs of the Province to your patriotic and disinterested consideration—earnestly hoping that under the favor of Divine Providence your deliberations during this Session may be productive of results conducive to the prosperity of Canada and the happiness of her people.

His Excellency and the members of the Assembly having retired, the usual mode of initiating the business of the House—the reading of prayers by the Chaplain—was observed.

SWEARING IN OF A NEW MEMBER.

The Hon. Mr. Chaffers, elected for the Division of Rougemont, in the place of Hon. Mr. Desaulles, who had accepted office, came to the table and took the customary oaths, after which he was escorted to his seat on the Ministerial side of the House by Hon. Messrs. McMaster and De la Terriere.

COMMON SCHOOLS.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON BLAIR introduced a Bill, *pro forma*, relating to Common Schools.

THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

The SPEAKER stated he had received a copy of His Excellency's Speech, the reading of which was, however, dispensed with at the desire of the members.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON BLAIR, seconded by Hon. Mr. LeTallier de St. Just, moved that His Excellency's Speech at the opening of Parliament be taken into consideration on Tuesday next.—Carried.

On motion of the same, the Speech was ordered to be printed in both languages for the use of members.

On motion of the same, the members present were appointed a Committee on Privileges.

BILLS OF LAST SESSION.

The SPEAKER laid upon the table a list of Bills, which, pursuant to the resolutions adopted last session in both Houses, were to be taken up at the stage at which they were when Parliament was prorogued, viz. :—

An Act respecting the Side Lines of lots in the Township of Bedford.—Honorable Mr. Campbell.

An Act relating to the bonded debt of the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway Company, and other matters.—Hon. Mr. Currie.

An Act to amend the Common Law Procedure Act.—Hon. Mr. Currie.

An Act to facilitate the collection of demands against Vessels in Upper Canada.—Hon. Mr. Currie.

An Act for the punishment of fraudulent Vendees of Grain.—Hon. Mr. Renaud.

An Act to re-constitute the Deacons of the City of Hamilton, and to facilitate the arrangement thereof.—Honorable Mr. Campbell.

An Act to explain and amend Section forty-one of Chapter twenty-four of the Consolidated Statutes of Upper Canada, relating to arrest and imprisonment for debt.—Hon. Mr. Ferguson Blair.

An Act relative to equitable Liens and Mortgages of Real Estate in Upper Canada.—Hon. Mr. Currie.

An Act respecting Short Forms of Mortgages in Upper Canada.—Hon. Mr. Ferguson Blair.

An Act to amend the Act intitled, "An Act containing special provisions concerning both Houses of the Provincial Parliament."—Hon. Mr. Ferguson Blair.

An Act to legalize By-Law No. 128 of the Town of Port Hope, and the issue of the Debentures therein mentioned.—Honorable Mr. Allan.

An Act to enable the Church Societies and Incorporated Synods of the Church of England Dioceses in Canada, to sell the Rectorial Lands in the said Dioceses.—Hon. Mr. Currie.

The following Bills, passed by the Legislative Council and sent to the Legislative Assembly for concurrence, were undisposed of by that House when the Prorogation of Parliament took place on the 13th October, 1863 :

An Act to change the period for the Annual meetings of Agricultural Societies in Lower Canada.

An Act to render valid certain Deeds passed before Notaries now deceased.

An Act to amend the Division Courts Act.

An Act to amend the Act Chapter Sixty-three of the Consolidated Statutes of Canada, respecting Joint Stock Companies.

An Act respecting Process of Bills of Exchange and Promissory Notes.

An Act to provide for the appointment of Commissioners to enquire into the affairs of the St. Roch's Savings Bank, Quebec.

An Act to regulate the Sale of Shingles in Lower Canada.

An Act to limit the Area of Towns and Villages.

EXPIRING LAWS.

The SPEAKER then laid on the table the Law Clerk's Return on Expiring Laws. The Council then adjourned.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

FRIDAY, 19TH FEBY., 1864.

The Speaker took the Chair at 3 o'clock.

After a short interview, the gentleman usher of the Black Rod made his appearance and summoned the members of the Assembly to attend on His Excellency the Governor General in the Legislative Council Chamber. The ceremony of opening Parliament occupied about half an hour, when, having returned with the members, and calling the House to order,

The SPEAKER reported that during the recess he had received a letter, giving notice that the Hon. Albert Norton Richards, late member for the South Riding of Leeds, had accepted the office of Solicitor General for Upper Canada, and that consequently a writ was required for a new election for the said Riding; and that accordingly he had issued his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, to make out a new writ for the election of a new member.

The SPEAKER also reported that the Clerk of the House had received from the Clerk of the Crown a certificate of the election of David Jones, Esq., as member for the South Riding of Leeds.

His Excellency the Governor General's Speech was read at length by the Speaker, both in English and French.

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Dorian, moved for leave to bring in the usual *pro forma* Bill to provide for the administration of the oaths of office to persons appointed as Justices of the Peace in this Province.—Second reading Monday week.

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD, seconded by Hon. Mr. Dorian, moved that the speech of His Excellency the Governor General to both Houses of Parliament be taken into consideration on Monday next.

Hon. Mr. CARTIER called attention to the apparent neglect of the Administration in not furnishing advance copies of His Excellency's speech to leading members of the Opposition, in order that they might have an opportunity of considering it more fully.

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD replied that printed copies of the speech had only been a few hours in circulation, and that he never recollects having received an advance copy of the Governor's speech whilst in Opposition.