

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 19, 1867

The Speaker took the Chair at three o'clock.

Mr. Dufresne presented the petitions of George Baby, Esq., against return of F. B. Godin for the District of Joliette.

Hon. J. S. Macdonald presented the petition of B. Hutchins, Esq., against the return of the Hon. J. J. C. Abbott for the County of Argenteuil.

Hon. Mr. Kierzkowski presented the petition of R. E. Fontaine against the return of P. S. Gendron for the County of Bagot.

Mr. Huot presented the petition of Adolphe Gagnon against the return of F. X. Cimon for the County of Charlevoix.

Hon. Mr. Cartier presented the petition of the Hon. J. C. Chapais, complaining of the return for the District of Kamouraska and claiming the seat.

Mr. Fortier presented the petition of Mr. Lanctot against the return of Hon. G. E. Cartier for Montreal East.

Mr. Casault presented the petition of J. A. N. Provencher against the return of Mr. Fortier for the District of Yamaska.

Mr. Simard presented the petition of L. B. Massue against the return of F. Geoffrion for the District of Vercheres.

Hon. Mr. Dorion presented the petition of L. B. Caron against the return of B. Pouliot for the County of L'Islet.

Mr. Archambault presented the petition of J. Lanouette against the return of the Hon. A. A. Dorion for the District of Hochelaga.

Mr. McCarthy presented the petition of S. Franchemontagne against the return of A. H. Paquet for the District of Berthier.

Hon. Mr. Dorion presented the petition of P. V. Valin against the return of P. G. Huot for the electoral Division of Quebec East.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Sir John A. Macdonald from the committee appointed to strike the select standing committees of the House, presented lists of such committees which were concurred in.

PRINTING COMMITTEE

Mr. Mackenzie moved that a message be sent to the Senate, requesting that body to unite with this House in the formation of a joint committee on printing.—Carried.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Sir John A. Macdonald moved that in addition to Tuesday and Friday, as at present, Thursday be a day for Government business—that on those days, after Government business, other business may be taken up, and that on Mondays and Wednesdays after the business in hand of private members is gone through with, Government business may be taken up.—Carried.

Mr. Holton said he entirely approved of this motion as likely to accelerate business in the House, but he desired to ask whether the leader of the Government would now or on an early day state what measure Ministers proposed introducing to the House and pressing to a final passage during this part of the session. It seemed to be generally understood that the session was to be divided into two parts—one to be brought to a close as early as possible in December, and that an adjournment should then take place to give the Government time and opportunity to elaborate the measures which they were not now prepared to submit. This under the actual circumstances of the case seemed a reasonable course for the Government to pursue, but he thought it right that the Government should communicate to the House the order in which they proposed to deal with the public business.

Sir John A. Macdonald said it was the intention of the Government to divide the session into two parts. The Government of the Dominion was formed on the 1st of July and very soon afterwards the members had to devote their time to their own elections

and elections of their friends. During that time, of course, they had no opportunity to prepare their measures and elaborate the details. The House then had to be summoned in order to meet the requirements of the Union Act, to pass the supplies and such measures as were immediately necessary. He hoped tomorrow to be able to state what measures would be pressed on the attention of the House during the first part of the session, which he hoped would be got through in a very short period. It was proposed that Parliament should meet again in February. The reason of the delay was that, in the first place, it would give the Government two months to elaborate its measures, and they should endeavor, as far as possible, to prepare the Bills and send them to members during the adjournment, that they might consider them at their homes. Another reason for the delay was, that the arbitrators between the General Government and those of Ontario and Quebec could not, according to the Union Act, be appointed until after the General Parliament and both Local Parliaments met, and until the arbitrators met we could not ascertain what property the Dominion had—what was the state of accounts between the General Government's and the Governments of Ontario and Quebec, or how the assets and liabilities were to be divided. He might mention now one measure which would be submitted during this part of the session. The Union Act rendered imperative a measure for the construction of the Intercolonial Railway; a commencement had to be made within six months of the Union coming into operation, and the subject therefore had to be dealt with without delay. The House would be asked also to give the necessary votes of credit carrying out the administration of public affairs. He begged now to give notice that he would introduce a bill similar to the first act of last session, continuing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and also an act to extend to the whole Dominion the act for the trial of foreign aggressors. It would be anomalous that there should be one kind of tribunal in one section of the Dominion for the trial of such parties, and another kind of tribunal in another section.

Mr. Howe said that a minister in the other House, referring to a measure in the matter of the fisheries and marine, stated that it would take till next spring to prepare that measure. Now, as the fishermen on the sea-coast were prepared to go to sea early in the

[Sir John A. Macdonald (Kingston)]

spring, they ought to have as early a notice as possible of what the intentions of the Government are.

Sir John A. Macdonald said he had no doubt the Fisheries Bill would be introduced early in the second part of the session.

Mr. Howe, in regard to the period when Parliament should re-assemble, said he would prefer the second part of the session should not commence till March. If we were having February weather now, what sort of weather we would have in February, who could tell! (Laughter)

Sir John A. Macdonald said that if they met in March the Nova Scotians would be telling them they were as mad as March hares. Here it had been found that the best normal period for assembling Parliament was the end of January or the early part of February.

The motion was carried.

INTERPRETATION OF THE STATUTES

Sir John A. Macdonald introduced a Bill respecting the interpretation and construction of the Statutes.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CANADA

Hon. Mr. Langevin introduced a Bill respecting the Department of Secretary of State for Canada. In introducing the Bill, Mr. Langevin explained the provisions of the proposed measures. The Department of Secretary of State for Canada was to be under the management of the Secretary of State, and Under-Secretary of State. The Under-Secretary of State would perform the duties assigned to him by the Governor General or Secretary of State, and the Department would be a medium of communication between the Government of the Dominion and the Imperial Government and other parties. Besides the Secretaryship, the office of Registrarship of the Dominion would also be vested in the Secretary of State; and, as Registrar-General, he would have to register letters patent and other instruments and documents, under the great seal of Canada. The Indian Department would form a branch department of the Secretary of State, under the control of which all Indian lands and grants in the Dominion would be placed. The laws in the various Provinces in regard to Indian affairs being different, it was necessary, and provision was made in this Bill to