

His Excellency the Governor General in the Senate Chamber, I informed His Excellency that the choice of Speaker had fallen on me, and, in your names, and on your behalf, I made the usual claim for your privileges, which His Excellency was pleased to confirm to you.

#### FIRST READING.

Bill (No. 1) respecting the administration of Oaths of Office.—Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier (Prime Minister).

#### THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

Mr. SPEAKER. I have the honour to inform the House that when the House did attend His Excellency the Governor General this day in the Senate Chamber, His Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of parliament. To prevent mistakes I have obtained a copy, which is as follows:

*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 lifetime 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 1, when the Act came into force, until January 1, 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.