

## THE SENATE

Friday, February 18, 1870

The Speaker took the chair at the usual hour.

After routine,

## MINISTERIAL EXPLANATIONS

Hon. Mr. Letellier de St Just called attention to the matter which was before the House yesterday, namely, the correspondence relating to the reconstruction of the Cabinet, and thought it would be well if the Secretary of State, Mr. Aikins, and Mr. McMaster gave explanations on some points which were not sufficiently clear.

Hon. Mr. Aikins, in reply, said he had been under the impression that the explanations he gave yesterday covered the whole ground, and would be sufficient and satisfactory. It was understood that the correspondence between himself and Mr. McDougall was to be strictly private, and he had not contemplated its being published; and as there had been much private conversation as well between himself and Mr. McDougall, he considered that no one but themselves fully understood the correspondence. In conversation with his friends, Mr. McMaster and Dr. Ryerson, he found that they did not adopt his view, they thought his refusal to consider the offer made to him ought to be on public ground; this was what those gentlemen advised, and hence the reference to them. He had thought he was correct in his view at the time; but was now convinced that his friends were right in their view, and that, as a public man, he should have considered the question on its public merits. He could confidently assure the House that his friend, Mr. McMaster, who was present, and could speak for himself, did not advise him to join the ministry. His explanation yesterday was perfectly correct, and if he had in any way been misunderstood, it was not because he had endeavoured to mislead the House.

Hon. Mr. McMaster said he could not understand how his honourable friend on the other side could think that a man of his well known modesty would be connected in any way with the formation or reconstruction of a Government; but as the honourable gentleman had put certain questions to him, he would not trifle with the House, but answer them in a candid and straightforward manner, (hear, hear). The Hon. Mr. Aikins had talked with him, he did not know how often, but certainly more than once or twice about the overtures made to him by the Hon. Mr. McDougall. He had invariably stated to him in reply, that the proposal to join a Coalition Government was a point that must be determined by himself. He would not incur

## LE SÉNAT

Le vendredi 18 février 1870

Le Président ouvre la séance à l'heure habituelle.

Après les affaires courantes,

## EXPLICATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES

L'honorable M. Letellier de St Just recommande à l'attention de la Chambre la question qui lui a été présentée hier, à savoir la correspondance sur le remaniement du Cabinet et il estime que le Secrétaire d'État, M. Aikins, et M. McMaster devraient élucider davantage certains points.

L'honorable M. Aikins dit, en réponse, qu'il croyait avoir tout expliqué très clairement dans son exposé d'hier. Il est entendu que la correspondance entre lui et M. McDougall est strictement confidentielle et il n'a pas envisagé de la rendre publique; comme il a eu beaucoup d'entretiens privés avec M. McDougall, il estime qu'eux seuls peuvent bien comprendre la portée de leur correspondance. Sur consultation de ses amis, MM. McMaster et Ryerson, il a constaté que ces derniers n'étaient pas de son avis et que, d'après eux, le refus de l'offre devrait être fondé uniquement sur l'intérêt public; voilà le conseil de ces gentilshommes et la raison pour laquelle leurs noms furent mentionnés. A l'époque, l'honorable M. Aikins jugeait son attitude valable, mais aujourd'hui il est convaincu que ces amis avaient raison et qu'en qualité d'homme public, il aurait dû évaluer la question suivant son bien-fondé dans l'intérêt du public. Il assure à la Chambre que son ami, M. McMaster, qui est présent et qui peut parler pour lui-même ne lui a pas conseillé de se joindre au Cabinet. Son explication d'hier est absolument exacte et s'il y a eu malentendu, ce n'était pas intentionnel.

L'honorable M. McMaster dit qu'il ne comprend pas comment son honorable collègue de l'Opposition puisse concevoir qu'un homme de sa modestie notoire soit directement ou indirectement associé à la formation ou au remaniement d'un gouvernement; mais comme l'honorable membre lui a adressé certaines questions, il ne plaisanterait pas avec la Chambre et ira directement au point. (Bravo!) L'honorable M. Aikins lui a parlé, il ignore combien de fois, mais sûrement plus d'une ou deux fois, des propositions de M. McDougall. Il lui a toujours répondu que la décision de faire partie d'un Gouvernement de coalition ne pouvait être prise que par lui-même (l'hon. M. Aikins). L'honorable M. McMaster ne pouvait accepter