

consider the Orders and Customs of this House and Privileges of Parliament, and that the said Committee have leave to meet in this House, when and as often as they please.

The motion was agreed to.

THE LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT.

FIRST REPORT.

The SPEAKER presented to the House the Report of the Librarian, on the state of the Library of Parliament.

The Senate adjourned at 3.45 p.m.

THE SENATE,

Friday, December 10th, 1880.

The Speaker took the chair at Three o'clock.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

THE ADDRESS.

Hon. Mr. GIBBS — A duty has been assigned to me upon the present occasion to move an Address in reply to the gracious Speech which His Excellency has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament. I may say that I should have been very much better pleased had it been assigned to some one who would have discharged the duty that now devolves upon me in a much more satisfactory manner than by any possibility I can expect to do. Although this is not the first time that I have had the opportunity or privilege of moving an Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, yet I feel that I do so to-day under very different circumstances from those under which I did it in 1866, while addressing the other branch of the Legislature of the then Provinces of Canada. When I heard His Excellency deliver his Speech yesterday, I could not help going back to the time when I had the honor of moving the Address on the occasion to which I have just alluded. I was forcibly reminded, as he progressed with his Speech, that the questions of that day sink into comparative insignificance when contrasted with the important questions which are submitted to the consideration of this Parliament. Upon that occasion we had the Fenian raid upon us, which had to be suppressed, and Parliament then, as now, had been called together at an extraordinary season of the year, warranted by the circumstances of the case. The questions that that Parliament had to

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deal with, though very important, now seem trivial when compared with those which have been presented, and which will be presented, for the consideration of the Parliament which is now assembled. Though the great question of Confederation was before that Parliament, and had been practically disposed of by the Legislatures of the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, and by the Legislatures of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, yet, all that that Parliament had to deal with was the consideration of the Union of the older Provinces, whose names I have just mentioned, and whose Legislatures had given assent to the terms of Union. The legislation contemplated under the British North America Act, extended only to these provinces, and was of an inter-provincial character. Now, the legislation which this Parliament is called upon to deal with, extends to half a continent. Then the question which naturally followed from the consideration of the measure of Confederation, was the construction of an intercolonial railway. Now, the question which this Parliament will have to deal with, is not one simply intercolonial in its character, though it is to benefit the remote provinces which have since been added to the Union, but it is the construction of nothing less than a trans-continental railway. The consideration of the finances and resources of the country, caused no little anxiety to those that were about to enter into the Confederation of the several provinces. To-day the question which you will have to consider — which the Parliament of Canada will have to consider — is perhaps the most important one which may come before it for a number of years, as it is certainly the most important that has engaged the attention of Parliament for the last decade. If one may judge from what has taken place in the past, he may fairly reason that the measure which appears so important to-day may, to the statesman of a decade hence, appear as insignificant as the measure of fifteen years ago appears to the statesman of to-day. The progress of the country is so great that great events have crowded upon us rapidly and imperceptibly. I make these few introductory remarks because