

different auspices as regards the sentiments represented by hon. gentlemen opposite. It shall be my endeavour, although taking a seat which as he has said has been made illustrious by great men of both parties, to do the best I can to so perform my duties that I may retain the confidence of my own party, and I should fain hope also the confidence of the hon. gentlemen opposite led by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Laurier) who has so kindly extended his congratulations. My hon. friend paid a compliment which was not undeserved to the two gentlemen who moved and seconded the Address. It is true that in the case of neither of these gentlemen was his address a maiden one. We have heard their voices before in this House and we know their ready expression, and although we were pleased to-day with the manner in which they addressed themselves to their task it was nothing more than our previous experience led us to expect from them. My hon. friend, however, although complimenting them in general had to find some fault. What is the Opposition for, if not to find fault, and what would become of the leader of an Opposition, if he did not ply his trade? After complimenting my hon. friends, the hon. gentleman came down to the real business of the hour, namely, to criticise. He found fault with these hon. gentlemen in the first place because as the Speech from the Throne did not give any reasons for the late calling of the session, neither of them deigned to enlighten the House on that question. I do not know the motives which were in the minds of the two gentlemen who respectively moved and seconded the Address, but I have a shrewd suspicion that if the right reason were known, they probably did not take my hon. friend opposite into their confidence, because they would spoil, as the sequel proves, the delight of the pleasant five minutes that my hon. friend spent in giving imaginary reasons why the House was not called at an earlier period. The late calling of Parliament has been on several occasions the cause of complaint by my hon. friend, complaint couched in his usually pleasing and not at all bitter language. I do not think, however, that the charge is a very grave one. He instituted a comparison between the constitutional methods of the United States and this country and he proved to his own satisfaction and the satisfaction of the whole House that, constitutionally speaking, he had no quarrel with the Government as regards the time that they called the House together. Constitutionally, it is perfectly within our right to use, as he says, our discretion in this matter. The hon. gentleman may quarrel with our discretion, but on constitutional grounds he certainly has nothing to say against it. Well, Sir, I am willing to be quite frank with my hon. friend and to give him the reasons why the House was not sooner called. He may con-

sider them insufficient reasons, but they are the real reasons and the only reasons why we meet on the 18th April rather than sooner. These reasons are three in number. In the first place there was the lamentable death of our chief, Sir John Thompson, which on account of the long and sad period which intervened between the time of his death and his burial, disorganized the Government, not only as to its headship and its membership, but as to its work as well. After that there was the question, which has been spoken of by hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House, admittedly an important question, one which had passed through all the phases of the courts, one which had reached that stage, where it was to be discussed and action to be taken, before the Canadian Privy Council. It is a question the judgment upon which involved certain action on the part of the Government to perform, which it intended to perform and which it has performed. It was only on the 29th of January that that judgment was given by the Judicial Committee of the Lords; it was not until the second of February that the Imperial Order in Council was signed and it was not until the 19th of February that the order was transmitted from London to Canada. It came here in due course of mail, and seven days afterwards, counsel appeared in prosecution of their appeal before the Committee of the Privy Council in Ottawa. At the request of the counsel of the majority in Manitoba, the hearing was postponed, and was disposed of on the 5th, 6th and 7th days of March. The discussion and consideration of these pleas and the formulation of the decision, and of the order, took no more time than should be decently given to it, and which should characterize a question of so great gravity and importance; and on the 19th day of March, the final Order in Council of the Government was passed, and a decision was come to within twenty-four hours thereafter to call the House together, and the House was called. Now, Sir, I say that there existed a very good reason why this matter should be disposed of before the hurly-burly and excitement and business of the session which brings together 213 gentlemen from every part of the country to discharge their legislative duties. There was another important reason. We had been in correspondence with the government of Newfoundland in reference to a conference with regard to the union of that ancient colony with the Dominion of Canada. Matters were gradually ripening towards a conference and a decision was come to to have that conference, and it was called, in order to have its discussion ended if possible before Parliament met. Those are plain reasonable reasons why it was better these matters should be got out of the way, and made ready as far as they possibly could be made ready for the House,