

have had of addressing the House since I left before the close of last session. I feel it both a duty and a pleasure to express my acknowledgments and gratitude to the members of the House on both sides for their kindness in facilitating the transaction of public business at last session in such a manner as to enable me to proceed to the high duties upon which I was subsequently engaged. I recognize the fact that it might have been made almost impossible for me to have gone to the discharge of those duties, if the hon. leader of the Opposition and his friends behind him and around me, including friends on this side of the House, who were deeply interested in some public questions, had not given me those facilities. I venture to say that they showed a high sense of patriotism and public duty in affording me that opportunity, and they have conferred an obligation upon me as a public man that I feel bound to recognize this evening.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I must frankly admit that it is not often we are called upon to complain of the levity with which the hon. gentleman treats important subjects. I would rather be disposed, in a general way, to describe the hon. gentleman's style as ponderous, than the reverse, but still, when I hear the hon. gentleman speaking of the great work of the High Commissioner, Sir Charles Tupper, as the little French Treaty, the petite French Treaty, Sir, I am in the judgment of the House if I say that the hon. gentleman has not on this occasion manifested a levity much at variance, I suspect he will find, with the great gravity that underlies that subject. The right hon. gentleman, with respect to the rather important question of the time at which Parliament was summoned together, has given us, no doubt, several precedents. The hon. gentleman is great on precedents. He has established several very curious precedents in the administration of justice in this country, to which I shall allude before I sit down, but I may tell the hon. gentleman now that he has read these particular precedents decidedly amiss. He will find cases enough, I dare say, within the last dozen years, where similar errors have been committed by his predecessors and himself; but, Sir, he will find no occasion in the seven-and-twenty years which have elapsed since Confederation, in which eleven months and a half have been allowed to lapse between the termination of one session and the calling of another. The hon. gentleman has sailed very closely indeed to the law in not summoning Parliament together until the 15th of March, when Parliament was prorogued, as we all know, on the first day of April, 1893. This is the law on the subject, with which the hon. gentleman is well acquainted:

There shall be a session of the Parliament of Canada once at least in every year, so that twelve months shall not intervene between the last sitting of the Parliament in one session and the first sitting in the next session.

He has barely kept to windward of the law.

Mr. FOSTER. We got to port all right.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. You just barely kept to windward of the law. The right hon. gentleman was good enough to announce on the part of his colleague, the Finance Minister, that he hoped to deliver the Budget speech by Wednesday next, a hope I am afraid which he will find to be entirely fallacious. If the hon. gentleman did wish to facilitate the progress of public business, I could understand very well his having summoned Parliament together at a convenient time. I could understand very well his having taken the House into his confidence, having stated to them what is an undoubted truth, that the interests of Canada and the United States are so very closely intertwined together that it was important for us to know their policy. There is some reason in this proposition, which is, however, wholly and utterly inconsistent with his previous professions. There is some reason in his declaration, that it is a matter of great importance for us to know what our friends on the other side of the border intend to do. That much I admit. That, Sir, might have been a good reason perhaps for delaying the presentation of the Budget, but it was no reason at all for not calling Parliament together at a proper time and pushing the public work ahead. Will the hon. Minister of Finance allow me to make him one suggestion? I fear, with all the desire in the world on my part, and on the part of my friends beside me, to help him forward—and we do not desire to spend a day here more than the public duties imposed upon us require—I fear that it will be utterly and entirely impossible for him to introduce his Budget on Wednesday next. I would suggest that instead of Wednesday next, he should name this day fortnight, and thereby he will select, perhaps, the most appropriate day in the whole calendar for the introduction into this House of a series of tariff resolutions which, while adhering to the principles of protection, will yet restore prosperity to the farmers of Canada, seeing that if the hon. gentleman defers it until the day I have indicated, the 1st of April, will witness the introduction of the new Budget to Canada. The hon. gentleman was good enough to reprove my hon. friend beside me (Mr. Laurier) for, as he said, sneering at his Minister of Agriculture, and he went on to declare that the Minister of Agriculture would have been a quack, if he had done what? If he had declared that it was within the power of the Government to raise the prices of grain or to give prosperity to the farmer. Sir, I remember a score—nay, a score of scores—of similar quacks who made their way from one end of this Dominion to the other in 1878, who obtained power by pretensions, which the hon. gentleman has rightly designated as pretensions, which none but quacks and charlatans would ever dare to