

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, February 8, 1901.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY— INTERNAL ECONOMY.

The PRIME MINISTER (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor General.

Mr. SPEAKER read the message, as follows :—

MINTO.

The Governor General transmits to the House of Commons an approved Minute of Council, appointing the Honourable Sir Richard Cartwright, G.C.M.G., Minister of Trade and Commerce; the Honourable Sir Louis Henry Davies, K. C. M. G., Minister of Marine and Fisheries; the Honourable William Stevens Fielding, Minister of Finance, and the Honourable Joseph Israel Tarte, Minister of Public Works, to act with the Speaker of the House of Commons, as Commissioners for the purposes and under the provisions of the 13th Chapter of the Revised Statutes of Canada, intitled: 'An Act respecting the House of Commons.'

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

OTTAWA, February 7, 1901.

DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

The PRIME MINISTER (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). Mr. Speaker, I rise to move the resolution of which I gave notice yesterday, which seems to be eminently called for by the fatal occurrence under which we have met. We have met under the shadow of a death which has caused more universal mourning than has ever been recorded in the pages of history. In these words there is no exaggeration; they are the literal truth. There is mourning in the United Kingdom, in the colonies, and in the many islands and continents which form the great empire over which extend the sovereignty of Queen Victoria. There is mourning deep, sincere, heartfelt in the mansions of the great, and of the rich, and in the cottages of the poor and lowly; for to all her subjects, whether high or low, whether rich or poor, the Queen, in her long reign had become an object of almost sacred veneration.

There is sincere and unaffected regret in all of the nations of Europe, for all the nations of Europe had learned to appreciate, to admire, and to envy the many qualities of Queen Victoria, those many public and domestic virtues which were the pride of her subjects.

There is genuine grief in the neighbouring nation of seventy-five million inhabitants, the kinsmen of her own people, by whom, at all times, and under all circumstances, her name was held in high rever-

ence, and where, in the darkest days of the civil war, when the relations of the two countries were strained, almost to the point of snapping, the poet Whittier well expressed the feeling of his countrymen when he exclaimed:

We bowed the heart, if not the knee,
To England's Queen, God bless her.

There is wailing and lamentation amongst the savage and barbarian peoples of her vast empire, in the wigwams of our own Indian tribes, in the huts of the coloured races of Africa and of India, to whom she was at all times the great mother, the living impersonation of majesty and benevolence. Aye, and there is mourning also, genuine and unaffected, in the farm houses of South Africa, which have been lately, and still are devastated by war, for it is a fact that above the clang of arms, above the many angers engendered by the war, the name of Queen Victoria was always held in high respect, even by those who are fighting her troops, as a symbol of justice, and perhaps her kind hand was much relied upon when the supreme hour of reconciliation should come.

Undoubtedly we may find in history instances where death has caused perhaps more passionate outbursts of grief, but it is impossible to find instances where death has caused so universal, so sincere, so heartfelt an expression of sorrow. In the presence of these many evidences of grief which come not only from her own dominions, but from all parts of the globe; in the presence of so many tokens of admiration, where it is not possible to find a single discordant note; in the presence of the immeasurable void caused by the death of Queen Victoria, it is not too much to say that the grave has just closed upon one of the great characters of history.

What is greatness? We are accustomed to call great, those exceptional beings upon whom heaven has bestowed some of its choicest gifts, which astonish and dazzle the world by the splendour of faculties, phenomenally developed, even when these faculties are much marred by defects and weaknesses which make them nugatory of good. But this is not, in my estimation, at least, the highest conception of greatness. The equipoise of a well-balanced mind, the equilibrium of faculties well and evenly ordered, the luminous insight of a calm judgment, are gifts which are as rarely found in one human being, as the possession of the more dazzling though less solid qualities. And when these high qualities are found in a ruler of men, combined with purity of soul, kindness of heart, generosity of disposition, elevation of purpose, and devotion to duty, this is what seems to me to be the highest conception of greatness, greatness which will be abundantly productive of happiness