

Who, being come with their Speaker,  
His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to open the Session by a gracious Speech to both Houses.

*Honorable Gentlemen of the Senate ;*

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons :*

I have much pleasure in again calling you together to attend to the business of the country.

Since you last assembled it has been my happiness to visit the Mother Country, and to have had the opportunity while there of calling public attention to the remarkable progress of the Dominion, and of giving expression to the feelings of attachment to the person of Her Majesty and the interests of the Empire which animate the Canadian people.

The great depression which has prevailed throughout the neighbouring countries for several years, and which has more recently been felt in the old world, causing a general stagnation of business, has extended to *Canada* and has seriously affected our trade. At the same time, we have reason to be grateful for an abundant harvest; and while I deeply regret the suffering which exists among certain classes and in particular localities, I believe nevertheless that the great bulk of our people continue to enjoy a condition of reasonable prosperity.

I am happy to be able to congratulate you on the fact that the great railway undertaking, connecting the former Province of *Canada* with the Maritime Provinces, provided for by the Act of 1867, is approaching completion. Early in the coming summer, the small portion of the Intercolonial line not already in operation will be opened, when the connection with other systems of railway will be formed, so as to enable passengers and traffic to pass over continuous lines of railway from *Halifax* or *St. John* to the extreme western railways of *Ontario*.

The opening of the *Prince Edward Island* Railway during the past year marks an epoch in the history of that Island, and cannot but exert a beneficial influence on the people, and add to their material prosperity.

Every effort has been made to obtain an early settlement of the claims of *Canada* for compensation for the use of her Fisheries by the *United States*, as provided by the Treaty of *Washington*. Her Majesty's Government in the early part of last summer, at the instance of my advisers, appointed the British Commissioner, but I regret to have to state that the *United States* Government have not yet appointed a Commissioner, and that consequently no progress has been made.

I have given effect to the Supreme and Exchequer Court Act of last Session by issuing the proclamations, and by appointing the Judges and officers of the Court.

A Bill to simplify and amend the law relating to Common Carriers will be submitted for your consideration.

A Bill will be brought before you containing provisions for affording greater security to policy holders in Life Assurance Companies.

The want of reliable and systematised information relating to the several classes of crime and the importance of collecting and classifying criminal statistics have engaged my attention. A Bill will be introduced to provide for what is most essential in this direction.

You will be asked to make provisions for the commencement of the work of consolidating the Statute Law.

The Acts relating to the enfranchisement of Indians and the management of Indian affairs have been fully considered, and steps have been taken to ascertain the views of the Indians themselves. A measure on this subject will be submitted for your approval.

A measure will be introduced to provide for the better administration of the estates of Insolvent Banks.