

April 19, 1872

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 19, 1872

The **SPEAKER** took the chair at 3 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE BUSINESS

A number of petitions were received and read; reports of Committees presented; and several Bills introduced and read a first time.

Hon. Mr. LANGEVIN presented the Report of the Department of Public Works.

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER presented the Report of the Militia Department.

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MARQUETTE, MANITOBA DOUBLE ELECTION RETURN

The Marquette election return was read by the Clerk.

The return showed that 282 votes had been polled for Mr. Angus McKay, and also 282 votes for Mr. James Lynch.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD moved the reference of the return to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE complained of the laxity of the Government. They were now, however, taking the right course, but at so late a season that the constituency could not possibly be represented by this Parliament.

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER explained, as on a previous occasion, that everything that could have been done in the matter last Session was done.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD moved that the petition against the return of Donald A. Smith, Esq., member for Selkirk, Manitoba, be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Hon. Sir FRANCIS HINCKS moved that the Speech of His Excellency the Governor General be taken into consideration on Tuesday next.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON: Before orders of the day were called

would call attention to the fact that the papers relating to the Treaty of Washington, appear to be very incomplete. He found for instance that the promised explanations respecting the cause of the delay in calling Parliament together, which, it was said, would appear in the papers, were not given.

He found also that the papers did not bear out the statement made by the Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Langevin), in his speech at Quebec last year, to the effect that Sir John A. Macdonald representing Canada individually, and his colleagues collectively, had protested against the execution and ratification of the Treaty. The inference was that there were papers on this point, and he thought the House was entitled to them.

The first remonstrance which appeared to have been made was contained in a Minute of Council dated July 28th, 1871, some two months or so after the execution of the Treaty, and the line of remonstrance there taken seems to him to follow very closely the comments of the public press that we were all familiar with.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD stated in reply that the Government had sent down all such papers as could properly be communicated and which in any way related to the ratification of that portion of the Treaty which relates to the Fisheries.

There had of course been a large mass of correspondence of a confidential character which could not properly be submitted to Parliament without prejudice to the interests of the Dominion, and to the Empire in the present exigency. The hon. gentleman would have to wait until they became historical and until the exigency that required their suppression had passed away.

The papers which had been sent down completed the case which the Government presented to the House as being the basis of the policy which they had the honor to submit.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said that it had already become historical that the Government had sent a protest against the Treaty. The Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Langevin) had so stated at Quebec. If he had done so without authority, then the leader of the Government might ask the forbearance of the House. But the statement having been made publicly, he thought the House entitled to the information. The hon. gentleman had stated the other day that when the papers were brought down it would be seen that the Imperial Government had requested the Government here not to call Parliament together at the usual time, but he could find nothing in the papers about it. He thought the House should know what reason the Imperial Government had given.