

March 31, 1874

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 31, 1874

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

Prayers

PROVENCHER ELECTION

The **SPEAKER** informed the House that, pursuant to order, the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery was present with all the poll-books and the papers in connection with the election for the electoral district of Provencher.

The **Deputy Clerk of the House** then read the commission to the Returning Officer, the proclamation, and the return, certifying the due return of Louis Riel as representative of the county.

In reply to the Speaker,

Mr. BOWELL expressed himself satisfied. His purpose in calling for the papers was simply to ascertain the effect and legality of the return.

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PETITIONS

Mr. WALKER presented a petition from the Board of Trade of the City of London, for the removal of taxes upon petroleum.

A large number of petitions for the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors were also presented. Most of them were from Ontario.

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CAUGHNAWAGA SHIP CANAL COMPANY

Hon. Mr. HOLTON presented a petition for the incorporation of the Caughnawaga Ship Canal Company.

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COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY AND WAYS AND MEANS

Hon. Mr. CARTWRIGHT moved, "That it be resolved that this House will in future appoint the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means at the commencement of each session, so soon as an Address has been agreed in answer to His Excellency's Speech and that the said resolution be a standing Order of the House."

In making this motion he reminded the House that a similar one was proposed by the hon. member for Kingston (Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald) last year. The purpose of the motion was to assimilate the practice in this House with the practice in the English House of Commons, where for some years the various formal

motions which preceded the motions to go into Committees of Supply and Ways and Means were abolished. As the powers of the Crown were no longer so strong in this community as to make their exercise formidable to the liberty of the people, and as the reasons for those motions had now disappeared, which was pointed out by Mr. Gladstone at the time they were abolished in England, neither the privileges nor prerogatives of the House would suffer from their being expunged. It would be for the convenience of the House that the sessions should not be unnecessarily protracted, and he thought the effect of the resolution he had just submitted would be to shorten it by some ten days.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON: No, no.

Right Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said before this motion passed he would like to hear the views of his hon. friend from Châteauguay (Hon. Mr. Holton) upon the subject. He thought his hon. friend had been very strongly opposed to it last year, holding that although it had really worked well in England it did not apply here; that it gave the Government the power of unduly pressing the supply, thus throwing over the rights of Her Majesty's liege subjects who represented the people of Canada. In fact, the hon. member seemed to consider that the complicated system of motions formerly prevailing in England, and still prevailing in Canada, was not a substantial obstruction to the business of the House, but on the other hand was a substantial benefit, which should not be allowed to lapse. These were the views of his hon. friend when a Government was in power in which he had no confidence.

No one descended to the depths of wickedness at once, and perhaps it would be well for his hon. friend with his usual prescience to take time by the forelock, and before this Ministry fell in his estimation, as they most undoubtedly would, maintain the position he took up a year ago. (*Hear, hear.*)

Hon. Mr. HOLTON said his right hon. friend seemed to forget that he (Hon. Mr. Holton) had now resigned the office he had last year, when these objections were taken, and that the right hon. gentleman had himself succeeded not only to the office but to its duties and emoluments. (*Laughter.*) He only hoped his right hon. friend would hold the office as many years as he (Hon. Mr. Holton) had done, and fulfil its duties as well. (*Great laughter.*)

With respect to the motion of his hon. friend the Minister of Finance, he would call the recollection of the right hon. member for Kingston to the terms of objection he took last year to a similar motion. The same objection could be taken to this motion, but not to the same extent. He did not last year object so much to the change itself as to the mode in which it was proposed to be brought