

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 5, 1873

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

Prayers

RESIGNATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. JONES rose to a question of privilege. He said on Monday last a respectable citizen of Ottawa, Alderman Heney, had a very serious charge brought against him, and was by order of the House taken into custody by the Sergeant-at-Arms. Since that time nothing had been done to bring him to trial, and he thought it was unjust that his case was not disposed of.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said he supposed, as a matter of fact, that Mr. Heney was suffering no inconvenience from the fact of his being in custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. He was known too well in the community to allow it to be supposed that any charge brought against him would injure or prejudice the previous good opinion entertained of him. His hon. friend might be satisfied that the House and the country would do Mr. Heney justice. Still, it was a matter of some complaint to a British subject that the hand of any legal officer should be laid upon his shoulder, and be told that he was in custody. He had no doubt redress would be given to Mr. Heney for the great wrong done him. However they would dispose of that hereafter.

At any rate he thought the House would leave the matter in abeyance for a few moments till he made an announcement he had to make. He had to announce that the Ministry had resigned.

The advisers of the Crown until yesterday, until last night, believed that they had a support in this House, with which they could not only meet any vote of want of confidence, but would enable them to carry on satisfactorily and creditably the affairs of the Government of this country. They have, from certain speeches

made in this House, and from certain communications, more or less formal, outside of this House, reason to believe that they have not at this moment a good working majority—(*Hon. Mr. Blake: Hear, hear*)—and the consequence was that I felt it my duty today to go to his Excellency the Governor General and to respectfully tender him the resignation of the present Government; and I have his authority, and I may repeat now what I stated two days ago, that no statement could be made by a Minister connected with any action of the Crown without the direct assent and consent of the Crown.

I have it, therefore, in charge from his Excellency to state that he has accepted the resignation of the present Administration, and I have his authority to state that he has sent for Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, the leader of the Opposition, to form a Government. (*Hear, hear.*) Therefore, I think, unless my hon. friend from Leeds and Grenville North (Mr. Jones) is of opinion that Mr. Heney is suffering in any way from the fact of its being known that he is nominally in custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, that I have been quite in order in moving that this House do now adjourn.

Mr. WHITE (Halton) said he made his motion upon the statement of the member for Marquette (Mr. Cunningham), but he did it in the interest of justice, and had no desire that any guilt should attach to Mr. Heney till he was heard in his own defence.

Hon. Mr. CAUCHON suggested that the matter be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD observed that it was the bounden duty of the expiring Administration to see that the incoming Administration had no embarrassments. He had been reminded since moving the adjournment that tomorrow was a holiday.

Hon. Mr. DORION (Napierville) said it was only a Provincial Thanksgiving Day, and did not bind this House.

The House then adjourned at 3.40 p.m. till three o'clock tomorrow.