

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

The House of Commons have elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me.

If in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me, and not to the Commons, whose servant I am, and who through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their Queen and Country, humbly claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to Your Excellency's person at all reasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from Your Excellency the most favorable interpretation.

The Honorable the Speaker of this House then said:

MR. SPEAKER,—I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the House of Commons to Her Majesty's Person and Government; and not doubting that their proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper and prudence, he grants, and upon all occasions will recognise and allow, their constitutional privileges. I am commanded, also, to assure you that the Commons shall have ready access to His Excellency upon all reasonable occasions, and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favorable construction.

His Excellency the Governor General was then 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 convoked Parliament at the earliest moment consistent with the delay entailed by the recent dissolution.

Your attention will be invited, during the present Session, to measures having reference to the Representation of the People in Parliament, embracing the system now prevailing in Great Britain and in most other countries enjoying Constitutional Government of taking votes by Ballot, and to the establishment of a General Court of Appeal.

Measures will also be submitted to you for the amendment of the Laws relating to Controverted Elections, the Militia and Insolvency.

The enactment of 1872 respecting the Canadian Pacific Railway having failed to secure the prosecution of that great enterprise, you will be called upon to consider what plan will best and most speedily provide the means of Trans-continental communication with British Columbia. A report of the Chief Engineer will be laid before you, showing what progress was made during the past year in the surveys connected with the proposed line. The destruction of the Railway Offices by fire involved a serious loss of maps, plans and papers, the possession of which would have made the report more complete.

The Canal and Harbor improvements are being vigorously prosecuted with a view to ensure adequate accommodation for the rapidly growing trade of the country.

The report of the Chief Engineer of the Department of Public Works on the proposed Canal between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of Fundy will be submitted for your consideration.

With the progress already made in the construction of the Intercolonial Railway another year will be required to complete it. A report indicating its actual condition will be laid before Parliament, and a measure will be introduced to vest in the Department of Public Works the powers now exercised by the Board of Railway Commissioners.

The question of compensation due to the Dominion for the Fishery privileges conceded to the United States by the Treaty of Washington, has given rise to a renewal of negotiations tending to widen reciprocal trade relations with that country. At the instance of my Government, the Imperial authorities have given directions to the British Minister to discuss the whole subject with the Administration at Washington, and have associated with him for this purpose a Canadian Commissioner.