

THE SENATE.

Ottawa, Thursday, 27th August, 1896.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

THE ADDRESS.

DEBATE CONTINUED.

The Order of the Day being read :

Resuming the adjourned Debate on the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General's speech, on the opening of the First Session of the Eighth Parliament.

Hon. Sir OLIVER MOWAT said :—In following my hon. friend opposite, I desire first of all to express my appreciation of the very kind way in which he spoke of me yesterday. I appreciate his kind words, as well as the kind words which have been addressed to me in private by other members of this House belonging, not only to my own party, but belonging to that party which is not mine. I am not of a nature to be insensible to kind words which are the expression of kind thoughts, and I rejoice greatly that our Canadian politics are in such a condition that political opponents may at the same time be personal friends. A word in regard to the mover and seconder of the address in answer to the Governor General's speech. With regard to the mover, you all know him much better than I do. You all know his merits much better than I have had an opportunity of knowing them. I have always heard him spoken of as a ready and well informed speaker, a courteous one also, and an able man, and now I can testify from having seen and heard him, that the general reputation which he possesses is in accordance with the fact. I wish very much that I had been able to follow as closely and intelligently what was said by my hon. friend who seconded the resolution. Unfortunately, though I know something of French, I am not able yet to follow a speaker, but perhaps in the position I now occupy it may be my duty to endeavour to supply that defect, and being a young man, full of vigour, I have in contemplation a course of study which may place me in a better position in that respect, after four or five years, than I am in now.

The first subject that my hon. friend opposite took up in discussing the address was the expenditure which had been made under Governor's warrants. My hon. friend expressed himself as perfectly horrified at the idea of those Governor's warrants, and he read the statute under which they were passed as by no means in support of them—I am not sure but he cited the statute as showing that no such warrants could issue. I differ entirely from my hon. friend in his reading of those statutes. I think the statutes quite plainly authorized the warrants. I so advised my colleagues and I stand by the advice that I gave. Let me call the attention of the House once more to the wording of the statute. It authorizes a Governor's warrant for what may be said to be two classes of cases, or rather for one specific class, and then for a general class. The specific class is repair of public works, and then follows a general clause in regard to which there is no limit to the purpose, excepting urgency of the expenditure. These are the words of the statute :

If, when parliament is not in session, any accident happens to any public work or building which requires an immediate outlay for the repair thereof,

That does not apply, but the next provision does apply—

or any other occasion arises when any expenditure not foreseen or provided for—

Not merely not foreseen, which was the reading of my hon. friend, but not foreseen or not provided for—

is urgently and immediately required for the public good.

Then the section provides for the issuing of the governor's warrants. So that the only question is whether the payment of the salaries of the officials and the contingencies of the departments is a matter urgently and immediately required for the public good. I do not see how any person can doubt the urgency of these things, for I cannot see how any government could be carried on unless the salaries of the officials are paid and the contingencies of the departments provided for. It cannot be done. Not to make this expenditure would be to paralyze all government for two or three months, as the case might be, and, therefore, I cannot imagine an occasion for expenditure