

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 8, 1868

The Speaker took the Chair at 3 o'clock.

PETITION AGAINST JUDGE DRUMMOND

Mr. Chamberlin moved the reception of a petition from Mr. J. K. Ramsay, praying for the impeachment of Judge Drummond:

Mr. Speaker said it would be understood that pending the question of its reception, the publication of the petition could not be allowed.

Hon. Mr. Holton said he had been surprised to see in a Montreal newspaper, under the telegraphic head, the leading allegations in this petition. He thought it was the duty of the Speaker to ascertain through what means the correspondent of that paper obtained communication of the contents of the petition.

Mr. Chamberlin said he would be happy to promote such an investigation. He knew nothing of the matter himself.

Mr. Morris said this was a very important petition, and in the absence of the Minister of Justice, he thought the question of its reception should lie over till another day.

This suggestion was agreed to.

BAGOT ELECTION COMMITTEE

Hon. Mr. Wood moved that leave be granted to the Bagot Election Committee to adjourn till the 22nd inst. Carried.

PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT

Hon. Mr. Holton, before the orders of the day were called, wished to make a suggestion to Government. The session had been prolonged into the business season of the year, and there was now a general anxiety to bring it to a close at the earliest possible moment consistent with the proper discharge of the duties devolving on the House. The hope was expressed from the Treasury Benches a few days ago, that the state of public business might admit of prorogation by the 15th May. He supposed this could now hardly be expected, but he thought they might expedite the prorogation so as to take place very soon

after that date. If the suggestion he now made was adopted by Government, three or four hours to-morrow should be devoted to advancing Government measures.

Sir G. E. Cartier said the Government had arrangements about their business elsewhere to-morrow, which would not allow them to accept this suggestion. It was their intention, however, to move with the view of bringing the session to an early close, that after Monday next there be three sittings each day, from 11 to 2, from 4 to 6, and half-past seven till adjournment.

RATE OF INTEREST QUESTION

Hon. Mr. Rose begged to state the course the Government had intended to take with reference to the rate of interest on money. As the House was aware that there was on this subject very considerable difference of opinion throughout the country, and of the state of the law in the various Provinces of the Dominion. In Quebec and Ontario all contracts relating to interest between individuals were free, but there were restrictions as regarded banks and certain corporations. In Nova Scotia the legal rate was 6 per cent. Individuals could not stipulate for or receive a greater rate. If they did so they were subject to the old penalties formerly in force in Canada. But the banks in Nova Scotia under the Bill of the former part of the session might stipulate for and exact 7 per cent. There existed, therefore, this anomaly, that banks could charge a higher rate than individuals could legally stipulate for. In New Brunswick both banks and individuals were limited to 7 per cent. He need not say what his own individual opinions as to usury laws were. He thought with many others that the fewer restrictions we had on money, the better, and that the rate should be regulated by demand and supply. But he was not insensible to the fact that there was great difference of opinion on the subject. He would now explain the course which the Government, under existing circumstances, thought most expedient to take. They were aware a strong feeling existed in Nova Scotia on the subject; they were told by many gentlemen whose views were entitled to