

Members of that body, preceded by their Speaker, the Honourable Napoléon Antoine Belcourt, appeared at the Bar. The Honourable Napoléon Antoine Belcourt, then informed His Excellency that the choice of the House of Commons had fallen upon him to be their Speaker.

After which His Excellency was pleased to open the Fourth Session of the Ninth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, with the following Speech :—

Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate :

Gentlemen of the House of Commons :

In again meeting you in parliament, it is our first duty to express our heartfelt thanks to a beneficent Providence for the abundant harvest with which the country has been favoured during the past year, and for the general prosperity that prevails in all parts of the Dominion.

It is very gratifying to note that the yearly increasing trade of Canada, which has been so marked a feature of the past six years, gives no indication of any abatement, while the number of settlers seeking homes in Manitoba and the Territories is without a parallel in the history of the country. These two very important facts lead irresistibly to the conclusion that long before the Transcontinental Railway, authorized by parliament at its last session, can possibly be completed, its urgent necessity as a medium for carrying the products of the west to our own Atlantic ports will have become apparent independently of the many benefits that will follow from the opening up for colonization and for various enterprises of the northern part of Quebec and Ontario.

The agreement made with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company regarding a new transcontinental railway, contained certain stipulations which in effect required the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada to become a party to that agreement and to assume heavy obligations in respect thereof.

Further consideration of the agreement by the representatives of the Grand Trunk Railway Company and my government has resulted in showing the desirability of certain amendments to the contract which, having been approved by my government and subsequently by the board of directors and the shareholders of the Grand Trunk Railway Company, will be submitted to you for ratification.

The sum of \$5,000,000 in cash has been deposited in the Bank of Montreal in accordance with the provisions contained in the original and supplemental agreements with the company.

A Militia Bill will be introduced containing several important amendments to the present law rendered necessary by the growth of the force and calculated to promote its efficiency.

A copy of the award defining the boundary between the Dominion and Alaska, and other papers connected with the controversy, will be laid before you.

In view of the widely extended settlements now forming in the Territories, it will become necessary to increase the strength of the Northwest Mounted Police force, and authority will be asked for that purpose.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons :

The accounts of the past year will be laid before you. I am glad to say that the revenue will

exceed the expenditure, leaving a balance to be applied in reduction of the public debt.

The estimates for the coming year will be laid before you at an early date.

Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate :

Gentlemen of the House of Commons :

After the long protracted session of the last year, when so many important matters were dealt with, it is not probable that your duties will involve your being detained on the present occasion for any lengthened period. I commend, however, to your best consideration the subjects to which I have referred and I invoke the Divine Blessing on your deliberations.

His Excellency was pleased to retire and the House of Commons withdrew.

The Senate adjourned.

THE SENATE.

Ottawa, Monday, March 14, 1904.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

THE ADDRESS.

The Order of the Day being called,

Consideration of His Excellency the Governor General's speech on the opening of the fourth session of the ninth parliament.

Hon. Mr. KERR (Toronto)—Hon. gentlemen, in assuming the duty which has been assigned to me to-day, I will not make the appeal which is so generally made that it may almost be said to be customary on such occasions as this, because I know that it has been the invariable practice of the Senate to extend to any of its members who may be called upon for the first time to assume a position of responsibility the most generous measure of its kindest indulgence, and, although I feel satisfied that I may stand to-day in as much need of that indulgence as any one, I am re-assured when I recall the consideration and the uniform courtesy which has been extended to me by the members of this honourable House since I have had the honour of having a seat in it.

In his gracious speech from the Throne His Excellency acknowledges the gratitude which the people of Canada should feel for the blessings which, under the dispensation of Divine Providence we have enjoyed during the past year. God has indeed been