

cumstances. The older members of the House have recognized that the committees would be more useful, and more practical were the membership restricted. If all the committees were of equal importance, the reform would be more easy to accomplish, but we know that some committees are recognized as being more desirable than others for membership on them. However, I presume there will be a general expression of opinion from all the members on the matter.

Motion agreed to.

#### REPORT PRESENTED.

Joint report of the librarians of parliament.—Mr. Borden.

#### INTERNAL ECONOMY COMMISSION.

Mr. BORDEN presented to the House a message from His Royal Highness the Governor General.

Mr. SPEAKER read the message as follows:

ARTHUR.

His Royal Highness the Governor General transmits to the House of Commons an approved Minute of Council appointing the Honourable Frederick Debartzch Monk, Minister of Public Works; the Honourable George Halsey Perley; the Honourable John Dowsley Reid, Minister of Customs, and the Honourable William James Roche, Secretary of State, to act with the Speaker of the House of Commons, as commissioners for the purposes and under the provisions of the eleventh chapter of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1906, intitled: 'An Act respecting the House of Commons.'

On motion of Mr. Borden, House adjourned at 3.55 p.m. until Monday.

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, November 20, 1911.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

#### CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER. I am informed by the Clerk of the House that on the 18th September last he received from the Hon. Messrs Justice Malouin and McCorkill, two of the judges selected for the trial of election petitions pursuant to the Dominion Controverted Elections Act, a report relating to the election for the electoral district of Chicoutimi and Saguenay declaring the said election null and void.

#### REPORT PRESENTED.

Public accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1911.—Hon. Mr. White.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

#### FIRST READING.

Bill (No. 2) to amend the Juvenile Delinquents Act, 1908.—Mr. Bickerdike.

#### MARRIAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Mr. LANCASTER moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 3) to amend the Marriage Act. He said: Mr. Speaker, the Bill which I have placed in your hands speaks for itself, and the best explanation I can give of it is to read it. It reads as follows:

The Marriage Act, chapter 105, of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1906, is amended by adding thereto the following section:—

Every ceremony or form of marriage heretofore or hereafter performed by any person authorized to perform any ceremony of marriage by the laws of the place where it is performed, and duly performed according to such laws, shall everywhere within Canada be deemed to be a valid marriage, notwithstanding any differences in the religious faith of the persons so married and without regard to the religion of the person performing the ceremony.

2. The rights and duties of the respective persons married as aforesaid as married people, and of the children of such marriage, shall be absolute and complete, and no law or canonical decree or custom of or in any province in Canada shall have any force or effect to invalidate or qualify any such marriage or any of the rights of the said parties or their children in any manner whatsoever.

I would draw attention to the fact that a duty has been thrown upon parliament in this matter by a decision of one of the courts in one of the provinces of Canada. I do not think that this House, or the country cares a rap whether that judgment is well founded or not on provincial law, what the national interests require is that no such doubt shall be raised in any part of the civilized world in regard to the validity of any marriage ceremony regularly performed in Canada. The people of Canada have recently dealt with very important matters, but such a question as reciprocity pales into insignificance compared with the great national question involved in this decision, and I have no doubt that when the House has considered the matter it will pass either this Bill, or some similar measure embodying the same principle.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

#### DOMINION ELECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Mr. LANCASTER moved for Bill (No. 4) to amend the Dominion Elections Act. He said: This Bill is required because of the very unfair result of legislation passed by the late government shortly after they took