

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Friday, December 20, 1867

The Speaker took the Chair at 3 o'clock, about sixty members being present.

### CLOSE OF THE SESSION

Sir John A. Macdonald moved that when the House adjourns, at the second sitting this day, it do stand adjourned till 1 o'clock to-morrow. Carried.

### RULES OF THE HOUSE

On motion of Sir John A. Macdonald the House went into Committee of the Whole to consider the report of the Special Committee on the Rules of the House—Mr. D. A. McDonald in the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Dunkin said, almost the only change made in the rules of the old Legislature of Canada, at any rate the only important change, related to the mode of dealing with private Bills. It would be in the recollection of those members of the House who were in that Legislature that the session before last a Committee was appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in framing rules, and they unanimously reported certain amendments. These amendments were not concurred in, simply because there was a pressure for other business. Last session they were again postponed because a new system of Government was about being inaugurated, when it was believed these rules would be all recast. The amendments to which he referred had received the assent of all the leading working members of the House, and their adoption now would perhaps be the more important that they would serve as guides to the Local Legislatures, where a large part of their business would be in the form of private legislation. They provided that private Bills should go to their appropriate Committees after the first and before the second reading. Instead of after the second reading, as heretofore; that in committee the preamble should first be disposed of, and then the details taken up; that if passed by the committee the Bills should be returned to the House for the second reading, when their principles would be discussed and passed upon; that then they

should be considered in Committee of the Whole, and amended in such respects as might be deemed advisable. These changes he thought would work advantageously. They would enable the Committee to get to work at an earlier period in the session, exercise greater supervision over measures referred to them, and would prevent a rush of private Bill legislation at the end of the session, when, under the old rules obnoxious Bills were often passed in haste the moment after those members who opposed them had left. Besides, there was often long and useless discussion on the second reading of measures which were afterwards entirely changed in Committee. Under the amended rules the Committee would perfect the measures before the second reading, and these discussions would be avoided. Another change was that the promoters of private Bills should deposit one hundred dollars instead of sixty meet expenses. He (Mr. Dunkin) had carefully watched the course of private Bill legislation for years, and he was confident from his observations that these changes would be productive of good as well as in the way of saving the time of the House.

Hon. Mr. Holton suggested whether it would not be necessary in consequence of these changes to require private Bills to be printed before first reading, instead of being introduced in blank as heretofore. It would not be proper for the House to refer to any of its Committee Bills, the contents of which were unknown.

Mr. Mackenzie also suggested that notices of when Committees should meet, what Bills would be considered, and other facts in regard to Committees, should be posted in the lobby with greater fullness than was now the case. The new rules should be made to provide for this.

Hon. Mr. Dunkin said he would adopt these suggestions, and change the rules so as to embrace them.

The rules were then adopted with the amendments suggested, and the Committee rose.