

election of Members of the House of Commons, the Franchises of the several Provinces.

My Government has determined that the advantages to accrue, both to our Western producers and the business interests of the whole Dominion from the completion of the works for the enlargement of the St. Lawrence Canals, should no longer be deferred, and has, subject to the approval of Parliament, taken the initial steps for a vigorous prosecution of those works and for the perfecting of the Canal system by the close of the year 1898.

I have much satisfaction in informing you that arrangements have been concluded which, if you approve, will enable the Intercolonial Railway system to reach Montreal, and thus share in the large traffic centering in that city. The many advantages which will flow from this extension of that railway are apparent, and I have no doubt you will gladly approve of the proposal.

Appreciating the difficulties encountered by our farmers in placing their perishable food products on the English markets in good condition, my Government has arranged a complete system of cold storage accommodation at creameries, on railways, at ports and on steamers, by which these products can be preserved at the desired temperature during the whole journey from the point of production to Great Britain. The contracts made for this purpose will be laid before you.

It is desirable that the mind of the people of Canada should be clearly ascertained on the subject of prohibition, and a measure enabling the electors to vote upon the question will be submitted for your approval.

The Behring Sea Claims Convention constituted during the past year to adjust the damages payable to the owners of the British Sealing vessels, seized by the cruisers of the United States on the high seas, has completed taking the evidence submitted to it by the respective Governments of Her Majesty and the United States, and has adjourned for a time to hear the arguments thereon on behalf of both Governments. I indulge the hope that a final and satisfactory adjudication of those long delayed claims will now speedily be reached.

The calamity which has befallen our fellow-subjects in India has evoked a widespread sympathy in this country. The generous manner in which the appeal for practical tokens of this feeling has been responded to, has elicited warm assurances of grateful acknowledgment from the Government of India which have also been specially and heartily endorsed by the Imperial authorities.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

The accounts of the past year will be laid before you.

The Estimates for the coming year will be presented at an early day. They have been framed with every regard for economy consistent with the efficiency of the public service. I regret that the receipts from ordinary sources continue to be inadequate to meet the charges against the Consolidated Revenue. The proposed revision of the Tariff and the application of strict economy in the administration of the Government will, I trust, restore the equilibrium between income and expenditure.

Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate:

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

Among the Bills which have been prepared and will be submitted for your approval, are Bills amending the Superannuation Act and the Civil Service Act.

These and other measures, I commend to your earnest consideration and express the hope that your deliberations under the Divine guidance will tend to increase the happiness and prosperity of every class in the Dominion.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier) moved:

That the Address with which His Excellency has been pleased to open the session be taken into consideration to-morrow.

Motion agreed to.

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEES.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier) moved:

That Select Standing Committees of this House for the present session be appointed for the following purposes:—1. On Privileges and Elections.—2. On Expiring Laws.—3. On Railways, Canals and Telegraph Lines.—4. On Miscellaneous Private Bills.—5. On Standing Orders.—6. On Printing.—7. On Public Accounts.—8. On Banking and Commerce.—9. On Agriculture and Colonization;—which said Committees shall severally be empowered to examine and inquire into all such matters and things as may be referred to them by the House; and to report from time to time their observations and opinions thereon; with power to send for persons, papers and records.

Motion agreed to.

REPORTS.

Report of the Joint Librarians of Parliament for 1897.—(Mr. Speaker.)

Report of the Department of Trade and Commerce for 1896.—(Sir Richard Cartwright.)

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier) moved the adjournment of the House.

Motion agreed to, and House adjourned at 3.55 p.m.