

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 11, 1867

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

Archibald Woodbury McLellan, for Colchester, N.S., and **Alfred Gilpin Jones, Esq.**, for Halifax, took oath and their seats.

Three petitions were brought up, and two received and read.

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS

On motion of **Sir John A. Macdonald**, the House resumed the order of the day for the consideration of the address in reply to His Excellency's Speech from the Throne. The question being upon the first paragraph of the address.

Hon. Mr. Howe stated that he thought it right to explain, that as the House would have a full opportunity of discussing the various clauses of the address, and every member who chose could state his views upon them, he would not move an amendment to the address as he intended to have done.

Sir John A. Macdonald—The honourable gentleman will have every opportunity of discussing every paragraph of the address, so that no amendment is necessary.

Mr. Blake resumed the debate. He quite concurred with the opening remarks of the member for Hants, in regard to the important nature of the work which the Government promised to lay before the House for its performance. The programme was one of a very extensive character, for several months past, Ministers had been engaged preparing these measures, and it was understood they were now ready for submission to the House. Ministers had asked the House and country to be judged upon those measures, and therefore he (Mr. Blake) presumed they were anxious that the trial should take place with as little delay as possible. He felt it doubly important now that the House should not be delayed in proceeding with those important measures upon which not only were the Government to be tried and judged, but the prosperity of the country and the fortunes of the new Do-

minion depended. But the circumstances under which the House met, as well as the circumstances connected with the recent elections, and with the great party to which he had the honour to belong, called for some remark before proceeding to those measures, and although he did not propose to move an amendment to the address, still it had been thought fit not to allow those circumstances to pass without some comment on the floor of this House. The remarks he would have to address to the House would be as short as the subject would permit, and he was sure he would receive that indulgence which British deliberative assemblages always accorded to a young member, and of which at that moment he felt seriously in need. (Hear, hear). In order, then, to look at the circumstances under which recent elections took place, it was necessary to go back a short time in the history of the country, and especially to the period of the formation of the Coalition, prior to the accomplishment of Confederation. In consequence of the impossibility of continuing the Government of the country by either of the two parties—Conservative and Reform—which had always prevailed, and which under whatever names disguised, would always prevail in any country constitutionally governed—in consequence of their being unable to carry on the Government in the ordinary way, an alliance was come to between the parties of a temporary character and for a certain definite purpose. Both parties thus came together for a time, and agreed upon a mode of solving the constitutional difficulties under which the country had laboured and which had brought the Government almost to an end. It was understood at that time, clearly and distinctly, that the questions which might otherwise have been agitated in the House—questions under which party issues might have been raised—questions likely to excite party feelings once more—questions which could only properly be debated and decided, as those on his side of the house contended, by a house properly organized and composed of the two parties—that all such questions should be placed in abeyance, and that the House should devote itself to a settlement of the constitutional question. It was not sup-