

Who being come, with their Speaker,

The Honourable Charles Marcil said:

May it please Your Excellency:

The House of Commons has elected me their speaker, though I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me.

If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me, and not to the Commons, whose servant I am, and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their King and country, humbly claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to Your Excellency's person at all reasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from Your Excellency the most favourable consideration.

The Honourable the Speaker of the Senate, then said:

Mr. Speaker,—I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General to declare to you that he fully confides in the duty and attachment of the House of Commons to His Majesty's person and government; and not doubting that their proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper and prudence, he grants, and upon all occasions will recognize and allow their constitutional privileges. I am commanded also to assure you, that the Commons shall have ready access to His Excellency upon all reasonable occasions, and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favourable construction.

His Excellency the Governor General was then pleased to open the session by a gracious speech to both Houses:

*Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate:*

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons:*

In welcoming you to the performance of your duties at the first session of a new parliament, I desire to acknowledge with devout thankfulness the abundant harvest with which Divine Providence has again blessed us.

The Quebec Tercentenary festivities in July, which were honoured by the gracious presence of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, as representing His Majesty, marked an epoch in the history of the Dominion. The generous support given to the National celebration by the Federal parliament and provincial legislatures, and by the peoples of Canada, of the other Dominions and of the United Kingdom, emphasized the community of sympathy which binds the various parts of the British Empire to each other, and to the Throne and person of His Majesty the King. The presence of representatives from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand,

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land, South Africa and Newfoundland, and from the great and freindly Republics of France and the United States, with the ships of war of the three nations, served not only to add lustre to the occasion, but to provide an assurance of increasing amity and peace.

I have much pleasure in announcing that a treaty relating to the Great Lakes and other International Waterways has been agreed upon between His Majesty and the government of the United States of America and is now awaiting ratification. Both countries are to be congratulated on having arrived at an amicable settlement which I trust will remove during the life-time of the treaty many vexed questions from the field of controversy. The treaty and papers relating thereto will be laid before you in due course.

A little more than a year ago, the whole civilized world entered into a period of commercial and financial depression, which may not yet have completely spent its force; signs there are, however, that it is gradually passing away. Whilst it is hardly disputable that owing to the abundance and elasticity of her resources Canada has suffered less than other nations, this depression has seriously affected our trade, producing and appreciable shrinkage in the public revenue, and calling for exceptional caution in the administration of our national affairs.

The rapid settlement of the new provinces calls for new lines of transportation. The construction of the Transcontinental Railway has been vigorously pressed forward during the last year. The line was open for the carrying of the crops from Winnipeg to the Battle river, a distance of 675 miles.

Exploratory surveys for a railway from the western wheat fields to Hudson bay are being pushed energetically. Four parties have been at work since August last. Upon their report it will be possible to reach a decision as to both the route to be followed and the approximate cost. The provision of the Dominion Lands Act of last session for the sale of pre-emptions and purchased homesteads has created a new source of revenue that will be sufficient to bear the cost of the railway to Hudson bay without burdening the ordinary revenue. From September 1, when the Act came into force, until January 1, sales of pre-emptions and purchased homesteads have amounted to over two million acres, all subject to homestead settlement conditions.

The total volume of immigration has not reached the high figure of previous years, but the number of those seeking homes on our unoccupied lands has been fully maintained during the last season, and, owing to the