

THE SENATE

Thursday, November 7, 1867

His Excellency the Right Honourable Charles Stanley, Viscount Monck, Baron Monck of Ballytrammon, in the County of Wexford, in the Peerage of Ireland, and Baron Monck of Ballytrammon, in the County of Wexford, in the Peerage of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Governor General of Canada, etc., etc., being seated in the Chair on the Throne,

The Honourable the Speaker commanded the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to proceed to the House of Commons and acquaint that House "It is His Excellency's pleasure they attend him immediately in this House."

Who being come,

The Honourable James Cockburn said:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

The House of Commons have elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfill 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 Queen 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 interpretation.

The Honourable the Speaker of this House then said:—

Mr. Speaker,

I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the House of Commons to Her 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 addressing for the first time the Parliamentary Representatives of the Dominion of Canada, I desire to give expression to my own deep feeling of gratification that it has been my high privilege to occupy an official position which has made it my duty to assist at every step taken in the creation of this Great Confederation.

I congratulate you on the Legislative sanction which has been given by the Imperial Parliament to the Act of Union, under the provisions of which we are now assembled, and which has laid the foundation of a new Nationality that I trust and believe will, ere long, extend its bounds from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

In the discussions which preceded the introduction of this measure in the Imperial Parliament, between the Members of Her Majesty's Government on the one side, and the Delegates who represented the Provinces now united on the other,—it was apparent to all those who took part in those conferences, that, while Her Majesty's Ministers considered and pressed the principle of Union as a subject of great Imperial interest, they allowed the Provincial Representatives every freedom in arranging the mode in which that principle should be applied.

In a similar spirit of respect for your privileges, as a free and self-governing people, the Act of Union, as adopted by the Imperial Parliament, imposes the duty and confers upon you the right of reducing to practice the system of Government, which it has called into existence, of consolidating its institutions, harmonizing its administrative details, and of making such legislative provisions as will secure to a constitution, in some respects novel, a full, fair, and unprejudiced trial.

With the design of effecting these objects, measures will be laid before you for the amendment and assimilation of the laws now existing in the several Provinces relating to Currency, Customs, Excise, and Revenue generally,—for the adoption of a uniform Postal System,—for the proper management and maintenance of the Public Works and Properties of the Dominion,—for the adoption of a well considered scheme of Militia Organization and Defence, for the proper administration of Indian affairs,—for the intro-