

County of Roxburgh, in the Peerage of Great Britain, Baronet of Nova Scotia, Knight Grand Cross of Our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, &c., &c., Governor General of Canada, being seated 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 with their Speaker,

The Honourable Louis Philippe Brodeur said :—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

The House of Commons have elected me as 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 interpretation.

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 :*

Since our last meeting the Empire has been called on to lament the demise of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria. The universal regret and sympathy with which the tidings of her decease have been received throughout the entire civilized world, afford the best testimony to the manner in which she has, at all times, discharged her duties, both as a woman and a sovereign, throughout her unprecedentedly long and glorious reign, and I will venture to add that in no portion of her vast territories were those sentiments more profoundly felt than in the Dominion of Canada.

You will, I am sure, take early action to express your sympathy with the Royal Family in their bereavement and your loyalty to the new Sovereign.

The Canadian contingents to South Africa have nearly all returned, and it affords me a very great gratification to be able to assure you that the valour and good conduct of our Canadian soldiers have called forth the highest encomiums from the several commanders under whom they have served during the arduous contest.

The union of the several provinces of Australia into one confederation, upon lines closely resembling those on which our own Dominion has been established, marks another important step towards the consolidation of the outlying portions of the Empire, and, I am well assured, will call forth your most sincere congratulations to the new commonwealth.

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Acting on the advice of my Ministers, I had, previously to the great grief which has fallen upon the nation, tendered an invitation on your behalf to His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York to conclude his intended visit to Australasia by one to the Dominion of Canada, and I am glad to be able to inform you that His Royal Highness has been pleased to signify his acceptance of the same. I still hope that that visit may not be considered impossible. I have no doubt of the warmth of the welcome with which he will be received.

My Government has learned with great satisfaction of the progress being made with the Pacific Cable scheme, and I trust that nothing may occur to delay its early completion.

Last summer, I made a tour through Canada as far as Dawson City and was everywhere received with unqualified proofs of devotion and loyalty. During my journey, I was, from personal observation, much impressed with the great activity displayed in the development of the mining and agricultural industries of the country, and with the substantial increase in its population. The thrift, energy and law-abiding character of the immigrants are a subject of much congratulation and afford ample proof of their usefulness as citizens of the Dominion.

It gives me great pleasure to note the excellent display made by Canada at the Universal Exposition in Paris. The fine quality and varied character of Canadian natural and industrial products is evidenced by the number of awards won in nearly every class of the competition. It is a remarkable testimony to the effectiveness of our cold storage transportation facilities, that fresh fruit grown in Canada secured a large number of the highest awards. It is extremely gratifying to observe that, as a result of the display of Canadian resources, considerable foreign capital has found its way into Canada for investment and large orders from foreign countries have been received for Canadian goods.

The improvement of the St. Lawrence route continues to engage the very careful attention of my Government. During the past year, ship channels have been widened and deepened, additional lights and buoys have been provided and, in a short time, there will be telegraph and cable communication with Belle Isle. These additional securities will tend to make safer and more efficient than ever our great waterway between the lakes and the Atlantic.

I am glad to observe that the revenue and the general volume of trade continue undiminished, and even show a moderate increase over the very large figures attained during the past year.

Measures will be submitted to you for the better supervision of the export trade in food products, and also in connection with the Post Office, the Pacific Cable and various other subjects.

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons :*

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

The Estimates for the succeeding year will likewise be placed upon the Table at an early date.

*Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate :*

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons :*

I commend to your earnest consideration the measures to be submitted to you, invoking the Divine blessings upon the important labours on which you are again entering.

His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to retire, and the House of Commons withdrew.