

April 1, 1871

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Saturday, April 1, 1871

The **SPEAKER** took the chair at 3 o'clock.

Prayers

AFTER ROUTINE

Mr. CURRIER introduced a Bill to incorporate the Dominion Construction Co. The Bill was read a first time and referred to the Committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills.

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INSURANCE ACT

Hon. Sir FRANCIS HINKS moved the second reading of the Bill respecting Insurance companies.

Mr. BLAKE objected to the measure, as limiting the class of securities to be deposited with the Government. He also objected to establishing a system of inspection.

Hon. Sir FRANCIS HINCKS assured the hon. member that there was no disposition to limit the class of securities, but, on the contrary, to relieve companies of the necessity of depositing cash with the Government.

The Bill was read a second time and referred to the Committee on Banking and Commerce.

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BRITISH COLUMBIA

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER moved the second reading of the Address to Her Majesty for the union of British Columbia with the Dominion.

Mr. MACKENZIE did not propose to reply to the speeches of the hon. members opposite delivered last night. They extended over a good space of time, but there was nothing in them. He merely wished to enter his protest against the extraordinary address now about to be read a second time. He, therefore, moved the following:

“Resolved that this House, while willing to give its best consideration to any reasonable terms of union with British Columbia, is of opinion that the terms embodied in the said address are so unreasonable, and so unjust to Canada, that this House should not agree thereto.”

Hon. Mr. TUPPER said he had not taken any part in the debates on this subject so far. He had listened with mingled pain and pleasure to the speeches of hon. members. He had heard with pain old friends of Confederation opposing this union movement. He defended the policy of the Government at considerable length, arguing that everything conspired to favor the construction of the Pacific Railway. While the United States had to contend against great natural difficulties in pushing their railways to the Pacific, the territory through which the Canadian route would lie, was of great natural fertility, and presented comparatively few engineering difficulties to the construction of a railway. It gave us a pass through the Rocky Mountains 2,000 feet lower than the best pass through that chain on American territory. The hon. member for Lambton had endeavored to show that the route from Nipissing to Fort Garry was an almost impassable wilderness. Only last session the hon. member had taken a very different view of the question and had stated that the very best route to the west lay through Canadian territory North of Lakes Huron and Superior. The hon. gentleman could not say that he had heard anything to present the matter in a different light. There were then, all these favourable circumstances to aid this great enterprise, but in addition to all that, the route once opened would place Canton and Liverpool 1,000 miles nearer than by any other line of communication that could be found. The hon. member had pleaded for delay in order to submit this question to the people, but the hon. gentleman had taken the ground on a former occasion that Parliament, representing the people, could act for them in a case like this.

Mr. MACKENZIE said this was a very different matter. When the Confederation scheme was first mooted he (Mr. Mackenzie) went before his constituents and presented the matter to them in twenty speeches held in different parts of his constituency and told them that if they were not favourable to Confederation they might elect some one who would oppose it in Parliament, he would not.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER admitted that the honourable member for Lambton was an important member of the House, and honoured the intelligent electors who sent him to Parliament, but he did not represent the whole people, and the Confederation scheme was not submitted to the country generally. But this question had been submitted to the people of British Columbia and the terms had been accepted by them. It was not new to the people of Canada. Six months ago the *Toronto Globe* had published the terms and they