

February 28, 1871

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, February 28, 1871

The **SPEAKER** took the chair at 3.00 p.m.

Prayers

Several petitions were presented.

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CORRECTION

Hon. Mr. CONNELL (whose remarks were very indistinctly heard in the reporter's gallery) referred to a mistake which had been made in the report of his speech yesterday with regard to the settlement of accounts between New Brunswick and the Dominion. He had been represented as saying that "it would be necessary to get an alteration of the Union Act." He would not like to have it go abroad to his constituents that he had made such an absurd statement. He had no wish to have the Union Act disturbed for a settlement of the accounts between New Brunswick and the Dominion. He had no doubt that a just and equitable arrangement would be made.

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LIBRARY OFFICIALS

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER moved that the Library Committee be instructed to inquire into the remuneration, classification, etc., of the officers of the library.

Carried.

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NEW MEMBER

Mr. PEARSON the member elected by the constituency of Colchester to fill the place rendered vacant by the appointment of Hon. Mr. Archibald to the Lieutenant-Governorship of the North West, was introduced by Messrs. Carmichael and Killam, and took his seat.

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THE ELECTION LAW

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER introduced a bill to make temporary provision for the election of members for the House of

Commons. (*Hear, hear from the Opposition.*) He expected that his hon. friends opposite would say "hear, hear" at the very mention of the measure. He would explain that since we were about to have another province comprised in this Dominion, it was obvious that the government could not yet enact a law to affect all the provinces of the Dominion, as far as the representation of this House was concerned. The circumstances of Manitoba having been recently admitted into the Union and British Columbia being on the eve of joining the Confederation, had led the Government to the conclusion that it would be better to carry on the next election for the Dominion under the laws as they now prevail in the several provinces. (*Hear, hear from the Opposition.*) He might state that the bill too, contained a provision with regard to the number of days on which elections were to take place. This Bill provided that the elections should take place on one day. (*Hear, hear.*)

Mr. BLAKE said that after two permanent Electoral Bills had been passed, the House was now asked to enact a temporary one. Last session one had been passed, the session before the House had passed one, and now they were asked to deal with another one. The hon. gentleman had explained that the reason why he now submitted this temporary measure, was because of the introduction of the new Provinces into Confederation. At what period since the 1st July, 1867, was not the House favoured with the news that new Provinces were to be added? Every day they were told they were coming in, though they didn't come.

Hon. Sir FRANCIS HINCKS: Yes! yes!

Mr. BLAKE: And yet the Hon. Minister of Militia had asserted that it was in view of these additions to the Dominion that this temporary Act was provided. Last session the Opposition had pointed out the effect that the new measure then submitted would have in the East and in the West. They had shown that it would be impossible to work it in Manitoba, and that difficulties would arise in other Provinces too. But they were told that their arguments were fallacious, and that the Union would overcome all the difficulties which were then deprecated. He was glad to hear that, taught by experience, they had admitted the truth of the arguments then advanced by the Opposition, that it was necessary to respect the views of the different Provinces on the subject, and by degrees as they became more acquainted with the franchise laws of other countries, the Government had made some approach towards providing for a common franchise for the Dominion. He was not surprised that it was merely a temporary Act. It would be coming down too far to propose as a permanent Act what they opposed so consistently before, but, he had no doubt that it would contain for some years to come the principle at the base of our Parliamentary representation, founded on the motion of the hon. member for