

March 28, 1871

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 28, 1871

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

Prayers

AFTER ROUTINE

SAULT STE. MARIE RAILWAY

Mr. SIMPSON introduced a Bill to incorporate the Sault Ste. Marie Railway and Bridge Company, and it received first reading.

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MANITOBA ELECTIONS

Mr. MACKENZIE referred to the return of the Writs from Manitoba, and asked if it was the intention of the Government to refer the matter to a special Committee to report on them to the House. Under the peculiar circumstances attending the election, some such precaution should be taken. In order to maintain the purity of this House and prevent the intrusion of those not entitled under Imperial Acts to sit here, he thought it was the responsibility of the Government to indicate their position, and that of those elected in Manitoba.

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER said the Government did not intend to take any such action until the newly elected candidates should arrive from Manitoba or until objections should be urged to their taking their seats in the House.

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QUEBEC HARBOUR

Hon. Mr. LANGEVIN introduced a Bill to provide for the improvement and management of the Harbour of Quebec.

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ADMISSION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER moved that the House go into Committee to consider a series of resolutions respecting the admission of British Columbia into Union with Canada. This

subject, he said, was one which required few words to introduce it. Its importance was recognized by all.

Who would have thought twelve years ago when British Columbia was erected into a colony by Lord Lytton that it should form in so short a time a portion of Canada. It was due to the foresight and statesmanship of that great literary man that he should quote from a speech of his, delivered in 1858, in which this great union was foretold. He was now quoting from the prorogation speech delivered on the 2nd August, 1858. It said: "The Act to which Her Majesty's assent for the establishing of the Colony of British Columbia was originally required in consequence of the recent discoveries of gold in that district, but Her Majesty hopes that this new Colony on the Pacific may be but one of several in a greater state of progress, by which Her Majesty's Dominions in British North America may be ultimately peopled in an unbroken chain from the Atlantic to the Pacific by loyal subjects of Her Majesty's Crown."

Could the present movement have been more clearly foretold? Since 1858 the scheme of Confederation had made great strides toward completion. He (Hon. Sir George-É. Cartier) regretted the absence of the hon. member for Shefford on this occasion. That gentleman had often complained that this country was advancing too slowly, and said that the Dominion would advance more rapidly if placed on an independent footing. But, if the hon. member for Shefford was present today, he could not charge the Ministry with having been idle since they had brought about the union of all British North America since they had assumed office. While in London with his (Hon. Sir George-É. Cartier) colleagues, at a dinner where several literary men were present, he mentioned to Lord Lytton, who was not then in office, that the Confederation scheme was one of the principal objects which had brought him to England. Lord Lytton replied, "I presume that you have come not merely to see that the British North American Atlantic Provinces should be united. I hope you look forward to the greater Confederation which will reach to the Pacific Ocean."

He (Hon. Sir George-É. Cartier) would now come to the Bill itself. It was before the House, and they could examine it for themselves. He invited the freest and fullest discussion on each and every clause, but he would remind them that the Bill was in the nature of a treaty, and consequently the Government would insist upon the adoption of those terms as adopted in British Columbia—that the amendment of one paragraph or one item of those terms would defeat the whole project. He took this early opportunity of informing the House of the fact. British Columbia had decided to accept the Bill without amendments, though several members of the Legislature of that colony had shown a disposition to amend the