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By Authority.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER,

FREDERICTON, 17th FEBRUARY, 1876.

THIS being the day appointed by Proclamation for the meeting of the Legislature, at three o'clock His Honor the Lieutenant Governor came to the Council Chamber, and being seated on the Throne, commanded the attendance of the House of Assembly; who being come, His Honor was pleased to open the Session with the following

S P E E C H :

" Mr. President, and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council,

" Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly,

" I have convened you at the usual period of the year for the consideration of the affairs of the Province, having the fullest confidence that your labours will be resumed in a spirit which will attest your zeal for the public interest.

" I regret that the financial crisis which commenced in the United States more than two years since, and has more recently extended to Great Britain, has, within the last year, led to depressing results in our own Province. The check given everywhere to Commerce, has considerably reduced the earnings of our vessels; the leading articles of our Export, with the exception of the products of our Fisheries, have yielded less remunerative returns than formerly; and our Manufactures, the productive power of which has been more than doubled within seven years, have had to meet a reduced demand at home, and overstocked warehouses abroad. These results would have been much more serious in their consequences had not Providence blessed us with an abundant Harvest. We cannot expect an immediate return to our former prosperity, but recent indications lead me to look with confidence for an early improvement in our Trade and Commerce.

" The display made by our Manufacturers and Mechanics at the Exhibition held in the City of Saint John during the past year was highly satisfactory, affording evidence of marked progress by the Province during the past few years in various manufacturing industries, and of such an improvement in the skill and workmanship of her Artizans and Mechanics as will justify favourable comparison with any other Province of the Dominion.

" I am happy to say that the working of the Regulations of the Crown Land Department, by which the system of Stumpage was applied to Lumber cut on the Public Domain, has proved as satisfactory as could have been anticipated; and the care now used in the selection of the Trees to be cut will be found preventive of that reckless and indiscriminate destruction of the Forest so often deprecated in the past.