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*Official Notifications appearing in this Paper, duly authenticated, are to be received as such by the persons whom they may concern.*

## By Authority.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER,

FREDERICTON, FEBRUARY 26, 1878.

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,*

" It affords me great pleasure again to meet you assembled for the discharge of your legislative duties.

" I did not deem it advisable to take steps towards obtaining the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada upon certain questions relating to the withholding of Liquor Licenses, inasmuch as similar questions were about the same time raised before that Court in an appeal from the Courts of Ontario, and as it came to be understood that the Dominion Parliament would take action in the matter upon the decision being reached in the Ontario appeal. That case was decided in January, but upon grounds, so far as I am able to learn, that did not finally decide these questions. Since that decision it has been announced that a measure upon the subject will be submitted to the Parliament of Canada at its present Session. Upon the passage of the Dominion Act it may appear advisable that your attention should be further drawn to this subject.

" During the recess, I had the pleasure of receiving a Delegation from Nova Scotia upon the subject of Maritime Union. As I had obtained from you no authorization to enter upon any negotiations, the conference was informal, and was confined to the discussion of the financial condition of the respective Provinces, and the probable financial and general effects of the proposed Union; and I did not think it proper to commit you in any way to so important a constitutional change—which, having the character of finality, should be the growth of a general feeling of its advantages, and the result of prolonged discussion. The visit of the Delegation from Nova Scotia will lead to the more full and attentive discussion of this question.

" The administration of justice being a matter of Provincial concern, I would draw attention to the state of the Law respecting evidence in criminal cases, in the hope that a change may be made by the Parliament of Canada, in which body alone the power to legislate in such matters exists.

" I regard it as conducive to the good administration of justice, as well in the interests of the public as in fairness to the persons charged with crime, that all persons so charged should (whatever the magnitude of the crime) have the right to give evidence in their own behalf. The existing state of the law, however advantageous it may be to the guilty, is clearly prejudicial to the innocent; and if the object of the existing law were the protection of guilty persons little could be said against it. I will ask you to join in an Address to His Excellency the Governor General praying for this alteration in the law.

" Your attention will be directed to certain matters affecting the interests of Agriculture, including provision for holding a Provincial Exhibition the present year,—the more frequent holding of such Exhibitions hereafter,—and the importation of certain Stock.

" I think it desirable that the School Boards in Cities and Incorporated Towns should be enlarged, with the view to a more varied representation on such Boards.