

Mr. Blake's Speech, in the House of Commons, on the Montreal Riots.

OTTAWA May 1.

Mr. BLAKE rose and said that, owing to circumstances which recently occurred in Montreal, of a serious and important character, he desired, even though the session was advanced, to introduce a subject which he considered to be of the greatest urgency. "Canada," he said, had had for many years the reputation of being occupied by an order loving and law abiding population, but latterly crimes of violence had been committed from causes which he sincerely hoped would in course of time disappear. It was immaterial to enter into a general discussion of the causes, but they were due, as he had said, to casual and accidental circumstances, which he hoped would soon disappear. With reference to one part of the Dominion, however, he feared this hope would be useless. Every member was justly proud of the City of Montreal from whatever part of Canada he might be. Members were proud of its situation, placed as it was at the junction of an unrivalled ocean navigation. They were proud of the enterprise and public spirit of its citizens and of the character of its population. The different creeds and nations had mingled together, up to a recent period, co-operating for the general good and to out-vie each other in the race of advancement. All feel these sentiments and the members of the House would be untrue to their duties as legislators, if in the face of the events which had taken place during the past two months they were to separate without making some efforts to restore the fair name of that city, which had been clouded by the occurrences to which he alluded. For nearly a year past, the City of Montreal had been the scene of frequent attacks in the streets by different parties, in which firearms had been used with the utmost recklessness, although until the other evening there had been no loss of life. The events of that evening were to his mind premonitory of far more serious events, unless some steps were taken to repress them. He (Mr. Blake) was not called upon at this time to weigh the merits of the contending parties, but looking at the public records he found that a great deal of the trouble was increased by the use of firearms by roughs and the more lawless and criminal classes of the population, who still availed themselves of a practice which even the more respectable did not in some instances scruple to resort to. The state of things in Montreal was of a more serious character by reason of the circumstances which had given rise to them. To him, a Canadian of Irish descent, it added an additional pang to think that his countrymen of both creeds should be mixed up in these troubles. He did not say to whom the blame was attached, but if his voice could reach beyond the narrow limits of this hall, and if his opinions would be of any weight with those to whom he appealed, he would have them to remember that both of them belonged to the Christian religion, the cardinal principles of which were love and charity, self-sacrifice, and yielding to one another. He would have them to remember that giving up to others, and yielding to others, was their duty as Christians, and that they daily prayed, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." He would urge them to use every means possible by precept, example, and concession to prevent the recurrence of such scenes. He would appeal to both sides—to one side to be regardful of the rights of the other, and to the other to be regardful of the feelings and temperament of the side which objected to some of their opinions. And it did appear to him that if such were done there would be a restoration of the good feeling which before existed. At the present moment, it might be said that a reign of terror existed in Montreal, owing to the facility with which the weapons of offence were procured. It was not only those who hazarded their lives in these encounters who were exposed to danger, but the peaceful citizens were exposed to the same risk, as evidenced by the fact that those who had had no concern whatever in the riots had been actually sufferers, in some cases only escaping with their lives. The question was now whether there was not some remedy by legislation. Some might on this point suggest the question of prohibiting public processions, but he would pass it by with one observation. The question generally was complicated, and although he would not say there were no circumstances under which this Parliament was not entitled to interfere to some extent, yet the circumstances were rare, the interference would be partial, and if any remedy were fit to be applied, that remedy had to be applied by the Local Legislatures. The second question which arose in this connection was the formation of a police force by Canada. To that he would

decidedly object, the preservation of the peace remaining with the local authorities. There remains, therefore, but one consideration, and that is whether under existing circumstances some change could be made in the laws respecting the repression of crime. In 1869, it was made an offence to carry loaded weapons, and the penalty for doing so was a fine of from \$10 to \$40. Last session an Act was passed to prevent the carrying of pistols except where specially permitted. There was an Act with reference to certain districts, entitled "An Act for the Preservation of the Peace in the vicinity of Public Works." The description of legislation he would venture to propose now was a bill framed upon the models of the Public Works Act and the Irish Acts, which would be a most reasonable way of meeting these difficulties. The legislation which he would now propose should, in his opinion, be but temporary. He would, therefore, suggest that the Act should only remain in force until the end of the next session of Parliament. He would propose that it should be in the power of the Government in Council, whenever in their judgment it was necessary for the better prevention of crime, to publish a proclamation in the *Canada Gazette*, declaring that the Act should apply to the district defined. When the operations of the Act are to be discontinued, a similar proclamation should be made. Notices of the Act coming into force should be posted on the doors of the places of worship, police-stations, and other public places. He would propose that from and after the time named on the proclamation, it should not be lawful for any person, not an officer of the peace, soldier, or sailor, in Her Majesty's service, to carry and have elsewhere than in his own house, any firearms or other dangerous and deadly weapons. Any person carrying such weapons in contravention of the statutes should be guilty of a misdemeanor and liable to imprisonment for any term not exceeding twelve months. He also proposed that it should be lawful for any person to apprehend any person found in the act of carrying weapons, and to deliver him over to an officer of the peace, with a view to his being dealt with according to law. He proposed that it should be the duty of any constable or officer to take from any person firearms or deadly weapons which should be thereupon forfeited to Her Majesty. He would also propose that the Governor-in-Council should appoint Commissioners to grant licenses to persons to carry arms, the license to be revokable by such persons at will. He would also propose that the seventh clause of the Act respecting offences against the person should apply with reference to the procedure. He did not propose to extend the law to weapons in houses, as that would be giving the arbitrary right of search, which might be abused, and it might impair the protection of private houses against burglars. He was aware that notice was necessary before the introduction of such a bill, but considering the urgency of the case, he did not think the house would mind consenting, unanimously, to permit the first reading of the bill. He would, therefore, move for leave to introduce the bill intitled "An Act for the better prevention of crimes in certain parts of Canada."

TENDERS.
MAYOR'S OFFICE,
City of Charlottetown, 30th April, 1878.
SEALED TENDERS, marked "Tenders for Lighting, etc., Street Lamps," will be received at the Mayor's Office, until noon of MONDAY, the 13th May next, from persons willing to contract for Lighting, Extinguishing and Keeping Clean the Street Gas and Oil Lamps. Form of Tender can be seen at this Office. The Council do not bind themselves to accept the lowest or any tender. By order,
WM. B. MORRISON,
City Clerk.
April 30—pat 2aw t 13th

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W. W. BEER, Ch. of Com.
J. W. HODGSON, Sec'y.
Ch'town, April 26, 1878—

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City of Charlottetown, 30th April, 1878.
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WM. B. MORRISON,
City Clerk.
Ch'town, April 30—dy pat 2 aw t may 13

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