

RESOLUTION EXTENDING
LIFE OF PARLIAMENT
AND
SPEECH
OF THE
RT. HON. SIR WILFRID LAURIER
P.C., G.C.M.G., M.P.
[IN THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 8th, 1916.
(From the Official Hansard)

From ADDRESS TO THE KING.

Moved by the RT. HONOURABLE SIR ROBERT BORDEN, P.C., G.C.M.G., M.P.

1. Notwithstanding anything in the British North America Act, 1867, or in any Act amending the same, or in any Order in Council, or terms or conditions of union, made or approved under the said Act, or under any Act of the Canadian Parliament, the term of the Twelfth Parliament of Canada is hereby extended until the seventh day of October, 1917.

Our Pillar of Fire.

The RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR WILFRID LAURIER, (Quebec East): Mr. Speaker, when the Fathers of Confederation sought the sanction of the Imperial Parliament to the plan which they had devised for the union of the British provinces of this continent, they declared, in the very preamble of the Act, that the new Dominion should be endowed with a constitution similar in principle to the constitution of the United Kingdom. It is well to mark the words, Sir, because the intentions of those men, who had the moulding of Canada's destinies in their hands, was that the British constitution should be the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day which should guide the young country to union and to nationhood. In the mass of rules and maxims, statutes and precedents, which make up the British constitution, there was one feature which particularly seemed to have attracted their attention, and that was that the maxim that the life of the elected branch of Parliament should not exceed limits rigidly fixed by law, and, as a corollary, that there should be at least one session of Parliament every year. These provisions of the British constitution had been evolved in the long struggle of the