

MR. MACKENZIE: I really do not think there is much ground of complaint. I asked the Chairman of the Printing Committee with regard to it, and he told me it was in the printers' hands at four o'clock, or the translator's hand, I forget which.

MR. MASSON said it was not in the printers' hands, because it had not left the translator's hands yet.

MR. BOWELL: The document has not yet been placed before the Printing Committee.

MR. SPEAKER said his attention had been called to the matter a short time ago. He believed that when the document was brought in it was laid on the table, and was taken possession of by the hon. member for Terrebonne (Mr. Masson), who handed it to the right hon. member for Kingston (Sir John A. Macdonald.) The Clerk informed the latter that it was to be printed immediately, and requested it to be handed to him for the purpose of recording it. At six o'clock the document was in the hands of the Clerk, who did not understand that the hon. member for Kingston wished to have it returned to him. On the way to his room the Clerk was met by the Minister of Inland Revenue, who asked for the document for a moment. He could scarcely refuse, and he gave the hon. gentleman the document for a few moments. Then, not finding the document returned to him at the time he expected, he sent to enquire for it, and the Minister of Inland Revenue informed the messenger that some other member had taken it. Afterwards the Clerk, in looking up the document, found it in one of the rooms, where a gentleman was making a precis of it, an hon. member of the House being present at the time. The document went immediately to the hands of the translators, who were now working hard at it with a view of getting it at once into the hands of the printers, ready for to-morrow. He did not suppose it was the intention of anyone to do wrong, and the Clerk had no intention of treating the hon. member for Kingston with any discourtesy, and had no idea at all that he wished the document handed back to him.

MR. TUPPER.

MR. TUPPER said he did not wish to be understood as complaining of any discourtesy on the part of the Clerk; he had no intention of doing so; but he did complain that a document of a public character, brought down here by the Government, should be taken out of the hands of the right hon. gentleman who led the Opposition in this House, and communicated to that part of the Press which was in accord with the opinions of the hon. Minister, before a record was made of the document. They complained that no opportunity was permitted the Opposition to become acquainted with the document before it was communicated to members of the Press.

MR. MACKENZIE said the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Tupper) seemed to think no one had any right to the document except the hon. member for Kingston (Sir John A. Macdonald). The hon. member for East Quebec (Mr. Laurier) had just the same rights in this House as the member for Kingston. The hon. member for East Quebec had no opportunity of seeing the document before it was brought down, and he had precisely the same right to look at the paper as the hon. member for Kingston had. The document was not taken out of the right hon. gentleman's hands by the member for Quebec East, but by the Clerk, who was not aware that it was to be returned. He (Mr. Mackenzie) was surprised that such a charge should have been brought.

MR. MASSON said he admitted that the hon. the Minister of the Interior had a perfect right to obtain the paper, but he had not the right to take it out of the hands of the Clerk, who would, otherwise, have returned it to the right hon. member for Kingston, from whom he had borrowed it for a few moments. The hon. Minister, it appeared, handed the paper over to the Press; the consequence was, if it were necessary to have it translated to-morrow the translators would be delayed a whole evening waiting for it. The reproach he had to make to the hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue was that he had taken this document and had given it to his party Press to the exclusion of that part of the Press representing the Opposition.