

14th instant, at four o'clock p.m., for the purpose of giving the royal assent to the Bills which have passed the Senate and House of Commons during the present session.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

L. G. DRUMMOND, Major,
Governor General's Secretary.

The Honourable

The Speaker of the House of Commons.

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR—EMERGENCY RATION.

Mr. FREDERICK D. MONK (Jacques Cartier). Mr. Speaker, I now present to the House the motion which, I believe, was deferred from yesterday, which is a motion that a select committee of this House be chosen to investigate the charge which I had the honour of reading in this House yesterday. I would like to say one word in regard to the character of privilege which I gave to the motion which I made yesterday. Let me, in the first place, state to the House in regard to this character of privilege—

The PRIME MINISTER (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). If the hon. gentleman (Mr. Monk) will pardon me, I will just interrupt him for one moment. I observe that the printed notice given is for to-morrow, Friday.

Mr. MONK. There is an evident misprint. The House will remember that it was agreed yesterday that the motion should be taken into consideration to-day.

The PRIME MINISTER. All right.

Mr. MONK. If my hon. friend will look at the French version he will find that the notice was properly printed. The error evidently occurred at the Printing Bureau. As two days' notice is necessary for a motion of this kind, they evidently assumed that I had made a mistake, but, as the hon. gentleman will remember, we agreed to proceed to-day. As I was saying, there is, in our own parliament, in respect to motions having the character of motions of this kind, a greater latitude than that which exists in regard to similar motions in England. I find in the 'Parliamentary Procedure and Practice' of Sir John Bourinot, the following:

The precedents go to show that the Canadian House of Commons, in its desire to deal promptly with all questions affecting its members, has generally waived the strict rules which govern matters of privilege properly speaking, and given every possible facility for inquiry thereon. When a member proposes to make a motion touching another member, it is frequently found convenient that he should state his intentions in his place, and then give notice that he will move it when motions are called in due order on a subsequent day.

If the House takes into consideration the fact, which, I assume, is beyond doubt, that

Mr. SPEAKER

this statement which I made yesterday affects the position of a member of this House, not only in his capacity as a minister of the Crown, but also in his capacity as a member of this House, and if it furthermore recalls the preceding debate in which I was invited by the right hon. leader of the government (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) in this House to formulate a charge, it will become evident that it was in order for me yesterday to place my statement before the House in order to safeguard my own position irrespective of any other procedure which should apply in a case of this kind. In regard to the motion itself, I have followed pretty strictly the procedure which was adopted by our late lamented Speaker, Sir James Edgar, in 1892, when he made a charge of a character somewhat analogous to this. The only difference is, that, in 1892, by his motion, Sir James Edgar asked that the reference be made to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. It appears, however, if hon. gentlemen will refer to the debate upon that motion of his, that there was a general consensus of opinion that a question of that kind would only suffer delay by being referred to so large a committee, and there was a general consensus of opinion that upon a charge of this kind the reference could far more profitably be made to a select committee. There is, in the motion, as the House will observe, a request that all witnesses should give their evidence under oath. I am aware that under the statute of 1894 that is not absolutely necessary, but that the statute provides that any committee of this House may swear witnesses brought before it. It says it may swear them, but the general rule, I find from precedents in England, where a similar statute to that of 1894 has existed for some considerable time, is that the direction of the House has always been imperative on committees to swear witnesses. I thought it was better to incorporate that instruction in the reference. I have also added the word 'articles' to the customary words 'papers,' &c., which usually appear in motions of this kind, because it is possible that, in the present inquiry, apart from papers, statements, accounts, letters, &c., it may be necessary to order the production of certain articles before the committee. So much for the procedure; now, as to the substance of the charge itself. It seems to me that a member of this House, making a statement upon which is founded a charge for which he demands an investigation, should not prejudge the case. The statement is made; it is articulated carefully, and he should refrain from making a commentary upon evidence which has not been adduced. However, I think it is necessary to point out to the House some few of the particular points raised by the statement; in the first place, to show what was the motive which caused me to originate this procedure, and in the next place, in order that the House should be