

Bill (No. 13) to determine the length of the working day for workmen and labourers employed on public works.—(Mr. Lépine.)

REPORTS.

Report, returns and statistics of the Inland Revenues of the Dominion of Canada, for the fiscal year ended 30th June, 1895; Part I. Excise, etc.—(Mr. Costigan.)

Part II. Inspection of Weights and Measures and Gas, for the fiscal year ended 30th June, 1895.—(Mr. Costigan.)

Part III. Adulteration of Food, for the fiscal year ended 30th June, 1895.—(Mr. Costigan.)

MINISTERIAL RESIGNATIONS.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. Mr. Speaker, before I move the motion which appears in my name, I desire to make an announcement to the House. After several interviews between the Premier and the Governor General, the former waited upon His Excellency yesterday for the purpose of tendering his resignation. His Excellency, however, intimated that he was not at that moment prepared to receive it. The chief reason for this attitude on the part of His Excellency is that the Speech from the Throne, although presented to Parliament, has not yet been considered, nor an expression of opinion given by Parliament upon it. It is regarded by His Excellency as unfitting that the Premier, as head of the Administration responsible for that Speech, should not have a full opportunity of reviewing the situation and testing the feelings of Parliament thereon. Under these circumstances the Premier deems it his duty to endeavour, as far as in him lies, to reorganize the Government. I therefore move :

That when the House adjourns this day, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, the 14th instant.

Hon. gentlemen will see that the period that the Premier desired me to ask an adjournment for is made shorter than in the original motion, which made it to the 21st.

Mr. LAURIER. The announcement which has just been made by the hon. gentleman who, at this moment leads the House (Sir Adolphe Caron) puts a new face upon the crisis, and will to some extent—to a large extent—modify the views which otherwise I would have felt it my duty to express upon this occasion. I may say, however, to my hon. friend at once that I do not think it would be parliamentary or consistent with usages and rules of parliamentary government, to grant an adjournment later than to-morrow. It is a well-known, a well-settled law of Parliament, which has come down to us by a series of precedents extending as far back as the last century—that whenever a ministerial crisis arises while Parliament is sitting, it is the first

Mr. LANDERKIN.

duty of Parliament to extend to the Administration not only all possible courtesy, but every facility for accomplishing the task they have in hand of reconstituting the Government. But, at the same time, it is also the undoubted right of Parliament to be here from day to day, in order to be informed, from day to day, exactly of what progress is made. Now, while the statement made by the hon. gentleman has put a new face upon the crisis and modified, to a large extent, the position I had intended to take, I must, at the same time, express my regret that the promises which were made, not later than last night, by the First Minister in another House, are not being implemented. I understood from the statement of the First Minister last evening that he would be in a position to-day to say what progress he had made in filling up the vacant portfolios. Instead, however, we are asked again to wait until Tuesday. I call, again, the attention of my hon. friend to the fact that an adjournment of more than a day is altogether contrary to the spirit of our constitution. Let me call the attention of the House to the authorities on the subject. I quote from the book of Dr. Bourinot, page 795 :

If Parliament should be sitting on the occasion of a ministerial crisis, it is usual to adjourn from day to day, and questions to be asked with respect to the progress made with the formation of a ministry. The motion to adjourn may be made, when necessary, by one of the ex-Ministers, at the request of the person who has been entrusted with the duty of forming a ministry. In case of a reconstruction, it is customary for members of the former Cabinet to make such explanations as have been given them by the new Premier, since they hold their old offices until arrangements are finally made.

Therefore, nothing can be clearer than that the right and the duty of Parliament to-day is to exact from the Government that the adjournment should be only for one day, and on the morrow to be informed of what progress, if any, has been made, and if the task of reconstruction be not then completed, then again to adjourn until the following day, and so on, until the Government is in a position to tell us that the crisis is at an end or is not curable. And I must express my astonishment that my hon. friend should depart from what undoubtedly is the law and the constitution. Hon. gentlemen opposite, not only those who are in, but those who are out—not only the orthodox, but the dissenters; not only the steady, but the kickers—have always been most profuse in their declarations that, under all and every circumstance, they would stand by the constitution. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is an occasion for the hon. gentleman to show that he abides by the constitution. Why should we have this delay of four additional days? It is evident that the delay is but for the purpose of allowing the plotting