

THE SENATE.

Tuesday, April 13, 1915.

The Acting SPEAKER took the Chair at Eleven o'clock, a.m.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

DISQUALIFICATION OF SENATORS ROBERTSON AND MACDONALD.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED.

Hon. Mr. POWER presented the report of the Committee on Orders and Customs of the Senate and Privileges of Parliament, to whom was referred the report of the Clerk relative to the absence of the Hon. Jas. E. Robertson, and the Hon. W. J. Macdonald, during two consecutive sessions of Parliament, and moved that the report be concurred in.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—The report states that no good reason has been given by Dr. Robertson for his absence. I should have liked—and I think a great many other senators would have liked—to know what is meant by the expression “no good reasons.” We have not the reasons to criticise, but the committee says that no good reasons are given. The committee must understand that they are not the final judge in a matter of this kind. It must be decided by the whole House in full session. In this report we are blandly told that the Hon. Dr. Robertson has given no good reason why his seat should not be vacated. I do not appeal to the Government—because they have nothing to do with it—but I appeal to the House to see that the rights and privileges of the active members of this Chamber should be protected. I am not asking any favour for Dr. Robertson, but the committee should have placed before the House his letter, or whatever explanations he gave. It is not for the committee to say that the reasons are no good.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—He gave no reasons.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I might say, in answer to what has already been said, that the words “no good reason” are a clerical error in the report. No reason whatever has been given.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—That is something sensible. It is just as well to call attention to the expression used.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—The report will be corrected in that respect.

The report was amended, and concurred in.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I move the resolution declaring the seats of the Hon. Dr. Robertson, and Hon. W. J. Macdonald vacant.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—The hon. gentleman cannot proceed with his motion without giving notice. I ask for a ruling on that point.

Hon. Mr. POWER—This is a matter affecting the privileges of the House, and a question which affects the privileges of the House is always in order. No notice is required.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—I should like the hon. gentleman to point out in any of our books his authority, statutory or otherwise, for his position. If the hon. leader of the House proceeds with this resolution without giving notice, he is doing so against the rights and rules of the House.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—This motion requires no previous notice. It is simply a consequential motion which necessarily follows the report.

The motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I move that a copy of the resolution—

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—Wait a minute; the former motion was not carried.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—The Chair declared it carried, and I move that a copy of the said resolution be presented to His Royal Highness by such members of this House as are members of the Privy Council.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—I really do not understand the attitude of certain members of this House; still I can pass it over. I have had on the Order Paper notice of a resolution dealing indirectly with this situation. I was going to drop it to-day in view of the resolution brought up in the committee in regard to Hon. Dr. Robertson's seat. I have nothing to say with reference to the Hon. Mr. Macdonald's seat. That became ipso facto according to our constitution, vacant, but I have held and still hold that the seat of the Hon. Dr. Robertson is not yet vacant, and will not be until the present session of Parliament prorogues. I hold—as a great many other people hold—that an extraordinary session for any purpose, whether it be a war session or a session to award a railway contract—