

YUKON—MR. OGILVIE'S REPORTS.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER moved for :

Copies of all reports from Mr. Ogilvie, Commissioner of the Yukon district, not already brought down, together with such information as is available respecting the report referred to on page 5025 *Hansard*, May 10, 1900, and the delay in sending it forward.

He said : The acting Minister of the Interior (Hon. Mr. Sutherland) of last session will recollect that the session expired without his having been able to obtain from Mr. Ogilvie the report for which he asked by wire on several occasions ; and the object of this motion is to have that report brought down, if it reached the department, or, if it did not reach the department, to have brought down the explanation, or such papers or correspondence as may exist in regard to those inquiries of which we were advised from time to time. Before the motion is disposed of, I might take this opportunity of asking the hon. the Minister of the Interior whether there is any truth in the report that Mr. Ogilvie has resigned. The reason I bring this rumour to the attention of the House, is that, after it had circulated some days in the press, it was followed by the report that a gentleman—a Mr. Ross, I think—would probably be his successor, and I think this an opportune time to ask the hon. gentleman if there is anything in that report.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR (Hon. Clifford Sifton). In reply to the hon. gentleman, I beg to say that Mr. Ogilvie has not resigned, nor have I received any intimation from him that he intends to resign.

Motion agreed to.

LENGTH OF SPEECHES IN THE HOUSE.

Mr. JOHN CHARLTON (North Norfolk) moved :

1. That the practice of delivering speeches of great length in the Canadian House of Commons has introduced a discursive and irrelevant style of discussion, is destructive of pertinent debate upon public questions, leads to waste of valuable time, unreasonably increases the length of the sessions of parliament, is in marked contrast to the practice with regard to debate that prevails in the British House of Commons, and tends to repel the people of Canada from a careful and intelligent consideration of the proceedings of parliament.

2. That it is desirable that rules and modes of procedure be adopted limiting, under certain conditions, the length of speeches, and regulating the general conduct of debate in that regard.

3. That a special committee be formed to consider the question of parliamentary debate, length of speeches, general conduct of debate,

and proper methods of securing greater promptitude in the despatch of the business of the Canadian House of Commons, so far as they be consistent with parliamentary rights and the general interest of the public; and report its recommendations to this House.

4. That such special committee shall be composed of the following members : Messieurs Britton, Cowan, Haggart, Clarke, Parmalee, Monk, Madore, Fortin, Russell, Costigan, Tupper, LaRivière, Oliver, Prior and the mover.

He said : The motion which I am about to make, Mr. Speaker, was brought under the consideration of the House two sessions ago, and upon that occasion received unfavourable action. It was upon the Order paper last session, but owing to the delays, which this motion aims at, instituting proceedings to prevent, it was never reached. I am glad to have this opportunity, at this early stage of the session, of bringing the matter to the attention of the House again. The feeling, I think, in the House itself, is a pretty general one that some modification of our rules might possibly be made in order to facilitate the despatch of business, and correct some of the evils that have been gradually growing up in the procedure of parliament. The tendency to lengthy speeches has been a growing one, for several sessions past, and the length of the speeches has tended to the prolongation of debates often extending over days and weeks, consuming an enormous amount of time, and with practical results of very little consequence indeed.

The country, so far as my observation goes, looks upon the mode of conducting business in the House of Commons with a good deal of disfavour and dissatisfaction, and the methods which we have drifted into are of a character to repel the country from a proper consideration of the proceedings of parliament. We are gradually reaching a position when the proceedings of the House attract very little public attention, compared to their importance, owing to the prolongation of debates by speeches marked by their irrelevance and want of logical application to the case.

This resolution proposes no specific rules. It merely recites the facts with regard to the operations of this House and the methods we are falling into in the conduct of business. It proposes no line of conduct for the remedying of this evil except the indirect one, which, I trust, will bear direct and positive fruit, namely, the appointing of a committee to examine fully into the case, to take into careful consideration all the facts connected with our procedure, and the results which have flown from the application of these rules, and to consider whether it may not be practical, to some extent, to adopt a modification of these rules which will lead to a more rapid despatch of business and lessening the length of parliament and improve the conduct of business in such a way as will commend the approval of the government and the House,