

CANADA.

in a Resolution moved on Wednesday, the 2nd of April instant, by the Hon. Mr. Huntington, member for the County of Shefford, relating to the Canadian Pacific Railway, with power to send for persons, papers, and records: to report from time to time, and to report the evidence from time to time, and if need be to sit after the prorogation of Parliament.

"The members to compose the Committee were then named by the House as follows: Hon. Mr. Blanchet, Mr. Blake, and Hon. Messrs. Dorion (Napierville) Macdonald (Pictou), and Cameron (Cardwell)."

Of the five above-mentioned gentlemen three—viz. Mr. Cameron, Mr. Macdonald, and Mr. Blanchet—may be regarded as regular supporters of the Administration, and two, Mr. Blake and Mr. Dorion—as leading members of the Opposition.

On the debate which took place on this motion, I am informed by my Prime Minister, and here I must remind your Lordship that I have no other means of acquainting myself with what takes place in the House, as I am precluded from being present at its proceedings, and the newspaper reports are quite untrustworthy—that Mr. Mackenzie the leader of the Opposition, as well as Mr. Blake, Mr. Dorion, and Mr. Joly, eminent members of the same party, expressed themselves of opinion that the evidence tendered should be on oath, and the former gentleman further suggested, it being doubtful whether the Committee could sit after the House was once prorogued, that a Bill should be introduced expressly enabling it to do so. I shall have occasion subsequently to refer to this latter circumstance. As the necessity for sworn testimony in respect of such grave charges was generally obvious, an Oaths Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on the 18th of April, was passed through the Senate on the 29th, and received the Royal assent on the 3rd May. The time occupied in getting this measure through Parliament was pronounced unnecessarily long by many members of the Opposition.

Into the motives which induced me to sanction the Oaths Bill, and into its subsequent history, I need not enter, as the former are stated in my Despatch of the 3rd of May and the latter is recorded in your Lordship's communication of June 30th—but I may observe in passing, that amongst other respects in which my conduct has been criticised, the fact of my having communicated to you by the first opportunity a certified copy of the Oaths Bill has been a very general point of attack. I apprehend it will not be necessary to justify myself to your Lordship in this particular. My law-adviser had called my attention to the possibility of the Bill being illegal. Had perjured testimony been tendered under it, no proceedings could have been taken against the delinquent, and if, under these circumstances, I had wilfully withheld from the Home Government all cognizance of the Act, it would have been a gross dereliction of duty. To those in this country who have questioned my procedure it would be sufficient to reply, that I recognize no authority on this side of the Atlantic competent to instruct the Governor-General as to the nature of his correspondence with Her Majesty's Secretary of State.

In the meantime the Committee had met, and on the 5th of May had resolved, amongst other things, "That in view of the absence of Sir George Cartier and the Hon. J. J. C. Abbot, and the impossibility of the investigation with which the Committee is charged being carried on in a proper manner without an opportunity being afforded these gentlemen of being present and hearing the testimony adduced, it was advisable the Committee should adjourn until Wednesday, the 2nd day of July, if Parliament should be then in Session,"—a conclusion which appears to have been arrived at in the Committee by a majority of three to two. On the following day these recommendations were adopted by the House of Commons, on a vote of 107 to 76.

The ordinary business of the Session being now nearly concluded, and it having been admitted, I understand, by all parties, that the Committee could not sit after prorogation, it was arranged that the House should adjourn to such a day beyond the 2nd July as would enable the Committee to complete the investigation and to frame their Report. The date eventually determined on was the 13th of August, which was also settled as the day on which Parliament was to be prorogued.

As the nature of the understanding at the time in respect of this latter event has been warmly controverted, it is necessary that I should here acquaint your Lordship with the facts of the case so far as I am cognizant of them. Early in May—I forget the exact date—Sir John Macdonald waited upon me in my office, and having communicated to me the arrangements contemplated for the convenience of the Committee, informed me that he wished to take my pleasure as to the date of prorogation, mentioning the 13th of August as the one he desired to suggest. Having received my assent to this proposal, he repaired to the House of Commons, and announced from his place as leader of the House and the person responsible for the conduct of public business, that Parliament