

House stated that to his knowledge the absent member was aware that this proceeding was about to be taken to declare his seat vacant. On those occasions the Committee recommended the House to pass a resolution declaring the seat vacant, and the House thereupon ordered that notice be given to the member and a delay to take place before pronouncing upon this recommendation. In this case, as we have no evidence of any kind, except the certificate of the Clerk, which was before the House when it referred the matter to us, I think we ought to make some inquiry into the matter and give the absent member an opportunity to be heard. For these reasons, I am disposed to move that the Committee adjourn for three weeks, and that notice be given to Mr. Alexander of the statement of the Clerk, and then the Committee can report with confidence to the House and make a recommendation which, no doubt, the House will adopt. I therefore move that the subject-matter of the reference be taken into consideration this day three weeks, and that Mr. Alexander be notified.

HON. MR. MILLER—I am doubtful whether it would not be better to follow the established precedents. I think the evidence taken in the cases referred to was a matter of surplusage, and that the report of the Committee was like a rule *nisi*, and was so treated by the House. Although, from a cursory reading of the record, it might appear not as logical as the course suggested by the leader of the House, it is really a better procedure than the form proposed by him. I will not, however, set my opinion against his if he desires to press his view. It is not at all necessary that any member of the House should make a statement that Mr. Alexander is aware that his seat is vacant. It would be quite sufficient for Mr. Alexander to know that the House intends to come to the conclusion that his seat will be declared vacant two weeks hence unless he shows some reason why it should not be declared vacant.

HON. MR. DICKEY—Speaking from a very considerable experience, I think it is desirable, in all delicate questions such as this, affecting a member's seat, to keep to the precedents which have been established. We have had two cases of this

kind in our history. Reference has been made to the circumstances of a member stating that the absent senator knew his seat was vacant, but that is only corroborative of a fact which has already been made clear to us by the certificate of the officer of the House. There is no necessity for it; it is cumulative evidence of facts which we require to know before we take any proceedings. I would like to impress on the Committee the importance of keeping to precedent, and I would remind the leader of the House that this matter was well considered and discussed on the occasions which have been already referred to. The report of this Committee is not at all final; it must be acted on by the House, and before the House will consider the report notice must be given to the absent member, so that he will have an opportunity to raise any objection, if he desires to do so, before the adoption of the report.

HON. MR. BOTSFORD—The fact that this case has been referred to a Committee of the Whole House, with the Speaker as chairman, shows that it has been submitted to us to try it and decide it, and whenever the proceedings are completed and a decision arrived at the chairman will report that to the House and the report will be taken up and dealt with by the House. But any proceedings that may be necessary to elicit the facts ought to be before this Committee, and I entirely approve of the course which has been suggested by the leader of the House. I think it is reasonable, and in accordance with the mode of proceeding in all committees that information should be sought for by the Committee.

HON. MR. SCOTT—If in this particular instance the Committee were seized of facts similar to those which were brought before the Committee on the other occasions which have been mentioned, I would at once recognize the value of those precedents; but the House had before it yesterday all the information that this Committee has to-day. This Committee does not propose to give the House any additional information. In the other cases the Committee was able to advise the House that the member not only had been absent for two sessions consecutively, but that he knew his seat was about to be