

have been much better pleased if, before sending it to the Senate, the Committee on Privileges and Elections had brought in their report and taken action upon it. This House might safely adopt a bill which was considered sufficient for the vindication of the honor and character of members of the other Chamber, without going into details.

Hon. Mr. HAVILAND could not agree with the proposition that the House of Commons were the sole vindicators of their own honor.

Hon. Mr. HAYTHORNE—They are the best.

Hon. Mr. HAVILAND said they should vindicate their honor by resolution and not by an Act of Parliament requiring the sanction of the Senate, and on which they (the Senate) were bound to exercise their independent judgment. He could not support the bill in its present shape. If it contained a clause declaring that no member could avail himself of it unless he had resigned his seat, or his seat had been declared vacant by the House of Commons, he would support it, but to pass it without amendment would be to encourage the Committee on Privileges and Elections not to exercise their functions in the various cases referred to them. He would vote against the measure.

Hon. Mr. MILLER suggested, as a number of gentlemen were absent who would like to take part in this division, the bill should be allowed to stand till the next sitting, with the understanding if it should then pass its second reading no further objection would be offered. He presumed the Government did not desire to snap a judgment on such an important question as this.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT said he could scarcely believe the honorable Senator was in earnest in making such a request. Every member of the House was aware this debate was to take place and should be in his place if he desired to oppose it. The bill was brought down late in the session because it was only within a few days that it was found so many members were in this position. The Government could not have framed a bill more restrictive in its character. It left every honorable gentleman free to ascertain before next session whether he had contravened the Independence of Parliament Act or not. Public opinion would not justify any Government in again bringing forward a measure to protect gentlemen who knowingly offended against the law. Their seats were in no way protected by this bill. If, after the passage of this measure, they should sit for a single day in Parliament, they would be liable to the penalty,

and the punishment for one day would, he thought, be sufficient to prevent a breach of the laws.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON said, as the honorable Secretary of State insisted on proceeding with the measure, he would give his reasons for objecting to the bill in its present shape. If it had been made a condition precedent to taking advantage of the provisions of the measure, that gentlemen should vacate their seats, he (Mr. Macpherson) would have been willing to relieve them from the penalties they had incurred. There was, also, a very wide distinction to be drawn between some of the alleged cases and others. Those members of the House of Commons who had unintentionally and unwittingly violated the letter of the Act through the action of a partner or clerk, for selling a small quantity of merchandise to an official of the Government, not knowing or suspecting at the time that the purchaser was an official, or that the purchase was for the Government, occupied a very different position from those who knowingly offended. It was alleged that gentlemen occupying the highest positions in the other House, and in the country, held contracts with the Government, some of them being themselves. It was alleged, Cabinet Ministers. There was a vast difference between these, who, from the position they held, were able to enrich themselves at the expense of the country by many thousands of dollars, and the men who had unknowingly violated the letter of the Independence of Parliament Act. He maintained that the Senate should not relieve those who were guilty knowingly and corruptly in any way whatever. If it was true, as was alleged, that high officers were Government contractors, drawing large sums of money from the public treasury, under contracts which they made with themselves, they were guilty of most scandalous conduct, and he contended Parliament should not relieve them of the legal penalties which attached to their conduct. As he did not see that on this the last day of the session the bill could be amended in such a way as to relieve the innocent and leave the guilty to punishment, he would be obliged to record his vote against the bill.

Hon. Mr. MILLER said, as the Government had an accidental majority, he supposed there was no use in dividing the House.

The bill was read a second time on a division.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT moved the House into Committee on the bill.

Hon. Mr. BROWN said it was very diffi-