

ABSENCE OF MEMBERS.

Mr. TAYLOR. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I wish to read a paragraph that appears on the editorial page of the Montreal "Gazette" of yesterday, which is as follows :

Something like a trap appears to have been laid for the Conservative members at Ottawa. It is usual, towards the close of a session, and when all the Government business is done, for the Speaker to issue an order to pay the members their full indemnity. Speaker Edgar, it seems, gave instructions that all who had made a full "pair," should be paid, but no others. With the Government's large majority in the House of Commons, the Liberals could pair off with most of the Conservatives and still have more than a quorum to run through their deals.

I think it is due to you, Mr. Speaker, that I should say that if there is any blame to be attached to any person, none whatever can be attached to yourself. You have simply followed the course of your predecessors in years gone by. As I stated the other day, when the leader of the Government and the leader of the Opposition thought they saw the end of the session, they approached the Speaker, and asked his consent to allow the members to go in pairs. You, Sir, consented, as the Speakers in former years have done when the leader of the Government and the leader of the Opposition agreed, and pairs were made and certified by the Whips. This year, when you were spoken to, the Bill allowing the twelve days had not passed the Senate, and you declined to give your consent until the Bill had passed the Senate. When that was done, you allowed the members to go. So that I think the papers should not comment on your action, for if any one is to blame, it is not you.

Mr. FOSTER. If you would allow a suggestion on this matter, I think it would be well for this House to come to the conclusion at once to obey the law. The Speaker is continually getting into trouble, there is dissatisfaction on both sides of the House, and this practice has the effect of depleting Parliament at a time when it is important that members should be here. I know that members are anxious to get away, but the public business should be the paramount consideration, and I suggest whether it would not be better for us to take the dignified course and obey the law.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. What was the practice under the old Administration ?

Mr. FOSTER. The practice under the old Administration was this. Two days, or about that, not more, before it was certain that the House would prorogue, members were allowed to draw their indemnity.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. It was several days before.

Mr. FOSTER. Well, if my hon. friend wants to discuss the question, we will take it up. I was simply making a suggestion which I think is in accordance with the dignity of Parliament and in the public interest.

Mr. SPEAKER. I would like to state to the House that what was done by former

Mr. MULOCK.

Speakers and has been done by myself, as explained by the Whip of the Opposition, has been for the convenience of members and at the request of the leaders on both sides. It was done on this occasion at the request of the leader of the Opposition before he left. So that there is no difference, so far as I know, in what has been done on this occasion from what was done on former occasions. It is to a certain extent irregular, and I was not anxious to do it, and did it largely against my own wishes ; and I made up my mind, as I stated the other evening when the matter was spoken of unfavourably by a couple of members in Committee of Supply, that it would not occur again. I made up my mind to that course, and I am strengthened in that decision by the observations which have just been made.

LOAN OF \$15,000,000.

The House resolved itself into committee to consider a certain resolution respecting the raising by way of loan such sum or sums of money, not exceeding in the whole the sum of \$15,000,000.

(In the Committee.)

The MINISTER OF FINANCE (Mr. Fielding). This resolution calls for authority to be given to the Governor in Council to raise from time to time by way of loan sums not exceeding \$15,000,000. Of course, by the House and by those familiar with questions of public finance, the nature of a Loan Bill is well understood ; but there is a tendency outside to confuse it with an Appropriation Bill, and to regard a measure of this kind as an authority to expend so many millions in excess of what has already been agreed upon. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to emphasize the fact that a Loan Bill is not an Appropriation Bill, and this measure will not in itself give the Government authority to expend one dollar. Parliament from time to time, in addition to the ordinary expenditures of the country, which are payable out of revenue, votes sums of money for the public service which are chargeable to capital account ; but at the time these appropriations are made, provision is not made for raising the money. That has always to be dealt with as a separate matter, and hence the passage of the Loan Bills from time to time. It is not expedient to have loans passed every session, and consequently these Bills are only introduced at intervals and for a sufficient sum to meet the wants of the Dominion for a reasonable time. The last Loan Bill was passed in 1888. At that time there was an outstanding authority to borrow to the extent of \$26,082,681, as shown by the Public Accounts of the 30th June, 1887. Some change in the borrowing power took place between that time and the session of 1888, but substantially the position was the same. In 1888, however, an Act was passed granting borrowing powers to the extent of \$25,000,000, which, adding the \$26,000,000 already outstanding, raised the borrowing powers of the Government to \$51,000,000. We do not think it is necessary that we should ask for any such authority, but we