

On the 1st June, a Report, since designated "Dr. Cook's Report from the Sub-Committee," was presented, received, and ordered to be printed for the use of the members; and on the 8th, on the motion of the Honble. Mr. Cochran, who had seconded the counter motion, it was adopted by a majority of about twelve to eight, with spaces in it still vacant for figures, and with instructions to the Sub-Committee to fill up the blanks.

Before these blanks were filled up, the Acting Secretary furnished the "Quebec Mercury" (of which Paper he is Editor) with the Report as part of the Minutes, and it was published on the 9th, in a Supplement of that Journal, without signature, and incomplete, *two days before the departure of the English Mail.*

It will be observed that the informal vagueness in the terms of their appointment, invested the Sub-Committee with a sort of *cart-blanche* to select articles according to their fancy, to construe as false and injurious even those which were *injuriously true*, and, without disclosing their selections, to comment upon them in the exercise of a secret censorship, if only an over-bearing majority would ratify their interpretations, and adopt their defence without either information or enquiry. No specific statements in the newspapers were referred to them, neither have they referred to any as false and injurious, nor even intimated whether and where they found a single one of that description. Nothing of the kind is in the possession of, nor recognized by, the Committee of Relief; and yet when the Sub-Committee upon false and injurious statements bring in their Report, designated "*Dr. Cook's Report from the Sub-Committee,*" every effort to procure the information requisite to the formation of an opinion is repressed,—every attempt on the part of the minority, to obtain proper access to the specific statements reported upon, and in regard of which a vote is to be given, is opposed.

It was severally moved by Mr. Hale, seconded by Mr. Sheriff Sewell,—“That the statements reported upon as false and injurious by the Sub-Committee appointed on the 18th ultimo, be now read:” and again, “That the Sub-Committee appointed on the 18th ultimo be instructed to communicate to this Committee the particular statements reported upon by them as false and injurious, to enable this Committee to form an opinion.”*

But both of these were negatived, and the Committee were forced to “open their mouth and shut their eyes” and swallow the Report *in globo!* †

* “Where papers are laid before the house, or referred to a Committee for their consideration, every member has a *right* to have these papers read through once at the Table, before he can be compelled to form an opinion.”

“When papers were referred to a Committee they were used formerly to be first read, but of late only the titles; unless a member insisted that they should be read, and then *nobody could oppose it.*”

Hatsell, vol. ii., p. 157.

† “Mr. Onslow used frequently to assign another reason for adhering strictly to the rules and orders of the House. He said it was a maxim he had often heard, when he was a young man, from old and experienced members—‘That nothing tended more to throw power into the hands of the Administration, and those who acted with the majority of the House of Commons, than a neglect of, or departure from, these rules—That the forms of proceeding as instituted by our ancestors, operated as a check and control on the actions of ministers; and that

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