

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. That subject was pretty well discussed, and I thought the Committee became finally reconciled to the idea of dispensing with the wax.

Mr. CASEY. The only reason was that the returning officer might not be familiar with the use of wax.

Bill reported.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON moved the adjournment of the House.

Motion agreed to ; and House adjourned at 11.40 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, 16th September, 1891.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

PRAYERS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPT.—CONTRACTS.

Mr. GIROUARD presented the seventh report of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, with minutes of evidence and proceedings.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) I desire to ask the hon. gentleman if the report of to-day's proceedings is included, so that the minority report may appear ?

Mr. GIROUARD. It is brought down as a portion of the proceedings of the general Committee, together with all the evidence. I was going to ask hon. gentlemen opposite what day would be convenient for the discussion of this report ?

Mr. LAURIER. Any time will be convenient to us, to-morrow or Friday.

Mr. GIROUARD. It will take at least a couple of days before the report is translated into French. I do not know whether the discussion can take place this week on that account.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. LAURIER. Perhaps the proceedings might be translated to-morrow, and possibly Friday might be a good day to commence the discussion.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. After a little reflection we can make an arrangement during the afternoon on the subject. It must be remembered the evidence has not yet been distributed. No doubt hon. members have followed the proceedings of the Committee and have read the evidence.

Mr. LAURIER. If the hon. gentleman will suggest a day, the subject may be brought up at 8 o'clock.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Yes.

THE MEMBER FOR EAST NORTHUMBERLAND.

Mr. LAURIER. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I desire to direct the attention of the leader of the House to the report presented yesterday from the special Committee to investigate into the charges preferred against the hon. member for East Northumberland. We have yet to fix a day for the discussion.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I understand we will be able to take that to-morrow.

Mr. LAURIER. Yes.

Mr. SKINNER. As the present Chairman of the Committee, I spoke to the members of the Committee on the other side of the House on the subject, and they said that, other things being equal, it could come up to-morrow.

CANADIAN SEALERS CAPTURED.

Mr. McDUGALL (Cape Breton). I wish to ask the special leave of the House to bring a matter of some importance to the notice of the Government. It is with respect to the seizure of Canadian sealing vessels on the Pacific coast by Russian authorities. I will not have an opportunity of asking information from the Government under the regular rules unless the House will allow me the special privilege of doing so now. Now, I repeat that it is a matter of very great importance. I notice in a report published in a newspaper in my county the following :—

"The startling news has been received in Cape Breton from Victoria, B.C., brought there by a sealing schooner, that Captain Alex. McLean, and his brother Captain Dan, Cape Bretonians, have been captured by the Russians, and are now prisoners at Copper Island. Further, that Captain Dan was caught ashore at Copper Island, and before he and his boat's crew could reach their vessel, which was anchored some distance off, they were fired upon, a ball knocking off Captain Dan's knee-cap and another piercing his left hand, after which he was made a prisoner, but while the Russians were taking him ashore, the crew put off with the boat and escaped with their vessel. It would appear from the following taken from a British Columbia paper, 'that the schooner *Hamilton Lewis*, Captain Alex. McLean, and the crew were seized and are also in the hands of the Russians. The captain of the schooner *Theresa*, which arrived in port to-day, September 2, reports that on Saturday, August 12, Captain McLean, of the *Rich*, was ashore with two boats, and just as they were returning ten Russian guards rushed on them over the sand hills and started shooting with rifles. They fired several rounds, and though many bullets hit the boats, only Captain McLean was struck. His knee-cap was smashed and his left hand pierced. Then both schooners made off to their position, 12 miles from Copper Island. The Russian man-of-war *Alert*, 13 guns, the next day steamed out after the three schooners at full speed. All of them put on every stitch of canvass, and for 12 miles there was a long chase, the *Alert* firing blank cartridges all the time. Then the wind fell off, and she came up to within a mile of the *Lewis*, and fired a ball which smashed the bowsprit in halves and brought her to. The *Theresa* then saw two boats pull off from the *Alert* and board the *Lewis*, which 10 minutes afterwards was taken in tow and rapidly disappeared.' It would appear from the above that Captain McLean, his vessel, crew, and catch of seals are in the hands of the Russians, as well as the wounded man, Captain Dan McLean, whose vessel and crew escaped. The position of the McLean boys is a most unfortunate one and there appears to be no remedy for it, as they were fishing inside of the Russian three-mile limit."

I should like to ask the Government, in view of the circumstances, if it would not be possible to make enquiries with a view of ascertaining whether the report that these men were fishing within the three-mile limit is correct or not ; and if, on investigating the matter, any relief can be given to these people ? They are people of my own county, and I understand several of the crew are from my county also. It is a matter of very great alarm to their friends, and I beg to ask the immediate attention of the Government to their case.

Mr. TUPPER. I may be permitted to say in answer to the hon. gentleman that the subject in some respects concerns the department over which I preside, and that the newspaper report to which