

of the House, and to speak as though the whole British constitution were coming down in battered fragments about our ears, because we postponed the publication of a debate until the House has an opportunity to decide whether it should appear or not. Suppose that in the course of a debate some very scandalous thing had been said—and there are hon. gentlemen here who remember debates that took place in past years, when very objectionable language was used—and suppose that no notice happened to be taken of that at the time, is it contended that the committee would have no right, when they came to realize, afterwards, what the effect of this language was, to recommend to the House that that debate should not appear, or that a particular speech should not be published? There is this fact, that more than once—and the hon. gentleman from Victoria must know it quite as well as I do—there have been instances in which speeches, and portions of speeches, have been suppressed, on the recommendation of the chairman of the committee alone, and no question was raised about it. We were not told that the British Constitution was going to pieces.

HON. MR. KAULBACH—That is all wrong, though.

HON. MR. POWER—It may or may not be; the thing had been done before and in a more aggravated form than it has been in this case, and I fail to see that any very serious injury has been done. Of course, if we could have foreseen that the non-publication of that interesting debate was going to excite so much feeling amongst the members of the House who are such warm lovers of British liberty, the committee probably would not have made the recommendation that they did; but it may be that some gentlemen may have occasion to regret that the House has taken the position which is now suggested with respect to this matter. If it is said that the committee which is appointed to supervise the publication of our debates has not the right of reserving the publication of one speech, or a number of speeches, until the House has decided upon the question, I think that occasions may arise when that will be found to be a bad rule.

HON. MR. MACDONALD (B.C.)—I am bound to believe that the committee acted with the best intentions. There is nothing personal to them in the opposition to this report, but at the same time, I think they acted injudiciously, and exceeded their authority. The statement of the hon. gentleman from Halifax that the reporter met him and suggested to him to withhold the report—

HON. MR. POWER—I never said anything of the sort. I said that the reporter made the suggestion to the chairman of the committee.

HON. MR. MACDONALD—The reporter's duty was to report the debates of the House, and he had no right to make a suggestion of the kind. It makes the matter ten times worse if there has been collusion between the official reporter and any member of the committee.

HON. MR. BOTSFORD—There is no question in my opinion but that the committee had a right to recommend, as they have recommended, that a certain portion of a debate be omitted; the only question is, whether it was judicious to delay the publication of the report, as has been done. The House has power to decide the question, it is true, but the committee have power to recommend to the House to suppress or delay the publication of any particular report. The difficulty has arisen mainly from the adjournment of the Senate. If the opinion of the Senate could have been got in a reasonable time there would have been very little delay. Under the circumstances, the question before us is simply whether the report should be adopted or not.

HON. MR. ALMON—I want to know if any person thinks that a private member of a committee has a right to meet one of the official reporters and tell him to suppress a report of a debate until the decision of the House is obtained? I do not think any one should undertake to do so.

The Senate divided on the motion, which was rejected by the following vote:—

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