

HON. MR. ABBOTT moved the third reading of the Bill.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read the third time and passed.

BILLS OF EXCHANGE AND PROMISSORY NOTES BILL.

COMMITTEE POSTPONED.

The Order of the Day being read,—House again in Committee of the Whole on Bill (6) "An Act relating to Bills of Exchange, Cheques and Promissory Notes."

HON. MR. KAULBACH said: Many of the gentlemen who are interested in the discussion of this Bill are absent, and I think it would be well, if my hon. friend considers it will not interfere with the public business, that the consideration of the Bill be postponed until after the adjournment.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—My hon. friend anticipates what I was about to say to the House with regard to this Bill. A good many of the gentleman who take an interest, and some who took part in the debate yesterday, have left already, but they called upon me and asked as a particular favor that the Bill should not be proceeded with in their absence. I therefore move that the Order of the Day be discharged, and that it be an order for the 10th of April next.

HON. MR. HAYTHORNE—Will the hon. gentleman, during the recess, see that the promised slips showing the changes in the law are distributed to members.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—My hon. friend does not quite realize the difficulty. There is no statute, nothing to which we can refer as containing the existing law, and, therefore, it is practically impossible to do what I did on one occasion—I think it was when the Customs Act was before us two or three years ago—print the Bill and the existing law in parallel columns, showing the difference between them. The changes in the law are not absolute, positive changes, except in very minor particulars. Where they appear to change the law they really do scarcely anything more than settle disputed points. There is really no absolutely new legislation in the Bill, from one end to the other. I

have a further table from the Minister of Justice, showing the clauses in which there is some difference between the English law and our law, and those of the clauses in which we have what may be called, in one sense, a new enactment, inasmuch as it settles difficulties that occurred previously. I would be happy to communicate that to my hon. friend if he desires it, but I do not think I could profitably undertake to publish a regular statement of the changes, because there are no data from which to commence. There is no clear statement of the present law on promissory notes in existence. It is taken from judgments, from decisions of the courts, from custom, from the code of Quebec, from the statutes in different Provinces, and largely from the existing definition of the law in England; but I shall be prepared, as I was yesterday, to point out in advance, on any clause being called, exactly what alteration, if any, is made by that clause in what is generally understood to be the existing law. I do not think I could do more than that.

HON. MR. HAYTHORNE—The hon. gentleman congratulates the House on the forward state of the business, but I beg to point out that there are two important private notices of motion which have been postponed from day to day. One of them is in the hands of my hon. friend from Alberton, and is a motion which is of very special interest to the people of Prince Edward Island. I cannot, of course, say whether my hon. friend has been induced to postpone that motion in consequence of the adjournment, or what other cause, but I can only say that the people of Prince Edward Island take a very keen interest in the motion of which the hon. gentleman has given notice and which has been postponed more than once.

HON. MR. KAULBACH—I am glad to hear my hon. friend speak that way. On former occasions, when this matter came up, I did not find him taking such a keen interest in it as he does now. With reference to the measure before us, relating to bills of exchange and promissory notes, I wish to know if the French code has been brought in harmony with the law of the Dominion on this subject? I know there is some difference between the law of Quebec and the laws of the other Provinces.