

submit the Bill to this committee, trusting it will not be treated in the humiliating and ignominious manner proposed by the hon. member for South Norfolk, but that it will receive the consideration of the committee. If there is anything in the measure worthy of consideration, adopt it. If not, reject it, but at least give it the courtesy of consideration.

Committee rose.

COMPLAINT AGAINST JUDGE ELLIOTT.

House resumed consideration of the proposed motion of Mr. Lister :

That a copy of the petition laid upon the Table of this House from Thomas Hobbs and others, complaining of the conduct of William Elliott, Esquire, county judge of Middlesex, in relation to the revision of the voters' list for the Electoral District of the City of London, be forthwith furnished him for his information, and to enable him to make such statement or answer to the charges therein contained as he may deem proper, and that the said petition and any such answer as the said judge may make be referred to a special committee of this House, to enquire into the truth of the several allegations therein, with a view of finding whether such charges should be investigated by a commission.

Mr. MULOCK. The petition which was laid upon the Table of this House on the 30th of March last, contains certain grave charges reflecting upon the conduct of a dignitary in the service of this country, the judge of the County Court of the County of Middlesex, not strictly in his capacity as a County Court judge but in his capacity as a judge interpreting the Franchise Act. That petition received due publicity through the journals of this country. It was endeavoured at an early date to bring it to the attention of this House in order that the serious charges involved in it might at the earliest possible moment receive that consideration which they demanded ; but for certain reasons, which appear to justify the Administration in taking the course they did, or in consequence of a ruling which hardly seemed to be in harmony with precedent, but to which the House notwithstanding bowed submissively, the consideration of the petition was not given that priority to which its importance entitled it, and through the tedious process of postponement, which the rules of this House require, it is now approaching almost the close of the session before one of the most serious charges that could be brought before Parliament is investigated. The Government is responsible in this regard. The Government had it in its own power, by acquiescence, to allow this motion to be entertained at an earlier date, and after succeeding in having it postponed to this late hour, I would not be surprised to find them complain that the lateness of the session is a sufficient reason for dismissing the application. I am surprised that up to this moment, notwithstanding the great publicity that has been given to this petition, and the charges involved, not one person in this House, or out of it, has been found courageous or rash enough to give a denial to the charges. They stand before the country to-day uncontradicted by any one in the House or out of it ; and if ever there was a confession of weakness it was furnished by the hon. gentleman on the other side of the House who has ventured to defend the action of the judge, and who, I suppose, ransacked all possible resources of ingenuity in order to discover reasons for denying this application.

His defences were very similar to those that cropped up on another important occasion to which the rules of this House will not allow me more particularly to refer ; but when I heard the exceptions taken that the charges were too vague, that they were not specific, that the petitioners were not respectable, and so on, I was very much reminded of the excuses offered when a motion was made on a certain occasion to investigate charges against the Postmaster General. Mr. Speaker, what are the charges made against this judicial officer, and how did the member for East Lambton (Mr. Moncrieff) endeavour to controvert them ? Without quoting at this stage the exact language of the petition, it is sufficient to say that the petition was presented to this House under the signature of a large number of respectable citizens of the city of London, a petition which contained on its face the most specific charges that could be very well framed. I fail to understand how the English language could supply more apt terms for the description of the offences. The offences set forth in that petition are, that this judge was partisan in the discharge of his duties, and acted in a partisan manner, that he publicly denounced a certain political party in the city of London, that he publicly stated that means would be found for seating Mr. Carling ; that this judge pending the determination of this question, pending the election, and prior to his giving judgment, wrote inflammatory or partisan articles and published them in the press of the city of London ; that all these things were done by him whilst he was seized of this question in his judicial capacity, and bound as a man of honour to administer justice impartially between the two parties, and so far as any action on his part went, to keep his mind judicially unbiassed, and in an unprejudiced condition. That is the simple statement contained in the petition, those are the charges that are made against this official ; and I suppose the hon. member for East Lambton, being the one, perhaps, of all others in this House, most deeply concerned in presenting the best face of the case on behalf of the judge, has advanced the best arguments possible why there should not be an enquiry. For I would remind the hon. gentleman and this House that the petition in question does not ask that the judge be convicted at this stage ; the motion asks nothing of that kind. The motion in question is couched in the most temperate language, and I think presents a very fair proposition to this House ; that motion is that in view of these charges made in this House, accredited, as they are by the petitioners in question, these charges are of that serious character that the House would not be justified in passing them by in silence, but should call upon the official in question to make answer to them, if an answer he can make. That is a fair proposition, and that is one of the least of the duties that this House can discharge under the circumstances. Now, what were the objections offered by the hon. member for East Lambton ? He stated that in connection with the London election the only disgraceful thing he could discover was the action of the Liberal press. Instead of confining himself to defending the accused, he endeavours, I presume from tactical motives, to carry the war into Africa, to raise some irrelevant issue, with a view to diverting attention from the motion itself. I am not aware that the