

know at once why the Act was passed. It was passed for the purpose of placing in the hands of the Speaker of the day control of the finances of the House, in order to afford a speedy and prompt payment of the officers and servants. That was the great object of the Internal Economy Act. He quite agreed that, when a Speaker knew that a new Parliament had been called into existence, and that he would in the order of things give way to a successor, he should not perform, or for a moment dream of performing, the so-called duty of appointment to vacancies. The member for Gloucester spoke of the Statute as being a law respecting which they had no precedents, to govern them. He begged to tell the hon. gentleman of a precedent which was made in 1874. Just as there was the other day in September last, there was then a Speaker representing a defunct Parliament. He retained office until his successor was appointed, and, during the interregnum between the two Sessions, he held in his hands opportunities of making appointments to offices of very considerable importance in the House. There was an important vacancy which had occurred at that time. He thought, if he recollected aright, the office was that of Accountant to the House.

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MR. COCKBURN said at any rate a very important vacancy occurred at that time, and the Speaker was warned by two Ministers of the Crown against making the appointment to the vacant office. The answer given was that he had no thought of appointing to that office; that he felt that his functions of appointment under the Statute had ceased, and that he did not dream of making any further appointments. He presented this precedent to Mr. Speaker, as the other one had been referred to, and he trusted that, when that hon. gentleman was in the sear and yellow of his leaf—and he hoped it would be very green for a long time—he would remember the two precedents and make his choice between them.

MR. MACKENZIE said they were all exceedingly obliged to the

hon. member for Gloucester for his calm, temperate, and able statement of the case. The subject would, of course, come up again when the papers were before them. He rose then merely for the purpose of asking the hon. gentleman opposite for information on one or two points which he had forgotten. The hon. member for Gloucester stated, in the course of his speech, that the Clerk had informed him that he had received an order from the Prime Minister, directing him not to recognize any of these appointments. The hon. gentleman himself said he gave the Clerk an opinion. He (Mr. Mackenzie) desired to know whether it was an order, as stated, or simply an opinion of what he believed to be the correct course in the case. Then the hon. gentleman had failed to inform the House concerning Mr. Piché's case. He had asked the Speaker, two days before, if he had received Mr. Piché's resignation, and he said that he had not. He then asked him if he had dismissed Mr. Piché, and he said he had not. He was unable to elicit any information whatever from the Speaker concerning the resignation, removal, or dismissal of one of their chief officers, and to that hour the House had received no information on that point. Hon. gentlemen opposite must give them that information. The House was entitled to the fullest information concerning the disposal of this matter. They found, whether the interpretation they put upon the Act was correct or not, that there would be very considerable inconvenience were the interpretation of the hon. gentleman correct. Under that interpretation, the Act would be exceedingly inadequate for the fulfilment of the object for which it was framed. The 10th section of the Act directed that immediately after the passing of this Act the Clerk of the House of Commons shall take and subscribe before the Speaker the oath of allegiance, and all other officers, clerks and messengers of the House of Commons shall take and subscribe before the Clerk of the House of Commons the oath of allegiance; and every officer, clerk or messenger who shall hereafter be appointed shall, before entering upon the duties of his office, take and subscribe the same oath; and the Clerk of the House of Commons shall keep a register