

terday, as well as the subject of debate in the Legislative chamber, the galleries, floor and corridors of which were crowded as they rarely have been before.

The matter of debate was the procedure to be followed in making the investigation that everyone recognized as inevitable and necessary. The Premier proposed that the whole question should be removed from the political arena and referred to a commission consisting of "two of the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court of Judicature." This term includes the Chief Justice of Ontario, the heads of the three divisions of the High Court of Justice, that is, Chief Justice Moss, the Chancellor Sir John Boyd, Chief Justice Falconbridge. The commission might therefore be made up of an

In the course of his speech which was quite evidently that of a man fully seized of the responsibility attaching to his words and of the grave nature of the subject before the House, the Premier declared that the Government proposed to govern the country as honorable men, with characters unimpeached, or not at all. As his speech will show, he made it thoroughly understood that if the Government were proven guilty of the charges made by Mr. Gamey, they did not wish any longer to remain in office. He asked that the House adjourn for three weeks to enable the commission to perform its duties.

Mr. Whitney Wants a Committee.

Mr. Whitney, in his reply, took immediate issue with the Premier as to the method of investigation. He declared that a reference to a commission of Judges, rather than to a committee of the House, was "loading the dice," and announced his intention of forcing a division along that line. Continuing his speech, he expressed his belief that not Mr. Stratton alone, but the Premier, the Attorney-General and the Commissioner of Public Works must make answer to the allegations contained in Mr. Gamey's charges.

Mr. Latchford, in a few spirited words, repudiated Mr. Whitney's further statement that he, Mr. Latchford, knew Mr. Gamey was being "influenced" to support the Government.

At very great length Mr. Whitney argued in favor of a reference to the House Committee of Privileges and Elections.

No Slang-whanging Investigation.

Attorney-General Gibson, who followed for the Government, at once took Mr. Whitney to task for his assertion that the appointment of two of the Chief Justices of Ontario to try the issues raised in Mr. Gamey's statement would constitute a loading of the dice. He defended the judiciary warmly, and referred derisively to Mr. Whitney's own speech as evidence that if the inquiry were conducted by a House committee, while the Legislature remained in session from day to day, the proceedings would consist of the taking of evidence by the committee in the morning, and slang-whanging in the House itself during the afternoon.

Mr. Sutherland's Indefinite Charge.

The speaker, when 6 o'clock, the hour of adjournment, was reached, was Mr. Donald Sutherland, Conservative member for South Oxford, who in the course of his remarks declared that he, too, had been approached with the object of securing his support for the Government. He did not go into details, however, as to the transaction, and made no specific statements.

The debate will be continued at 3 o'clock this afternoon. The programme of the Opposition is not definitely known, but it is understood the debate will be a prolonged one.

THE PREMIER'S PROPOSAL.

Premier Ross, immediately after the orders of the day had been reached, rose and made his statement as follows:—Mr. Speaker, before proceeding with the orders of the day I desire to address the House briefly for a few moments with regard to the matter brought before us yesterday afternoon by the hon. member for Manitoulin. The charges made by the hon. member were of a very serious character. Quite unexpected, as you can well understand; charges that impressed both sides of the House somewhat seriously, and charges which have given us, very naturally, as mem-

bers of the Government, some concern.

I stated to the House yesterday afternoon that my esteemed colleague, the Provincial Secretary, denied these charges in toto, particularly with reference to that portion of them which was of a serious and corrupt character. I have reason to believe that the statement of my colleague is true. I have unbounded confidence in his honor, in his integrity and in his fidelity—to his oath of office, to the serious responsibility which he has assumed as a member of the Government and as an adviser of the Crown. In the long time

stood in regard to this matter.

Government propose to proceed immediately with that investigation—that as fast as is consistent with the interests of justice, and with such facilities for examination as circumstances warrant.

A Royal Commission.

We are proceeding by a royal commission. I mentioned yesterday that was a matter which might very well be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, or a special committee. Either of these two methods would involve considerable delay, and fear. The year is advancing. It is important that public business should be disposed of for the convenience of members and the convenience of the country. We do not want to delay. Moreover, we think that the examination by a commission of Judges of the High Court will be more satisfactory to the parties concerned. The Committee of Privileges and Elections is necessarily a committee composed of a majority of supporters of the Government, and any special committee that would be given would be similarly composed. The investigation, of course, would be open. The committee have the power to swear witnesses, send for persons, papers, and so forth. They have large powers, but not larger powers than the statute enables us to give a commission. No matter what their finding might be, if they exculpated the Provincial Secretary it would be said to be a partisan finding. Those who are prone to believe any charge against the Government would disbelieve the finding of the commission, and instead of us settling what is at best a disagreeable matter, the evidence taken before the committee and the report of the committee would be still under that newspaper criticism and that partisan criticism which, in my humble opinion, does not make for the public interest.

Judges Above Suspicion.

Happily for us in this country, judicial decisions are received with a great deal of confidence, whether those decisions affect civil or criminal matters. Even where political interests are involved, seldom is it said that an election court displays a partisan character in this Province. I have confidence in asking this House to approve of the appointment, first, because of the high character of our High Court Judges, in fact of all our Judges; secondly, because of the confidence which the people have in any conclusion they may come to; thirdly, because I believe it is the most expeditious way of getting at the questions involved; and, fourthly, because I believe that their conclusion will command the confidence of the country, no matter what their decision may be.

Some Instances Cited.

I think that position is conclusive, I think it is unanswerable. It has prevailed in other places. Commissions have been appointed elsewhere, and their findings have been regarded with great satisfaction. For instance,