CHAP. 83.

An Act for enabling the House of Commons and any Committee thereof to administer Oaths to Witnesses. A.D. 1871.

[16th August 1871.]

WHEREAS it is expedient that the House of Commons, and any committee thereof, should respectively have the powers of administering oaths to witnesses:

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Examination of witnesses on oath by the House of Commons and committees of the House.

1. The House of Commons may administer an oath to the witnesses examined at the bar of the said House.

Any committee of the House of Commons may administer an oath to the witnesses examined before such committee.

Any person examined as aforesaid who wilfully gives false evidence shall be liable to the penalties of perjury.

Where any witness to be examined under this Act conscientiously objects to take an oath, he may make his solemn affirmation and declaration in the words following:

'I, A.B., do solemnly, sincerely, and truly affirm and declare that 'the taking of any oath is according to my religious belief un- 'lawful, and I do also solemnly, sincerely, and truly affirm and 'declare,' &c.:

any solemn affirmation and declaration so made shall be of the same force and effect, and shall entail the same consequences as an oath taken in the usual form.

Any oath or affirmation under this Act may be administered by the Speaker of the House of Commons, or by such person or persons as may from time to time be appointed for that purpose either by him or by any Standing Order or other Order of the said House.

A.D. 1871.

Repeal of section 1 of 21 & 22 Vict. c. 78.

2. The first section of the Act of the session of the twenty-first and twenty-second years of Her present Majesty, chapter seventy-eight, intituled "An Act to enable the Committees of both Houses "of Parliament to administer oaths to witnesses in certain cases," and the third section of the Act of the present Session of Parliament, chapter three, intituled "An Act to empower Committees "on Bills confirming or giving effect to Provisional Orders to "award costs and examine witnesses on oath," shall be repealed:

Provided that the repeal enacted in this Act shall not affect any penalty, forfeiture, or other punishment incurred in respect of any offence against the sections hereby repealed, or the institution of any legal proceeding, or any other remedy for ascertaining, enforcing, or recovering any such penalty, forfeiture, or punishment as aforesaid.

As to additional power or privilege of House of Commons.

3. Nothing in this Act contained shall be held to confer any additional or further power or privilege on the Commons House of Parliament with reference to impeachment or other criminal jurisdiction or otherwise howsoever than is herein expressly enacted.

Short title of Act.

4. This Act may be cited as "The Parliamentary Witnesses Oaths Act, 1871."

LONDON: Printed by GEORGE EDWARD EYRE and WILLIAM SPOTTISWOODE,
Printers to the Queen's most Excellent Majesty. 1871.