

of great assistance to those who were promoting such railways; while, if unfavourable, it might on the other hand be the means of preventing the useless expenditure of a very large amount of money. At the present time throughout the country, from one end to the other, projects of this kind were springing up. It would be not only unnecessary, but an insult to the intelligence of hon. gentlemen, that they should take up their time in discussing the advantages which must inevitably flow from the construction of railways through the newly settled parts of the country. As to that, he thought there could not be two opinions; and the regret was universal that hitherto he had not been able to devise any practicable means for the construction of such railways. By resorting, however, to the system of wooden railways, he was satisfied that he had placed within our means the construction in poorer localities of roads which would secure the end we all so much desired. During the past summer he had had occasion to devote a good deal of attention to this subject, and he had also visited the wooden railway which had been in operation for three or four years in the state of New York, known as the Clifton Railway. From what he had seen, he was satisfied that these railways were capable of performing all that was claimed for them, and many other gentlemen of practical experience and having an intimate knowledge of railways had visited this work and had come to the same conclusion as to the merits of the system. We had also before us the action of the Quebec Legislature and people, who were now pushing vigorously forward several projects of this kind. He thought, if we followed their example, we would be doing something that would very materially benefit this Province. He might also mention that he was informed that, at a short distance from Clifton, they had commenced to build another wooden railway. This afforded strong proof that those who had the best opportunity of judging of the merits of these works were satisfied that they were capable of doing all that was represented. He thought it was quite unnecessary that he should take up time further in arguments to show that this Committee ought to be granted an order to examine into the subject.

Mr. HAYES remarked that the Committee, as named by the hon. mover, was an almost purely eastern Committee.

Mr. CARNEGIE—We take most interest in the subject in the east.

Attorney-General MACDONALD said, if this were an ordinary matter, having reference to the amendment of a railway charter, or a petition for the incorporation of an ordinary Railway Company, the proper course would be to send it to the Committee on Railways. But his hon. friend proposed—and, he (the Attorney-General) thought, very properly—that a special report should be made to this House on the advantages which would be derived from a cheaper kind of railroads than any that had been introduced into this country hitherto. There could be no objection to having a committee on the subject. Of course, if the committee were to recommend any public grant, they would be transgressing the legitimate bounds which the adoption of this motion would give them. Their function, as he understood it, would simply be to report to this House, such information as they might collect, showing the advantages which were to be derived from wooden railways—and, that being the view, he had no objection to the committee being organized. He supposed his hon. friend would be prepared to bring forward such information and such statistics as would at all events enlighten the House as to the practicability of adopting that system of railroads, at least in that particular part of the country in which the hon. gentleman was more particularly interested.

The motion was agreed to.

**REGISTRARS' FEES.**

Mr. EVANS moved that a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report upon the working of the present system of remunerating Registrars, and whether any and what changes may be properly made therein; said Committee to be composed of Attorney-General Macdonald, and Messrs. Blake, Pardee, Ferrier, Galbraith, Sinclair, Fitzsimmons, Rykert and the mover. He said that in moving this resolution, he was simply actuated by a desire that a course should be taken which should be for the public interest. It would be remembered that during the first session of the present Parliament he called the attention of the Government to this question, and again, towards the latter part of last session he enquired of the Government what was their intention as to taking any action in the matter. He then learned that they had come to the conclusion to do nothing. He had now considered it to be his duty once more to bring the matter before the House, and he hoped the Government and the House would allow a Committee to be formed, with a view to recommending some remedy for the existing irregularity, so that on their report the House might take such action as they might think best. He believed the public expected something would be done with regard to this matter. He found, from a statement laid before the House last session, that in 1868, the fees of the Registrar in the County of Middlesex, were \$6,625; in East Northumberland, \$6,200; in Simcoe, \$6,830; in Welland, \$6,416; in Huron, \$5,569; in Peel, \$5,296; in Wellington, \$5,536. There were seven Registrars whose fees exceeded \$5,000; nine whose fees were under \$5,000 but exceeded \$4,000; five whose fees were between \$4,000 and \$3,000; seventeen whose fees were between \$3,000 and \$2,000; eight whose fees were between \$2,000 and \$1,000, and there were six whose fees were less than \$1,000. He believed that the country felt strongly about this matter, and that the people generally were of opinion that a large proportion of these Registrars were in receipt of sums which must be considered excessive, and that the remuneration they received was too great for the class of services they performed. He was aware that during the last general election this matter was brought very prominently forward in the course of the canvass, at least in the western part of the Province, and it was the view of the public generally that something should be done to reduce the fees, or at all events that a portion of the fees paid to those Registrars who were in receipt of

very large sums should be handed over to be used for some public purpose. He would not, however, lay before the House what was his own opinion as to what should be done. It would be for the Committee, if allowed to be formed, to enter into a thorough examination of the whole question, and to report to the House some plan which would be just to the country, without doing injustice to these gentlemen who occupied official positions. He believed there were hundreds and thousands of well-qualified persons, who would be glad to take those positions for a much smaller remuneration than the present incumbents received. Under these circumstances he thought it was the duty of the House, while doing no injustice to the present incumbents, to adopt such measures as would redress what the people of the country generally felt to be a grievance.

Attorney-General MACDONALD said with respect to the large salaries received by some Registrars, that he apprehended from the statement of the hon. member for East Middlesex (Mr. Evans) that a very large majority of them were too well paid to be consonant with the liberality of Reformers. Where there was a large amount of legislation in operation, he took it that there must be a very considerable amount of additional labours cast upon the Registrars, in the way of examining titles, and in other equally responsible matters. He knew that it had been often observed with regret that there were respectable men who did not receive sufficient deserts for their labours, and who were expected to keep their offices open from ten to three every day, and to take an equal proportion of responsibility and risk with the Sheriff's office with regard to everything in their department. But this was so on the principle that those who had small and comparatively light duties to perform should receive remuneration in accordance. It had been said that they should legalise the pay of these Registrars, and of the Sheriffs, and Clerks of the Peace, by means of funding the fees and then paying an equable certain salary; but he would ask how were they to fund these fees? They had no means of ascertaining the exact amount of business transacted by Registrars; for though they could establish a certain check upon the amount of stamps placed upon documents, and could calculate the cases which were shown in his books, they had no means whatever of gaining an exact return of monies received by him in other ways. The motion proposed to throw upon a Committee the task of devising some means of improving the working of the present system of remunerating Registrars. He could very well understand the present system which was founded on the principle that in proportion to the work done—in proportion to the fees received—should be the remuneration; but he supposed that the hon. member for East Middlesex was prepared to recommend to the House some other mode, and if so, he should have told the House what the plan was that he proposed to bring before the Committee, if they entered upon their investigations. He ought to have told the House his plans, and they might then possibly have adopted his idea of referring it to a committee, but he had not even proposed a crude and undigested plan, for he had not brought forward any scheme at all. The hon. members of the House knew very well the working of the present Registrar Law, and the amount of responsibility there was upon those officials; and he would again say that there ought to be some information placed before the House as to what the hon. member proposed. Did he, for instance, propose that the Government should pay a certain sum to them, whatever might be the extent of their duties? or did he propose that those who did the most work should receive a corresponding salary? At one time, he remembered, there was an Act passed which divided registry offices, but, strange to say, the scheme did not satisfy those who promoted it, and it was very shortly after repealed. It was found that under its provisions the Government of the day took away appointments from some hard-working officials and gave them to favourites; and they also appointed Registrars for ridings where there existed no necessity for the additional appointment. He asked his hon. friend to propound a scheme of some sort, which would show how he proposed to take away the salary from these Registrars who received the larger amount, and give it to those who received less.

Mr. EVANS said, with regard to his own views, he had no hesitation in saying that he considered that the salaries of the majority of the Registrars he had mentioned were far too high; that they were, in fact, excessive.

Attorney-General MACDONALD—How many?

Mr. EVANS—The great majority of them—all those who receive above \$2,000. He thought that a salary of \$1,000, or \$1,500, would be amply sufficient, but this he left in the hands of professional gentlemen, who had more knowledge on the point. The Registrars, as a rule, he knew, were men who did not spend much time in studying the law, or in other studies, and there were some men whom he knew had been placed in this position who were but little better trained than many farmers. The plan he would propose was simply this, that the salary should not exceed the sum of \$2,500, and that the surplus, after allowing a percentage on the work performed, should be returned to the County Treasurer. With regard to the remarks of the Hon. Attorney-General, he would admit that he had no definite plan to place before the Committee; but he did not wish to throw the onus upon that body. He was prepared to assist it so far as he was able; but he thought that the several members of the Committee would be able jointly to come to a much better decision on this matter than any plan that might be laid before it. At any rate, he thought no harm could be done, for it was a matter calling for serious and earnest consideration.

Mr. LOUNT had understood from the hon. gentleman who had introduced the question, that the question was felt by the people to be in some degree a grievance which called for amendment; but it generally happened that where there was a grievance generally felt, there were petitions received by the House complaining of it, or at least, if petitions were not presented, they found that newspapers or other vehicles of public opinion

gave information with respect to it. For his own part, he had not heard, except from the lips of his hon. friend, any complaints at all in reference to the matter. The matter had been under the consideration of the House before, and a settlement had been arrived at, after the question had been thoroughly investigated, when all parties who had any complaints to make were heard. It had been supposed that this arrangement had given satisfaction to everybody; but they had now found that at least there was one hon. member who was still of opinion that there were grievances to redress. But what were those grievances? That they had some five Registrars in the Province who received \$5,000 a year, while he admitted that \$2,500 was but a fair remuneration. He supposed that he meant that that sum was to be his salary over and above his expenses. ("No.") Well, then, it was to cover everything, but he thought if the hon. member knew anything about Registry Offices and the duties of Registrars, he would be of a different opinion. They had to employ a number of clerks, for whose acts as well as for their own personal doings, they were held to be responsible. This placed those officials in a very onerous position, for if any loss was occasioned through any oversight or error on the part of a clerk, the Registrar was liable to all losses occasioned thereby; considering this and the nature of their duties, he did not think that Registrars were a too largely paid body. He believed if a plan were adopted of making the Registrar a sort of superintendent in the Registry Office, and employing some clerks under him, who should be paid by the Government, that, in the place of the five or six who now suffice, it would be found necessary to employ twelve or fourteen; and the salaries of these clerks would more than amount to the sum of money actually received by the Registrar in the discharge of his duties. He was not prepared to oppose a fair investigation of the case by a committee if the hon. member had the slightest plan to place before it; but so far as he could see he had not any, but had introduced the matter into the House in this crude and undigested state. He did not think the time of the House should be given to the consideration of the subject as suggested.

Mr. HAYS said he thought it was a very fair way to pay officials in accordance with the work that they performed. He saw no necessity for the appointment of the proposed Committee, and personally he had never heard any complaint in reference to the matter.

Mr. LAUDER said his objection was not so much with regard to the large amount of the salary received by the Registrars as it was to the amount which people had to pay for the registration of their deeds and for making a search, &c. There was at one time considerable difference in the fees charged by different Registrars, but at the present moment they were more equal, and he should be sorry to see any disturbance to this state of affairs. With regard to the difference in the amounts received by the various Registrars, he did not see how the enquiries of the proposed Committee could in any way assist the House in remedying it. If it was thought that the fees should be funded with the County Council, it would, as had been already shown, be found to be a difficult matter; and if it was proposed that the counties should be divided, that also would be found to be very difficult. Now, if the hon. member would have included in his motion the enquiry by the Committee into the propriety of funding the fees of all county officials, such as sheriffs' officers, clerks of the peace, county clerks, so that the whole of them might be fairly and equitably paid, then he (Mr. Lauder) would admit that he should see more reason for the motion. He thought there was less ground for complaint in the question of Registrars than there was with reference to sheriffs' officers and other county officials. It was but fair when reference was made to the high salary received by some Registrars, to remember that some were almost half starved. The investigation proposed was too narrow. With regard to funding the fees of the various officials, he thought it was rather a matter within the jurisdiction of the Government than for private members. He hoped the hon. member, seeing the opinion of the House, would withdraw the motion.

Mr. EVANS, in reply, said with regard to the fact that had been referred to, that no petitions had been presented complaining of the grievance, that it was not to be expected that petitions would be presented upon such a point as there were upon measures of a more general nature. He could see no reason why the matter should not be taken up. It was rather strange, he thought, that the hon. gentleman who had supported the existing arrangements represented counties where the Registrars received the highest salary. Mr. Evans was proceeding to make some personal remarks in reference to hon. members, when—

Mr. COYNE rose to a point of order. The hon. member, who had already spoken twice, ought to confine himself to the question, and not refer to personal matters.

Amid general cries of "order" and "spoke,"

Mr. MCKELLAR said, I hope the hon. House will permit my hon. friend to go on. He very seldom occupies our time, and I think it is only fair that he should be allowed to discuss the question.

Mr. EVANS, then, further contended that the duties of the Registrar Offices could be done at much less cost than was now paid, and said he was surprised to find champions in that House of excessive payments out of the pockets of the people. With reference to the remarks of the hon. member for South Grey (Mr. Lauder), he believed that the motion, as he had framed it, might fairly be considered to embrace the whole of the discussion which that gentleman proposed. ("Withdraw.") As there seemed to be a general opinion against the advisability of his motion, he would not further detain the House, but would withdraw his motion. Motion accordingly withdrawn.

**ALLEGED HARD TREATMENT.**

Mr. MCKELLAR moved an address for a copy of the petition of William John Nicholls, for certain lands in

the Muskoka district, together with all Orders in Council, and all correspondence had with Mr. Nicholls touching the same. He would state, briefly, in explanation, his object in moving the address. He understood that Mr. Nicholls, who had arrived from England some months ago, came to this country with letters of recommendation from the highest officials and others in England, as to his character and respectability. He went out into the Muskoka Territory, explored there, and finally selected a location about thirty miles beyond any other settlement in that district at the present time. He applied to the Government for a grant of land of from one thousand to two thousand acres, and was prepared to bind himself to erect a mill and make further improvements, such as were absolutely necessary in forming new settlements; and, in addition to this, he was prepared to bring out a number of English emigrants, of that class of settlers which was chiefly required in the country, viz., farmers who had means varying from £500 to £3,000 or £4,000, and he (Mr. McKellar) understood that the Government declined, because it was stated the law, or the regulations of Parliament were against their consent. He thought that if such was the case there should be a little more elasticity in the law, and his object in moving for these returns was, that if the facts of the case were really as they had been narrated to him, that the House should have an opportunity of expressing an opinion as to whether the action of the Government had been liberal, and was calculated to promote the settlement of the country.

Attorney-General MACDONALD had no objection to the motion being passed.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON said, with reference to the observation that there should be more elasticity in these matters, that it was part of the policy of the hon. gentlemen opposite that the Government should have a cast-iron rule with regard to the administration of the lands, mines, &c. They had substituted for the rule by statute the rule by Orders in Council, which could be altered, and therefore the remark of the hon. member fell to the ground.

Mr. MCKELLAR had said nothing about Orders in Council, for he was against them. He wished to see more liberality in these matters.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON would like to know how it was possible for a Government to have the elastic powers spoken of. They must have their rules to go by.

Mr. MCKELLAR said it was quite easy to do what he said.

The motion was then carried.

**CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF TORONTO**

Mr. LAUDER moved for an Address for a return, shewing the receipts and expenditure, during the last two years, of the Canadian Institute of Toronto, the number of meetings held during the past twelve months, the number of lectures delivered, and subjects upon which they were delivered; the present membership of the Institute, and the increase or decrease during the last five years; also a copy of the Constitution and by-laws of the Institute.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON asked the hon. member the object of these returns, and for what reason they should put the officials of the Institute to the trouble of preparing them?

Mr. LAUDER explained that the institution received a grant of public money, and he wished to have the returns he asked for in order to see how the money had been expended. There were other reasons which had been communicated to him by constituents of the Hon. Secretary himself, which he did not think it necessary to particularize. With regard to their institution, he might perhaps more fully explain the matter when the returns were brought down. The return would be no expense to any body, and there could be no objection to it.

The motion was agreed to.

**THE PUBLIC DEBT, &c.**

Hon. Mr. CAMERON brought down the reply to an address for correspondence, &c., respecting the Public Debt, and the adjustment of accounts between Canada and Ontario.

The House adjourned at 20 minutes to five.

**NOTICES OF MOTION.**

The following notices have been given:—

Mr. Rykert—Act to amend the Common Law Procedure Act.

Mr. Rykert—Special Committee to consider such amendments as may be necessary to be made to the Common School Act, with power to report by Bill.

Mr. Ferrier—Enquiry whether the Government have taken any steps; or, if not, if they intend to take steps for the surveying the country to the north of Lake Superior, with a view to its settlement, and the probabilities of an Intercolonial Railway passage through that part of the country to the Red River Settlement.

Mr. Sexton—Enquiry whether Government intend to introduce during the present session, a measure for making it incumbent upon cities united with counties, for judicial purposes, to pay a just proportion of jurors' expenses incurred at the several Courts of Quarter Sessions for such counties.

Mr. Lount—Select Committee to enquire into the present position of the Huron and Ontario Ship Canal, and also into the practicability and advantage of the proposed work.

**THE ARBITRATION.**

A very voluminous return was made to the House yesterday, in reply to an address moved by Mr. Blake for copies of all correspondence, &c., on the subject of the public debt, and the adjustment of accounts between Canada and Ontario. A considerable proportion of the correspondence has been published already. The following are the reports by Mr. Treasurer Wood to the Executive Council of Ontario, on what took place