

THE LEGISLATURE.

Until some specific measure of general interest comes on for debate, the Crown Lands policy of the Government seems likely to be the standing topic of debate. A considerable time was occupied yesterday in discussing the recent sale of timber limits to the north of Lake Huron. It came up on a motion for returns moved by Mr. Rykert. Mr. E. B. Wood had also a notice on the paper of a similar kind, and spoke at some length. Mr. Wood, whilst complimenting the Commissioner on the vigorous administration of his Department, urged several grounds of objection to the late sales, most of which have already been very fully discussed in the papers. He was followed by Mr. M. C. Cameron, who also criticized the proceedings in question, both on general grounds and with respect to the manner in which the sale had been conducted. He insinuated, as was done by the organs of the Opposition at the time, that certain parties had been favoured by the Commissioner with private information for their own advantage. He insisted that the sale of the limits was a fatal error, and would excite great uneasiness as to the future action of the Government in dealing with great national interests. He boasted that the cardinal policy of the Sandfield Macdonald Government had been the reservation of these lands, but was obliged by Mr. Scott to admit that they actually did not know of the existence of the pine lands in dispute.

Mr. Scott declined to repel charges against his personal honour, which was safe in the hands of the House and the country. He then recalled to the memory of the House his recent statement,

and pointed out that if he had yielded to the personal pressure which had been put upon him he could have served his friends much better by putting other lands under license than those sold in October. He entered into a temperate but very circumstantial statement of the arrangements connected with the proceedings on the occasion referred to, and stated that nearly all the purchasers were strangers to him and new to the Canadian lumber trade. In ten years he declared his act would be confessed to have been a master-stroke of policy, and reminded his assailant that it had taken him two years to induce the late Government to adopt a liberal timber policy. As to the charge of recklessness, he showed that the late Government had received a report on the probable value of the Muskoka lands only two days before the sale; and that report was held on the day of sale by an officer of the Department, who immediately transferred his services to a firm of lumberers. Mr. Scott then gave his reasons for favouring the issue of licenses for a term of years, believing that, by a periodical revision of the dues, it might be possible to raise the revenue from that source from \$600,000 to a million or \$1,200,000.

Mr. Stephen Richards claimed that the excess of "accruals" in 1872 was due not to the present but to the former Administration; and a good deal of crossfiring took place between Mr. Richards and Mr. Scott on matters of fact. The ex-Commissioner insisted that he was entitled to all the credit for whatever was liberal in the present Crown Lands policy. He also revived the old slander that Mr. Scott was the paid agent of the lumberers, and deprecated the recent sales of limits. Mr. Oliver bore testimony to the importance of lumbering preceding or being concurrent with settlement. He gave some statistics in support of this view, and urged that mining enterprise in the Huron region could only be successfully encouraged if a stimulant were given to settlement in the first instance. In answer to an irregular question put by Mr. Richards, Mr. Oliver justified the sale of pine timber, in conjunction with mining locations, at a dollar and a half an acre. Mr. Calvin, whilst declaring that he was forced to go to the United States to get lumber, maintained somewhat contradictorily that we were selling our timber for one-fifth or one-third of its value. At six o'clock the House adjourned till Friday.