

Speaker left the chair he wished to bring to the attention of the House the position of the employees of the House and Government. While members of the House expected that the strictest economy would prevail in the different departments, at the same time they had a right to require that the duties of each Department should be efficiently performed by competent men. If economy had been practised—and he trusted it had not—by employing incompetent men at low salaries, then they had a right to complain; but if the services were efficiently performed and the employees badly paid, then an equal right for complaint existed. If the House had been able to save three or four thousand dollars a year by underpaying its servants, it deserved no credit therefor. After having made enquiry and investigated the matter, he was of opinion that there were men in the Departments who were very inadequately remunerated. Hon. members were aware that the cost of living had very largely increased, and that a man who could live on a thousand dollars a year a few years ago could not do so now. These employees had to keep up a respectable appearance, to support their families, and to try and do so in the same manner as he had been doing years ago. He did not wish to assert that the Government, in arranging salaries, should be guided by the method adopted in Quebec and Ottawa. Perhaps they had been extravagant there;

but perhaps we had been practising here an economy which was as little to our credit. From the public accounts of 1870, the latest which he had been able to obtain, he found that in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec there were 37 employees, whose salaries were \$30,636, while in Ontario there were only 14, whose salaries were \$9,725. In the Quebec Executive Council Office 5 employees at \$3,729, in Ontario 3 at \$1,015; in the Quebec Provincial Secretary and Registrar's Office 14 employees at \$13,874, in Ontario 9 at \$9,495; in the Quebec Treasurer's Office 12 at \$14,650, in Ontario 7 at \$8,765; in the Quebec Department of Agriculture and Public Works' Office 11 at \$14,250, in Ontario 7 at \$10,365; in the Quebec Attorney General's Office 6 at \$9,550, in Ontario 4 at \$6,624. He might also state that in Quebec they had found it necessary on account of the increased expense of living to bring down not only an additional aid in the way of salary, but they granted aid in respect of past services. He had brought this matter up for the sake of obtaining an expression of opinion by hon. members on the subject. He wished to be understood that he thought the officials should be as few as possible, but that they should be competent men and well paid.

Mr. CAMERON said that, standing in the position that he did, the Government might desire to hear his views on this subject. Of course he spoke only for himself. He had been a member of the Government which originated the salaries of the different officials of this country. When they commenced they were ignorant of the extent of their resources; they were not aware whether these resources would be sufficient for the wants of the country; and they determined that the work of the Departments should be carried on as cheaply as was possible. He agreed in the observation that it was desirable to have no more officials than are necessary for the work to be performed, but he thought that the officers appointed should be fairly remunerated for the services rendered. Too many officers in a Department were a nuisance and interfered with each other to such an extent that the affairs of the country were mismanaged. It would at the same time be much to be regretted if the officers of the Department were paid salaries which were less than those paid by bankers and merchants to efficient men whose duties were not more onerous than those discharged by the employes of the country. It would not be right to pay too lavishly, but if the clerks in the Departments were found not to be receiving what was their due then the Government should at once take up the matter and deal with it.

Mr. LAUDER contended that this was a matter in which the Executive was responsible and the Government should take some action, and that hon. members should not be called upon to express their opinions until some measure was brought down. He concurred in the view that employes should be well paid, but there was no one in the House who knew the merits of the different clerks except the heads of the Departments. Let these Departmental heads, uniting to form

the Executive, say what ought to be paid, and then the matter could be discussed.

Mr. BOULTER said that last year he had voted against the increase of the Speaker's salary, and he now wished to explain that he had done so because he thought the employes of the House had been overlooked. He considered employes should be properly remunerated.

Mr. ARDAGH thought the matter had been brought up in this way as a feeler so that the feelings of the House could be ascertained. He for one was in favour of a fair increase of salaries. So far as he knew they were all underpaid, and exceedingly efficient. What was adequate remuneration five or ten years ago was very inadequate now. An example of the inadequacy of the salaries paid to Government officials was given in the presence of the House then of an hon. gentleman who, if his salary had been greater, would probably have remained where he was.

Mr. WOOD (Brant) did not think it was fair to draw comparisons between the salaries paid in Quebec and those in Ontario. In Quebec they had to have a double staff of officers because of the two languages. He believed that the employes in some of the Departments spent half of their time in talking about their salaries, and scheming as to how an increase could be brought about. He believed the employes here were paid as well as those in Ottawa and Quebec, and certainly as well as persons holding like positions in commercial employment. When a merchant paid \$1,200 or \$1,600 a year for a bookkeeper, he expected to have a very good one, and that bookkeeper would have to work from 8 in the morning till 6, and not unfrequently till 8 or 9, whereas the hours of Government employes were practically from 10 till 4. If the Government employes were not well enough paid, why did they not leave and go into more lucrative employment? By advertising, the Government could get persons to take their positions. He hoped that some means would be adopted by which these incessant complaints about ill pay would be put an end to. They should be made to understand that the country would not go to ruin if they abandoned its service.

Atty.-Gen. MOWAT said he had not been aware that the hon. member for South Victoria meant to bring up this matter. That gentleman had not done so at the instance of any member of the Government. The subject had been receiving the consideration of the Government. He had himself been making enquiries as to what was paid to officers in the public Banks and other Governments, and endeavouring to compare the duties of officers connected with the Government with those in other employments. He considered this the only way of arranging the matter. It was impossible to over-estimate the importance of having efficient officers, and this could never be secured if the employes were constantly looking out for employment elsewhere. It would be the greatest mistake and the falsest economy not to pay the public servants as fully as the value of their work demanded; but, at the same time, they should not be paid too much. It would be very desirable if we could have some system in this matter, and he had made some progress in preparing a Civil Service Bill with that view, but he was really hopeless of accomplishing that during this session; but it would be necessary to consider the matter and settle it soon. The report of the Government would shortly be made known to the House. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. FERGUSON thought the Government should lay before the House a statement of the salaries of the employes, and then the House would be in a position to decide whether an increase of salary was desirable. He wanted to know if the Government had not increased the pay of the officials of the House a quarter of a dollar a day, while others received none.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS explained that \$600 was, by vote of the House, placed in the hands of Mr. Speaker to be distributed among certain servants of the House for services rendered.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT, referring to the remarks of the member for South Brant, said that no less than three or four officers of his Department had last year left the service, finding they could better themselves elsewhere. One of them especially was a very efficient officer. He had no hesitation in saying that if some others were to leave it might very seriously embarrass the public services. The officers in his Department required a long period of probation. Some of the employes in that Department were there for upwards of twenty years; one very efficient officer had been there forty years, and he got the munificent salary of \$1,400 a year. He was of opinion that the system should be adopted of increasing the pay of employes the longer they remained in the service, so that they could make provision for old age.