

Mr. CAMERON said that when returns asking information which it would harass officials to give were asked for the reason for asking should be given.

Mr. HODGINS said it would be found that not very large returns would have to be made under this motion. It was stated that this Act was unworkable, and that as a general rule suitors seemed to prefer the Court of Chancery. His object was to see how far the Act had been made use of, and how far it was possible or desirable to assimilate the practice of the County Courts to the Court of Chancery.

Attorney-General MOWAT said the importance of judicial statistics had long been recognized, and the Government thought the motion of sufficient importance to be passed.

The motion was then carried.

CENTRAL PRISON.

Mr. LAUDER moved for copies of all correspondence between the Government and the Canada Car Company, and a copy of the contracts said to have been made between the Government and said Company regarding the labour of convicts which may be confined in the Central Prison in course of erection at the City of Toronto. He said that it was very singular that the Government were undertaking the erection of machinery in the Central Prison building and were otherwise working in conjunction with the Car Company. He was told that the Government were erecting stationary engines and machinery of various kinds with a view of accommodating themselves to the work of the Company. He was somewhat surprised to learn that the Commissioner of Public Works advised the adoption of a contract like this without first seeking the sanction of the Legislature. It had always been a principle which he had advocated while in Opposition that no step of this kind should be taken without the sanction of the Legislature. It was a question as to whether it was better to let out the labour to a company or for the Government to control it itself. Surely on a matter so worthy of discussion the opinion of the House should have been asked.

Attorney-General MOWAT said the motion was hardly wide enough to embrace all the papers that the Government thought fit to bring before the House. There were Reports from the Inspector of Prisons which he would like also to see included. It had been the intention of the Government to bring down all the papers and the contract so as to receive the sanction of the House. By the vote of last Session a large sum of money had been appropriated for the erection of the building and of machinery in order to utilize the labour of the prisoners. It was always a question, no doubt, as to whether it was better that convict labour should be let out as it had been here, or whether it should be under the direct management of the Government. There were objections to both courses, and the Government thought that the contract that had been entered into was one which avoided all the objections to either system, and gave the country the advantages of both. A preliminary contract had been entered into in August last. At the time he came into office he gave his attention to the matter and he found this contract in force. The Government had been, however, of opinion that before any final step was taken the House should see the complete contract, and should know the grounds on which the Government thought that such a contract should be entered into. Though the Government had the legal power to have completed the whole matter before coming to the House, they had not thought proper to do so. It had been the intention of the Government to have brought down these papers and the contract so as to obtain the express sanction of the House.

Mr. RYKERT asked if the papers which were to be brought down would show how the system of letting out prison labour worked in other countries.

Attorney-General MOWAT said the report of the Inspector, who had gone fully into this question, and who had visited several of the prisons in the United States, would give pretty fully all that information; but of course the data from which he drew his inferences would be too bulky to present.

Mr. RYKERT asked if there was in existence a contract which was binding on the Government.

Attorney-General MOWAT said that a preliminary contract had been entered into, but it gave no details as to the character of details.

Mr. WOOD said that in so important a matter it was necessary that the greatest deliberation should be exercised before coming to any final conclusion. There was a very important principle underlying all such contracts. Occasions would of course arise when it was impossible for the Government to appeal to the Legislature before entering into contracts, and as a rule these contracts had inserted in them a clause to the effect that such contracts should be subject to the ratification of the House. As he understood it the Government had not entered into any absolute contract in respect to this prison labour, and that the contract referred to was merely provisional. He hoped it would be found that the Government had in this case adhered to the sound constitutional principle, and inserted the clause with respect to the approval of the House.

Mr. RYKERT said that hon. gentlemen should have instructed their organs to inform the public correctly in this matter. He had no recollection of anything being said about machinery in the debates of last session.

Attorney-General MOWAT did not wish to be misunderstood with regard to the contracts with the Car Company. He had not said that in the contract of August there was any reservation or provision that there should be a reference to this House. What he had intended to convey was that the contract of August was merely a preliminary one in so far that it contained no details. The exact terms of the proposed contract would be brought down to the House.

Hon. Mr. McKELLAR said that the hon. member for Lincoln was mistaken with reference to the machinery. If he would refer to the estimates he would find that a large amount had been appropriated for machinery. It had not then been decided what particular branch of industry should be carried out in the prison—whether making needles or shoes or cars or what—so that it was impossible for the House or Government to say what sort of machinery would be required. When the papers came down it would be found that very little additional expenses had been entailed by the alterations made.

The motion was then carried.

THE GRANTS TO RAILWAYS.

Mr. LAUDER moved for a return of all sums paid by the Treasury Department to railways, as bonuses, within the last twelve months, specifying the railways to which such sums were paid and the date of such payments. He made this motion in order that the House might have before it all the information and Orders in Council upon the subject before other Orders in Council were taken up for discussion. It was very important that they should know what monies had been paid, and to what railways; and he hoped the Government in bringing down additional grants to railways, if they intended to do so, would give the House all necessary information so that they might have time to enquire into the matter. It had been stated that some of the money voted last year would never be required because the railway companies would not construct the roads. That showed that proper information was not given to the subject then. It was very important, in his opinion, that before any of the public's money was appropriated in that way the House should have all the information connected with the bonuses, so that they might judge of the desirability of granting the money before voting.

The motion was carried.

MAP OF THE TIMBER LANDS.

Mr. WOOD moved that the Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands should with all convenient speed be pleased to cause to be prepared and lithographed for the use of the members of this House, a map of the woods and forests of Ontario, exhibiting in distinct colours the several timber limits under license, with the names of the holders written thereon, and the area of each in square miles, and also the lands still unlicensed, which the Department regarded as chiefly valuable for its timber, but not adapted to settlement or agriculture, and the area of each parcel in square miles marked thereon. He said that from the returns brought down it was impossible to form a conjecture as to the extent of the limits, or as to the persons occupying them. It seemed to him for anybody to get distinct ideas as to how much of our territory was under license, what that territory was, and who were the holders of that territory, it could be best accomplished by a map of the description indicated. A great deal of ambiguity existed upon the subject, and it was necessary that they should know what limits were under