

LEGISLATURE OF ONTARIO

SECOND PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

THURSDAY, March 13, 1873.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

TAKING AFFIDAVITS.

On motion of Attorney-General MOWAT the House went into Committee on the Bill respecting Commissioners for taking affidavits—Mr. Deroche in the chair. The Bill was reported with some verbal amendments, and ordered for a third reading to-morrow.

THE ESTIMATES.

On motion of Hon. Mr. CROOKS the House went into Committee of Supply—Mr. Wood (Victoria) in the chair.

On the vote of \$12,130 for the Executive Council and Attorney-General's office,

Mr. RYKERT and Mr. MACDONALD called attention to the increased expenses of the office, the latter gentleman objecting to the increased salaries seriatim. He thought sufficient reasons should be given for the increases in salaries.

Mr. McCALL could not see how the Attorney-General was worth more salary than the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS said that the former Attorney-General, Mr. Macdonald, had always drawn \$4,000.

Mr. MACDONALD said he understood the \$800 difference was paid to his Secretary.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS denied this, and explained all the details of the working of the office.

Mr. LAUDER strongly objected to the increased vote asked for, and said that there was very little work and that of no great importance in the Executive Council Office.

Attorney-General MOWAT said that whatever salaries were necessary for the proper conduct of the service should be paid. Competent men must be had, and these could not be retained unless they were paid fairly for their labour. If one efficient person was employed at \$1,000 a year it would be far better than having two incompetent persons at half the amount. The principle was to get as few officials as possible, but to have them first-class men. It was thought that the chief clerk, whose salary was formerly placed at \$2,000, could at the same time pursue his private practice, but that was found impossible. The chief clerk's salary had therefore been increased by \$800, and he gave all his time to the office duties, working very often until midnight. He (Attorney-General) was convinced that the public could not be injured if the chief clerk could not be retained, and he could not be unless he were paid an adequate salary, such as was proposed. He was a gentleman of extensive legal knowledge, and his services were invaluable. As for the Secretary to the Executive Council, that gentleman had been promised an increase of salary by the late Premier, and being a very talented short-hand writer, and thoroughly efficient in his duties it would not be right to give him less than the salary proposed, \$1,100. Indeed, unless that amount were given, the services of that gentleman could not in all probability be retained. Of the other increases of salaries the same might be said—the necessity of having the departmental work performed by the very best men that could be had at fair salaries.

Mr. MACDONALD spoke of the extra amount of \$400 to be paid to Mr. Scott for work on the Municipal Loan Fund Bill.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS explained that it became necessary to employ some one to work out the scheme of the Government in reference to this Bill. He found on coming into office that the existing law was far more understandable than the Bill proposed by the late Provincial Secretary. He found also that the Law Clerk had been paid for extra services in regard to this Bill. He thought that Mr. Scott was the best and most competent man he could find to take hold of the matter—partly from zeal and partly from a desire to help him (Mr. Crooks) Mr. Scott had worked most assiduously, and had rendered most valuable services in preparing this Bill, which was a matter entirely outside of the business for which he was employed. He would rather pay the money out of his own pocket than see this gentleman go without the remuneration which his services in this matter were worth.

Mr. RYKERT said it was a most extraordinary fact that there should be such an

increase of salaries this year in the public service. He had analyzed the amounts to be paid this year, and had found that there was the large sum of \$34,500 added to salaries this year. He did not object to the Attorney-General's salary, for he believed his services were worth that to the country, he having received \$5,000 when on the Bench. He did not wish to undervalue the services of the chief clerk, but he thought it most extraordinary that his salary should be raised from \$1,600 originally to \$2,800, and \$450 for extra services. There was also the Secretary's salary raised \$200, and he was not aware that he had a very large amount of work to perform.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS said that the hon. gentleman was incorrect in his estimate of the total amount of increase of salaries, for many of the items were last year placed under the head of "sessional writers" in "contingencies." He had also made an estimate of the increased amount to be paid for salaries, but instead of \$34,500, as stated by the hon. member for Lincoln, it was only \$14,925.

Mr. RYKERT alluded to the item headed "furnishings" amongst those in connection with the Speaker's rooms, in the public accounts of last year, and alleged that the word meant really glassware in the shape of champagne and wine glasses, plates, &c.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS called the hon. gentleman to order. He was supposed to be speaking now of the Attorney-General's office, and his statements were entirely false.

Mr. RYKERT went on to speak of the "furnishings" of the Speaker's rooms, which included chromos, glasses, plates, and such items. He thought that perhaps the "furnishings" of the Attorney-General's office were comprised of the same sort of articles, and went on for forty-five minutes to speak of the reckless extravagance of the Government in expending \$245 in these luxurious chromos which he and other hon. members never saw.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT said that when he became Speaker the then Commissioner of Public Works, Mr. Carling, told him that he (the Speaker) could get whatever furnishings were necessary, added to the Speaker's rooms that they might be made compatible with the dignity of rooms occupied by the first Commoner in the Province. They were used by the Lieut.-Governor and other distinguished gentlemen occasionally, and it was quite proper that the furniture and furnishings should be had; but the present Government were not responsible for the orders he had given; he had ordered them himself. He did give the order for the glassware spoken of; for whatever his own principles might be, he did think that in entertaining gentlemen they should be allowed the exercise of their own will in such matters as the taking of a glass of wine. He also ordered the pictures, but some of them were distributed in other portions of the building. The larger portion of them, however, were still in the Speaker's rooms. His colleagues had nothing to do with the orders given for the glassware and pictures. As for the item of \$320 paid for a large picture, he did not know whether it had been ordered or not; but the picture was that of the first Parliament of Ontario, and it was in the room when he became Speaker. It remained there for a long time afterwards, and it would not have been proper to have sent it back, and it was therefore paid for. The picture was well worth the money. Lord Dufferin admired it very much, and said that he had seen nothing in England comparable with it for the faithfulness of the likenesses where so many were grouped together. The present Government, however, had nothing to do with these expenditures. If he had thought it justifiable he might have ordered furniture and furnishings to four times the amount, for since he had become Commissioner of Crown Lands he had added \$2,000 a day to the revenue of the country. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. RICHARDS said he had never heard of the order to furnish the Speaker's room.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT said the order had been given Mr. Carling and endorsed by Mr. Macdonald.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS called the attention of the House back to the item of the Attorney-General's office from which Mr. Rykert had led it; and explained that during his term of office nothing had been purchased in his office but water jugs and tumblers. He said that the expenses of the heads of Departments in Quebec were \$29,000 a year, whereas those of Ontario were only \$16,000, a saving of \$13,000 per annum. If he did not feel that he was worth to the country more than the miserable salary he was receiving he would resign at once.