

ing connected with all the Courts and all the business in the country. The principle involved in the Bill of the hon. member for East Grey was the affirming that it was improper for the Government to interfere with the printing of the County Councils. He contended that neither Mr. Sandfield Macdonald nor Sir John Macdonald had ever given Clerks of the Peace orders to insert such advertisements in certain newspapers, though members of these Governments might have suggested that if practicable it should be given to newspapers supporting them.

Mr. BETHUNE said he had no doubt but the clause which it was now sought to repeal had been rendered necessary, knowing as he did the old disputes that so frequently occurred between the sheriffs and executing creditor. He thought that upon the whole the Lieutenant-Governor in Council was, no matter what party was in power, the best judge in the matter under a responsible system of Government. If it was found that any injustice was being done, the pressure of public opinion would soon oblige the Government to rectify the wrong. If the Government persisted in any course which was not just and fair, it was perfectly open to any member to expose them, or even to bring them before a Committee. He was quite sure that the County Councils would be perfectly willing to forego their power to direct in what papers those advertisements should be inserted. For his part he was perfectly willing to take the responsibility of defending to his constituents the law as it now stood, and he hoped the Government would not change it.

Mr. MACDOUGALL contended that the provision in this Act was a usurpation of the power which ought to belong to the County Councils. He was entirely opposed to this centralization which hon. gentlemen had endeavoured to secure in this way. This would some years ago have been considered a Tory measure. It had been thought that measures which kept the power out of the hands of the people were Tory measures, and Reformers had always contended for self-government. Now, however, these gentlemen, who claimed to be the successors of the old Reformers, asked this Legislature to enable them to coerce the officials to obey their behests. The member for Stormont had put this matter on a higher ground, but he believed the Government had been inspired by a desire to use the people's money in order to promote their own political objects, in passing this legislation. The result was that the people felt a desire to punish hon. gentlemen for their action in this matter. He thought the Provincial Secretary ought to have avoided the statements contained in the preamble to his amendment, because those statements were not, he believed, accurate. He asked if County Councils under the previous law could be compelled to pay for advertisements which they did not authorize.

Mr. MOWAT—Conviction lists, for instance. Undoubtedly.

Mr. MACDOUGALL said in that case there might be some foundation for the statement in the amendment. (Hear, hear.) The member for East Grey was admitted to have good ground for bringing this matter before the House, and he hoped hon. gentlemen would give County Councils the power to dispose entirely of their own moneys. He had no strong opinion as to the sheriffs' advertisements, and thought that that matter might very well be left to the Government of the day.

Mr. MOWAT said hon. gentlemen opposite had tried to represent that the legislation of last session had endeavoured to take this power away from County Councils. They never had that power. The clerk of the peace might sometimes have adopted the view of the County Council as to the newspaper which he should select, but that was the exception. The clerks of the peace, the sheriffs, and the other officials generally acted according to their own views, and those were almost always in accordance with the views of the Government of the day. He had evidence before him in the shape of letters which proved this statement. The Government requested the officials to advertise in certain newspapers, but Mr. Sandfield Macdonald declared that he would deal summarily with parties who did not conform to his request. It was a request in form, but a command in fact. Hon. gentlemen said this was taken out of the hands of the people. The Government were the chosen representatives of the people of Ontario, and these

officials were not the representatives of the people in any sense. This practice had been formerly carried on in an underhand way, but the Government had put it openly in an Act of Parliament, and the present proposal of the member for East Grey was an afterthought, and would merely have the effect of restoring the matter to its previous condition. If the motion had been postponed the hon. member would have been aware of the character of the legislation which the Government proposed.

Mr. MEREDITH contended that the Government was not authorized to give printing to the newspapers which supported them politically, and the result of that system would be to prevent entirely competition among the different newspapers. Such power should not be entrusted to any Government.

Mr. GOW reminded the hon. members that the universal practice of the Conservatives when in power was to give all patronage to the newspapers that supported them. If there was any easy mode of ascertaining what papers had the largest circulation, he would favour a proposal to give the patronage to those papers. He hoped some legislation would be framed by the Government in the general interests of the Province; and, having faith in the promise made by the Provincial Secretary, he would support the amendment.

Mr. SCOTT thought there could not be a more favourable opportunity than the present for the Government to introduce the measure indicated; but he doubted the sincerity of the Ministry in regard to legislating in the direction desired by the hon. member for East Grey.

Mr. ROSS contended that the Sandfield Macdonald Government had interfered with the Clerks of the Peace in regard to the publication of advertisements in the Conservative papers.

Mr. Graham and Mr. Robinson spoke briefly, after which

Mr. PAXTON regretted that the Attorney-General had backed down in regard to the clause in the Bill, which was the only clause he was favourable to. (Laughter.) It was no use endeavouring to satisfy the Opposition, for their action was dictated solely by party reasons. The members for East Grey and East Toronto both admitted that the Government should support their friends, but they supported the new Bill in order to avoid that principle. He hoped the Bill would be voted down.

Mr. DEACON said he believed the member who had last spoken was not speaking for all the usual supporters of the Government when he hoped the Bill would be voted down. He contended that the Government had backed down on their past course, as they now promised to amend the 88th Section of the Act. He would later from that promise that they intended leaving the power in the hands of the County Councils. He contended that although when the matter was before the House last session the Opposition had not asked for divisions they had by their speeches protested against the principle of the 88th Section.

Mr. LYON contended that the reason why hon. gentleman opposite had brought in such an amendment was in order to make an ostensible case against the Government in the country, through they did not pretend to deny that the late Government had exercised all the patronage in their power. He had full confidence in the promise made by the Government, and would cordially support them.

Mr. BRODER said the previous Government had never attempted to place such a law upon the statute book as the one which it was now sought to amend—a law which gave them complete control of county printing.

Mr. BISHOP said he would have preferred if the reading of the Bill had been deferred until the correspondence asked for in reference to the matter. While he did not think the Government Bill was exactly right, he certainly thought it was nearer right than one which sought to place the whole power in the hands of supporters of the hon. gentlemen opposite. (Hear, hear.) He read from the minutes of the Huron County Council to show that the late Government had persistently interfered with the rights of that body when they desired to leave the matter to fair competition. He had perfect confidence that the Government would act honestly under the present law, but he hoped they would change the law, for fear that at some distant day the less