

lived its efficiency. It was very difficult to get the best people to serve as magistrates because of the number of persons of a different stamp who were appointed. He rather favoured revoking every commission of the peace in the whole country, and laying down the rule that only two magistrates should be appointed for a township with some educational standard. Some of the present magistrates could scarcely sign their names, and their decisions had been frequently upset by the superior Courts, after an unnecessary expenditure of time, in consequence of their ignorance of the manner in which the convictions should be made out. Unfortunately we had not here the same class of men who in England desired to become magistrates—clergymen and country gentlemen, who made a point of understanding their duties—but we had a class of persons, just as intelligent, who would be willing to serve if it were made an object of ambition to them.

Mr. CLARKE (Norfolk) said he believed the legislation of this House was partly to blame for any deterioration in the soundness of the decisions of country magistrates. He defended the decisions of the magistracy and opposed the appointment of stipendiary magistrates.

Mr. PATTERSON (Essex) said he did not find fault with the men who had been appointed but with the principle of appointing men who positively refused to do so. He could not see the force of the Attorney-General's distinction between public and private correspondence in a case of this kind.

Mr. HARDY said he objected to the rather sweeping observations made by the member for Stormont, as to the general character and what might be called the mal-practice of the Magistracy. He (Mr. Hardy) could only recall some one or two cases in his own observation of such conduct on the part of magistrates. The description of these gentlemen given by the hon. member for Stormont did not apply to the magistracy of Brant County at all events, or in fact to the western sections of the Province generally.

Mr. SEXTON said he did not think the present number of magistrates was at all too large. He found that very few of the decisions of the magistrates were quashed, and thought that generally speaking they were excellent men. He hoped their number would not be materially lessened.

Mr. SCOTT said the present system of appointing magistrates could not be logically maintained. The most of the business now done by the police magistrates in towns was from the country, and it might be possible and proper to have all the business of the country performed by these gentlemen. It would lessen litigation very considerably. The present magistrates might issue the summonses, and so on.

Mr. FERRIS protested against the wholesale charges made against the magistracy of this country. They were a lot of men who generally performed their work well. No mention was made by hon. members of the large number of cases which were amicably settled by the influence of the magistrates.

Mr. PAXTON said the magistrates were poorly paid, and as a rule were not deserving of the charges some hon. gentlemen had made against them.

Mr. CURRIE said the majority of the magistrates in his county were intelligent, well-read men; and he could only remember of one case coming before the Court within the last ten years, which was caused by the blundering of a magistrate. He was a little surprised to find an opponent of the Government asking the information sought by the member for Essex.

Mr. McMAHON said it was questionable to him whether it would be proper for the Government to bring down the information sought for by the member for Essex. So far as regarded the last appointment of magistrates in North Westworth, the Commission then issued was very necessary, as the previous one had been issued as far back as 1863, and many of the appointees had died, others had removed, and some had refused to qualify. With regard to the proposal to transfer the powers of the magistrates in the country districts to the police magistrates in towns, he thought there would be nothing gained by that, as he noticed that there were a greater number of cases coming before the Quarter Sessions owing to the errors of the Police Magistrates, than of those arising from the blunders of County Magistrates.

Mr. PATTERSON (Essex) protested against the ground assumed by the member

for Welland, that an opponent of the Government should not ask for such information as he had. His action had been dictated by his sense of duty to his constituents, and he thought it was a wrong principle to make such a distinction as that laid down by the member for Welland.

Mr. MEREDITH directed the attention of the Attorney-General to the cases of two magistrates in East Middlesex who were also members of the License Commission. They were also in the habit of sitting as Justices of the Peace in cases arising out of infractions of the License Act, and though he believed them to be men of integrity, he thought it very improper that they should act as judges in such cases.

Mr. BETHUNE said some hon gentleman had misapprehended his remarks upon the motion before the House. He had nothing to say against the personnel of the magistracy, it was the principle to which he objected.

Mr. MACDOUGALL (Simcoe) said if the principle observed by the Government was only to consult with their own friends in appointing Justices of the Peace, the sooner the system was changed the better. Such a thing had never been done by any previous Government in his (Mr. Macdougall's) time. They found also, that the Government had selected their License Commissioners on account of their politics, notwithstanding the announcement in THE GLOBE that the best men would always be selected. He had expected to receive a circular from the Government or something of that kind asking for his recommendations as to the best men for these offices in his constituencies, and had been very much surprised to find that the Government had not done so.

Mr. MOWAT said the hon. member for South Simcoe was quite wrong in supposing that the License Commissioners had been appointed from a purely political point of view. The Government had done their best to avoid doing so, and at the same time make the law as efficient as possible. While some of the Conservatives whom they had appointed on the various Boards had done their duty, there were other cases in which they had done their best to render the law a dead letter. (Hear, hear.) So that the appointments had to be revised. With reference to the appointment of magistrates, he believed the rules professed to have been acted upon, had been substantially the same under all Governments. Occasionally when a Conservative Government was in power, Reformers were appointed, but the majority of the appointed persons were Conservatives. He always argued when consulting with his friends in the various constituencies as to the appointment of magistrates, the propriety of putting in the names of Conservatives as well as Reformers, and so far as he knew this had been done. He quite agreed that magistrates should be appointed for their fitness. With regard to consulting his hon. friend the member for South Simcoe as to appointments, he might say that he only consulted those in whom he had confidence—(laughter)—and he only had confidence in those who had confidence in him. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) He believed that the magistrates appointed by the present Government were in every respect as good a body of men as any who had preceded them. (Hear, hear.)

The motion was then carried.

SUPPLY.

The House went into Committee of Supply. Mr. Clarke (Wellington) in the chair.

On the item, Treasury Department, \$21,300.

Mr. CROOKS explained that it had been necessary to make some additions to the staff in his office, owing to the increased labour involved in the operation of the new License Act.

In the course of a discussion which followed,

Mr. PATTERSON (Essex) contended that a more systematic mode of appointing and promoting public officials should be appointed.

Mr. BETHUNE thought it would be better to make the present officials work longer and pay them better than to increase the staff. Generally speaking, the hours of labour were shorter than those of employees in business houses.

Mr. MEREDITH—You would reduce the amount of patronage.

Mr. BETHUNE pointed out that the patronage was a great objection to any Government. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CROOKS said the specific duties of each clerk in the Department were such that