

Those hon. gentlemen, who complained that there were no meetings of this Committee held, should first attend when they were held. The hon. member for East Grey himself had only been present four times this session. (Applause.)

Mr. LAUDER—That statement is not true. (Order.) I was present last week and could not get a quorum.

Mr. WOOD—The hon. gentleman came half an hour late, and he calls that attendance.

Mr. LAUDER—The clerk must have made a mistake in not noting my presence more than four times.

Mr. WOOD—Last year the hon. gentleman only attended twelve out of twenty times.

Mr. LAUDER—Where does the hon. Treasurer get his information?

Mr. WOOD—From the minutes of the Committee, and from the journals of the House. The hon. gentleman is the one who finds all the fault and makes all the complaints; and anticipating, and believing, and being almost certain that he would do so in regard to this Committee, I prepared a calculation.

Mr. LAUDER said that the Government had packed the Committee during one session, and gave themselves a large majority. The present Treasurer was more willing to allow the fullest examination into the accounts than any of his predecessors under the present Administration. The Government at the present time had a majority of two to one on the Committee.

Mr. WOOD—No! no! Only ten to seven.

Mr. LAUDER contended that the minority was not to blame for non-attendance, but the majority.

Mr. WOOD said that the seven members of the Opposition last year attended sixty-five days, or an average of nine days each. The ten Government supporters had attended 143 days, or an average of fourteen days each. This year the seven Opposition members attended 34 sittings, or an average of five each; and the ten Government supporters attended 94 sittings, or nine each. (Applause.) So it was not the Government supporters who were to blame because there were no quorums.

Mr. MEREDITH pointed out that the Opposition and other members were on the Exemption Committee, discharging the duties which the Government should have performed.

Mr. HARDY said the supporters of the Government had been charged by the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Lauder), who was trying to draw the charge back, with having neglected the Committees, but he had to learn now that it was the Opposition which had abandoned the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. DEACON argued that the blustering course of the Government and the style of its attack would prevent the Opposition from making any statements in the House. He characterized the assertion by the Hon. Treasurer that the Opposition had abandoned the Public Accounts Committee as being false. (Order! order!)

Mr. WOOD—I made no such statement.

Mr. DEACON—I mean the Provincial Secretary. Although I may be called to order, I say that the statement is untrue. (Order! order!)

The SPEAKER—There is a parliamentary way of expressing the denial.

Mr. DEACON stated that he had been most regular in attending the Committees of the House, and to-day was the first occasion on which he had missed doing so.

Mr. HARDY had not intended to apply his charge to the Opposition generally, for certainly the hon. member for Renfrew (Mr. Deacon) and the hon. member for West Hastings (Mr. Wills) must be exempted.

Mr. CAMERON reviewed the whole debate, and argued that the fact that, in anticipation of complaints from the Opposition, the Treasurer had provided himself with a prepared calculation, was in itself a proof that the Committee, from design, had not been called. There had been no meet-

ing of the Public Accounts Committee since it was stated on the floor of the House that several thousand dollars had been drawn from the bank for the Agricultural Farm without any proper authority. Thus the Opposition had been precluded from moving for papers and witnesses, and investigating the irregularity.

Mr. MILLER advocated the reduction of the quorum of committees. It might also be considered as inconvenient that the same chairman should preside over two important Committees—Printing and Public Accounts. The Printing Committee had been in session up to one o'clock to-day, and the chairman could not well be in two places at one time. The accounts ought to be brought down earlier, and perhaps a change in the commencement of the fiscal year would have the desired result.

Mr. ROSS said that if the Public Accounts Committee went on with the business in the absence of the Opposition members, they would be open to the imputation of partiality. The utmost facility was given for the auditing of the Accounts, but for three or four days a quorum could not be obtained in consequence of the absence of members of the Opposition. (Hear, hear.) It did not lie with them, therefore, to make the complaints they had been making. He was in favour of the fiscal year being made to end in September or October, so that the accounts for each year could be presented to the House at the first session, and each year's accounts could be audited within proper time.

Mr. HARDY pointed out that the hon. member for East Toronto, who had been complaining of there being no opportunity to cross-examine witnesses before the Public Accounts Committee, had attended the meetings of that Committee only twice in three years. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. SCOTT favoured the fiscal year being ended at a time which would allow the accounts for that year to be presented to the next session of the House. He thought the committees were too large, as they divided the attention of the members.

Mr. BIRSON said that on the days when the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Lauder) was absent from the Public Accounts Committee their business was rapidly proceeded with. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) He agreed with the last speaker that the committees were too large.

Mr. WILLS thought the Public Accounts Committee should be a small one, that it should be appointed at the opening of each parliament and last as long as the parliament.

After some further discussion the motion was carried.

UNION SCHOOL SECTIONS.

The House went into Committee on Mr. Crooks' Bill respecting Union School Sections.

The Bill was reported with one or two amendments.

LANDLORDS AND TENANTS.

Mr. MOWAT said that the Government did not intend to proceed with this Bill. It was intended to be in the interests both of landlords and tenants, but as there were some provisions in the Bill which might with advantage be further considered, it was thought that the opinion of the country upon it should be ascertained. He moved, therefore, that the order for the second reading of the Bill be discharged.

Mr. CAMERON concurred in the view of the Attorney-General.

The motion was carried, and the order was discharged.

THE REVISED STATUTES.

Mr. MOWAT, in moving the second reading of the Bill to make certain amendments in the Revised Statutes, explained its various provisions. The amendments in the Bill were in the order in which the Acts amended appeared in the Revised Statutes, and they were such as were expected not to involve any difference of opinion. The first clause embodied the resolution passed a couple of days ago to the effect that mem-