

Clarke (Norfolk).

An Act to amend the Mutual Fire Insurance Company Act.—Mr. Clarke (Norfolk).

PASSAGE OF BILLS.

The following Bills were read a third time and passed:—

Mr. Wood—To authorize the issuing of scrip for Railway Grants in certain cases.

Mr. Mowat—To extend the right of taking Security of Guarantee Companies.

Mr. Lauder—To incorporate the Grey and Walkerton Railway Company.

SUPPLY.

The House, on motion of Mr. WOOD, went into Committee of Supply.

On the item \$3,350 for Lieut.—Governor's office,

Mr. MEREDITH desired to know what were the duties of the Private Secretary and the Official Secretary of the Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. WOOD explained that the duty of the Private Secretary was to attend upon the Lieutenant-Governor and superintend the hospitalities of the Government House, and perform other services that are required of him. The Official Secretary was engaged in the answer of official correspondence, and was expected to be in readiness to undertake any commissions entrusted to him by the Lieut.—Governor.

Mr. MEREDITH thought this an unsatisfactory explanation. He did not know what had been the necessity of employing an official secretary.

Mr. MOWAT said the explanation was that Lieut.—Governor Howland had found it necessary on several occasions to employ privately additional help in his Department. This could not be allowed permanently, and therefore a new officer had been appointed. He quoted from the estimates of the Province of Quebec to show that two officers were employed in the Governor-General's Department there, costing more than those in Ontario.

Mr. MEREDITH stated that he had learned that the gentleman occupying the position of official secretary was an articled clerk in a law office in the city, and thought if this was the case he could not well attend to his duties in the Government office. The Attorney-General had no right to justify this expenditure by that in the Province of Quebec.

Mr. CURRIE quoted from the Public Accounts of 1871 to prove that at that time there were two officers employed in this Department, at a total cost of \$1,800.

Mr. DEACON thought it did not matter what had been done in former years; if this officer was not needed he should be dispensed with.

Mr. MEREDITH, in answer to Mr. Currie, pointed out that the employment of two officers in 1871 was exceptional, as it was not charged in the Public Accounts of 1872 and 1873. He noticed that the Attorney-General had not either denied or affirmed the statement that the gentleman occupying the position of official secretary was also an articled clerk in a law office.

Mr. MOWAT said this was the first intimation he had had of the matter. He could only say that he would look into it and inform the House as to its correctness or otherwise.

Mr. HARDY said that the hon. gentleman had not stated that this officer did not put in his time at the Government House. It was quite possible that he, like many others in similar positions, was studying law in the time which he could spare after office hours.

Mr. MEREDITH said he had stated plainly that this officer was not only articled, but also was spending his time in the law office to which he had referred.

Mr. FRASER desired to know if the hon. gentleman wished the Executive to form themselves into what might be called a Smelling Committee to see that the officers in the Government House attended to their duties, and put in all their time at the Government office; to subject the Government House of Ontario to a supervision different from that of any other Government House. If he did he was mistaken, for it was something which the Government would not undertake, and if the gentlemen opposite came into power they would

not wish to engage in it either. With a gentleman of the high standing and character of the Lieutenant-Governor it was not to be expected that any clerk or officer would be employed there that was not necessary. When he stated that he wanted an additional clerk there was no reason why he should not have one, or why the people should not trust that that officer was performing his duties to the satisfaction of the Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. LAUDER said the leader of the Opposition did not require the Government to do anything indecent, but it was his duty to see to it when the peoples' money was being voted away that it should be applied to proper purposes. There were other items in this account which should be looked into, as, for instance, the item of \$950 for contingencies for the Lieutenant-Governor's office. He claimed that while the present Government were in Opposition they were not slow in even ridiculing the Government House, and insisted upon having vouchers for even the most trifling expenditure.

Mr. CURRIE was glad to see the gentlemen in the front ranks of the Opposition were becoming such careful guardians of the people's money. They had not always manifested this feeling, as would be seen by the fact that this item to which they took exception had been voted without question for several years. However, they expected to go to the country soon, and must make a show of economy. He thought, however, it was very much like a death-bed repentance.

Mr. WOOD said that it had been the opinion of the Government that it was well the Lieutenant-Governor should pay his own accounts, and therefore no return had been asked for money voted. Capt. Grant had been examined before the Public Accounts Committee a few days before, and had given an account of the amounts spent during the year upon contingencies, and was prepared to furnish full particulars, but the hon. member for West Hastings, who was examining him, had declared that he had no further questions to ask of him. The position simply was that the Province trusted the Lieutenant-Governor with some \$600 for the payment of the contingencies in his department, for this was about all that was generally spent.

Mr. MEREDITH claimed that they were now pursuing a different policy from that which had obtained in former years, when the custom was to require vouchers for money paid in this department. The Government had appointed a new officer, and did not know whether he performed his duties or not.

Mr. MOWAT said that this was not a new officer, for the payment of his salary had been sanctioned year after year.

Mr. WILLS spoke on behalf of the Opposition. He claimed that the accounts submitted by Capt. Grant were not sufficiently detailed.

Mr. DEACON said this was not a question of trusting or not trusting the Lieut.—Governor, but simply a matter of business. He understood that contingencies covered only those small accounts which could not be set forth with more particularity. The system of not keeping account of these matters was a bad one, and should be abolished.

Mr. LAUDER drew the attention of the House to a rule of the Government that accounts of money expended should be kept in the Departments, and claimed that it was no reflection upon the Lieutenant-Governor to enforce the rules of the Assembly.

Mr. MERRICK thought the item of salary for the official secretary should not pass until some information upon it had been furnished by the leader of the Government.

Mr. MOWAT said if this was a new appointment this contention would be a sound one, but it had existed since 1876, and the House had been quite satisfied concerning it. Mr. Curtis, who had formerly occupied the positions of private secretary and official clerk, had often complained that the work was too much for one man to perform, and the House had been satisfied of this, and therefore the new appointment had been made. He (Mr. Mowat) would look into the matter, and gentlemen opposite knew that there were many opportunities out of Committee for cutting off the item