

the rival of Chicago. (Hear, hear.)

The report was received and referred to the Printing Committee with instructions to have it printed.

CONCURRENCE.

With regard to the item of \$14,430 in the Executive Council and the Attorney-General's Office,

Mr. DEACON said it was necessary to do more than merely talk economy. It would not do to reduce the salaries of other officers without reducing also those receiving large salaries. The reduction he was about to move for was not at all with a view to reflect upon the ability of the officer to be affected, for he recognized the value of his services, but he pointed out that in 1870, when first appointed, he received only \$1,600, which next year was increased to \$2,000, and in 1873 to \$2,800, which increase he thought was too great and too rapid: therefore he moved in amendment, "That the said resolution be not now concurred in, but be forthwith referred back to the Committee of Supply, with instructions to reduce the item of \$2,800 for the salary of the Clerk of the Executive Council and Deputy of the Attorney-General to \$2,500."

Mr. MEREDITH said that notwithstanding the clause in the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne recommending economy, nothing of importance in this direction had been done. He believed that large reductions must be made if the people of this Province would avoid the evils of direct taxation. All through the country steps toward retrenchment were being made. In Prince Edward Island this had been deemed of so much importance that it had been referred to in the speech from the Throne at the last meeting of Parliament. In the cities of Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, and London reductions of salaries were being made. It might be said that this Province was in a better position than these cities, but though the Province was rich, yet economy was quite as necessary. The item for the reduction of which he proposed to move was the salaries of Ministers. The House had committed itself to a reduction of the indemnity of members, and it had been shown that the whole time of Ministers was not necessary for the performance of the official duties. This was not a matter personal to the Ministers themselves, but affected the public expenditure of the country. In questions of this kind the Provincial Civil Service were not the same as those of the Dominion, for that had been the growth of some time. Owing to the depression which had lasted for so long a time the purchasing power of money had increased by almost one-third, and reduction of expenses was the rule in all parts of the Dominion, so that it was only fair that the salaries of the Civil Service should be reduced as well. He, therefore, moved in amendment to the amendment, "That all the words in the proposed amendment after the word 'that' be struck out, and the following substituted therefor:—In the opinion of this House the salaries of the Ministers should be fixed at \$3,500, with \$1,000 additional for the Premier; that the salaries of the deputy heads of the Departments should not exceed \$2,000; and that all the salaries of the Departmental officers for which appropriations had not already been made, and which are in excess of \$800, should be reduced by ten per cent. of the amount thereof, but not so as to reduce any such salary to an amount below \$800, and that the said resolution be forthwith referred back to the Committee of Supply with instructions to reduce the items under the head of Executive Council and Attorney-General's office accordingly."

Mr. MOWAT said it was very easy to make pretence of a desire for retrenchment by proposing to reduce the salaries, for no matter what salaries were given it was easy for hon. gentlemen opposite to say they were too large, move a resolution of this kind, and take credit for a desire to economize. He claimed, however, that the salaries were all now as low as the interests of the country required. The plain reason why they could not be reduced was that the Government had been all along so economical that not one of them was too high. (Cheers.) The hon. leader of the Opposition spoke of the salaries of men in business employments. He must know perfectly well that there were many mercantile positions having attached to them salaries larger, several times over, than those received by officers of the Government, performing as important and as arduous work; and larger by a great deal in many instances, than those paid to Ministers of the Crown. (Cheers.) It was impossible to come to a fair conclusion upon this matter without knowing what were the duties performed, and this none could know so well as the members of the Government. During the four years immediately following Confederation the salaries were considerably lower than at present, but it was then discovered that it would be impossible to maintain the efficiency of the service unless the salaries were increased. Competent men would not continue in the public service for the remuneration that was offered them. When the increase was made it received the sanction of hon. members on both sides of the House. It would be easy enough for the present Government, if they did not care for the efficiency of the service so much as to make a display of economy, or to prevent hon. gentlemen opposite having an opportunity of raising a cry against them, to either concur in the present motion or even offer to make a still further reduction. Why did they not take that course? Because, instead of this being an economical move it was quite the reverse. (Cheers.) The hon. member for London spoke of our Civil Service not being the same as at Ottawa. He claimed that it was of the utmost importance to the Province that the Civil Service should be as carefully looked after as that of the Dominion or of any other State. The true efficiency and good working of the Departments depended upon the efficiency of the officers of those Departments, and the loss of efficiency, which would result from reducing the salaries of those officers, would be greater than the gain afforded by such a paltry reduction. (Hear, hear.) He was glad to be able to say that the Civil Service of this Province was wholly free from corruption. (Cheers.) This was a most creditable thing to the Province at large; but how was it to be kept up to this standard of purity if the officers were to be given the idea that their incomes were liable at any moment to be reduced, and that reduction would depend largely upon whether or not the party in power desired to use this reduction as an election cry? It was well known that the character of the civil service in other countries was not so good as that of the Ontario staff, and the loss caused by the want of uprightness was very large. Every form of government, autocratic and democratic, suffered from this evil; and the best means of causing it to grow was to make the office insecure, as hon. gentlemen were seeking to do. Reference had been made to the sums which these officers were paid when first engaged. It was quite true that good

men could be engaged at low prices in the first instance, but as soon as they became efficient they were sought after by other parties, and it was impossible to keep them unless additional inducements were offered them. They had already lost servants who had become of great value, because it was found impossible to pay the price necessary to command their services. The salaries paid in other States might seem small, but the economy was only in the name; the salaries of officers if not sufficiently large would be irregularly increased, causing an immense loss to the public. These officers had been living in a certain style in view of their incomes, and if a reduction was made the effect would be to offer greater or less temptations to irregularities, and weaken the moral character of the service. He would prefer in the coming contest to be defeated, rather than countenance a reduction which, though it pretended to secure economy, was in reality extravagant. (Cheers.) But he had no fears of the result, for he believed that the people of the Province were not in sympathy with the proposed reduction. (Loud cheers.) To take advantage of a reduction in the cost of the necessaries of life to reduce these salaries was a most unstatesmanlike thing to do, and a most disgraceful piece of partisanship. (Loud cheering.) No dereliction of duty whatever was charged against the officers, and it was not pretended that they did not earn their money now as well as they did some years ago, when hon. gentlemen so unanimously expressed themselves in favour of an increase. In bringing this question up the hon. leader of the Opposition acknowledged either that he was opposed to the policy which his party had before so strongly advocated, or that this reduction was proposed merely for a party purpose. The people of the Province, however, would appreciate the fact that in opposing this reduction the Government were acting in the interests, not of men who were in sympathy with them politically, but who had as a rule been appointed by their opponents, and whose political views were against them. It seemed strange that the hon. leader of the Opposition should speak of the hard times as a reason for effecting this reduction, as the party with whom he was identified had promised, now that they were in power, to bring about an immediate and complete relief for the hard times which had so long oppressed the Province in common with the rest of the world. With regard to the salaries of Ministers, that was something which, as it affected themselves, he could not say much. He would just remark, however, that the increase was made not only with the consent, but with the hearty approval, of hon. gentlemen opposite, and that there was a unanimous expression of opinion in its favour. It had been said that it was understood at the time the increase was made that Ministers should devote their whole time to the duties of their respective offices. He had said before, and he now maintained, that no such thing was mentioned at that time. However, the present Ministers had devoted more time to their official duties than their predecessors, and not only that, but they had also done more work than any who had ever occupied the same office. (Loud cheering.)

Mr. MORRIS thought it unfortunate that Dominion politics should be dragged into questions of this House on every occasion by gentlemen opposite. It was not possible for any country to secure prosperity in a moment from a depression such as we had suffered under. The people did not expect this, but simply that the prosperity of the country could be aided by wise legislation. (Opposition cheers.) He believed that before a year was over the people of Canada would see that other than the fly on the wheel policy was necessary to weather the storm of depression. He repelled the accusation that this motion was made for party purposes, but the time had come when a revision of the expenditure must be made. Every mercantile house in the Province was taking stock of their expenditures, and seeking to make reductions. The question of salaries of Ministers was entirely within the province of the House. He had no hesitation in saying that this resolution was actuated by a desire to serve the best interests of the Province.

Mr. WOOD said that the salaries of Ministers being a matter personal to themselves he did not purpose to give his own views of the matter, but would give the opinions of hon. members opposite as reported in the *Mail*. He then proceeded to quote the speeches of hon. gentlemen from the report of the discussion on the increase of the salaries in the session of 1876-7, all of which were strongly in favour of the proposed increases. He objected to salaries being reduced so long as they were being earned, but he desired to go further, and in doing so spoke solely upon his own responsibility. He objected further then, to the hon. members in the front Benches of the Opposition picking out a certain class to have their salaries reduced, and that was the class of laymen. He would, however, warn the hon. gentleman that the people of this Province were wide awake, and when it was proposed to reduce the salaries of non-professional servants of the Government by a motion aimed specially at them, he was going too far in that direction. He admitted that the legal profession were our authority in this Province, and stood as high as those of any other country; he did not pretend that they were receiving larger fees than elsewhere, or that he believed those fees should be reduced. But arguing this out, if it was unreasonable and unwise to reduce the fees of the legal gentlemen who were in receipt of incomes of two, three, or even ten thousand dollars a year, then why pick out the laymen and introduce a motion specially against them? If several thousands of dollars were struck off the salaries it would not reduce the taxation of the people, but would give them a slight additional interest in the surplus. Taking the amount paid annually to officers of the Government as \$185,000, ten per cent off that would yield \$18,500, which extraordinary economy would just give each one of the population an additional interest of one cent in the surplus. But supposing that there were 1,000 lawyers in the Province, their taxable fees would amount to \$1,000 each per year, or a total of \$1,000,000. A reduction of ten per cent. on this (the House having the power to regulate them) would give a saving to the people of \$100,000.

Mr. LAUDER—That is for the Government to do.

Mr. WOOD—The Government would not stoop to such a thing. They would not reduce these fees by a cast-iron rule simply because the price of bread and of bacon had fallen. But he objected, as before stated, to the laymen being singled out for an attack of this kind, and he asked his hon. friend to consider if the laymen of the country would consent to such legislation, would submit to being told that they were men of such small calibre that their paltry salaries of \$1,000 or so a year should be reduced by \$100. The legal gentlemen filled—efficiently he was glad to admit—nearly all