

light. It was hinted that the present Commission had been appointed for political purposes, and that one of its chief duties would be to enquire into the evil workings of the N. P., as if any such enquiry as that were at all necessary. (Applause.) In appointing the Commission, practical men were selected who had personal knowledge of the matters to be enquired into, having no regard for their political creed. An effort would be made to bring the report of this Commission within the reach of every farmer in the Province. Owing to the difference in soil and climate no definite rule could be laid down which every farmer could safely follow, but the report would be of such a nature that it could be utilized by everyone, and if the suggestions given in the evidence were followed, it would be the means of adding hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to the resources of the Province. They had tried to impress upon the farmer the value of under-draining, about which great ignorance prevailed. Some farmers thought it took away the moisture which was needed for vegetation, instead of which it had the opposite effect. With regard to the destruction of forests something might be done to fill up the waste which was going on. There was a tendency in the forest destruction to bring about winter-killing. That might be prevented by the planting of trees to form a wind-break. Much could be done in the way of instructing farmers in the matter of growing fruit, something which would stimulate production. The whole country appreciated the work of the Commission, and very many people were awaiting the publication of the report with a great deal of anxiety. He was glad a desire had been shown to advance the real interests of the people, and concluded by drawing a glowing picture of the high position Canada was destined to fill as a part of the British Empire.

Mr. MEREDITH, after some complimentary references to the mover and seconder of the Address, and also to the Lieutenant-Governor, proceeded to discuss the boundary question. He complained that there was on the part of the Government a disposition to take a party advantage of the Dominion Government with respect to this matter. Other Provinces were jealous of Ontario, and there were many difficulties in the way of a final settlement of the dispute, and a settlement would be greatly facilitated were the Government to pursue a different course. He endorsed the proposed action of the Government with respect to the subsidy to the Ontario and Pacific Junction Railway, and stated that that action had not been taken a moment too soon. He warned the Government that the payment of \$8,000 a mile to that road would leave in the Treasury little of the surplus left by the Sandfield-Macdonald Government. He thought the character of the work done by the Agricultural Commission should be judged by the report submitted and disclaimed having ever attempted to prejudice the Commission by expressing fears that it covered an attack on the N. P. He maintained that public opinion was more strongly than ever opposed to the erection of new Parliament Buildings, and argued that the money might be more usefully expended. The Opposition last session had looked on while supporters of the Government were finding fault with the policy of that Minister of Education with respect to Upper Canada College, and he thought it was necessary that something should be done with respect to that institution after the discussion which then took place. He hinted that some discussion was likely to take place during the session on the appointments in University College, which were certainly not prompted by a national feeling. Referring to the Judicature Bill, he thought the eulogy of the member for Hamilton on the Attorney-General in connection with it was somewhat extravagant. The measure was in one respect in a wrong direction, inasmuch as it would tend to centralize law business more than ever in Toronto. A better reform, he contended, would be the creation of three courts instead of one, that is, one east and one west of Toronto. He regarded the measure as premature, and stated that in this opinion he was in harmony with many eminent members of the bench and bar. He hoped private rights would be carefully respected in any legislation respecting streams, and agreed that something should be done about the question of market fees. He ridiculed the paragraph referring to legislation in alternate sessions, and preferred biennial sessions. He thought a more important reform would be a reduction in the membership of the Assembly, and such a simplification of the forms of its procedure as would admit of a shortening of the session to 30 days. He repudiated the charge that the Opposition were in favour of abolishing the Provincial Legislature, and concluded by expressing a hope that the session would be a brief one.

Mr. MOWAT, on rising to reply, was received with applause. He noticed the complimentary references of the leader of the Opposition to the mover and seconder of the address, and said that they were destined to make their mark in the House should they continue to devote their time to the Province. Regarding some remarks made by his hon. friend the leader of the Opposition as to the Lieutenant-Governor he said that the Governor had so far acted as a constitutional Governor, and he felt sure that he would continue to do so. His hon. friend had mentioned the Boundary Award, and had said that the Dominion Government had not yet had an opportunity to show whether they opposed it or not since the last session of the Ontario House. His hon. friend was referring to the resolutions passed by that House, but he seemed to forget that those resolutions were passed on the third of March, and that the Dominion House remained in session for two months after that date. A Committee of the House of Commons had also considered the question—a Committee hostile to the interests of Ontario with a hostile chairman. Before the resolutions referred to were passed there was a debate in the Commons on the subject, taken part in by Ministers, who argued that the award was a bad one, and that Ontario was entitled to the award she had received. The people, therefore, had a good cause of complaint against the Dominion Government in that matter.

Mr. MORRIS asked if there had been any communications on the subject since last session.

Mr. MOWAT could not say just then whether there had been any written communications or not, but there had been verbally. His hon. friend opposite had joined with the Government in the view taken by them on this

question, and the hon. gentlemen had said that they still took the same view, yet he spoke as if there was something doubtful about the matter by which they might justify the Dominion Government two years after the award was made. The territory awarded was at present in such a state that no one could tell whether any law existed in that section or not. The territory was becoming settled, and if a proper state of things were in vogue more people would go there. No one had found fault with the choice of the Arbitrators, and they had not even awarded so much to Ontario as the old Province of Canada had claimed. There was no doubt but that the *minimum* award had been given. A defence of the Dominion Government for not confirming the award, and making known what sort of law was in force in that territory, was not possible, and as hon. gentlemen opposite had united with him last session they would probably do so again. The hon. leader of the Opposition had said that they were pressing this matter too hard, but there was no foundation for that statement. The hon. member for East Toronto was of opinion that they did not press it hard enough to make his Ottawa friends give way. With reference to the new Parliament Buildings and the appropriation of \$5,000 for the safety of the records of the Crown Lands Department, he went on to say that it would be unnecessary to have an appropriation of \$500,000 were these the only records to be guarded. But every department had very important records, the destruction of which would occasion very serious loss. These all required to be taken care of. His hon. friend had said that they were not going to get the buildings erected for the sum named. Well, if they could not get them constructed for the sum which had been sanctioned by the Legislature they would not be erected at all.

Mr. MEREDITH—What about the safety of the public records, then?

Mr. MOWAT—Then they would have to be taken care of separately. A number of designs had been furnished to the Government, and competitors declared that the designs submitted could be erected for the sum named. They would ultimately test that, however, by calling for tenders when the plans were selected. It would be a very extraordinary thing if the Province of Ontario could not provide suitable buildings for the requirements of the Government. His hon. friend had referred to some statements as to the expenditure and management of the Upper Canada College, but he was glad that his hon. friend did not endorse these statements, not knowing that they were true. The House would be supplied with the fullest information in regard to all particulars, and at the same time the Government would lay before the House the advisability of certain changes in connection with that institution, which they hoped would remove all objections to it, and give to it a Provincial character. His hon. friend had referred also to the Judicature Bill. The English Judicature Bill had been passed seven years ago, and they were enabled to judge of its defects, although it had been amended and was now working well, giving satisfaction to both Bench and Bar. All the reforms promised by its promoters have been realized. It was, as everybody who had studied the question knew, founded on the New York Code, a code which came into operation a quarter of a century ago. They had the experience of that code, and of the several States by which it was adopted to guide them, and although he did not think that they should hurry the matter, he took the step when he could no longer justify delay. He had never taken any step which involved so much labour as this one in order to adapt it to the country. His hon. friend had remarked that he thought the Bill had a tendency to centralization. But the contrary was the fact, and his professional friends in Toronto had said that it half ruined them in going towards decentralization, and beyond all doubt the Bill did tend that way. His hon. friend did not dispute that on the subject of the public rights in the streams of the country some wise legislation was necessary, and in fact he did not know that he disputed the propriety of any of the legislation suggested in the speech with one exception, to which he would presently refer. Persons who had patents of the land were supposed now to have power to prevent any use of the stream; for example, of floating down lumber. The assumption of such rights were wholly unexpected, and if left alone they would soon render those streams valueless. A measure would be laid before them which would commend itself to the good sense of the House, and which would not involve the loss of individual interests. One objection made by his hon. friend was that the House should consider, in view of the large amount of legislation already passed, whether they should continue legislating every year. There was no doubt a great many who would rather see less legislation, and who did not like any addition to the laws even if such addition was an improvement, and there was something in that view. There would be no legislation in the alternate session, unless urgently needed, and then it might possibly be required. The question was, whether now that they had gone over the whole of the statute book and over every subject within their jurisdiction session after session, they should go on making laws each session or confine their attention to that branch of their duties every other session. His hon. friend rather favoured biennial sessions. That was open to objection.

Mr. MEREDITH—I made no such suggestion.

Mr. MOWAT—Well, I have been for some time trying to discover whether he was or not, and it seems he is not. Probably he was making up his mind on that subject. The Government had come to no conclusion on their part, for it was a question which required a great deal of consideration. He did not pretend to say that he had yet thoroughly made his mind up on the subject, and he did not ask the House to legislate on it now, and perhaps he never would.

Mr. MEREDITH—Does the hon. gentleman mean that he is not in favour of alternate sessions?

Mr. MOWAT replied that what he had said had reference only to biennial sessions.

Mr. MEREDITH—Is the hon. gentleman in favour of alternate sessions?

Mr. MOWAT could see no solid objection to confining legislation to alternate sessions. His hon. friend had said that this was a new subject, but this was not correct. It was suggested some years ago by Mr. Blake, a gentleman in whom they had great confidence—(applause)—and in whom the country were past expressing their con-