

**Haldimand's Representative.**

Dr. Baxter made an effective speech in reply to what had been urged from the Opposition benches. The member for North Hastings had



failed to give the House any just reason why the system he advocated should be adopted. It was a very easy matter for almost anybody to find fault. It seemed almost as though he had had a legal training, so prolific was he in fault-finding. While there might be some objections to payment by fees, there were still graver objections to payment

by salaries. It had been asserted that the present system was old and worn out, but Dr. Baxter showed how amendments had been made in it as they were required in order to bring it up to the needs of the day. When the late Sandfield Macdonald was in power the incomes derived were excessive in one or two cases; but when that eminent statesman, Hon. Edward Blake, was leading the Government in 1872 he passed an act in which it was provided that in cases where fees exceeded \$2,000 a certain percentage should go to the counties; where they were over \$2,500 and under \$3,000 the registrar was entitled to 90 per cent. of the amount received; where they were over \$4,500 to 80 per cent.; where they were over \$5,000 to 75 per cent., and where they were over \$4,500 to 60 per cent. and so on. In this matter there had been ample progress and reform, and justice had been done. As a matter of fact the fees in the majority of cases did not amount to large sums and they were falling off. He advocated the extension of the present system on the principle that a man ought to be paid according to the work he did. The hon. gentleman had quoted some Reform papers which advocated the change, but he had not quoted any on the other side.

Mr. Meredith—Can the hon. gentleman show any that contained anything on the other side?  
Dr. Baxter—I don't know that I can, but a large number never discussed the question at all. (Applause.) There had been no sufficient reason advanced why a change should be made.

Mr. Sol White followed and made a great many curious statements which created much laughter on the Ministerial benches. The reasons given by the Attorney-General for the continuation of the present system were not good. The officers if paid by salary, he argued, would not be less attentive to their duties.

Mr. Charles Mackenzie contended that there was no sincere desire for change advanced by hon. gentlemen opposite. Their whole object was to give the present Government trouble. There were very few officials indeed in the Province whose fees amounted to \$3,000 a year. The Attorney-General had taken a very fair position in this matter. It was a credit to the Reform party that they were not bound by strong party feelings from doing what was right upon this as upon any other question.



Mr. A. F. Campbell accused the officials holding the positions in question of stumping for the Government in some instances, and expressed a belief that a change would be satisfactory to the people.

Mr. Awrey did not allow the assertions of the previous speaker to go unchallenged. It was a crime, said he, according to the hon. gentleman, for a man believing in a good Government and in the principles of the Liberal party attempting to discuss these questions. But what about the High Commissioner of the Dominion brought from London to stump the country and to stir up party strife, and to injure the interests of one of the great railway corporations here? What about Mr. Cowan, the postmaster of Galt, stumping the country up and down for the Tory Government? Mr. Awrey quoted from the Postmaster-General's report the fees paid to the postmasters of the Dominion—salaries varying from \$2,500 to \$4,000 or more. These men had all served their party before they got their positions. The officials of the Province were men in every case well qualified for their positions, and they were not in the majority of cases getting too large salaries. He asked the House to remember when they quoted from the newspapers that there were 150 or 200 Liberal journals in the Province and he doubted if more than six of them had suggested that this question should be dealt with by the Gov-

ernment, or that any change should be introduced.

Mr. Godwin felt it incumbent upon him to assert his rights as a farmer, declaring that he was sent to the House largely because the people of Elgin were convinced of the necessity of a change in the payment of the officials.

Mr. Bishop showed how in the past when attempts had been made to improve the system those attempts had been defeated by



the Tory party with Mr. Meredith, the dux of the first row of the Opposition, at their head, and Mr. Monk, the whipper—(laughter)—dux of the second row, and Mr. Tooley, the head of the third row—(great laughter). Surely these were sufficient to commit the whole Opposition. He believed that in some cases the fees were a little too large, but that would be remedied by

the legislation promised by the hon. the Attorney-General. We would like the gentlemen opposite to be a little more consistent.

Mr. Miscampbell argued in favor of payment by salary and further, that the salaries should be smaller than those of bank clerks or cashiers of banks and others who were liable to dismissal at any time, inasmuch as the registrars and sheriffs held permanent positions.

Mr. Davis had an amendment to move to the motion, but before submitting this he criticised at some length the arguments of Mr. Wood, and declared that no change of such a far-reaching character should be undertaken without careful consideration. The resolution was very unsatisfactory in the matter of its final clause, which stated that the change should only be introduced where it could be "satisfactorily applied." That was very vague. Then the hon. gentleman had spoken of grave irregularities that had come to his knowledge. If he knew of such irregularities it was his duty to have brought them to the knowledge of the Government. He denied the assertion that the people would endorse the proposed change, and also the statement that it would result in a financial gain to the Province. In his opinion it would be a financial loss. There would be a decided increase of expenditure in connection with the offices as a whole, and the work might not be as efficiently done as it was now. Complaint had been made by hon. gentlemen that the Government were too slow to adopt reforms. He believed that the history of the Government would not bear out this statement. Reform, improvement, advancement had been all along the line characteristic of the Government. He proposed the following amendment:—

That all words of the original motion after the first word "that" be omitted and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—It is the opinion of this House—

(1) That remunerating sheriffs, registrars of deeds, clerks of the peace and county attorney's fees is in the public interest preferable to a system of payment by salary.

(2) That placing these officers on salaries would result in a general increase of expenses and cost of carrying on the necessary business of these offices.

(3) That it is very probable that the salaries to be paid to such officers and their necessary assistants would considerably exceed the total of fees received, and by reason thereof the Province would, in most if not all cases, be burdened with an increase of expenditure.

(4) That as to registrars, the result of such a change, if made, would in some instances wipe out and in others greatly reduce the amounts which under the present system are payable to counties out of the fees received in the registry offices.

(5) That as to sheriffs, the payment of salary could not well be adopted, and, if adopted, the work of these offices generally would be apt to be less diligently performed, and thereby the interests not alone of the general public but of suitors, litigants and judgment creditors and others would suffer and be greatly prejudiced.

(6) That having regard to the public interest and of persons having to transact business in or through the offices of clerks of the peace and county attorneys the result would probably be the same as in respect of business to be transacted in sheriffs' offices in a somewhat less degree.

(7) That, having heard the assurance given that the Attorney-General purposes before next session to make special inquiry as to the remuneration at present actually received by such officers respectively and as to such other matters as would enable the Government to fairly and fully consider in what degree and in respect to what officers, if any, the said remuneration might be reduced, further consideration be deferred.