

Timber Policy of the Government Again Assailed.

The proceedings were very quiet to-day until about 9 o'clock to-night, when, on the motion to go into supply, a motion of want of confidence was moved by Mr. Miscampbell. It was directed, as Mr. Miscampbell's motions always are directed, against the Crown Lands Department. A diversion was, however, shortly effected by Mr. Whitney, in the shape of an altogether extraordinary attack on Hon. Mr. Bronson, the member of the Cabinet who sits without portfolio. Mr. Whitney's charge was in effect that Mr. Bronson, because of his being a lumberman, and connected with a company which has extensive Ontario timber limits, was disqualified both from sitting in the House or in the Government. Mr. Bronson, who seldom speaks in the House, made a singularly lucid and effective reply, first to Mr. Miscampbell on the timber policy generally, and then to Mr. Whitney on the curious point he had raised. At a late hour the amendment was voted down.

At the opening of the sitting Hon. Mr. Harcourt drew the attention of the House to an inaccuracy in to-day's report of the Public Accounts Committee, which was published in *The World and Empire*. These stated that Mr. John Scully, an enthusiastic supporter of the Administration, had received \$4,250, representing a 5 per cent. commission on the amount which the Government realized in the sale of bricks from the Central Prison to Major Stewart for the Drill Shed. The amount of commission which Mr. Scully had actually received was \$237 50, not \$4,250, as it would have been had this statement been true.

Only one bill was introduced, that of the Attorney-General respecting High Court sittings in the County of York. Several bills were read a third time, among them being the Attorney-General's bill to make further provision respecting the solemnization of marriages, Dr. Gilmour's bill to consolidate the debenture debt of Toronto Junction, Mr. G. Campbell's bill to consolidate the debt of the Town of Port Hope, and the Attorney-General's bill respecting Deputy Police Magistrates in cities. Hon. Mr. Harcourt's bill to amend the libel law came up for its third reading, and a slight discussion took place regarding the definition of a newspaper contained in the bill, and the consequent exclusion of monthly magazines from the benefits of the bill, the debate on the bill being finally adjourned.

Government orders came next, the first bill taken up being Hon. Mr. Harcourt's measure relating to voters' lists. This was passed through committee, with a number of amendments, over which there was but little debate. Mr. Meredith drew attention to the state of the law, by which persons who have changed their place of residence even the day before the election are disfranchised. Hon. Mr. Harcourt remarked that the evil was certainly existing, but that the Government could not see a way out of the difficulty without raising still greater evils. Mr. Balfour took the same ground, and Mr. Meredith suggested a transfer from the lists of one constituency to those of another. The debate was continued by Mr. Gibson (Huron), Hon. Mr. Ross, Hon. Mr. Hardy and Dr. Meacham, and the bill was then passed.

Hon. Mr. Hardy's bill relating to mines and mining lands was then considered in committee, Mr. Conmee's amendment of the other day being taken up. The amendment, it will be remembered, was in effect that the proposed suspension of the royalty on all mining lands for five years to come should be made retroactive, and that lands heretofore sold or leased subject to the royalty should be free of royalty for all time to come. The term of five years is changed to January 1, 1900.

Mr. Waters held that as amended the bill would be giving the lands away for very small sums; it would be handing them over to a small band of speculators.

Mr. Conmee replied that agricultural lands are given away free. The bill simply allowed the exercise of private energy and enterprise. Mr. Conmee then discussed the question of royalties at large, and expressed his hope that still further concessions would be made to the mining interests by the absolute abolition of royalties for all time.

Some remarks of Mr. Conmee's as to Mr. Meredith's alleged change of attitude on the royalty question drew from Mr. Meredith the declaration that he still adhered to his former opinion as to the advisability of charging a royalty, but thought that those who bought land under the royalty system should be put on the same footing as those buying under the condition of things caused by this bill.

Mr. A. F. Wood approved of the removal of royalties.

Mr. Waters returned to the charge, and maintained that the Province would find

that the pick of its mining lands would be seized upon, and that it could whistle for revenue. The mines would flourish when conditions of trade were favorable, and in the meantime a valuable asset would be thrown away. Hon. Mr. Hardy remarked that the feeling of those interested in the mines had been very strongly against royalties, and said that he looked forward to the royalties as likely to yield a very valuable revenue in the future, the present enactment being merely a suspension for five years. On account of the extreme depression existing on both sides of the mire, this exemption from royalties had been given in the meantime until January 1, 1900. Mr. Conmee held that the royalty was a special tax on the mining industry, and was unfair. Some further debate took place, Mr. Meredith arguing for the preservation of the royalties as a valuable source of future revenue. The bill was then passed.

Hon. Mr. Gibson's bill to amend the Division Courts act was then discussed in committee and carried, Mr. Gibson explaining the changes made in the law. There was a full discussion and some amendments made, but no regular debate until Mr. White moved an amendment providing that the defendant in a suit should receive a witness fee. After considerable debate the amendment was defeated by a large majority.

Mr. White then moved the insertion of a clause which would practically be his bill to assimilate the powers of Division Court Judges with those of the Judges of the High Court, which would deprive them of the right to commit for contempt, and practically abolish imprisonment for debt. Mr. White made an earnest plea for this, but it was defeated by a two-thirds majority. The committee then reported progress on the bill, and it being 6 o'clock the House rose for recess.

After recess the Division Courts bill was again taken up in committee and put through without further amendment.

The Attorney-General's bill to facilitate the local administration of justice in certain cases was then proceeded with. Some discussion occurred over the legal centralization in Toronto which the bill necessitated, or at least encouraged, according to Mr. Meredith and Mr. Whitney. Eventually the bill was sent through without important amendment.

TIMBER POLICY ATTACKED.

Then came at 9 o'clock what had been looked for all the afternoon, an amendment to the motion to go into supply, in

other words, a want of confidence motion. The amendment came from Mr. Miscampbell, and was directed against the Crown Lands Department. It was as follows:—"That this House disapproves of the large expenditures which are made annually by the Crown Lands Department for surveys, amounting to upwards of \$35,000 per annum, and of the sums paid by that department to unnecessary Crown lands agents, and it regrets that the executive of the department persisted in the practice of disposing of the Crown timber reserves of the Province without consulting or obtaining the approval of the representatives of the people in this House, and has failed to take any adequate steps for preserving the standing timber, and especially the smaller trees, from unnecessary waste and destruction; and this House deplores the improvidence which characterizes the management and disposal of the timber upon these reserves, which has destroyed in many parts of the country the saw mill industries which flourished there, and has transferred the business which they formerly carried on to the State of Michigan and other States of the neighboring republic, and is fast depriving the Province of its most valuable asset, and one which, if adequately and intelligently cared for, safeguarded and managed, would continue to furnish a large revenue to the Province for years to come, but which as now mismanaged is rapidly disappearing."

Mr. Miscampbell said his excuse in bringing this question up was the importance of the subject. The assets of the Province are limited and the revenue is fixed. When they prove insufficient and the timber, the Province's only asset, is exhausted, direct taxation must follow. The timber asset, Mr. Miscampbell held, is not inexhaustible; a large portion of the timber in Northern Ontario can hardly be counted upon as an asset, for the height of land intervenes, the streams flow the other way, the transport would be difficult. In addition, the more immediately accessible portions of the Province are being rapidly depleted of their timber. In Muskoka within the past few years great quantities have been cut, and now timber is scarce where not long ago there was apparently an inexhaustible quantity. The timber limits are receding, and the timber is rapidly growing scarcer. Mr. Miscampbell then spoke of the export of timber, and held that all the timber possible should be manufactured in the country. Every foot of timber exported in the rough is an injury to the Province, every foot retained in the country is a benefit. The manufacture of it would bring money into