

moved an amendment on going into supply to the effect that the appointment of such officials be transferred to the County Councils. The discussion was brief, the Patrons announcing that they intended to adhere to their former policy of waiting until the Government has announced its course, and the Conservative motion was defeated by a vote of 56 to 23. In the evening a useful session was spent in Committee of Supply, several important votes being passed.

An unusual number of bills were read a first time.

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICIALS.

At 10 minutes past 4 the order of going into supply was reached, and Mr. Harcourt made the necessary motion. Dr. Meacham then moved the following amendment:—"In the opinion of this House, the present mode of appointing Registrars of Deeds and other county officials is unsatisfactory and should be changed; and that the appointment of all the said officials whose salary or remuneration is provided in whole or mainly by the localities for which they are appointed should not be vested in the Executive of the Province, but in the people of the locality, through their municipal bodies."

The Opposition, Dr. Meacham said, had not maintained that all officials should be elected; it had said that many would be the better if election were substituted for appointment. For the report of the Fees Commission Dr. Meacham expressed very little respect. It had not been started, he said, with the idea that the Opposition would be convinced by its findings. Two reasons had actuated the Government in appointing the commission: to stave off the question at an awkward moment, and to get a supply of arguments wherewith to influence the voters of the country. Three ways of appointing these officials presented themselves, the doctor said: the old way of direct appointment, under which, he said, these places are given as retiring allowances to party men, and the hope of them is used to keep them in line; the system of direct popular vote, which, he said, all members of his party opposed; and the method of appointment by the Municipal Councils, in favor of which the motion was. In a defence of this Dr. Meacham now plunged. The County Councils would keep a closer watch upon the officials, he said, and the honors would be distributed among the different parties more evenly. Even where party feeling ran high in the Councils, the members would have to put forward their best men so as to improve their chances, and so the class of men would be improved. Then, appointments would not be kept open so long as at present they often are, to the injury of the service; while useless officers would be promptly dismissed. In every way he thought the proposed plan would be far superior to that at present followed by the Government.

THE PREMIER.

Sir Oliver Mowat, in his opening remarks, said that his hon. friend (Dr. Meacham), and those who acted with him and represented the same party, found fault with the continuance of the appointment of officials in the Province, but saw no objection to the continuance of the system of appointing Dominion officials. There were very many Dominion offices which might as well be handed over to election in the localities as the Provincial offices which are in controversy. But about these there was never a word heard. The reason was plain; in the Province they had no power, nor likelihood of getting control of the appointments to office, while in the Dominion their party had the power, and expected to retain it. The present was an inconvenient time for making this motion; it was inconvenient for many reasons; inconvenient for every other purpose except for a purely party purpose. In England the Parliamentary practice was that when a motion of this kind was brought in any member had a right to move an amendment to it. Sir Oliver said he could see no reason why this should not be. There had been more motions of this kind during this session than he had known during his experience of 22 years in the Legislature. His experience this session had led him to the opinion that when the Dominion Parliament had adopted the rule to prevent amend-

ments to resolutions moved upon the House going into supply, a mistake had been made.

The point of the present resolution understood to be the appointment of county officials by County Councils. The hon. member who had moved it had first led the House to think he favored popular election, although afterwards he said he wanted County Councils to make the appointments. As, therefore, the question of election by popular vote was not proposed, Sir Oliver said he would not discuss that. He was prepared to say, however, as he had said before, that if any change was to be made it should be to popular vote, and not to appointment by County Councils. Criticism had been made of the commission appointed to gather information on this subject, and Sir Oliver spoke very warmly of the personnel of the commission, as well as the usefulness of the work it had done. One of the commissioners was a Patron of good standing, who commenced the investigation with the belief that the present system was not the best, and who favored the system which was a part of the Patron platform. But the evidence was so overwhelming that he had signed the report which the commission had made. It was most reasonable that the House should pronounce no opinion upon the subject dealt with in the resolution until members had had an opportunity of reading and considering the report. It was a most able and elaborate report, and would be most useful to anyone who wished to get at the facts. Considering briefly the proposition in the resolution he argued that there was no parallel between the appointment of municipal officers and County Attorneys, Clerks of Peace or Registrars of Deeds. Besides, the jurisdiction of these officials was not coterminous with the constituencies of County Councils. For instance, in some cases there was a Registrar for half a county, or even less. All experience was against the idea that there was no party feeling in County Councils. There was as much party feeling in County Councils as anywhere. They sometimes divided upon party lines, and on the distribution of patronage they would be sure to do so. He was amazed to hear his hon. friend say that under appointment by County Councils there would be a better class of officials. Ontario had now a splendid class of officials. They were equal to or superior to any other class of officials in any part of the world. He defied Dr. Meacham to find anywhere a better class of officials. It might be well for other reasons to change the system of appointing officials, but it could not be to improve them. It was said that long periods sometimes elapse before vacancies were filled. This occurred in only one case in twenty, and then provision was made that the public service should not suffer. But he wondered, Sir Oliver said, that his hon. friend did not blush to use that argument, for he was a good Conservative, and yet it was known that his own friends at Ottawa did not always fill offices immediately upon their becoming vacant. Sir Oliver before concluding gave additional reasons why the system proposed should not be adopted, and asked the House to vote down the resolution.

MR. WHITNEY'S SPEECH.

Mr. Whitney complained that the Premier had refrained from argument at first, and confined himself to citations of what was done at Ottawa. If their friends in Ottawa did those things they did what was wrong, and the evil was the worse. As for Sir Oliver's remarks upon the motion being brought in in amendment to supply, it was because the Government would have sidetracked them, and they would withdraw the motion then if the Government would agree to bring in no amendment. If they brought it in in any other way two friends of the Government would have amendment and amendment to the amendment ready, and discussion would be diverted from the real issue. Mr. Whitney then argued for the motion on the ground that it was a home rule principle; they wished the County Council to appoint the men who did duties which affected the county, and whose pay was drawn from the county. To the Attorney-General's argument that few or no countries have adopted this scheme, Mr. Whitney's reply was that the Premier was out of place in a Reform Government; he was the only