

that such a system would be a great boon to the class who are poor for lack of work. The Government, in taking the matter up, had done right, and at another session the Opposition would give it every encouragement.

The motion then passed.

#### A BINDER TWINE AGREEMENT.

Hon. Mr. Gibson moved the ratification of an agreement between the Inspector of Prisons and Public Charities and Patrick Louis Connor regarding the manufacture of binder twine at the Central Prison. In speaking to the motion Mr. Gibson said that there were two reasons why the binder twine industry was established at the Central Prison. Work had to be provided for the prisoners, and there was at the time a big binder twine combine. The latter had been successfully broken by the establishment of the Central Prison and Kingston Penitentiary binder twine industries. The agreement was in the nature of a lease of the binder twine industry of the Central Prison to Patrick L. Connor.

Mr. Marter said he had expected the hon. gentleman would have given the House some idea of the value of the plant turned over to the contractor.

Hon. Mr. Gibson said the cost of the plant of jennys was \$50,183, while the Dominion Government paid \$48,000 for about half as many.

Mr. Marter—It is all very well for the gentlemen opposite to talk about Ottawa, but when the hon. leader of the House gets down there he may change his mind.

Sir Oliver Mowat—I will not be ashamed to say down there all that this House does.

Mr. Marter—If the hon. gentleman had been in some places I was in to-day he would not say that.

In concluding Mr. Marter said there should be more information given, as the House was in the dark as to the figures regarding the lease.

It was now 5.05, and on account of Mr. Speaker's reception several members shouted 6 o'clock. The usual Parliamentary fiction prevailed and the Speaker left the chair.

#### COUNTY COURTS.

After recess the debate was continued by Col. Matheson. He made an attack on the management of the Central Prison, charging that there had been many injudicious purchases, and contending that the purchases should be made by contract. The motion was then passed.

Second readings were then called, beginning with Hon. Mr. Hardy's bill entitled the County Courts act, 1896, which has already been explained in The Globe. The act increases the jurisdiction of the County Courts in many directions. The first clause, however, was one of reduction, providing that, except in certain cases, the court shall not have cognizance of any action: (1) In which the title to land of a greater value than \$200 is brought in question; (2) in which wills of over \$200 are disputed, nor where the assets of the estate or fund out of which the amount in question is payable exceeds \$1,000; (3) for libel and slander; (4) for criminal conversation or seduction; (5) against a Justice of the Peace for anything done by him in the execution of his office if he objects thereto prior to the issue of the writ.

The matters in which there is an extension of jurisdiction are very numerous. Cases relating to debt, covenants and contracts where the amount is liquidated or ascertained by the act of the parties or by the signature of the defendant when the parties consent may be tried by the County Court. Such cases where the amount is from \$400 to \$600 shall be tried in that court, unless the defendant objects, in which case they shall be tried in the High Court. Suits for the recovery of land under \$200 in value; actions arising out of partnerships, where not more than \$1,000 capital is involved; actions relating to legacies of from \$200 to \$1,000; actions on mortgages of not more than \$200; actions for redemptions, where the sum actually remaining due does not exceed \$200; actions for equitable relief of not over \$200; actions of creditors to rank on an estate where the amount does not exceed \$400, are all brought within the jurisdiction of the County Courts. Arrangements are made in case it should be discovered in the progress of a case that the amount is beyond the limit, such actions may be transferred to the High Court without the validity of proceedings which have al-

ready taken place being affected. Moreover, in recovery of land and partnership cases where the amount does not exceed \$1,000 by \$200, a High Court Judge may on application being made by a party interested order the suit to be continued in the County Court. Again, on an excess coming to light a plaintiff may abandon the excess of his claim. Provision is made for relief to be granted County Courts and for the costs of references. Provision is also made for transfer to the High Court of cases in the course of which the title to land, the validity of a will or the administration of an estate out of the jurisdiction of the court is brought in question. Provision is also made for venue and for pleading want of jurisdiction. Mr. Hardy gave a running summary of the contents of the bill and moved the second reading.

#### THE BILL DISCUSSED.

Mr. Whitney said that so far as the bill went he had little fault to find with it, but it failed, he thought, to answer the demand for rapid and cheap justice throughout the Province. He thought the demand would have been fulfilled had a proper bill been introduced. The County Court Judges did not have their share of the cases that went through the courts. The bill did not go far enough, he contended. The clause providing that when both the parties to a suit agree to have it tried in the County Court it could be there tried, Mr. Whitney thought unlikely to be of any use. The increased jurisdiction, he thought, was altogether more imaginary than real.

Mr. Hardy replied that he had not heard of any great demand for increased jurisdiction. If County Court Judges were idle, it was certainly not in the larger counties, and their duties had largely increased by the recent laws respecting County Courts. If the bill went on, as his hon. friend had urged, there would have to be a junior Judge appointed in nearly every county, which would not be desirable. The bill was then given its second reading.

#### CLEARING THE ORDER PAPER.

The House then went into committee and reported the following bills:—

The Attorney-General's bill as to certain proceedings under the act respecting assignments and preferences by insolvent persons, with certain amendments.

The Attorney-General's bill relating to dower in certain cases, with amendments.

Hon. Mr. Ross' bill to improve the law respecting public libraries, with amendments.

Hon. Mr. Hardy's bill to authorize the transfer of certain Provincial land occupied by the C. P. R.

The following second readings were given:—

Respecting high and county constables—The Attorney-General.

To amend the registry act, 1893—Mr. Gibson, Hamilton.

For the better protection of certain classes of workmen—The Attorney-General.

Respecting antecedent unregistered agreements for bills of sale and chattle mortgages—The Attorney-General.

To amend the electric railway act—Mr. Bronson.

Respecting the expropriation of lands of the Province by railway companies—Mr. Bronson.

The House then went into supply and passed the estimates for public buildings, public works, colonization roads, charges on Crown lands, refund account and statutes consolidated, after which they adjourned at 10.55.