

HARBOURS ON LAKE HURON

Mr. Sproat moved for a return of all surveys and reports having reference to the harbours on the east coast of Lake Huron.—Carried.

BURLINGTON BAY CANAL TOLLS

Mr. White moved for a return of the amount of tolls collected at Burlington Bay Canal from the 1st of April, 1864, to 1st July, 1867.

Mr. White said his object in moving for this return was to show the people of Hamilton that they had lost a very good offer by a former Government respecting the transfer of this work to the City, and to show also the injustice of the tax on vessels entering or leaving that port. Vessels and goods could pass through the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals to the sea-board by paying one toll, while those from Hamilton had to pay two tolls.

Mr. Magill, seconder of the motion, said that the ultimate object of the motion was to get the canal tolls abolished, so that the Port of Hamilton should be in the same position as the other ports in the Dominion. At present the merchants of Hamilton laboured under a very great grievance. The people of the United States could ship through the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals by paying but one toll, whereas Hamilton merchants had to pay two.

The motion was carried.

THE VACANCIES IN THE CABINET

Mr. Holton said that before the orders of the day were called, he desired to ask the Leader of the Government whether the negotiations to which reference was made last week, in regard to the filling up of vacant offices in the Government, had been concluded. The Leader of the Government had then said that negotiations were in such a condition that he hoped in a day or two to be able to announce the result to the House. He wished now to give that honourable gentleman an opportunity of making that statement.

Sir John A. Macdonald said he had a motion to make which would serve as a reply to his honourable friend. He moved that a writ do issue for the election of a member for the County of Huntingdon, vacant by the acceptance by the Hon. John Rose of the office of Finance Minister. He went on to say

that, on the recommendation of the late Finance Minister (Mr. Galt), negotiations were opened with a view to the appointment of the Minister of Inland Revenue (Mr. Howland) to the vacancy. He preferred holding his present office, which was not such an onerous charge as that of Minister of Finance. Negotiations were then entered into with the late member for Huntingdon, and that gentleman, after a considerable amount of reluctance, and a desire to be saved from the anxiety of that office, yielded to pressure, and accepted the appointment. With respect to the other office—the Secretaryship for the Province—that had not been filled, and when he said the other day that negotiations were on foot which he hoped would result successfully, he meant only the office of Minister of Finance. He did not intend at present to enter into the question of the distribution of offices, but might say that the distribution so far was, in a great degree, experimental. He did think, and still thought, that the duties of Secretary were so increased that one officer was unable to perform them. The office of Secretary of State was one of every-day labour, requiring every-day attention, and, with the development of the country, its duties were every day increasing. The Provincial Secretary, of Quebec, required two under secretaries to assist in discharging his duties. Those of the Secretary of the Dominion were, to some extent diminished, because a good deal of work has been localized; but the area of work was enlarged, and therefore the Secretary of the Dominion would have as much to do as the old Provincial Secretary had. Besides that, the Government had thought it well to add to the duties of Secretary of the Provinces two important branches. The Indian Affairs were formerly managed by the Commissioner of Crown Lands. We had now no commissioner, so there were no Crown Lands except the Public Lands, and his duties had been placed in the hands of the Secretary of State. The Ordnance Lands which had been handed over to the Provincial Government in consideration with maintaining a certain defensive force, were also put under the management of the Secretary of State. Then there would always be a considerable amount of correspondence between the Local and General Governments. How far these duties would be sufficient to occupy the attention of a Minister, had not yet been sufficiently developed and for the present it was not intended to appoint a successor to the Secretary of State for the Provinces.