

\$300 as secretary to the Speaker, so that the Speaker has his secretary all the same. It seems that it was convenient that the Government should advance the salary of the assistant clerk to \$2,400, and thus make ample provision for him, while the salary of another official was advanced by making him secretary to the Speaker. With regard to the question of the superannuation of Mr. Leprohon, I think it is germane to the question before the House. If there is a grievance, if he has been superannuated to make room for another, that question ought to be discussed and a reason given for it. We know that a certain gentleman did act as Assistant Clerk, and that we never heard any objection as to his efficiency; we see another gentleman at the Table, and we have a right to ask why this departure? What explanation has the hon. gentleman to give for the superannuation of that officer? Was it made with the view of preparing the way for another, or is it justifiable on its merits? If it is justifiable on its merits, then I should suppose that the superannuated officer would have shown some signs of bodily infirmity or unfitness for service. This question of superannuation is becoming a serious one, and I say that the House is bound to examine critically every single case of the kind. I call attention to this matter incidentally at present, but I shall take the opportunity of asking the hon. gentleman for explanations later on.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. What I stated was that I could not be expected to be drawn into a discussion of this question, which is not germane to the question of whether the Assistant Clerk is receiving too large a salary in getting \$2,400. The hon. gentleman said he wished to discuss this question of superannuation, and I can only tell him that we are ready to discuss it at the proper time. Since I spoke before, my hon. friend beside me has placed in my hands the following letter, dated 1st May, 1882:

"To the Hon. the Commissioners of the Internal Economy of the House of Commons.

"GENTLEMEN,—I beg leave to state that I was advised by my medical attendant to cease all official business and mental occupation and to travel, in order to restore my impaired health, my decreased strength and nervous system, which are seriously affected by a long official life of nearly 40 years in the service of the Legislative Assembly since the union of the two Canadas, and in the service of the House of Commons since the confederation of the several Provinces.

"Under these circumstances, I beg leave to ask the Hon. Commissioners that they may be pleased to recommend my superannuation to the Government.

"I have the honour to be, &c.,

"J. P. LEPROHON,

"Assistant Clerk of the House of Commons."

Mr. BLAKE. I cannot agree with the hon. gentleman that the condition of things which is evidenced by the various entries on the Public Accounts as to the Assistant Clerkship is an unfit subject for comment on the occasion of this vote. As an hon. member has pointed out we have on our books the names of three persons who have filled that office, Mr. Piché, Mr. Leprohon and the present Assistant Clerk. This Government appointed Mr. Leprohon. I forget whether they appointed Mr. Piché, but they appointed Mr. Leprohon, having full experience and knowledge of his fitness for the office. He was in the office for a short time, and I am sorry to learn from the letter which the hon. gentleman has read, that his health failed him, though he certainly did not exhibit, up to the latest period at which he was present at the Table, any failure of his powers, or that he was less fit for the office at the close of his official career than at the commencement. Now, we find that the Government, in making the new appointment, has practically increased the salary very considerably, and that the salary which was paid to Mr. Leprohon, for the combined offices which he filled, was less than that which is now paid for the one officer, while at the same time there has been a charge of some \$1,800 on account of the superannuation of the late Clerk Assistant.

We are sometimes told that though superannuation may cost more, still there is a certain saving, because the new salary is reduced, but in this case the public charge has been increased, first by the superannuation, and secondly by the increased charge consequent upon the superannuation. I think some reasonable explanation of that increased charge should be made.

Mr. CASEY. The hon. First Minister is not very consistent in his remarks. He began by stating that he was prepared to give explanations upon the question of superannuation, but upon that point he has given none. Then he said he was prepared to discuss whether the salary paid the present Clerk Assistant, was a proper one or not, but upon that point he has only given one explanation—if it can be called so—and that was, that the present officer was doing less work than formerly.

36. Publishing Debates..... \$20,000.00

Mr. BLAKE. That is the old estimate, I believe?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD, Yes.

Mr. BLAKE. Is it anticipated that that sum will be adequate?

Sir LEONARD TILLEY. I think that there is a supplementary estimate of \$5,000.

Mr. BLAKE. Might I enquire as to whether there is any intention of increasing the strength of the English reporting force? Provision has already been made, I believe, for an addition to the strength of the French reporting staff. Has any provision been made, or is any intended to be made, for increasing the strength of the English-speaking reporting staff?

Mr. BOWELL. I am not on the Committee; perhaps the hon. member for West Middlesex will answer the question.

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex). The matter was brought before the Committee at its last meeting, but no decision was arrived at. It is now under consideration. I might say, however, that we have increased the French reporting force by the addition of one French reporter. We hope that by that means the French members of this House, who use their own language in discussion, will be more fully and more satisfactorily reported than they have been before. We propose also to make a change in the system of translating the Debates from English into French, and *vice versa*. The intention is to appoint a staff of translators, and we hope to utilize on the French staff the additional French reporter when his services are not required in the Chamber. These are all the changes we have made, with the exception of one other. It has been decided that members of this House, instead of receiving, as now, two copies each of the bound volumes, should receive five copies each. Such frequent demands are made upon the Debates Committee for copies of the reports for libraries and for public institutions, as well as by members, that we think the only way in which these demands can be met will be to supply the members with the additional number of copies. By that means our Mechanics' Institutes and other institutions could be supplied with a valuable work of reference, and new members, who, on coming into this House are unable to be supplied from our stock on hand, could perhaps have access to back numbers, and thus overcome the difficulty of supplying themselves with information that seems to be very much in demand.

Mr. BLAKE. I am sorry to hear that an increase of such a large amount is proposed in the vote for the *Hansard*; but I have always said that so long as the House chose to continue this expenditure, it was essential that, whatever expenditure was necessary, in order that there might be an effective and accurate report of the Debates, must be voted;