

when that court is not over-burdened with work, and they might assume this duty. One strong reason why such a court should be established is the fact that these divorce bills are objectionable to many members of this House. The Government might bring in such a bill as I have referred to, if not this year, at all events next session.

## THE LOAN BILL.

### SECOND READING.

HON. SIR ALEX. CAMPBELL moved the second reading of Bill (21) "An Act to authorize the raising by way of loan of certain sums of money required for the public service."

He said: This Bill recites the existence of a loan contracted some years ago, which loan is maturing in 1885, and the object of the Bill is to enable the Government to borrow money to meet that loan. The amount of the loan, which is recited in the Bill, is £6,446,000. That loan was contracted in 1860, and was made subject to a sinking fund. That sinking fund has reached the sum of £1,381,325, leaving balance to be provided for of £5,065,675 or \$24,651,177.13, which is the amount to be raised under this measure. The Bill says it may be raised in any of the ways mentioned in the Act respecting the Public Debt, as amended by the Act passed in the 38th year of Her Majesty's reign. That is an Act which enables the Government to raise money in any of the ways by which such loans are contracted, that is by debentures payable in England or in Canada, or stock payable in either of these countries. The final provision is that they shall not pay more than four per cent. per annum. Substantially it is a Bill to enable the Government to borrow \$24,000,000.

HON. MR. PLUMB—Before the motion is adopted, I would ask the leave of the House to make some remarks upon this loan, and in connection with that, perhaps to say something in regard to the financial position of Canada. This loan, as my hon. friend has remarked, is one which is intended to renew the obligation incurred before Confederation—a five per cent debt upon which there has been a large accumulation of sinking fund. That

debt was created prior to Confederation and the renewal of a large loan of that kind brings up for consideration a great many matters which I think would not be uninteresting, and I think would not be without use if re-called to this hon. body. Although this Senate is not charged with the management of fiscal and financial affairs it certainly is interested, as we are all interested, in the financial condition of the country, and it has the right of supervision over that financial condition. With this feeling I venture, although an humble member of this body, and one who has but recently joined it, to think that the remarks which I may make, and which I do not intend, if I can possibly avoid it, to be tedious, will be of some interest to us all as residents of a common country, and having a common interest in the prosperity of the Dominion. Prior to Confederation it was well understood that difficulties had arisen which made it necessary that the old compact between the two Canadas should be enlarged by taking in the other members of the first Confederation. To that Confederation has since been joined Prince Edward Island, British Columbia and Manitoba, each of them a most important accession to the great strength of this transatlantic dependency of the crown of Great Britain. At the time of Confederation a very considerable debt of the old Province existed, which was assumed by the Dominion Government. That debt was something over \$90,000,000; the amount of assets on hand reduced it to \$77,000,000. It was represented by about \$35,000,000 of assets in public improvements which were tangible and could be put down on paper. The rest of it, however, had been expended in various ways, some perhaps by deficits, some perhaps by larger discounts which the old Province, not being strong in credit in the money markets of the world, had to submit to in the negotiations for loans. But we began at Confederation with a debt of \$77,000,000. It was my good fortune last year to be appointed on a committee which had the charge of looking over and examining into the state of the balance sheet of Canada, and it was a suggestion made by the committee that there should be a statement brought down which now appears for the first time in the public accounts, in order that