

to be productive of any material benefit in an economical point of view. The necessity of a thorough examination of the Public Accounts, every year, would be a bar to very short sessions; unless, indeed, a change was made in the Constitution, so as to enable the Committee of Public Accounts to begin its work prior to the commencement of the session.

Mr. McLaughlin showed, from statistics, that the representation in the Canadian House of Commons was one member for every 14,775 souls. Ontario was represented in the Local Parliament by one member for every 18,400 of the population. The cost per head for government in the Province of Quebec, was eighteen cents; in the Dominion, it was eighteen and three-quarter cents; in Ontario, it was, in 1878, only seven and a half cents per head of the population. A member of the Ontario Parliament represented more people than a Representative in any other legislative body on the Continent.*

Hon. Mr. Hardy, Provincial Secretary, observed in the same debate, that 'if Biennial Sessions were held, the supplies for two years would have to be voted at one time. If this change were made, Ministers would be able to commit any crime or blunder they pleased; and the people would have no power to turn them out for two years afterwards. If they had Alternate Sessions, in which they did not legislate, the Public Accounts Committee would be a stronger body, and would have more time to devote to the business coming before them than they had at present. There was a cry that the country was over-governed. But, in the United States, there were no less than 6,086 Representatives in Congress, and in the various State Legislatures. In the latter, there was one member for every 6,809 people; while in the Ontario House, one member represented 18,000 persons. The number of Representa-

tives in Ottawa was not any too large. Legislative bodies required numbers to give dignity and weight to their proceedings.*

It will be observed that the phrase, 'Alternate Sessions,' does not seem to have been very clearly defined during the debate. A good authority has since explained it in this way:—'One Session for Private Bill legislation: the other Session for the consideration of the Estimates, and such legislation as would be declared imperative by a Rule of the House.' Based on the mass of legislation which, from the years 1868-9 to 1880, the Parliament of Ontario has helped to rear, the argument for Alternate Sessions would seem to be unassailable. A conception of the magnitude of this legislation may be formed from the tabulated statement which is subjoined:—

YEARS.	STATUTES. NUMBER OF CHAPTERS.	STATUTES. NUMBER OF PAGES.
1868-9	85	367
1869	75	213
1870	105	368
1871-2	119	412
1873	163	806
1874 (1st Session)	103	585
1874 (2nd Session)	94	292
1875-6	114	383
1877	88	363
1878	75	297
1879	95	317
1880	83	324
Total	1,199	4,727

The Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1877, reduced the number of chapters to 224; and pages to 2,580.

It is but right to bear in mind that, although the legislation tabulated above may appear mountainous in its proportions, its bulk may be safely regarded as corresponding to the permanent as well as the varying exigencies of the community. Liberated from the unequal yoke which bound Upper Canada to Lower Canada, the Province of Ontario, free at last to manage its own affairs, demanded of its new Parliament a great body of legislation necessary under the altered condition

* Abridged from *Globe* report, January 18, 1881.

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