

Mr. McMULLEN. I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule) is charging a judge with improperly drawing travelling allowances. I am amazed at hon. gentlemen sitting on the right and on the left of the Speaker should remain silent at that, considering that when another member of this House was trespassing very nearly on that mistake, they raised a protest and found fault.

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. gentleman (Mr. McMullen) is mistaken. I do not think he can have any intention of misrepresenting what I said. I said I gave this statute in justification of the opinion I gave to the House. I do not say whether it was correct or incorrect, but I cited it to allow the Solicitor General to give such an explanation as would enable us to understand the matter, and if the information was incorrect that it might be set right before this House and the country. With regard to the resolutions before the House, I do not understand that even if carried out, they will do away with this trouble. I may not understand them, and I would ask the Solicitor General if he would show where it is proposed in these resolutions to make such a change as will meet the difficulty that has been pointed out.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. I would refer the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule) to the paragraph which says :

That to each of the judges of the Superior or Circuit Courts attending as such, at the request in writing of the chief justice or judge discharging the duties of chief justice in the district, any court held at any other place than that at which he is directed to reside, for each day he is absent from the said place of residence, there shall be paid, for travelling allowances, six dollars.

And so on. This is instead of \$18 heretofore paid in consequence of what I consider an improper construction of the statute. Now, the judge cannot receive more than \$6 a day.

Mr. SPROULE. How much did he receive before ?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. Eighteen dollars a day. That was the construction put upon the statute. The further provision I make for the purpose of preventing this exorbitant—if I may use the word—charge is that no judge shall be allowed to leave his district to go to an adjoining district unless he is specially requested to do so by the chief justice of the province. No judge will have the right to go from one district to another and make the charges heretofore made for travelling allowances, unless he can produce, when he files his account, a certificate in writing from the chief justice stating that he has gone there at the request of the chief justice. I think that this would reduce these travelling expenses by fifty per cent.

Mr. SPROULE. It does appear probable that this law when passed will accomplish that. But the judge is allowed \$1,000 a year more of salary, and that will reduce the saving, though, apparently it will still leave something.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. I shall have occasion to refer to the matter when I reply, but in the meantime, I do not wish to mislead my hon. friend (Mr. Sproule). This will not affect Judge Taschereau because he will get his \$1,000 the same as the other judges ; and if he goes to Terrebonne to administer justice he will get \$6 a day additional.

Mr. SPROULE. I am obliged to the hon. gentleman for giving me this information. I have only to say in addition to what I have said, that, so far as my opinion goes, the system that obtains in the province of Quebec at the present time is a bad one. It is most regrettable that a change cannot be brought about by a conference between the provincial legislature and Dominion Parliament or by some authority that might deal with this matter. It seems to be the fact, as stated by the ex-Minister of Justice (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper), that there are a sufficient number of judges in the province of Quebec to do the work. Perhaps it could be done by fewer judges, if the work were better distributed. I do not care whether this applies to the province of Quebec or any other province. I think it is the duty of the province and the Dominion to work in a friendly way to remedy things of this kind. It is unfortunate that there is not, in my judgment, a sufficient disposition on the part of provincial legislatures to correspond and cooperate with the Dominion Government in bringing about these desirable changes. For they are desirable, and in the interest of the country, they should be brought about. As I understand it, we have not the authority in this House to deal with the matter, but the provincial legislatures have the authority. Still, we at least control the travelling expenses of the judges, and these should be cut down in some way so that influence would be brought to bear on the provincial governments to remedy the evil for the benefit of the people.

Now, I am not opposing this Bill : on the contrary, I believe it is in the right direction. But these irregularities or evils seem to have existed for a length of time, and the sooner they are remedied the better. My principal object in rising was to protest against the disposition that seemed to be apparent in this House to prevent a criticism of the expenditure of money in this House by any hon. member. I protest against any interference with the rights of the members of Parliament to criticise any proposition to expend public money when it comes before this House, whether