

obtain the assent of those on the Opposition side. The scheme would not result in saving much expenditure. A proposition which would be favoured by the country would be to reduce the membership of the House, and to alter the rules in regard to Private Bills, so that there would be no loss of time. If this were done, the business of the country could be transacted within thirty days, and four hundred dollars of the Sessional allowance to each Member would be saved. He denied that there were any members of the Opposition in favour of the abolition of the Legislature.\*

Attorney-General Mowat observed that 'the question was, whether, now that they had gone over the whole of the Statute Books, and over every subject within their jurisdiction, session after session, they should go on making laws each session, or confine their attention to that branch of their duties every other session. The Government had come to no conclusion on their part, for it was a question which required a great deal of consideration. He could see no solid objection to confining legislation to Alternate Sessions. This subject was suggested, some years ago, by Mr. Blake, who had frequently referred to it in his speeches. He (Mr. Mowat) had never heard of any opposition to the change. If they did not adopt Biennial Sessions, he did not see why they should not accept a system giving them all the advantages of Biennial Sessions.†

Hon. Mr. Morris observed that, 'Nothing had occurred since Confederation to show that the Conservative party had any desire to destroy the autonomy of the Provinces. How could the Dominion Parliament, overburdened as it already was with business, deal with the local interests of British Columbia, the North-West, Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Provin-

ces? If ever an attempt should be made to destroy the Legislatures of the Provinces, all parties should combine in resisting it. He was opposed to any scheme of Biennial Sessions, but favoured short Annual Sessions, and the commencement of real business as soon as the House opened. Biennial Sessions were still more objectionable than Alternate Sessions; they were not adapted to the requirements of the country, and allowed the Government to escape public responsibility for too long a time.\*

Mr. James Young was of opinion that, 'Biennial Sessions were quite inconsistent with Responsible Government. Very little money would be saved by this change. He would not like to see any alteration simply for the sake of economy. If Biennial Sessions were adopted they would have to vote the supplies for two Sessions at one time. This would decrease the responsibility of Ministers to the People's Representatives. It would not tend to purer administration if the Government were only to account to the people every two years. The Biennial system would put it in the power of the Government to commit the people to engagements which might be ruinous; they could enrich themselves and their friends at the public expense, when the people would have no power to turn them out.†

Mr. Sinclair said, in the same debate,‡ that 'even the *Bystander* had sneered at the Legislature regulating the relations of law and equity,' and unjustly disparaged the legal gentlemen who are members of the House. This course was altogether unpatriotic. Biennial Sessions did not appear to him to be in harmony with the spirit of our Institutions. As to short Alternate Sessions, he doubted much if it were possible to make them so short as

\* Abridged from *Mail* report, January 17, 1881.

† Abridged from *Globe* report, January 17, 1881.

‡ Debate of January 17.

\* Abridged from *Mail* report, Feb. 14, 1881.

† Abridged from *Globe* report, Jan. 14, 1881.