

year, at any rate, this subject is not to be taken into consideration. I think there is a general feeling in the country that the character of the bench, both in the County Courts and the Superior Courts, is certainly not improving, and I believe the cause is felt generally to be that the present salaries are too low to enable the Government to command the services of the class of men whom the public at large would like to see occupying those positions. It is felt that the salaries of the judges are not at all in proportion to the incomes made at the bar by the sort of men we would like to have on the bench. If there is one thing the country has always had reason to be proud of, it has been the character and standing of our judiciary, and no worse economy can be practised than that which will have the result of lowering the standard of our judiciary by not giving our judges salaries adequate to their position and duties. I take this opportunity of expressing this opinion, not merely because it is my own, but because it is that of all those who have given any thought to the subject.

Mr. MARA. I wish to call the attention of the hon. the Minister of Justice to the great dissatisfaction that exists in British Columbia, but more particularly on the mainland, as regards our courts. About seven years ago the County Court work was thrown on our Supreme Court judges, with the result that they could not take time to do the work of both courts. I do not mean to infer that they have not performed their duties honestly and faithfully, but there must be a great deal of friction, delay and inconvenience when both Supreme and County Courts are called for the same day, so that the County Court suitors have often to wait four and five days until the Supreme Court business is finished before their cases can be heard. Another objection to the system is this, that at present we have five Supreme Court judges and only one County Court judge. The five have to be present in Victoria twice a year to attend the Court of Appeal; and as one of the terms occurs in the middle of the winter, the judges are tempted to remain there the greater portion of that season. Take the present winter for example. In the district of Yale I do not think there will be a County Court for six months; and the district of Kootenay may not have a County Court for six or seven months. This is not a proper state of affairs. The system either ought to be changed, or we ought to get more County Court judges. Take the districts of Yale and Kootenay, which are very large districts. One judge cannot do the work there, properly belonging to both County and Supreme Courts, and, therefore, those who would like to take their cases into the County Court have not an opportunity of doing so. If the Minister would give this his attention, he would possibly be able to get over the difficulty, so far as Yale and Kootenay are concerned, at all events, by appointing another county judge.

Mr. THOMPSON. I will give the best attention possible to this matter, and see if a remedy can be applied.

Kingston Penitentiary \$111,185 30

Mr. THOMPSON. The Committee is aware that the Government have asked Parliament to abolish the system of perquisites in the various penitentiaries. The officers already appointed are exempt from the operation of the Bill passed to-day; it is not to affect their salaries prejudicially. At the same time, I think the disposition of Parliament, as evinced by its ready acquiescence in that Bill, is in favor of the abolition of the system of perquisites. I need hardly say that the system has gradually grown up into very irregular proportions, and it was felt by my predecessor, and has been likewise, from time to time, felt by myself that it was exceedingly desirable to abolish these perquisites. Inasmuch as existing officers cannot be dealt with under the terms of the Bill, I propose to ask Parliament to make

provision in these estimates for the commutation of perquisites which are received by the various officers now in the penitentiary, so that I will not have to wait, for the coming into operation of the Bill passed, until all the existing officers have resigned or been removed. That would postpone to a very remote period the accomplishment of the object we have in view. I think it is very desirable to carry that out, both in regard to economy and in regard to discipline. I placed in the hands of the hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Blake) a few weeks ago, a statement of what these perquisites were estimated to be worth. Taking up the vote for the Kingston penitentiary, the warden has been in the receipt of a salary of \$2,600. It is proposed to increase his salary to \$3,000, but the additional \$400 is a commutation of the perquisites he now receives, which consist of house, fuel, light, and keep of horse and cow. We propose to continue the use of the house on the principle I mentioned this afternoon, but for the rest of the perquisites we propose to make a commutation of \$400. I may say, for the further information of the committee, that the officers who have been accustomed to receive these perquisites have rendered a statement of what, in their estimation, their perquisites were worth, and some years ago the practice existed of allowing an officer to base his superannuation allowance, not merely on his salary, but also on his house rent and other perquisites; and it may be owing to a supposition on the part of those officers that the enhancement of the value of these would increase their superannuation allowance that the sums which I will state to the committee have been estimated by them. The estimate of the warden at Kingston of his perquisites is \$1,200 a year. That includes his house rent. We propose to continue to him his house, and to allow him \$400 as a commutation of his other perquisites. Then, the deputy warden has been estimated at \$1,400. I propose to allow him \$100 in consideration of cutting off his fuel and light. He has had no horse or cow. There is also an increase estimated for in the allowance to the accountant. He receives at present the maximum salary which can be paid to an accountant. He has been a long time in the service of the institution. He is said to be an exceedingly valuable officer, and very diligent in the performance of his duties; and, inasmuch as it is not proposed in the Bill which I introduced to-day to give him any augmentation of his salary, I thought it only just, considering his long service and the value he is said to be to the institution, to propose an amount of \$100 additional salary to him as an exceptional allowance, which is not to be permanent for the office. I think the salary of \$1,000 in the Bill introduced to-day ought to be sufficient as a maximum salary for an accountant, and this increase is only asked for on account of long service and efficiency. There is also an increase for the engineer, but it is not an increase of the engineer's salary. The engineer has heretofore received two allowances, the regular salary voted in the estimate for him as engineer, \$750, and \$550 which has been paid to him by the Minister of Public Works as an officer of his Department, because the engineer, as well as some of the other officers of the penitentiaries, who are immediately connected with the public works, is appointed on the nomination of the Minister of Public Works. It has been considered desirable, and I think the committee will agree with me that it is desirable, that the salary should be combined in the vote, and that any officer of the penitentiaries should hereafter receive only one salary, which would appear in the estimate for the penitentiaries. The same remark explains the increase in the salary of the chief trade instructor. There is likewise an increase of \$1,500 in the allowance for keepers. Representations have been made of a very emphatic character, that an increase in the staff of keepers and guards is absolutely necessary. The warden represents that this is to some