

JUDGES' SALARIES.

Hon. Mr. MILLER said that the question to which he wished to call the attention of the House was one of great importance to the Province of Nova Scotia. The Equity Court was presided over by a judge—the only one in that Province—a gentleman of high attainments and unspotted character; but for some years his health had been very delicate, and obliged him to go to Europe. The duties at present were discharged by another member of the Bench, on the Common Law side. The opinion prevailed in Nova Scotia that this learned judge, in leaving the country, desired to retire from office; but it is understood generally that he was induced to alter his decision for some reason or other. Lately, within two or three months, it was announced from the Bench of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia that the learned judge had actually resigned his office, but still no appointment had yet been made. It was a matter of complaint on the part of the Bar and the public that the Equity cases were in a very deplorable condition. If there was a vacancy at the present time it was desirable that the Government should lose no time in filling it up. He did not presume that political considerations were influencing them in this matter, for the gentleman to whom the Bar pointed unanimously was Judge Ritchie, formerly a leading member of the Senate. Of course, that appointment would leave a vacancy which might create some difficulty. As respects the other matter, it was one to which he had called attention several times. Not having any personal aspirations in the direction of the Bench, he was able to speak more freely than other legal gentlemen, whose advanced position and years might open them to some charge of self interest. They had in Nova Scotia on the Bench two gentlemen who had done good service in their day, and who possessed a high character in the country, but they were now getting old and physically infirm, and they considered they were being unjustly treated by the Government with respect to their allowance, and the pension that would be based thereon. He believed one or two of the Judges would retire if their salaries were equalized with those of the same class in the other provinces. Under existing circumstances, it was impossible that legal business could be satisfactorily transacted. Besides, this was looked upon, and very justly, as an unfair distinction between the Benches of the several provinces. He considered they had in Nova Scotia a Bench, which, in point of talent, and integrity, and in-

dustry, would compare favorably with any in the Dominion. With these remarks, he asked leave to enquire of the Government:

1st. Is there a vacancy in the Superior Court Bench of the Province of Nova Scotia, and, if so, how long has such vacancy existed?

2nd. Is it the intention of the Government to recommend to Parliament, during the present session, an equalization of the salaries of the Judges of the Superior Courts in the several provinces of the Dominion?

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL was satisfied that the subject to which the hon. gentleman referred would receive the attention of the Minister of Justice. In answer to the first question he would say that there was no vacancy at present in the Supreme Court; but he would also add that the Judge to whom he referred, Judge Johnson, was on leave of absence, which lasted until the spring, when he is either to resign or go back to his duties. With reference to the salaries of the judges, he sympathised very much with the remarks made by his hon. friend. He hoped during the course of the session to be in a position to give a satisfactory answer on the subject, but in the meantime he could only say that it was under consideration.

Hon. Mr. MILLER said this was the nearest approach to an answer that he yet had.

The House then adjourned.

FRIDAY, 14th March.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at three o'clock.

PUBLIC PRINTING.

Hon. Mr. AIKINS laid on the table a return respecting the distribution of the Statutes.

Hon. Mr. MILLER referred to the very great inconvenience suffered by the people of the Maritime Provinces in consequence of the lateness of the date when they received the Dominion Statutes—as late as November or December last year, and when both the Courts of Nova Scotia, which meet in the spring and the fall—had passed over. For instance, there had been small pox prevalent throughout the Province, and still the quarantine law was not in the hands of the proper authorities. He did not know where the blame rested, but he thought certainly much improvement ought to be made in this particular hereafter.