

AN ABSURD CHARGE.

An absurd charge of inconsistency has been attempted to be fastened upon the Government in connection with this sale of timber limits, inasmuch as they should, it is said, have previously intimated their intention of making the sale to the Legislature, and obtained the consent of the latter thereto. Now, apart from the fact that there is nothing in the statute-book requiring such a course, it has always been the contention of the Reform party, that the interests of the country demand that the responsibility for ordinary administrative acts should not be removed from the Government and placed upon the Legislature. To the Government are entrusted matters of routine and administration, and the true policy is to hold the members thereof individually and collectively responsible for the proper performance of such duties, not to deprive them of the power of taking action. This principle, so far as the disposal of timber limits is concerned, was embodied in a resolution moved by Hon. E. B. Wood in the session of 1873, to the effect that the berths or limits should "be offered for sale by public auction at the upset price . . . at such time and place, and upon such conditions, and by such officer, as the Commissioner of Crown Lands shall direct by public notice for that purpose" (Jour. Ont. Ass., 1873, p. 142). This resolution was carried, not only by means of the votes of members supporting the Government, but also by the aid of a large majority of the members on the other side of the House—including Messrs. Cameron, Meredith, Lauder, Deacon, and Merrick—only four of the Opposition, in fact, recording their votes against it. The course of the Government in this matter has been thoroughly consistent, and strictly in the interest of the Province.

THE SETTLER'S INTEREST IN THE TIMBER.

At the late session of the Legislature a resolution was introduced by Mr. Boulter with regard to the Free Grant and Timber policy of the Government, advocating a return to the principles of the Free Grant Act of 1868. The hon. gentleman claimed that the old law, which was altered by the amendment of 1880, was more in the interest of the settler than the present one. Hon. Mr. Pardee, Commissioner of Crown Lands, in reply pointed out that the reverse was the case.

Mr PARDEE said: Neither the hon. member who had moved a vote of want of confidence, nor the gentleman who had moved a resolution on this subject at the Conservative Convention, had assigned a single reason showing that the change made in 1880, with regard to the timber, was not in the interests of the country, or, in other words, of the settlers. If there was a question to which the Government had devoted the most careful attention, and upon which they had consulted those best entitled to speak on the subject, it was this question of how to secure the settler sufficient pine at the end of the five years to answer his local purposes. The hon. member for North Grey had truly admitted that under the old