

allowed by Her Majesty as being in excess of the powers of the Canadian Parliament. The true reason, however, was the anxiety of Sir John Macdonald and his Administration to be free from the obligation of an examination under oath before the impending Committee charged with the investigation of the notorious Pacific Railway scandal. The reasoning of the Law advisers in England on which the disallowance proceeded was unsound, for it appeared that an Imperial Act (34 & 35 V. c. 83,) had been passed in 1871 for the like purpose; and this constitutional objection having been conclusively shewn to be "a myth" (which, however, answered its temporary purpose), the Parliament of Canada, on the 12th April, 1876, enacted a similar law, under which witnesses before any Committee of the Senate or House of Commons may be examined upon oath.

Important amendments in the law were also made in this session, in enabling any person to appear as an agent or advocate for any party in the Division Court; to facilitate the transaction of the business of the County Court by junior judges; to settle the true construction of the Act against fraudulent conveyances; to make debts and *choses in action* assignable at law, when formerly equity alone would recognise such; to confer upon subjects the same rights of suit against the Crown as against ordinary persons for the like causes of action, when such a measure had been positively denied by the former Government; to extend the right of property of married women, so that all her wages and personal earnings, and all proceeds or profits from any separate business carried on by her, or derived from any literary or other skill, should be enjoyed by her as if a *femme sole*, to hold or own real estate in the like manner, to insure her own life or that of her husband (with his consent) for the benefit of herself and family, to hold stocks in banks and other companies; and to make deposits of money in any bank in her own name, and to withdraw the same by her own cheque, also to bring any suit in her own name for the recovery of her money or property. This Act further relieved the wife from many of the disabilities of the old feudal law, in giving her a separate legal existence in regard to her own property, and in removing the necessity of the cumbrous system of settlements, good only under the doctrines of a Court of Equity. A general measure for the construction of drainage works by municipalities was passed, which has been found of the greatest advantage in many portions of the Province, and which, being based upon municipal debentures purchased by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, out of a fund (\$200,000) then set apart, and which since became permanent, secures the means of benefitting large areas of property in an efficient and economical manner, and in contrast to the unsatisfactory method of the late Government, under which the Department of Public Works assumed to construct such works. One hundred and nineteen Acts in all were passed during this Session, forty of them being in the nature of Public Acts, and seventy-nine Private Acts; twenty-two being either in respect of Railways or for their incorporation.

The Estimates for the year 1872 amounted to the sum of \$2,368,272.