

evident that it is time a change should take place, that if the allegations contained in the petitions are correct, this man is neither morally nor intellectually qualified to perform the duties of an office which requires such a union of rare qualities to enable its occupant to discharge those duties properly; that the interests and personal safety of 60,000 of Her Majesty's lieges are of too much importance to be entrusted to one so evidently unworthy of the trust; that the interests of humanity and of all classes of society demand that the charges contained in this petition should receive the most thorough investigation; and, if they can be sustained, that this man should be deprived of his office."

The petition to which Mr. WRIGHT alluded bears date, District of Ottawa, 14th June, 1864, and sets out that "the conduct of the Hon. A. Lafontaine, in connection with the Crown Lands, and the administration of justice in the District of Ottawa, has been characterized for years by such gross neglect of his duties, by such dishonesty and corrupt practices, as have destroyed all confidence in his integrity and efficiency as a Judge, and seriously impaired the public confidence in the Courts over which it is his duty to preside." The petitioners had long abstained from denouncing his conduct in this respect, "in the hope that those whose peculiar duty it is to watch over the administration of justice would take cognizance thereof," and it was only "by the last excess of disorder, and when the administration of justice has in many cases been entirely stopped by the conduct of the said Aimé Lafontaine, and by the loss and absence of the records and registers of the Courts of Justice through his neglect," that the petitioners had been moved to pray the House to do justice in the premises.

The petition proceeds as follows:—

"In this behalf your Petitioners would premise that the Hon. A. Lafontaine, before he was raised to a seat in the Superior Court, held the following offices in the District of Ottawa:—1st. Land Agent for the sale of lots in several of the largest Townships in the district. 2nd. Prothonotary of the Superior Court. 3rd. Clerk of the three Circuit Courts at Aylmer, Lochaber and Portage du Fort.

4th. Clerk of the Crown, and 5th. Clerk of the Peace.

"As Agent for the sale of Crown Lands, the Hon. A. Lafontaine received for many years from purchasers of Crown Lands large sums of money, which he never returned to the Government, but which he embezzled and appropriated to his own use, concealing throughout the receipt of such monies by false and fraudulent returns.

"Your Petitioners would further represent that the monies appropriated as aforesaid by the said Hon. A. Lafontaine amount to a very large sum of money; and his defalcations were for the most part discovered after his elevation to the Bench, as follows: His successor in office offered for sale all the lots that had not been returned as sold by the Hon. A. Lafontaine in his agency up to the time he was appointed judge; and thereupon the parties who had purchased from the said Aimé Lafontaine produced receipts, signed by him, to the said Crown Land Agent.

"Your Petitioners would further represent that the proof of the foregoing allegations is to be found in the Crown Land Department in the receipts, returns, letters and representations of the said Hon. A. Lafontaine, as well as in the testimony of many of the undersigned who have suffered by his said appropriations; and that without having access to the said documents in the Crown Land Department, or a return thereof, it would be impossible to state the date and the amount of each sum paid and embezzled as aforesaid, or the fraudulent means adopted by him to conceal the payment thereof. *It is, however, understood that as each successive act of embezzlement is discovered, the amount is deducted from the salary of the said Hon. Aimé Lafontaine as Judge of the Superior Court.*

"As prothonotary of the Superior Court, the said Aimé Lafontaine so grossly neglected his duties that for several years after he became judge, no register of the orders and judgments of the said court for the time he held that office was to be found in the possession of his successor; and your petitioners aver, that the register which he produced so late as the 18th of November, 1863, was made up by the said Aimé Lafontaine at his private