

consideration during the next session of the Legislature; but they recommend that all future grants of land should contain a reservation of the duty which may be imposed on timber. The Committee of Council are not of opinion that any advantageous change can be made in the system of disposing of the public lands. The agents are paid by a moderate fixed commission on the monies passing through their hands; and as it would subject the public to great inconvenience, if agencies were wholly abolished, the Committee cannot recommend the adoption of such a measure.

The Committee of Council have carefully considered the various charges on the Crown Land revenue, and the causes which have led to its apparent unproductiveness. It appears from the evidence of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, that during the last eight years, scrip to the amount of 317,119*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* has been issued in satisfaction of the claims of U. E. loyalists and militiamen, of which 291,085*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.* has been redeemed, being, on an average, upwards of 36,000*l.* per annum. The amount outstanding, together with that to be issued in satisfaction of claims, may be estimated at about 40,000*l.*, so that the main cause of the apparent unproductiveness of the public lands will soon be removed. The Committee of Council are not called upon to express any opinion as to the wisdom of the policy of making grants originally to the U. E. loyalists or militiamen, or of satisfying the claims for such grants by the issue of scrip. It is sufficient for them to affirm that the faith of the Crown having been pledged to the claimants, the redemption of the scrip was an inevitable necessity: and although the revenue from the Crown Lands and timber has been for several years very small, it must be considered an important and gratifying circumstance that a debt of nearly 400,000*l.* has been extinguished.

The next important charge on the territorial revenue is the expense of Surveys, including the salaries of the officers engaged in the superintendence of that branch of the Crown Lands department. The Committee of Council do not find either that the salaries of those employed permanently in the department, or the remuneration allowed to those engaged in surveying the new townships, are excessive. There seems then but two modes by which this expense can be reduced: 1st, By the abandonment of surveys: 2nd, By adopting a different system of remunerating the surveyors, viz., that which formerly prevailed of compensating them by grants of the surveyed lands. The Committee of Council have no hesitation in giving it as their opinion, that it is wholly impossible, considering the demands of the settlers on the vacant lands of the Crown, to refuse to provide for new and extensive surveys; and nothing but the want of means at the disposal of the department has prevented the Commissioner of Crown Lands from sooner meeting the urgent demands which have been made upon him from various parts of the province for new surveys.

As to the mode of compensating surveyors, the Committee of Council feel assured that the evidence of the Commissioner of Crown Lands must satisfy the public that no real saving can be effected by the change which has been suggested. "The surveys," says the Hon. Mr. Price in his evidence, "paid in land cost more than twice as much as those paid in cash; while it is notorious that the former are very erroneous and defective." The Committee of Council are of opinion, that any apparent retrenchment to be effected by reducing the cost of surveys in money, at the sacrifice of the public domain, would be a measure of the most objectionable character. The other disbursements in the Crown Lands office are salaries, postages, advertising, and other incidental expenses. The salary of the Chief Commissioner, it is proposed, should undergo a reduction of 20 per cent., similar to that which will be proposed for the other heads of departments. The salaries of the subordinate officers are not, in the opinion of the Committee of Council, excessive; and at present no reduction can be made in the number of those employed. The Commissioner of Crown Lands is fully impressed with the necessity of practising the utmost economy consistent with maintaining the efficiency of his department; and when the new postage system has come into operation, and when the land claims have been finally settled, there is reason to believe that the office expenditure may be reduced.

The Excise Revenue consists of auction duties, and duties on spirits, and the charge for licences for shops, billiard-tables, &c. The officers employed in the collection of this revenue are paid by commission, and their emoluments vary from 10*l.* to 300*l.* per annum; averaging in Lower Canada about 100*l.* per annum, and in Upper Canada about 140*l.* per annum. The duties cannot, in the opinion of the Committee of Council, be advantageously transferred to any other class of officers; and the emoluments of the officers do not appear to be excessive. The duty on bank-notes is paid direct to the Receiver-General without any charge.

The Committee of Council will now proceed to a consideration of the General Expenditure of the province. The charge on the Consolidated Revenue for various items of expenditure during the year 1849 was (including the appropriation for the Sinking Fund, 75,000*l.*) 525,913*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.* Of this amount the charge for interest and appropriation for the Sinking Fund absorb 257,727*l.* 19*s.* 11*d.*, or very nearly one-half of the entire amount. The sum of 93,704*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.* was expended on grants for educational and charitable institutions, for the promotion of agriculture, maintenance of light-houses, Indian annuities, militia pensions, geological surveys, and support of the penitentiary. The Committee of Council are not of opinion that the expenditure under any of these heads can be reduced, without causing very great public dissatisfaction. The expenses of the Legislature amounted to 54,001*l.* 7*s.* 2*d.* The Committee of Council forbear entering into the consideration of this branch of the expenditure, which is under the immediate supervision of Committees appointed by the two Houses of the Legislature. The charge for the administration of justice was, in 1849, 62,740*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.*, of which about 37,000*l.* was expended