

Their two-
fold cha-
racter.

Private Bills, while Parliament still exercises its Legislative functions, its proceedings partake also of a Judicial character. The persons whose private interests are to be promoted, appear as suitors ; while those who apprehend injury are admitted as adverse parties in the suit. Much of the formality of a Court of Justice is maintained ; various conditions are required to be observed, and their observance to be strictly proved ; and if the parties do not sustain the Bill in its progress, by following every regulation and form prescribed, it is not proceeded with by the House in which it is pending ; and if they abandon it, and no other parties undertake its support, the Bill is dropped, however sensible the House may be of its value.*

Object of
this enquiry.

With these preliminary observations, I proceed to enter upon the execution of the duty entrusted to me, of describing the system now pursued by the House of Commons in the transaction and management of its Private Business ; and respectfully to recommend, for the consideration of the Legislative Assembly, the adoption of such Orders as may seem best calculated, under present circumstances, to introduce into the practice of this Honourable House, sound and efficient regulations on this important subject.

Practice
heretofore
pursued on
Private
Bills in Ca-
nada.

Hitherto no attempt has been made, either in the Legislatures of Lower or Upper Canada, prior to the Union, or in that of the United Province, to introduce a definite system with regard to Private Bills ; one that should recognize the judicial character in which Parliament is called upon to decide between the con-

* See May on Parliament, 385, who mentions that in 1828 the Manchester and Salford Improvement Bill was abandoned in Committee by its original promoters, when its opponents, having succeeded in introducing certain amendments, undertook to solicit its further progress.