

Mr. Miller was attempted to be withdrawn by telegraph; that although it had not been previously accepted it was considered that this occasion should be taken for accepting it, and that it was accepted at a period which has been named as the first of January last—to take effect on that date; that subsequent remonstrances were made by Mr. Miller that the acceptance of his resignation under these circumstances—when that long-looked for and much desired event took place, when the dead man's shoes were ready—was not fair; that these remonstrances were received without the attention to which he thought they were entitled, and on the first of January he ceased to hold office. It seems to me that if this state of things prevails—if there were these antecedent negotiations or arrangements—if there were arrangements in respect of which Mr. Miller deemed himself to be unfairly treated by the Administration which appointed him, and if the resignation sent in on that score some months ago and not accepted, only after the event occurred which made it possible to fulfil the alleged engagement, it would be interesting to see how these things were brought about, and, therefore, I move for the correspondence.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It would answer no good purpose to discuss this question until the papers are brought down. I will only say that Mr. Miller resigned his office, but did not wish to vacate his seat at once, and a future day was appointed—a day named by himself. At the time he expressed his desire to retire, he stated that he had received an offer of a guaranteed salary much larger than would be governed by the salary of a Puisné Judge or that of a Chief Justice. Upon that the resignation was accepted, and I have no doubt that he was quite satisfied, because he has gone into politics since.

Mr. BLAKE. Only so far as to be defeated.

Motion agreed to.

TIMBER LICENSES.

Mr. BLAKE, in the absence of Mr. CAMERON (Huron), moved for a return showing the total number of timber licenses applied for and granted or refused up to 1st February, 1882. 2. The estimated area covered by each license or applicant. 3. The amount of premium or bonus per square mile, and in the aggregate paid to and received by the Government on each such license. 4. The name and residence of each applicant for a license. 5. The date of such application of such license, and the number of years each license is granted for. 6. The Crown dues or stumpage charged or chargeable on each license. 7. The kind, quantity and quality of the timber in each area so licensed. 8. Copies of all claims made on the Government for any such area or timber by any persons, and of all petitions, remonstrances or communications sent or made to the Government respecting said areas, licenses or timber, and all correspondence had with the Government respecting such claims, or in any way respecting said areas, lands, licenses or timber and the action of the Government therein.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I took occasion, the other day, to call the attention of the House to the reckless manner in which returns were moved for. When a number of returns were moved for by the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) who is not now in his seat, I said that the responsibility must be thrown in a great measure on the mover for returns of this kind. It is difficult for Ministers to object to returns of this character, as it might be said that they were desirous of withholding information from the House; so, as I remarked before, it depends very much on the discretion of the hon. members to move for them whether he will take the responsibility of causing the expense to be incurred, which is involved in

preparing these voluminous returns. In this case I got the usual memorandum from Mr. Burgess, the Secretary of my Department, as to this motion, and I shall just read his words. He says:

"There is no objection to furnish the information asked for by Mr. Cameron, but there is not the slightest probability that it can be brought down during the present Session. It means, in fact, that we should furnish a greater part of from 1,500 to 2,000 files in the timber branch."

The expense of this work would be enormous, and, unless the hon. gentleman has some specific object in incurring it, it shows a want of regard to economy to move for such extensive returns. However, as this information may be of importance, if the hon. gentleman takes the responsibility of moving for it, I shall not take the responsibility of refusing it.

Mr. BLAKE. Of course, it is very difficult for us, who do not know the contents of these papers, to judge what is important and what is not. We have a system which we believe to be unsuited to the condition of affairs, and to be at any rate liable to very great abuse in its administration. I am not now saying that it has been abused, that is irrelevant; but, certainly, a system by which the timber limits of the North-West are to a large extent granted under the discretion of the Government, is, the hon. gentleman must admit, liable to abuse. The one security the public have—I am afraid not a very great security—is the full disclosure of what goes on, or as much as public records tell them. We know that the public records do not tell us all that goes on, do not tell us what we would like to know about these things, do not tell us what might affect the decision of the hon. Ministers on these matters, but they give us some information. As to the 1,500 or 2,000 files which the Secretary says are to be copied, it will be observed that all the first parts of this motion are for information which seems to be absolutely necessary, at any rate—for schedules, a list of names, a list of areas, a list of premiums, &c. There surely can be no objection to granting that information unless it be to save the expense of the clerks writing it. What involves the clerical labor the hon. gentleman speaks of, I suppose has reference to the latter part of the motion—for correspondence, &c.—and it may be that some arrangement can be made to mitigate the expense of that demand. But if it is going to take more than the whole Session to make the return, it is quite clear that it will be impossible for any hon. member to wade through it and ascertain what is in it. I would, therefore, suggest the adjournment of the debate until the return of my hon. friend from Huron (Mr. Cameron), in whose name I made the motion, and who will consider, I have no doubt, whether it is possible for him to reduce the voluminousness of the return. I may add, what the hon. gentleman has already been reminded of this Session, that returns with reference to colonization companies, land sales, and other North-West matters, ordered at the commencement of last Session, have not yet been brought down. The whole of last Session and the whole of the recess has been available for the preparation of these returns, and I hope the time has been used, and that we may expect these papers at a very early period. It is true, some expense is involved in giving the House the various kinds of information asked for, but it involves matters of enormous magnitude pecuniarily, as well as important questions of policy.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I have no objection to this matter standing over. The hon. gentleman says truly that the policy of the Government respecting the sale of lands and the leasing of timber limits may be subject to abuse. It is just because it may be liable to abuse, and because I think no abuse has occurred, that I at once assented to the motion. The hon. gentleman having taken the responsibility of moving for all these returns, I thought it my duty to call the attention of the House to the great