

Clifton by conveying the Gas from the American side of the Niagara, from Suspension Bridge to the town.

A QUESTION OF ORDER

Hon. John Sandfield McDonald called the attention of the House to the fact that there had been an innovation in the practice of the House. Routine business had been commenced with since the recess, whereas he defied any one to cite an instance wherein, the absence of two distinct sittings of the House, the routine proceedings were gone on with.

Sir John A. Macdonald said this was in reality a new sitting, and the course just sanctioned by the House in the matter of the St. Hyacinthe election committee was a frequent one. Besides it was merely a question of notice, and in a matter like this to which there was no opposition he did not see any objection.

The subject dropped after a brief discussion.

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION

The debate on **Sir John's Departmental Bill** was then resumed.

Hon. Mr. Dorion agreed with the Minister of Justice that it was wise to represent at the outset at all events the civil sections of the Dominion in the Cabinet, instead of taking all the members from any one section. But it would be observed that while the Government contend there should be 13 representatives of the Dominion in the Cabinet, so many from each section, two from Nova Scotia, two from New Brunswick, four from Quebec and five from Ontario, yet at once one of those officers which was said to be indispensable was dispensed with—Nova Scotia was left with one representative. Again, Ontario was to have five, but they had not that number. She was left with four. With what propriety could these two Provinces be deprived of what was held to be their just representation? For his part he believed the representation was altogether too large. In the neighbouring Republic with a vaster population, greater area of country and more diverse interests, there were but seven departments. In England, they had but one Finance Minister, and in all fifteen heads of departments. How was it that this new Dominion must, at the outset, be burdened to a greater extent than older and more populous countries? He contended that the whole

[Mr. Street (Welland).]

financial administration of the country was conducted by the Finance Minister, and as to the Receiver-General and Minister of Excise, they were merely executive officers. It had always been found to be so in the late Province of Canada; and were not only unnecessary, but entailed much additional expense on the country, in consequence of the staff necessary to be kept up in each of these offices. Then as to the office of Secretary of State for the Provinces he would like to know what such a functionary would have to do, what correspondence had he to conduct? It was only the other day, on moving an address for correspondence, the honourable gentleman was told there was no correspondence between the Local and General Government of interest.

Sir John A. Macdonald—On that particular point.

Hon. Mr. Dorion could not see what correspondence the Secretary of State could find to employ himself with. There was really nothing for him to do even under the old Parliament of Canada. The Provincial Secretary was admittedly the officer who had least to do of all the departments—so little work indeed fell to his share that his duties had to be eked out by giving him some other work to keep him going. There was not work before for the Provincial Secretary, and there certainly had not been shown to be any need for perpetuating the useless office in the person of a Secretary of State. Again, there was the Department of Agriculture. Almost the whole bulk of the work of such a department came within the scope of the Local Governments' management; and yet, now that that office was confessedly unnecessary, it was not only to be continued, but it became magnified into a most important office. As to the head of the Immigration Department, that office also might very well have been spared, and its duties allocated to the Secretary's or some other department. The President of the Council was another useless officer; his duties were partially discharged by the Clerk of the House, and the balance of them might very well be discharged by the President of the Senate; or, if more convenient, by any other member of the Cabinet. Therefore, he (Mr. Dorion) found that of the 13 heads of departments at least six could be well dispensed with. Among the latter he forgot to mention that new office, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries. Would the Minister of Militia allow his confrere to take charge of the military gunboats of the Dominion? Certainly not, and