

~~Mr. ARCHIBALD presented a petition from J. McKay and 100 others of Earlton, asking an alteration in the line of a polling district, and introduced a bill in accordance therewith.~~

~~Mr. CALDWELL presented a petition from Sydney, asking that the provisions of chap. 69 R. S. be extended to that place, in order to authorize the appointment of commissioners of streets.~~

~~Mr. McLELAN presented a petition from Chas. Taylor and others relative to loss of goods on railway.~~

~~Mr. PRYOR reported two bills from the committee on private and local bills.~~

~~Hon. Mr. SHANNON introduced two bills respecting markets and the market house in the city of Halifax.~~

LOCAL CONSTITUTIONS.

Hon. PRO. SEC'Y moved the resolution of which he had given notice on the previous day with respect to the number of members of which the Legislative Council should in future be composed.

Mr. ANNAND asked whether it would be wise to limit the number of Legislative Councillors for all time to come?

Hon. PRO. SEC'Y answered that it was only intended to limit the number to 18, as it was now limited to 21, it being still the prerogative of the Crown to add to the number.

Mr. ROSS said that one of the grounds on which the reduction had been made in the members of the House was that the work would be largely diminished; and another was, that a saving would be effected. He did not see why the same arguments would not apply to the upper branch, and why the reduction should not be in the same proportion, which would make the number of Councillors 13 or 14. If the government, at the eleventh hour, were so favourable to retrenchment they should avail themselves of this opportunity.

(The Legislative Council announced by message that they had passed a bill to incorporate the Amherst boot and shoe manufacturing company, and agreed to the bills to legalise the proceedings of the Sessions of Cape Breton county, and the bills to incorporate the Wellington Mining Company, the Palmerston, Dominion, Blue Lead, Union, Provincial and Eldorado Gold Mining Companies.)

Hon. PROV. SEC'Y, in answer to Mr. ROSS, said he thought it would be a doubtful policy to make a branch of the legislature so small as had been suggested. The number of the Councils of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick bore a greater disproportion to the lower branches in those Provinces than that which would exist if the resolution passed. He felt he need hardly say that the government would only have been too glad to have effected a further saving in that particular if it had been consistent with the public interests to do so. While they could claim credit for an almost lavish expenditure on the two great services of the country—education and roads and bridges—they had taken the earliest opportunity to bring forward a measure which would largely reduce the legis-

tive expenses, and were therefore deserving of the compliments passed upon their economy.—The difficulty which had met him on a previous occasion when he moved a reduction of the public expenditure was that the civil list was beyond the control of the House—and the Imperial Government had testified its dissent to any such reduction, in a strong despatch. Although his opponents were right in their prediction that the financial condition of the country would be such as not to demand so extensive a system of retrenchment, yet the government from the first day they had obtained power had strenuously endeavoured to obtain the power for the legislature to deal with the subject, and this had been accomplished by the recent action in connection with Confederation. The government had no sooner secured that right for the legislature than they brought forward a measure which would largely diminish the public expenditure, and had succeeded in passing it notwithstanding the opposition from the other side. The alterations effected by the civil list bill were far more extensive than any scheme of retrenchment which he had ever submitted to the legislature.

Mr. KILLAM said that the greater part of the salaries referred to had always been under the control of the Legislature, and it should be remembered that while the reduction had been made, the government had taken away the means of paying these salaries. The economy was very trifling, and the whole scope of the alterations in the Legislature evidently was to increase the influence of the Crown and to diminish that of the people. If ever there was a time when the Council could be dispensed with, it was now.

Hon. ATTY. GENL. asked how such a proposition as that with which Mr. Killam had concluded agreed with the statement that no change should be made in the constitution at this time?

Mr. LOCKE expressed himself favorable to the abolition of the Legislative Council.

Hon. PRO. SEC'Y asked how it was that the hon. gentleman always lost sight of that proposition when in power?

Mr. LOCKE said that it might have been owing to a difference of opinion on the part of his friends.

Mr. McLELAN said that although he had hitherto regarded the upper branch as of value, yet under the many guards and checks which would be applied under Confederation, he thought it might very well be dispensed with. The Prov. SEC'Y had expressed his willingness to economize as soon as the opportunity offered, and here was an opportunity for retrenchment. It was very strange that that gentleman was not aware when he proposed his retrenchment scheme in 1863, of the difficulties that laid in the way. It was pleasing to be informed that Confederation would be the means of effecting retrenchment, for the general belief was that it would impose large additional burdens on the country. Whatever small saving could be effected in local matters would be far outweighed by the burthen of the general government, and the policy was therefore "penny wise and pound foolish." He thought that the Legislative Councillors could