

MONDAY, Nov. 29.

The SPEAKER took the chair at three o'clock.

The following petitions were presented:—

PETITIONS.

Mr. Scott (Ottawa)—From the City Council of Ottawa, praying for a repeal of the clause in the Assessment Act exempting the salaries of Government employees from taxation. (Laughter.)

For the Act to enable the Erie and Niagara Railway to extend their line:—

Dr. Baxter—From Aaron Hobb and others of Walpole; from H. C. Brackinread and others, of Walpole; from James Davis and others, of Walpole.

Mr. Oliver—From Thomas Hardy and others, of Dereham; from the Township Council of South Norwich; from Geo. Southwick and others of South Norwich.

For the establishment of a school for the blind:—

Hon. Mr. Macdonald—From the Township Council of Cornwall.

Mr. Calvin—From the Township Council of Kingston.

Mr. Blake—From the County Council of Huron.

For the erection of certain townships into a Provisional County:—

Mr. Swinarton—From S. Reaully and others, of Adjala.

Mr. Blake—From the County Council of Huron, respecting an appropriation from the Land Improvement Fund, respecting the construction of roads and bridges.

FIRST READINGS.

The following Bills were severally introduced and read a first time, and referred to various committees:

Mr. Rykert—To amend an act of the old Province of Canada, entitled, "An Act to secure to the wives and children the benefits of assurances on the lives of husbands and parents."

Mr. Smith (Leeds)—To legalize a survey of lands; and also to enable the Town of Chatham to sell certain portion of its market plot.

Mr. Scott, (Ottawa)—To incorporate the Ottawa Ladies College; also to incorporate the Ontario Peat Company; also to incorporate the Mississippi River Mining and Navigation Company.

CROWN LANDS.

Mr. LAUDER asked whether the Government intended to introduce, during the present session, a measure to enable the Commissioner of Crown Lands to adopt more expeditious measures to settle disputes as to unpatented lands, and to reduce the purchase money, or throw off the interest upon the purchase money of lands, where it appears that the purchasers have a just claim for such reduction or abatement.

Hon. Mr. RICHARDS, in reply, said the Government had no intention during the present session of introducing any measure with a view of settling disputes. In regard to the charges on lands, there was no doubt that there had been a large amount of arrears accumulating in the Crown Land office in consequence of the changes that had taken place from time to time in the removal of offices, and from other causes. So great had these arrears become that he had instructed the gentleman who had charge of that office to work off the arrears. A great portion had already been removed, and he thought that further success would be achieved. He might state that the number of letters received in the Crown Lands office of the Province during one year was 16,000, while the whole number received by the same Department when the two Provinces were united was but little more, being only 17,000. This showed that great efforts were being made to get rid of these arrears, and if, during the coming summer, he held the office of Commissioner of Crown Lands, he contemplated, when the arbitration was finished between the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, that some further decided steps might be taken. But until that arbitration had been held and had reported, it was not the intention of the Government to introduce any such measure as that alluded to. If such an Act was passed, he thought it would greatly increase these claims. He would candidly say that his policy had been to oust these claims, for there was no doubt that the advantage lay with the applicants, who got a surveyor to value their lands, and then apply to the Government to reduce the purchase money. He would admit that there were some cases in which these claims were justifiable; but they were not so generally. If, as he had said, such an opinion got abroad as was shadowed forth by the question, they might expect to see these claims increased four fold. The Government would, after the report of the arbitration, have the lands in question revalued, and then there would be a rearrangement with reference to the disputed lands; but until that time, he did not think it advisable to prejudice the question. Under these circumstances, the Government did not intend to introduce such a measure as referred to in the question of the hon. member.

PROVINCIAL AUDITORS.

Mr. BLAKE moved the following resolutions:

1. That it is the undoubted right and bounden duty of this House to control the administration of the Public Finances.

2. That in order to the exercise of an efficient control over the administration of the Finances, it is necessary, *first*, that the grants of public moneys made by this House should be by Act of the Legislature specifically appropriated to the particular services for which the grants are made; *secondly*, that provision should be made to prevent the issue of public moneys except to the extent, and for the services to which they have been appropriated; and *thirdly*, that provision should be made for an efficient and independent audit of the appropriation of the moneys so issued, and also of the amounts of