

Legislature of Ontario.

FIRST PARLIAMENT—FOURTH SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 11.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 3:10 p. m.

PETITIONS

Hon. Mr. CAMERON—From the Toronto and Nipissing Railway, for an amendment to their charter.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON—From the trustees of Toronto General Burying Ground, for an amendment to their charter.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON—From William Paterson and others of Toronto, praying for an Act to incorporate a street railway in Toronto.

Mr. Blake presented several petitions from residents of Bruce, for certain amendments to 33 Vic., Cap. 41.

Mr. Blake—From D. J. Hughes and others of St. Thomas, praying for an Act to extend the limits of St. Thomas.

Mr. Sinclair—From several residents of Bruce, praying for certain amendments to 33 Vic., Cap. 41.

Mr. Hooper—From the Napanee River Improvement Company, for an amendment to their Act of Incorporation.

Mr. Hooper—From certain residents of Hinchinbrook, praying that the proposed Bill of the Napanee River Improvement Company may not pass.

Mr. Murray—From Wm. Moffatt and others of Pembroke, for an Act to incorporate the Pembroke and Ottawa Railway.

Mr. Pardee—From Joshua Adams of Saranac, praying for an Act to pass to admit him to practice as a barrister.

Mr. Graham (Hastings)—From the senate of the Albert University of Thurlow, for an amendment to their Act of Incorporation.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON—From Samuel B. Harman and others of Toronto, for an Act to incorporate the Toronto Central Railroad Passenger Station and Wharf Dock Company.

Hon. Mr. Wood—From the Trustees of the Mount Pleasant Grammar School, against certain clauses in the proposed School Bill.

Mr. Blake—From the County Council of Bruce, for certain amendments to 33 Vic., Cap. 41.

RETURNS.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON laid on the table returns giving information as to the number of persons in arrears in the Muskoka district, and also the number of squatters on these lands.

ANNUAL REPORT.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON presented the annual report of the Registrar-General.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

Mr. RYKERT presented the seventh report of the Committee on Standing Orders.

GEORGIAN BAY LUMBER COMPANY.

Mr. LAUDER introduced a Bill to incorporate the Georgian Bay Lumber Company.

ONTARIO SUGAR REFINERY COM.

Mr. LOUNT introduced a Bill to incorporate the Ontario Sugar Refinery Company.

PRIVATE BILL.

Mr. BEATTY introduced a Bill to enable Solomon Burr to convey certain lands to the County of Welland, and for other purposes.

INDEPENDENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Mr. ANDERSON introduced a Bill further to secure the independence of Parliament.

LADIES' SCHOOL, OTTAWA.

Mr. SCOTT (Ottawa) introduced a Bill to incorporate the Church of England Ladies' School, Ottawa.

SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY.

Mr. SCOTT (Ottawa) introduced a Bill to incorporate the Sisters of our Lady of Charity in Renfrew County.

TAVERN AND SHOP LICENSES.

Mr. ANDERSON introduced a Bill to amend the Act relating to Tavern and Shop Licenses.

CHURCH SOCIETY.

Mr. CARNEGIE introduced a Bill to amend the Act authorising the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto to sell certain rectory lands, and for other purposes.

ASSESSMENT LAW.

Mr. CARNEGIE introduced a Bill to amend the consolidated law respecting assessment.

The above Bills were read a first time.

ACTS OF BRIBERY, &c.

Mr. BLAKE moved that the House do resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider the following resolutions:—

1. That it is expedient to provide that acts of bribery, undue influence, and other illegal practices at elections for the Legislative Assembly, shall be prohibited and punishable by imprisonment.

2. That it is expedient to provide for the appointment of election auditors to audit and pass the accounts against candidates for election expenses.

3. That it is expedient to provide that no candidate shall pay any money in connexion with the election, (save his own personal expenses,) otherwise than through the auditor, and that every candidate shall render to the auditor a statement of his personal expenses, and shall pay through the auditor the accounts audited and passed by him.

4. That it is expedient to provide that the payment of any money by any candidate in contravention of the preceding resolution shall void his election.

5. That it is expedient to provide that every member shall, before he takes his seat, make oath that he has not paid, and will not pay, any money in connexion with the election, (save his own personal expenses,) otherwise than through the auditor, and that he has rendered to the auditor a statement of his personal expenses.

He said that before moving the House into Committee of the Whole, he desired to make a few observations. In the first place, these resolutions provided that acts of bribery and undue influence should be prohibited and made punishable by imprisonment. The Attorney-General had expressed the opinion that the House had not power to prohibit these offences, nor to punish them by imprisonment; this was last session, and on that occasion he (Mr. Blake) ventured to urge that we had, under the Confederation Act, the power to prohibit breaches of the Provincial laws by imprisonment. Yet, not long after, when the Tavern License Bill came up, the Attorney-General considered that his (Mr. Blake's) views were correct, and introduced them into that measure; and now we had on the Statute book provisions punishing breaches of the Tavern License Law by imprisonment, and thus the original position of the Government was abandoned. It now remained to consider whether it were not expedient that the law in respect to election offences should be brought back to its former condition, when it made these offences punishable by imprisonment. He (Mr. Blake) had argued on a former occasion, that it was of particular consequence that these crimes should be punished by imprisonment, and that there should be attached to them that stigma which marked imprisonment in the common jail. There were men who would think lightly of a fine of \$200, but who would not risk being imprisoned like other criminals. He apprehended that it would be of peculiar consequence if in this class of crimes—almost the highest class of crimes—crimes that went to shake the very foundation of our political existence, and were calculated to destroy the fabric of our political existence—the offence of vitiating our free representation—that these offences should be punished by imprisonment. That was the object of the first resolution. Then followed a series of resolutions—three in number—in which it was proposed to provide that election auditors should be appointed. These resolutions he had prepared last session, intending to submit them if his measure on controverted elections had been favourably received, and intending to append them to that measure. Finding that a Bill on controverted elections was to be favourably received this session, he took an early opportunity of placing on the paper the resolutions he had prepared last session. In this country the condition of things with reference to candidates and election contests was somewhat different from that in England. In England, for several years, there had been a law providing for the appointment of election auditors, the object being to diminish the use of corrupt means at elections. That law was defective in several particulars. The provisions in his resolutions were much more stringent than in the English system, and obliterated some of the prominent defects of that system. In this country, throughout the rural constituencies at least, the petty condition of the people was such as to prevent any very large expenditure by the friends of the candidate, except on the expectation that those expenses would be repaid. In this country we are in that blissful condition of not having among us extreme poverty or extreme wealth. In Eng-