

Parliament of Ontario LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

MONDAY, Dec. 11.

The SPEAKER took the chair at three o'clock.

RESIGNATION OF MR FRASER.

The SPEAKER read to the House a letter he had received from Mr. Fraser, member for West Northumberland, in which that gentleman stated that he had resigned his seat. The Speaker observed that the letter of Mr. Fraser was quite informal.

Mr. BLAKE—Hear, hear.

PETITIONS.

Attorney-General Macdonald—Petition of Wm. H. Harris and others, of the First Calvinistic Baptist Church, of Toronto, praying for power to appoint trustees, and for other purposes.

Mr. McKellar—From Archibald McKellar and others, of Kent, for an act to incorporate "The Wübertorce Educational Institute."

Mr. Pardee—County Council, Lambton, for certain amendments to municipal law.

Mr. Prince—From George Leggett and others, for act for construction of a street railway from Sandwich to Windsor.

Mr. Fairbairn—County Council, Peterborough, for the repeal of the legislation of law granting bonuses to Grand Junction Railway.

Mr. Scott (Grey)—From North Grey Railway Company, for act to amalgamate Toronto, Simcoe and Muskoka Junction Railway, and the North Grey Railway.

Mr. Williams (Durham)—Adolph Huigel and others, for a charter to construct a certain railway.

Mr. Wood (Victoria)—For act for the construction of the Bowmanville, Lindsay & Bobcaygeon Railway.

Mr. Wood—Fenelon Falls Railway, for act amending act of incorporation.

Mr. Gow—County Council, Wellington, for reconsideration of act setting aside North Riding for registration purposes.

Mr. Sexton—County Council, Wentworth, for act to amend "the Joint Stock Road Companies' Act."

THE DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS.

Mr. DEROCHE rose to move an address to his Excellency in reply to the speech from the Throne. He begged the indulgence of the House while he, perhaps the youngest member of the House, addressed them for a few moments. He had undertaken this task with some hesitation, but at the same time he did so because he believed the policy of the Government would be in the future as it had been in the past—one that would secure the confidence of the people. Referring to the first clause of the speech, he spoke of the great progress the Province had made and was making. With regard to the subject of the award, he would say nothing upon that subject, but would leave it to the Treasurer, whom he complimented upon the able manner in which he had conducted the negotiations. Coming to the clause relating to education, he thought there was a necessity for some increased means for training properly qualified teachers. Heretofore, he was sorry to say, the province had many school teachers who did not come up to as high a standard as was desirable; but the Act of last session was already beginning to remedy that evil, and a higher standard was being secured. He spoke of the advantages of a technological college, especially in view of the many new railways and other public works going on in the province. He referred to the question of immigration, and claimed that the Government had done something for that object in the past, and would do more in the future, strengthening the hands of the Dominion Government in that respect. He next adverted to the School of Agriculture, which he said would be a popular measure. Then passing on to the subject of drainage, he argued that if a system of good drainage were adopted, it would prove advantageous to fertile lands now lying unoccupied. He spoke of the complaints that had been made with regard to witnesses in criminal cases, and he believed the proposal to pay them would meet with the approval of the country. The number of subjects touched upon in the address were not many, but he supposed this was because most of the subjects that had at one time engaged public attention had now been settled. Still the subjects referred to were of importance, and he trusted the Government would deal with them in such a way as to receive and deserve the approval of the country. (Cheers.) Mr. H. S. MACDONALD, of South Leeds, seconded the address. He claimed the in-

...to a new member, and said he would pursue the method of the last speaker, go over the address clause by clause. He adverted to the disappointment that had arisen from the failure of the arbitration. He argued that the School Act of last session was proved a success, although he admitted that further legislation would be needed this session to amend matters of detail. He congratulated the Government for their determination to establish a school of technology, and for what they had done and would yet do for immigration. He claimed that the policy of the Government with regard to the swamp lands was a wise one, and that it was a good policy to lend out money at low rates of interest for the purpose of land improvement. With regard to the proposed fusion of law and equity, he was of the opinion that a much-needed reform might be carried out in that matter. The payment of witnesses in criminal cases was only a matter of justice. He complimented the Government upon their management of the finances, and expressed his congratulations upon the prosperous condition of the country. (Cheers.)

The Speaker then put the first paragraph of the address.

Mr. BLAKE rose and said he congratulated the gentlemen who had just spoken for the manner in which they had discharged a very awkward task; and if the matter had been as good as the manner there would be nothing to wish for. (Laughter.) But that could not be, for the gentlemen knew they were addressing themselves to a very bad business. The House had met again under very different circumstances, personally and politically, from those under which it had met last session. During the last days of that session, a small but gallant band fighting for the interests of the country sat on the Opposition benches. (Applause.) Numerous divisions were taken on measures which the Government had procrastinated to a time when it was impossible that they should receive a suitable discussion. These divisions, as a rule, were very unsuccessful to the Opposition; but they were, as a rule, extraordinarily successful in the country. (Cheers.) He had amused himself in tracing out the votes of gentlemen who, on the other side, had voted in solid and unbroken ranks against every amendment; and though personally he regretted the absence of many estimable men from this House, yet he rejoiced, in his country's interests, to see that, as two to one, the Province had pronounced against these men. (Applause.) The head of the Government boasted that he had fifty-five in his ranks last session; but of this number, thirty who had supported him were not elected to the present Parliament. He (Mr. Blake) did not believe that the history of recent years at all exhibited a parallel case of such a complete scotting out on any side of the House. (Applause.) The leader of the Government, a day or two before the session closed, was good enough to ask some gentlemen on this side of the House, if it would not suit them to have the elections held in June, July, or the month of August, while he knew in his secret heart that he had a different intention. (Cheers.) In a month from the end of the last session, this worthy statesman—this worthy Premier of the Province of Ontario had issued writs for a general election. (Revised applause.)

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD—Name the gentlemen.

Mr. BLAKE said that the gentlemen were here to-day. The Premier caused the elections to be held at a most inconvenient season of the year; no time was given to the country to obtain a proper verdict; in fact, the Premier, like some dishonorable members of the legal profession, had attempted to snatch a verdict, but had miserably failed, and he knew to-day that he had not the control of this Chamber. (Cheers.) The honorable gentleman and his allies at Ottawa had attempted to exercise influences during the election which ought to be condemned and deplored. They knew instances of this kind with reference to the Government at Ottawa. If the honorable gentleman disclaimed any participation in these acts, if he says he is not responsible for what his allies did and fears them down, then let him join with the Opposition in a proposition—condemnation of them, which they proposed shortly to make. He (Mr. Blake) called upon his friend from Essex to make good his words, and tell the House of the steps taken to control the electors by the voice of power. The same thing was done in his own county by a Government official. It was done in other counties, and now they were bound to protest in the strongest and the most solemn manner against any interference either by this or any other Government, with the freedom of the people in electing their representatives. (Cheers.) Other influences were used by the Government. They obtained a measure, the principles of which they on his side did not oppose, but rather approved of, for the reduction of the price of crown lands, and they all knew how this measure was used. In the county of Grey there was a large quantity of poor lands with reference to which reports had been made, and the supporter of the Government in that county, who was seeking re-election now, told the electors it would be extremely important for them to elect an opponent of the Government. He says nothing of what the report is, or what the Government intends to do, but all he would tell them was that it would

be very imprudent on their part to elect an opponent of the Government. (Hear, hear.) That was what was said in public; but what was said in private was something a great deal stronger, and he would appeal to the Treasurer if such was not the case. It mattered little to the Government of the day that these unfortunate settlers had not shared in the material prosperity to which the resolution called upon them to testify. It mattered little to them that as a rule in some of these townships they reaped less than they sowed. It mattered little that they kept their people upon the tenter hooks of expectation until they had done their duty by freely electing Mr. Abraham Lauder. (Hear, hear.) Another way in which the Government interfered in the election, was with regard to the railway fund, but he would not enter upon that subject at this stage of the debate. Mr. Blake then proceeded to refer to the fate of the "Martyrs." These men were elected upon pledges that they were to use the power entrusted to

them to advance the very cause which they had betrayed. Under what circumstances they strayed from the right path was pretty well known to the House and the country. They were as a rule that sort of person of whom an American poet had spoken when he said that

"A merciful Providence had fashioned them hollow on purpose to let them their principles swallow."

(Laughter.) That was an apt description of the character of some of these persons. They were here no more; their constituents had rejected them and sent better men to fill their places. There was another result of the election upon which they had cause to congratulate themselves. The result of the elections, were such as to necessitate a change in the Government—not that change that was shortly to be made (laughter), but a minor change. Four years ago in his first speech in this House, he characterized the Government as a Borough Administration. They still represented boroughs. The late Commissioner of Crown Lands, now the Secretary, represented the smallest constituency in the whole country—a borough of only some 3,600 souls, in debt over head and ears to this country, a bankrupt borough, in the hands of any government of the day, (laughter)—a borough the fee simple of which you could not sell in order to pay its debt to the crown. The first Minister had the next smallest borough.

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD—And have kept it too all along.

Mr. BLAKE—I suppose it is easy to keep. It had only some 7,100 souls, while his honorable friend from North Huron represented some 49,000 souls. Then there was the Treasurer, he also represented a borough. It was true that the South Riding of Brant was a fine constituency, that there was a fine rural population there; but the Treasurer after unheard of efforts, during the election, was rejected by the rural population by a majority of 200 votes. It was true that the town of Brantford gave him some 300 majority, but it was also true that he owed his election not to the unflattering votes of the borough even, but to the votes of the Grand Trunk employees, whose votes exceeded his whole majority. That was the position of the Treasurer of the Province. The Commissioner of Public Works represented a pleasant little borough, but it was a borough for all that, containing some 15,000 souls. The Commissioner of Crown Lands represented the eastern division of Toronto—the smaller and less important division of that city—a large and respectable borough, no doubt, but still a borough. He was not one of those who believed the boroughs ought not to be represented in the administration—far from it. But he believed that the country ought also to be represented in the administration, and that the interests of the country at large would be better attended to if such were the case. He knew the administration felt this themselves. What else had induced the present Secretary to depart from his snug little borough of Niagara, and wander up to South Oxford, and make appeals there to the people for his election. But he was defeated by a majority of 400; South Oxford would have none of them; it spewed him out of its mouth (laughter.) The Ministry were not so fortunate in the country as in the boroughs. The first Minister had some time ago tried Stormont, but Stormont rejected him.

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD—I was elected for Cornwall first.

Mr. BLAKE—And even with a certificate of good character he failed to carry the day in Stormont. (Laughter.) The Commissioner of Crown Lands, too, at one time tried North Ontario, but with very little success. Therefore the Ministers stuck to the boroughs, because the boroughs stuck to them and the country would have nothing to do with them. Under these circumstances it was not surprising that they had made mistakes with regard to rural interests, and that they were not so well informed with regard to those interests as those members who drew their political breath from the country constituencies. Under these circumstances he was not surprised that the late Commissioner of Crown Lands had progressed uninterruptedly from blunder to blunder. No doubt this was to a certain extent attributable to that Hon. gentleman's peculiar cast of mind, which made it difficult for him to make up his mind upon even the smallest question. But a good deal of it was attributable to the ignorance of the Government on the questions connected with that department. It was satisfactory to know that the Government early felt that in this House such a narrow, contracted, blundering, vacillatory policy, as characterized the administration of Crown Lands for four years could not be sustained, and so, as soon as the verdict of the people was known, the Commissioner of Crown Lands subsided from that position to the easy one of Secretary, where it mattered very little what kind of letters he wrote, or whether he made up his mind to write letters at all. (Laughter.) If his Excellency had called upon them to express their joy that the Commissioner had been removed from his post and transferred to one in which he could do little harm he would have heartily concurred in it, and rejoiced that when things got to the worst they had mended a little. But they were not allowed to rejoice even upon a subject which must be a matter of rejoicing to Ministers themselves. By the Government so changed they were called upon to discuss the Speech from the Throne, and to consider the policy propounded by the administration. It was true that there were some other things upon which the Speech might have said something, if the interests of this country had been properly attended to—if the Government were not slavishly subservient to, and kept in life by the Government at Ottawa. (Hear, hear.) Since they last met a blow—a fatal blow if it was to be repeated, a dangerous blow at any rate—had been struck at the constitution and the rights and interests of the people of Ontario. What was that for which they struggled so long—although that old and good Reformer, the first Minister thought that they were all wrong at the time, but the adoption of that principle of political justice, representation by population. They believed that they had accomplished it. Ministers told them they had not, but at any rate in theory they had accomplished it, and we had a constitution that guaranteed to us a fair share of political power,

and it provided that when any increase in representation took place that principle should be observed. It also prescribed that in the addition of any other province the terms and conditions of that Act should not be violated. In violation of the terms and conditions of that Act the Province of Manitoba had been established, and, with a population of about 10,000, had been given four members in the Commons. His friend from North Huron represented 49,000 people, the average of whose condition as to wealth and stake in the country he did not hesitate to say was higher than the average of the population of Manitoba. But North Huron with 49,000 speaks with but one voice in the House of Commons, while Manitoba with 10,000 spoke with four voices. One evil done was followed by another. Last session British Columbia was added to the Confederation, and with a population of 10,000 got no less than six members; that was one member to every 2,000 people in those two provinces. They on his side had contended, and he rejoiced to say, with a success, for the right of the people of Ontario, to protest against the violation of the Constitution, and set their feet down in the most solemn and formal way against such violation. That protest was recorded on their journals, and the votes of the Ministry were recorded in its favour. That was with reference to a financial question—a question of secondary importance, but only of secondary importance to the question of representation. And yet this violation of the constitution was continued, and not a word of remonstrance in the speech against that which was rapidly depriving this Province of everything for which she sacrificed so much in accepting Confederation. He was not at all surprised that Ministers should have abstained from alluding to another subject in which this country was interested. After inviting the House, as they had done, to pass a solemn resolution expressive of their joy that Governor Archibald had issued warrants for the arrest of the murderers of Scott, he was not surprised that in view of recent events Ministers preserved a discreet silence upon that subject. The House had since learned how much truth there was in the warrant story. They had learned the miserable consequence of tampering with crime. They had seen a second attempt made, when one would have been, had the proper course been taken at first; and they had seen that attempt so far successful that the representative of Her Majesty in this Province had been shaking hands with the man for whose arrest, they rejoiced last session, warrants had been issued. Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that Ministers should have abstained from any allusion to that subject. Although there was silence on many topics, yet there was a good deal of landlubber running through the Speech. The Speech seemed to have been framed

on the notion that having nothing worthy of submitting to the House they spun out the Speech to a decent length, by prating the measures of the past. He well remembered, for it had been often dinned into his ears by Ministers, when their very was that it was very improper to discuss settled questions; they say, "have nothing to do with them, they are dead issues." But what was this beggarly array of empty boxes that was submitted to them? What but a proposal to discuss whether it was wise to establish a Technological college, that had been established; whether it was wise to establish an Agricultural college that had been established; whether it was wise to pass a School Bill that had been passed; whether it was wise to issue a commission to the issue of which the whole House had unanimously assented last session. These were prime paragraphs in the Speech. It was now, at the entrance upon their duties, solemnly proposed to discuss whether they should take the roof of the Technological College; whether they should sell again the land purchased for the Agricultural College; and whether they should revoke the commission they agreed should issue last session. This was trifling with the House and country. These measures, be they of little or great consequence, were settled questions, except to the extent, with regard to some of them, that the Speech left them unsettled. One of the main objections they had last session to the proposal to establish two of these institutions was, he believed, of great force. With reference to the Technological College they intended that a Bill should be presented to the House to regulate the proposed College, showing what the functions of the College were to be, how it was to be governed, &c. Instead of that, the only way in which the matter was brought before the House was the vote in the estimates for \$50,000 for the establishment of the College. Honourable gentlemen, no doubt, would say that, in passing the vote, the House meant that the Government should take charge of the College. Perhaps it was to be annexed to a department, perhaps to the Secretary's department, to diversify his duties. The same with reference to the Agricultural College. There was no provision for the regulation of that institution. The hon. gentleman who spoke before him said rightly that their objection was to the details. They could not tell what the details were. They had a report from two gentlemen who had inspected similar institutions in the United States, but when they attacked a portion of that report, taking it to be the recommendations of the Government, they were told that it was not the Government report, and no information was given them. Then the Speech proposed that they should congratulate themselves upon the working of the School Bill. He believed that in very many sections of the country very considerable dissatisfaction was felt, and much distress was created at this moment by the working of some of the provisions of that Bill; and he agreed with the hon. gentleman who preceded him that it would certainly require amendment. The utterances of that gentleman might be regarded as quasi official, and they might, therefore, infer that it was the opinion of the Ministry that this perfect measure required a little more perfecting still. As to the necessity for more Normal Schools, he should require more information before he pronounced on that subject. It was of great consequence to have an adequate supply of trained teachers. But by the report of the Education Office for 1868, he found that the number of Normal School teachers was 601, out of 4,920 who had passed through the school, or 12 per cent. of the whole. He was