

LEGISLATURE OF ONTARIO.

Second Parliament—First Session.

TUESDAY, 19th Dec.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 3.00 o'clock.

BILLS INTRODUCED.

Mr. MACDONALD (Leeds), introduced a Bill to amend the Act respecting short forms of mortgage.

Also, a Bill to amend the Registry Act.

Mr. CROOKS introduced a Bill to establish laws in favor of mechanics, machinists and others.

Also, a Bill to extend the legal capacity of married women.

Also, a Bill to make "choses in action" assignable by law.

Mr. HODGINS introduced a Bill to amend the law of property and trusts.

Also, a Bill to enable assignees of "choses in action" to sue in law in their own names.

Also, a Bill to amend the law relating to the remuneration of Attorneys and Solicitors. (Hear, hear).

Mr. CLARKE (Grenville), introduced a Bill to make better provision for the sale of estate.

Mr. BOULTBEE introduced a Bill to provide for the separation of the city of Toronto from the County of York for some judicial purposes, and except in certain cases to prevent the trials in which the causes of action arose in some other county.

All the above Bills were read a first time and ordered for second reading on Friday. Objection was taken to Mr. Boultee's Bill that it was a private one.

RESIGNATION OF MINISTRY.

Before the order of the day was called, ATTY-GEN. MACDONALD said, I rise to make some explanation in regard to the events which have taken place in this House since it has opened. The Government, at the opening of the House last week, imagined that the programme which was contained in the Speech from the Throne, would have commended itself to all parts of the House in such a manner as to demand a gracious reply. The measures which that Speech proposed for the consideration of the House were few and we fondly hoped would not have created any active discussion upon them. We relied upon the record of the past four years to justify our expectations, and we expected that we should have the ordinary courtesy extended to the Speech in the same manner in which former Speeches from the Throne had been received from this House. In that respect we were disappointed. We were sadly disappointed when we looked forward to the hope that the record of the past would have secured us, at all events, a fair hearing in regard to the matters alluded to in the speech. The hon. gentlemen opposite thought differently and they adopted a course which, although not unusual in the annals of Parliament, was unusual in latter days, and they grafted a motion at the outset on to the first paragraph of the Speech, which was a test of the strength of the House and of the position which the Ministry held in the eyes of the country—of course we could not avoid that issue—we found it was squarely put to us in regard to a single measure which the last Parliament had sanctioned, as I have said, by the largest majority the Government of the last Legislature had ever counted up. We had imagined that the sanction of that Legislature to the measure, which of all others we had regarded as almost the crown act of our administration, that is the appropriation of a large portion of the surplus at our disposal to works of improvement, to encourage enterprises which were intended to open out the rear of our country, and to facilitate the settlement of our wild lands, and to open up the avenues of travel in that direction. It appears that we were mistaken. It appears that although it was constitutionally introduced to the House, that the objections, which we consider to be very limited indeed as far as regards the disposition of that surplus, was censured in the country as a dangerous usurpation of the liberties and functions of the Legislature. We sought in vain for any legislation, so far as this country and our experience were concerned, to find where there was an equal limit upon executive functions to what that contained. We had fondly hoped that we would receive that cordial recognition of our endeavors to prepare a measure adapted most to advance the material interests of the country. I am not going to quote as I might do from scraps which I have from speeches made by hon. gentlemen opposite throughout the country, who tried to alarm the public mind as to the tremendous powers which had been taken. It is not my wish to now refer to these matters. That time has gone by. We have had as much discussion upon the contents of the Bill as it was desirable to give. Suffice it to say the the sensational appeals made to the people at the hustings are still entertained in this House. We found members coming here to condemn us, not so much because we appropriated the sum that I mention, as for the unconstitutional power it was said we had assumed to ourselves, while I claim, and I

money for any service which the State required. The Government would always feel a satisfaction with reference to the work of that committee. Respecting the various largesums which had been entrusted to the Government from time to time, the same remark would apply. No contracts had been allowed to be given or taken one over another without being examined into, and a full regard for the cheapness of the offers made. In connection with the working of the Government, it showed that the Government occupied a very proud position in regard to the management of affairs. Then feeling that it was not in the power of the Opposition to charge the Government with anything which ought to brand them as traitors to the interests entrusted to them, the Government had hoped they would have been allowed to escape scot-free until they submitted measures to the House for its consideration. The Government was disappointed, as he had already said. They had heard of members securing the suffrages of their constituents by declaring that their object was to give fair play and to judge the Government of the day by their measures. Hon. members had declared that privately and publicly. But the Government had found a defection; they could not control the votes of hon. members who had been returned to give the Government a fair trial. He admitted a feeling of disappointment; but the Government was prepared to stand the consequences of that feeling. The Government had been surprised at the defection in some quarters where they had least expected it; but as to the motives which had prompted that defection they were not going to make any charges; it lay between the hon. gentlemen and their constituents to decide as to whether they were justified. The front of the Government's offending at its formation was that he had invited into the Government a portion of the Conservative leaders to represent that large and respectable party which had worked as earnestly as the Reformers to bring about Confederation; he claimed for that Government that it was not the Government of a party, but of the people. They disavowed any obligation to start at the commencement with a declaration that one party alone should govern the country. How far the Government had succeeded he had already intimated; it had met with the approbation and approval of the country. He supposed they were now to go back to old party lines, but he should not join them in that course; he believed that the success which had attended the management of the affairs of the country during the last four years justified the fact that the non-party Government, with the usual fair play given to any party which might be in power which had the well-being of the country and good departmental management at heart, had been eminently successful. If hon. gentlemen on the other side were true to their old professions he took it that they could have nothing in connection with the gentlemen who had defected from that side of the House. If they could succeed in bettering the condition of the country, and in instituting a better state of things by the adoption of pure party Government than the present Government had with the non-party Government, then he could say that they would have the proud boast of showing to the people of the country that the Government had been wrong for the last four years. He hoped they would not be disappointed; he hoped that the Government which he declared the honor to lead had done justice to both parties, and who until lately proclaimed their adherence to that form of Government when they were as they must be outside. He meant that portion of the Conservatives that had thought fit to find fault with one who had advanced the condition of that party, and who were now hangers on on the outskirts of the great party which had to retrieve the lost character of the administration of the day, would prove by their acts that they were the only persons who could conduct the affairs of the country satisfactorily. He supposed that that party could not admit into their allegiance or into their confidence the persons who had lately joined them; it would be for themselves to put up with that. They would probably be asked to do chores and carry parcels for their leaders, but they would find at last that that did not pay, and that was not what they expected for their adherence and for their condemnation of the people's party which up to a very recent period they professed to admire. They must have had some motive, or have received some promises for the change which had taken place; that was all he had to say. With regard to the defections which had induced the Government to tender to His Excellency their resignations of the offices which they had held, His Excellency had been pleased to accept those resignations, only the Government was to continue in office until their successors were appointed; and he, (the Attorney-General,) now had to inform the House that the Government held office until His Excellency should be able to form a Government which should take their seats. He could not too strongly thank those members who on various trying occasions had lent the Government their aid; the Government would ever feel grateful to them, that whilst on occasions their actions had been maligned, and frequently during the heat of debate words of slander and imputations upon their motives had been cast across the House, they still had believed that these were not of such a nature as to justify their withdrawing their support. To them he returned his most hearty thanks. He went back to the period of four years, and he declared that whatever official position he might have held previously, he had never received a more cordial support, nor had he been more cordially supported by friends on that side of the House to grant anything which could for an instant embarrass the Government if insisted upon. He had found in the supporters of the Government a ready willingness to co-operate with them; but for the opinions on some questions which attached to the Conservative party since Confederation, he would not have discovered in a single instance that there was anything in

the character of those gentlemen which was not as essentially reform in nature as he himself could desire, and he was glad that they had had an opportunity of proving to the country that what had been said of them, and what he himself had, in the heat of debate, said frequently of their leaders required qualification, and that they had had an opportunity of showing, by their adherence to the non-party Government, and by having abandoned as they did their own peculiar views of a Conservative character, that they had belied those charges which were heaped upon them as being corruptionists and inimical to economy and good Government. Having said this much he had nothing more to say than that in the course of the debate on this occasion or during any other Session of the House he had at any time said anything that was offensive, it was not his intention so to do, and he hoped his hon. friends would accept that apology, if he had ever said anything to hurt their feelings. He hoped he was ready to forgive as they would be ready to forgive him. He moved that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. BLAKE wished to say a few words in reference to the last observations of the hon. Attorney-General. He (Mr. Blake) had no doubt sinned in the direction indicated, and he thought they all had occasion to regret some expressions which had been made use of, he would not enter into the historical discussion with which the hon. gentleman had prefaced his observations, thinking that that subject had been worn thread-bare, but he would allude to one observation of the hon. gentleman. The Attorney-General had informed them with reference to those members of the House who sat behind him and had supported him for four years that his intimate relations with them had shown him that they were all good Reformers; that they had abandoned the views they had held, and were as good Reformers as himself, (the Attorney-General). That being his estimate of those hon. gentlemen, the Attorney-General had nevertheless thought fit to warn them off from his (Mr. Blake's) side of the House, as if, though such good Reformers, it was impossible they could support the Reform party. The Attorney-General proposed to set up something like a Chinese wall between the new Reformers and the Reform party. He (Mr. Blake) was not going to confide to the hon. gentleman his plans for the future, he would know them soon enough.

Mr. MACKENZIE said it would be recollected that in the course of last week's debate he had referred to the case of Mr. Fraser in terms which he felt bound to characterize as severe. He had said that he had reason to believe that pressure had been brought to bear upon that gentleman by a certain banking institution. The language which he had used was such as could not well be misapprehended by parties who knew the intimate relations existing between the hon. gentleman opposite and that institution. Yesterday he (Mr. Mackenzie) received a letter from Mr. King, the manager of the Bank of Montreal, to the following effect:—

16th December, 1871.

Alex. Mackenzie, Esq., M.P.
Toronto.

DEAR SIR,—My attention has been called to a report of your speech in the Ontario Legislature on the 14th inst., in which you state that the resignation of Mr. Alex. Fraser was brought about by a pressure of Ontario hon. gentlemen which the Government

From the high position which you held in public life in Canada, I am satisfied that no such statement would be made by you, unless you had good reason for believing it.

I feel therefore it is due to you as well as to the Bank of Montreal, if you referred to that bank, to state that you have been entirely misinformed.

I have had no recent communication whatever with Mr. Fraser respecting his seat in Parliament.

When the elections for Ontario took place early in this year, Mr. Fraser was heavily indebted to the bank, and his business was not prosperous, owing in some part, as I feared, to his public engagements interfering with his business, and I requested the Manager at Cobourg to say to Mr. Fraser, that as the Bank was so largely involved with him, that it was our mutual interest he should give his undivided attention to his business.

Unfortunately this suggestion was not adopted, and Mr. Fraser has since become insolvent.

Beyond this suggestion upon the subject at that time, I have never had any communication with Mr. Fraser either directly or indirectly.

I remain, yours truly,
E. H. KING,
President.

He had also made an allusion to another gentleman—Mr. Geo. Stephens—as having been in communication with Mr. Fraser on this matter, and that gentleman's statement was this:—

MONTREAL, 16th Dec., 1871.

DEAR SIR,—I observe in the Toronto Globe that in addressing the Parliament of Ontario, on the 14th inst., you stated that Mr. Alexander Fraser, member for Northumberland, had been compelled to resign his seat in the House by pressure brought to bear upon him by a certain Bank, with whom the Government had dealings, and by a leading merchant in Montreal who had intimate relations with Cornwall, and further, you informed Parliament that Mr. Fraser had his resignation placed before him and told that if he did not send it to the Speaker by the first mail they would wind him up. I beg to inform you that the statement is untrue. Mr. Fraser, some months ago, and again more recently, consulted me with a view to obtaining my assistance and co-operation in extricating him from his pecuniary difficulties by the establishment of a Joint Stock Company to carry on the business in which he had become insolvent. I told him then, and also recently, that I could not ask any friends to invest capital in such an undertaking unless he, as manager, gave up his