

LEGISLATURE OF ONTARIO

SECOND PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, February 26.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

PETITIONS.

Mr. Crosby—From the Township Council of Markham, for certain amendments to the Act now before the House, to amend the Act incorporating the Toronto and Nipissing Railway.

Mr. Wood (Victoria)—From Trustees S. S. Nos. 2 and 3, Macaulay, for certain amendments to the School Act.

Mr. Baxter—From L. D. Hagle and others, of Toronto, for certain amendments to the Medical Act.

Mr. Deacon—From Grand Lodge of L.O.L. Association of British America, praying that the Acts to incorporate the L.O.L. Association of Eastern and Western Ontario, may pass.

Mr. Baxter—From A. M. Dingwall and others, of Toronto, for certain amendments to the Medical Act.

Mr. Wood (Victoria)—From the Township Council of Somerville, praying to be relieved from a certain by-law passed by the County Council of Peterborough in favour of the Q and O. R. Co.

Also—From J. W. Fitzgerald and others of Fenelon, to the same effect.

Mr. Patterson—From the Township Council of Etobicoke, praying that the site for the Agricultural College at Mimico may not be abandoned.

Mr. Wood (Victoria)—From W. Harkin and others, of Galway, praying to be relieved from a certain by-law.

Also—From the Township Council of Ops to the same effect.

Mr. Crosby—From the Township Council of Scarborough, for certain amendments to the Act to amend the Act incorporating the T. & N. R. Co.

Mr. Scott (Grey)—From the County Council of Grey, respecting the distribution of the surplus.

Also—From the County Council of Grey, for an Act to unite the county of Grey for registration purposes.

Mr. Wells—From the County Council of Bruce, for certain amendments to the Assessment Act.

Mr. Gow—From the Township Council of McDougall, for certain amendments to the Municipal Act.

Mr. Finlayson—From John Miller and others, of Dumfries, for certain amendments to the School Act.

Three petitions were presented in favour of a Prohibitory Liquor Law.

SCHOOL LANDS.

Mr. LAUDER moved that the House will, on Friday next, resolve itself into a committee to consider the following resolution:—
“That, in the opinion of this House, there is no just reason why settlers on inferior School Lands should not have the same measure of relief as settlers similarly situated who are occupants of ordinary Crown Lands; and that settlers on School Lands will have just grounds of complaint unless this House takes immediate steps to secure to them the full advantages of recent legislation regarding lands occupied by them.” He said that the subject had been discussed at some length in the last Parliament, and very strong ground had been taken by Mr. Blake and those working with him in the direction of the motion he (Mr. Lauder) now made. This view had been supported by the present Commissioner of Public Works. It was argued by the then Government that they could not deal with the question until after the arbitration between this Province and Quebec had been settled. The Opposition at that time contended that it was merely a matter of book-keeping, and could be dealt with immediately. They also held that the reports of the valuers should be sent to the House, and should not be kept confidentially in the Crown Lands Department. He quoted from THE GLOBE an editorial to show that it was then the opinion of the Opposition party that the adjudication of the claims for reductions on School Lands was a monstrous power which should not be placed in the hands of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. Mr. Blake had contended that the Common School Lands' Fund was not a trust fund, and should be dealt with as well as the other lands of the Province. If the Commis-

sioner of Crown Lands did not approve of all the valuations, he should tell the House what townships he accepted and what he disapproved of, and the new valuations should be made at once. Hon. gentlemen opposite had made it an election cry that justice was not being done to the settlers on school lands, and yet they now were eating their words and remaining inactive, and stating that they could not deal with the matter. He admitted that this was a difficult question to deal with, but that fact did not relieve the Commissioners from the responsibility which he had undertaken.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT said it was quite natural the hon. member should try to represent the feelings of his constituents. He repudiated the insinuation that his Department was governed by political considerations. In the management of his Department he knew no man politically. He was placed there as the trustee of the people, and he was endeavouring to discharge that trust faithfully and honourably. The charge against him was, that he was too generous with the Crown domain, rather than too niggardly. If he erred at all it was in being too generous. He explained that these lands had already been reduced in price one-fifth, and that Ontario's share in them only amounted to 37 cents an acre. They had already reduced their share of the Common School Fund by about one-half. If the House wished he would be perfectly willing to lay the books of the valuers before the House. He was quite willing to allow any member to go into the Department and examine any of the books confidentially, and give him advice as to the reduction. There was great difficulty in connection with that matter, because he could not always rely upon the valuation of the valuers. Whether it would be wise to reduce the price of these Common School Lands still lower it was for the House to decide. He was quite prepared to be governed by the decision of the House.

Mr. SCOTT (Grey) said the honourable member from South Grey and himself were deeply interested in these school lands, inasmuch as in the municipalities they represented there were large quantities of the school lands. He pointed out that some of the lands in different parts of the country varied in quality, and he thought a fair and proper reduction should be made in the price of the inferior lands in order that the same justice might be done to the persons occupying these lands as had been meted out to settlers on the other side of the line.

Mr. SINCLAIR said it was not just that settlers who had selected a poor lot, and had not been able to pay for the land should be compelled to pay the valuation price. He contended that settlers on inferior school lands were as much entitled to a reduction as upon other lands. He concurred with the resolution of his hon. friend from South Grey.

Mr. MONTEITH advocated the reduction of the price of school lands.

Hon. Mr. McKELLAR said the hon. member for South Grey had endeavoured to show that the Government had abandoned the principles they had advocated on the other side of the House. In refutation of this charge he quoted from a speech of Hon. Mr. Blake, and referred to the occasion upon which the honourable member for South Grey voted against the Government, as he believed if he voted against the interests of his constituents on this question he need not show himself in South Grey again. He (Mr. McKellar) maintained that it was dishonest for the hon. member from South Grey to garble and misrepresent a speech in the manner he had done that of Mr. Blake. He (Mr. McKellar) simply rose to show the inconsistency of his hon. friend in stating that they were not carrying out the principle they advocated when in Opposition. He was in favour of relieving the settlers on the school lands, and he hoped they would be able to enter into some arrangements with the Quebec Government for the relief of those settlers.

Mr. CAMERON said that he hoped the hon. member for North Bruce (Mr. Sinclair) had been listening to the hon. Commissioner, and would follow out the rule laid down by him for the member for South Grey, and would vote for the Opposition in future. According to the theory laid down by hon. gentlemen opposite there was no reason why a reduction should be made at once. He did not know whether the policy of the Government had been expressed by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, or by the Commissioner of Public Lands. The former gentleman seemed to control the Government, and he would rather accept his statement as the official one. The hon. Commissioner of Public Works ought to have listened to what his colleague said before expressing his own views.

Mr. WOOD (Brant) pointed out the diffi-