

# LEGISLATURE OF ONTARIO.

## SECOND PARLIAMENT—THIRD SESSION.

TUESDAY, Feb. 24.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

### PRIVATE BILLS COMMITTEE.

Hon. Mr. CURRIE presented the second report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

### RAILWAY COMMITTEE.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS presented the report of the Committee on Railways.

### THE ASSESSMENT ACT.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS moved the third reading of the Bill to amend the Assessment Act.

Mr. RYKERT thought a clause should be inserted to enable assessors to arrive at the amount of personal property possessed.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS did not consider that it would be expedient to provide any additional machinery with regard to assessment than that provided for in the Bill before the House.

Mr. DEACON was of opinion that appeals to the County Judge with the permission of a judge of the Superior Court were desirable.

Hon. Mr. MOWAT had never heard of a case in which the want of an appeal to the Superior Court had given inconvenience.

Mr. GIBSON moved as an amendment that the Bill be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to a Committee of the Whole House with instruction to repeal subsection 2 of section 71, cap. 36, 32 Vic.

Mr. CHISHOLM thought the amendment would be unfair to villages throughout the Province, as villages were assessed to their full value.

Mr. McMANUS could not see the invidious distinction which it was desired to draw between townships and villages, and thought the clause had been too long on the statute books, and should be repealed.

Mr. OLIVER considered the assessment law, as it stood, was a very fair one. He had heard no complaint with regard to the assessment of towns and villages. He did not think the hon. gentleman should endeavour to force his amendment on the whole Province because it did not work well in his county.

Mr. WOOD thought all the power necessary to regulate assessment should be possessed by County Councils, and was in favour of the law as it stood. He thought the equalization system was a fair one, and the County Councils, he asserted, had always shown a disposition to do what was right and proper.

Mr. BOULTBEE said that, theoretically, the last speaker was correct, but he was not in favour of the views held by the mover of the resolution, and would vote against it.

Hon. Mr. CURRIE thought the equalization of taxation should be left to the County Councils, and if any towns or townships thought they were not fairly dealt with, they could appeal to the County Judge, who would see that justice was done to them. He pointed to a case where this was done in the County of Huron.

Mr. HODGINS referred to the time when this question was brought before the House in the session of 1871-72, and when, the gentleman who introduced it having refused to withdraw it, Mr. Blake moved the six months' hoist, which was carried against the votes of some supporters of the Government. He was one of those who voted for the motion of the hon. member for Brant upon that occasion, and he would vote for the amendment of the hon. member for Huron now.

Mr. BISHOP supported the amendment, and thought County Councils were quite as likely to do justice as the Legislature, if not more so.

Mr. CALVIN also supported the amendment.

Mr. BETHUNE supported the amendment, on the ground that under the 72nd section of the Act injustice was done to towns as compared to rural districts, and he held that any unfairness that might arise from the decision of County Councils, would be corrected by appeal to the County Judge.

Mr. PATTERSON said his experience in the County Council of York was that the

greatest pains were taken to make an equitable assessment as between towns and townships. He would support the amendment.

Mr. RYKERT said the assessments of towns and townships were comparatively most unequal. It was because there was a feeling to this effect that the Commissioner of Public Works had originally introduced the clause to which exception was now taken. The towns and villages were too heavily assessed, and the townships too lightly, and he did not approve of the repeal of the clause.

Mr. CRAIG (Glengarry) said, so far as his memory served him, the clause referred to had been inserted in accordance with petitions presented to the House when the Assessment Law was under discussion, and if it were repealed he was quite sure that the same dissatisfaction which had given rise to the petitions before would again be created.

Mr. HARDY gave the history of the facts which led to the motion of Mr. Wood in 1872. He was opposed to the principle of the clause, which he thought could not be defended, but he did not know that there was any great hardship attaching to the working of it. He would, however, vote for the amendment of the hon. member for North Huron.

Mr. CAMERON pointed out the difference of the qualifications for the franchise in cities, towns, and rural municipalities, showing the difference in assessable value between town and rural property, and he thought the injustice complained of under the present law had no foundation in fact. He hoped the amendment of the hon. member for North Huron would not pass. He thought there should have been a general amendment of the assessment law by the Government this session; but he did not approve of giving the right of appeal from the decision of the County Court Judges to the Superior Courts in matters of disputed assessment. He thought the decision of the County Judge should be final, and had always found that the expense of appealing more than counterbalanced any benefit which a man might derive from even a decision in his favour. He was opposed to the amendment.

Hon. Mr. MOWAT said the matter under discussion was one to which his attention had not before been specially called, and he had not observed his hon. friend's notice of the amendment. His hon. friend had stated that the County Judge of Huron decided that in order to make the assessment equal under the meaning of the Act, the townships and villages were entitled to a further deduction of 40 per cent. That certainly was never the intention of the Act. He was also informed that some three or four other County Judges besides the one referred to had given similar decisions. Then there was the difficulty raised by the hon. member for Lincoln. He (Mr. Mowat) would like some time to consider this matter, and would, therefore, move the adjournment of the debate in order to give him an opportunity. He might, with the assistance of his hon. friend the Treasurer, be able to arrive at some solution of the difficulties which had been referred to.

The adjournment of the debate was then agreed to.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS then moved the House into Committee of Supply.

Mr. LAUDER said it had been ruled by the Chairman in Committee of Supply that members were not allowed to speak except upon the item under discussion, and it therefore became a matter of difficulty to refer to some extraordinary expenditures on the part of the Government. He would therefore take this opportunity of contrasting the expenditure of the Government for the past two years with the last two years of Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's Administration. The total expenditure of the Government of Ontario for 1870 was \$1,580,663 21, the expenditure on capital account being \$407,734 29. In 1871 the total expenditure was \$1,816,866 78; the expenditure upon capital account amounted to \$432,071 65, being greater than the preceding year. The next year, 1872, the expenditure was largely increased, and amounted to \$1,847,956 57, while the expenditure upon capital account only amounted to half that of the previous year—namely, \$266,764 55. Last year, 1873, the total expenditure amounted to the sum of \$2,460,212 03, while the expenditure on capital account was only \$554,389 71, leaving such an increase of the expense of Government as nobody examining the figures could mistake the meaning of. He would then call their attention for a few