

LEGISLATURE OF ONTARIO.

SECOND PARLIAMENT—THIRD SESSION.

FRIDAY, February 27.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. Currie presented the fifth Report of the Committee on Private Bills.

Hon. Mr. Crooks presented the third Report of the Railway Committee.

Both Reports were adopted.

BILLS INTRODUCED.

The following Bills were introduced:—

Hon. Mr. Currie—Respecting Municipal Franchise.

Hon. Mr. Mowat—Respecting the Solemnization of Marriages.

Also—Respecting Industrial Schools.

Hon. Mr. Pardee—For the remission of sums due to the Crown by settlers in the Free-Grant townships of Alice, Wilberforce, Minden, and Gratton.

NEWSPAPER MISREPRESENTATION.

Hon. Mr. CROOKS said that before the orders of the day were called, he wished to make an explanation necessary on his part, relating to the debates which had taken place in connection with the salaries of officials of the different Departments. Certain insinuations had been expressed in reference to an officer of his own Department, and these insinuations had assumed a definite shape in a communication of a correspondent for a newspaper published in Hamilton. That correspondent stated that the accountant of the Treasury Department was the person referred to as being guilty of a breach of confidence by disclosing the contents of certain papers connected with the without any reservation, that the statement which appeared in that newspaper was entirely unfounded. Nothing had occurred in the slightest degree which was calculated to shake his confidence in the gentleman who acted as accountant of the Treasury Department. When he (Mr. Crooks) became Treasurer, he had from his predecessor Mr. Mackenzie a very satisfactory recommendation as to the usefulness and efficiency of the gentleman who was chief officer of his Department, and that recommendation had been repeated on other occasions. He regretted that anything should have been said in the debates in the House which would have led the House to draw an inference so unjust against the gentleman in question.

THE BALLOT.

Hon. Mr. MOWAT moved the second reading of the Bill to provide for voting by ballot at elections of members of the Legislature of Ontario. He said he did not intend to discuss the measure with the fulness which would be necessary if the question were a new one. Last session, after considerable debate, it was found in this House that out of the 64 members who were present, 50 were in favour of the measure, and fourteen only voted against it. Almost every member who ordinarily supported the Government was in favour of the Bill, and several members who usually voted against the Government were in favour likewise of this measure being adopted. He had said the subject was not a new one. It was a subject which had been discussed for many years, and it was a system of voting which had been in substance in use in ancient times as well as in modern. They all knew that in Rome and Athens they had a system of voting by ballot. It was a recognized system in Europe as well as in America, amongst monarchical nations as well as in Republics. It was adopted in some of the most important Colonies of the British Empire, and was recognized by those Colonies as being a measure which had been attended with invaluable advantages. At last it had become law in the British Empire, and it was the law under which elections in England were now held. On this Bill passing the English House, it was supported not only by the great bulk of the Liberal party but also a considerable number of Conservatives, as he believed it would also receive the support of a considerable number of Conservatives in this country. It was not contended that this Bill secured all the objects which were claimed for it, but it secured these objects to a very important degree. The object