

LEGISLATURE OF ONTARIO.

SECOND PARLIAMENT—THIRD SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, March 11

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

BILLS INTRODUCED.

The following Bills were introduced:—

Hon. Mr. Mowat—To amend and consolidate the Public School Law.

Also—To amend and consolidate the laws respecting the Council of Public Instruction and the High School Laws.

DORCHESTER GLOBES.

Hon. Mr. CURRIE withdrew his motion relative to the Dorchester globes.

CROWN TIMBER LICENSES.

Mr. DEACON withdrew his motion referring to Crown timber licenses, as he found the defect he desired to remedy no longer existed.

Mr. BYKERT then moved "That in the opinion of this House it is expedient that provision be made by which municipalities entitled to payments under the Municipal Loan Act of 1873, shall be permitted to expend their appropriation in accordance with the wishes of the ratepayers, as expressed through their Councils or by by-laws to be passed and approved of by them." He said it appeared that there were several municipalities which could not, or did not, desire to take advantage of the 12th section of the statute, which provided that the money should be spent on permanent improvements, such as hospital, industrial farms, improvements of school buildings, public halls, bridges, etc. There was a strong feeling in the country that every municipality should be allowed to invest this money as it pleased, and he saw no reason why the arbitrary rule contained in the Act should be laid down. A municipality should be trusted with its own funds. He knew that applications had been made to the Government by municipalities to be allowed to invest their money in different directions, and he had seen the resolution of one of the Councils of York desiring to apply their portion of the money to the maintaining and support of their schools. He thought they should impose no restriction as to the way in which the money should be expended, but that they should merely see that it was properly invested.

Hon. Mr. MOWAT said the distribution of that portion of the surplus provided for by the Municipal Loan Fund Act of last session was a matter which involved, as everybody must be aware, one of great difficulty. It was generally admitted that the Act of last session settled the matter satisfactorily, and he thought it would be extremely undesirable to re-open the matter. It was a matter regarding which years passed away without a solution being found, and now, having come to a conclusion in respect to it by very large majorities of this House, and by the votes of several hon. gentlemen on that side of the House, it would be a mistake, he was satisfied, to attempt now to re-open the question. A very large amount of discretion was given by the Act in regard to the objects to which this money should be applied by the municipalities receiving it. It was thought that the money should be expended in a way that would show permanent results. A large portion of the Clergy Reserve Fund was really lost because it was distributed without any restriction. It was only a year since the Municipal Loan Fund Act was passed, and they thought if there was to be any change made the time had not yet come for that change. They ought to have the advantage of some experience in regard to the working of the Act as it stood. Most of the municipalities which were to receive money, were content to apply it for the purposes provided in the Act. The only restriction was in regard to the permanency of the objects. The Act provided that the money might be applied in the aid of railways, and some of the municipalities had taken advantage of this provision and intended to apply their share in this direction. It might be applied to drainage, or for the purpose of building or improving a court-house or hospital, industrial farm, schools, public hall, bridges, gravel roads, or in making any other permanent improvements affecting the municipalities, or towards the reduction of municipal obligations already contracted for public works. While there were a few muni-