

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

THIRD PARLIAMENT---SECOND SESSION.

MONDAY, 15th Jan., 1877.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:—

By Mr. Bell—Of W. Long and others praying for the passage of an Act to incorporate Trinity Medical School.

By Mr. Widdifield—Of J. Juns and others to the same effect.

By Mr. Coutts—Of the Township Council of Chatham, praying for amendments to the Municipal Drainage Act.

By Mr. Hardy—Of Andrew Hudson and others, for the abolition of the Book Depository.

By Mr. O'Donoghue—Of J. Davis and others, to the same effect.

By Mr. Ross—Of R. Olanianing and hers, to the same effect.

By Mr. Dawson—Of J. Leys and others, for the passage of an Act to extend the limits of the municipality of Sault Ste. Marie.

By Mr. Crooks—Of the Prescott High School Board for amendments to the High School Act; also of the Renfrew High School Board, the Drummondville High School Board, the Pembroke High School Board, the Markham High School Board, and the Kemptville Board, to the same effect.

By Mr. Sinclair—Of the County Council of Bruce for amendments to the School Act.

By Mr. Preston—Of Newboro' Village Council, for amendments in the Assessment Act so far as exemptions are concerned.

By Mr. Crooks—Of the Village of Norwich and the Town of Ingersoll to the same effect.

Petitions for the incorporation of the Orange Society to the number of 117 were presented.

BILLS INTRODUCED.

The following Bills were introduced and read the first time:—

Mr. Crooks—Respecting payments to unorganised townships and parts of districts under the Municipal Loan Fund scheme.

Mr. Dacon—To extend chap. 45, Con. Statutes Upper Canada, entitled an Act respecting mortgages and sales of personal property, to the districts of Muskoka, Parry Sound, Thunder Bay, and Nipissing.

THE LICENSE ACT.

Mr. CROOKS introduced a Bill to amend the Acts respecting the sale of spirituous and fermented liquors. He said that it was not proposed by this amendment of the present Acts to interfere in any way with the principle of existing legislation, but it was rather intended to amend the machinery of the present Acts so as to make them more efficient throughout, from the granting of licenses down to those portions which dealt with contraventions of the law. The machinery of the law upon this subject had been tried to the fullest extent during last year, and while certain deficiencies, which were not at all formidable, had been found to exist, many of them had been suggested by a desire on the part of some of those charged with the administration of the law to find flaws and defects, rather than to construe the law in a liberal spirit. He hoped that by the amendment which he proposed to make the provisions of the law would be drawn so closely and rendered so efficient and powerful that such efforts as he had mentioned would be impossible in future. He hoped, too, that when the one was referred to the Committee of the Whole, the License Act as a whole would be fully discussed, so that further amendments would be unnecessary, and other countries would be able to point to our laws upon this subject as worthy of imitation.

ELECTION OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES.

Mr. ROSS asked whether it was the intention of the Government, in the proposed amendments to the Public School Law, to provide in cities, towns, and townships where Public School Boards are established for the election of school trustees at the same time as the election of municipal councillors, and by ballot.

Mr. CROOKS said it was not the intention of the Government to make any change at present either in regard to the time or the mode of conducting the elections for school

trustees. (Hear, hear.)

HIGH SCHOOLS.

Mr. BOULTER moved for a return showing the number of High Schools in operation during the year 1876, number and location of such schools, as had been ordered to be closed during the present year, and the reasons for such closing. He said he was informed that several High Schools had been ordered to be closed, and he did not know what reasons had been given. The High School in the village of Sterling had been ordered to be closed, the only reason of which the people were aware being that a second teacher had not been engaged. He believed there was an Order in Council that there must be two teachers, no matter how many scholars there might be—even if there were only ten or twenty scholars. In the common schools the number of scholars was limited to 50 before a second master was required. He considered that some such regulation was required in reference to High Schools.

Mr. CROOKS said there could be no objection to the motion—in fact it was very important that the hon. member and the country should understand the true position which our High Schools should occupy in our educational system. This particular school was to be closed for a long continued contravention of the regulations of the Department which had been enforced prior to 1874. The question was not, as the hon. gentleman put it, one of the attendance of pupils, more or less, but was one of scholarship. The only *raison d'être* for the existence of a High School was that of superior scholarship. The old Grammar Schools had been more or less left to themselves, but by degrees the late Chief Superintendent of Education set himself to apply to High Schools the same system which prevailed as to elementary schools, and he had been endeavouring for years to place the High Schools in their proper position as intermediate between the elementary schools and the universities. A difficulty had been found in the fact that prominent people, in particular districts or in villages, desired to separate their children from those of the general public who were in the Public Schools. The Public School programme showed that if all the classes were properly taught, an education was imparted which was quite fit to enable an average child to enter upon any career in life. A discussion was now going on in Scotland as to how they could introduce the system of intermediate schools which we possessed, instead of leaving everything to the parochial schools. The only reason for the existence of a High School was a demand for higher education than that given in the Public Schools. He (Mr. Crooks) had simply to carry into effect the regulations which he found. The school in Sterling was found to have been continually violating the regulations after repeated warnings.

Mr. MACDOUGALL—In what respect?

Mr. CROOKS said in assuming to carry on with one master the whole curriculum of a High School. It was impossible to find one teacher able to take charge of all the branches of a High School curriculum. That would place our High Schools in the same position as the Scotch parochial schools, where every subject was dealt with, from Greek down to the rudiments of spelling and the elementary instruction in writing. That system had been condemned, and the people of Scotland were trying to bring about by legislation the same condition of secondary schools which we had had here for years. He concluded by promising to bring down the papers at an early day.

Mr. MACDOUGALL (Simcoe) said that there were certain cases in which he thought the law might be advantageously amended. He thought that the hon. Minister of Education would be adopting a rather questionable line of policy if he adhered in all cases to the regulations laid down by the old Council of Public Instruction. He (Mr. Macdougall) was very happy to learn from what he saw in the public newspapers and in other ways that the apprehensions which he (Mr. Macdougall) had expressed on the late change in our educational system had not been realized. He had feared that the peculiar position which the hon. gentleman occupied in a political sense would have provoked the hostility of the people, but the fact that such a prediction had not been fulfilled showed the good-will of the people and their anxiety to facilitate the perfection of our educational system, as well as the ability brought to bear by the hon. gentleman himself upon the discharge of his duties so far. (Cheers.)

Mr. MOWAT said he was quite sure that his hon. friend the Minister of Education would always be glad to get what information he could from hon. members upon the