

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE

THIRD PARLIAMENT---SECOND SESSION.

TUESDAY, 30th Jan., 1877.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:—

Hon. Mr. Cameron—From the Consumers' Gas Company of Toronto, praying that the Bill now before the House respecting the People's Gas Company may not pass.

Mr. Paxton—From Peter Kennedy and others, of Fort William, praying that the Bill now before the House respecting the municipality of Shuniah may not pass.

Mr. Tooley—From the county of Middlesex, praying for certain amendments to the Agriculture and Arts Act.

Also—From the same, respecting the distribution of the Ontario Statutes.

Also—From the same, praying for certain amendments to the Assessment Act with respect to the assessment of personal property.

Mr. McDougall (Middlesex)—From the County Council of Middlesex, praying that the ballot may be abolished at municipal elections.

Hon. Mr. Macdougall—From the County Council of Simcoe, respecting the distribution of the Consolidated Statutes.

Mr. Deroche—From the High School Board of Newburgh, praying for certain amendments to the School Act.

Mr. Mazze—From the School Board of Guelph, praying that the Government grant to High Schools may be increased.

Mr. Ross—From the County Council of Huron, praying for certain amendments to the Ontario Medical Act.

Hon. Mr. Macdougall—From the South Simcoe Electoral District and the Essex Branch Agricultural Society, asking that Government aid extended to Township Agricultural Societies be withdrawn, and given to County and Electoral District Societies.

Mr. Ross—From the Municipal Council of Huron, asking for amendments to the Assessment Act.

Also—From the same, asking for certain amendments to the School Law.

Mr. Tooley—From the County Council of Middlesex, praying for a further distribution of the surplus, as it is said it has now reached the sum of five million dollars.

Mr. Ross—From the Municipal Council of the county of Huron, asking for the abolition of tax exemptions, except as regards Government and municipal property.

Mr. Graham—From School Section No. 8, township of Plympton, praying that Section Boards be allowed to remain as they are.

Mr. Hay—From A. Matheson and others, praying for the abolition of the Book Repository.

Mr. Scott—From the Council of the village of Lakfield, praying for the abolition of tax exemptions.

Mr. Merrick—From nine Orange Lodges, praying for the incorporation of the Orange Association.

Mr. Broder—From one Orange Lodge, to the same effect.

Mr. Monk—From one Orange Lodge, to the same effect.

NORTH AND SOUTH GREY.

Mr. FRASER presented the sixth report of the Committee on Private Bills.

Mr. FRASER moved the adoption of the report.

Mr. CREIGHTON, in amendment, moved to recommit the report with instructions to report the preamble of the Bill to reunite the North and South Ridings of Grey for registration purposes proven. He contended that a question of this importance ought to be decided by the House, and not by a Committee. The division took place in 1871 against the will of the County Council. The County Council was not in session when the division was made, but the Warden, being Reeve of the township in which the new Registry Office was fixed, took the responsibility of providing for the new office. Since that the County Council had refused to do anything to improve the office in Durham, as they were very anxious to see the districts re-united. The division was, instead of a convenience, a great inconvenience to the county. A very large propor-

tion of the people of the townships which before the construction of the railways did their business at Durham now do it all at Owen Sound, while others did business at Mount Forest. Since the division the county was losing \$2,000 a year in fees, and if the division continued would have to expend \$7,000 or \$8,000 on a new registry office. There was no feeling against the registrar for South Grey, but that was a matter which could not be considered when the public service was at stake. The County Council was willing, however, fairly to compensate the registrar if the Ridings were re-united. The separation was made by Order in Council, and the County Council had constantly been petitioning the Government to re-unite the Ridings, but without effect, and now the Council came to the Legislature as a *dernier ressort*. In a similar case, the county of Huron had had its request acceded to.

Mr. HUNTER said, as representing South Grey, he felt bound to correct the mistakes made by the member for North Grey. He pointed out that numerous petitions had been presented against this measure. The proposal to re-unite the Ridings of Perth had been rejected last session. The northern portion of the county had a selfish motive in proposing this re-union, as it desired to obtain a large share of the fees over the stated emoluments of the registrar. If this Bill were to pass there would soon be petitions to again separate the Ridings. He contended that there was no inconvenience in the office being located at Durham.

Mr. BARR supported the amendment, and stated that the County Council of Grey would fight hard before they would comply with any *mandamus* calling on them to build a registry office at Durham. Very little dependence could be placed on petitions, as all the members knew. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Mr. PAXTON said he was glad to hear the hon. gentleman admit that the late Government had done a great wrong in this matter. As one representative from the county took one view and the other took the reverse, he thought the House should hear from the third member, the representative of East Grey. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. ROSS thought the views of the people should be considered, and supported the amendment, as a similar re-union had worked well in the county of Huron. He thought the officer who was to be deprived of his office should be reimbursed by this House and not by the county. The Sandfield Macdonald Government were to blame for this measure.

Mr. LAUDER said he should vote for the amendment.

Mr. FRASER said he thought the member for East Grey ought to have explained his reasons for voting, as he proposed to do. On some small question he would have been very diffuse, but on a matter so much affecting his own constituency he would not have said a word if the member for North Ontario had not drawn him from his covert. If these Ridings were re-united, he supposed it would be impossible to place the office where it would be most convenient for all parts of the county. In Huron, if he recollected aright, all the municipalities and all the people were in favour of the re-union. In this case three municipalities and a large number of the people had petitioned against this re-union. The House had refused to re-unite the Ridings of Perth, and he considered that unless a very strong case were made out the action of the late Government should not be interfered with. This was a matter in which hon. members would vote according to their own views of the question.

After further discussion,

Mr. MOWAT said all these cases must be determined on their own merits. In the Huron case all the municipalities were in favour of the re-union, and all the members of the county took the same view. In such a case as that, where those supposed to be benefited by the separation were opposed to the separation, he could not see any question as to what the decision of the House should be. Here, however, the state of affairs was very different. The county was not by any means unanimous, and besides that, the matter had been left open for so many years without appealing to this House. Considering that so long delay had been allowed, and that the member for the Riding which was affected and the townships in that riding were opposed to the re-union, he thought it ought not to take place.

The House then divided, and Mr. Creigh-