

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

Third Parliament—Third Session.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

Friday, Feb. 8.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

Prayers were read by the Rev. Father McCann.

The House sat for a few moments with closed doors.

PETITIONS.

The following petition were presented:—

By Mr. Deacon—From the County Council of Renfrew, praying for certain amendments to the Voters' Lists Act.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. PARDEE presented the seventh report of the Committee on Railways, which was adopted.

Mr. FRASER presented the eighth report of the Committee on Private Bills, which was adopted.

BELLEVILLE DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTE.

Mr. WILLS moved for an order of the House for a return in the matter of the buildings, erections, drains, and other works done or contracted for in connection with the Deaf and Dumb Institute at Belleville, for the year 1877, setting forth: 1. All tenders for said works. 2. All contracts entered into for the same. 3. All claims for extra work. 4. All amounts allowed on said claims for extra work. 5. All claims for extras allowed. 6. All claims for extras in course of adjustment. 7. What sums are yet required for the completion of works so undertaken. He said there had been some misunderstanding among the contractors, and it was only fair that these returns should be brought down.

Mr. FRASER was glad this motion had been made, as it gave him an opportunity to contradict a rumour which had found currency at Belleville to the effect that the contract for this work had not been given to the lowest tenderer. He need hardly say to the House that so far as he himself was concerned such a thing was not likely to take place. The only way he could account for the rumour was by attributing it to the habit of some tenderers of attempting to make other tenderers believe that they had tendered at a higher rate than was really the case. He had made it an invariable practice of awarding a contract to the lowest tenderer, provided he was able to perform the work, and he had done that in the present instance. There were eight tenderers for the work, three of whom lived at Belleville. The lowest tenderer, Mr. Ford, was accepted. His tender was for \$18,347, and the tenders ascended to as high as \$32,000. The steam heating work was done under a separate contract. The lowest tenderer was a firm with which Mr. Brown, of Belleville, a member of the House of Commons, was connected, and for that reason he declined to do the work. Accordingly, the next lowest tender, made by a Toronto firm, was accepted. He had no objection in laying the information asked for before the House.

The motion was carried.

SETTLERS ON FREE GRANT LANDS.

Mr. BELL moved for an order of the House for a return showing the number of actual settlers on free grant lands, together with the amount of land occupied by each settler, and also what amount of improvements has been made on lands in the free grant district since they were first set apart, and whether such lands are settled by emigrants or otherwise, or if not wholly so, to what extent.

Mr. PARDEE said the Government was very desirous of giving the House all the information possible with reference to the Crown Lands Department, but it was quite impossible to furnish what was asked for by the motion. Much of the land being occupied by squatters, any return would only show approximately the amount of land improved. Such information would be imperfect, and consequently misleading. What