

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

THIRD PARLIAMENT—FOURTH SESSION.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
Toronto, 12th Feb., 1879.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.
Prayers were read by Rev. J. B. Silcox.

PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:—

By Mr. Bell—From the Whitby, Port Perry, and Lindsay Railway Company, that no exclusive powers be granted to the Victoria Railway Co.

By Mr. Grange—From the Village Council of Bath, for certain amendments to the Municipal Act respecting the enforcement of statute labour.

By Mr. Grange—Seven Orange petitions.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. FRASER presented report No. 8 of the Committee on Private Bills, which was adopted.

Mr. CROOKS presented the sixth report of the Committee on Railways, which was adopted.

Mr. DEROCHE presented the second report of the Committee on Printing, which was adopted.

MUNICIPAL ACT.

Mr. GRANGE submitted a Bill providing amendments to the Municipal Act, which was read a first time.

THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Mr. CREIGHTON moved

That in the opinion of this House it would be in the public interest to have the Public Accounts and Departmental Reports printed as soon as possible after the expiration of the year to which they relate, and to have the same circulated immediately upon being printed, whether the House shall be in session at such time or not; and that it be an instruction to the Committee on Printing to consider and report on the best method of accomplishing this end.

Mr. CREIGHTON said it would be remembered that last session he had moved a somewhat similar motion, but had withdrawn in the belief that the Public Accounts would be brought down before the close of the session, but they had not been. This subject had been alluded to previously in the debates of this session, and he was glad that the question was being agitated. It was a strange thing for the Government to plead that it was impossible to get down the Public Accounts earlier than in former years. Those for 1871 had been brought down on the 21st January, 1872, those for 1872 on the 6th February in the following year. The accounts of 1876 had been brought down on the 15th January, 1878, and those for 1877 were submitted to the House only a few days ago. It was necessary that some system should be adopted to do away with this delay. In every session there was submitted a statement of receipts and expenditure of the year before, which showed that the books had been made up and the totals arrived at, and all that was then necessary was a mere work of copying. He was pleased that the Ministry proposed taking some action in the matter, but they did not seem to be very decided as to what that action should be. It was spoken of to change the date of the financial year, but this would not be advisable, for there was no guarantee that the time of meeting of the House would not be changed. He believed that the month of January was the most inconvenient month for members to meet, because the municipal elections and the meetings of the Township and County Councils, and of the horticultural and other societies, were held in that month. If the accounts could not be got ready by the end of the session, they might be in the hands of the members before the following meeting of the House. They would then be prepared to discuss them intelligently, for it was impossible for any hon. gentleman to give full attention to the mass of documents placed on their desks. Further, the people of the country would be able to read them over, and the members of the press would have them for comment and criticism. This motion covered other documents, such as the education report, which was not generally published until more than a year after