

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

THIRD PARLIAMENT—FOURTH SESSION.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

Wednesday, Feb. 26.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

Prayers were read by Rev. Dr. Topp.

PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:—

Mr. Coutts—The petition of Kent Division Grange No. 11, praying for certain amendments to the Municipal Act respecting the number of Councillors.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES.

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

FREE GRANT HOMESTEAD ACT.

Mr. MILLER introduced a Bill to amend the Free Grant Homestead Act, which was read a first time.

CORRECTION.

Mr. BRODER corrected a report which appeared in the *Mail*, attributing to him some remarks made by Mr. Boulter at the sitting of the House yesterday concerning colonization roads, and on the Bill providing for the limitation of actions.

POULTRY ASSOCIATION.

Mr. WOOD said that as the exhibition provided for in the Bill incorporating this Association was being held, he moved to have the Bill referred back to Committee of the Whole for amendment.

The Bill was referred back, amended, and reported, and was then read a third time.

THIRD READINGS.

The following Bills were read a third time and passed:—

Respecting the Whitby, Port Perry, and Lindsay Railway Company—Mr. Paxton.

Respecting the Lake Simcoe Junction Railway Company—Mr. Lauder.

To give further powers to the Petrolia Crude Oil and Tanking Company—Mr. Pardee.

Respecting the Andrew Mercer Ontario Reformatory for Females—Mr. Wood.

To establish an Industrial Refuge for Girls—Mr. Mowat.

CROWN LAND REDUCTIONS.

Mr. MEREDITH moved for an order of the House for a return showing by townships:—1. The amount of the reductions made in each year in which reductions were made under the provisions of 34 Vic., cap. 20, and 35 Vic., cap. 22, on account of the purchase money of Crown Lands, Clergy Lands, Common School Lands, and Grammar School Lands, giving the reduction as to each class of such lands. 2. The amount of interest abated in each year as to each of such classes of lands. 3. The amount remaining due on the 1st day of January, 1879, on account of each of such classes of lands which have been heretofore sold. 4. The number of acres sold in each year since 1868, and the price thereof. He understood that reductions had been made on the purchase money and interest of lands purchased from the Crown contrary to the provisions of the statute. He thought that reductions had been made for which the Province might be responsible to Quebec.

Mr. PARDEE said there was no objection to the motion, but it would entail a great amount of work for preparation, and it would be quite impossible to bring down the return this session. He was quite satisfied that the spirit of the Act had been strictly carried out in the Crown Lands Department, both as to the purchase money and in the interest. As to the Province being responsible to Quebec he was strongly of opinion that equitably they ought not to be so.

Mr. LAUDER asked that the Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands should bring down the reports of the valuers who were sent out to appraise lands on the purchase money of which reductions were proposed to be made. He did not consider that such reports could be considered confidential.

Mr. SINCLAIR said that he did not

think it becoming to the hon. member for East Grey to blame the Government in the matter, as he (Mr. Lauder) and the speaker had pressed upon the Government the necessity of going into the matter in the way in which they had gone into it. He was of opinion that the Government had carried out to the satisfaction of the rural parts of the country the Act which had been passed. It was hardly fair that the hon. member, whose constituents as well as his (Mr. Sinclair's) had benefitted by the operations of the Act, should censure the Government for doing what he had expressed his desire, by moving a resolution, that they should do.

Mr. LAUDER said the resolution referred to by the last speaker related to a motion made in the second session of the Legislature, turning upon the inferiority of lands and the prevalence of frosts in certain sections, but it was not intended to carry out the Act as it had been carried out by the Hon. the Minister of Crown Lands. He did not object to the Act itself, but to the interpretation put upon it by the Government.

Mr. SINCLAIR contended that the hon. member for East Grey had brought up a resolution that the Commissioner of Crown Lands should go further than he had gone, the complaint being that the reductions of prices and interest were not sufficient.

Mr. PARDEE said these discussions were mainly for the purpose of making capital against the Government. The Government had acted strictly under the Act, as could be seen by hon. members who would take the trouble to examine into the facts of the case. Revaluations had to be made in various counties, which necessitated the appointment of a large number of valuers. If the old Government had remained in power they would have had to appoint quite as many valuers as had been employed by the present Department. His hon. friend had read the resolution, but he had taken good care not to read the Act itself. He then proceeded to read from the Act to prove that it provided that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council had the power to reduce the price of Crown, Clergy, or Grammar School lands, when it appeared that the price was too high, and the amount could not be paid. Nothing was said about poor lands. It was not provided that the Government were to apply this reduction to certain townships in the County of Grey, but to make a general enquiry about the lands throughout the Province, and to make a reduction whenever necessary. He claimed that the Act had been carried out faithfully. He did not say that they had been always able to rely upon the valuations made, or upon the opinion of every valuator in the 300 townships that had been surveyed. There was not an hon. member of the House, he presumed, who had not seen the books relating to this subject in the Crown Lands Office. It would be the work of a year or perhaps more to make out the list of lands and prices, and bring it down to the House, and he was glad his hon. friend from North Renfrew had withdrawn his addition to the present motion. The motion of his hon. friend from London was a proper one, and the return asked for would be brought down.

Mr. MEREDITH asked if these were confidential documents, or if they were open to the inspection of hon. members of the House.

Mr. PARDEE replied that these were quasi confidential papers, but no hon. gentleman seeking information would be refused access to them. This, however, was a different thing from bringing them into the House.

The motion was then carried.

Mr. LYON (Algoma) moved for a Select Committee to consider the following resolution, with instructions to report to this House thereon:—

That the growing importance and increasing population of the electoral district of Algoma, together with the diversity of interests arising from difference of soil, climate, and the occupations of the people in a region of such vast extent, render it expedient that the said district of Algoma should be sub-divided, to the end that it may be more fully represented in the Legislature of Ontario. That it is expedient that the present electoral district of Algoma shall be abolished, and that the provisional district of Algoma shall be sub-divided into two electoral divisions, to be called respectively Eastern Algoma and Western Algoma, each of which will be an electoral district, and shall each return one member to the Provincial Legislature.

He said the growing population of Algoma