

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

THIRD PARLIAMENT—FOURTH SESSION.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

Thursday, Feb. 27.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

Prayers were read by Rev. Dr. Topp.

PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:—

By Mr. Preston—The petition of the County Clerk of Leeds and Grenville, praying for certain amendments to the Registry Act respecting the registration of documents, and three petitions from Leeds anent the incorporation of the Orange Associations.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. FRASER presented the 18th and last report of the Committee on Private Bills, which was adopted.

Mr. BETHUNE presented the report of the Select Committee on the Building Societies' Act.

Mr. MEREDITH, presented the report of the Select Committee on the Trust Funds Act.

Mr. MOSTYN presented the report of the Select Committee on the Agricultural and Arts Act.

MUNICIPAL ACT.

Mr. McCRAVEY introduced a Bill to amend the Municipal Act, which was read a first time.

EXEMPTIONS FROM TAXATION.

Mr. HARDY moved that a Select Committee be appointed for the purpose of taking evidence and preparing a report upon the question of exemptions from taxation, the said Committee to be composed of Messrs. Bell, Calvin, Chisholm, Deacon, Ferris, Graham, Harcourt, Hardy, Hargraff, Hay, Lauder, Meredith, McMahon, Miller, O'Donoghue, Robinson, Ross, Sexton, White, Wills, Williams, and Wood. The same Committee as proposed in the motion, with one or two changes, had met last session to take evidence upon and consider this exemption question, and a large amount of evidence had been taken, both verbally and in writing. A list of questions also had been drawn up and sent to a large number of people in the Province and the United States, with a request that they should be answered and returned. Answers had been received in a large number of cases, some of them before and some during the session, and it was thought that probably as much evidence had been collected as could be received before the close of the session. It was, therefore, desired that the Committee asked for should meet to consider this evidence and receive statements from other parties who had requested to have an opportunity of giving some further evidence upon the question. Probably only a few sittings would be necessary.

Mr. MEREDITH said there were no two opinions that this matter affected the whole Province and was of paramount importance. He accused the Government of trifling with this question, and said that being not disposed to take it up they were merely desirous of making a false impression upon the country, his hon friend had given notice of his intention, to move for a Committee upon this subject, and yet nothing had been done with it until very near the close of the session, when the Committee could not sit. The hon. the Attorney-General had already given notice that he would move for a morning session of the House beginning at 11 o'clock, so that it would be utterly impossible for the Committee to fulfil the office for which it was pretended to be appointed. This action had made it apparent to both the House and the Province that hon. gentlemen opposite were merely trifling with the people upon this question.

Mr. MOWAT said that when the hon. gentleman spoke of this question as being one upon which the people at large were demanding legislation, he did not agree with the observation. He did not find that there was any special interest upon the question, except in a few localities. No doubt in this city it was of im-