

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE:

Fourth Parliament—First Session.

TORONTO, January 13.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:—

By Mr. Morgan—Of Wm. Collier and others, for the incorporation of the Port Rowan and Lake Shore Railway Company.

By Mr. Striker—Of the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward, to confirm a certain by-law.

By Mr. Robinson—Of the County Council of Kent, for an amendment in the Ditches and Water Courses Act.

Also of Rev. John R. Battisby and trustees of St. Andrew's Church, Chatham, for authority to sell certain lands.

By Mr. Harcourt—Of A. G. Hill and others, of Clifton, for an Act to incorporate the Niagara Falls Street Railway Co.

Also of the County Council of Welland, for a change in the present mode of conveying prisoners to the penitentiary.

By Mr. Sinclair—Of George Stanley and others, of Chesley, for an Act to confirm the incorporation of that village, and to make valid the election of Reeve and Councillors therefor.

By Mr. Creighton—Of certain ratepayers of Union School Section No. 3 Derby and Sydenham for a change in the mode of collecting school rates, and for the abolition of Township Boards of School Trustees.

IRREGULAR PETITIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER called the attention of the House to the fact that certain petitions which had been received for increased grants to High Schools were irregular, because they were addressed to the Lieut.-Governor instead of to the Legislative Assembly, and that they asked for aid, which could not be granted except on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

The following Bills were introduced and read the first time.

To Amend the Municipal Act—Mr. Calvin.

To Amend the Division Courts Act—Mr. Gibson (Hamilton.)

THE LIBRARY.

Mr. MOWAT moved the appointment of the following Committee to act with Mr. Speaker in the care of the library:—Messrs. Crooks, Deroche, Gibson (Huron), Harcourt, Meredith, Morris, and Boulter. Carried.

SUPPLY.

On motion of Mr. Wood, the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. Sinclair in the chair, and after passing the formal vote for Civil Government the Committee rose and reported.

The House then went into Committee of Ways and Means, and adopted the usual formal resolution.

COUNTY COUNCILS.

Mr. CREIGHTON asked whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce during the present session any measure providing for the reduction of number of members or otherwise altering the constitution of County Councils.

Mr. MOWAT—I have the pleasure of saying in reply that the matter is under consideration. (Laughter.)

GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONS.

Mr. LAUDER moved for an order for (1) names of all persons appointed by the Ontario Government as Special Commissioners or Committees of Enquiry regarding matters pertaining to Provincial affairs since the year 1871, (2) a statement of the subject matter of investigation or enquiry in each case; (3) a statement of all expenses connected with each Commission or Committee of Enquiry in detail. He said he deemed this to be a matter of great public importance. He blamed the Government for being eminently a Govern-

ment by Commission, and said it was necessary for the country to know the objects for the appointment of these Commissions, the effect of their operations, and the cost incurred thereby.

Mr. MOWAT said the hon. member seemed to think that a Commission was a bad thing; but if he had studied what had been done by Commissions in other countries he would change his opinion. A Commission was a regular, a constitutional, and an eminently British means for securing information, and sometimes of even preparing schemes as the basis of legislation. What the Government claimed was that every Commission they had appointed was a proper one, that there was a necessity for its appointment. They were quite willing that any investigation should be made, but would like the motion amended so as to cover the whole period of government since Confederation.

With this amendment the motion was unanimously carried.

ELECTION RECORDS.

Mr. ROSS, in the absence of Mr. Deroche, moved for an order for a return from the records of the elections to the Legislative Assembly, showing the aggregate amount of votes polled for each candidate in each electoral district in which there has been a contest, the total number polled in each division, and the number of names on the voters' lists of the same respectively, and the population of each constituency as shown by the last census. Mr. Ross remarked that he had no doubt the Opposition would read this return with considerable interest. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Mr. MILLER thought the motion ought to be made to include the number of votes polled and the number of inhabitants in unorganized districts, such as Algoma and Muskoka.

Mr. MOWAT thought that the motion included that information.

Mr. MILLER said a large number of votes had been polled in these districts which did not appear on the voters' lists. He, however, consented that the motion should pass as it stood, and he would make a new motion for the information he desired.

Mr. MORRIS, referring to the remark made by Mr. Ross, assured that gentleman that the Opposition would welcome that return. Mr. Blake was of opinion that minorities ought to be fairly represented, and would no doubt bring his views, with his accustomed ability, before the House of Commons. The Opposition in this House represented a very large proportion of the people of this country, and when this return was brought down it would show that, minority as they were, they were entitled to just and fair dealing from the majority in the House, where they spoke the voice of more than their number indicated.

Mr. MOWAT assured the hon. gentleman that even if he had at his back only one-tenth of the number he had they would still experience fair and just dealing from this side of the House. (Hear, hear.) He was glad to know that the hon. gentleman was grateful to the people of this country for the result of the last election, for he anticipated with great joy what his return would show. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) It was a feeling that they could hardly have expected the hon. gentleman to possess. (Hear, hear, and renewed laughter.) He was glad to know that the hon. gentleman had become a convert to one of the views expressed by the Hon. Mr. Blake—(hear, hear)—and he hoped this was just a beginning, and that the hon. gentleman would soon become a convert to all the views of Mr. Blake. (Cheers and laughter.)

Mr. MORRIS proceeded to express regret that the leader of the Government had not met the overture of the leader of the Opposition to avoid asperities with a frank and generous response.

Mr. MOWAT said the hon. gentleman must have been asleep, or he would have heard that he did respond to the offer of the leader of the Opposition in a similar spirit.

The motion was then carried.

UNIVERSITY MATRICULANTS.

Mr. METCALFE moved for a return of:—1. The number of regular students,