

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

Fourth Parliament—First Session.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

Monday, March 1.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

THIRD READINGS.

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

To protect the goods of lodgers and boarders against distresses for rent due to the superior landlord—Mr. Monk.

Respecting ditching watercourses—Mr. Robinson (Kent).

Respecting the support of destitute insane persons—Mr. Waters.

To prevent the spreading of Canada thistles—Mr. Hay.

To make valid certain municipal by-laws—Mr. Ross.

To remove doubts arising out of the revised statute respecting mortgages and sales of personal property—Mr. Meredith.

To extend the powers of joint stock companies for the erection of Exhibition buildings—Mr. Sinclair.

CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINERS.

Mr. MEREDITH asked whether any appointment of examiners, under section 31 of the "Ontario Public Service Act, 1878," has been made, and if not, what the cause of the delay is. (2) Whether any rules or regulations have been made under the provisions of the section referred to, and if not, what the cause of the delay is. (3) Whether any classification of the officers and clerks in the Public Service has been made under the provisions of section 20 of the same Act, and if not, what the cause of the delay is.

Mr. HARDY said there had not been any examiners appointed under section 3, for the reason that clerks were appointed, and therefore there was no immediate need for examiners. No rules or regulations had been made except as regards sessional clerks for the same reason. There was a classification of the officers under the provisions of the Act.

LOCATION OF THE PACIFIC RAILWAY.

Mr. BELL moved the following resolution:— "That in the opinion of this House it is expedient that the Government of Ontario take into consideration the question of the location of the Pacific Railway through this Province in relation to its effect on the prosperity of the southern portion of Ontario, and particularly on its towns and cities on Lake Ontario; and that if the Government consider that effect injurious, it take such steps as it may deem best for preventing the business of the country naturally pertaining to the frontier towns and cities from being drained off to Montreal and Portland." He regretted that this very important matter should not have fallen into more able hands. He alluded to the idea that Ontario with the boundary which the late award had given her was too large. He believed that in every way it would be better to increase the size of the existing Provinces. He was informed that if the award were sustained it would give Ontario a sea coast of 400 miles on James Bay. This would be an important thing for the Province, as it would create an industry which at present Ontario did not possess, namely, fisheries of all kinds. It was the popular impression that the territory surrounding Hudson's Bay was a frozen wilderness; but from good authority he had it that it was really a land capable of supporting an agricultural population. Mr. Bell read from several works supporting this view. These authorities showed that wheat and other cereals, vegetables, and luxuriant tree-growth were possible in a latitude further north than was generally supposed, thus throwing open a region compared with which the settled part of Ontario was very small indeed. From the St. Maurice to the Peace River these authorities showed a vast belt of country existed covered with valuable forests and capable of a high state of cultivation. Now, with these facts in view, he would ask their opinion whether it would not be better to throw the line of the proposed Pacific Railway back into this region rather than attempt to run it through the rocky country known as the Laurentian ridge, which would be an expensive undertaking and would not open up an acre of agricultural land for settlement. It might be said that it was now too late to alter the direction of the railway. But he would point out that it would be cheaper to let what had been done go than to build a railway through a region which would never be anything but a howling wilderness. In a military point of view the line he spoke of was also worthy of consideration. Let the matter be thoroughly discussed and ventilated, and they would perhaps be more inclined in the end to assent to his views. He had much pleasure in moving the resolution.

Mr. PARDEE quite agreed with his hon. friend as to the richness and importance of the country spoken of. He did not believe, however, that this House would attempt to make any change in the location of the road. It would be for the Ontario members of the Dominion Parliament to raise their voices against the location of a road chartered and built by that Government. It was not within the province of the Local Legislature to interfere in the matter, and as the member for West Toronto had had an opportunity of expressing his views, and of calling public attention to it, he hoped he would withdraw the motion.

Mr. BELL consented to withdraw his resolution.

PUBLIC SCHOOL INSPECTORS.

On the motion for the second reading of the Bill respecting County Public School Inspectors,

Mr. HAY explained the clauses of the Bill. He spoke of the important relations which Public School Inspectors bore to the public. The teachers were thoroughly under their power, so that it was quite possible for an inspector to influence these teachers politically. Therefore this Bill had in view the preventing of these inspectors from taking any active part in politics. He considered this a sound principle. He could instance many

cases to show the desirability of passing the clauses which enunciated this principle.

Mr. CROOKS had on a previous occasion stated that an inspector should be free from all political bias. On assuming the duties of his office he had found that in some cases inspectors had considered it meritorious that they should throw their influence one way or the other in political contests. He had framed his Bill so as to make it a legislative enactment that inspectors shall not meddle in politics. After the last election he had taken occasion to enquire into one or two cases which had been reported to him in which inspectors were alleged to have exceeded their duties, and he had had the subject under investigation. He agreed with the general principle of the proposed Bill, but thought it would require to be considerably modified. He would have no objection to allow the Bill to be read a second time, and when in Committee he would propose some amendments.

Mr. MEREDITH said that seeing that no election would take place before next session, perhaps it would be better to let the matter stand over for mature consideration. He saw that it would be most difficult to draw the line. If you allowed a man to vote could you prevent that man from asking his neighbour to vote. He would like to see the Bill withdrawn.

Mr. HAY would withdraw the Bill with great reluctance because he thought it would only aggravate the evil. In the South Riding of Perth, at the last election, the Inspector had taken the stump, and had referred to the Attorney-General and other prominent politicians as "sneaks" and "cowards."

Mr. CROOKS said the official in question had made ample apology, and pleaded as an excuse that he had been unjustly attacked by his opponents.

Mr. HAY said it was untrue that he had been attacked. In the September election he had made himself officious in putting the path to electors. In the North Riding the matter was scarcely better. He felt that if there was one public measure brought before the House of more importance than another it was the one in question, and he would therefore press the Bill to a second reading.

Mr. SINCLAIR thought that at this late day in the session it would be unwise to press the matter. But it was worthy of their most earnest consideration. It touched a system that he feared very much, that was, that public servants in Canada should enter the political arena as they did in the United States. He hoped that would be put down by every means in the power of the Legislature. Lately this odious system had showed itself in various ways. At Ottawa there was much to be feared that the thin end of the wedge was being introduced. The case of Mr. Small, he considered, was one in point. When they saw Mr. Dalton and Mr. Small come into this House and make a covert attack on their chief, the Attorney-General, it was time that a definite expression of opinion should be recorded on the question of the active participation of public servants in the political arena. With this expression of his views he would make no further allusion to the matter before the House.

Mr. DEROCHE concurred in the Bill and hoped it would become law. It was a well-known fact that the inspectors were able to exercise a great deal of power in the county for which they hold office. In his county during the last election he found that the Inspector for Frontenac, Dr. Agnew, was ahead of him through the back portions of the riding making a personal canvass for his opponent. On coming to the front part of the riding he found the inspector canvassing in company with his opponent. He thought it was too bad that the House should exercise itself in maintaining the salaries of these officials and find them busying themselves in political matters through the various ridings. He hoped the Bill would be pressed to a second reading.

Mr. FRASER thought the hon. gentleman who had proposed the Bill would allow the Minister of Education time to consider it. In the meantime there could be no objection to allowing the Bill to be read a second time.

Mr. HAY moved that the Bill be referred to a Special Committee. Carried.

RAILWAY AID.

Mr. PARDEE said that he did not intend to proceed with the motion, but before he asked the withdrawal of the motion to go into Committee on Railway Aid he desired to make a few remarks. The question of Government aid to railways was surrounded with difficulties, as hon. gentlemen in the House well knew. The policy of the Government hitherto in this respect had been a most liberal one. Under that policy undoubtedly the material resources of the country had been developed beyond what the most sanguine could have expected. But the question had arisen in the country and House whether they were to continue that policy in the future as it had been in the past, or whether they were to stay their hand in the belief that they had about as many railways, taking into consideration those built and under construction, together with such as are aided but not commenced, as the state of the country demanded. One way to answer the question was by considering whether they had as much railway accommodation according to their necessity as other countries. He recollected a gentleman speaking on this subject a few years ago, and in his remarks he said that we had more railway accommodation according to our traffic than any other country in the world. We had in 1879 no less than 3,528 miles of railway in Ontario, more than half the total railway mileage of the whole Dominion. That being the case it was not to be wondered at that the people of this country are considering whether it would be wise to go as rapidly in the future as we have gone in the past, so far as the construction of railways is concerned. The feeling of the country, so far as new railway schemes and projects was concerned at any rate, was undoubtedly conservative. It was felt that the moneys of the country, not only public, but also municipal moneys, could be expended to better advantage, except in exceptional cases where large tracts of country were without railway facilities. And in the latter case he did not mean that every man was entitled to have a railway within sight of his own door, but he used the term in a general sense where a railway was needed to open up any large portion of valuable territory. He frankly admitted that the Government did consider that there were certain railways to which it would be wise to grant aid during the present session. These railways had procured large municipal bonuses to enable