

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

FOURTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

The second session of the fourth Parliament of the Province of Ontario was opened this afternoon at three o'clock with the usual imposing ceremonies. His Honour Lieut.-Governor Robinson was escorted by a detachment of the Governor-General's Body Guard, and was, on his arrival in front of the Parliament Buildings, received by a guard of honour commanded by Captain Baker and composed of ten picked men from each company with the regimental band of the Queen's Own Rifles, his coming having first been announced by a salvo of artillery. On the floor of the Assembly chamber were collected a large number of prominent citizens, including the usual quota of ladies, while the galleries were filled with "strangers," who never seem to tire of witnessing the annual repetition of this time-honoured performance.

Amongst those present on the floor of the House were Mrs. and the Misses Robinson, Mrs. Howland, Mrs. Alexander Mackenzie, Miss Morris, Mrs. Maclellan, Mrs. Sheriff Jarvis, Mrs. Kenneth Mackenzie, Mrs. C. S. Patterson, Mrs. Thos. Hodgins, Mrs. A. J. Cattanaeh, Mrs. G. W. Allan, Mrs. Burton, Miss Crooks, Mrs. W. S. Lee, Mrs. John Strachan, Mrs. W. T. O'Reilly, Mrs. E. W. Spragge, Mrs. G. R. R. Cockburn, Mrs. A. S. Hardy, Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Sydere, Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Crerar, of Hamilton, Mrs. Gilbert, Mrs. Snelling, and Mrs. B. Homer Dixon. Chief Justices Hagarty and Wilson, Justices Burton, Cameron, Osler, Patterson, and Morrison, Chancellor Spragge, Vice Chancellor Proudfoot, Judges Mackenzie and Boyd; Mr. G. R. R. Cockburn, Principal of Upper Canada College; Dr. Wilson, President of University College; Principal Caven, of Knox College; B. Homer Dixon, Senator Allan, Sheriff Jarvis; Col. Walker, of London; Hon. John McMurrich; J. G. Scott, Q.C.; Archbishop Lynch, Vicar-General Rooney; T. Hodgins, Q.C.; Mr. Williams, ex-M.P.P.; Hon. Stephen Richards, Q.C.; ex-Mayor Morrison; William Robinson, ex-M.P.P.; Hon. R. M. Wells, Mr. Frank Draper; Mr. P. J. Brown, of Ingersoll; Aldermen McMurrich, Darling, Close, and Hallam.

His Honour, when the slight commotion caused by the entrance of himself and staff had subsided, read with due emphasis the following—

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

It affords me much pleasure, on this the first occasion since my appointment as Lieutenant-Governor, to meet the representatives of my native Province, and to welcome them to its capital in the discharge of their legislative duties.

I congratulate you on the revival of commercial prosperity, the result of the abundant harvest of the past year, of the revival of trade abroad, and of the increased demand for lumber, the receipts from which source, I am happy to say, have considerably exceeded the estimate of last session.

It is much to be regretted that the Dominion Government have taken no step to obtain, and show no intention of seeking to obtain, from the Parliament of Canada legislation confirming the award determining the northerly and westerly boundaries of Ontario, made two years ago by three most distinguished arbitrators chosen by the two Governments, and who had before them all the evidence obtainable from the most diligent researches both in America and Europe, or brought to light during the many discussions bearing on the subject that have taken place during the past century. The result of the inaction of the Dominion Government in this respect is to defer the settlement and organization of a large extent of country; to deprive the inhabitants of that district of those safeguards of peace and order which they, in common with all others, are entitled to enjoy; and to withhold from the people of Ontario the benefits which the possession of that territory would afford.

It is obvious that the earliest possible construction of railway communication between the existing railway system of Ontario and the Canadian Pacific road is of the very greatest importance to the interests of this Province. An appropriation having been made for this purpose by an Act of a former session of the Legislature, a measure will be submitted to you for carrying out the object of the Act with the least possible delay.

The Commissioners appointed to enquire into matters connected with the agricultural industry of Ontario have, by close and unremitting attention to the duties assigned to them, collected a large amount of information of a most interesting character and of much value. The evidence and report of the Commissioners will be laid before you in the course of the session. I trust that the publication of these documents will stimulate enterprise and encourage a spirit of improvement among the farmers of the Province, and at the same time produce a favourable impression elsewhere of the openings which Ontario affords to the capital and energy of the intelligent and experienced agriculturist. I am sure you will agree with me that the Province is under no small obligation to those gentlemen who, as Commissioners, placed their services, without any pecuniary recompense, at the disposal of the Government,

and will share the feeling of satisfaction with which I have observed in how cordial a spirit the proceedings of the Commissioners have been regarded by the public.

The subject of constructing the new Provincial buildings, required for the safe-keeping of the public records, the due performance of the ever increasing business of the Departments, and the proper accommodation of the Legislature, and of the Provincial Library, as well as the safety and health of the members and other persons engaged in the public service, has received the earnest attention of the Government. Competitive plans were invited, and sixteen different designs, by as many competitors, were submitted. None of these designs were entirely satisfactory; but three of those which were considered to have most nearly complied with the conditions of the competition were, under the terms of those conditions, secured for the Province; subsequently it was deemed advisable to permit the authors of the best of the three, and certain other competing architects, on whose plans experts had reported most favourably, to modify and alter their plans, with a view to a reconsideration of their merits by the Government when so altered. Time has not yet sufficed for this to be done; but I confidently anticipate that the result will be to secure the commencement in the coming spring, and the early completion, of buildings worthy of the Province, and at a cost not exceeding the amount already voted for that purpose by the Legislature.

The Reports of the several Departments of the Public Service will be laid before you. I am glad to find that the several Institutions under the management of the Government are in a state of satisfactory efficiency; and that others, to which Provincial aid is given, are respectively performing services to the community fully commensurate with the aid afforded them.

The report of the Minister of Education, as usual, possesses deep interest, showing, as it does, to what a high standard of excellence, as compared with other countries, the educational system of Ontario has attained; and I doubt not that you will agree with me, that no effort should be spared to maintain it in the fullest state of efficiency. While marked improvement may be observed in elementary education, the expense of that branch has been less in the last three years than previously. Gratifying progress, too, has been made in the department of higher education.

I commend the very important subject of the Administration of Justice to your continued and careful attention. Profiting by the example of Great Britain and other States, in which the anomaly of two systems of pleading and practice in the Civil Courts has been abolished, and by other reforms effected in their judicature, a Bill will again be laid before you for the purpose of consolidating the Superior Courts, establishing uniformity in pleading and practice, and making further provision for the due administration of justice.

Amongst the other measures to be submitted to you are, a Bill relating to railways, and making provision for the greater safety of railway employees and the public; a Bill for protecting the public interest in streams and rivers within the legislative authority of the Province; a Bill giving increased stability to Mutual Insurance Companies; and one dealing with the question of market fees, which have long been a source of complaint by the farmers of the Province.

In view of the many extensive and beneficial improvements in our laws effected since the Province obtained, thirteen years ago, control over its local affairs, and of the further legislation which will engage your attention during the present session, I commend to your serious consideration the question whether the time has not come when the public interests may be sufficiently protected, and at the same time a considerable saving of expense be effected, by confining future legislation to every alternate annual session, except in cases of special urgency.

The Public Accounts of Receipts and Expenditure for the past year and the Estimates of moneys required for the services of the current year, will be laid before you. The Estimates have been prepared with every regard for economy consistent with the public interest.

I trust that the labours of the session now commencing may, when brought to a close, reflect fresh honour on the wisdom and patriotism of our legislators, and prove permanently beneficial to all classes of our people.

On the conclusion of the reading of the Speech His Honour bowed and retired, and after a brief interval, devoted to conversation and mutual recognition amongst members and their friends, the "strangers" were requested to withdraw, and

The Speaker took the chair.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL introduced a Bill for the due administration of oaths to Justices of the Peace, which was read a first time.

STANDING COMMITTEES.

Mr. MOWAT gave notice of a motion to appoint a committee to strike the Standing Committee of the House.

THE LIBRARY.

The SPEAKER presented the Librarian's report, which was laid on the table.

Mr. MOWAT moved the adjournment of the House.

The House adjourned at four o'clock till to-day at three o'clock, when the Speech from the Throne will be taken into consideration.