

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

FOURTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

TORONTO, Jan. 14.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:—

Mr. Morris—The petition of A. G. Hodge and others of Toronto, praying for certain amendments to the Municipal Act respecting the hours of closing.

Mr. Bell—A petition of Thomas R. Gibson and others, of Toronto, to the same effect.

Mr. Parkhill—A petition of R. Bingham and others, of Bradford, to the same effect.

Mr. Springer—The petition of the Waterloo County Mutual Fire Insurance Company, praying that an Act may pass to enable them to raise a share or stock capital.

Mr. Near—The petition of the Town Council of Clifton, praying that an Act may pass to change the name of the town to that of "Niagara Falls."

Mr. Patterson—The petition of Daniel Reaman and others, of York, praying for certain amendments to the Municipal Act respecting the market tax on farm produce.

Also by Mr. Widdifield—The petition of the Township Council of Whitchurch; Mr. Deroche, of the township of Kaladas; Mr. Near, of the township of Bertie; Mr. Deroche, of the Township Council of Richmond; Mr. Ross, of the Township Council of Goderich; Mr. Tooley, of the Township Council of London; Mr. Baxter, of the Township Council of Seneca; Mr. Parkhill, of the Township Council of Innisfil; Mr. Ross, of the Township Council of W. Wawanosh; Mr. Near, of the Township Council of Humberstone; Mr. Near, of the Township Council of Stamford; Mr. Ross, of the Township Council of Hullett; Mr. Near, of the Township Council of Willoughby; Mr. Deroche, of the Township Council of Portland; Mr. Cook, of the Township Council of Orillia.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS.

The Provincial Secretary brought down the report of the Commission of Public Works for the past year.

THE ADDRESS.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton) rose to move the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. In doing so he asked that indulgence from the House which was usually extended to persons occupying the rather difficult position he was then in, especially as he had not previously attempted to address the House at any length. He felt that they all joined heartily in congratulating the Lieut.-Governor on his appointment to the high office he now occupied, and as having added one more to the list of distinguished positions at various times filled by members of his family. His long Parliamentary experience eminently qualified him for the discharge of those important administrative functions which, as the representative of the Crown, he would be called upon to perform, and while they sincerely trusted that his term of office in the gubernatorial chair might prove an agreeable and pleasant epoch in the lives of himself and his family, they might safely predict that following in the footsteps of his predecessors he would prove to be an eminently constitutional Governor. He spoke of the reference in the Speech to the continued evidences of the revival of prosperity in the Province, and said that after the period of depression which had existed they must all witness with satisfaction and gratitude those symptoms of returning prosperity. Farmers had again been blessed with good crops, and received a good price for their produce, and they would now be gradually enabled to relieve themselves of the pecuniary embarrassments under which many of them laboured. No better indication could be furnished of the passing away of the depression than in the fact that there has been an increased activity in the lumber trade, and that the estimated receipts from the timber dues have been greatly exceeded. He referred to the shipping interests and said that floating property was now in such a position as to approach something near to its former value. He did not know that they could attribute this prosperity to any particular cause. There were those he knew who ascribed every blessing they enjoyed to one particular source, the National Policy, (Hear, hear, from the Opposition). At the same time he had no hesitation in saying that those evidences of returning prosperity, to which he had specially referred, were in no sense attributable to any trade policy. (Hear, hear.)

An Hon. Member—Rather in spite of it.

He next referred to the Ontario Boundary Award, and said that all doubt of the attitude of the Dominion Government on that question was now dissolved, and they knew that that Government stood in antagonism to the best interests of this Province. The award had been unanimous, and based on a full and complete knowledge of the facts, and acceptable to both the arbitrators of Ontario and of the Dominion, and he could not understand why it was not confirmed by the Dominion Government as it was by the Ontario Government. Probably one of the most important measures to be submitted for the consideration of the House would be the Judicature Bill, providing for the consolidation of the several courts of law and equity, and the establishment of a uniform system of practice and pleading. Last year this Bill had been carried to its second reading, but in deference to the legal fraternity, who had represented that the time for its consideration was too short, it had been held over. It would now be again submitted, as improved, and he had no doubt but that it would become law. The present system created in many and various ways obstacles and difficulties in the due administration of justice and the anomaly of justice in one Court not being justice in another, and what might be considered one man's property in one Court counted as the property of some one else in another Court would, he trusted, soon be a thing of the past. He pointed out that the Administration of Justice Act of 1873 had in a great measure prepared the way for the one now proposed, and consequently the difficulties experienced upon the introduction of a similar Bill in England would not be felt. In England also they laboured under the disadvantage of an insufficient number of judges

and the unsatisfactory constitution of their Courts of Appeal. (Hear, hear.) The hon. leader of the Opposition had signified his approval of the principle contained in the Bill, and this was much, as they all admitted his ability as a lawyer, however much they deplored his political mistakes. (Laughter.) He went on to say that the hon. the Attorney-General was achieving a lasting reputation as the greatest law reformer the country had ever seen. (Applause.) His honourable friends had objected to his coming down from the bench, but his descent had been of greater benefit to the country than any Judge could possibly have been. He made a passing reference to the subsidy already voted to the proposed railway to connect with the Canadian Pacific, and said that considerable interest was attached to the matter of a connection between existing lines of railway in Ontario with a Canadian Pacific Railway, whatever sort of line was eventually constructed. He alluded to the Agricultural Commission