

# ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

## FOURTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

Wednesday, Feb. 16.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

### PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:—

By Mr. Creighton—Of Dennis Allen *et al.*, also of John Taylor *et al.*, severally praying that the Bill before the House respecting the Toronto Gravel Road and Concrete Company may not pass.

Mr. Rosevear—Of the Town Council of Port Hope, praying for amendments to the Municipal Act respecting the right to charge a fee for admittance to public parks.

Mr. Creighton—Of Adam Ainslie *et al.*, of Sydenham, praying for amendments to the Municipal Act respecting the general system.

Mr. Ross—Of the Township Council of West Wawanosh—To amend the Assessment Act.

Mr. Creighton—Of Town Council of Meaford to same effect.

By Mr. Hay—The petition of the Town Council of Stratford praying that the Bill before the House respecting the amalgamation of the Port Dover and Lake Huron, the Stratford and Huron, and the Georgian Bay and Wellington Railway Companies as the Grand Trunk, Manitoulin, Georgian Bay, and Lake Erie Railway Company may not pass.

By Mr. Lyon—The petition of the Saulte Ste. Marie Railway Company praying for an Act to amend their Act of Incorporations.

### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. FRASER presented the tenth report of the Private Bills Committee.

Mr. HARDY presented a report relative to the classification of clerks.

### PRIVATE BILLS.

The Bill relative to London East was amended in Committee, read a third time, and passed.

### DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTS.

Mr. CREIGHTON moved "That, in the opinion of this House, it would be in the public interest to have the Public Accounts and Departmental Reports printed as soon as possible after the expiration of the years to which they respectively relate, and to have the same circulated immediately upon being printed, whether the House shall be in session at such time or not." This question had been frequently brought under the notice of the House, and had always been voted down. But the arguments that had heretofore been used against it could not be used now. Last August, when they were at their homes, they had received a report. And more than that, this report was sent out with a lie on the face of it. He did not object to the report being sent out, but he wanted to show that the argument of unconstitutionality had been done away with by hon. Ministers themselves. Some of the reports were brought down in time, but others were very late, notably the Educational Report, which was usually about two years behind time. He hoped that hereafter they would adopt a more sensible rule, and send out the reports as soon as they were ready, whether the House was in session or not.

Mr. FRASER thought it a pity that his hon. friend was so much out of temper, and that he had made a motion so much out of season. It was his hobby, however, to make that motion annually. The sending out of a report in August was not inconsistent with the position taken by the Government in 1878. The position they took then they took now—that it was a well understood constitutional rule that reports should be submitted to the House before being sent abroad. The report referred to by his hon. friend as being distributed out of session was a report, not addressed to the Lieut.-Governor, but to the Treasurer, and therefore was a report which could properly be sent out to the country before being submitted to the House. There was no reason why they should break the well-known constitutional rule in the matter. The leader at Ottawa of hon. gentlemen opposite had not made a word public of a most important bargain, involving many millions of dollars, before Parliament met, although such an exceptional matter as that might well have been made public before the assembling of Parliament. The report of the Minister of Education was not two years old when brought down as alleged, but one year only. That was unavoidable, however.

Mr. CROOKS said that circumstances prevented the issuing of the Education Report before some months after the expiry of the previous year. There were many difficulties in the way of bringing down that report sooner.

Mr. MEREDITH said he objected to the tone used by the hon. gentleman on the opposite side of the House in this discussion. He recognized the high ability of the Minister of Public Works, but if there was one thing in which he made a mistake, it was in the tone which he usually used in addressing the House. Mr. Fraser had made out no case whatever against the motion. He did not say that the Minister of Education was to blame, because the House did not get the Educational Report at an earlier season, but if the report could not be got ready earlier than July of each year, he did not see why it should not be distributed to members as soon as it was ready. There need be no violation of constitutional rule, and he thought that the House should support the motion.

Mr. MILLER sympathized with the object of the resolution. It was, he said, a great difference between the practice in England of submitting the Parliamentary reports there, because of the great political importance attached to some of the British reports. It was impossible for members, hard at work from morning till night in session, to find time to digest the reports of the Departments. He would like to have them in summer when he might find some spare moments to read them up. He hoped the Government would reconsider their decision in the matter.

Mr. SINCLAIR said he believed that instead of blame the Government deserved praise for their promptness in bringing down reports, and he could not see the utility of breaking through the customary rules of the House. In this case there was no grievance whatever. The reports were all brought down during the session, except the report of the Minister of Education; and the Minister of Education had given good reasons for not bringing his report earlier. He would move in amendment that as the reports were now brought down at as early a date as possible, there was no necessity for departing from the constitutional rule.

Mr. LAUDER could not see why these tables should not be submitted to the House sooner. They knew that the Education Department required time to prepare it, but it did not require a whole year. To say that the distribution of these statistics was a violation of any constitutional rule was, in his opinion, simply ridiculous. If any statute prevented this desirable course from being pursued it should be changed, and the reports given to the country immediately they were ready.

Mr. CREIGHTON said that in speaking on his motion he had not intended to speak in a personal manner, but merely to show that the arguments once used against the motion could not be used now. He did not think it was a party matter at all, and he thought it would be wrong for the Government to vote down his motion, as he believed it would be in the best interest of the country to have the reports distributed at as early a date as possible.

The House divided on the amendment, which was carried on the following division:—

YEAS.—Messrs. Appleby, Awrey, Ballantyne, Baxter, Bishop, Blezard, Caldwell, Cascaden, Chisholm, Cook, Crooks, Deroche, Dryden, Ferris, Field, Fraser, Freeman, Gibson (Hamilton), Gibson (Huron), Graham, Harcourt, Hardy, Hawley, Hay, Hunter, Laidlaw, Livingstone, Lyon, McCraney, McKim, McLaughlin, Mowat, Murray, Nairn, Neelon, Pardee, Patterson, Paxton, Peck, Robinson (Cardwell), Robinson (Kent), Robertson (Halton), Ross, Sinclair, Springer, Striker, Waters, Wood—48.

NAYS.—Messrs. Baker, Bell, Boulter, Broder, Calvin, Creighton, French, Jelly, Kerr, Lauder, Lees, Long, McMahon, McMaster, Mack, Meredith, Merrick, Metcalfe, Miller, Monk, Morgan, Near, Richardson, Rosevear, Tooley, White, Wigle—27.

Mr. Baskerville paired with Mr. Bonfield.

### RAILWAY AID.

Mr. MILLER moved for a return showing:—  
(1) The total amount of scrip issued for this Province under authority of the "Railway Aid Act," the "Railway Subsidy Fund," or any other Act or Order granting aid to railways out of the funds of the Province. (2) The amount redeemed and the amount outstanding on the 1st day of January, 1881. (3) The names of the railways to which scrip has been issued, and the amount granted to each road, especially showing the amounts redeemed and the amounts outstanding. (4) The present value of scrip due each road at the date above-named, calculating the payments as capitalized at 5 per cent. Carried.

### THE AGRICULTURAL AND ARTS ASSOCIATION.

Mr. GRAHAM moved that, in the opinion of this House, after the expiration of the current year, it will not be in the interest of the public to continue the annual grant of \$10,000 to the Agricultural Association of Ontario. He said it might seem strange that a practical farmer like himself should move for the abolition of a grant ostensibly used for the benefit of farmers. He contended, however, that it did