

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

FOURTH PARLIAMENT—THIRD SESSION.

Thursday, Jan. 12.

The third session of the fourth Parliament of Ontario was opened yesterday at three o'clock by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor with the usual ceremonies. At three o'clock the interior of the House was completely filled with a brilliant gathering of ladies and gentlemen awaiting the advent of the representative of Royalty.

Among those present were the following named:—Senator McMaster, Senator Alexander, Archbishop Lynch, Bishop Mahoney, Chancellor McCann, Vicar-General Rooney, Vicar-General Laurent, Father Bergin, Bishop Sweatman and Mrs. Sweatman, Revs. D. J. Macdonnell, John Potts, E. A. Telfer, J. Moore, Provost Body and Mrs. Body, Mr. Homer Dixon, Consul-General of the Netherlands, and Mrs. Dixon, Mr. J. Saurin McMurray, Vice-Consul for Norway and Sweden, Mr. J. A. Simmers, Consul for Germany, Chief Justice Hagarty, Judges Patterson, Barton, Morrison, Mayor McMurrich, Sheriff Jarvis and Mrs. Jarvis, Hon. John McMurrich and Mrs. McMurrich, Mr. James Beaty, Jr., M.P., and Miss Beaty, Thomas Hodgins, Q.C., and Mrs. Hodgins, Ald. Hallam, Mr. W. B. Hamilton and Miss Hamilton, Commander Cheyne, R.N., Prof. Duncan, Miss Williamson, Mrs. Edward Fisher, Mrs. Sydere, Miss Daly, Mrs. Williams, Miss T. Bright, Miss Honor Grant, Mrs. Robinson and Misses Robinson, Mrs. and Miss Mowat, Mrs. Hardy, Mrs. Alexander Mackenzie, Mrs. Gzowski, Mrs. Saelling, Miss Skea, Mrs. Williams, New York; Miss Cox, Chicago; Mrs. James Bethune and Miss Bethune, Miss Ferris, Miss Hooper, Picton; Mrs. Charlotte Morrison, Miss Mackenzie, Picton; Miss Ros, Goderich; Mrs. Grantham, Mrs. Charles Thompson, Mrs. Walter E. Murray, Aylmer, Ont.; Mrs. Wm. Arthurs, Mrs. Algar, Mrs. and Miss Burton, Mrs. John Boyd, Mrs. Robert Bell, Mrs. Cattanaach, Misses Capreol, Mrs. G. D. Dawson, Mrs. G. T. Denison, Mrs. Dury, Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. Edward Fitzgerald, Mrs. R. A. Harrison, Mrs. J. G. Hodgins, Miss Emily Morrison, Mr. and Mrs. A. McNabb and Miss McNabb, Mrs. Beverley Robinson, Mrs. W. B. Scarth, Mrs. E. Wragge, Mrs. Gibson of Hamilton, Mrs. Herron, Miss Jessie Marshall, Mrs. C. F. Randall, Mr. P. R. Randall, Port Hope.

Shortly after three o'clock His Honour's approach was signalled by the firing of a salute by a detachment of the Toronto Field Battery, commanded by Lieutenant Mead. His Honour was escorted by "A" troop of the Governor-General's Body Guard under the command of Major Denison, attended by a staff of officers. He was received at the entrance to the House by a guard of honour composed of one company from the 10th Royal Grenadiers, commanded by Capt. Boomer and Lieutenants Reid and Percival. He entered the House, accompanied by Captain Geddes, A.D.C., Col. Gzowski, A.D.C., R. B. Denison, Deputy Adjutant-General, Lt.-Col. G. T. Denison, Lt.-Col. Algar, and Adjutant Manley.

THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

His Honour, having taken his seat, delivered the following speech:—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

It is with much pleasure that I once more bid you welcome to the metropolis of the Province, and that I congratulate you upon the encouraging circumstances under which you assemble for the performance of the responsible duties of which, as the representatives of the people, you have been put in charge. The public revenue for the year has considerably exceeded the amount estimated: the year has been one of general prosperity, the result of the late abundant harvest, the general revival of trade in other countries, and the consequent demand for the products of our fields, forests, and mines; and the recent census has shown that the population of the Province has in the last decade increased by nearly 300,000, and amounts now to nearly two millions, notwithstanding the number of our people who, from various causes, have during several years past left the Province.

I regret that since your last session no progress has been made towards a recognition of the right of the Province to that extensive portion of its territory our title to which, notwithstanding the award of the distinguished arbitrators appointed by the two Governments, the Federal authorities have continued to dispute. The grave practical evils resulting from the dispute have, since your last met, been greatly increased by an Act of the Federal Parliament transferring to the Province of Manitoba, so far as relates to Provincial jurisdiction, the claim of the Dominion to the most valuable part of the disputed territory, including our organized municipalities south and east of the Height of Land. While the Bill was before the House of Commons I addressed to the Federal

Government a despatch protesting, on the part of Ontario, against this part of the intended Act. A copy of my despatch, with other papers relating to the territory, will be laid before you.

I regret that I have to refer also to the disallowance of the Act of last session for protecting the public interests in rivers, streams, and creeks. The competency of the Legislature to pass the Act was not questioned, and the Act was disallowed mainly upon the ground that the Minister of Justice did not approve of the mode or extent of the compensation which the Act gave to owners of property affected by the Act. The correspondence on the subject will be laid before you. The object of the Act is of such importance as well to those engaged in the lumber trade as to the Province in general, and the duty of asserting the right of the Legislature to deal according to its own judgment with all matters within Provincial jurisdiction is so urgent, that a Bill for the same purpose as the disallowed Act will without delay be submitted for your renewed consideration.

I congratulate you that recent decisions of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council have set at rest all question as to the right of the Provincial Legislature to legislate as our interests may from time to time require, on matters of internal trade, and in particular on the law of insurance. Some further provisions seem now necessary in order to render effectual the legislation which had for its object the securing of uniform conditions in fire policies; and I invite your attention to the subject.

I regret that the right of the Provinces to property escheated for want of heirs—unanimously maintained by the highest courts in Ontario and Quebec, and acquiesced in by the Federal Government for several years, has—on a recent appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada by that Government in the name of the defendants in a well-known case, been negatived by a majority of the Judges of the Court. The case in litigation is but one of several cases of the same kind which have occurred since Confederation; and the constitutional question involved is so important, and some of the grounds on which the decision proceeds are of such far-reaching application, that I have lost no time in taking the necessary steps for obtaining a review of the judgment by Her Majesty's Privy Council. There is strong reason for expecting a favourable result.

I congratulate you on the general favour with which the Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the agricultural resources and requirements of the Province has been received by all classes interested in agriculture. I have anxiously considered what further means may be employed to aid this great industry, and to promote the welfare of the population engaged in it. During recent years in Great Britain and other European countries, and also in the United States of America, and in the Australian Colonies of Great Britain, great advantage has been found from the collection of reliable crop reports and other agricultural statistics. A measure to secure like advantage to this Province will be submitted for your consideration.

I have also to recommend to your consideration such changes in the law respecting the Agricultural and Arts Association as may increase the usefulness of that organization, and bring its operations into harmony with the present needs and circumstances of the country.

A Bill respecting Market Fees will again be submitted for your consideration.

Other measures which will probably be laid before you, and to which I invite your attention, are a Bill for Amending and Consolidating the Laws respecting Line Fences, Ditches, and Water Courses; a Bill to provide by a general law for the erection of water-works in cities, towns, and villages; a Bill providing for the crossing of railway tracks by streets and roads; a Bill for the Inspection of Boilers, with a view to affording some additional security against explosions; a Bill to make provisions for maintaining and promoting the Public Health; a Bill for further simplifying the laws concerning Real Property and Conveyancing; a Bill to remove some defects in the Law of Evidence; a Bill to place on a more satisfactory footing the Law of Libel in certain cases; and a Bill to facilitate the establishment of Free Libraries.

It having become necessary in the interests of settlement and revenue to place under timber license a few townships lying to the south of French River and Lake Nipissing, in the Parry Sound and Nipissing districts, the activity of the timber trade last year afforded a favourable opportunity of selling at public auction the right to cut the pine timber in these townships, covering the limited area of 1,321 square miles; and it is gratifying to know that the result was most satisfactory, the sale having (among other advantages) increased the available means of the Province by nearly three-quarters of a million of dollars, besides adding to the revenue the annual rent to which the purchasers are liable, and the dues on the timber which they may cut.

In consequence of circumstances not within the control of either Government, the accounts between the Province and the Dominion are still unsettled; and the money coming from the Common School Fund for local improvements in the counties in which the lands that produced the Fund are situate has not yet been received by the Province. In view of the prolonged delay, I recommend the payment of the principal (about \$125,000) to the counties interested, out of the Consolidated Revenue of the Province, in anticipation of the receipt of the money from the Dominion.

The subject of constructing new Provincial buildings adequate to the growing requirements of the Province and the necessities of the public service has continued to receive my attention during the past year. Much more time than had been expected was consumed in procuring necessary modifications to be made in the plans received previously to your last session, and in the preparation of the specifications. This preliminary work has now been completed; tenders have been called for; and the result will be communicated to you.

The Public Accounts, showing the receipts and expenditure of 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 cannot allow the present opportunity to pass without expressing in my own name, and in that of the people of this Province, the grief and indignation which, in common with the whole civilized world, we felt at the shocking and unprovoked