

A QUESTION OF RELIGION.

Mr. MERRICK asked the Provincial Secretary when a return showing the religion of the civil servants and other matters ordered last session would be brought down. The Government had had ample time to prepare the return, but they had made no explanation why it had not been brought down.

Mr. HARDY said the return involved a number of enquiries. A portion of the return was in the hands of the writers and other portions were yet to be made out. There was a difficulty in finding out the religion of some of the clerks. That was the reason for the delay.

Mr. MERRICK said that was not a reasonable excuse. When the motion was carried it was with the consent of the Government. The Government ought to carry out the order of the House.

Mr. FRASER said there was nothing unreasonable in the excuse offered, as there was a difficulty in finding out from clerks their religion. Some of them, he supposed, did not know what religion they belonged to, or whether or not they had any religion. (Laughter.)

Mr. MEREDITH—If the clerks no not answer then the heads of the departments should dismiss them.

Mr. FRASER—Perhaps the heads of the departments do not know how they themselves stand. (Loud laughter.) If members of that House were asked just what they believed in and what they did not, they might find it hard to answer.

Mr. LAUDER—Speak for your own side of the House.

Mr. FRASER—I am speaking of both sides. I have no doubt but that the member for East Grey (Mr. Lauder) could establish his faith, but in some of the churches you have to establish yourself in a particular form, and there are sometimes obstacles in the way of a man knowing just where he belongs and how much he does belong if he belongs at all. (Loud laughter.) However, if the difficulties are not insurmountable as far as this question can be determined, the return will show. It will be brought down this session.

Mr. MEREDITH did not believe the matter should be treated with the levity with which the Government had treated it. The same return was given in every decennial census, and there was no difficulty in getting the religion of the people. If it was not a proper return the Government should ask the House to rescind the order, but so long as the order remained it was not treating the House as it ought to be treated to neglect bringing down the return.

Mr. MOWAT said there was a difficulty which had prolonged the time which it would ordinarily have consumed in making up the return. The return would be brought down before the end of the session.

THE NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

Mr. MEREDITH asked the Commissioner of Public Works when the result of the tenders for the erection of the Parliament Buildings would be made known to the House.

Mr. FRASER said he did not know the result himself. None of the tenders had been yet opened. It was possible they would be opened to-morrow, but he could not say anything very definite about them yet. It would depend upon circumstances how far the result could be communicated to the House.

Mr. MEREDITH asked if it was the intention to put the House in possession of them before prorogation.

Mr. FRASER said if any decision was arrived at it would be made known.

EARLY ADJOURNMENTS.

The adjournment of the House having been moved.

Mr. CREIGHTON protested against the practice of adjourning the House at six o'clock. He did not know why the House could not sit oftener after six o'clock than was the custom.

Mr. MOWAT said the adjournment was moved because it was thought to be the general wish. If the leader of the Opposition wished it they would go on with the estimates.

Mr. PARDEE said it was the expressed wish of the leader of the Opposition that they should not go on with the estimates without the Public Accounts. It was hardly fair now for a supporter of the hon. gentleman to try and throw the responsibility upon the Government. The Public Accounts had been on the table only two hours, but if the leader of the Opposition thought that he had them in hand long enough they would go on.

Mr. MEREDITH said if it was the desire of members on both sides of the House to proceed he would go on.

Mr. HARDY reminded the House that a number of members had gone home, believing that there would be no session that night.

Mr. FRASER said that was not a Government day, and members had no right to complain if they allowed their notices on the paper to stand without proceeding with them. He was strongly in favour of short sessions so far as that was concerned. Members had done a good day's work that day. A great deal of important business had been quietly transacted this session, and he

thought the work done would compare very favourably with the work done during the same time in any previous session while he had sat in the House, at which there were later sittings and more debate.

The matter then dropped.

DITCHES AND WATERCOURSES.

Mr. MEREDITH asked the Treasurer when the Bill respecting ditches and watercourses would be brought down.

Mr. WOOD replied that it would be brought down on Monday or Tuesday.

The House then adjourned.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

Mr. Meredith—On Tuesday next—Order of the House for a return showing in detail the amounts expended for repairs upon the Provincial, Legislative, and Departmental buildings in each of the years from 1867 to 1881 (both inclusive), distinguishing the amounts expended on the separate parts of such buildings.

Also—On Tuesday next—Order of the House for a return showing the quantity of coal purchased by or on account of the Province in each year from 1874 to 1881 (both inclusive), the institutions for which purchased, the date of purchase, and the price per ton paid, giving the information in each case in detail as to hard and soft coal.

Mr. Long—On Tuesday next—Order of the House for a return for all correspondence between the Government and Mr. Creswick, Provincial Land Surveyor, relating to the new survey ordered to be made by the Government in the township of Sunnidale.