

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE

Fifth Parliament—Second Session.

(By Our Own Reporters.)

Thursday, Feb. 12.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

FIRST READINGS.

Mr. DILL—Bill to incorporate the Parry Sound Colonization Railway Company.

Mr. McLaughlin—Bill to amend the Consolidated Municipal Institutions Act.

Mr. O'Connor—Bill to amend the Municipal Act of 1883.

Hon. G. W. ROSS—Bill to consolidate and amend the Separate School Act. Mr. Ross explained that one clause provided that it shall be lawful for the Separate School Board to appoint a ratepayer—not one of themselves—a member of the High School Board, such member to take no part in any matter affecting the Public Schools. He also said he intended to amend the High School Act in conformity with this provision.

Mr. MERDITH—How many will that add to the High School Board?

Hon. G. W. ROSS—One.

Mr. MERDITH—One out of how many?

Hon. G. W. ROSS—The Boards consist of six members. This will add another.

Mr. Ferris—Bill respecting the debt of Napanee.

Mr. Dryden—Bill to amend the Act incorporating the Toronto Baptist College.

Mr. Creighton—Bill to amend the Assessment Act.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Hon. A. S. HARDY presented the Public Accounts for the past year.

THE ESTIMATES.

Hon. O. MOWAT presented a Message from the Lieutenant-Governor, which was read by the Speaker. It informed the House that His Honour had transmitted the Estimates for 1885, and recommended these to the consideration of the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. A. M. ROSS moved that the Estimates be referred to the Committee of Supply. Carried.

THE BUDGET SPEECH.

Hon. A. M. ROSS—Mr. Speaker, in consequence of delay in the printing it has been found that the Public Accounts were not ready to lay upon the table so soon as I expected they would be. I expected that I would have been able to lay them before the House yesterday. Not being able to do that I can understand that there is some reason for the ground taken by the leader of the Opposition yesterday. I consent to the proposal that the Budget Speech be delivered to-morrow, but it must be understood that it shall be delivered then, although it is not a Government day.

Mr. MERDITH—I suppose the Public Accounts will be distributed before to-morrow.

Hon. A. M. ROSS—They will be distributed immediately.

Hon. F. FRASER—Of course it will be understood that the Speech is to be delivered to-morrow.

Mr. MERDITH—Oh, certainly.

THE GAME LAWS.

Hon. O. MOWAT, in reply to Mr. Gibson (Hamilton), said the Government had not contemplated introducing any legislation this session amending the game laws, but in view of the petitions presented the matter would receive consideration.

TOWNSHIP EXEMPTIONS.

Hon. O. MOWAT, in reply to Mr. French's question, whether in view of the Committee appointed on 14th March last to take evidence and report as to the expediency of exempting division lines in townships from the effect of the recent statutes of limitations, and to report thereon, by bill or otherwise, having failed to act on report, the Government propose this session to introduce any legislation on the subject, said circulars had been sent out by that Committee, and a large number of answers had been received. Instructions had been given to compile them, and as soon as this was done the matter would be considered and the House informed of what course would be taken.

CANADIAN HISTORY.

Mr. BADGEROW moved for a return showing the text books authorized by the Education Department in geography, grammar, and English history, and now used in the Public Schools of this Province. He thought there was some misapprehension as to the text books in use, and he suggested that the return would be a valuable one.

Mr. HARCOURT explained the reasons which influenced him in alluding to the text books in Canadian history. He did not consider that the little epitomes or summaries in use in Ontario schools were without considerable merit, but what he did object to was simply that they were epitomes, giving bare dry details in the shape of an index, and utterly useless in the Ontario Public Schools, and of little use in the High Schools. There was considerable difference of opinion in the minds of eminent teachers as to when the subject of history should be begun to be taught, and no less authority than Professor Bain, of Edinburgh, says it is not a fitting subject for Common Schools at all, and gives reasons why instruction in it should be postponed. He would like

TO HAVE A WORTHY BOOK,

such as could be read by a boy or girl with pleasure, and he contended that to place such a book as the one authorised in the hands of a boy or girl would have the effect of giving such a child a marked disinclination for the study of history altogether. The book of Mr. Jeffers was one for the teacher to use, and he explained this in order to avoid doing Mr. Jeffers the injustice of criticising it from any other standpoint. In using it the teacher was supposed to be capable of enlarging upon the facts the book contains, and this brought him to the subject that there was no book suitable for the teacher to use to prepare himself for the book of amplification. He referred to Collier's little epitome of English history, and thought that no one would say that there was such a book on Canadian history. What they wanted was a volume of Canadian history of such a size that would give in narrative form, something more than a mere index, or dictionary of facts, and a book that would cause a child to read it for its own sake.

Hon. G. W. ROSS—I have no objection at all that the motion should pass in the form in which it is presented, and I am glad indeed, to have the attention of the House, and through it the attention of the country, called to these questions both of English and Canadian history. The object of the book referred to by the member for Monck, is to present to the teachers more than to the pupil, the leading facts in Canadian history, and in the preface the use to be made of it by the teacher is pointed out. The idea of the book is simply to present in consecutive order, the leading facts of Canadian history, trusting to the teacher to give the details; indeed it is supposed that at the back of this book there is a live teacher, who has read Canadian history extensively, and is able to supplement this book with

THE INTERESTING NARRATIVE.

While we may not have any one book filling to the full all the requirement of the teacher in his Canadian history studies, and presenting such views of Canadian history as do Freeman's and Macaulay's of the periods they cover, yet we have several historical works of considerable merit. There is Garnot's history of the French period in Canada, Rogers' history of the War of 1812. This latter is a book of three or four hundred pages, it is true, but it presents in an interesting way the circumstances connected with that period. Then we have McLellan's history of Canada, which is a very valuable book, though his treatment of certain circumstances was such as would strike a young Liberal as being from a Conservative standpoint. Then to the teacher desirous of studying the Rebellion of 1837, there is Lindsey's biography of William Lyon Mackenzie, and there is also Withrow's history of Canada. This latter is a summary in a more readable style. Watson's Constitutional History of Canada is, as far as it goes, a valuable history of Colonial government, and I am reminded that we have Dent's "Forty Years of Canada." In these we have abundance of material for the teacher. Of course it is rather expensive, yet we expect our teachers to be well-informed, not only on the text-books themselves but on

ALL THE FACTS AND DETAILS

suggested by them. Creighton's epoch primer presents in consecutive order the main facts of English history, and the teachers of Ontario are trained in the Model Schools how to teach history, and as I have said the text-book presupposes a live, well-informed, intelligent man behind it. Jeffers' book, with the addition of five or six pages has been extended to 1834 and gives some idea of constitutional history, telling how all we governed by the Dominion, Provincial, and municipal institutions. There are objections to the alleged frequent changes in the text-books, but except in our Readers, I propose no immediate change. I hope this House and the country will always be liberal enough to support a Minister who is prepared to keep up with the educational wants of the times. A book after long employment becomes stale and practically worthless, and I now find complaints that the grammars in use, of which we have seven, are not adapted to teaching that subject in a modern style. We have nine geographies, and yet we find that our geographies in Canada are becom-

ing very stale, when compared with the latest issued in the United States and England. It is of the utmost importance that the live teacher should have the very best book in his hands, and that the thinking scholar should be brought into contact with the product of the ripest minds. It has been charged that we have authorized books in advance of their preparation; I simply intend in the future, as in the past, to announce that a book will be authorized at a certain date, and give eighteen months for dealers to get rid of their stocks, and teachers to prepare for them. I want to say that this (Jeffers) is the only book authorized or intended to be authorized in Canadian history, and I hope to have a better English primer than any now authorized.

The motion was carried.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

Hon. C. F. FRASER explained, in reply to Mr. Meredith, that public business was as much advanced as usual at this stage of the session. The time which had been spent was far from being wasted, there were the bills to be introduced in their first stages, to comply with standing orders, and everything had been done which was safe to be done in a single chamber. In a single chamber it was not safe to be galloping at first.

Mr. MERDITH—The trouble is that you walk now and gallop at the end.

Hon. C. F. FRASER—That is the true way, go slowly at first, then trot, and gallop when you are sure of the ground, and not break your neck by galloping when you should go slowly.

The House adjourned at 4 o'clock.