

Fifth Parliament—Second Session.

(By Our Own Reporters.)

Wednesday, Feb. 25.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. Gibson (Hamilton) presented the fifth report of the Committee on Standing Bills.

FIRST READINGS.

Mr. Gillies—To amend the Consolidated Municipal Act of 1883.

Mr. Gillies—To regulate the sale of horses and cows and for other purposes.

Hon. O. Mowat—To further improve the administration of the law.

SEED WHEAT.

Hon. A. M. ROSS, in answer to Mr. Chisholm, said correspondence had been had with several parties as to the importation of spring wheat, and the Professor of Agriculture was instructed to make enquiries. The result of all this had not been very promising, and this year a re-vote has not been asked of the amount which was appropriated at a previous session.

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton) moved:—That in the opinion of this House the present Parliament and Departmental Buildings are unfit for occupation by the Legislature, inadequate to the requirements of the public service, and not in keeping with the resources and position of Ontario as the premier Province of the Dominion. This was not, he said, a new text, and he did not intend to preach a very lengthy sermon upon it, inasmuch as the matter was one that had engaged the attention of the members of this House on previous occasions, and regarding which no member required anything from him in order to be enlightened upon it. He repudiated the statement which had been given out in the public prints that he had been spoken to by any member of the Government respecting his motion. He was an independent member of this House, whatever meaning they would attach to that, and his independence had been proved on a former occasion, as it would be vindicated by his position with respect to this motion. No suggestion, he repeated, was made at any time, either directly or indirectly, by any member of the Government that he should allow the motion to stand, and he exercised control over his actions respecting it himself, having regard only to such desires as were expressed by private members. He felt that this matter had not been dealt with by the Government as they should have dealt with it. He was a supporter of the Government. He did not feel that there were many occasions when he had reason to criticize what they did, but if there was one thing with which they were chargeable with shortcoming it was in

THE LONG COMING

of the new Parliament Buildings. He believed the country was satisfied that the time had come when something should be done for the improved accommodation of the Legislature and the Departments. He knew that any large expenditure that was made in a local way was apt to create a certain amount of jealousy in those parts of the Province remote from that locality, and inasmuch as these buildings when they were erected would be erected in the city of Toronto, and certain advantages would accrue to it thereby, human nature was so selfish that so long as it was physically possible to transact business in these buildings there would be those throughout the country who would say there was no necessity for new buildings. The members of this House were very apt to pay some attention to these local jealousies, which would be found here and there throughout the country. They got their seats by votes throughout the country, and it was only human nature that they should be influenced more or less by the effect of what the feeling would be in regard to their particular cases. He called attention to that view of the case because he intended to urge—and he thought he was justified in urging—that the matter of new Parliament Buildings should not be made a party question. He believed he could safely assume that among the members of this House there would not be found half a dozen who did not honestly feel that the time had arrived when new buildings should be put up. He was satisfied that if

PARTY TACTICS

were not made use of in this question, there would be such an overwhelming expression of opinion in favour of them that it could not possibly be a question between the parties in the country, and if this was not done the responsibility would rest with hon. gentlemen opposite. Now as to the necessity for new buildings, he had never heard of a case where any person from any part of the country visited these buildings who did not pronounce an emphatic opinion in favour

of new ones. He had taken pains to enquire into individual opinions regarding this subject, and he was bound to say that in no case had he yet discovered the individual who had been willing to say that the use of these buildings should be continued a moment longer for their present purposes, or any longer than it was possible to obtain new ones. He had spoken privately with hon. members of both sides of this House, and he knew that whatever might be their public attitude, that was the feeling entertained by both sides of the House. The present time was most opportune to press this matter on the attention of the Government. Just now labour and material were cheap, and hundreds or thousands of dollars might be saved to the Province by entering on the work now instead of entering upon it a few years later. Then the amount of employment a work like this would afford to artisans and mechanics who at the present time did not find employment as plentiful as might be desired, was worthy of consideration. There was no doubt about it whatever, that when a large work like this was undertaken, it afforded a very considerable measure of relief to artisans and mechanics—not only to those engaged in the work, but to the class not engaged, because it would readily be seen that when so much work was created here it would increase the demand for work in other places. On a previous occasion when this matter was under consideration the hon. leader of the Opposition did not meet this question squarely. He proposed an amendment to his (Mr. Gibson's) motion, and probably it was his intention to do the same thing to-day. They were told, in the first place, that it was not strictly in order to submit a proposition such as this contained in his motion. They were told that it was

AN ABSTRACT PROPOSITION,

and that a proposition of this kind should not be submitted as he put it in his motion. He thought the very reverse was the case. He thought there was nothing in his motion which could be criticized in that way. The motion was pointed and specific in its terms. It was as far the reverse of an abstract motion as it would be possible to make it. Then of course, they would be told, as they had been told time after time, not only here but in the public press, that it was the duty of the Government to take the responsibility of this matter upon itself, and that a motion like this, which was calculated to provoke discussion, and to bring out some expression of opinion on the part of the representatives of the people, was not in order. He thought this was just such a motion as the members of this House, who met here once a year, who had business to transact at the Departments, had a perfect right to express their opinions upon. This was a matter in which they were individually and personally interested, and in which their advice might well be sought for by the Government, and which the Government would feel perfectly justified in regarding. He had been somewhat amused to watch the course of the leader of the Opposition, as well as the leader of the Government, in dealing with deputations and in other ways, with the mode in which they had expressed themselves regarding the responsibility of taking up this matter. With regard to the leader of the Opposition, it seemed to him there was room for hope. He thought the expressions which had fallen from that hon. gentleman of late gave evidence that he was going to abandon the position which he took in former years. Whatever objection had been raised to the scheme for new buildings when it was brought down in 1880-1 was now removed by the fact that it had formed a topic of discussion and was pronounced upon in the election of 1883. He therefore thought that probably the leader of the Opposition had had reason to modify his position. He opposed the Opposition leader's argument in favour of erecting new wings, which would probably cost \$100,000 or \$200,000. The buildings as a whole were a disgrace to the Province, and the plan which any man of business would adopt would be to renew them throughout. As far as Hamilton was concerned, he assured the House that the people were almost unanimous in supporting the erection of new buildings, the Conservative as well as the Reform newspapers having urged their erection.

Mr. MORRIS congratulated the hon. gentleman upon bringing his resolution, because he believed the time had come when new buildings should be erected, and that the work should be undertaken at once. The Government stood pledged since 1880 to a resolution which declared that new buildings were absolutely necessary, and in not going on with their erection they had been evading their duty. Then they were further pledged by having in the same year passed an Act for the expenditure of \$500,000 upon new buildings. The Government, he held, were solely responsible for the work not having been carried out. In conclusion, he cordially supported the motion, and assured the hon. Attorney-General that he would co-operate with him in the erection of new buildings.

Hon. C. F. FRASER.—The hon. gentleman, the member for East Toronto, during the whole of his speech has not one single word to say against his own leader for the attitude he has taken against what he contends to be the interests of the Province. Although the hon. gentleman is supposed to have considerable influence