

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE

Fifth Parliament—Second Session.

(By Our Own Reporters.)

Tuesday, March 24.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 p.m.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. Gibson (Hamilton) presented the 16th report of the Private Bills Committee.

Mr. Baxter presented the 4th report of the Committee on Printing.

Mr. MEREDITH said that application had been made on behalf of the Mechanics' Institutes of the Province for the distribution of copies of the Ontario Gazette among them, and he thought the Printing Committee should have acceded to this request.

Mr. BAXTER said that the Committee did not feel disposed to incur an expenditure for supplying these institutes with bound copies of The Gazette.

Mr. MEREDITH said they did not want bound copies, but merely the numbers as they were issued weekly. As they would be convenient for reference by the public in these places, and as the cost would be trifling, he thought the Committee should have granted the application.

Hon. C. F. FRASER said The Gazette was now sent to five or six officials in each county, and he thought that was all that was necessary. Instead of being kept for reference in Mechanics' Institutes, he apprehended that as the numbers accumulated they would be regarded as a nuisance and be utilized for lighting fires, or put out of the way.

Mr. BALFOUR said that the Committee were aiming at curtailing the expenditure on printing, and did not consider it advisable to increase it in this direction to something like \$4,000, which would be the cost of the subscriptions to the whole of the Institutes of the Province.

Mr. CREIGHTON, while admitting that it would increase the expenditure, said it would not do so to any such extent as \$4,000. The subscription price was four dollars, but the cost of getting out The Gazette did not amount to anything like that.

Mr. WATERS was in favour rather of making a larger expenditure on the Agricultural College Reports.

Mr. BALFOUR said this was one thing in which they did not intend making any reduction, but were in favour of an increased expenditure. The report was received.

MUNICIPAL LOAN FUND.

Hon. A. M. ROSS moved the third reading of the Bill respecting the amounts past due and payable by certain municipalities upon the settlement made by statute of their debts to the Municipal Loan Fund.

Mr. NEELON complained that St. Catharines had not been dealt with fairly in the matter of the Municipal Loan Fund. There was no doubt that the Government, when they took the settlement of this question in hand, had tried to frame a law on a scale that would prove satisfactory to all the municipalities, but it appeared that it was impossible to frame an Act of that kind on account of the different municipalities being placed in different circumstances. In order to prove that St. Catharines had not received justice, he drew a comparison of the amounts

which other municipalities received and paid, and the amount St. Catharines received and had been called upon to pay. In the year 1873 St. Catharines borrowed \$190,000 from the Municipal Loan Fund, and that money was invested in the following way:—They put \$100,000 into the Welland Railway, and at the same time there was \$100,000 belonging to the city invested in the same concern. Then there was \$35,000 of the \$190,000 invested in the Queenston and Grimsby macadamized road and the Merriton and St. Catharines macadamized road. At the time of the settlement of the amount which the corporation had borrowed, it was called upon to pay back to the Government \$165,000, all the reduction it received being \$25,000. In drawing a comparison with other places it was seen that in many instances they got off by paying a great deal less amount than they had received. The settlement was based upon a two cent scale—that was that no municipality was to be burdened with a tax which they could not pay, and under no circumstances was any municipality to pay over two cents taxes for school purposes. It happened that in 1873, when this settlement took place, that property in St. Catharines was assessed very high, and at that time he thought the rate was 12½ mills. He could not say what was the reason why the rate was so exceedingly low, but thought it was because the Mayor—Mr. Brown—had a large interest in real estate, and wanted to keep the rate down for the purpose of inducing outsiders to come in and settle. In 1871 the rate had been 14 mills, but it was upon the assessment of 1872 that the settlement was made on account of the Municipal Loan Fund. To show that the assessment was not correct in 1872 he mentioned that the rate was 17 mills the following year. Cobourg had borrowed from the fund \$500,000, and got its debt reduced by \$431,000, only leaving it to pay \$69,000. Brockville borrowed \$400,000, and its debt was reduced by \$265,000, only leaving it to pay \$135,000. Brantford, Prescott, and Dundas, which had borrowed different amounts, he said, had managed to get off scot free. At the time the \$190,000 was borrowed St. Catharines was just commencing to build water-works, which cost some \$275,000, and if the settlement had been made one year later perhaps that city would not have had to pay more than the other places, but it was necessary that these water-works should be built. To-day the debt of the city was \$632,000, and the assessment \$4,000,000. Last year the rate was betwixt 19 and 20 mills, and if the assessor had kept down the value of the property, which was assessed about 20 per cent. above its value, the rate would now be up to 28 or 29 mills, and all the Council would have to keep the streets and pay the expenses would be \$31,000 or \$32,000, and the balance would go to pay the interest of the city's indebtedness. The place was now \$107,000 in debt to the sinking fund. Consequently it was utterly impossible to pay this debt on the Municipal Loan Fund. The County of Lincoln had never got one dollar for building railways such as other municipalities had got, and he maintained that it was entitled to its share of the sum, amounting to nearly \$6,600,000, which had been expended in this way throughout the Province. When these things were taken into consideration the people of St. Catharines did not think they had been dealt with justly, and he hoped the Government would take their position into consideration, and relieve them entirely from the Municipal Loan Fund debt.

Mr. MEREDITH said that the Bill was now exactly in its original shape. These resolutions had never gone through Committee.

Hon. A. M. ROSS said that he understood that the resolutions had been passed and ordered to be embodied in the Bill. He would allow the matter to stand, but it would be advisable to have the discussion now.

Mr. MEREDITH said there was a good deal of force in what had been said concerning the claims of St. Catharines and Cobourg. He suggested that the basis of the Act of 1873 was wrong and had dealt unjustly with St. Catharines, Cobourg, and London. He thought the matter should, now that it had been opened up, be dealt with liberally.

Hon. A. M. ROSS said this was the first suggestion he had heard since the settlement of twelve years ago of any injustice having been done by that settlement. In 1873 and part of 1874 the agents of the Province had paid up the interest on the bonds held against the municipalities. All the municipalities had paid this back except St. Catharines and the township of Hope. The arrangement of 1873 had given universal satisfaction, and the various municipalities had gone to work to pay up their indebtedness as well as they were able. The idea would not be entertained by the Government that the whole of the settlement of 1873 should be re-opened and that all the municipalities should make a demand on the Government for another settlement. He did not think there were half a dozen members in the House who would seriously propose to re-open the whole question and consider the claims of all the municipalities whose claims had been satisfactorily settled in 1873.

Mr. CREIGHTON had no objection to the House dealing liberally with the municipalities, but he must take exception to the statement that the whole country accepted the settlement. The County of Grey was not satisfied, but they had no wish to re-open the question.

The motion was withdrawn.

THIRD READINGS.

Hon. O. Mowat—To amend the Act for employing persons without the walls of common goals.

Hon. O. Mowat—Respecting the property of insane persons in gaols.

Hon. O. Mowat—For further improving the administration of the law.

THE SUPERANNUATION FUND.

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex) moved that the House will to-morrow resolve itself into a committee to consider the following resolutions:—

Resolved (1), That it is expedient that every teacher or inspector who, while engaged in his profession, contributes to the Superannuated Teachers' Fund, as provided in the Act which, on reaching the age of sixty years, is entitled to retire from the profession, at his discretion, and receive an allowance or pension at the rate of six dollars per annum, for every year of such service in Ontario, upon furnishing to the Education Department satisfactory evidence of good moral character, of his age, and of the length of his service as teacher or inspector.

Resolved (2), That it is expedient that every teacher or inspector, under sixty years of age, who has contributed as aforesaid and who is disabled from practising his profession, shall be entitled to a like pension, or local supplementary allowance, upon furnishing the like evidence, and upon furnishing to the Education Department from time to time, in addition thereto, satisfactory evidence of his being disabled.

Resolved (3), That it is expedient that every teacher entitled to receive an allowance from the Superannuated Teachers' Fund, who holds a first or second class Provincial certificate, or a first-class County Board certificate, or who is an authorized head master of a High School or Collegiate Institute, shall, in addition to said allowance or pension, be entitled to receive a further allowance at the rate of one dollar per annum for every year of service while he held such certificate, or while he acted as Head Master of a High School or Collegiate Institute.

Resolved (4), That it is expedient that any teacher retiring from the profession, or any teacher or inspector who desires to remove his name from the list of contributors to the Superannuated Teachers' Fund, shall be entitled to receive back from the Minister of Education one-half of any sums paid in by him, or her, to the fund, through the Public School Inspector or otherwise.

The motion was carried.

THE REDISTRIBUTION BILL.

Hon. A. S. HARDY moved that the order for the third reading of the Bill to divide the electoral district of Algoma for electoral purposes, and otherwise to readjust the representation of the people in the Legislative Assembly be discharged, and it be referred to the Committee of the whole House.

In Committee of the Whole,

Hon. A. S. HARDY moved to strike out the last clause of the first section, and add the following, provided always that the present Legislative Assembly of the Province shall from and after the division of the District of Algoma into two electoral districts be composed of 89 members. Carried.

Several verbal changes were made, among them being a change making the proposed electoral division of Stormont, Corawal and Stormont.

Hon. A. S. HARDY said a good deal had been said about the disparity of the figures of the population in the Ridings of Perth. It was proposed to take the township of Logan from North Perth and add it to South Perth. The population now stands—South Perth, 20,778; North Perth, 32,915. The township of Logan has a population of 3,355. This would make the ridings—South Perth, 24,133; North Perth, 29,560.

Mr. MEREDITH proposed to substitute North Easthope, which he contended would make a more equal divide.

Mr. BALLANTYNE showed that if any change is to be made the one which was suggested was the only one which could have been made. He thought the political status of the ridings would not be changed by the proposal.

Mr. YOUNG said if there was any proof needed to show that the leader of the Opposition had found fault for the sake of finding fault, then his opposition to the change supplied it. The hon. member had only a few days ago charged the Government with infamy because they had allowed the ridings of Perth to continue in their present disparity of population. The change was one which was made entirely consonant with the principles laid down.

Mr. MEREDITH proposed that North Easthope, in addition to Logan, should be added to the South Riding.

Mr. HESS said even if the township of Logan were taken away from him there was hope left for him, and he ventured to think that he could get a majority again.

Hon. A. S. HARDY said the township of Logan was the remotest from the centres of the North Riding, and its business relations were all with Mitchell. If it had been desired to leave the member for North Perth in a minority they could have done so.

The amendment was carried.

The Bill was reported.

It being six o'clock the Speaker left the chair.