

Fifth Parliament --- Third Session.

(By Our Own Reporters.)

FRIDAY, March 12.

The Speaker took the chair at 3 o'clock.

REPORT.

Mr. Gibson (Hamilton) presented the twelfth report of the committee on Private Bills.

FIRST READINGS.

The following Bills were read the first time :—

Mr. Freeman—To amend the Petty Trespass Act.

Mr. Cascaden—To amend the Ontario Medical Act.

Hon. O. Mowat—Respecting the awards under the Niagara Falls Park Act.

THIRD READINGS.

The following Bills were read the third time :—

Mr. Fell—Respecting the Irondale, Bancroft, & Ottawa Railway Company.

Mr. Carnegie—Respecting the town of Peterboro'.

Mr. Pardee—Respecting the Sarnia & Florence Road Company.

Mr. Pardee—Respecting the debenture debt of the town of Sarnia.

Hon. O. MOWAT, in reply to Mr. French, said it is not the intention of the Government to introduce during the present session a Bill to provide for the filing or registration of hire receipts and receipt notes, or other evidences of conditional sales of chattels.

FIFTH READER.

Mr. McKAY asked if it is the intention of the Government to publish a fifth reader for use in Public Schools, and if so, when it will be ready, and when it is to be used in the schools.

Hon. G. W. ROSS said the fifth reader referred to was not to be published by the Government but by a private firm, it would be used in the public and high schools and ready for use according to the contract on the 1st Aug.

TIMBER DUES.

Mr. MEREDITH asked what was the balance due on 31st December last, for timber dues and ground rent and remaining unpaid on that day.

Hon. T. B. PARDEE said the balance due on the 31st December was \$277,396 83.

LAKE SIMCOE OBSTRUCTION.

Mr. GOULD moved for a return of copies of all correspondence subsequent to the year 1882, between the Department of Public Works and any person or persons with reference to the regulation of the waters of Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching, together with the reports of the Engineer, showing the amount expended in removing obstructions from the outlets of the lakes and also the condition in which the outlets are at the present time. Carried.

A PORT ARTHUR CLAIM.

Mr. MEREDITH—Order of the House for a return of copies of all correspondence and Orders in Council relating to the claim of Thomas Smith to water lot 13, opposite lot 15, South Water-street, Port Arthur, or to an allowance for improvements made on the lot. Also copies of all Orders in Council, correspondence, and other documents with reference to the claim of the Dock & Elevator Company to the same lot.

Hon. T. B. PARDEE said the fact of the matter was that Mr. Smith had no right of pre-emption and there had been none. It would be in the knowledge of members that along the water front at Port Arthur the north side of the street was laid out in lots but the south side was not. In 1873 Mr. Smith made application for a water lot opposite his land lot. In the meantime the Government had determined not to sell the lots, and they informed Mr. Smith that his application could not be entertained. Nothing happened till 1882, when the Port Arthur Dock and Elevator Company applied for water lots. Their plans showed that there were persons in occupancy, and the Department demanded that before the lots were sold the Company must settle with the parties for their improvements. In addition, though the parties on the north side of the street were not riparian owners, yet the Department insisted that the Company should buy the lots on the north side of the street. This they did, and bought the lot from Mr. Smith for \$3,500, which he had from the Government for \$41. Then Mr. Smith would not settle with the Company for his improvements, and the Company filed a letter agreeing to leave the matter to arbitration. Mr. Smith, though the Department

sent a notice to him that for any improvements which he might make after notification he would not be allowed compensation for, notwithstanding this proceeded, and removed the building on the lot and brought action against the Company. The suit ultimately went against Mr. Smith, and the house was seized for the costs. Though Mr. Smith had no right, either in equity or law, to remove the house he would have been allowed to remove the house had it not been seized for costs.

The motion was carried.

MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTS.

Mr. FELL moved that in the opinion of this House it is expedient that a more efficient mode of auditing the accounts of local municipalities and school expenditure should be devised, as the present system, as regards accuracy, is unreliable and unsatisfactory, and has failed to inspire public confidence in the results.

Mr. WOOD, while admitting that difficulties had arisen in the auditing of the accounts of small municipalities, said that he saw no way out of the difficulty except for the Local Government to appoint auditors, which he thought would be a very undesirable interference with the powers of municipalities.

Mr. WATERS said he had no sympathy whatever with the resolution. He had never seen any difficulty in the auditing of these accounts. There was no difficulty in securing in each township a man competent to audit the accounts of the municipalities.

Hon. A. M. ROSS said there was no doubt a good deal of looseness in the auditing of municipal accounts, but the fault lay with the municipal councils themselves. The councils had the power to appoint whom they pleased, and the people had the power. Councils were often too penurious to pay the auditors a sufficient sum to warrant them in devoting sufficient time to the auditing of the accounts. Properly there should be two or three days devoted to the auditing of the accounts. Instead of that he believed the usual time taken was two or three hours. The fact was that the fault did not lie entirely with the auditors, but to a large extent with the treasurers, who were often not familiar with the keeping of accounts. Something might be done by requiring that certain books should be used, and that the accounts should be kept in certain forms. It was, however, too late for anything to be done this session.

Mr. MEREDITH said that he was strongly opposed to the Government taking power to appoint auditors for municipalities.

Hon. O. MOWAT said he never had any such intention.

Mr. PHELPS said that the first duty of the municipality was to appoint an honest treasurer, and then there would be little difficulty in auditing the accounts.

Hon. A. S. HARDY said that every concession would be filled with people with lanterns looking for this honest man. (Laughter.)

Mr. FELL—The trouble is, you don't know an honest man when you see him. (Laughter.) There have been men who appeared to be honest, but when the time came they were gone.

A member—Which, the man or the money?

Mr. FELL—Both. He thought the Provincial Treasurer's suggestion for uniform books and forms accounts was a good one.

Mr. CREIGHTON said the auditor's duties should be defined by statute.

Mr. WOOD said the duty was a statutory one.

Mr. McCOLMAN did not see how any change could be made in the present system.

The motion was withdrawn.

MASSEY MANUFACTURING CO.

Mr. ERMATINGER moved for a return of copies of all letters and correspondence between any and all members or officers of the Government of Ontario, and any party or parties interested in the capital stock of the Massey Manufacturing Company, or the con-

templated increase thereof, in reference to such proposed increase. He referred to some litigation which had taken place between the shareholders with reference to the increase of the stock.

Hon. O. MOWAT said that he had come to the conclusion that if the parties came to this House asking for an increase of stock it would not be granted. They went to the Courts, maintaining that the Government had nothing to do with the matter, and that the Provincial Secretary's duties were merely ministerial. Should the minority decide to appeal the Government would have to consider whether it would be expedient to allow the name of the Attorney-General to be used.

The motion carried.

SCHOOL BOOKS.

Mr. MORGAN moved for a return relating to the preparation of school books.

Hon. G. W. ROSS said it was not proposed to pay anything for the preparation of fifth readers. Nothing had been paid for the pre-