

with a woman in an asylum or other place to which the Inspection Act applies. A case of this kind had arisen, and the prisoner had been acquitted because the woman was not at the time of the commission of the offence a lunatic. The bill made the offence punishable whether the woman was a lunatic or not.

Mr. MEREDITH said he must sympathise with the object of the bill, but he doubted the power of this Legislature to deal with the matter.

Hon. O. MOWAT said he thought there was very little doubt that the Provincial Parliament had jurisdiction in the matter. It might be well, however, to add a few words making it clear that the Legislature was dealing with only such cases as were not provided for by the criminal law. As he had said, he had very little doubt on the subject, but, even if he had more doubt, he did not know that that would prevent him from advocating action by this Parliament. He did not know that the Dominion Parliament would be ready to pass such legislation. The Charlton Act was passed with some difficulty, and it did not go as far as this bill.

The bill was read the second time.

CONCURRENCE.

The House concurred in a number of the items reported from Committee of Supply.

THE ASSESSMENT ACT.

Mr. WILMOT moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Assessment Act. The bill was read the second time and referred to the Municipal Committee.

DITCHES AND WATERCOURSES.

Mr. FERGUSON moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Ditches and Watercourses Act.

Mr. MEREDITH said that the whole matter should be dealt with after a full investigation, and that there should be no patch work legislation.

Mr. HARCOURT said that several County Councils had decided to send deputations to the Municipal Committee to make representations in regard to this matter. He hoped that a day would be fixed to hear them. So far the Act had worked well, not because it was perfect, but because the ratepayers were so desirous of having the drainage done that they gave all the assistance they could. But any ratepayer had it in his power to obstruct the working of the Act.

Hon. A. S. HARDY said that Thursday next had been appointed to hear the engineers, and the County Councils might be heard at the same time.

Mr. BALFOUR said that a good deal of legislation in the past had been more in the interest of the engineers than of the public.

Mr. WATERS said he did not think the last remark was justified. The great difficulty was that under this Act very extensive works were undertaken, such as should be undertaken under the Municipal Drainage Act.

Mr. CLANCY said that he did not wish to cast any reflection on the engineers, but he never knew them to cast aside a profitable job. He was opposed to the bill, believing that no person should be allowed to cover any portion of a drain.

Mr. WOOD (Hastings) said that the law as to ditches and watercourses was in a very confused state.

Mr. MORIN said that the Ditches and Watercourses Act had not worked well in Welland. He thought the Government should bring done a measure dealing with the matter.

Mr. SPRAGUE also thought the Government should deal with the matter.

The bill was read the second time and referred to the Municipal Committee.

QUALIFICATION OF COUNCILLORS.

Mr. GARSON moved the second reading of a bill to abolish property qualification for municipal offices. He thought that electors should have the greatest possible freedom of choice of candidates. It was not always the best business men in a municipality who owned the greatest amount of property. In the Town of Niagara it was almost impossible to get any change in the Council, on account of the small number of persons who were qualified.

Mr. GIBSON said he had introduced a bill of the same nature. He was in favor not of an entire abolition of property qualification, but of a material change in the law. If wealth was to be the test those who were best qualified for councillors in that respect would not offer for election. He was in favor of such

AN AMENDMENT IN THE LAW

that any one who was qualified to vote in a municipal election would be qualified as a candidate for municipal honors, and he had introduced a bill to that effect.

Mr. FRASER said there was no reason why the bill should not go to the committee. The bill was read the second time and referred to the Municipal Committee.

Mr. GIBSON then moved the second reading of the bill which he had referred to. His bill also provided that where street watering was done under the

FRONTAGE TAX SYSTEM,

the more valuable property might be compelled to pay a higher tax. The bill was read the second time and referred to the Municipal Committee.

MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANIES.

Mr. McMAHON moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Act relating to mutual fire insurance companies. The bill gives legal voting power to all shareholders, irrespective of the amount of stock they hold, and allows the location of a head office to be changed by a majority vote, instead of a two-thirds vote.

Hon. O. MOWAT said that he thought the interests of all the shareholders were best attended to when the greatest power was placed in the hands of those having the greatest pecuniary interest in the company, and he therefore did not think there should be any change in the law in this respect. He intended to bring in a bill dealing with the question of insurance, and he would, therefore, suggest that this bill be allowed to stand.

Mr. MEREDITH said it should be distinctly understood that the Government was opposed to these changes, otherwise the House would be flooded with insurance agents from all over the country.

The order stood.

THE MUNICIPAL ACT.

Mr. HARCOURT moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Municipal Act, in regard

to the appointment of auditors. Bill read a second time and referred to the Municipal Committee.

Mr. GILMOUR moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Municipal Act by allowing townships and municipalities to make improvements on the local improvement system. The necessity for the bill had arisen in certain portions of the southern part of West York, which at present could not obtain these improvements without being incorporated as villages, or becoming annexed to the City of Toronto. Bill read a second time and referred to the Municipal Committee.

Mr. BISHOP moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Municipal Act by reducing