

Proposed there should be some legislation on the subject, and suggested that the bill should be sent to a special committee.

The bill was read the second time.

Mr. FRENCH rose to move that the committee to consider the bill should be the Legal Committee of last year.

Mr. MEREDITH—No; put some farmers on it. Put on all the candidates for the portfolio of agriculture. (Laughter.)

Hon. Mr. MOWAT—On both sides of the House. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. MEREDITH—We are all candidates over here. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. MOWAT suggested that at a later time the matter should be brought up, and in the meantime the mover of the bill should draft a special committee.

This suggestion was accepted and the next order of business was called.

TOLL ROADS.

Mr. LEES (Lanark) moved the second reading of his bill to amend the General Road Companies Act. He spoke at some length upon it, but in a tone of voice which made the greater part of his remarks inaudible in the reporters' gallery. He was understood to say that he was glad the members were taking such an interest in this bill. Under this measure it was proposed to take part of the responsibility of doing away with the tolls off the shoulders of the County Councils. It provided that on the application of one hundred ratepayers the Council shall appoint an arbitrator and the county judge a second, and if a third is necessary he shall be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. These three are empowered to decide the bounds of the municipalities or parts of municipalities that shall be taxed to buy up the roads. If the County Council cannot agree with the road companies as to the value of the roads to be purchased, another arbitration is to take place under the Municipal Act. At one time in the history of the Province these road companies were necessary, but now the roads could be made without the intervention of these organisations. Last year there was a special committee on this subject, which investigated the question fully and presented a report with a resolution which was passed by the House. This bill was based upon that resolution. It was not contended at all that this bill was perfect. It was as good as its promoters could make it, but they looked to discussion in the House to lead to the mending of defects. One provision authorised the Government to advance money to purchase the debentures to be issued by the County Councils for the purchase of the roads. If this were objected to it could be struck out, but it was merely permissive and the promoters would prefer to have the clause stand.

Hon. O. MOWAT said that he had no objection to the second reading of the bill, which appeared to be a fair attempt to carry out the object of the abolition of the tolls; the details of course would have to be considered by the committee. He preferred that it should be referred to the Municipal Committee, in order that the opinions of that committee might be obtained. The road companies should be allowed to appear before the committee and make any representations they thought necessary.

Mr. MEREDITH said he hoped that the hearing of the road companies would delay the matter, so as to prevent a bill being passed this session to abolish these relics of barbarism.

Mr. MOWAT said there was no reason why the hearing of the companies should prevent the bill from being passed this session, and it was only fair that they should be heard.

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

FIRE ESCAPES.

Mr. McKAY moved the second reading of a bill for the prevention of accidents by fire in public buildings. He reminded the House of a fire which destroyed a hotel in Guelph recently, and said that although eighty persons slept in the house there were no means of escape. The result was that twenty were injured and one young man lost his life. It had been objected that a system of fire escapes would facilitate the departure of defaulting guests and the entrance of burglars, but it was to be noted that all the best hotels in the United States provided for escape in case of fire. The bill provided for escape by means of ropes or outside stairways.

Hon. O. MOWAT said that the object of the bill was a good one, and the question was one of the utmost importance. There was real difficulty in selecting a proper system of fire escapes, but if the provisions of this bill were not found suitable something better should be substituted for them.

The bill was read a second time and referred to a special committee composed of Messrs. Fraser, Hardy, Meredith, H. E. Clark, Wood (Brant), Gibson (Hamilton), Guthrie, McKay and Metcalfe.

THE POLL TAX AND STATUTE LABOR.

Mr. WATERS moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Assessment Act. He explained that its objects were to abolish the poll tax, to abolish statute labor in certain cases, and to provide that the sum paid for commutation of statute labor should be paid to the overseers of highways, and by them expended for the improvement of the roads. He argued that it was unfair to impose the poll tax upon young men who paid taxes indirectly by paying for their board and lodging.

Mr. MEREDITH said that the poll tax was a reasonable thing, and that there had been no demand for its repeal.

Mr. PHELPS, Mr. LEES and Mr. WOOD (Hastings) opposed the repeal of the poll tax.

Hon. A. M. ROSS said the promoter of the bill was perhaps a little in advance of public opinion in asking for the repeal of the poll tax. The Legislature had done a great deal in relieving small incomes from taxation, and it seemed only fair that those who paid no other taxes should contribute this small sum to the revenue of the municipality. There would be no harm, however, in allowing the bill to go to the Municipal Committee, where its other features could be considered.

Mr. SPRAGUE spoke in favor of the bill and Mr. WATERS replied to the arguments urged against it.

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

INQUESTS ON PRISONERS.

Mr. STEWART moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Municipal Act. It provides that where a prisoner dies in gaol no inquest shall be held except on the order of the county Crown attorney or the county judge, or two justices of the peace.

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

Mr. WOOD (Brant) moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Municipal Act. The object of the bill is to compel the publication of a clear, business-like statement of the affairs of the municipality at the close of the year. The clerk of the municipality is to have a hundred copies of the statement printed for the use of the electors. Certain districts and counties where a compliance with this rule would be extremely difficult are exempted from its operation.

Mr. WOOD (Hastings) supported the bill.

Mr. ROSS (Huron) said that the difficulty would arise in getting an accurate statement in the short period which would be available at the close of the year. He thought that in towns and cities at least a monthly statement of the affairs of the municipality should be published. The question was one of great importance. The bill was read a second time and referred to the Municipal Committee.

SALARIES OF POLICE MAGISTRATES.

Mr. PHELPS moved the second reading of a bill which provides that the salaries of police magistrates in Scott Act counties shall be \$700 where the population is over 40,000, and \$800 where it exceeds 50,000. The present salary is \$600, irrespective of population.

Mr. MEREDITH opposed the bill, arguing that it would retard the progress of the Scott Act to compel County Councils to pay an increased salary to police magistrates.

Hon. O. MOWAT said a very strong case must be made out to justify any amendment to the legislation so recently passed fixing the salary at \$600.

The bill was withdrawn.

Hon. A. M. ROSS said that the hon. gentleman had made out such a good case showing the necessity of paying this magistrate a larger salary, particularly in view of the emolument the county had received from the enforcement of the Act, that no doubt, if the hon. gentleman would bring his influence to bear upon the County Council, the salary would be increased. (Laughter.) The hon. gentleman had done good in drawing attention to the fact that, while the counties were making so much out of the Act, the magistrates through whose works these revenues came in were in many cases underpaid.

The bill was withdrawn.

TOWNSHIP LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. SMITH, moving the second reading of his bill to amend the Municipal Act, explained that it was intended to extend the local improvement system to township municipalities. But it was believed that the frontage tax would not be just as a means of assessing for the cost of the works constructed. It was proposed, therefore, to authorise the assessment on a basis of acreage, those lands which received the benefit from the improvement to be assessed according to the benefit they received. He believed that the bill was a good one and would receive the approval of the House. In reply to objections by Mr. Waters, he said that the bill could be taken advantage of to promote selfish ends if a man could secure control of the Township Council, but he thought that that was a matter that might be left with the Township Council and

the people.

Mr. WOOD (Hastings) expressed fear that this measure would introduce in the townships the difficulties which had made themselves felt in this city over the local improvement question. He thought it would be better to depend upon the equity of the Council for the making of improvements.

Mr. PHELPS opposed the bill and thought it should be withdrawn, as it was a bad bill. (Laughter.)

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

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

Mr. CLARKE (Wellington) moved the second reading of his bill concerning justices of the peace. He said that last session he had introduced a bill providing that all members of Township Councils should be justices of the peace. That bill met with the approval of the leader of the Opposition, but was opposed by the leader of the Government, and could not pass. He (Mr. Clarke) had been long enough in public life now to have learned to take the half loaf where he could get no better, and rather than introduce the same bill again and have it defeated, seeing that so many of his friends found it too democratic to suit their views, he had decided to modify it. He proposed now that every head of a Council and every Reeve and Deputy-Reeve should be a justice of the peace. He claimed that the justices of the peace were not so distributed as to meet the convenience of the people, and in many localities there were not enough of them. Moreover, many of the magistrates preferred not to undertake the labor and responsibilities of their office where they could avoid them. When he was Reeve of the village in which he lived, as he was for many years, desiring to retain the favor of the people by fulfilling his duty, he had assumed the duties of his office as justice of the peace whenever called upon. The Reeves, he believed, were the best magistrates. He trusted that this bill would meet favor with the House.

Mr. INGRAM favored the bill and found fault with the conduct of some of the magistrates.

Mr. MEREDITH—The Attorney-General ought to be heard from on this bill.

Hon. Mr. MOWAT—Carried. (Laughter.) The bill was read the second time.

PETERBOROUGH POOR TRUST.

The bill to amend the Act incorporating the William Hall Peterborough Protestant Poor Trust (Mr. Stratton) was read the second time.

The House adjourned at 5.50 o'clock.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

Mr. Waters—Friday next—Bill to amend the Municipal Act.

Mr. Bishop—Bill to amend the Act respecting insurance companies.

Mr. Garson—Friday next—Bill to amend the Act respecting cemetery companies; also, bill to amend the Municipal Act.

Mr. Conmee—on Friday next—Bill to amend the Municipal Act.

ASSEMBLY NOTES.

THE PREMIER OVERWORKED:—It was a hard day for the veteran Premier. Before the House opened he was besieged with desperate vigor by a battalion of county-town hunters from Orillia. Then the House sat and wrestled with mortgages, toll roads, fires, poll tax, police magistrates, sinking funds, justices of the peace, assessment by acreage, Division and County Courts, and her Majesty's English for nearly three solid hours.

This, however, was but the beginning of it. The moment the House rose Mr. Mowat was beguiled into the reception-room again, and the Northern country poured the rest of its population after him. And men of quicker intelligence, more robust physique, or wearing more of the signs of inward peace and of outward prosperity the Province does not hold. But they are all split into sections on the county town question. One party says Orillia was born to be a county town. The other party say Orillia ought to be happy with a branch lock-up. Huntsville and Gravenhurst and Bracebridge have each a pet ambition, and as Tennyson would say if he were doing Gallery notes:—

The rivals do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Then on top of the multitudes from the North came Royal Templars of Temperance, Foresters, Workmen and doctors. There they kept Mr. Mowat in a corner and talked to him at forty knots an hour, and often with the wind in every quarter of the compass at the same time. One or two of the speakers seemed to be loaded for the heart's blood of Patience on her native monument. They