

plained that the Act of the Attorney-General passed in 1873 controlling the manner of such settlements had been found to work most unfairly to many municipalities. The terms of the Act had prevented its object being realised, he contended, and while some municipalities had been given more relief than they should have received, others had received more than they should. The hon. gentleman suggested points in which he held the Act could be improved.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Huron) said it would hardly do for the hon. gentleman at this late date to claim that the bill in question was so radically wrong, and it was of little use to discuss the matter. He thought the suggestions made by the hon. gentleman would hardly have made the Act more mathematically accurate than it was at present. It had been in operation over fourteen years, and had been found to work most admirably. Perhaps in some cases a little injustice would be done one place or another, and here and there some place might receive a slight advantage. These little discrepancies were unavoidable, and would always occur in a case where a general rule had to apply to special cases. The hon. gentleman denied that the matter had ever been used for party purposes.

#### AND THIS SETTLEMENT.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Huron) moved that this House doth ratify an Order in Council approved by his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor on the 2nd day of March, 1888, accepting from the City of St. Catharines municipal debentures of the city for the sum of \$4,850, payable in five years, with interest at the rate of five per cent., payable half-yearly, in full settlement of the indebtedness of the city upon municipal loan fund debentures and coupons now held by the Province.

#### HOUSE IN COMMITTEE.

The House then went into Committee of Supply and took up first the item for agriculture, \$135,631.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Huron) explained the few cases in which the amounts asked for this year differed from those given last year. The chief difference was a reduction from \$10,000 to \$4,500 in the case of the item "agricultural associations." In connection with this item, the

hon. Treasurer said that it was a reduction in the grant to the Provincial Fair, which the Government thought had now lost much of its usefulness. He was quite willing to have the matter discussed and to hear the views of hon. members in connection with the same. The only other change in the items of any importance were an addition of \$200 per annum to the salary of the Secretary of the Bureau of Statistics and Deputy Minister of Agriculture, making it \$2,200. This was a change he was sure the House would approve of. The gentleman in question was a most valuable and efficient official of the Government.

#### THE PROVINCIAL FAIR.

On the item of \$4,500 to agricultural societies,

Mr. METCALFE spoke strongly in favor of continuing the grant for the Provincial Exhibition this year, and asked that the vote be increased to \$10,000.

Mr. LEES thought it would be unfair to the lower part of the Province to cut off the grant.

Mr. WOOD (Hastings) said that the only ground for renewing the grant was that Kingston prepared for the fair this year, and for that reason he would support the grant for another year, although he believed its usefulness was gone.

Mr. WILMOT asked that the grant be given to Kingston this year. If it had to die let it be buried in Kingston, where there was a good burying-ground.

Mr. DRURY said he did not like the disrespectful and cold-hearted manner in which some members spoke of the old Provincial Fair. (Hear, hear.) Some of the other exhibitions had been turned into horse races and circuses. The Board of the Provincial Fair discouraged that sort of thing, believing that the object of the exhibition should be educational. He would suggest that the commissioner issue a circular to the electoral district societies and ask them whether they believed the time had come when the Provincial Fair should be discouraged. He was aware that the large cities were opposed to the fair, and if they closed their gates against it, it must die a natural death for want of a home. The present tendency was to cater too much to the fun-loving public, and he was very much deceived if it was possible to please that class and at the same time win the approval of the solid farmers of the country.

Mr. MEREDITH asked Mr. Drury whether he was in favor of the continuance of the Provincial Fair.

Mr. DRURY said he believed the time would come when the farmers would insist upon holding such an exhibition, but that at present the circumstances were against it.

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

After recess,

Mr. AWREY said that it was the farmers themselves who caused the Provincial Exhibitions to fall into disuse. If they attended it, and brought their cattle and other exhibits to it, it would succeed; but they appeared to prefer the central stationary fairs, and these were taking the place of the Provincial, although the latter had done good work in its time.

Mr. PHELPS said that he was opposed to the continuance of the grant. He had no objection to Kingston getting the grant this year, but for several years they had heard the plea, "This is to be the last time."

Mr. BALLANTYNE said he hoped the Government would see its way clear to continuing the grant for at least the present year. If the grant was justifiable at all it was justifiable in the eastern part of the Province, where they had not the same large population as in the west. He was strongly of the belief that a thoroughly Provincial Exhibition was a necessity for the country, but the Provincial Fair had not answered to this description.

Mr. FREEMAN said that he favored the grant for Kingston this year. There would, no doubt, be some horse-racing there, and they would have the benefit of the advice of the member for Kingston—(laughter)—who might also fulfil the Scriptural injunction and "take them in." (Laughter.)