

THE LEGISLATURE.

LADIES MAKE A RAID ON THE OLD BUILDINGS.

Woman's Enfranchisement Urged on The Government—Deputation From the Ontario Alliance—Crooks Act Amendments—A Railway Policy Advocated by Influential Speakers.

FEBRUARY 8, 1889.

The most interesting proceedings at the local legislative building this afternoon were not those that occurred in the chamber. They were those connected with the three important deputations that waited on the Government concerning women's rights, Temperance and railways. In the House the usual number of petitions were presented, and then the following bills were given notice of:—

- To amend the Municipal Act—Mr. Freeman.
- To amend the Municipal Act—Mr. Murray.
- To amend the Municipal Act—Mr. Hudson.
- To amend the Mechanics' Lien Act—Mr. Balfour for Mr. Garson.
- To incorporate the Town of West Toronto Junction—Mr. Gilmour.
- To amend the Municipal Act respecting the appointment of gaolers—Mr. Waters.

THE SLANDER BILL.

The adjourned debate on Mr. French's bill to amend the Law of Slander was on the order paper. Mr. French suggested, however, that the arguments advanced against the bill could be better answered by him in committee. He moved therefore that the bill be read a second time and referred to a special committee, consisting of the following gentlemen:—Messrs. Fraser, Gibson (Hamilton), Meredith, Clancy, Clarke (Wellington), Harcourt, Dryden, Guthrie, Hardy, Wood (Hastings), Whitney, Craig, McKay, Morin, Balfour and the mover. The motion was carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS.

Mr. Dack's bill to amend the Act relating to snow fences, previously explained, was read a second time and sent to the Municipal Committee. Mr. Balfour moved the second reading of his bill to amend the Assessment Act. He briefly explained the provisions of the bill on a line similar to that already set forth in THE GLOBE. With a brief comment from Mr. Hardy, not unfavorable to the bill, it was read a second time and referred to the Municipal Committee. The same was done with Mr. Graham's bill to amend the Municipal Act, so that the County Councils may by by-law provide that each local municipality shall be required to pay for each person sent by such municipality to the House of Refuge and received therein, a sum not exceeding \$1 50 per week, for maintenance and support. Mr. Balfour's bill to amend the Municipal Act in the matter of the marking of ballot papers by returning officers was read a second time and referred to the same committee. Mr. Fraser moved the second reading of the Assessment Amendment Act for 1889. The same was carried and the House adjourned about four o'clock.

THE CAUSE OF WOMEN.

▲ TREMENDOUS DEPUTATION WAIT UPON THE GOVERNMENT.

Immediately after adjournment there was an appearance of great and unusual activity in the lobbies of the House. Ladies were to be seen in nearly every part of the building. They streamed into the aisles, the galleries and the committee rooms. At length, by common consent, they massed in the library, this being the only room in the building beside the chamber itself large enough to accommodate them. With the ladies came in nearly all the legislators and all the members of the several other deputations that intended later on to besiege the Government. The ladies, as they marched down to the House two deep, reminded the reporters that something unusual was to take place that day, but when they saw the library crowded with so many of the fair sex memory went back to a similar occasion during the session of the Legislature when the Crooks Act was enacted. It was a great day, taking it all through, corresponding in many features to the stirring times when every municipality was aroused to the necessity of railway construction. The

ladies were in earnest, their mission being to urge the passage of Mr. Waters' Woman Suffrage Bill on the Government and the members of the Legislature. The deputation comprised members of the Women's Enfranchisement Association, and of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, who consolidated their forces upon the attainment of an object upon which they are all agreed. There were noticed amongst them the following:—Dr. Emily Stowe; Mrs. Rockwell, Kingston; Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Dr. Shaw, Mrs. Finkle, Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Clement, Mrs. McDonell, Dr. Annie Pickering, Mrs. German, Mrs. Brethour, Mrs. Curzon, Mrs. James Forster, Mrs. Vance, Mrs. LeRoy Hooker, Mrs. Coverdale Watson, Mrs. W. B. Hamilton, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Storm, Mrs. Wardell, Mrs. D. Cowan, Mrs. Armstrong, Mrs. Dr. Parker, Mrs. Beatty, Miss Armstrong, Miss Kelly, Miss Gray, Mrs. F. S. Spence and others. They were introduced to the Attorney-General and their object stated by Mayor Clarke, and after Mr. Mowat had stated that he would be delighted to hear what they had to say, speaking commenced in earnest. Mrs. Brethour read a short paper in which she set forth the claims of women to the ballot, stating that she would use it in guarding the morals of the nation. She claimed the franchise on the ground that women could exercise it as intelligently as men.

PRESIDENT DR. EMILY STOWE.

Dr. Emily Stowe stepped up to the Attorney-General, manuscript in hand, and with magnificent voice and modulation read her appeal for a further extension of the franchise. The scene during the reading of the address was a memorable one in the history of the Local House, the lady doctor being supported by a solid phalanx of ladies who dwelt on the words addressed to the Premier with an interest and delight seldom seen. And then, of course, behind Mr. Mowat and his colleagues stood members of the Legislature, Aldermen and citizens, who went down to the House to participate in the day set apart for woman suffrage, Temperance, railroads and other important matters. The legislators gallantly cheered on appropriate occasions, and the ladies approved with smiles and nods any good thing touching the alleged wrongs inflicted on women. Mrs. Stowe maintained that women by intelligence and as owners are entitled to a voice in framing and forming Governments. "We are not," she continued, "office-seekers, and do not wish to take from those in power any well-merited crown, but we do as educated citizens, as moral and loving women, desire to be placed in a position to impress directly our thought upon our nation and times." Giving the franchise to the male youth of the country and withholding it from women is arbitrary and artificial. Such exclusion, Mrs. Stowe argued, forcibly classes women as imbecile and insane. Condorcet said, "Women having the same qualities as men should enjoy equal privileges." Babeau declared "that a representative body should be a miniature of the whole community." The lady went on then to say that because some women do not desire the ballot, it is no argument against the right of women to personal representation through the ballot seems to be reasonable, whenever the right of man to vote is extended or exercised. After in this way she set forth the claims of women, she demanded the ballot

in the following emphatic terms:—"We ask for the ballot for all women on the same conditions as it is granted to men. Yet, we are willing to accept any portion of it that you honorable gentlemen are willing to grant. We thankfully and cordially support Mr. Waters' bill craving the Parliamentary franchise for widows and spinsters. At the same time we see nothing save sentiment, a relic of barbarism, in our being, as married women, excluded." In conclusion she said among other things: "If the women of our country are not all prepared to use the newly imposed responsibility intelligently, neither are men prepared to use it intelligently. Of this I am certain, that the women of our country desire to use it only for their country's good."

FROM A TEMPERANCE STANDPOINT.

Mrs. McDonell, of Parkdale, representing the W. C. T. U., said that Mrs. Dr. Stowe had gone over the ground so thoroughly that it would be unnecessary for her to say much. Then she proceeded to make a speech which for clearness of expression, logic of argument and delicacy of sarcasm, could not have been excelled by many of the legislative orators present. It was still urged by some, she said, that woman's disfranchisement was ordained of God. "We believe," she said, cuttingly, "that it is ordained of man. When you

established manhood suffrage in Ontario," she continued, addressing Mr. Mowat directly, "you made sovereigns of all the men in the Province and subjects of all the women. I will not say slaves. Questions of legislation were largely questions of words, and men alone could not properly deal with them. She quoted from their leader, the famous Frances Willard, to show what the world lost by the exclusion from politics of half—the better half, and the more moral half, as the speaker believed—of mankind. Mrs. McDonell pointed out the importance also of the organisation represented by the deputation, and suggested that it was not so unimportant that it could be trifled with. Then she briefly told the Attorney-General just what they wanted the Government to do, repeating what had been said by previous speakers.

MRS. DR. PARKER'S ADDRESS.

Mrs. Dr. Parker was the next to address the Attorney-General. She said that the advance already made by the Government in granting the municipal franchise to women has been marked by such decided success as to cause the wonder that such a step had not much earlier been taken, and also to warrant the conclusion that an enlargement of the franchise would produce corresponding results. The lady concluded as follows:—"In thus honoring and elevating your women to their rightful positions of citizens, you but honor yourselves, your children and your country, and by the addition of such a large voting constituency you prepare the way for the support and enforcement of all good and righteous government. We commend this grave matter to your earnest and faithful consideration."

MR. MOWAT'S REPLY.

The Attorney-General, who had remained with sphinx-like features listening attentively during the half-hour or so occupied by the foregoing speeches, now relaxed into a smile and expressed himself as follows:—

I am delighted to have met all here today, and I am quite sure my colleagues share in the delight that I feel. I have, and I am sure they have, listened with the greatest possible interest to the address that have been made. They have been eloquent, touching and forcible. If anybody can answer the reasons you have advanced, I cannot. (Applause and laughter.) So long as I can remember I have sympathised greatly with the cause you have at heart. As a practical politician, however, I do not say you will get what you want this year, or next year, but this I do say, that I hope I shall remain long enough in power to be the humble instrument of carrying your wishes into effect. (Loud applause and laughter.) The cause you represent is no doubt making great progress over the English-speaking world, at all events, and what has been done in this country along the line in question has added strength to your arguments. The way in which the franchise has been exercised at the municipal and school elections has been such that nobody, I think, has ventured to suggest that evil has resulted from it, while most of us would be willing to admit that the results have been good. Speaking for myself alone, and leaving my colleagues to think as they individually may see fit, I have no hesitation in declaring my convictions, that as good has been accomplished by what has been already done in the way of extending the franchise to women, so further good would be done if you had the ballot in legislative elections. (Applause.) I do not know that there is anything further for me to say, save to again express my joy at meeting you and the deep interest of myself and colleagues in the subject you have brought to our attention.

THE CHAMPION HIMSELF SPEAKS.

Then the ladies had an opportunity of beholding the man who in adversity and prosperity, in sunshine and shadow, championed their cause in the House. Mrs. Rockwell proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Waters for his zeal in the cause of the enfranchisement of women. Mrs. McDonell seconded, after which the member for North Middlesex elbowed his way through the crowd, halting near the Attorney-General. He thanked the ladies for their kind words, and then walked into his subject with the usual enthusiasm, calling on the members of the House to do justice to women by voting for his bill. Turning then to Mr. Mowat, Mr. Waters said:—"I hope, sir, that you and your Government will soon introduce a measure giving to women the same franchise as is now enjoyed by men." (Cheers.)

THE CROOKS ACT.

▲ AN INFLUENTIAL DEPUTATION URGE STILL MORE STRINGENT AMENDMENTS.

The ladies made no signs of withdrawing, because there was another deputation wait-