

THE LEGISLATURE.

ANIMATED DEBATE ON MR. HARDY'S
NEW COUNTIES BILL.

Parkdale Bill Passes the Private Bills
Committee—Toll Gates and Roads
—New Bills Introduced—Col-
onisation Roads—Deputa-
tions—A Lively Discus-
sion in Committee
of Supply—The
Question of
Surveys.

Quite unexpectedly the bill providing for the formation of new counties came up for discussion early in the afternoon and of course created a lively discussion all afternoon. The other business transacted was of the usual routine character.

FIRST READINGS.

The following bills were introduced and read a first time:—

To amend the General Road Companies Act—Mr. Wood (Brant).

To amend the Act to encourage the planting and growing of trees—Mr. Dack.

To amend the Municipal Waterworks Act—Mr. Conmee.

To amend the Municipal Act—Mr. Clancy.

As to conveyances of land granted under the Free Grants and Homestead Act—The Attorney-General.

To amend the Municipal Act—Mr. G. B. Smith.

THIRD READINGS.

The following bills were read a third time:—

To amend the Workmen's Compensation for Injuries Act—Mr. Fraser.

To confirm certain by-laws of the City of Kingston and for other purposes.

Mr. Meredith wanted himself placed on record as being opposed to the effect of the provisions of the 12th and 13th sections of the bill, if an amendment moved by him embodying his views were declared lost on division.

RUSHING BUSINESS.

The Attorney-General moved that Government orders may be taken on Monday next, after other orders of that day are disposed of, and that Government orders shall have precedence thereafter, on every day, over all other business except private bills.

Mr. Meredith objected to the latter part of the motion, on the ground that whereas the Government has no important matters on the order paper, private members have a good many.

The motion was carried.

SECOND READINGS.

After advancing through the committee stage a number of Government orders, the following bills were read a second time:—

To make further provisions respecting the Districts of Parry Sound and Muskoka—The Attorney-General.

For enforcing orders under the Act respecting master and servant—The Attorney-General.

Respecting steam threshing machines—Mr. Drury.

Respecting the powers of electric light companies—The Attorney-General.

NEW COUNTIES BILL.

THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNMENT BILL
TAKEN UP AGAIN.

The hon. Minister of Education, in resuming the debate on the New Counties Bill, introduced by Mr. Hardy on Wednesday evening last week, remarked that he had been a little surprised at the reception of the bill. The object of the bill was to divide counties when it appeared to be in the public interest to do so. This was a question that had been pressed upon the attention of the Government for a number of years by large deputations from various counties, but particularly from those large counties in which the county town was so far distant from many points of the county as to be a source of serious inconvenience. The bill was not designed to wantonly break up existing counties. There were various safeguards by which any wanton violation of the old associations of Township and of County Councils would be avoided. The Government had recognised this point as one of great importance, and only in case certain majorities were secured could these associations be at all interfered with. The Government had taken up the matter only after considerable pressure had been brought upon it, and because it had been considered that in doing so it was acting in the interest of the public. The counties in

particular from which deputations came to advocate the principle of the bill were those of Wellington, Perth, Huron and Middlesex. But while the bill made provisions for the subdivisions of counties, it did not make such subdivision so easy that it could be brought about without a fair expression of public opinion. The advantages to be gained by the bill were obvious to everybody living in the older and larger counties. For instance, in some of those counties, owing to the distance of the county town from many points in the county, those who had to attend court, the witnesses and the jurors in particular, were subjected to long delays and great expenses waiting for a long docket to be disposed of. If the county were smaller the docket would be shorter and the county town nearer, two advantages. In some of the larger counties the business of the courts had even had to lie over for special sittings. Then again some of the County Councils had grown to dimensions that enabled them almost to vie in numerical importance with the Local Legislature itself. The expenses of the travel and session of such a body were very large, and at the same time, on account of their numbers and the amount of their business, it was very difficult for them to get through their work within a reasonable period. Were the Councils smaller a less number of men would be able to get through their work a good deal sooner. In those same counties he had instanced, the surrogate office, the registry office and all the other buildings incidental to a county town were, of course, far away from large sections of the population, and so the mere probate of a will, the registration of a deed and the various other transactions peculiar to a county town, became a serious inconvenience, expense and delay. Much of this evil, insisted the hon. speaker, could be remedied by the decentralisation proposed by the bill. The expenses of new buildings and of sustaining county officials would be more than offset by the decreased expenditure made in the way he had suggested, as well as perhaps in other ways. Discussing the safeguards in the bill against the wanton subdivision of existing counties, the speaker showed that a majority of the ratepayers concerned have first to sign the petition for the appointment of commissioners to consider the formation of a new county. The Government, too, wished to give due weight to the rural vote, and the bill required that the petition should represent a majority of the townships interested. The importance of the voice of a township municipality was fully appreciated, it being a well-known fact that one township sometimes pays more to the county rate than three or four small villages. The assessment of the proposed districts is well provided for in the bill, it being stipulated that each county formed shall have 30,000 souls and the remnant must have 40,000. Then there is a safeguard with respect to the appointment of commissioners to find out all the interests between conflicting parties. Their report would have a great deal of weight with the Government and the country. Not only is there the report of the judges, but the majority of all the votes cast in the proposed districts must be in favor of new counties before any action is taken. It is said that no division should take place if single municipalities would express an unfavorable opinion. In rural municipalities there must be more than one-half of the voters representing more than half of the total assessment. The larger municipalities are well guarded by the bill. He would say that according to the representations made to the Government it was necessary that the House should sanction a reasonable system of decentralisation which would meet the conveniences of the ratepayers. The bill provided for that.

Mr. O'Connor said that several of the towns in the neighborhood of his county were agitating for new counties. One town agitated for a county town because another was ambitious in that direction. He admitted that the Minister of Education made a strong defence on behalf of the bill, but notwithstanding he (the speaker) maintained that multiplication of counties would result in increasing the burden of taxation. The only saving as to jurors and others required to attend the civil and criminal courts was that of mileage, but when other expenses are taken into consideration the taxes would be increased. The House ought to guard against this constant agitation in villages and towns to become county towns. The member for South Bruce then explained how easy it was to get signatures to petitions asking for new county formations, and in this way take away townships from their old associations

age of a few manufacturers. Another common objection is that it will lead to annexation, to which he replied that the granting of Unrestricted Reciprocity would take away the last reason why any should desire Annexation. They might as well attempt to keep back the tide, as did Mrs. Partington when she went down to the seashore with a broom. Free trade was bound to have full sway on this continent. He did not believe that direct taxation would result from Unrestricted Reciprocity. If necessary, we could have a readjustment of tariffs and then there would be the enormous advantages to be gained. In regard to the charge that freer trade would ruin the manufacturers, he held that the manufacturers would ruin us. They were a kind of octopus, sucking the life blood out of the producing class, with the exception of a small class who were in the ring. There was

A GREAT MARKET

on this continent open to us and why should we not have an equal chance with the Americans? It is certain that there could not fail to be a great trade in our natural products. He did not fear the result of Unrestricted Reciprocity upon the manufacturing class of this country. He had no doubt, speaking of Imperial Federation, that closer union between the Colonies and England would be advantageous to the Colonies, but a concession on the part of England was absolutely necessary and that was that she should impose a discriminatory duty in favor of the Colonies. If England would place a duty upon raw material imported from any other country but the Colonies it would be an advantage to us, but there was no reason to believe that she would do this. He did not believe in any scheme for a Parliament in London, in which Canada would have but a very small representation. In conclusion, Mr. Charlton said the policy of Unrestricted Reciprocity with the United States must and now would commend itself to the support of the great majority of the voters of Canada. The adoption of this policy would conduce to greater amity between the two Anglo-Saxon peoples. The best interests of humanity would be served by that union and the first grand pregnant step in that direction was contained in Sir Richard Cartwright's resolution, and he should give it his hearty support. Mr. Charlton on resuming his seat was greatly applauded.

Mr. White (Renfrew) arose at 11.15 and entered into a long argument for the general policy of Protection, and quoted an abundance of statistics in support of his position. From this he wandered off into well-worn defences of the Gerrymander and Franchise Acts and then enlarged on the working of the old Reciprocity Treaty. Mr. White is evidently a constant reader of THE GLOBE and quoted freely from its columns during his speech. Mr. Armstrong moved the adjournment of the debate.

The House adjourned at 12.25.

OUR FOREIGN TRADE.

SENATOR MACDONALD GIVES THE SENATE
SOME USEFUL INFORMATION.

In the Senate this afternoon Senator Macdonald, of Toronto, moved his important motion relative to extended southern trade as follows:—

That he will call the attention of the House to the present condition of the trade of the country, import and export, in view of and in connection with the proposal of the Government to open up extended commercial relations between Australia, South America and the West Indies, and will inquire when the Government propose to introduce any measure in relation to the same.

This he followed by a powerful, closely-packed address, rich in facts and statistics, the delivery of which will mark an epoch in the life of the Senate. The Senator prefaced his remarks by referring to his visit to the West Indies last summer, when at a large meeting of the citizens of British Colonies there a resolution was passed unanimously favoring closer trade relations with Canada. He found that the Government purposed subsidising steamboat connections with various parts of the world, but he would only refer at present to that portion of their policy which referred to Australia, South America and the West Indies. Considering first the more remote, Australia, he described in eloquent terms the resources and immense possibilities of that country, with its rich gold fields, excellent wheat-growing stretches and "sheep walks," large enough to furnish

WOOL FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.

This people might provide a market for Canadian manufacturers if they could be reached at any reasonable cost, but experience had proven this to be practically impossible. Indeed, British Columbia might supply them with some articles, but it was an utter fallacy to suppose that any great amount of trade would be secured there for