

This Report appears in Globe  
of Monday 18

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1889.

THE LEGISLATURE.

CLOSE OF THE DEBATE ON THE LICENSE QUESTION.

Mr. Meredith's Motion Defeated—The Division on the Resolution—Mr. Garson's Bill to Enable Young Men's Salaries to be Garnished—A Second Police Magistrate.

MARCH 15, 1889.

The House does not often sit on a Friday evening, and doubtless to-day would have been no exception to the rule had not the license debate come up again and displayed an inclination to go beyond six o'clock. That was the principal business of the day.

THIRD READINGS.

The following bills were read a third time:—

To amend the Act incorporating the Township of Pelee—Mr. Balfour.

Respecting appeals on prosecutions to enforce penalties and offences under Provincial Acts—The Attorney-General.

To authorise the Synod of the Diocese of Huron to sell certain lands—Mr. Meredith.

Respecting the consolidation of the debenture debt of the City of Toronto—Mr. E. F. Clarke.

To amend the Pharmacy Act—Mr. Gibson (Hamilton).

To give representation in the Legislative Assembly to the District of Nipissing—Mr. Hardy.

Respecting the Niagara & St. Catharines Street Railway Company—Mr. Garson.

Respecting the Boards of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec—Mr. Dryden.

Then the House went into committee and advanced a number of bills a stage.

YOUNG MEN'S DEBTS.

A considerable discussion occurred over that clause in Mr. Gibson's bill to amend the Division Courts Act, that proposes to amend that point in the present Act which enables a young unmarried man, with nobody to support but himself, to contract debts with tradesmen that he never pays, whether he intended to do so or not. The amendment was to enable the salaries of such young men to be garnished. The Minister of Education admitted the paternity of the clause, and Mr. Meredith expressed himself as strongly against it, claiming that tradesmen should learn not to trust young men. The futility of this argument was evident on both sides of the House, and several of Mr. Meredith's supporters, particularly Mr. Hudson, expressed themselves as strongly opposed to his idea of striking out the clause. Mr. Meredith did not press his point and the clause remained in the bill.

A SECOND POLICE MAGISTRATE.

In the Attorney-General's bill respecting the administration of justice in certain cases, there was a little discussion in committee over the police magistrate clause. The clause provided that a second police magistrate might be appointed in any city where the Council by a majority had decided in favor of the same. Mr. Meredith in discussing the clause said he wanted to express no opinion on the question of the appointment of a second police magistrate for Toronto. If he favored either side of that question, perhaps he leaned to the appointment of such an official. But he thought such an appointment should be asked for by more than a bare majority. He moved that the clause be amended so as to require a two-thirds majority. Mr. Mowat accepted the amendment.

THE DEBATE RESUMED.

MORE TALK ON MR. MEREDITH'S LICENSE RESOLUTION.

The debate on Mr. Meredith's license resolution was renewed. Dr. Wylie took up the thread of the discussion and spoke for over half an hour. He reiterated the arguments advanced by other gentlemen on his side of the House, and insisted that this was too free a country to allow of one-man government, which was, he contended, what the present administration of the license system amounted to. Mr. McLaughlin said that if the hon-

member for East Northumberland honestly and sincerely believed one-half the charges he stated yesterday he was unworthy of his position in the House if he did not formulate these charges and have them investigated in a proper way. These general charges meant nothing. He (Mr. McLaughlin) might as well stand up and charge the hon. gentleman with being dishonest, with being a thief. That would prove nothing, and would it not be cowardly on his part to make such a charge without substantiating it? Mr. McLaughlin avowed in the most distinct manner that so far as his own riding was concerned the commissioners and inspector had never used their influence, directly or indirectly, to affect any election. As a proof of the satisfactory working of the license system he instanced the fact that not a single petition had been presented to the House seeking its repeal. On the contrary, they found Temperance organisations and Church courts time and again endorsing this very principle that had been embodied in the Crooks Act. The Conservative was a peculiar specimen of the genus homo. Here, where they had no power, they opposed the interests of their friends, the liquor dealers, whereas at Ottawa they objected to every attempt to improve the Scott Act. It was at Ottawa responsibility rested for the failure of the measure. The difficulty in securing a second or third conviction under that Act was not due to the Provincial officers, but to the fact that the owners of barrooms after being once convicted leased their bars to some one else, who in turn, if convicted, leased to another person, and so on. Last year at Ottawa they introduced a measure to cripple the Act still further, taking away the power to put the seller of liquor into the witness box. This resolution he characterised as the worst blunder the leader of the Opposition had ever made. He was weakening on this subject. In 1883 he favored handing this license matter over to the County Councils; now he wanted to hand it over to nobody knew where; and by next session he (Mr. McLaughlin) hoped he would have seen his error and come back prepared to say, leave it in the hands of the Government.

Mr. Metcalfe then entertained the House with one of his customary remarkable speeches, and before he had ended had put the House into roars of laughter. It cannot be said, however, that he materially increased the stock of arguments used to support the amendment.

Mr. Awrey, in a vigorous half-hour speech, put plainly before the House the true position of the question, and showed the foundationless character of the charges made. He took up several of Dr. Willoughby's statements as to practices in East Northumberland, and in taking exception to them was several times interrupted by the doctor, who, as Mr. Awrey pointed out, became very uneasy under a careful analysis of the statements he had used in drawing his extraordinary picture of the state of affairs prevailing, according to him, in the riding of East Northumberland. Mr. Awrey insisted, too, that if Dr. Willoughby had seen the Scott Act so flagrantly abused as he said he had, it was his duty to call the lawbreakers to account. Mr. Awrey was talking until six o'clock, when the Speaker left the chair.

EVENING SESSION.

THE DEBATE DRAGS ITS WEARY LENGTH ALONG.

When the House met after the adjournment the following bill was introduced:—

Bill entitled an Act to make further provision for religious instructions—The Attorney-General.

Mr. Awrey then rose and continued his speech on the license question. He said that the charge made against a large number of citizens of the Province by the Opposition was one that could not be substantiated, it being impossible for any person to know under the ballot how any persons voted. In East Northumberland it was proved that the Conservatives had such a system that the votes of doubtful electors were scurtenised by a spyglass by the supporters of Dr. Willoughby. (Great laughter.) The voters placed their ballots against the window pane and then Dr. Willoughby put the spyglass to his eye to see that it was marked as he wanted. The policy which the Opposition propounded was certainly not favorable to Temperance, but after all it was difficult to make out what the policy of the

leader of the Opposition really was. It would produce better contests in the municipalities, because the first consideration at the meeting of the County Council would be as to the complexion of the license commissioners and the inspectors to be appointed to regulate the liquor traffic during the year. The ministers of the Gospel have never yet been heard to remonstrate against the Crooks Act, but Church courts had declared that it was the best license system that could be got in any country. The Conservatives had of late taken a great hatred to Mr. Lottridge, of Hamilton, the reason being that this gentleman, like many others, had come to the conclusion that the Mowat Government was one deserving of confidence. Moreover, Mr. Lottridge left the Conservative party because Sir John Macdonald broke faith with the Brewers' Association of the Province. In doing this he did not act more selfish than Senator Sanford, of Hamilton, who left the Reform party because the leader of the Conservative party promised him and other manufacturers protection at the expense of the consumers. The 200 license commissioners of the Province are beyond reproach, and it was mischievous to bring the charges against them hurled by the Opposition. In his constituency the influence of the license commissioners was on the side of religion and Temperance. That was, he believed, the record of the license commissioners throughout the Province. It was a fact that the clergy and moral men were on the side of the Government. (Cheers.)

Mr. Clancy claimed that the arguments of the Opposition were not met fairly by the speakers on the Government side of the House. The charge made by himself and his friends was that the license law was administered from a partisan standpoint, and, consequently not in the best interests of Temperance. He would say that his own party would not administer the present law free from the imperfections of the past. The system is open to objections, but these had not been met fairly—side issues having been introduced by Government speakers. Mr. Clancy proceeded then to lecture the House on the high party spirit prevailing in the Province; blaming this for the evils noticeable in the working of the Crooks Act. He would, however, not say that a municipal election could be conducted without party strife, but at the same time the people should be entrusted with the powers sought for them by the member for London.

Mr. Wood, of Brant, a gentleman who has made considerable progress as a debater this session, then got on his feet and discussed the license question in a moderate and liberal-minded manner. He summed up Mr. Clancy's speech pretty correctly, describing it as three-quarters of an hour of talk with very little in it. The whole attitude of the Opposition, said Mr. Wood, seemed to be that of men who were urging the public to complain, while the public was too satisfied to think about complaining. Mr. Meredith talked a good deal about his confidence in the people, but the people did not seem to show as much confidence in him; and when it came to the point the member for London did not seem to have such confidence in the people after all, otherwise he would have trusted the people in this matter, and waited for them to complain before he began this agitation. The speaker twitted Mr. Meredith, too, with favoring the transfer of the license administrative power to the County Councils in his speech, but with having left it out of his resolution.

Dr. Meacham denied that the member for London had introduced the resolution from party motives. That charge was not consistent with the second charge, that he knew he had a weak case and was overstating the facts. How could he benefit his party unless he were on the popular side in the matter? He proceeded to claim that the Government had broken its promise as to non-partisan administration of the license law under the Crooks Act, and had generally manipulated it to their political advantage.

Mr. Dack said that it was quite evident the object of the leader of the Opposition in bringing forward the motion before the House was to manufacture thunder for the next election. During the last election the crusade was against Roman Catholics, and it looks that from this out the Conservative policy is to be one of ridiculous and unsubstantiated criticism of the license law.

Mr. Ballantyne maintained that the Crooks Act was the best piece of legislation ever passed in the House and was a credit to the Govern-