

THE LICENSE FUND.

Mr. Clancy asked what were the gross amounts paid into the License Fund for the years 1888 and 1889 respectively? How much of the fund the municipalities imposed by by-law over and above the statutory duties in each of such years, and what were the gross amounts paid to the municipalities and the Province respectively for the same years?

The Hon. Provincial Secretary replied as follows:—The gross amount paid into the license funds for the license year 1887-8 was \$392,675 17; for 1888-9, \$470,855 50. The amount imposed by the municipalities by by-law in excess of the statutory duties for liquor licenses for the license year 1887-8 was \$69,546; for 1888-9, \$87,407. The gross amount paid to the municipalities on account of liquor license fees for 1887-8 was \$156,979 89; for 1888-9, \$190,297 79. The gross amount paid to the Province for liquor licenses for 1887-8 was \$201,542 45; for 1888-9, \$232,511 55.

THE POOR SCHOOL FUND.

Mr. Preston moved for an order of the House for a return showing the number of schools aided by grants from the Poor School Fund. He wanted to know, he said, upon what basis the fund was administered, if there was any basis. There did not seem to be, he remarked, and there should be, for the amount of money to be so distributed was too large to be left at the discretion of one person. He complained of the disparity shown in certain cases of distribution.

The hon. Minister of Education said he was sorry to have to tell the hon. member that he was unable to give him any further information on the subject than was contained in the public accounts, but as all he asked for was contained in the public accounts he imagined he would be satisfied. The conditions on which the grant was distributed were to be found in regulations 207 to 209 of the Education Department, and were now just as they had been for the past eight or ten years. He did not remember that he had made any change in them; if he had done so the changes were very trifling. As to the disparity the hon. gentleman complained of, it was natural the grant should not be always the same. Sometimes the need of a particular school section was a sufficient reason for the exercise of the clemency of the Education Department in respect to the grant. There were many cases in which this might be done with beneficial effect, and some cases where a little additional help was perhaps necessary to keep the school going at all. The Department in dealing with the grant was guided by the necessities of the case so far as its course was not laid down in the sections referred to.

Mr. Preston cited an instance of disparity, the reason for which was not obvious to him, and the Minister of Education promised papers in this case should be brought down; meantime the motion stands.

The House then adjourned.

MR. ROSS' BUDGET SPEECH.

In the preparation of the report of Hon. A. M. Ross' admirable financial statement on Thursday in the House, the subjoined remarks were inadvertently omitted. As they contain mention of a point of particular interest and great importance they are given below. In discussing the Common School Fund and his treatment of it as an available asset in his annual statement, the hon. Treasurer said:—

I know very well that hon. gentlemen opposite have made objection to that item being treated as an asset in the past. They have said you can only draw the interest. They are trust funds, which the Dominion will only pay interest on. The Dominion want consent to give you the principal. Now, I have always contended that if ever Ontario wanted to realise on that, and Quebec and she united in asking that the principal sum should be paid over to them, the Dominion would never object; that so soon as Ontario and Quebec will say, "We want these funds," the Dominion would be ready to hand them over. Hon. gentlemen opposite have disputed that. The cry has been, "You have no right to put that in as an asset, because the Dominion would not dare to pay it over." Well, now, I wish to inform hon. gentlemen that I have the written opinion of a gentleman well versed in Dominion finances, whose right to speak with authority on this question hon. gentlemen will not deny, that the Dominion would hand it over if desired. I will read what he says. Other matters are referred to, but I will read the extract referring to this particular thing:—

As the Common School Fund is solely for the benefit of the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec and the Dominion simply acts as trustee in the matter to invest the moneys and pay over to the Provinces the interest derived from such investments, it appears to the Dominion Government that it would be in the interest of all parties if a tripartite arrangement were entered into and ratified by the necessary legislation whereby the fund and the property connected therewith should be completely transferred from the Dominion to the Provinces, and I am directed to ask your consideration of this suggestion.

The reading of the letter excited much applause. The Treasurer continued:—

This letter, Mr. Speaker, is from the Hon. Finance Minister of the Dominion of Canada. (Applause.) Now, I would ask hon. gentlemen opposite where they stand in their objections to this item? I have myself always contended that if Ontario chose to demand the payment of the capital held in trust for her by the Dominion, the Dominion would never hesitate to hand it over. And here we have the Finance Minister asking us to take it over. If we did accept it and place it in the bank to our credit, would it not be a cash asset? Hon. gentlemen are rather unfortunate in their contentions. First of all, they objected that we should take in any of these funds held by the Dominion as part of our assets. Then in course of time they gradually let themselves down a little. Then they took emphatic ground in regard to the \$2,848,000 placed to our credit by the Finance Minister under the Act of 1884. They said the Act provided that interest only was to be paid. That was their contention for a year or two until the Finance Minister placed the amount in his public accounts to the credit of Ontario as capital due to her, and now we have the Finance Minister of the Dominion himself casting to the winds the last vestige of their claim, that the Common School Fund could not be treated as an available asset, by inviting us to take the money out of their hands! (Applause.)

COUNTY ROADS.

Mr. Guthrie has introduced a bill to amend the Municipal Act. The main provision is a very important one, affecting county roads. It proposes to invest County Councils with the power to pass by-laws to give up gratis to the local municipalities all county roads—not toll roads—the local municipality being thereby responsible for their repair. There are many counties which have extensive systems of county roads—some purchased from Joint Stock Companies, and some assumed and afterwards gravelled and macadamised at the expense of the county. This bill has been petitioned for by the County Council of Wellington—a county which owns about 150 miles of gravel roads. There are no tolls on these roads.

POOR SCHOOL GRANT.

Messrs. Armstrong, Lyon, Bronson and Connee waited on the Minister of Education and Minister of Agriculture in the afternoon with a view to induce the Government to give to poor schools in outlying districts the grant of \$10,000 withdrawn from the Provincial Exhibition. They asked that, if such a proposal could not be entertained, the present grant to poor schools be increased at least by \$10,000. They represented that there were many schools in these districts paying a tax of three cents on the dollar, and that there are localities where new settlers have gone in unable to support schools. The Minister of Education replied that he would endeavor to add to the grant in the supplementary estimates. The deputation also asked that the trustees of schools in these districts be