

THE ASSEMBLY.

Discussion on the Poor School Grant.

TORONTO REGISTRY OFFICES.

Government Bills Advanced a Stage.

THE LAW RESPECTING MORTGAGES.

Another Batch of License Commissioners—Deputation from Bracebridge—Private Bills Read a Second Time.

February 21, 1890.

Friday is generally classed a dull day in the House, but the session to-day was more than usually interesting. A discussion took place on the distribution of the poor school grant, the Opposition, so far as heard from, insinuating that the grant was construed unduly in favor of Separate School establishment by the Education Department. The lucid explanation given by the Minister of Education of the manner in which the fund is distributed convinced the House that the construction put on its apportionment and the Separate School law was erroneous. The remainder of the sitting was taken up by second readings of public and private bills. The House rose at six o'clock.

PETITIONS.

There were only three petitions presented to-day, and they were:—

From R. A. Agnew and others, Toronto, praying for an Act to amend the Assessment Act respecting the assessment of dwellings—Mr. Leys.

Praying for the incorporation of Walkerville into a town—Mr. Balfour.

From the County Council of Wentworth, asking amendments to the Assessment Act respecting the assessment of real property of railways—Dr. McMahon.

FIRST READINGS.

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

To prevent the sale of meat and milk from animals suffering with tuberculosis—Mr. Graham.

To amend the General Mining Act—Mr. Hardy.

Respecting the inspection of boilers and examination of engineers—Mr. Garson.

To secure the costs in certain actions against Justices of the Peace—The Attorney-General.

AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS.

Mr. Davies asked—Have the Government under consideration any plan to make more accurate and efficient the annual audit of accounts in municipalities either by appointment of a Government auditor or otherwise?

The Attorney-General said the matter was one that had been for some time under the consideration of the Government, but they were not prepared to take any action in the matter just now.

POOR SCHOOL GRANTS.

Mr. Preston moved again for a return showing the number of schools aided by grants from the Poor School Fund. When the motion came up previously it was pointed out by the Minister of Education that the information was contained in the public accounts. Mr. Preston had then asked how it was that in a particular section one school got a grant of \$100 and the adjoining school only \$16, and the Minister of Education promised to look up that particular case. The township in question is that of North Crosby, the sections Nos. 7 and 8 in Leeds and Lanark.

In giving the information he had promised on the subject Hon. Mr. Ross explained the manner in which the Poor School Fund is divided as between Separate and Public School claimants. There is an annual grant, he pointed out, of \$25,000 as a poor school grant, and in order that this

amount might be fairly made between the two sets of schools, Public and Separate, the same proportion as in the case of the Public School grant had been set apart, namely, one-fourteenth of the whole, which amounted, in the case of this fund, to \$1,700 a year; aid to Separate Schools from this fund beyond this amount was withheld. Similarly as to the Public Schools. When their proportion of the fund was exhausted there was no encroachment made on the proportion set apart for the Separate Schools, unless it should happen that that fund remained unexhausted through lack of applications. The applications from the Public Schools were generally in excess of the ability of the fund, so it was customary to strike an average. Last year only 80 per cent. of the total amount asked for in the applications could be paid. The applications came from the Inspectors, and were granted entirely on their recommendations. The Inspector of this district asked for a grant of \$20 each to Sections Nos. 7 and 8, and got eighty per cent. of that amount. No. 7 was a Separate School, No. 8 a Public School. No. 7 got the additional grant of \$100. In the case of schools that were particularly needy a departure from the average was made, both as to Public and Separate Schools. It was increased in case of the building of a new school or rebuilding of an old one. For several years after the proportionate amount had been set apart for the use of the poor schools among the Separate Schools, there were no applications from the Separate Schools. Last year there were a great number and the percentage had to be applied as in the case of the Public Schools, otherwise the proportion to which the Public Schools were entitled would have been encroached upon, in which case there would have been the objection raised that the Separate Schools were getting more than their share. The hon. gentleman said he had asked the Inspector of the district for a special report, which was produced and read to the House. It stated that the district was a very poor one, Section No. 7 particularly, and there was no place, in the opinion of the Inspector, more worthy of assistance. It appeared that that year the school in question was greatly in need of the hundred dollars, and it was given specially, as even with that amount included the proportion to which Separate Schools were entitled would not be exceeded. The Minister of Education remarked that the same principle applied all through, including the schools of the Rainy River District, Algoma and Muskoka. Special cases received special consideration. Sometimes it was a new school that had to be built, now an old one rebuilt, sometimes the district was an exceptionally poor one, and in many other ways the amount of the grant was liable to be affected. He was sure the extra grant had in this case been given because it was needed. He hoped Mr. Preston was satisfied.

Mr. Meredith asked when the change to which the Minister of Education referred was made—when the amount was proportioned in the manner he had described.

Mr. Ross—About four years ago.

Mr. Preston said he did not find fault with the giving of this special grant because it was given to a Separate School, but he thought it wrong that the section immediately adjoining and equally poor should receive only \$16.

The Minister of Education pointed out that Mr. Preston had forgotten that the grants were made on the recommendations of the Inspectors of the different districts.

Mr. Preston asked what Inspector had made the report the Minister had referred to?

Mr. Ross—William Johnson, of Leeds.

Mr. Preston said he accepted the explanation of Mr. Ross.

Mr. A. F. Wood (Hastings), however, was not to be satisfied so easily. He asked Mr. Ross if he understood him to say that the Poor School Fund, which had been formerly distributed over the whole Province, regardless of the denomination of the schools, was now divided off into Separate and Public School funds.

Mr. Ross repeated his explanation. Just as the \$240,000 of the Public School Fund was divided up, 1-14th going to the Separate Schools and 13-14ths to the Public Schools, so with the \$25,000 poor school grant. Up to 1886 there were no applications from Separate School Inspectors for grants. One of the latter spoke of a poor school in his district, and he (Mr. Ross) had mentioned this fund, telling him he was certainly entitled to a share of it. To prevent the fund being, however, unfairly absorbed by either class of schools this proportion division had been made.

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