

Provincial Government at the present time.

ELECTORAL DIVISION GRANTS.

Mr. Rorke asked :—

Has the Government decided to increase the annual grant this session to the Electoral Division Agricultural Societies, and if so, to what extent and upon what conditions?

Hon. Mr. Drury said the Government did not intend making any increase in such grants during the present session.

MUNICIPAL DRAINAGE.

Mr. Ferguson asked :—

Do the Government propose to introduce any legislation during the present session towards simplifying or reducing the costs of arbitration in municipal drainage, as promised last session?

Hon. Mr. Hardy replied in the negative, and Mr. Ferguson said he was sorry for that.

THE UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS.

Mr. Clarke, of Wellington, asked :—

How many lecture rooms and teachers' rooms were in use in Toronto University building before the late fire, and how many rooms of each class are still available within the building? What increased accommodation for teachers and lecturers could be obtained by fitting up the residence wing as lecture rooms and teachers' rooms? What amount of expenditure would be required for this purpose, and how long would it take to make the necessary changes?

The Minister of Education, in reply, read a letter from Sir Daniel Wilson, President of the University, in which the following facts were given :—

There were in use fourteen lecture rooms. By placing a temporary roof over the floor of the museum we have recovered the use of eight lecture rooms, and a ninth is being repaired, and will speedily be available. Fortunately the completion of the new Biological building this year has enabled us to secure the use of lecture rooms there in lieu of those destroyed.

The destruction of the reading room attached to the library, as well as of the students' common room, and the lady students' parlor, is a serious loss. But to meet this the hall and parlor of the College Y. M. C. A. have been appropriated, with satisfactory results.

The Registrar's room was destroyed, but an office has been provided for him in the residence of the Dean. The Dean has also given up his drawing room as an office for the President; and his dining-room is appropriated both for Council and Committee meetings and as a lecture room.

Seven sitting rooms for Professors, Lecturers and Fellows were destroyed. Another in the west end has been given up to the

lady students. But temporary arrangements have been made among the various Professors by which, in the surviving rooms and in the residence, their work can be carried on.

The Senate and Council Chamber along with the adjoining Committee rooms were destroyed. Temporary accommodation has been provided in the Biological buildings, which has proved satisfactory.

As to the question of the amount of expenditure required to adapt the west wing for accommodating the professors and lecturers, Mr. Dick, the University architect, made a special report on this subject, prior to the erection of the new Biological building, in which he stated that the residence wing is wholly unadapted for such a purpose, and any attempt to readapt it would involve a greater outlay than to pull the whole down and rebuild it.

POOR SCHOOL GRANT.

Mr. Marter moved the following resolution :—

That in the opinion of this House it is expedient that the Government should take into consideration the propriety of further increasing the grants to the poor schools; and also, a change in the mode of distributing the Legislative school grant so far as it may affect thinly and sparsely settled districts.

Mr. Marter discussed the question at some length, showing very clearly the difficulties the children of poor districts labor under with the present grant, and contending generally on behalf of the propositions of the resolution.

Mr. A. F. Wood supported the purport of the resolution. In his own district the people were very much exercised over the distribution of the ordinary school grant. They felt that they had a right at least to a portion of the money which Northwestern Ontario contributed to the Province. The grant should be distributed in proportion to the needs of the people.

Mr. Waters said that the older sections of the Province should give even a more generous grant than now to the poor schools of the Province.

Hon. Mr. Drury also argued in favor of increasing the amount of the grant. In course of time, he thought, there would be a radical change in the methods of farming pursued in the districts where so-called poor schools existed. He hoped the Minister of Education would see his way clear to increase the grant, as he believed that the people were always in favor of a liberal policy regarding educational matters.

Dr. McLaughlin thought that the adoption of Township Boards would settle difficulties now complained of. A uniform rate for school purposes would, under such a system, be imposed, and in this way the policy inaugurated by Dr. Ryerson would be given full effect.

Mr. Armstrong made a strong appeal to the House to increase the amount of the poor school grant. The Legislature could not set apart a fund for better purposes

He was confident the older settled districts of the Province were inclined to deal fairly with those who were not equal to the occasion of maintaining schools in an efficient state.

Mr. Murray said he had brought the same question before the House some years ago, when the schools in question were in a much worse position than they now are. Mr. Crooks had been Minister of Education when he had brought up the matter, and his representations had received due attention. He confessed that the schools in Renfrew, so far as he knew, were aided from the grant with fair liberality. He thought there was some truth in the contention that the present mode of distributing the grant was not the most equitable, seeing that in some cases it would allow of a larger grant being given to a school section where the tax was 18 or 20 mills on the dollar than to the section where the tax was but 7 or 8 mills. He was pleased to hear the member for North Middlesex (Mr. Waters) speak so generously as he had done. That hon. gentleman evidently appreciated exactly the position of the settlers in the northern districts, who had so much to contend with. The Government got a good deal of benefit from these districts in the shape of timber dues and otherwise, and should deal liberally with these settlers in return. He did not agree with Mr. Armstrong's suggestion that anything should be taken from the allowances for roads. But for these road grants there would be fewer settlers in many of those districts than there actually are. Mr. Murray referred to the substantial progress being made by the settlers of Renfrew, and concluded by expressing his pleasure at seeing that there was so strong a feeling in favor of the Government dealing with the subject.

Mr. Craig expressed sympathy with those who have to endure hardships incident to new settlements. He thought the whole House would consent to a liberal policy regarding schools in remote districts of the Province.

Mr. Lyon spoke from the standpoint of one who knew the difficulties which settlers had to contend against in new districts. He thought the House should increase the amount of the present grant. In rural districts in his riding great difficulty was experienced in maintaining schools all the year round. The House should as a matter of right lend its aid to popularising education in the outlying districts of the Province.

Dr. Preston hoped the Minister of Education would see his way clear to increase the poor school grant.

Hon. G. W. Ross prefaced his remarks by saying that he was in absolute sympathy with any move tending to assist outlying districts in maintaining schools in an efficient state. The policy of the Department had been to deal generously by the poor schools. In 1871 the poor school grant was fixed at \$5,000 but now it is \$25,000. The increase shows how generously the Legislature was inclined to deal with these schools. There were, no doubt, inequalities in the distribution of the grant, chiefly arising from the fact that the assessment from year to year varied in amounts. If the poor school grant varied it was due to the changes in the assessment. The Education Department sought to distribute the grant upon a fair basis. They endeavored to apportion the grant as it was originally intended. In every case the policy was to act justly by all the sections of the Province. There were no complaints of injustice, as far as he knew, and although it was said that the Department sanctioned too many permits, it could be shown that the policy of the Department was uniform on this as on other questions. It was remarked that in Manitoba the Government is more liberal than in Ontario. Well, they had not a complete municipal assessment in Manitoba such as that of Ontario. Ontario and Quebec were the only two Provinces that divided the school grant on the basis of average attendance. In the other Provinces a minimum sum was given to each school and the section was left to provide the remainder. He admitted the inequality of the present system of assessment, even so far as it affected the older parts of the Province, in many cases. It was an inequality that should be considered and remedied. A remedy was provided under the School Act of 1885, whereby a municipality could assess a whole township for each school section to the extent of a hundred dollars, irrespective of the size or area of the township. In that way the expenses would be more equally divided. Then the Government grant might be similarly divided into equal proportions over the township to the extent say of \$40 or \$50, and the sections left to provide the remainder. This was practically the policy of the Government in regard to High