

To amend the Street Railway Act—Hon. Mr. Fraser.

Respecting the expenses of County Court Judges under the Ditches and Water-courses Act—Hon. Mr. Hardy.

THE CITY OF LONDON BILL.

The third reading of the bill respecting the City of London was on the order paper, but was not called. Mr. Meredith wanted it called, and the Attorney-General objected to going on with it that afternoon, but said it could come up any day next week, Monday, if Mr. Meredith wished. Mr. Meredith thought Monday a bad day, and Wednesday was suggested, and this is the day on which it will probably be taken.

THIRD READING.

The following bill was read a third time and passed :—

Respecting the commitment of persons of tender years.

UPPER CANADA CENTENNIAL.

Mr. Morin asked as follows :—Has the Government decided on any, and if so, what form or mode of celebrating, during the year 1892, the centennial of the opening of the First Parliament of Upper Canada at Niagara? If no celebration has been decided on, is it the intention of the Government to take the matter into consideration?

The Attorney-General replied that the Government had not decided upon any such celebration, but he admitted that personally he should very much like to see the event in question suitably commemorated.

FREE TEXT-BOOKS.

Mr. Garson moved, "That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived when the Government should seriously consider the advisability of furnishing school books free to the pupils of the Common Schools in the Province." It had, he said, often been asserted that the Public School system of this country, as compared with other countries, particularly the United States, was a good one, but there were some points in which, in his opinion, it was susceptible of improvement, as these figures would show. There was in this country a school population of 615,000, and the average attendance at the schools was 228,000. The total attendance at the schools, taking short periods with long, was 464,000. When they considered the fact that the population was 615,000 and the average attendance 228,000, or something like 35 per cent., there was a state of affairs which could not exist without some reason. There was a large proportion of the school population to whom the expense of providing school books was a very serious matter, and often, rather than that it should be incurred, the children were kept at home. In his opinion children ought to be provided with school text-books at the beginning of the term, and the result would be a far better attendance. There was another point to which he wished to direct attention. A great many of the children took their exercises home written on wrapping paper, and he could not regard that as a desirable state of things. Children who wrote exercises on wrapping paper to-day would be apt when they grew up to write their letters upon wrapping paper. It spread a spirit of carelessness amongst the rising generation. The people, he contended, were not getting too much education. There was too much ignorance to be found in spite of all that was already done for education. If the people of Ontario were to make the most of their opportunities and to achieve the future that seemed to be before them, it could only be done by the Government withholding from the people none of the educational advantages that were given in any other country. The whole question resolved itself into one of dollars and cents, and surely, he contended, it could not be urged with any show of reason that the Province of Ontario could not afford to do this. The countries that Ontario had to compete with in many instances furnished free text-books, and if Ontario would keep pace with them it must do the same.

The hon. Minister of Education said he had been pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Lincoln. There was machinery, he pointed out, under the present law, by which School Boards could furnish free text-books to the pupils and giving the Trustees the right to impose a tax on the pupils not exceeding twenty cents each per month. Two cities had availed themselves of this privilege—Hamilton and Brantford. He did not know of any other place. Hamilton had adopted the system a good many years ago and it had been found to work very satisfactorily there. The fees imposed on the pupils do not in any case exceed twenty cents per month, and in the case of the lower forms it goes very much lower, in some cases as low as five cents per month. The books supplied averaged between 70 and 80 cents per head of the pupils. In some of the United States a system prevailed by which cities and towns

THE ASSEMBLY.

The Question of Free Text-Books Discussed.

MR. GARSON'S PROVINCIAL SCHEME.

Mr. Ross Thinks It Altogether Too Tremendous.

THE UPPER CANADA CENTENNIAL

Mr. Dryden's Dog Bill—The City of London Bill to be Taken Up Next Week — Important Meeting of the Public Accounts Committee.

March 21, 1890.

The House sat only until six o'clock or a few minutes later, although an all-evening session had been expected all week. The time was principally taken up by a discussion in Committee on Mr. Dryden's bill to protect sheep from dogs. The bill seemed rather too hard on the dogs in some of its clauses, and was much discussed and slightly amended. An interesting discussion took place on a resolution by Mr. Garson in favor of a Provincial system of free text-books. The Minister of Education did not disapprove the idea of free text-books in municipalities, but thought the Provincial scheme proposed by Mr. Garson too large, and the resolution was withdrawn.

FIRST READINGS.

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

To amend the Municipal Act — Mr. Meacham.