

# THE ASSEMBLY.

## The Question of Separate Schools Under Discussion.

### THREE BRILLIANT SPEECHES

Occupy the House for Nearly Six Hours.

#### HON. G. W. ROSS SPEAKS FIRST.

He is Followed by W. R. Meredith—  
The Latter is Scored by Hon.  
C. F. Fraser—The Gallery Crowded

For a few days past the Legislature has presented the appearance of an extinct volcano, or at least one from which all energy had departed; but yesterday a change came, and all through the afternoon and evening fiery eloquence, hot as the molten lava of Aetna, deluged the chamber. The occasion was the long-deferred debate on the Separate School Law, its scope and limitations, and in the course of the debate the case was presented on behalf of the Government with all wonted vigor by the Hon. G. W. Ross and Hon. C. F. Fraser. Mr. Meredith, for the Opposition, laid down a platform which he stated would be one of the issues on which they would fight the general elections. Great interest was manifested in the debate, which was regarded as one of the most important of recent years, coming, as it does, in the last session of the House.

#### FIRST READING.

The following bill was introduced and read a first time:—

To protect persons acting as executors or administrators—The Attorney-General.

#### THIRD READINGS.

The following bills were read a third time and passed:—

To prevent the sale of milk and meat from animals affected with tuberculosis (to be entitled an Act to amend the Public Health Act)—Mr. Graham.

Respecting the Town of Walkerton—Mr. O'Connor.

To incorporate the Hamilton & Barton Incline Railway Company—Mr. Awrey.

To incorporate the Town of Gore Bay—Mr. Lyon.

To amend the Act for the protection of game and fur-bearing animals—Mr. Clark (Wellington).

To amend the Act to regulate travelling on public highways and bridges—Mr. Bishop.

To amend the Act to authorise the appointment of fire guardians and for the better prevention of bush fires—Mr. Meacham.

To amend the Ditches and Watercourses Act as applied to railways—Mr. Waters.

#### HOUSE IN COMMITTEE.

The House then went into Committee on the Attorney-General's bill with respect to fines and costs of summary convictions, which was slightly amended.

The Attorney-General's bill to vest certain portions of the St. Catharines, Thorold & Niagara Falls Road in the Town of Niagara Falls and the Township of Stamford, also passed through Committee.

#### THE REGISTRY ACT.

The Provincial Secretary moved the second reading of his bill to amend the Registry Act. The first clauses provide that the Registrar shall see and certify that all copies in registers are correct; that the Inspector shall have power to direct the keeping of a plan index book where he may deem it necessary. Clause 5 provides that "if the said instrument embraces different lots or parcels of land situate in different municipalities in the same county, the registration and copying of such instrument, together with all necessary entries and certificates in connection therewith, shall be considered separate and distinct registrations for each municipality in which the land is situate, and shall be paid for as follows:—Where the aggregate copying does not exceed 700 words, \$1 40; where the aggregate copying exceeds 700 words, the sum of fifteen cents for every hundred words or fractional part thereof up to 1,400 words, in addition to the said sum of \$1 40; and where the aggregate copying exceeds 1,400 words the sum of ten cents for every hundred words or fractional part thereof in addition to the above charges; the said fee shall include all certificates and necessary entries.

Clause 6 deals with disputes as to fees and provides that "where any dispute arises in regard to any question of fees under this Act the Registrar shall forthwith submit the same to the Inspector, and shall thereupon notify the person interested or his agent of such submission, and the decision of the Inspector upon the question submitted shall be final, unless appealed from and varied by appeal as hereinafter mentioned. All decisions given by the Inspector shall be in writing, and the appeal therefrom shall be in like manner, and subject to the same rules of practice as nearly as may be as an appeal from a Master in Chambers or local Master."

These and the remaining and less important clauses of the bill were briefly explained by Mr. Gibson, and it was then read a second time.

#### OTHER SECOND READINGS.

The following bills were also read a second time:—

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

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

The principal provision in the first of these two bills is the following:—

"Where under this Act a Company is incorporated for the purpose of constructing and working a tramway, the charter incorporating said Company may, notwithstanding anything in this Act contained, expressly provide that the rails of the tramway may be made and constructed either of wood wholly or partly covered with iron, or of wood only; and may also expressly provide that such Company shall not have the power to take, transport or carry passengers upon or over its line of tramway."

#### THE SEPARATE SCHOOL BILL.

Then came on the debate over which the House and the public have been on the quiver of expectation for the past week. It was not the bill that was waited for, inasmuch as that was already known, but the debate. It was ten minutes to four when the Minister of Education rose to move the second reading of the bill to amend the Public and Separate Schools Act.

Hon. G. W. Ross, in moving the second reading of Bill No. 186, "An Act to amend the Public and Separate Schools Acts," said he would explain why this bill should be adopted, and why some other bills which had been submitted to the House should not be adopted. Hon. gentlemen were no doubt aware, or would no doubt perceive from the many brief proposals of the bill, that its main object was to remove doubt as to the rating of Public and Separate School supporters. The bill contained two provisions. It was found that under the Act of 1863 mistakes frequently were made in regard to the assessment of Public School supporters and also in regard to the assessment of Separate School supporters. These mistakes were sometimes of a very trifling character. Sometimes it happened that a Separate School supporter was set down as a Public School supporter and vice versa, and though the mistake was very trifling, in some cases it caused considerable irritation, and it was felt that a stricter instruction should be given to assessors to provide that no person should be classed as a supporter of a school contrary to his own inclination. Amendments were made by the Act of 1867, by which the Clerk was to enter in certain columns the direction which the rates should take, and it was thought at that time that this should be sufficient at least as a warning to the Clerks of the municipalities, and that the mistake would be avoided. But the mistake still occurred, and in 1869 a further amendment was made, allowing any ratepayer to apply to the Court of Revision with regard to his own particular assessment, and if the appeal was not satisfactory a further appeal was allowed to the County Judge. These were amendments made in order to have the wishes of the ratepayers distinctly carried out. They found that since the enactment of the School Acts of 1863 something more had to be done, and it was felt desirable to instruct the various persons connected with classifying the assessment as to what their duties would be. Hon. gentlemen who were familiar with the Municipal Act knew there were different persons connected with the official revision. The assessor had certain duties to perform; then the clerk had certain other duties, and then the matter was carried to the Court of Revision.

The bill gave very specific instructions as to these classes of officials, the object being to see that mistakes would not occur. If hon. gentlemen would examine the bill they would see how these duties were classified. By the first section:—"The Clerk of every municipality shall forthwith after the passing of this Act, enter in a convenient index book, and in alphabetical order, the name of every person who has given to him or any former Clerk of the municipality notice in writing that such person is a Roman Catholic and a supporter of a Separate School in or contiguous to the municipality, as provided by the 40th section of the Separate Schools Act, or by previous Acts respecting Separate Schools." That was the first instruction. Then the instructions go on:—"The Clerk shall also enter opposite to the name, and in a column for this purpose, the date on which the notice was received, and in a third column opposite the name any notice by such person of withdrawal from supporting a Separate

School, as provided by the 47th section of the said Act, or by any such other Act as aforesaid, with the date of such withdrawal; or any disallowance of the notice by the Court of Revision or County Judge, with the date of such disallowance." Then it was provided that "The index book may be in the form set out in the schedule to this Act, and shall be open to inspection by ratepayers." These directions were very specific, and it was confidently expected that if the Clerks of municipalities, who discharged their duties under very heavy penalties, carried out their instructions, the mistakes to which he had called the attention of the House should not occur. He wished to call the attention of the House to the fact that these index books were to be open to inspection, so that if any elector were in doubt as to whether notice had been given or had not been given he could go and examine these index books and satisfy himself. Then followed instructions as to the duties of the Clerk, and if hon. gentlemen would observe they would see that the instructions were two-fold. First that he entered the notice properly upon the slip; and then, as required by the Assessment Act, he had also to set forth upon that same slip whether the ratepayer was a supporter of a Public School. That was the provision up to date. In order, however, that the ratepayer might be classed as to whether he was a Public or Separate School supporter the Clerk was instructed to enter across that slip whether the ratepayer was assessed as a Public or Separate School supporter, so that he was notified at the time as to how he was classed. But it was further provided that the Assessor should consult the index book. Section 3 said:—"Where the list required by the first section of this Act is prepared, the Assessor is to be guided