

THE ASSEMBLY.

The Separate School Debate Takes Another Day.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Canada Cannot Abolish Separate Schools

ANY MORE THAN ONTARIO.

The Imperial Parliament Alone can do it, but the Attorney-General Says it Would Not do so —The City of London Bill.

March 27th, 1890.

The first business before the House to-day was the City of London Bill, then came the Separate School debate.

Mr. Meredith moved the third reading of the bill respecting the City of London.

Mr. Waters proposed that the bill be not now read a third time, but that the order be discharged and the bill referred back to the Committee of the Whole House, with instructions to amend the same so as to provide that such portions as relates to the annexation of London South to the City of London shall not come into force or operation until the majority of the electors of the territory described in the schedule shall have expressed themselves in favor or otherwise of such annexation. The question of the annexation of this portion of the Township of Westminster had, Mr. Waters said, been very fully discussed, and it had been shown that the majority of the people of London South were opposed to annexation or amalgamation. That was the reason why he proposed this amendment. It was not as if there were only a small number of the inhabitants opposed to the amendment; there was, according to his information, a distinct majority, and it became then a broad question whether this House would take steps to force the residents of London South to amalgamate with the City of London. It would put beyond all manner of doubt that the people residing in that portion of the Town of Westminster are shown clearly and conclusively to be in favor of annexation. If a majority expressed themselves in favor of the amalgamation, he had nothing more to say. If the course he suggested were not adopted, a very large number of the people would remain under the impression that a grievous injustice had been inflicted upon them, for they were not at all satisfied as to the advantages that amalgamation would confer upon them, and greatly feared that they would be saddled with responsibility for the debt incurred by the London municipality. He would not go into the arguments before the Committee on Private Bills with respect to water supply and other matters. The principle was so clear that he need not detain the House further in advocating it, for it was both in accordance with the provisions of the existing laws and in the interest of the people affected.

Mr. Meredith deemed it necessary to put the House in possession of the reasons why, in his judgment, the bill ought to pass. There was no reason whatever why politics should enter into the discussion of the question—indeed it was one of those questions into which politics should not be imported. It had been said in some quarters with a view to influencing members that he was strongly in favor of the bill, but he hoped that hon. members would not be actuated by such an insinuation to support the amendment, but would bring their unbiassed judgment to bear upon it. It had been said that the proposed amalgamation was not in the interest of those who lived in the suburbs affected; but nothing was more patent than that it was greatly to their advantage. This territory, Mr. Meredith proceeded to point out, was nearer to the business part of the City of London proper than three-fourths of that already within the city limits. It was not a question of what were the wishes of a bare majority of those residing

within that territory. The question was, having regard to the interests of all parties, that the amalgamation should take place. It was said that the City of London was endeavoring, against the will of those affected, to force them into its limits, in order to impose upon them obligations for their indebtedness. This was altogether untrue. But he (Mr. Meredith) took this broad ground that the Legislature ought not to facilitate the building up upon the outskirts of large cities of suburban communities which derived the benefit of the expenditure by the city of large sums in public works without contributing towards their cost. This proposal came from the people residing in London South themselves, and a large number of the citizens of London were opposed to it. If any objection could be urged against this amalgamation it was that the terms of it were far too liberal to the territory proposed to be annexed. One of the concessions was that for a period of sixteen years the taxation should be six mills on the dollar. There was a proposition that there should be extended to London South the magnificent system of water supply that the City of London now had; that there should be created within their limits a fire system, and that there should be erected a police station and fire hall. Practically, the residents of London South had been conceded better terms than they were entitled to. Mr. Meredith went on to argue that there was no necessity for reference to the people of the locality, that under section 22 of the Municipal Act it was only necessary that the Council should pass a resolution in favor of the annexation, and then the matter was left with the Lieut.-Governor in Council to make a proclamation, and it was left to the city or town to say what terms should be imposed. There ought to be, before such an amendment as the hon. gentleman proposed was adopted, a clear case established in favor of it, but no such case had been made out. Mr. Meredith quoted from a statement prepared by Mr. George F. Jewell, City Auditor, London, showing the financial position of the municipality, the amount of its indebtedness and the amount of the sinking fund provided for its liquidation, and submitted that the new territory would in no sense be liable for the city's indebtedness. He denied the truth of various statements that had been put into circulation by persons who were opposed to the amalgamation. He referred to a pamphlet, "Facts for Voters," not Irish voters this time, Mr. Meredith playfully remarked, but facts the accuracy of which were vouched for by responsible signatures, and to another pamphlet published in The London South Truth, which he supposed was one of the organs of truth and righteousness, and concluded by an earnest appeal to the House to ratify the decision of the Committee. It had been, he remarked, the custom of the Attorney-General on two or three occasions to oppose legislation on behalf of the City of London, and he (Mr. Meredith) had had the satisfaction afterwards of seeing the House pass unanimously the measures that had provoked the opposition of the hon. gentleman. These were milestones on the way, indicating should he oppose this measure that his judgment might not always be sound.

The Attorney-General said he had no recollection of the occasions to which the hon. member referred, but if he had opposed legislation affecting the City of London no doubt his reasons for doing so were perfectly good. He had been delighted to hear what had been said about the finances of the City of London and the advantages which it was proposed to extend to the territory proposed to be annexed. The reasons advanced by the hon. gentleman against the amendment were the strongest that could possibly be urged in its favor, for the bargain would be so highly favorable to London South that the residents would be glad to have the opportunity of expressing themselves in favor of it. His hon. friend had referred to the provisions contained in the 22nd section of the Municipalities Act, leaving the decision in such cases to the Lieut.-Governor in Council. But what was the practice of the Governor in Council? Why, the Government never thought of making an addition to a municipality without ascertaining in the first place what those affected by it thought about it. The amendment was, in his opinion, a fair and reasonable one, and it was important, before adopting such a measure, to ascertain what the people really thought about it.

Mr. J. Leys supported the amendment, and observed that it might be safely assumed that the people of London South knew a great deal better what was good for them than the people of London did.

The amendment was then put to the House and carried on the following division:—

YEAS.—Allan, Armstrong, Awrey, Bishop, Blezard, Bronson, Chisholm, Clarke (Wellington), Conmee, Dance, Davis, Drury, Dryden, Evanturel, Ferguson, Field, Fraser, Freeman, Garson, Gibson (Hamilton), Gibson (Huron), Gilmour, Gould, Graham, Harcourt, Hardy, Leys, McKay, McLaughlin, Mack, Mackenzie, Master, Morin, Mowat, Murray, O'Connor, Picaud, Phelps, Robillard, Ross (Huron), Ross (Middlesex), Smith (York), Snider, Sprague, Stratton Waters, Wood (Brant)—47.

NAYS.—Balfour, Ballantyne, Biggar, Blyth, Clancy, Clarke, H. E. (Toronto), Craig, Creighton, Cruess, Dack, Fed, French, Hammell, Hess, Hudson, Ingram, Kerns, Lees, McAndrew, McMahon, Marter, Meacham, Meredith, McRorke, Smith (Frontenac), Stewart, Whitney, Willoughby, Wood (Hastings), Wylie—36.

The bill was then referred back to the Committee of the whole House, and an arrangement was made that Mr. Meredith and the Chairman of the Private Bills Committee shall meet together and devise a clause containing the machinery required by the passage of Mr. Waters' amendment. The bill will no doubt then be read a third time.

THIRD READINGS.

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

To amend the Act incorporating the Village of Tilbury Centre—Mr. Balfour.

To incorporate the Kent & Lambton Railway Company—Mr. Clancy.

To amend the Railway Act of Ontario—Hon. Mr. Fraser.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS.

Hon. Mr. Hardy moved as follows:—

That this House will, to-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider the follow-