

1891
Feb. 13

THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

The Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor.

AN IMPOSING SCENE.

The Attorney-General's Vigorous and Effective Speech.

Mr. Meredith as an Upholder of the Dignity of the House — \$300,000 Supply Granted.

February 12.

Age cannot wither nor custom stale the interest of the people in the ceremonies of State. The assemblage in the Legislative Chamber to-day was as large and brilliant as any that has gathered within the walls of the historic building. There was all the pomp and circumstance of the formal opening. Parliament had met and had transacted business on the preceding day, but there was yet to come the formality of the speech from the throne; and this was the feature of attraction. There was some routine work done. Supply was voted to keep the services going till the usual estimates are submitted. There was a little breeze stirred by Mr. Meredith on the Dominion elections, but it passed over the political waters softly as a summer zephyr. If the surface was moved at all the spray was blown in the face of the member for London, who can hardly claim to have strengthened his position much by his performance. His utterances provoked a vigorous and timely speech from the Attorney-General.

The Lieut.-Governor's Arrival.

A few minutes before 3 o'clock a guard of honor was formed by C Company, which drew up in front of the Parliament buildings under the command of Major Vidal, the other officers being Capt. Evans and Lieut. Laurie. The Lieut.-Governor was received with the customary salute. Punctually at the stroke of 3 his Honor entered the chamber to read the speech from the throne. He was attended by his official secretary (Commander Law), his aide-de-camp (Capt. Harstoe); Hon. Oliver Mowat, Attorney-General; Major Vidal, Capt. Evans and Lieut. Laurie.

The Legislative chamber presented a bright and animated spectacle. There was a brilliant gathering of the wealth and fashion of Toronto. The attendance was large, almost unprecedentedly so, and it was select. The members present were the same as on the preceding day. Amongst the assemblage were:—

Miss Campbell, Miss Strange, Miss Mowat, Mrs. Hardy, Mrs. G. W. Ross, Mrs. Alex. Mackenzie; Miss Baxter, Cayuga; Mrs. Wm. Mulock, Mrs. Chas. Mackenzie, Mrs. Biggar, Miss Richards; Mrs. Stevenson, Simcoe; Mrs. Langton; Mrs. A. N. McLean, London, Eng.; Mr. Justice and Mrs. MacLennan, Mrs. G. W. Monk, Mrs. Primrose, ex-Ald. and Mrs. Baxter, Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, Rev. E. H. Dewart, Rev. Manley Benson, Rev. C. Duff, Hon. G. W. Allan, Prof. Ashley, Thos. Hodgins, Q. C., Dr. Rosebrugh, John Downey, Dr., Mrs. and Miss Chamberlain, Mrs. Wm. Stone, Mrs. Lud K. Cameron, Mrs. S. T. Bastedo; Miss King, Brantford; Miss Laidlaw, Woodstock; Miss Bastedo, Mrs. W. D. Gregory, Col. and Mrs. Shaw; Miss Hunter, Durham; Miss Cameron, Mr. Joseph Mowat, Mrs. T. C. Irving; Miss Macpherson, Simcoe; Mrs. McAndrew, Miss Robertson, Miss McLachlan, Miss Cameron, Miss Cluff.

The New Speaker.

His Honor having taken his seat on the throne, the Speaker-elect approached the dais, bowed and spoke as follows:—

May it Please Your Honor:

The Legislative Assembly have elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me. If in the performance of those duties I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me and not to the Assembly whose ser-

vant I am, and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their Queen and country, hereby humbly claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to your person at all reasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from you the most favorable consideration.

Hon. Mr. Harcourt then said:—Mr. Speaker,—I am commanded by his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the Assembly to her Majesty's person and Government, and, not doubting that their proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper and prudence, he grants, and upon all occasions will recognise and allow, their constitutional privileges. I am commanded also to assure you that the Assembly shall have ready access to his Honor upon all seasonable occasions, and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favorable construction.

The Speech from the Throne.

His Honor then read the following speech:—

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to your legislative duties as members of a new Parliament.

I am happy to state that a considerable advance has been made since the last session of the Legislature towards a settlement of most of the long pending differences between the Province and the Dominion. At a recent conference which took place between my Government and the representatives of the Governments of the Dominion and Quebec, definite arrangements were made for an arbitration to settle questions of account, and for referring to the courts in friendly actions some of the constitutional questions which have arisen; other differences are still the subject of negotiation. A settlement of most of these matters during the present year may reasonably be expected. A bill as to the proposed arbitration will be laid before you.

I regret that the Government of Quebec retains its old attitude with respect to the Land Improvement Fund; and in view of the continued delay, and of the arrangements effected for the amicable settlement by arbitration and otherwise of most of the other questions in which the two Provinces are interested, I commend to your consideration the propriety of now paying over to the municipalities concerned the share chargeable against this Province, without waiting longer for a settlement of the balance which is claimed to be chargeable as the share of Quebec.

I am greatly pleased to observe the increasing interest which is taken in improved methods of agriculture, as evinced by the marked success which attends the sessions of farmers' institutes, and by the growing demand for the reports and bulletins of the Department of Agriculture.

I take pleasure in directing your attention to the work done in promoting the public health. Through the operations of the Provincial Board, the dissemination of sanitary literature and the increasing efficiency of Local Boards, endemic disease has been notably less, and an impetus has been given to the construction of public waterworks and sewage systems. To aid efficient work of a scientific nature, a laboratory has been established, in connection with the Provincial Board, for investigations into the causes of disease. A bill will probably be laid before you supplying some defects, ascertained by experience, in the present statutory provisions respecting the Boards of Health.

It having recently been ascertained beyond doubt that the Province possesses immense deposits of nickel, a metal which is likely to be of great economic use and value in the immediate future, my advisers deemed the time opportune for making some changes in the laws relating to the sale of mining lands; and a part of the districts of Algoma and Nipissing in and near the nickel-bearing region was withdrawn from sale and location until you could be consulted. I commend to your attention a measure respecting our mining lands which is to be submitted for your consideration.

During the recess I issued a commission to inquire into the subject of prison reform, and another into the subject of the fish and game laws. The reports of the commissioners on both subjects are expected to be completed and

ready for distribution during the present session, and, in case of their being received in time, bills will be laid before you for consideration.

Among other bills to be submitted for your consideration are a bill making certain improvements in the election law which another general election has suggested; bills making some amendments of our education laws, in the light of the five years' experience which has been had since the last revision; a bill regulating the charters to be granted to loan companies; a bill securing a lien to workmen on saw logs in the western districts of the Province, and a bill to make provision respecting the marriages of Quakers and others.

The public interests and the wants of those engaged in lumbering in the northwest part of the Province appeared recently to require that a limited number of timber berths west of Port Arthur should be offered for sale. A public sale was therefore held in October last, and fair prices were realised. A return of the particulars will be presented for your information.

The public accounts for the past year will be laid before you. You will be pleased to learn that the expenditure has been kept within the appropriations, and that the aggregate revenue has exceeded the amount anticipated.

The estimates for the current year will be presented for your approval. They will be found to be framed with a due regard to economy, and to the necessities of the public service.

I feel assured that your deliberations will be characterised by wisdom and patriotism, and will conduce to the happiness and prosperity of the people.