

THE LEGISLATURE.

Members Re-Assembled and Ready for Business.

THE WORK SO FAR DONE.

Speeches by Messrs. White, Balfour and Others.

Bills Introduced—Night Sessions and Hard Work Hereafter—Business Should be Finished This Month.

TORONTO, 31st March.

The Provincial Legislature re-assembled to-day after the Easter recess, which began on Thursday last. This has been a long session already, judging by the time when the House opened, but circumstances have been against the members settling down to business, and consequently comparatively little has yet been done. The House was called to assemble on 11th February, but between the issue of the proclamation and the time of meeting the Dominion elections were announced, and it was known in advance that even if the attempt were made no real progress could be made with the work of the session. The House therefore did no more than meet, elect the new Speaker, Hon. Thomas Ballantyne, and listen to the speech of his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor before taking a holiday to the 10th March. Meantime the great national contest took place and most of the members of the House made doughty fight for their respective sides. It was natural, therefore, that on assembling five days after election day there should be a certain disinclination to take up the work actively. The delays necessary under the rules of the House were rather welcomed by a majority of the members, and the House was just getting into good working swing when the Easter holidays loomed up and modified the ardor of even the most energetic. A good many bills were introduced and still others given notice of, some questions were asked, a good many notices of motion put on the paper and some of them moved, but on the whole the work was not pushed as it would have been had there not been the certainty of a break in the session. It is but fair to say that, so far as the Government is concerned, there was no unnecessary delay. There are ample proofs of this in the fact that the public accounts were on the table on Monday, 16th March, less than a week after resuming business after the first adjournment. To-day there are two Government bills standing for third reading, and these are the only bills that have reached that stage. Moreover the estimates were ready on the 23rd March, and the Treasurer delivered his budget speech on the following day.

The budget debate is the principal feature of the session thus far. It was attended with special interest, because the new Treasurer, Hon. Richard Harcourt, whom all admire and who as much as any other member has the good-will of the representatives on both sides of the House, was to make his first budget speech. That he acquitted himself well goes without saying in the minds of those who have watched his career and have heard him speak. The financial condition of the Province was never more clearly presented to the House and the people. Pleasant things are being said in their speeches by members on both sides of the House, and no compliment that has yet been paid him is more than is justly due the new Treasurer. The chief financial critic of the Opposition is Mr. H. E. Clarke of Toronto. Mr. Clarke suffers under the disadvantage of having little to criticise, but his speeches are always interesting. On this, as on former occasions, he presented some compilations of figures which were not easy to follow, thereby getting at a disadvantage those who were expected to answer him. Mr. Clarke is always good-humored even in his strongest criticism, and thus his critics are led to treat with respect every opinion that he advances. Mr. Tait, who made so favorable an impression by his first speech in the House (that made on moving the address), followed Mr. Clarke, and replied to that gentleman fully and ably. Mr. Tait rather suffered for lack of material, Mr. Clarke having said so little that even the most ardent admirer of the