

# THE LEGISLATURE.

## The Debate on the Budget Continued and Adjourned.

MANY SPEECHES MADE.

### Large Number of New Bills Introduced.

Work of the Private Bills Committee—The Chartered Stenographers—Insurance Act—Crown Lands Report.

TORONTO, April 1.

The Legislature went at the budget debate again this afternoon with the expectation of finishing it, but did not succeed. The day was occupied largely with the speeches of the younger members of the House, who, on the whole, acquitted themselves in a manner to prove that this Parliament will be the equal of its predecessor in debating talent. It is satisfactory to notice that the Opposition, usually rather weak in debate, has some new men who promise well.

It will be remembered that a discussion arose some days ago concerning the right of a member to have a petition presented by him read at once by the clerk, Mr. Meredith leading the affirmative and Mr. Fraser the negative. Decision was reserved. At the opening of the House to-day Mr. Speaker settled the question by a ruling in the following terms:—

In the case of the petition in question an objection having been taken and there having been no motion made for the reading of the petition, the petition could not then be read. Although a member presenting a petition is by rule 89 answerable that it shall not contain impertinent or improper matter, the practice of the House is that every petition presented to it shall be at once deposited with the clerk for examination by him, and if found to be such as according to the rules and practice of the House can be received it shall be brought to the table by direction of the Speaker two days after the presentation to be read and received. It may then be read at length by the clerk at the table if required, or it may with common consent be read by the clerk at the time of its presentation, but this cannot be done if any member objects. When a petition complains of some present personal grievance requiring an immediate remedy, it may with common consent be read.

A large number of bills were presented, to which more extended reference is made in separate paragraphs. The report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands was laid on the table.

#### The Budget.

Mr. Waters resumed the debate on the budget, continuing the speech which was interrupted by the adjournment of the House yesterday. He spoke in his usual able style, going over some of the most prominent points brought out in the course of the debate. Referring to the claim that the Scott Act was repealed because the Government failed to support it, he gave it as his opinion that it was because the law was so strictly enforced that it was repealed. Taking up the question of the schools, he dealt with it in an array of facts and figures which left no doubt whatever that the present Government is innocent of the charge made by Opposition members of fostering higher education at the expense of the Common School system. He showed by a variety of comparisons the striking advance in education within the last decade, manifesting a close study of the public documents, while his comments in the course of his remarks showed him to be an earnest friend of education. Mr. Waters was equally strong in his discussion of the question of the expenditure and surplus. He ridiculed the belief apparently held by Opposition members that the John Sandfield Macdonald Government, had it remained in power, would have continued its expenditure at the same rate as in the last

year of its life. He quoted the public accounts to show that in its short term of office that Government had increased the expenditure by 53 per cent. To make a comparison between the expenditure of this Government and that of their predecessors he characterised as simply childish, for the reason that the circumstances were entirely changed. As to the wail raised by the Opposition that there should be a reduction of expenditure, he declared himself heartily in accord with them if only they would say how the reduction should be made. He was not so bound to party, he said, but he would be glad to support any reasonable proposal for reduction of expenditure put forward, even by the opponents of the Government. He did not speak as if he actually expected the Opposition to come in with plans and specifications for a reduction of the expenditure. In concluding he propounded the question why the Government was so uniformly successful at elections, and answering said that the Attorney-General had the respect and confidence of the people generally and had so carried on the affairs of the Province that even Conservatives voted for him, feeling that there would be no advantage to the Province in having a change of Administration.

#### Mr. Miscampbell.

Mr. Miscampbell, the member for East Simcoe, who claims the distinguished honor of being the only man in the House who defeated a Minister last session (Hon. Chas. Drury was his opponent), was the next speaker. He spoke vigorously, perhaps too vigorously considering that he was not on the stump but in the House, but he displayed ability which will probably bring him to the front among the debaters on his side. Like the



others, he fell upon the unfortunate surplus at the very outset, declaring that this subject ought to be threshed out so that the people would understand it clearly. Like the others also he failed even to make himself clear, so that if he had any idea of elucidating the question the only thing to be done is to give him credit for good intentions. Respecting the timber of the Province, he held that it was being sold off too rapidly, and advised the Government to follow with respect to it the policy they had followed with respect to the nickel lands—reserve it until a complete survey could be made, a sort of Provincial stock-taking. He denied the statement made by the Minister of Crown Lands that the desired information was already in the hands of the department. Col. Dennis had run over the territory, but no careful estimate had been made of its timber resources. He dealt with the cost of maintaining the public institutions. His method of showing that there was waste in not buying groceries as well as potatoes and flour by tender was to quote the cost of maintenance in Orillia Asylum and in Toronto Asylum, and call attention to the fact that the latter was higher than the former. His idea seemed to be that Toronto Asylum being in the neighborhood of grocery stores and distant from the country necessarily used a comparatively large supply of groceries and a comparatively small supply of farm produce. He quoted the reports to show that the cost of maintenance per head in some cases, instead of diminishing with the increase of inmates, actually increased. He quoted the Toronto Asylum and the Penetanguishene Reformatory as instances in point. He complained particularly of the amount spent in salaries. Before closing he dealt briefly with educational questions, reiterating Mr. H. E. Clarke's warning that the Common Schools were being slighted in an unwise desire to unduly promote higher education.

#### Mr. Cleland.

Mr. Cleland of North Grey, another of the mighty warriors in the last election, followed. This is the gentleman who has so advantageously replaced Mr. David Creighton, until this session the first lieutenant of the Opposition leader. As Mr. Cleland was to make his maiden speech, he was received with encouraging applause by his friends. He did not speak at great length, but he said enough to show that, while making a decided gain in having a Liberal instead of a Conservative to represent them, the people of North Grey have chosen a man who will be able to take quite as prominent a part in debate as his predecessor did. Mr. Cleland has a good



grip of his subject, but, instead of attempting to cover ground in detail, he seeks his effects by devoting his attention to a few salient points. He is thus easily followed and as easily understood. He had to go over ground which in the main had been traversed by former speakers, nevertheless the interest in what he was saying did not flag. He had one decidedly new point to make, and that was the announcement of the election by acclamation of Mr. McKechnie in South Grey, a piece of news which was received with great applause. Mr. Cleland drily suggested that this would help Mr. Clarke's popular majority calculation. As to this matter of popular majority, he understood, he said, that the Attorney-General claimed that the Government had a majority of 15,000. If the Attorney-General said so they could afford to accept the statement, as that honorable gentleman made very few mistakes. Concerning the surplus, he stuck simply to the fact that the Government had saved about \$5,000,000, which fact the members of the Opposition were at liberty to account for as they pleased. Mr. Clarke's unique contention that by High Schools, etc., the people of Ontario were "educating citizens for a foreign State," drew from Mr. Cleland the declaration, that the people had a right to education that they must have it, and that it was the duty of statesmen to see that opportunities were given in this country for the exercise of their powers. Had the Liberals been successful on the 5th March, as they ought to have been, opportunities would have been opened which would have stopped the exodus now so generally deplored. Regarding the liquor license question, he denied the sweeping statement that the Government was supported by the licensees through fear. In his own riding some of the licensees were among the fiercest and most open of his opponents. He ridiculed the idea that the present generation should refrain from using necessary timber in order to save it for those to come. If the gentlemen opposite feared that the timber was being unwisely taken off to supply the American market he suggested that they should apply to their friends in Ottawa to reimpose the export duty on logs. This course, it may be remarked, is not likely to be taken. Mr. Cleland pointed out that in the last timber sales this Government provided that the timber should be cut in the country. He expressed a natural disappointment that the Opposition had confined themselves to vague and general charges in all their attempts at criticism in the House.

Mr. A. F. Campbell, member for East Algoma, was the last speaker before 6 o'clock and he left the floor when the House resumed at 7:30 o'clock. Not content with the extended dealing preceding members of the Opposition had had with the question of the surplus, he devoted ten minutes to it. He devoted himself, as preceding speakers had done, to showing how it did not amount to nearly \$5,000,000, but only \$700,000 or \$800,000, for the existence of which sum he claimed the present Government could rightfully take no credit. After satisfying himself, and relieving his mind with respect to the surplus—and the hon. member talked with readiness and vigorous elocution on resurrected election topics—he turned to the policy of the Government in the matter of colonisation roads. In the hope that the ears of his constituents might catch his words, he urged the expenditure of more money in East Algoma for roads, and asked that when the supplementary estimates are brought down an amount of money be put in them for the purpose of assisting the immigration of settlers to that district. He had put in his vague disclaimer against the Province sacrificing the interests of the Common School system to High Schools, and was taking up the question of licenses, when, 6 o'clock having come, the Speaker left the chair.

Continuing after recess, Mr. Campbell advocated a scheme for loaning Government money to the farmers at a low rate with a view to promoting agriculture. He reiterated the general charges made by others concerning the liquor license administration, and contended that some of the commissioners should be members of the board by virtue of some other office held by them, as for instance mayors and Reeves. He declared his intention of making detailed charges against the Government, and went on to talk in general terms of certain breaches of the license law in a small Algoma village which he did not name, and a failure to punish them by some officials whom he did not clearly indicate.

#### Mr. Charlton.

Mr. W. A. Charlton followed in a brief but bright and telling speech. He remarked very justly in opening that the Opposition did not seem to be really serious in their criticisms. He dealt particularly with the timber policy of the Government, starting with a contrast between it and the policy of the Dominion Government—one yielding large revenue to the people from the public domain, the other making the public domain a means of rewarding political favorites. He quoted from the Dominion statistical abstract the statement that the disputed territory which had been awarded to Ontario embraced 95,000 square miles covered with timber of the most valuable description, and would meet the demands of commerce for centuries to come. He showed that in 1872 John Sandfield Macdonald's Government sold 4,592 square miles of timber, and the House approved the sale, only four members voting to condemn it. And in all the years since that time up to last year, this Government had sold only 2,275 square miles less