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### The Registry Act.

The bill introduced by Mr. McColl of West Elgin to amend the Registry Act is as follows:—

No greater fee than 25 cents shall be charged for searching the abstract index with respect to any lot or part of a lot as originally patented by the Crown, or as afterwards subdivided into smaller lots as shown by any registered map or plan thereof, whatever number of entries may be contained therein.

In explaining this measure Mr. McColl spoke in such a low tone of voice that he could not be distinctly heard. He was understood to complain that the system was unjust in that it virtually compelled a person desiring an abstract concerning part of a lot to pay for information a part of which he did not want. The Attorney-General pointed out that in the case of lots in a place like Toronto, where small subdivision had been made, the proposed law would work unjustly. However, he desired the bill to go to a committee in order that it might be fully considered. The bill was referred to the following committee:—Hon. Mr. Hardy, Hon. Mr. Gibson, Messrs. Clancy, Evanturel, Meredith, Fraser, Whitney, Garrow, Wood (Hastings), Balfour, Miscampbell, Meacham, Clarke (Wellington), Preston, Guthrie, M. Kay (Woodstock) and O'Connor.

### County Bridges.

Mr. Willoughby's bill to amend the Municipal Act deals with the question of county bridges, and provides that even though a bridge may be built a specified short distance from the line between two townships it shall be deemed a county bridge. Mr. Blezard objected that the bill was intended to affect only the case in Seymour Township, concerning which representations have been made to the Government and in which case he contended the effort is made to saddle Peterborough Township with a share of the cost of the bridge to the relief of Northumberland and Durham, to which it properly appertained. Mr. Willoughby contended there were other similar cases in the Province. Mr. Waters approved the bill, and Mr. Mackenzie referred to a difficulty in his own county in which the Council was saddled with the cost of bridges over small streams which were never now since the county had been cleared up 100 feet in width, the judges having decided that the width of a stream was the distance between its well-defined banks. Mr. Hardy said the case in Seymour Township was not without difficulty, and said that information concerning such cases could be got before the committee. He advised that the bill should be allowed to go to the Municipal Committee. This course was adopted.

### Mr. G. B. Smith's Municipal Bills.

Mr. Smith proposed the second reading and reference to the Municipal Committee of his bill (107) to amend the Municipal Act. This bill provides that the petition of 150 resident freeholders and householders, instead of 100 as is now the case, shall be necessary to incorporation of a village, and that these shall have been resident in the village for six months before the petition. The present law, he said, was evaded by mere temporary and formal residence. Mr. Balfour objected to 150 as too high, it including practically all the freeholders and householders in a population of 750. Mr. Gibson suggested that provision should be made for notice to be given of the proposal to incorporate, as under the present system injustice was inflicted upon parties interested but not informed of the proceedings. The bill was read a second time and referred to the Municipal Committee.

Mr. Smith's bill (109) to amend the Municipal Act provides, as has been previously explained, for regulating the voting in township elections. Mr. Smith explained its several clauses. Mr. Wood (Hastings) objected to changes in the present system and to the introduction of what he believed to be more complicated legal machinery. Mr. Balfour thought the proposed system would not be complicated as Mr. Wood expected, but that it would relieve the clerk of unnecessary work in writing out voters' lists. Mr. Meredith protested against frequent changes in the machinery.

member go on; the bill has no other advocate in the House." The incident was one to arouse the pugnacity of Toronto's junior member, and he went into the case with vigor, making a strong, clever and successful fight for his bill. He said he would be sorry to think the bill had no other advocate in the House but himself. In these days, when people in professions of all kinds were licensed, he thought it would be a pity that in an act like this, asked for by a body of gentlemen, should fail for want of proper consideration. The fact that these were workmen should not debar them from receiving just attention. In answer to the objection raised by Mr. Miscampbell that this would prevent engineers now working from taking charge of a larger plant than that they had in charge at the passing of the bill, he pointed out that this could be overcome by the party passing the prescribed examination. As to the plea that the labor of engineers now at work would be interfered with, he read from the bill the provision that such persons might receive certificates on paying the required fee without passing an examination. He thought none would object to that part of the bill providing for the inspection of boilers, and urged for the sake of these clauses at least the bill should be read the second time and sent before the committee.

Mr. Fraser argued in favor of allowing the bill to go before a committee, as he said the House committed itself to nothing by taking that course. There was much to be said, he contended, in favor of an association to examine and give certificates to engineers on the same basis as was now done in the case of architects. The committee should have power to report any bill in place of this. As against Mr. Fraser's arguments Mr. Meredith urged the inconvenience to persons who believe their interests to be attacked of being compelled to attend a committee, and held that an intention to legislate on the subject was the only reasonable justification for it. After some further discussion the bill was read the second time and referred to the following committee, which is given power to report this or any other bill:—

Hon. Mr. Dryden, Messrs. Davis, Gilmour, Clancy, Hudson, Wood (Brant), Mackenzie (West Lambton), Whitney, Miscampbell, Tait.

### Noxious Weeds.

Mr. Wood (Brant) proposed the second reading of his bill to amend the act to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and diseases affecting fruit trees. He disclaimed any desire to lecture the farmers, but he recognized a practical evil and desired to meet it. He spoke particularly of the reappearance of smut in Ontario wheat, due, as he believed, in a large measure to the feeding of cattle of grain from the Northwest affected by the disease. Mr. Dryden, while recognizing and deploring the difficulty, expressed doubt that the bill would meet it. If the farmers could be prevented from sowing smut the disease would soon disappear, but once sown the only cure was pulling up and burning. This meant the destruction of the crop, which would make the act inoperative, as the same difficulty—the necessary destruction of grain in order to destroy the weeds—had made the act against thistles in many places inoperative. He had no objection to the bill going to a committee, but some of the clauses would probably have to be expunged.

The bill was read the second time and referred to this committee:—

Hon. Mr. Dryden, Messrs. Awrey, Bishop, Charlton, McColl, Preston, Wood (Hastings), Meacham, Bush, Glendinning, Blezard, Mackenzie (East Lambton), Carpenter, Wood (Brant).

### Scaffolding Inspection.

Mr. Tait's bill to authorize inspection under municipal auspices of scaffolding and other constructions used in building operations was read the second time and referred to the Municipal Committee without discussion.

and attributed the mistakes in the recent election to confusion arising out of the difference between the Provincial and Dominion law. He was not opposed to making changes where necessary, but he did not like to see changes made from little more than a mere desire for change.

The bill was read the second time and referred to the Municipal Committee.

### Gensing.

Unique interest attaches to Mr. Caldwell's bill "to prevent the extermination of the plant called gensing," and a very interesting speech, though brief, he made in support of it. He was not discomfited by the very audible remarks of members about "gin sling," but went on to explain that the value of the gensing root had become known within the last few years. But now that its value is known it is eagerly sought for, and thus quantities of it are gathered before the berry has so far ripened as to propagate, and thus the plant is being exterminated. This plant, it seems, was one of the discoveries made in the early days of the French priests, and in those days also the plant had been so industriously and unintelligently gathered that it was almost extinct. On this point Mr. Caldwell read a very interesting extract from Kingsford's History of Canada, telling how Pere Lafitan had first discovered gensing in 1716, he having been informed of its existence in Canada by Pere Jartoux, who had seen the plant in Tartary. The gathering of the root was begun, but as the crop increased less care was taken in curing it and thus it could not be sold. While the plant was held of value the search for it was more profitable than the farm. "In many localities agriculture was neglected; the entire attention of the inhabitants was given to its collection; the result was that in some parts of Canada the plant entirely disappeared." Mr. Caldwell described the plant as having a single stalk, from which branched three stalks, in the middle of which rises the berry, purplish and of a kidney shape. Each minor stalk has three leaves. Last year gensing to the value of \$20,000 was exported, and the quantity was likely to increase, as it was worth 50c a pound as gathered and from \$4 to \$6 a pound when properly dried. It is exported to China, where it is used as a medicine. To prevent the extermination of the plant this bill was proposed. It prohibits the pulling or destroying of gensing (except for purposes of clearing land) from 1st January to 1st September. Mr. Meredith suggested that the Department of Agriculture should do something to protect this plant.

The bill was read the second time.

### The Drainage Law.

Mr. Waters' bill to amend the Ditches and Watercourses Act evoked a discussion, the result of which shortened the consideration of a couple of bills by Mr. Whitney which came later on the order paper. After the member for North Middlesex had explained the object of the bill, which has already appeared in THE GLOBE, Messrs. Meredith, Balfour, C. Mackenzie and Wood (Hastings) made speeches objecting to further tinkering with this act.

Mr. Meredith said he recognized that the practical experience of the member for North Middlesex was valuable to the House, but the western part of the Province believed it was necessary to make a radical change in the drainage law. At present it was a thing of shreds and patches. The law was of great importance to the people of Western Ontario, and at present it was altogether inadequate. One township which he knew of had constructed 800 miles of drains, and had spent \$250,000 on them. It would be in the interest of the country if a commission were appointed to look into the whole drainage question and report to the House with regard to more satisfactorily dealing with it.

Mr. Balfour, who is a ready champion of the interests of his constituents, said he agreed with what had been said by the honorable member for London. No question, he said, coming before that House was of more importance to the people of the