

# THE LEGISLATURE.

## The High School Bill Discussed in Committee.

### EDUCATIONAL ESTIMATES.

#### Toronto Legislation in Committee on Private Bills.

The Bill Will Come up Again on Tuesday  
Next—West Toronto Junction  
Amendments.

TORONTO, April 9.

To-day was a Government day in the Legislature, and a number of bills standing in the name of the several Ministers were advanced a stage. Before entering upon the discussion of these measures the following private bills were read the third time and passed:—

To enable William Barclay Craig Barclay to assume the name of William Barclay Craig—Mr. Awrey.

Respecting the St. Andrew's Society of the City of Ottawa—Mr. Bronson.

Respecting the Grand Legion of Ontario Select Knights of Canada—Mr. Tait.

To incorporate the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria—Mr. Rayside.

Respecting the debenture debt of the Town of Gananoque—Mr. Preston.

To consolidate the debt of the Town of Clinton—Mr. Garrow.

To amend the act to incorporate the Manitoulin & North Shore Railway Company—Mr. Conmee.

The House afterwards went into committee on the bill introduced by Mr. Ross to amend the act respecting dentistry. It is a short measure, but no advance was made with it on account of a representation made by Dr. Preston with reference to the advisableness of embodying some other provision. Progress was reported and leave granted the committee to sit again.

#### The High Schools.

The bill for consolidating and revising the High Schools Acts, introduced by Mr. Ross, occupied the attention of the members in committee for the remainder of the afternoon. There were several important points raised in the course of the discussion upon its clauses. Mr. Meredith desired that every departure from the existing law should be fully elucidated.

The first phrase to which the leader of the Opposition took exception was sub-section 7 of the second clause. It was an interpretation clause and defined what "non-resident pupils" were. The leader of the Opposition saw an excellent opportunity for splitting a straw. He has a legal reputation to sustain, having regard to his election at the head of the benchers, so he proposed to substitute the word "children" for pupils. "The word pupil is well understood," drily remarked Mr. Ross. "The words 'non-resident pupil,'" pleaded Mr. Meredith, "imply somebody who has been at the school." "The child becomes a pupil the day he attends," rejoined the inexorable Minister. The clause was forthwith agreed to.

The next matter that provoked discussion was sub-section 2 of clause 4, which relates to the dissolution of boards of education. It reads thus:—

"If at any meeting of a board of education called for that purpose a majority of all the members thereof, or if two-thirds of all the trustees representing the High School, or if two-thirds of all the trustees

representing the Public School vote in favor of the dissolution of any board of education, such board shall be dissolved on and after the close of the current calendar year." And there is another new sub-section declaring that in case any board of education is dissolved the members of such board of education who were appointed on behalf of the High School shall be the board of trustees for such High School, to hold office the full term of their appointment or until changed according to the provisions of this act. Mr. Meredith objected to the dissolution of the board without provision being made for the board being re-constituted. Mr. Ross contended that the provision was a reasonable one. "If I were," said he, "to take as strong a ground as I think should be taken and as I think would be the best thing to do, I would dissolve them by Act of Parliament, but that would be considered an arbitrary thing to do. In the course of the discussion that followed it appeared that disputes and bickerings between Public and High School trustees were by no means infrequent, and that troubles arose which jeopardised the interests of both. Mr. Meredith's idea was that the question of dissolution should be submitted to the ratepayers as an election issue. Mr. Ross opposed this as being an innovation in school law of which the effect would be very questionable. The clause was agreed to.

There was a brief discussion upon clause 3, which relates to the establishment and discontinuance of High Schools. Mr. Ross explained that the only amendment it contained to the existing law was a proviso that a new High School should not be established in any municipality containing less than a thousand inhabitants. Dr. Preston raised a point as to what should be done as regards villages and High School districts. Mr. Ross promised that this would be carefully considered. Meanwhile the clause was adopted.

There was a long debate upon the second sub-section of clause nine, which provides that "preparatory schools or classes shall be abolished on and after the 1st July next ensuing after the passage of this act." Hon. Mr. Ross observed with regard to this change that he was quite free to say that the Public Schools were so efficiently conducted that they could supply the necessary quota of pupils for the two or even for the three High Schools that it was expected we would have here in a short time. It might be said that these preparatory classes were not a burden to the ratepayer, and in a certain sense they were not, but in another sense they were. The preparatory classes were in a sense self-sustaining. Nevertheless they occupied a certain portion of the High Schools; that was, they appeared on the capital account and they occupied a certain portion of time that was useful. It was important to observe that the work done in the preparatory classes was not so well done as in the Public Schools. At the last examination there were sent up under the preparatory form six pupils recommended from the preparatory classes rejected as below the standard for admission to the High Schools. It so happened that the surroundings of the preparatory classes were not so stimulating as the Public Schools, and no loss would accrue to the City of Toronto by the abolition of this department or sub-department of the High Schools. Indeed, the City of Toronto would gain by not having these establishments. These were the reasons that led him to see that this was a section of the system for which there was no longer any need. He might add that there were indications at a recent meeting of the High School Board trustees that that body would favor the abolition of these classes. They had the matter up the other evening and it was referred to the School Management Committee for report. He thought the House would agree that what had ceased to be useful might as well be abolished, and that it would be better to give the Public Schools the advantage of preparing the whole class rather than have a self-house like this.

Mr. H. E. Clarke reminded the House that the preparatory classes were establish-