

THE LEGISLATURE.

Signs That the Session Draws Toward the Close.

A LIVELY DISCUSSION.

Mr. McColl's Motion For the Election of Officials.

Alleged Annexationist Sol. White—A Point of
Order and the Discussion of
It — Notes.

TORONTO, April 17.

Another week of the session of the Ontario Legislature was brought to a close to-day. The desire of the members to return home again prevented the holding of an evening sitting, but this is the last Friday this session when this will occur unless for some very urgent reason. The House has not worked very hard, though fair progress has been made with business. There seems to be a general desire to close up the work and get away, and Monday next will probably begin a week of very close attention to the work in hand. The Government will claim precedence for its business every day but Monday, and the bills standing in the names of members of the Cabinet will be pressed forward to their final stages with all convenient speed. The educational measures in the hands of Mr. Ross are well advanced. The High School Bill has been almost completed, but the details of the Public School amendments still remain for consideration. The most important bills other than these are the mining amendments proposed by Mr. Hardy. These are being discussed privately by the members, and doubts and difficulties which have presented themselves are being cleared away, so that the discussion will be all the shorter and all the more useful when it comes on. The members of the Opposition have shown every desire to facilitate public business, and seem to be as anxious to conclude the session as those on the other side. The sittings next week will be longer than hitherto, and there is talk even of the House sitting in the morning—a sure sign that the close of the session is not far off. To-day's sitting was devoted mainly to Mr. McColl's resolution in favor of electing public officials, with a brief engagement by the way over a question of order.

The following private bills were read the third time:—

To consolidate certain debts of the City of St. Thomas—Mr. McColl.

Respecting Trinity Church, Toronto—Mr. H. E. Clarke (Toronto).

To consolidate the debt of the Town of Milton—Mr. Kerns.

Respecting the City of Kingston Gas and Electric Light Companies—Mr. Metcalfe.

To amend the act to incorporate the Parry Sound Colonisation Railway Company—Mr. Sharpe.

Respecting certain local improvements in the City of Ottawa—Mr. Bronson.

Mining Applications.

Mr. White's resolution calling for papers showing applications for mining lands throughout the Province since 1st January, 1889, which was postponed so as to allow a consultation with a view to giving the resolution less scope, was taken up again. Mr. White expressed his willingness to confine the motion to applications in the reserved district, and with that change it passed.

Elective Officers.

Mr. McColl moved that in the opinion of this House sheriffs, registrars of deeds, county attorneys, clerks of the peace, clerks of the County Court, Division Court clerks and bailiffs, and other county officials now appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council ought hereafter to be chosen by popular election. This resolution Mr. McColl supported in a speech of about twenty minutes' duration. The subject was evidently familiar to him, and he gave the arguments against it concisely and in good order. He will probably improve as a speaker with practice and greater familiarity with his surroundings.

He did not command much attention except from a few—in fact the House as a whole was particularly inattentive, as if considering the matter of no moment. The Attorney-General, however, took notes of Mr. McColl's speech, as if intending to reply, which, as a matter of fact, he did. There

was no new argument in what Mr. McColl said. He dwelt upon the right of the people to have officers in accordance with their own wishes, upon the disadvantage of establishing an official class (and in this connection he drew an alarming picture of a host of young men driven out of the Province by reason of the discouraging and reprehensive effect of appointing officers virtually for life), and upon the disadvantage to the county of leaving so much patronage in the hands of the Provincial Government. On the other hand, he contended that with a system by which the offices would be "passed around" young men would be encouraged to study public affairs and to aspire to the honorable position of servants of the public. He contended that the trend of public sentiment was in favor of the change he advocated.

The Attorney-General Opposes.

Mr. Mowat replied briefly. He drily remarked that the argument that the present system gave too much patronage to a Liberal Government would be regarded as a strong one in a House the majority of whose members were Liberals. He noted as a strange thing the fact that those who proposed this change seemed to think that the patronage of the Provincial Government was a dangerous thing, but said nothing about the greater patronage of the Dominion Government. Yet why, he asked, should a county official be elected by the people and a postmaster or a collector of customs or an inspector of weights or measures be appointed? He noted another thing also as remarkable, that the advocates of this change did not make it one of their claims that the public would be more efficiently served by their officials than under the present system. Even if this claim were set up it could hardly be justified by comparison of the officials in the United States, where the elective principle was recognised, with those of a Province like Ontario. Referring to the plea that this change would be in the direction of democracy, of giving more power into the hands of the people, he pointed out that this was not a fair way of putting the case. The question was not whether the people or some other power should choose the officers, but whether the people should choose these officers directly or through those in whom they had confidence. The plea was put forward that these officers should be chosen by those who paid them. But a resort to popular election would not gain this object, because the people at large did not pay these officers. Most of the people did not come in contact with them. Elaborating this idea the Attorney-General considered the several classes of officials, and pointed out how each did business only with a portion of the people. He raised a smile by one of his illustrations. "In the whole course of my long life," he

