

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

The Ashbridge's Bay Bill Discussed at Length.

THE PREAMBLE ADOPTED.

The Esplanade Agreement Declared to be Valid.

CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARLIAMENT OF UPPER CANADA WILL BE CELEBRATED.

TORONTO, March 17, 1892.

In the Legislative Assembly to-day the following bills were introduced and read a first time:—

Mr. Stratton—An act to amend the Assessment Act; also, an act to amend the Assessment Act.

Mr. Sharpe—To amend the Division Court Act; also, to amend the act respecting the destroying of wolves in districts not forming part of any county.

The House then went into committee on the bill "to amend the law relating to mortmain and charitable uses." The only change made was an addition to clause nine, at the suggestion of Mr. Mowat, setting forth that nothing in the act would affect any impending action. The third reading was deferred.

The following bills were read a third time:—

Mr. Dryden—To consolidate the debt of the Town of Oshawa.

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

The House then went into committee on the bill "To further amend the law respecting mortgages and sales of personal property," and a number of changes proposed by the Attorney-General were made. The changes have reference to conditional sales:—Where a man sells stock, giving possession, and providing that the purchaser shall not enter the stock until the price is paid. This is not registered, and if a man breaks down he gets credit for being the apparent owner, as there is at present nothing to indicate otherwise. The bill guards against this by requiring special transactions of that kind to be in writing, and that is to be filed the same as a chattel mortgage.

The next bill taken up in committee was Mr. Walters' measure, "To amend the act to impose a tax on dogs and for the protection of sheep."

Mr. Walters explained that no change was proposed in the bill, as the amendment was only intended to rectify an error. No discussion took place, the bill passing its second reading.

Mr. Dack moved the second reading of his bill, "To amend the act respecting companies for supplying cities, towns and villages with gas and water." He explained that the object of the bill was to give greater bonding powers to cities than at present. They were limited in the same way as towns and villages, which he did not think was altogether fair. He understood that the City of Belleville was opposed to the bill, but he did not think they would be affected, and in committee a clause might be inserted providing for their case.

Mr. Hardy explained that the City of Belleville opposed the bill because they believed it would give companies power to issue bonds to too great an extent, and when they would be taking over the water-works from the present company the bonds issued would be of greater value than the property, which would be burdened by a very heavy debt.

The bill was allowed to go to the Law Committee.

TREASURER'S SECURITIES.

Mr. Allan moved the second reading of his bill "To amend the Municipal Act." He explained that its object was to make it compulsory upon auditors to report on the value of the securities of county treasurers, instead of leaving it to the Municipal Councils as at present.

Mr. Awrey said that, so far as he could see, nothing would be gained by the proposed change. At the beginning of the year the Municipal Council appointed a committee to deal with this matter, and he thought they would do it fully as well as an auditor. If any change were considered necessary it would be better to hold the councillors responsible individually for any loss sustained.

Mr. Wood (Hastings) took the view that the proposed change was a good one. He considered it would be desirable to have the auditors report annually on the securities of the treasurer. This would not at the same time relieve the Council from its responsibility.

Mr. Whitney asked if it was proposed to take away the responsibility of the Municipal Council. He would suppose that such was not the intention of the mover of the bill. It was desirable to have as many safeguards as possible.

Mr. Balfour favored the measure and said that the defalcations that have taken place, as mentioned by the mover of the bill, were evidence in themselves that an improvement was desirable. He suggested that the Government should exercise some supervision over county officials.

Mr. Davis also spoke in favor of the bill. The weakest point in the present municipal system was the auditing. The auditor should go carefully into the funds and not take the balances as handed down. They should demand the bank books and go fully into the amounts on hand.

Mr. Waters expressed the opinion that this was one of the most important measures that had been submitted to the House. It was important for this reason—that the auditors now have a little delicacy in asking for the securities of the treasurer and where the money is on deposit. This law would enable them to make full inquiries without feeling any delicacy in the matter. Many of the defalcations throughout the country were the result of this delicacy on the part of auditors or councillors.

Mr. Awrey said that he was as anxious as any one to guard fully against any defalcations being possible. He thought, however, that the Municipal Council should exercise vigilance and be responsible in the matter.

Mr. Clancy said it should be guarded against placing the responsibility upon an auditor instead of the Council.

Mr. Wood (Hastings) pointed out that the Councils were in many cases negligent in this matter and allowed bonds and accounts of treasurers to run on for five or ten years without ever inquiring into them. Councils were also too lenient in holding bondsmen responsible.

Mr. Allan said that in his bill it was not intended to lessen, but to strengthen, the safeguards. The bill did not do away in the least with the responsibility of the Municipal Council. He did not see any force in the argument that the auditor would be making inquiries into the private funds of the treasurer. He was a public official, and should be prepared to show just how and where the public funds in his hands were kept. The bill was then read a second time.

Mr. Robillard moved the second reading of his bill "To amend the Municipal Act." He explained that its object was to give to unincorporated villages the same powers as incorporated villages or towns with regard