

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

Wednesday, April 12.

This was the first private members' day of the session and the time was taken up in disposing of questions and motions chiefly bearing upon the timber reserves of the province. The debate on the budget will be continued to-morrow, when Messrs. Whitney, G. B. Smith and others will speak.

The following bills were introduced and read a first time:—

Mr. Sprague—Respecting compensation to workmen in certain cases.

Mr. Mack—To consolidate the municipal act.

Mr. Meacham—To amend the Ontario medical act.

Mr. Whitney—To amend the law relating to witness fees.

Mr. Waters—To amend the ditches and watercourses act.

Mr. Monk—Respecting sheriffs and registrars of deeds under the land titles act.

INFORMATION ASKED FOR.

Under the head of questions Mr. Clancy asked what sum had been expended on the new parliament buildings since Dec. 31st, 1892.

In reply Hon. Mr. Fraser said that there had been paid out since Dec. 31st on account of erection and construction of buildings \$93,000 in round numbers. Of this sum about \$40,000 was what was called a drawback until the contracts were finished. Under the head of miscellaneous expenditure, including equipment, fitting up and finishing there had been expended since Dec. 31st \$47,000 in round figures. Some of these sums might not yet be actually paid out, but they were certified for.

Mr. Monk inquired to whom and at what price was timber berth No. 1, Thunder Bay district, sold at the sale of October, 1890. Was the sale carried out; if not, why not? What subsequent disposition, if any, was made of the said timber berth?

Hon. Mr. Hardy replied:—The berth was knocked down at the sale of 1890 to S. F. McKinnon, the highest bidder, for \$42,000. The sale was not carried out by him. The purchaser was notified to carry it out but failed to do so, and an order in council was passed previous to the sale of 1892 cancelling the sale, and the berth was again put up at the sale in October last and sold to J. E. Coleman, the highest bidder.

ABOUT TIMBER LIMITS.

Mr. Meredith moved for an order from the house for a return showing all timber berths which have been sold or disposed of which were not under license in the year 1889, and a like return for each of the years 1890, 1891 and 1892.

In support of his motion Mr. Meredith said that he had made an examination of the berths under license since confederation and had found that there had been a great and surprising fluctuation from year to year. In 1867 there were

under license in the Ottawa district 4,105 square miles, in the Belleville district 695 square miles and in the western district 1,345 square miles. In 1884 the number of square miles under license was 6,730; in 1885, 6,503; in 1886, 6,778; in 1887, 6,698; in 1888, 6,605; in 1890, 4,777, and again in 1891 it jumped up to 7,316. Why was this great variation? It might be accounted for to some extent by the withdrawal of certain sections, but this would not account for the seemingly large fluctuations.

Hon. Mr. Hardy said that the variations complained of arose from various causes. There had been 19,000 square miles put under license in all. Of this, 6,000 square miles had been put out during the first four years of confederation, a little over 5,000 square miles during Mr. Blake's time, and some 4,200 square miles under the present government. Of the 19,000 miles subject to license a little over 12,000 square miles were under license at the present time. Some six or seven thousand miles were in abeyance, or had been surrendered from time to time, as men exhausted their limits and gave up the property to get rid of the rental of \$3 per mile. When the dues were in arrear the licenses were not renewed until payment.

The attorney-general said that while he did not hold himself responsible for anything he had not himself been a party to, he found the measures that had been inaugurated by his predecessor so good that there was not a single one of them he was not prepared to defend.

Mr. Meredith charged that by the sale to Mr. McKinnon not having been enforced the province had lost about \$12,000.

Mr. Hardy replied that the matter could easily be made clear, as the failure of Mr. McKinnon to carry out the purchase was owing to a discrepancy in the survey. Instead of the limit being twelve miles, as understood at first, other property had been included, making it up to eighteen miles. Subsequently the property was re-estimated and sold.

Mr. Clancy, not quite comprehending Mr. Hardy's explanation, Mr. Fraser took a hand in, and showed that the difference in the size of the limit created confusion all round, and very naturally led to the agreement not being carried out. It had to be remembered that in a purchase of this kind it was not a question of miles, but of timber, as one mile of land might have more timber on it than twenty other miles.

Mr. Meredith said that no satisfactory explanation had been given to the house, and that it had been shown that the Government had deliberately taken from the provincial revenues a sum over \$10,000.

Mr. Hardy said that there was so wide a difference between the estimates made of the limit sold to Mr. McKinnon before and after the sale that he would not have been prepared to go into a court of law to enforce the sale.

Mr. Marter said that Mr. McKinnon, not being a lumberman, bought upon the erroneous estimate of one of the commissioner's bushrangers. Mr. McKinnon got only twelve miles of timber when he thought from the ranger's estimate he was purchasing eighteen miles of timber land.

Mr. Hardy said that rangers had been known to disclose information to prospective purchasers, and they had been dismissed for it. The information thus given he likened to the "tips" of the race track, which he was told were sometimes very unreliable. People were expected to make their purchases on their own information and responsibility. The motion was passed.

Mr. Whitney moved for a return giving all the details of the timber berths sale of October 13 last, and Mr. Campbell (Algoma) moved for similar information concerning the sale of October, 1890. Both returns will be brought down.

Mr. Miscampbell asked for a return showing the amount due in the year 1889 by Alexander McLaren for dues on timber cut on the berth in the township of Wilberforce, of which he was licensee, and of the amount accepted in payment of his indebtedness, and of copies of all correspondence with reference to such indebtedness, and the settlement of it; and of all reports by any officer of the department in reference thereto, and as to the quantity of timber cut by the licensee, and the value of the license.

Mr. Whitney asked—Has the resignation of A. A. Logan, police magistrate of Morrisburg, been accepted? Is it the intention of the government to appoint a successor to the said A. A. Logan? Have the reeve and other members of the municipal council of Morrisburg, or

any of the members of the said council, made any representations to the government, and if so, what, with reference to said vacancy or the filling thereof?