

that the taxation being burdensome, the Council wish to extend the term of payment and consolidate the debt so as to reduce the annual charge. The ratification of certain local improvement by-laws is also asked.

WASTE OF NATURAL GAS.

Mr. McCleary—From the ratepayers and citizens of the County of Welland, regarding the waste of natural gas. This petition sets forth that about five years ago natural gas was discovered in considerable quantities at a depth of about 700 feet below the surface of the ground in that portion of the County of Welland extending from the Niagara River west to the limit of the county and beyond, and with a width of six miles from the shores of Lake Erie north; that companies were formed and a large quantity of the gas is being used for fuel and for manufacturing and lighting purposes; that if such gas continues other industries will be started, to the great benefit of the county. However, two companies, "The Provincial Natural Gas and Fuel Company," and "The Erie County Natural Gas and Fuel Company," have been established and incorporated under the laws of Ontario, but controlled and operated by American citizens, to bore for and supply natural gas to Buffalo, and have leases and exclusive rights over nearly all the productive territory. The natural pressure from the wells being insufficient to force the gas over to Buffalo in large quantities, the Provincial Natural Gas Company has established large pumping stations, and the Erie Company intends to follow suit as a measure of self-protection. This, however, the petitioners claim, will exhaust the gas in the district in a year or two, to the injury of the county and against the welfare of the people, and they accordingly pray that the act of 55 Vic., chap. 56, be amended by adding to it a section which will prevent natural gas being taken from the ground by means of pumps or other artificial appliances.

Mr. Campbell (Durham)—From the Council of the United Counties of Northumberland and Durham, that section 533a of the consolidated municipal act of 1892 be repealed.

Mr. Paton—From the Council of Simcoe County, praying for legislation authorizing municipalities to levy municipal taxes on land values alone.

Mr. Paton—From the same, for the incorporation of a company to construct a ship canal to connect the Georgian Bay and Lake Ontario, and to grant tax exemptions on all lands granted for right of way.

Mr. Charlton—From Messrs. John McBride (President), Thos. Theal (Treasurer), Edward Irvine (Secretary), R. Brown, James Jackson and G. T. Middleton (Trustees), as officers and trustees of the Universalists' Convention of Ontario, praying for an act of incorporation for the Universalists' Church in Ontario, making the church a body corporate and politic, with all corporate powers, and with full powers with regard to the acquisition and disposal of property.

Mr. Tait—From 400 citizens of Toronto, that the assessment act be so amended that when a man improves his property he shall not have his taxes increased for so doing, or that Municipal Councils be empowered to carry this petition into effect.

Mr. Tait—From the executors of the late Richard Stubbs, to be empowered to lease or mortgage the lands left by the deceased on Queen street and James street.

Mr. Field—From the County Council of Northumberland and Durham, for a two cents per mile passenger rate on the part of all railways operating in Ontario.

Mr. Ferguson—From the County Council of Kent, for a change in the municipal act as regards road building, so that roads may be constructed as local improvements in case of a majority (instead of all) of the parties interested petitioning, and whether the road is or is not a township or other boundary line, and so that forty or fifty years' time may be granted, instead of twenty, as at present.

Mr. Ferguson—From the Town Council of Chatham, praying for changes similar to the foregoing in the municipal act.

Mr. Lockhart—From the County Council of Northumberland and Durham, that the consolidated municipal act of 1892 be amended so that 800 electors shall be requisite to entitle a township or town to a Deputy Reeve, and 1,500 to a second Deputy Reeve.

Mr. Conmee—From Nelson Schnarr of Rat Portage, for permission to practise dentistry.

Mr. Conmee—From the Town Council of Sault Ste. Marie, for an act consolidating the town's debenture debt of \$344,043 62 and floating debt of \$10,000.

Mr. Cleland—From the Township Council of St. Vincent, in the County of Grey, for the repeal of section 533a of the consolidated municipal act of 1892.

TO SHELTER THE MOTORMEN.

Hon. Mr. Gibson (Hamilton)—From the City Council of Hamilton, for the passing of an act to enable City Councils to pass by-laws to compel every electric railway in the city limits to provide sufficient shelter on the street cars to protect the motormen in the winter from exposure to cold or to snow, sleet or rain, while operating the cars.

Hon. Mr. Gibson (Hamilton)—From the same, that the assessment act be amended by striking out the exemption of lands occupied by places of worship, and substituting a clause exempting the building only of every place of worship, but not the land on which it is erected, or which is used in connection with it.

Mr. Meredith—From the London & Port Stanley Railway Company, that the City of London be authorized to borrow \$110,000 to reloan to the petitioners upon security of first preferential bonds or debentures, to enable the railway company to renew certain bridges, trestles and large culverts, which are now wooden, or partly so.

Mr. Fell—From the County Council of Victoria, that the powers conferred by section 52 of the consolidated assessment act be extended to townships, and that assessments may be made triennially instead of annually.

Mr. McColl—From the City Council of St. Thomas, that the assessment act be so amended that the pipes, poles and wires laid down by gas companies on public streets in municipalities, and connected with their gas buildings, shall be liable to be assessed as real property. The Council complains that the law is in a very unsettled state upon this point.

Mr. O'Connor—From the Town Council of Warton, for an act to consolidate the debts of the town at the sum of \$50,000, and to allow the corporation to issue new debentures from time to time to pay off their indebtedness.

FIRST READINGS.

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

To amend the game laws—Mr. Cleland.

To amend the assessment act—Mr. Tait.

To incorporate the Toronto & Suburban Railway Company, Limited.

Respecting the ditches and watercourses act—Mr. Hardy.

To consolidate and amend the drainage laws—Mr. Hardy.

Respecting the Beechwood Cemetery Company, Ottawa—Mr. Bronson.

To incorporate the Portlock & Desert Lake Iron Mine Railway Company.

DUFFERIN LICENSE INSPECTOR.

Mr. Barr (Dufferin) asked the following question:—Did Mr. F. J. Dodds, who held the office of License Inspector for the electoral district of Dufferin, resign that office, and if so when? Was he reappointed to the office, and if so when? What salary is now attached to the office, and what was the salary at the time of Mr. Dodds' original appointment?

Hon. Mr. Harcourt replied as follows:—On November 1 Mr. Dodds resigned the office of License Inspector for the district of Dufferin. His resignation has not yet been accepted. His salary is \$400 yearly.

PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL POPULATIONS.

Mr. Wood of Brant moved for an order of the House for a return, duly compiled from the census for the year 1891, of the Federal census for the Province, showing the population for each county and district and the municipalities situate therein; also the population of the unorganized territory and the Provincial electoral districts.

Mr. Meredith said he thought these figures could be obtained without a special return. After every general election the figures of the different electoral districts were printed and issued.

Hon. Mr. Hardy pointed out that the last return of this nature was issued in 1890, whereas the last census was taken in 1891. There was no means of getting at the exact information asked for by Mr. Wood unless it was specially compiled, and it was certainly information that would be useful.

After some remarks by Mr. Clancy and Mr. A. F. Wood, the latter gentleman remarking that he supposed the figures were needed for gerrymander purposes, and Mr. Hardy jocularly responding that Mr. Wood of Brant (the mover of the motion) had not been consulted in regard to the "gerrymander," the House was adjourned, on motion of the Attorney-General, at 3.30 o'clock.