

Mar 29

The motion then passed. Dr. Barr (Dufferin) moved for an address to his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that he will cause to be laid before this House copies of all orders in Council and regulations made or passed under the authority of section 122 of the Public School Act, for the apportionment or payment of the Government grant for Public School purposes.

Dr. Barr, in speaking to this, spoke in favor of a system of payment of grants to townships direct from the treasury.

Hon. Mr. Ross explained that the grant is issued to County Treasurers direct, these issuing their shares to the Township Treasurers. He did not think that great benefit would ensue on the adoption of Dr. Barr's suggestion, but promised that the Government would do all it could to accelerate the distribution of the grant. The motion was passed.

Mr. Bishop moved for an order of the House for a return showing (1) the salaries of all County and City Treasurers; (2) the total amount of all fees or other emoluments received by the Treasurers by reason of their offices.

Mr. A. F. Wood suggested the addition of City Treasurers, to which Mr. Bishop assented. It was also suggested to add County Clerks to the motion, but this was not agreed to, and the motion passed.

Mr. Balfour's pharmacy bill was then passed through Committee of the Whole, and passed without amendment.

It being 6 o'clock the Speaker left the chair.

On the House reassembling at 8 o'clock private bills were taken up, and Mr. Harty's bill to confirm the agreement between Gananoque and the Thousand Islands Railway Company, Mr. Biggar's bill to confirm certain assessments of Trenton, Mr. Paton's bill respecting the railway debenture debt of the Township of Tiny, Mr. Davis' bill to reduce the area of the Town of Newmarket, Mr. Harty's bill respecting St. George's Church, Kingston, Mr. Harty's bill to confirm a by-law of Kingston, Mr. McKay's (Victoria) bill to enable Lindsay to purchase the Lindsay waterworks, Mr. Tait's bill to incorporate the Ontario Burglary Insurance Company, Mr. Tooley's bill confirming an agreement between the London Street Railway Company and London West, Hon. Mr. Gibson's bill relating to Christ Church, Hamilton, and Mr. E. F. Clarke's bill relating to Toronto were passed without amendment through Committee of the Whole.

Second readings followed. Mr. Caldwell moved the second reading of his bill relating to the Town of Carleton Place. Mr. W. B. Wood objected to the bonus features of the bill, which would tend to set one municipality against another. Mr. Whitney defended the bill. Mr. Balfour was also opposed to the bonus system. Mr. Waters was in favor of the bill, which he thought guarded enough. Hon. Mr. Gibson was on the side of the bill, which he thought justifiable under the circumstances. Mr. Meredith opposed the breaking of the prohibition of the practise of bonusing. Mr. Caldwell defended the bill, relating the exceptional circumstances which led to the request for it. The bill then passed.

Mr. Kerns' bill legalizing by-law 214 of Halton, Mr. Tait's bill relating to the Toronto Street Railway Company, Dr. Barr's bill amending the incorporation of the Pembroke Southern Railway and Mr. Tait's bill concerning the estate of the late Richard Stubbs were given their second readings.

THE ASSESSMENT LAW

Under the head of public bills Mr. Waters moved the second reading of his bill to amend the assessment act. He explained it briefly, stating that it was to tax real estate and to levy on mortgages, investments, dividends and net incomes of persons engaged in professional or business occupations, subject to the exemption of \$700. No other personal property should by it be liable to taxation. Mr. Waters gave an exposition of the details of the measure, and declared that it was not a bill to favor the rich against the poor; it was, instead, a bill that would do a great deal of justice in the direction of equalization. He gave considerable details to show this, and was questioned freely by Mr. E. F. Clarke and other members as to the workings of the proposed measure.

Hon. Mr. Hardy said the bill bore evidence of much care and thought. Whether or not the country would accept it was another matter. The principle of the bill was looking to the single tax, and he thought the time when those principles could be adopted had not come in this country or on this continent. They found acceptance in only one little town in the United States. The bill, of course, only fringed on these principles, but they were contained in it in the shape of the large exemptions of personal property which it entailed. There was truth in the statement that the assessment law was complicated. He admitted this, but insisted

that it could not be avoided, except, possibly, by the acceptance of the single tax, and this, he thought, could not yet be done. It was urged that the present system favored those earning professional incomes at the expense of those receiving salaries. That was true, and the best way to even that up was to take off a percentage of the salaries, rather than make a desperate attempt to tax every dollar in sight of those enjoying professional incomes. Mr. Hardy said he had no intention of discussing the single tax. He knew how ably its principles were advocated by its exponents. It was not possible to meet some of their arguments, save by plain common sense. On the whole, while the present assessment law was open to improvement, he thought changes along the line proposed in this bill were not advisable.

Mr. E. F. Clarke thought the bill would result in many merchants who do not show a large profit at the end of the year escaping taxation, while deriving a full measure of police and fire protection, as well as other municipal conveniences. The exemption of the plant of many corporations also struck him as unjust, and he thought the bill went either too far or not far enough. He thought it should be withdrawn.

Mr. Meredith thought that there are too many exemptions. He held that public property should be exempt, and that all property not representative of the public should be taxed. Something like a rebellion would occur if bank stocks were taxed. He thought there should be a different rate imposed on personal property from that imposed on real estate. There was no better thing that the House could set about than the reorganization of the assessment system. He hoped that the bill would not be rejected entirely, for that would mean that the House would do nothing at the problem this session.

Mr. Waters denied that the bill was very radical or a step towards single tax, and asked that it might go to the committee. However, as Mr. Hardy was unwilling to take up so late in the session and the Parliament a bill dealing with so complicated a matter Mr. Waters withdrew it, predicting, however, that the House would before long pass a much more radical measure.

THE LAW OF EXECUTIONS.

Mr. Snider's bill regarding the landlord and tenant act, exempting from seizure for rent any property other than that owned by the person owing the rent, was read a second time and referred to the Legal Committee. The Attorney-General said he had no objection to this being done, but declined to commit himself to the principle.

Mr. White's bill amending the act respecting executions was then considered. The bill specifies and much enlarges the number of chattels which shall be exempt from seizure under writ. While he was enumerating the rather extended list of exemptions, Mr. White put the House in a laugh by remarking, "Why not bonus him?" Mr. White put forward as an argument for the bill the statement that more people had been driven out of Canada by having all they had taken from them than from any other reason.

Mr. Balfour thought something might be done in the direction indicated, though not perhaps going so far.

Hon. Mr. Gibson said he thought the general view of the present law was that it was sufficiently liberal, though it did not leave the poor debtors in the condition of comfort and affluence proposed by Mr. White. There seemed no special desire for any increase of existing exemptions, and unless there was such it was undesirable to make any change in and disarrange a law that was now becoming very well understood.

Mr. Waters said the bill would virtually abolish seizure.

Mr. Meredith said it would destroy the credit of the country, and advised its withdrawal.

Mr. Tait, Mr. Barr and other members spoke, none approving the bill. Mr. White refused, however, to withdraw. He was anxious to press it to a division, but being unable to secure the support of five members necessary to this, he was finally content to have it declared "Lost on a division."

REDISTRIBUTION BILL.

As the House was about to adjourn Mr. Meredith asked when the redistribution bill would be brought down, and the Attorney-General said probably early next week.

The House adjourned about 11 o'clock.