

# THE VOTERS' LIST ACT.

Legislative Chamber, April 27.

The day opened quietly enough, and a good deal of business of a general character was done. Mr. Fraser effected some wise changes in the canal and aqueduct bill, though he was fighting most of the time in the teeth of a majority. Mr. O'Connor's exemption bill caused an interesting discussion, and finally an amendment was passed making it virtually optional with the municipalities to adopt the principle of the bill. Mr. Garrow, acting in the absence of Mr. O'Connor, then got the bill withdrawn, on the ground that the declaratory effect originally sought being lost by the effect of the amendment, the promoters would prefer the existing law should be interpreted by the higher courts. About 5 o'clock the House went into committee on the bill respecting registration of manhood suffrage voters in certain cities. A serious hitch occurred in the proceedings. Mr. Meredith developed an extraordinary and remarkable antagonism to the bill. He denounced the bill as a partizan measure, as grossly unfair, as an anomaly, and as everything else but what the Government claimed for it. What he particularly objected to was that the registration system should be applied at the approaching election, and the lists prepared or in preparation in the four cities concerned rendered useless. He held that in regard to London, Ottawa and Hamilton the Government could so arrange the issue of the writs that if the present lists were not in their favor they could use the registration system, or, if the present lists seemed likely to favor them, they could delay the issue of the writs until they were complete and use them. Mr. Meredith attacked the bill in numerous other points, and declared he would use every means in his power to prevent its passing into law. This savored very strongly of obstruction, and when the rest of the afternoon and several hours of the evening passed before the first clause was reached it became evident the Opposition meant to seriously obstruct. The Government remained firm, defending the principle of the bill, but showing no disinclination to modify it in details. Mr. Meredith lost his temper very completely early in the evening, and laid himself out very clearly to a policy of delay. He received very valuable assistance in this way from Mr. Clancy, Mr. White, Mr. E. F. Clarke and Mr. Sol. White, the last gentleman speaking for nearly an hour after 11 o'clock. The Government appears prepared to meet the obstruction, and it is not impossible the proceedings may run for some days yet.

Third readings were then taken up. Mr. Tait's Sunday car bill came up first and was once more referred back to committee for fresh amendments to be added. Hon. Mr. Gibson, who assumed charge of the matter, announced that he had decided to adopt Mr. Meredith's suggestion as to a fresh registration before a Sunday car election. A number of somewhat complicated provisions had been proposed by the Sunday Observance Committee, but there was not possibly time enough for them to be considered. The solicitor for the Street Railway Company had made a proposition which seemed fair enough, that prior to an election the manhood suffrage voters should register before the City Clerk; but the other side objected that this left no chance of purging the lists. He accordingly moved an amendment that prior to an election the City Council could order a fresh registration, just as in case of an election for the Legislature. The amendment was carried and the bill reported.

## THE AQUEDUCT-CANAL BILL.

The Georgian Bay Ship Canal and Power Aqueduct Company bill came up and was sent back to committee. Hon. Mr. Fraser moved that inasmuch as there was no compulsion for a foot of the canal to be built after the aqueduct had been constructed, and as the sum of \$55,000,000 was excessive capital for such an undertaking, the capital be limited to \$20,000,000. If the company actually needed more capital it could come to the Legislature at a future session and present its claims to an increase.

Mr. Tait said while it might appear improbable that the company could do more than build an aqueduct, he thought the committee had no right to limit the capital so that it could not do more than this.

Mr. A. F. Wood thought \$20,000,000 a sufficient capital to start the company on.

Hon. Mr. Gibson said he had always re-