

The New Contract Cheapens School Books

Legislative Chamber, April 2.

The law-making machine is working at full capacity. To-day's proceedings, although not giving rise to any notable debate, were replete with interesting subjects. Hon. Mr. Harcourt introduced a bill amending the succession duties act. An important announcement was made by Hon. Geo. W. Ross with regard to the cheapening of school books. Hon. Mr. Dryden piloted a couple of bills through a stage in their passage. One of them, which proposes to grade apples and pears and punish fraud in packing, aroused spirited opposition. In the evening the general bill respecting electric railways was explained by Hon. Mr. Bronson, and read a second time. The comments by the Opposition were generally favorable, the only criticism of any definiteness being offered to certain provisions by Mr. Conmee. During the last hour of the sitting a large number of bills were advanced a stage with unusual celerity.

SAULT STE. MARIE INDUSTRY.

Mr. Hardy moved a resolution approving of the agreement made between the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Edward V. Douglas of Philadelphia, manufacturer, and Francis H. Clergue of Bangor, Maine, manufacturer. The main features of the agreement, as explained by the Commissioner, were as follows:—The parties named have purchased the Sault Ste. Marie water-power, upon which they expended a quarter of a million of dollars. They are to spend \$200,000 this year upon the property, and \$200,000 is to be expended upon buildings and plant for pulp and paper mills. For the encouragement of so large an enterprise the Government had agreed to set apart 50 square miles upon which the company might cut the coarse woods, not including pine, at certain special rates.

Upon the suggestion of Mr. Howland the motion stood over to give the members of the House a further opportunity of studying the agreement.

Mr. Whitney good-humoredly rallied the Government for granting special aid to an industry, and assented to the proposition.

CHEAPER TEXT-BOOKS.

Hon. Mr. Ross then moved that the House approve of the agreement made by the Government with Hunter, Rose

& Co., the Canada Publishing Company and Copp, Clark & Co. for the publication of certain text-books to be used in the Public and High Schools. In moving this Mr. Ross gave some interesting details as to the new text-books which are contemplated. The first is a single text-book, containing enough Euclid and enough algebra for those going up for the junior leaving examination. It will cost but 25 cents, and thus save \$1 to each of the 12,000 pupils preparing for this examination, as the books hitherto used cost \$1 25. Messrs. Squair and Fraser had been employed to prepare a French grammar, and thus a modernized text-book at a reduced cost will be secured.

A new High School arithmetic giving a modernized treatment of the subject, and in particular paying more attention to commercial arithmetic, is to be introduced. It has been prepared by Mr. Thompson of Hamilton, Inspector Ballard and Prof. McKay of McMaster Hall, and the price will be reduced from 75 to 60 cents. A new contract for the issue of the High School reader has been necessitated owing to the failure of the firm which first had the contract, Mr. Ross explained. With regard to text-books on writing the course is being simplified and modernized; instead of eleven text-books costing 10 cents each, there will now be six books at 5 cents each. This will mean a saving of 80 cents each to the 300,000 pupils in the Public Schools. Mr. Ross then gave an outline of the main points of the very stringent contracts entered into by the department.

Dr. Ryerson asked the Minister of Education to allow the matter to stand over two or three days, as the subject was too important to be discussed off-hand.

"With pleasure," said Mr. Ross.

AGRICULTURE AND ARTS ACT.

Government bills were the next order, and Hon. Mr. Dryden moved the second reading of his bill to consolidate and amend the agriculture and arts act, giving a lucid exposition of the main features of the bill. First of all, the act would be consolidated and simplified. Next came the question of the existence of the Agriculture and Arts Association, which, on the whole, the Minister of Agriculture considered to have outlived its usefulness, the Toronto, London, Ottawa, Kingston and Hamilton Industrial Exhibition Associations having displaced the Provincial fair. The association had then tried other lines of action, such as the giving of prizes for farms, most of which failed, until now it has two main duties, the aiding of the Fat Stock Show at Guelph and the Horse Show at Toronto; and he did not think that these were important enough to bring men together from all over the Province to elect a committee to look after these matters. Accordingly, the Government had made no provision for the continuance of the association after the present year.

With regard to agricultural societies one change was the abolition of the present system by which the district societies decided upon the grants to be given to the individual societies; henceforth the societies will report directly to the department, an officer of which will decide upon the amount to be received, and the aid will be sent direct. Other changes were briefly outlined by the Minister.

Messrs. Haycock, Matheson, Whitney and McPherson spoke briefly, without finding much to criticize in the bill. The second reading was passed.

FRAUD IN FRUITS.

Mr. Dryden's bill for the prevention of frauds in the sale of fruit was considered in committee of the whole House, the conservatives, led by Major Hiscott, opposing the bill, on the ground that it was not called for and injurious to the interests of the producers. Mr. Dryden held that the bill would benefit the fruit-growers, and held over some of the clauses for the purpose of making some verbal changes.

At 6 o'clock the committee reported progress, having been adjourned.

THE ELECTRIC RAILWAY ACT.

After recess Hon. Mr. Bronson moved the second reading of the electric railway bill. He said it was intended that the bill should bear the same relation to the electric railways that the general railway act does to the steam railways. The principal features of the bill were briefly outlined by him. It provides that directors cannot directly or indirectly be interested in any contract for construction. First