

Voters' Registration Act Extended to Towns.

Legislative Chamber, April 4.

This was a plain, hard-working day, with no rhetorical pyrotechnics, nor anything to relieve the close application which members were called upon to give to useful but unexciting measures. There was an interesting series of discussions upon the bill to consolidate and amend the agriculture and arts act. The Attorney-General promised the House that, with the co-operation of the Opposition, the session should close next Thursday. To this end a session will be held on Saturday at 11 o'clock.

Hon. Mr. Ross introduced a bill to amend the city manhood suffrage act of 1894, the first important clause of which makes the act of 1894 apply to towns as well as cities. Provision is made as to the composition of the Board of Registrars in towns; in county towns it shall consist of the County Judge, the Police Magistrate and the Clerk of the County Court; in all other towns it shall consist of the Police Magistrate, the Clerk of the town, and the Clerk of the Division Court; when any of these are unable to act, the two left may choose a third person. The interesting question of students registering is touched upon in a clause which states that students in attendance at any University, College, school or other institution of learning situated in any city or town, who are residing there and are not registered elsewhere, or entitled to be registered elsewhere, may be registered as manhood suffrage voters in the place where their University or College is situated.

Mr. Conmee introduced an amendment of the mines act, 1892, to give the employees and workmen in mines a similar lien to that possessed by workmen under the mechanics' lien act, so that where the sub-contractor does not pay the workman may look to the contractor, and if he fails there he may enforce his lien against the mine.

Hon. Mr. Gibson introduced a bill respecting aid to charitable institutions. It provides that no institution is to receive aid from public moneys in respect of patients who pay not less than \$3 per week; this not to apply to institutions which have been receiving aid for ten years. No aid is to be paid to a hospital hereafter where there is a hospital already established and in operation, unless the Government has approved of its establishment. It regulates the liabilities of municipal corporations for maintenance of pauper patients, so as to prevent persons moving into one municipality from another immediately becoming a charge on the municipality into which they have removed for hospital treatment.

Mr. Haycock returned to the attack upon the medical act with a bill to fix a maximum of all fees which may be charged by the Medical Council to any person for admission, examination and registration to \$50. The fee now amount to about \$100.

Mr. German by a bill which he introduced seeks to amend the evidence act, so that the person opposing or defending, or the wife or husband of such person, shall not be compellable to give evidence at the trial of summary matters cognizable under the laws of Ontario before Justices of the Peace and Police Magistrates.

Third readings were given the following bills:—The Attorney-General's bill relating to leases, sales and mortgages of settled estate; respecting the Georgian Bay Ship Canal & Power Aqueduct Company; to authorize George Duncan Van Arnam to practise dental surgery; to authorize the Town of Carleton Place to issue certain debentures.

Hon. Mr. Gibson moved the ratification of an agreement between the Government and H. A. Nelson & Sons for the manufacture of brooms and whisks at the Central Prison by the prisoners. He explained that Messrs. Nelson had the same kind of a contract last year, and it had netted to the Government the satisfactory rate of 40 to 50

cents per diem for the prisoners' labor. The Inspector believed that the new contract would be still more profitable to the Government.

Mr. Marter complained that there had been no opportunity of examining into this matter in the Public Accounts Committee because of Inspector Noxon's illness. To this Mr. Gibson at once replied that he would allow the motion to stand until the desired opportunity shall have been furnished.

Hon. Mr. Hardy moved the ratification of the agreement with the Sault Ste. Marie Pulp & Paper Mills capitalists. Mr. Howland criticized the verbiage of the document in two or three places, and was replied to by Messrs. Hardy, Conmee and Farwell. The resolution was then passed.

The regulations in connection with the diamond drills were approved upon motion of Mr. Hardy, after some remarks had been made with reference to them by Messrs. Matheson and Conmee.

SCHOOL TEXT-BOOKS.

To Hon. Geo. W. Ross was accorded the gratification of hearing words of commendation uttered by that uncompromising critic, the member for East Toronto. The Minister of Education had moved the ratification of the agreement with certain publishers for the publication of school text-books. Dr. Ryerson, to whom had been assigned the duty on behalf of the Opposition of scrutinizing the agreement, rose to make the customary criticism. What he said was that it was a more satisfactory agreement than the last; that it contained more safeguards of the public interest, and reduced the prices. There did not seem to have been tenders called for, and no agreement as to the retail prices. He asked whether the Government would own the plates of the books. In conclusion he described the contract, on the whole, a marked improvement upon the past.

Mr. Ross briefly answered the questions, and gave the explanations which were asked for. He explained that the present system had been found so satisfactory that it was not thought desirable to incur the risks and difficulties of the contract system as applied to the publication of text-books. The Government did not own the plates, because it was not thought to be worth while to go to the necessary expense, but they might be reproduced by any other firms than those with whom the contracts are made.

To Dr. Meacham Mr. Ross replied that for teachers to forbid the use of old school books was contrary to the instructions sent out by the department.

Then Mr. German voiced the complaint sometimes heard that there are too many changes in school books.

The Minister said good-naturedly that he would "have it out with that idea." Since he had taken charge of the department in 1885 there had been no changes in the Public School books except in the English history and in the drawing books, the latter being for the purpose of reducing their price from 10 cents to 5 cents. In the High Schools there had been still greater fixity, and whereas when he took charge there were 131 text-books in use in them, that number was now reduced to 25. In the Public Schools, where there had been 55, there were now only 9.

In moving that Government business shall have precedence on each day of the session on and after Friday next, and that there shall be a meeting of the House at 11 o'clock a.m. on Saturday next, Sir Oliver Mowat expressed his belief that the session would close before Easter. Mr. Marter remarked that unless they were sure to finish up on Thursday it would be unnecessary to hold a Saturday session. Mr. Hardy said he did not think there was any doubt about it.

In Committee of the Whole House upon his bill respecting the election laws Mr. Hardy put in an amendment intended to cover such a case as the recent one of Mr. Tucker in West Wellington, to provide that in charges of treating it shall not be sufficient reply to say that the candidate was in the habit of treating.

A resolution submitted by Hon. Mr. Dryden was adopted, declaring in favor of the appointment of a female factory inspector.

HORSE RACING.

The next piece of work which fell to the Minister of Agriculture occupied several hours. It was the passage through committee of his bill to consolidate and amend the agriculture and arts act. Mr. McPherson had an amendment which caused a discussion that