

Bill to Reorganize County Councils Discussed.

GOVERNMENT BILLS PASSED.

Return on the Central Prison Investigation.

Monday's Proceedings in the House—Bill Regarding Medical Matriculation—Succession Duties Bill.

Monday, March 23.

Perhaps owing to the snow blockade the benches were very thin to-day, and in consequence the order paper, which has, on account of the steady work of the last week, been growing smaller, would have suffered little reduction had it not been for the action of the House in allowing the Government to go on with its business. Monday is reserved for private members so strictly that Government business has not even a place on the programme, but on the order paper being exhausted by 4.30 o'clock it was agreed that the rule be suspended, and over a dozen Ministerial bills were advanced.

Four bills were read a third time, on the opening of the House. These were:—

- To make further provision respecting street railways—Mr. Bronson.
- Consolidating and revising the acts respecting the registration of births, marriages and deaths—Mr. Harcourt.
- To further improve the agriculture and arts acts—Mr. Dryden.

To authorize the Commissioners of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park to grant certain lands to the Clifton Suspension Bridge Company—Mr. Harcourt.

Private bills came next, and four of these were put through Committee of the Whole. These were:—

Respecting the Hamilton Gaslight Company—Mr. Middleton.

Respecting the floating debt of the Village of Markham—Mr. Richardson.

Respecting certain school moneys of the City of Chatham—Mr. Pardo.

Relating to the Sault Ste. Marie & Hudson Bay Railway Co.—Mr. Farwell.

TORONTO'S BILLS CONSIDERED.

Public bills followed, and the first which was taken up was Dr. Ryerson's bill to amend the assessment act. This is the bill which contained the provision requiring merchants to furnish the assessor with sworn statements of their personalty, against which the Toronto Board of Trade is up in arms, and which Mr. Stapleton Caldecott, the President of the board, described as likely to lead to worse than Russian tyranny. Dr. Ryerson was not particularly enthusiastic in its defence. He said that he had been requested by the city to bring it in, and that it might, at all events, go to the committee for discussion. Any objectionable clauses might be struck out there.

Hon. Mr. Hardy observed that the Municipal Committee had dealt with the assessment bills, and that the principle proposed was altogether new. It might, perhaps, be well to let it stand over for a year. Dr. Ryerson assented, but it was finally agreed to let the bill stand over for a few days.

Mr. Howland's bill to amend the municipal act came next. He explained that it was a City of Toronto bill, and that the most important clause was that reducing the qualification for voters in municipal elections from \$400 to \$200; the necessity for this rose largely from the reduction in land values. Hon. Mr. Hardy assented to the bill's going to committee, but expressed himself as doubtful as to the advisability of assenting to this clause. Municipal government might be described as the management of a joint stock company, and a lowering of the franchise would, he thought, hardly be in the public interest.

Mr. Richardson's bill to amend the municipal act by providing for the way in which, in case of a tie, the Clerk shall deliver his casting vote, was given its second reading.

Mr. Howland's bill respecting the Canadian Historical Exhibition was put through Committee of the Whole, very few changes being made in the bill as amended by the special committee.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES.

It was then 4.30 p.m. and the entire order paper was exhausted; Government measures not being given a place on it on Mondays. With the consent of the House, however, Government measures of a nature which would not rouse controversy were taken up. The House accordingly went into committee on Hon. Mr. Hardy's bill affecting the timber slide companies' act, passing it without serious amendment. Mr. Hardy's bill relating to Crown timber was also passed through committee, the Commissioner of Crown Lands explaining the chief features of the bill. Col. Matheson was inclined to question the clause giving fire-rangers powers to deal on the spot with persons guilty of carelessness which might lead to forest fires. The Colonel thought that it might lead to abuse of authority, but Mr. Hardy pointed out that the powers were not excessive and would result in a great saving of timber.

AN ASSIGNMENT BILL.

The Attorney-General's important bill as to certain proceedings under the act respecting assignments and preferences by insolvent persons was given its second reading. Sir Oliver in moving the second reading said the Province had a decision from the Privy Council giving it power to pass such an act, their right to pass such legislation being given by the action of the Dominion House in not passing an insolvency act. Since the introduction of the bill, Sir Oliver said, some very good suggestions have been made by merchants, Boards of Trade, professional men and others interested in the administration of the law, and he had brought in this bill as a substitute for the one first moved to embody some of these suggestions.