

Mr. Bronson's Resolution Favorably Received.

SOCIAL RELIEF PLANS.

County Courts Bill Given Its Second Reading.

Settling the Unemployed in the Newer Districts—Government Measures Passed—The Speaker's Reception.

Thursday, March 26.

Rather an important day's business was transacted to-day. In the afternoon Hon. Mr. Bronson's resolution in encouragement of the formation of voluntary associations to aid in the settlement of the problem of the unemployed by placing them on the unoccupied lands of the Province was passed unanimously by the House. Mr. Bronson's speech was an interesting and lucid exposition of the subject, and the resolution was received in the friendliest manner by both sides of the House. In the evening Hon. Mr. Hardy's important County Courts bill was given its second reading, and a good deal of other Government business was despatched.

Third readings came first, and a number were taken up and discharged. They were as follows:—

Respecting the City of Ottawa—Mr. O'Keefe.

Respecting the Hamilton Gas Light Company—Mr. Middleton.

Relating to Crown timber—Mr. Hardy.

Revising and consolidating the acts to encourage the planting and growing of trees—Mr. Dryden.

Respecting Houses of Refuge—Mr. Gibson (Hamilton).

To secure payment of wages for labor performed in the construction of public works—The Attorney-General.

Respecting the quieting of titles—The Attorney-General.

Respecting fraud by debt collectors—The Attorney-General.

Respecting bills of sale and chattel mortgages in unorganized districts—The Attorney-General.

To incorporate the Lincoln Radial Electric Railway Company—Mr. Hiscott.

To correct a clerical error in the debenture registration act—The Attorney-General.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

A subject of great importance was broached by Hon. Mr. Bronson, when he moved the following Government resolution:—

"That this House would view with approval and as worthy of encouragement any movement towards the organization of voluntary societies in the larger cities of the Province having for their object the giving of such assistance to the unemployed as would contribute towards making them self-supporting, by settling them on the unoccupied lands of the Province, or other lands within the Province."

In moving this Mr. Bronson spoke as follows:—

I feel that no apology is necessary for asking the time of the House for a few moments for the consideration of a question that is elsewhere claiming widespread attention, viz., the question of the unemployed in our cities and towns. Were any apology necessary, the importance of the question and the fact that, with the ample political rights and privileges that we enjoy under our free institutions, no question of greater importance is pressing for solution, and we may, therefore, well take up a social question of this importance, would be a sufficient one.

Various causes during recent years, notably the improvements in labor-saving machinery, have resulted in throwing many men out of work. That process is still going on, and were it not that to a certain extent our ap-

parent requirements have kept pace with the means for supplying them, many more of our workers would to-day find themselves without remunerative employment. We all enjoy the companionship of our fellows, and the union which results therefrom has rendered possible many enterprises of the greatest importance that would otherwise have been impossible of accomplishment. But this social impulse is not an unmixed blessing, for under its influence and the fascination that our large centres of population seem to possess, the people drift unresistingly to the cities and towns—the industrious in search of fellowship and employment, and those who dislike work in search of a chance to live by their wits.

So strong, indeed, is this drift cityward in our own country, that we find from the census returns that, while the urban population during the decade from 1881 to 1891 increased by 38 per cent., the rural population increased by only 3 6-10 per cent., or a little less than one-tenth the increase in the cities, and this excessive increase in the urban population is by no means confined to Canada, but obtains in all civilized countries the world over. But the cities cannot employ all who are thus drawn into them, and they become thereafter, either as paupers or criminals, a charge upon the community.

BENEFITS OF CO-OPERATION.

From time to time various expedients have been resorted to to meet this difficulty, but, while they have palliated it, they have not cured it. For instance, there have been many cases among our industries of co-operation and profit-sharing that have contributed largely to the well-being and contentment of those who found employment in connection with them. But, necessarily, the numbers of such have been comparatively small. It appears to me, however, that the plan of co-operation could be much more largely extended than has been the case thus far. An instance has lately come under my own observation where nearly two hundred workmen of superior intelligence have associated themselves together and, in conjunction with a few others of business experience and integrity—thereby securing efficient and reliable management—have organized an important business enterprise. These men will in this way not only supply their own wants in the particular line in question, but they will at the same time reap whatever of profit there may be in doing the business. The success of the enterprise thus far has been most gratifying, and with careful management in the future the result cannot be doubtful.

Now, sir, this is not the time for any remarks upon the temperance question, but I cannot forbear repeating this statement: that if one would consider for a moment the immense sums that are spent for stimulants, amounting, for example, according to the report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, to over twelve hundred millions of dollars per annum in the United States alone, and to even a larger sum in Great Britain, it will at once be seen that if the working men of the country—and I do not know that they are sinners above all others in this respect—would abstain from their use and save the money they spend for them they might in ten years buy up all the industries in the country, and thus become capitalists as well as laborers, and enjoy all the profits that would accrue from the harmonious employment of these joint factors of all successful industry, without which commercial prosperity is impossible.

SMALL INVESTMENTS.

It is quite true that even now some of the largest enterprises are carried on very largely with the capital of small investors. One of the arguments urged against the enforcement of the income tax upon corporations, recently declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States was that it was class legislation, and that the stockholders upon whom the burden would mainly fall were in a great majority of cases poor; and it was shown by way of illustration that in both the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company and the Pennsylvania Company, two of the richest railway corporations in the United States, over 82 per cent. of the stockholders owned stock of the par value of \$5,000 or less. Commenting upon this fact The Industrial World says:—