

AT WORK AGAIN.

FOREST PRESERVATION.

Second Reading of the Government Bill.

TO SET APART RESERVES.

Measure Dealing With Water Powers.

Mr. Dryden's Bill to Prevent Gambling at Agricultural Exhibitions — Coloniza- tion Road Expenditures.

Parliament Buildings, Dec. 28, 1897.

There were many vacant seats in the House to-day when the Speaker took the chair and called the Legislature to order for the transaction of business, the desire of the Government to push business to the extent of sitting during the interval between Christmas and New Year's not being universally shared by the members. The House gave three hours to substantial work, and then adjourned to allow the members to attend the Victorian era ball.

Mr. Dynes introduced a bill to amend the jurors act.

Forest Preservation.

Mr. Gibson, in moving the second reading of his bill to establish forest reserves, said that during the last three or four years much had been done in the way of securing knowledge on the subject of reforestry. Many of the States of the Union had adopted measures for the preservation of the forests, although there the effects of unwise cutting had been more marked than here. He alluded incidentally to the importance of forest preservation for the purpose of maintaining the living streams of the country during the dry season. The bill, he said, was restricted to the

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newer sections of the country in which agriculture could not be successfully carried on, but where pine trees grew in abundance. In other districts which had been burned over a new growth was coming on, which promised to become of market value in a few years. It was the purpose of the bill to establish forest reserves on these otherwise unavailable stretches, and to protect the second forest growth on the burned areas. The Commissioner of Crown Lands anticipated the report of the Forestry Commissioner by stating that the inquiries of the special commission appointed to inquire into the subject in conjunction with Mr. Southworth had given encouragement to the hope that beneficial results will follow the adoption of a policy of reforestry. In reply to a question by Lieut.-Col. Matheson the Minister said that the present bill had no relation to tree-planting or the planting of seed, though he thought much might be accomplished in this direction.

Mr. Marter, who, in the absence of Mr. Whitney, was acting as leader of the Opposition, said that anything that could be done in the shape of reforestry would meet with no opposition in the House.

The bill was read a second time.

To Preserve Water Powers.

Hon. Mr. Gibson moved the second reading of his bill respecting water powers. In explanation, he pointed out that the department had for some time been considering the question of making some regulations respecting water powers on Crown lands, that will facilitate matters in cases where valuable water powers exist on lands that are to be disposed of by the Crown. The practice has been for some time past to, as far as possible, make available such water powers as may exist for the benefit of the public generally, instead of allowing a monopoly to be created by disposing of the lands on either side of the stream where they exist to one or two individuals. That, however, has not always been done, and sometimes it has not been done simply because the lands were sold without knowledge of the existence of water powers, or of their value, and in that way riparian proprietors have become owners of valuable privileges which might, under wise regulations, have been available to the public. The northern part of this Province, the height of land, contains a series of water powers on both sides of the height of land, on streams running northerly and southerly. The idea has been suggested that these streams having water powers may in the future become extremely valuable in connection with mining enterprises and the development of our mining resources. However that may be, it does seem important that the Government should have some better understood policy with reference to the disposal of water powers which exist on the property of the Crown than has hitherto been the case, and the object of this bill is to lay the foundation, the express authority to adopt regulations for the control of such water powers. The aim of the regulations will be, as far as possible, to preserve for the benefit of the public generally any use that can be made of them.