

tive that increased accommodation be provided for many urgent cases now requiring attention.

Important Measures.

Measures will be submitted for the improvement of public highways, the drainage of swamp lands, the encouragement of cold storage stations in rural districts, and the colonization of those portions of northern Ontario best adapted for agricultural purposes. Your attention will be invited to bills respecting the revenue, elections, education and mining, and also to a measure for a comprehensive exploration of the district lying between the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Hudson Bay, in order that more accurate information may be obtained as to its timber, its mineral resources and its suitability for farming purposes.

Administration of Justice.

Your attention is invited to the present relative jurisdiction of the courts of the Province, and of their respective Judges, and to the suggestions of experience for further promoting the efficient, prompt and inexpensive administration of justice throughout the Province.

The Royal Commission.

During the recess I appointed a Royal Commission to report upon the financial position of the Province. The report will be laid before you early in the session. A commission was also appointed to enquire into irregularities reported by the Judges at the bye-election held in the West Riding of Elgin on the 12th January, 1899. The commissioners have entered upon the duties assigned to them.

The public accounts and the reports of the several departments of the Provincial service will be submitted to you in due course.

The estimates for the current year, prepared with as great regard to economy as is consistent with efficient service, will at an early date be placed before you.

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House in Session.

At the conclusion of the speech Sir Oliver left the chamber, the mace was placed on the table, and Speaker Evan-turel took his seat.

The Speaker submitted reports of the vacancies that had occurred during the year, together with reports of the election of new members in each case.

Premier Ross made the usual motions respecting administration of oaths of office to Justices of the Peace, the appointment of select standing committees, and also that the speech from the throne be considered to-day.

New Members Introduced.

The following new members were introduced:—

Hon. John Dryden, South Ontario, by Hon. Geo. W. Ross and Hon. J. M. Gibson.

Hon. J. R. Stratton, West Peterboro', by Hon. Geo. W. Ross and Hon. W. Harty.

Mr. T. H. Preston, South Brant, by Hon. Richard Harcourt and Mr. D. Burt, member for North Brant.

Mr. Finlay G. Macdiarmid, West Elgin, by Mr. J. P. Whitney and Mr. G. F. Marter.

Mr. C. A. Brower, by Mr. Whitney and Mr. Marter.

West Elgin Irregularities.

Mr. Whitney asked that members be furnished with copies of the commission issued for the inquiry into the irregularities—so styled in the speech from the throne—in the West Riding of Elgin. "I apprehend," he said, "that it will appear at once reasonable that in order to discuss the speech in a proper manner with reference to that subject it will be necessary for members to be advised of what scope has been given to the commission—what the commission contains, and what is intended to be done by the commission, together with copies of any instructions that may have been issued to counsel, or to any person acting as counsel, or arranging to act as counsel, before the commission."

Hon. Mr. Ross—A copy of the commission will be laid on the table tomorrow.

Mr. Whitney—I understand that at Ottawa on a similar application being made the papers were furnished to the leader of the Opposition the same evening. I would also ask for copies of any instructions to any counsel that may have been assigned, together with any instructions to members of the commission.

Mr. Ross—The instructions given will come down also.

The House then adjourned.

Opposition Caucus.

The members of the Opposition held a caucus yesterday morning, when a resolution deploring the death of the late Mr. T. D. Hodgins, member for East Middlesex, was introduced. Congratulatory speeches over the numerical strength and aggressiveness of the Conservatives were made. Mr. Finlay G. Macdiarmid, the recently elected member for West Elgin, was cordially greeted, and he was elected to the position of Chairman of caucus.

Duration of the Debate.

The statement was made yesterday by a prominent member of the Opposition that the duration of the debate on the address depended greatly upon whether or not the copies of the West Elgin commission, and instruction to the Judges and counsel, asked for by

Mr. Whitney, were brought down today or not. Since the Premier promised that these documents would be forthcoming there seems to be no reason to apprehend a very lengthy debate.

Father of the House.

Hon. Richard Harcourt, Minister of Education, is the father of the House. Since he entered it, in December, 1878, some seventy members of the Legislature have passed away.

Mr. John Mutrie, member for South Wellington, has just received word of his appointment to be Lieutenant-Colonel of the 30th Battalion, in which he has been Major for a long time.