

of such bills would move the second reading early in the session. He thought the House had not been true to itself in the past in not giving those bills the early consideration they should have. He would almost go the length of recommending that no bill suggesting an amendment to the municipal act be allowed to be introduced after a certain date, say six weeks after the session began, except by the unanimous consent of the House. He thought the House might perhaps agree to some rule of that kind this year. Bills should not go to the Municipal Committee merely as a matter of course. They should have some discussion on the floor before they go to the committee. Matters of municipal law were not party questions, and should not be treated as such, and no favor should be shown to a bill of that kind simply because it came from one side of the House or the other.

The bill was referred to the Municipal Committee.

In Mr. Smith's absence, Mr. Pattullo moved the second reading of his bill to amend the municipal arbitration act, so as to provide for the dismissal of an arbitrator at the conclusion of his services, to cover an evident omission in the act. The bill was read a second time.

#### To Save Jury Expenses.

Mr. Hoyle moved the second reading of his bill to reduce the expense of the administration of justice by providing that where no cases are billed for trial within fourteen days of the opening of a court no jury be summoned. Mr. Hoyle said the object was to save an expenditure of \$400 or \$500 which often took place in counties when there was no occasion for it.

Hon. Mr. Gibson said that during the last few years the tendency had been toward a diminution of cases, both civil and criminal, at the Assizes. Before favoring the principle involved in Mr. Hoyle's bill, however, he would like to know the number of instances in, say, the last five years, when juries had been summoned when no cases were presented for trial. If they were rare the House should not legislate in this direction. They should do nothing to deprive prisoners of a speedy trial unless there was very strong reason for it.

#### Proposed Law Reforms.

Proceeding, the Attorney-General said there were some people who thought a great deal of the work done by the High Court Judges at the Assizes should be done by the County Court Judges at sessions held possibly four times a year. Special provision could be made for cases to be tried by a High Court Judge. There was, of course, a difficulty as to the salary of the High Court Judges. At present Judges on circuit received certain allowances in addition to salary, which made them reluctant to enter the Court of Appeal, where they got no such allowances. The Attorney-General intimated that these matters would probably be the subject of legislation, though not at the present session. He again asked Mr. Hoyle to withdraw the motion and change it to one for a return showing the information suggested.

Mr. Whitney said the only objection he saw was that, as the Attorney-General had pointed out, the bill would interfere with the right of suitors to have a speedy trial by jury.

Mr. Hoyle accepted the suggestion of the Attorney-General and withdrew the bill. He will now make a motion for a return giving the information he wishes.

Mr. Eilber moved a bill to amend the municipal act. The object is to enable municipal Councils to levy such rate as may be required for police village purposes, and pay it over to the Treasurer of the Police Village Board on or before December 15. The trustees are then to publish on that date a financial statement showing the receipts and expenditures for the year.

#### Will Never be Perfect.

Hon. Mr. Gibson said he did not know that there was anything particularly objectionable in the bill. He supposed the municipal act would never be in such shape that nobody would be able to suggest improvements.

"What we ought to avoid," he said, "are fanciful improvements. These are what we ought to set our faces against unless there is some really good purpose to serve or important end to gain by making the change. We ought to become conservative, I think."

Opposition cries of "Hear, hear!"

Mr. Gibson—Municipally speaking, I mean.

The bill was read a second time.

The House adjourned at 4.05 p.m.

#### Decrease in Crime.

The annual report of the Inspector of Prisons and Reformatories shows an encouraging decrease in crime in the Province. During the year there were 8,203 persons committed to the jails, the lowest number in 26 years, compared with 8,256 in 1898. Of the total, 8,203, there were brought to trial and discharged 1,584. By order of the Judge 806 were let go. Of those found guilty

4,060 were sent to jail, 613 to prison and 133 to Kingston Penitentiary and the reformatories. Of those sentenced, the report says, 3,297 were temperate and 6,855 of the total of 8,203 could read and write. There was a decrease in the expenditure of the jails, that for 1899 being \$136,617, compared with \$137,310 in 1898. The average cost per prisoner was 20 2-5 cents per day.

#### Renfrew Registrarship.

Mr. Matheson gives notice of these questions:—"Is the Registrarship of the County of Renfrew vacant? If so, when did it become so? If it is vacant, did Mr. McKay, the late Registrar, resign, or was he dismissed by the Government? At the time of the appointment of Mr. McKay to the said office, or at any time, was there an agreement, written or verbal, taken by the Government, or any member thereof, or any person on its behalf from the said Mr. McKay, that the latter should resign when called upon to do so? Is it true that the Government gave Robert A. Campbell a written or other promise or understanding to appoint him to the said office if he would resign his seat as a member of this House?"