

Hon. Richard Harcourt has given notice of a bill in regard to Upper Canada College. The bill will make radical changes in the governing body of that institution and in other respects.

Liability of Railways.

Mr. Conmee's bill to amend the municipal drainage act is really a most important bit of railway legislation, in line with other measures introduced by him during this session. The bill provides that if owing to the construction of a railway either before or after the passing of the act water is by any means caused to flow upon and injure the lands of any municipality, company or individual, or the natural flow of the drainage is or has been diverted or interfered with so as to cause water to remain upon or so as to prevent the free flow of water from any such lands and roads, or if owing to the existence of a railway extra cost is incurred through the necessity of diverting the course of a drainage work under this act, so as not to cross this railway, the company owning or controlling such railway may be assessed and charged for the construction and maintenance of the drainage work to the extent required for relieving the injured lands and roads from such water, and to the extent of the extra cost of the work occasioned by the existence of such railway. The cost is to be determined by the engineer, surveyor, Court of Revision, County Judge or referee, and such assessment shall be considered an assessment for injuring liability under the municipal drainage act. The railway thus made liable to assessment shall not have the power to petition against the assessment.

Mr. German, on behalf of the Retail Merchants' Association, has introduced a bill placing a tax upon the gross proceeds of the sales of departmental stores, the tax to be in addition to the personalty tax.

Destruction of Insects.

The House in committee discussed Mr. Dryden's bill giving the Government power to make regulations for the prevention and destruction of injurious or noxious insects. The bill further provided that if the occupant or owner of the lot neglected to comply with the regulations, the work should be done by an inspector and the cost of the same entered on the collector's roll and charged as taxes. The bill was left over for consideration.

Hon. Mr. Harcourt's bill amending the pharmacy act was reported with some amendments.

Hon. Mr. Davis' bill shortening the term of apprenticeship for apprentices to land surveyors under the Ontario land surveyors act was reported without discussion. The bill providing for the appointment of a number of "fire-rangers" to aid in the prevention of fires on Crown lands, and for the payment of half of the salaries of these rangers when employed on lands under license by the holders of the licenses, was introduced by Hon. Mr. Davis and was reported, as was Mr. Davis' bill terminating licenses for the cutting of timber other than pine in Algonquin National Park after April 30, 1900.

The bill of the Hon. Mr. Davis giving the Commissioner of Crown Lands power to allow by regulation prospecting, mining, hunting or fishing on the forest reserves passed its second reading.

Aid For Drainage Works.

The Premier moved the second reading of a bill to enable the Government to grant relief to municipalities in cases where they were engaged in the construction of drainage works that would overtax their resources.

Mr. Whitney doubted the wisdom of any such measure, and Mr. Matheson said it was another case of teaching the people to look to the Province for aid instead of giving them to understand that they must pay their own way.

The Premier—That is not very good doctrine from a protectionist.

Mr. Preston (South Brant) drew attention to the effect of drainage legislation upon the City of Brantford. He suggested the appointment of a commission to consider (1) the possibility of preventing floods by storing the surplus water; (2) the development of water-powers or improvement of existing waterpowers on the Grand River; (3) straightening the course of the Grand River; (4) responsibility for the floods and the best means of overcoming them.

Mr. Crawford thought the Government were simply encouraging municipalities to come to them for aid.

Mr. Whitney styled the bill an invitation to the municipalities just before a general election to come to the Government and ask for aid, in return for which they would be expected to support the Government. The whole object of the bill was to debauch municipalities, and he would not sanction the second reading.

The Premier defended the bill as a meritorious one, and one that was called for by the topographical conditions of Ontario. Drainage works had so far been aided only in a spasmodic

way, but with successful results. Having done so well in a small way, the question was, should they not adopt a comprehensive scheme whereby the Government could help municipalities that were powerless to help themselves? Mr. Whitney feared that the scheme might be used for corrupt purposes. The same might be said of tariff legislation, bonuses to railways, etc. The man who sought for a sinister motive could find it in every act passed by the House, whether public or private. Mr. Whitney was looking at the political rather than the economic effect of the bill. The Government were not presenting the scheme in that way, but sincerely desired that the three or four million acres of existing waste lands should be brought under the plough of the husbandman. The bill was a good one, and if the Government remained in power would be administered in the public interest. The Government declined to take the responsibility of granting appropriations, and the House would therefore be asked to ratify each vote. The suggestion made by Mr. Preston for the appointment of a commission was a reasonable one, and the Government were bound to consider any scheme that would remedy the evils complained of.