

brought down it would be found to be carefully guarded. He emphatically denied the allegation of monopoly, and pointed out the practical working out of the Sault agreement, who have never yet set aside an area of fifty square miles, and have been compelled to come to the Government every time before cutting on any area and get permission.

Mr. Conmee (West Algoma) rose to the defence of the gentlemen referred to. Mr. Clavet, he said, was a retired merchant worth half a million.

Mr. Whitney—He was one of the dummies.

Mr. Conmee—Why does the hon. gentleman say that? It is an insinuation for which he has no foundation whatever. He was prepared to put up the money and is quite able to do so. Mr. Bray was, he said, at present a resi-

dent of Toronto, and possessed of means, while Mr. Whalen had for several years been employing from 250 to 300 men in his lumber business.

An Assessment Commission.

Premier Ross announced that the Government had determined to appoint a commission composed of from five to seven capable men with municipal experience—men who had the power to grapple with such an important question—to inquire into and report upon the whole subject of municipal assessment. Every year from ten to fifteen bills to amend the assessment act had been submitted to the House until the law had become so unsymmetrical and contained such anomalies that the Government were bound to deal with it. The former Premier, Mr. Hardy, had spoken last session of a royal commission upon the question, and had he remained in office would probably be recommending the same course which the present Government had decided upon. Something useful might be learned of the operation of assessment laws in the other Provinces, and also in neighboring States of the Union. The Legislature of New York State last year agreed to the appointment of a Board of State Commissioners to deal with the elevated railroads and gas companies of New York, and other concerns which enjoyed municipal franchises. From a report recently brought down it had acted with great discretion and acceptability to all concerned. The State of New Jersey had also appointed State commissioners, who dealt with corporations enjoying public franchises in a similar way. It was in the interest of Ontario that the Government should deal resolutely and comprehensively with all questions of this kind. There were perhaps not as many anomalies in the Ontario assessment law as there were in the laws of other countries, but in view of the fact that this House had to deal with such varied forms of property it was well to pause for one session and consider whether they could not treat the assessment question as thoroughly and comprehensively as they had the matter of drainage. He made the suggestion that the bills to amend the assessment act now pending be allowed to stand until the commissioners had reported on the whole question fully, and arrive at conclusions

which would practically be a permanent settlement.

Mr. Whitney Charges Cowardice.

Mr. Whitney said the Premier had claimed that he handled questions of this kind resolutely, when as a matter of fact he refused to deal with them at all.

Mr. Ross—Piecemeal.

Mr. Whitney—The leader of the Government refused to deal with any question of serious importance to the Province because he felt he was so insecure that he dared not take the responsibility. Under our system of government, the Administration should take the responsibility of introducing measures to the House, but this Government either had no confidence in their own opinions or were incapable of forming any opinions upon any great question. The gentlemen on the Treasury benches were now being ground between the upper and nether millstone, between the corporations and public opinion. Their revenue bill of last session was an ill-advised piece of legislation, and the Government had no idea when introducing it that it would prove to be such a veritable boomerang. What was to hinder the Government from dealing with the assessment question? Why was the scrap-iron law allowed to remain on the statute book if it was unjust? The fact was the Government were afraid to deal with the matter, and shifted responsibility upon a royal commission. He wanted to know if the railway subsidies would not be down on the morrow.

The Premier replied in the negative.

Mr. Whitney said that if the balance of Government measures were not brought down by the close of the week they need not expect to close the House as soon as they anticipated.

The Premier said the Opposition leader was worrying himself unnecessarily about Government measures. If necessary they would stay there until August discussing public measures. Did Mr. Whitney think he had the Government by the throat? He would find that he was even more powerless at the close of the session than he was at the beginning. From the time Mr. Whitney entered the House until the present moment he had failed to bring down a single substantial measure that would be of any benefit to the country.

The House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Brewers' Tax Amended.

Hon. Mr. Stratton introduced a bill to amend the act respecting brewers and distillers' and other licenses. The amendment is designed to obviate difficulties and inequalities found in the working out of last session's act, and it removes from the basis of taxation by the Province the value of a malting plant where one exists, and also the buildings, etc., used for fattening cattle.

In Aid of Prisoners.

A deputation representing the Prisoners' Aid Society, comprising Hon. G. W. Allan, Dr. Aikens, F. Spencer and Mrs. L. C. Bellamy, waited on the Government and asked for an increased grant to the association to enable them to carry on their work with greater