

# PARTY LEADERS CROSS SWORDS.

## Debate on the Address Closed Yesterday.

### NEW ERA IN EDUCATION.

#### Attack and Counter Attack on Spoils System.

**Hon. Geo. W. Ross Speaks for the Opposition—Shows How Present Government Benefits by Past Liberal Policy—Present Surplus Was Due to the Liberal Measures.**

The debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne was closed in the Legislature at 6 o'clock yesterday evening. Hon. Geo. W. Ross was the only speaker for the Opposition and Premier Whitney replied for the Government. Mr. Ross made an eloquent and effective speech, illuminated by flashes of humor and apt comparison. His resume of the legislation of the late Government, his defence of the educational system, and his keen criticism of the course of the present Administration, particularly in respect to dismissals from office, were the notable features of a speech lasting about one hour and a half. For the greater part of the time Mr. Ross, who was somewhat fatigued, though mentally as brightly alert as ever, sat in his chair. Premier Whitney, who followed Mr. Ross, spoke for nearly the same length of time as the leader of the Opposition. He vigorously defended the Government's policy and actions. At times he was somewhat harsh in his personal references to the Opposition leader. The point chiefly dwelt upon by Mr. Whitney was the necessity for a forward movement in education.

The business of the afternoon opened with the introduction of Mr. E. J. B. Pense, the victor in the recent bye-election at Kingston, whose sponsors were Hon. Geo. W. Ross and Mr. T. H. Preston (Brant). The members of the Opposition lustily applauded as, the formality over, Speaker St. John stepped from the throne and exchanged a hearty handshake with Mr. Pense, who afterwards took the seat he occupied last session next to Mr. Preston.

#### Hon. Mr. Ross' Address.

Hon. Mr. Ross, who resumed the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, congratulated the mover and seconder upon the manner and tone of their addresses. Referring to the congratulatory allusions of the speakers to the members of the Cabinet, "individually and in bulk," he thought the abilities of the Ministerialists could be better judged after some years in office, and a greater experience in the framing and introduction of legislation than at the present time. Proceeding, he said the majority of the people of the Province of Ontario, although they had dispensed with their services last year, were convinced that the 30 years of Liberal administration had been of immense benefit to the Province. (Op-

position applause.) Mr. Ross outlined briefly the legislation of the late Administration on agriculture, the license law, in respect to good roads, asylums, the encouragement of railway and mining development, the aid which had resulted in the establishment of great works at the Soo, and the concessions which had been followed by the establishment of pulp industries and reforestry. An educational system had been devised which diffused more widely than ever before the benefits of education. The Temiskaming Railway had been launched and not very warmly welcomed, though last year it had brought a surplus of about \$100,000.

#### The New Jack Horner.

The succession duties, another product of the legislation of the former Government, had also brought in a considerable amount. Hon. gentlemen now boasted of a surplus. He was glad they had one. "How did they get it?" he asked. "Has my hon. friend the Treasurer done anything to produce it? Very little. He would have reduced the succession duties tax. But now he has a surplus, come by honestly, but by succession. (Laughter.) He is very much like

"Jack Horner, sitting in a corner,  
Eating a Christmas pie,  
He puts in his thumb and pulls out a plum,  
And says what a good revenue have I."

(Laughter and applause.) And he and his supporters do not stop to think of who made that pie and who put in that plum." (Prolonged laughter and applause.)

#### The Education Question.

Mr. Ross then passed on to a discussion of questions connected with education. It had been promised by the Government that education and politics should be kept apart, and yet the first two appointments in that regard, namely, the inspector of public libraries and the Deputy Minister of Education, had been political. The former gentleman had been a Conservative organizer, the latter had been an editorial writer for Conservative papers. Against either of them personally Mr. Ross had nothing to say, but he desired to point out that neither had had any experience in their work, and the teaching profession, whence experienced men could have been obtained, had been overlooked. There were so few plums in the profession that it seemed only fair that when there were any of the nature mentioned they should not be given to outsiders on purely political grounds. When the late Government had wanted an inspector of high schools they had gone to the profession, and had selected a man who in politics was opposed to them. They had kept educational affairs clear of politics, and he challenged the Government now, as he had challenged them when they were in Opposition, to show that such had not been the case. He entered a strong protest against the general statements recently made by the leader of the Opposition and others, to the effect that the educational system had deteriorated. Twenty-four years ago 4,000 pupils passed the entrance examinations into the high schools; in 1903-04 the number was 14,632. Twenty years ago only 272 pupils passed the matriculation examinations into the universities; in 1903-04 851 passed. Twenty years ago there were 11,000 pupils in the high schools; the latest figures showed 50,000. These and other figures Mr. Ross quoted in support of his contention, and then devoted some time to a defence of the ability and influence of female teachers. He agreed that teachers' salaries were inadequate, and said the Opposition would support legislation with a view to remedying that; but he doubted if any legislation could be devised that would keep enterprising Canadians in the profession.

#### License Law Administration.

After a reference to other educational proposals of the Government, which, so