

# OPPOSITION SHOW DEBATING VIGOR

## Government Put on Defensive on Executive Measures.

## PRIVATE TIMBER SALES.

## Demand For Rigid Inspection of Loan Companies.

### Progress Was Made on the Estimates—

**Hon. Mr. Cochrane Explains the Measure Making Changes in His Department—A Discussion of Matters Relative to Education.**

The first general field day in the Legislature brought out the fact yesterday afternoon that the Opposition was by no means so weak as their numbers might have led some to believe. In the discussion of the estimates the Government was put on the defensive on the sale of timber by private treaty instead of by competition, the palliation offered being that it was sold by the thousand feet and not in bulk, and that the lots were so small that cost of advertising for public tender would have eaten up the profits. In the treatment of the insurance and loan companies and in the policy of the Education Department in excluding experts from its two chief offices the Government was drawn out, and manifested an explanatory disposition. The debate was good-natured, and thrust and parry were very deft at times, causing much laughter and frequent applause. The lively aggressiveness of the younger Liberal members was quite worthy of their responsible future. Some progress was made with the estimates, the votes for the Lieutenant-Governor's office, the office of the Premier, the Attorney-General's Department, the Education Department and the Lands and Mines Department being agreed to.

### Some First Readings.

The following bills were read a first time:—

Respecting the village of Campbellford—Mr. Preston (Durham).

Respecting the township of Monck—Mr. Nixon.

Respecting the town of Bruce Mines and Copper Mining and Smelting Company—Mr. Smyth.

Respecting the Peterboro' Radial Railway—Mr. Bradburn.

Respecting the city of St. Thomas—Mr. Hoyle.

To amend the electric railway act—Mr. Downey.

To incorporate the village of Finch—Mr. Kerr.

Respecting the township of North York and village of Weston—Mr. Pratt in absence of Mr. Dargavel.

Respecting the town of East Toronto—Mr. McCowan.

To incorporate the Synod of the Diocese of Algoma of the Church of England—Mr. Mahaffy.

To amend the assessment act—Mr. Gamey.

To amend the municipal act—Mr. Little.

Respecting Knox Church, Toronto—Mr. Crawford.

To amend the assessment act—Mr.

Craig.

Respecting the Anglo-American Insurance Company—Mr. Crawford.

Respecting the town of Welland—Mr. Fraser.

To confirm by-law No. 198 of the town of Welland—Mr. Fraser.

To amend the assessment act—Mr. Munro.

Respecting the Kingston, Gananoque & Perth Railway—Mr. Lewis.

To amend the street railway act—Mr. Downey.

To amend the assessment act—Dr. Smellie.

To amend the municipal act—Mr. McDougall.

To amend the municipal act—Mr. LaBrosse.

Respecting the Kingston, Portsmouth & Cataraqui Railway Company—Mr. Pense.

Respecting the Port Arthur Blast Furnace and Iron Company and the Coal & Iron Dock Company—Mr. Kennedy.

### Lands, Forests and Mines.

Hon. Mr. Cochrane, in moving the second reading of his bill respecting the Department of Lands, Forests and Mines, explained that the changes proposed were desirable for many good reasons. The recent enormous growth of the work of the Lands and Mines Department were briefly touched upon. It was proposed to attempt to overcome this difficulty by making the Director of the Bureau of Mines a Deputy Minister and clothing him with the powers of that position. This would enable him to make rulings in all cases and generally administer mining matters, subject to consultation with and review by the Minister. The latter would consider all the interests in any question in which there is danger of conflict. The Deputy Minister of Lands and Forests, formerly the only deputy of the department, would by this change be relieved of considerable routine, leaving him free to attend the great and rapidly growing amount of business coming under his care. This had been added to largely of late because of the opening up of portions of the north country by the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway, and to be opened up by the Grand Trunk Pacific. In the past it had been practically impossible for the one deputy to get away from the department when, as sometimes happened, such a course was necessary in order to get first-hand personal knowledge of matters requiring settlement in the newer sections. Mr. Cochrane thought the changes outlined would be to the benefit of the interests of the Province. The idea of creating two distinct departments, one to deal with lands and forests and one with mines, was not practicable, and anyone who looked into the matter would soon convince himself on that point. The two things—lands and forests and mines—were far too closely connected to admit of it.

### Hon. Mr. Ross' Comments.

Hon. Geo. W. Ross remarked that it had been a disappointment that the Minister of Mines, of which the Government had given assurance, had not been appointed. He thought it wise that the Crown Lands and Mines were kept together, and it was what might have been expected on a closer acquaintance with the departments. Mr. Ross had no objection to the bill or to the appointment of a Deputy Minister. In eulogizing Mr. Gibson he expressed the belief that he would be found exceedingly helpful. The Government had given a Deputy Minister to the Mining as well as to the Forests department, which left things precisely as they were. Mr. Ross called the attention of the Attorney-General to sub-section two of the bill, whereby in the absence of the Minister statutory powers were conferred on the deputy to discharge his duties. This seemed to be going a little too far in investing him with responsibility.

The Attorney-General promised to consider the matter.

The bill was referred to committee.

### To Protect the Forests.

Hon. Mr. Cochrane also briefly explain-

ed his measure to amend the act to preserve forests from destruction by fire, which has previously been explained. In effect it provides that where railways are being built through public forests, lands under settlement, or otherwise, the Government shall appoint fire-rangers to protect the forests, and the railways shall pay the expenses of the rangers.

### Salary Increases.

The House then went into Committee of Supply on estimates under the head of civil government.

Premier Whitney observed with regard to the increase of salaries to some of the civil officers, especially those residing in the city, that in looking into them during the past two months the Government found them in such a condition it was patent to everybody they should have been dealt with before. It was quite impossible for officials to live in Toronto at the previous salaries.

On the item of \$3,900 for the Lieutenant-Governor's office, Mr. Graham inquired if the rumors as to the disposal of the Lieutenant-Governor's residence were well-founded.

Premier Whitney stated that the Government had never discussed the question. An informal proposal to deal with a portion of the property had been made. He thought the wisest thing was to be content with it as it was.

Mr. Graham believed a new building might yet be necessary.

Hon. Mr. Ross thought that, merit being considered, any reasonable increase in salaries was a matter to which no one could offer objection. One of the functions of the Opposition was to warn the Government against extravagance. He objected that the increases followed no definite plan. There should be a regular, if not a statutory, increase from year to year until after a certain number of years a maximum would be reached. The Government might have difficulty in satisfying the officials later on under these precedents. He did not think the service had been starved in the past. To keep up the present pace would lead to heavy charges. There had been considerable additions to the service, and he did not see the necessity for increases in the staff just yet. He trusted care and caution had been exercised, as it was easy to overload the service when so many were willing to sacrifice themselves even at the moderate salaries paid.

Premier Whitney stated that it cost more than twice what it did twenty years ago to live in Toronto. If this were true, there was no room for argument. The present increases would not be duplicated every year. The policy was to get the service in some state of order. It had been found in the reverse of that. A number of people in the departments doing duty had no status whatever. Four of the principal officers of the Government had been asked to make out a schedule, which had been made a basis of the increases. He would be glad if the leader of the Opposition would point out which of the Deputy Ministers he considered undeserving of the increase given.

### Premier's View Not Accepted.

Mr. Harcourt said if the estimates were analyzed it would be found that nine-tenths of the increases were from \$50 to \$100. Increases of that amount had been made in the past without much discussion in the House. When it came to amounts of several hundreds they should and could be fairly discussed. It would be found, he thought, that the two parties in the House were not far apart on the question. For example, he did not think \$3,500 too much for a Deputy Attorney-General who was painstaking, efficient and hard working. However, it did not follow that every Deputy Minister was deserving of such a salary. In some cases the work was routine only and did not call for special training. He took issue with the view that in the past all had been chaos, haphazard, and confusion, and alluded to the practice in relation to several departments in which careful attempts had been made to classify the employees, and where salaries were increased on a proper plan.

Hon. Mr. Foy, in regard to an amount of \$29,750 under the heading of the "Attorney-General's Department" explained that some increased salaries were provided for.