

# A CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT.

## Mr. Currie on the Dismissals of Officials.

### PREMIER ON HIS DEFENCE.

## Accepts Responsibility For Acts Complained of.

### Bills Introduced Amending the Railway and Municipal Board Act and the Railway Act—A Large Number of Private Bills—Notices of Motion—In the Legislature

In the Legislature yesterday afternoon Mr. Currie, the Liberal member for Prince Edward, criticized the Government for some recent appointments and dismissals of officials, in the latter category specifically referring to the case of Mr. James Gillespie, formerly Sheriff of the county. Premier Whitney responded with a defence of the Government and a declaration as to his own responsibility in respect to dismissals.

Hon. Mr. Hendrie introduced a measure to amend the act respecting the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board. This confers on the board powers under certain acts now exercised only by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council in respect to specifications and plans of railways, or where information is required during the construction of the same. It also empowers the board to engage counsel at any time deemed necessary. The measure also clothes the board with power to inquire into and report upon the rates charged by municipalities for service of utilities owned by them in order that they may decide whether such are too high or whether they are too low, and not sufficient in the latter case to meet the amounts required for operation, maintenance, indebtedness, and so on. It further gives the board the same powers in regard to arbitration under the municipal act of 1903 as are now held by County Judges.

Another measure introduced by Hon. Mr. Hendrie amends the railway act by making it apply to all railways under Provincial jurisdiction, whether incorporated before or after the passing of the act.

Mr. Hoyle, in rising to move the second reading of his bill to amend the municipal act, stated that he desired to prevent differences arising between municipalities and County Councils as to which is liable to erect bridges in dispute. His bill refers the dispute for settlement to the County Judge. The bill was sent to committee.

### Abolish the Poll Tax.

Mr. Bowyer, in moving the second reading of his bill to amend the act respecting statute labor, explained that it was the purpose of the measure to abolish statute labor as well as the unpopular poll tax.

Mr. Graham said that the working out of the bill had proved farcical. It was a most unpopular tax, and the bill had his sympathy. The motion carried.

Mr. Carnegie moved the second reading of his bill to amend the municipal act in order that differences affecting police villages be adjusted by the County Judge. The motion carried.

Mr. Clark (Bruce) moved the second reading of his bill to amend the assessment act. Its purpose is to permit

the serving of tax notices by mail.

Hon. Mr. Matheson explained that it was also the intention to permit the Clerk and Treasurer to collect the tax. Checks would require both signatures, adding to the protection of the public. The motion carried.

Mr. Eilber moved the second reading of his bill respecting mortgages of real estate. It passed its second reading, and on the suggestion of the Premier was referred to the Legal Committee.

### Partisan Appointments.

In rising to ask for an order of the House for a return of copies of all correspondence between the Government or any member or official thereof and any other person or persons with reference to the dismissal of James Gillespie of Picton from the office of Sheriff of the county of Prince Edward, Mr. Currie said he was not satisfied with past explanations of the Government in regard to certain dismissals. He charged that in Prince Edward they had not only dismissed the Justices of the Peace, but also the Liberal constables. One James Cousins was a J. P. in 1894. Rumors were rife concerning him, and an investigation was held in 1894 before Mr. Fleming at Napanee. Both sides were represented by counsel, and the result was that Mr. Cousins was condemned by the commission and dismissed. One of the first Justices to be appointed by the new Government was Mr. Cousins, in the face of the circumstances related. Mr. Currie criticized the appointment of a relative of Hon. Dr. Willoughby to a Government position.

Mr. Currie went extensively into the motives which had prompted the dismissal of various officials, and charged the Government with unfairness and injustice. Proceeding, Mr. Currie sharply criticized the Government for dismissing Sheriff Gillespie of Prince Edward without making an investigation into the case. The Premier dare not step from the sacred precincts of the House and make the assertions that he did against Sheriff Gillespie or they would prove the charges unfounded in a court of law. He intimated that it was rumored and believed by many in Prince Edward that the Premier had been held up by a deputation, and then