

BUDGET DEBATE AND ESTIMATES.

Features of Yesterday's Session of the Legislature.

MR. ROSS IS INTRODUCED.

Member For West Middlesex is Heartily Welcomed.

Senator Ross on the Floor of the House When the Ceremony Took Place— Discussions on Some of the Items in Estimates—Suggestions From the Opposition.

The debate on the budget progressed, but did not conclude at the sitting of the Legislature yesterday afternoon. Addresses were delivered by Messrs. Thompson (Wentworth), Lewis and Clarke (Northumberland). All were of interest. Mr. Clarke had not finished at 6 o'clock, and will continue on Thursday. His remarks were spiced with considerable humor. The night session was occupied by arrangement in consideration of estimates, with which considerable progress was made. During the afternoon two Government bills, one respecting stationary engineers and the other taking the control of Burlington Beach from Hamilton and Saltfleet township and placing it under a commission consisting of two members were introduced.

West Middlesex's Member.

Hon. Geo. W. Ross, Canadian Senator and ex-Prime Minister of Ontario, had the satisfaction yesterday of seeing his son, Mr. Duncan C. Ross, take his seat in the Legislature as member for West Middlesex. The incident was brief, but interesting. The new member was escorted into the House by Messrs. A. G. MacKay, member for North Grey, and C. N. Smith, member for Sault Ste. Marie, the former making the usual formal introduction. Mr. Ross then stepped up to the dais and cordially shook the hand of the Speaker, amid vigorous Opposition desk-pounding. On taking his seat Mr. Ross shook hands with Mr. Kohler, his desk mate, after which the House proceeded to business.

The Assessment Act.

The Premier before the orders of the day were called pointed out that the assessment act had been made the subject of many proposed amendments during the session. The amendments, said the Premier, could be referred to the Municipal Committee which would single out and refer all amendments of consequence to the commission for the revision of the statutes. The commission, he continued, had been engaged lately in going over the matter in the most careful and thorough manner; going over it line by line, and there would be a revision, he predicted, such as had never been before.

Mr. Graham said that of course the House did not lose or abandon any of its prerogatives, or its right to pass upon the revision in leaving this matter to be dealt with by the commission. There were some things in the assessment law which it would be advisable to change, but he agreed that it would be better to take the act as a whole

in any consideration with a view to making changes. Perhaps by the time the commission's report was ready the House would be ready for some radical changes.

Hon. Mr. Monteith introduced the Government's bill respecting stationary engineers.

Hon. Mr. Cochrane introduced the Government's bill "respecting Burlington Beach." This provides for the appointment by the Government of a commission of not less than two persons to hold the Burlington Beach lands in trust for the Crown.

The House went into committee on Hon. Mr. Hendrie's bill to amend the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board act of 1906, and several amendments to facilitate the working out of the act were inserted.

It Approached Frenzied Finance.

Mr. Thompson (Wentworth) in resuming the debate on the budget carefully reviewed, in part, the budget speech. He alluded particularly to the surplus of \$1,050,000 for the past two years claimed by the Provincial Treasurer. There would have been a deficit instead if the former Administration had followed the advice of the present Government and largely cut down or wiped out entirely some of the supplementary revenues, including the succession dues. Passing on to a criticism of the expenditures, he was of opinion that while some of the items might be justified, an increase aggregating \$2,223,000 in two years was nearly approaching "frenzied finance." He commented adversely upon the fact that while the expenditures had thus largely increased, the vote of \$1,700 for a Provincial forester had been dropped from the estimates. It was a strange thing to find in a Province which so largely depended upon its forest wealth for revenue so important an office as that of forester abolished.

Proceeding, Mr. Thompson dealt in some detail with the promises of the Government while in Opposition, and their failure to carry them out while in office. In this regard he particularly criticized the promise to take the enforcement of the liquor license law out of politics, and its non-fulfillment. Recent events in Toronto, Mr. Thompson said, had shown that it was not as good "to keep hotel" as it was to make transfers. It had been said by supporters of the Government that Father Pull and Father Graft were dead, but he thought this had not been borne out in timber sales in Chesley township and in North Renfrew, nor in changes made without advertising by the T. & N. O. Railway Commission in respect to mineral land tenders, as a result of which "one of the boys" had got in. He closed with a reference to the bye-elections in Kingston, East Hamilton and West Middlesex, in all of which the Government candidates were defeated, pointing to these results as indicating dissatisfaction with the Administration.

Dr. Lewis Defends Government.

Dr. F. W. Lewis (Dufferin) congratulated the Liberals on their choice of a leader. He would be found a fair and manly fighter, and he hoped that he would not be handicapped as other leaders had been. He could even hope that the leader of the Opposition would not wander in the wilderness for forty years.

"Thirty-three," corrected Mr. Graham.

The Province was to be congratulated on having secured an honest administration, Dr. Lewis continued. Touching upon the condition of the Provincial revenues, he declared that concessions that had formerly been given away for nothing were now used to increase the receipts of the treasury. On one occasion he had been told that he was no good by a man whose wife had to be sent to the Hamilton Asylum because he could not secure her admission under the Government's minimum rate per week. He had been told that the member for Peel under the old Government had secured such a privilege for him. This he told as instancing the former laxity of administration. He defended the employment of Mr. Thorne as a Provincial Auditor

because the circumstances called for the appointment of an expert in the peculiar work for which he was engaged. The Parliament buildings had been planned by an architect from Buffalo.

Dr. Lewis paid a tribute to the courage of the Minister of Mines, and said that if he were not acceptable up north there were forty or fifty other constituencies in which Hon. Frank Cochrane would be acceptable.

Some Excuse For Jubilation.

Mr. S. Clarke (Northumberland) could understand and sympathize with the Government, for, while the Liberals had been in Opposition two years, their opponents had been on the outside all their lives. One would think they had built up this great Province. Why, they never had their hands on it. The Hon. Provincial Secretary was a man capable of running his department, but he could not sympathize with the boasting over a fund piled up by the pursuit of the husband, sister or niece of some unfortunate lunatic. There was something sweeter than politics, and that was charity. They might say harsh things about the former Government, but no one could say they were not good to the poor. Any family which had the burden of lunacy on their hands, God knew they had trouble enough. If a man could not pay three dollars or two dollars, then let him in at one dollar. The family that had sickness should not be pursued with a hammer and chisel by the Government for a matter of two or three thousand dollars, for in this they were worrying the hearts out of men who were worried half to death. Mr. Clarke touched on the question of power. Strange to say, that after two years in an age of progress with plenty of money, nothing had yet been accomplished. He could not see why they were waiting. In reply to the statement that the poolrooms had been wiped out, he understood that the pool business was still carried on at the Woodbine, at Windsor, and a place called Hamilton. Turning to the Central Prison contract, he said that the expert, Mr. Thorne, had been brought over to witness one of the weakest deals that he had ever seen in public print. There was no value in it, and it left a liability. The Premier had tried to be as liberal and honest and fair as any Premier could be. (Government applause.)

"Just wait," said Mr. Clarke. "I never saw a Premier with such a horde behind him—scratching at him and scratching at him. If I were the Premier I would cut the nails off every one of them."

Progress With Estimates.

The evening session was occupied in the passing of estimates, splendid progress having been made by the time the House adjourned at 10 o'clock. Hon. Mr. Foy, in asking a vote for \$64,462 for the expenses of his department, explained a number of increased details in the vote.

The Premier said that the public business had greatly increased through natural causes, and this had necessitated securing more help. "The officials in this building have never been paid too high salaries. I mean by that that proper men to-day to do the work could have obtained larger salaries outside. Material comfort, which would enable them to do the work properly, is necessary. The increase of living expenses in this city has more than doubled in twenty years. That, together with other causes, we have felt that certain increases were justifiable." Mr. Whitney added that a number who had been on the temporary list had been placed on the permanent list.

Mr. Graham thought the transferring of civil servants from the temporary to the permanent list was a good thing. He was strongly in favor of the Government putting on the permanent list any officials on the temporary list who were found to be necessary. This would be supported by the Opposition. The vote passed.

The Question of Forestry.

On the item of \$110,600 for the Lands, Forests and Mines Department expenses Mr. Graham asked what was being done in respect to forestry. There was now no Provincial forester.