

THE GLOBE, TORONTO,

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1907.

A great deal of work was cleared up in the Legislature yesterday, adjournment taking place at 6 o'clock. The House will meet on Monday at 3 p.m. and will probably conclude its business by the end of next week. The principal feature of interest was a discussion of the bill which places a tax on reserved petroleum rights. This applies with especial force to the Canada Company. On Monday afternoon non-contentious matters will be taken up, and the Premier hopes to be able to state what position will be taken by the Government with regard to railways. He intimated also that some statement on another important matter, which he did not desire for the present to disclose, would probably be made on Monday afternoon.

At the morning session the House went into committee on the municipal act of 1907 clause 22, which created much discussion. This clause provides that a corporation shall not be civilly responsible for damages unless the corporation has had express notice of the default causing such damages a sufficient time before the accident to enable the corporation to remedy the same. Mr. M. G. Cameron suggested that the words "express notice" were vague. Knowledge of a defective condition of a bridge or highway should have the same effect. Mr. MacKay thought a verbal notice to any officer in charge of the roads, bridges, etc., should be sufficient. Mr. McGarry declared that the effect of the act would be to shut off litigation against municipalities, while Mr. Tudhope thought it an injustice that the loss should fall on the injured parties. Mr. MacKay brought up the question of the finality of municipal voters'

ists. Judges had held that the list is not final, and sometimes bad blood was created because persons whose names were not on the list had been held eligible to vote.

The Premier pointed out that substantial residents were often left off the list; and the error was not rectified until some important by-law was being voted upon. It would be an injustice clearly to prevent such persons from expressing their desires on questions by which they might be vitally affected. In dealing with a local option by-law it might be desirable to make the list final, but not so with matters affecting questions of taxation.

The clause was not altered.

The Assessment Act.

The assessment amendment bill, 1907, was put through the committee stage. Section 6 deals with the Canada Company grievance. It provides that the reserved mineral rights shall be subject to assessment at their actual value.

Hon. Mr. Hanna explained that anything reserved should justly be assessed. It had a speculative value, and tended to depreciate the value of the surface rights. This is a modification of Mr. Auld's bill. The clause did not strike the man who, having owned the land, sold his mineral rights.

Hon. Mr. Matheson opposed the clause. It meant practically confiscation, and under that principle they were going to hinder the investment of foreign capital in this country. He suggested some tax, but it should be fixed at the same rate as that of mineral lands in unorganized territories.

Mr. Auld maintained that there was no danger of the rights being taxed where they were of no value.

Mr. McCoig thought that provision should also be made for reserved rights applying to natural gas.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Matheson the tax was made to apply to reserved petroleum rights, the word "petroleum" being substituted for the word "mineral."

Farm Lands Assessment Basis.

Considerable discussion resulted over the abolishing of farm lands assessment in cities and towns. It was decided that blocks of fifty acres or over in towns or cities shall be assessed at farm values; all under fifty acres on the regular frontage basis.

The bill consolidating and amending the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario act was advanced a stage in committee.

On motion of the Premier some unimportant amendments were made to

Hon. Mr. Cochrane's measure supplementing the revenues of the Crown (the mining tax bill), and the bill passed its third reading.

Manhood Suffrage Registration.

In committee on Hon. Mr. Foy's act to amend and consolidate the manhood suffrage registration act, there was some discussion on the clause providing that students not registered and not entitled to register elsewhere may register in the city in which they are attending college or university, and be entitled to vote. Mr. Graham and Mr. MacKay contended that this might easily result in a number of students losing their votes. They might be registered at their homes, but on election days might not be able from various causes to go home, or might decline to do so on the score of expense. The Premier argued that the test of qualification besides British citizenship and age was domicile, and a man could not be domiciled in two places. The clause was allowed to stand. The bill, which as originally drafted applied only to cities, will now be applied to towns of over 10,000 people.