

Y, FEBRUARY 27, 1908.

THE RAILWAYS PAY ENOUGH TAXES NOW.

Position Taken by Hon. Mr.
Matheson in Legislature.

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.

Attitude of Government Not
Same as Years Ago.

Mr. P. H. Bowyer (East Kent)
Launches Discussion on Bill to
Supplement Crown Revenues —
Views of Government Indicated
Clearly — Much Business Was
Transacted at Yesterday's Sitting.

Out of what commenced as a very prosaic sitting of the Legislature yesterday afternoon sprang a pithy discussion on railway taxation. When the bill of Hon. Mr. Matheson to supplement the revenues of the Crown was in committee, Mr. P. H. Bowyer (East Kent) made a brief speech favoring increased railway taxation. He made comparisons with the taxation in Ontario and States of the Union, showing that the latter levied from the railways more than this Province. His remarks brought the retort from the Provincial Treasurer that any such proposed increase would be unwise and unjust at the present time. Mr. Preston (South Brant) brought to mind the fact that the present Government when in Opposition had held Michigan up as the pattern for railway taxation, but now went back on that position. More business was accomplished in a shorter time yesterday than at any sitting so far this session. Many bills were advanced a stage, and some new ones introduced.

In reply to Mr. C. N. Smith (Sault Ste. Marie), Hon. Dr. Reaume stated that ten fishing licenses were granted on Lake Nipissing during 1907. Two nets were granted with each license. Three hundred dollars had been charged for each license, and all had been paid but one.

Some New Bills.

The Hon. Dr. Reaume introduced a bill to amend the game and fisheries act. The amendment permits the keeping of game, under ordinary conditions, for fifteen days after the close of the open season, and to make the keeping of game in cold-storage for an indefinite period legal.

The following bills were also introduced and read for the first time:—Respecting the Guelph Radial Railway Company—Mr. Downey. Respecting

the Port Hope Gas Company—Mr. Preston (Durham). Respecting the town of Uxbridge—Mr. Hoyle. Respecting the township of York—Dr. Godfrey. Respecting the town of Perth—Mr. Preston (North Lanark). Respecting the division of the surplus income of the rectory of St. James' Cathedral, Toronto—Mr. Hoyle. Respecting the township of Osgoode, and an act incorporating the Ottawa Hunt Club—Mr. McElroy. An amendment to the municipal act—Mr. McCoig. An act to amend the act incorporating the Alma Ladies' College, St. Thomas—Mr. Eilber. An act allowing William A. Bell to practise dentistry—Mr. Gallagher. An act to amend the assessment act—Mr. Brower. Respecting the Mount McKay & Kakabeka Falls Railway Company—Dr. Smellie. Confirming a by-law of the united townships of McLean and Ridout.

The following bills were given second readings:—To amend the act respecting landlord and tenant—Mr. Hoyle. To amend the municipal drainage act—Mr. Auld. To amend the fences act—Mr. Hoyle. To amend the municipal drainage act; to amend the assessment act—Mr. Ferguson (Greenville). To amend the assessment act—Mr. Duff.

Mr. Bowyer's Object.

After several sections of the act to supplement the revenues of the Crown in the Province had been considered by the House in committee, Mr. P. H. Bowyer (East Kent) made a speech of a few minutes advocating additional railway taxation. Railways in Ontario, he said, were taxed about \$100 a mile by the Province and municipalities, while in Michigan they were taxed \$400, in Indiana \$450, and in North Dakota \$107. On the other hand, the Province had altogether given about fourteen million dollars to railways, while the municipalities had given about thirteen millions in bonuses. In those States where the high railroad taxation prevailed the railways had still continued to build other lines, besides carrying passengers at two cents per mile.

"I often wonder," continued Mr. Bowyer, "at the hesitancy of this Government in seeing that railways pay their fair share of taxation. The movement is gaining strength that these railways should pay more. I believe that it is the intention of this Government after the next election to see that justice is done in this matter."

Mr. Studholme (East Hamilton) suggested that the increased taxation from the railways might be used to build the technical schools the Province had waited so long for.

A Ministerial Reminder.

Hon. Mr. Matheson—We must remember that we doubled that taxation a couple of years ago. It would be hardly fair for us to come at them so soon again.

Proceeding, the Provincial Treasurer pointed out that railways were needed in this Province. He called to mind a recent convention at Columbus, Ohio, when it was stated that if all the States in the Union taxed the railways in a manner similar to Michigan the

railways would have no money with which to carry on business. He argued that the farmer, for instance, would be better off with cheap rates than with a high railroad taxation. The railroad employee, too, would not receive as high wages if the taxation were made heavy.

"It would be unwise and unfair, especially with the present financial conditions, to increase railway taxation," concluded the Minister.

A Lost Affection.

Mr. T. H. Preston said that when the Government were in Opposition they had favored the high rate of taxation in operation in the State of Michigan, but on coming into power they had lost their affection for the method.

Hon. Mr. MacKay said he believed that under the present method of distribution the urban municipalities got an advantage over rural districts.

The Provincial Treasurer admitted that occasionally there was some advantage gained by urban districts. It was impossible in some cases to be absolutely fair.

The bill was reported.

Mr. P. H. Bowyer (East Kent) will introduce a bill to prevent towns and villages creating a monopoly for telephone companies by granting an exclusive franchise.

Under the redistribution bill which will be brought before the Legislature this session it is anticipated that there will be some rearrangement of the Middlesexes. As at present, there will be three constituencies, but instead of being known as the North, East and West ridings, they will be called North, South and East. The chief change will be the inclusion of Westminster in what