ONTARIO ASSEMBLY.

Second Session—Third Legislature.

THURSDAY, JAN. 11, 1877.

In the Assembly this afternoon, a very large number of petitions were presented from Orange lodges praying for the incorporation of that body.

Mr. Bethune introduced a bill to extend the franchise for municipal purposes in cities and towns.

Mr. Wood's bill for the encouragement of agriculture, horticulture, &c., was read a second time and referred to a special committee.

In answer to Mr. Meredith,

Mr. Mowat said, amid some laughter, that the question of the abolition of tax exemptions was under the consideration of the Government.

In answer to Mr. Keen,

Mr. Mowat said it was not the Government's intention to issue a General Commission of the Peace for the whole Province during the present year, but if it were found that more Justices of the Peace were required in any section of the country, they would be appointed.

Mr. Lander, in moving for the papers respecting the Central Prison enquiry, said, as the Government were once extremely anxious to inform the public with reference to the troubles of the Model Farm, he did not for a moment suppose that they would be backward in giving the country the fullest information concerning the Central Prison muddle.

Mr. Mowat said whatever was wrong in the Central Prison had been put right by the Government, and he had no objection to the passage of the return.

The motion was then carried.

Mr. Lander moved for the correspondence with reference to the Superintendency of the Orillia Asylum.

Mr. Meredith said he had heard that the Superintendent of the Hamilton Asylum had been transferred to London, and although he did not object to this, still he thought the Assistant-Superintendent at London should have been considered.

Mr. Mowat said the Government had exercised their best discretion in the matter. Dr. Bucke, of Hamilton, had been transferred to London, Dr. Wallace, of Orillia, to Hamilton, and Dr. Beaton to Orillia.

The motion was carried.

Mr. Wood presented the third report of the Commissioners appointed to consolidate the statutes, and the House adjourned at four o'clock.

FRIDAY, Jan. 12.

As usual, the first business of the sitting to-day was the presentation of a large number of petitions from Orange lodges praying for the incorporation of their East and West Grand Lodges, and from Municipal Councils praying for the abolition of tax exemptions. On presenting a number of Orange petitions from the County of Oxford, Mr. Creelman took occasion to make an "aside" to the effect that though it was his duty to present the petitions he certainly did not acquiesce in the prayer of the petitioners. Petitions were also presented praying for the abolition of the Government Book Depository.

Mr. Crooks introduced a bill respecting property in incorporated Townships under the Municipal Loan Fund Bill; also a bill to amend the Liquor Law. The amendments proposed in the latter would not affect the principle of the Act, but would supplement the machinery of the law and tend to its better enforcement. He thought the bill would complete the liquor legislation at least for some time.

In answer to Mr. Ross, Mr. Crooks said at present it was not the intention of the Government to make any change in the method or the time of the election of School Trustees.

In answer to Dr. Boulter's motion for the papers relating to the closing of the Stirling High School Mr. Crooks said the High School there had been closed because the teacher was trying to teach the whole High School curriculum with a staff which was impossible. The Trustees had been carefully warned, and the responsibility rested upon them. The teacher had been in no violation of the Departmental regulations.

Mr. Hardy complained that two High Schools in Brantford had been closed under similar circumstances. It had been said that they had not kept up their staff of teachers, but he thought the public treasury would suffer but little if the High School curriculum were considerably curtailed.

Mr. Crooks said the subject would be brought before the House in connection with the proposed amendments to the School Law. He thought the County Councils should in a measure be placed in control of the High Schools. The policy of the Department was to increase the number of High Schools, so that all classes of the population would have opportunities for higher education.

Mr. Ferris said under the present regulations the Councils of incorporated villages were involved in a heavy taxation for High Schools to which the outlying population had access, although paying nothing toward the support, &c., of the institutions.

A message was received from the Lieut.-Governor bringing down the estimates for 1877. Mr. Crooks intimated that he would make his financial statement to-day.

Mr. Bethune moved for papers, returns, &c., relative to the Government Book Depository, which he was desirous of obtaining with the view of securing the abolition of the Depository. He said that in the past the Depository had served a good purpose. In the old days there were few bookseller, but now there were altogether some five or six hundred houses interested in the trade; and hence the question, why should the Government keep a book-store under these circumstances? Why should the Government compete with the bookselling trade? Mr. Bethune referred to the report issued on this subject by the Booksellers' Association which had been shelved by the late Council of Public Instruction. As the Department had now passed into the hands of a responsible Minister, it was for the Legislature to deal with the question anew.

Mr. Mowat rose and announced the death of Mr. Peter Graham, the member for Frontenac. The deceased, said the Attorney-General, was highly respected in his district, and had been an attentive member of the House. It was not the custom to adjourn on sad occasions of the kind, but taking into consideration the state of public business, he would depart from the rule, and move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. Cameron thanked the Attorney-General for the respect paid the memory of the deceased, and seconded the motion.

The House then adjourned at a quarter to one.

MONDAY, Jan. 15.

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Mr. Currie introduced a bill to prevent betting or wagering in local elections.

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