

The annual meeting of the Convention of Royal, Parliamentary, and Police Burghs of Scotland was resumed in the High Court of Justice.

Edinburgh, occupied the chair, and there was a good attendance of members.

**NEXT PLACE OF MEETING.**

It was proposed by Mr Simpson, town clerk of Dunfermline, that next meeting of the Convention should be held at Perth, but, on the motion of Provost Dewar, Edinburgh was unanimously fixed upon.

**THE LICENSING LAWS.**

The programme of business contained half a

ing Laws prepared for the consideration of such matters as Local Taxation, Police, Education, and the Permissive Licensing, Powers, Bills, and other cognate subjects. The President said he thought consideration of these subjects would be best reserved for the report of the Royal Commission was out-moved accordingly. Bailie Dick seconded. The Assessor for Culross (ex-Provost Mack, Paisley) moved the amendment that the Bill be referred to the Kirkwall (Councillor) Emsoun. Edinburgh seconded the amendment. On a show of hands, the motion was carried.

**SUBJECT 2. (SCOTLAND) ACT.**

The suggestions prepared by the Annual Committee for a Bill to amend the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892, were read by the President, and ex-Provost Brodie, North Berwick, proposed that the Bill should be re-committed with powers to the Annual Committee, who would be empowered to introduce any amendments into it. The President said that the Bill would be introduced into Parliament if the official members would not. Provost Macfarlane seconded, observing that the Bill was a good one, and was wonderfully made. Mr James Donaldson, the assessor of Partick, urged that the Convention should petition in favour of the introduction of the Bill. Mr James Macfarlane, 13, 8, said, with an additional clause as to the licensing of slaughter-houses in burghs. Some difference of opinion was expressed as to whether it was to go to one point under the Bill dealing with the transference of one-half of the assessment for

Finally the Bill was remitted with powers to the Annual Committee.

HOUSE-LETTING.

The Lord Provost of Dundee proposed that a clause be inserted in the Burgh Police Amending Bill rendering it unlawful for proprietors

lesses earlier than 15th May. The Assessor informed the Committee that the Assessor had been there were several aspects of the proposed change which were neither for the benefit of the proprietor nor tenant. On a division, the previous question was carried.

**ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGES.**

Proctor McLeay, commissioner for Lanark, moved that in burghs with a population under 50,000 the power of appointment should be given to the Surveyor of Taxes for the district in which the burgh is situated, and that his appointment should be by the Crown. Bailie Donald, assessor for Greenock, seconded the motion. Mr. McLeay then proposed a direct amendment, arguing that the burghs were quite enough under the heel of officialdom and Government officers without the Surveyor of Taxes being put in to rule over it. He was astonished, he went on to say, that this movement in the direction of abandoning any little vestige of Home Rule they had should come from the High Council of the Scotch Municipalities. He moved that the Committee should depend upon the example of Home Rule. Bailie McLeay, commissioner for Tain, seconded the amendment, which was adopted on a division.

**EXPENSE OF PARLIAMENTARY BILLS.**

Proctor Kirkwood Gowan, moved that the Convention petition Parliament and memorialise the Government to put burghs in Scotland on the same footing as English boroughs in regard to the privilege conferred on the latter by the English Local Government Act, whereby such of them as have a population of 50,000 can claim to be made a burgh. Fovvles, for Dumfries, seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

**COUNCILS UNDER THE ACT OF 1839.** The motion was agreed to.

**ASSESSMENTS OF BURGH AND LAND.**

On the motion of Mr Councillor Waterston it was referred to the Annual Committee to consider and report upon the subject of the exemption from the assessment of the property of the Corporation for profit, and that with the view of urging the Government to introduce a Bill into Parliament excluding such cemeteries from the Churches and Churchyards.

**TRANSFER OF HOUSES AND LAND.**

It was agreed, on the motion of Mr David Lindsay, that the Corporation should consider the transfer of houses and land in burghs and counties should be largely simplified and the expense lessened, and that the Convention should bring forward a memorial to the Government calling on it to the views of the Convention as to how the grievances should be remedied.

**NORTHERN LIGHTHOUSES.**

There was a motion on a paper submitted upon the Convention to take such steps as might be necessary for securing the reorganisation of the Northern Lighthouse Board, and that the Convention with a view to the introduction into the Board of men having practical acquaintance with navigation and commerce, but the Preses pointed out that the Convention was not a committee, and called upon to discuss, and on a division the meeting supported him with 25 votes against 17.

The Assessor for Dingwall (Mr David Lewis, Edinburgh) moved that the Convention petition Parliament to extend the Convention franchise to the burgh of Dingwall.

He was, he said, a great admirer of the fair sex, but he did not want to trouble them with the duties of municipal council, Parliamentary life, and he thought they were far better employed in attending to their own affairs. The Provost of St Andrews said ladies ought to be at home and attend to the darning of the stockings and the keeping of their children in order, instead of dancing and all those other frivolous diversions. The motion for the adoption of the word "ratepayers," was carried by 24 votes to 15.

The Convention closed with the usual votes of thanks.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.]

Yesterday's meeting of the Convention lacked none of the usual elements of a Scotch dinner and, with the exception of the temperance party, most

performed. The shunting of the Local Veto and other restrictive panaceas till the appearance of the Royal Commission's report was rather rough on those whose enthusiasm is strong on this subject, and soon mutterings of discontent were heard after the opportunity was gone, but probably little progress could have been attained by reviewing the matter ere that lugubrious document is presented.

The proposal of the Commissioner for Dundee to prohibit proprietors and their factors from enforcing too immature declarations by working class

The Provost of Montrose was not quite up to concert pitch. He only moved the previous question three times, probably because there were no other questions. He was, however, particularly in holding the balance fairly 'twixt owner and occupier, was commendable, while his ready comprehension of municipal procedure can't be overpraised. He was, in fact, a man of a mun rate from 1d to 2d (for the maintenance of Free Libraries was hardly up to the times of light and sound, and the ground of objection, viz., that it would develop a bad habit of idleness, was, in fact, a very old one, and one which, happily, while much broader avenues of prosperity are virtually unrestricted. That the Provost of Montrose was a man of a high principle in this procedure adds to the poignancy of the result of insisting upon the roll being called, however, proved the majority in favour of the proposition.

A large amount of time was consumed with amendments on '92 Police Act to remove its inconsistencies and interpret its incoherencies. There is truth in the rather witty observation of the Editor of *Dumbarton* that it is so "fearfully and wonderfully made" that no mere man since the Fall has ever been able in his life to unravel its mystification.

The Parliamentary franchise of women ratepayers came in for the usual amount of chivalry, and was opposed by the editor. Probably it is considered safe subject for courteous criticism, but the female vote at municipal and other elections. How the franchise can be given without

upon, but if the women representatives are local they may know more, and take greater pains to interest themselves in the weal of their constituencies than the prevailing system of representing the Scottish electorate with London lawyers.

The metric system of weights and measures was the last controversial subject touched upon, and the Convention was hardly prepared to adopt it as soon as 1901.