

Hon. J. S. McDONALD—Do you refer to school lands?

Mr. LAUDER.—No; there were Crown Lands in Proton. He had been told time and again that the great subject the Local Legislature would have to deal with was the public domain. He concurred to some extent in that view, and regarded the Commissioner of Crown Lands as the most important public functionary in this House. It was to him the members of this House would have to look for the redress of the grievances of many of their constituents, and he trusted the hon. gentleman would endeavour to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the position of the people in the newer parts of the country. (Hear, hear). As regarded future legislation as to the Crown lands, there was a strong feeling that something might be done—that we had been losing by the bad character of our system the surplus population of Europe, of which we should have had our share. The practical working of our Emigration Department, also, had been of a nature to drive emigrants from our country. A gentleman had been employed here at a large salary as emigration agent, who, in addition to writing something ~~up~~ ^{to} flax culture, had not so far as he (Mr. L.) was aware done anything ~~but~~ direct the stream of emigration on to Chicago and the Western States. The member for South Simcoe had referred to Government land sales which had taken place at Barrie. His (Mr. L.'s) information was that those sales were very improper—that lands had been sold at a few cents an acre, and bought almost entirely by speculators. He was told they had been chiefly bought by gentlemen in this city, who then went to Ottawa, and got the influence of their political friends to procure patents for them.

Mr. FERGUSON said the statement of the hon. gentleman was to a certain extent very true. What he (Mr. F.) had chiefly referred to was the sale of farms in settled townships. As regarded the back townships, he regretted to say a great deal of land had been sold to speculators at as low a price as ten cents an acre. The Government had had under consideration—in fact, the cancelling of those sales; but they had found that they could not set aside the conditions of sale.

Mr. LAUDER said a similar sale had been advertised to take place at Owen Sound, but, fortunately for the interests of the country, had been stopped. He thought, also, the House should set its face against all grants of lands to corporations. He referred to the purchase by a company of a tract of land north of Peterboro—for whom a gentleman occupying a political position in this Province had acted as agent, receiving, he believed, a large sum of money for his services—and said the position of the settlers there would be the same as that of the settlers under the Canada Company, men who grew grey without being able to get their land in fee simple. (Hear, hear). He had been somewhat astonished at the way in which political matters had turned during the last twelve months, more especially with reference to the formation of the Government of Ontario. He did not believe that if the issue was put clearly before the people of Ontario at the late election, whether we should vote for one who was opposed to Confederation or not, they would have supported the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government. There was a strong feeling in Upper Canada that the arrival of Confederation was the time to throw away a great deal of the bitterness that used to exist; but he said we might depend upon it that if there was anything introduced having a tendency to weaken the influence of the Local Legislature, the Government would find that the people would not sustain them. They are too much afraid of the old days of strife to permit any