

discussed it with those who had different views, and he implored hon. gentlemen to consider the subject carefully before coming to a conclusion upon it. This was a matter of Provincial importance, and should not be left in the power of the municipalities to decide. It was better for the Legislature to alter it one way or the other. (Applause.)

Mr. FRASER said there had been a good deal said in reference to some remarks he had chosen to make upon the question of exemptions from taxation, and he had been credited with a great deal which he had never said. The member for East Grey had gone so far as to say that he (Mr. Fraser) would not permit any Government to which he belonged to take up the question. He had never said anything of the kind. The reference he had made to the question was not at Brantford at all, but at Dunnville, and what he had said on that occasion he had well considered. He had known that in Toronto there had been considerable agitation on that subject, the people of the city thinking that it would be a very desirable end to make all the Provincial and Dominion property within its bounds subject to municipal taxation. He had also observed that the question of exempting Church property had been put in the foreground, so that the attention of outside people should be drawn away from the real object sought, namely, the taxation of Provincial and Dominion property. His own idea had been that perhaps his reference to the question at Dunnville would make those who were agitating it in Toronto show their hand. He had not said a word as to what might be the action of the Government; he had only referred to the question so far as it affected the exemption of churches from taxation, and he had expressed his own opinion that churches should not be taxed. He was still of the same opinion. At present he wished to make a few remarks on the general question of exemptions so far as Toronto was concerned, for in reality the whole agitation had originated in this city. He was quite safe in saying that if the whole question had been confined to the exemption of church property from taxation, the people of Toronto would not have had a word to say on the subject, but in order to secure their purpose, they had very wisely kept the real question in the background. He wished to point out that those who were advocating the abolition of exemptions were themselves proposing the hugest exemption in the land. The strongest point with those who sought to do away with exemptions was that if real estate were subject to taxation, all was taxed that should be taxed, which was tantamount to saying that those who were able to pay taxes should not pay so much as they now did, and that those who were least able should pay more than they did to-day. In the city of Toronto, for example, the total value of assessable real estate was \$39,000,000; the amount of assessable personal property and incomes was about \$7,000,000. If the taxes were taken off the latter amount, it simply meant that the whole of the taxes required for the purposes of the city should be collected off the real estate, or, in other words, that every poor man, every labourer, and every clerk who owned the house in which he lived, whatever it was worth, should pay more taxes than he did to-day to make up the diminution caused by abolishing the assessment on incomes and personal property. (Hear, hear.) The rich man, on the contrary, would pay a little more on his real estate, but a little less on his whole real and personal property and income to-morrow than he did to-day. This was making an exemption of the most illogical and indefensible kind, and any party who would venture to make that a political question in the country could not find a corporal's guard to follow them. (Hear, hear.) The people of Toronto who were agitating this matter—and with the exception perhaps of Kingston and Ottawa, Toronto was the only part of the country interested in the whole matter—used as an argument that the location of Osgoode Hall, the Parliament Buildings, the Central Prison, the Normal School, and other such buildings was of no special benefit to the city, and that on the other hand, the property owned by the Provincial and Dominion Governments was being benefitted through the expenditure of municipal money by the City of Toronto. They said that for these reasons it was only fair that such property should be taxed. For his part, he failed to see what special benefit the real estate owned by the Government was receiving from its location in Toronto. The Government did not hold the ground on which their buildings were erected for the purpose of selling it. None of these lands were held in such a way that,

they increased in value, it would be for the benefit of the Province at large. There was a sort of fictitious value imposed upon them, inasmuch as if they were put in the market and sold they would be of more value to-day than twenty years ago; but as the Province did not wish to put them up for sale, the Province was not benefitted by any improvements carried on in Toronto. (Hear, hear.) On the other hand, it was stated that the city did not gain anything by the location of these buildings within its bounds. He would say nothing about the large number of visitors brought to this city from time to time on business with the various Departments of the Government, at Osgoode Hall, and so on. The assessed value of Provincial property in this city was about two and one-half million dollars, exclusive of the educational institutions. Upon this there was annually expended not less than half a million of dollars in repairs that went to capital account. This was an advantage which he was very sure the people of Toronto would not like to lose. They undoubtedly did receive a special—a very particular advantage from their location here. Apart altogether from the fact that in the Confederation Act there was a special exemption with regard to this description of property, there were good reasons for the Province insisting that it should not be taxed. Supposing that to-day the Government were to say to the people of Toronto that it was proposed by the city of London, or any other city in the Province, to exempt these buildings from taxation if they were located there, the advocates of exemption would only be too ready to resist their removal. The policy of exemption was being carried on by the city of Toronto in matters of far less moment, such as manufacturing establishments, railway buildings, and other property of that description. Since Confederation there had been expended on capital account, exclusive of last year, on Provincial buildings in Toronto upwards of one million dollars. Taking the estimates of last year—and they were a fair criterion, as the amount the Government asked for maintenance was generally expended—the amount spent on the buildings for maintenance alone was \$450,000. The advocates of exemption said that the Province got the benefit of the gas, water, and other conveniences supplied to the buildings by the city, but if they did they had to pay for them. Would it be reasonable for the people of Ottawa to say that the Dominion Government there, valued say at six millions of dollars, on the ground that the city derived no benefit from them? And if the Provincial property in Toronto were taxed, they must tax the Provincial property elsewhere; this was what logically followed. Every acre of Crown land owned by the Province would have to pay its taxes, for the rural municipalities had just as good a right to impose taxation as Toronto had, on the ground that the property was being benefitted by its location. The Crown lands were held by the Government at a nominal value, and if they were to be taxed, the municipalities had better take them altogether, (hear, hear) for in two or three years they would be taxed out of the hands of the Government. Dams, locks, and slides owned by the Government would have to be regarded in the same light. If Dominion property in Toronto was to be taxed, then the people of the Lower Provinces had a good and sufficient reason for taxing the Intercolonial Railway, on which twenty millions had been expended. Ontario, which contributed about three-fifths of the revenues of the Dominion, would certainly be paying the piper to the Lower Provinces if they paid taxes on say forty million dollars worth of Dominion property in these Provinces. Carrying the same argument to its legitimate conclusion, the Pacific Railway, costing perhaps \$200,000,000 (taking the land into account), would have to be taxed for the benefit of the North-west. And all this was to be done because the city of Toronto, finding itself burdened with debt, had thought of a happy release in abolishing exemptions from taxation. He was pretty sure that if the people of this Province considered the lengths to which this question would take them, they would be rather chary of adopting the views of the Toronto agitators. (Hear, hear.) There was another argument, if one were needed, against taxing these classes of property. If real estate belonging to the Government was to pay taxes, then the owners of this property should have a voice in the city affairs, in the voting of by-laws for loans, improvements, and general municipal purposes. How were they going to regulate that? Would