

enabled to drain ten acres each. He believed that this Bill, if passed, would give rise to complications that were now unforeseen, and that the money would ultimately cost the borrowers as much as if they borrowed from loan societies or private individuals. If that would be the case he considered that it would be a very bad and unsound policy on the part of the Government. Former Drainage Bills were to enable farmers to drain lands that they could not drain themselves, but this Bill would not assist them to do more than they could do without it. He therefore thought the Government should pause before carrying a measure of this kind into law, and he hoped it would be left over for a year in order that the opinions of the farmers of the country upon it might be obtained. The farmers were adopting a general system of draining their own lands, and they could go just as fast or as slow as they pleased; this Bill would have the effect, he thought, of encouraging them to proceed with their drainage at too fast a rate. The expense incurred in creating these loans would bring the cost quite as high as if the farmers borrowed their money directly from loan societies.

Mr. LAUDER said that if Township Councils were to have the power to issue debentures without the consent of the ratepayers that was another reason why the Bill should be deferred. So small a sum as \$200,000 would be no real assistance to the farmers, and he thought, moreover, that the Province had gone far enough in lending money. He agreed with many of the remarks of the hon. member for North Ontario (Mr. Paxton), and as there was no pressing need for a measure of this kind, he hoped the Government would not press it.

Mr. MILLER, while not feeling at liberty to commit himself as to this measure, was disposed to think that the farmers of this country had been very liberally dealt with. Even if the minimum amount, \$3,000, was granted to each township, forty townships would swallow up the whole sum set apart for the purpose. This measure appeared to be only the thin edge of the wedge to another municipal loan fund. He quoted figures at some length to show that the tendency had been to grant the preponderance of aid to the older municipalities in the Province, and that the newer districts had been comparatively neglected. He did not make these remarks because he represented a newly settled section of the country, but merely because he believed it was the better policy in the interest of the country to open up the new portions of the Province.

Mr. BISHOP thought the farmers were not by any means going too fast in draining their lands. If he had made a speech with reference to any point of law, he could not have made more mistakes than were made by the hon. member for South Simcoe with regard to drainage. He suggested that provision should be made in the Bill for wood drains, as they were better for some kinds of soil than tile.

Mr. MOSTYN said that the agriculturists of his constituency were greatly in favour of a measure of this nature, and for that reason he intended to support the Bill. He hoped the machinery would be inexpensive.

It being six o'clock, the Speaker left the chair.

After recess,

Mr. CAMERON said that though not being a farmer, and therefore not being so competent as some others to give an opinion on the subject of tile draining, he yet thought this measure would not be in the interest of the country. The scheme seemed to be a very roundabout one; it would be much better that farmers should borrow directly from the Government than through Municipal Councils. This \$200,000 would be like a drop in the bucket for the purpose, and when the farmers paid the cost of having an inspector, and the various other costs connected with obtaining their loans, the interest, nominally five per cent., would really be equal to the ordinary rate of interest charged by loan societies. It was the duty of the Government to assist companies or the country as a whole, and not individuals; and this scheme would benefit only a few, and would give the Government an opportunity of exercising patronage. It would be much better to divide the surplus among the municipalities; but though he did not approve of that course, it would be much better than to distribute it in such a way that it would benefit a few persons and not the country at large. He saw no reason why the Government should not invest their funds in bank stocks or other reliable securities and derive profits from the investments the same as private investors. He was disposed to oppose the resolution.

Mr. LONG was satisfied, from what he had seen of drainage in the Old Country, and especially in Ireland, that high as well as low land could be greatly improved by drainage. He did not think, however, that the scheme proposed was the right one. The habit of borrowing money was exceedingly prevalent among farmers at the present time; many farms were under mortgage in building and loan societies. Anything, therefore, that would increase the borrowing facilities of farmers would be a step in the wrong direction. If the Government continued the extravagance they had been indulging in during the past three or four years they would soon get to the bottom of the surplus. While he was in favour of underdrainage, he did not consider the scheme proposed was the best one for encouraging it.

Mr. BALLANTYNE said the question for the House to consider was not the underdraining of lands, but whether it was a work which the Government should assist. In 1846 the English Government introduced a Bill to set apart £4,000,000 for the drainage of lands in Great Britain and Ireland, and a further grant of £2,000,000 was made for the same purpose in 1850. Every nobleman availed himself of the privilege offered, and there was hardly a foot of land that was not underdrained in the district in which he lived. (Hear, hear.) Having this example, he thought that the Government were doing well in bringing forward this measure. Farming was really the basis of our prosperity, and anything that could increase the productive power of farms was worthy of consideration. He pointed out that a meeting of agriculturists at

St. Mary's recently, as well as the late meeting of the Grangers at Toronto, had passed resolutions in favour of underdrainage. If Conservative England had thought it worth while to loan money to individuals for this purpose, it certainly could not be a mistake for the Government to do the same thing in this country, where there were a large number of farmers who were not able to raise money for improvements to their farms. The only objection to the measure was that the sum was too small, but that could easily be overcome in the future if the experiment became successful. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. ROSS thought that the hon. member for South Simcoe would be alone in his opinion that underdrainage was not of benefit. As an horticulturist his experience was that drainage increased the crop and benefitted the land. He considered the scheme would certainly be in the interest of the whole country, as the experiments of those who availed themselves of the opportunity afforded them to drain their lands would, if successful, induce the majority of the farmers to follow their example. If the scheme proved a failure the whole of the money would not be taken up. It was estimated that drainage would cause an increase in crop of five bushels per acre. Supposing that in a township that availed itself of the grant one thousand acres only were drained, the increased annual yield would be five thousand bushels of grain. Land could be drained at \$15 per acre, and it could easily be calculated that the return would be a profitable one. With regard to the outlying districts, he thought the House had been very liberal to them, as the expenditure on colonization roads amounted to the whole amount received from the sale of Crown lands.

Mr. DAWSON said that this was not the case with Algoma. After comparing the expenditure and receipts he found there was a balance of \$864,000 to the credit of the district. With regard to the drainage scheme, he said by all means let it be tried, but he claimed fair play for Algoma and the outlying districts.

Mr. SEXTON thought that the scheme should be hedged round with every possible precaution. With regard to the present outlying districts, he thought they were fairly treated in comparison with the older sections of the country, where sixty or seventy years ago the settlers had to construct their own roads. In conclusion, he might say that he would feel bound to oppose the Government drainage scheme, unless he found when the Bill was introduced that every precaution would be taken to see that the money would be applied to the purpose intended.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN wished to explain that he did not object to legislation on behalf of the farmers, but he thought that if money were to be given to farmers in the older districts to assist them in clearing their land of surplus water, it should also be given to those in the newly-settled districts to assist them to remove their stones and stumps. (Laughter.)

Mr. DEROCHE could see no objection to the resolution. This country being an agricultural one, it was important to foster and encourage the farming interests. In referring to the remarks of the member for Algoma, he said there was no doubt that the revenue was contributed to largely from the woods and forests of the new sections, and it was right that they should receive full consideration from the Province in regard to the construction of colonization roads, &c. In the old and rich counties the money spent in the past upon the main roads far exceeded the expenditure on colonization roads in the new sections.

Mr. BRODER contended that this measure should not be an experiment; the Government should be satisfied that there was a necessity for it and then bring down a matured measure. The cases of Canada and of England were not parallel; because the spending of money for underdrainage in the latter country was justified by the fact that it was found necessary to bring the land there to the highest state of productiveness. There was too much disposition among the people of this country to depend on the Government, and that should be discouraged. He was disposed to approve of the principle of underdrainage, but he could not support the resolution.

Mr. DEACON thought the Government had made a mistake in this matter, because it would only increase the evil of borrowing money which prevailed to so great an extent among farmers. The money would be only borrowed by the older municipalities; not one cent of it, he ventured to say, would find its way into the section of country he represented. The holding of municipal debentures by the Government, which had formerly been condemned, would be the effect of this measure, and he believed a great deal of money would be lost in consequence.

Mr. LANE said that at any rate no objection was made to the principle of underdrainage. If drained lands yielded an increase of five bushels of grain per acre as compared with undrained lands, the country would be vastly benefitted by the general adoption of the system of underdrainage, and the proposal of the Government was to be supported because it would tend to bring about such a state of things. The cost of underdrainage was greatly exaggerated. His experience was that it rarely exceeded \$25 per acre. He proceeded to enumerate the advantages to be derived from the practice of underdrainage, the chief being a supply of moisture from below in times of drought, the drawing off of superfluous water in wet seasons, and the early and certain germination of seed. He deprecated hon. gentlemen finding fault with the amount of discussion upon such subjects.

Mr. FLESHER thought that if the scheme was to benefit the Province of Ontario it should be of much greater dimensions. The \$200,000 would only drain eighty acres in each township, so the scheme partook of the nature of an experiment. If it were intended to be of benefit, it should be more liberal.

Mr. WOOD regretted that the question of locality had come up. These outlying localities had not been unattended to; \$583,681 had been spent on colonization roads alone there, and between Georgian Bay and the Ottawa three-quarters of a million had been spent. The tendency of all classes in this country was to get into debt, but of all classes the farmers were the most saving and careful. They intended to invest the two hundred thousand dollars on the best security at five per cent. It was not ex-