

DEBATES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

(Continued from last week's Extra)

Speech of Henry Beer, Esq., on the Indications of Mineral Wealth in this Island, and on the Construction of Canals.

Mr. BEER—I am pleased, Mr. Chairman, to notice the reference in the speech to the subject of dredging around the wharves. There is no doubt that many shipping places in the Island suffer great inconvenience from the want of sufficient depth of water. On the South side of the Hillsborough River, the steam Ferry Boat has frequently grounded on the flats, and been detained an hour and a half or more, with 50 or 60 passengers on board. Money would be saved by the employment of a steam dredge owned by the Government. If we had such a machine, we would not require to build wharves of the same length as at present, and a competent engineer should be engaged whose duty it would be to superintend the deepening of the water at the different shipping places, and to devote his whole time to the supervision of the more important public works required from time to time. Such an officer should be adequately remunerated, and the office would save far more than its cost by preventing the useless expenditure incurred by the want of scientific knowledge on the part of those charged with the construction of public works of importance. As to a Railroad, I am of opinion that other public works are more urgently required. I will suggest the question whether certain navigable by steamers, from the Hillsborough and from Richmond Bay to Summerside, might not relieve, to a great degree, the inconvenience under which a large portion of the inhabitants of the north side of the Island labor. I believe Mr. Chairman that there are resources of great value in the Island, which only require development, to give a great impetus to the prosperity of the people. I would favor the search for coal, lime stone and other valuable minerals which may be found beneath the surface of the soil. Dr. Geayer reports favorably of the mineral indications of the Island. He reports that "conglomerate limestone occurs near the entrance of Charlottetown Harbor, to the eastward and westward of the Black House. It resembles the common conglomerate of the coal group being apparently a collection of pebbles cemented together; but instead of quartz or flint pebbles the nodules of the limestone and the cementing matter contain carbonate of lime. A piece of this rock, of medium purity, yielded 100 parts; carbonate of lime 68 silicious residuum 44-192. The limestone of this piece is therefore sufficiently pure for the purposes of agriculture, but its situation is unfavorable for quarrying any great quantity. A thin stratum of white and compact limestone appears at Bellevue on the farm of Mr. Charles Bisland. At Lobster Point, strata are again seen in a bed of dipping N. N. E. at an angle of 4 degrees. From the soil downward to low water mark they are as follows: detritum G; red sandstone 5; red shale B; red marble clay 5; sandstone 6-27 feet. The rocks of Governor's Island are different in their character from those just noticed, and from a few fossils contained in them they appear to belong to the coal field of the opposite coast. They are compact grey sandstones, conglomerated and blue shales, marls and limestones. Pieces of copper ore have been found on the N. side of Governor's Island, upwards of 20 lbs. of the ore was obtained the best samples contain 40 per cent of pure copper. The site of the ore was once occupied by a tree which has been felled by copper, and the vegetable texture of the wood can still be traced in the impure masses. Orwell or Gulliver Point is a small peninsula between Foxon Bay and Orwell Bay, at its western extremity it is composed of rocks belonging to a coal formation; they are coarse and fine micaceous sandstone, conglomerated, red white and blue shales, fine clay and blue compact and conglomerated limestones. The general direction of the strata is N. N. E. 8 degrees, but both are very variable and the beds have evidently been very much disturbed. At one place a fall of four feet was observed. These rocks form a low level cliff upon the shore, being covered by six feet of gravium. Near the point a conglomerate limestone like that of Governor's Island appears nearly like water mark and a thin strata of black rock occurs in the cliff. This limestone also appears on the farms of Mr. Young and Mr. Mutch, where it gradually rises to the surface and becomes a compact; blue rock in a stratum from four to six feet in thickness. It is well situated for being quarried, and the limestone is of a good quality." The sandstone and conglomerates of the point contain the remains of trees, and the plants characteristic of the coal measures. The trees are all prostrate in and between the strata; the original bark has been changed into coal and the woody parts of the trunks are now seen in masses of sandstone, iron ore and sulphate of barites; in the latter the vegetable fibres still remain distinct. They are quite different from any other tree now growing upon the Island. A very thin seam of coal was found in the face of the cliff, in which there is also a small quantity of the sulphate of barites associated with an ore. The rocks of the coal formation at Orwell Bay are succeeded by the red sandstones, which on the south side of the bay, form perpendicular cliffs from 35 to 70 feet high. "One of the most remarkable circumstances in regard to the geology of the Island was observed at Cascapec Harbor. On the south of the bay, there is a pen bog, called the Black Bank, reaching three miles along the shore, and containing nearly 2000 square acres. It reposes directly upon the red sandstone and marley clay, and is from ten to twenty feet in thickness. This bog, with all its decayed spongy plants, is of fresh water origin. Two groves of spruce and fir were observed to be buried in it at different levels, and their trunks and roots may be seen projecting from the bank. The peat is of excellent quality, and in the course of time very valuable." Now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to see a reasonable sum appropriated

to ascertain the value of those indications. It is an opinion entertained by many, that this Island was formerly part of the mainland, and in corroboration of this belief, we find the rocks at New Glasgow and Peofot identical in character with those of Wood Islands. With reference to the Railroad, I am not in a position at present, to give a decided opinion upon it, not having as yet, sufficiently informed myself upon the subject. The people of my district are divided in opinion about it; some of those residing on the north side of the Hillsborough are in favor of it, while the inhabitants of the south side are opposed to it. While I am willing to support the paragraph before the Committee, I will not commit the Island to the proposed Railroad until I shall have ascertained the views of my constituents on the subject.

James McLean, Esq., in favor of Progress, Steam Dredges, and Extension of Breakwaters.

Mr. McLEAN—I was much pleased with the remarks made by the hon. member from St. Peter's (Mr. Keilly) on the subject of the improvement of the harbors at the eastward, and I am pleased at the reference to it in the speech. The Railroad places me in a somewhat unpleasant position. I am as great an advocate of progress as any one, and consider it essential to the human race. But, although it may suit the views of some hon. members to establish a line from Alberton to Georgetown, I cannot support the paragraph before the Committee until there shall be a guarantee that the rails will be laid to Souris. The Railroad would cost a very large sum, and years would elapse before it will be carried to Souris, and until that shall be done, it would be a hardship to my constituents to impose on them heavy burdens from which they would derive no benefit. Besides this objection, I consider that the matter should be laid before the people that an opportunity may be afforded of obtaining a knowledge of their wishes on the subject. I cannot support any Railway measure until a survey and proper estimates are before us, and it would probably prevent political and governmental jobbery, if the work were undertaken by a company instead of the Government, which might subsidize the road. I make these remarks with a full knowledge of the immense benefits received in other countries from these roads. But, sir, whether we are to have a Railroad or not, increased harbor accommodation is absolutely necessary, and the use of a sufficient steam dredge and the extension of breakwaters are urgently required.

R. Munro, Esq., on the Railway, and propriety of Establishing Savings Banks in King's and Prince Counties.

Mr. MUNRO—The question referred to in the paragraph before us, Mr. Chairman, are of so important a nature, that I should not feel justified in giving a mere silent vote. I am in favor of the introduction of Railways into the Island, as of all other improvements, as conducive to the general prosperity. The speech of the Hon. Leader of the Government last evening was so able, so replete with details, as to leave but little to be said by other members on this side of the House. It has been said that the introduction of the printing press may be considered as the commencement of civilization and steamboats and railroads. Last evening the member from Belfast stated that all the materials requisite for the construction of a Railroad, must with the exception of wood, be imported from Great Britain. Well, sir, let us bear in mind that although we shall import iron from that country we could send wood in exchange. Great numbers of railway sleepers have been exported to England from the neighboring provinces, and we would find that we could participate in the business. The question has made rapid strides in public favor. During the late election this subject was not broached, and now we hear of public meetings being held at which large majorities have pronounced in favor of it. It is true that the people in several sections of the country are opposed to it; but many of them will tell you that their opposition would be converted into support if the road should go through or close to their farms. As was stated by the Hon. Anty. General last night, that is one of the strongest arguments in favor of the scheme. It is impossible to carry a Railroad to every man's door. Nova Scotia is divided into 17 or 18 counties, but the people of that province did not object to the road because the first line passed through 3 or 4 of them. In his speech last evening the Hon. Leader omitted all references to the great benefits to be derived by the agricultural portion of the population in the interior of the Island, from the introduction of Railways. At present that class have to haul limestone and mussel mud long distances at heavy expense, because they have not the facilities which a Railroad would confer,—the application to the soil of these fertilizing substances. If we had a Railroad, not only would they be rendered more available than at present, but coal could be used in the rural districts more extensively and economically than at present. Firewood is becoming daily more scarce. Coal is cheaper, especially to those living in towns and villages who have not only to pay the price of the wood delivered at their doors, but in addition, the cost of cutting and piling it when cut. The advantages of mussel mud, are at present at a disadvantage; to those parties whose farms are situated in proximity to the shores, while Railroads would transport it to the several farms remote from the localities of its deposit. My own constituents are in favor of the proposed road. I admit that Georgetown will receive a very great benefit from it; but I trust that I am situated by higher views than the merely local interests of the constituency I represent. Whatever will benefit the farmers will benefit the whole community, and any measure having a tendency to foster the general prosperity of the country, if it can be carried into effect without imposing on the people burdens too heavy to be borne, will always receive my hearty support. I regret that I was not in my place last evening, when the paragraph referring to the extension of the amounts to be deposited in the Savings Bank was debated. As it

has been deemed advisable to increase the amount to be received by the present bank, the benefits of the present legislation would be greatly increased by the establishment of branches in King's and Prince counties. I believe that some parties in those counties have availed themselves of the bank, but we all know that there must be many cases of the nature which the bank was expressly established to meet, namely, the cases of parties wishing to deposit small sums, the amount of which Government securities is not worth the trouble and expense of sending them to Charlottetown. I hope that the Government may see its way clear to the establishment of branches in these counties, as it would not only entail expense, but, reasoning from the result of the operations and the saving of a Bank, as at present conducted, would be a source of revenue to the Government and encourage a spirit of economy on the part of the people, returning to the matter of the Railway, I am not sure as to the source from which the interest on the costs of its construction is to be derived. As yet, we have not heard how the Government as trustees for the people, will be required. It is evident that the company will not undertake the work unless the Government assume a certain amount of pecuniary responsibility. Some assert that it will be a surplus over its working expenses, I myself believe that it will pay, and if having the Government as trustees for the public, should receive the profits from this great public work. If the result should be otherwise, then in equity to the Government, or, in other words the public, should bear the loss. If the Government should give a guarantee or an annual subsidy to a company, and if having the Government as trustees for the public, they would be taking money from the pockets of the people, which would—if the Government owned the line, be saved.

Hon. Francis Kelly, in reply to some Arguments against the Railway.

Hon. Mr. KELLY.—Mr. Chairman, the paragraph of the Address which we are now discussing does not commit the House to the adoption of any specific line of action on the subject of a railway. It merely states that the House will consider the expediency of constructing a railway through the Island, and that the Government will be required to consider the expediency of such a measure. It is my intention to consult my constituents, and to be guided by their wishes on the subject. I do not, for a moment, believe that the expense of constructing the road would involve the people in a ruinous amount of taxation, as some hon. members have asserted. I have heard it stated that a tax of five shillings per head would realize all that would be required to meet the interest, and my opinion is that no one in the Island would be worse off by a pound of tea in the year if the railroad were built. The fear expressed by the hon. member from Tryon that the railway would be controlled by the electors, I regard as absurd. Any addition to our population should be welcomed as a great benefit, and the increased demand for labor, which would result from the construction of the road, would have the effect of opening a home market for the industry of our people, and thus preventing them from being driven to the ruin of the Island was predicted at the introduction of our present educational scheme, but I never hear such objections now, and the case will be similar with the railroad.

Hon. Peter Sinclair, on the Introduction of good Dredging Machines; and the Cost of Railroads.

Hon. Mr. SINCLAIR.—Mr. Chairman, the paragraph embraces two distinct subjects—the necessity of dredging our harbors, and the construction of a railroad. The first of these I highly approve of, and am willing to allow all credit to the Government for having introduced it into the Speech, and I will heartily support the proposition for the introduction of a good dredging machine. As to a railroad, the hon. Leader of the Government and the hon. member from Georgetown advocate its construction as a Government work, as is the case in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and I must say that the speech of the former was very clever and plausible. While I am in favor of railroads, the first thing I wish to know is what is to be the weight of the burden we shall have to shoulder. He has tried to make us believe that the road can be built for much less than the experience of other countries has taught us to expect, and to try up his argument, he stated that macadamizing cost £3000 per mile. Hon. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT.—A member of the late Government told me that it cost £500 to macadamize 21 chains, and it is easily to calculate the cost of a mile at that rate.

Hon. Mr. SINCLAIR.—The part referred to was of double the usual width. The country has gone to the expense of importing a stone-crusher and stone for to be crushed for the roads in Charlottetown and the neighborhood. It should be borne in mind that stone can easily be procured in other parts of the Island, and that whether we have a railroad or not our present roads must be kept up. I defy any one to point to an instance of any country embarking in an undertaking so vast in proportion to the means of the people as this scheme of the Government. In Britain £500,000,000 stg. have been expended in building Railroads. The population of that country may be estimated at 32,000,000. Railways were commenced there over thirty five years since. Now, if we take 500,000,000 expended in 35 years for a population of 32,000,000, we will find that it amounts to £1,400,000 annually. And, estimating the average of the population during that period at 28,000,000, that sum would amount to ten shillings per head per annum expended on the construction of Railways. Now compare this with the contemplated undertaking in this Colony, viz: £650,000 in 3 years, and you will find that it will amount to £2 5s. per head, or four times more than that of Great Britain. The Government proposition is to build a Road from Georgetown to Alberton, and estimate the distance at 120 miles. Some hon. members are in favor of laying the rails from Summerside to the Head of the Hillsborough, but if that route be adopted, the Road must still come to Charlottetown. I have no objection to a reasonable line of Railroad, but it must be shown what it will cost. As to the cost, or estimate, of which we have heard so much, it may turn out to be but a bagatelle affair after all. Such cases have been known in the other Colonies last year. It was necessary for the Government to take into their own hands the contracts of three contractors in the Dominion. It may be cheaper than the narrow gauge is 33 1/2 per cent cheaper than the broad gauge, and the rails they have the broad gauge, and the Road from St. John to Shediac has cost some £45,000 per mile. It runs through a level country, where wood is abundant, and to be procured easily and cheaply; and I doubt if we could build a line for less than half of the cost of that in New Brunswick. In the United States there are 14,000 miles under construction, but what comparison can be instituted between that country and ourselves? They number 35,000,000 or 36,000,000 of in-

habitants, or nearly 3,000 to a mile: here it is sought to construct 135 miles, (for that I estimate, will be the length of the line.) This will give a proportion of only 120 to a mile. We have heard it stated that quantities of produce in the interior of Ontario have been kept from market for want of Railway transportation. I am not in a position to say whether such is, or is not, the case in that country; but, if it is it does not affect the construction of this question. No oats in this Island look a market for want of a Railroad. The Hon. Leader of the Govt. said that oats at the westward would have commanded a better price last autumn, had there been a Railroad; but they never realized higher prices than were paid at Port Hope last fall. I question the offer which has been mentioned. The proposed line would, I believe, cost over £600,000, less the cost of right of way and other expenses. Assuming the cost at 500,000, the interest on that sum at only 6 per cent, would exceed £30,000 a year. In New Brunswick it costs from 25 to £30,000 yearly to work 100 miles, and as to the prediction of increased revenue after the road is in operation, we will find our tariff increased likewise. It was 10 per cent—it is now 11 per cent—and, if we continue to increase it, we will be merely affording a premium to smuggling, as the experience of all countries show that such is the effect of high duties. I understand that it is proposed to add two and a half per cent to our present tariff. That would realize, perhaps, 15,000, leaving still some 25,000 to be raised annually. The Hon. Leader of the Government said that the additional taxation required to be raised, would not exceed five shillings per head. We are about 30,000 of a population, 125 miles at £6,000, will cost £750,000; that amount, at 6 per cent will come to £45,000 yearly interest, which is more than half our revenue, clear of the Land Office. This is the way to meet the subject fairly and squarely, and I say again, that no country, at one stroke, ever assumed such a burden as this undertaking will lay upon us. The national debt of Great Britain, large as it undoubtedly is, represents but the revenue of ten years. This project will involve us in a debt far heavier, in proportion to our population and means. Before going any farther with the matter, the House and the country should know the particulars of the offer, and in what manner the requisite funds are to be raised, and then we can legislate upon it with more accuracy and justice.

William Hooper, Esq., in favor of Railroads in the abstract.

Mr. HOOPER was in favor of railways in the abstract; but until he knew the course it would take through the Island he did not propose to commit himself to the undertaking. If the country had sufficient means to build one it would perhaps be prudent to consider the matter, but he did not feel satisfied that it had, and could not support the proposition.

Hon. Daniel Davies' speech in favor of Railroads.

Hon. D. DAVIES said in the course of that debate, the hon. member for Souris (Mr. M. Lean) made allusion to the remarks which he (Hon. D. D.) had made respecting a young man who would look up all his available means in the purchase of a farm when he should have kept a portion for its improvement, and had endeavored to turn such reasoning against the construction of a railroad. But had that hon. gentleman gone on and enquired if that young farmer had outgrown the money at a reasonable percentage for thirty years, and expended it in improving and cultivating his farm, would it not have been wise in him to have done so? And that was the position he (Hon. D. D.) took with respect to the railroad. To build a railway out of their own available means would certainly be injurious to the country; but if foreign capital could be obtained he thought it would be wise to do so, as he felt that the country was well able to pay the interest which the undertaking would cost, and thought the real difference between hon. members was as to which should undertake the work. He (Hon. D. D.) had traveled some and when abroad, felt how important it would be to have a railway on this Island, and often wished that they had one; and was of opinion that their traffic was sufficient to give more employment to a railroad than many supposed, and believed that those engaged in the fisheries would soon find a railway of immense advantage to them. A large majority of his constituents were of opinion that if foreign capital could be obtained on reasonable terms to build one, it would be wise to undertake its construction with as little delay as possible. No doubt hon. gentlemen on that Committee had to be guided by the wishes of their constituents, and whatever their private opinions were, would have to consult that of their supporters. Still he (Hon. D. D.) hoped a majority would be prepared and willing to support the paragraph. He looked upon the macadamizing of the roads throughout the Island as impracticable. In no country could they find pleasure in roads to travel on with light carriages in the summer, and they were pleasant for man and horse; but the macadamized roads were so hard upon the horses feet that he would rather travel through mud than put his horse upon them. Every year getting worse, last fall the St. Peter's Road was impassable for a time, at least, for heavy loads; but this would be obviated by a railway, while for light carriages their roads could be easily kept in good repair, as he had no doubt a railroad would take a great deal of the traffic from off the main roads. Some were of opinion that a railroad on this Island would be self-sustaining after a few years, and he (Hon. D. D.) was inclined to think it would. He had a conversation some time ago with the superintendent of the New Brunswick Railway, from whom he learned that the receipts on that road during the past year amounted to \$200,000 yielding about one-and-a-half per cent on the cost, over and above wear and tear to rolling stock and other expenses, and that 50 per cent of the traffic was local, or independent of the sea. Now as that railway cost fifty per cent more than it was believed a narrow gauge could have been built for, it was obvious if New Brunswick had adopted the narrow gauge, that their profits would, in proportion to the cost of construction have been greater. Intelligent gentlemen who had calmly considered the subject thought they were able to have one built on the terms which had been proposed. He concurred with the

hon. gentleman from New London (Hon. P. S.) that if the duties upon the necessary articles of life were raised too high, it might tend to encourage smuggling; but yet was of opinion that the duty could be imposed so that it would fall mostly upon the class best able to bear it. A direct tax, for instance, might be imposed upon produce which would be better than increasing the duty upon Tea, Sugar, and other like articles. He would be glad to see the Government undertake the work at an early day.

Hon. P. SINCLAIR said that he understood the Hon. Leader of the Government to say that the intention was, that a company should build the road, and that the Government would afterwards pay for it.

Hon. D. DAVIES.—Assuming such to be the case, it would not be, properly speaking, a Government contract. His experience of public life only convinced him that the representatives of the people were but their servants, and he, as usual, would prefer that the Government should enter into a contract for the whole line with a party able and competent to build it. The hon. member for New London (Hon. P. S.) seemed to think the dispute represented would receive no benefit from the understanding; he (Hon. D. D.) was of quite a different opinion and believed London was one of those places to which a branch would be required yet to be extended. He had loaded a vessel out there at one time, and from what he saw then, was convinced a line would have to run there at an early day if the road were built. Every merchant who had much to do in shipping out knew that cargoes often heated, and that the delay in getting vessels quickly dispatched was the cause. They knew also, how much it detracted from the value of the cargo, and that in making calculations those drawbacks and losses had to be taken into consideration, and that if those drawbacks could be overcome, farmers would obtain a higher price for their grain. If merchants could send their ships into Georgetown up to the fifteenth of January, as they would were there a railway extending from Cascapec to that port, important advantages would result therefrom to the industries in the country. Allusion had been made to the Savings Bank. He thought such institutions were intended for the poorer classes of society, for frequently people spent money which they probably would not if they had an opportunity for putting it out at interest; such safe places as those which such institutions afforded, they would be glad to see the one in Charlottetown extended. He knew there was a class of people which was fond of putting their money out on interest, and some of those had placed deposits in that institution; but it was not for such it had been originally intended.

R. Munro, Esq., original ideas on best means of meeting Railway Expenses.

Mr. MUNRO was glad that the Savings Bank had been alluded to. But understood such institutions were intended for the droppings of the poorer classes of society, and was surprised to find that persons of means were placing deposits in the Bank in Charlottetown, yet if a motion should be brought in for extending the limits of the one in that City, he would cheerfully support it; but at the same time thought that persons distant from the capital should have the same opportunity. He thought such institutions gave an impetus to industry; encouraged thrift and economy among a people and should be extended to other parts of the country. When speaking in the forenoon about railways, he wished to know from what source the tax required for the annual interest on the Railway was intended to be drawn, but had not received an answer. He had some original ideas of his own which he would give (Hear.) If there were many farmers who were unable to save any money in any place; or even to purchase as many supplies as they would have wished for their families on account of having to pay for their farms; and that money had been going off the Island in the hands of the buyers of the produce. More goods would be imported, and as a result more money would be thrown into the Treasury. Besides, the building of the road would also be the means of circulating much money in the country. Laborers would be paid in money which they would freely circulate, and he had no doubt but that such an undertaking would also cause many immigrants to come into the country, and thereby the population would be greatly increased; and population, that hon. Committee knew, was the best source of wealth in any country. There would be more mouths to feed and more bodies to clothe, therefore it was that he believed a small tax would be sufficient to raise the extra amount which would be required for the annual interest; and felt satisfied, that within the next five years the annual revenue, even with the present tariff, would reach £100,000. If the Revenue doubled itself within the last ten years, might not the same result follow within the next ten years also? True, the duties had been raised; yet it was also true that some articles were cheaper than they were ten years ago. The increasing prosperity of many of their farmers, and he might also add of their mechanics, together with an increased population, would, he felt satisfied, operate so favorably upon the interests of the country at large, that a surplus revenue would be thereby placed in the hands of the Government. The Hon. Leader of the Government said that if it would cost more than £5000 a mile, he would have nothing to do with the undertaking, but if an interest of a small tax would be sufficient to raise the extra amount which would be required for the annual interest; and felt satisfied, that within the next five years the annual revenue, even with the present tariff, would reach £100,000. If the Revenue doubled itself within the last ten years, might not the same result follow within the next ten years also? True, the duties had been raised; yet it was also true that some articles were cheaper than they were ten years ago. The increasing prosperity of many of their farmers, and he might also add of their mechanics, together with an increased population, would, he felt satisfied, operate so favorably upon the interests of the country at large, that a surplus revenue would be thereby placed in the hands of the Government. The Hon. 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