

saving would be effected in regard to plans and specifications for such undertakings. Even if the Municipality Bill were not carried out, the establishment of a Board of Works would be paving the way for a change in the system of the road service. He cared not himself whether there should be any other persons than members of the Government in the Board of Works; but he thought it advisable to bring in one or two persons not connected with them, to act along with some of them as a Board of Works, which was the way in the other Provinces. They saw that there were Boards of Works in the other Provinces and in Great Britain; and there was great need for one in the Island; for the present system of building large bridges was the means of throwing away money, in consequence of their continually going out of repair. They should be under the superintendence of a proper person. Should a general superintendent be appointed, that would be the means of introducing new improvements; for it was not likely that a Road Commissioner with a salary of £10 a year would feel much interest in studying new plans and improvements. In that manner, great improvements had been made in bridges in New Brunswick; in Canada, he believed there was one superintendent for the whole Province. He knew hon. members were afraid of the expense; but if there would be expense connected with the board, there would be a saving effected in the works executed. The chief engineer would supersede the present superintendent of Public Works, and to him would be entrusted the management of the principal public undertakings, the survey of new lines of roads, and the preparing of reports respecting such works, with their estimated cost, which could then be provided for by grants from the House. He did not think it was necessary that the bill should be postponed till they saw if the Municipality Bill was carried into effect.

Mr. MACINTOSH said, he would approve very much of a Board of Works, if he saw means to carry it out; for he thought as long as they had the present system, but little improvement would be made. If the Statute Labor were commuted into money, he thought there would be something for the chief engineer to go by. He believed there were very few bridges that would not require to be built again; for they were constructed of such perishable material that they soon decayed. As for roads, he thought it would be necessary that some better system be adopted to keep them in repair than the Statute Labor; for it was a loss to the people, and the labor was not well done. He for one would be for postponing the bill, until Municipalities were established in the country. If they passed the bill, a great part of the duties to be performed, would devolve on the chief engineer; but really he did not think the Colony was in a state to build new bridges at present.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY said, this bill was not going to create additional expense. In taking up the public accounts, they would see that large sums were spent in paying the Superintendent of Public Works for visiting different places; and in some cases, as Darnley Bridge, his plan was not carried out; but if a chief engineer were appointed, his plans would be carried out; he would be responsible for them, and much would be saved in building bridges, &c. The members of the board would not receive pay, except perhaps 10s. a day for every day they attended. The hon. member complained of the present system; but the bill would be the means of remedying it.

Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY had always thought that a better system than the present relating to roads and bridges, might be adopted; for large sums were spent for bridges year after year, with but little beneficial results. If a competent person were appointed to look after the bridges, he was convinced there would be a great saving to the country; for though they might cost a few pounds more in building, yet they would be cheaper to the country and last much longer than if built as many of them were at present; such as Wilnot Creek Bridge, which if properly built at first, they would not now be called upon to provide a large sum to repair it. Unless some better system than the present were adopted, he thought it was only throwing away money to build more new bridges. It was for the House to say if there should be one superintendent. He was of opinion that something was wanted in this Colony; but whether the present bill would remedy the evil, he was not prepared to say.

Mr. COOPER had often mentioned that they required a different system from the present. They ought to have road contractors who would take a lease of the roads to keep them in repair for a number of years; and until they had a party of men that had an interest in doing the best work, they might lay out money to little purpose in paying for contracts, as a number of men took contracts on the roads, and just executed them in such a manner as to make the work pass. If they had men to take a lease of the road contracts for a number of years, the public would be overseers; and when a person passed along a road and found it bad, complaints could be made, and the contractors might be proceeded against. In case, too, of such contractors being employed, they would be prepared for their work with proper implements and other requisites for roadmaking, and would not proceed according to the very inefficient manner in which that work was now frequently performed. Some of the roads were repaired with the top soil, notwithstanding the directions of the Road Commissioners to the contrary; yet when they went to inspect the work, they could scarcely have the hardihood to say,—the contractor being a poor man,—that he must take it off, and put on gravel.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY could not agree with some of the remarks just made; for at present there was no man to take the management of the work; but if a Board of Works or chief engineer were appointed, they could attend to the matter. Were the making of roads let for a number of years, the chief engineer might perhaps draw up some plan for making those roads. The parties contracting would then feel it to be their interest to find gravel or some other material to keep the roads in repair. But how was it now? The Road Commissioner let perhaps a mile to one party and a mile to another, who repaired the road with the top soil, which the first rain that came afterwards swept away, leaving the road worse than it was before, and so it remained during the season. That was the way in which the work was generally done. He certainly thought it was time something should be done; and he did not know of any other scheme than the one proposed. It would be some time, perhaps, before a competent person could be obtained; for there should be such a person,—a civil engineer from some other country. In that case, no doubt, great improvements would be made in the roads and bridges.

Mr. CLARK said, all that was very good; but this Bill did not provide anything at all for repairing the roads; but this Bill did not provide anything at all for repairing the roads. He was not going to argue against the principles of the Bill; but it did not go far enough. He agreed with what had fallen from hon. members respecting the state of the roads; but no one person could carry out all that was proposed; and it was his decided opinion that they must have one superintendent for each County. He would abolish the office of the present Road Commissioners, and give their salaries to pay for a superintendent for each County. It was useless to endeavor to improve the bridges, unless they also improved the roads. He thought the best thing the Government could do with the measure was to allow it to lie over for a year, and then bring in a measure providing for a superintendent of roads for each County.

Hon. COL. TREASURER said, from what had fallen from the hon. member, Mr. Clark, it did not appear that he knew much about the matter. He (hon. Col. Treasurer) had known that such a Bill was to be brought before the House this session; and when in Ireland lately, he had made inquiries respecting such matters, and found that there they had a County Surveyor, who surveyed the roads of a County; and one of those counties was nearly as large as the whole Island; but not a rut would be found on the road in it. The work on the roads there was executed as the hon. member, Mr. Cooper, had recommended, by letting it to a number of individuals. He objected to having a superintendent for each County for the reason that it was more difficult to procure three competent men to discharge the duty than one; and he certainly believed that one man occupied the whole summer, could superintend the erection of every bridge to be built, and also report on everything of that nature required in the country. He spoke from the little experience he had, and from the inquiries he had made. There were more roads in the County in Ireland to which he had alluded, than in the whole Island. He felt satisfied that if a Board of Works were established with one competent person to undertake the superintendence of the roads and bridges, it would be quite sufficient; for in Canada one superintendent had a district five or six times as large as Prince Edward Island.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY said, what the hon. member, Mr. Clark, alluded to, one superintendent for each County, might be carried out, if the municipalities' bill were passed next session, and then if the House thought proper one might be appointed for each County to act in concert with the chief engineer; but this Bill was not intended to provide for that.

Mr. COOPER did not see the necessity of passing the Bill the present session, as there were no great works commenced or likely to be commenced this year; and the road money was already appropriated. The Bill might lie over one session.

Mr. MACINTOSH quite agreed with the opinion first expressed. An alteration of the existing system would be required before they introduced the Bill; but had it been brought forward before the road appropriations were made, they might have considered the measure more particularly.

Mr. DOUSE felt inclined to support some new plan with reference to the roads and bridges in the Island; and a remodelling of the whole system, he thought, was much required. At the same he did not feel pledged to carry out the system proposed. He thought it would be almost impossible that one superintendent would be able to discharge all the duties required of him. The hon. Col. Treasurer had alluded to Ireland; but the circumstances of that country, and those of this Island were quite different; for there they could work on the roads all winter, and likewise had railroads, which was not the case here. It was no use to think that a person at a salary of £75 a year could devote his time sufficiently to the public service. The salaries proposed in the Bill were certainly too low. He thought if they could adopt some plan to be well matured, and brought in next session, a saving might be effected as regarded the public expenditure; for he knew cases in which the public money was expended to little advantage; and he really was of opinion that something might be done, as the municipality Bill was likely to go into operation next year.

Hon. Mr. PALMER said, he thought no part of the public service called more for a change of system than that of the expenditure on public roads and bridges; and he believed it was the opinion of every person capable of forming an opinion on the subject, that a change was loudly called for in the system in which the public money was appropriated for the public service throughout the Island. He did not believe that one fourth part of the statute labor was applied as the law provided it should be applied; and that was done by contracts was very much slighted, and in too many places it was overlooked from a dereliction of duty on the part of the Commissioners. He thought if the real value of the statute labor were expended in labor or money faithfully applied, they would soon see a visible difference in the state of the roads and bridges of the Island. He did not think, however, that the present Bill was calculated to remedy those evils; nor did he think that the circumstances of the country required that a Bill should pass in that form; because the public buildings were not of that magnitude to call for a separate Board as was proposed in the Bill. He would willingly advocate such a change as would ensure to the country that the money expended in future would be applied more faithfully and honestly, and more to the credit of the Government and the benefit of the country than at present; but he did not see how that would be more effectually accomplished by the proposed measure. He thought the only plan that would be a public improvement, would be to place each County under a chief supervisor, who would be a responsible person, and would require to give security that all the work entrusted to him was faithfully and properly done. What responsibility had the present Road Commissioners? Supposing they squandered the money and overlooked the work, they might indeed be discharged from office; but the salary attached to it was so trifling, that they cared not to retain office. He would give the chief supervisor a salary of not less than £200 a year,—something that he could look to and be anxious to retain,—and who would devote his whole time and attention to the subject, in short, make it his business. If necessary that there should be a Board of Works, that might be done along with what he had suggested; and let those supervisors for each county might be members of the Board, to meet from time to time in this County as might be necessary, and let all money appropriated for the road service go through their hands. The suggestion made by the hon. member, Mr. Cooper, was one that he (Mr. Palmer) was sure would meet with public approbation; and it might very well be carried out by the scheme which he had just proposed. The Board might let by contract each year, the keeping in repair of eight or ten miles of road to one contractor, who would then make it his business to attend to the road, and whenever he saw any part of it likely to give way, he would apply a remedy before it became worse. To some scheme of that kind he would be most willing to give his support; but the present Bill did not at all meet his expectations. He fully agreed with what had been said, that there was no necessity for passing the measure this session. But it seemed somewhat remarkable, that both this House and former Houses admitted that the present system relating to roads and bridges was a bad one, and still a majority of the Legislature could not be obtained to agree as to what would be a new system. He had always been willing to support a new system, and one time did support a measure for having a property tax for roads instead of the present system. Such a measure had been in operation in New Brunswick, for many years past; and it had been found that the assessment on property worked well. Such a plan could be combined with the new system of a separate superintendent for each County; and he thought it would likely come to that at last. According to the present system, the poor man was taxed as highly as the rich man for the labor on the roads. He thought the subject was well worthy the attention of hon. members, and that they should come there another session well prepared to consider the question.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY said, the hon. member had only expressed the same opinion as that expressed by every member

of the House who had spoken on the subject. A bill different from the present one, would be required, if the suggestions of the hon. member were carried out. This bill was not prepared for the purpose of going into operation, if the Municipality Bill did not pass; but it was similar to bills in the other Provinces for the establishment of a Board of Works. If the House next session should not pass the bill for the establishment of Municipalities, a bill could be introduced to abolish the office of Road Commissioners, and to provide for the appointment of a superintendent for each county; but the country was not able to support a chief engineer for each county. He agreed with hon. members that there was not an urgent necessity for passing the bill now; yet there were several large bridges going on, and people were desirous to have more competent persons to superintend them than the Road Commissioners, and a chief engineer was not to be had. He wished to have the principle discussed, which would do a great deal of good in preparing the people for some change; and it would be well if members of the House turned their attention to some change in the existing system. He thought the bill so far as it went, was very well; and if in another year the Municipality Bill were not passed, a change might be made in the bill providing for the appointment of Road Commissioners. Nothing could be worse than the present system. Mr. COOPER made a few additional observations. He thought the management of the roads should be under the general Government or Board of Works, especially the fixing of the amount of rates, which should be done in an equitable manner.

Hon. Mr. WIGHTMAN said, that introducing the bill would be paving the way for some improvements next year, and if they allowed it to go into operation before the Municipality Bill, the country would have an opportunity of judging of its benefits. The present system of road making was confessedly a bad one, incurring a large expenditure; and unless some competent person were appointed to superintend the outlay of the money appropriated to the road service, it would continue so. There was now much more travelling than in former years, and also a great increase in the carting of produce to places of shipping. So long as the system of throwing loose soil on the roads was continued, they would be bad, or until they were macadamized as in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Wherever the roads were macadamized in this Island, they were excellent. He approved of the bill so far as it went; but it did not go so far as he wished.

Mr. PERRY did not see the necessity of passing the bill this session. His views on the subject had been so well expressed by Hon. Mr. Palmer, that he had not a word left. He certainly thought there should be a measure introduced providing for a road superintendent for each county; because if there was only for the whole Island, how could he know the state of the roads at Tignish, or the East Point. If the bill passed this session, it would cost the country £500 or £600; and he would, therefore, let it lie over for a year. It would be much better, in his opinion, to take it up next session before the road appropriations were passed; and he was also of opinion that the bill did not go far enough. He thought every hon. member would admit it was high time that the system of making roads and bridges was revised.

Mr. LAIRD thought the subject had been pretty well discussed; and the general opinion seemed to be, that as they had appropriated the money for roads and bridges, and as there were persons appointed to take charge of it, it was unnecessary to pass the bill this year. He agreed with hon. members that a change in the road service was necessary; and he also agreed with what fell from the Hon. Col. Secretary, that one person might superintend the roads for the whole Island. He thought that before next session the subject would be pretty well considered by hon. members; he, therefore, moved the following resolution to test the opinion of the House upon the question:—

Resolved, that the further consideration of the Bill intitled 'an Act to provide for the establishment of a Board of Works,' be postponed till next session, and that the bill be printed and published in all the weekly papers."

Hon. Mr. LORD said, he would go with the resolution; in fact, he understood when this bill was introduced, it was to lie over until the Municipality Bill was passed, and the minds of the people were known on that bill. Much had been said in the state of the roads in the Island, and the necessity of an improved system, which was perhaps all very well; but he had made comparisons between the roads of the Island and those in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as he had travelled on the roads in those Provinces as well as on those in the Island, and he thought, leaving the main post roads out of the question, that the roads were worse in those Provinces than they were in this Island. He was one of those who paid some attention to road making, and when he travelled through other countries, he observed their systems; and he did not think that our system was to be despised so much as some thought. He thought when they considered the amount expended on them, that they were as good or perhaps better than those in the other Provinces. They knew very well that if roads were macadamized, as large amount of money would be expended; and how was it to be obtained? They went on from year to year increasing the amount appropriated to the road service; but if so, the roads were also improving. If a Board of Works were established, its officers would require to be paid. He was perhaps wrong in his opinion, but he thought, if a Board of Works were established, there would be a necessity for raising a little more money than at present, or the board would not have a sufficient amount of money to make those improvements that the public would expect. He thought they were going a little too fast; they must impose taxes, if they made improvements. Were they to look at the finances of the country, they would see at a glance that it was going to be involved in debt, which he did not approve of. Hon. members might go on, and appoint officers; but he would tell them that the money must come from the hard working people of the Colony. He would refer to an observation made by the hon. member for Charlottetown (Hon. Mr. Palmer) with reference to a property tax, who had stated that in New Brunswick they had a property tax for the making of roads. Now, he would ask him if he would like to introduce a measure of that nature in this Island; and if he intended to be a representative for this town, he could not moot a measure that would be less popular than such a one. At all events, he (Hon. Mr. Lord) disapproved of it very much.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY again offered some explanation, showing that the amount appropriated to the road service, had been greatly increased during the few past years, and stating that the present bill was introduced to make that money go further. The expenses connected with the working of the bill would not be great, as the present officers in connection with the road service and public works, would not then be required. He had no objections to publishing the Bill.

Hon. Mr. LONGWORTH thought the hon. member's arguments went to condemn the present system; yet they were all agreed upon that; and he thought the majority had agreed that the Bill would not tend to improve it. He felt that there must be a great deal of corruption, when so much money was expended as they yearly appropriated to the road service, and so little benefit derived from it. He thought the old system should be swept away, and a new one introduced next session. He had no objections to allow this Bill to be printed and lie over till next session; and he hoped that then there would be a measure introduced to embrace a great deal more than it did.

Some suggestions were then made as to amending the resolution, which was accordingly amended and then agreed to by the Committee. The House then resumed, and the Chairman reported the resolution agreed to, which was adopted by the House, and is as follows:—

Resolved, that the further consideration of the Bill intitled 'an Act to provide for the establishment of a Board of Works,' be postponed till next session, and that the Bill be printed and published in the Examiner, Islander, Protector and Advertiser newspapers."

WAYS AND MEANS.

The House then went into a Committee of the whole on Ways and Means.

Hon. Mr. WIGHTMAN moved the following resolution, which was agreed to:—

Resolved, That the several rates and duties imposed and levied under the Act 19 Victoria, cap. 1, be continued and amended for one year, from and after the first day of May next."

Hon. Col. Secretary moved the following resolution:—
Resolved, That the 14th, 15th and 20th sections of the Act 19 Victoria, cap. 1, be amended so as to carry out the suggestions of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury."

He then offered a few remarks respecting the Despatch which had been received on the subject, by which it appears to be intended to abolish certain duties imposed on parties entering goods at the Excise Office.

After several hon. members had briefly expressed themselves on the subject, the resolution was agreed to.

Hon. Col. Secretary moved the following resolution:—
Resolved, That the ad valorem duty be increased from 5 per cent. to 6 1/2 per cent."

He made a few remarks on the subject, observing that there had been a practice of some merchants, who, in importing goods from Halifax, paid duty as if imposed on sterling money, and not as was intended by the Act on the currency of the Island, which he thought was taking advantage of other merchants. He thought if the evil could be remedied, it ought to be done. As to the proposed increase of duty, 6 1/2 per cent. was the lowest tariff in any of Her Majesty's dominions. In Canada, it amounted to 20 or 30 per cent.; in New Brunswick, he believed it was to be raised to 10 per cent. this year, and the same in Nova Scotia. In fact, when they were raising the duty, they might have gone a little higher; but he thought the proposed increase would meet the expenditure, and there was no occasion to increase it any more than would be sufficient for that purpose. He thought an increase of duty on dry goods would not be objectionable, as the parties who principally purchased them were those who could well pay for them.

Hon. Mr. LORD rose to oppose any increase of duty on dry goods. He would ask the leader of the Government if there was any occasion for an increase of taxation. There might be for education, but in no other way at all. If an increase of duty were imposed on spirituous liquors, he would support it; but the increase was proposed on the very articles required by the inhabitants of the Island from one end of it to the other. He said the House had no right to appropriate a larger amount of money than the revenue would meet; and he knew it would be an unpopular movement to increase the duties as proposed; nor did he see why it should be introduced this session. If the members of the Government thought that an increase of revenue would be required, why did they not propose it at the first of the session, when they brought down their estimates? The expenditure for roads and bridges might have been reduced, as he thought the roads were very fair for the Colony; and he would rather support a reduction of the grant to them than have an increase of duties. He would not give his consent to an increase of duty, unless on ardent spirits imported into the Colony and those manufactured in it. Every gallon of spirits drunk in the Colony might well be taxed 5s. per gallon. It was said that such an increase of duty on them would encourage smuggling; but it would do no such thing.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY said, the hon. member seemed to say that no improvements were going on; but such was not the case. When the free education system was first introduced, it was not thought to cost more than £6,000 or £7,000; now the expenditure for it was £13,000 or £14,000. Thus the people of the Island could have education for a paltry tax on land. The duties, too, at that time had been lowered. The increase proposed now would perhaps not raise over £1,500; and the people would not grumble at that. The hon. member need not be so much alarmed that the proposed increase would be unpopular; for he was convinced that the people would be satisfied with the increase to carry out the Education Act. It could be seen that the Education Act and roads and bridges took up half of the revenue. People could not expect to get education without paying for it. What had the Education Act done for the people of the Island? It was better than to have free land; and many throughout the Island would never have been able to educate their children, had it not been for that Act. Therefore, the hon. member need not be afraid of the unpopularity of the proposed increase of duty. He (Hon. Col. Secretary) was one who had no fear of it. The Government were called upon almost every day of the Council met, to establish new schools; and they had never refused a school yet. The Government schools had gone on increasing till they now amounted to about 260 or 270; and the Government must have funds to meet those demands; and, in order to meet them, they must impose taxation. The hon. member thought that other articles might bear the increase better than dry goods; but he (Hon. Col. Secretary) thought persons who purchased dry goods could pay for an increase of duty as well as those who took a glass of brandy and water. They had raised the duty on spirits as high as they well could, without encouraging smuggling.

Hon. Mr. LORD replied, that then it appeared to be cause of the extra expenditure for the school system, that the increase was required; but why not put the tax on the proper quarter—on the land. Some years ago when a small sum was required to be given to the teachers, a small tax was laid on the land. He thought the Hon. Col. Secretary must have been mistaken in his allusions to some merchants as paying duty on the value of their goods in sterling, instead of in the currency of the Island.

Hon. the SPEAKER was altogether opposed to any increase of taxation on land. He was of opinion that the people would rather pay an additional duty of 2 1/2 per cent. on dry goods than any increase of the tax on land. He said he spoke of several meetings that had taken place, at which the question had been put to the people, if an increase of the taxation of the country were required for paying the amount expended for education, would they be satisfied to have it imposed on land or not; and they were opposed to that, but would not object to an increase on dutiable articles imported into the country. Therefore, he did not believe there would be a man out of a hundred who would object to the proposed increase, when he saw that it was required because of the increased expenditure for education, which had not been expected. He considered that taxation on spirituous liquors had a tendency to increase smuggling; and was in favor of taxing one article as well as another. He was sorry that when the present educational system was introduced, the Government had taken off the duty on tea to the extent of 1d. per pound, and the same on molasses per gallon; and he had said it was no benefit to the consumer; for if any duty were taken off, take it off entirely, and then there would be a reduction made in the price of the article to the consumer. There was no taxation imposed on the country that they would feel so lightly as an increase of the ad valorem duty; for the one who wore the best clothes, paid the highest. He was prepared to go for that increase in order to meet the deficiency upon the expenditure for schools, or rather the increase of the school system.

Mr. CLARK said, there was one thing that had not been taken into consideration in speaking on the question, which was, that some years ago they had entered into a treaty with the United States, by which many articles which then paid a high duty now paid very little. Many articles were now admitted duty free from the United States, such as cheese and also flour, on which the duty had formerly been 5s. per barrel. Quantities of boards and shingles were also now imported duty free from the other Provinces. He thought the revenue would not be much augmented by an increase of the duty on spirits; for it would encourage smuggling. The duty on spirits was already much higher than in the neighboring Colonies. The revenue must be increased in some way, else the Colony would go in debt; but as its inhabitants were deriving great advantages from a large expenditure for education, he did not think they would complain of the proposed increase of duty.

Mr. COOPER said, if the Government must have an additional revenue, he for his part did not know anything that would bear an increase of duty better than the advertisements of quack medicines. The proposed increase was only about 3d. per pound, and just about 1s. more on a fine coat, and perhaps 1d. on the poor man's shirt; so there would be very little difference in the price of it. The increase proposed was so trifling, that it was scarcely worth while making an objection to it.

Hon. Mr. LONGWORTH said, they might as well say the same thing every year. But what was the occasion of raising the duty? Was it not those land speculators? Were it not for them the country would be clear of debt; and that was the cause of the increase of duty now required.

(For continuation of Debate see Examiner of to-day.)