

of our wild-land assessment law, which was passed, chiefly, for the express purpose of compelling the great land holders to part with their lands, and which was such a favorite measure with the late administration and so important, in their estimation, that the members of another branch of the Legislature, as has been proved by some of their number before a committee of this House, were compelled, during the reign of terror, by a most unconstitutional coercion, to vote for it, against their own inclinations. Now, this bill will produce gradually and safely the same result which that law, in a violent manner, was expected to effect. Therefore, if the policy of that law was good, if its tendency was constitutional, no reasonable objections, on that score, can be urged against the bill. It is rather singular I think that those objections should have been insisted upon most strenuously by the warmest friends of the assessment law. The opponents of the bill refer to England, and ask us, with exultation, to look at the unrivalled pitch of glory and wealth, and power and refinement, to which she has arrived. But I confess, Sir, that I do not see how the law of primogeniture has ever contributed to those wonderful results. They may be traced much more satisfactorily, in my opinion, to other causes; such as the morality and integrity of her people, their spirit and enterprise, the freedom of her laws and institutions, and the extent and activity of her commerce. These causes, at the same time, have counteracted the tendency, and more or less prevented or mitigated the evils, of the law of primogeniture, which, I believe, would otherwise have become intolerable. In the vast establishment which Great Britain has maintained, at an enormous and prodigal expense, the younger branches of the great aristocratic families, whom the law of primogeniture would otherwise have left in beggary, have found situations where they could live in the splendor and luxury to which they have been accustomed. So that the people of England in fact, have