

Land Questions in the Ontario Legislature.

THE Legislature of Ontario assembled for dispatch of business on the 3d inst., and we are glad to perceive, both from the Governor's Speech and the remarks of members on both sides of the House, during the debate in reference to the address in reply, that there is a disposition to give early attention to those important land questions, the adjustment of which is so imperatively demanded by the best interests of the country. It is very generally conceded that the legislation on these questions during the first session of our Provincial parliament was far from satisfactory. Men of all parties join in condemning it as narrow, illiberal, unsuited to our wants, behind the age, and but ill calculated to attract what most of all we want, an industrious, energetic, thrifty agricultural population. If the legislation of last session was unsatisfactory, the procedure of the Crown Land Department during the recess has been still more so. A summary notice was issued in June last requiring immediate payment of arrears by settlers on lands purchased from the Government. Believing themselves threatened with the loss of their farms, not a few hastily sold them for what they would fetch, and others borrowed money at high interest to keep them out of the clutches of the Commissioner, while the rest, in painful suspense, awaited their fate. The time for payment was extended until October, at the earnest representation of influential people resident in the sections affected by the demand for arrears, and has been further extended until March. The feeling is very generally entertained by intelligent men of all shades of politics, that the greatest leniency should be shown toward settlers in arrears, and anything like indiscriminate coercion, or forfeiture of land, should not be thought of for a moment. Indeed, no man, unless possessed by the spirit of a Shylock, would think of exaction on pain of confiscation, and we are persuaded the Crown Land Commissioner never seriously entertained the idea of doing what he threatened. It was, therefore, very unfortunate, to say the least of it, that the settlers should have been thrown into panic, and put to trouble and loss. From what has transpired in the Legislature, we hope assurance will soon be conveyed to the parties concerned that they will not be disturbed or put to further unnecessary annoyance about their land arrearages. Except in the case of men of intemperate and otherwise loose character, the anxiety of a settler to get his land free from encumbrance will be a constant stimulus to effort in the direction of paying up. It is the great ambition of this class of people to own their farms, and they may, generally speaking, be relied upon to constitute themselves proprietors at the earliest possible date. When the toils of clearing land and getting in the first crops are considered, and account is taken of the many difficulties and hardships encountered by settlers in new townships; when further it is remembered that they are adding largely to the wealth of the country by their labours, assuredly every indulgence ought to be extended to them at all consistent with the public interest. Being a rich Province, with a million of money at our credit, we do not need to push honest and well-intending debtors.

The free land system is to be improved. This is well, for it greatly needs improvement. A larger grant is contemplated, and on less restrictive conditions. As yet we have not come up to the liberality of the United States Government in this particular, and if we wish to arrest and detain a portion of that tide of emigration which sets so strongly toward the far west, we must offer at least as tempting inducements as are held out by our neighbours across the lines to those who are seeking homes in the new world. We see no cause for hesitation in this matter. The faster we can fill up our waste places with an industrious population, the better will it be for

every material interest of our country. Every settler becomes at once a producer and a consumer. He is profitable to us in both characters, and we can afford to pay a premium on population, for that is our great want.

We trust that the present session will not close without the enactment of a Homestead Law. Much was said on this point last session, and but little done in regard to it. It is to be hoped this order will be reversed during the present session, and that however little may be said, something substantial will be done. In this respect, again, we compete disadvantageously with Brother Jonathan. Beside this argument based on expediency, there is ample ground for urging a Homestead Law on high and righteous principles. We are by no means in favor of supplying dishonest people with an easy mode of evading their just debts. There is no lack of these things already, and with or without such a law, rogues will always find ways of cheating those who are unfortunate enough to put confidence in them. But a well-framed and wisely guarded Homestead Law is not a premium on dishonesty, but an incentive to industry and energy. The payment of one's debts must always be more a matter of innate honesty than of security and compulsion, and if a Homestead Law induced as one practical effect a wider prevalence of the ready money system of doing business, it would be of incalculable benefit to the country. We have heretofore urged at length the arguments in favour of the law in question, and need do no more at this time than call attention to the matter as one that imperatively demands immediate action on the part of our Legislature.

We trust the Minister of Agriculture will be prepared to submit some measures of importance in connection with his department. Now that we have so large a balance to the public credit is a good time to meet the subject of a model farm and school of agriculture. Not a few of the States of the American Union have richly-endowed institutions of this kind, and we ought not to lag behind in a thing of such manifest importance. Our Provincial exhibitions furnish proof that we are in many respects ahead of our neighbours in the United States. Let us determine that we will equal, and, if possible, excel them in provision for agricultural education.

Book Notices.

"THE CAROLINA FARMER."—We have received "the initial number," as it is fashionable now to call it, of a new monthly magazine, with the above title, and "devoted to the agricultural interests of the two Carolinas." It is neatly printed, and contains a miscellany of useful articles, chiefly selected from other journals of its class. In a short "monthly talk with our farmers," we find warm quarters for stock insisted on as essential to success with animals, and the "antediluvian habit" of exposing them to wintry winds and storms deservedly reprobated. How much more this applies to such a climate as that of Canada! In a paragraph on exchanges, the editor proposes to send two copies of his journal to sundry papers not mentioned, and requests them to reciprocate the favour. "One copy," he says, "we wish to clip from, and the other we wish to keep for binding." A good idea. There are no "Southern politics" in this journal, and we cordially welcome it to our exchange list, wishing it all success.

"THE LITTLE CORPORAL."—We have more than once noticed this beautiful juvenile monthly, and now, on the occasion of its appearance in a new dress, we take the opportunity of again commending it to public attention and patronage. The November number is at once protected and bedecked with an attractive-looking cover, which is a great improvement. "The Little Corporal" is true to its motto, "fighting against wrong, and for the good, the true, and the beautiful." Its articles are exceedingly well

written, and it often contains rare gems of poetry and choice pieces of music. It is published by Alfred L. Sewell, of Chicago, at one dollar per annum, and subscribers ordering now will receive the November and December numbers for the present year in addition to next year's volume.

HEMP AND FLAX.—A treatise on the culture of these plants has been recently published by Mr. A. Kirkwood, of the Crown Land Department. It contains a vast amount of important information, gathered chiefly from works recently published on the subject in England, and judiciously applied to the circumstances and requirements of Canada. The harvesting of the crops, the manipulation of the fibre, and its application for manufacturing purposes are fully explained. The treatise will be found a valuable work for all who are interested in this important branch of industry.

AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING.—We are glad to learn that a firm have recently arrived from Scotland whose services in one branch of their profession will be particularly useful to agriculturists in this country. Messrs. McDougall and Skac, Engineers, Surveyors, and Architects, have commenced business in Toronto, and propose to give special attention to the drainage of farm lands, waste lands and towns; and to the improvement of water courses, irrigation of lands and the introduction of water into towns and buildings. They also propose to make a specialty of preparing plans and estimates for the laying out of ornamental and farming properties, for draining fields by tiles and other means, for the erection of farm-steadings and other buildings. We know of few things more needed in Ontario than to have the advice of a professional man of skill and taste, and moderate ideas as to expenditure in such matters. How many beautiful places over our country have been spoiled in appearance by the lack of such advice! How many meditated improvements have been cast aside by a groundless dread of the cost, which one consultation with an experienced professional man might have removed. When work is being done it is sound economy to do it in the most convenient and tasteful way that circumstances and means on hand will permit, and the advice of a skilled professional man is but a small addition to the cost. We hail the introduction of this branch of professional skill amongst us as at once an indication and promise of agricultural progress.

Agricultural Intelligence.

Board of Agriculture.

A MEETING of the Board of Agriculture took place in the rooms of the Association on Thursday, Nov. 5th. The President of the Board, the Hon. David Christie, occupied the chair.

A number of communications were read, some of which referred to matters of the past, on which no action could be taken.

The Treasurer's statement submitted showed the total receipts for 1867 to be \$82,140 98, including the balance of the previous year. The total amount expended was \$75,986 18. A continuation of the report, in conformity with instructions from the Bureau of Agriculture, was read, showing the amount received and expended since last audit.

The communications between the Board of Agriculture and the department at Ottawa, in reference to the cattle disease, were submitted.

A circular, dated Albany, 13th October, was also read, asking a general convention of all interested in the raising of cattle to inaugurate an efficient system of legislation to prevent this and similar diseases. The circular recommended that a convention, with this object, be held at Springfield, Illinois, on Tuesday, the 1st of December—each State to be represented by three commissioners.

At the annual meeting held at Hamilton, Hon. D. Christie, Messrs. Asa Burnham and F. W. Stone were appointed a deputation, and at this meeting it was resolved that the appointments be at once communicated to the Minister of Agriculture for the Dominion, and that he be requested to obtain