

member for Toronto (Mr. Harrison) that if the Government could dispense with the tax it would be very advantageous to the country, and he hoped the Government would give the matter their best consideration.

Hon. Mr. ANGLIN said that nothing could be more desired by the Lower Provinces than the total abolition of the Bill.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said he did not propose to enter into a discussion of the Stamp duty, as it was irrelevant to the matter in hand. The immediate cause of the introduction of the Bill was an embezzlement of postage stamps, and its object was to make those stamps a valuable security. As to inconvenience arising from the imposition of the stamp tax, there was no species of tax against which some objection could not be raised. He would ask those members connected with rural districts, and who spoke of the inconvenience of the tax, whether they would not prefer to have this part of the revenue raised by way of tax on Bills and Promissory Notes, than on tea and sugar and other necessaries of life. (*Cheers.*)

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE thought they could not afford to disregard the mode of taxation practised in England. During the past twenty years they had endeavored to reduce it as much as possible on imports of necessaries, and had transferred it to objects of inland revenue. He was glad to have this principle acknowledged in Canada, and he therefore had not looked unfavourably on the imposition of the Stamp Tax.

Mr. MASSON (Soulanges) said the tax was no doubt objectionable in rural countries, and he would propose that all bachelors throughout the country should be taxed. (*Laughter.*)

Hon. Mr. MORRIS said the matter of the stamp duty was receiving the consideration of the department.

The Bill then passed its second reading and passed through Committee.

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INJURY TO PROPERTY

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD moved the second reading of "An Act to correct a clerical error in the Act respecting malicious injuries to property."—Carried.

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INSOLVENCY LAWS

Mr. COLBY moved the second reading of "An Act to repeal the Insolvency Laws." He said the Bill proposed the entire abolition of the existing insolvency laws of the Dominion. It was framed in accordance with his personal convictions in the matter, and he believed, in accordance with the solid sentiment of the section of the country with which he was most familiar, and also of the House and of the country at large. He was not one who believed that an insolvency law was per se and under all circumstances

objectionable, but thought there were occasions when it was necessary. After some great financial crisis such a measure might be beneficial. It had happened in this and other countries that the most prudent men were plunged into this same ruin with the reckless and imprudent, and then some peculiar remedy should be provided.

He did not think the present Insolvency Laws were in accordance with the principles of morality. That portion respecting voluntary assignments said to the debtor, "the moment you find it inconvenient to pay your debt, you are privileged to compound them," and he thought nothing more demoralizing could be found in any law. This was seriously damaging to the country, for the moment men got into difficulties they ceased to struggle to extract themselves, and found it much more convenient to pass through the legal process and so relieved themselves from all obligations. The speech of His Excellency told them that the country was now in an unusual state of prosperity, and that prosperity extended to all branches of industry, and yet if one derived his impression of the prosperity of the country from the Official Gazette he would believe they were in a state of bankruptcy. The number of insolvents was appalling and was entirely inconsistent with the idea of prosperity.

He believed that the effect of the Insolvency Law in a new country like Canada was particularly injurious, for it could not but encourage recklessness in trade. He held out to any man desiring to become suddenly rich the prospect of the realisation of wealth if he prospered, without anything counterbalancing if he failed. Young men without experience or business habits, and with very insufficient capital, entered into business and speculated because if they were fortunate all would be well while if they were unfortunate they were relieved from all consequences. So much was the case that there was now no dread of being known as a bankrupt, and indeed many persons who had passed through bankruptcy four and five times now held up their heads as honest business men.

He had received communications from all parts of Ontario and Quebec all pressing for the abolition of the Laws, and he had been told of a case of an Insolvent for whose estate the principal creditor had offered \$14,000, the whole of which amount had been absorbed in costs and a large commercial house in Montreal wrote him that under the operation of the Insolvency Laws their losses had doubled. There were a number of assignees whose special business was to find out men in business who were in difficulties, and to encourage them to take advantage of the Act. It had been stated that the Act might be amended, but he believed the difficulty lay in the very principle of the Act.

He was fully persuaded that the sentiment of the country was entirely in favor of the abolition of the Laws, and if at any future time they might be again needed they could be restored. He believed that the occurrences of the last session when the second reading of his bill had been passed by a large majority against the wishes of the Government showed how strongly the House was in his favour. He believed that the entire retail trade of the country desired the abolition of the Act, for they suffered extreme hardships