

followed up by something of this nature. It was vain to say to the destitute, we have retained the seed in the Province, go and purchase what you require, unless they had the wherewithal to do so. The one measure naturally flowed out of the other. By the operation of the late enactment, potatoes would naturally be collected from all the outputs into Halifax, as the only extensive market for their consumption. The market would become glutted by the quantity, and the price would sink to almost nothing. But if the present measure passed, the means of purchasing the article would be diffused where they were most needed, among the poor settlers who were destitute of seed, and who, but for the supply from this source, would be obliged to leave their lands uncultivated for the present year, and could look forward to nothing but the horrors of famine for the next. He wished to remove any idea which might be entertained, as to the incongruity between opposing the former bill and supporting the measure now before the house. He had entertained a very strong opinion as to the impolicy of that Bill, but the majority having been in favour of passing it, it was the duty of the minority to submit. The measure having now passed into a law, the present question was to be urged, not merely as one of abstract policy, but as having reference to what had already been done. He was surprised to perceive opposition come from persons who had, on a previous day, expressed their determination to advocate a measure of this nature. He did not think there was a man in the house of so narrow an understanding as to take one side of a question to day, and another tomorrow. The mind was so constituted that, whenever the respective arguments by which a measure was supported and opposed were addressed to it, the judgment came to a decision not at all dependent upon the way on which these arguments were suggested, if then an investigation were made into the motives which induced those changes, so frequently perceptible in popular assemblies, it would be found that the passions were often affected, and their inconsistency of conduct had its source, not in the intellectual, but in the moral faculties.

*Mr Howe* thought that this was one of those cases in which it was of less consequence to understand the laws of the human mind, than the practice of the Assembly. He had seen enough of the proceedings in former houses to know, that when a majority of the different counties participated in grants of money for purposes similar to this, it was seldom paid out of the Road Money, and generally formed a permanent addition to the public debt. Suppose this sum is given, and 30 out of the 49 members have divided it among their counties—when we meet again they will be anxious to obtain Road money as they are now; the necessities of these counties will be as great, and the Road Scale of the next year, if there is a majority interested, will be constructed so as to make up the amounts to be deducted for the Oats and Potatoes. If it were possible, he wished that the sums to be drawn could be made chargeable on the Road Monies of this year; because the poor would be more willing to work out the sums received, immediately after the benefit had been felt; than they would a year or two hence. To delay the time of payment would be to foster litigation, in suing the notes taken, and make the second evil in some cases worse than the first. To prevent all difficulty and unfairness, perhaps it would be better to take the £4000, divide it fairly among the counties, and let those settlements that were distressed work out the amount taken this year; where there was no distress, an additional portion of road work could be done, and the whole amount could then be deducted from the gross sum voted next year.

*Mr McDougall* was surprised that the hon gentleman from the County of Halifax, who had the other day, with so much warmth and ability, advocated the claims of the settlers in Sheet Harbor. (Mr Howe explained that the petition was from County Harbor, and not from any part of his own county.) Mr McDougall continued. It was immaterial. Distress certainly existed in the Province to an unprecedented amount, and it was the duty of the Legislature to do all that was in their power to relieve it. The scheme now proposed appeared to him to be eminently calculated for the two objects of relieving that distress, and of doing so without injury to the public. There was every check that could possibly be imposed to prevent an improper use of the public benevolence. There were the members of House, who were interested in not allowing the amount to be so large as to entail, to any considerable extent, the appropriations for their cross roads next year; there were the Commissioners, inhabitants of the counties, whose interest it was to see that the money lent out by them should be so secured as not to subject themselves, in common with the other men of property in the country, to taxation; there were the notes of hand, by which the borrowers became personally responsible for the sums given; and lastly, came the remedy or deficiency—by assessment. With all these guards and checks,

it was impossible that the Province could sustain any loss by the transaction, and very much good might be done. He could not, for a moment, hesitate as to which line of conduct it was his duty to pursue. But the House were told that if this sum were granted now, it would next year be added to the public debt. He could not believe it possible that any member, in the face of the declarations now made, and in the teeth of a positive enactment, could be so thoroughly imbued with rascality as to make the proposition. It was impossible for a moment to entertain such a conception, and if the house should be sufficiently rascally (he repeated the expression) as to pursue a course in such an violation of every principle of honesty, there was a Council at the other of the building, who, bad as they were, would never give their sanction to so monstrous a proceeding. But, some honorable gentlemen thought that the relief sought for might be granted without this extra sum, merely by allowing a part of the £10,000 voted for roads and bridges to flow in another channel. Those who entertained such notions, must have very little idea of the state of things in the county. With a population destitute of articles of food as well as those of seed, and obliged to spend every hour they had to spare from the cultivation of their farms, in working for money to supply the cravings of nature, it was absurd to propose such a scheme. The earnings of this summer must be considered as already mortgaged for the present subsistence of the people, and they could not be expected to repay the sums advanced to them until another year, when their labour on the roads could be performed under happier auspices.

*Mr W. Young* said that the practical operation of the bill did not appear to be yet thoroughly comprehended by the members of the Committee. It was contemplated by the bill that the sums remaining due in the several counties should be deducted from the road money, which, in the general scale of next year, those counties should be entitled to receive. It was only in case of their being no road money for next year that the principal assessment was called in. It was the intention then that this grant should be deducted from the road and bridge service of the following year. It was not in the power of the House to act as they were urged by some members, and appropriate a part of the £10,000 to the purposes of the bill before them. That sum had already undergone a division and subdivision, and had been sent up to the other branch, so that it was entirely out of their reach. There was one danger in the course now proposed, and that was, that if next session a considerable sum should be found to have been expended for the purposes of the present bill, there would be a strong temptation to grant a larger amount to the road and bridge service; but, if it should be found that the Province could afford to do so, where would be harm. But until sad experience (to use a favorite phrase of the hon. gentleman for the county of Halifax) should prove to him, that in the appropriations of next year the House would abandon the usual principles upon which the scale was prepared, for the purpose of giving to certain counties an unfair advantage over others, he would not harbour the idea that they could act so widely at variance from their present professions, and from the dictates of proper feeling. A larger sum might probably be granted, but he did not believe it would be differently divided.

*Mr Howe* gave his hon. and learned friend for Sydney and other members who had recently come into the Assembly, credit for the purest intentions—he knew that now they were above doing any thing unfair, but he feared the operation of time—when they had become thoroughly steeped in those waters of something very like rascality, that usually bubbled up in a Committee of Supply. He had known pure spirits before now undergo some strange alterations—and the like might occur again; and therefore he was desirous that the whole arrangements to be made under this Bill, should be put beyond the reach of time and accident—that the account should be squared at once, or at all events settled before the next session. He had no wish to defeat the Bill, but wanted to carry out its provisions without injustice. It was said, how can people who are famished turn out to work upon the road—but we do not ask them to do so till their necessities are relieved, and their crops are in the ground. He could see no difference between their doing so this year or the next. He could not help smiling, when he saw, on looking at the scale in preparation, so large a sum set down for Pictou, but he understood it perfectly—and felt certain that his honor the Speaker, who was an old and experienced member knew well how the account would be arranged hereafter. From that moment he had determined, either that the whole should be paid out of the road monies of this year, or that he would draw every farthing that he could obtain for his own county. He felt like Cowper's Boy with the cherries, he would not take any if the others would let them alone; but as they were all going, why his constituents might as well have a share.

*The Speaker* (Mr Smith) said that he could see nothing in the arguments adduced by the opponents of the present measure, to shake the opinions formed at the commencement of the discussions he had entertained upon the subject. He had given a good deal of attention to the question, and thought the bill before the House had been drawn up with accuracy and care, and was well calculated to effect the object in contemplation. If it were asked whether the necessity existed which was spoken of, he thought there need be no better proof of that circumstance, than the fact that out of the 16 counties, 13 had already been applicants for a share of the loan. Allusion had been made to him, and somehow or other Pictou and its representatives always came in for a share of obloquy, when there was any question about money matters. There had been a time when a little energy and exertion might have procured a small extra sum to one county, but it had gone by, the well was dried up, and the spirit of reform and retrenchment entered now too deeply into the management of our provisional concerns, to allow the supposition that that plan could be tried successfully again. As regarded the deficiency of the crop last season, he could speak more particularly for his own county, and he was satisfied that if £2000 were distributed through the county, it would not make up for the difference to an average crop.—The magistrates there had lately held a meeting, in which they determined to apply to the Legislature for the sum of £750. Of course he did not intend to ask the house for that amount. He would take whatever they should choose to give him. His county, in its fertility, high state of cultivation, the number of its inhabitants and the quantity of its exports, was entitled to rank with the largest counties in the Province; and in the allotment among the different counties of the sum to be borrowed, he would have to content himself with being placed on a level with the largest. As to the proposition to apply to this purpose a part of the road money, how could it be done? The monies did not come into the Treasury till the first of July, and the relief was useless unless afforded by the first of May. He had himself made arrangements to procure seed from Halifax for his own county, and he apprehended that similar steps would be taken by the Representatives of other parts where there was a deficiency. But there was another reason why the road money, as granted, could not be appropriated to this service. The labourer on the roads never got any portion of his pay till after the work was performed, and for two thirds he was obliged to wait to an advanced period of the season, when the Commissioners could obtain it from the Treasury. As to the fears that some gentleman entertained, that the money would be added to the funded debt he did not conceive they were based on any substantial grounds. He would be sorry to think that the house would meet again in a tone and temper different from what they manifested. He would add one word of his hon. friend from the county of Halifax; that gentleman was very energetic in his opposition to the present measure, but he thought when the navigation should be completely opened, and the inhabitants of the remote Harbours and Settlements of the county of Halifax, should find their way to the capital with a statement of their distresses, it would be found that the constituents of the hon. gent. himself stood in as much need of the Legislative provision, as those of any other members in the house, and would be as grateful for the relief.

*Mr Stewart* said, that the question for the House to consider was, whether there was such a need of assistance, as to justify a temporary departure from those principles, by which, in ordinary cases, the Legislature should be governed. It was not wise to hold out to the population of the Province, the hopes that, in all cases of difficulty, they had a ready resource in an application to the Treasury. But there were cases of extreme and imperative necessity, in which it would be the blindest economy, to keep close the lid of the Treasury chest; and this he thought to be one of those cases. Distress prevailed to a great extent throughout the country, and it was essential to the happiness and welfare of many of the inhabitants, that some measure like the present should be adopted for their relief. As to any danger of converting the loan into a part of the public debt, he was not apprehensive of any such result. It was true, when the hon. Gentleman from the County of Halifax, had been elected a representative—some friendly voice had expressed its regret, that he was to be placed in a situation, where his honesty would run so great a risk; but in the present reformed House, that gentleman was less exposed to the danger of contamination. With respect to the idea of appropriating part of the £10,000 to this purpose, was it practicable? If those gentlemen who had thrown out the idea, would put it into shape, and produce some feasible plan for the adoption of the House, it might be taken into consideration. For his own part, he thought any such thing impracticable. The road division had already