

Communications.

ON THE MODERN SYSTEM OF DRAINAGE, AND ITS APPLICATION IN CANADA.

No. III.

If we may judge by the discussions and resolutions at several of the Farmers' Clubs throughout the Province, the question is not whether it would be profitable to drain,—for *that* is admitted by common consent,—but rather, how means are to be found for the operation. Now, the promoters of drainage extension in England had to contend with precisely the same apparent difficulty; and hence, in their advocacy of an improved system, they early found it desirable to recommend it as a secure and remunerative object for the application of collective capital, and so to enlist in the cause the commercial sympathies, and co-operation of the monied classes. The eminent success which has attended the establishment of Public Companies for the drainage and improvement of land, has already been alluded to; and since, with such an example before them, it may reasonably be expected that the good people of Canada will go and do likewise, we shall give a brief outline of the powers which have been conferred by the Imperial Parliament on "*The General Land Drainage and Improvement Company*," and their mode of conducting business.

The Company was incorporated in 1849 by an Act which, in its progress through Parliament, received the careful consideration of the Drainage Commissioners, the Board of Trade, and a Committee of the House of Lords. It supplies the defects of all former enactments in matters of detail, and by an inexpensive and simple process enables the owners of a limited and an exclusive interest in land to carry out every kind of permanent improvement thereon, either by the application of their own, or the Company's funds; and to secure the same by a charge upon the inheritance. The powers comprise the execution of all works of Drainage, (including the making of outfalls through adjoining properties, if needful), Irrigation, Reclamation, Inclosure, Road-making, &c.; the erection of Farm Homesteads, Tileries, and other buildings necessary for good farming; and they have also the power to undertake sewerage, and all other sanitary works, under contract with corporation and town authorities. They can also purchase lands that are capable of being improved, improve them by the necessary means, and resell them. In conducting their business, which has become very extensive, the Company, on request, supply the landowner with a blank form of application wherein to particularise the lands, and the nature of the works to be performed. If the application is entertained, an inspection and survey of the property is made by the Company's Engineer, and a plan and estimate of the contemplated improvement is prepared by him for the guidance of the Company, and for the approval and acceptance of the owner of the land. This agreed upon, the proprietor enters into a contract with the Company to execute the

work, in accordance with the plans, in an effectual and durable manner, for a fixed sum. On the completion of the work, the total amount of its cost, along with any reasonable sum for preliminary and incidental expenses, is made a mortgage charge to the Company on the land improved, for a prescribed number of years, with such an agreed annual payment as will redeem the principal and interest in the period. In the case of homestead, and other erections, the maximum term over which the repayment of the outlay can be spread in 31 years; and in the case of Drainage, and other works of a like nature, it can be extended over as far as fifty years. Of course in either case the owner has the option of making the period for repayment as short as he pleases. As evidencing the soundness of the principles upon which this Company is based, as well as the beneficial and profitable character of their operations, it might be sufficient simply to refer to the high standing of the parties composing the Board of Directors; but when we see amongst them the names of two of the most eminently practical and extensive contractors of the present day—Wm. Cubitt, Esq., and Samuel M. Peto, Esq., M. P.—we cannot hesitate to give a ready assent to the usefulness and advantages of such a Company.

Now, what is there in this that the enterprise of Canada cannot emulate? The benefits derived from the application of Joint Stock Capital are as fully recognised in this Province, in all other operations, as they are in the mother country: Banks, Canals, Railways, Insurance, and even industrial establishments, are successfully conducted with collective means; surely, then, the cultivators of the soil might hope for the same success. Indeed, in our judgment, the condition and circumstances of the country are such as to ensure, to a well conducted Company, a highly remunerative return; and to the land owners, such a reliable source for means and efficient workmanship as they can hardly hope to secure in any other way.

In seeking from the Provincial Legislature a special Act of Incorporation, it would be necessary, not only to provide for what may be regarded as ordinary operations of land improvement, such as Drainage, Irrigation, Fencing, Building, &c., but powers must be given, as in the English Act, to use, improve, and cut outfalls through adjoining lands, under suitable regulation; to sell and clear land of timber, and to make roads. And on this latter head we would suggest whether it might not be advantageous to the country generally to give such a Company powers to make, maintain, and receive tolls from all such public roads as they might be called upon to construct. We would also have conferred upon them powers to contract with City and Town authorities for the execution of sewerage, water, and other sanitary works; and also the power to purchase, reclaim, hold, and sell land. And, further, that under fitting limitations, they should have the power of issuing Notes or Debentures, bearing interest, and payable at such periods as should correspond with the periods of repayment over which the several Mortgage charges for com-