

THE  
ONTARIO FARMER;

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF

Agriculture, Horticulture, Country Life, Emigration, and the Mechanic Arts.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1869.

No. 2.

THE RECLAMATION OF OUR SWAMP  
LANDS.

In various parts of this Province there are extensive tracts known as swamp lands, the reclamation of which by drainage would greatly promote both the health and wealth of the country. These lands are rich, some of them having two feet in depth of black soil, but while saturated with moisture they are worthless, for no crops worth raising will grow in earth that is soaked with stagnant water. In their present condition they are not only useless for tillage purposes, but are fruitful sources of disease to the contiguous regions that lie somewhat higher. It is here that ague, fever, and other "ills that flesh is heir to" have their lurking places, whence they come forth to prey upon poor oppressed humanity. Higher considerations, therefore, than those of material gain call for the improvements of these lands. A couple of reports in reference to two of these tracts have been made to the Minister of Public Works, and by him read before Parliament. They embody the results of some surveys and estimates which have been made with a view of ascertaining what can be done with the tracts to which they relate. One has reference to the low, swampy region about Baptiste Creek, with which every one who has travelled on the Great Western Railway from Chatham to Windsor must be familiar. The other relates to the "Greenock Swamp" in the County of Bruce. The "Greenock Swamp" has only been examined in a general way, and requires to be regularly surveyed, but it has been ascertained that some 20,000 acres of valuable land can be reclaimed by a proper system of drainage. The other and more exten-

sive region in the Western peninsula of the Province has been subjected to a preliminary survey, and estimates have been gone into, so that a pretty good idea can be formed as to what is practicable in regard to it. These lands lie in the townships of East and West Dover, Chatham, Raleigh, East and West Tilbury, Mersea, and Romney. Although they appear to the unaided eye to be a dead level, yet a large portion of them have a fall in such directions that they can be drained by natural flow, while the remainder admit of being dried by artificial means. These lands have been divided by the engineer who surveyed them into "high level" and "low level," and sub-divided into five districts, three of which are in the "high level" and two in the "low level" class. The *Globe* condenses that part of the report which gives details respecting them as follows:—

"No. 1 is composed of parts of East and West Tilbury and Romney, and covers an area of 30,000 acres. There is abundance of fall for leading main drains to Lake St. Clair. The main drain will have an inclination of 24 inches in the mile, and in freshets will carry off 79 millions of gallons every 24 hours. The estimated cost is \$20,253 for drying these 30,000 acres. In 18,000 of these the estimated increase of value to the land effected by this would be \$3 per acre; in 12,000, \$1 per acre. In other words, for the outlay of \$20,000 the land would be increased in value by \$66,000, to say nothing of better health and comfort.

No. 2 comprises lands in West Tilbury, Mersea, and Romney, to the extent of 12,000 acres. The main drain in this would lead into Lake Erie, and would discharge, in freshets, 39 millions of gallons per diem. The estimated cost is \$9,425. For that, 8,700 acres would be benefitted to the extent of \$3 per acre; and the rest of the 12,000, about 50 cents each, or upwards of \$27,000 in all.

No. 3 comprises 6,000 acres, and lies so high