

the sort indicated by his inquiry, and that they do not propose to spend money where it is not needed.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—It is really gratifying to see my hon. friend taking such interest in the character of our country. I must say, however, for him, to do him justice, that he has not usually been one of those who decry it, and I take his remarks to be what one might familiarly call poking a little fun at my hon. friend behind me, rather than sneering in any respect at the country, or as invoking what he thinks he finds in my hon. friend's notice as evidence that the country is not as good as those who live there think it is. I do not see in my hon. friend's notice anything so depreciatory of the country as my hon. friends from Lunenburg and Halifax find, and his speech certainly made perfectly clear anything that might be considered ambiguous in the notice itself. In the first notice that he gave he said that he would :

“Call the attention of the House to the importance of making preliminary surveys in the North-West, with the view of locating reservoirs for water, to be obtained by means of artesian wells, and by conserving the waters of rivers and streams, for the irrigation of districts which suffer from drought in dry seasons; and will enquire whether it is the intention of the Government to make such surveys?”

Now, this is not an imputation on the North-West generally. My hon. friend indicates by this that he thinks there are sections of the country which suffer from drought in dry seasons, and we do not deny that there are. My hon. friend from Assiniboia, who spoke so ably and forcibly from personal knowledge of the country, does not deny that there are sections which do suffer in dry seasons from drought, so I do not see anything so very injurious to the character of the country in asserting what we all know, that there is a section of the extreme North-West where they do occasionally suffer from want of sufficient water. The modified notice which my hon. friend put on the Paper, after consideration of the first, was still more precise; because while he spoke only of surveys in the North-West, he did not speak of surveys all over the North-West. In this he specifies the portion of the North-West where he thinks a survey might be of use. I must say, however, that the whole discussion has been an instructive one. We have learned from the speech

of the hon. member from Burlington the extent to which he thinks this irrigation might be required, and we find it to be very small and modified indeed. That impression is fully confirmed by my hon. friend from the North-West, who spoke on the same subject, and we have had a deal of valuable information from all who have dealt with the subject. The answer which I have to give to my hon. friend is, that the irrigation of the territory referred to could only be attained either by utilizing the surplus water of the streams having their sources in the Rocky Mountains, or by artesian wells. The former method has been the subject of a good deal of attention at the hands of the hon. Minister who was himself an engineer of many years experience in British Columbia, where irrigation on a limited scale has been tried upon the same class of lands with some success. He has not only considered this question himself, but he has consulted with the officers of his Department, from whom he has received valuable reports and suggestions. After full inquiry and examination, some scheme for utilizing the waters of the streams referred to and applying them to adjacent lands by a well-planned system, supplementing the rainfall, may be adopted, if found of sufficient advantage to warrant the expense. The rainfall, however, is usually quite sufficient, and the exceptions to this rule are so few that the consideration of the question of irrigation in relation to this section of the country becomes desirable chiefly because the natural facilities for applying the system are so great that it would cost very little. Indeed, the chief use of irrigation in that region would be as an aid in growing hay.

As to artesian wells, they would be needed, if at all, in the prairie country lying east of the mountains. But it must be remembered that in average years the rainfall is sufficient for the requirements of ordinary agriculture. There are seasons, like that of 1889, when portions of the country suffer from drought; but even in those portions deep and thorough cultivation produced an average crop of wheat last season. But dry seasons are the exception, not the rule; and in relation to the agricultural regions, where there is occasional drought, the Government have authorized a considerable sum of money, under the supervision of the Director of the