

LAND DRAINAGE.

SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THE WORKING OF THE DRAINAGE ACTS OF ONTARIO,
WITH A FEW HINTS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF OPEN DITCHES—BY H. E.
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Having been requested by the Executive Committee to prepare a paper on "Drainage," and having accepted their request before I knew in what a short space of time the paper had to be handed in, I consider I owe some apology to the Association for the crude manner in which the subject will be handled.

There are, in Ontario, two separate and distinct drainage acts: the first is that portion of what is now called the "Consolidated Municipal Act," relating to the "powers of Municipal Councils as to drainage and other improvements paid for by local rates"; and the second is what is known as the "Ditches and Watercourses Act of 1883." The Municipal Drainage Act and the Ditches and Watercourses Act, although arriving at the same object in the end, viz.: the rendering of land fit for cultivation, or the improvement of land partially or disadvantageously cultivated, attain that object by altogether different methods. In the first, the *majority in number of the persons as shown by the last revised assessment roll* petition the Municipal Council for the improvements in their drainage facilities, and the Council may procure an examination to be made by an engineer or Provincial Land Surveyor, whose duties it will be to make an estimate of the cost and the amount in dollars and cents of the cost to be borne by each lot or portion of lot improved. A Court of Revision is then held, and the engineer's assessment can be altered by it if shown to be wrong. If no appeals are then made from the assessment so altered to the County Judge (if the Council did not alter the assessment an appeal could still be made to the County Judge), who has power to alter such assessment if needs be, then the Municipal Council may pass a by-law empowering them to issue debentures to defray the cost of such work, advertise for tenders and let the work; the parties interested having no further trouble with the exception of paying so much extra taxes once a year for the next ten years. The Municipal Act is by far the best under which to construct a ditch of such magnitude that it would be impossible for the several parties interested to construct their several portions in a short space of time during the summer with only the ordinary farm help. Also, there are only certain short periods of time, and they are not consecutive, during which an owner of a farm lot can find time to work at a ditch, and as it is generally absolutely necessary that the lower sections should be completed before the upper sections, and if each party had his time allotted for completing his portion of the work to suit the intervals in harvesting, etc., it is quite apparent for these reasons that the work that could be done by a contractor in a few months would be extended over a space of time ranging from one to four years if