

Colonial works: other works necessary for the settlement of the country, we class amongst the Local. We do not say that there will not, from time to time, come before us for consideration works the classification of which will be difficult. If I am asked why the Colony cannot take charge of the whole of these works, I reply that we must no longer palter with a great question. Because of our disinclination to come to a decision, the past has been a series of compromises, and the Assembly has at times usurped Provincial functions without the requisite knowledge how to exercise them. If the Assembly means to do the work of the Provinces, then the Provinces should be abolished, the waste of labour on Provincial legislation be saved, and provision be made for a thorough system of Colonial government. I express the opinion that the legislative work of the Provinces and of the Colony, if performed by one body of men, would necessitate the sitting of Parliament for at least ten months out of the twelve. I shall be told that the parliamentary work of the Empire itself occupies but a small portion of the year. Granted, but the circumstances are different. In a country with hundreds of years of history, rapid legislation is rarely necessary and generally undesirable. A young country requires, as do young children, more care and looking after. The argument that an old and wealthy country requires proportionately more parliamentary attention than a young and comparatively poor one, would be fairly paralleled by the assertion that infants might feed, and wash, and be mindful of themselves—that the attention of nurses should be devoted to adults. But where are we to find, in the Colony, men to whom its legislation should be confided, who are willing to give ten months in the year to the task? We find with difficulty men to whom ambition of the power to be useful, and of the position of a Minister, is inducement sufficient to lead them to consent to the personal sacrifices the position entails; but to be simply Members of Parliament does not offer adequate temptation to reconcile men to entirely relinquishing their occupations, and we have not in the country a sufficient number of leisured men on whom to rely for its legislation. Therefore, if a strictly Colonial system were the best, it could not be satisfactorily carried out; but I am not sure it is the best. Even in the United Kingdom, thoughtful men begin to see the necessity of a system of government intermediate between the Central and the purely Municipal; or, in other words, of strengthening the system of County government. In the Colonies, I think, the want of Provinces has shown itself, and to supply it Road Districts are becoming powerful by some such process as that by which, according to Darwin, man has developed from a lower type. Road Boards, by the process of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, develop into Shires, and Shires may develop, indeed are developing, into Provinces. I may be told that man's perfection arises from his slow development. Grant that in our case the highest form of local government has been too rapidly developed and is full of imperfections: surely it is better now to work from the vantage ground obtained, than to endeavour to throw back our local system, in order that it may attain a higher form more slowly. But my illustration would do me injustice if it be held to indicate that I disapprove of Road Districts or wish to see them abolished. On the contrary, I want to see them permanent, and I believe that permanency can be better established by an intermediate form of government to work with them and over them, than by starting them on a career of ambition to supersede themselves by the attainment of a higher and different form of power. In the system of diffusion which is to make the whole Colony prosperous, Road Boards have a most useful part to play, and it would be as improper to allow them to usurp Provincial power, as to allow the Provinces to usurp Colonial power.

We arrive, then, at the conclusion that certain works should be carried out by the Provinces with borrowed money; the next question is, "Who is to borrow the money, and how is it to be borrowed?" We have great objection to the Colony borrowing it. If the Colony borrow the money required for Provincial works, it will have to pay more largely for its own Loans, because its borrowing power will be more largely exercised. In theory I am aware that objections may be raised to this proposition; but I think, without an abstruse discussion on financial economy, honorable Members will agree that the tendency

and Immigration,  
Colonial:  
Other necessary  
works, Provincial.

Too much of com-  
promise in the past.

Legislative work of  
Provinces and of  
Colony cannot be  
performed by one  
body.

Example of Great  
Britain, not to the  
point.

Men cannot be found  
to devote time  
necessary for all  
legislative work.

Therefore, strictly  
Colonial system  
unworkable.  
Necessity of some-  
thing akin to Pro-  
vincial Government  
recognized elsewhere.

Road Boards should  
be made permanent:  
how it can best be  
done.

If Provinces are to  
carry out local works,  
with borrowed  
money, who should  
borrow it, and how?  
Why the Colony  
cannot do it.