

I have no doubt it will be agreed to by both sides of the House. No question is raised as to the principles of that Bill, under the operation of which so many tenants have become freeholders; the paragraph only contemplates further efforts to enable tenants on the estates of the remaining Proprietors of Township Lands to participate in its benefits. The concluding part of the paragraph relates to providing funds. It does not, however, seek to pledge this hon. Committee to any particular method of raising these funds; it simply states that the means of providing them shall receive our careful and serious consideration. I am not aware that the Opposition intend to propose any amendment to the clause under consideration, therefore it is unnecessary, at the present stage of the debate, to enter very fully into the subjects to which it refers. Though I am pleased that the Cunard Estate has been purchased, yet I believe that, had the loan brought forward some years ago by the Liberal party been secured, that purchase could have been effected at much less inconvenience to the Colony, than by the arrangement of the late Government. With the Imperial guarantee, money can be obtained at a much lower rate, than under the ordinary security of the local Government; hence the advantage of the measure which we then introduced. Of course, those who opposed the Loan Bill did it from patriotic motives, though I am of opinion they were mistaken. One of the Montgomery estates was also purchased last year, and the manner in which the tenantry on that and other estates have come forward to secure the fee simple of their farms, shows that the people generally are anxious to be relieved from the leasehold system. A scheme for raising funds to pay for proprietary lands may have to be matured and brought forward, but no pledge to that effect is contained in the paragraph now before this hon. Committee.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.--Mr. Chairman; it is not my intention to offer any amendment to the paragraph, the adoption of which has just been moved by the Hon. Attorney General, but some of his remarks call for a reply. He appears to think that all the patriotism of this hon. House is on the side of the present majority, and that the settlement of the Land Question is their sole birth-right,—in fact, that it is nothing short of plunder for this side of the House to meddle with that question. Sir, in my opinion, the Conservative party have effected quite as much as ever the Liberals did, to enfranchise the tenantry. It has been stated that the Conservatives simply carried on the operation of the Land Purchase Bill, after it had been passed by their political opponents. I now state that the Land Purchase Act was never made a party question in this House. It was introduced in 1853, by the hon. Leader of the Government, and the only opposition offered to it was brought forward by a member of their own party—the Hon. Mr. Mooney. The amendment proposed by that gentleman is the sole opposition to the Purchase Bill, which has a place on the records of this House. This being the case, the Conservative party had as good a right to carry out its principles as the Liberal Government. It has also been stated, during the course of this debate, that the Land Commission scheme, introduced by the Hon. Col. Gray, did more to injure than benefit the cause of the tenantry. I cannot agree with that opinion, but contend, on the

contrary, that the Commission was productive of a great amount of good. It so happened that the Commissioners' Award was not approved of by the Imperial Government; its failure, however, cannot be charged against the Conservative party, who did their utmost to have it carried into effect. The first opposition shown to it was by the Liberal press of the Colony; and, so successful were the efforts of their organ, the *Examiner*, to excite a prejudice against it, that Hon. Mr. Howe, of Nova Scotia, the Commissioner on behalf of the tenantry, was burned in effigy in one or more parts of the Island. After reflection, however, when the people had time to examine into the Award, they became convinced that, if only confirmed, its operation would be more beneficial to their interests, than had been set forth by the Liberal press. But the discovery was too late. The Award was objected to by the proprietors—encouraged, it may have been, by the opposition to it in this Colony—and that objection was held as valid by the Imperial authorities. Still, though the Award, in its entirety, was rejected, out of it arose the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill. That measure, I am aware, has been strongly denounced as worse than useless; but I maintain that it has been attended with benefit to not a few of the tenantry. One object, at least, it accomplished; it was the means of remitting a large amount of arrears of rent. Some, I know, affirm that those arrears could never have been collected. As the agent for the Montgomery estates, I am in a position to state, from personal knowledge, that a large proportion of the arrears due on them, which that Bill remitted, could have been recovered. I contend, also, that the privilege of obtaining the fee simple of their farms, at 15 years' purchase, was a boon to the tenantry on many of the estates. On Cunard's estates, the lowest price at which the tenant could purchase was 20s. an acre; and the Messrs. Montgomery would not sell their lands in detached farms, at any price. The operation of the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill, as it would eventually break up the estates into fragments, was the means, I believe, of bringing both the Cunard and Montgomery properties into the market. Another objection urged against that Bill is, that it confirmed the Fishery Reserves to the proprietor. But, Sir, admitting this to be the case, it is more advantageous to the tenant to pay 1s. an acre rent to the proprietor for the reserves, than that he should pay such a rent for them as might be exacted at the discretion of the government of the day, without the privilege, too, of securing the fee simple thereof, as provided by the Fifteen Years' Purchase Act. The Hon. Attorney General stated, as his opinion, that the Cunard estate could have been purchased on terms more advantageous to the Colony, had the celebrated Loan Bill of the Liberal party been in operation. This is a problem very difficult to solve. I, for one, hold a directly opposite opinion to the hon. member. It is contrary to the principles of Political Economy, for a government to go into a foreign market for money when it can be procured at home. Supposing the Imperial guarantee had been secured, at what rate could the money have been obtained?

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Four and a quarter per cent.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—Still, supposing it could have been obtained at 4½ per cent., would not an agency have been required to manage the