

On Sir George's motion adjourned until to-morrow at noon. The hon. member would have been led in their despatch of the business of the Government. Opposition in the House generally, and I believe the majority of the people generally throughout the Colony. But what did the majority do while in power? While debenture loans were bearing five per cent interest, they raised them at six per cent. Treasury Warrants at six per cent, thus rendering it impossible to negotiate debentures except at a large discount; which proceeding I do not hesitate to characterize as most dishonest, treacherous. The hon. member alluded to the purchase of Lot 54, and said something in reference to it. I recollect an article during several years ago. France, a country in which they have a very numerous, and I believe, undrained there took so obviously as the hon. member appears to believe. There may be a few flocks in the place, but that is nothing against the country. There are here, however, plenty of wolves in sheep's clothing, from which country is to be feared than from those hostile to us. The hon. member also referred to Belfast, a town of which we ought to be heartily proud and deservedly a part of the Government, because they had distinguished in the purchase of the estate. Without an investigation of that title. There was the same examination into the titles of the land purchased by us, as was in the case of the Merrimac Bill. A general inquiry was never given to Belfast, than when the hon. the Leader of the Opposition and his friends passed the Land Purchase Bill. At this time of day it is a mere sophistry to talk of Belfast. He also made a remark to the effect that time will prove that the purchase of the Selkirk property will not be attended paying superannuated than the Wharrell estate. But by his own showing, there are better drivers on the south side of the island than those who buy and with this advantage, and the low price paid for it by the Government, it is every object that it will prove self-explanatory. With respect to the indemnity, that because Lord Selkirk was not called in this Excellency's speech, it is likely the Government have found it to be a trifling transaction; I may state that there has not been time for any notice to be affected, as the Commissioners appointed to value the land have not yet performed that duty. The hon. member for Ulster said that he did not think the Government were warranted in purchasing this estate. It is true when they had a given higher rate for it, than 2s. 4d. per acre. But I beg to inform that hon. gentleman that the sum of £2000/- paid in the purchase of the Selkirk estate by the Commissioners, Lordship pleased to make, however deduced from the exorbitant amount over £100/- an acre paid for houses, leaves the case that the Government about £2. 10s. an acre, thus making that sum the average price of all the land purchased. It was on this account that the Government agreed to the purchase of Lot 54.

The Committee then rose, and the Chairman reported progress. Adjourned until 3 o'clock.

#### AFTERNOON SITTING.

Hon. Mr. Coles.—Committee on the Address.

Hon. Mr. Coles.—Before the adjournment, the hon. member for Belfast, in explanation of the action of the Government in issuing Treasury Warrants at six per cent, when they found it impossible to negotiate debentures at five per cent, informed us to what amount Warrants had been issued. From the wording of the paragraph in the Lieut. Governor's Speech, I was led to believe that the whole sum required for the purchase of the two Estates was raised by issuing Warrants. From the explanation, however, of the hon. Leader of the Government in this end of the building, it appears that Warrants were issued only to the amount of £2000. This materially alters the aspect of the case; but still the principle involved is the same. Let the sum be large or small, the Government had no right to issue Warrants without the authority of this House. It was an objection raised against the Loan Bill by the present majority that the interest of the money would be drawn off the island; but it appears that the debentures issued for the payment of the Selkirk estate have been taken by his Lordship himself, who resides in England, and therefore in the same position as regards drawing interest

from the Island, as would be the British Government. The hon. member said that he had never called the Land Purchase Bill a visionary scheme—that he had never opposed to the principle on which it is based, it was only the Loan Bill of which he disapproved. By Mr. Chairman, when they say the resolutions which he proposed in the Session of 1858 and which he said would settle the Land Question in eight months, the preamble reads thus:—

"Whereas certain questions arising out of the original grants of the land in this Island, especially called the Belfast estates, the Flaxery Reserve question, and the Quaker's question have for many years caused much dissension and difference of opinion amongst the people of this Island, and many defective projects and impractical measures have been, and are from time to time, introduced respecting such questions, whereby the Tenantantry have been, and are greatly imposed upon, and reduced to a support the propositions of such measures, under the delusion of hope that by doing so they will be relieved from the payment of rent. Therefore, in this year 1858,

This is one part of the preamble, and towards the conclusion he goes on to say, "and you best,"

"And whereas, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton in his Despatch above referred to, while residing in India managing, which his English are considered inconsistent with the rights of property, has opposed the residence of Her Majesty's Government to operate with the Legislature in furthering measures for the settlement of the land tenures, if conducted in a spirit of fairness and conciliation to all parties."

Now, Sir, I believe the same opinions are entertained at the Colonial Office still; for it appears, in the event has been withheld from the Act to give effect to the views of the Commissioners; that they, without giving their sanction to any bill calculated to interfere with the rights to lands will now read an extract from the old resolution which shows that he intended to include the Land Purchase Bill among the defective projects included in the preamble. After explaining the means which he proposed for converting leaseholds into freeholds he says, "and if so,"

"Such an arrangement should not only give the tenant the advantage of paying an instalment of his purchase money, and at the same time reducing his rent, whenever demanded, without subjecting him to the vexation and cost incident to the difficulty of great instalments agreed to be paid at a particular day, but would, in the opinion of this House, gradually, but certainly, change the tenure into freeholds, without the making of loans, and the expensive substance of Public Offices, by which heavy burdens have already been, and would, if necessary, now to much greater extent, be imposed on the public purse."

Now, when the Selkirk Estate and Lot 54 were purchased, surely it was intended that the tenants should pay for their lands in "small instalments," and here, in this resolution, the regulation of payment of such. There is no objection in this to the Land Office; but instead of the present Government dispensing with it, they have now an assistant there to Mr. Aldens. I think the hon. gentleman must have forgotten himself when he said that he was never opposed to the Purchase Bill. The resolution goes to show that he was opposed to both the Loan and Purchase Bills. I do not blame the Government for endeavouring to obtain the land from Lord Selkirk at as low a rate as possible, and to make the best bargain they could. The hon. member has certainly explained away some of the objections to the course they pursued, which appears to have been occasioned by the circumstance that Lord Selkirk possessed a greater quantity of land than was at first represented. They may have made the best bargain in the case that lay in their power, but we did the same with respect to the Worrell estate; and after all there is not much difference between the rate paid for the two, as the cost of that Estate was about 5s an acre. It seems that the Government considered they would be justified in giving something over 2s 4d stg. for Lot 54, because they obtained the Selkirk estate for less. Even with such a protest, I think they were not warranted in making the purchase, for who is to pay the extra charge, but the Tenants on the Township; it will never do to lay it on those who buy land on the Belfast estates. We should not, however, quibble at these little points, but co-operate with each other in the Purchase scheme, as it will probably be the only one, by which the question will ever be settled. I was