

comfortably settled, and that the Island would be allowed a full share of representation, in proportion to the extent of territory and population—all which is respectfully submitted."

Well, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member having got the opinion of Mr. Hume, the House passed a resolution in 1841, to the House of Commons, praying the grievances arising from the land question might be redressed. That House took no action on the petition, and the hon. member was so enraged with the Home Government, the proprietors and all hands, that in his report, which I have just read, he was willing to annex the Island to Nova Scotia. (Laughter.) And, Mr. Chairman, I do not know what better answer to the assertion of the hon. member that we have only the opinion of individuals who might be holding the seals of the Colonial Office at the time, to shew in opposition to his views, and that the British Government have not decided against the measure which is the subject of this evening's discussion, than the despatch which I will read to you from the journals of 1842. I think that expresses the decision, not of the then Colonial Minister, but of the British Government, and I request hon. members to observe that it expressly mentions the determination of Her Majesty's Government. That despatch is as follows:—

Downing Street, 25th June, 1841.

"Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 5th May last.

"I have to acquaint you, in answer, that Her Majesty's Government, having reviewed the whole progress of the discussion regarding the tenure of land, have arrived at the following conclusions:—

"First.—That the original terms of settlement were impracticable; and that any escheat at the present day, on the ground of the failure to fulfil such conditions, would be unjust.

"Secondly.—That Her Majesty's Government consider it right to state, that the Crown has not at its disposal any funds out of which the lands could be purchased by the Crown, to be afterwards sold or granted to the tenants.

"Thirdly.—That the terms proposed by Mr. G. R. Young, or terms equivalent to those, seem to have been acceded to by the great majority of proprietors.

"Fourthly.—That under these circumstances, the best course which Her Majesty can recommend is, that the Assembly and Council should turn their attention to the improvement of the resources, and the encouragement of the growing wealth of Prince Edward Island, and leave to the gradual operation of time the settlement of a question which offers no sound footing for direct legislation.

"Lastly.—I have to state that Her Majesty is not disposed to blame any party for the mode in which this discussion has been prosecuted; but Her Majesty's anxiety for the welfare of the Province makes her desirous to see the termination of a fruitless and irritating contest.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c. &c.,

J. RUSSELL."

Now, Sir, I would ask what language can be more explicit? It states that the question had been reviewed; now, who reviewed it? Why, Her Majesty's Government. And it further states that Her Majesty's Government, after "having reviewed the whole progress of the discussion regarding the tenure of land, have arrived at the following conclusions:" and then proceeds to declare the conclusions; and we find there the positive and express declaration that it would be unjust to escheat the lands, on the grounds that the original conditions were not complied with, and alleging that those conditions were impracticable. And, Mr. Chairman, the endeavour of the hon. member to make it appear to the country that the Legislature had never given up the principle of Escheat, is as susceptible of refutation as his assertion that the British Government have never declared their opposition to it. Why, Sir, at the risk of being considered as occupying too much of the time of the Committee, by a reference to what is well known to many hon. members, I will direct their attention to the journals of 1843. In that year, when the House was in committee on a Bill introduced by the hon. the present Speaker, and generally known as the "Squatter's Bill," the following amendment was moved, and by whom? by the hon. member himself! Here is the preamble of his amendment, as entered on the journals, and the record that he moved:—

"Mr. Cooper moved that the Bill be recommitted, for the

purpose of amending the same, by striking out all after the word "Whereas," in the said Bill, and substituting the following in lieu thereof:—

"Her Majesty's Ministers have stated in their Despatches that the conditions contained in the original grants were impracticable, and that it would be unfair to deprive the proprietors of such grants of the land for the non-performance of such conditions; but as the proprietors have imposed conditions upon persons who have improved the land, which are so oppressive as to deprive such persons of the benefit of their improvements; it is, therefore, not only necessary, but just and equitable, that while the proprietors of such grants are allowed to retain the fee simple of the land so granted in its wilderness state, that persons who have cleared such land, and brought it into a state fit for cultivation at their own cost and labour, and have erected buildings thereon, should be secured in their improvements by a settlement upon the land."

That amendment embodies the principle of the Tenant's Compensation, of which the hon. member has chosen now to say he disapproves, and I contend, Mr. Chairman, that no man of common honesty and intelligence can view the extract I have just read in any other light than as a declaration by the hon. member himself, and of his party, that the question of Escheat was considered at that time finally settled. Although I think I have already adduced documents sufficient to shew the recorded declarations, not of Colonial Secretaries individually, but of the British Government not to grant escheat, I shall refer to the despatch of the present Earl of Derby, then Lord Stanley, and Secretary of the Colonies, dated the 14th July, 1842:—

"In obedience to Her Majesty's commands, I have to acquaint you, for the information of the House of Assembly, that Her Majesty's Executive Government must decline to interfere any further in the question in debate between the grantees of lands in Prince Edward Island and their tenantry; experience having sufficiently shown, that no beneficial result is to be anticipated from any such interference."

Then we find the announcement of the determination, not of Lord Stanley, but of Her Majesty's Government. Now, Mr. Chairman, after so many decided expressions of the opinion of the Home Government, I put it to this House and to the hon. member himself, if it is not useless to agitate this question further. He knows well what reception our previous applications have received, and let him consider for a moment who it is that now holds the seals of the Colonial Office! Why, Sir, Lord John Russell, the man whose opinions I have read to you. Is it likely that the Government, of which he is a leading member, will consent at this day to grant a Court of Escheat? That hon. member knows it is not; and I regret that the minds of the people are agitated on this question. Had it not been for parties exciting them, and holding out false hopes, every thing would have gone on quietly, and the Land Purchase Bill, the Education Act, and the proposed Bill for taxing the rent rolls of proprietors, would have had the effect of inducing a reasonable and equitable settlement of the tenantry. I do not believe any member of the present majority is pledged to support the motion, and I am sorry my hon. colleague intends to vote for it. I know that his constituents never asked him to do so. As to the petitions having much influence on the minds of hon. members, I know how they have been got up. A few individuals in Charlottetown prepare them and send them through the country, telling the people that they are to have free lands. The movers in the matter know that the prayers of the petitions cannot be granted, and that Escheat is out of the question; but they get up this excitement merely to upset the present Government. The people sign the petitions without consideration, and in proof of the facility with which signatures can be obtained, I may mention to the Committee, as a fact, that the hon. member for Belfast (Mr. Douce), has now from his constituents two lists of names, to put to any petitions he may please, and for or against any measure he chooses to support or oppose. But, Mr. Chairman, at the risk of being considered tedious, I will read from the pamphlet published by the hon. member, an extract from Lord Grey's despatch to Sir Alexander Bannerman, in 1851—the despatch commonly called the "Bloody Despatch":—

"Without going into detail, it is sufficient for me here to remind you that repeated applications have been made, at different times, to Her Majesty's Government, to consent to deprive the proprietors under the original grants of their

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