

eral; for if Responsible Government is a government to carry out the wishes of the people, as expressed through their Representatives, surely the nineteen or eighteen members on the Government side of this House can form a truly responsible Administration.

Hon. Mr. DUNCAN.—I do not, Mr. Chairman, find fault with the exclusion of officeholders from the floor of this House; but I wish to tell the hon. gentleman who last spoke, that I canvassed as a Conservative, and only as a Conservative—not as an Independent. I would feel obliged to the hon. member, if he would tell me where the Independent members are in the present House. Surely Independent members cannot be members and supporters of a Government. They are returned as Independents, and they support a Government before they are a month old. These members should, I think, remain dumb, when consistency is spoken of.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD.—The last speaker says he has always been a Conservative; surely he must mean a converted one—for he was once opposed to having any offices on the floor of the House; then he would admit three, and last Session eight. He has also referred to the Independent members. I can tell the hon. member for Belfast that I canvassed on the principles that I now hold. I never canvassed as an "Independent;" and, therefore, when I found that the present Government held the same principles, I was perfectly free to join them.

Hon. Mr. DUNCAN.—Then the whole Government is Independent.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—The hon. member for Bedeque (Mr. Laird) has said that, in 1863, the Conservatives gave no notice to the country of their change of policy, regarding officeholders. What better proof could the country have of the change in their opinions, than the fact that they sent two gentlemen (Mr. Pope and Mr. Palmer) to their constituencies in that year, while holding office. There was not any curtain kept before the public, as the hon. member has insinuated. I cannot but wonder at the sophistry of the hon. gentleman in bringing forward that clause which he read, relating to officeholders. That clause does not prove that the Conservatives were willing to have all these officers on the floor of the House; but merely provided that any person, at any future time, holding one of these offices, by vacating it and accepting another, should not thereby forfeit his seat. This matter has been brought up as a delusion and a snare. The clause, too, was not carried by the Conservative party as a party measure. We all (Government and Opposition) were a happy family in passing the Bill. It is true that my friend (Mr. Howat) the master of the situation, as he used to be called, objected to the insertion of the words—"Finance Minister," as that was an office not recognized in the Colony.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—There are many views regarding Responsible Government, but I think that the definition given by me already,—that a Government is responsible so long as a majority of Representatives are willing to support it in carrying out the wishes of the people, and only so long,—is the truest definition. I was once conversing with a gentleman in one of the other Provinces, and in the course of our conversation he asked me who was then Attorney General of the Island. I told him; and he asked how it could be the case, since that gentleman did not hold a seat in the Executive, and added that we were not carrying out Responsible Government. This only shows how different opinions are upon this sub-

ject. We may, Mr. Chairman, debate here for two days without arriving at any conclusion. All that can be said is that a government, so long as supported by a majority, is responsible; if not, the people have the power to turn them out. Exception may be taken to this, but as we can arrive at no satisfactory conclusion, it is better to say that both parties have changed their views. All this discussion has nothing to do with the clause before the Committee. That clause merely says that we are willing to engage in the business of the country even at this late period. I trust that the debate will now terminate.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—I hope, Mr. Chairman, that it will, but the Hon. Attorney General must not lay the flattering unction to his soul that no one understands Responsible Government except those on his side of the House. In 1860 we were carrying out Responsible Government in fulfilling the wishes of the people relative to officeholders, and the Address sent home by the Opposition shows that they were then opposing that form of Government.

The second paragraph was then agreed to, when the Committee rose and reported progress.

House adjourned.

TUESDAY, April 23.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL, from the Committee on expiring Laws, presented the first report of said Committee, and moved that it be made the order of the day to-morrow.

Hon. Mr. HAVILAND, Leader of the Opposition, said that, by the report just read, he observed one law had expired, the immediate consideration of which was necessary. He would therefore move that the House do now go into Committee on the report.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL supported the motion. Mr. GEORGE SINCLAIR in the Chair.

The House in Committee reported the following Resolution agreed to, namely:—

That it is expedient to revive, continue, and amend the law relating to the limits and rules of Jails in this Island.

A Committee was then appointed to bring in a Bill in accordance therewith.

On motion of Mr. BRECKEN, Mr. JOHN YEO obtained leave of absence for one week.

The House then went into Committee of the whole, to take into further consideration the Address in answer to His Excellency's Speech.

The 3d paragraph of the Address was read and agreed to, without comment.

*Paragraph of Address relating to Purchase of Lands.*

On the 4th paragraph being read, which relates to a further extension of the Land Purchase Bill, &c.:

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL said:—I rise to move that the paragraph just read be adopted. As it principally refers to extending the operations of the Land Purchase Bill, a measure introduced by the Liberal party, and carried out by the late Government,