

of arrears remitted by the Government, the statement, I think, must have been correct. This being the case, if it is ascertained that they may have been able to raise sufficient money to pay the deposit of the purchase of their farms, but perhaps they will never so forward in paying the full statements. The remission of the Worrall estate, I do not believe the opportunity of those on the Selkirk estate who have the advantage of a better title. But we can not judge how the Selkirk estate is to pay until two or three years hence. By paying the arrears amount, however, required for the purchase of two estates, together with the higher rate of interest on the whole £200 of £300 a year, has been added to the arrears of the Colony.

Hon. Mr. WOOD.—I think that the report of the offer made by Lord Selkirk to Mr. Douse must be unimpaired. I do not believe that Lord Selkirk is a man who would be guilty of double dealing. The hon. member found great fault that higher interest was given than the Government, but we know that money now can be obtained only at a high rate. I scarcely ever paid so high discount as I have done this last year. He need not say that the Government is to be blamed for acting as they have done. They could not obtain the money otherwise. And see what they are doing for the country. They have given up a large amount of back rent to the people on the Selkirk estate. The Government have done more for the people in a short time, than his party would have done though they had remained in power for ten years. At one time he was in favor of Echeat, and at another time running it down. This is the way he (Mr. Cole) has carried on.

Hon. Mr. WIGHTMAN.—The purchase of the Selkirk estate was agreed to by this House last session, though it may have been under the impression that it was offered to the Government. We all thought the terms were very low; but when we hear to-day that it probably could have been purchased for £3000 less, we have cause to regret, if it had been the case, that this amount was not saved. The rate at which the property was purchased, however, must be admitted to have been very reasonable, and I believe the people on the estate—as I have met many of them at public meetings, and heard their opinions—are well satisfied with the terms at which they are privileged to convert their leasehold into freehold. I supported the measure for the purchase of the Selkirk estate, and do not regret having done so. I wish we could obtain more at the same price. With respect to Lot 54, a higher sum than 2s. 4d. per acre was paid for it, and as the purchase was not authorized by this House, I consider the Government had no right to purchase the estate which they did. Reference has been made to the Worrall estate, and much we have heard during our sessions because the rate paid for it was so high. The Government could not treat with the owner of the estate himself, and they were unable to prevent a middle party from stepping in, with whom they had to arrange the purchase on the best terms they could obtain, though at a considerable loss to the Colony compared with what it would have been had the owner himself been willing to treat with the Government. But I believe, notwithstanding all that has been said respecting the price paid for that estate by the late Government, and the manner in which it was afterwards managed, that the loss the Colony will sustain by the property will be trifling, as large sums have been paid in from it at different times. I will cheerfully assist the Government in any measure to authorize the purchase of more land, if it can be obtained at the same rate as that paid for the Selkirk property.

Hon. Col. GRAY.—I would not have risen so early in the discussion were it not to correct the statements of the hon. leader of the Opposition. There is something for the people of the country to depend on besides his assertions. He says he was not aware two estates were going to be purchased by the Government—was not; nor was I; but a long time has elapsed since the rising of the House last ses-

sion. With respect to the justice of the proceeding, it appears that the Government were authorized to purchase more land than the Selkirk estate if the incoming year was satisfactory to us as to doing so. The hon. member referred to something told him by a gentleman, another hon. member of this House, who is now in his place, a circumstance which I very much regret. He says this gentleman informed him that the Selkirk property was offered to his son for £5000 and that was paid for it by the Government. But more accurate is nothing without proof. We have the statement of Lord Selkirk that the very low rate of 2s. 4d. per acre was agreed to by him solely on account of representations made to him from his own tenantry; and I think the hon. leader of the Opposition, and the gentleman who he states gave him this information, must be under some misapprehension, for I cannot believe that that distinguished nobleman would be guilty of double dealing. But even were it the case, I submit to hon. members on both sides of the House, if they would not rather see £5000 placed against the Colony than that the estate should have passed into the possession of Mr. Douse? We are all aware what has been lost to the country by the action of middle men, as has just been referred to by the hon. member for Murray Harbor. I am not disposed to attach blame to the late Government for purchasing the Worrall estate, though I may regret that it was not obtained on more favorable terms. I had, however, to inform this hon. House that we did not purchase the Selkirk estate at 2s. 4d. an acre, but at a less sum.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—How much less?

Hon. Col. GRAY.—I will before I conclude state how much less for the information of hon. members. Last year when we were informed that the estate of Lord Selkirk could be obtained at the low figure of 2s. 4d. an acre, notwithstanding this House had agreed to the appointment of a Land Commission, as we could scarcely expect that it would be the means of procuring the land on more favorable terms, in order that the Government might be in a position to accept the offer, I introduced a measure to extend the Land Purchase Bill.

Hon. Mr. COLES.—The Bill which you had called a visionary scheme.

Hon. Col. GRAY.—The Land Bill I considered a visionary scheme; but I do not recollect of ever characterizing the Land Purchase Bill as such. When Lord Selkirk communicated to the Lieut. Governor last year that he was willing to dispose of his estate, the quantity of land mentioned was 48,000 acres, and the rate 2s. 4d. sterling an acre. But it subsequently appeared that his Lordship held 62,000 acres, and in consideration that we should give him £3000 down in cash, and the remainder in debentures at five per cent, he agreed to dispose of his whole estate for £9918 0 9, being £968 15 0 less than 2s. 4d. an acre, or at the rate of 2s. 1½d. per acre. After the land was surveyed it was ascertained there were 59 acres over and above the 62,000, for which his Lordship received 2s. 4d. an acre, being nearly the very large sum of £6 17 6. To raise the £2000 required, as it could not be obtained on debentures bearing five per cent interest, Treasury warrants were issued, Lot 54 cost £2000 for which amount warrants were also issued, being in all £4000; but as about £1958 of the warrants have been redeemed, the amount now out is little more than £2000, and the extra expense to the Colony this year on account of the higher rate of interest will only be about £90. But now we come to the real pith of the matter—the right of the Government to accede to a rise in the rate of interest. We found that we could not meet our engagements, as it was impossible to negotiate debentures at five per cent, while Treasury warrants were bearing six per cent, and though there was no special enactment authorizing the issue, were we to allow the opportunity of purchasing the land to slip from our grasp? If we had permitted the estate at so low a price, to pass into other hands, the members of the Opposition, I have