The Protestant

EXTRA.

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Wednesday, March 27, 1861.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

[Continued from Protestant, March 23.]

Hon. Mr LONGWORTH.—Mr Chairman; every courtesy has been shown to hon. members on the other side of the House in this debate, lest they should hereafter complain that they were restrained. But with all the latitude which they have been allowed, what have they proved? We still remain unimpeached, and I was about to say unimpeachable. If it be the desire of the Opposition that we should have a fair opportunity to test this Commission scheme, what can be the motive which impels them in the course which they are pursuing? It is as clear as noon-day that their situation in the cool shades of opposition is not all that is desirable. If they are sincere in what they profess, in reference to not seeking to defeat the Government, why have they not received the statements from this side of the House, without attempting to misrepresent them? Their conduct has been unworthy of an honorable opposition. I do not blame an hon. member for opposing a government, but I do object to unfair proceedings. With respect to the paragraph of the Address under consideration, it is unnecessary to take up time, as the subject has been already fully discussed. I will briefly refer to the object of the Commission. The granting of this Island in large tracts was an impolitic proceeding on the part of the British Government; but they did not foresee the evils which have ensued. However, the deed was done, and its consequences have come down to us, and unless we are enabled to remedy them, they will descend to our children. I do not affirm that members of this House were insincere in the measures which they introduced to settle this vexed question, but the schemes failed in the end proposed. Escheat was tried for a time, but effected no good result, and has been cut aside. The Land Purchase Bill was passed, and I do not object to it, for it is based on safe principles, yet it is limited in its operations. The Loan Bill was next introduced, but it was opposed by most of those who compose the present majority, because it was dangerous in principle, as it pledged the whole revenue of the Colony to carry it into operation. It was then considered that a Commission should be appointed to investigate the whole question; and this scheme the present Government have endeavored to carry out. The hon. leader of the Opposition states that we have done nothing more than take up a suggestion made to the late Government by the Colonial Minister of that day; but admitting this to be the case, why did not they attempt to carry out the recommendation?

Hon. Mr COLES.—Because we went out of power.

Hon. Mr LONGWORTH.—This was not the reason, for the last proposal which the hon. member made was to revive the question of Escheat. The existing Government considered that as the Land Purchase Bill was limited in its operations, it was desirable that something more extensive should be attempted, and hence the origin of the present movement. Objections have been taken to the manner in which we have endeavored to carry out the Commission; but I maintain that it has been carried out in good faith, and that all has been done by us which a government could be expected to do. The whole duty of the Government was to hold the scales of justice in their hands, and afford every facility for investigation. The hon. leader of the Opposition has insinuated that the public offices were closed against those who desired to obtain information on the side of the tenantry, but as this has been already answered, I shall not recapitulate. In regard to the hardships caused by distraints for arrears of rent, I regret exceedingly that the proprietors, at least those who gave in their adhesion to the Commission, should pursue such a course. I think, to say the least, it shows very bad taste on their part. I regret that the Leasehold System was ever introduced into this Colony; but it having come down to us, and that tenure having been acknowledged, we cannot now pass a law to do away with rights which have been a long time recognized. I believe if such a bill were passed as is contemplated by the amendment, the direct effect of it would be, though it could receive the Royal assent, that the proprietors would turn round and say, "Since you have disregarded our rights we will look after our own interests;" and before the measure would have time to become law, they would have recovered a large portion of their arrears by coercive means. I am of opinion that the only motive which actuates the Opposition in proposing this amendment, is the desire to see those at present in power driven from their position.

AFTERNOON SITTING.

Hon. Mr KELLY.—I rise to express my approval of the amendment before the Committee. I believe what it proposes would be a just measure. Some hon. member remarked that there perhaps might be one instance or two of distraints on the estates of proprietors who have agreed to the Commission; but I know several cases in which judgments are pending; and though the award of the Commissioners was given in to-morrow, it would not stay these proceedings. I can see no impropriety in passing such a measure as is proposed, therefore I will support the amendment.

Mr MONTGOMERY.—I am unable to discover what advantage will be gained by the proposed measure. When the Commission was sitting, it was anticipated that some proprietors might pounce upon their tenants before the award was made, and the Commissioners said that surely no proprietor would act so unfairly as to enforce the collection of arrears; but at the same time they stated that they had no power to hinder it. Though I regret that there have been distraints, yet I cannot well see how they are to be prevented. I would support the amendment, if I considered it would effect any good; but I feel convinced that the measure which it proposes would not receive the royal assent. Besides, I think, if passed by this House, it might materially effect the Commission; and I would be sorry to see any step taken which might be the means of defeating the object for which it was appointed.

Hon. Mr PERRY.—When I heard the amendment read, I thought it was so short and simple that it would scarcely meet with opposition. It does not, however, appear to be looked upon in this light by some hon. members. I do not understand how it would be the means of overthrowing the Government, as it is not opposed to the Commission; but only goes to carry out the recommendation which I heard the Commissioners give at St. Eleanor's. As regards what was done by the Government to aid the Commission, I cannot particularly speak, but I observed one member of the Government at the Court who appeared to be ready to furnish information. I feel called upon to support the amendment, as it is necessary that something should be done to prevent oppression on the part of the proprietors pending the award of the Commission. I do not see that any injury can result from it, for if the award comes out in a few months, then the proposed measure would not be required; but we are not aware how long it may yet take the Commissioners to complete their labors.

Hon. Mr LAIRD.—I think there is not the least prospect of the proposed measure receiving the Royal assent. Under the late Government, a Bill was passed to tax the rent rolls of the proprietors, and this was termed by the Home Government a class legislation," and not allowed to pass into law. I think there is every probability that the measure now proposed would meet the same fate. I am willing to support any measure which would benefit the country, providing there be a likelihood of its receiving the sanction of the authorities at home. Much has been said about the Government withholding information from the Commissioners; but I never heard that any person was prevented from coming before the Court, and giving his sentiments freely and fully. If the men of the Commission had to be gone over again, I am of opinion that the Government could not more fully than they have done.

Hon. SPEAKER.—I do not intend to give altogether a silent vote on this question. There has been a great deal of time wasted by the frequent motor introduced into this discussion. The Government have been censured for not furnishing information to the Commission; this, however, was not so much their duty as that of the tenantry, who were allowed every facility for representing their case to the Court. But when the Commission commenced its sittings in Queen's County, so few came forward at first that the Commissioners were led to believe that no grievances existed. This was in a great measure caused by certain parties who labored to make the people believe that the Commission was a delusion. Perplexed to the Commissioners when at St. Eleanor's, that this was no doubt the reason that there appeared to be so little interest manifested in the inquiry when they opened their Court at Charlottetown. The Government procured able counsel; and with reference to the Commissioners, I have heard different people in Prince County express the belief that other gentlemen could not be appointed better qualified to investigate the question. I am surprised at the Opposition advancing schemes which are only visionary. The people in this country are, I believe, satisfied to wait until the award of the Commissioners be made known. I am opposed to the amendment, for probably before such a measure as it proposes could receive the Royal assent, the award would be made. Besides, though we were to pass the measure through as rapidly as possible, yet before it could become law, the proprietors might pounce upon the tenantry, and cause a vast amount of hardship and distress.

After some further discussion, the question was put on Mr Whelan's amendment, which was lost on the following division:

Yeas—Hons. Whelan, Coles, Wightman, Kelly, Thornton, Perry; Messrs. Doyle, Sutherland, Sinclair, Cooper, Conroy—11.

Nays—Hons. Speaker, Col. Gray, Haviland, Longworth, Yeo, Laird, McAulay; Messrs. Owen, Davies, Holm, Howat, McNeill, Beer, Montgomery, Ramsay—10.

The original motion that the paragraph be agreed to, was then put and carried, on the same division, reversing the order.

The seventh paragraph was then read.

Hon. Mr WHELAN.—I rise to move the following amendment to this paragraph—

"We regret that the Colonial Minister has not seen fit to present for the Royal assent, the Bill passed last Session, to give effect to the award of the Commissioners, While the Duke of Newcastle gladly acknowledged in his Despatch of the 16th June, 1860, addressed to your Excellency, the promptitude with which the Legislature of this Island hastened to give effect to the award, it is worthy of remark, that His Grace did not then intimate that our legislation on this subject was premature. The fact that His Grace now seems to consider that such legislation should be subsequent, and not antecedent to the award, will most probably postpone a settlement of the difficulties arising out of the land tenure until a late period of the year 1862."

It is unnecessary to enter into an explanation of my reasons for submitting this amendment, as the matter to which it refers, on account of its connection with the preceding paragraph of the Address, has already been very fully discussed. It is most extraordinary that His Grace the Duke of Newcastle should on the 16th of June acknowledge the promptitude with which the Legislature hastened to give effect to the award of the Commissioners, and that he should now, as we are informed in His Excellency's speech, consider such legislation premature. But probably we may yet learn the reason for this change in his views. There can be little doubt if the Legislature will have to be called upon next session to pass another Bill to give effect to the award, that a settlement of the question will be postponed until a late period of 1862. I know that the supporters of the Government will vote down every measure proposed by the minority, but they cannot prevent us from placing our views upon record.

Hon. Mr. COLES.—The reason the Duke of Newcastle assigns for not submitting the Act for Her Majesty's assent, is that he considers such legislation premature; yet he makes no allusion to this in the Despatch of the 16th June in which he acknowledges the receipt of a Despatch from the Lieut. Governor informing His Grace of the passing of the Act. But, Sir, there may be another reason for his considering it advisable that the Act should not be submitted for Her Majesty's approval. His Excellency's Despatch of the 30th April states that the Act had passed through both Houses, whereas it appears from the Journals of the Legislative Council that it did not pass that Body until the following day, the first of May. I suppose the Government depended on the party of new Councillors then lately brought in from the country to do their bidding, and therefore considered the bill as good as passed. I hope and trust that these new members of the Council will see that an unwarrantable reliance has been placed upon their support, and announce their independence. Now, Sir, I cannot say that this Despatch, containing such a statement, was the reason that His Grace the Duke of Newcastle thought the Royal assent should be withheld for the present from the Bill; but there is no telling what may have been the result. He is well aware of the the uncertainty of legislative action. In no matter do we know what may happen in a day. A nation may be ruined in a day. Such a course as that Her Majesty's Representative should pen a falsehood to the Colonial Office is dishonorable to one holding his high position. But the Lieut. Governor is not so much to be blamed or held responsible for the statement in the Despatch as the members of the Government, or those from whom he received the information, for it cannot be expected that His Excellency can be otherwise acquainted on any particular evening with the proceedings of the Legislature during that day than from the members of his Council. I hope, Sir, that the amendment just proposed by my hon. friend on the right (Mr Whelan) will receive the support of every member of this House, as it contains nothing but truth.

House then adjourned.

D. LAIRD, Reporter.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 27, 1861.

House in again Committee of the whole on the Address.

Hon. Col. GRAY.—You are aware, Mr Chairman, that at the close of last evening's debate, the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition rose in his place, and in a highly insulting and indecorous manner, accused His Excellency the Lieut. Governor with being guilty of falsehood, and his advisers with instigating him to it.

Hon. Mr COLES.—I said his Government caused him to do so—that his advisers instigated him to it.

Hon. Col. GRAY.—I should have supposed, Sir, the hon. member was aware by this time, of what is expected in society from a person claiming any respectability. Nor was it in the heat of debate the hon. member used this language, but in his cool calm moments. If hon. members are entitled to have the proceedings of this House conducted in this indecent manner, I for one, raise my voice and protest against it. It shows, Sir, to what sore straits hon. members are driven, when they bring forward such sorry quibbles upon which to found an accusation so grave. And what it is founded on is, that His Excellency dated a Despatch on the 30th April announcing the passage of a Bill through both branches of the Legislature, when according to the Journals, it appears not to have passed until the next day. Upon turning to the Journals of the Legislative Council, I find the Bill in question was read a second time and passed without a division on the 30th April. Now, Sir, I am not going to take my Parliamentary experience of Legislative duties from the Leader of the Opposition; nor am I going to learn how business should be conducted by referring to any Colonial Parliament. I look to my Fatherland, Great Britain, and in doing so, ask him if he can point but one instance in the British Parliament where a Bill has passed the House of Commons, gone up to the Lords, been read a second time and passed without a division, that was not passed virtually, if not technically? If His Excellency is to be charged with falsehood on these grounds, which of us is safe or not equally in fault?

Hon. Mr COLES.—I say the hon. Leader of the Government, must go again to the land of his fathers to learn Legislative duties, if he stands up in this Legislature at the Head of the Government, and says that after the second reading of a Bill it becomes the Law of the land. Will he tell me an amendment might not have been moved to that Bill? On the next day, *e.g.*, if the Legislative Council had only one of a majority, the Opposition might have mustered their forces and thrown it out. Or suppose one of the Councillors had died before the next day, would the Bill have passed? It would not. I expected this would be the excuse. It is the Government, however, I hold responsible. How did His Excellency know it had passed unless told so? His Excellency could have no idea it had passed unless he had been so informed by one of his Councillors, for he is a gentleman of too high standing to pen a falsehood in reference to this matter. In the Legislative Council a motion was made that the Bill entitled "An Act to give effect to the Report of the Commissioners to be appointed on the Land Question," be now read a second time. Mr Bagnall moved, seconded by Mr Swabey, that the word "now" be left out, and after "time" insert "to-morrow," which shows the Bill was not finally agreed to. Next day it passed. It appears there was no division taken, but that does not alter the question.

Hon. Mr McAULAY.—The matter at present before the Committee is the charge brought against the Government by the hon. member; viz., that the advisers of His Excellency caused him to pen a falsehood. Words of this character should not be passed by this hon. Committee without ascertaining their truth or falsehood. Before a charge of this nature is urged against such gentlemen, he should be well satisfied about its foundation. I contend, however, the words of the Despatch will not be found meriting this censure, nor His Excellency the charge imputed to him.

Hon. SPEAKER.—I rise to speak to a point of order. It was certainly out of place in the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition, to use the expression which he did. Hon. members may be aware that after the first reading of a Bill it is laid upon the table, that hon. members may have an opportunity afforded them of examining its contents. During this period there is no discussion upon it. On the second reading the principles of the Bill are considered, and when these are received it is supposed to be passed. When the principles of a Bill are absolutely conceded, it is presumable it will become law; and that the only alteration which will take place, will be in its details. This occurs in Committee; and when the details are gone through, it is then ordered to be engrossed. The object of the third reading is to correct any errors which may have been committed in engrossing.

Hon. Mr THORNTON.—From my own experience in the Speaker's Chair, I learned that in every stage through which a Bill passed, an opportunity was afforded for expunging a principle, or for adding a new clause; and that the third reading was not merely to correct clerical errors.

After a little farther discussion on this point the motion on the amendment was put and lost on the same division as the preceding amendment.

The eight paragraph was next read by the Chairman, after which—

Hon. Mr COLES said,—The inference to be drawn from that paragraph, in the Speech of His Excellency is, that £13,000 had been paid in Warrants. His Excellency regrets that after issuing Debentures, the Government could not raise the money, and was compelled to issue Warrants at 6 per cent. Certainly, there was great objection to that, till we happened to draw out some further explanation. Had it not been discussed by the minority, I believe the majority would have passed it as it is. Now it turns out there were only £2000 issued bearing 6 per cent, of which £1000 was given to a member of the Government for a bill of exchange. Perhaps the Bank condescended to take the remainder; but I think the Bank has not that confidence in the Government which would induce them to take their Bills. Now that the present Government stood so high in England, it was considered the Bank would cash their Warrants; but there appears to be some difficulty on this score. It is acknowledged in the Speech of His Excellency, the Government made a bargain with Lord Selkirk about the purchase of his land, but could not get the money; consequently Warrants, which they were not authorized to issue, were issued, bearing interest at 6 per cent. Now, if the Bank has that confidence in the Government, which was pretended they would have given them £2000 at once, and taken their Warrants. There is certainly an objection to any Government stepping out of its legitimate course. If a Government can spend more than it is authorized to do in one case, it may do so in all cases; and perhaps the payment of those Warrants issued without law cannot be enforced. It was said if we came into power, we would repudiate them; but I think no Government could enforce their payment. If there are many of them out, perhaps it would be advisable to pass a short Act for the purpose of enabling the Executive to stretch its power in enforcing their payment. (Laughter.)

Hon. Mr HAVILAND.—The hon. the Leader of the Opposition appears to think the Government have exceeded their powers in issuing these Warrants; and, that it would have been preferable to have left the tenantry—with whom he sympathises so much—without making an effort to free them by paying a few more pounds interest, rather than to have purchased the Selkirk Estate. What patriots they are, when it suits their convenience! It cannot be inferred the Bank had no confidence in the Government, because it would not take their Warrants for £2000. If the hon. member understood the finances of this country, he would be aware, that the Bank at certain seasons of the year, cannot give Bills on Great Britain. Only for a tax upon its members, it could not be kept in working order. The balance of trade, too, is against us, as we import more than we export. How then could we meet these difficulties? I say, it was fortunate Mr Yeo had means at his disposal to enable us to meet these demands,—not that the Bank had no confidence in the Government, but because at that season of the year, trade was in such a condition, that the Bank could not purchase their Warrants. If the Bank sells Bills it is to get money from other parties, and it is as apparent as anything can be; its refusal on that occasion was not indicative of a want of confidence in the Government. If the hon. member, himself, had offered the best security the country could have afforded, at that season of the year, I believe he would not have procured a Bill of £300. We know this colony would become bankrupt were it depending upon the trade of Great Britain. It is the trade of the United States which keeps up our country; for it is there we get a market for our surplus produce. No doubt the hon. member, would like to get out of the dilemma by censuring the Government. Session after Session, we know the Government of Great Britain itself does extraordinary acts, which, tho' not within the letter of the Constitution, are consonant with its spirit. Then they come to Parliament, and if Parliament does not sustain them, the Government must go to the ground; but, on the contrary, if it is for the public weal they always have a majority, the party spirit run over so high. I believe every man on both sides of this House who will put his hand on his heart, will approve of this act of the present Administration, and say they did the best they could under the circumstances;—that they did just what the hon. member himself would have done under similar circumstances, tho' he now throws out such insinuations against us. Tho' he may flatter himself with back-stairs influence, still he is not so well versed in the schemes and policy of the present Government, as to know everything which has come to pass. By-and-bye, if a Bill be introduced beneficial to the country, I suppose he will say the country should thank him for it. If he is so fond of acts of indemnity as he pretends, why did he introduce a Bill in 1858 by which Treasury Warrants could be hawked about the country, and contrary to what had been authorized, sold at a discount. I know of persons going to the Road Correspondent Office and getting Treasury Warrants to the amount of hundreds of pounds, for £90 per hundred, thus causing the country to lose 10 per cent. And it would puzzle first rate accountants or a Philadelphia lawyer to make head or tail of the books, to ascertain how much was lost on these Warrants; yet, these are the moral politicians who come forward to give us a lecture on political morality.

Hon. Mr. COLES.—The hon. member from Georgetown still harps on the same string. No new arguments are advanced—nothing but the old story about Treasury Warrants. But I may state that at the period to which he refers we had £300 voted for contingent purposes, and placed at the disposal of the Government, we acted legally and constitutionally; and if Warrants were hawked about at the discount stated, it was not the act of the late government. The hon. member speaks about back-stair influence. Does he mean to say I go to His Excellency and get a knowledge of what his Executive is doing? For the last two years I have not opened my lips to His Excellency on political matters.

Hon. Mr. HAVILAND.—I never intended to insinuate the hon. member had the slightest influence with His Excellency. It is by pricking up his ears to find out what is going on here.

Hon. Mr. COLES.—That is certainly a strange definition to give of back-stairs influence; but it will not do to say I have that influence because I take up the weak points of the majority. But, Sir, there is another point to which the hon. member has alluded,—that the Government had violated the law, but that the country would concur with them because they had taken the shackles off a few tenants. But look at the other side: Are there no shackles to be taken off the other tenants? No; we are told by His Excellency they will take off no more; there are to be no more Loans to buy them out in other parts of the Island. These favors are for Belfast. As for Lots 32 and 37, they do not belong to the constituency of a gentleman who has influence here. Here it is; they are not to listen to such visionary schemes about Loans; but, had we been in power the tables would have been turned. In reference to the Worrell Estate because we did not investigate the titles we were charged with having acted contrary to law. My hon. colleague at that period left the Liberals because we did not investigate the titles. So did Mr. Macintosh, and my friend on the left (Mr. Cooper) who manifested more sincerity, agreed with them we had not done exactly right. During two Sessions in succession the Opposition tried to upset the Government on that question. Now they tell us we are doing these things out of treacherous motives and a party spirit, because we tell them they violated the Act,—themselves forgetting how they managed.

Hon. Col. GRAY.—The Hon the Leader of the Opposition, who has just sat down, has evidently alluded to me, and in terms which I must repudiate. He referred to a member in this House, who had influence to pass measures through the Legislature, and Lots 32 and 37 will not be benefitted by our exertions. I now publicly declare all my exertions have been, are, and shall be to put, not only these Lots, but all others upon the same footing; and all that can possibly be done, shall be done to effect such a consummation. This, however will not be done by a Loan Bill which would stink every man.—every freeholder on the Worrell and Selkirk Estate, by a ruinous taxation, which would amount to £130,000 in 10 years. We need not, then, entertain the project of a Loan of that magnitude. My object is to carry out the provisions of the Land Purchase Bill, but not at the expense of persons who are already freeholders. Of what benefit would it be to gain them their freedom and then make them tax-payers?

Hon. Mr. YEO,—I was surprised to hear the remarks which fell from an hon. member a short time ago. The Government were of opinion the Estate should be purchased; and, when Debentures could not be disposed of as they desired what was to be done? Was it necessary to call the Legislature together to know if they would advance money to purchase the property? No man of reason would think of doing such a thing. The Bank could not give the sum required, and I was requested to advance the sum required, which I did. Of this I do not boast, as it is nothing to the purpose. I did it for the benefit of the Country, and to enable the government to effect a purchase. No reasonable member I think should rise and accuse the Government for their conduct in this transaction.

Hon. Col. GRAY.—The hon. member the Leader of the Opposition has introduced what purports I believe to be a reply to a paragraph in the Address presented to His Excellency by the inhabitants of Belfast. The comments of His Excellency on the paragraph respecting a Loan are surely very plain; and I think no hon. member can mistake his meaning. His Excellency says to them—"Do not testify impatience;" and, speaking of the Commission he advised them to "turn a deaf ear to all those visionary schemes, which, pending the investigations of the Commissioners are as crude and premature as they are impracticable:" And so they are. We must not interfere with the Commission. By doing so, we may mar the whole affair. The advice of His Excellency is to wait, rather than adopt premature measures. We do not know but what the Commissioners themselves may propound a Loan; and, I trust the British Government will bear a portion of the expense incurred. If the Commissioners recommend a Loan under certain restrictions, it may be well; but, pending their investigations His Excellency the Lieut. Governor recommends the tenantry to exercise patience.

Hon. Mr COLES.—As regards what has fallen from the Hon Col. Gray respecting the paragraph in the Reply of His Excellency to the Address of the people of Belfast about some scheme which may be proposed, perhaps he refers to the one proposed by the Colonial Secretary, which was to borrow twice as much as was necessary. It would appear, however, the Colonial Secretary has come to his senses; for, knowing the Bill was lost, and that something must be done to promote the peace of the Country, he fell back on the old scheme, and came forward and gave his views on this point to the public. I have yet to learn we are to obtain anything from this Commission. The Colonial Secretary will see he does not rule, when a rod has been brought to bear upon him, under which he so speedily retracted the opinions which he had just promulgated. Talk of giving an Award which will call upon the Home Government to remedy evils incurred by a preceding Home Government! No, Sir. This Act is lost. We are told we must pass another to give effect to the Award of the Commissioners. According to the wording of the Act—"That the Report or Award of the Commissioners, or one part thereof, to be made by the three Commissioners or Arbitrators, or any two of them to be nominated and appointed, &c," we see it does not contemplate that they were to be appointed till the Act passed; and this Act has since been refused. Suppose one of the Commissioners should die, how, I ask, is the Commission to go on? There is no Law for that purpose. The only one there is, is the one under which they were appointed. If the Award be not favorable for the proprietors, we need not expect it will receive the Royal assent; and a Bill will not pass the Legislature unless favorable to the tenants; so, under these circumstances, I think we may expect little from the Commission. I would, then, support the views of the Colonial Secretary and adopt the only feasible scheme upon which this House can fall back. It was no visionary scheme to purchase Lots 54, 57, &c.; and, if not then—why now? The hon. member from the second district, King's County, need not say it would be ruinous to borrow £100,000. Has not one-third of this amount, £40,000, been granted by the Colony already; and if it were wise in that case, it cannot now be ruinous to go so far again.

Hon. Mr LONGWORTH.—I believe I was asked whether or not £40,000 were granted for the purchase of lands, and answer, I believe that sum was granted for that purpose. I may state, too, I think it was not too much, considering the manner in which the purchase were effected. I think the instance cited by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, as a strong argument, does not, and will not favor his views. It may do for him to say the principles of the Loan Bill would not be relative to the interests of the tenantry; but, were it adopted as suggested by the hon. member, it would then be a signal to all the world, we were prepared to buy up all the lands in the Island at the highest figure. The Bill would be limited to a certain amount, and the proprietors would not take 7s 6d an acre for all their Lots. The hon. member himself, in purchasing an Estate went far beyond its value; and it matters not how the amount was increased. As a man of capacity, it was his duty to say, if he could not get it at a more reasonable rate, he would not effect a purchase. In purchasing the Selkirk Estate, we were careful not to go beyond the limit assigned us, and then act against the interests of the people. But we are not now discussing the relative advantages of the Loan Bill, which, already has been discussed at great length; but considering a small paragraph respecting the policy of the Government in issuing a few Treasury Warrants under pressing engagements, without consulting the Legislature. The Estate was purchased was extensive, and its purchase affected the interests of a large body of the tenantry. Even the Home Government in sometimes compelled to resort to such expedients. They do so without consulting the Parliament immediately, believing they would afterwards indemnify their act; and it was upon this principle we acted. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition thinks we have stretched our constitutional powers, let him consider the statements made by the hon. member from Georgetown, who showed him, how he had issued Warrants at a vast discount. To vindicate his conduct in this matter, he said they acted legally and constitutionally, because a certain sum had been voted for the services of the Government. But this sum was voted for bridges which might be injured by a storm, &c., and which could never have been foreseen. Yet the apology is offered for the purpose of bolstering up the defective principles of a Government. But it will not do. There must have been some under-hand work—something not done above board, or better reasons would have been advanced. I referred to a member of the Committee in order to examine the accounts of that year; but it was not possible to ascertain for what purpose the sums expended were appropriated. That gentleman said it was impossible to ascertain for what purpose the sums were expended. Many sums were entered as lost on Treasury Warrants—the particular Warrant and amount not being mentioned. These transactions indicate anything but fair dealing.

Mr BEER.—I think it is unreasonable the Government should be blamed for what they have done in effecting the purchase of the Selkirk Estate. We know it could not be bought without paying £2000 down. What an outcry there would have been, had not the Government issued Warrants to this amount, but left the people on that Estate in their old position! I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition must have an imperfect knowledge of the mercantile circumstances of this country, when he says the Bank had not much confidence in the Government when it would not give them a Bill of £2000. It was fortunate they had a friend at home from whom they could get the sum required. Had the Loan Bill passed, the cry would have been, "Now, they must purchase; and we will have our price." The effect would have been, that land would have changed hands at double its value, and the country saddled with a debt. It would take the whole revenue to pay the interest on such an enormous Loan; therefore, I think it is rather visionary to talk about Loan Bills just now.

Hon. Mr THORNTON.—Mr Chairman, I do not rise for the purpose of defending the acts of the late Government, nor to offer opposition to the present Administration; but, to direct attention to the paragraph under consideration. Whether the Government were justified in issuing Warrants or not, I am prepared to support the Amendment to the paragraph. Instead of the wholesum having been borrowed at 6 per cent., we find it was only £2000, and that the Selkirk Estate could not be purchased without that sum. I say I am not inclined to show opposition to the paragraph under discussion. I think the Government were justified in purchasing a large tract of land for the people. I was not in the House, unfortunately, the Session the Bill authorising its purchase, was passed, or it would have received my cordial support. After putting that Bill, guaranteeing £10,000 for purchasing that Estate, on the Statute Book, the Government, without the sanction of the Legislature, issued Warrants to purchase Lot 54. This is the act for which I blame the Government, in purchasing Lot 54 contrary to law. And this Township is spoken of as one of the best in the county. I wish those who speak in these terms, knew as much about it as I do. I am glad they are in a position to purchase it; and, as regards the increase of the purchase money, I do not oppose the Government; but I repudiate their act, in paying money for it without the sanction of this Legislature.

Mr COOPER.—I was not satisfied, Mr Chairman, with the late Government in regard to the manner in which they effected the purchase of the Worrell Estate. In reference to this former Government, I may say they were prompted and encouraged by the Ministry to make good its purchase, being promised a Loan by the Imperial Government. The Loan was even voted there, and a day appointed for the second reading of the Bill, when Lord Stanley was to be prepared to explain the wording of it, which resulted in getting it defeated. Forfeited land was not to be purchased without an investigation of the title; therefore, they could not be a party in guaranteeing a Loan under such circumstances. Finally the Ministry with the consent of the proprietors agreed to leave the matter to an arbitration. After we agreed to this our Government, for party purposes, made a selection of two Estates out of the whole property left to arbitration, thus acting dishonorably to serve party purposes. They borrowed money on the faith of warrants, at a high rate of interest. The Liberal Government made an experiment, and the present one has abandoned an honest and just principle to serve party purposes and run the country in debt.

Hon. Mr COLES.—In reference to the Public Accounts, I may say I was a little astonished to hear a member of the Government come out at this late period—two years after the Committee reported—and insinuate that a public officer had acted fraudulently. He almost charged him with fraud, for his insinuation was calculated to lead people to believe that the officer could not give an account of money with which he had been entrusted. Now, if that officer was a defaulter, why did the Government not instruct the Attorney General to take legal proceedings against him? Then the hon. member went on to speak of financial matters; and, as regards the finances of this country, they must be pretty low now, for during the two years they have been in power, they have run the country in debt three times as much as we did during the nine years we had the Government.

Mr DAVIES.—There was every disposition on the part of the Committee on Public Accounts, to act fairly; and no inclination to reflect upon any one without sufficient cause. Any person who looks at the Books of the Road Correspondent, may see a number of Warrants are noted as being sold; but neither the name of the individual, nor the amount of the Warrant is mentioned—both of which, I think I would have done. We did not bring any charge against the Secretary for defrauding the public. I am of opinion, however, he should have noted down the No. of the Warrant, and the name of the individual who received it. It can be shown from the Public Accounts, the present Government has not run the Colony in debt.

Hon. Mr COLES.—My statement about the Road Correspondent has not been contradicted. The only excuse is, he did not keep his Books as another man would have done.

Hon. Mr WHELAN, after referring to the fact of Warrants being issued without the consent of the Legislature, said—I am not sorry this discussion has taken place; because, I trust it will prove a check on this or any other Government which may succeed it, and serve as a warning to them of the impropriety of paying away any portion of the public money contrary to law. If a Government can in this manner issue £2000, the principle is recognized, and £10,000, £20,000, or £30,000 may be issued in the same way. I said I was willing to forgive this error in the conduct of the Administration, inasmuch as it was done for the purpose of carrying out an object to which I lent my assistance. I said last Session, and even a few days ago—my hon. friend on the left (Mr Coles) being strongly opposed to me,—that my policy was to give a frank and generous support to it. Last Session, when it was announced that the intention was to purchase the Selkirk Estate, my hon. friend said we should vote against it. No; said I; my intention is to vote for its purchase, for I am determined to carry out the policy we ourselves pursued in reference to the Worrell Estate and Lot 11. I said, if we had a right to purchase these proportion, it could not be wrong to purchase the Selkirk Estate, Lot 54, or any other property. I was not actuated by party motives. I am aware prejudices have been attempted to be excited in Belfast, because I sometimes indulged in a little pleasantry at the expense of some persons in that locality, but I did not do so out of a spirit of malice or vindictiveness. I contend this principle should be recognised by myself, and every man holding positions similar to those which we occupy—that the moment I take my place here, I am not merely a representative of any particular District in this Island, but that I am sent here to represent the views, feelings, and wishes of the mass of the people; and, to do all I possibly can, as an honest man, to further their interests. This I did in reference to the purchase of the Selkirk Estate. And the people in that locality should consider,—that were it not for the conduct of the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, in bringing in a Bill for the purchase of the Worrell Estate, they would not be in the comfortable position today which they occupy. Where would they have been to-day, had that Bill never been introduced? They have reason to congratulate themselves on its consummation. And who opposed the Land Purchase Bill?

Hon. Mr HAVILAND.—There was no division taken on it.

Hon. Mr WHELAN.—So far as I am concerned, I say I have done my duty, notwithstanding the insinuations thrown out to induce them to believe I am their political enemy, and that I have no sympathy in common with them and the other people of this Island. If the hon. Col. Gray should bring forward a measure tending to confer still greater advantages upon them than the purchase of their properties, when that is not detrimental to other portions of the Island, I state frankly, it shall receive my most cordial support. We are told we should wait—that all schemes "pending the investigations of the Commissioners are visionary;" but the gallant Col. knows well that if it is improper to interfere with the proceedings of the Land Commission, he cannot forget that he and his colleagues were guilty of flagrant inconsistency in pur-