Mr. Howat's motion having been put and lost, the House went into Committee on the Bill. Mr. McLennan in the Chair.

The Bill was then read a second time and agreed to, after which the Chairman (Mr. McLennan) claimed the privilege of addressing the House on the subject of the Bill. He said that having occupied the chair he was deprived of giving his views to Committee, but would now state that he was prepared to give the measure his hearty concurrence. He had done so last year, and he saw no reason why he should not support it now. The principle of the Bill [illegible] Hon. Mr. Hensley, who introduced it to the House, and from his knowledge of that hon. member, he did not believe that he would submit any measure to that House that would tend to prove an injury to his own constituents or to the country at large. He was of opinion that the repeal of the Usury Laws was in accordance with the principles of sound and enlightened legislation, and would, therefore, give it his cannot.

On motion of the Hon. Solicitor General, the House went into Committee on the Bill to promote Vaccination, Hon. Colonial Secretary in the chair. After some time spent in Committee, during which the purport of the Bill was explained by the Hon. Solicitor General, it was agreed to. House adjourned.

TUESDAY, March 22.

The Bill to regulate the Salaries of Impost Collectors of Summerside and Georgetown, was read a third time and passed.

The Bill to Incorporate the Summerside Bank was also read a third time and passed.

Hon. Mr. Pope submitted the account of sales of the Barrack Square, and other papers connected therewith; which on motion of the House is Committee on Ways and Means.

In accordance with a resolution, the following gentlemen were appointed a Committee to prepare the Revenue Bill, viz:—Hons. Messrs. Davies and Mr. Green.

Hon. Solicitor General, Chairman of the Committee to whom were referred the petition of the inhabitants of Georgetown and Royalty, relating to the Georgetown Common, reported a Bill, which was received and read. Ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

The Bill to enlarge the Jurisdiction of the Mayor's Court in the City of Charlottetown, was ordered to be read a second time; to which Hon. Mr. Coles objected, and moved that the word "Criminal Jurisdiction" be struck out of the title of the same.

The Bill was then recommitted, and amended accordingly; after which it was read a second time and agreed to.

The Bill to amend the Law to promote Vaccination was read a third time and passed.

The House in Committee resumed Consideration of Supply.

Hon. Mr. Coles moved that the sum of £20, for the payment of wharfage at Brule, be struck out of the resolution. Hon. Subject the Committee, which motion was lost on the following division:

Yeas—Hons. Messrs. Coles, Kelly, Thornton, Warburton, Messrs. Conroy, Howlan, Sutherland, Sinclair, Walker—9.

Nays—Hons. Messrs. Pope, Gray, Longworth, Solicitor General, Colonial Secretary, Kaye, Davies, Laird, Messrs. Green, Howat, Brecken, McLennan, Ramsay, Montgomery, Haslam, Yeo—16.

Several resolutions were reported from Supply and agreed to.

A discussion took place on a resolution granting £1,000 towards building a Market House in Charlottetown, to which Hon. Mr. Coles moved an amendment, namely, that the words "provided said Market House be not built on Queen Square," be added to the said Resolution. He said he was not opposed to a grant for the purpose of assisting the City to build a Market House—the necessity for which was obvious to all—provided it was not built on Queen Square. He then spoke of the filthy condition of the said Square, which would always continue so as long as a Market House was there. Some might say that, with a new building, properly constructed, the Square could be kept clear of filth, but such would not be the case; it would, on the contrary, be utterly impossible to keep the Square free from that collection of mud and dirt which rendered it a disgrace to the place as long as a Market House was allowed to remain there. The windows of the Building, in which they then sat, could not, in the heat of summer, be opened, that Public Officers might breathe the pure air of heaven, because of the stench which came from the public square, which should be an ornament, and not a disgrace, to the City. He said the whole country should have a voice in this matter. The law authorized its being built on that Square, and unless contravened by a resolution of that House, it would, in all probability, be erected there. He said that it would not do to leave a matter of such importance to the City authorities, who, it seems, did not interest themselves very much on behalf of their fellow citizens. He was told that, even on Sunday last, a dead animal laid on the Square, in consequence of which, Ladies, on their way to and from Church, were compelled to take a circuitous route to avoid passing in that direction.

Mr. Brecken was in favor of the Resolution as submitted in the Estimates, and would oppose putting any restrictions or conditions on the grant before the Committee. He would leave it to the good sense of those under whose control it would be placed. Every hon. member of that House would, he was sure, admit that the Shanty at present on the Square, was a disgrace to the City, and the sooner it was removed the better. In an agricultural country like ours, a country Market-house should be one of our principal show-shops. He sincerely hoped that hon. members, who wished to secure the erection of a new Market House, would not place any restrictions on the Resolution before them. His own individual opinion was, that Queen Square was not the proper place for the Market-house. That, however, was a question which might be left to those whose more immediate duty it was to protect and guard the interest and prosperity of the city. The whole country, he said, would be benefited by the erection of a new Market-house in Charlottetown. Who, he would ask, that has seen men and women, from all parts of the country, compelled to stand ankle deep in mud, exposed to the pelting rain and storm, and was half-perished, willing to take almost any price for getting their hard earnings, that they might escape for a shelter, could withhold his vote from so laudable an object as that contemplated by that grant? Hons. Messrs. Davies, Longworth, Hensley, Sol. General, and several other hon. members, supported the Resolution as submitted, and contended that it was but an act of common justice to the country at large to support the grant, which should not be looked upon as a local matter exclusively for the benefit of the City. They also were opposed to any restrictions as to where the building might be erected, and would, by so doing, give their support to the grant unconditionally.

Hon. Col. Gray was at first disposed to support the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Coles, and spoke at [illegible] Market-house removed from Queen Square, even in a sanitary point of view. But as he understood from the remarks of the hon. members for the City, and was in fact assured by them that it was not probable the new Market-house would be erected on Queen Square, he would give his unconditional support to the Resolution.

At the close of the debate the following division took place:

The question was then put on the Hon. Mr. Coles' amendment, and negatived on the following division:

Yeas—Hons. Messrs. Coles, Whelan, Thornton, Kelly, Beaton and Walker—6.

Nays—Hons. Messrs. Pope, Gray, Longworth, Davies, Col. Secretary, Kaye, Laird, Hensley, Warburton, Solicitor General, Messrs. Haslam, Yeo, Howat, Ramsay, Montgomery, Green, Brecken, Conroy, Sinclair, Howlan, Duncan—21.

Hon. Mr. Warburton then moved that the Resolution for the grant of £1,000 towards building a Market-house in Charlottetown, be disagreed to. Which motion was lost as follows:

Yeas—Hons. Messrs. Warburton, Thornton, Beaton, Coles, Whelan, Kelly, Messrs. Conroy, Howlan, Sinclair, Walker—10.

Nays—Hons. Messrs. Pope, Gray, Kaye, Col. Secretary, Solicitor General, Longworth, Laird, Davies, Hensley, Messrs. Haslam, Yeo, Howat, Duncan, Brecken, Montgomery, Ramsay, Green—17.

The original Resolution was then reported agreed to.

AFTERNOON.

The House in Committee on Despatches.

The debate on the Correspondence relative to the 15 year's Purchase Bill, of last Session, was resumed, and kept up till a late hour, during which the hon. leader of the Government announced that, pursuant to a notice which he had placed in the Order Book, he would on Saturday next, move for leave to introduce a Bill, the subject of which was to authorize the Government to make advances, by way of loan, to tenants throughout the Island, for the purpose of assisting them to purchase the fee simple of their farms. That measure he hoped would meet the approval and concurrence of hon. members on both sides of the House.

Towards the close of the debate an altercation having taken place between the Hon. Mr Coles and Hon. Colonial Secretary, the Hon Sol. General moved that the Speaker take the chair, and the Committee rose, without reporting.

House adjourned.

THURSDAY, March 23.

Mr. Howlan called the attention of the House to an error in the Parliamentary Report of last Session, relative to a Resolution submitted by him on the subject of the Union of the Colonies, in which resolution the word "expedient" was, by mistake, used for "inexpedient," which very materially altered the meaning intended to be conveyed by the said Resolution.

The Bill to enlarge the Jurisdiction of the Mayor's Court in Charlottetown, was read a third time and passed.

The Bill to amend the law relating to the sale by licence of Spirituous Liquors, was read a second time and agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Longworth, from Committee on Private Bills, submitted a report, recommending that the Bill relating to the Estate of the late John Hodges Winslow receive the favorable consideration of the House. The hon. member then proceeded to explain the object of the Bill, which, he said, was introduced in compliance with the prayer of a petition of the parties interested. The Bill, he said, was designed to perfect the titles of a very considerable number of persons, without compelling them to resort to expensive proceedings in the Course of the Colony. There was, therefore, nothing objectionable in its principles. After which it was ordered that the said report be agreed to.

The House in Committee on a bill to alter the times for holding the terms of the Supreme Court in the different Counties on this Island.

Hon. Mr. Hensley explained that the alterations contemplated by this Bill were, that the commencement of the Hilary Term for Queen's County be on the second Tuesday instead of the first Tuesday in January, as heretofore; and the commencement of the Winter Term, in King's County, to be on the last Tuesday in February, instead of the second Tuesday in March. Those alterations, he said, were made with the view, if possible, of securing a better state of travelling for Jurors and Suitors attending the Courts in question. The Act also fixes the commencement of the June Term at St. Eleanor's, to be on the second, instead of the first Tuesday of June, in each year, the latter days being inconvenient to farmers, having to attend at the Court before the seed time expired; after which the Bill was reported agreed to.

A message was received from His Excellency, transmitting a Despatch from the Secretary of State, intimating that the Colony must be prepared, within a reasonable period, to assume the payment of the Salary of the Lieutenant Governor of this Island, heretofore defrayed from the Imperial Treasury.

Hon. Leader of the Government gave notice that he would, to-morrow, move for a Committee of the whole house on the subject of the said Despatch; and on Saturday, that the House go into Committee on the Road Scales.

It was then moved that the Resolution for a grant of £1,000 to build a Market House in Charlottetown be agreed to.

To which the Hon. Mr. Coles proposed an amendment, that the words "provided said Market House be not built on Queen Square."

For the amendment—Hons. Messrs. Coles, Warburton, Whelan and Mr. Walker—4.

Against it—Hon. Messrs. Davies, Kaye, Hensley, Sol. General, Longworth, Pope, Laird, Beaton, Gray, Col. Secretary, Messrs. Conroy, Howlan, Sinclair, Green, Duncan, Howat, Brecken, Ramsay, Haslam, Montgomery, Yeo, McLennan—22.

Hon. Mr. Warburton then moved that the Resolution be disallowed.

For the motion—Hons. Messrs. Warburton, Coles, Whelan, Beaton, Messrs. Sinclair, Walker, Howlan, Conroy—8.

Against it—Hon. Messrs. Davies, Longworth, Hensley, Sol. General, Pope, Kaye, Laird, Gray, Col. Secretary, Messrs. Green, Duncan, Brecken, Ramsay, Howat, Yeo, McLellan, Montgomery, Haslam—19.

The Resolution was then reported agreed to.

Hon. Solicitor General presented a petition from certain inhabitants of Georgetown, against letting the Common of Georgetown, as asked for by a petition of sundry other inhabitants of the same place. Petition was received and read.

The hon. member said he would discharge his duty to his constituents, by placing both sides of this question fairly before the house. The Bill submitted in accordance with the prayer of the first petition, was then ordered to be read a second time.

After some discussion, during which hon. members generally were of opinion that it would be advisable to refrain from any action on the subject, Hon. Mr. Coles moved an amendment that it be read this day three months—

For the amendment—Hon. Messrs. Coles, Warburton, Beaton, Whelan, Kelly, Davies, Laird, Longworth, Pope, Hensley, Messrs. Conroy, Howlan, Walker, Sinclair, Howat, Montgomery, Ramsay, Duncan, Haslam, Yeo—29.

Against it—Hons. Messrs. Thornton, Kaye, Sol. General and Mr. Green—4.

The amendment was accordingly carried.

The Bill to amend the law for constituting Boards of Health, was read a second time and agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Pope presented the Revenue Bill for the current year, which was received and read, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

Hon. Solicitor General moved that the Bill to facilitate the mode of conveyance of real property be committed to a Committee of the whole House. Motion carried. Mr. Sinclair in the Chair.

The Hon. Solicitor General who introduced the Bill, fully explained its various clauses, as read by the Chairman; the object of which was to facilitate and simplify the mode of conveyance, by abolishing the observance of useless forms and obsolete technicalities. It dispensed with the necessity of referring or quoting the Statute 12 Vic., cap. 5, in deeds of conveyance, and was also an improvement on the mode of granting possessions of real property.

Hons. Mr. Hensley, Longworth, and others, also supported the Bill, and pronounced it a great improvement on the present Statute of the Island, by referring to Deeds of Conveyance, Indentures, &c.; after which the Bill was reported agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Longworth asked if it were the intention of the House to charge the usual fees on the Bill relating to the Estate of the late J. H. Winslow, as he wished to move the house in Committee on that subject.

Hon. Mr. Coles said that as a considerable number of tenants were interested in that Bill, who, no doubt, would have to pay the fees thereon, if charged, he would, therefore, suggest that the fees in question would be, in this case, remitted; and as that house professed to sympathise with the tenantry generally, he hoped there would be no objection offered to his proposal.

Hon. Mr. Longworth concurred with the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Coles and submitted a Resolution to the effect, that as the intention of the Bill was to carry into effect certain unexecuted agreements for the benefit of a large number of persons in this Island, the fees chargeable for the same be remitted by the house; which was agreed to.

Hon. Leader of the Government gave notice that, to-morrow afternoon, he would move that the house go into Committee on the Despatches and Correspondence relating to Colonial Confederation.

Mr. Brecken gave notice, that, to-morrow, he would present a petition from his constituents, asking the house for a portion of the Government farm, to be used as a place of recreation for the Citizens of Charlottetown.

House adjourned.

FRIDAY, March 24.

On motion of the Hon. Mr Pope, the House went into Committee of the whole on the Revenue Bill. Mr. McLennan in the Chair.

The Bill was read clause by clause by the Chairman. When the clause relative to the duties of Collectors of Impost was read,

The Hon. Mr. Coles remarked that it had been rumored the Collector at that anticipated City, Summerside, was discharged from his office for having performed his duty in seizing Goods that had been landed improperly at that place. He was of opinion that Governments should always be very guarded in interfering with any officer when in the discharge of his duty. It was also rumored that Goods which were taken from Charlottetown to Summerside, in Steamers, had caused trouble.

Hon. Mr. Pope said that he supposed that hon. member (Mr. Coles) thought that a good opportunity for having a blow at the Government. If that hon. member could point out any defect in the law on the point in question, why did he not, if he could, propose an amendment? The hon. member (Mr. Pope) then proceeded to explain the proceedings which had been taken by the Government, relative to the conduct of the officer alluded to, who, he said, was not discharged for doing his duty, but because he refused to comply with the law, and had expressed his determination to sell the goods seized by him, despite the admonitions of his best friends. The owner of the goods tendered the necessary securities, but he refused to accept of any bondsmen. The head of the Customs department was sent to Summerside to investigate the case, and he declared the Collector had no right to seize the goods.

Hon. Mr. Coles—If the owner of the goods offered bondsmen, and the officer refused to accept of them, he deserved to be discharged.

Hon. Mr. Hensley approved of the action taken by the Government. They pursued a just and proper course in the matter, and the conduct of the officer in question was extremely reprehensible.

Mr. Green remarked that though he was not disposed to find fault with the Government, yet he must say that, to his own personal knowledge, some of the goods seized by the officer had been removed previous to the seizure being made by the officer.

Hon. Mr. Pope—Any portion of the goods which might have been removed were taken by the consent of the Preventive Officer. If the conduct of that officer had been at all justifiable, he would not have been discharged; but, unfortunately, he was actuated by private feelings, which he allowed to govern his actions in that case.

Hon. Mr. Coles said he did not wish it to be understood that he would countenance any such arbitrary and extraordinary conduct as that of which the Collector at Summerside appeared to be guilty. He then alluded to the propriety of allowing steamers to land goods without being delayed; they were known to remain but a short time in port, and often arrived at midnight.

Hon. Col. Secretary suggested the necessity of enacting a clause in the Bill, making provision for landing goods from Steamers.

Hon. Solicitor General approved of adding a clause to the Bill, by which Preventive Officers would be empowered to take charge of goods landing from Steamers at all hours. He was aware of the inconvenience and delay caused, especially to the Boston Steamers landing at Charlottetown, for want of such a provision in the Act.

Hon. Col. Secretary then submitted a clause to the effect that all goods or merchandize imported in steam vessels might be landed by the master or officers thereof, without previous entry of such vessels, and without obtaining a permit to land the same, provided all such goods should, on being landed, be placed in the custody of a Preventive or other Revenue Officer; and such officer receiving the same should retain possession thereof, on behalf of the Collector of Impost for the Port in which such goods should be landed, until the duties due thereon should have been paid or secured.

Said clause was then added to the Bill, which was reported agreed to.

Hon. Solicitor General moved that the Bill relating to the law of libel be read a third time.

Hon Mr. Whelan said it afforded him much pleasure to second that motion. It was not usual, he said, to enter into the details of a Bill in that stage of the proceedings, but as he happened not to be in his place when the merits of this measure was debated, he would now state that it had his most unqualified approval. He complimented the Government from whom emanated this Bill, and the hon. member who introduced it, for having erased one very disgraceful blemish from our Statutes.

Hon. Mr. Hensley said that when that Bill was in Committee, some hon. members expressed their fears that a dangerous course was about to be adopted. To alleviate such doubts, he would allude to the remarkable fact that a Bill of similar import had very recently been introduced into the Imperial Parliament; in proof of which he read from the London *Times* newspaper of the 25th of February last, an extract relating to that subject. After which the Bill was read a third time and passed.

The following Bills were also read a third time and passed, viz:

A Bill to constitute Boards of Health.

The Bill to alter the times for holding the Supreme Courts of this Island.

The Bill to regulate the sale by license of Spirituous Liquors.

Mr Brecken presented a petition from divers inhabitants of Charlottetown, praying that a portion of the domain attached to Government Farm be set apart as a place of recreation.

Ordered to be submitted to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow.

On motion of Mr. Longworth, the Bill relative to the Winslow Estate was submitted to a Committee of the whole House. Mr. Hoplan in the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Longworth explained the object of the Bill, which was to enable him to carry into effect certain leases and agreements held by tenants on the Estate of the late J. H. Winslow, for the completing and perfecting of which it was necessary to introduce the Bill, which was read and agreed to.

House adjourned.

AFTERNOON.

Mr. Brecken submitted a Bill to alter and amend the Corporation Law for the City of Charlottetown, which was received and read.

Hon. Mr. Davies presented a Bill for the purpose of amending the Union Bank Act, so as to change the time appointed for the annual meetings of that Institution.

Ordered that it be referred to the Committee on Private Bills to report thereon.

The House, in Committee of Supply, reported several resolutions agreed to.

The resolution granting £4,000 for Volunteer and Militia purposes, elicited a debate.

Hon. Mr. Coles contended that the whole policy which the Government intended to pursue on the subject of defences, should be submitted to the House, previously to the voting of the money.

Hons. Solicitor General, Longworth and Mr. Brecken supported the grant, and said it was necessary that the House should show a disposition to do all in their power to encourage that military spirit which prevailed throughout all the Colonies.

A short debate also took place on the Resolution granting £100 as an addition to the salary of the Sol. General. The principle feature of which was that it would be preferable and more satisfactory to make the salary of that officer permanent by Statute, and not leave it dependent upon an annual vote of that House; after which the Resolution was agreed to.

The House then went into Committee on the Despatches and papers relating to the Confederation of the Colonies.

Hon. Col. Secretary submitted and read a series of Resolutions, commendatory of the Report of the Quebec Conference. He then delivered a long address in defence of the principles expressed in the said Resolutions.

Hon. Leader of the Government followed the Col. Secretary, and said that, in his opinion, that hon. member should have allowed him the privilege of first addressing the House, from the fact that he had given notice of his intention to introduce the subject, in accordance with the usual mode of proceeding. He would now, however, move that all after the word "Resolved" be struck out of the Resolutions of the Col. Secretary, and submitted a series of Resolutions disapproving of the Confederation scheme.

A spirited debate then followed, and was kept up until a very late hour, when it was ordered that the Resolutions submitted on both sides of the subject should be printed. The debate to be resumed to-morrow afternoon.

Hon. Col. Secretary presented a petition from divers inhabitants of the Town of Summerside, praying for an Act of Incorporation. Hon. Mr. Pope said that the subject of the petition just read was of the greatest importance to the people of that thriving Town. He, therefore, thought it would be well, as the present Session was far advanced, to defer its further consideration till the next Session of that House. He moved, therefore, that the petition be referred to a Committee to report thereon next Session by Bill or otherwise.

Mr. McLennan said that ever since he had the honor of holding a seat in that House, all matters relating to his constituents always received his careful attention; that, he said, was the first time during which any other than their Representatives had been asked to present any matter relative to their special interest in that House. He would, however, inform the House that he had just received letters by the mail, informing him that a counter petition was about to be forwarded on that subject. It was his opinion that every property-holder in the place should have the privilege, at a public meeting of the inhabitants, of expressing his views on a subject of such vital importance, previously to any action being taken. He would, therefore, support the motion for referring the petition to a Committee to report thereon next Session.

The following hon. members were then appointed a Committee to whom [illegible] accordingly, viz: Hon. Mr. Pope, Messrs. Green and Yeo.

After the transaction of some further routine business the House adjourned.

SATURDAY, March 25.

Mr. McLennan, Chairman of the Committee to whom were referred sundry petitions relating to the opening of new roads, submitted a report, which was received and read, and ordered to be submitted to a Committee of the whole House on Monday next.

On motion of the Hon. Solicitor General, the Bill to amend the Land Purchase Act was submitted to a Committee of the whole House. Mr. Howlan in the chair.

Hon. Solicitor General explained that the object of the Bill was to abolish the restrictions in regard to the minimum prices fixed by that Act on the wilderness lands of the Worrell Estate. It was, therefore, necessary to amend the law, so as to authorize the Government to lessen the prices of said lands which could not be sold at the present fixed rates. Portions, at all events, of those waste lands, he said, would be sold, provided the prices were lowered.

Hons. Messrs. Coles, Hensley, Col. Secretary, Davies, Laird, Longworth, Pope, Gray, and Messrs. Sinclair, Montgomery, and Sutherland, addressed the Committee on the object of the Bill.

During the debate, it was considered advisable to retain the clause in the Act limiting the quantity of land sold to any one person to 300 acres. After which the Bill was reported agreed to.

On motion of the Hon. Mr. Davies, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole to resume the consideration of Supply.

Several Resolutions were then reported from Supply and agreed to.

Hon. Sol. General presented a petition from divers inhabitants of Georgetown, asking permission to erect a Pound on the public square of that Town.

Said petition was referred to the following special Committee to report thereon, viz: Hons. Sol. General, Longworth and Kaye.

On motion of the Hon. Mr. Laird, the House resumed the debate on the subject of Colonial Confederation.

Hon. Col. Gray opened the debate by delivering a long speech in favor of Confederation.

He was followed by the Hon. Mr. Warburton, who spoke in opposition to the proposed Union. After which that important debate was again adjourned till Monday next.

Hon. Mr. Pope then introduced a Bill by which to assist Tenants to purchase the fee simple of their farms. He said the object of the Bill was to advance money to Tenants to the extent of one-half the purchase money necessary to obtain the fee simple of their farms. The money, thus advanced, to be secured on the property and repaid with interest, by annual instalments, extending to a term of 10 years. To accomplish that object, he said the Bill authorized the Government to issue debentures to the extent of £50,000 currency, which amount might hereafter be increased, if necessary, for the purpose of finally abolishing that hoed system which had retarded the progress and prosperity of the Colony.

The Bill was then received and read, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday next. House adjourned.

A. McNEILL, Reporter.

In the Canadian Legislative Council on the 25th ult., Hon. Sir E. P. Taché, in answer to Mr. Mooge, said it was the intention of the Government to bring before the Legislature this session, the entire scheme of the organization of the Local Governments under the proposed Federation, but he was not then able to say at what period of the session it would be submitted to the House.

The Boston *Journal* says:—At the date of last accounts, the rebel pirate Olinda had put into the Spanish port of Ferrol, having met with considerable damage in the Bay of Biscay, after leaving the French coast.—She was considered a failure. The United States steamer Niagara and a French steamer had gone to intercept her. The New York *Herald* says a new rebel pirate, the Ajax, sailed from England some weeks ago, and three others would shortly sail—one of which, the Hercules, in the Clyde, was [illegible]

The Herald.

Wednesday, March 29, 1865.

THE LAND QUESTION.

In our last issue, we stated that the Hon. Mr. Coles suggested a method to the House of Assembly which would, if acted upon, satisfactorily settle the differences in this Colony between landlords and tenants. His suggestion was to the effect, that the Government should come to the assistance of the tenants, in their efforts to become freeholders, by advancing them two-thirds of the purchase money of their farms, provided the tenants themselves raised one-third. By this means, the tenants, either singly or collectively, might enter into arrangements with the proprietors to effect a purchase of their lands at a reasonable rate by offering the ready-money down; and the strong probability is, that the proprietors would find it to their own advantage and actual gain to sell their lands thus, than to keep them at rent, the proceeds from which are necessarily diminished by land assessment, agency fees, &c., &c. The tenants would be allowed ample time by the Government to repay, by instalments, the two-thirds which would be advanced. This, we looked upon as a practical and equitable way by which to remove the evils of the rent-paying system which has so long retarded the prosperity of this Island; because, we considered that any industrious tenant, who really desired to improve his condition and release himself from what has been so justly termed "proprietary bondage," could raise one-third of the fee-simple of his farm—which, in most cases, under the proposed plan, ought not to exceed £[illegible] for the one hundred acres—on the Government guaranteeing the remaining two-thirds. We hailed this suggestion with satisfaction, as we believed it would prove acceptable to the vast majority of the leaseholders and freeholders of this Island, and as it would effectually obviate anything like resistance to the laws, and those serious complications which threaten, from day to day, the peace of the Colony. We are sincerely glad, therefore, to be enabled to announce that the Government have introduced a measure somewhat in accordance with the Hon. Mr. Coles' views, although the Conservatives deny to that gentleman the credit of having first made the suggestion, as they assert that they had it in contemplation since last Session, and decided upon introducing a Bill intended to be supplementary to the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill. Without at all wishing to throw discredit upon the veracity of the Government members, we must, nevertheless, with Mr. Coles, express our surprise that so important a measure was overlooked in the Governor's Speech, particularly when we remember that it is generally in that document that all new and important Bills intended to be introduced to the Legislature are generally—we might say almost invariably—first brought to the notice of the public. However, without entering into any controversy on this point, we wish to announce the fact that the Government have introduced a Bill on this important subject; but we regret to say that it does not go quite so far as Mr. Coles suggested, or, as we would wish. In point of importance, however, and in practical value, it is, in our opinion, far in advance of any measure which has been introduced into our Legislature, by the present Government, to effect a permanent settlement of the long-agitated Land Question. The great objection which we find to the proposed bill, and indeed the great objection which we find to the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill is, in the Legislature and Government recognizing the valuation at 15 years' purchase, and the payment of all arrears of rent which may have accrued since the year 1855; or, in other words, fixing the maximum rate of land at twenty-two or twenty-three shillings per acre. In former years, all estates which were sold to the Government, were sold at rates which enabled them to be resold to the tenants at from two shillings to twelve shillings and six-pence per acre. This price the tenants are willing to pay, and local proprietors, who know the wants of the people, and the difficulties with which they have to contend, are willing to sell, and indeed have sold at these prices, notwithstanding the existence of the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill, which would warrant them in exacting the highest price which the law allowed. Mr. Haythorne is a case in point. With absentee proprietors, however, the case is different. So long as the latter class labored under the impression that the estates, claimed by them in this Island,—and we believe, in some cases, unjustly claimed,—were of little value, and from which, in the past, they derived but small returns, and in the future expected to derive less, they sold to the Government and to private individuals at very cheap rates. By the representations of middle-men or land agents—who have a more immediate interest in perpetuating the leasehold system than the proprietors, and by such legislation as is illustrated in the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill—it is rather too sanguine to suppose that much land will hereafter be offered either to the Government, or to individuals, at a lower rate than from fifteen to twenty shillings per acre. Another great evil with the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill is, that tenants purchasing under its provisions are bound to pay the sum total, or the full value, down, as soon as a purchase is effected—a provision which renders the whole Act almost inoperative. The object of the proposed measure is to remedy the foregoing evil in the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill, which the Government members have in vain endeavored to persuade the tenants is a beneficial and practicable law. It is very true, that in some few cases that Act has proved advantageous to tenants, but as "one swallow does not make a summer," neither do a few isolated cases, which never required the intervention of Parliament, prove that the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill has been, or will be, of any advantage whatsoever, to the tenants who most demand our sympathy and support. The Government, then, propose to advance one-half to the tenants, on their making up the other half; and the proposed Bill also recognizes that high rate of land per acre, against which we have contended, against which the tenants contend, and against which previous sales and the Government scale of prices can be pertinently quoted. Sixteen shillings and eight-pence is the maximum price in the new Bill, but we think it ought not to be higher than twelve shillings and six-pence; and any tenant who, by the "sweat of his brow," has cleared and tilled his land, and expended the prime and vigor of his manhood thereon, should not be required to pay more, except in rare instances.

The Bill, it is true, does not compel the tenant to buy, nor the proprietor to sell, at this high rate, but our exception to such a provision is, that it induces the latter to demand and expect the maximum price, especially when he knows that the Government is to advance a certain portion of that price. We are not one of those who would deprive any man or class of men of their lawful rights; yet, in view of the peculiar nature of our land tenures, we think the duty of the Legislature and the Government should be to keep those lands as low a rate as they possibly can. The Bill also provides that the Government will advance to the tenant one-half of