The Protestant EXTRA.

CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. ISLAND, MARCH 7, 1861.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS.

[Continued from our last.]

Hon. Col. GRAY.—Mr Chairman, I wish to correct what I conceive to be a misrepresentation on the part of the hon. member. I do not consider it necessary to follow him through all his remarks, as he has not invalidated my arguments. He has travelled back to the resolutions which were passed by this House in 1859. This I think irrelevant to the subject under consideration, but cannot allow his observations to pass unnoticed. He appears to misunderstand the nature of those resolutions. I objected to the Loan and Purchase Bills only in a secondary point of view. Before I came to this House, I stated on the hustings in the presence of several hundreds that I was not opposed to both these Bills in every respect, but that I considered the measure which I intended to propose was superior to the system of paying by instalments under the Purchase Bill. As was justly remarked by the hon. member for Murray Harbor last year, the offer of Lord Selkirk was so favorable that it could not be expected the Commission would be the means of obtaining the land on better terms. This was the only reason that induced me to enter into the purchase. Respecting what is mentioned in the resolutions, namely, the Escheat, Fishery Reserve, and Quit Rent questions, I believe most people in the country consider them to be as there stated "visionary schemes." The hon. member attempted to justify the rise of interest on Treasury warrants by the late Government while debentures were allowed to remain at the same rate; but I still maintain my argument that he cannot point out a case in Britain or in any other country, where after the Government had given security on different kinds of loans that a rise was made in the interest of one and not in that of another. Such a course would be most unjust. To show in what manner the action of the late Government operated, I may state that I had purchased debentures myself to a considerable amount, and when the interest on Warrants was raised, I found it impossible to obtain more than £90 for £100 on the face of the debentures.

Mr DAVIES.—One of the principal objections offered to the purchase of Lot 54 by the Government, appears to be that there are no receipts from it; this, however, should not be expected as it has but recently come into their possession. The question with the Government was whether the land ought to be purchased by them or be allowed to go into the hands of private individuals. I have heard that two or three parties were desirous to procure the property, and if it had been disposed of to either of these persons, the Government or the Treasury would probably never again have the opportunity of purchasing it on nearly so favorable terms. Under these circumstances I think the Government were justified in the course which they pursued. The hon. leader of the Opposition stated that the price paid for the Worrell estate was about 8s an acre, but if the quantity of land purchased, and the sums paid for it be reckoned up it will be found to be near 6s an acre.

Hon. Mr COLES.—The amount for the fishery reserves should be deducted from that.

Mr DAVIES.—It is pretty evident that the late Government bought both the fishery reserves and the water on St. Peter's Bay; as otherwise it does not appear that the number of acres sold to be on the Estate can be made up. With respect to the statement that the Selkirk estate was offered to Mr Doane for £2000 less than the sum for which it was purchased by the Government I think it is extremely doubtful. Mr Doane's son was here at the time the Bill passed the House, and went home by the next Mail to forestall the Government, and what use would it have been for him to do so, if they had offered a higher sum for the estate than he was expecting to give. I would have been pleased to learn that the land had been purchased at a lower rate; but, as I before remarked, in the circumstances of the case I believe the Government were justified in acting as they did.

Hon. Mr HAVILAND.—The hon. leader of the Opposition is frequently fond straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. He denominates the paragraph under consideration a "whining paragraph." hmmm, I suppose, the Government had the sincerity to come forward and state the course which they had pursued. The Government have been obliged, in order to meet their demands, to issue Treasury wants at 6 per cent.; but if this had been done by the late Government they would not have had the candor to acknowledge it. We have been told by the hon. member that we have violated the constitution of the Colony; but where was the violation of the constitution when he and his party were in power, and the credit of the country was at a low ebb? Treasury warrants were given in a subordinate office at a discount, and known to be taken in some instances by the party immediately to the Treasurer's office where the sum on the face of the warrant was demanded and obtained. A person also was despatched to Halifax to endeavor to procure money, if not otherwise, by disposing of warrants at a discount; and there was no law empowering them to negotiate Government loans below par. We were necessitated to consent to a rise of interest in order to facilitate the purchase of the estates; and when we consider that Treasury warrants were bearing six per cent, it is unreasonable to suppose that debentures at a lower rate could be negotiated. A capitalist would be a fool if he found it possible to obtain six per cent. for his money on government security for ten years to lend it on the same security at five per cent. With respect to the action of the late Government in raising the interest on Warrants when that on debentures was left unchanged, the hon. member will not find a precedent in any country; and I contend that in this matter they committed a public fraud. The objection, however, to the rise of interest which we mentioned is a mere *bagatelle*, as no individual interests were made to suffer. I was surprised to hear the public morality of the hon. member, when he stated that if the Opposition had come into power they would have repudiated the Warrants issued by the Government.

Hon. Mr COLES.—I did not state that they would have repudiated them, but they might have done so.

Hon. Mr HAVILAND.—To even hint of such a course shows what respect he entertains for the public credit. I am astonished that such a remark should have fallen from one who has occupied so high a position in the Colony. For one party going into power to discard the engagements made in public faith by those whom they displaced is unknown in the history of legislation. He raised objections to the purchase of Lot 54 because it was liable to be escheated, and was only a fit place for frogs. The title of this lot is, I believe, the only one which has been brought before a jury of Prince Edward Islanders, and they decided it to be valid. And though I am unable to state the description of land on which frogs are always found, yet I have the best authority for saying that whether they are numerous on Lot 54 or not, the soil there is of a very good quality. The Government are satisfied for paying a higher rate for this Township than for the Selkirk estate; but if they had not agreed to accept the offer at £2000, other parties were prepared to step in and take possession; then the Government would have been charged with neglecting opportunities, and the hon. leader of the Opposition would have been the very first to raise the cry. Members of the Government have been accused of once opposing the Land Purchase Bill and afterwards adopting the measure. I can say for myself that I never opposed the Bill, and defy any hon. member to prove that I ever voted against it. I heartily wish all the land on the Island could be purchased under its provisions. But I was opposed to the Loan Bill, and will ever be so, for I consider it to be unjust in principle.

Hon. Mr COLES.—I cannot understand the great objection of certain parties to the Loan Bill, as the amount of interest which it specified was only four per cent. The hon. member for Georgetown almost leaped into a passion when alluding to the action of the late Government in disposing of Warrants at a discount for the Road service. This was, he said, an unconstitutional proceeding, but I would like to hear him prove his assertion. A sum was voted by the House for the contingent expenses of roads and bridges, and the Government considered it quite proper to obtain money to meet the orders on the Road Correspondent, by appropriating a part of this sum to make up the deficiency caused by the discount allowed. But the present Government when in need of money under such circumstances, are assisted by the Bank for political purposes.

Hon. Mr LONGWORTH.—There has been none received from the Bank for the Road Service.

Hon. Mr COLES.—Well, an arrangement was made with the Bank last year to receive money from it; and we cannot tell to what purpose it is applied. As to issuing Warrants without authority, I contend that the late Government would never have adopted such a course; however, as the amount issued by the Government appears to have been only £2000, and thereby the estate was procured on more reasonable terms, perhaps we should not raise further objections on the point.

The paragraph was then agreed to, as was also the 5th.

(To be continued.)

SATURDAY, March 2.

Mr JOHN YEO, Chairman of the Committee of the whole House on the draft Address in answer to the Lieut. Governor's speech, reported that the Committee had gone through the Address paragraph by paragraph and had adopted the same without amendment; and the said Address was again read by the Clerk, and is as follows:—

To His Excellency GEORGE DUNDAS, *Esquire, Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Her Majesty's Island Prince Edward, and the Territories thereunto belonging, Chancellor, Vice Admiral, and Ordinary of the same, &c., &c., &c.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY;

1. We Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Representatives of the people of Prince Edward Island, thank your Excellency for the Speech with which your Excellency has been pleased to open the present Legislative Session.

2. We will consider the propriety of making provision for taking the Census of this Colony, and what enactments may be required to effect that object.

3. We thank your Excellency for having directed the Accounts of the past, and the Estimates for the present year to be laid before us; and it is a source of satisfaction to learn that all financial arrangements connected with the public Service, have been framed with a due regard to economy.

4. We are aware that the Expenditure of the past year has been increased principally by the purchase of the Estates of two non-resident Proprietors.

5. Our most serious attention shall be directed to the fact that the Revenue as regards imposts on Spirits has decreased, in the face of increased duties, which it is to be feared is caused by an extensive system of smuggling.

6. We are gratified to hear that the Land Commission, which our Address to Her Majesty has procured, has investigated with the utmost care and diligence all questions submitted to it; and although it is to be regretted that the Award of the Commissioners has from various causes been delayed, yet we are pleased to learn that it will be made as early as practicable, in the ensuing summer.

7. We observe that the interpretation put by the Legislature of this Colony upon the views of His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, regarding the necessity of a measure to render binding the decision of the Land Commissioners and to give validity to that decision, and which led to the passing of the Act to which your Excellency alludes, was different from that which His Grace now states was his intention, as expressed in his Despatch on this subject; but we feel assured that when the Commissioners make their Award, Her Majesty's assent will then be given thereto.

8. We are gratified to learn that the purchase of the Selkirk Estate has been attended with satisfactory results, and that the great majority of the tenants have availed themselves of such a favorable opportunity of becoming freeholders; and that the amount of deposits already received is a proof that the purchase of that Estate will not entail any loss to the Colony.

9. Under the circumstance of your Excellency not being able to negotiate Debentures at five per cent., in accordance with the Land Purchase Act, whilst Treasury Warrants yielded six per cent., we approve of the course adopted by your Excellency in issuing Warrants for that service.

10. We are pleased to learn that your Excellency's efforts in organizing Volunteer Rifle and Artillery Corps have been responded to in a praiseworthy manner by numbers of spirited young men enrolling themselves. We will cheerfully make such provision for supporting and encouraging the movement as our limited means will afford, in order to enable your Excellency to further their efficiency. Your Excellency's suggestion respecting the Militia law not being applicable to them, shall receive our best consideration.

11. It is pleasing to know that the reception given to the Prince of Wales by the People of this Colony was gratifying to His Royal Highness, testifying as it did, an attachment and loyalty so characteristic of its inhabitants.

12. We cordially unite with your Excellency in the fervent hope that our deliberations may, with the favor of Divine Providence, conduce to the honor and welfare of this Island.

The first to the fifth paragraphs, inclusive, of the Address, on the question being separately put thereon were agreed to. As the question was about to be put on the sixth paragraph, Hon. Mr Whelan moved to amend the same by striking out the whole thereof, and inserting the following:—

"We are not insensible to the importance of the investigation made by the Land Commission, and we readily join with your Excellency in expressing regret that the award should have been delayed. We deem it advisable, however, in the meantime, that some measure should be adopted to stay proceedings, since the closing of the Commissioners' Court in this Island—many of the tenantry have been subjected to great expense and hardships. Such a measure as this, would give practical effect to the unanimous recommendation of the Commissioners at the closing of their Court; it would also afford great relief to the tenantry, and be hailed with satisfaction by the inhabitants of the Island generally."

The House divided on the motion of amendment, which was negatived on the following division.

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

Nays:—Hons. Messrs. Gray, Haviland, M'Aulay, Longworth, Laird; Messrs. Beer, J. Yeo, Davies, Ramsay, M'Neill, Owen, Montgomery, Holm, Howat—14.

The question being then put, "shall the said paragraph be agreed to," it was carried in the affirmative, on the same division as above, reading the *Yeas* for *Nays*, and *vice versa*.

The seventh paragraph of the Address being again read, Hon. Mr Whelan moved to amend the same by expunging the whole and inserting the following:—

"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."

The motion of amendment having been put was lost by the same division as on the preceding amendment. The paragraph was then agreed to, hon. members voting as on the sixth paragraph.

The eighth paragraph having been read, Hon. Mr Whelan moved in amendment that the whole be expunged and the following substituted:—

"We regret that your Excellency found it impossible to negotiate the Debentures which the Law authorized to be issued for the purchase of the Selkirk Estate, and that Treasury Warrants bearing a higher per centage were