

Mr. Speaker, is simply, shall the papers be published or not? I think it right that they should appear in all the Newspapers, as it is but just to the whole people of the Island that they should be informed of the course pursued by the Government in this matter, and I say this, approving of their action in the purchase of the Worrell Estate.

Hon. Mr. PALMER.—Mr. Speaker, I did not anticipate that such a discussion would have arisen on the motion before the House, and consequently was not prepared for it. I took it for granted that the question would be brought forward in Committee of the whole House, on the general state of the Colony. I wish, as I stated before, that all publicity on the subject should be afforded to the people, as every individual is deeply interested in the matter—we have heard it often repeated, Sir, that this Bill would be self-sustaining—I for one do not believe it, it is however good policy for the Government and Hon. Members who support them, to induce the people to think that it will be so; and no doubt we shall see the parrot cry of this measure being “self-sustaining,” emblazoned on their banners at the next General Election. Time, however, will show how far this Bill is entitled to the appellation, and when you calculate the amounts of Land and School Assessment lost to the Revenue while Government retains the property, the large sums to be disbursed in salaries to Commissioners, Surveyors and Assistant Surveyors, Wood rangers, and Deputy Wood rangers, the accounts will show the measure not to be so self-sustaining as its friends predict it will be. And, Sir, I do not consider the report of the Commissioners entitled to much credit. The Government have made an improper selection of individuals to act as Commissioners; in saying this, I mean not to say any thing disparaging of them as individuals, but I do say, that men of a different stamp, and in other situations should have been appointed. One of them—Mr. Dingwell—is a land speculator and a partizan and warm supporter of the Government in this House, he has a right to purchase the lands he was employed to survey; and, Mr. Speaker, I consider the Hon. Captain Swabey a very improper person for the Government to appoint. The office of Commissioner of Public Lands, with a salary of two or three, or perhaps hereafter, four or five hundred pounds, was before his eyes, at stake on the purchase, and he should not have been appointed a Commissioner of Public Lands until the lands had been purchased by the public? Mr. Ball, too, was equally interested in obtaining the appointment. It was not to be expected that he would concur in making a report adverse to his prospects of putting fat pickings into his own pockets. On grounds such as these, Sir, I say we have not a report entitled to that confidence which would be reposed in one made by disinterested individuals, and it was the duty of the Government to have appointed as Commissioners men who were impartial and free from the influences I have mentioned; and I agree with the Hon. Member (Mr. Cooper), although I do not generally coincide with him in opinion, that the Commissioners should have investigated and reported upon the titles to the lands, and thus have put a stop to the agitation of that question. Had disinterested Commissioners reported on the validity or imperfection of the titles, the public mind would have been quieted; but now, Sir, the whole question of Escheat is revived. Who could have expected any other result from the report of such Commissioners, the mere servants of the Government, bound by regard to their pecuniary interests to report as Government wished? I repeat, Sir, my belief that the measure will not be self-sustaining, and we find the Hon. Col. Sec’y himself admitting that there may be a deficiency.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY.—Really, Mr. Speaker, I do not remember ever to have seen the Hon. Member for Char-

lottetown so good humoured and so fluent; it must be the result of his sudden agreement with the Hon. Member (Mr. Cooper). But, Sir, with reference to the objections of the Hon. Gentleman, I must inform him that the Act rendered it incumbent on the Government to appoint six gentlemen as Commissioners to report upon the value of the lands. You, Sir, were one; and does the Hon. Member mean to attribute interested motives to you? Messrs. Dingwell and Beaton were equally disinterested. And the law also expressly required the appointment of the Hon. the Commissioner of Public Lands and the Surveyor General. The Hon. gentleman has seen fit to characterise Mr. Dingwell as a land speculator, and consequently unfit to act on the commission. I deny that Mr. Dingwell is a land speculator, but were he one, it should be borne in mind that the law restricts any one individual from purchasing more than 300 acres; and the Hon. Member (Mr. Dingwell) would be acting in direct opposition to his own interest, as a speculator, if he put a high valuation on the land; no better arrangement than that entered into could have been made. The Hon. gentleman says that the Commissioners should have investigated and reported upon the titles to the land; that, Sir, was no part of their duties, they were but to estimate the value, and the investigation of the titles was the province of the Hon. Attorney General. It is unfair for the Hon. Member to attribute interested motives to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, when he well knows that the Law specifies £300 as the amount of his Salary. Why then should he stretch that amount to £500 or £600? His allusions to the present Surveyor General are equally unjust and unfounded; and, Sir, had Mr. Wright been Surveyor General, I feel sure we should have heard no such complaint. But, Sir, why did not the Government, the then leader of which, Hon. Mr. Hall, was a trustee of the Estate, conclude the purchase? I for one am quite willing to give the Hon. gentleman the benefit of his opinion, and allow him to wait till the closing of the matters of the estate, and I have no fear of the result, knowing that the Government have acted with due caution, and that, although the amount be large, the price is reasonable. Why, Sir, when I stated that the price would probably be five shillings sterling per acre, I was laughed at for making so low an estimate; and now we have purchased at five shillings currency. If the Hon. Member for Charlottetown wishes to impugn the conduct of Government in this matter, let him bring it up in Committee on the general state of the Colony, when the Government will be prepared to justify their conduct.

Hon. Mr. PALMER supposed the report would be submitted to the opinion of the House; he was not prepared to go into debate, but merely wished that all publicity should be afforded at present for the purpose of eliciting the expression of public opinion. It was the duty of the Government to bring the matter before the House. The reason why the late Government did not purchase the property, was that the trustees had sold it before that Government was appointed: this could be proved by a reference to dates.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN—I rise, Mr. Speaker, in support of the motion of the Hon. Col. Secretary, that the documents he has laid upon the Table be published, as I deem it but right that the widest publicity should be given to them, not only for the information of my constituents who are more immediately interested in the subject, but of that of the people generally, who are ardently desirous of knowing the terms on which they may obtain Land under the Act. Sir, I was amused at hearing the Hon. Member for Charlottetown state that the Government should bring the matter before the House in Committee on the general state of the Colony; in other words, should bring themselves to trial—who ever heard of such a