

Why the necessity of passing this Act to confirm the making of these leases, if the Company, prior to that time, had the power to make them? Stronger proof need not be required of the illegality and imposition of the leasing system.

This Act will have the effect of confirming the leases made prior to 1864, but not after; and the sooner the leasing system is put an end to the better for the country.

As to the question of returns: during the early history of the Company they never refused to make returns to our Parliament. In 1829 they gave a statement to the House of the sums stipulated to be paid by them for the lands. This statement was referred to a Committee of the whole House, but from some cause was never acted upon. Again, in 1833, a statement was given to the House, showing the sums they had then expended in public improvements, with an extract from their agreement with the Home Government, showing the authority for such expenditure. In 1836 they made a return of all lands surveyed by them from the first; also, showing the sums expended by the Company in improvements, and a return of the lands purchased by the Company, with the terms of purchase, and a list of the settlers placed upon the lands, before and after 1st October, 1828. Also, in 1837, the number of settlers they had located in that year. And the same in 1839. But from that time forward a determined stand seems to have been taken by the Company, to hold themselves no longer answerable to Parliament or to the people, and to act as a close corporation, quite regardless of the public purposes for which they were created, as is clearly specified in the Act of Parliament and the Charter which brought them into existence. During the session of 1852, a return, embracing a demand for detailed information, was ordered by the House; but the only reply it elicited was a letter from Mr. Commissioner Widder, refusing to supply the required particulars, on the ground that they included matters in which the personal and private interests of the "Proprietors" were concerned; and he refers those requiring information to the Reports sent home to head-quarters in London. No doubt this is what the speakers referred to in the Parliamentary debates during last session. See Parliamentary Proceedings.

During the session of 1854 a Committee on Public Lands was appointed, and the report of that Committee contains a short letter from the same Commissioner, Mr. Widder, but no general information in regard to the Company's affairs. Therefore, this public Company, formed for public purposes, and acting under a Charter granted to them expressly for these purposes, has, up to the session of 1866, succeeded in setting at defiance the Parliament of this country, and, regardless, of the public interests, they have, up to the present,