

He said that the Imperial Parliament ought to agree to it, not merely as a favor, but as a right, to indemnify us for the injustice we had been laid under. What were the representations the Opposition, or Proprietary party, made against this measure? They put forward misrepresentations, shewing that the Colony was in an embarrassed state, in contradiction to the report of the Government and in direct opposition to the acts of the case; and they represented that it would have an injurious effect on the small freeholders, but the latter party now know better, and their Representatives are here to-night to testify to that effect. But what did the proprietary party do? Why, they said that they would establish a court of Inquiry—a court of Escheat. ("Oh," from the Opposition.) And I ask what was the Commission as represented by them, but a court of Escheat? and that they imposed this opinion upon the Colony, I will make patent before I am done. No party, Sir, that ever came into power in this Island, raised the expectations of the tenantry higher than they did at that time; and, yet I believe, they never intended to benefit the country by that measure. It was all deception. I will leave you, Sir, to say whether it was the good of the people, or their own selfish propensities, which induced them to bring in the Bill to give effect to the decision of the Land Commissioners. That Bill gave to the Commissioners all the powers of a court of Escheat, and they published that the Bill had been sent Home, and that it had been graciously received by Her Majesty, when all the time, Sir, it had not been sent Home at all! Who ever heard of the like? who can trust such a party after that? Did ever deception go further? I never once thought that they would give the powers contained in that Bill to any court; and when from so many parts of the country I was chosen by the people to appear as their delegate before that court in Charlottetown, and at St. Eleanors, the first question I put to them was, to ask if they had power to settle the whole question. I said to the court, that if the proprietors could not substantiate their claims to the land, that then it should become public property. And, Sir, if the land had been forfeited, it ought to become public property. The Commissioners answered the question, by saying, if it could be proved that the proprietors had not complied with the conditions of their grants, that then they had power, *with one dash of their pens, to erase their claims.* Sir, I could not but believe them. I did believe them; and believed that justice was going to be done to us at last. I never gave the proprietors credit for any sincerity, when their friends held out the prospect of obtaining an equitable arrangement of this question. It was unreasonable to expect they would of their own accord let go the power in their own hands. It is not in human nature to do so.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—You did well to make the admission.

Hon. Mr. DAVIES.—I wish to show this Committee that the course I pursued was perfectly justifiable, and that I am worthy of the confidence and esteem of the people whom I have the honor to represent. Well, what did the Duke of Newcastle say? He said that the Commissioners had no power to settle anything. That all the power they had, was simply to enquire into the existing grievances, and recommend a mode for settling them; and the Com-

missioners merely recommended purchasing the proprietors out under the provisions of the Land Purchase Bill, and said that they thought the transfer should be made for two shillings and sixpence sterling per acre; and I am surprised that the Government then in power did not act upon that recommendation. And why did they not do so? Because it was a recommendation which did not suit the proprietary party here. But it ought to have been acted upon, and would have been, were they the true friends of the people, as was well and ably shown by the Leader of this Government, Hon. Mr. Coles, at the time. Had they acted upon that recommendation, all the lands in the Colony would ere this have been bought up. But instead of doing that, instead of legislating for the people whom they represented, they legislated for the proprietors, and gave them a statutory title: and added to all their claims the property of the people, namely, the Fishery Reserves, which was a property they never once laid claim to. What absurd legislation! But, Sir, no one knows better than the learned and hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition, that when a dispute takes place between two parties, and when they agree to leave it to arbitration, both parties are bound to abide by the decision which may be given. But in this case, while the people were bound to abide by the decision of the Commissioners, the proprietors were not bound at all; and why were not the proprietors bound down? Because they wished, that if the recommendation of the Commissioners was favorable to the proprietors, that the tenants should be compelled to abide by it, and on the contrary, that if it was not favorable to themselves, they might set it at defiance. Now, I maintain that when they neglected to bind the proprietors to abide by the recommendation of the Commissioners, that they did wrong. Indeed, Sir, their whole conduct has disappointed the reasonable expectations of the people, and it is this which has overturned the late Government. The rights of the people that ought to have been upheld by them, were sunk, and a Bill to confirm the proprietors' titles, and to bestow upon them property they never claimed, was brought in and carried. Nothing, Sir, could have been more unjust. The Legislature of this Island confirmed them in all their claims, and more than they ever claimed, when it passed that Bill. Previous to the passing of that Bill, the proprietors could not maintain their claim in any court. Since I was a boy—I am now nearly grey-headed—I never saw a proprietor come into court and shew that he had a title. I have seen squatters summoned up to court to respond to the proprietors, and they never met them in court. I believe that in England, if a man does go into court with a claim, that he is bound to show his claim, and produce proof if required. But here, I knew a man to be brought up to court six times by a proprietor, and for six times the proprietor did not appear in court against him! The proprietor could not prove that he had as good a title as the squatter. Therefore the squatter has a better title than the proprietor, *nor can the government or any other party disturb him in his possession.* I maintain, Sir, that the squatters have a better title than the proprietors. It is true the proprietors have a title now, by virtue of the Bill passed for that purpose by the late Government, and as a result we see Sir Samuel Cunard immediately raising his land to double the price set upon it by the Land Commis-