Provincial Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, Feb. 26th, 1861.

House in Committe on the Address in answer to His Excellency's Speech. Hon. Mr. Goff in the Chair. The first and second paragraphs, on being read, were agreed to without any discussion.

On the third paragraph being read

Hon. Col. SWABEY rose and said—Such important interests are involved in this clause that it cannot be passed without some discussion. You are aware that the delay in the award of the Commissioners may be attended with many very serious consequences to this country. Are not many transactions, into which our Merchants have entered, dependent, to some extent, upon the Tenantry? I never go into the market without being asked, "What is the Commission going to do"? I have uniformly answered, "wait patiently till the award is made known." But the delay is unnecessary. And suppose the Commissioners should sit here again next summer, what would be gained by it? They already know what the privileges are for which the people contend. It is said that "His Excellency regrets the delay." I regret it too. The Land Question has occupied the minds of the people so long, and hope has been so often deferred, that it is impossible to know when to look for re-[illegible] I expected that the Leader of the Government would have come here full of information. Indeed, I would not have been surprised if we had been asked for a sum of money to raise a column in commemoration of the Land Commission. I thought there might probably have been a committee appointed to superintend the erection of this column. At the four corners, I would place the statues of the three Commissioners and His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, all to be worked in white marble, emblematical of the purity of their intentions. On the four sides of the Pedestal, I would have a relief, portraying the Proprietors lifting the prostrate Tenantry with their own hands to the most conspicuous position. There should also be placed the Messrs. Bruce Stewart and Tracadie MacDonald, like Peter and John, in the Cartoons of Raphael. Above this, there should be a lofty column, in white marble, and the top wanting a statue. I first thought of the figure of Justice, with her scales and her eyes bound; but thinking that His Grace the Duke of Newcastle ought to be commemorated, I should decide to place him there in the resemblance of the Goddess of Wisdom; and your honors will bear in mind that Minerva was Goddess of War as well, so that something masculine in countenance was deemed by the ancients as fitting for the statue, so that we should have nothing to do but to reduce the dimensions of his Grace's beard to something approaching feminine, or at least hermaphrodite. This statue would greet His Royal Highness Prince Alfred when he sailed into the harbour. He would probably have first seen those erected to Brocke, Wolfe and Montcalm—heroes indeed, but of a warlike character—whereas my statue would commemorate a far greater victory, the victory of Peace.

Hon. MR. PALMER—I rise to order. I have heard extreme language used in debate; but I never heard the Representative of Her Majesty so held up to ridicule in any House of Parliament.

Hon. Col. SWABEY—I deny that I have held any person up to ridicule. I was going to add that the Column would not be complete unless the corner stone was laid by the hon. member from Belfast. The disappointment to the country in not getting the award must be extreme; and I look upon the Commission as dead and gone—as a measure calculated to tranquilise the public mind. We might leave a matter in dispute to arbitration, and I believe it is the proper way to settle a dispute; but, in this case, it appears that the award would only be conditional. The Act to render the award binding will not receive the Royal assent, unless the award gives satisfaction when it is made. It was necessary that an act should be passed to render the award of the Commissioners binding on both parties; but if this Act is to be subsequent to making the award, what will it come to? Now, I believe that if the award is favourable to the Proprietors, the Act will be passed, otherwise it will not. The Colonial Minister very properly says that he could not advise Her Majesty's Government to entertain the proposal, unless the Commissioners were left free to entertain any question which they might think proper. In a Despatch from His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, dated 21st March, 1860, His Grace uses these words: "But it will be necessary, before going further into the matter, to be assured that the Tenants will accept, as binding, the decision of the Commissioners"; and in a Letter from Messrs. Cunard and others, addressed to the Duke of Newcastle, dated 13th Feb., 1860, we find the following—"But we do not think that the appointment of Commissioners, in the manner proposed by them, would be the most desirable mode of procedure, as the labours of such a Commission would only terminate in a Report, which would not be binding on any of the parties interested. We beg, therefore, to suggest, that instead of the mode proposed by the House of Assembly, three Commissioners, or Referees, should be appointed—one to be named by Her Majesty, one by the House of Assembly, and one by the Proprietors of Land; and that those Commissioners should have power to enter into all the enquiries that may be necessary, and to decide upon the different questions which may be brought before them, giving, of course, to the parties interested the opportunity of being heard." From this it appears that the Duke of Newcastle and the Proprietors were both of the same opinion. Perhaps I may have indulged in a little pleasantry on rising; but my sincere desire is, that his Honor the Leader of the Government should join in supporting the amendment which I am going to propose. I think the Government regrets the state of things; and I also think they are not in a very favourable position to appear before the Country; and I am therefore going to offer them an apportunity of placing themselves in a more favourable position. It is my opinion that the Government cannot stand unaffected by the fate of the Commission; and I do not think the Commission will submit to make an award under such circumstances. I do not prejudge them; but if they have to come back here in the Spring, some violence will be done to some party. If they are going to take evidence here again, I do not know what the expense will be upon the already shattered Revenue of this Colony. Now, Sir, some general principle should be marked out. It is not expected that the Commissioners will please every body; but there is a party who would like to see the Country prospering. And if this long agitated question was settled, who knows but his Honor, the Leader of the Government and myself might be seen sitting down on the same side of the House, thereby fulfilling the prophesy "The lamb and the lion shall sit down together." I now beg leave to submit the following amendment to the clause under discussion, which will not compromise the principles of any member of this board:—

"We regret that His Grace the Duke of Newcastle should not have considered it advisable to submit the Act passed last Session to give effect to the Report of the Commissioners appointed on the Land Question for Her Majesty's assent, as we believe that the Royal confirmation of that important Act would have the effect of giving public confidence to any adjustment relative to the rights of Land owners and Tenants in this Island that the Commissioners might report."

Hon. Mr. PALMER—I intended to submit an amendment, and shall therefore give my opposition to the amendment proposed by his Honor Col. Swabey. It says "We regret that the Colonial Minister did not think it advisable to submit the Act passed by this Legislature to give effect to the award of the Royal Commission for Her Majesty's assent. Now, Sir, I consider that in giving my support to that amendment I would be doing a great injustice to the Colonial Minister. It is, in effect, passing a censure upon His Grace, who is the first Colonial Minister who has given heed to the cause of the Tenantry of this Island; and before I can support that amendment, I must see that His Grace is to blame. It is true that the Legislature of this Colony passed an Act to give effect to the award of the Commissioners; but the question is, did the Colonial Minister go so far as to say that it should be passed? I acknowledge that I had strong misgivings as to the propriety of passing that Act: and I stated at the time that I considered it doubtful whether it was couched in terms which would receive the Royal assent; but I did not hesitate to vote for it. It remained for the Colonial Minister to point out any defects in the Act. Now, it is very true that in a despatch, dated 21st March, 1860, His Grace points out the necessity of being sure that the tenantry would concur in the award of the Commission. The despatch was not very explicit; and the Government were somewhat at a loss to know whether His Grace meant that an Act should be passed on mere Resolutions of the Assembly to make the decision of the Commission binding. However, the Government thought it was better to err on the safe side; and they came to the conclusion that the Act should be passed. His Honor Col. Swabey complains that great delay has ensued in consequence of that Act not having been presented for Her Majesty's approval. His Honor has been in the Legislature for many years; he represented himself as a member of the only Government which would pass an Act for the benefit of the tenantry; and yet session after session passed, and the tenantry never received any redress of grievances through any measure of his Honor's. Only a few months have elapsed since the Act was passed to authorise the appointment of the Commission, and his Honor complains that the country will be ruined in consequence of the delay in making the award. I think that the course taken by the Legislature was a very fortunate one. I do not say that it will give satisfaction to all parties. I do not believe that any Government would give entire satisfaction, even with his Honor Col. Swabey at their head. There will be some disappointment caused by every Government. I have no want of confidence in the measures which have been introduced for the settlement of the Land Question; and I believe that, when the award is made, it will give general satisfaction. I believe it was Col. Swabey who first suggested the appointment of a commission. I have heard him say that the question never would be settled until a commission was appointed. When he was in the majority I thought he would have applied himself to the perfecting of some measure to settle the question. But I think there are brighter prospects for the tenantry now than there have ever been since his Honor had a seat in the Legislature. I am very sensitive in regard to any resolutions which this House may come to which will censure the conduct of His Grace the Duke of Newcastle. I would not hesitate to pass censure upon any Colonial Minister, if I thought his conduct merited it. I think I have given proof of this on some occasions. I have not the fear which his Honor Col. Swabey appears to entertain, that the Act, not having received the Royal assent, will affect the giving or not giving of the award. If the Colonial Minister found, when he received and came to examine the Act, that it was different from what he supposed it would be, he was perfectly right in not presenting it for Her Majesty's approval. It is very true that in a despatch, dated 16th June, 1860, in answer to a despatch from the Lieutenant Governor of this Island, acquainting him of the passing of this Act, His Grace urges the necessity of the award being made binding; but His Grace had not that Act before him when he penned that despatch, and consequently was ignorant of its nature; and he speaks of it as giving effect to the resolutions of the House; and I am not surprised at the conduct of the Duke in not submitting it for Her Majesty's approval. It would be quite proper that the award when given should be confirmed by the Act. The subject before the Commissioners is purely a question between Landlord and Tenant; and the Tenantry are more interested in it than ever they were in the question of Escheat. It is not improbable that the Commissioners will have some difficulty in coming to a decision as to the extent of their powers; and daily experience shows us that ordinary arbitrators err, though not from a desire to do so. Now, while I do not doubt the good faith of the Colonial Minister, yet I think it is a matter of very little consequence whether the Act is passed before or after making the award. Though not passed up to the present time, I do not think it will influence the Commission in the slightest degree. His Honor Col. Swabey appears to think that the Commissioners will never make an award. I think that would be a happy result for some members of the Legislature; but there is a party who would like to see the country enjoying peace and prosperity. I hope his Honor Col. Swabey belongs to that party; but, judging by the tenor of his address to-day, he belongs to a party who have no interest in the Commission, and whose interest it would not be to see this vexed question settled.

Hon. Col. SWABEY—I deny it.

Hon. Mr. PALMER—I have prepared an amendment, instead of the one proposed by the Hon. Col. Swabey, which I shall now take the liberty of reading. It is as follows:—

"In concurring in the Act passed last session to give effect to the Report of the Commissioners to be appointed on the Land Question, the Legislative Council were guided, in a great measure, by what appeared to have been deemed requisite by the Imperial Government from the construction the Legislative Council put on the Despatch of His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, addressed to your Excellency, and bearing date the 21st March last. We trust, however, that although the Act has not yet been submitted to Her Majesty, the award of the Commissioners will undergo no unnecessary delay; and when perfected and published will be such as to enable Her Majesty to allow the same."

To be continued.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

FRIDAY, Feb. 22.

On motion of Hon. Col. Gray, Messrs. David Laird and J. D. Gordon were appointed Reporters for the present Session.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Haviland, a committee was appointed to receive tenders for printing 75 bound copies of the Parliamentary Reporters, and 6 copies to each member in sheets;—Mr. Howat, chairman of Committee.

It was resolved that no Petition praying aid for Roads, Bridges, &c., be received this Session after the 13th of March next.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Haviland a committee was appointed to receive tenders for printing the Journals of the House.

Hon. Col. Gray remarked that it had been represented to him, particularly by hon. members from the country, that as in previous sessions, there had generally been a laxity of attendance at this House in the forenoon, on account of which the business of the country was retarded; and, as the sittings in the evening were too frequently protracted [illegible] late hour, it was highly desirable that some arrangement [illegible] made to induce punctuality, and an attention to business at proper hours. [illegible] subject had been attracting attention in the neighbouring Provinces, and in New Brunswick, he believed, the House adjourned about nightfall. It was generally admitted that much gas-light was injurious to health, and there was no doubt that a great part of the work could be done in the forenoon which had hitherto been done in the evening. He then moved the following resolution:

Resolved, That the following rule is hereby adopted and added to the Standing Rules of this House, viz: "The Speaker do take the Chair punctually every morning at 10 o'clock, and that this House at its evening sitting do rise punctually at 6 o'clock."

Hon. Mr. Coles said that the resolution might be all very well, but last Session the greatest part of the detention of the business was caused by the Government holding *caucus* meetings to drill up their friends to support their measures. He thought the House should adopt no such resolution. If the members from the country were desirous to get speedily through with the business in order that they might be able to return soon to their homes, they would be more likely to gain their point by working till ten o'clock at night.

Hon. Mr. Haviland was surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. leader of the Opposition. It was an old but he believed true saying, that "An old smuggler made the best preventative officer." He (Mr. Coles,) surely could not have forgotten how he, when in power, detained the House by similar meetings. Something of the nature of the resolution was required.

Hon. Mr. Thornton remarked that the resolution might effect some good, and if coupled with another that no member should speak on one question longer than a quarter of an hour, he would support it.

Hon Mr. Yeo, Mr. Davies, Mr. M'Aulay, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Howat, Hon. Mr. Wightman, Mr. Cooper and Mr. Holm spoke briefly in favor of the resolution. On the question being put thereon, there appeared for it—Hons. Gray, Haviland, Laird, Perry, Kelly, Yeo and Messrs Beer, J. Yeo, M'Neill, Howat, Holm, Davies, Sinclair, Sutherland, Doyle, Conroy, Mr. McAulay, Montgomery, Cooper, Ramsay—20.

Against it, Hons. Coles and Thornton—2.

On motion of Mr. Perry it was resolved that the postage on outgoing letters of hon. members, during the session, should be paid.

Hon. Mr. Haviland having moved for a suspension of the standing rule in reference to giving notice of introducing bills, presented a Bill to consolidate and amend the Laws relating to grand and petit jurors, which was read a first time.

House adjourned till 3 o'clock.

AFTERNOON SITTING.

Hon. Col. Gray said that as sums had been voted last year to the proprietors of the four principal papers in the Island for publishing the debates in whole or in part, perhaps some understanding should be come to by the House at the beginning of the Session, in order that these gentlemen might know what course to adopt in reference to publishing them this year.

After some remarks from other hon. members on the subject, it seemed to be agreed that the House should pursue the same course as last session, viz, vote a sum to each publisher in proportion to the amount of the proceedings and debates given in his paper.

Mr. M'Neill, from the Committee appointed to prepare an Address in answer to His Excellency's Speech, presented a draft, which was read by the Clerk.

Mr. M'Neill moved that it be made the Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Hon. Mr. Coles objected to the motion, on account of the time being too short. Several copies of the address ought to be furnished to members of the opposition, which would take some time to prepare, and to make it the order of the day for to-morrow would not be treating the minority fairly, as they should have time to weigh some of the subjects to which it adverted, and in reference to which the country was anxiously looking for information. But if the majority endeavored to smother inquiry by precipitation, on them would rest the onus of the proceeding. He thought at least they ought to give the minority to consider the Address until Monday.

Mr. M'Aulay remarked that it appeared to take the members of the minority a long time to collect their scattered thoughts. He thought that if they had this evening until 11 o'clock, and to-morrow morning, they should be prepared, for in that time they might have their speeches both made and committed to memory.

Hon. Mr. Whelan said that the motion certainly showed a want of courtesy on the part of the majority. He for his part was ready to go into the consideration of the Address now if they choose to press it; but surely time ought to be given to weigh the important matters to which it adverted, for though he had never read a Speech of a similar kind so meagre in itself, as that with which the session was opened, yet he had scarcely ever read one which contained so much debatable matter.

Hon. Mr. Thornton was also of opinion that more time should be given. He moved in amendment that the Address be made the order of the day for Monday.

Hon. Mr. Haviland was astonished to hear the hon. leader of the opposition raise objections on account of the length of time it would require to prepare copies of the Address. This might be all done in about fifteen minutes. He saw no occasion for the delay asked by the minority; besides he could point out in the Journals that when the hon. members was in power, the address had more than once been made the order of the day following that on which it had been presented.

Mr Davies was also in favor of the motion for to-morrow, if they deferred taking up the Address until Monday, they would then be accused of retarding the business of the country.

On the motion of amendment, being put, it was lost 14 to 11. The original motion was then put and carried.

The House then adjourned.

SATURDAY, Feb. 23.

Mr. Cooper presented a petition from certain inhabitants of Lot 36, complaining that oppressive land claimants since the opening of the Royal Commissioners' Court have acted with greater severity than they formerly did, by exacting the accruing rent, and extorting bonds and securities for arrears, and that the Attorney General has since issued writs for the collection of rents; and praying that the House would direct a return or list to be made of the writs issued, and pass an Act to render said bonds and securities null and void, and stay the proceedings of the Supreme Court, and other courts in the matter; and that an address be presented by the House to the Lieut. Governor requesting the dismissal from office of the Attorney General.—Read and laid on the table.

On motion of Mr. Howat, a Committee was appointed to whom all pauper petitions should be referred.

Mr. Davies from the Committee to ascertain the progress made in printing the Journals of the last two Sessions, presented a report from which it appeared that those of 1859 would be ready on Tuesday next, and that those of 1860 were not yet all printed, but would be completed as soon as possible. The report which also contained a recommendation that hereafter no indulgence be granted by the House in reference to its contracts, was adopted.

Mr. Howat from the Committee to receive tenders for printing the Parliamentary Reporter, presented a report stating that four had been received, viz: from John Ings—at 28s per sheet, binding 1s per copy; from John Ross—at 30s per sheet, for both bound and unbound copies; from William Malon—at 27s 6d, binding 1s; from G. T. Hazard—at 27s 6d, binding 1s,—and recommending that Mr. Hazard's tender be accepted.—The report was agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Haviland from the Committee on the printing of the Journals presented a report stating that three tenders had been received, viz: from G. T. Hazard—at 30s 6d or 32s 6d per sheet as per specimens of paper, binding 4s 6d or 4s 9d per copy accordidg to quality; from John Ings—at 32s 8d, binding 4s 9d or 5s, stiching 1s 6d: from William Malone—at 34s 9d, binding 2s 6d, stitching 1s 6d,—and recommending that Mr. Hazard's tender at 32s 6d, and 4s 9d be accepted.—The report was adopted.

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE LIEUT. GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

On motion of Mr. McNeill, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole on the Address in answer to the Lieut. Governor's Speech. Mr. John Yeo in the Chair.

The first, second and third paragraphs were agreed to. The fourth having been read—

Hon. Mr. COLES said—we are not altogether surprised to hear that the expenses of the past year are not met by the Revenue. But, Mr. Chairman, we were not aware last Session that two Estates were going to be purchased by the Government. With respect to the Selkirk Estate, we were informed by His Excellency that it was offered to them at a low rate, and the House, on this account, considered it should be purchased, though the Land Commission was agreed to. Now, though it was stated in the message to the House, that Lord Selkirk had offered his Estate to the Government, it turns out that the very reverse was the case—that they had offered to purchase it from him. From a conversation which I had with Mr. Douse, I learned that it was offered to him for £3,000 less than it was purchased for by the Government. The offer was made to his son when in England, and as he could not agree to the purchase without his father's consent, he returned to the Island for that purpose, and while absent, Lord Selkirk received propositions from the Government. If they, instead of making an offer for the Estate, had sent home to ascertain what Lord Selkirk would have taken for it, this £3,000 might have been saved. The correspondence with this Proprietor was not submitted to the Legislature when the purchase was proposed, as it should have been, or probably the measure would not have received the concurrence of the House. Again, sir, when this House extended the Land Purchase Bill with the view of purchasing this Estate, it was distinctly laid down that no higher rate of interest should be paid than what was mentioned in the Act; and when I stated at the time, that it was doubtful whether money could be obtained at 5 per cent, oh, they had no fears! their credit stood so high everywhere, that they could obtain money to any amount but the poor Liberal party, when in power, could not get a shilling! The late Government, however, though so much abused, procured money at 5 per cent. under the Land Purchase Act, while the present Government have failed. But what have they done? They have violated the constitution of the Colony, by issuing Treasury Warrants that are not authorized by any law of the Island. This is the course pursued by this great Government, which we we were almost led to believe would never do any wrong. I am surprised that the constitutional lawyer, the hon. member for Georgetown, should have consented to such an act. What would have been the result had the opposition now come into power, and repudiated these Warrants, as they might have done? I did not think His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor would have come down here whining in the manner he did in his Speech—"It was found impossible to negotiate debenture loans at 5 per cent., while Treasury Warrants yielded 6 per cent.; I was therefore compelled, in order to meet our engagements, to avail myself of the temporary expedient of issuing Warrants to the amount required." The other Estate, Lot 54, the Government was not authorised to purchase; but I suppose they bought it to please an absentee Proprietor. They must go and give him £3,000 for the Estate, and that too after the greater portion of the good land on the Township was sold. What remains are swamps, or land on which scarcely anything can live but frogs. No wonder, then, that we hear the debt of the Colony is increasing. I maintain that if the Government could not procure money at the rate of interest specified in the Act, they had no right to purchase the land at all. They may say, but we have received so much from the sales, on the Selkirk Estate, that a portion of the Warrants has been paid off by this means; but they had no right to appropriate the money thus received to such a purpose, for Warrants when issued should be redeemed in their turn. The expenses of the past year, which have been increased by the purchase of two Estates, have not been, we are told, met by the revenue. What, then, will now be the public debt of the Colony? We have heard much about the extravagance of the late Government—oh, they were ruining the country! But when we went out of power, the debt was only about £39,000; now it will be found to be over £60,000. At one time, under the administration of the late Government, if the sum paid for land, and the amount of Treasury Notes afloat were deducted, the debt was not more than £2,000 or £3,000. The Government last year knew that they were going to purchase at least one Estate; they were aware also that a reception was to be given to the Prince of Wales; and to meet this and other extra expenditure, they increased the duties from 25 to 100 per cent., and yet we are told that the expenses have not been met by the revenue. Respecting Lot 54, nothing is said in His Excellency's Speech; all the glorification is about the Selkirk property—"the purchase has been attended with the most satisfactory results—it will be a self-sustaining transaction." But no expectation is expressed that Lot 54 will be self-sustaining. Here, then, we see the Government engaged in a land speculation without the probability of its being self-sustaining, and that too since the Commission was appointed; and notwithstanding all that they said about the loss by the purchase of the Worrell Estate. How much also have we heard from some of the members of the present Government respecting the titles on the Worrell Estate not being investigated; but here they have consented to the purchase of Estates, without any investigation of the titles. I believe it was understood with respect to the Selkirk estate that no investigation should be had; but what excuse can be offered with regard to Lot 54, the title to which is known to be very questionable? I do not think the objection to the fourth paragraph of the Address very important; yet, I believe, Sir, that a bad course has been pursued by purchasing the two estates together. The large sum received from the sales on the Selkirk estate, we are informed, is an earnest of the self-sustaining character of the transaction. From the Worrell estate, in reference to which so much complaint has been made, a large amount was also paid in during the first year. By next session we may hear a different tale about the Selkirk estate. The tenants on the estate, it appears from a remark made by the agent last year on the floor of this House, have scarcely paid any rent for 14 or 15 years, and from the amount of arrears remitted by the Government, the statement, I think, must have been correct. This being the case, it is no wonder if they may have been able to raise sufficient money to pay the deposit of the purchase of their farms; but perhaps they will not be so forward in paying the instalments. The tenants on the Worrell estate, I admit, have not the opportunities of those on the Selkirk property, who have the advantage of southern harbors. But we cannot judge how the Selkirk estate is to pay until two or three years hence. By paying the extra amount, however, required for the purchase of two estates, together with the higher rate of interest on the whole, £200 or £300 a year have been added to the expenses of the Colony.

Hon. Mr. YEO.—I think that the report of the offer made by Lord Selkirk to Mr. Douse must be unfounded. I do not believe that Lord Selkirk is a man who would be guilty of double dealing. The hon. member found great fault that higher interest was given than the Act authorised; but we know that money now can be obtained only at a higher rate. I scarcely ever paid so high discount as I have done this last year. He need not say that the Government is to be blamed for acting as they have done. They could not obtain the money otherwise. And see what they are doing for the country. They have given up a large amount of back rent to the people on the Selkirk estate. The Government have done more for the people in a short time than his party would have done though they had remained in power for ten years. At one time he was in favor of Escheat, and at another time running it down. This is the way he (Mr. Coles) has carried on.

Hon. Mr. WIGHTMAN.—The purchase of the Selkirk estate was agreed to by this House last session, though it may have been under the impression that it was offered to the Government. We all thought the terms were very low, but when we hear to-day that it probably could have been procured for £3000 less, we have cause to regret, if such be the case, that this amount was not saved. The rate at which the property was purchased, however, must be admitted to have been very reasonable; and I believe the people on the estate—as I have met some of them at public meetings, and heard their opinions—are well satisfied with the terms at which they are privileged to convert their leaseholds into freeholds. I supported the measure for the purchase of the Selkirk estate, and do not regret having done so. I wish we could obtain more at the same price. With respect to Lot 51, as a higher sum than 2s 4d. stg. an acre was paid for it, and as the purchase was not authorized by this House, I consider the Government had no right to pursue the course which they did. Reference has been made to the Worrell estate, and much we have heard during previous sessions because the rate paid for it was so high. The Government could not treat with the owner of the estate himself, and they were unable to prevent a middle party from stepping in, with whom they had to arrange the purchase on the best terms they could obtain, though at a considerable loss to the Colony compared with what it would have been had the owner himself being willing to treat with the Government. But I believe, notwithstanding all that has been said respecting the price paid for that estate by the late Government, and the manner in which it was afterwards managed, that the loss the Colony will sustain by the property will be trifling, as large sums have been paid in from it at different times. I will cheerfully assist the Government in any measure to authorize the purchase of more land, if it can be obtained at the same rate as that paid for the Selkirk property.

Hon. Col. GRAY.—I would not have risen so early in the discussion were it not to correct the statements of the hon. leader of the Opposition. There is something for the people of the country to depend on besides his assertions. He says he was not aware two estates were going to be purchased by the Government—true—nor was I; but a long time has elapsed since the rising of the House last session. With respect to the justice of the proceeding, it appears that the Government were authorized to purchase more land than the Selkirk estate if the incoming amount warranted them in so doing. The hon. member referred to something told him by a gentleman, another hon. member of this House, who is not yet in his place, a circumstance which I very much regret. He says this gentleman informed him that the Selkirk property was offered to his son for £3000 less than was paid for it by the Government. But mere assertion is nothing without proof. We have the assurance of Lord Selkirk that the very low sum of 2s 4d stg. an acre was agreed to by him solely on account of representations sent home to him from his own tenantry; and I think the hon. leader of the Opposition, and the gentleman who, he states gave him this information, must be under some misapprehension, for I cannot believe that that distinguished nobleman would be guilty of double dealing. But even were it the case, I submit to hon. members on both sides of the House, if they would not rather see £3000 placed against the Colony than that the estate should have passed into the possession of Mr. Douse? We are all aware what has been lost to the country by the action of middle men, as has just been referred to by the hon. member for Murray Harbor. I am not disposed to attach blame to the late Government for purchasing the Worrell estate, though I may regret that it was not obtained on more favorable terms. I have, however, to inform this hon. House that we did not purchase the Selkirk estate at 2s. 4d. an acre, but at a less sum.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—How much less?

Hon. Col. GRAY.—I will before I conclude state how much less for the information of hon. members. Last year when we were informed that the estates of Lord Selkirk could be obtained at the low figure of 2s. 4d. an acre, notwithstanding this House had agreed to the appointment of a Land Commission as we could scarcely expect that it would be the means of procuring the land on more favorable terms, in order that the Government might be in a position to accept the offer, I introduced a measure to extend the Land Purchase Bill.

Hon. Mr. COLES.—The Bill which you called a visionary scheme.

Hon. Col. GRAY.—The Loan Bill I considered a visionary scheme; but I do not recollect of ever characterizing the Land Purchase Bill as such. When Lord Selkirk communicated to the Lieut. Governor last year that he was willing to dispose of his estates, the quantity of land mentioned was 48,000 acres, and the rate 2s. 4d. sterling an acre. But it subsequently appeared that his Lordship held 62,000 acres; and in consideration that we should give him £2000 down in cash, and the remainder in debentures at five per cent, he agreed to dispose of his whole estates for £9918 0 0, being £968 15 0 less than 2s. 4d. an acre, or at the rate of 2s. 1¼d. per acre. After the land was surveyed it was ascertained there were 59 acres over and above the 62,000, for which his Lordship received 2s. 4d. an acre, being nearly the very large sum of £6 17 8. To raise the £2000 required as it could not be obtained on debentures bearing five per cent interest, Treasury Warrants were issued. Lot 54 cost £2000, for which amount warrants were also issued, being in all £4000; but as about £1958 of the warrants have been redeemed, the amount now out is but little more than £2000, and the extra expense of the Colony this year on account of the higher rate of interest will only be about £90. But now we come to the real pith of the matter—the right of the Government to accede to a rise in the rate of interest. We found that we could not meet our engagements, as it was impossible to negotiate debentures at five per cent, while Treasury warrants were bearing six per cent, and though there was no special enactment authorizing the issue, were we to allow the opportunity of purchasing the land to slip from our grasp? If we had permitted the estates at so low a price, to pass into other hands, the members of the Opposition, I have no doubt, would have been loud in their denunciations of the timidity of the Government. Our action in the case, I feel assured, will receive the approbation of the people generally throughout the Colony. But what did the minority do while in power? While debenture loans were bearing five per cent interest, they raised that on Treasury warrants to six per cent, thus rendering it impossible to negotiate debentures except at a large discount; which proceeding I do not hesitate to denominate a most dishonest transaction. The hon. member alluded to the purchase of Lot 54, and said something in reference to frogs. I resided at periods during several years in France, a country in which frogs are very numerous, and I never understood them to be so obnoxious as the hon. member appears to believe. There may be a few frogs in the place, but that is nothing against the country. There are here, however, plenty of wolves in sheep's clothing, from which more is to be feared than from those harmless little animals. The hon. member also referred to Escheat—a word of which we ought to be heartily tired—and censured some members of the Government, because they had consented to the purchase of the estates without an investigation of the titles. There was the same examination into the titles of the land purchased by us, as was in the case of the Worrell estate. A greater blow was never given to Escheat than when the hon. the leader of the Opposition and his friends passed the land purchase Bill. At this time of day it is a mere phantom to talk of Escheat. He also made a remark to the effect that time will prove that the purchase of the Selkirk property will not be a better paying speculation than the Worrell estate. But by his own showing there are better harbors on the South side of the Island than to the eastward, and with this advantage, and the low price paid for it by the Government, there is every prospect that it will prove self-sustaining. With respect to his insinuation that because Lot 54 was not alluded to in His Excellency's speech, it is likely the Government have found it to be a losing transaction, I may state that there has not been time for any sales to be effected; as the Commissioners appointed to value the land have not yet performed that duty. The hon. member for Murray Harbor said he did not think the Government were warranted in purchasing this estate, at least when they had to give a higher rate for it than 2s 4d. an acre. But I beg to inform that hon. gentleman that the sum of £968 15 0 saved in the purchase of the Selkirk estate by the reduction his Lordship was pleased to make, when deducted from the extra amount, over 2s. 4d. an acre paid for Lot 54, leaves the cost of the Township to the Government about 2s. 1¼d. an acre, thus making that sum the average price of all the land purchased. It was on this account that the Government agreed to the purchase of Lot 54.

The Committee then rose, and the Chairman reported progress. Adjourned until 3 o'clok.

(*To be continued*)

A GIGANTIC PROJECT.—It is said that the Emperor Napoleon has given his sanction to the project of building a railway between Calais and Dover. This understanding, probably the most stupendous in the history of the world, contemplates the tunnelling of the British channel between the points above named—a distance of nineteen miles. It is intended, we believe, to build a number of stations or islands along the route. The bed of the channel along the proposed route has been ascertained to be of solid rock, which will render the proposed tunnel, when completed, impervious to water. Contractors are busy preparing the estimates of the probable expenses of the work.

Correspondence.

FOR THE EXAMINER.

ABERDUMBEE WILHOCK, ESQ., TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE LIEUT. GOVEROR—GREETING. No. 1.

Although not having the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with your Excellency, yet I flatter myself that one holding the high position which I have attained in this community, as conservator of the Tenants' rights, cannot be unknown to you; but if your parasites have kept me hitherto out of sight of your Excellency, I am determined they shall no longer do so, as my correspondence shall in future be directed to yourself; and as I intend to continue the same for some weeks to come, I have, for the greater convenience of reference, commenced the series with the *unit*, as you will observe above. And in the first place, I am desirous to set myself right with your Excellency, that I detest and despise the application of low epithets, while I equally eschew all personalities as to your Excellency's *antecedents*, about "*thirty-nine-pounders*," or "*six-pounders*," or "*Spoonerite George*," because I am a loyal subject, and respect Her Majesty's commission, whether it be held by a wise man or by a dolt, or by a gentleman of your high hereditary descent and chivalry in the army, as well as your "long parliamentary experience;" and I trust your Excellency will believe me, that what I have to say, as an imperative duty, is solely against your Government, and that I feel great regret at the unfortunate position in which your present constitutional advisers have placed you. I suppose your Excellency has read the story of the "would be" limner who, after drawing or painting the representation of a certain "*long-eared*" animal, found it necessary—for the sake of enlightening the uninitiated—to write underneath, "*this is an Ass.*" Now, I think the same rule ought to have been adopted by your Executive advisers with regard to THE SPEECH. To a person so conversant with the "ex-Parliamentire," as the gentleman who has now the honour of addressing you, who knows that under Responsible Government it is your Excellency's constitutional advisers who make and write THE SPEECH, such a precaution would be unnecessary; but I very much fear with the bulk of the people in general it will be called "the Governor's Speech;" and that is the reason that I feel so intensely for your Excellency, that any, even the commonest school-boy in the country, should think for a moment that your Excellency should be guilty of so grossly "*murdering the Queen's English*," as would appear by that extraordinary document, were your Excellency supposed to be the writer of it. And, indeed, I am free to acknowledge, that for the past quarter of a century which I have been in this Colony, I never saw before such *a thing* in the shape of a Governor's Speech; and hence before *I* could be made believe it to have emanated from your Excellency's classic pen, I should require to see it labelled in some well-known hand-writing underneath, stating that it was so. I would therefore most earnestly advise your Excellency to write underneath the Speech, ere it gets publicity, "*This is the abortion of my Ministry.*"

I think in one of my former communications, which—though not directed personally to your Excellency—I have no doubt you read, I cautioned your Excellency against the machinations of the "old Compact," by whom you are surrounded, relative to forcing on you a Colonial Secretary who was retained by them to blackguard our late worthy Lieutenant Governor Sir D. Daly, and who no doubt will be employed against your Excellency, if need be, hereafter.

As your Excellency was particularly selected by the Proprietors in England to foster and protect their (*usurped*) "landed estates," as they termed them, in this Island, you were no doubt favoured, ere you left England, with a famous pamphlet written, or at least subscribed by one "Wm. H. Pope, Esqr., Barrister at Law;" it is entitled "P. E. Island under Responsible Government," and which, I need scarcely inform your Excellency, is a tissue of abuse from beginning to end of the unfortunate Tenantry, and all those who sympathised with them, or who felt for the slavery in which they were held by the land claimants. At page 22 of that pamphlet Mr. Pope says: "When that great man, Edmund Burke, pleaded at the bar of the House of Lords, on behalf of the Commons of England, against *a Governor* of India, who was charged with innumerable offences, it was complained by the accused [illegible] opprobrious names and scurrilous invectives were hurled against him. Burke, in [illegible] answered whenever men are *oppressed* when they ought to be *protected*, we call it *tyranny*; whenever goods are taken by violence from the possessor, we call it *robbery*, and the person who takes it we call a *robber*." Now, if your Excellency would enquire of such an authority as Edmund Burke what he would call the taking of money from a *Bank* without being *able* or *willing* to pay it, whether the money were taken by "*violence*," by "*fraud*," or by "*endorsement*," or by "*false pretences*," would he not call it "*robbery*," and would he not call the person who takes it a *robber*?" But without consulting the works of Edmund Burke, your Excellency might get a proper definition on the subject from Judge Peters; and if the "learned Judge" happen to agree with Burke in the definition, I leave your Excellency to judge for yourself of those who would employ such a character, and not only employ him but keep him employed, although said to have been properly designated and recognised and held in scorn *as such* by your predecessor in office.

How can your Excellency expect that people will believe you, when you say you are "the Tenants' friend," while you are surrounded and advised by the Land claimants and their *notorious* abettors and advocates? And if the people be "oppressed *by those who ought to protect them*," then, according to the definition above cited, will they not be called "*tyrants?*" an application which I am unwilling to designate your Excellency by; but which, I much fear, cannot be long avoided, while your Excellency is hampered by such greedy and grasping cormorants as at present controul your executive acts. The party who caused your Excellency to give expression, last year, in *the Speech* at the opening of Parliament, to a notorious and palpable falsehood, by saying that Her Majesty received very graciously an address which *at that time* Her Majesty had *neither seen nor heard of*, your Excellency should be on your guard against. And ere I close my present correspondence, I hope to be able to convince your Excellency that "honesty is the best policy," and that until your Excellency will dissolve the Assembly and give the electors an opportunity of electing your advisers, in whom they can place confidence, every act of your Excellency's administration will sink lower and lower in public estimation, and may at last involve your Excellency in a labyrinth of inextricable confusion, if not in utter ruin; to save you from which is the object of,

Your Excellency's faithful friend,

ABERDUMBEE WILHOCK.

FOR THE EXAMINER.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY GEORGE DUNDAS, ESQ., LIEUT. GOVERNOR, &c. &c.

PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

Your reply to the address presented to you, and signed by a number of the inhabitants of Belfast, as published in several of the newspapers of this city, shows definitely that you have cast off the non-political interference of Her Majesty's Representative, and have openly entered upon the political stage, as a decided partizan politician, and a public advocate of the one-sided policy and politics of your Executive advisers.

If the Royal Instructions, which you have for your guidance and direction, as the Lieut. Governor of this Colony, permit your public undisguised championship of the party policy of your Executive Council, and sanction your open personal meddling, and wading in the slough of the tumults and distractions of political feuds and partizan conflicts, then I am persuaded that your Excellency is privileged and at liberty to accept and hold a seat in either branch of the Legislature.

Your antecedents in the House of Commons, (now deprived of your light), flatteringly noticed by Messrs. Roebuck, Williams, and other members of the Imperial Parliament, ratified by the inimitable "Punch," and recorded by the stalwart pen of the powerful Editor of the London "Times," recommend you to universal admiration as a Legislator, specially adapted by your luminous statesmanly talent, and humane six-pounder sympathies, to be entrusted with, and to defend the rights, the liberties and privileges of any people as their Representative in the Legis[illegible] any British Colony. In this appreciation of you [illegible] fications, and in view of your having [illegible] the ranks of a brigade of [illegible] and assum[illegible] structions in prosecuting your party [illegible] announcements, and in support of [illegible]

[illegible] yearly in advance.