

THE EXAMINER:

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EDWARD WHELAN

This is true Liberty, when free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

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COURT OF ESCHEAT.

(Continued from our last.)

Mr. McINTOSH.—It is a singular idea, Mr. Chairman, that a reduction in the price of land is against the interest of the purchaser. I do not see that the difference in the amount of the purchase money deteriorates the quality of the land. I presume that remains the same as before the purchase. But perhaps the Hon. Col. Treasurer may have directed all his attention to the interests of the proprietors. For myself, I feel it to be my duty to endeavour to protect the interests of the tenants. They need all we can do to relieve them from the burdens which injustice has imposed upon them; and I think the proprietors have often shown that they have influence enough to guard their own interests. I was surprised to hear the hon. member for Charlottetown (Hon. Mr. Palmer) ask where were we to look for a fair jury? Dear me, where are all the men gone? (Laughter.) But, Mr. Chairman, I am content to leave the question of titles to the decision of a jury; I think it will be found to be as fair as any other tribunal.

Hon. Col. SECRETARY.—Mr. Chairman, the handbill to which allusion has been made does not mention the word "Escheat," nor does it contain a single sentence to warrant the belief that Escheat would be advocated by the Liberal party. My hon. colleague, Mr. Laird, it is true, admits the practicability of the measure, and I regret that I have not his support on the present occasion. I must do the hon. member for Princetown (Hon. Mr. Montgomery) the credit of saying, that he has been pretty consistent in his views on Escheat, for I believe it was his support of Escheat that first brought him into the House. I perceive that he and the hon. member (Mr. Cooper), prick up their ears like hounds when they hear the sound which tells them that the game is afoot. (Laughter.) But I am indeed surprised at the declaration made by the hon. member for Charlottetown (Mr. Longworth), that a COURT OF ESCHEAT has never been asked for. I think I can easily prove to the committee that that statement is not correct. We find in the preamble to the Bill passed in 1837, which I read before, the recital by the House of Assembly, that "His most gracious Majesty had been pleased to disallow the establishment of a COURT OF ESCHEAT in this Island." That is certainly an admission that it had been applied for, and that the House considered it untenable. And again, in 1842, on the Escheat resolution, the House of that day decided in opposition to Lord John Russell's despatch in 1841; and one of the resolutions stated that the decision at which the British Government had arrived was in opposition to many previous Acts and records, and among them, to the Act of 1832, intitled "An Act to encourage the settlement and improvement of lands in this Island, and to regulate the proceedings of a COURT OF ESCHEAT therein." Those resolutions were carried by a majority, but the hon. member voted against them, and by so doing put his opinion against the establishment of a COURT OF ESCHEAT on record. And again, in the extract I previously read from Sir George Grey's letter to the hon. member (Mr. Cooper), it is expressly stated "that it is not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to establish a general COURT OF ESCHEAT in the Island." Now, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member (Mr. Longworth) will tell you, notwithstanding this evidence to the contrary, that the establishment of a COURT OF ESCHEAT has never been agitated in the Island! Not only is the contrary the case, but the hon. member voted against the Court. And ask what language can be plainer, to express the opinion of the Legislature of the Colony, and the decision of the British Government on the question of a COURT OF ESCHEAT. The hon. member for Princetown (Hon. Mr. Montgomery), says the question was submitted to the consideration of the Reform Association. That association did not agitate the question of Escheat. There were plenty of reformatory measures which required the attention and influence of that society, and the association might well doubt whether Escheat would be a reform or not. And now Mr. Chairman, with reference to the extraordinary speech of the hon. member for Charlottetown (Hon. Mr. Palmer) although I agree with the conclusion to which he has arrived, I was indeed amused at the manner in which he treated the subject. He reminded me of two or three young fellows going to rob a hen-roost. (Laughter.) The hon. member laid great stress on the fact that the Bill for establishing a Court of Escheat must pass through the Legislative Council—then receive the sanction of the Lieutenant Governor. He himself will not support it, but does all he can to induce others to vote for it; as a boy might say to his fellows—"Oh, I cannot rob the hen-roost, it would not do for me to be seen on such a business, but you can go, and I advise you to do so, and I have no objection to participate in the plunder." (Laughter.) I have no doubt that the hon. member can find out many grounds of which he will avail himself, to try and recover the Attorney Generalship. He will endeavour to tickle up the hon. member (Mr. Cooper), and induce him to agitate this question, until ultimately, in the confusion it may create, he and his friends may obtain power and place. But, Sir, the Government have taken their stand on this question, and I agree with the hon. member (Hon. Mr. Palmer), that if Escheat were established it would not affect the original proprietors, as the lands have now, in so many instances, changed hands. And as those changes have, to a great extent, been made on the faith of the despatches of the British Government which I have read to the committee, and of others, with which I have not thought it worth while to trouble them. I do think it would be an act of the grossest injustice to the present owners to deprive them of their properties at this day. The faith of the Home Government has been so repeatedly and so explicitly pledged to the proprietors, that a deviation now from the spirit of its repeated declarations on this subject would render Great Britain a bye-word among nations. The effect of such a breach of faith would convey a reproach which would never be forgotten. Suppose, Mr. Chairman, that the present Government, anxious to prevent a majority against them on this question, lent it their aid, or offered no opposition to the resolution, what, I ask, would be the result? Why, Sir, the measure would affect not only the large proprietors, but no distinction could be drawn between the owners of large tracts and small lots—between the proprietors of 10,000, 1,000 or 100 acres. To obviate that difficulty, you would have to bring in a partial Bill, and then we should have the cry of "class legislation." Let the committee consider the lapse of time that has occurred. Why, it is now more than thirty years since the indulgences were granted, and that alone ought to give a title by possession. As to myself, Mr. Chairman, I repeat that I never pledged myself to this measure, and if we cannot carry on the Government without holding out to the people hopes of measures which cannot be obtained, I say let the Government be scattered to the winds. I can refer with pride and pleasure to many measures beneficial to the tenantry of the Island, which I have carried through the House. I will instance the Education Act, which enables a man to educate a family of eight or nine children, at an expense of only six shillings a year; the Land Purchase Bill; the Tenants' Compensation Bill; the Bill to prevent the landlords dragging the tenants into the Small Debts Court; the Bill for the protection of tenants, in cases of distress; the One-Ninth Bill, and the Franchise Bill. And in addition to those, there is the proposed tax on the proprietors' rent-rolls. Those measures are all of a practical character, and will work positive good to the people, while Escheat is impracticable, and, as I said before, the agitation is not only useless, but positively mischievous, as exciting hopes which cannot be realized. Why, Mr. Chairman, look at the advice given to the people by the hon. member (Mr. Cooper) in his published pamphlet. In that pamphlet is a recommendation that the Lieutenant Governor be requested to have whatever amount the tenant can pay on account of rents

deposited with the Government, and that they be protected from distraint for the arrears of rent until the land question should be settled. Such a recommendation as that is enough to put the country into a state of turmoil from one end to the other; and what, I would ask, can be imagined more disastrous to the people than the adoption of the suggestion. They would get behind hand in their rents, and then the proprietors could at any moment come in and take the last hoof from off their farms. Such a course as that would, I think, be truly holding out "a will of the wisp" to the people. (Laughter.)

Mr. COOPER.—Mr. Chairman, the hon. leader of the Government has paraded before the committee all the despatches he could find, adverse to the establishment of a Court of Escheat, and the hon. member for Charlottetown (Hon. Mr. Palmer), argued to show that it could be established, but that it was not expedient, inasmuch as he thought it would be productive of evil. But if we look at the original grants, I do not think we need anticipate from the forfeiture of the lands, greater evils than those which the country has sustained by their having been considered in force. The intention of the grants was that the Island should be settled in the proportion of one settler to every 200 acres of land; there was time allowed for such settlement, and the people were to be settled, not as tenants, but as freeholders, for they were to improve the lands, and rent would amount to nothing more or less than interest on the improvements they might have made. There are too many individuals who have got the people under their control, without any legal or honest claim to the claim to the land. The Hon. Col. Secretary says he is anxious to pass any measures calculated to relieve the tenantry, but when the Tenants' Compensation Bill was before the House, I wished its provisions extended to all classes of tenants, and he opposed my views. The Government have it still in their power to bring in a Bill to settle the lands on the terms of the original grants—that is, one settler to every 200 acres. That condition is still in force, and the argument deduced from the transfers of property cannot affect the continuing obligation of settling one person on every 200 acres. According to the returns of the census taken in the year 1832, which I have in my hand, I do not find a single Township in the whole Island having the number of freeholders required by the grants. Township No. 17 was the highest, and had 99 freeholders; and the next was Township No. 28, which was returned as having 94; the rest ranged from 1 to 70, and several of the lots had not one settler in freehold, and many only two or three, or perhaps half a dozen. The result of Escheat would not be authorizing the Government to rob individuals, but to induce the settlement of the country in accordance with the terms of the original grants.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD.—Mr. Chairman, I have listened for a long time, with all the gravity and seriousness of which I was capable, to the discussion which we have had to night, and I do not wonder at the fresh vigor which has been infused into the debate, after the remarks which have been made by the Hon. Member for Charlottetown, Hon. Mr. Palmer, which certainly have a tendency to keep up the excitement on this question throughout the Country. He has stated that he was opposed to Escheat 20 years ago, and is so now, as a matter of course. But now that we have Responsible Government, the British Government must assent to Escheat, whenever we declare that it is our wish to obtain it; that despatches from the Colonial Minister are but waste paper, not worthy of our notice, not even entitled to our consideration, that they do not convey the conclusion of the British Government, and he winds up his speech with the intimation that the lands may probably be Escheated. Now, I would like to know, supposing the Hon. Member wished to have the resolution of the Hon. Member Mr. Cooper passed, and Escheat established by law, what greater encouragement he could give than he has afforded by such remarks to the very measure he intends to vote against. How well it will read in the newspapers! What contradiction between the speech and the vote! This is indeed "running with the hare, and hunting with the hound." But I think that the Hon. Member has done a serious injury to the country by the speech he has made to night. It will go far to encourage the agitation of this question, going abroad as it will under the influence of his authority. I oppose the resolution, as I believe that the agitation will only prove injurious to the Colony and disquiet the minds of the people for no practical result, for although the Hon. Member says the British Government must grant Escheat, I am very well convinced, that whether they must or not, they will not. (Laughter.)

Hon. Mr. PALMER, Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member who has just sat down states that he listened to the debate with all the gravity he could call into requisition. I believe him, for I never saw him so grave in my life, and pretty good reason he has for his gravity. (Laughter.) If he is displeased at the observations I previously submitted to the Committee, I can not help that, as I stated that I thought it probable that my speech would not please either party, and I can readily imagine the reason why my remarks were distasteful to the Hon. Member. He knew that I could take a greater latitude, could take a wider range and treat the subject with more freedom than he could, being as he is, fettered by his position as a Member of the Government. The Hon. Col. Secretary has said, that my remarks originated in a desire to turn out the present Government. Sir, however desirable I may conceive a change of Government to be, yet if my conduct to night were guided by any motive of that nature, I should adopt a totally different course from that which I intend to pursue; I should, in that case, vote for the resolution. But, Sir, suppose this resolution carried, and the present Government overthrown, can it be supposed that I would come in and join a Government in carrying out a measure, which but twenty-four hours before I had denounced. The Members of the Government feel that they are in an awkward position in dealing with this question. Thank God, I have not two masters to serve. I can vote on this matter independently, but the Government know they must oppose the resolution of the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, and that their opposition will damage them with the people and probably cause them to lose their offices. The Lieutenant Governor, from what I know myself, must feel an interest in the question, and will doubtless use his influence to maintain the rights of property, and his Government must accordingly present a compact front in opposition to the resolution, no matter what may be their individual wishes or opinions. There is the reason for their votes, and I think it will be admitted that mine is based on different and far more creditable grounds. The Government deny that they countenance the idea that they would support Escheat, and in proof of that they tell us that the word "Escheat" is not mentioned in the hand bill that was circulated by their party; certainly it is not named in that, and it is not to be supposed that it would be. No, no, Sir, it is not in printed papers, nor on public platforms that we expect to find such statements put forth to the world. But, letters traverse the whole Island, and what is easier than quietly and generally through the medium of letters to private friends, to hold out the expectation of free land, if once they were returned to the House. This is the way in which the seeds of this agitation have been planted, and Members of the Government must not be surprised, if after sowing the wind, they should reap the whirlwind. My course on Escheat has always been consistent; I have entertained and expressed the same sentiments year after year, and my answer to the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, has always been

the same. I never considered that a Court of Escheat was unconstitutional, but I oppose it, and have opposed it, on the grounds that it was highly inexpedient, and that opinion is in perfect accordance with those of the former Attorney and Solicitor General, which was read by the Hon. Member Mr. Cooper; they did not advise that it was expedient, my opinion as to the constitutional right to such Court is the same as theirs and of all legal men.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—Mr. Chairman, as this debate has been protracted to a late hour, it is not my intention, in offering my observations on the question, to occupy the attention of the Committee for any great length of time. I have understood that the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, has submitted his views to the Committee through the medium of a written document, and I must express my regret that I was not present at the commencement of the debate, in order that I might have received the benefit of all the information that Hon. Member could afford, through the means he has adopted to convey it to the House. When some time since, that Hon. Member asked me, in conversation, what were my opinions on the subject we are now discussing, I stated that I should, previously to voting on the matter in this House, listen with all the attention of which I was capable, to the arguments that might be adduced on both sides, but that my then impression was, that it was inexpedient to constitute the Court which is the object of the resolution he has moved.—Some weeks ago, Sir, there was a meeting called of the constituency which I have the honor to represent. At that meeting, although not specially invited, I thought it my duty as representing the district to attend. I went to it, and several questions were put to me as to the views and probable action of the Government on the subject of the Fishery Reserves; and the question of Escheat was fully gone into. I explained to the people present at the meeting, the views of the local Government on the Reserves, and quoted portions of various despatches and other documents to show the decision of the Imperial Government in opposition to the establishment of a Court of Escheat; and I asked them if they considered it advantageous or desirable to assume an attitude of hostility to the British Government and I convinced them of the futility of the agitation even if it received the encouragement and approval of the Executive Council and the Lieutenant Governor himself. In arriving at the conclusion, which I have come to on this subject, I need scarcely declare that my mind has not been biased by any regard for the proprietors. They have never been friends of mine, and my past history will show that I have never been their advocate. In the views I shall express this evening, I am, I can assure the committee, unbiased, save by a desire to have the matter settled, without exciting or encouraging an agitation at once useless as far as the attainment of its professed object is concerned, and mischievous in its effect upon the minds of the people.—The first thing that attracts my notice in the discussion this evening, is the singular manner in which the resolution of the Member, Mr. Cooper, is worded.—It states: "Whereas Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to give her assent to an Act for the purchase of Land on behalf of the Government, and it is provided in the Fifth Section, that it shall be the duty of the Commissioners to investigate, or cause to be investigated, the titles of such Lands, and make a report of the result of such examination or investigation to government; and whereas the titles to such Lands were to have been made perfect by the performance of certain conditions. Resolved, therefore, that a Court of competent Jurisdiction be appointed to investigate and decide upon the titles of all lands liable to forfeiture, and also to try the fraud in practice, to make British subjects tenants upon forfeited lands, instead of aliens, as intended by the grants."

Now, Mr. Chairman, I must state my opinion, that this Resolution is an evasion of the question, and does not bring up the subject of Escheat fairly and honestly before the House. This Committee is constituted for the purpose of ascertaining the opinion of Members if a Court of Escheat is to be established, but the Resolution purports to be based on an assumption that the Government have omitted to comply with the spirit and provisions of a particular Act—the Land Purchase Bill—on the assumption that the Government have not investigated the titles of the Worrell Estate previously to the purchase of the property. Now I will ask the Hon. Member who introduced the Resolution if he can say candidly and honestly that no such investigation has been made? Does he mean to say that the Government had not a report on the validity of the titles before them, prior to the purchase of the property? He knows that yesterday the opinion of the Hon. Attorney General was laid before the House, on the subject of the titles, and I say, Sir, that opinion, and the investigation on which it was based, and of which it is the result, are in strict accordance with the provisions of the Land Purchase Bill. Does the fifth section of that Bill contain one word about the establishment of a Court of Escheat? I will read from the section: "It shall be the duty of such the Commissioner of Public Lands, from time to time, when any such tender for the sale of Lands shall be referred to him by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to examine into the same and the descriptions and particulars thereof, and to investigate or cause to be investigated the title of such lands, and he shall make a report of the result of such examination and investigation to the Government." While the negotiations for the purchase of the Worrell Estate were in progress, the chief legal adviser of the Crown made the requisite examination, and his report, which the Commissioner of public lands of course adopted, was submitted to the Government previously to the purchase having been concluded. That report is on the Table, and it proves that the premises on which the resolution is predicated are not correct, and as a necessary consequence, there is no justification for the Court he seeks. When the Committee was proposed, the Hon. Col. Secretary asked me my opinion as to the most desirable mode of proceeding. I suggested that it would probably be as well to wait for any resolutions which the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, might introduce. I shall offer in opposition to the resolution he has moved, one hastily drawn up by myself to the following effect:—

"Whereas by various despatches from successive Secretaries of State for the Colonies it has been shown to be the fixed and unalterable determination of Her Majesty's Government to abstain from any investigation into the conditions of the original Grants of Township Lands in this Island, Her Majesty's Government having stated that such conditions were fulfilled as far as practicable—and whereas to agitate the question of Escheat, which is almost universally deemed to be a necessary forerunner to the commencement of the investigation referred to, would lead to "incite the minds of the tenantry of this Colony, without producing the least beneficial result, owing to the positive refusal of Her Majesty's Government to sanction the establishment of any such Court of Escheat—and whereas this Committee have every reason to believe that the great majority of the population of this Island are satisfied with the Law passed in 1853 for the purpose of purchasing the interest of Proprietors in the Township lands in this Island, as the easiest and most effectual mode of settling the long vexed question between landlord and tenant, and that no such extreme measure as an Escheat is now expected by the majority of the population. Resolved, therefore, that it is inexpedient and unnecessary to appeal again to the Imperial authorities for its sanction on behalf of a measure so long agitated and so firmly rejected by Her Majesty's Government."

In moving that resolution it will not be necessary for me to take up the time of the Committee, after what has fallen from the Hon. Col. Secretary. I shall, however, make one or two remarks in addition to his, and I must in the first place allude to the strange doctrine promulgated by the Hon. Member for Charlottetown, Hon. Mr. Palmer, that a despatch was not to be considered as binding on the Government; that it was merely, as the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, had stated, the expression of the individual opinion of the Colonial Minister of the day. This idea was dwelt upon with considerable earnestness by the hon. member, and I

must say it is the most extraordinary and indefensible doctrine I ever listened to within the walls of this House. What, Sir, a despatch not the expression of the will of the Government? Not to be considered in a higher light than as a mere declaration of personal opinion? On what, I would ask that member, is our constitution based?

Hon. Mr. PALMER.—On Responsible Government.
Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—On Responsible Government. "I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word." (Laughter.) But is not Responsible Government itself based on a Despatch? (oh oh.) Hon. members may cry "oh," but I maintain that all our Colonial Constitutions are founded on Despatches from Colonial Ministers.

Hon. Mr. PALMER.—Then a Despatch may take it away again.
Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—The Hon. Member for Charlottetown went further, and stated that it was the duty of the Government of the Colony to resist the Imperial Government, that the understanding between that Government and the proprietors was not to be considered as an obstacle—that the Bill having once received the sanction of this House, and of the Legislative Council, and then been approved by the Lieutenant Governor and the Executive Council, must, as a matter of course, be allowed by the British Government. Why, Sir, I may well express surprise at such opinions and assertions coming from such a source. Why was it that the Bank Bill, which had all those aids, did not receive the royal assent?

Hon. Mr. PALMER.—Because it had a suspending clause.
Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—Does the hon. member mean to say that we should pass a Bill establishing a Court of Escheat without a suspending clause, and that, if we did, the British Government would allow its operation?

Hon. Mr. LONGWORTH.—They would have to.
Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—If, Mr. Chairman, the Government of the Colony have the power, as asserted by the two hon. members for Charlottetown, I would like to know, why, when they were in power, they did not constitute the Court?

Hon. Mr. PALMER.—Because it was against my principles.
Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—Yes, and I suppose it was against your colleague's principles too, notwithstanding his speech to night in favor of it, (laughter.) Having now, Mr. Chairman, notice of the more prominent members of the minority, I will turn to this side, and I shall notice in the first place the Hon. Member, Mr. Laird. He stated that under Responsible Government we could obtain the establishment of the Court. Now, in the name of common sense, what connection is there between Responsible Government and the establishment of a Court of Escheat? I would ask that Hon. Member, why, entertaining such opinions, he was so quiescent from 1851 to 1853? Responsible Government was conceded in 1851, yet no availing was heard from the Hon. Member in favor of Escheat. He must assuredly have been guilty of a gross neglect of duty in not bringing it before the House, if he deemed it so essentially necessary and so undoubtedly a matter of right. I shall now, Mr. Chairman, notice a remark or two which were made by the Hon. Member, Mr. McIntosh, and in the first place I must admit that he has paid a high compliment to the people of the Island, his own constituents included, when he designated them "bastards." I do not but that the term will be very popular, and that the Hon. Member's courteous appellation will be duly acknowledged by those to whom it was applied. (Laughter.) He has made allusion to some imaginary case of turning out one set of Land Agents to make room for another. Now, if he means by that to convey the idea that the present Government are land agents, I cannot believe that he is sincere in making the insinuation that he has.

There is not a single Member of the Government agent of a proprietor, with the exception of the Hon. Col. Treasurer; and the Hon. Member himself must admit that that gentleman is in every respect worthy of his high position in this House and in the Government of the Colony. How unfair it is for the Hon. Member to say that the people have derived no benefit from Responsible Government—that the only difference consists in a mere change of office holders. Does that Hon. Member forget the measures the liberal party has carried from 1851 to 1853? Is the extension of the franchise nothing? Is the opening of the ports a measure so unimportant and so unproductive of benefit that it has escaped the recollection of the Hon. Member? Cannot his memory suggest the passing of the 1-3rd bill, the Education Act, and many other Acts I could name, which the liberal party have carried? Why is it that after being pledged as was his colleague, to support the liberal Government, he now says that the only difference between that and the Government it superseded is a change in the individuals holding the reins? Sorry indeed I am, Mr. Chairman, to hear such expressions from a gentleman who has hitherto uniformly accorded his support to the present Government, and equally did I regret his assertions that Hon. Members were speculating in lands.

Mr. McINTOSH.—I said I had been told so, and I am afraid I shall have to believe it. (Laughter.)

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—Then I should like to know on what grounds the hon. member bases his belief. Is there, in the purchase of the Worrell estate, anything to justify his belief. He knows there is not. And yet does he hesitate to adduce such charges at the very time when he cannot bring forward a shadow of evidence to substantiate them; there should be at least some slight appearance of fact—something at least, which might give the imputation a character of probability, no matter how faint. Look at the effect of such remarks going abroad to the country from the pen of the Reporter. I must say, that the remarks he has made to night are inconsistent with the opinion I had formed of his character. Another opinion he has expressed deserves some notice at my hands. He has stated that a Court of Escheat is our right under our constitution. I ask him where he finds the authority for that doctrine? Is it to be found in the despatch of 1851, by which Responsible Government was conceded to the Colony? Our constitution is based upon a despatch from Lord Grey, which gave us the principle of responsibility to the people, on the part of their rulers, and which was conditional on the settlement of the Civil List Bill. In that despatch not one word is to be found on the subject of a Court of Escheat; on the contrary, there issued from the same office, almost at the same time, the so-called "bloody despatch." Will the hon. member say that that despatch forms part of our constitution? It is no more a part of our constitution than the constitution of China. Now, Mr. Chairman, I must leave my friends on my left, though sorry to part with good company, (laughter,) and turn once more to my right, and I shall take up the remarks of the hon. member for Princetown (Hon. Mr. Montgomery). I must say, Sir, that he has alleged a most extraordinary reason for the vote he purposes to give. He states that the question has been the subject of general agitation throughout the country, and that individuals have been going about the country exciting the people by instilling the hope that Escheat will be granted, and that he will vote in favor of the Court to test the question. Now, Mr. Chairman, I deny that persons have been sent through the Colony on the errand he has alleged, and I affirm that no agitation of the question was got up by the liberals for the purpose of obtaining support at the last general election. Those statements were made by the party in opposition and the press which supports them. But I defy them to adduce proof of their assertions. Who are the liberal members of this House to whom those charges will apply? I ask him to name. No, Sir, he knows he cannot name a single individual among the supporters of the Government in this House who has acted as he would fain induce the people to believe. With reference to the observation of the hon. member for Charlottetown (Hon. Mr. Palmer), that the liberal members, by offering opposition to the resolution of the hon. member (Mr. Cooper), might laugh themselves out of the House. It is scarcely necessary to remind that hon. member that the mirth which provoked his observation was not caused by the resolution, but was excited by a remark of his own, which certainly was calculated to