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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

MARCH 24.

SQUATTERS' BILL.

(Debate concluded.)

Mr. THORNTON confessed that some of the arguments he had heard against the Bill in its present form had quite staggered him. If the squatters, notwithstanding the provisions of the Bill, can be dragged into Court at any time, it may as well be done at once, and let it be settled by a Jury. He would leave it to the sense of the Committee to say whether it should be settled by arbitration or by the Court.

Mr. COLES was of opinion that if a dispute arose about the right of the claimant, it should be settled by the Court; but as to the amount and value of the improvements, he thought persons resident on the spot the most competent to form a correct judgment; but he did not for one moment suppose that a disputed title could be settled by arbitration, but the other matters, he preferred, should be settled by arbitration.

Mr. COOPER thought the subject matter of this Bill should form part of the report on the state of the Colony, and should be sent home along with it. How do the squatters know the right of the claimant, who may draw them into Court? Those claimants should have persons to represent them resident on the Island.—He did not see for his part how it could be fairly settled, unless the land was re-invested in the Crown.

Mr. THORNTON was of opinion Lots half 45 and 52 should have been escheated, since their owners have so long neglected the settlement and improvement of their lands, some so long as 50 or 60 years; he agreed with the hon. member for King's County, that such land as those lots should be forfeited, as a proof that we were inclined to do all that was in our power to meet the wishes of the people. This Bill was beset with so many difficulties that perhaps it would be better to postpone its further consideration until we get an answer to our address on the state of the Colony; yet we should not wait until the proprietors might occasion the ruin of the squatters. In Nova Scotia, every protection is afforded to this class of persons.

Mr. DOUSE said what had fallen from the hon. gentleman who spoke last was falling back to what he (Mr. Douse) had previously proposed, that the condition of such land should be represented at home, and then since no owner appeared, that the disposal of it should be left to the Crown.—One township (No. 10, we think) was claimed by Mr. Stewart: it is as bad land as ever he saw. He coincided in opinion with Mr. Cooper, that the matter should be represented at home.

Mr. YEO said, he knew that lot as well as Mr. Douse; agents came there year after year; but could get nothing from the settlers. One third of the lot is covered with water.

Mr. SPEAKER said the hon. member (Mr. Yeo) forgets that £300 or £400 worth of marsh hay is annually cut on it. The reason it was not settled was, the high price that was asked for it. He was aware that 30 or 40 were willing to settle on it.—The French had prepared 2,000 tons of timber, which was paid towards the purchase of it by them, but they were swindled out of it by Mr. Kay. A man of the name of Prendergast pretended to act as agent, but when examined, it was found he had no authority for the office he had assumed. If the requisite number of settlers were settled on those parts of Lots 45 and 52 which were claimed, it would protect the remainder from forfeiture, so that we need not trouble our heads about them. He should not hold out inducements for entertaining false hopes to the people; as settled or not settled, there is not the slightest grounds for escheat at present. He would go with an address.

Mr. DOUSE had spent 12 or 13 days travelling over Lot 10, and during that time saw no land on it fit for settlement. It is true there are marshes on the shore, but there are five miles of road on it and not even a squatter settled on it. It is a swamp, where no one can settle on.

Mr. MACAULAY said, it seems the Bill is quite forgotten by hon. members. He did not see any good that would arise from the proposition of the hon. member for King's County (Mr. Cooper). He would move that the Clause be agreed to.

Mr. MACINTOSH did not see what business a poor man had to go to law with a rich man, and could not see what protection this Bill would be to the people; he therefore coincided with Mr. Cooper.

Mr. LONGWORTH objected to the proposal of Mr. Cooper; what might happen to the squatters during the interim that we were waiting an answer to our address? He thought the better way would be to pass or reject the Bill at once, if not the consequence might be disastrous in the extreme.

Mr. WIGHTMAN proposed One Shilling currency as the amount of rent per acre to be demanded.

Mr. DOUSE thought Halifax Currency was more than is now paid.

Mr. THORNTON approved of the currency of the Country.

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD said, he would be putting the squatters on the same footing as the tenantry but no better; but he thought this alteration would tend to defeat the Bill, and as such he would oppose it how much soever he wished to see currency as the tender for rent.

Mr. PALMER said, the sentiments of the hon. member who last sat down were also his. Squatters should not be put on a better footing than the tenantry generally, especially when we are so well aware of the opposition we shall encounter elsewhere. The proprietors would say we cannot tell what precedent this may establish. People are very anxious to take land at one shilling sterling; he was lately offered one and six-pence sterling. Let a solitary instance be produced where more than one shilling currency, with the addition of one-ninth, has been paid for rent.

Mr. COOPER had been where in cases of famine every man's grain was taken from him and all thrown into a common stock, and then every man served out according to his need, at a standard price, without distinction of persons, as to who supplied least or most. In this country a poor man cannot depend on his labour to insure him from want, as it is beyond the power of the farmer to employ and pay him. In like manner a person may take any thing sooner than starve.—How can we say that those who have leases are any thing better off than the squatters? he could not perceive the difference; we are about passing a law making the squatter pay one shilling sterling per acre, and we have agreed to a Resolution which we are going to send home, stating that the tenantry are unable to pay rent. How ridiculous we must appear!

Mr. COLES said the squatters should not be better provided for than the tenants. The Bill does not provide whether the rent should be paid in cash or produce.

Mr. HUNSON thought every hon. member of the House would see the necessity of legislating for the squatters; and he would like to see it founded on justice and equity, as well to them as to others, but he would give them no greater advantage. He thought, if the Bill became a law, it would relieve a good deal of distress. The squatters should not receive more advantageous terms than those who held by lease; as such he would support it, but he thought a different mode of procedure would defeat the Bill entirely.

Mr. COOPER said, in all cases where land was settled by the Crown on this Island, it was settled in fee, and such would now be the case, if right took place. The proprietors had had sufficient time to settle their land, and those who had not done so should lose it. Squatters have to make roads and protect the country, and are therefore as well entitled to the consideration of Government as any other.

Mr. HUNSON.—Our opinions then are very different, and the hon. gentleman's arguments have very little weight with me.

Mr. PALMER.—The argument of the hon. member for King's County (Mr. Cooper) has nothing to do with the question, as it is not about Escheat we are now legislating. The Squatter, he thought, would wish to pay his rent in produce. He had already expressed his opinion on the subject at full length.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Let us say in produce, and then it carries its own condemnation on the face of it. He was surprised at the pains taken by those who were so anxious for the success of this Bill to make it ridiculous. The more he said of the turn taken by the Bill, the more he regretted the introduction of it into the House; though he knew the hon. mover was actuated by the best of

motives, yet it has served as a plea to revive the exploded question of Escheat; the steam could not have been got up with so much facility without such a measure as the present. He wondered why the hon. member (Mr. Coles), who was a large consumer of produce, did not insist on introducing a clause, fixing a price to be given by him for it. It would be quite as consistent with the right of doing what one pleases with one's own, as saying to the landlord, he must ask so much and no more for his land. What would be said at home about such legislation? He would vote for one shilling sterling, and no less.

Mr. MACINTOSH.—The case that occurred on the Island that he was aware of, was at a Launching place near Grand River, where the people who had squatted on the land there, were put in possession of it in fee simple, for the expense of £5. Are we now to put those on a level with the others? I hope not. If it were made a general thing, it might be opposed at home, since there is so much opposition against every thing proposed for the benefit of the unfortunate people of Prince Edward Island. What is the use of talking about paying a rent which we have already acknowledged they cannot pay. Let us shew the people that we have a disposition to do all we can to benefit the people.

Mr. COLES moved, that one shilling sterling be inserted.

Mr. D. MACDONALD objected to it. It was for the double purpose of confirming or legalizing the rents already demanded, and which we have resolved that the people cannot pay, and to compel the squatters also to pay it.

Mr. DINGWELL said, the rents in some places are only one shilling currency, and still the people cannot pay that same, as was set forth in a petition which he had the honor to lay before the House this Session. And were it not that Mr. Haviland was a merciful and considerate agent, and did not wish to harass or distress the tenantry, those persons would certainly be very miserable. When Mr. Thornton first introduced the Bill, he (Mr. Dingwell) thought something beneficial to the country would be the result, but he feared "it would end in smoke!"

Mr. COOPER was afraid very little good would be effected by it, and he thought that after all the time that had been spent at it, it would serve no useful purpose; it would only cause more trouble, and sooner than that would be the case, he would sooner see it lost altogether.

Mr. PALMER did not question the veracity of the hon. member in that particular: no doubt he would like to see it thrown out. No matter what others propose to do for the benefit of the tenantry, it will not suit his purpose, as it would render that agitation on which he lives, nugatory. Is confirming the squatter in his possession on a long lease, and the same rent as others, no benefit? He maintained it was, and that this House will get the thanks of those who are liable to be turned out of their improvements for so great a boon. He considers or seems to think, that we can enact laws as we please—no such thing. When we make a law to protect the rights of one party, we must take care it does not infringe the rights of others. He objected to the proposal of Mr. Coles, as it only tends to defeat the Bill. The House should feel grateful to the hon. member (Mr. Thornton) who had brought it forward, and had further shewn his good sense in yielding those points which would peril its passage through the Legislative Council. And beyond a question, the Squatters will be thankful for so great a benefit. He moved that one shilling sterling be inserted as the rent per acre.

Mr. LONGWORTH would second the motion. He would join the hon. member (Mr. Palmer) in opposing the Bill altogether, unless this were the case. Squatters never had paid any rent, why then put them on better terms than those who had paid all along and continued to pay it? If currency be substituted, the Bill will be lost.

Mr. SPEAKER said, it was very evident from whence arose the opposition of the hon. member for King's County (Mr. Cooper); it would deprive him of his calling. He does not suggest any thing that will benefit the Squatters himself, and he is so perverse as to throw obstacles in the way of those who do, stating that the present measure will do the country more harm than good. What has he ever done for the good of the country, notwithstanding all the turmoil and confusion he has occasioned?

The question was then separately put on the rate of rent and term of years, when it was agreed, by a large majority, that the rent should be fixed at one shilling currency, and the duration of the term to be 99 years, or 100 years, with a right to purchase at 20 years' purchase.

Mr. COOPER in amendment, moved a lengthy Bill for the settlement of the Colony—Yeas 5, Nays 15.

APRIL 1. STATE OF THE COLONY. (Debate concluded.)

The Honorable Mr. PALMER remarked, in continuation, that in 1839, the escheators said, "if you elect us, we will obtain for you even more than you demand." How then can this House, with any appearance of consistency, ask the Proprietors to sweep away those accumulated arrears of rent? Yet no member of the House could rejoice more to see it than himself, though he expected very little thanks for it; but gratitude was now out of the question. The hon. member (Mr. Rae) has entertained us with interesting details about delegates, factory children, &c. but these were no precedents for us to follow. What similarity was there between the Solicitor General's private affairs, the collecting of rent, and usages that affected the lives of her Majesty's subjects? He instanced the low price of produce taken in rent in Prince County, saying that oats were sold at 9d. the bushel; but he kept back another material part of the subject; he did not tell us that the proprietor lost 1s. 9d., as he allowed 2s. 6d. per bushel to the tenant for them in his rent. When this was last under discussion, he asked the whole of the Committee how many cases of distraint for rent had fallen within their knowledge, and though diligent search had been made in all the Record Offices, only 7 or 8 cases could be mustered up, during a period of 15 or 20 years past, and in a rental of £6,700; was it not flagrant to make such statements? So desperate was their case, that they were ashamed to bring the number of cases forward. An hon. member (Mr. Macgregor) stated a case of distraint that ended fatally—the case of Abel, at the Bay of Fortune; but that was rather a dispute about the currency of the rent than a case of distraint. What does the hon. member wish us to conclude on? Let us examine both of the hon. member's speeches on the question before the Committee, and what do they mean?—for his part he could form no idea. What is there tangible that we can form into a resolution. (Here read Mr. Rae's resolution.) "In all cases where the proprietors have let lands on short leases, and long rents have absorbed all the improvements of the tenantry, &c." The facts are not sufficiently strong to bear us out in stating that the distress of the Island was ascribable to the tenure on which the land was let. Almost all the proprietors give long leases; and the agent of Lord Selkirk states that he has received orders to give short leases, (and to the shame of the escheators be it told) in consequence of the unsettled state of the country! Mr. Stewart had also been misrepresented; that he refused to give leases was quite unfounded. He had seen the leases; they were for 60 years or 3 lives; the rent taken in produce payment and a right to purchase given. How can it be supposed that a proprietor will give away his property for a produce rent, for which they say a market cannot be found? He thought therefore the resolution was not borne out by fact, and it would be unwise in us to pass such a resolution, at the time when we are asking the proprietors to allow us more favourable terms. He thought it equally bad to expect us to recommend to her Majesty to take the rent in produce to reduce the rent to six-pence, and take the fishery produce that would lie on their hands; also to take the fishery reserves from the public and give them to the tenants. He thought this would be the most effectual method to take away any good that might be expected to flow from the resolutions we had already agreed to.

Mr. MACINTOSH observed that there was nothing new in this harangue of the hon. member for Charlottetown. He has told us that the House, since 1835, has entailed £60 of arrears on every 100 acre farm, and he says it is entirely owing to the agitators, but this he (Mr. Macintosh) denied. Is it to be supposed that the country is to be kept in continual agitation? For his own part, he was tired of agitation, but yet he saw no remedy pro-

posed. We acknowledge that the rents cannot be paid, and yet we call those who sent us here scoundrels and rascals, when they call upon us to devise some remedy for this evil—and what do they receive in reply? Nothing but a torrent of abuse. They may not be able to express their wants like lawyers or men of business; but he felt for those whom distress prevents from using more forcible language to express their wants, or from procuring the education suitable to their wants. For his (Mr. Macintosh's) part, he could not understand what plan he wished to propose. He supposed he should find capacity for that purpose. Formerly, he supported agitation; now he would support any thing that would set it at rest. We acknowledge that the tenants cannot pay rent, would it not therefore be better to get hand in hand, with more charity to one another than we find displayed in this House, in order to redress the destitute condition of the tenantry? Yet, because they are destitute, they must be called scoundrels! It is the agitators, says one, that cause the distress! They are the demagogues who cause it, says another! And so they go on, but they do nothing to relieve the poor tenantry, the only means of preventing agitation. We are told there is no hope; but if there is not, what use have we here. He hoped there was a desire to reduce the rent; at least he was sure the country would never be better until some remedy was applied.

Mr. WIGHTMAN said he considered that from the number and purport of the petitions before the House it was undeniable that distress was very general all over the Island. He was of opinion that the Resolutions already agreed to by this House, on the subject of the present state of the Colony, were not as satisfactory as could be wished, nor so extensive as they should be; yet he would support them on the principle that "half a loaf was better than no bread," and he therefore trusted the House would be unanimous in adopting them; and he was fully convinced that by the powerful support of his Excellency and the Executive, their effect would be most salutary at home.

Mr. D. MACLEAN said he had heard so much about "Agitators" and "Demagogues," that he verily believed some gentlemen on the opposite side had persuaded themselves that nothing that was wrong but might be ascribed to them; and that if "Agitators" were got rid of, all would be peace and quietness throughout the country. On this he would remark, that were they possessed of the cunning, the activity and the malignity of the devil himself, still there must be a cause deeper rooted, why this single colony, among all the dependencies of Britain, should be the most obstructed country in North America. Remove that cause, and agitation will become prostrate.—Othello's occupation will be gone. That cause will be found in the leasehold tenure which this House declares it will not interfere with; and the proceedings taken under distraints for rent drive the people almost to desperation. He had that day been informed, by a gentleman from New London, that he had gone into a house while the family was at dinner, which consisted of potatoes, without even salt, every thing having been sacrificed to pay those bonds and warrants for back rent given to the Solicitor General. Whatever the laws may be, the people will not be content to live in this manner on the virgin soil of America; and he believes that agitators are rather restraining than exciting the people. An hon. member had stated that disaffection was spreading among the people, but such is not the fact, but there can be no doubt that they are highly discontented, and that the rising generation will be disaffected if the grievance of which they complain be not redressed, or in other words, if the tenure of the land be not changed. With the aid of plenty of British bayonets, the present system might remain unchanged for many years, were it possible to remove the Island a thousand miles or so into the middle of the Atlantic; but it is folly to suppose that, situated as we are, within a few miles of a continent covered with republican institutions, it will always continue so. Lord Ashburton has declared that he is of opinion that all the British Provinces will be American States in the course of twenty years. But with all deference to Lord Ashburton's opinion, he (Mr. Maclean) thought differently; with the support of the provincials, Britain might bid defiance to all the power of the States for an indefinite length of time; but without that aid, she could not possibly hold them many weeks. In this Colony then it is very certain that rents must be laid aside, or the affection, loyalty and allegiance of the people to the mother country will go to the winds, and the man that supports the rent system is acting the part of a practical traitor to the British Crown; although he may not, for the time being, be aware of it, it is not the less true, though he may brand his political opponents with disaffection, rebellion, and bluster and puff about his own loyalty. As to the resolution before the House, he would say little about it, because he was certain it would not pass, however beneficial it might be. With regard to the resolution adopted recently by a majority of the House, depriving the people of all hope of Legislative redress, it happened rather untowardly that the Executive deemed it requisite to send regular troops into the country to overawe the inhabitants, a step which he considered to be quite illegal; but if otherwise, he called on them to point out any law that rendered it so.

Mr. COLES said he was surprised at the hon. member (Mr. Rae) bringing forward this resolution, as it was the same brought forward by Mr. Cooper when in the state of the Colony last, which he (Mr. Rae) objected to, as it contained matter that would never be obtained. But he (Mr. Coles) thought they were jealous this House would do something for the people, and the old Escheators would have no credit for it, as he was convinced the people were already satisfied (if it should be obtained) with what was in the resolution carried by a majority of this House the other evening; but he fancied he heard the hon. member for King's County, after they went home that evening, ridiculing the hon. member (Mr. Rae) for not agreeing to his resolution, and he said if we don't get up something to show our constituents, the next Election, and keep up agitation, we will never be returned again. Well, what must be done? Why bring forward another resolution, and such a one as they will not agree to, and then get it published; so now for it! Well! six pence per acre and a fixed price for their produce, for they will agree to 1s. currency, and a market price for produce. But he would ask the hon. member (Mr. Cooper) what would the farmers of this Island say if the price of produce were fixed at the prices that hon. member stated to him? He would rather see the market price two shillings and six pence for wheat, and one shilling for oats, when it is well known that for some years past wheat has been sold for seven shillings and oats for two shillings per bushel. But so inclined are some people for agitation, that he believed if the land was let for one penny per acre, they would not be satisfied; for he had heard a member of the old House say, he would wear his coat thread-bare agitating, and would learn his children to agitate. He (Mr. Coles) had told his constituents at the hustings it was useless to look for Escheat; but he would do his endeavour to get their rents payable in produce and long leases, which they said they would be satisfied with; and he was satisfied he would not have had a petition this Session, if it had not been for a few disappointed candidates of the old House, for he thought the majority of the people were satisfied to see what the present House would do for them; and he would like to know what more the House could have done? They have passed a bill to prevent the proprietor selling the tenants' stock or fodder during six or seven of the winter months, and also a bill to protect those persons settled on unclaimed lands, and have now passed those resolutions to address the Home Government in behalf of the tenantry, to get the proprietors to take the rents in produce; and if this is obtained, he said it would be more for their benefit than all the last House obtained for four years. But he thought if hon. members of the old House could carry any measure to frustrate those measures, they would do so.

Mr. SPEAKER did not by any means suppose that all those called squatters fell under the denomination of squatters; he acknowledged that many worthy characters might be found among them. He spoke in general terms; and nevertheless he would not bring forward any charge that he could not substantiate on naming the person to whom he alluded. There was a person of the name of Peter Campbell, a sort of itinerant agitator, who was very likely in the pay of some person here, who, with two or three others who were anxious to acquire estates, and no way scrupulous about the property of others, went about the country inciting the people to get up meetings, and to draw up petitions such as have been laid before this House. This very

Peter Campbell sent a petition here this Session praying the House to confirm his title, or rather to procure him land which he purchased as a Sheriff's sale. It was to such reckless characters as those he alluded, and by no means to the peaceable and quiet disposed settlers. The hon. member for New London (Mr. MacLean) asserts the illegality of sending the military to overawe the rioters of King's County, but he (Mr. Speaker) was convinced it was legal, and would have a salutary effect on the minds of the people, who now go quietly about their ordinary occupations, whilst the soldiers are peaceably enjoying themselves in their cantonments at Souris. If grievances exist, let the people lay their complaints before Government in a constitutional manner, and not by riot and turbulence interrupt the execution of the law, by taking the law in their own hands. We are sent here for the purpose of upholding Government, not to incite the subject to insubordination. Almost all the tenantry of the Island held leases for 999 years, and on that score he saw no reason they had to complain. Produce was very generally taken in payment of rent; indeed he believed it was very seldom refused, and thought the proprietors would be very glad to get it, and allow a good price for it also. If from the depressed state of trade pecuniary distress was prevalent, was it not the same all through Great Britain—even much worse than it is here? We are about addressing the Government to apply to the proprietors for a modification of the tenure and rent, which he trusted would be found beneficial to the Country. The fishery reserves are under the consideration of the Crown officers at home, and as soon as their decision was made known, the result would be laid before the public.

Mr. D. MACDONALD said the hon. Speaker has alluded to the glorious result of the military campaign to the East Point, and threw out some significant hints that certain members from King's County are instigating the illegal meetings so much talked about; he (Mr. Macdonald) called on him to name those persons to whom he alluded.

Mr. SPEAKER said, he was informed by an hon. member, (Mr. Yeo) that he was told by a person from the East Point that 500 men were coming to town to hold a public meeting, at the suggestion of some of the members from that County, who had written to the people on that subject.

Mr. D. MACDONALD said, if it is only from his friend, Mr. Yeo, the hon. Speaker has had his information, he (Mr. Macdonald) would say that so far as he was concerned, it was utterly false, which he was prepared to prove in any way required.

Mr. Cooper said, we have heard it stated on the floor of this House that the tenants were always in arrears of rent; now this he contended was because they were unable to pay the rent demanded. The land was to be settled according to the grants, otherwise they became forfeited to the Crown; now, we should enquire whether this has been complied with. How then can proprietors or their assignees justly demand rent when they have so flagrantly violated their own contracts? or how can government, consistently with equal justice, compel the tenantry to abide by contracts which they can't fulfil, while they allow the proprietors to violate their own with impunity? By Government telling us that they cannot interfere, we are given to understand that there is no occasion to interfere, as the land is legally forfeited without any formal declaration on their part. So that instead of soliciting the Government to act as mediators with the proprietors, we should at once bring in a Bill to settle the people. And this Bill to settle the squatters, if disagreed to by the Council, might be sent home accompanying the address. If the rents were reduced to six pence currency and taken in produce it would be better than the present system.

Mr. YEO stated, in corroboration of what the hon. the Speaker had said, that he was informed that such was the case by a Mr. Murray, from the Eastward. He continued at some length to explain his own views of the subject, but all we could understand of the matter was, that "if the persons to whom the hon. member alluded caught Mr. Cooper, they would smoke him."

Mr. MACAULAY was astonished to hear any one say P. E. Island had no cause to complain. The people are dissatisfied, because they are made to believe that they are submitting to unequitable terms. Hopes were held out to them that those evils would be redressed, but that was a forlorn hope. An individual was sent to England to look for that which he could not get in P. E. Island; but what was the result? The result was, that the scheme was found to be impracticable, and therefore this individual should now sink into conscious insignificance and contempt. This should teach them the absurdity of their teachers. Who else have they to blame for their folly? Are the tenantry more distressed than others? Are not merchants, tradesmen and mechanics equally distressed on account of the general depression of trade? Are there any of them in prison? They have plenty to subsist on—what more can they want? Compare their state with that of the merchants; examine their ledgers, and it will be seen that they are worse off than the tenantry. He (Mr. Macaulay) designed to bring forward a Resolution himself; but as so much time had already been wasted on the subject, he would merely support the Resolution formerly agreed to by the House, and brought forward by Mr. Palmer; for were he to agree to that submitted by Mr. Rae, he would consider it a proof of a defective judgment.

Mr. DALZIEL said, many hon. members have asserted that there was no distress. This he denied. Rents were too high, for one thing; and another great evil was, the short leases, and paying rent to absentee proprietors. These, he considered, were very great evils. There was much said about back rents; but he would ask, how could back rents be paid, when the current rents could not be paid? The system is bad, and requires alteration; for while a man lies under the lash of another, it spirits him. He was told that things might be worse than they were, but he thought they were quite bad enough. Short leases would tend to that end, and whether it was Lord Selkirk, or whoever it might be, that adopted them, as long as he had his senses he would oppose them in every shape.

Mr. DOUSE, a little excited, would ask where those leases existed? If the hon. member (Mr. Dalziel) alluded to the persons located on the Murray Harbour Road, he would say, that if they were tired of their obligations, and of him as their agent, let them now come forward, and he would soon release them, by remunerating them for their improvements; or he would find persons who would gladly purchase them. He was not there for the purpose of offering any explanation of his private affairs; nor would he give the House any further satisfaction respecting them. He cared not for insinuations, come from what quarter they may. He had challenged some hon. members, on a former night, to point out the "oppressors," and the only evasive reply that could be obtained was from the hon. member (Mr. Rae), who said "he could some tales unfold, if he were at liberty to do so, that would exhibit striking facts of the treatment of this worthy set of individuals," the proprietors. "A land agent's book," continued the hon. gentleman (Mr. Rae), "was a document of all things he should like to look into; he thought the perusal might throw light upon certain suspicions entertained by some hon. members. He wondered if they adopted the system of book keeping by single or double entry," &c. &c. He (Mr. Douse) considered these observations as travelling a little beyond the bounds of legislation. However, he would only observe, that the hon. member often appears to have a great many visionary ideas overflowing his brains. Permission to look into a land agent's book would, no doubt, be a gratification, but to look at it, and not be allowed to look into it, would no doubt be a great mortification. However, he would assure the hon. member, although he had stated his allusions were not intended for him (Mr. Douse), that he considered other land agent's as capable and competent as himself to keep correct books, by "single or double entry." He looked upon the reply as a mere evasion of the gauntlet