

The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

EDWARD WHELAN]

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

[EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Vol. VII.

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, MONDAY, APRIL 19, 1858.

No. 41.

Colonial Legislature.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

WEDNESDAY, 31st March, 1858.

House in Committee on the Report of the Special Committee on the Public Accounts. Mr. Perry in the Chair.

[On the first day of the session it was resolved that a Committee of seven members be appointed to examine and report on the Public Accounts; and it was ordered that Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Macgill, Mr. Perry, Mr. Muirhead, the Hon. Mr. Haviland, the Hon. Mr. Longworth, and the Hon. Mr. Montgomery, do compose the said Committee.]

Mr. Perry, the Chairman, having first read throughout the report of the Select Committee, as agreed to by a majority of the said Committee, and reported to the House by the Chairman thereof, Mr. Macdonald—it was agreed that the same should be re-read, and submitted, paragraph by paragraph, to the consideration and determination of the Committee.

The first paragraph was then accordingly re-read and submitted to the consideration of the Committee. It contains the general account of the financial state of the Colony, charging against it all Debentures, issued under the authority of 16 Vic. cap. 18, for the purchase of Township Lands in this Island, and all Warrants and Treasury Notes afloat; and—giving credit for cash in the Treasury, and Bonds for Duties in the Treasurer's and Attorney General's hands, and for the amount of sales of Public Lands, as they stood at the end of the financial year, 31st January, 1858,—exhibits a balance of £14,868 3s. 3d. against the Colony.

Hon. Mr. HAVILAND.—Before the question shall be put on the report, as far as it has been read, I wish to call attention to the fact, that although a majority of the Special Committee were in favour of the report which is now in the hands of the Chairman, yet it did not receive the sanction of the members of the Special Committee appointed from this side of the House, as it exhibits in our view a very fallacious statement of the existing liabilities of the Colony. By referring to the report of the Special Committee on Public Accounts, in the last session of the House, a report of a committee consisting wholly of the supporters of the Government, and which report was adopted by the House—it will be seen that the public debt of the Colony was acknowledged to amount to £23,863 14s.; yet, according to the report now on the table, in which the expenditure of the past year is admitted to have been £7066 10s. 1d. in excess of the revenue for the same period, the liability of the Colony is reduced to £14,868 3s. 3d.; and this is made to appear by credit being given for sums stated to be due on alleged sales of public lands, to the amount of £14,226 14s.; and on certain bonds handed over by the vendors of the Worrell Estate, for sums stated to have been due for sales of land, made previously to the purchase of the estate by the Government; but for much the greater portion of the sum of £14,226 14s. no vouchers are to be found in the office of the Commissioner of Public Lands, beyond the entries which appear in his books. In many instances no amount of deposit has ever been paid; and, in other cases, very trifling sums appear to have been so paid. In our opinion, the special committee might, with equal propriety, have decreed the 43,403 1/2 acres of public lands which remain unsold to be available assets to the credit of the Government; and so thought another member of the committee, who subsequently, however, changed his mind, and agreed to adopt the report now before the committee, as you, Mr. Chairman, may remember. I will now, Mr. Chairman, proceed to read the report prepared by the members of the special committee from this side of the House, and which at one time conveyed the views of that committee of the present financial state of the Colony.

[The hon. gentleman then read his report, which, as will be seen on reference, to and comparison of, the two reports, differs from that of the report of the majority of the special committee in all except the first and the last two paragraphs.]

This report states the public debt of the Colony, at the termination of the past financial year, to have been £23,870 4s. 4d. The remainder of the report does not differ materially from the report before you, except in that particular where the proceeds of sales of Crown lands are improperly blended with the amount received for public lands, for the past year. I shall content myself at present with moving that the paragraph relating to the financial state of the Colony be struck out, and that which I have read be substituted for it. Before I sit down, I must express my dissent to the manner in which the debentures, issued by the Government for the purchase of public lands, have been charged in the Treasurer's accounts. As they were not payable for ten years, the charge in such accounts should, in my opinion, be confined in the meantime to the annual interest required to be paid on them, and the debentures themselves not charged against the public lands until the expiration of the period for which they were issued.

Hon. COLONIAL TREASURER.—It is not within the province of the Treasurer to interfere with the mode in which the Accounts of the Commissioner of Public Lands are made up; but I think with the hon. gentleman, the member for Princetown, that the Debentures which have been issued for the purchase of Lands should not be charged against the Colony until they shall become redeemable; and particularly so as a large quantity of the lands, for the purchase of which they were issued, is yet unsold.

Hon. COLONIAL SECRETARY.—There is a discrepancy or incongruity in what the hon. member for Princetown has just read. If it be his opinion that the £20,550 of Debentures should not be charged against the Colony, until after the expiration of ten years, the period for which they were issued,—an opinion in which I perfectly agree with him—why has he included it in the balance which, by his amended Report, is exhibited against the Colony? If that amount were withdrawn, as it ought to be, from the debit side of the Government Account, the balance against them would be only £9,320, instead of £20,550. But since he and his friends have chosen to retain the £20,550 of Debentures in their statement of account against the Colony, they ought most certainly to have given credit for the £15,000 due on sales of lands; and then the whole balance against the Colony, even although now charged with the £20,550 of Debentures, would not be quite £15,000. If the Colony is to be charged with the £20,550, and is to have no credit on account of the 80,000 acres of land, to effect the purchase of which Debentures to that amount of money were issued; nor for the amounts due to the Government on account of the sales of this land, for the payment of which, by instalments, ten years are allowed; it is not possible that the Colony should appear to be otherwise than in debt. The hon. gentleman (Hon. T. H. Haviland) seems, not to understand the propriety of giving the Government credit on account of Public Lands to the amount of £15,000; but I will endeavor to shew the justice of doing so. They admit the propriety of giving the Government credit for £4058, due on Deeds issued; but they deny to their having credit for the amounts paid on Deeds not yet issued; and particularly their having credit on account of 938 acres of land, on which, they say, no deposit has yet been paid. Now, with respect to the Deeds not yet issued, but on which various amounts of deposit have been paid, but for which it is said there are no vouchers, it ought to be remembered that, by the law, the purchasers are not entitled to their Deeds until they have paid 20 per cent on the purchase money; and that persons, in order to secure tracts of land, by purchase from the Government, go to the Land Commissioner's Office as soon as they are able to make anything like a deposit at all, and pay such deposits, be they ever so small, into his hands, in order to secure the tracts of land on which they have set their hearts. Thus a man who may have selected 50 acres for himself, procures a plan and description thereof from the Surveyor General, which he takes to the Commissioner; and, on the payment of a deposit

£1, £2, or £3, as the case may be, the Commissioner gives him a receipt for the money paid, and enters his name in his books, as a purchaser of 50 acres, with credit for his deposit; but the man gives no voucher of his purchase; and the only possible voucher thereof, besides the receipt which he takes away, is the record of the transaction in the books of the Land Commissioner. And, as to the 938 acres, on which it is said no deposit has yet been paid, the facts are these; the persons who have applied for, and whose names are entered as purchasers of these 938 acres, in different quantities, in the Commissioner's books, are persons who have been employed by the Surveyor General, and whose claims upon the Government for work performed by them, on the Public Lands, will, when adjusted, severally amount to the several deposits to be paid by them. The Surveyor General has given in plans of the several tracts, so sold, to the Commissioner, who will give credit to the individual purchasers, for the amounts severally due to them, by the Government, for work performed by them; and these persons, satisfied that they have, in this way, secured their lands, will now go on contentedly improving them; but, even should they not take them, the lands are there, and worth the money at which they have been valued. The parties, however, believe that they have paid, in labor, the deposits which entitle them to their Deeds. If, however, those hon. members of the select committee who do not agree with the majority in their Report, are of opinion that the Government ought not to be allowed credit for the sale of these 938 acres, why have they not taken them into the account of wilderness lands, amounting to upwards of 45,000 acres? The 438 acres are there; and the Government must have credit for them in one shape or another. But the fact is, the hon. members in the minority in the select committee, and, generally speaking, the standing minority of the House altogether, having found nothing whatever substantial to grasp at, by which to verify their predictions of the evil results of the working of the Worrell Estate, by which to damage the Government in the opinion of the country, have vainly endeavored to lay hold upon a shadow. It is also invidiously noticed, in the report which has just been read, by the hon. member for Princetown, that, in some cases, a trifling amount of deposit only has been paid, while by a section of the Land Purchase Act, a deposit of 20 per cent is required to be paid before the Deed is issued. Well, what would they have? Is not this perfectly in accordance with the law, although they evidently wish it to appear to be in violation thereof? The report says, "while, by a section of the Land Purchase Act, a deposit of 20 per cent is required to be paid before the Deed is issued;" thereby leaving it to be inferred that Deeds have been issued before the legal deposits had first been paid; which is not the case. The Auditors have been wrong in charging the £20,550 of debentures against the Government; and I feel thankful to the hon. gentleman who, by his honest decision, has determined that question, in the House, in favor of the Government. [Hon. T. H. Haviland. The debentures ought not to have been charged against the Colony at the beginning.] The decision is certainly a correct one; for the holders of the debentures cannot make them available against the Government, except for interest, until the expiration of the ten years, for which they were issued; and neither can the Government enforce payments for the sales of public lands, otherwise than by instalments and interest, until the expiration of ten years. The only difference which I see between the report of the majority of the select committee and that of the minority, is that the minority, although charging the £20,550 of Debentures against the Government, refuse to give them credit for £15,000, due on account of sales of public lands; whilst the majority, in questionably charging the Debentures against the Government, have yet, very justifiably, given them credit for the amount due on the sales of public lands. The hon. member for Princetown says, that it appears strange that after spending £7,000, in excess of the revenue, the public debt should appear to be £8,000 less than it was at the close of the previous financial year; but this is easily accounted for. The balance due on the sales of public lands is £15,000, and when credit is given for that amount, as it ought to be, and as it is in the statement on the table, the balance against the Colony will be only £14,868, and not £29,870, as set forth in the hon. gentleman's proposed amendment. For political purposes, parties endeavor to make it appear that the balance against the Colony is £29,870; but take away the £20,550 of Debentures, which amount it is admitted ought not to have been charged against the Colony from the beginning, and the true balance will be only £9,320. This mode of ascertaining the balance, is the proper one; and I hope it will be satisfactory to the country. I maintain that the deposits, and the lands which are the securities for the payment of the balances, are preferable to the bonds in the Treasury. [Hon. T. H. Haviland.—When deeds are given.] Every acre is now worth 20 per cent. more than it was worth before it was sold. The deeds cannot all be given at once. The Commissioner told me, the other day, that he had, since the opening of the session, issued deeds for upwards of £600. When a number of deeds are ready, he notifies the parties for whom they are intended that they are so, and the parties, if they have paid, or are prepared to make good the full amounts of legal deposits, come and take them up; or when he visits the estate, he carries a number of deeds duly prepared with him, and delivers them to all who are prepared to take them up. But he does not refuse to take very small deposits, and give receipts for them, at any time; and, thus, when a man has paid only £1 as an instalment, he feels satisfied that he has secured the parcel of land which he wishes to purchase; and, in this way, several small amounts of deposit, not amounting to 20 per cent. have been paid, and entered in the Commissioner's books. Understanding that there had been some disputing on this head, amongst the members of the select committee, I copied off a few items of the kind from the Commissioner's books, which I will now read:—

On Lot 38, Jonathan Best has purchased 100 acres for £35, and paid a deposit of £10; John and Alexander McDonald have purchased 300 acres for £150, and paid a deposit of £30; John Jay has purchased 176 acres for £70 8s. 0d., and has paid a deposit of £20; and George Jay has purchased 50 acres for £17 10s., and has paid a deposit of £5; and, much after the same ratio, many others have become purchasers, and paid deposits; but their deeds, although they are entitled to them, have not yet been issued. Now, when it is known to all that if such purchasers, as well as they who have paid smaller deposits, do not take out their deeds, they must forfeit their deposits, I am surprised that any hon. members should seriously object to the credit which is given, in the financial statement now on the table, for the several amounts due on such sales. The individuals who, as I have before explained, are accounted the purchasers of the 938 acres, on which, the report states, no deposits have been paid, are persons who have paid their instalments by labor, but who have not yet come forward to have their claims adjusted, and take out their deeds; and two of them, whose names have been entered, as purchasers, in the Land Commissioner's books, are and have been unfortunately, for a considerable time, prisoners in the jail of Georgetown; and consequently it has not been in their power to come forward and claim their deeds. But I will now speak of the report itself; and first of that part of it wherein it is remarked, by the committee, that they find there were paid to the Clerk of the Executive and Legislative Councils, for his services, last year, £270, and £20 to an Assistant; although it is declared, by statute, that his salary shall be £120, in lieu of all fees of office, allowances or emoluments. Now, to understand this, it must be remembered that the Legislative Council exercise a power, independently of our control, by which they make suitable provision for remunerating their officers for the performance of any extra labour within their official province; as, for example, before the introduction of the present system of Government, a small sum was regularly voted, every session, by the Legislative Council, to be paid to the Clerk for indexing the Journals; and, no doubt, the sum voted to him, for that

service, last year, makes a part of the increase of his allowance noticed in the report. But the indexing of the Journals is very far from being the chief part of the extra or increased labour performed by the Clerk of the Councils. When we came into power, we wanted to refer to a certain Bill in the original manuscript, which should have been in the keeping of the Clerk of the Executive Council, but on enquiring for it, we found that it was in the office of the Queen's Printer. A question then arose as to the impropriety of the laws, in the original manuscripts, being sent to the printing office, where they were taken apart, and distributed, sheet by sheet, or leaf by leaf, amongst the compositors; to the great danger of portions of them being defaced, lost, or destroyed; if not positively altered and falsified. We then came to the conclusion, that, for the future, effectually to guard against accidents or evils of so serious a nature as the loss of a leaf, by which a whole Act would be lost, or the alteration of a word, by which the import and intent of a law might be wholly changed, the Clerk should be ordered to engross copies of the several laws, passed in any session, for the use of the printer, retaining the originals in his own possession, and comparing the printed copies therewith, as they proceeded through the press. This has been done ever since; and when it is remembered how great has been the number of Acts passed in different sessions, since this extra duty was imposed upon the Clerk of the Councils, the addition made to his salary on that account cannot, I think, be held, even by the most economical, to be more than he is well entitled to—for the increase of labour is not only serious in amount but of the most important nature. That the precaution which has caused so much extra engrossing, on the part of the Clerk of the Councils, was not needless, the explanation I have already given is sufficient to prove; but if the most direct proof of it be required, we have in the fact—that, through the very careless and dangerous manner in which the original copies were formerly used, and comparisons made between the printer's proofs and the manuscripts—in the Election Law, a Township was actually put into a wrong District. The Committee, in their report, also take exception to the amount (£67) which has been paid by the Government to John Doirant for superintending the erection of Oyster-bed bridge, and to a further sum of £115 5s. paid to the same individual for superintending the erection of Prince-street wharf, in Charlottetown, alleging that all such superintendence comes within the special province of the Superintendent of Public Works, as a part of the duty for the performance of which he receives his salary. This, however, I maintain, and hope to be able to shew, is a very erroneous idea indeed. The chief duty of the Superintendent of Public Works is to visit the sites of intended works; to draw plans and specifications of such works; to estimate the cost of their erection, for the guidance of the Government; and also to visit, survey and inspect them from time to time, whilst their erection is progressing. The Superintendent of Public Works is not the superintendent of such works in Charlottetown only, but of all public works throughout the whole of the Island. Were he, from the commencement of any public work of magnitude, to be stationed at it, as its daily superintendent, until its completion, that particular work, begun, continued and completed under his immediate supervision and direction, might be all that it ought to be; but, whilst the public had been benefited in an especial manner by his superintendance of that particular work, it might at the same time, in different quarters of the Island, have suffered loss to twice the amount of his salary, from its having been impossible for him, whilst so stationed, to visit other and distant public works, at the same time in course of erection; which, lacking the scientific inspection and architectural directions, so necessary to be made and given, from time to time, to ensure their proper construction, might be finished in a very imperfect and insecure manner. Knowing what very serious public loss had, at different times been sustained, and public inconvenience experienced, by the very unskillful and inefficient manner, in which contracts for the building of wharfs and bridges, in the Colony, had been performed, the Government, in order to ensure the proper construction of Prince Street Wharf, at first, engaged Mr. Benjamin Davies to superintend the erection of it; but (finding that the faithful superintendence of the work required more of his time, and a closer attention, than his private avocations would admit his bestowing upon it,) he notified the Government to that effect; and, on his declining the further superintendence of the work, Mr. Doirant was engaged to prosecute it in his stead. Of the wisdom and benefit of employing such a man as Doirant, to superintend the erection of such public works, we have ample proof, to mention only one instance, in the bridge at Souris. The abutments on one side of the bridge, not having been duly superintended, during their erection, gave way before the violence of the first heavy storm which arose after their erection; but those parts of the work which were constructed and completed, under the superintendence and direction of Doirant, have remained firm, and withstood the most violent assaults both of winds and waves. In the proper erection and construction of such works, much iron is used, and a great number of bolts are required to be driven, several of the length of seven or eight feet; and it is quite clear that the due performance of such work, by some workmen or contractors, there can be no sufficient guarantee but the constant and vigilant superintendence of a faithful and skillful architect. Occasional surveys or inspections of such works, by the Superintendent of Public Works, would not alone be sufficient to insure a due and efficient performance of the contracts; for, in his absence, much work might be very imperfectly performed and very insecurely fastened, and yet be so concealed by fair outward appearance that the superficial contractor would not be detected when it would be too late to have it remedied at the expense of the dishonest contractor; that, not until it should have given way and become a wreck and a ruin beneath the force of storms, which, if properly constructed and faithfully erected, it would have been able to withstand. The money which has been paid to Mr. Doirant, for his superintendence of the construction of public works on which he has been stationed, has therefore, I say, been wisely expended, and on no other account. But to argue or conclude that, whilst it is absolutely necessary for the Superintendent of Public Works not only to visit, inspect and regulate matters about lighthouses, but also, in their turns, to visit, inspect and report concerning all the principal public works at any time in progress throughout the Island,—he should be retained to superintend and direct the progress of any particular work, either in Charlottetown or elsewhere, is positively absurd. If the Committee on Public Accounts thought it necessary to apply to the Government for any information concerning the moneys paid to Mr. Doirant for his services, which I certainly think they ought to have done, before agreeing to that paragraph of their report which, by implication, casts a censure both upon the Government and the Inspector of Public Works, that information, as they must have known, would have been readily afforded them. That the whole paragraph in which, as I have shewn, reference is so unnecessarily made to the amount paid to the Clerk of the Councils for his extra official services, and to the sum paid to Mr. Doirant for his service in superintending the erection of Prince-street wharf, should be struck out of the report, is what I think no one who takes a fair view of the service therein adverted to candidly; and therefore, when that paragraph comes under our special consideration, I shall move that it be struck out of the report.

Hon. Mr. HAVILAND.—That the amount paid to the Clerk of the Councils, for his services, is adverted to in the report, is not because it is or has been considered, by any one who is capable of judging justly concerning the extent, nature and value of his official labours, that he is too highly remunerated for the performance of them; for, I believe, all such individuals agree with me that no government or legislative official is more deserving of the remuneration awarded to him, for his special labours, than Mr. Desbrisay, the Clerk of the Councils. But the amount paid to him has been noted because there is something anomalous, if not quite contradictory, between the fact that his annual salary is by statute positively fixed at £120, and the evidence that the amount of remuneration paid to him for his services for one year has been £270. That the salary fixed by statute is a very inadequate remuneration for the services to be performed, no one competent to estimate their value will, I think, deny. Why then, now that the average annual amount of his official labours can be pretty accurately ascertained, should not his salary be raised by law to such an amount as it is evident he is justly entitled to?

Hon. COL SECRETARY.—The amount of his labours is very far from the same in every year; but, on the contrary, varies greatly according to the amount of legislative business transacted in different sessions. Now, were we to fix by law the salary of the Clerk of the Councils, even as high as £200 per annum, this amount might not always be accounted sufficient by the Legislative Council, who, in the exercise of that discretionary power which by usage they have rested in them, might occasionally think it right to increase it, by sessional allowances, considerably beyond

that amount. The discretionary power which, in this respect, is ceded to the Legislative Council, we might, do doubt, constitutionally circumscribe; but so long as they continue to exercise it, as they have hitherto done, in accordance with the principles of justice, our proper course will, I think, be to leave them in the full and undisturbed enjoyment of it; as thereby they may, at all times, proportion the sessional allowance to the amount of labour actually performed. For a short session, in which but few Bills have been passed, the extra allowance will be but small; but for a session in which, as has been the case, forty or fifty Bills may be passed, it will be proportionally large.

Hon. Mr. LONGWORTH.—If the only difference between the report of the majority of the special committee and the amendment submitted by the hon. member for Princetown, (the Hon. Mr. Haviland,) be, as the Hon. Col. Secretary says, that, in the one credit is given to the Government for £15,000, the amount due on sales of public lands, and in the other credit for those sales is not given; his objection to the amendment appears to me to be altogether untenable, if not quite baseless. The only credits to which the Government can justly lay claim, on account of the sales of public lands, is given them by the amendment; and that is for the sum total of the several amounts which have been paid upon those Deeds. How, with any shew of propriety, the Hon. Col. Secretary can lay claim, on behalf of the Government, to credit on account of lands sold, for which no Deeds have been issued, and on which deposits amounting to only £1, £2, or £3 have been paid, I cannot imagine. The securities, where Deeds have been issued and Bonds given, are good and valid; but in all cases in which such trifling deposits only have been paid, the lands should still be accounted wilderness lands. I think that credit should be given for the sums received, and for the amounts due on Bonds, or on Deeds, but only upon such Deeds as have been duly executed. In cases in which Bonds have been given, or Deeds executed the securities are good and valid; but, in all cases in which the deposits paid do not amount to more than two or three pounds, and consequently no Deeds issued, there is no security for the performance of their implied contracts by alleged purchasers; and most, indeed all, of them, might, after having each cut and disposed of £20 or £30 worth of timber, for his own advantage, unceremoniously abandon their presumed purchases, and throw them upon the hands of the Government, depreciated in value to, at the least, the value of the timber taken from them, under the color of purchase and pretence of ownership. This is my reason for objecting to the credit which has been given, by the majority of the select committee, on account of the sales of lands for which no Deeds have been issued, and for lands on which no deposits have been paid.

Hon. COLONIAL SECRETARY.—Such lands, even if stripped of timber, as the hon. member for Charlottetown (the Hon. Mr. Longworth) supposes they may, or might be, would still be worth the price per acre for which they have been sold; for the barrens which were thought to be worth nothing bring 10s., an acre. I agree that if credit should only be given for the amount due on Bonds and on Deeds issued; then in that case, the Government should not be charged with the £20,550 of Debentures. If, on the other hand, the Government are to have placed to their debit the amount of debentures issued by them, they ought certainly to have credit given them for the amount of lands actually sold, but for which Deeds have not yet issued, if not also for the value of the lands remaining unsold. Let the committee, I say, do either the one or the other; and then, the balance struck will be correct and satisfactory one.

Hon. Mr. MOONEY.—It seems to me that it should be no very difficult matter to make up a fair debtor and creditor account, justly and fully shewing the position of the Government with respect to the public lands. The purchase of these lands, in large quantities, by the Government, for the purpose of selling them again in small quantities, is in the main, just like the ordinary speculations of our merchants. For example, one of them imports, say from Halifax, £2000 or £3000 worth of goods, and commences retailing them. Some he sells for ready money, and some on credit, wholly or in part; and at the end, say of twelve months, he wishes to ascertain how he stands, with respect to his speculation. In the first place, I fancy, he will debit his stock with the cost thereof, and all expenses, as well as damage and loss, if any. Then against that he will give the concern, or his stock, credit for cash sales, for moneys due on account of sales, and lastly for the value of the goods on his shelves, or in his warehouse; and the difference between the two sides of the account will shew the true state of the concern. Just so with respect to the public lands; let the amount paid for them, be first of all charged against them, next the interest of the debentures, by means of which they were purchased, and then the expenses incurred by the management and sales of them; and, against these, let the concern or speculation have credit for the moneys received on account of sales, for the amounts due on bonds, or on deeds, or on agreements for deeds, and lastly, let it have credit for the goods on the shelves, that is for the lands remaining unsold; and the balance will then shew the true state of the speculation; and prove whether or not it has answered or is answering the expectations of its projectors. If the account were made out in this way, it would shew that the estate is not only solvent, but in such a state as must be satisfactory to every reasonable man, and truly gratifying to every sincere friend and well-wisher of the people. But to admit this, will by means suit the views of the opposition; and they have labored and will labor,—but in vain I am satisfied—to convince the country that the concern is bankrupt, and that nothing but their return, in a majority, at the next election, can save the country from utter ruin.

Hon. COLONIAL SECRETARY.—By the 22nd clause of the Land Purchase Act, it is provided that "all sums of money and fees, paid by any person, purchasing lands, under this Act, from the Commissioner of Public Lands, on account of the purchase money thereof, or for preparing the conveyance or duplicate thereof, or otherwise, where required by this Act, shall be paid to the Commissioner of Public Lands, who shall enter the particulars of each payment in his books, and give the person making the payment such certificate, acknowledging the same, on his part, by endorsement on the back of the Deed, or otherwise, as the circumstances of the case may require." Now, on a fair consideration of this clause, does it not fully appear, that what hon. members in opposition are so strongly disposed to represent as altogether irregular,—I mean the practice of the Commissioner of Public Lands, in at first receiving and giving credit in his books, and receipts to purchasers, for less than 20 per cent on the sales of lands, before deeds can lawfully be claimed or issued on account of such sales, is merely a carrying out of the intention of the Act in that respect, wherein it provides that acknowledgment of money paid on account of a purchase of land shall be made by endorsement on the back of the Deed, that is if the Deed has been issued; or otherwise, that is by a simple receipt and an entry in the Commissioner's Books, if the Deed has not been issued? And, even after instalments or deposits have been paid, amounting to 20 per cent, or more, a moment's consideration might serve to shew, that Deeds cannot always be issued immediately; it may not always be convenient to procure the signature of the Governor; and in so large a concern all deeds which can be duly claimed cannot be issued in one day.

Mr. POPE.—I do not quite agree with the hon. member for Princetown (Hon. Mr. Haviland) in his views concerning the liabilities of the Government, on account of the public lands. In the account of public lands all the liabilities of the Government, on account of them, should, in my opinion, be plainly and broadly set forth, on the one hand; and on the other, they should be credited for the amounts due on bonds given and deeds issued, and also for the quantity of lands on hand or unsold, at what they are considered to be worth; but the amount of credit on this latter score would,