

(Continued from our first page.)

& Co. had purchased from the Trustees. If Mr. Pope had continued to hold the property, he would have put the people to great trouble and inconvenience. And, Sir, as to the price—the Government gave no more than the amount which was asked from Captain Sleight. The press opposed to the Government stated that it would cost twenty shillings an acre, we got it for six shillings an acre with the back rents. As to the assertion of the hon. member—that members of this House have been speculating in the lands. I deny it, and now call upon him to name a single individual to whom his charge will apply. Not one Liberal member has purchased 100 acres, and none could obtain more than 300. So there is not much chance of speculating in that. So far from the Government not taking all necessary precautions to guard the interests of the people, I can only state that Messrs. Pope & Company were dissatisfied at the strictness with which we conducted the negotiation for the purchase.

Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Mr. Chairman, the question of Escheat has been agitated now for a very long time, and I do not agree with the Hon. Col. Secretary when he says, that the petitions before the House on the subject originated from a few individuals in Charlottetown. I know, Sir, that it has long excited great interest throughout the country. The tenantry were promised that they would have their lands on better terms when once Responsible Government was introduced, and I know that political capital was made out of it at the Elections. The first year after the introduction of Responsible Government, handbills in support of the Liberal candidates were circulated, in which it was stated, that the Land Question would be settled. The people understood by that, that a Court of Escheat would be established, and several were elected on the strength of that idea. As to the argument that the Home Government would not allow a Court of Escheat to be established because they had previously refused it, we know that many things have been granted which had previously been denied. I see no reason, Mr. Chairman, for Hon. Members objecting to the establishment of a legal and constitutional Court of Escheat, if for no other purpose than to put an end to the agitation of this question. A proprietor having a good title to his land will have no cause to fear an investigation, and should in my opinion, be the first to support the institution of such a Court, and I think it our duty, Sir, to endeavour to obtain the Court, only to quiet the minds of the people, which will not be until the Court shall have been established. I shall support the Resolution as having for its object the attainment of a legal and constitutional right, and not only on that ground, but with a view, as I said before, to terminate the future agitation of this question, and allay the excitement in the minds of the people. Why, Sir, I know one Township where the people refuse to pay their rents, as they were led to believe that the Government intended to take the lands from the proprietors, and grant them to the tenants. I must say, Sir, in justice to the Hon. Col. Secretary, that I never heard of his having made such promises, but I know that persons have been going about the country, instilling into the minds of the people, the idea that the Liberal party would obtain an Escheat of the proprietor's lands.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—Really, Mr. Chairman, a new light appears to have dawned on the mind of the Hon. Member who has just sat down. We heard nothing of this last winter, when he and his party were in power. As to political capital having been made at the last general Election, out of promises of free lands to the tenantry, I have seen it stated in the *Islander* newspaper, that I promised the inhabitants of Lot 19, to get them free lands. Now, Sir, I deny the assertion most positively, I never promised any thing of the kind, and Escheat was never mentioned at any meeting on Lot 19, at which I was present. I believe Mr. Todd's Title to Lot 19 is good, and, Mr. Chairman, I deny that the agitation of this question is general throughout this Island: I admit there may be some excitement about it in two or three sections. About East Point there is a little interest felt in it. It has been discussed for the last 20 years, and I would like to know what good has resulted from the agitation of it? What benefit did the people gain from the mission to England of the Hon. Member (Mr. Cooper), which cost £300? But, Mr. Chairman, I am surprised at the Hon. Members, Messrs. Cooper and McIntosh, stating that the tenants on the Worrel Estate are no better off than they were before. Why, Sir, I was informed by Mr. Charles Dingwell that some of the tenants had agreed for the purchase of their lands at three pounds an acre, and when I stated that surely Mr. Pope would not enforce the bonds, he told me that he would. Sir, I maintain that the tenants on that Estate who have availed themselves of the provisions of the Land Purchase Bill, are much better off than they were before. Why, Sir, look at the land about St. Peter's Bay, which is the highest priced of the whole Estate, the tenants can get that at 12s. 6d. an acre, and will any man tell me that Mr. Pope would have sold those lands at that price? No, Sir, he would not have given it for double that amount. I am decidedly opposed to any further agitation of this question, and I must say that it does not look very well to see certain parties now supporting the Hon. Member Mr. Cooper, on this question. I recollect, Mr. Chairman, the time when that Hon. Member, and Mr. McIntosh were brought to the Bar of the House, for their concurrence at the famous Hay River Meeting; on that occasion some of those who now go with him, had not the spirit to raise their voices in his behalf, at the time when the Hon. Member for Charlottetown, (Hon. Mr. Palmer), was the warm friend and supporter of the Proprietors.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member who has just sat down has asked "what benefit the people have received from the agitation of this question?" I can answer, that they have gained in the reduction of the price of Land from four pounds to ten shillings an acre. And I advocate Escheat in order to lower the price to the tenants still more. If it had not been for the discussions which have taken place on this subject, the lands would still be held at three or four pounds an acre. But now, instead of receiving thanks for having reduced the price of land, we are ridiculed and held up to the country as disturbers and agitators. But, Mr. Chairman, it is my opinion, that if there was more opposition manifested to the proprietors, the lands would be offered on better terms. And certainly those who have paid rent and spent their time and labor in improving the land, should purchase their properties at a lower rate than they who come in and purchase wilderness lands.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—Mr. Chairman, there can scarcely be any evil, however great, which does not produce some little good. And I can assure the Hon. Member Mr. McIntosh, that the Government used every precaution in dealing with Mr. Pope. As a proof that they did so, I need only call the attention of the Committee to the fact of their having reserved no less a sum than six thousand pounds, to meet any difficulties that might arise from tenants refusing to attend.

Hon. Mr. LONGWORTH.—Mr. Chairman, I must say that I think the allusion made by the Hon. Member, Mr. Lord, to the time at which the Hon. Members Messrs. Cooper and McIntosh were brought to the bar of this House, can have no bearing on our discussion of the question before us this evening. That occurrence took place some 20 years ago, and really I do not see how it can affect our judgment on this matter. I am disposed to go for a Court of Escheat, and when I say that, I do not mean to express the opinion that the lands are liable to be escheated (laughter). Hon. Members may laugh, but I can tell them, they may find it to be no laughing matter, and it may be, that if they do not support the establishment of a Court of Escheat, their constituents may laugh them out of the House of Assembly at the next Election. I see a great difference between a Court of escheat and escheating the lands. I have ever been opposed to the extreme measures hitherto advocated by the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, and I still consider the agitation which has been going on for many years, a misfortune to the country, as no good could result from it. Still, Mr. Chairman, I am in favor of a Court of Escheat. I consider that we are as much entitled to it as the people of Canada, New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, all of which Colonies have it as part of their institutions. And, Sir, I think there is a greater reason for it in this Island, as we know that by grants improvidently issued, the whole Island was granted in one day. Although the British Government may refuse to allow us the Court, and the lapse of time since the date of the original grants, now some 80 years, may be considered as a confirmation of the title of the grantees, I will advocate the Court, and I should wish to see a majority of this House in favor of

it, in order to quiet the minds of the people and prevent any man or any set of men from making political capital out of the agitation on this subject. But Mr. Chairman, it has been denied that Members of the present Majority ever held out to the people the promise of free lands as a bait to obtain their support. But I will ask, if in the year 1852 one Hon. Member now in this House did not circulate a handbill in which free lands were promised to the people, if the so-called liberal party were elevated to power? (Name, Name). Well Mr. Chairman, I am not afraid to name him and I name the Hon. Member, Mr. Clark.

Mr. CLARK.—I deny it.
Hon. Mr. LONGWORTH.—Then all I can say is, that I can prove that he placed the handbill into the hands of another party.

Mr. CLARK.—That is not circulating it. (Laughter.)
Hon. Mr. LONGWORTH.—Mr. Chairman, I need no more than such an assertion to prove the truth of what I have said, for if the fact of the Hon. Member's having circulated the Bill is not proved by his having handed it to another person, or does not prove a circulation by him, I do not know what could be termed a circulation. But with reference to the question itself, I maintain that although Ministers may have refused to Escheat the lands, there is nothing in all the documents which have been cited to show that the British Government would not sanction a Court of Escheat. (Laughter.) Hon. Members may amuse themselves by laughing as much as they please, but I say that the question for the establishment of a Court of Escheat has never been before the House on any previous occasion. It is our constitutional right to have such a Court, and as I do not approve of the wording of the resolution moved by the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, I suggest to the consideration of the Committee the following:

"That it is expedient to establish a Court of competent Jurisdiction to investigate and decide upon the titles to all Township Lands in this Island."

Mr. CLARK.—Mr. Chairman, as to the handbill on which the Hon. Member, Mr. Longworth, laid so much stress, I think I can easily explain that to the Committee. I received that paper by post; it came to me among a lot of others; the principal portion of which I recollect right, related to the civil list Bill. "When I opened the parcel, Mr. John Owen, who was present, took up the handbill. Mr. Owen is no Elector. And I can state, Mr. Chairman, that I did not agree in the statements contained in the handbill. It has been frequently thrown up to me, that I carried that handbill about among the people, but I consider that my conduct with reference to that handbill, in letting Mr. Owen take it away with him, affords no greater proof of my agreeing with the opinions it set forth than would, this reading and lending to a friend by the Hon. Member for Charlottetown, Mr. Longworth, of Paine's works, be a proof that he coincided with the opinions of the author. I deny, Mr. Chairman, that there is much agitation on this subject in Prince County and I appeal to the Hon. Member, Mr. Montgomery, to say if there was any allusion to it at St. Eleanor's at the general Election? and at my recent election. I expressly stated at St. Eleanor's that I would not pledge myself to vote for Escheat. The Hon. Member, Mr. Laird, took the trouble of going into my district to excite the people against me on this question, and after all he has done, if he is content to lose his time and pay his horse-hire and expenses, I am satisfied. Why Mr. Chairman, under the fifth section of the Land purchase Bill, the Attorney and Solicitor General are a Court of Enquiry to investigate titles. In all countries there will be found some agitators, no matter how wild and visionary their views may be. The Hon. Member, Mr. Laird, has stated that the petitions before the House had influenced his mind and induced him to support the resolution of the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, although he was pledged to advocate no measure which did not meet the views of the present Government. Now, Sir, let us see how much consideration those petitions are entitled to, to induce any Hon. Member to violate the general pledge not to oppose the Government. Allowing every signature subscribed to the different petitions to be that of a bona fide elector, although there are many names written by the same hand, yet waiting that objection, and supposing them all to be genuine, we find but 1047 people asking for Escheat, about 1-13th part of the electors of the Island; and are we to be referred to those petitions as expressing the wishes of the people? And, Mr. Chairman, those very petitions have been got up by a few agitators, who have been going about the country, endeavouring to unsettle the minds of the people and throw every thing into confusion. This I think is proved by the result of the meeting held in the Hon. Member, Mr. Whelan's, district. At that meeting, I have been informed, that all but a few, say some six or seven, went against escheat, and though it is true some had put their names to the petitions before the House, when they were made acquainted with the true state of the case, they were sorry and ashamed for what they had been induced to do. So it would be in other parts of the Island, if the people had the true state and position of the question fairly laid before them. The Hon. Member, Mr. McIntosh, seems to think that the present Government, because it is liberal, ought to have gone for Escheat. I can tell him, Mr. Chairman, that if they had done so, they would not have been in a position to have carried the beneficial measures they have, but they would be in a position similar to that of the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, after his unsuccessful agitation. I shall vote against the resolution in toto, and I will give my support to the Government in measures calculated to improve the settlement of the country, such as the Land Purchase Bill.

Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I must say, Mr. Chairman, that in my opinion it does not look very well for the Hon. Member, Mr. Clark, to censure Mr. Cooper, and designate him as an agitator. If I recollect aright, he got his first election on the ground that he was in favor of Escheat. I know that he was a strong supporter of the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, in those days; and therefore, if Mr. Cooper is now wrong and misleading the people, he, (Mr. Clark,) must have been liable to the same imputation. I do not agree with the Hon. Member in the opinion that the fifth section of the Land Purchase Bill established a Court of Enquiry. As I read the Bill, it merely enables the Government to examine the titles of any particular property which may be offered to them for sale. And, Mr. Chairman, it is idle to say that the agitation of this question arose in Charlottetown; it is notorious to every one that the country at large has been agitating it for the last twenty years, and if I do not mistake, the great Liberal Reform Association had it brought under their notice. As to the remarks the Hon. Member, Mr. Clark, has offered in explanation of the circulation of the handbill, all I can say is, that what he has stated is to my mind, as I think it will be to others, quite sufficient proof that he did circulate it; and whether Mr. Owen was or was not an elector, it makes no difference; it is well known he was a warm political partizan.

Mr. CLARK.—I deny, Mr. Chairman, that I ever was an escheator, as the Hon. Member, Mr. Montgomery, has stated. My father was, however, a very warm advocate of escheat, and the only difference that ever arose between him and myself was on that question. I do not deny that I may have taken an active part from the year 1832 to 1842, but I was not elected till 1846, and for some time before that the escheat party was considered dead. There was no talk of escheat when I came to the house in 1846. And I can tell the Hon. Member that the majority of my constituents are opposed to escheat and that the public mind in Prince County is not enlisted in its favour. I stated at my election that I would not promise to go for escheat and I was elected for the reason that I was a supporter of the Liberal Government.

Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I repeat, Mr. Chairman, that the Hon. Member was a warm supporter of escheat and I would recall to his recollection the time he went to Brackley Point to do all he could against the present Hon. Col. Secretary.

Mr. CLARK.—I deny, Mr. Chairman, that I was an escheator at the time to which the Hon. Member has alluded. The question then was a quarrel between Mr. Pope and the Lieutenant Governor, and sorry enough I am from what I have seen since, that I did not support the Hon. Col. Secretary at that time.

Hon. Mr. WRIGHT.—Mr. Chairman, this is certainly a most important question, and it has been so fully and ably discussed that there is but little left for me to say,—but it is one of those questions in which I cannot feel myself justified in giving a silent vote. We all know, Sir, that it has been agitated for a great many years. In the years 1837 and 1838 the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, brought his

views before the House of Assembly. At that time, Sir, the Hon. Member had a large majority in the House, and much benefit was expected to result. Myself and others were led to believe that important alterations in the conditions under which land was held by the large majority of the people in the colony would be effected, and I will say now that it is my opinion that if the Hon. Member had not been extravagant in his views, much might have been accomplished in the direction of the Hon. Member's views—probably some six or seven Townships might have been escheated—but the Hon. Member believed that what could be applied to one would be applied to all, and thus, however good his intentions may have been, he went in my opinion too far. It is, however, Mr. Chairman, high time this question was decided; and while I admit that it is natural for the tenants to desire to become freeholders, and further that I believe they have been led to believe that the lands would fall into the hands of the Government of the Colony, I cannot withhold the expression of my opinion that the day for that has gone by, never to return. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the land purchase bill presents the only practicable mode of converting the tenants into freeholders, and although it may be considered by some that the Worrel Estate was purchased at a high figure, I consider it an excellent move in the right direction. Before long I have no doubt that the proprietors will be glad to sell their lands to the Government—the land tax they will find to be a somewhat heavy burden, which is not without its influence upon them now—the contemplated tax upon their rent roll is another step in the same progression which if continued will ultimately induce the best and fairest, and indeed only practicable mode of escheat namely, by the tenants paying a reasonable sum for the purchase of their farms.—I do not go before, I think the time for doing so proprietors. As I said before, I think the time for doing so has passed, and if I agree to purchase a piece of land from any man, I have no right to ask him how he received it, if he has a title recognized by the laws of the Country. As to the observations which have been made on the subject of the investigation of the title to the Worrel Estate previously to its being purchased by the Government under the Land purchase Bill, the fifth section of that Act requires that the Government shall cause such investigation to be made before they shall purchase any lands under the Act. This, Mr. Chairman, I consider has been done by the law adviser of the Crown, the Hon. Attorney General, and I should think that the opinion of a gentleman holding the high position which he does, ought to be sufficient to satisfy the people of the Colony that a proper investigation has been made, and that the titles of the Proprietors are good. All the different Deeds and Documents affecting the property were submitted to him, and there is on the Table of the House his opinion, which should, I think satisfy Hon. Members as to the mode in which the Government acted in the purchase of the Estate. When Petitions come before this House, it is our duty to take them into our consideration. It is true we have on this subject petitions from various parts of this Island. These petitions I shall treat with all respect, and so I know will all Hon. Members in this House; but we have to decide whether we will encourage the Hon. Member, Mr. Cooper, in his endeavours to carry out the views of those who have signed these petitions. Hoping that the question will be disposed of, one way or the other to night, I shall support the views of the Hon. Colonial Secretary.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Mr. Chairman, the hon. member who has just sat down, has spoken as if he hardly knew his own meaning. When he says that the grants were made improvidently, I tell him that the law and the constitution afford a remedy. If that hon. member will look, he can easily see for himself. But they who suffer under the actual pressure of evils, are those most apt to look out for the modes of relief. To show that the hon. member (Mr. Wrightman) should go for Escheat, after admitting that the grants were made improvidently, I will read what will, I think, convince him that he ought to support a Court of Escheat as a constitutional measure. I find in the third section of the twelfth chapter of Chitty on prerogatives:—

"The *stare facias* to repeal or revoke unfounded or improvident grants of the Crown (d), is another prerogative process which requires consideration. The King is, generally speaking, bound by his grants; but this is only when they are not contrary to law either in themselves, or void for uncertainty or deception, or unjust as injurious to the rights and interests of third persons (e). In these cases the King *jure regio*, for the advancement of justice and right, may repeal his own grant (f). As if the King grant what by law he is restrained from granting (g), or the grant be obtained by fraud or a false suggestion (h)."

No greater injury could be inflicted upon us, as British subjects, than to treat us as aliens. It is their duty to complain, and if we are unanimous, we shall obtain what we ask.

Hon. Mr. PALMER.—Mr. Chairman, a great deal has been said in this discussion, and the remarks I am about to offer will not, I fear, meet the approval of either party, as they have taken sides on this question. Sir, the first time on which I publicly expressed my opinions on this question of Escheat, was about twenty years ago, and my opinion was opposed to that of the hon., and I may now say, venerable member, Mr. Cooper. That hon. member then advocated the establishment of the Court as he does this evening. My reasons for considering the measure objectionable, were the same as I now entertain. There were many grounds of opposition to the measure, but a principal one was, that the day for Escheat had gone by. I argued then that the lands had been settled, and in many instances transmitted from father to son, and various other transfers of the properties had taken place. If that was my opinion twenty years since, it is not likely that I shall vote in favor of the hon. member's (Mr. Cooper's) resolution. But while I do not support that resolution, I wish it to be clearly understood that I do not oppose it for the reasons which have been assigned by hon. members who have spoken against it. I shall take but a short time to shew the difference. In the first place, Sir, I do not think that there is any weight in the argument, that because it has been hitherto refused we should cease our exertions to obtain it. I shall never pay such servile respect to the despatch of a Colonial Minister, nor will I submit with blind and uncomplaining submission to the continuance of what I may consider to be a general grievance, merely because a Colonial Minister may choose to write a hurried despatch disapproving of my views. One man is in office, as Colonial Secretary to-day, God knows who may hold that office to-morrow. It is no principle to go on, and if a hundred despatches from a hundred different Colonial Ministers could be cited, all condemning a Court of Escheat as being unconstitutional, I should give my vote for the Court, if I thought it was a constitutional right. A despatch is not and cannot be the law of the Colony, and if I thought it necessary, Mr. Chairman, that the Court should be established, believe me, I should be but little dismayed by the refusal of a Colonial Minister. I, Sir, would never submit to such dictation, but would take my position on the higher grounds of my right as a British freeman. These are not the reasons of my opposition, nor do I oppose on the grounds mentioned by the Hon. Col. Secretary, even if I were satisfied of the truth of the assertion, of which I am not, namely, that the petitions on the subject originated in Charlottetown, and that, therefore, they are not to be considered as conveying the expression of the opinions and wishes of the people generally. Experience, Mr. Chairman, has shewn that some of the most important measures that ever passed this House originated from petitions which emanated from Charlottetown, and from thence sent throughout the country, north, east, south and west. I would instance the petition for a dissolution of the House. Where, Sir, did that originate, and to what results did it lead? That effected a very great change. It might, at the time, have been said that it was not the expression of public opinion, yet it came back to Charlottetown, was presented, and produced the desired effect of dissolving the House. Nor do I oppose the resolution, believing that its rejection will finally settle the

agitation on the subject of Escheat. Voting it down this evening will be so far from settling it, that a refusal will only pave the way for subsequent applications, to be repeated until at length the House concedes it. Mr. Chairman, if I voted with a view to a final settlement of the question, I should have to give my support to the resolution, and say that nothing but the Court in operation would settle the matter. And when the first case which might be submitted to the decision of that Court, as being a competent tribunal, should be thoroughly argued and discussed, and fairly decided—and then if legal objections were taken to that decision, and it should be carried to the House of Lords as the highest court of appeal, and there receive its quietus—then I would say that every man should bow with respectful submission to the final settlement of the question. I look for a stronger agitation next year, and I oppose it, as I said before, for the reasons which actuated me on previous occasions, on which my vote has been recorded against escheat, although I agree with the opinions of a former Attorney and Solicitor General, as quoted by the hon. member, Mr. Cooper, that it is quite competent for the Government to constitute a Court without an Act of the Legislature. Still, Mr. Chairman, I consider this question is one which is inexpedient to moot at the present time. The non-compliance with the conditions in the original grants has been the subject of indulgences from time to time, and he to whom the lands were forfeitable might have granted them or not as he pleased to A. or B., to any person here or in England, in small lots or in one large grant to a single individual or to several. While such was the undoubted prerogative of the Crown, and while it chose to exercise it, by remitting some of the conditions, and by extending the period of settlement, there surely is sufficient grounds to warrant the grantees and their successors in saying and feeling that it would be a hardship and injustice to escheat the lands. I, Sir, will oppose this resolution, as I believe the introduction of such a Court would produce such agitation and turmoil as we have never in the worst of times experienced. I believe irreparable mischief would arise. Those opinions influenced my opposition twenty years ago, and now there is greater reason to maintain those opinions, and offer to the resolution a more vigorous and decided opposition, because there is now more danger of escheat than there was twenty years ago. The system of Government which was in force at that time, was such that they could not have demanded escheat with any success. But, Mr. Chairman, such is not the case at present. If this Act passes—if the resolution before the committee this night shall have received the sanction of the majority of this House, and shall become law, then there is no power in a colonial minister to prevent its going into operation. If, after passing this House, receive the sanction of the Legislative Council, and then meet the approval of the Lieutenant Governor. Now, Mr. Chairman, I ask what colonial minister, after the concession of Responsible Government, would dare to say that he would not allow a bill backed up by the approval, and receiving the sanctions I have mentioned, to pass into operation? For this reason, Sir, I feel it necessary to offer a more strenuous opposition than I have on previous occasions felt myself called upon to manifest. For once establish this Court, and who can tell me the result? The expectations of the tenantry throughout the Island have been long excited, and when now, Sir, will be found impartial Sheriffs under the Bill you passed the other day? Where will you now find Sheriffs of impartial and unbiassed opinions? Pass this resolution, and then you will have agitation not at the East Point or Morrell alone, but it will extend and agitate the country from one end to the other. I have never said that it was impossible to obtain Escheat on legal and constitutional grounds, but while it might and doubtless would be considered by many as a great boon—it would cause great loss and irreparable evils to many individuals. Lands have been purchased for valuable considerations, have descended to children,—large improvements have been made,—mills and other valuable buildings have been erected; and are properties such as these to be escheated at this day? If such should be the case, I may be told that the party in possession has his remedy against the individual from whom he derives title on the covenant for quiet enjoyment. What remedy is that? Where is a man to look for a proprietor? Many of them are dead, and the only reference in their cases is to be found in the inscriptions on the tombstones of those over whose remains such memorials may have been erected. If we wish to consult the peace and well being of the community, we should not set in motion an engine fraught with the mischief this measure would produce. It might have been tried as an experiment years ago, but it is no longer safe to tamper with it now under the present system of Government. If the Court be once established, and even only one Township should be escheated—the Legislature cannot then interpose and stop its further action, and undo what they had done, though every member might be anxious to do so—the people generally would insist on the machinery being kept going, and the House dare not, if it would, interpose to prevent it. And, Mr. Chairman, I warn hon. members to consider what they are about to do, if they carry the resolution. And much as I differ with the members of the present Government, I think they have done their duty by taking the stand they have in this matter, for if they feel themselves responsible for the peace of society in the Colony, they are bound to oppose a Court of Escheat, even at the risk of being turned out of the Government. (Hear, hear.) Hon. members may cry hear hear, but I can tell them that in the present state of public opinion on this subject, should public opinion be generally aroused, they may find themselves in a position very different from the present one. But now while they are acting on their idea of constitutional duty, they must not fear to lose public opinion, even if by so doing they should lose the Government, which I consider it is very likely they will.

Hon. Col. TREASURER.—Mr. Chairman, a great deal has been said during the progress of this discussion, and I shall not protect the sitting of the Committee by any lengthy observations of my own. The allusions that have been made as to members of the Government having excited in the minds of the people hopes of obtaining Escheat, are, I believe, without foundation. In fact, for myself, I know that at the first political meeting which I ever attended, in the year 1837, I expressly stated that I was opposed to Escheat, and I have always, from that time to the present, considered and declared my opinion that it was impracticable. It has been stated that the question was agitated in the partial elections in 1851, and also at the last general election, and the inference is sought to be drawn that the members returned gained their elections by inducing the people to believe that they would go for Escheat. I deny those statements; and I know that at the Saint Eleanor's meeting, during the last general election, the question was not mooted, and in the partial election of 1851 it was not made a test. In that year the Hon. Col. Secretary and myself attended a very numerous meeting at Tignish. At that meeting there were 700 people present, and the hon. member (Mr. Perry) heard the Hon. Col. Secretary ask the people if they had ever known him or myself promise to give our support to a Court of Escheat. The people answered in the negative. That, I think, is a sufficient proof that the insinuations against the Government are unfounded. It is my intention, Mr. Chairman, to oppose the resolution of the hon. member (Mr. Cooper), notwithstanding his assertion that Governor Fanning had received the Imperial sanction to the establishment of a Court of Escheat, and had destroyed the document. I trust he will pardon me if I refuse my credence to that statement, as long as nothing more than his unsupported assertion is adduced in support of it. The hon. member (Mr. McIntosh) seems to find matter of congratulation in the fact which he assumes, that the agitation of this question has reduced the price of lands from four pounds to ten shillings per acre. Now Sir, this, I contend, has a bad tendency, as it would have the effect of reducing the value of property, and no man will settle and introduce capital into the country if his property is not protected.

(To be continued.)