

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I trust that the hon. member who has sat down does not expect me to agree with him on all points. When the late Government purchased the Selkirk Estate they had the Warrel Estate before their eyes, and we know that it was much more encouraging to the settlers on the former estate to know that it was self-sustaining than otherwise. The Conservees had an estate before them with a debt of £18000, bearing interest at six per cent, as a warning, when they purchased the Selkirk Estate, therefore they wished to avoid the errors of the Liberal Government which had preceded them, by fixing the price high enough to make the estate self-sustaining.

Hon. Mr. CALLEBERG.—The hon. member for Murray Harbour (Mr. Henderson) says that the people on the Selkirk Estate were encouraged to purchase their farms, but I think the high prices fixed by the late Government upon the lands would discourage them.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I said that the late Government showed their honesty in making the estate self-sustaining.

Hon. Mr. CALLEBERG.—I understood the hon. member to say just what he has said, and I believe that people at times are apt to impose upon their friends. Some years ago the Conservatives contested an election upon the principle of exclusion of government officers from the House of Assembly, and I was called upon for my support. I said that it was not my intention to accept office, but I considered it necessary that there should be some officers on the floor of this House. Although that party obtained a majority they proved unfaithful to their pledges and several of them accepted office, which shows that men may sometimes impose upon their friends. It appears that the hon. member, when he consented to fix the high prices upon the lands on the Selkirk Estate, thought he would lay a little of other people's burdens upon the Balfasts. The hon. member for Belfast (Mr. Danaan) stated that about 50 per cent, besides costs was required to make an estate self-sustaining, but the people of Belfast were charged more than a hundred per cent. The promise made in the paragraph under discussion, that the people on that estate shall receive justice and equity, is all that can reasonably be asked for. The Government have been taunted by the Opposition with being cowardly; but a man is not a coward because he will not fight with shadows. I do not think there is much substance in the arguments brought forward by the hon. members of the Opposition. The Government are blamed for consulting their supporters before bringing their measures before this House, but before the late Government brought down the Fifteen Years' Purchase Bill they consulted their constituents on the matter. At that time I entertained and expressed the very same opinions on this point as I do at the present time, although I had not the slightest idea of becoming a member of the Government of this Colony. If I were not consulted on a measure introduced by my party I would not support it, for I do not think a man was intended to be moved like a machine, and to be bound to support every measure that is brought forward by his party. The Government can resign if they cannot obtain the support of their party. We hear a great deal about the unanimity of the late Government, but how was it that they broke up their party. It was because they could not get a sufficient number to form a quorum, on account of the want of unanimity.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—We are certainly under deep obligations to the hon. member who has spoken last, for his essay on constitutional government. House adjourned for one hour.

It was moved that the paragraph under consideration be now agreed to.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—Mr. Chairman, I have already expressed my views on the matter, but I should like to hear the opinions of those hon. members who have not yet spoken. I do not think the late Government of the Colony could enforce payment of the money still due on the Selkirk Estate. They could certainly do so in a Court of law, but I do not think they could in a Court of equity. We heard a very eloquent speech this morning from a member of the Government, in which he gave a resume of the actions of both political parties for the last twenty years. The hon. member stated that he was once a supporter of the Conservative Government, but changed his views because that party had broken their pledges with reference to allowing office-holders on the floor of the House. They only once went to the country saying that they would exclude office-holders from the floor of the House, and in 1835 they candidly acknowledged that principle to be wrong.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—There has been a good deal of debating, but neither of us has had any reference to the subject under discussion in another question. I agree with my hon. friend in reference to the question of the Conservative party—they did not remain true to their pledges. The hon. member for Charlottetown has said a good deal about vote by ballot. Any person would think from what the hon. member has said that he would never vote in such a way, or have any connection with any person who is in favor of that method of voting. But he belonged to the Political Alliance, and one of its principles was voting by ballot. The arguments in favor of this method of voting were that each man could vote freely, without being swayed by any, but his own views. I do not know how hon. members have found out that the present Government do vote by ballot.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—The hon. Leader of the Government (Mr. General) —The Conservatives broke their pledges with regard to paying the Private Secretary. Then there was the great religious question. It was said that the Liberals were going to take the Bibles out of the Schools. The Board of Education made it permissive whether or not the Bibles should be read in the Schools, and the law made it permissive also. The hon. member for Upper St. John's said that he was in favor of the principle of vote by ballot unless he found fault with it. But I should like the hon. member to tell us what are his opinions with respect to voting by ballot.

Mr. BRECKEN.—The hon. Attorney General would like to get a list out of my book. I never advocated vote by ballot although I did belong to the Political Alliance—that principle was never carried out by the Association. It was a very convenient method of voting. Any literary societies voted in this way. Why? Because there might be occasions when they would wish to black-ball a man, and gentlemen would not wish to let their views be known. But while the mode of voting may do very well in private matters, it is a miserable method for a political party to adopt. The hon. Attorney General has asked for my opinions respecting vote by ballot; and I say that the late Government had to resort to the mode of voting, it is something I cannot understand. The day was when the hon. Leader of the Government would have kicked the hat out of the House, and I hope he will yet do so.

Mr. G. SINGLAI.—With respect to the paragraph now under consideration, it appears to me that the late Government in fixing the price of the land on this estate, could not have been aware of the spirit of the Land Purchase Act. If they were, they must have been trying to make profit out of it, and I think this was the case, for I heard one of the members of the Government say at the time, that it was going to be a paying speculation. The Act provided that in case there is a deficiency it is to be made up out of the General Revenue, but it says nothing about what is to be done when there is an excess. It is to be sold to the tenants at as low a price as possible; but it is impossible for any Government to fix a price so that there will be neither loss nor gain. There should have been a provision that in case of an excess the money should be refunded. If this provision be complied with, the Act should be changed, if not, any Commissioner who may hereafter be appointed, would be afraid of setting too high a price on the land. If sufficient money has been paid to cover all expenses, what is to be done with the wilderness land, and the Government are not to make any profit out of the estate, they cannot charge anything for the wilderness land.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—One of them was placed so high that it could not be read.

Mr. MCNEILL.—I am aware of that, but that was not right. I think it was unfortunate that this extra sum of money was realized so soon from this Estate, for perhaps it had been in the hands of the late Government, where they would have used it for the benefit of the people. Probably, were it not for this, the Troops would not have been brought here, and the Barracks would not have been built; and Sir I. do think it is very fortunate that they had no more at their command, for if they had they might have built a wall around this city like T. J. Agass, or Graham's Dyke in Scotland, to keep out those barbarians to whom Mr. Dudd has referred in his letter. Of course the hon. member for Charlottetown (Mr. Brecken) in his allusions, will say in presence of Mr. McNeill, "oh! I did not mean you," but the statements which he has made makes me feel suspicious that he is not sincere in such assertions. The hon. member has said that he was insulted by my hon. friend, Mr. Davies, but he thought nothing of insulting me, and through me my constituents, when he said I was a "freibred." Is this the compliment the hon. member

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Mr. BRECKEN.—Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has succeeded in misrepresenting me in this matter. It is true that I spoke of one man, with whom I had a conversation, and related what he said to me, and in doing so, simply stated the truth. At one time the League wielded an influence, and exerted a sway over its supporters, which their organs afterwards denounced, and that man told me that their leaders were worse than demagogues. I was not going to take that man's oath; no, I was not going to do anything of the kind. The hon. member has taken exception to the term "freibred," but he should not be so sensitive. He should know that it is a common political expression, and that it was in that sense I used it. The hon. member is very well aware, that he, or any one else might succeed in inflaming the minds of the people to so great an extent, that such an expression in its political aspect would be quite correct. The hon. member is very well aware of this, and I tell him that he is not representing the good sense of his constituents when he makes such speeches. In the case to which I referred, I might have collected evidence, for several persons spoke freely to me on the subject, but I had no disposition to do anything of the kind, but I would like that some of these men had been placed at the Bar, then justice would have been done. But I do not say that the hon. member is one of those who should have been placed there. I will say this though for the hon. member, that I believe he has fairly said his position, but the Government which he supports do not support him, nor are his opinions reflected in the Press of the Queen's Printer, who in his place has been very reticent upon this question. If I twitted the hon. member, it was upon the score of his supporting a party who do not endorse his opinions. I believe the Conservatives would do as much for him as the Liberals and therefore he might as well come over and obtain their support. I think that I have not done wrong in coupling the name "freibred" with that of the hon. member, and I wish Mr. Dudd were here to defend himself for I think if he was, the hon. member would not have it all his own way, but I would be sorry to apply the name freibred to every man in the Country who bears his name, nor do I impute personal motives to the hon. member.

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Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—With respect to the clause under consideration, the members on the other side of the House, although they had the opinion of the Crown Law Officers, seem very anxious that the Government should state their views on this subject. I should think that the late Government would have put the same construction on the Act as the Crown Law Officers have now done; but when we see them fixing a price which would yield about 25,000 more than the cost, while they had a large quantity of wilderness land to dispose of, the only clause is irrefragable, that they must have contemplated making a profit out of it. That Government remained in office a great many years after the Selkirk Estate was purchased, but we never heard anything about the people being charged too high a price for their land. I should like to have an opinion from the hon. Leader of the Opposition, stating what his views were on the subject at the time the land was purchased. If the clause was contemplated, why was such a price put upon it. It would be difficult now, to adjust the matter properly, as some of the settlers have paid all their instalments. Although I have never thought much of the Conservatives, politically, yet I thought they would have priced the land in accordance with the intention of the Act. I have not heard an hon. member get up and say he is dissatisfied with the opinion of the Crown Law Officers, and I know that there is a diversity of opinion among lawyers as well as among doctors, and I should like to know if any of the legal gentlemen on the other side of the House, entertains a different opinion. I cannot but think that some other opinion was held when the Estate was purchased.

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Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—He was from the District represented by the Leader of the Government, Mr. MacNeill.—But when I asked the hon. member to name him, he would not do so. Before utterance was given by the hon. member to such a statement, he should have taken the man's oath, and then, had he proceeded against the guilty party, no blame could have been attached to him, but to come here and attempt to fix so large a slander, upon so large and respectable a community is very unjustifiable.

Mr. BRECKEN.—Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has succeeded in misrepresenting me in this matter. It is true that I spoke of one man, with whom I had a conversation, and related what he said to me, and in doing so, simply stated the truth. At one time the League wielded an influence, and exerted a sway over its supporters, which their organs afterwards denounced, and that man told me that their leaders were worse than demagogues. I was not going to take that man's oath; no, I was not going to do anything of the kind. The hon. member has taken exception to the term "freibred," but he should not be so sensitive. He should know that it is a common political expression, and that it was in that sense I used it. The hon. member is very well aware, that he, or any one else might succeed in inflaming the minds of the people to so great an extent, that such an expression in its political aspect would be quite correct. The hon. member is very well aware of this, and I tell him that he is not representing the good sense of his constituents when he makes such speeches. In the case to which I referred, I might have collected evidence, for several persons spoke freely to me on the subject, but I had no disposition to do anything of the kind, but I would like that some of these men had been placed at the Bar, then justice would have been done. But I do not say that the hon. member is one of those who should have been placed there. I will say this though for the hon. member, that I believe he has fairly said his position, but the Government which he supports do not support him, nor are his opinions reflected in the Press of the Queen's Printer, who in his place has been very reticent upon this question. If I twitted the hon. member, it was upon the score of his supporting a party who do not endorse his opinions. I believe the Conservatives would do as much for him as the Liberals and therefore he might as well come over and obtain their support. I think that I have not done wrong in coupling the name "freibred" with that of the hon. member, and I wish Mr. Dudd were here to defend himself for I think if he was, the hon. member would not have it all his own way, but I would be sorry to apply the name freibred to every man in the Country who bears his name, nor do I impute personal motives to the hon. member.

Mr. MACNEILL.—I have just got what I wanted to get out of the hon. member; and I wish, through the Reporters, to let my constituents know that the hon. member for Charlottetown called me a "freibred." I am glad also to hear him say that he was sorry that Mr. Dudd was not a member of this House. Mr. Dudd was the man who wrote this vile slander against the people of this Colony, and therefore, I am glad that he is not here. A man who could put upon paper that which would rob us of our constitution, our good name and reputation, ought not to be here. "Ho who robs me of my good name, takes that which does not enrich him, while it makes me poor indeed;" and this truth will apply to committees as well as to individuals. The whole of the country outside of this city have been branded as rebels by that gentleman; and yet the hon. member, Mr. (Brecken) is sorry that Mr. Dudd is not his colleague in this House. I always esteemed Mr. Dudd, and was sorry to see that he signed such a document; but having done so, he should not have a put forward as a candidate to represent the people. I wished to see if the hon. member would express regret for Mr. Dudd's defeat at the last election, and have succeeded to my entire satisfaction. I believe that our late Conservative Government wished, if possible, to induce the Imperial Government to force us into Confederation; but the folly of such proceedings the British Government have had enough in what has since transpired in Nova Scotia. But notwithstanding the foul libels heaped upon the people of this Colony by the late Government, the Colony has maintained her reputation and her independence.

[To be Continued.]

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—With respect to the clause under consideration, the members on the other side of the House, although they had the opinion of the Crown Law Officers, seem very anxious that the Government should state their views on this subject. I should think that the late Government would have put the same construction on the Act as the Crown Law Officers have now done; but when we see them fixing a price which would yield about 25,000 more than the cost, while they had a large quantity of wilderness land to dispose of, the only clause is irrefragable, that they must have contemplated making a profit out of it. That Government remained in office a great many years after the Selkirk Estate was purchased, but we never heard anything about the people being charged too high a price for their land. I should like to have an opinion from the hon. Leader of the Opposition, stating what his views were on the subject at the time the land was purchased. If the clause was contemplated, why was such a price put upon it. It would be difficult now, to adjust the matter properly, as some of the settlers have paid all their instalments. Although I have never thought much of the Conservatives, politically, yet I thought they would have priced the land in accordance with the intention of the Act. I have not heard an hon. member get up and say he is dissatisfied with the opinion of the Crown Law Officers, and I know that there is a diversity of opinion among lawyers as well as among doctors, and I should like to know if any of the legal gentlemen on the other side of the House, entertains a different opinion. I cannot but think that some other opinion was held when the Estate was purchased.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—The Hon. Attorney General is very kind to ask for an opinion from this side of the House. Unfortunately, however, the Crown Law Officers one day, which he disregards the next. Yesterday he had down the principle, that it was ridiculous for this side of the House to ask the Government any question, until all documents relating to the question were laid before them. Now he asks this side of the House for an opinion on this subject, when the report of the Crown Law Officers has never been laid before them.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—It is brought up in this debate, and it has been published in the different newspapers.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—We cannot take everything that appears in print to be genuine. We did see something there, purporting to be over the signature of the Attorney General, but it has never been officially submitted to me. Hon. Attorney General was trying to fish out of me, what the object of the Executive Government was, in fixing the price of the land so high. I can tell him that I was not Leader of the Government at the time, nor was I a Crown Law Officer, so that I am not responsible for any legal opinions on the subject.

not do it. Neither do I think it wrong to tell of things that happened in public. Talk about platforms; what platform have the Conservatives had for the last eight years? I read an article not long ago in which the Conservative party was compared to a horse in harness in a boat. He might pull or shove as he liked, but the boat would still go on. If a man has pursued a wrong course it is right for him to change his views and go in the right track. If the Conservatives see that the Land Purchase Bill is the proper method of settling the Land Question, they have a right to take it up. One gentleman said it was a proof of the honesty of the Conservatives that they had changed the settlers on the Selkirk Estate who were their own supporters, a high price for their land. Hon. Mr. Henderson.—I said it was a proof that they were honest in their endeavors to settle the Land Question. Mr. P. SINGLAI.—The clause before this hon. Committee is a very important one. The IX Section of the Land Purchase Act reads as follows:— "After each purchase of lands effected under this Act and conveyance taken, it shall be the duty of the Commissioner of public lands, within three months to make a report and return of the lands purchased (for each Township a separate report and return) designating particularly the quality, nature, description, and position thereof, and arranging the same into classes, and it shall be the duty of the Commissioner, as tenant Governor, by and with the advice and consent of Her Majesty's Executive Council, thereupon to fix upon and determine the price to be charged for the sale of each description of land; the same to be regulated so that a sufficient price be charged to aggregate to cover all other charges, as well as the purchase, transfer, survey and management of the lands, the purchase money and interest thereon, less to the general revenue from decrease in the land tax on account of land purchased under this Act, the salary of the Commissioner of public lands, and all other expenses incurred in working the Act;—It is provided that this Act shall, if possible, be self-sustaining, and that all expenses and outlays shall be paid out of money arising from the sales and rents of lands purchased hereunder, and that the purchase money and interest thereon, shall be repaid to the Government, as well as resort to the general revenue if it can possibly be avoided; but that this object being attained, the lands shall be disposed of to the Tenants and other persons desirous of becoming purchasers, at as low a rate as possible."

It has been said that the late Government were not aware of the clause which charged so high a price for the land on this Estate; but I see from the Debates of 1866 that they took great credit to themselves for making a good bargain. The law is very explicit here; they must send Commissioners to examine the land, and the Government is to fix the price in accordance with their report. The law should be changed, so that in case there is any surplus it may be returned to the people. If this is not done it may occasion trouble with other estates as well as this. There is one thing I cannot well understand—It, after all the money has been paid for an estate, there is a deficiency, what is to be done then? The rule should work both ways. I think it is very difficult for any Government, without having that clause amended, to fix the price of the land. I am of the same opinion as the hon. member from Princeton (Mr. G. Singlai) that if the clause remains in the law the Government cannot charge anything for the wilderness land.

Mr. BRECKEN.—To whom would the hon. member give the wilderness land?

Mr. P. SINGLAI.—If it is found that according to the law you cannot charge anything for it, give it to the first who will claim it.

Hon. Mr. MACNEILL.—There is an axiom in mathematics that all parts are equal to the whole, and the hon. member has only given us a part of the Act. Will he favor this Committee by reading the XX Section of it.

Mr. SINGLAI then read the twentieth section, as follows:— "For the repayment of all sums of money borrowed under this Act, and the interest thereon, and for the repayment of all sums contracted to be paid under this Act, and expenses incurred in the management of the lands, sales, and profits of land purchased thereunder, and paid into the Treasury, shall, in the first instance, be pledged and rendered liable, and the other public funds, monies, and securities of this Island, shall be and the same are hereby in the next place pledged and rendered liable."

Here followed some discussion concerning the word profit, which appeared in the foregoing section. It was explained, however, that the words "rents, profits and interest," meant the proceeds of an estate, and not any surplus over and above the cost.

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