

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 7 MAY 1867

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 7 May, 1867.

Meeting of Parliament.—Marriage Laws Amendment and Consolidation Bill.—Vice-Regal Speech.—Address in Reply to Opening Speech.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

The SPEAKER took the chair at twelve o'clock.

A message was received from His Excellency the Governor by the Acting Usher of the Black Rod, requiring the attendance of honorable members of the Legislative Assembly in the chamber of the Legislative Council.

The SPEAKER and honorable members present accordingly proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber, and on their return the House adjourned till half-past three o'clock.

MARRIAGE LAWS AMENDMENT AND CONSOLIDATION BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that, in virtue of the constitutional right which attached to the Legislative Assembly on the first day of their meeting for the session, he begged to bring in a Bill to amend and consolidate the laws affecting the celebration of marriage; and to move that the Bill be read a first time.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read a first time.

THE VICE-REGAL SPEECH.

The SPEAKER said he had to report that the House had that day attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency was pleased to deliver a speech to both Houses of Parliament, a copy of which, for greater accuracy, he would now read to the House. He then read the Speech accordingly.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

Mr. COXEN moved—

1. That a select committee be appointed to prepare an address in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor in opening this fifth session of the second Parliament of Queensland.

2. That such committee consist of the following members:—The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer, and the mover and seconder.

MR. REED seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

The committee then retired, and on their return the Clerk, on the motion of Mr. COXEN, read their report, which consisted of the following address:—

“To His Excellency Sir GEORGE FERGUSON BOWEN, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same, &c., &c., &c.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

“We, Her Majesty’s dutiful and loyal subjects, the members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled, desire to assure your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the person and government of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the Speech in which you have been pleased to open Parliament.

“2. The papers referring to the Postal Conference at Melbourne shall receive our best attention, and we trust that your Excellency’s anticipations in reference to this matter will be realized.

“3. We have learned with much satisfaction that the settlement of the country progresses under the Leasing and Agricultural Reserves Acts. The increased surveys, and the proclamation of extensive areas suitable for cultivation, will facilitate the occupation of the country, and thus tend to promote the benefit both of its present inhabitants and of those who may be attracted to the colony by the wise liberality of our land laws. The terms upon which leasehold as well as freehold tenure may be acquired or retained are also of the utmost moment to the pastoral interests; and we thank your Excellency for informing us that this matter will be brought under our notice.

“4. We desire to express our satisfaction that the question of immigration is to be submitted for our deliberation. The continued prosperity of the colony depends upon the introduction of an industrious population possessing both the skill and the capital to develop its great resources.

“5. The completion of the most important of the railway contracts is a matter for sincere congratulation, and we trust that the remaining public works will be finished in a satisfactory manner.

“6. We will gladly co-operate with the Legislative Council in the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the monetary position of the colony, and to report upon the system of credit, and of the currency now in existence.

“7. We desire to thank your Excellency for that portion of the Speech specially addressed to the Assembly. We are alive to the defects in the representation of the people which are referred to by your Excellency, and we shall therefore give our best attention to the Bill which it is proposed to introduce for taking a Census.

“8. Notwithstanding the financial crisis, which has severely affected this colony in common with the whole Empire, we observe with pleasure that our productive industry was never in a more active condition. The rewards offered for the discovery of new gold fields are calculated to stimulate enterprise, while the prospects both of the yield of cotton and of the growth of the sugarcane are most encouraging.

“9. We trust that the operations of trade and commerce, which are indicated by the return of exports and imports, referred to by your Excellency, will conduce to the advancement of this colony.

“10. In conclusion, we beg to assure your Excellency of our earnest desire to give our most serious attention to the various measures which may be brought under our notice; and we trust that, under the Divine blessing, our deliberations may conduce to the prosperity and happiness of the people.”

Mr. COXEN then rose and said: I now move that the address in reply to His Excellency’s Speech, as read, be adopted. In doing so I desire to state that I should have been better pleased that the usual custom of Parliament had been persevered in on this occasion—that is, that a younger member of the House than myself should have moved the adoption of the address. However, this is not the first time I have stood in this position, and I am somewhat inclined to think that the honorable gentleman who put this motion into my hand and asked me to move it acted to some extent on the principle of working the willing horse to death. But, I have the less hesitation to perform this duty as, in looking over the opening Speech, I see nothing

in it with which I cannot to some extent agree; at least, I see nothing in it with which I disagree. I will now proceed to deal with the address; and, in the first place, I would call the attention of honorable members to the second paragraph. It is with considerable satisfaction I see by this paragraph the probability of postal communication between this colony and Europe and the East being established by way of Java. I think honorable members will agree with me in saying that it is not only the advantages of a second postal route we will derive by this means, but the benefit also of having brought prominently under the notice of commercial men in all quarters, and of the passengers by the mail steamers, the fertile character of the colony, especially along our extensive stretch of seaboard. It is highly desirable that such should be the case, as it must lead to the introduction of many tropical plants for which the climate and soil of the colony are well fitted, and the cultivation of which would greatly conduce to the prosperity of the colony. In coming to the third paragraph I may say that I could have wished that the fifth paragraph had preceded the third; as the subject of the one is very intimately connected with the subject of the other. There can be no doubt that the opening up of the lands for agricultural purposes will be of immense benefit to the colony, and that it is perhaps the only means of obtaining for us a high position among the neighboring colonies; but I look upon the opening of the railways as the principal cause of those lands being set aside for agricultural purposes, and therefore, as a matter of order, I could wish that the fifth paragraph, which refers to the railways, had preceded the third. In the Speech I see it is contended that no particular interest should be made to suffer for the purpose of encouraging an interest of another character; and I view that passage with the greatest satisfaction, for it is patent to all that the pastoral interest in this colony must not be made to suffer for any other, unless that other would be of greater advantage to the colony. I do however look upon this third paragraph in the Speech as possessing immense interest to the whole of us, because the policy it expresses will tend to open up new industries, and the paragraph therefore presents new and encouraging prospects to us, and gives us a hope that we may yet realise the prospect exhibited by Mr. Broughton, who was one of the honorable members for West Moreton in the first session of the first Parliament of this colony, when he pictured in very glowing colors the colony as covered with smiling homesteads and waving fields of corn. Now, I think the policy set forth in this paragraph is calculated to bring forth that which Mr. Broughton foretold would be the consequence of a liberal land policy. The paragraph referring to immigration is one that demands the most serious atten-

tion; and it is admitted throughout the length and breadth of the colony, that the immigration system demands that great changes should be made in it. The system has not worked satisfactorily; and I could have wished that more had been shadowed forth on the subject than is expressed in this paragraph, as to the intentions of the Government on the subject, for I believe that much of the vitality of the colony depends on the introduction of an industrious population. The opening of the railway will, I have no doubt, tend to increase very much the prosperity of the colony, and if the prophesies made to some honorable members of the House, by the late Minister for Works, for instance, on the opening of the line, as to the great benefits that would result from the establishment of railway communication—if these should be fulfilled I have no doubt we will all have much cause to bless the day that the railway works were commenced. I have no hesitation in saying that railway communication will tend very much to the advancement of the colony, by opening up large fields for new industries, by facilitating communication with the interior, and thereby promoting the settlement of population in districts hitherto comparatively inaccessible; and also furthering the prosperity of those engaged in pastoral pursuits. The seventh paragraph, relating to the financial condition of the colony, is one that demands the serious attention of all honorable members. I must admit that I can hardly follow the meaning of the paragraph, but if I am correct in my opinion, the matter is one the consideration of which, I think, we may readily enter upon with honorable members of the other House. It appears to me to be a matter that is not connected with the political position of parties, or particularly with the Government in their financial arrangements, though I think it foreshadows something of the nature of a national bank.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: No, no.

Mr. COXEN: Well, I will admit that it is not very clear to me what is intended by the paragraph. The next paragraph is one that is usually found in the Speech of His Excellency on the opening of Parliament. It is one that says that the Estimates for the year 1868, have been prepared with the utmost economy consistent with making due provision for the necessary expenditure of the year. Well, that has always been the statement made by the men in power, and I hope that when the Estimates are placed before us, we shall not be disappointed. The next paragraph, as it relates to the representation of the people, is one that demands the attention of every one in the colony. I am glad to see the subject is referred to in the Speech, for the opinion I expressed last session has been very much strengthened by the present position of affairs; and my impression last session was that a re-organization of the electoral districts was urgently required, and I consider that the

present is a most opportune time for effecting are-distribution of the electoral districts of the colony. There has long been a great cry by the constituencies of several districts that they have not been fairly represented. I do not blame any one for that; but, that there has been such a cry for a length of time proves the necessity for a re-distribution of the electorates. If we look at the changing nature of our population, we will find that one or two years makes a great difference in the number of the population in any district, and it is only by the taking of a census, as proposed in this paragraph, that a proper basis for the representation of the population can be obtained. With regard to the tenth paragraph, I could have wished that something more had been said in it with reference to the gold resources of the colony—something that would have given us a hope that the Government would take some steps towards obtaining a geological survey of the colony, and such a survey as would indicate, not only the position of the present gold fields and known auriferous country, but which would also provide something like a fair ground for speculation in the further development of the gold resources of the colony. I have some little knowledge myself of geology, and I decidedly believe that the lands of the colony are not only highly auriferous, but are also rich in other mineral resources, which might be turned to great advantage; and it is very desirable that some steps should be taken to ascertain the localities where they exist. The statement in the eleventh paragraph is highly gratifying. It is to the effect, that our exports during the first quarter of the present year considerably exceeded our imports. Now, when we find that our exports are beginning to exceed our imports, we must see that we are getting into a very happy state of affairs.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: When we do.

MR. COXEN: Well, I am not in a position to know much about the matter beyond what is contained in the Speech, and I take the statement contained in this paragraph on the subject as being correct; and, comparing the figures for the first quarter of 1866 with those for the corresponding quarter of 1867, it appears that there has been a very large increase in our exports. I have no occasion to detain the House any longer, and will therefore conclude by moving that the address as brought up be adopted.

MR. REED seconded the motion of the honorable member for the Northern Downs, and said that he would content himself with simply doing so at present, as he desired to address the House at a subsequent stage of the debate.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE said he believed all honorable members would agree with him in saying that, next to the opening of the first session of Parliament, the present session was the most important time they had met

together. On the former occasion they met for the purpose of inaugurating responsible government—when the colony was to begin to run alone, and when it appeared to be full of promise. Now, on this occasion, they were called upon to adopt an address sanctioning all that was contained in the Governor's opening Speech—which should not be done without due deliberation and consideration on such an occasion as the present. The representatives of the people now met at a time when this once flourishing colony was oppressed with a heavy debt; when trade was falling away from the colony; when the colony was laboring under the burden of excessive taxation; when the authority of Parliament was set at naught, and when the people were under the rule of a despotic Minister—he would not say a despotic Ministry, but a despotic Minister—who seemed to think that he was quite irresponsible for his acts either to the people or to their representatives. They found that in the short period of twelve months there had been several changes in the Ministry, but there had always been the same despotic head. For some time the Darling Downs interest prevailed in the Ministry, and it was then almost a purely squatting Ministry, but, by death and desertion, the same Ministry almost, with the same head, was in power that was in power twelve months ago. It was quite clear the Ministry did not hang well together, and one member of the Ministry had just resigned his office, and it had not yet been filled up. Now, under all those circumstances, he thought the House ought not to allow the address to pass without proper discussion. With regard to the Speech, he would say this for it, that it did not appear to be concocted so much for the home market as former speeches on similar occasions. Though there was one portion of it that partook somewhat of that nature, it did not go to the same extent as had been usual, and they did not find so much in the Speech about the flourishing state of the revenue of the colony, or the extent to which the population and the resources of the colony had increased. So far, therefore, he approved of it; but, on looking over the various paragraphs, he felt he would have something to say upon all or most of them. The first paragraph he found threw down the gauntlet to honorable members with respect to a question upon which they were at issue with the Government—that was in regard to the railway resolutions passed by the House, and the refusal of the Government to adhere to those resolutions. When His Excellency the Governor was memorialized to call Parliament together to deal with that question, the prayer of the memorial was refused. The first paragraph in the Speech said:—

“It is with much satisfaction that, at the usual period of the year, when it is most convenient for many of you to attend upon your

Parliamentary duties, I again invite you to the consideration of the public business."

Now, that paragraph conveyed an imputation that those honorable members who memorialized His Excellency were, when they did so, endeavoring to have Parliament called together at a time when it would not be convenient for other honorable members to attend to their parliamentary duties. He had already tabled a motion for the production of the minutes of the Executive Council meeting at which the memorial was considered, and the correspondence respecting the calling of Parliament together at an earlier period. It was quite true that those papers had been published in the *Government Gazette*, but he thought that those unique productions should not be allowed to be lost to society and posterity by their publication being confined to the *Government Gazette*, but that they should be also laid upon the table of the House. The second paragraph in the report had relation to the Postal Conference that had been held in Melbourne. Now, the Ministry must be aware that, in consequence of the jealousies that existed between the colonies on the subject of postal communication, the resolutions agreed to by the conference were not likely to be carried out; and he thought that, until the result of the proceedings in the Victorian Parliament, and the views of the Home Government on the subject, were ascertained, this was a question that might be left alone by the Government. So far as his own opinions were concerned, he must say that he did not agree with the decision that had been come to by the conference. He believed the colony might have carried on the Torres' Straits route single-handed, except with the subsidy from the Dutch Government of Netherlands India, at much less expense than they would be involved in by the scheme agreed to by the conference. By that scheme they would have to join in maintaining another line of mail communication which would be perfectly useless to the colony; and they would also have to erect a line of telegraph to Cape York, which would be very expensive, and from which there would be little or no return. It seemed to him that a species of what was called "log-rolling" had prevailed amongst the representatives of the various colonies at the conference, and that the one set of representatives had said to the other, "If you support our scheme, we'll support yours." Now, when they took their financial circumstances into consideration, though it would be desirable to have a line by way of Torres' Straits, they ought to bring themselves to the conclusion that the one line, in the advantages and expense of which they now shared, was quite sufficient for all their wants at present. The line *via* Suez enabled them to have communication with the mother country once a month, and that, he thought, was quite sufficient for all the requirements

of the colony. The cost of that line to the colony was, he believed, about £6,000 or £7,000 a year, and, until they recovered a good financial position, that line should be considered sufficient for the present wants of the colony. However, as he supposed the Government would introduce a motion on the subject at another time, he would not refer further to the question at present. The third paragraph in the Speech had reference to the agricultural reserves, and alluded to the extent of land in the Darling Downs district that had been reserved by the proclamation for agricultural purposes. Now, with regard to the last proclamation of the Government, he looked upon it as nothing more or less than an electioneering dodge. He believed that the alienation of such a large amount of land at that particular period, however desirable it might be in other respects, would not have been thought of by the Ministry unless they had believed they were on the eve of a general election; and they therefore wished by such a proclamation to recommend themselves to a certain portion of the population. That the proclamation was good he did not mean to deny, had it been in other hands; but was the Premier to be considered sincere in this matter, and were his professions to be believed? Let honorable members look at the honorable gentleman's professions in his former speeches, and see how he had fulfilled them, and then they would be able to answer the question for themselves. The honorable gentleman, however, had, by recent proceedings, been put upon his mettle, and having found that he was in a false position, he had resorted to this course for the purpose of strengthening his position and setting himself right. About two years ago, he remembered that the honorable the Treasurer, when he sat alongside of him on the Opposition benches, shewed him a sketch as to the proclamation of lands on the Darling Downs; and that he afterwards brought forward a motion proposing that the whole of the lands should be proclaimed at once. Well, when the motion was brought forward, he opposed it on the ground that the plan was nothing else but a system of free selection—which he had always been opposed to, and would always be opposed to. However, if it was considered necessary that those reserves should be proclaimed by the Government, any one would have thought that, by a proclamation taking such large areas from the squatters, at so short a notice, it would have behoved the Government to have taken all the lands from the squatters on the Darling Downs. But the Government had not done so; and honorable members could not shut their eyes to the fact that a great amount of favoritism had been exhibited in this matter; and he hoped that honorable members would take steps to secure that justice was impartially done to all parties. He did not believe it

was the wish of the country, or of those who were most loud in their demands for the means of settling population, to have a population settled by walking over the bodies of evicted run holders. He believed that if the Alienation of Crown Lands Act had been properly worked in connection with the Leasing Act, nothing more would have been required to be done for the settlement of an agricultural population, and the squatters would have only been required to retire gradually. But this wholesale eviction was far too sweeping, and it was, besides, far from being fair. He did not at all sympathise with the Darling Downs squatters. On the contrary, he had always opposed them; and he could remember that when a year or two ago he brought forward a motion against the Government, he was beaten by the support given to the Government by the Darling Downs squatters. When they were remonstrated with by the Opposition members, they admitted that the Government were acting wrongly, but said they, "We cannot afford to put the Government out, for if we put them out, other members will go in and we shall lose our runs." Now, by the same Government almost as the one they supported on that occasion, they had their runs taken from them; and though he did not wish to see them treated in that way, he must say that it served them right. At the same time, he would do his utmost to see justice done to all parties, though he believed that the Darling Downs squatters had brought about their own downfall by the support they gave to the railway scheme, the carrying out of which had contributed so much to the financial embarrassment of the colony. There was another branch of the question which he would wish to bring under the notice of the House. He had been credibly informed that, before the issue of the last proclamation, 40,000 acres of land included in the reserves had been applied for to be purchased, but the applications had been cancelled on the plea that the proclamation would be retrospective. Now, that being the case, it must be evident that a very large loss in money to the colony had been sustained; but there was also the further loss of the rent for those lands. That, of course, was another question, but it also went to shew that the proclamation had been less advantageous to the colony than was supposed. The fourth paragraph in the Speech had reference to the subject of immigration, and proposed that a system of immigration should be re-established. Honorable members would remember that last session he put a question to the Government on this subject, or rather made a proposition to the effect that immigration should not be discontinued; but the Government, it seemed, were determined that immigration should be discontinued, and the worst part of the arrangement was that the remittance system was put out of existence. Now, if so happened that at that

time a great many people in the colony were in the position of being able to send home money for the purpose of bringing out their relatives to the colony; but still the Ministry would not listen to any proposition for the continuance of the system, and consequently they put an end to it, and the system had never been revived till a few days ago. Indeed, two days after the Parliament was last prorogued, the remittance system was by proclamation put an end to; and about two days before Parliament again met, it was by proclamation restored. Now, he maintained that the remittance system should never have been stopped at all. He was altogether in favor of the question of immigration being again taken into consideration; but he thought that the land order system, and the remittance system, provided for under the old Act would secure all that could be required, or that was desirable. He next came to the fifth paragraph of the Speech which alluded to public works, the most important and the most expensive of which it was stated had now been finished—that was the railway from Ipswich to Toowoomba, which they were further told was now ready for traffic. Well, they were told the other day that the line had been opened and that traffic existed upon it. It was probable that this question would come before the House at a future period, and therefore he would say as little upon the subject at present as possible. Still, at a time like this something might be allowed to be said. Well, some years ago, when the railway question was first brought under the notice of the House, a report was laid upon the table from the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Fitzgibbon. In that report Mr. Fitzgibbon, after stating what his proposals were, and the cost of the railways, and so forth, concluded with a quotation which reflected severely on those honorable members of the House who had opposed the three feet six inches gauge. In the speech of the honorable gentleman who held the office of Minister for Lands and Works at that time on the subject, and on which he was defeated, the want of railways was prominently pointed out, and it was stated that the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba could be constructed at an average cost of £4,000 per mile. Now, he hoped honorable members would confine themselves to the fact that the line was to be from Ipswich to Toowoomba only, and that they would not be blinded by having the cost of that line mixed up with the cost of lines constructed over easy country, and which had only been added on for the purpose of reducing the average cost of construction. He wished honorable members, therefore, to confine their attention to the Ipswich and Toowoomba line. Well, at the time he was now referring to, Mr. Fitzgibbon accused those honorable members who were opposed to his scheme of being short-sighted, obstinate, ignorant, and altogether

incapable of forming an opinion on such a subject. Well, the matter went on, the Ministry carried their policy, and the railway works were ultimately commenced. In course of time the first section was opened, and it began to be known that the estimated cost of the line would be considerably exceeded. Still, so well was the secret kept, that but very little was known of what was going on by those who opposed the scheme. He was one of those who believed they had been proved to be in the wrong; and he believed at the time that they had been proved to be in the wrong. The line having been proceeded with, the time came for the opening of the first section, and those who had opposed the scheme were, with others, invited to be present at the celebration; and they went to the place where the rejoicings were to take place, and were present at the luncheon, or banquet, that was provided. The honorable gentleman who was then Colonial Secretary, Mr. Herbert, in the course of the proceedings got up in his place and was extremely impertinent towards those who had opposed the railway scheme of the Government. His words were to the effect, that the Government had gone to the country on the railway question, and that the Parliament was therefore essentially a railway Parliament. He also said that the party in Parliament who opposed the railway scheme had been arraigned before the country and had been convicted; and that they were what Mr. Fitzgibbon had said they were—shortsighted, ignorant, and obstinate. He, himself, was one of those who believed he had been in the wrong, and, after hearing such remarks, he regretted that he had attended the ceremony, or the banquet either. However, it would now be the business of the Parliament to arraign and convict the parties who used those words at that time. They were all aware that the railway works had cost double the amount that it was estimated they would cost. They knew that a most expensive bridge had been erected at Ipswich over the Bremer to connect the north and south portions of the town. When it was determined to start the railway from North Ipswich it was intended, as they all knew, that the bridge should be not merely a railway bridge, but also a general traffic bridge; that it should be of such a width as would provide a roadway for general traffic as well as provide for the railway. At a public meeting held recently at Ipswich there was a great deal of talk about that frightful job, the Brisbane bridge. Well, if it was a job, it was nothing to the job of the Ipswich bridge which had cost £30,000, and which was erected by the present Colonial Secretary in order to please his constituents, and which was now tumbling down. That bridge was not erected by the contractors for the line, but by the Engineer-in-Chief himself. Now, the Engineer-in-Chief, in his report, stated that he had gone

over the country and that he was quite satisfied the railways could be constructed at a certain rate per mile; and when he went over it a second time, and had made a more complete survey, he stated that a further reduction of his estimate could be made. But, after some time had elapsed, he said it would be necessary to increase the expense in order to construct the line beyond the flood mark. That was after he had seen the flood of 1864. But the flood of 1867 had not been so high by several feet as the flood of 1864, and yet it was found that the railway was submerged, that the culverts had not been sufficient to carry off the storm waters, and had been washed away, and that portions of the embankments had sunk down to a considerable extent. Many honorable members might not know that at some places the rails on one side of the line were from four to five inches lower than the rails on the other side; and that at present there was a large number of men employed in making the necessary repairs. He held in his hand a report of the speeches delivered at the banquet at Toowoomba, on the occasion of the so-called opening of the line to Toowoomba; and by the report, he found a Minister of the Crown actually trying to gloss over one of the most serious things that could happen on a railway. The honorable the Postmaster-General, Mr. St. George Gore, stated at the meeting, which he attended in his double capacity, as a Minister of the Crown and as a member of the Legislative Council, that he had been twenty-seven years in the colony, that he did not know much about railways, that he had been led to believe that the carriages going off the line was something terrible, but that some of the carriages of the train in which he had gone to Toowoomba had gone off the line, and he had found there was nothing more in it than the most nervous and timid lady might undergo. Well, he could only say that the honorable gentleman had found that to be only a joke in Queensland which, in the mother country, had cost thousands of lives. However, the honorable gentleman might have a different experience before he was many years longer in the colony. He was very glad that an interruption had taken place, and that there had been no demonstration at the opening of the line; and when he had expressed that opinion to a friend of his, the remark made in reply was, "Yes; for if there had been a ceremonial opening, there would have been much said that was better unsaid." Still, at the demonstration that did take place, such as it was, there was a great deal said that it would have been better had not been said. Now, what were they to think, after that meeting, of the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor? His honorable and gallant friend got up in his place, and what did he tell the meeting? He told them—and no one could accuse the honorable member of uttering anything like a post prandial speech, in the ordinary

acceptation of the term, as he was a teetotaler,—but he told the meeting—and he believed the honorable member was correctly reported—that he agreed that the genius of the man who first accomplished the surmounting of the Main Range would ever be remembered, and that the name of Mr. Fitzgibbon would for ever live in Queensland. That observation could not be attributed to any momentary excitement, for the reason he had stated. Well, he must say that he also believed the name of Mr. Fitzgibbon would live for ever in Queensland, but in a very different manner from that in which his honorable friend seemed to contemplate. Mr. Fitzgibbon's name would live in the history of Queensland; but it would be as a warning to all ministers, not to allow themselves to be led away by any adventurer; and, as the name of the man who drove the first nail in the coffin of Queensland. Another gentleman, who acted as vice-chairman at the banquet, also spoke of the crossing of the Main Range, as the greatest achievement in railway engineering in the world. Now, that was only the utterance of mere ignorance. To compare the ascent of the Main Range with the crossing of the Alps or the Appenines, or of the Main Range in New South Wales, which was 3,000 feet above the level of the sea, while in this colony it was only 1,700 feet, was nothing short of taking the one step that led from the sublime to the ridiculous. The crossing of the Main Range here was mere child's play to what it was in New South Wales. It was a mere bagatelle to it. Well, he came to the opening of the railway. It was a question whether it had been opened or not; and there was some reason to think it was to be opened again. They all knew that the weather had been very unpropitious; some of the Ministers were at one end of the line, and some at the other; communication took place by telegraph. Invitations had been issued, and it was decided by the Secretary for Works that the line was to be opened; but, for some reason or other, the Colonial Secretary was not there—perhaps he had “got his back up.” Invitations had been refused to some of his constituents, and, as a general election was approaching, it was an easy way to get over the affair, and he refused to go, and did not go. Fancy the honorable the Colonial Secretary anathematizing and consigning to perdition his bantering three feet six gauge! When demonstrations of that kind were to take place, if they could not be done properly, they had better be left alone. The Secretary for Works, whose speech he (Mr. Mackenzie) held in his hand, told the assembled multitude, “in the name of His Excellency the Governor,” that the line was formally opened for traffic. It was, therefore, done with. Such demonstrations were not without expense. Then, why the country should be put to the expense of another demonstration, merely because a quarrel had taken place between the Secre-

tary for Works and the Colonial Secretary, he could not see at all. But he would leave the railway question alone for the present. He passed the sixth paragraph of the Speech without notice. The seventh set out—

“You will be requested to appoint a joint committee of both Houses to inquire into and report on the monetary position of the colony.”

In reading this he could not help feeling—and he was sorry to have to express it in the absence of the honorable gentleman—that the Colonial Treasurer was unfit for his position, if, as finance Minister of the colony, he could not get it out of its difficulties without “a joint committee of both Houses.” If it was necessary to have such a committee to manage the finances of the country, in God's name let there be a committee to take the whole management of the Government at once! The prosperity of the country rested on its finances. In his speech to his constituents, the honorable gentleman seemed to treat those difficulties very lightly. Oh! nothing was wanted to be done—nothing original was required. He (Mr. Mackenzie) told the honorable member that something very original was required—something that would be original not only in this colony but in the Australian colonies; that was for the Government to pursue a rigid system of retrenchment. The House were told that—

“The Estimates for the year 1868 have been prepared with the utmost economy consistent with the making due provision for the necessary expenditure of the year.”

It was rather remarkable that in the Speech no observations were made on the state of the revenue. The House had always been informed how it had been increasing, and how very flourishing it was. When so much trouble had been taken heretofore to shew how much per cent. it was increasing year by year, he thought the Governor's Speech—or the Minister's Speech—was bound to exhibit the real state of affairs now. He knew, from the late Colonial Treasurer's estimate, that the revenue for 1867 was to be so much; and that he expected to get a certain amount from the new duties. The House had before them the statement of the first quarter's receipts; and it was found that the revenue was not increasing at all. The estimate of the revenue for this year was £800,000 odd, and he felt bound to say that not more than £500,000 would be realized. Something more than what was stated in the last paragraph was required for the guidance of the House. As he should this session set his face against any unnecessary expense that the country could properly do without, he should certainly oppose any proposal for taking a census. There had been two censuses taken since Queensland was a separate colony. To take another would cost £3,000 or £4,000. If any honorable member could show that the country would get an equivalent for that expense, he would be obliged to him. If

there was to be a re-distribution of electorates, the House could arrive otherwise at an approximation of the population sufficient for their purpose. In the tenth paragraph they were told—

“Queensland, in common with the United Kingdom and the rest of the British Empire, has suffered severely from the financial crisis of 1866.” This might apply to the general or commercial position of the country; but he discovered in the Speech no reference to the state of the colony’s finances. It was true the panic at home prevented the Government from getting rid of the colonial debentures; but the position that the colony was in was brought about by the reckless extravagance of the Government, who had not calculated upon anything of the kind occurring. It had been given out that the failure of the Agra and Masterman’s Bank was the cause of the colony’s difficulties. That failure, he maintained, was the best thing that had ever happened for this colony. It exposed its financial position, and brought it up “all standing.” The official returns were encouraging; but, certainly not so much so as was attempted to be made out in the Speech. This might be a gold producing country, but he feared it would be long before the gold would be of any good to the community. As to the rewards offered for the discovery of new gold fields, he could not support that policy, because he could not see what good would come of it. Another item he would notice in connection with that subject was, the announcement which appeared in the *Government Gazette* offering a reward of £1,000 for the discovery of kerosene shale in this colony. Anything of that kind ought to be opposed. A company had been formed in New South Wales for the purpose of extracting the oil from shale discovered in that colony, and, no doubt, they would be very glad to give £1,000 for the material not to be discovered here. It was a very childish way of encouraging new productions that the Government had hit upon. He was very happy to find that cotton and sugar cultivation were improving, and he trusted that the aspirations expressed with regard to them would be borne out. Coming to the eleventh paragraph of the Speech, he regarded it as the most curious one of all. The House were favored with the results of the customs returns of the first quarter of the year, shewing that the exports were much in excess of the imports. The paragraph went on to say:—

“This is the first period since the colony was established during which the exports have exceeded the imports, and I have much pleasure in offering my congratulations upon this subject.” If that desirable state of things had been brought about by natural causes, he (Mr. Mackenzie) would have joined his congratulations on the subject. What did the facts disclose? That the imports had dwindled down—not that the exports had increased

—from causes which he would state: first, because the credit of the colony was so bad, that it could not get any more; and, second, that the *ad valorem* duties were fast ruining its trade. That shewed that the colony was getting into a worse and worse position. The trade was being fast driven away, and the amended tariff, with its heavy duties, was doing the country no good; they were not making up the revenue to a tithe of what was expected. Into the concluding paragraph of the address he need not go. He thought the eighth paragraph was an absurd one; and, with regard to the ninth, the present position of the colony did not warrant it. What the House had now to consider, in connection with the Speech, was the question of—“How we are governed?” They had merely to look at the occurrences of the last few months. The honorable gentleman who was now at the head of the Ministry had been a member of the Government for five years; and he had had time during that period to perfect his policy. He had always commanded a majority of the House. To him alone they were to look for the railway policy that had been carried out; because, at that very meeting that he (Mr. Mackenzie) had already alluded to, Mr. Herbert, on his part, repudiated any share in it and gave all the honor and glory of it to Mr. Macalister. They had now to consider where the late Secretary for Lands and Works, the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, had landed them. If they thought he had landed them in a prosperous condition, let them hail him as a deliverer, and vote for his continuance in power as long as possible. If not, the question was to be considered—Was he worthy to be retained in the position which he had kept before the country for so long a period?

Mr. RAFF said he was not one of those who expected much from a Governor’s Speech, or from ministerial programmes; but, on an occasion like the present, he did think that the House had good grounds for expecting something very different from the document which had just been read. Every honorable member must see that it entirely ignored the present very serious position of the colony and the Government. He thought that any Government, on such an occasion, were bound to come down to the House and acknowledge their position, and appeal to the House for assistance, and for approval of what they considered to be the best line of conduct under the circumstances. The House had a variety of subjects presented to them, which might have been all very well under ordinary circumstances; but he maintained that, on an occasion like the present, the Government had no right whatever to pass over the most serious question which would have to be considered by honorable members. The first place was given to the Postal Conference;—no doubt that was a very pleasant piece of business for the honorable gentlemen who

had been engaged in the conference. He should say nothing whatever, on the present occasion, against the action taken in that matter. It would be placed before the House on a subsequent occasion, and they would be asked to give their sanction to the course of action agreed on, and no doubt they would be asked to sanction "a little bill" that would be presented. Reference had been made by the honorable member who had just sat down to the third paragraph in the Speech, referring to the extensive areas which had been proclaimed in the districts of Moreton and Darling Downs. The honorable member, he thought, had made a mistake when he talked about "alienation"—about the Government alienating those lands;—he must have meant "reservation." He did not think the House could have any objection to the alienation of any amount of land. They wanted money. The railways had been made specially for the benefit of the Darling Downs, and there would be no objection if the whole of the Darling Downs was surveyed and put up for sale. That would be very desirable, indeed. But the action taken by the Government was very different. Instead of selling those lands to pay for the interest of the railway loan, they had locked them up. They would only let them be sold under certain restrictions and conditions, which would have the effect of locking them up for some time to come. He said the whole land of the Darling Downs should be surveyed as quickly as possible, and let the country have returned some portion of the outlay which was for the special benefit of the Darling Downs. The honorable member, Mr. Mackenzie, had talked about the action taken by the Government in proclaiming those reserves on the Darling Downs, as "serving out" the representatives of those districts for the policy they had supported in times past. He (Mr. Raff) was certainly inclined to look upon the way in which they were now used as a righteous retribution for the way that those gentlemen and the people of Ipswich had forced the construction of the railways upon the country. But he objected to the interests of the colony being sacrificed for the sake of punishing the Darling Downs squatters, or any other class or individuals. The Government had sacrificed the property of every squatter in the colony by the course they had taken with regard to the Darling Downs runs. Not only was property depreciated, but capital and enterprise were obstructed in their legitimate developments. Honorable members did not hear now of men coming into the colony with large sums of money for investment. Property was so depreciated that it was nearly unsaleable, and it appeared that the Government, not having succeeded in giving them an inconvertible currency, were determined to make everything else inconvertible. The opening of the railway had been pretty fully referred to by the

honorable member for the Burnett; and, no doubt, as the colony had to pay for the railways, it was well they should open them and make them reproductive. Although the House had not heard a word about their reproductiveness, he believed it would be found—as he had predicted, when the honorable the Secretary for Lands, then Colonial Treasurer, made his financial statement—that the calculations of last year, of the amount to be received from the railway, was most extravagant and absurd;—and, perhaps, it would appear that he had overrated the returns, although he was laughed at, at the time. He thought it would be most satisfactory if the Government, instead of telling the House that the railway was opened, had stated that their own eyes had been opened to the mistake of the railway policy, which had brought the country to its present position and was the true cause of the present depression. It was all very well to say that the commercial crisis, which had caused difficulties in other parts of the world, was the cause of the difficulties of this colony. That had very little to do with them—that would not have affected Queensland long. It would have been more satisfactory if the Government had told the House that their eyes were opened to the fact that the railways had been entered upon with rashness and extravagance, which had caused an amount of suffering that they would like to ignore, but that forced itself on the notice of every individual. The House had heard nothing, except from the honorable member for the Burnett, of the effectiveness of the railway. He (Mr. Raff) might say, that he had had a ride on what had been called a well-bred pony—he had ascended the Main Range; and the idea forced itself upon him—and he took observations as he went along, for he was on the engine—that if the pony was well bred, it was also "screwed." The turnings and turnings, the curves succeeding curves, were many of them altogether unnecessary; and it struck him, that the great engineer who had done the work was bent on making a screw, not a railway. Many of the obstacles that the curves were made to get round might have been cut through, and the line made more direct; for the expense of making a survey and cutting through scrub was nothing compared to making curves to avoid that expense. If the line answered the purpose of a railway as well as it answered the purpose of a screw, the country might be glad, but he feared that the remembrance of the railway-screw was likely to last out the screw-railway. Instead of giving them in the Speech the amount of exports, it would have been better if the Government had told the House the amount expected to come in from the railway—shewed how they were to pay the interest on the railway loan. They heard nothing about taxation. They heard that the Estimates were framed with a view to economy: but that was a stereo-

typed term, and very little reliance was to be placed upon it. Other trifling matters were referred to which it was hardly worth while to waste the time of the House by touching upon. They were told that a census was to be taken. They had lately given the world plenty of proofs that they had lost their senses; and, perhaps, the best thing they could do was to try to collect them. He must say that in the Speech there was neither promise nor hope of any amendment in the conduct of the Government; yet, he trusted that while the House looked to the Government for the performance of their duty, honorable members would recollect that they had duties to perform.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS said there was something in the Governor's Speech, which might appear to be satisfactory to the general public; but he regretted exceedingly that no reference was made to the colony's helpless state of insolvency. He thought it would have been well if His Excellency had made a plain statement of facts—that the Government were insolvent—that the country was insolvent—that destitution and misery prevailed all over the colony—and that all this had been brought about by Ministers; and then proposed some plan by which his constitutional advisers might be able to retrace their steps, and redeem the colony from the calamitous condition they had brought about. He could not lose the opportunity of recording his opinion that the Speech and the address were not satisfactory; nor did he think they were founded on truth, simply because the truth was concealed—the position of the colony was concealed. He did not think any honorable member possessing any degree of political honesty could say that the Speech and the address in reply were satisfactory to the public. He maintained that neither of them honestly represented the present condition of the colony. The time had come when it was absolutely necessary for the House to define the powers of the Government. It was the duty of every honorable member to make known to his constituents what power the Government could exercise in appropriating borrowed capital and the public revenue of the country without the sanction of Parliament. He was led to make these remarks, because the Government had set at defiance a resolution of the House—because the Government had trampled under foot the wise and matured decisions of both Houses of Legislature; and, in doing so, they had shewn the utmost disregard of political honesty. He had sufficient confidence in the justice and good sense of honorable members, that they would not any longer tolerate the treachery that the Government had been accustomed to use towards them and the colony. The Ministry had shewn on several occasions their incapacity to govern the country; and, though it was unpleasant for him to give his opinion on this matter, he could not avoid

saying that the recklessness which Ministers had practised for several years ought to be checked as speedily as possible by a vote of the House. It had been stated, especially by the honorable member for the Burnett, that it was solely to the Ministry the country was indebted for its embarrassment at this time. Railways, which the people had never asked for, had been forced upon the House, and had ruined the colony. Notwithstanding that independent Government started into existence only about seven and a half years ago, when the colony was not a shilling in debt, it was now found that Queensland had advanced to a degree of indebtedness which, in proportion to the population, was not known in any other part of the world. He appealed to honorable members, whose fault was that? Should not some exertion be made to remedy such a state of things? Another matter he had to touch upon was, that at this time more than two-thirds of the population of the colony were dissatisfied with the Government, and were prepared, in fact, to act in open rebellion against them. When such was the case, it was time to examine their position, and to trace the cause of so much dissatisfaction. When the honorable gentleman now at the head of the Government sat on the other side of the House, at the head of the Opposition, he was one of their most useful members; everybody looked up to him with respect, and asked his opinion on every question. Since he had gone over to the Ministerial benches, he made every exertion to travel in the opposite direction from the course he had before pursued. The honorable the Premier had exerted all his powers for the benefit of Ipswich and the Darling Downs, and, in an equal degree, to do every possible injustice to the rest of the colony. That could not be disputed by him—that was the truth! The honorable gentleman had had, for a long time, a large power from a large majority of the House that supported him in the exercise of Governmental authority. There was now come a change. The country had seen the sneaking fraud with which he had acted towards the outlying districts; it had seen the disregard of justice—he (Mr. Fitzsimmons) ought to say, the political dishonesty—by his Government; and, what was of consequence, public opinion was now excited against his Government, and at the next general election the Government might rest assured they would find it out. The honorable member for the Burnett had alluded to the railway, and so would he, for a moment. Two trains started from Ipswich for Toowoomba, a few days ago, and ran off the line. He must allow the honorable member at the head of the Government credit for having given this colony the safest railway in the world. Trains had run off the line, but, it appeared, in an instant they jumped on again, and passed on to Toowoomba without a moment's delay or any

accident! This was an age of inventions. It would appear, fortunately for Queensland, that safety lay in the inventive powers of the Colonial Secretary—that he had effected something that had never been comprehended in past times by the mind of man. He (Mr. Fitzsimmons) saw, the other day, an advertisement that the whole of the plant of the Rockhampton railway would be offered for sale in a short time. That meant that the railway would not be proceeded with any further;—in spite of the promises made from time to time. He would not have mentioned it, but he wanted to know something of the conditions of sale. The country had expensive engineers on that line; and he wanted to know whether they were to be thrown in as a bargain, or whether they were to be taken at their own valuation.

Mr. WALSH stated that he was taken unawares in having to rise at this stage of the discussion. He had thought that, on such an important occasion, Ministers would have something to say for themselves, so that the country should not be allowed to think they could not defend their policy—that the only thing they could do on such an auspicious day as this was to produce the Governor's Speech—and that the only information they could give was contained in it. He was bound to think that this silence resulted from the consciousness of their own weakness—the feeling of guilt that filled the breasts of the Ministry, and that so stifled them, as to render them unable to give the explanation which was required of them, or to meet those charges which they had been called upon to answer. He would never consent to a motion like that before the House being carried, during the existence of a Ministry who had been arraigned before the country as a most good-for-nothing Ministry, without some explanation from them. He could but confine himself to the Speech and the address, and what he had to say could not be so well stated as the arguments which had been offered by preceding speakers whose sentiments he entertained. It was not his good fortune to reach town early in the day, and he had not had time to consider the Speech attentively; but he was very much struck with the few paragraphs he had read—with their style and form, and their lack of information to the country. It appeared to be treating the House with something like ridicule, to give them, in the very first paragraph, information respecting the Postal Conference. In the present state of the country, what did they want to know of the conference? The country was in a famishing, an impoverished, a receding condition; yet the first paragraph of the Speech initiated another expense—further extravagance. He had much to say against that paragraph which referred to the proclamation of the agricultural reserves; and he considered that it was the duty of the Minister for Lands, or, better still, the Premier—whose policy he

presumed it was—to get up and give the House information of that extraordinary act. That proclamation had taken the country by surprise. It seemed to please nobody, and the Ministry must be thoroughly aware of the fact; yet, notwithstanding that, they refused the House the least explanation, or apology, about it. That a reserve should have been made of the Darling Downs, he doubted if half-a-dozen men in the country would deny; the Darling Downs should, no doubt, have been made to bear the expense into which the country had been rushed. But what he complained of, was that the Government had only done that piecemeal. They seemed to have selected their enemies—to have done what they had done for political purposes—and to have said “We will crush these individuals to the death; we know we are certain of our followers, who crave for the runs of the Darling Downs squatters, and we will propitiate them by this movement.” Much as the House had to lament the unjustifiable and fatal influence which the Darling Downs men had in the councils of the country, he was satisfied that they would never consent to such a partial, such an unuseful, such a destructive act as that complained of. Well was it said by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, that that act would do an immense amount of harm to the business of the country. It struck the very last blow at the little hope that was left for the colony—the little hope in the minds of capitalists and in the other colonies was shattered by that insane act of the Government. Why should five or six men have been picked out and their runs alone proclaimed? What the Government should have done, if they wanted to proclaim the Darling Downs, was to have come down to the House and stated that the time was come when the whole of that country—not excepting Jimbour and other places—should be made answerable for the wretched railway. To proceed only so far as they had done was persecution;—theirs was not a wise measure—to injure a few individuals, and wholly and solely damn the country in the eyes of the other colonies. Had it been a wise or full measure, the colony would be relieved of the charge now levelled at it—that political motives guided the action of those who had to deal with the public lands. He (Mr. Walsh) could not agree with the seventh paragraph of the Speech; it was exceedingly faulty, and he was very much surprised that his honorable friend, the Premier, did not see the bearing of it. What had the Assembly to do with asking the Legislative Council to assist them in that which the honorable gentleman knew the law did not allow them to do—in managing the finances of the country? They all knew what the “monetary position” of the colony was, and that the colony was nearly insolvent. They could not pay the interest on the capital borrowed. What would the joint committee do? It would

have to do that which unfortunately must be done by any committee—recommend the imposition of fresh taxation. Yet the Governor's Speech—he hoped it had been concocted by his Ministers—asked the Council, an irresponsible body, to do what the Constitution forbade. The part of the Speech which alluded to commercial improvement, as evidenced by published returns, was unanswerably met by the honorable member, Mr. Raff. It argued badly for the ability of the Colonial Treasurer, that he had not discovered that the falling off of imports was not a subject for congratulation. It argued a want of ordinary counting-house knowledge in that honorable gentleman, that such a statement should be put in for the digestion of men who had some commercial experience. Such a statement was an attempt to hoodwink the country again, as had been attempted last session, when the Speech commenced by congratulating the country on its "continued progress." He (Mr. Walsh) took the opportunity, at the time, of saying, in contradiction to such a statement, that he believed the country was in a wretched state, and that its only "continued progress" was a "continued progress downwards." He now repeated the expression, and avowed his conviction that such a state had been accelerated by the unwise and pernicious legislation which followed the delivery of the opening Speech, last session. He was sorry to have seen the address in reply in the hands of the honorable member who had moved it, Mr. Coxen. If the House accepted it, how could they go on with the legislation of the country? How could they do what he believed nine-tenths of the House intended to do—compel the Government to alter their ways, to expend the revenue more justly, and to gather it more wisely and economically? It was very unfortunate that there was not a full house. He felt that there were honorable members absent who would have been of considerable service to the country, had they been in their places on the present occasion; and probably the Government would credit that, as much as honorable members on the other side. But, small as was the attendance, he thought the Government were bound to give some explanation of what they had been doing since Parliament last met—some explanation of what the Speech really meant;—or foreshadow a little of what was to be their programme, this session. He had heard it said by the honorable the Premier, that the Speech was meant to contain nothing. But was the country to be treated to nothing? Were the House to be treated in that way? Many honorable members had come to the House at great inconvenience, and were they likely to put up with such treatment? But for his getting up, no doubt the address would have passed without a Minister rising to address them. Such a course was unparalleled, and deserved the severest censure. The country knew full well that it had been

misgoverned. Two opinions were never heard on the subject. Friends and supporters and foes of the Government, joined in chorus upon the mismanagement of the Government—that the railway policy was a fatal one. With that knowledge, the Government seemed to think they had nothing to explain, nothing to confide to the House. There had been unpleasant rumors during the past few days about the railway. Why did not the honorable the Premier get up and give the House some explanation of them? It had been stated that the railway, completed for so many thousand pounds, which was to have been opened with great *ecclat*, was not in a fit state for traffic. Why did not the honorable gentleman tell the House how he came not to be at the opening of the line, for which preparations had been made? Some explanation was required of those things, and of that unpleasant occurrence which had taken place within the past week, by which the Government had lost one of their number who had been considered the bulwark, the main strength, of the Ministry. If nothing was to be explained, he (Mr. Walsh) would never submit to it, and he trusted that the majority of the House would not. He might state that an amendment would be moved on the address; he felt quite satisfied of that. He believed the Government were in possession of as much information themselves. Unless he was wrong on that point, he could well understand why they sat so complacently in their places. He trusted the amendment, when moved, would be one that would commend itself to the House and to all who believed in the integrity of representative institutions. The Ministry had been guilty of unconstitutional conduct, and the only regret he had was that there was not another way of dealing with men who had set at defiance the very spirit of the constitution. He alluded to the Government going against an expressed resolution, twice conveyed by the House to them, on the Warwick Railway. Since Parliament last met, action had been taken on the matter by members outside of the House, and by a very large number—so large, that at one time the Ministry almost dreaded that the Governor would be obliged to listen to the memorialists who addressed him. Notwithstanding that the Ministry had been importuned on the subject, and that His Excellency had been unpleasantly called into question on account of their conduct, here was the first evening of the session passing over without any explanation—this, the first and only opportunity, would, with their permission, slip away. He certainly should be very dissatisfied if the House did not elicit from the Ministry a very full reply to the accusation made against them, especially with reference to the state of the country, which they were charged with having produced, and that conduct which they had been told in no very favorable language outside the House was

unconstitutional. It was useless their trying to blink the subject. It was the determination of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House to ventilate it; and the evening could not pass over, he thought, without the Government making a Ministerial explanation respecting the secession from their body of the Minister for Works. He did not feel in a position to move an amendment on the address, but there were other honorable members who were determined to bring one forward; and he should reserve what he had to say on the general state of the country until that amendment was under consideration. He could not possibly agree with the address as proposed. For instance, the Postal Conference was not likely, this session, to receive the best consideration of Parliament. The figure cut by the Queensland delegates at Melbourne had not excited any national pride in the community; and he (Mr. Walsh) particularly took exception to that portion of the address which referred to the conference until he was satisfied the Government had any right there. They were, he believed, overstepping their duty when they embarked and committed the country to anything of the kind; and they were bound to ask the consent of Parliament before they did so. In the other colonies, before Ministers of Parliament could do so much, Acts of Parliament had been passed; but, in Queensland, they had arrived at such a state of perfection that Ministers asked for nothing, but proceeded as they wished without reference to Parliament. The proclamation of the agricultural reserves was illegal, and he believed the Government themselves were aware of it. The question of immigration, he hoped, would be considered; it was one of vital importance to the country; but as great a mess had been made of immigration as of the railways. It had been started and stopped, and started again, until the House hardly knew what had really been done; and he agreed with the honorable member for the Burnett, that the greatest loss had been caused to the colony by the policy of the Government on that question. He agreed that it was necessary that, at as early a period as possible, there should be a redistribution of the electorates; that was a most satisfactory part of the Speech. But, as usual with everything that was attempted to be done, it must cost money. He could not see why a redistribution and an increase of the electorates could not take place without a census; but if a census must be taken for that purpose, and they could afford it, he would gladly agree to the expense. With that part of the Speech referring to the offering of rewards for the discovery of new gold fields he did not agree, believing that such a course was not calculated to stimulate enterprise, or do any good. He never heard that a reward had ever been paid, or applied for, elsewhere for such a purpose. Another matter was, that the Government had it in

contemplation to advance a large sum of money to the corporation of Brisbane for the completion of the bridge. If that were so, and he believed it was, it should have had a place in the Vice-regal Speech. He did not say that he should oppose it, but the Ministry might have offered some information to the House about it. As it was six o'clock, he would not longer take up the time of the House, but he trusted that when they re-assembled the Government would speak of their past doings and future intentions—that the report might go to the country.

The Hon. R. PRING moved the adjournment of the debate until to-morrow. The questions involved in the Governor's Speech, which was only delivered at twelve o'clock, invited serious consideration and discussion by the House; and, as he did not feel in a position to speak upon them this evening nor to grapple with the strong arguments which honorable members on the other side would use if they went into debate, he thought no injury would ensue to the colony by their being allowed to sleep on the subject.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, if it was convenient for the House that the debate should be adjourned, he should offer no objection on the part of the Government. At the same time, he thought the House should go on with the debate up to a reasonable hour, to hear all that was to be said against the Government.

The question of adjournment was put and passed.
