

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 22 MAY 1867**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, 22 May, 1867.*

Ministerial Announcement.

## MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY rose and said: In consequence of the decision at which the House arrived last evening, with reference to the right of my honorable colleague the Minister for Works to take his seat in the House without going back to his constituents, I took the opportunity of calling a meeting of the Cabinet at a late hour last night, and at their request I solicited and obtained an interview with His Excellency the Governor. At that interview, and at the request of my honorable colleagues, I tendered to His Excellency certain advice. I have again had an interview with His Excellency this afternoon, and His Excellency has intimated to me that, in answer to the advice given to him, he will be prepared to give his decision to-morrow. For that reason, and as it is not

desirable to proceed with any business till we know the result of His Excellency's answer, which I believe will be delivered by message to-morrow to the House, I now move—That the House adjourn until to-morrow at three o'clock.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE said he thought that before the question was put, honorable members should have a little time afforded them to consider how far they were bound by such a statement as that made by the honorable the Premier. The House, he held, had a right to know what advice was given to His Excellency, and what was the cause of the delay of His Excellency in giving his answer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I decline to give it. I must say that I really wish the honorable member, and some other honorable members, would give a little more consideration to constitutional law and parliamentary practice in respect to proceedings such as the present. It is contrary to all etiquette on the one hand to ask, and contrary to all constitutional law and parliamentary practice on the other to state, what advice is given to His Excellency till His Excellency makes known his decision upon such advice.

Mr. R. CRIBB said he thought the Ministry had come to a most extraordinary conclusion. He could have understood their coming to such a decision if the division on the previous night had been on a question relating to their policy as a Government, but such was not the case. But the question had nothing to do with the Ministry whatever. It was simply a constitutional question, and had nothing to do with whether the Ministry possessed the confidence of the House or not, or whether the House approved of the policy of the Ministry or not. The question upon which the division took place was purely a constitutional one. It was as to whether a member of the Government, when he left one office in the Ministry and went to another, should go before his constituency and have the change ratified. He held, therefore, that the Ministry should not make the question one as to their stability as a Government.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: Yes.

Mr. R. CRIBB: Well, he held they should not. Let them come forward with their policy; and if they were defeated upon it, they would be right in dealing with the question as a ministerial one. The Ministry had gone out of their proper course in consulting the Governor on the question at all, for it was a question the Governor had nothing to do with, but one that the House alone could deal with; and the Ministry, in acting as they had done in respect to it, had not treated the House in a proper way.

Mr. PUGH said that, as the mover of the resolution, which had caused the Government to arrive at the conclusion they had just heard intimated by the honorable the Premier, he might perhaps be permitted to say a few words on the matter. No parallel case, he

believed, could be found in the history of any of the colonies, and certainly not in the history of the British Parliament. No case could be found to shew that the Ministry, upon a mere point of parliamentary practice such as the one that was dealt with by the House last evening, should go out of office or go to the country. If the Ministry intended to go to the country he would be perfectly satisfied; but he wanted to know what they were to go to the country upon. The question appeared to him to resolve itself into this—whether the Ministry should rule the House, or the House the Ministry?—and it was upon that point he took his stand. He did not regret for a single moment anything he said or did the previous night; but he regretted the Ministry should have felt compelled to take the course they had taken. Whatever might be the opinion of other honorable members, he must say that he did not look upon the question as in any way implying a vote of want of confidence, and he had no doubt that, if the matter were put to the issue, the Government would find themselves much stronger than they thought they were.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Even to override a resolution of the House.

Mr. PUGH: Well, if the Ministry could do that by a proclamation in the *Gazette*, he did not see why the House should not be able to do it. The honorable the Premier had stated that he had tendered certain advice to His Excellency, the purport of which honorable members might pretty well guess.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. PUGH: Well, perhaps some of them were somewhat shrewder than the honorable the Premier seemed to think; but whether they guessed rightly or not—and the honorable the Premier declined to give the House any information about it—he would say this, that it was mere child's play to postpone the business of the country at a time when the people wanted to have the finances looked into; when they wanted to know how the debt of the colony was to be met, or whether the Government intended to provide for it or not; when they wanted to know if the burden of taxation was to be decreased or increased;—at such a time, he held, it was mere child's play to make a question of parliamentary practice of so much importance. He had no more idea, when he moved the resolution, that the matter would be made so much of than he had of being Lord High Chancellor of England. He thought the proper course would have been for the Ministry to have said, that though they did not agree with the House, yet, in accordance with the determination of the House, as expressed by the resolution that had been agreed to, the honorable the Secretary for Public Works would go before his constituents for re-election. It was stated on the previous day that it was not intended again to separate the offices of Lands and Works—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; what I said was that the matter was under the consideration of the Government.

Mr. PUGH: If the matter was only under consideration, he would like to know how it was that the gentleman acting as Under Secretary for Lands had notice some days ago that he was to consider himself superseded, and that his office was to be filled by Mr. A. O. Herbert, and that Mr. Tully was to consider himself merely as Chief Commissioner of Lands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS explained that such notices were communicated, but it was in error, and that they were countermanded before any action was taken upon them. It was not correct that any such changes had been made. The notices were not gazetted, and he would defy any honorable member to produce a *Gazette* shewing that any such changes had been made. No changes of the nature mentioned had been made.

Mr. PUGH: There had been a great many errors committed lately.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There was one committed by the House last night.

Mr. PUGH: He did not consider that was an error. But to return to the question of the union of the offices of Lands and Works, he maintained that the notice in the *Gazette* announcing that the duties of Secretary for Works were to be performed by the honorable the Secretary for Lands was, as it appeared in print, and according to its grammatical construction, a clear and distinct announcement that the offices of Lands and Works had again been amalgamated, and, taking in connection with it the notice given to Mr. Herbert and to Mr. Tully, it only went to prove that it was the intention of the Government to amalgamate the two offices. The point that he took on the previous night was, that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer went out of office—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. PUGH: Then he was still Colonial Treasurer.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No, no.

Mr. PUGH: Then he held a dual office.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. PUGH: It was a mere quibbling with words to say he did not. If a Minister resigned one office for another, he must leave the first, and he could not hold the two. What he said was, that the honorable gentleman, Mr. Douglas, had left the office of Colonial Treasurer. The Ministry said he had not, and if that were correct, then Mr. Douglas was Colonial Treasurer still. But if he was not, it came to this, that honorable members could not know anything about the Ministry, or what office or offices any of them held. He thought the House was entitled to have some more information than was given in the bald statement that had been made by the honorable the Colonial Secretary. The question raised by the

motion on the previous day was simply one of parliamentary practice; and whether the Government were to dissolve the House or go out of office upon it, was a matter of indifference to him, but whatever they might do, he must say it was a petty thing for the Government to go out upon. He thought it was an act of momentary rashness for the Ministry to act as they did last night, because of the decision the House came to. The resolution was a right and proper one for the House to come to, and he thought the honorable the Premier, after he had slept on the matter for a night, would have come to the House in a different style from what he had that afternoon.

Mr. WALSH said he felt he would not be doing justice to himself if he allowed the suspicion to exist that he did not intend, as far as his vote went last night, to cast a very severe reflection upon the Ministry. He meant it to apply, in all its force, as a vote of censure upon the Ministry, because he could not be a party to such shuffling as was exposed last night respecting the appointment of a Minister. It was asserted last night, and the assertion was never contradicted, that the Colonial Treasurer did send in his resignation; and it was also asserted, that his resignation was under the consideration of the Government.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I never saw it.

Mr. WALSH: He said last night that he believed the Colonial Treasurer did send in his resignation, and that he went to bed on Monday night with the full impression that he was no longer a Minister of the Crown.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He could not do that, because he did not know if his resignation was accepted.

Mr. WALSH: He called on the Government to deny the statement, if they could; and he called on the honorable gentleman, Mr. Douglas, himself to deny it; and asked him, if he could not deny the statement, to acknowledge the fact. Well, the statement was not denied, and on the principle that silence gave consent, he took it that the fact was acknowledged, and the House arrived at the conclusion, that beyond all dispute the honorable gentleman did send in his resignation of the office of Colonial Treasurer, and that he went home believing he was no longer a Minister of the Crown.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. WALSH: That was the conclusion the House arrived at, and there was documentary evidence in support of the fact, for there was now the *Gazette* notice before them that another gentleman had accepted the office. But the Government had chosen to deny the fact, and he would therefore suggest that all doubt should be cleared up at once by the House summoning the late Colonial Treasurer to the bar of the House and interrogating him on the subject. He would pledge himself that, if the honorable gentleman appeared

at the bar, and said that he did not resign, or that, if he did send in his resignation, he did not consider he was not any longer a Minister till he received notice of His Excellency's acceptance of his resignation, he would no longer insist that there had been any more than a mere transference of office—that there had been a resignation and consequently a new appointment to another office. He therefore called upon the House to require the attendance of the honorable gentleman at the bar, that honorable members might have an opportunity of hearing from him his own plain unvarnished statement; and that they might not be misled, one moment longer than it was necessary to submit to, by the contradictions or contrivances of the Ministry. The question was in a most unsatisfactory state, though it could be easily cleared up by the course he proposed. He therefore moved that the honorable gentleman, Mr. Douglas, the late honorable member for Eastern Downs, be called to the bar of the House to answer such questions as might be put to him.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The House had done violence to constitutional law in many respects, but he hoped honorable members would not consent to commit such an act as the honorable member asked them to support him in. But without going into that view of the matter, he would ask what question there was before the House for the honorable gentleman to be interrogated upon?

**MR. WALSH:** The case was exactly parallel to the one that was before the House a few days ago, when the Ministry forced upon the House the examination of two witnesses at the bar. A statement had been made by the Ministry, which was doubted, and he only desired to have the evidence upon the subject that could alone be furnished by the honorable gentleman who was principally concerned.

**THE SPEAKER** said he could not put such a motion without previous notice.

**MR. WALSH:** There was no notice given of the motion on the other subject.

**THE SPEAKER:** On that occasion he could not help himself, for the House choose to over-ride what he considered to be the proper course, according to parliamentary practice.

**MR. WALSH** said he merely wished to enjoy the same privileges as members of the Ministry were allowed to exercise. The Ministry had two witnesses called to the bar of the House the other night on a motion without notice, and he did not see why honorable members who were not Ministers should not enjoy a like privilege.

**THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL:** The cases were not parallel. The House had resolved that the honorable gentleman, Mr. Douglas, was no longer a member; but on the occasion to which the honorable member referred the gentlemen concerned were members of the House. Besides, in the question that was then raised, the conduct of two members of the Government, their character as Ministers,

as well as their characters as members of the House, were involved.

**MR. WALSH:** Mr. Douglas is a Minister, if he is not a member of the House.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** But the House could not examine him as a Minister; and what was more, honorable members did not know whether Mr. Douglas was a Minister or not.

**DR. CHALLINOR** said that if he had read the 19th clause of the Constitution Act before the House went to a division the previous evening on the motion of the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, he would not have recorded his vote as he did. In his opinion, as he read the section of the Act, the action of the Government came within the letter of it, though it did not, he thought, come within the spirit of the Act. He believed the clause applied to a transfer of office only. He believed it simply meant that there might be an interchange of offices by Ministers, or that a person holding the office of a minister should be at liberty to exchange office, or hold other offices without requiring to go again before his constituents for re-election. But in the case of the honorable gentleman, Mr. Douglas, there was the fact that he sent in an unconditional resignation of the office of Treasurer. On the part of the honorable gentleman there was a decided resignation, but of course he had no power to enforce its acceptance by His Excellency; and therefore, upon constitutional law, he was to be held as still in office. But if the House had not sufficient grounds to vote the seat for the Eastern Downs vacant, as he thought they had when he voted for the motion, he wished to put the question on another issue. He wished to have it put in this way,—that such conduct as the Ministry had displayed, placed the Ministry in the position that they were no longer entitled to enjoy the confidence of the House. He stated that distinctly at the time, and he had seen no reason to depart from that opinion. But referring to a remark made by the honorable the Attorney-General, to the effect that the House by passing the motion had over-riden an Act of Parliament, he could only say that if they had, the proper way for the House to do, and for the honorable the Premier to do, would be to fall back on the course that was pursued by the honorable the Premier in the matter of the Warwick Railway. The honorable the Premier, in that case, tendered to His Excellency the advice that, as the resolution of the House overrode an Act of Parliament, it was only so much waste paper, as it could not be acted upon. If the resolution was of that nature, he did not see why the question should not be brought before the House again. He thought the proper way for the Government to do would be to bring the matter before the House as a question of constitutional law, and to take the opinion of the House upon it as such. Then, if the

House came to the same decision upon the question as they did last evening, the Government would be perfectly justified in recommending His Excellency to dissolve a House that had determined to override an Act of Parliament. But the question had not come before the House in that form, and, therefore, he thought it was the duty of the honorable the Premier to bring the matter again before the House, if he thought the resolution overrode an Act of Parliament, and shew the grounds he had for thinking that it did so; and if the House again determined to override an Act of Parliament, then the honorable gentleman would be quite justified in advising His Excellency to send honorable members about their business.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The question before the House now was really one of courtesy—whether they would give His Excellency time to consider certain advice, or whether they would not.

Dr. CHALLINOR: The House did not know what the advice was.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No; and the House had no right to know, and would not know.

Dr. CHALLINOR: They might not; but, if they did, it might not be till it was too late to say anything about it. Honorable members had no desire to act in any way discourteously towards His Excellency, or to refuse him time to consider the advice that had been given to him; but they had the statement of the honorable the Attorney-General, that the resolution that was come to on the previous evening was contrary to an Act of Parliament. Now, if that was correct, the proper course, he maintained, was not to advise with His Excellency on the subject, but to take afresh the sense of the House upon the question; and if the House, on a reconsideration of it, still determined to act unconstitutionally, then the Ministry might recommend His Excellency to dissolve the House. He admitted that he had committed an error; for, if he had seen the 19th clause of the Constitution Act before the motion of the honorable member for North Brisbane was put, he would have voted differently; and what he asked now was, that he might be afforded an opportunity of reconsidering the matter. He, for one, should very much like to see the minute of Council in respect to the consolidation of the two offices of Secretary for Lands and Secretary for Works.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is none.

Dr. CHALLINOR: There was a consideration of the subject at the Executive, for there was a proclamation in the *Gazette* notifying that the honorable the Secretary for Lands would act also as Secretary for Works. He did not read the notice in the same way as the honorable member for North Brisbane read it; but looked upon the Secretary for Lands as being only the acting Secretary for Works. The honorable gentleman was described in the *Gazette* as the Secretary for

Lands, and it was stated that he was authorised to act as Secretary for Public Works. But, while that was his reading of the *Gazette* notice, he did not understand why, to secure the continuance of a colleague as a member of the Ministry, there should be a division again of the two offices. For himself, personally, he did not care whether the House was dissolved or not; but he thought that, as if the House, as it had been stated, had overridden an Act of Parliament, and as it was to be presumed that they had done so in ignorance—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He stated, when the motion was before the House, that it was contrary to an Act of Parliament,—though he was not bound to give the House any advice, and would not do so again.

Dr. CHALLINOR: If they had overridden an Act of Parliament, they had done so in ignorance—at least, that was his view of it—and he thought the clause in the Act would bear the construction Ministers put upon it; consequently, he considered the House should have another opportunity of reconsidering the matter before the Ministry tendered any advice on the subject to His Excellency. He must say that he thought the Ministry had taken a wrong course.

The Hon. R. PRING said the honorable the Premier had asked for an adjournment of the House for particular reasons which he had stated himself; and in this instance he must say that the motion for the adjournment of the House was of a very different character from motions of a similar kind that were made for the purpose of raising a debate upon some particular subject. It also appeared to him that the reason assigned by the honorable the Premier for an adjournment was so destitute of information that a debate could not be continued upon the motion. He must also confess that, out of courtesy to a Ministry, if they wished to have an adjournment for a day or a week to consider their policy, it was always usual, so far as his experience went, for the Legislative Assembly to grant the adjournment asked for. He perfectly agreed with the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, that the motion that was carried last night was one that involved the privileges of the House only; but if the Ministry choose to make it a political question, he did not know that the House could say they should not. If the Ministry choose to take a different view of the matter from that taken by the House, or looked upon it as having a different character from what was intended, they were of course at liberty to do so; and if they came to the House and stated that they had taken such a view of the vote, that the honorable the Premier had considered it right to tender certain advice to His Excellency—which advice he was undoubtedly not bound to state to the House—he had a right to come and ask that His Excellency should have time to consider the course they had advised

him to pursue. He did not agree with the honorable member for Ipswich, when he said that the Government were in this matter attempting to over-ride the action of the House by a message from His Excellency.

DR. CHALLINOR: The honorable and learned member must have misunderstood him. He did not say that the Government were attempting to over-ride the action of the House, but that the House had over-ridden an Act of Parliament by the resolution that was passed last night.

THE HON. R. PRING: The honorable member said that if a message came down from the Governor in consequence of the resolution passed last night, it might be too late to say anything about it. But the Governor could not by a message over-ride a resolution of the House.

DR. CHALLINOR: He alluded to a message for dissolving the House, and said that it might come down when it would be too late for the House to say anything on the subject.

THE HON. R. PRING: The honorable member said the message might be too late, —leading him to believe that in the honorable gentleman's opinion the Governor might by a message over-ride a resolution of the House.

DR. CHALLINOR: No, no.

THE HON. R. PRING: Well, if the honorable member did not mean that, he should have expressed himself more distinctly than he did. But the Ministry had a perfect right to ask for an adjournment, to enable His Excellency to consider the advice they had given him. The House ought at once to agree to the motion, and ought not to go into a discussion, such as the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, desired to raise upon the question that the House, by the resolution of last night, had over-ridden an Act of Parliament. The resolution passed last night was, he held, a perfectly correct one, for the seat of the honorable gentleman, Mr. Douglas, could only be affected during the session by such a motion. But there was this further to be considered. The clause in the Act was a disabling one, and no resolution of the House could have the effect of again putting the honorable gentleman in the House, so as to enable him to record a vote, if the law was against him. If the resolution were rescinded, and the honorable gentleman again took his seat in the House and voted, the effect would be that, if the Judges of the land decided that he was disabled by the Act from holding a seat in the House till he was re-elected, not any measure that might be passed, and for which he voted, would be law. The Government, therefore, he thought, were taking a very proper course in not straining the proviso contained in the clause of the Constitution Act, so as to enable them by a majority of the House to place the honorable member in

his seat again, by which action every Act of the session might be invalidated. He knew the proviso to which the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, alluded, and he knew that the Judges of the land, if the question should come before them, would decide that the honorable gentleman could not hold his seat till he was re-elected.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The honorable member had made a very authoritative statement, and he wished to know if he had consulted the Judges on the subject.

THE HON. R. PRING: No, he had not. He was above that. What he had said was, that if the question came before the Judges of the land, he was sure they would decide that the honorable gentleman could not hold a seat in the House till he was re-elected, and that he was disabled by the Constitution Act from doing so. If the honorable gentleman took his seat again in the House, the £500 penalty would be brought before the Supreme Court, and the Judges would then decide whether he was right or not. If the honorable gentleman took his seat again in the House, the question would come before the Judges, and that as sure as his name was Ratcliffe Pring. The clause in the Act was a disabling one; and the rescinding of the resolution would not enable the honorable gentleman to take his seat. He would not have spoken upon the subject, if it had not been stated by a member of the Ministry that the resolution passed by the House last night overrode an Act of Parliament. He did not, however, intend to argue whether it did or not. If it did, let the Government bring the question before the House by itself, and let it be again considered. However, he would not at present dispute the question, as he did not know the premises. But he knew the Act, for he had had to give advice upon the clause in question over and over again for four years. He repeated that he should not have alluded to the question, if it had not been stated by a member of the Ministry that the resolution over-rode an Act of Parliament. Now, he maintained, that it did not, and that no proviso of the 19th section over-rode the Constitution Act. There was another point he wished to raise. He would give the greatest credit to the honorable member for Maryborough, Mr. Walsh, for wishing, in order to arrive at a right conclusion, to examine Mr. Douglas, and know from himself what really took place in regard to his resignation; but he saw a very great difficulty in the way, and that was, that though the honorable gentleman might have resigned his office as Treasurer, which was a departmental office, the House had not been informed, nor did he believe it was the case, that he had resigned as a member of the Executive. Now, the House could not call a member of the Executive to the bar and ask him what had taken place between him and

his colleagues on the subject. The honorable member must have forgotten that, when he suggested that Mr. Douglas should be called to the bar. While he desired as fully as any one to maintain the privileges of the House, he could not consent to a member of the Executive being called to the bar and examined in respect to Executive Council matters; for the House had no right to know about Executive matters, nor even as to what took place between members of the Executive Council. But he did not think they ought to call the honorable gentleman to the bar, even if they had the power to do so, and examine him on the matter. However, it was enough that they had not the power. He thought that the request made by the honorable the Premier was a very proper one, and ought to be granted. His Excellency was entitled to have time to consider the advice that had been given to him, and honorable members knew quite well that if things were done in a hurry they were not generally done in a proper way. He would like to know what good the House could do by going on as matters stood. Honorable members did not know what advice had been given to His Excellency. They did not know whether the Ministry had advised His Excellency to dissolve the House, or whether the honorable gentleman, Mr. Douglas, had tendered his resignation of office; or if the Ministry had informed His Excellency that the resolution was a proper one for the House to adopt; and while they were in that state of uncertainty and anxiety, why should they attempt to go on with business? He did not think the colony would be benefitted by their doing so; and, because he considered the honorable the Premier was right, he would support the motion for adjournment.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS said it appeared to him there was no question before the House to debate. There was a question before the House the previous day, but as there was some doubt as to which side of the House was right, and which was wrong, the honorable the Speaker left it to the House to decide the matter. The House did decide it, and the Government strengthened that decision by dividing the House on the question. Whether the decision could be re-called or not, was a matter that might be considered after the explanation which the honorable the Premier promised to give on the following day; and, until then, he did not think the time of the House should be taken up with it. He would, therefore, support the adjournment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said: I regret that such a discussion as we have now heard should have taken place on a motion of this kind. I regarded the acceding to this motion as an act of courtesy; and I believe we may search the annals of every Parliament in these colonies without being able to find a

parallel to what has taken place on this occasion. I must say that the proposition of the honorable member for Maryborough, Mr. Walsh, to call the late Colonial Treasurer to the bar of the House, if supported or entertained for one moment—if not scouted by every honorable member in the House, would point out to me the condition at which the House had arrived. I would say that it would have been well if some honorable members, and particularly the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, had not been so positive in giving an opinion as to the validity and regularity of the proceedings of last evening. I have not called them in question, though I may yet do so. Probably, it may be unfortunate that I am in the position that my mouth is sealed. As I have stated, the Government have tendered to His Excellency certain advice; but what that advice is, I am not disposed to divulge; nor will I divulge it. I have merely to ask the House to do what it never refused to do before—that is to accede to a request to give a little time for the decision of the Governor. As I have stated, that decision will be given to-morrow; and no doubt will be duly announced to the House in the usual way. I trust there will be no objection to the motion, and that it will now be agreed to without further opposition.

Mr. WATTS: The proposition—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have replied.

The SPEAKER: It is laid down in all the authorities, that if an honorable member replies before every other honorable member has spoken, he must run the risk of other honorable members speaking after him.

Mr. WATTS said that, in his opinion, the proposition made by the honorable member for Maryborough, could not be entertained by the House. The request made by the honorable the Premier was a most reasonable one, and ought to have been acquiesced in immediately. If the proposition made by the honorable member for Maryborough had been agreed to, and Mr. Douglas had been called to the bar of the House, he would have violated his oath if he had answered any question that might have been put to him on Executive matters. The honorable gentleman had taken a solemn oath that he would not divulge any information that he possessed as a member of the Ministry; and, therefore, it would not have been competent for the House to have asked him for any information that he was bound to keep to himself. He was sure the object of the honorable member would have been defeated if he had pressed his motion. He trusted the House would let the motion for adjournment pass, and that the Government would have the time they asked for, which ought to be courteously granted.

The motion was then agreed to, and the House adjourned.