

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 8 AUGUST 1867**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Thursday, 8 August, 1867.*

Address in reply to Opening Speech.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING  
SPEECH.

The order of the day for the resumption of the debate on the Address in reply to the Opening Speech, and amendment thereto, having been read,

MR. WALSH said that, though he moved the adjournment of the debate on the previous evening, and it therefore devolved upon him to resume it now, he would be glad to give way to the honorable the Premier, who, he understood, intended to address the House immediately. It was his own desire that the honorable gentleman should do so, and, unless he misunderstood one of the members of the Ministry, it was also the desire of the honorable the Premier to resume the debate.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: What member of the Ministry?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he was the member of the Ministry to whom the honorable member for Maryborough had referred; and he begged to say that the honorable member had somewhat mistaken what he said to him on the subject. In the course of a conversation he had with the honorable member, he asked him if he intended to resume the debate; and in reply to a question by the honorable member, he said that he believed his honorable colleague, the Colonial Secretary, would address the House early in the debate. He had no doubt, if honorable members so desired, his honorable colleague would address the House at once, and, for his own part, he must say that he hoped he would do so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In rising to make a few observations on the amendment proposed by the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie, said: I may, from a difficulty honorable members may observe in my voice, be unable sufficiently to be heard in all parts of the House; but I shall endeavor, as far as I can, to meet the amendment; and I trust that, in doing so, I shall be able to satisfy the House that I have met it on

substantial grounds. The honorable member for the Burnett commenced his observations last night, by repudiating the idea of going into the Governor's Speech at once; and said that he would do nothing of the kind, but that he would commence with the termination of the last Parliament, and begin with the subject that had then engaged the attention of the then Parliament. Now, I had, personally, no objection to the honorable member commencing at any part of our colonial history; and if he had commenced at the point to which he referred, and had come down from that period to this, I am satisfied that the whole of his observations, pertinent to the amendment, might have been delivered in five minutes. The honorable gentleman, however, did not content himself with commencing at two months ago, but he had no sooner opened than he went back to 1862; he went into the budget and disposed of that in a very strange and extraordinary manner; he then took up the question of the estimates, that had not yet been laid on the table of the House; and he also gave us something of a rambling account of the land question—not as the question is to be put before the House, but as the honorable member himself conceives it ought to be put. He also gave this House, by referring to certain newspapers, the views of the various members of the Government; but, in the whole of his observations in regard to the Government, the honorable gentleman entirely failed to shew that the Government had placed themselves in a position that compelled them to follow up the antediluvian views of the honorable gentleman on the land question; or that the members of the Government were not fully entitled to keep pace with the spirit of the age, and to adopt such a land Bill as they might conceive to be necessary, and such as the country demanded. It is not my intention to follow the honorable gentleman—and I am sure this House does not expect me to do so—through all his wanderings of last evening; but, at the same time, I am perfectly willing to meet him, and to deal with some of the questions—the more salient questions, to which he referred. The honorable member, in referring to the question—the constitutional question—that was before the last session of Parliament, maintained again and again that my honorable colleague, the then Colonial Treasurer, resigned his office, and that the Government had no right to transfer him from that department to the department of Works. Now, I have no wish to impute to the honorable member the uttering in this House of a statement which he knew was inconsistent with facts; but I do tell him that he ought not to make assertions in this House, on so important a question as that, without being in a position to prove them.

THE HON. R. R. MACKENZIE: I did prove them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I told this House, or rather I told the last Parliament, and I now tell this one, that I never saw the resignation of my honorable colleague; and I have it on the highest authority in the colony, that although my honorable friend did tender his resignation, he withdrew it in a very few hours afterwards. The honorable gentleman, in fact, never ceased to be Colonial Treasurer till he became Minister for Works; and he only ceased to be Treasurer by reason of his transfer to the department of Works.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: No.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: As the honorable member is not in a position to disprove one word of what I have stated now, and what I stated then—

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: I am.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I deny that the honorable member is. If he is, he should have denied the statements last night; and I say that the honorable member not being in that position last night, immediately proceeded to make an admission that was fatal to the whole of his argument. He admitted that if the resignation had not been accepted,—that if my honorable colleague still continued as Treasurer of the colony,—then the transfer was allowable.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: No.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I maintain that the honorable member did say so, and he is so reported in the public newspapers.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: The honorable member is mistaken. I did not say so. I said that if the office of Works was in existence at the time, the transfer was allowable in this way, that the Treasurer might take the office of Works, or the Secretary for Works take the office of Treasurer; and that was what took place in New South Wales, where one Minister took the place of another. In that way the Ministers might change all round. But in the case in question there had been no such changing as that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I made some notes myself of what the honorable member said last night, and I find that they correspond with the speech of the honorable member as reported in one of the newspapers. But the statement the honorable member has made just now is the same in fact. The honorable member has admitted that if the two departments existed, a transfer from one to the other was allowable. The honorable member said that the department of Works did not exist; but let us see how that was.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: No. I said a Minister for Lands did not exist.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A Minister for Lands did not exist! Well, what the honorable member stated last night was that the department was abolished—that it had been amalgamated with another office. Now, there the honorable member made an assertion that was not founded on fact, and one which therefore he ought to

have been careful not to make. Not only was the department of Works not abolished but the announcement the honorable member stated I had made in the House on the subject never was made. The last time the question was mooted in the House—and I think it was by the honorable member for Maryborough—I stated what took place, namely, that the question of amalgamating the offices of Lands and Works was at the time under deliberation. But the honorable member, last night, after making that assertion, immediately proceeded to shew that the office could not be done away with; and he stated that he had been asked to accept the office.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: I beg the honorable gentleman's pardon. If my memory is correct, I never said such a thing.

An HONORABLE MEMBER: It was the office of Treasurer he referred to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, I gladly apologise to the honorable member, for I thought he referred to the Works department. But, it is the fact that I can point to one honorable member in the House to whom I offered the office of Works at the time it was said to be abolished. But how could we abolish a department that was established by law? The department of Public Works is as much a department as is that of the Colonial Secretary. The proclamation that brought the department into existence had never been withdrawn or cancelled.

The Hon. R. PRING: But it could have been rescinded by another proclamation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: But it never was. I perfectly understand that the proclamation establishing the department could have been rescinded by another proclamation; and if the Government had intended to abolish the department, that is, no doubt, the course they would have adopted. But they had not done so; and so long as the proclamation existed, so long did the department exist; and, therefore, there was nothing to prevent the Government making the appointment they made. The simple fact, with regard to the department of Works at the time was this: Although I did offer the department of Works to an honorable member of this House, he declined to accept it. There was a difficulty in getting an honorable member to accept of the office when it became vacant, and that was the reason it was not filled up. But the office was established by proclamation, and could not be cancelled without another proclamation for that purpose being issued. The honorable member's position, therefore, throughout the whole of his argument about my transferring my honorable colleague from the office of Treasurer to the office of Secretary for Works, falls to the ground, and forms a beautiful commentary on the great constitutional discussion. The honor-

able member maintained that the defeat of the Government on that occasion necessitated a resignation. May I be permitted to ask the honorable gentleman for his authority on that point? That the honorable member was disappointed on that occasion, I have not the slightest doubt; but I tell the honorable gentleman—and I tell it to him once and for all—that however successful he may be with this amendment—however ardent he may be to turn me out of office—it does not necessarily follow that he is to replace me. I believe that I possess the constitutional privilege of suggesting my successor; and, certainly, when I look at this amendment, as a direct personal attack upon me, I am not compelled to go to the other side for a successor at all. I fancy, therefore, that the honorable member may find himself from the frying-pan into the fire. But the honorable member maintained that the Government went to the country on the constitutional question, and that not only was that the question we went to the country on, but also that we had been defeated on it. Now, I tell the honorable gentleman that we did not go to the country on any such question. We knew better. We knew the country was not the place to go to in order to have a constitutional question disposed of. But we went to the country on reasons which I gave to the House; and which reasons the honorable gentleman took very good care he did not quote to the House last night. But as the honorable gentleman has not referred to them, I shall do so on this occasion. I do not think it is a matter of very great importance, but I only wish to correct the harping that was carried on by the honorable gentleman on the subject last night. What I stated to the House as our reasons for going to the country was this:—

“The resolution which this House arrived at the night before last, and the resolutions which they agreed to on a previous occasion with regard to another matter, induced the Government, in deliberating upon the position in which they were placed by the resolution of Tuesday, to come to the conclusion that this House had shewn a determination to govern the country by resolutions, and to disregard Acts of Parliament. Now, sir, as far as my honorable colleagues and myself were concerned, and referring to the resolution of Tuesday last, the course which we intended, and would have pursued, was plain and direct. I shall not at present say what that course would have been. But the question we had to consider was, whether there were not other interests involved; whether we had not other matters to complain of, and other questions to take into consideration, in arriving at the conclusion as to what advice we should tender to His Excellency. This Government, sir, has for a considerable time been pursuing a certain land policy in connection with the railway lines of the colony;—a policy which it is of the utmost importance should be continued. The Government announced in the Speech of His Excellency,

at the commencement of the session, a certain line of policy, broad and comprehensive, in reference to the great questions which now excite the interest of the community. In the debate which took place in this House on the Address in reply to His Excellency's Speech, an amendment was proposed in the shape of a vote of want of confidence in the Government; and although that amendment was not carried—and although no division took place on the subject—yet, in the course of that debate, expressions of opinion were uttered by honorable members who the Government would have supposed would assuredly have supported them—opinions which at once displayed an intention on their part to have supported the amendment, if it had been confined to the Warwick Railway, and to have condemned the Government. The conclusion to which the Government came on that occasion, from the opinions expressed by a number of honorable members in this House, was, that they could not rely for support, upon any important question, upon either side of the House. The opinion they formed on that occasion arrived at a culminating point on Tuesday night, after the resolution was passed in reference to my honorable colleague, Mr. Douglas. It amounted to this—they were compelled to entertain the conviction that, not only could they not expect support from this House in carrying out the policy which they had announced, but it was vain for them to hope that they had the slightest prospect of being able to pass through this House the measures shadowed forth in His Excellency's Speech. Now, sir, looking at all these matters, the policy of the Government and the vital questions affecting the welfare of the country now at issue, as well as to the age of the present Parliament, we arrived at the conclusion that it was desirable the country should be appealed to, and a decision pronounced upon the policy of the Government.”

That is what we went to the country upon. I never intended to conceal from the House that it was on our policy, and not on a constitutional question, that we went to the country. I shall not delay the House much longer before I meet this amendment; but I cannot help remarking on an observation which the honorable gentleman made last night, that some of the reasons referred to by me before the dissolution of the House, namely, that the sixes and sevens in which parties appeared to have placed themselves, enabled the Government to place themselves in a very convenient position. Now, I dare say that such a position might have suited the honorable gentleman—office without work—but it should have no place in a constitutional Government; and no constitutional Government should be placed in a position by which they would not be able to carry measures through Parliament. The honorable member also touched on the subject of a re-distribution of the electorates. This, I take it, is not the proper time to go into that question, though we have the honorable gentleman's opinion on it. He announced a certain line of action, though I could not collect what were his opinions beyond his objection to a population basis. Now, I am not aware that I at any

time announced a wholly population basis as the groundwork of any Electoral Bill. But I maintain this, and there can be no question about it, that population must be regarded in dealing with any question of the kind. In looking only at the electoral district of West Moreton—and I shall take the data which the honorable gentleman maintained the Government should take—not a census of the people, which it would cost £5,000 to obtain—but I shall take the returns of the births, deaths, and marriages, and the *Statistical Register* of the colony.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am glad the honorable member agrees to take that as the basis of a Bill. Proceeding on that basis, I find that the electorate of West Moreton contains a population of 8,000; and that the electorate of East Moreton contains a population of not less than 14,000. Now, am I to be told, in the face of these facts, that those two electorates are already sufficiently represented in this House, when I know that in this House there is one member for the neighboring electorate which contains a population of only 600; that another electorate, with 900 of a population, returns a member; and that, for a third, with a population of 1,100, there is also a member in this House. The honorable member himself is a representative for a district which returns two members to this House, but which does not possess a title of the population or of the interests of other electorates that return only one member.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS: What about Rockhampton?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The representation of Rockhampton should be increased, undoubtedly. I shall now proceed to touch upon the amendment which the mover himself never touched upon in the course of his long speech, and which, from all he said, no one could have expected to have heard proposed. I do not remember any statement the honorable member made, that would warrant anything of the kind. But in dealing with the amendment, I would ask honorable members to give me their attention for a few minutes; and I would particularly ask the attention of those honorable members who have just taken their seats in this House. When I had the honor of presiding over the joint department of Lands and Works, the constant theme of complaint against the Government by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House was, that I monopolised the whole power of the Government; and it was urged that those two departments should have been divided long ago. An honorable gentleman, who was formerly a member of this House, but who is now absent from the colony, went on a visit to Sydney, and while there wrote a grandiloquent account of this subject of complaint, urging the division of the two departments, and had it published in the newspapers

there. But this division of the two departments had been a subject of conversation amongst Ministers ever since there was a responsible Ministry in the colony. It was the subject of conversation amongst members of the Government of which the honorable gentleman himself and I were members; and not only that but it was the subject of conversation between the honorable gentleman and me, at a time when he was prepared—and indeed offered—to join me, when I re-constructed the Government, on condition that I gave him a certain office, and when he knew there were to be five Ministers in the House. I only refer to that as a matter of fact, and I do not mean to make any observation upon it.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: What the honorable gentleman states is incorrect. At the time he mentions, which was on the formation of the coalition Government, he stated that the department of Lands and Works was to be divided, and my remark was,—“You may divide them as you like, but I very much doubt if the Parliament will vote two salaries.”

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The honorable member may have used those words, but after he did use them, he wrote me a note offering to take office. But it was all very well for the honorable gentleman to express his opinion about the House voting the salaries. I knew, as well as the honorable gentleman did, that it would be necessary to bring down a vote on the Estimates for the salary of the Minister, and to take the responsibility of establishing the department on the Government. Honorable members will recollect, that last year His Excellency the Governor, acting on the advice of his responsible Ministers, separated the two offices, and that a supplementary estimate was brought down for the salaries of the Minister and officers of the department, and voted without objection. And when the vote was again brought down—the vote which is current to the 31st of December next—when it came before the House, there was some discussion upon it. Of course, on the establishment of a new department, the asking of money for it is almost sure to create in the minds of some honorable members a feeling of opposition. Now, I happen to have in my hands the names of all the honorable members who voted on that occasion on the subject,—who voted that a certain sum of money should be granted for the department from the 1st of January last to the 31st of December next—that is, the very estimate we are now discussing. There was also a proposition before the House to reduce the amount to one shilling, and in the division that took place on that amendment there were, ayes 5, noes 16. And amongst the names of the sixteen gentlemen who voted “no”, I find the name of the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: No; I was not here.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The honorable member does not appear to be very particular as to his denials. But here is the honorable member for the Burnett's own name flourishing in this division in favor of the money being voted—a division that carried the amount we are now using—in that division is the name of the very gentleman who now brings forward the amendment to condemn, not the Government, but to condemn me for carrying on a department that is established by law, and for which the money has been appropriated by Act of Parliament. Now, I do not wish for a moment to stand in the way, if a necessity exists for a reduction of the number of Ministers in this House. All I ask for is, that that reduction shall be gone about, and proceeded with, when it is asked for, in a legitimate and constitutional manner. If any honorable member—if the honorable member for the Burnett—fancies that this department ought not to exist—that there is not work enough for it—that there is not responsibility enough cast on the shoulders of the Minister, he will have abundance of time to deal with the matter when the Estimates are before the House. If on that occasion the Government are not in a position to assign sufficient reasons for the continuance of the department, then the Government will be bound to accept of the rejection of the vote in precisely the same way as they would accept of the rejection of any other vote; but, to bring forward the question now, and in the way it has been done, is a course altogether unprecedented. This amendment is not only a vote of want of confidence, but it is one of the most vile propositions I ever heard of. It is, in point of fact, a proposition asking the House to repudiate what it has already given its approval to. I have not the slightest objection, so far as I am personally concerned, to anything that the House does. Nor am I one of those who would hang about Government House in the hope of being called in to take office—being there as it were, by accident. If I occupy my present position, it is not because I have run after it, but because it has been thrust upon me. And I tell the honorable member for the Burnett, and his supporters, that although I stand here at great personal loss to myself, yet, so long as I can obtain a majority in this House—so long as I can be enabled to be of the slightest use to the country in my present position, I am prepared to hold my ground; and I simply ask this House now to do me the justice, not only to reject the amendment, but to reject it ignominiously. If I believed that such a vote as this would be entertained by the Parliament, I should consider myself disgraced by remaining in it.

Mr. WALSH said he had listened with considerable satisfaction to the debate, as it was carried on yesterday; and heard with sincere satisfaction the good advice that was

tendered to honorable members, and so ably tendered to them, by the honorable members who moved and seconded the adoption of the Address. For his own part, he was in hopes that the advice so cordially and frankly given would, for a certain time, have had its influence. As regarded the effect of such advice upon himself, he would, notwithstanding the efforts that had been made on the Ministerial side of the House to diverge from the course that was chalked out for honorable members to pursue, endeavor to keep within the mark, and avoid incurring the displeasure of any one. He must confess that he had, in times past, allowed himself to be drawn into too much asperity in the House; and he knew that, in that respect, he had acquired a very bad character; but he would say now, for the twentieth time, that he had never indulged in personalities except when he was provoked into doing so, and then such personalities were only used in reply. The records of the House would prove that such was the case; and he only made the present remarks in order to set himself right with honorable members who held a seat in the House for the first time. He admitted that the official opposition that had been levelled at himself since last session, and the obloquy that had been cast upon him by a Minister of the Crown, in his capacity of a newspaper proprietor, would, in former times, have been sufficient to have warmed his blood to a greater degree than now, and to have induced him to take notice of those attacks in a different spirit from that with which he would treat them on the present occasion. He was rejoiced to find that the loyal subjects of Her Majesty had now the satisfaction to see that those attacks that used to be made daily without compunction, and without feeling, apparently, against Her Majesty's representative in this colony, were now directed against a much humbler person; and that those daily attacks, that were a disgrace to the colony—those attacks against Her Majesty's representative—were now singly directed against himself. But he hoped the honorable members who so ably moved and seconded the Address, in tendering the advice they gave against indulging in personal hostilities, had regard, in doing so, to honorable gentlemen near them, rather than to the House generally; and he trusted that if they ever again tendered advice of a like character, they would do so more directly to the quarter where it was so much required. But the honorable mover and seconder were, he thought, alike, in one respect, at fault. They set out, no doubt, according to the line they were advised to pursue. But they set out with the most mischievous and fatal doctrine, he believed, that any statesman could indulge in, namely,—that past legislation and past legislators were not to be remembered. Now, he took it that it was only by history that they were able to see what their future proceedings should be.

He thought it would be as futile and absurd to recommend every fresh mariner who came up to Brisbane not to regard, not to see, the beacons and buoys that were placed where previous navigators had discovered rocks and shoals, not to heed them, as it was to tell a fresh Parliament not to heed the acts of those who had gone before them. On the contrary, it was their duty to attend to such things, and he called on honorable members to remember that it was a very solemn duty they were called upon to discharge in doing so. It was as much the duty of honorable members constituting the present Parliament to see that the Acts and resolutions passed by their predecessors had been carried out by the Government as it would be for the members of a succeeding Parliament to see that the Acts and resolutions of the present Parliament were carried out by the Government of the day. It would form a very bad precedent if they were to allow it to go forth that their acts were not to be defended by their successors, and that their laws were not to be carried out by those who came after them; but such would be the effect of the advice honorable members received yesterday from the honorable members who moved and seconded the Address. The honorable mover of the Address favored the House to a considerable extent with his views as to the necessity that existed for extensive changes in the land laws of the colony. Of course a very great deal was to be allowed to honorable members in their position on such an occasion; but he thought, nevertheless, that the honorable members went unnecessarily into details on the subject of the land laws. But certainly they had an example set before them in His Excellency's Speech. He did not think a precedent could be found for the details of a measure being set forth in a Governor's Speech. Honorable members knew as much, by the Governor's Speech, of the land policy of the Government as they could know when they were in committee on the Bill; and it was as unprecedented as it was unnecessary to enter so largely into the subject in the Speech. He regretted that such a course had been adopted, because it convinced him of this, which he was not so sure of before, that the land question had been put forth as the stalking horse of the Government,—that it had been put forth with the view of exculpating them from the difficulties with which their mismanagement of the affairs of the country had surrounded them; and especially the difficulties their mismanagement of the railways had brought upon them. It was impossible for honorable members to see otherwise, when listening to the speech which the honorable the Premier had just delivered; or when reading his last speech last session, which the honorable gentleman did not fully quote from; or in reading his address to his constituency—it was impossible not to perceive that the Government sought to shelter themselves,

from the difficulties past mis-government had brought upon them, under the cloak of a popular Land Bill. Now, he would undertake to prove that such was the case, if it was possible to prove anything, by quotations from speeches and addresses. When the Parliament was addressed last session by His Excellency how different were his words on the Land Bill. Honorable members were not told then that such a comprehensive measure as was now proposed would be required. The land question was then dealt with in far other language; and honorable members were told, in the most trifling way, what the country required. He would implore honorable members to understand that he was now quoting what the present Ministry, that were rushing to such an extreme on the land question,—what they said in His Excellency's Speech last session they considered to be necessary; and he would ask them to contrast it with what the same Ministry said now on the subject. In the first session of the present year, on the 7th of May, His Excellency was made to tell the House—

“I invite your special attention to a Bill which will be introduced to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the leasing of Crown Lands. It is of the highest importance that leasehold as well as freehold tenure should be placed on the most favorable footing possible.”

Not more than three or four months ago the present Government were content with saying only that much on the land question. They did not see then that anything more was necessary for the country than the passing of a Leasehold Bill. It was only after that overwhelming majority against the Government, at the close of the last session, because of unconstitutional efforts on the part of the Ministry—it was only then, and when the Government had taken a day to consider their position, and, he might say, dodge to avert a calamity—it was only then the honorable the Premier came down with his *ad captandum* speech and said that honorable members on the Opposition side were fighting him on the land question. Well, he was glad that he could so far bear out that statement, for ever since he had had the honor of a seat in the House, he and others who held similar views had been fighting him on the land question; but it was to compel him to bring in a Bill such as the one shadowed forth in the Speech delivered by His Excellency yesterday. Now, he contended that it would be shameful in the extreme, after the Opposition had compelled the Government to consider the necessity for bringing in such a Bill—and he considered it would not only be shameful, but most ungrateful, on the part of the country—to give the Government credit for the proposed measure, instead of giving the credit to those who had driven the Government to propose such a measure. When the honorable gentleman who now held the office of Secretary for Public Works and he sat beside each other on

the Opposition benches, they worked together to try and compel the Government to introduce into the House a more liberal land law; and he well remembered the rebukes they used then to get from the honorable member for the Western Downs. He remembered the sharp attacks the honorable member made against them, because they tried to make the Government adopt something reasonable and liberal in the matter of the land laws. But political exigencies arose, and all the faults and frailties of the Ministry were forgotten. He believed that the very first time he had the honor of addressing the House on the subject of the lands of the colony, he used the following words;—and they were words that Ministers took singular exception to—they were words that led some honorable members to say, that so long as he embarked in such mad schemes, so long as he worked with the honorable member who now held the office of Minister for Works, so long he would not get anything for the district he represented, and so long he would be treated as a pariah—the words he used on that occasion were as follow :—

“He thought the time had arrived when those country lands should be made productive, and that it would be much better to legislate for the benefit of the free selector, and to let him have it at a lower rate of purchase.”

Having used those words on that occasion, he claimed to be the first person who advocated free selection in the House. He had never deviated from the opinions he then expressed, and the great amount of hostility he encountered from the Government was because he advocated such measures. Now, he thought he had sufficiently shewn, and he could refer to a dozen other books, and to “Hansard,” to prove it, that upon every available occasion the honorable the present Secretary for Works and he urged upon the Government, and demanded of the Government, to bring in a more liberal land measure. They maintained that the squatters were placed in a false position—that hopes were held out to them that would never be realised—that it would be better to treat them fairly and frankly; and that agriculturists should be treated as freely as possible. They said that the squatter should not be allowed to stand in the way of the agriculturist, so long as a pre-eminent interest was not injured. Now, he would repeat that this Land Bill—of which, when it was brought forward, he should probably cordially approve—this Bill would never have appeared, had the Government not been placed in a fix—had the loss of office not been rendered imminent, by the course the Opposition was compelled to take, in order to check the unconstitutional conduct of the Government. The honorable mover of the Address had spoken in favor of the American Homestead Law, with the details of which he must confess he was not intimately acquainted, but he could

inform that honorable member that the present Premier, who had administered the land laws of this colony so long, had been peculiarly opposed to that law, and had testified his opposition to it in the House. The honorable member who seconded the Address had also spoken about the important crisis which existed. He begged to assure that honorable member that ever since he had had a seat in that House there had always been an important crisis, and it did not appear that the colony was any further from it than when it was first announced. He did not think it would ever disappear until the House ceased to labor under the delusion—for the country did not—that only one set of men could be found to govern the colony. Such a delusion, he maintained, was destructive to the principle of responsible government. It would be far better, by comparison, to linger on, or to flourish on, under the sway of the most despotic ruler than to suffer from the rule of five responsible men who had to cringe to honorable members to obtain a seat in the House. He must still further allude to a remark made by the mover of the Address yesterday when he stated what had often been stated in that House, that the Darling Downs should be called upon to pay for the gross expenditure upon railways in the southern districts. There was something, however, to be said in defence of the Darling Downs.

MR. FRANCIS: The honorable member is mistaken, I did not use the word “gross.”

MR. WALSH: Perhaps the honorable member was right. He would, however, use the words gross expenditure, but, as he had stated, there was something to be said in defence of the Darling Downs. No doubt the people of the Downs had had a great deal to do with the initiation of those railways. He did not believe that they anticipated all the evils which had ensued, or they would not have pursued the course they did. They ought not, however, to bear the blame for all the gross expenditure, and gross mismanagement which the railways had entailed. The inhabitants of the Darling Downs, in common with the other inhabitants of the colony, had been told over and over again that the railway was to be constructed for a certain price. It was the various Governments who carried out those railways who were chiefly to blame in the matter. There was another defence for the Darling Downs, that anxious as they were for the introduction of railways through their district, there was the most powerful influence at work to plunge the colony into this expenditure, viz., the Ipswich and Toowoomba influence. That influence overawed the Ministry of the day and forced them to do what they now seemed inclined to do, at the beck and call of a Toowoomba inhabitant. It was only fair to say this much, that those who deserved it might have their share of the blame. He would next proceed to make a few remarks upon the Vice-Regal Speech, and likewise



upon the Address. The principal fault he found with His Excellency's Speech was that the most important interests of the colony were ignored in it in order to blind the House. He accorded every importance which was due to the land question, but he warned honorable members that it was not any land Bill which might be passed that would speedily restore the prosperity of the colony. The most liberal Bill might be passed, the land might be given away, but that would not bring money or credit, and he had considerable doubts whether any land Bill would attract population to these shores. There were questions of more importance than the land Bill—there was the question of immigration; there was the question as to how the railways were to be managed, and what they would cost—all far more important than any land Bill which could be passed. There was also the constitutional question of how the late dissolution took place, which was of far more importance to the welfare of the country; for confidence would never be restored or capital introduced into the colony until those persons who had it in their power to benefit us could be assured that the reign of terror and corruption were over, and that the present Parliament would take more effectual steps than the last. When he recollected the last scene in that House during the last day of meeting—when he saw law and order and the Constitution set aside—the presence of the Speaker insulted, and that done by Ministers of the Crown—when he saw that no satisfaction had been given for this—when he saw that honorable members were invited to blink that serious page in the history of the colony—he feared there was little chance for the eventual, or the rapid, or the permanent, prosperity of the country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he had listened to the observations of the honorable member, in the hope that he would refer to the particular upon which he had stated that the Ministers of the Crown had offered an indignity to the Speaker, towards the latter end of the last Parliament. He was not aware of any such occurrence, and he should like the honorable member, in making such a sweeping assertion, to be a little more minute in his statement.

Mr. WALSH said he presumed that was a piece of advice tendered by the honorable member to him, and he begged to assure him that he should probably carry out his instructions much more fully than would, perhaps, be desired.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he must take the opportunity of flatly denying that any such conduct as that alluded to by the honorable member towards the Speaker had taken place.

Mr. WALSH resumed: He was quite aware that it was the practice of members of the Government, whenever a debate began to assume an interesting form, to take any

opportunity of interrupting it. The honorable member would have ample time to reply to any charges which he might make, at the proper time. He could not, he repeated, forget what occurred on the last day of the last Parliament. A very important constitutional question had been raised which was met by the Premier of the colony rising and making a political, a party, an electioneering speech, amid the greatest violence, the greatest turbulence, arising principally from the Ministerial benches, and persisting in making that speech, knowing at the time that he intended to throw at, or hand to, the Speaker, a document which utterly precluded any chance of reply. Was the House to forget that? It might be their fate tomorrow to be treated in a similar way. He maintained that until a check could be put upon such practices, the introduction of a land Bill would be of little use to restore the prosperity of the colony. It was the bounden duty of the House, whenever there had been an infringement of the constitutional rules of Parliament, to take steps to vindicate its dignity, and to prevent any recurrence of such an unseemly practice. There was another very important matter altogether ignored in the Governor's Speech, and that was the financial position of the country. He believed they were in a worse state than ever, and that the colony was in such a fix that it was almost impossible to carry out its important undertakings. He believed there was a record of the House, placed on the table only the day before, which would shew that the later management of the finances of the country had been worse, more prejudicial, more costly, more wasteful, than any which had preceded it. He believed a perusal of that document would shew that money had been actually thrown away, that the country had been robbed of it. In the issuing of the Loan Bill, he believed it would be found that that which had been done tolerably well before had been done shamefully since; that, instead of the arrangement with the Union Bank for carrying out the loan at one per cent., under the new *regime*, entrusted to the gentleman about whose pay and position so little satisfaction had been afforded by the Premier, the colony were charged two per cent.—while, after all, the matter had to be negotiated by the Union Bank. Now, if he could prove that such maladministration had been going on for the last six months, ought not the Ministry, when they came down to the House, and especially with a new Colonial Treasurer, to have made some reference to those matters? There was another matter in connection with the finances of the country, and he was sorry that it devolved upon him to allude to it. It was impossible that the finances of the country could be properly carried out when the officer whose duty it was to supervise them—who was made independent of the Government, and subject only to the control of the Parliament—was not in

such a position as should inspire confidence. It was notorious that the principal official in the colony—who should be above reproach—was now in a position which the House should have been called upon at once to consider and repair. He repeated that the position of the Auditor-General should have been brought before the House in the Governor's Speech. He affirmed that a Ministry who could resort to such schemes as the present Ministry had been guilty of—who could attempt to hoodwink the country upon the strength of a Land Bill, which he believed not one of them ever thought of introducing when the last Governor's Speech was made—were not deserving of confidence, and the House would be a thousand times worse if they submitted to such a Government. He regretted, however, that the matter had been made so personal towards the Premier; it was not fair that he should be the recipient of all the displeasure. He contended that every member of the Ministry deserved censure, and he called upon them not to sacrifice their Premier; for he had heard that such was the intention of those honorable members. The honorable member, in his speech, had not referred to the subject matter of the debate, but, in order to controvert the strong position upon a constitutional question taken up by the House at the close of last session—the removal of a minister from the Treasury to the Works—had stated that which was not strictly in accordance with facts. He (Mr. Walsh) affirmed that the present Minister for Works did resign his office as Treasurer, that he congratulated himself at being out of the Ministry, and that both he and Mr. Watts mutually congratulated each other. He placed that statement against the statement of the Premier. If the honorable gentleman was not aware of the facts he had stated, he could only say there must be something wrong in the Government of which he was the head, when it could have been kept from his knowledge. The Premier had stated that the mere changing from one office to another did not necessitate the vacating a seat in the House and an appeal to the member's constituency. Now, it had been laid down by the example of the English Parliament, and had reached this colony since the turmoil about this matter, that three Ministers of the Crown there had changed their offices, and each one of them had to appeal to his constituency. The Premier ought to have known that, as it was known throughout the colonies and had been copied from the English papers into the local journals. That should have been the course pursued by the Government of the colony. The honorable member had also stated that the Department of Works was never done away with, that it was never gazetted. He had never heard that the mere gazetting of an office was at all essential. But what would the honorable gentleman say after relying upon the necessity for gazetting when

he read a proclamation which clearly shewed that the office had been done away with. Surely the Premier should be less oblivious of what had occurred and not attempt to hoodwink the House by such statements. He would read a proclamation which was issued on the 10th May, 1867, from the Executive Council Office. It was as follows:—

“His Excellency the Governor directs it to be notified that he has been pleased to appoint the Honorable Joshua Peter Bell to be Secretary for Lands, and to act also as Secretary for Public Works.”

Was not that a notification that the office, so far as its separate character went, was done away with? Could language convey any clearer inference? The Premier had likewise stated that the House approved of the fifth minister; but he affirmed that the moment the House heard there was a fifth minister, they went to loggerheads about it, and defeated the Government by a majority of 19 to 5. He had been prepared that very afternoon to move that which would have amounted to a vote of want of confidence in the Government, when he was interrupted by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, who asked him to allow him to put it into a distinct form. The motion then put amounted to a distinct question—That the honorable member who had held the office of Treasurer had vacated his seat in the House. What honorable member in the House was there who did not then feel that it was the expense of the office as much as any thing else which they had to consider? They felt they could not sanction that extra expenditure upon the country, that their constituents would not allow it, and more than that, that the office itself was not required. He affirmed, and the nineteen members out of the twenty-four or twenty-five who were present on that occasion entertained no other opinion, that it was a piece of dodging to bring back the honorable gentleman as a member of the Government. They knew he had been snatched from the ranks of the Opposition and that he had not been *d'accord* with his colleagues; they felt that an insult had been cast upon the House, and that a bribe had been offered to the honorable member to return to the Ministry, which he had announced himself he had left, and left with pleasure. Could all that be forgotten? Could the House, with that history before it, refuse to recognise the necessity for passing such an amendment as had been moved? Would it be believed that such an offence, fresh in the memory of three-fourths of the members of that House, could be condoned? He hoped it would cease to be a record of the Parliament of this colony that such proceedings were permitted. He was not satisfied with the Address because he was not satisfied with the Governor's Speech. He thought it singularly wanting in information, that it would give general dissatisfaction when read, and that it held out no hope to

those who were looking to this colony of any improvement in the Government of the country. There were hundreds waiting to embark their capital and energy in the colony, but they would never do so until they were convinced that it contained in it sufficient ability to form a second Government. The honorable member who moved the amendment had read the House one or two valuable lessons, and had read a letter which, in his estimation, amounted to pure eloquence and patriotism. It offended him—nay, more, it aggrieved him very much—to think that a gentleman who could write in such a strain should be mentioned in a tone of derision by the occupants of the ministerial benches. Was it to be proclaimed to the other colonies that a respectable man who had embarked capital in this colony was to be looked upon as its common enemy, and that his advice was to be ridiculed and disregarded? He considered the letter worthy of being a record of the House, and thought it should have been treated with marked respect; for it was not until scores and hundreds of such able thinkers and advisers as the writer settled in Queensland that there would be any hope for the colony. Population was charming to witness, provided it could support itself; but a population without capital would be a curse to the colony. Unless the two went hand in hand, it would be as easy to make the country prosperous as to get blood out of a stone. There was one portion of the Speech to which he must refer before he sat down, because he must again protest against any deception. It was that part in which His Excellency invited attention—

“to a few remarkable results exhibited by the *Statistical Register* for Queensland for 1866, just compiled.”

But it was to the concluding portion of the paragraph that he more particularly wished to refer—

“And yet it is to be regretted that in 1866 the colony had occasion to import grain and other agricultural produce of those descriptions that are now being grown in the colony to the value of £370,157.”

Well, of course, it was a lamentable thing, especially to the non-traders or protectionists, that so much money should go out of the country for cereals; but the inference he drew from that paragraph, and which he believed it was intended to convey, viz., that there was within the colony the possibility of averting the expenditure of that large sum of money for the necessities of life, was unjustifiable. He wished that were the case, but he would appeal to those who were experienced in such matters to say whether it would not be almost impossible to grow sufficient grain to feed the people at such a price as they could afford to give for it. And more than that, he contended that if such restrictive measures were passed as would prevent the importation of wheat and flour into the colony to any extent, the colony

would be brought into a state, if not of absolute starvation, at any rate, to such a state, that in consequence of the alteration in the price of the first necessary of life, the people would not be able to buy sufficient to keep them in ordinary health. It was a delusion to put forth such a statement. It was an *ad captandum* argument put forward in connection with free selection, and it would be wrong for the House to submit to it. Even if wheat could be grown in sufficient quantities, if the climate answered as well as the land, at a price which would be sufficient to pay them, there were other uses to which the land could be put; there was the growth of cotton and sugar, which might possibly, and he believed would, succeed and aid the prosperity of the colony. It would be a misfortune if all the farmers in the colony, whether they were many or few, devoted themselves to the growth of cereals. It was well known that a good crop of maize in this colony ruined the grower; and therefore he said it was a delusion which ought not to be sanctioned. He did not think it would be possible to avoid sending out £300,000 or £400,000 annually for food, nor did he think it would be politic; but he thought a vast amount of injury might be done if a number of people were attracted to the colony with the idea that by settling down on the Darling Downs and growing wheat, they would prosper. He did not think ten individuals could be found in the colony who had done so. He intended to vote for the amendment, and he thought he had given ample reason, without going into matters of detail affecting the colony generally, to shew that he was perfectly justified. He believed that the separate department of a Minister for Works was not required in this colony. He believed the creation of the office was at variance with the promise given by the Premier to the House, that that expense should not be entailed upon the country. He believed it had been incurred, and the office separated, from a political necessity; and with that conviction, it would be impossible for him to do otherwise than support the amendment. If the honorable gentleman who occupied the position of Secretary for Works had taken his own place and followed his own bent, he might have been Premier, or, at any rate, the certain future Premier of the best Government the colony had ever produced. But what was the position which he now occupied?—that of a condemned member of the House. With all the respect, all the admiration for his character, which honorable members entertained, they could only look upon him as a condemned member. The last session had been closed by a declaration that he had vacated his seat, which he felt was a severe reflection on the honorable member; and he trusted that if the motion before them were carried, he would obey the wishes of the House, and not only throw up his office, but

ask to be allowed to refuse the pay which was supposed to be attached to it. The honorable member must feel that it was the desire of the country that the expenditure should not be entailed upon it; and, no doubt, with that chivalry which characterised the honorable gentleman, he would at once say to his colleagues, "I will have none of your company, and join in none of your schemes." It was the duty of the Government and the House to commence retrenchment in the proper place; and he thought a lesson should be read to the Ministry, and they should be taught that, which the last Parliament would not have permitted, if it had existed for another day, would not be allowed by the present Parliament. He thanked honorable members sincerely for listening to him so patiently; and he hoped that, having himself endeavored to avoid all personalities—of which he had so often been the subject—other honorable members would follow his example, and endeavor, at the commencement of the session, to refrain from them.

Mr. GROOM said that, as usual, whenever the honorable member for Maryborough addressed the House upon any subject of vital importance to the colony, he entered upon a number of other questions which had nothing whatever to do with it. The honorable member had derided agriculture in no measured terms; and unless his statements were contradicted, it would again go forth to the world that the colony of Queensland would not grow cereals, and was only fit for a large sheep walk. Such arguments he maintained were wholly fallacious, even although they were based upon such documents as had been quoted that evening. The honorable member had affirmed that the statement in the Speech that £370,000 had been sent out of the colony for breadstuffs which could be grown in it, had been put forward with a delusive object. He thought he had not misunderstood the honorable member, and that he had defied any one to name ten individuals who had made a living by growing wheat. If the honorable member would pay a visit to the Darling Downs—he had only seen him there once—and especially to Warwick, he would there see a great many individuals, not ten, but hundreds, who were making a living out of wheat, and intended to continue doing so. He had listened to the observations of the honorable member with regret, because the honorable member represented a constituency which was particularly interested in the promotion of agriculture. It was said that on the banks of the Mary there were large tracts of land suitable for agricultural purposes. Cotton could be grown there luxuriantly; sugar also; and other products of the kind. It was not to be denied that the Darling Downs were situated on a higher elevation than the town of Maryborough; and while cotton and sugar could be grown on the banks of the Mary, wheat and other

cerials could be grown on the Darling Downs with great advantage—if proper facilities were held out to the growers—and in sufficient quantities to supply the whole of this colony. He had heard it stated on several occasions that the Darling Downs would not grow wheat; that, in point of fact, it would not even grow a cabbage. He believed two honorable members of that House on one occasion waited upon the Secretary for Works as a deputation, to request that the railway fares might be reduced to enable certain farmers of East Moreton to visit the Royal Agricultural Show at Toowoomba, and he believed the request was acceded to, and the reduction made. Now, he happened to come across some of those farmers who came up expressly to see the produce exhibited; and although the agricultural exhibits were small—as they always would be as long as that society rejoiced in its present royal pastoral designation—yet, if the people in the district could not exhibit a cabbage, they certainly exhibited a cauliflower, which was grown in the neighborhood of Toowoomba, and weighed 15 lbs. The royal association did not even award a prize for that production, but it was exhibited to shew what could be done in that line at least. In connection with the growth of wheat, he might observe that the local society had offered a national prize for the best sample of wheat grown in any part of the colony, to be exhibited in January, 1868, for which there were twenty-six competitors. One difficulty which existed in connection with wheat growing was the difficulty in carrying it to a market. Flour could be conveyed from Adelaide to Queensland for twenty-five shillings per ton, whereas, under the present railway charges, the cost would be fifty shillings between Ipswich and Toowoomba. Then, again, another thing had to be taken into consideration, that when farmers in this colony had to contend with South Australia, they had to contend with an old and long established colony. Very large areas were already under cultivation there, whereas Queensland was but in its infancy. And as long as it was necessary for the intending agriculturist to go into the auction room and compete with large capitalists for the land, Queensland would never be able to compete with the other colonies. The honorable member for the Burnett could not have quoted a worse illustration than the letter he had read from Mr. King. Whenever one or two farmers went into an auction room, they were sure to be met by large capitalists, and it was utterly useless for any single farmer to compete with them. The letter in question, which he hoped would be published in "Hansard," was from an individual who had expended some £5,000 in the purchase of land orders, and had then attended the land sale at Toowoomba, and driven away every small farmer who wished to purchase. Of course, every credit must be given to the

patriotic individual, who proposed to lay out £10,000 in the colony, but, unfortunately for that patriot, he had not an opportunity of doing so. It was pretty well known that, under the Leasing Act, no person could purchase more than 2,500 acres, but he could mention two honorable members of that House who had lent their names upon that occasion, and been put down for 2,500 acres each, by which the object of the Act was defeated. Another thing must also be taken into consideration;—the reserves at first selected in that district, were from fifteen to twenty miles away from Toowoomba, in a densely timbered locality, where it would cost £20 or £30 to clear the timber and prepare the land; while the land which this patriotic individual bought up had scarcely ten trees upon it per acre. The honorable member for the Burnett stated, last evening, that the individual referred to had departed from the colony, and had expressed his regret that he had not left a thousand pounds behind him. No doubt the colony would deeply regret having lost his thousand pounds; but if sympathy were to be expressed for him, it should also be expressed for others; and he (Mr. Groom) could mention names and supply data which would be borne out by other persons, to shew that, as soon as the Southern and Western Railway had been completed, and the line taken possession of, many persons were desirous of settling in the neighborhood. Among others, was one of the engineers, who possessed capital to the extent of somewhere about £3,000 or £4,000. He rode over the land which was advertised for sale on a certain day, and selected some two or three thousand acres which he intended to occupy. But what did he find? When he went into the auction room, and bid for the first lot, five or six persons in the room fastened their eyes upon him and bid against him, and he allowed the first three or four lots to pass. Again, when he commenced to bid, he was again assailed and run up, until he finally walked out of the room disgusted, and it was probable that he and his family would shortly leave the colony for Victoria. There was a case in point, a practical illustration of the injury the colony would sustain by these model patriots, such as the gentleman whose letter had been read by the honorable member for the Burnett, and referred to in such glowing terms by the honorable member for Maryborough. He must confess that he entirely concurred in the observations made on the previous day by the honorable member for East Moreton, in moving the adoption of the Address, and he was quite sure they would afford the honorable member's constituents, as well as every town and suburban constituency in the colony, unmixed satisfaction to learn that at last the House possessed a member who was prepared to raise his voice in behalf of the agricultural interest. He found that if population were taken as the basis of representation, it would be utterly

impossible, unless a re-distribution of electorates took place, to expect any land law of a liberal character from the House, as it was utterly impossible that the business before the House could be attended to, when the greeds of office were more considered than the interests of the country. He would not have risen at this early stage of the debate, were it not for the observations of the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie, upon the letter of Mr. King, wherein it was stated that certain lands of Gowrie run had been withdrawn from sale in obedience to a telegram from himself (Mr. Groom) to the Minister for Lands. He now stated most emphatically that he never sent a telegram to the honorable gentleman having reference to lands for sale at Gowrie; nor did the Minister for Lands send him any telegram that he had withdrawn lands from sale. The honorable member for the Burnett had been somewhat misinformed; yet, from his statements, it was utterly impossible to ascertain whether the honorable member was referring to Gowrie run or to some land on which the eyes of two or three hundred persons had been some time fixed, known as Cambooya Reserve.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: No; Eton Vale.

Mr. GROOM: Perhaps the honorable gentleman had not visited the locality. Eton Vale and Cambooya Reserve were almost identical, the one having formed part of the other. When the Minister for Lands went to the Downs, accompanying His Excellency the Governor, a deputation from a public meeting of the inhabitants of Drayton waited upon him and pointed out that Cambooya had been surveyed, and, they believed, designedly so, in such large lots that no farmer could purchase an acre of it; and subsequent to that interview the following letter, addressed to the Minister for Lands, appeared in one of the papers published at Toowoomba:—

“THE CAMBOOYA RESERVE.

“To the Hon. Joshua Peter Bell, Minister for Lands.

“*Per favor of the Toowoomba Chronicle.*

“Sir—You will, I am sure, pardon the liberty I take in now addressing you, but the subject which has induced me to take up the pen is one so closely interwoven with the best and dearest interests of this portion of the colony, that I am sure you will take in good part the few words I now address to you. You are reported to be a liberal-minded squatter, and the fact that you have been twice returned by a popular constituency, is, perhaps, sufficient proof that rumor has reported correctly, and that hence you will receive any advice tendered to you in connection with your office.

“You are, I presume, well acquainted with the Cambooya Reserve, in the District of Drayton, and that on the 11th of this month 1,000 acres of this reserve will be offered for sale by public auction. It is, however, possible that you are not aware that 5,000 acres of this reserve have been

surveyed, and that for some reason which requires explaining, only 1,000 is open for public sale. There have been numerous inquiries for this land, made, not by speculators, but by men who will, *bona fide*, occupy and cultivate the soil. Their disappointment, however, can be gathered, when I inform you that it has been hinted to these men that they can save themselves any trouble, because the owners of Eton Vale station intend to purchase every acre of it, and have bought up land orders for that purpose. This is, sir, a crying injustice. The Leasing Bill passed in the session of 1866, and which, by your recent proclamation of agricultural reserves you have declared inoperative, is acknowledged by all a failure. And yet you now announce 1,000 acres of the finest land in this colony for sale by auction on the 11th June, under the very Act which you, by your recent proclamation, say can be easily evaded. You, I have no doubt, are aware, that the Cambooya Reserve comprises land of the very best description. Hundreds of farmers and practical men say it is the finest in the colony for agricultural purposes. By nature, it is adapted for agricultural purposes. All the other lands in and around Drayton and Toowoomba are thickly timbered, but at Cambooya are thousands of acres ready for the plough. The land has only to be ploughed, sowed with seed, and forthwith we have the produce. The owners of Eton Vale station say—'We require all this land for our flocks—we do not require farmers—we do not require the cotton planters; but we say the land is ours by right, if not by purchase, and we have determined to buy up every acre for squatting purposes.'

"It is now in your power, sir, to decree the law, and in your hand the issue remains. I trust, sir, for your sake, and for that of the colony, that you will, in the face of a general election, consent to withdraw the Cambooya land from sale. I ask you is it not better to see the Cambooya lands occupied by hundreds of sturdy yeomanry than occupied as the grazing ground of a flock of sheep? Be, sir, true to your interests. Be true to your country, which country is prepared to secure you in your present position, so long as you shew your inclination to benefit all classes of the community. If you now, sir, will withdraw the proclamation of the land at Cambooya, for sale on the 11th of June, until the next Parliament decides the new land laws, you will confer a real benefit on the agricultural community.

"I am, sir, yours obediently,

"A FARMER.

"Drayton, June 1st, 1867."

What took place at the interview between the Minister and the deputation—which comprised the Mayor, Mr. Handcock, and Mr. Allen—he was not in a position to state, further than that the deputation came to him (Mr. Groom) afterwards and stated to him what they said they had represented to the Minister for Lands; and, thereupon, he wrote a letter to the Government on the subject, and in answer received a telegram—the only telegram he ever received from the Minister for Lands in connection with lands on Darling Downs:—

"Brisbane, 8th June, 1867.

"Too late to communicate with you, yesterday. The land referred to is in the town reserve and

must go to auction. The same risk of purchase by lessees must exist, whether a postponement takes place or not. A large sale in that neighborhood will soon be proclaimed.

"JOSHUA P. BELL."

The honorable gentleman would bear him out, when he stated that no telegram passed from him to the Minister for Lands with reference to lands at Gowrie. When the land sale did take place, nine thousand acres passed into the hands of one person for grazing purposes. A public indignation meeting took place at Ipswich, and a request was forwarded from it to the Government to proclaim the whole Darling Downs, and East and West Moreton, one agricultural reserve. He believed he was correct in stating that the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie, decried free selection in New South Wales—that he objected to the principle of free selection. He held in his hand a speech delivered by the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, who, at one time, was by no means an advocate for free selection, either before or after survey; but, in addressing his constituents at Kiama, on the 17th June last, he spoke in the following strong terms. As had been properly remarked by the honorable mover of the Address, our revenue was not equivalent to our expenditure, and the colony must depend on some foreign source to pay the interest on the public debt. Mr. Parkes said—

"I think the credit of the country stands higher now than it has for some time past. The very last mail brought us intelligence that our outstanding securities had sold in the London market at a very good figure. The Government at the present time have a pretty good supply of money to carry out necessary improvements. In the midst of all this we have had people settling on the land of the country under that beneficial Act, the Land Alienation Act. I never realised the value of that Act until the last year or two, during which time I have visited different parts of the country. I am not going to speak in extravagant terms of this measure, but I will say that it has been the means of placing industrious families where they never would have been but for this measure. It has enabled them to find out spots of land suitable for them, to provide homesteads for themselves, and by raising produce of various kinds to increase the wealth of the country. I question very much whether that district of which we have heard so much, not far from here—the district of Wingecarribee—would ever have been settled by an agricultural population on the surveys and reports of Government surveyors. Looking at the experience we have had from them, I question whether land in that district would have been measured out for agricultural settlement if not discovered by the settlers themselves. Unquestionably a number of places that are now converted into profitable plots of ground, and on which comfortable homesteads are erected, would have been overlooked by the official pioneers. This is a state of things for which we ought to be thankful; for, above all things, we want population spread over the country. \* \* \* \* \* As far as this

most important of all questions, the land question, is concerned, I trust that future legislation will be directed to affording greater facilities for families to settle on the land, while I would avoid committing injury to any other class in the country. I hope that this will be the main object of legislation on this subject; and I trust that as far as our pastoral tenants are concerned, that we shall get from them a rent more just in relation to the other classes of society. The question is one so large and so very difficult to treat on account of conflicting interests which it embraces, that it will always be one of great popular concern, and ought to be regarded by all classes with jealousy and great cautionness. I would never give my support to any measure that had not for its objects the ends which I have endeavored to point out, as I see no hope for the country except by the settling it with a virtuous and industrious population. I do not know whether any of the gentlemen present entertain the opinion that we have too many people in the country—I for one do not. If we had four million people instead of four hundred thousand, everyone would be better off."

Mr. Parkes cited the following case, which might be taken as having special application to the one quoted by the honorable member for Burnett, that of Mr. King, of Gowrie:—

"On the Murray River we have a district extending from miles below Wagga Wagga up to Albury, that would support ten millions of people. You may drive for a hundred miles and find the country like an English park. The land everywhere is rich, and capable of producing almost everything; and when anyone tells me that this land ought to be preserved for pastoral purposes, he tells me what is contrary to my common-sense. While in that district I became acquainted with a squatting property of a little more than 100,000 acres. This was occupied by a gentleman who with his family and servants were strangers to the city of Sydney, and could hardly be persuaded that such a city existed. They came out to Melbourne, negotiated the purchase of the station in Melbourne, purchased all their supplies in Melbourne, and when they took a holiday they spent it in Melbourne. Every ounce of wool was taken to Melbourne, and all they got from Sydney was Mr. Robertson's Land Act, and the *Government Gazette*. They occupied 100,000 acres, and every acre of it was fit for agricultural settlement. They had a frontage to that noble river the Murray; and out of the beautiful cedar which there is abundant, they had built a little palace. There was abundance of waterfowl in the neighborhood, and almost every advantage enjoyed by a retired gentleman in the mother country was there to the hand of this squatter and his family. For this magnificent estate they paid to the Government the sum of some £120 a year. The free selectors at Wingecarribee have taken up about 30,000 acres of land, and supposing that they have only paid their deposits, they amount to £7,500, and they are now paying interest to the Government at the rate of five per cent., which adds to the national income £1,125 per annum. Now I think this is a better rent than the squatter pays for his 100,000 acres."

That, he (Mr. Groom) contended, was a practical illustration of what would accrue to this colony

from free selection; it had been corroborated by the present Minister for Lands, in New South Wales, Dr. Wilson, who told the squatters of Riverina, at a banquet given by them to Sir John Young, that, after what he had seen, they need not now expect the repeal of the Free Selection Act. It was a current rumor that some gentlemen from Victoria had gone to the Darling Downs, and had offered £5,000 for a run there, which, with a five years' tenure, paid only £250 a year to the Government. That shewed plainly—and it applied equally to Eton Vale, Gowrie, and other runs on the Darling Downs—that the Government must look for an enormously-increasing revenue from that part of the colony. The accruing interest on the public debt must be provided for. He was prepared to take his share of the blame for past extravagance; but the House had been misled by false and fictitious reports laid on the table, particularly in regard to the railway policy of the country. Honorable members had been sent to this Assembly to repair the injuries of the past, and to see if they could not tide the colony over its difficulties, and direct a flow of population again to these shores. He was thoroughly convinced that it was bare justice for the districts through which the railways passed to be made bear the greatest part of the burden of debt incurred in the construction of the line. If it were true, as the honorable member for Maryborough had stated, that agriculture would never pay, then it would be impossible to induce an agricultural population to settle on the Downs.

Mr. WALSH, in explanation, said that what he had stated was, that they were beguiling people to go on the Downs who were not induced to go there to produce an article of export.

Mr. GROOM accepted the honorable member's explanation. "Hansard" told strange tales—he had not explained himself so clearly before. But, with regard to his statements of this evening, supposing, for the sake of argument, that wheat would not pay for growing, and admitting that the farmers had not equal facilities for bringing their produce to the seaboard;—fortunately, there was an artery extending to the Darling Downs, and veins of that artery extending to Dalby, westward, and to Warwick, southward. If the Downs were not adapted for agriculture, they were for pastoral occupation; and the railways must be used for the conveyance of wool from that country to the port of shipment. He (Mr. Groom) must say, therefore, that the railways had been constructed simply for the conveyance of pastoral produce from the Downs. What benefit would Bowen, Rockhampton, and the other districts of the north, derive from them? To get over the difficulty of paying the interest on our debt, it was worth considering, whether the runs on the Downs, which were now paying a ridiculously low rent,

compared with runs in the outlying districts, should not be submitted to public competition. He was confident that if they were so submitted, their productiveness would be greatly accelerated, and the revenue from them considerably enhanced, and facilities would be given for the opening up of many channels of industry, besides public works, affording employment for labor. Of course, the subject would demand a good deal of attention and trouble, and there would be much conflict of opinion, before an adjustment was effected. So it was in South Australia; but the public spirit of the Parliament supported Mr. Goyder's valuations of the runs. It was hard to understand why exception was taken to the Government for the third paragraph of the Speech. They contended that certain lands were worth, for agriculture, half-a-crown an acre; for which lands the pastoral tenants paid about a farthing an acre. He (Mr. Groom) was prepared to support that part of the Government policy, and he considered that what was stated in that paragraph provided a sufficient safeguard against the errors of the Leasing Act. He did not believe what had been said by the honorable member for Maryborough—that it was unparalleled for a detail of the principles of the Land Bill to be contained in the Governor's Speech. He had attended Parliament for four sessions, and never before heard a complaint against the Speech for being explicit. The complaint had ever been that Governor's speeches were like Minister's letters—vague and unintelligible. The present Speech was so plain that one could run and read, and it would be understood by the people; it was one with which he cordially agreed, and he should endeavor to support it as far as he could—with certain reservations, which he would state presently. The time had arrived when, without resorting to a census, it was necessary to provide for the additional representation of the people. The *Statistical Register* had just been laid on the table. He hoped it would never be so late again; for it was a document which, from the important information it contained, should be placed in the hands of honorable members immediately on the assembling of Parliament, early in the year. He found these startling facts exhibited:—There were fifteen members returned to the Assembly, representing 9,824 electors; and seventeen members, representing but 5,437 electors. He found that, at the end of 1866, the district of Burnett contained 303 electors, returning two representatives; the district of Western Downs contained 268 electors, also returning two representatives; Leichhardt contained 226 electors, returning two representatives; Warrego contained 79 electors, returning one representative; and Mitchell, with 101 electors, returned one representative. That shewed 977 electors, returning eight representatives. West Moreton, with

1,485 electors, returned three representatives; East Moreton, with 1,723 electors, had but two representatives; and Rockhampton, with 1,528 electors, only one representative. So that the three last-mentioned electorates, with an aggregate of 4,736 electors, returned but six representatives; while the five first named, with 977 electors, returned eight representatives. Those were facts which could be verified by any honorable member; and they afforded sufficient grounds for immediate action by the House in the reconstruction of the electorates, or the passing of an Additional Members Bill. What did they find under the present state of things? At Warrego election, there were four gentlemen present besides the returning officer. Had there been opposition—two electors nominating one candidate, and two the other—the conditions of the Constitution Act could not have been complied with, for there were too few electors present to demand a poll. The Mitchell election was worse than that. He spoke under correction; but if his information was correct, there were only three persons present at the last nomination—not enough to bring forward an opposition candidate. The electorates must either be reconstructed, or additional members be granted to the most populous—East and West Moreton, Darling Downs, and one or two others. He hoped that would be done, no matter what Government were in power. Referring to the amendment of the honorable member for the Burnett, he was prepared to support it, in so far as it objected to the appointment of a sixth minister; but not in the invidious way in which it was worded. It was not for any honorable member to bring before the House an amendment singling out any individual minister for their censure. If the Ministry deserved censure at the hands of the House they must be to blame collectively, not individually. If, after a time, the honorable gentleman brought forward a motion setting forth that a sixth minister must not have a seat in Parliament, he (Mr. Groom) would support him. It was a matter of perfect indifference to him, individually, who was in power; but certainly the country did not expect that honorable members would engage in party or personal squabbles, while hundreds of people were going to ruin and desolation. It could not be disguised, that the prosperity of the colony had waned; nobody could walk through the streets of Brisbane without being struck with the change from the busy scene they presented four years ago. What was the cause of that change? The people said, the only remedy was to open up the public lands. Before the House talked about a change of Government, they ought to do what the people in all parts of the colony were crying out for—open the lands. If that was done, he was prepared to consider, at another time, whether or not the Government deserved the confidence of the House. In the present embarrass-



ment of the colony, and looking at the number of members in the House, he did not think the additional minister was required. If the newspapers were correctly informed, that no money was to be voted for roads and public works, the Ministry would soon have nothing to do, and would be able, as the honorable member for the Burnett said, to go down to the Bay in the steamer "Kate" on pleasure trips. "Measures, not men," were the objects which every member should steadily look to. Regarding the evils that had already been brought to pass by hasty and hostile legislation, they should all unite to promote the prosperity of the country. Whether the present Ministry remained in power, or honorable members opposite formed the Government to-morrow, what he would do would be—support measures irrespective of the men that originated them. He hoped that the result of those deliberations would conduce to the establishment of the prosperity of the country, by throwing open the lands to all comers.

Mr. RAMSAY was unprepared to address the House on the question before them; but, having heard the statements made by the honorable member who just sat down, it was impossible for him, with the information he possessed, to allow them to pass uncontradicted. That honorable member had stated that Mr. King, of Gowrie, had taken up 2,560 acres of land in his own name, and that two other gentlemen, friends of his, had taken up equal quantities for him in their names, purposely evading the Act. Mr. King had taken up no land under the Leasing Act; every acre he took up was purchased. Another statement was, that Mr. King had bought the land orders with which he paid for his land at half-price. Nothing of the kind occurred. For £18 land orders, £15 was the price paid; and £11 for £12 land orders. It was of no consequence to the House what private business was carried on outside; but it was of great importance that honorable members should not make statements without sufficient information. He was very sorry that the first time he had to address the House, he had to call attention to such gross mis-statements as had come from the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba. That honorable member had further said, that at a land sale which recently took place at Cambooya, a great many intending purchasers attended, but that nobody could buy, because the lots were so large. He (Mr. Ramsay) was prepared to say, that none of the lots at that sale were larger than eighty acres. On that occasion, two areas of land were offered for sale—one at Drayton, and the other at Cambooya. Great competition took place for the land at Drayton, some of it going up to £3 an acre; and for every lot there was spirited bidding. As soon as that sale was over, the room cleared, and there were not four persons to attend the sale of the Cambooya lots. He

was unopposed, except for two lots, and he got every lot but those, at the upset price of £1 an acre. Was it to be supposed, if the people wanted that land, they would have let him get it? They would have opposed him, or anybody else, as they opposed one another. There were no bidders, because the people knew what land it would pay them to settle upon;—that would not pay them, though it suited him, because he had purchased some other land near it. He was opposed for the only lot on which the rock cropped out; and on turning round in astonishment to the man who was bidding against him, and asking him what he wanted it for, the man said "for agriculture!" That was absurd; he could not have known the land at all.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS regretted that he had not had an opportunity of studying the Governor's Speech, but he arrived in town only this morning. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba laid great stress on the third paragraph, from which it would appear that the lands were to be set free from obstructions; though the next sentence almost set forth that the terms of occupation were to be residence and cultivation. How those terms could be made to agree, he (Mr. Fitzsimmons) could not understand. His opinion was, that a man ought not to be restricted in his acquisition of land by any conditions; but be able to do as he pleased with it when he had paid for it. Every squatter in the House agreed that the law regulating the alienation of Crown lands wanted improving and simplifying; the squatters had offered long ago to do away with the obstructive conditions, but they could not abolish them. As for the Speech itself, there was nothing in it worth notice; the Government had, intentionally, he believed, omitted every single thing which could be of interest to the public. If any reference had been made to the debt of the colony, or to the manner in which the interest on the debt was to be paid, that would have been interesting. It was with a bad grace the Ministry had omitted all mention of the gold fields, and of the appointment of a sixth Minister, and of the necessity for doing justice to the northern districts. The north had often been insulted by the Government, but never so grossly as when the Colonial Secretary stood up and made some reference to increased representation for West Moreton, with a population of 1,400 odd, and three representatives, but not the slightest word for Rockhampton with a population of 10,000—6,000 in the town, and 4,000 on the diggings—and only one member. But that was in keeping with the conduct of the present Government. The honorable Premier might rest assured that endurance had certain limits—the limit had been reached in the northern districts. It was now for the House to determine, whether further acts of injustice were to be permitted,

and the northern districts be forced to stand up in opposition to the constituted authorities. There was no part of the world in which the Government had had such a baneful and destructive effect on the interests of a country as in Queensland; where every species of hypocrisy had been exercised by the men in power, and only now, when they had effected its ruin, were they being found out. The Government should have come forward with some specific remedy for the ill-effects that had resulted from their kidnapping of immigrants. The Colonial Secretary had, at Ipswich, made capital out of the land question, when he stated he was engaged in "a hand to hand fight" for the public lands. But he did not state with whom he was engaged;—doubtless, he had been fighting with some ghostly creation of his own mind, conjured up in the contemplation of the "dead men" who had, with the Government officers, secured the return of the honorable gentleman. He (Mr. Fitzsimmons) was determined to oppose the Government in every possible way, and he thought this was the proper time to test their strength.

The Hon. R. PRING: This House has now had its attention occupied for some considerable time in debating on the Address moved and seconded in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency yesterday; and to the Address exception has been taken in the form of an amendment proposed by my honorable colleague the member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie. In dealing with the question before the House, namely, the amendment, I shall not take it upon myself to criticise either the Speech or the Address, because I conceive that their consideration is not the question now before the House, or the question which the House will be called on in a short space of time to decide. If I were induced at the present moment to pass any remarks on the addresses, or speeches made by the mover and seconder, it would be to compliment them for the able manner in which, so far as their opinions guided them, they expressed themselves on the occasion when they addressed this House. Those opinions may be good or bad, either for the welfare of the colony or otherwise, but it is not any portion of my duty now to address myself to them. The question is not whether a land policy of the particular character shadowed forth by the Government in His Excellency's Speech is a good or a bad one,—or whether a re-distribution of the electorates is necessary now or at some future time. But the question we have to consider is a question peculiarly applicable to the Parliament, namely—whether the administration, or rather the administrative power which acts under the direction of Parliament at this present moment is of such a character that we can safely trust it to conduct the affairs of the country and to carry out the policy which the House enunciates when it is prorogued. It must be

known that the Government forms the Executive Council, as it is termed, and to them the administration of the affairs of the colony during the time the Parliament is not sitting is entrusted. During the time the Parliament is not sitting no control can be exercised over them, or over their actions; and, therefore, it is only when the Parliament is sitting, and during the time when it can exercise a control over the Government, that remedial measures must be taken if a necessity exists for so taking them. Therefore, I conceive that if any single honorable member of this House doubts the capacity of any existing Government, or refuses himself to trust them, or has any other particular and valid ground of objection to them, he has a perfect right to bring forward any resolution which he may think fit to bring forward, without being subject to cavil or comment from any other honorable member of the House. Therefore, I conceive the honorable member for the Burnett, my honorable colleague, has strictly followed his particular duty, if he can see that such a duty devolved upon him, in bringing the question before the House at an early period of the session, that he may himself at least protest against the present Government, or, I may say, express his distrust of them. It is not because the honorable member has proposed the amendment that the House will carry it. It is not because the honorable member has given certain reasons why he distrusts the head of the Government, or distrusts the Government collectively, that a majority will concur with him. He may arrive at his conclusions in one way, and other honorable members may arrive at the same conclusion but by a different process of reasoning. But I think the question before the House is well worthy of the consideration of this House, though it may not be carried by a majority of this House. Now, it is a perfect mistake to think or suppose that, because this resolution or amendment particularly specifies a particular member of the Cabinet, exception should be taken to the particular form of the amendment. Although the amendment so far as regards the wording of it particularly specifies a particular member of the Government, it is not defective in that particular point, because the Government is a corporate body, and therefore the whole are answerable for the acts of every single member. But it is well known that the honorable the Colonial Secretary, who, from his position of leader, manages the Government, is selected by the Governor to assist him in selecting advisers to carry on the Government of the country in a constitutional manner; and to him is deputed the selecting of proper men for that purpose, and he is answerable for the selection. When he, who occupies such an office, thinks fit to resign, all his colleagues resign with him. They must do so; and he is not required to consult them as to whether he will resign or

not. He resigns if he likes, and they have to follow their leader. I, therefore, come to the conclusion, that if the head of the Government has been so guilty of acts that distrust is felt towards him the expression of that feeling of distrust towards him is equivalent to a feeling of distrust in the whole of the Government; and, therefore, whether he is singled out by his name or by his designation of Colonial Secretary, it matters little for the purposes of this discussion. It is merely a matter of phraseology and nothing else. I must also here observe that we are dealing now with the Government in its administrative capacity, and the question we have to consider in this amendment is this: Has the Government, in the administration of the affairs of this colony, shewn itself possessed of sufficient administrative capacity to warrant the confidence of this House, and so to be allowed to continue in office and to further administer the affairs of the colony for the future? In considering this question, we shall have to consider the conduct of the Government collectively; not as to what they might do; not as to what they intend to do, if we are good boys; but what they have done; and so they must be judged by their acts, and by their acts alone. Not by promises of future good conduct; not by political measures that are brought forward for the nonce to please A or B, or any particular party; not by the shifting of their ground to please one class or another, or doing anything to please anybody; but by their being able to shew that they are men possessed of honesty of purpose, as I hope they will be able to do on this occasion. I hope they will be able to shew that they possess sufficient strength of mind to manage the affairs of the colony, and to be able to drag it forth from the mire in which it is engulfed and restore it to that position of prosperity which the honorable member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, thinks the proposed land Bill is likely to restore it to, but which I do not think it is. I was surprised, and yet I ought not to say I was surprised, having heard so many of the speeches of the honorable member for Toowoomba, that he should venture to say that the distress existing in Brisbane is all owing to the land laws of the colony; and that the distress would be put an end to by the beautiful land law that is shadowed forth in His Excellency's Speech. Now, I ask, can any reasonable man believe that it was the want of a good land law that brought the colony into its present degraded condition? I have now had the honor of holding a seat in this House for several years. I have sat here when the colony was in a high state of prosperity; I have sat in this House when it was sinking from a position of prosperity; I have sat in this House and battled in the hope that the colony might be dragged out of the mire; but I only saw it sinking deeper and deeper. But I never came to the

conclusion that a new land Bill was necessary to bring it round again, else I should have thought that the wise head of the present Government might have produced such a measure during the three years that he has held the high post of leader of this House. If a new land law would be sufficient to save the colony, why did the administrative ability of the Honorable the Colonial Secretary—and no one had a better chance than he had of doing so, while he held the office of Secretary for Lands and Works, and he held that office when he took the office of leader in the Government—why was it that his administrative ability did not tell him what kind of a land Bill to introduce two or three years ago. It appears to me that he had some kind of idea of a land Bill, but it was nothing like the one that is shadowed forth for the present. Not one that would have the effect of introducing population into the colony, and thereby retrieving its lost position. Such was not the kind of a land Bill that the honorable member proposed to introduce two years ago. I refer to the vaunted consolidation of the land Acts of the colony that were for so long trumpeted forth by the honorable member—a measure which we were led to believe was to settle the question for years. That land Bill was debated from day to day; and I would ask honorable members, who were in the House at the time, and also those who were not in the House at the time, but who may have read the observations that were made upon it, if that Bill was at all like the one which was now to be introduced, and if we were not in the same condition then as we are in now? We were in the same condition then, for the money was borrowed though it was not spent. And why did not the administrative capacity of the leader inform him then of what was to take place. I look on a man who is possessed of sufficient administrative capacity as being one who does not legislate for the day merely, or for the hour; who does not legislate with the desire merely to retain office; who does not resort to every shift and contrivance of political opinion to keep his seat. The man who does such things is not the man I wish or desire to see in the position of leader of this House; and when we come to look into the career of the honorable member we will see whether I am right or wrong. The honorable member sat down this evening with that flourish of trumpets, which I have been long accustomed to hear when he gets up to make a speech in this House—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL here made some remark.

The Hon. R. PRING: I hope the honorable the Attorney-General will desist from interrupting me.

The SPEAKER: I am sure the honorable gentleman must see the impropriety of interrupting the honorable member while he is addressing the House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will remain silent. Is that enough for you? (Cries of "Order, order, and "chair, chair.")

Mr. WALSH: I really hope the House will support the Chair; and I, for one, will not remain in the House if such conduct as that of the Attorney-General is to be tolerated.

Mr. SANDEMAN: I consider, sir, that the conduct of the Attorney-General towards yourself just now is perfectly disgraceful, and that it is the imperative duty of the honorable member at the head of the Government to protect your position.

The SPEAKER: If the other members of the Ministry will not endeavor to keep the Attorney-General quiet, I will be under the necessity of exercising the authority which is vested in me by the Standing Orders.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I shall remain quiet.

The Hon. R. PRING: When I was interrupted, I was observing that the honorable the Colonial Secretary, after making a speech in answer to my honorable colleague in the representation of the Burnett, sat down with the usual flourish of trumpets which I have been accustomed to hear from him on similar occasions; and the language he made use of induced me to come to this conclusion—that he thinks there is no other man in the colony like himself, and, therefore, he thinks the country cannot do without him; and so he attempts to ride the high horse in this House in a similar manner as, if I am correctly informed, he rides it in the Executive Council. But I can tell the honorable gentleman that the Executive Council and the Parliament are two different things; and though he may have a set of Ministers associated with him who are ready at all times to follow their leader, he will not find this House ready to follow him as their leader. I can assure the honorable member of that. The honorable gentleman sat down with a flourish of trumpets, to the effect that he did not wish to hold office; that he did not seek for office, but that office was thrust upon him. But I think I will be able to shew that the honorable member thrust himself into office. He informs us that if the House ventures to debate on his conduct as Colonial Secretary, he had better not sit in Parliament. Now, this is the language of an honorable gentleman who aspires to lead the Parliament of Queensland, and who aspires to continue as one of the councillors of His Excellency the Governor—the representative of Her Majesty the Queen. Why, it appears to me that the very language used by the honorable member in the course of the debate shews that he is unfit for his office. In using such language, he shews that he is wanting in dignity and courtesy to this House.

An HONORABLE MEMBER: And in manner.

The Hon. R. PRING: No; not in manner. He is wanting in courtesy in language, not in manner, for he is never discourteous to any honorable member in manner; but, I say, he

is wanting in courtesy in language to this House. But if I thought fit to rake up old grievances, I might be able to shew that he was sometimes, on particular occasions, discourteous in manner. But it is no part of my purpose to rake up old grievances, and I do not wish, on this occasion, to speak of any honorable member, be he friend or political opponent, at all in a personal manner. I desire only to speak of the political conduct of men, and the very amendment before the House does nothing more than ask us to criticise the conduct of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government; and, therefore, if I am not to be allowed to criticise his conduct, I had better not be addressing this House. Now, it would be well that I should mention to the House that it is the peculiar duty of Parliament to take care that those members who form the administrative portion of it possess the confidence of a majority of the House; and when the Parliament comes to consider a question of this character, it is invited by a proposition, introduced by any single member, to consider that question alone, and no specific charges need be made against the Government, or any member of it. If a majority of this House feels any distrust in the administration—if they think that the Government itself, or any component part of it, is so weak, that it weakens the corporate body, and for that reason thinks that the Government itself, as a body, ought not to be trusted—that is sufficient ground in itself for the introduction of an amendment of the present kind. It has been truly written in a very good work, "Hearn's Government of England," page 149—

"Parliament has a preventive as well as a vindictive power. If it perceive the King in danger of being misled by weak or by wicked counsellors, it is bound to interpose its advice without waiting for the actual occurrence of the mischief that it has, or thinks that it has, cause to anticipate. It votes large sums for the public service, and duly secures their appropriation; but it may reasonably require to be satisfied that the agents, by whom these moneys will be expended, are men not merely of character but of capacity and skill. The question of capacity or of incapacity is one of opinion, and admits also of various degrees. Parliament would, therefore, be excluded from tendering any advice upon such questions, if it were required to prove the absolute inefficiency of one Ministry or the relative superiority of another."

Now, the Parliament of this day is asked to consider under this amendment, whether the present Government possesses that capacity or not. Whether the Government is capable of administering the affairs of the colony, is a matter of opinion, and that matter of opinion will be decided by the House, collectively, or by a majority of it. But there must be some data to guide every individual member in arriving at that opinion which he will have to exercise by his vote on this occasion. And I should like to know how

this House is to arrive, or how any honorable member of it is to arrive, at that opinion, unless he reviews the conduct of the Government in dealing with the affairs of the colony during the late recess, and during the previous recess, and how it has managed the affairs of the colony during its existence. I should think that that data is the best the House can take for the purpose; and, therefore, I would venture to differ from the honorable mover of the Address, and the honorable seconder of it, when, no doubt, with the very best intention, they advised this House to bury the hatchet. But it is not a question of burying the hatchet, and doing away with old animosities. We can easily bury the hatchet, so far as regards matters of opinion, or feeling, that have been excited in our breasts during former debates. We are not debating any question of debate raised last session, but we are reviewing the conduct of a Government that now asks for a retention of office at our hands. Now, if we look back for only a short period, I think I shall be able to shew to the House that the present Colonial Secretary has, at all events, shewn himself to be either a very weak man, or else a very bad politician, or else something very much worse. I shall go back to the period when there was—and I do not think I can go back to a better period than when there was a re-construction of the Cabinet—and that re-construction took place when the honorable gentleman who held the office of Colonial Secretary from the commencement of responsible government in this colony thought fit to retire from the Government on private grounds. The present Colonial Secretary had held a post in the administration for some years. He had left the Opposition benches to enter on the Government side, and to enlist himself with them; and, having so far inducted himself into office, he at length filled the office of Lands and Works, and under his auspices the present railway system of the colony was inaugurated—that is, he took the part in advising that the railway system should be inaugurated—and when the necessary preliminary steps were taken, and Parliamentary sanction for the construction of a railway was received, it was to his department that the carrying out of those matters was entrusted. Now, the railway question has been a very vexed question in this House from the outset of it; and, I have no hesitation in saying, so far as my firm conviction enables me to judge, that it is to the railway system we may trace the present bad state of the colony. The land laws of the colony have never impeded its prosperity. I repeat, that never have the land laws of the colony impeded its prosperity; and I reiterate at this moment that if the existing land laws of the colony had been properly administered by the Government of the day, they would have been found sufficient to have met all the

requirements of the colony in times past; and, I may even go so far as to say, for years to come. It is throwing dust in the eyes of the people, and it is an attempt to throw dust in the eyes of some honorable members of this House, to say that our misery and wretchedness is to be attributed to bad legislation on the land question; and that this Government, by a new land policy, is prepared to remedy the evil. But have the Government shewn in His Excellency's Speech how the evil is to be remedied? Has the Colonial Secretary and his colleagues ventured to inform the House of the important fact how the interest on the millions we have borrowed is to be paid? Has the Colonial Secretary informed the House that the taxation that was placed on the colony by his Government at the end of last year is insufficient to meet the expenditure? And, if the additional taxation then imposed, and which now grinds down the colonists, is insufficient to meet the expenditure, where are we to get the means of paying the interest on the loan, much less the principal itself? These are questions which I, as a member of this House, and as a colonist, desire to be informed upon. I want to know, on the opening of a new session, what has been done with the millions of money that we have borrowed? Neither this Parliament nor the preceding one has been enlightened on that point, because, by a series of evolutions, that matter has always, somehow or other, been kept in the back ground, and will continue to be kept in the back ground if the House does not direct its attention to it. I should have liked to have seen some mention of that matter in His Excellency's Speech. I should have liked to have seen some propositions in the Speech, as to how the poor public creditor of the colony at home is to be repaid—who thought the lands of the colony were pledged to him, poor unfortunate man, when they are nothing of the sort. I should have liked to have been informed how he is to be paid even the interest on his money. And I should like to know how, if he should fall into a state of adversity, and should have to put his debentures on the market—how he is to realise them, or get one sixpence on the outlay, which he has been put to on the faith of the present Government.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: On the faith of the present Government?

THE HON. R. PRING: Yes, put to on the faith of the present Government, because when the railway loan for the extension of the railway from Toowoomba to Warwick was proposed, and an extra loan was asked for, myself, and other honorable members, sat here for several hours one night and battled to prevent the expenditure of £60,000 or £70,000 for the extension of the line from Allora to Warwick. The Government have got the whole of the money, and they know they have not the means of paying the

interest upon the loan. But the Government will not tell the House what they have done with the money. I know what they will say. I know they will say it has been spent upon the railways. But I should like to know how much Sir Charles Fox has had out of the loan in the shape of commission. I dare say he has had £25,000, if he has had a sixpence—and that for selecting iron and timber, when there is plenty of timber in the colony. I would also like to know what some contractors have had out of the loan under the contract that was prepared by the Colonial Secretary when he was Secretary for Lands and Works; and which never saw daylight till it was laid on the table of the House. I would like to know how much has been paid in per centages and commissions out of the loan. I believe it would be sickening to know how much has been paid out of money borrowed at home, and on which we have not the means of paying the interest, to say nothing about paying the principal. Now, I ask if we have not a right to condemn a Government that refuses us information on such points, affecting, as they do, our financial position? Then, again, I would like to know how the House, under such circumstances, can deal with the land question at all? I would like to know how, if the lands are pledged to the public creditor, the House is in a position to deal with them? We ought to know, before we attempt to deal with them, how much they are pledged for, and whether it would be safe to deal with them in any particular manner; because, to deal with them in the way proposed may involve a breach of faith with the public creditor. Have I not heard the Colonial Secretary over and over again, when certain propositions were made—have I not heard him say, “For God’s sake, don’t do that, for we will commit a breach of faith with the public creditor if we do not vote this sum.” Now, I say to him do not commit a breach of faith with the public creditor by asking the House to legislate in the dark. Before you ask us to legislate with respect to the lands which are pledged to the public creditor, shew us what is our financial position. If the Government come and shew us that they are in a position to provide, by a sinking fund, or by any other means, for the satisfaction of the debentures in the English market, and which they have induced Englishmen to take up and pay their money for, then I say they are at perfect liberty to deal with the lands of the colony as they like. Then I will go any length with them in the proposed land law amendment. But do not ask me to give my sanction to a Bill for the alienation of the lands on an annual payment of half-a-crown an acre for eight years, when, before eight years are over, you will want all you can get to meet your debenture liabilities. What right has the colony to be asked to sell its lands for eight years at half-a-crown an acre per annum, when, before another year is over,

you may have your bill sent out from England for the repayment of the millions you have borrowed in the English market? Then you will have nothing to pay it with if you have parted with that bit of property that might have stood you in the time of need. But then it will be said—“Oh, the Parliament did it.” Well, so far as I am concerned, I shall take pretty good care the Parliament shan’t do it without being pretty well advised as to the financial position of the country. And, now, speaking of the land question itself—undoubtedly it is a very grave question in the eyes of most colonists, and it is one that should receive the utmost consideration at our hands. But the great question is: whether, at this particular period of our history, we ought not to direct our attention to more important matters? Now, perhaps it would be advantageous for me to ask, by way of query—not the Colonial Secretary, certainly, for I should never get an answer to the question from him—why this precious Land Bill is to be introduced on this particular occasion? Why, when population has decreased instead of having increased, when there is also less money in the colony than there has been at any previous period since parliamentary government was first inaugurated—why, when such is the case, is this Bill to be introduced? Where is the extraordinary necessity for so many thousands of acres being thrown open to free selection? Why, it makes me laugh; for it is perfectly farcical for the Colonial Secretary to think that any man with the smallest share of brains could not see through his policy, and that it is for the purpose of securing himself in office by a majority when he came to meet the new Parliament. And I will give my reasons for that view. As I said before, the honorable member not only thrust himself into office originally, but has managed to keep in office by his own great acumen ever since—and I give him credit for it. Well, when he became Premier, what did he do? He violated a constitutional principle in the first instance, which is this—that a Government never should go into the ranks of the Opposition to ask members to join it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Oh dear!

The Hon. R. PRING: The Attorney-General may cry “Oh dear!” if he likes, but I will give him authority for it; and that is, again, “Hearn’s Government of England,” page 194:—

“The Cabinet is not an ordinary board. It is literally a partnership of Privy Counsellors for administering the Government. If it fail or if it succeed, its failure or its success is that of the collective body. Whatever internal difficulties it may have, its voice and its action are single. If one of its members should commit any error, or become involved in any difficulty, the blame attaches not to him only, but to all those who either actually concurred in his views, or at least authorised him to act in their behalf. It is needless to say that under our existing system a retir-

ing Ministry gives way at once, and in a body, to its successor. Except in the case of a mere reconstruction of a Ministry, no member of the out-going Ministry is now asked or would consent to remain in office under the opponents of his party."

Now, what did the honorable the Colonial Secretary's Government do on a late occasion? The matter was discussed before the House, and a very grave matter it was. It was no less than this—that the Government, the present Colonial Secretary's Government, tendered illegal advice to the Governor; and it is a constitutional principle that the Governor, when illegal advice is tendered to him by his Ministers, is not only free to reject it, but would be answerable to the Crown if he accepted it. And when the Colonial Secretary, backed up by the then Colonial Treasurer, the present Secretary for Lands, thought fit to advise the introduction of greenbacks, the Governor rejected the advice of his Ministers, and the Colonial Secretary, in a fit of spleen because the Governor did not choose to accept of the advice of his Ministers, took the pet and resigned. Well, in the midst of this distressing dilemma, a new Government was formed, in which I had the honor to hold the office of Attorney-General. But we found ourselves in this awful predicament, that we had a large sum of money to pay, and there was not a sixpence in the Treasury to pay with; and we had to drive all over the town in order to scrape a few pounds together to meet the most pressing demands. But while arrangements for the formation of a new Government were pending, the honorable gentleman, instead of assisting to relieve the colony from the dilemma—instead of giving the colony the aid of his valuable assistance and great talents, resigned. And why? Because he felt he could not grapple with the difficulty—because he felt he had not administrative capacity to deal with it. Well, certainly, one or two gentlemen did manage to find out a scheme such as never struck the Colonial Secretary, and so rescued the colony from the disgraceful position in which it was placed; and it was a disgraceful position for a colony to be placed in—that the outgoing Government should leave the incoming one without a sixpence in the Treasury, and so compel them to go from bank to bank, all over the city, to get as much money as would pay a number of laborers. Now, if that was not a disgraceful position for a colony to be placed in, I would like to know what is. The Government cheques were dishonored at the banks, and there were no funds in the Treasury to meet them; and I should like to know what right the Government had to issue cheques, when they had no money to meet them? I know that if I were to do so I would be branded as a rogue for all time coming; but it seems that a Government may do so, and still be thought fit to administer the affairs of the colony. Well, a new Government was at length

formed, and every artifice was used to prevent them giving their assistance to the colony, and endeavoring to remedy matters—I repeat it, that every artifice was used against them; and that while I, as Attorney-General, was being nominated at Ipswich, plots were being formed in Brisbane against me. At the same time, another new Government was being formed in Brisbane, in the expectation that I would be ousted. Every means were taken to have me ousted, and I was ousted; and what was the consequence? The election took place on a Saturday. The poll closed at four o'clock; and at five o'clock the present head of the Government was engaged in the formation of a new Ministry. That took place on the Saturday, and on Monday forenoon the Colonial Secretary was driving to Government House to attend a meeting of the Executive Council. Now, what do such proceedings tell me? They tell me that there was treason in the camp. But what followed then? Why, the most startling thing that ever was heard of. The then Colonial Secretary, Mr. Dalrymple, was, for the first time, informed in his office that he was no longer Colonial Secretary, and he had to walk out; and I, while instructing the Crown prosecutor at the Ipswich assizes, in the capacity of Attorney-General, was informed by telegraph that I was no longer Attorney-General. Was that the way to act in matters of such grave importance? Well, it was said that the present Colonial Secretary was sent for. Now, that is a technical way of putting it; but I question very much if he did not manage to get himself sent for. At any rate, he was sent for; but did he then act in the way that an honest and honorable politician would have acted in such circumstances? Did he send a note to his former colleagues, asking them to return to the offices they previously held? Did he write—"Dear Douglas, I am in power again, will you resume the office of Postmaster-General?" Or, did he write—"Dear Mackenzie, take the office that Pring wrested from you; I am in power now, and I will give those squatters the grandest dressing they ever got?" Now, why did he not do that, and then come and inform the House, in his usually grand style, that they would not take office. The honorable gentleman, with the astuteness that belongs to him, knew that his little game was up if he came and did that. And what did he do? Oh, those squatters! Those men he had abused, and would not come near for anything! I really believe that the honorable member, if in crossing the floor he had but touched a squatter, would have felt he had been contaminated—such was his abhorrence of that class of the *genus homo*. Well, what did I see? I saw two of the most determined squatters in the colony—of one of whom I will not speak now, because he is gone—but of the other I may speak. Well, I saw Mr. Watts, of Eton Vale, embracing Mr. Macalister. Now, if there

were two squatters in the colony more determined opponents to him than any others, it was those two whom he had got to join him. He had sent for them because he thought they would suit him; and, with his characteristic tact, he induced them to unite with him. But, in doing that, he violated, as I have already stated, a constitutional principle—by going to the Opposition and taking supporters from their ranks,—two of the Cabinet of which I was a member and who supported me; and because of whom I was opposed at Ipswich. Now, I would like to know what opinion I should be expected to have of an honorable member who would behave in such a manner towards me as that. I know what it was done for. I know it was done because the Government of the day could not hold its own in the House by its own strength; and so it had to seek for strength from the Opposition, to enable the honorable member to hold the office he so fondly clung to, and which he now fondly clings to still. But I have not done with the policy of the honorable gentleman yet. The honorable gentleman had enemies to contend with; for it could not be supposed that a great leader like the Colonial Secretary could take members from the Opposition camp without raising a dust and creating jealousies. The question arose—what was to be done with Mackenzie and Douglas, who were both walking about with sour faces? Well, he offers Mackenzie the Post Office, but he won't have it; and asks for some other office, and is told that he shan't have it. But it was reported that both gentlemen were anxious to get rid of the Colonial Secretary. "Dear Douglas" did not care for the Post Office, as the salary was only £600 a year, and "Dear Douglas" did not wish to continue in the service at such terms if he could make better terms for himself. Well, God forbid that I should blame him for that. Well, "Dear Douglas" then for some time lived a life of retirement and busied himself in various philanthropic ways about orphans. Now, he may have had something in training for an orphan establishment, and it may be that the Colonial Secretary had some great idea floating in his mind about orphans, and it was possible that a position might have ultimately fallen upon "Dear Douglas." But it is worthy of notice how the Premier managed. Up to that time the railway works of the colony had been of great importance. All the loans had been raised and all the money had been spent. There had been some disputes about the western line, but they had been determined by this time. But it was found necessary that an additional Minister should be appointed, and it was determined to accomplish that by separating the department of Lands and Works and appointing a Minister of Works. Now, it is quite clear that the Colonial Secretary never meant to divide the Lands and Works Department, because there was no more

necessity for dividing the department then than there was for dividing it at any former time. But, then, "Dear Watts" and others could not be provided for, unless there was a division of the offices; and so in a weak moment the honorable the Colonial Secretary was led into having two "dear" squatters united with him. Well, the House voted the division of the offices, and the Ministry was virtually then a squatting Ministry; and, of course, the honorable the Colonial Secretary, with his usual astuteness, again got the squatters to assist him, and so he got himself continued in office. Well, he went on swimmingly for some time; and I will pay Mr. Watts, who was then the member for the Western Downs, this credit, that while he held the office of Secretary for Works he did more than any other minister who had held the office in furthering the completion of the railway works. I believe the railway to Toowoomba would not have been opened to this day, but that John Watts was Minister for Works. There had been many promises made that the line would be opened by a certain date, but those promises were never kept. But John Watts said the line should be opened on a certain date, and it was opened on that date. Well, what was the consequence of his honest and punctual conduct? Why, that he got notice to quit. Honest John was far too good for that cabinet, and John Watts was so persecuted that he did what any other honest man would have done under the circumstances—he cut the painter. And it is a fact worthy of notice, that Mr. Watts did not take his seat on the Government benches after he resigned, but sat on the cross benches; and the Colonial Secretary, with three of his colleagues, formed the Government. That was the then Government, for a *Gazette* had been published announcing that the departments of Lands and Works were again to be carried on together. The Colonial Secretary having got rid of Mr. Watts, thought there was no longer any need for the two offices, and so a *Gazette* was issued containing an announcement that led honorable members to believe that the offices were amalgamated. Well, what was the consequence?—and I ask honorable members to mark again the capacity of the Colonial Secretary. Things went on for some time—and all the business of the country might have been finished by this time. But what was the conduct of the Government? Amongst the schemes the present Government were to introduce to the notice of the House was one relating to the immigration question. Now, the immigration question, to my mind, is one of the most important questions of the day; and I should have liked to have seen some reference made to it in His Excellency's Opening Speech. I hold that the immigration question and the land question should go together. Well, it was necessary to introduce a Bill for the carrying out of this immigration scheme, whatever it



was; and it was necessary the Executive Council should sanction it. The Bill was prepared, but the Executive Council could not agree amongst themselves upon it. The Treasurer, Mr. Douglas, had, it seemed, some peculiar ideas on the subject of immigration. At any rate, he differed on the subject with the Colonial Secretary; and I know this, that the Colonial Treasurer felt that the scheme the Colonial Secretary intended to introduce was one that would not be beneficial to the colony; and he felt that if such a policy were carried out, he could not hold office as Treasurer. He felt that the finances of the colony would be brought into such a bad state that he could not undertake to hold the office of Treasurer, and that, if such a measure were brought forward, he would have to resign. Well, what did he do? He left the office of Treasurer, and went to the office of Works. Whether he had, or had not resigned, matters nothing to me. At any rate, that was what led to this very serious question, whether the honorable member should take his seat in the House after he had been appointed to another office. But this brings me to the conduct of the Colonial Secretary, who could not agree with his colleague the Colonial Treasurer. The Colonial Treasurer, doubtless, was right—I have no doubt of it myself, and the only thing I blamed him for—although, really, after all, that was his business, and not mine—was for not resigning absolutely, and refusing to have any more dealings with a Government in whose counsels he could not coincide. But still I am not going to cast any aspersions upon the honorable gentleman, because I am not sufficiently acquainted with all the facts of the case; but I do say that, differing so much with the Colonial Secretary that he felt himself pledged to relinquish office, he should have absolutely quitted the Ministry of which he was a member. However, the office of Works was restored, and the late Colonial Treasurer brought back to fill it—I say *cui bono*? If the work could be done before by four Ministers, the Government were not justified in creating a fifth, and especially at the present time. For what reason was the office resuscitated and given to the Minister who could not agree with the Government, but for political reasons, to take a talented gentleman from the Opposition benches, and strengthen the Ministry? I say that such conduct was unworthy of men who seek to guide the destinies of the country in their administrative capacity. And as we judge ordinary men by their acts, so must we pass judgment upon officers of high position by their political conduct. By that process of reasoning, then, I can come to but one conclusion in my own mind, that the honorable the Colonial Secretary, if possessed of sufficient administrative capacity, is not possessed of sufficient political honesty, to carry on a Government with benefit to the

colony; and that is one reason why I shall vote for the amendment. Still, I think the career of the late Colonial Treasurer, which I have pointed out, must go far to convince this House that my honorable friend the member for the Burnett has very good grounds indeed for coming forward and asking this House, before it enters upon the deliberation of measures to be introduced by the Government, to decide for itself the question whether that Government possess the confidence of this House, so that it should be entrusted for the future to perform its executive functions. I maintain, sir, that that amendment will be productive of much benefit, because it would be improper for honorable members in this House, who have distrusted the Government, to sit by and allow measures to be introduced by the Ministry, and passed by this House, when they entertain an opinion that if good and salutary measures are to be carried through, the administration of the Government out of Parliament may, either through weakness, or incapacity, or otherwise, alter what might be good laws, into laws which would be exceedingly bad and injurious to the true interests of the State. Therefore, I say it is well that this question should be set at rest. A majority, if it be so, will express their confidence in the Ministry, and that confidence expressed, we can proceed to deliberate upon the measures to be introduced, in a better spirit, and, in all probability, with far less opposition, than otherwise. I crave leave, therefore, to ask this House not to condemn the honorable member for the Burnett for the course he has pursued, but rather to award him a certain amount of praise for it, even should a majority of this House affirm that they do not agree with the absolute amendment itself. Now, sir, many speeches have been made in the course of this debate, but I have not discovered that the real question has been touched upon in any of them. I did not hear the honorable member for Toowoomba touch upon the amendment at all. I heard him descend upon the land Bill and Toowoomba, for it appears to me that Toowoomba is always present to his mind, and that he considers there is no place like it in any other quarter of the globe. The honorable member has peculiar claims on Toowoomba, and well may he be satisfied with those gentlemen in Toowoomba who so far trusted him as to send him to represent their interests, and it is worthy of comment, too, that he has not been trusted, and that, whatever the residents of Toowoomba may think of his trustworthiness, it is clear that there is a member of this House who would not trust him; and, since the observations have been made, I feel bound to say that I distrust him too. For when I find an honorable member on the Government side of the House, for political purposes, making statements to hoodwink the House—and, thank goodness, there was a gentleman quite as talented as the honorable member for Too-

woomba, who contradicted him, and the honorable member did not appear to have sufficient confidence in his own veracity to get up and support these statements—then, I must confess that I distrust the honorable member. Now, sir, the amendment itself is worthy the consideration of this House, because, if honorable members have not been able, from the speeches which have been made, to gather its object and effect, I will only request them to read it carefully line by line, and I will guarantee that they will understand it. It commences by setting forth the reasons this House should be asked to assent to certain propositions, and those reasons are explicitly stated. Many honorable members of the present House may not be aware of the proceedings which took place last session, except from hearsay, or through the public prints. It may be as well, therefore, for me to state, that a very grave question was raised upon the appointment of a fifth Minister; that that question was raised by an independent member, and not a member of the Opposition; that the Government fought the question very hardly indeed, and that there was an overwhelming majority against them, but that at the time the Government were assured by many honorable members who voted that they did not consider it a vote of want of confidence. And I believe I am correct in stating, that the honorable member who made the motion did not consider it to have that effect. Now, it is quite clear to my mind, that the course taken by the Government was not a proper course. I am obliged to make these remarks, because in all probability the House will be told, over and over again—"If you throw the present Government out, the business of the country will be impeded. It is late in the session; pass a land Bill—pass the Estimates—and give us a month or two's spell; if you do not do this, nothing will be done at all. It is these naughty boys on the Opposition side of the House who are to blame,—they would not have a fifth Minister, and, therefore, we resigned." That would be nothing to the cry. But I say there was no occasion to resign, the Premier was asked not to resign, and he could have gone on with the business of the country, if he had chosen to do so. But, no, that would not suit him, he knew that the balance of power in the House was pretty equally divided, and I cannot conceive why he did not tender his resignation to His Excellency the Governor, and throw the onus upon the Opposition. If he had done so, he might have come back to office in a very short space of time with greater power than before. But the honorable member wanted a dissolution; every time a word of opposition to the Government was uttered on this side of the House, there was a threat of dissolution; "dissolution, dissolution," was the cry, till honorable members were hounded with the word "dissolution." "I will dissolve the Parliament, every one of

you will go out, and a good many of you will never come back again." He wanted to get rid of the naughty boys and to put good ones in their places. But he reckoned without his host. The real naughty boys are away now and the good boys are all here, ready to meet the Colonial Secretary any day in the week, any hour of the day, and upon any subject whatever; he did not carry out what he thought he should do. That was the real object of the dissolution, and not the land Bill. If the Colonial Secretary had been sincere, and anxious to bring about a dissolution in order to put forward a land Bill—the only land Bill for the colony—why did he not carry out, last January, what in the preceding Parliament he promised to do—dissolve the Parliament then. He told this House, before he resigned his office, on the occasion of my accepting the office of Attorney-General, that he would dissolve the Parliament in January, and go to the country on the land Bill; and on the hustings, at Ipswich, I told my constituents, that if they elected me I pledged myself to follow out the promise made by the honorable member. I promised them what he had promised in this House, and since he came back to office in August, up to the present time, he never dissolved the Parliament as he said he would do, and only did so at last in a pet, because the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, did not think fit to agree with him about the appointment of the Minister for Works. He found he had done wrong,—but then came the thought land, land—the land question—and then goes forth the cry "Land! land!" The *Courier* cries "Land;" the *Guardian* cries "Land;" everyone shouted "Land." In fact, it was more like a wild Indian war-cry than any thing else. I never heard a better cry got up upon such petty premises. That is the history of the Government land policy? It is not because the country is in a bad state for want of a land Bill—that I cannot believe; not because it is going to permit all the effects of bad legislation and improper borrowing of money, that a land Bill will remedy the evil—take my word for it. The land Bill has been a political cry on the hustings, and it is attempted to make it the basis of political intrigue in this House. Therefore, the land question, although it may be a very proper one to discuss, must not be thrown in the eyes of honorable members, to blind them as to the real question which they have to consider at this moment. If I were to ask any honorable member of this House, or each one separately, whether or no the present land laws, if properly administered, would not conduce to the prosperity of the colony, the influx of immigration, and so on, as well as any land Bill based upon the details mentioned in His Excellency's Speech, they would, I know, give me no other answer than this, if they understood the question: unquestionably; for I contend that any

honorable member who will carefully study the land laws of this colony, taken as a whole, who will take the trouble for himself, will find out that so great and ample is the power delegated to the Executive Council, that the land laws themselves, which, in reality, are comprised in very few sections of Acts of Parliament, are absolutely worked out by Executive action, and that that Executive action has been so improperly carried out as to impede the prosperity of the colony and the welfare and happiness of the colonists. It has been the Government who have done this, for I will guarantee that regulations shall be passed to-morrow to give to every colonist what he at this moment desires with reference to the land; as much land as he wants, and as cheap as he desires. It never has been done, perhaps, but I maintain that it can be done. I maintain that the powers of the Executive are unbounded; they are expansive; they can produce, if properly worked out, a land Bill much better than any land Bill which can be worked out in this House in committee. I repeat, this is only a bugbear brought before the House. The whole land system has been improperly carried out, for political purposes, ever since there has been a land law. The regulations were to suit one class of persons, and I have lived to see them altered to suit another class, for political purposes. It is the mal-administration of the law which has wearied the public on this question, and not the law itself. The public have never had the rights accorded them, which they should have asked for, through their representatives, because those very representatives who cried out so much for a land Bill supported the very Administration who withheld them. Why, ever since responsible government, ever since the first land Act, whenever a political question has been brought forward, the land has always been dragged into it. The Colonial Secretary, I believe, knows no more how to deal with the land question than this tumbler on the table before me. I believe he never had a single idea of how to work the lands except for a particular purpose, at a particular moment, and then—as I said before, the Acts of Parliament were so expansive that he could do as he chose. In the first session when the Land Bill was mentioned in the Speech he never thought of introducing what was then the popular cry, but now seems to have faded from the mind of almost every one—a Leasing Bill—why, I believe, we, absolutely sitting in Parliament, read of meetings held by the citizens of Brisbane at which the land question was discussed, and hopes were expressed that the Legislature would introduce in the new land measure a leasing system. The papers were inundated with correspondence on the subject. All at once the Colonial Secretary finds out that leasing is the finest thing for the colony; but although he was prepared with a Land Bill at that

time, he did not find out that leasing was so necessary as to introduce it then. But, the public found it out, and he fell into the view and considered it the proper thing for the colony; and I have no doubt, he would have thought anything the proper thing if it had suited the public. That was the position of the leader of the Government who is now going to tell us how to manage the lands of this colony. Why, if I were to get up in my place and drop a hint, which I shall take good care not to do, he would be ready to take it up. I am surprised at honorable members on this side of the House; I cannot conceive how they can have been so foolish as to give any hint of what their land scheme was to be. He will not get one from me; I gave him such hints once, and he was not slow to take advantage of them. But I shall be careful for the future, lest the very Land Bill which is now in print should be changed in the same way as the Governor's Speech was. I hold in my hand a copy of the *Government Gazette*, in which it is stated that the Queen's Speech would be delegated to Commissioners, and I was perfectly astounded when I saw His Excellency sitting before me in the Council Chamber. So that I do not really know whether the Land Bill would not be altered and my hints be put in, and then the honorable member would say, "You and I agree on the land question." I believe he would not have listened so attentively to honorable members to-night if he had not wished to get a few hints from them. Well, all this discussion has been caused by the honorable member himself. If it had not been for his conduct the House would have gone on with the business of the country in peace and quietness. If we had a good Government, composed of sterling men, this state of things would not have occurred. I do not think we require great talent, but we require men of good honest principles, and sterling common-sense, and all my remarks tend to shew that the honorable member is not a gentleman who can possess the confidence of every member of this House. I have no doubt he possesses the confidence of the honorable member for West Moreton. When we find that these things, and far worse things, have been done, are we to sit quietly and hold our tongues? It is quite clear that the proposition laid down in the first paragraph of the amendment is undeniable—that in a House of thirty-two members there should not be five ministers. I can scarcely fancy that the Government can argue to the contrary, especially when they are not wanted. I can prove that they are not wanted. The Colonial Secretary himself has shewn the country that they are not wanted, because he did without them when one of them at all events was wanted more than he is now. I maintain, too, that the office of Postmaster-General is not wanted, and I can affirm my absolute conviction that it was framed for the purpose of strengthening the

Ministry. For I cannot understand why the gentleman—a hard working officer—who filled that office before, and opened all the mail routes, should have been put down the ladder and another person put in his place, for no reason whatever. I am free to admit that when the Post Office was under the present Secretary for Works, it was as efficiently conducted as under the previous Postmaster-General, but I am equally free to admit that it has been very inefficiently carried out since, and I shall vote that no salary be granted to that officer. Has he ever assisted the Council with his advice, or laid any new or beneficial measure before them? Is he an ornament, or is he supposed to be of any use? Is it to strengthen the hands of the Government that he is put there, or what is he placed there for? It is almost distressing to see the expenditure of the colony at the present moment. I should like to know how it is that, if the Government are sincere in their intention to retrench, the Postal Inspector, for whom no expenses for travelling were voted, should be appointed with travelling expenses. Now, it is a positive fact that, when the salary for the office was voted, a sum of money was asked for travelling expenses, and was distinctly refused; it was specially stated in this House, that no such expenses would be granted, and the Government knew it. What is the consequence? They appoint a Postal Inspector, and give him travelling expenses from the 1st April last, contrary to the opinion and advice of this House. I maintain that there was no occasion for a Postal Inspector, for the work had been done by a clerk in the office, Mr. Hitchins, and there was no necessity for the appointment, except it was to please the *Courier*—the Government organ. I am not afraid to speak out; and when the interests of the colony demand my voice—when I see things done that I do not approve of—I must speak out: and I repeat, that it was for political purposes that the Postal Inspector was appointed. That is a specimen of retrenchment! This brings me to the third paragraph; and, with these facts staring me in the face, I must coincide in that portion of the amendment which says, “that this House cannot believe in the sincerity of the head of the present Government, in his assumed desire for economy and retrenchment, &c.” The reason assigned for that paragraph is a very good one, that “he pertinaciously retains, at the cost of the country, the unnecessary and expensive office of Minister of Works, and the staff appertaining thereto.” Then we come to the last paragraph, which recommends that the office be abolished; and I really think most honorable members must come to the conclusion that it ought to be. The honorable Colonial Secretary has given us no reasons for its continuance; perhaps some of the other members of the Government will enlighten us as to its necessity. They seem to be very reticent, and I

doubt if they can bring forward any solid reasons in favor of it. Perhaps they will say, “We do not object to this, and will do it at the end of the year—the salary for 1867 is voted, and we will not ask for any salary for 1868.” But if there is to be any retrenchment, I say it should be made at once; for the position of the country is so bad, that even a saving of a few hundreds is desirable; and I feel sure that the patriotism of the honorable member will at once induce him to give up the remaining five months’ salary, to benefit the country. £200 saved, is £200 made. It is not a large sum, but I am quite sure the Colonial Treasurer would be very glad to find a couple of hundred sovereigns in his till to-morrow, and very much put out if he found a similar sum abstracted. The latter part of the amendment refers rather to the formal mode of presenting it to His Excellency, which is of very little moment. I have now, sir, given my views with regard to the amendment before the House; and, as I said before, it is not my intention to go into the Speech. We shall have plenty of time to discuss the redistribution of electorates, and other matters, when the amendment has been disposed of. There is quite matter enough before us, to enable us to come to a decision upon, and I think the House will not have much difficulty in coming to that decision.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—Sir, at this time of night, I shall not trouble the House with many remarks, as we have already been treated to some very lengthy statements and addresses. I must confess that I have listened with a certain amount of amusement to portions of the speech delivered by the honorable and learned member who, I am sorry to see, is leaving the House. I certainly felt that the lengthy remarks of the honorable member had imparted a tedium to the debate, which weighed rather heavily upon me; and I was reminded of an anecdote, told of a certain witty person, Sydney Smith, I believe, who said, upon one occasion, after listening for a long time to a very lengthy sermon, preached by a bishop with whose opinions he did not agree, that he hoped the ultimate fate of the diocesan might be, that he might be preached to death by wild curates. Now, if I wished at anytime any harm to my honorable and learned friend opposite, I certainly did so this evening; and though I hardly went the length of wishing him to be preached to death, I certainly felt a wish that, if ever it should be the fate of that honorable and learned member again to be a minister of the Crown, he might be talked to sleep by some ex-minister for the time being. That has been my fate this evening. I have, however, occasionally picked up some of the honorable member’s remarks, and several of them I wish to refer to. The honorable member addressed me, and thought fit to make me the subject of some of his attacks, in

connection with this debate. I think my name has been called in question more than it deserves. The real merits of the case are not connected with my acceptance of office; that question has been raised by a side wind, to get rid of the real question before the House. However, as the honorable member has chosen to advert to matters which have been well discussed before, and are recorded in "Hansard," I think it necessary to make some explanation. I must take the honorable member for Maryborough to task, for the manner in which he has spoken of me, and my sayings and doings—or rather certain sayings and doings which he has heard from a friend, who had heard another friend say so and so.

Mr. WALSH said he had not used the word "friend." He had simply stated what Mr. Watts had told him he had said, and the honorable member had said.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: At any rate, the honorable member stated, from a conversation which took place some months ago, that I had said or done such and such things, and I think it hardly fair to say that of me in the House. I must decline to tax my memory with everything I may have said, and the honorable member has no right in any case to bring up such a matter in the House, after my public statement that I had tendered my resignation and that it was not accepted. The honorable member ought to have received that statement; if he does not, it is as much as to say that it is not worthy of belief. If honorable members are not satisfied, I will refer more exactly to what I did, and the exact form in which I tendered my resignation. It was in the form of a memorandum, from which I will quote:—

"He, the Treasurer, therefore begs to tender to His Excellency the Governor in Council his resignation of the office which he holds, and which he can now only continue to hold, subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, till his successor is appointed."

My successor was not appointed until I took office with the present Treasurer; we were both sworn in together; and, therefore, I have never ceased to hold office until I accepted the office for Public Works. Now, why should there be so much contention about a matter in reference to which, I repeat, the honorable member should have accepted my bare statement. And, after all, what is the value of it all? Do honorable members on one side of the House or the other care one fig whether I am in office or not? I do not believe the country cares, or that it is essential in any way to the distribution of parties in the House, whether I am in office or not, and it certainly would not make any difference in my support to the Government in power. I know the honorable the Premier will bear me out and say that he has depended upon my support to certain measures in which I have supported the Ministry of which I was not a member. I

felt that there were measures which required the forbearance of all who had the prosperity of the country at heart. I expected to have to decide upon certain general principles in giving my support to the Ministry, and at the same time to differ with them in matters of detail, in which no Ministry can expect unanimity. No members of a Government can be unanimous in matters of detail, but they can unite in carrying out a certain line of policy, and if we cannot secure the support of the House, we are ready to give way to another Ministry who are prepared with a defined policy. I think, then, there can be no necessity for any further reference to the position I held previous to my resignation of the Treasury and my acceptance of Works; but, it does strike me as rather extraordinary, that this Address in reply—for the amendment is really an address in reply, or rather a substitution for the Address—should be concentrated upon this one subject. It is a trivial subject compared with the policy which the present or any future Ministry may bring forward; it is nothing in comparison with the administration of the office I hold; and as to the value of the £1,000, it is nothing in consideration of the large amount of money which I have to control. It is a question which may well arise hereafter, and the Government are quite prepared to submit to the decision of the House upon it. But the mere question of £1,000 now raised, is not one which should decide the fate of the Government policy for the next session; for, of course, if the policy of the present Ministry be subverted, those honorable members who oppose the Government must substitute one of their own. The honorable member who last addressed the House, as I understood him, said that some reference ought to have been made in the Speech to the financial position of the country. Could the honorable member expect that in the Speech of His Excellency the Governor a detailed statement of the finances of the colony could be made. The honorable member for Maryborough also made some deprecatory remarks about the way in which those finances have been managed. I am glad, therefore, to be able to say that, in a very short period, my honorable colleague, the Treasurer, will afford the House full information on this subject; and, as I believe it is generally admitted that no one could more fitly occupy the post of Treasurer than that honorable gentleman, I hope the honorable member will obtain all the satisfaction he requires. The honorable member for Maryborough led the House to suppose that from documents which were laid on the table of the House, yesterday, the Financial Agent in England had most recklessly disposed of the trust committed to his charge. Now, I think the honorable member will regret that statement. This is not the time to shew it, without full discussion; but I take leave to affirm,

although I have often been opposed to Mr. Herbert in this House, that if the honorable gentleman never did the colony a service before, he did ample service when he negotiated the loan for the Government. It is a mistake for the honorable member to say our debentures have been disposed of at a price equal to 83. The price was never lower than 87. Under the unprecedented circumstances of a large loan having been previously raised, and from the known fact that our indebtedness was very large in proportion to our population, I think on the whole that the terms obtained were most excellent, especially in this point of view:—that if this loan had not been raised we should have been obliged to go upon the Australian market to raise the money we now have. If he never did any service to this country before, Mr. Herbert amply repaid everything to Queensland by the judicious manner in which he negotiated this loan. There is no doubt that we may anticipate another further rise in our debentures. I am informed, to-night, by intelligence received by the mail that the latest quotations of Queensland debentures were from 96 to 97. That is a very satisfactory result. What would be the result if our debentures had hung on the market—if they had been held by the bank, and if we had been compelled to borrow from the banks? It would have cost us much more than the depreciation we have had to submit to in the London market. This statement I make merely by way of explanation. The honorable and learned member for the Burnett, in the latter part of his address, alluded to the possibility of administering the law with perfect satisfaction to the country, as I take it, by Executive authority. Now, that is the very thing, dinned into our ears month after month, that we should avoid. We must have legislative Acts! was the cry;—we do not trust the Government; do not leave anything to Executive power to decide, but rather embody in your legislation what you think proper and right! How, then, can I accept the statement which is now made by the honorable gentleman, Mr. Pring, when I know that on previous occasions his text has been of a very different character? But it is really tedious, and of no avail, to go over this old rigmarole. We have been told, over and over again, that we are false as a Ministry. We do not pretend to say we are consistent. I do not say I am. There is no member of any ministry in this House who will say so, for himself; for, in his career during two years, he must have found occasion to modify his views, or to concede on certain points of opinion. I do not, therefore, set up this claim. We are bound to consider circumstances; we are bound to do what is, in our opinion, for the welfare of the country; we are bound to shew a determined front—to do what we believe the exigencies of the time demand. The policy which is indicated in the Speech,

is a policy which we believe to be right; that is the policy which we consider will meet the exigencies of the present time; and we confess to be willing to be tried by that policy. What we say to the House, is—Will you give us a chance to be tried? Do you so object to us, that you will turn us out of office at once, and not give us that chance which we ask for? If you deal thus, how are you to judge whether we are worthy of support or not? Only on these grounds can gentlemen newly come to this House, judge the question before them. They are not politicians of the past; they do not come here to mix in our quarrels. There are no representatives in this House of any great conservative party or great liberal party. If there were, we could easily understand how honorable members coming into the Assembly for the first time, might ally themselves with one party or the other. But there are no such distinctions here: we have no historical traditions of party in the State. The Government ask for this opportunity, and this judgment of our policy; and, as the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, appropriately remarked, the House must be guided by the inexorable logic of facts. But if the House wish it so, I am perfectly willing to be made personally responsible for any ministerial action. If any honorable member will table a motion that I am incompetent or otherwise unfit for my office, I am prepared to accept the decision of the House upon that. But the present proceeding does not conduce to the parliamentary government which we have previously recognised; and which is, that where a party of men, for certain purposes, agree to stand or fall by their policy, they must be judged by their policy. There is our policy! Why should it not be decided on, to-night, whether or not it is acceptable to this House? I say that in two or three hours, we shall be quite competent to decide; as much so as in a week hence. The main principle, I take it, in the policy now before you is in the proposed land Bill, involving the choice of land in large districts, namely, those of Moreton, Darling Downs, and Wide Bay. The great principle is, free selection in certain large areas that are specified in the Speech before you. That is a simple issue. Another issue is, that the representation of the people shall be improved and re-adjusted. The honorable member at the head of the Government has stated that that modification must chiefly depend on the population basis. I ask the House—Are you prepared to accept these two issues? I say, if you are not, and if you affirm by your vote, to-night, or in some other amendment, that we are not competent to hold office, you also affirm that the policy we propose is not fit for the exigencies of the time.

Mr. WALSH, by way of explanation, and with the consent of the House, begged to state, that the reason why he alluded to the

honorable gentleman himself (Mr. Douglas) was, that the Premier had previously introduced him in his speech, and he only followed him. Again, in reference to the remarks that he (Mr. Walsh) was bound to take the honorable gentleman's word when he denied a statement, "Hansard" would shew the state of the case. He would read to the House the last words he uttered on the occasion alluded to.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Read what I said.

MR. WALSH: The honorable gentleman never spoke afterwards. It was said in "Hansard" that he called on the Government to deny the statement, if they could—that was, that the honorable gentleman had *de facto* resigned—

"And I very much doubt whether that honorable gentleman will get up and say that he went to bed last night feeling that he was a Minister of the Crown."

He remembered pausing for an answer: the statement was not denied. The honorable gentleman never addressed the House afterwards.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member would give him the trouble of hunting up what he had previously stated. It was detaining the House on a trivial matter, but he would trouble honorable members by reading what he did say:—

"I merely now rise to corroborate what has been already stated by the honorable member at the head of the Government. I did tender my resignation, and that resignation *has not been accepted*; and I have to state that I did receive a proffer from the honorable gentleman to take the Department of Works, &c."

That was a sufficient explanation.

MR. LAMB said, when the Minister for Public Works alluded to the speech of the honorable and learned member for the Burnett, he stated that it reminded him of the sermons preached by "wild curates." He did not, however, tell the House the effect of a splendid oration by the Rev. Sydney Smith—how very exhilarating, how very refreshing such things were. If the Assembly were like the French Chamber, previous to the time of Louis Napoleon, or the Belgian Chamber of the present time, he (Mr. Lamb) should have thought, when the Minister for Works rose, that that honorable gentleman was going to give the honors of the sitting to his honorable and learned friend, the member for the Burnett (Mr. Pring), and move the adjournment of the House in acknowledgment of the eloquent speech he had delivered—a speech of which any Assembly might be proud. But that the minister had spoken, he confessed he would not have had confidence to address the House after such a speech. The Minister for Lands had asked—What was £1,000? Well, in the embarrassed position of the colony it was a very large sum of

money. It was in that wasteful spirit of the minister that many thousands of pounds had been looked upon, until the colony was brought down to its present low condition—a state verging on insolvency.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

MR. LAMB: It was not the £1,000, but the power it gave the Government in the House with a fifth minister that must be protested against. When the House learn that £4,800 was spent in the supervision of the Department of Public Works, they certainly could make some reduction. First, there was an Engineer of Railways, Mr. Plews, whose salary was £1,000; there was the engineer of the Dalby line, Mr. Brady, who, he presumed, got another £1,000; then an Engineer of Roads for the Northern Division, £600; an Engineer of Roads, Southern Division, £600; then, again, there was the Commissioner for Railways, £600; making £3,800. Another £1,000 for the Secretary for Public Works made a total of £4,800. And there might easily be added another £200 for contingencies, which would make the expense of the department £5,000. Now, he (Mr. Lamb) maintained that the whole of the work could easily be combined with the department of the Minister for Lands, the Colonial Secretary, or the Colonial Treasurer, he thought the Colonial Treasurer would be the best to look after it, because that minister would see what contracts were going on and know what money he had in the Treasury to meet their demands. He contended that the clerical work done by ministers did not amount to more than an hour a day; and if the administrative arrangements of some of the smaller neighboring colonies were consulted it would be found that they had never arrived at such a numerous ministry as Queensland possessed. The honorable and learned member for the Burnett had stated that the land laws of this colony gave the Government unbounded powers to deal with the Crown lands, and that statement was perfectly correct. The third paragraph of the Speech, which had been paraded with such a flourish of trumpets, was a standing reproach to the Government, because the powers that they proposed to obtain in a new Bill were already theirs under the existing law. But it was the disloyal manner in which the law had been treated by the Government that brought about the necessity for a new law. Was there not the Agricultural Reserves Act, which gave to the ministry of the day the power, by a stroke of the pen to make the whole colony an agricultural reserve? By the fifth clause, an agriculturist had power to select up to 320 acres before survey. If that clause were examined, and compared with the paragraph of the Speech, it would be found that the change proposed was that a person should be empowered to take up 640 instead of 320 acres, as now; and that, he contended, was the only alteration, the only point in the new land policy of the Govern-

ment. He defied any person to contradict that. By the 5th clause of the Act 27 Victoria, No. 23, it would be seen that any person could go and select from 80 to 320 acres where he chose;—it was true, he must pay down the purchase money of twenty shillings an acre at once. But, then, the Leasing Act did away with that necessity, as would appear by the 12th clause:—

“All lands in agricultural reserves which shall have been or may hereafter be proclaimed as open for selection and have remained so open and unselected for one calendar month shall be open to lease by the first applicant under the terms and conditions specified in the seventh clause of this Act. Provided only that if taken up on lease they shall be subject to the same condition and restriction as to cultivation and quantity as if they were selected by purchase.”

What was to prevent the Minister for Lands, simply by acting under those two enactments, for proclaiming the whole country open? The country had never had a Government loyal to the Parliament—that was why the law had not been allowed to operate; and until the country had a loyal Government, Queensland would never rise from the miserable position that it was in. He would shew how those Acts had been contravened day after day. Honorable members had all heard of the agricultural reserves on the Downs, and of the twelve months' notice required to be given to the lessees before resuming lands. Turn to the 44th section of the Pastoral Leases Act, which ran thus:—

“The whole or any portion of any run may be reserved for public purposes, or resumed for sale or otherwise, after giving twelve months' notice in writing to the lessee or occupier.”

Was that ever done? Was there one party in that reserve who had ever received the twelve months' notice? He could tell the House that there was not; but they could not tell what that contravention of the law might yet cost the country. There was a Claims against Government Act, and if the parties affected took their case before the Supreme Court, the Government would have to pay damages for the disloyal way in which they had carried out Acts of Parliament. If that notice had been given, and the country surveyed, instead of the contrary proceeding, it would have been better in every way; and, as in the case of the northern territory of South Australia—whose Government had been enabled to put land in the London market which white men had never seen, and sell it—purchasers would have been found for the land who would put it to good use. He next came to the refusal by the Government to give leases to the pastoral tenants of the Crown, even though the leases were already drawn up and lying on the floor of the Minister for Lands' office. He told the Government that such disloyal acts would never get over the necessity they were under of giving leases to the persons entitled to them, because justice was to be obtained in the Supreme

Court, without the leases. He was not telling tales out of office, but talking of matters on which he had received information since he left the public service, complaints having been made to him of the grievous manner in which the Government rode roughshod over persons applying for their leases;—but he knew cases in which such applications were refused point blank, though the documents had been long completed, and actually signed by His Excellency the Governor. But, according to the Pastoral Leases Act, they would yet have redress:—

“Any lease or other instrument issued under this Act may be proved in all legal proceedings by the production of a certified copy thereof, signed by the officer to be authorised for that purpose under any regulation to be made as hereinafter enacted.”

The receipts, shewing the license fee and the rent paid, or any other instrument, would enable those gentlemen to get justice without the leases which were kept from them. Some persons had said that the giving of twelve months' notice of the resumption of runs would prevent the Government from establishing their agricultural reserves. Well, the slightest modification of the law at the expiration of the leases, would have enabled them to do what they required: their own regulations had often gone much further than the change involved—had gone counter to the law under which they were framed; and this was the case now. But against such illegality he, for one, protested. They could have met Parliament, and stated their reasons for asking for the modification, and possibly they would have been borne out in their measure for reform, if found necessary. The honorable member for Ipswich (Dr. Challinor) might tell him that the proposed change in the third paragraph of the Speech, as to the extension of the settled districts, would do away with the pre-emptive right. That right was always permissive; and in some of the colonies it had never been allowed. Therefore, if all the waterholes, and the best of the country, had been picked out in the exercise of that right, nobody was to blame but the Minister for Lands. With regard to the fourth paragraph of the Speech, he, for one, was agreeable to the redistribution of electorates. He might easily ask the honorable members for Leichhardt to give him a slice about Springsure; and may be the honorable member for Warrego would give a portion of his district to be tacked on to Mitchell: neither of them need fear, for the first had a gold field in his district, and the other could get a portion of the Maranoa constituency, which had been increased from the population of Ipswich. But he (Mr. Lamb) asked the House if they heard anything of the despised district that he represented when Mr. Gore Jones was member, or of Warrego being such a miserable electorate when Mr. Forbes represented it? Both those gentlemen had been supporters of the Govern-



ment. When they sat in the House, nothing was heard of a redistribution of electorates. In the fifth paragraph of the Speech they were told that there was to be a new law to prevent personation—that he viewed with considerable suspicion, considering the quarter whence it emanated. It was well known in the Mitchell district that a person in the employ, as chainman, of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who was also returning officer, had proposed Mr. Gore Jones; and that immediately after the election the chainman was appointed clerk of petty sessions. Now that same ex-chainman had written to him (Mr. Lamb) to protect him against the returning officer, because he had been instrumental in getting the letters off to inform the electors that there was to be a new election in the district. View the manner in which another Government officer had been treated when there was merely a suspicion that he had been harboring an opponent of the Government, he had been ordered to proceed immediately, at great expense to himself, six or seven hundred miles to the north. The officer asked what he had done to be served so. He (Mr. Lamb) had been up at the Maryborough election, and heard all that took place; and he was able to say that he saw the gentleman alluded to every day, for fourteen days, from the time he left his office to the time he retired to rest. He had made two or three expeditions with him after office hours, to view the plantations in the neighborhood, and he could positively assert that that gentleman never touched upon any question of politics whatever, and told him that he always abstained from taking any part in politics. That gentleman had heard of the rumour that he was to be instantly removed if the honorable member, Mr. Walsh, was returned for Maryborough; he wrote to inquire why he was to be removed, and his answer was—that the exigencies of the public service required it. Why was not his junior, at Rockhampton, removed? He demanded, if any suspicion attached to him for taking part in the late election, that he should be granted a trial; and, like an honorable man, said—that if it could be proved he had been in league against the Government, from whom he derived his bread, that he should be dismissed. But he (Mr. Lamb) knew the great pressure that was brought to bear on the Civil Service; he knew it when he was a member of that service. He remembered that once, when he was seen walking down the street with an honorable member of the House, then a Member of the Opposition, now a Minister of the Crown; he was told by a Minister that such conduct was unbecoming in him. (Cries of "Name, name.") He asked, if that was from the ministerial head of his department?—for that Minister had not spoken for himself—and the reply was, that it was the opinion of the Cabinet. (Renewed cries of "Name.") He had some

delicacy in giving the name, though no hesitation when called upon.

MR. PUGH: The name of the Minister—who is the Minister?

MR. LAMB: The Minister was the late Mr. DeLaacy Moffat. Those were matters of history. But there was none for whose memory he had a greater respect than that of the gentleman named. He told him that he would never hold an office under Government on such terms; and that if he could not, as a private gentleman, walk the streets after four o'clock, and choose his own friends, the Government might have his resignation at any moment. He had known a Minister come into his office, when an election was going on opposite, and say—"Mr. Lamb, So-and-so is the Government candidate; send your clerks over to vote for him." He did call the clerks in—of course, after the departure of the Minister—and said: "Gentlemen, there is an election going on over the way; go and vote for whom you like." He contended that the greatest pressure had been brought to bear on the Civil Service of the country in elections.

MR. TAYLOR: Prove it.

MR. LAMB: Well, there was to be a law to prevent personation and corrupt practices at elections. He contended that there were parties in the Government who had aided personation at elections; and he had been told that the servant of one Minister had personated three different parties, and was caught in the act of personating another "dead man." He once resided in Ipswich, and he saw in those days what encouragement was given to corruption in quarters where he did not expect it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: You were glad enough to take office.

MR. LAMB: He was taunted with having taken office, and he would explain to the House how he did take office. He had just returned from an expedition to the interior, in November, 1862, when he saw certain letters, by Mr. Rae, in the *Rockhampton Bulletin*, describing the chaotic confusion the land laws were in. Dining with two Ministers, at an hotel, in the course of conversation one of them put the question to him, "Do you know anybody who will make a good Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands?" He was a novice in diplomacy in those days, so he really did not know what the Minister meant: he never thought of becoming a public officer then. He named several gentlemen—Mr. Wiseman, Mr. J. C. White, Mr. Walsh—any man who, he thought, really wanted it. From their response, it dawned upon him that he was asked to name himself, and presumed it was the nearest thing to an offer that they could make. He took a fortnight to consider upon it; and, upon accepting the office, he found that the letters, which were worth reading, contained the truth—indeed, the confusion of the office was ten times as bad as it was described. He told

the Ministers that he was frightened at the prospects, and must have time for consideration.

Mr. WALSH: Who were the Ministers?

Mr. LAMB would name them—Mr. Macalister and the late Mr. Moffatt. He could tell the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba that there were as independent men on the Opposition as on the other side of the House, and men who cared not so much for office as honorable members on the Treasury benches. It was an ambition for an honorable member to be proud of, that in course of time he might be called upon to shape the destinies of this future giant of a nation: and he presumed that every honorable member of the House shared in it. But he did not thirst and greed after office. If such laws were passed as would enable him to go into some of the industries of this country, he would prefer to do so to stopping in the House; but no man had a right to feel confidence that the laws of the country would be administered honestly after what had occurred. There was one matter he had to remark upon, and which he had nearly omitted to mention. When he first issued his address to the electors of Mitchell, in October, 1866, he wrote to the Colonial Secretary, and asked for an additional polling place to be established. The Minister told him that as the number of electors was merely nominal, he could not think of incurring expense. He wrote a second time, acquainting the Colonial Secretary with the fact that the only polling place was at the extreme end of a district, 230 miles by 160 miles, and that it could not be supposed the electors would travel all those distances to record their votes. Then, as the honorable gentleman could have proved by the roll, to which he must have had access, that, instead of the electors numbering two or three, there were ninety-seven on the roll. At Ipswich, when addressing his constituents, the honorable gentleman, to his surprise, stated that Clermont had only half-a-dozen electors, and that Mitchell had about the same. Was it not astonishing that a gentleman, holding such a high position, should make such mis-statements? Could anybody have confidence in him? When he made such incorrect statements on trifling subjects, in and out of the House, could he be trusted in more important matters? The reason why so few persons appeared at the nominations at Mitchell was plain. Opposition was not expected, and only a legal number left their business to attend the nomination. Of course, if there should be opposition, every voter would have timely notice of the election. Though there were only ninety-seven electors on the roll, he knew, from good information, that there were at least five hundred male adults in the district of Mitchell, attending something like half-a-million of sheep, or their equivalent in cattle. That large quantity of stock employed

directly or indirectly five men per thousand, and he could prove it easily. Nobody would deny that at the time of Separation, there was no other industry than squatting in Queensland. The stock in the colony was, say, five millions of sheep or their equivalent in cattle, and the population was 23,000. Therefore, he contended, that a new district like Mitchell, employing within its boundaries five hundred men, ought fairly to be considered as indirectly giving employment to another two thousand persons. But the whole subject of representation would be discussed again, and he would defer further remarks upon it.

On the motion of Mr. PUGH, the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, 13th instant.