

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 6 AUGUST 1868**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Thursday, 6 August, 1868.*

Address in Reply to Opening Speech.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING  
SPEECH.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that when the House was counted out on the previous evening, he was proceeding to answer certain

statements made in the speech of the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, and especially that portion of it which referred to the alleged "mismanagement, or want of all management" of the gold fields by the Government. He had not been able to gather from that honorable member's speech that he had preferred any specific charge, but he had brought forward a general and sweeping allegation, unsupported by any facts which would enable any member on the Government side of the House to offer either defence or reply; and he must say that, throughout the whole course of the debate, the system adopted by the Opposition had been to abstain from charging the Government with any particular acts of delinquency, and attempting to substantiate them, and to bring forward vague and general accusations. All he could do, therefore, was to answer the assumption on the part of the Opposition, that the Government had been guilty of general incompetency, and endeavor to meet that charge as he best could. No direct charge of mismanagement had been made; the accusation had rather been, that the Government had neglected the interests of the colony, in not providing sufficient means of transit between Brisbane and the gold fields at Gympie. But that was a local matter; and even if the Ministry had been guilty of neglect in that respect, they could not be charged with neglecting the interests of the colony of Queensland. No doubt, he should learn in the morning that he had been lecturing the House; but in spite of the fulminations with which, in all probability, would be directed against him by the press, he should not hesitate to express his opinion of the charges made against the Government, of which he was a member. He repeated that to bring forward charges of neglecting local interests as general charges, was not a fair course to pursue. It was one thing for a member representing those local interests to urge them upon the attention of the House, and another thing for the Government to be censured by the whole House for neglecting them. Such a charge, he maintained, ought not to have any weight with the House in considering the general policy of the Government. He thought that an honorable member who took upon himself the onerous task of moving an amendment which, if carried, was likely to cause a change of Ministry, should do so upon sufficient grounds, and at all events be prepared to shew that he himself was convinced that he was performing a public duty. Now, he was compelled to say, that the speech of the honorable member had failed to satisfy the House that he himself believed that he was taking a proper line of action. For no one could help being impressed by the fact, that while the honorable member affected to condemn the Government, almost every sentence that he uttered wound up with the remark that he should suspend his judgment upon their conduct. That was all the Govern-

ment asked for, that the judgment of honorable members should be suspended until the facts were laid before them; and that was the course that would be taken by any but a factious Opposition. While the honorable member appeared to be so anxious that the present Government should be turned out, the whole tenor of his speech was directed to one point—that they should have a fair trial. When so much weakness was displayed in the speech of the mover of the amendment, he contended that, unless the Opposition were a factious one, the address should have been adopted, and some other opportunity taken to test the honesty or the ability of the Government. How had the amendment been supported? It had been supported by one honorable member who seemed to have found out, at the last moment, the error of his ways. He was at a loss to understand how, at the eleventh hour, that honorable member had become convinced that the course he had pursued during the previous session was erroneous. He should be inclined to think that a great deal of pressure of some sort had been brought to bear on the honorable member; but he could tell him that it was a matter of very little moment indeed whether the Government possessed his confidence or not. That honorable member had stated, that it was only within the last few days that the Government had been impressed with the importance of the gold fields. Why, the honorable member must have known that such an accusation could be readily refuted. He must have known that the Government, for months past, had been in regular communication with the gold fields about this particular road to Gympie, about which he spoke so much. There had also been a large expenditure to meet the other requirements of the gold fields, and, in his opinion, quite enough had been expended. Why did not the honorable member point out in what way the Government had neglected the gold fields, and how it was that their importance had never become apparent to the Government until the last few days? It had been stated outside, though perhaps not in the House, that the Government had retarded the progress of the gold fields; but the only evidence in support of that charge was, that the honorable Colonial Secretary had telegraphed to the Governments of the other colonies to caution them against a too great influx of population, in consequence of these discoveries. He considered that his honorable colleague was perfectly right. He had seen a great deal of injury accrue to this colony from the sudden rush of a large number of persons to gold fields, which promised to be quite as rich as those at Gympie. Indeed, so great was the difficulty caused by that rush, that it became necessary for private individuals to subscribe to send those persons back to their wives and families. Surely, with such facts before the eyes of the Government, it was but common prudence to take steps to

prevent the recurrence of a like state of things. If the Gympie gold fields had not turned out well, and nothing had been done to check the rapid influx of population, and the same scenes had been enacted as took place at the Canoona rush, would not the Government have been censured? They had not, however, retarded the progress of the gold fields, quite the contrary; though they had acted without rashness in the matter. No honorable member would deny that the money required to form the road to Gympie would have to come out of the consolidated revenue, to which the whole colony, already so heavily taxed, contributed; and he maintained that it was neither right nor the duty of the Government to spend the people's money for the benefit of only a small section of the community. It might have been argued that to assist the gold fields of the colony was to assist immigration, and so to further the prosperity of the colony; but a line must be drawn somewhere, and the position of the gold fields which required assistance ought to have been specified. If the argument used had been that it was essentially necessary to the welfare of the colony that proper communication should be rapidly opened up between Brisbane and Gympie, there would have been some force in it. But it had not been shewn that the Government had any special necessity or authority to expend a larger sum of money in that district than it was entitled to as its share of the general revenue. But even then the money could only be granted by a vote of the House, and so far the Government had acted correctly. The clamor which had been raised in reference to this subject had in reality proceeded from only a few interested persons in Brisbane; not a word on the subject had been heard from the inhabitants of Gympie. In fact, they seemed to consider that they had already a much cheaper and better road for goods and passengers by way of Maryborough, and they did not trouble themselves at all about the road to Brisbane. Therefore, if the persons most interested in it did not take the least trouble to agitate about the road, why should a few individuals in Brisbane take up the question, and endeavor to raise such a storm against the Government; except it was because they would be able, through this road, to put a little more money into their own pockets? He believed there were such things as indignation meetings in this town. He should like to know what an indignation meeting meant, held on the eve of the opening of Parliament? Was it a meeting got up by three or four persons, who drew up resolutions and spoke to them, having reference entirely to local affairs? He approved of meetings for that purpose in the different electorates; but the object of such a meeting should be confined to the electors and the representatives of the district, and go no further. But when the holders of such meetings attempted to act for the good of

the commonwealth, they overstepped their duty. It had been well observed the other evening, by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, that such a meeting could have no effect upon the Government; and he thought it would be a very sorry day for the Parliament of Queensland when they allowed themselves to be influenced by a meeting in any electorate, whether Brisbane or elsewhere. The two general charges against the Government were, first, that they did not possess the confidence of the House in their legislative functions; and, secondly, that they did not possess that confidence in their administrative capacity. Now, to deal with the first charge, he had never heard that the Government had forfeited the confidence of the House in their legislative functions during last session. The charge was, he believed, that, instead of discharging those functions badly, they did not discharge them at all; but that was not a proposition which could be supported by facts. If a certain part of the duty of a Government was taken from them by the House, he maintained that the House could not blame them for that. If that duty had been taken from the Government in consequence of its incapacity, it would have been a different thing; if that had been proved, the existence of the Government should have terminated at once. But if the Government had left a certain portion of its duty to the House, in consequence of the antagonistic opinions which prevailed, and the House, in an amicable spirit, had accepted that duty, there were no grounds for the assertion that the Government had not performed its legislative functions, or that they had not discharged them at all. It was the first time he had ever known a Government attacked for its conduct during a previous session. He could quite understand that, under certain circumstances, the argument of the honorable member for East Moreton might be correct; and that if the Opposition, instead of being at sixes and sevens, had been combined and unanimous in their views and opinions, and finding that the Government had done nothing to advance the prosperity of the country, had submitted to a defeat last session solely because they were in a minority—then, perhaps, these charges might, with some show of reason, been brought forward this session by way of renewal. But there were honorable members now seeking to occupy a prominent place in the Opposition, who had certainly no claims to it, either from their eloquence or from anything they had done for the country; and he thought very little weight should attach to their action. The honorable member had made another charge, namely, the want of administrative capacity in the Government; and, of course, that was one which affected the Ministry in relation to their conducting of the affairs of the colony during the recess. He (the Attorney-General) could not understand how the honorable member could support that charge,

without affording certain information to the House;—in other words, he should be prepared with the facts of the maladministration of the Government to prove his case—acts of political dishonesty, or any others, that would justify him in asserting that the Government ought not to possess the confidence of the House. Had the honorable member shewn one fact in support of his action? No. He had rather rested his position on the ground that certain things had been said against the Government, out of doors—certainly of a grave nature; but, if he had only followed in his conduct, what he had said in words, he would not have moved the amendment at all; he would have informed the House why he objected to the Government, and he would have taken an opportunity to initiate an investigation of those charges. The way he had acted was not the fair way. Some persons liked the sweets of office;—but they did not know what the bitters were. He (the Attorney-General) knew very well what the bitters were. If honorable members opposite were in the position he was now in, they would be the first to ask for the justice that he asked for at their hands. He did not think for a moment that the language he was uttering would have any effect whatever on them—and he was not speaking to influence the other side, because they had determined outside the House to condemn the Government; but he wished to shew them that it was not because they had so determined that the Government would submit without a struggle. He had a political character to maintain; and he would not submit to charges made in the way he had heard, and see such things done without taking his own part. He was not going to put himself in the position for honorable members opposite to say by-and-bye—“Oh, we made charges, and you said nothing.” He believed it would have been proper for the Government, and perfectly justifiable in them, to have sat on their benches without answering a word, and to have treated what was said with silent contempt. That was a position which they might have assumed; but whether it was one which they ought to pursue was quite another matter. The Government had pursued a proper course on this question. It was a mistake to suppose that he ever said that the members of the Opposition ought to have shewn the Government their policy: he was of the contrary opinion. Some honorable members had said that before an Opposition sought to obtain the reins of office, they should disclose their policy; but he believed that a Government should stand or fall upon their own policy. It was not the part of a Government to say to an Opposition—“You ought to disclose your policy.” In saying this, he was only following out the course of conduct that he had pursued in a previous Parliament. What he did hold, and all he had said, was, that the Opposition ought to make specific charges against the Govern-

ment, and prove them. It had been argued that the Government had no policy. In reply to that, he pointed to the Speech, and asked—What more was wanted? Did the Opposition want every Bill printed ready for them? Such a line of action was impossible. As he had said before, the formalities of introducing their measures, as prescribed by Parliament, must be followed. If no policy was disclosed by the Government, that would be a very good ground of complaint against them; but he thought that a very good policy had been put forward in the Speech; and it was for the House hereafter to pronounce, as the measures were laid before them, whether it was a good policy or not. What was the grand question which agitated the public mind last session? The re-distribution of electorates and the increase of representation occupied the attention of everybody. It was clear that this Parliament, at all events, was not a reflex of public opinion; and the sooner a change was made the better. If the Government were not prepared to legislate, there would be a proper opportunity for a charge of want of policy. There was a policy, but this was not the time to discuss it. A question of great importance was that of the creation of provincial councils. In some large districts it was considered a very vital question. A debate took place upon it last session, not for the purpose of settling the question, but to obtain an expression of the views of honorable members as to the measure that should be provided. The Government had shewn themselves fully alive to it: being informed that additional legislation was required to that which existed, they had announced to the House and to the country that they were prepared to introduce a measure for the establishment of provincial councils. Could it be said that they had no policy on that great question? Could it be said that they evinced any indisposition to accord the fullest investigation in reference to the Land Act? The Crown Lands Alienation Act had been passed under very peculiar circumstances, and, he thought, he might say that it had received the accord of every honorable member of the House. It had not been carried by a bare majority; it had not been carried by one party. Members of different political views, and members opposed to one another, had lent their assistance to make it law—to bring it into operation. Therefore, he said, the House must take upon itself the responsibility of that measure. The Government had brought in a Bill, but it was thought that the suggestions of all sides should be received, as it was impossible that any Government could pass a Land Bill satisfactory to all parties in the House. The Government acceded, and the measure was passed with the assistance of all sides. If the Act had not worked well, because it had not been properly managed by the Minister who had the working of it, then he ought to be blamed, and the Government through him.

But the Government ought to be informed how it had worked badly. He could say most sincerely and conscientiously, that if the Land Act had operated unjustly, no individual and no class had been specially injured by it. He had gone over the Bill—he had been obliged to do so—and he knew that no illegal act had been done under it. The only difficulty under it had been the difficulty of construing the meaning of the Legislature. No better illustration of the working of the Land Act could be given than that it was the cause of complaint from all classes. It was not from the working classes alone that complaints were received; there were as many complaints from the squatters as from those who sought to take up land by selection, and there were complaints from those who wished to purchase land by auction. It would be a Herculean task to satisfy every section of the community. He thought the Government could not have had a higher compliment paid to them than that by the honorable member for Eastern Downs, who said he was going to support the amendment. He really did not know what the honorable member was driving at, unless that he made a mistake when he said he was going to support the amendment. There was not a word in his speech against the Government, or that reflected upon them. Although the honorable member got a great deal of credit for his speech, he had really shielded the Minister for Lands; and seemed to wish to make the House believe that the defect was in the Act—if defect at all—.

Mr. DOUGLAS: No, no.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Well, that was the effect of the honorable member's argument. He thought that the whole tenor of that very speech amounted to applauding the Government for everything that they had done. One of the very grave charges in reference to the administration of the Crown Lands Alienation Act was the matter at Warwick. Let the House have the origin of that business, and it came to little. Yet a meeting had been held, and a man had told the people present that the Government had acted wrongly, because he had read in the Warwick newspaper that so-and-so had taken place. That was the statement made at the recent indignation meeting. He knew enough of the matter to be able to state that the popular version was not at all correct; and, when the Secretary for Lands spoke on the subject, he would say it was not true. Another charge against the Government was, that they had not spent money on the road to Gympie. A very much larger expenditure had taken place than ought to have been incurred. Would the House like to be informed that £10,000 had been spent on a bog; or, that that amount had been thrown away, by carrying out works at the wrong season; or, upon a line of road that was subsequently shewn to be not the best? Was it not to be considered that there were special difficulties in obtaining labor on a gold field?—or, that

there were grave reasons for doubts and hesitation in deciding upon a line of road, owing to the shifting character of a mining population? The Government had very good reasons for their action in the matter of the Gympie road. But how could the House know of those things without asking questions, or having a committee to investigate them? Honorable members on the Opposition wanted to go over to the Government side of the House; and they knew that an investigation would turn out for the benefit of the Government. They knew that they were pursuing a most unprecedented course, such as certainly had never been followed in this colony. The example of Victoria had been referred to; but he denied that there was any precedent there for such a line of conduct as the Opposition were pursuing here, considering the state in which Queensland was at present. The Opposition, knowing they could shew no wrongful act on the part of the Government, shrank from an investigation, for which the Government were anxious. They had managed to scrape a number of members together, and, by dint of perseverance, got a majority of one; and they would listen to nothing but to vote out the present Government. But, if the Government, by a vote of a majority of this House, were declared not to have the confidence of the House, he was sure that the honorable members opposite had not the confidence of the House or the country. If those honorable members had an opportunity of going over to the Treasury benches, it should be done when and where the Government wished. It was not at their dictation the Government would act; and he might tell them that he should not be frightened—the Government were not afraid to go to the country. He was not going to allow the Opposition to be flattering themselves that they were to cross the House all at once. He hoped they would be clear of that mistake from this very minute. He might tell them that he was as fully alive to Parliamentary practice as any of them, and that to all the little dodges he was as much awake. He would tell them this, that whatever he did as a member of the Government should be done with due deliberation and caution, and for the benefit of the country, and not for his own personal interest. He had upheld what he believed it to be his duty to uphold; and he really felt it to be due to his position to do what he could to shew that the Government had not been guilty of the acts alleged against them. He would add one word in reference to what might be said of the action of the Government during the past two or three days. It seemed to be thought by many that the Government had pursued a peculiar line of conduct; it was asserted that the Opposition had pursued a peculiar line of conduct. That which the Government had done had been forced upon them, and he was not aware that there were any rules to guide

the Government on an occasion like the present. A Government, finding themselves in peculiar circumstances, must be guided by those circumstances; and, as there were no definite rules for guidance laid down, he hoped and trusted that, ere long, the action of the Government for the last few days would be fully understood, and he hoped it would be beneficial to the best interests of this colony.

After a pause,

The Hon. A. MACALISTER rose and said: Mr. Speaker—As no other honorable member on this side of the House seems inclined to rise, I think it becomes my duty as a member of this House to express a few, at any rate, of those opinions which I hold in regard to those matters that have been touched upon in the speech which the House has just heard; and, although in doing so, I may be somewhat tedious, yet the importance of the present occasion, not only to the Government, but to the country, must form my excuse; because what I may say on those various subjects has to a great extent been forced upon my consideration during the last two or three days. I have certainly been somewhat astonished, in perusing the Speech from the Throne, that no paragraph therein appears giving the slightest explanation as to the causes which prevented the Parliament meeting in the month of June. I think there cannot be a doubt that it was distinctly understood, if there was not an agreement, at the time that we prorogued, that Parliament should assemble in the month of June following. It is plain, too, that this impression was very strong in the minds of the members of Government, because a proclamation calling Parliament together “for the despatch of business,” at that date, was issued. I refer to this matter, because the Opposition side of the House has been accused of making general accusations of misconduct and neglect on the part of the Government, and of not bringing forward specific charges against their administration. Now, sir, having issued a proclamation calling Parliament together on the 23rd June, we find them issuing another proclamation postponing the meeting of Parliament to the 4th of August, and calling Parliament together for that day. When the last proclamation was issued, I recollect that a circular went with it to several members of Parliament, giving certain reasons for the postponement of the session. Now, the fact of their issuing that circular is certainly the very strongest argument to shew that the Government had taken an unprecedented course—an unwarranted course—one that could not be defended except on some special and extraordinary grounds—in postponing the assembling of Parliament after it had once been called together “for the despatch of business.” What were the grounds for taking that course? The first ground was, if I recollect rightly, that the new Governor was expected. He is not arrived yet. The second ground was, that two important electorates would not be repre-

ented in this House, if Parliament met at the time named. And the third ground was, that this building which we are now in would be ready. I think I am correct in stating, that these were the grounds on which the Government acted. When I read that circular, it occurred to me that the question for consideration was this:—When the Cabinet has issued a proclamation calling Parliament together, it has no right to revoke it;—and it seems to me a wanton act on the part of the Government to call members from distant parts of the colony, and then to tell them they are not wanted. If the Government possessed a reasonable amount of common sense, they could not have acted in such a manner, but would have recognised that the deliberations of Parliament were of the greatest, of primary, importance to the country. They could have admitted, on the meeting of Parliament in June, that one or two of their supporters from the northern portion of the colony would not be present in Brisbane, and they might have claimed consideration for not being in full force; they should have given reasons, which would have shewn that they accepted their position as a responsible Government, and not the childish reasons which they had given. Their reasons were of the most worthless character, and were an insult to the House. I refer to this subject, sir, because I think that the course which the Government took was injurious to the welfare and progress of this colony. I think, sir, that this charge has not yet been met. The Government have, no doubt, asked this side of the House to give reasons for the amendment; we have been told that we have been generalising. I may go so far as to admit that, to some extent, this has been the case. But what is the position of parties in Parliament? We have been told that the Government should not be attacked in this way;—we have been told that we have no right to dispense with their services unless we have charges to bring before the House. Well, I say that we have such a right, and I defy the Government to disprove it. I maintain that we are proceeding according to constitutional rule and practice, to pronounce judgment on the Government. We say we have no confidence in you—neither in your departmental acts, nor in your promises—and we mean to dispense with your services. I repeat that that is not only right, but the constitutional course of procedure; and, more, that the course taken by the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, is the same which the honorable and learned Attorney-General himself admitted is correct. With respect to the observations of that honorable and learned gentleman, which I endeavored to follow as well as I could—and he made a very long, and, to my mind, a very able speech; at the same time, he confined himself as nearly as possible to two matters simply;—I propose to say one or two words.

The first matter was the conduct of the Government as regards the Gympie gold field. Why, sir, it would be an insult to the Opposition side of the House to suppose that they would think of bringing forward a vote of want of confidence, and limiting their objection to the Government to that question. At the same time, I say that the road ought to have been made. But, as for making that the ground of our opposition, we never thought of anything of the kind. The Government, even now, propose to come down and ask for a sum of money for that road. What does that mean? They must have arrived at a conclusion that the road is necessary. But my honorable and learned friend, the Attorney-General, maintained that the expense of works of that kind should be borne by the locality, and that the expenditure should only be what the locality was entitled to; and, therefore, if he is sincere in that belief, he ought to vote against a grant for the road, and it ought not to appear on the estimates at all.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I must rise to correct the honorable gentleman; I am sure he will forgive me for interrupting his speech. What I said, or what I meant to say, if I did not say it, was—that the locality was entitled to only so much unauthorised expenditure.

THE HON. A. MACALISTER: I maintain, sir, that this is a road of vital importance, not only to Brisbane, but to the whole colony. The making of it is not a question of a local character; it is a question of access to the gold fields. It is an important social question, affecting all parts of the colony. It is a question whether the gold fields are to be cut off from the rest of the colony except in one direction. It is also a question whether this colony is to profit by the trade which springs from the diggings, or whether the other colonies are to profit by it; by reason of there being no road to connect the diggings with the capital. I have not, perhaps, sufficient information to enable me to speak of the importance of the gold fields; but it is a fact that when thousands of ounces of gold were being sent from those diggings, a member of the Government was telegraphing to the other colonies to prevent people from coming here. It is also a remarkable circumstance that the road to Gympie is little better now than it was at first. However, if once made, it will be one of the most important highways in the colony. The honorable and learned the Attorney-General has stated that if a combined Opposition had existed last session, there might be some grounds for the course the Opposition are taking now; but it was owing to the fact that there was no combined Opposition last session—it was to the want of a combined Opposition, that the Government were allowed throughout the whole of last session to do what they did. It was owing to the fact of there being no combined Opposition that the Government threw their

land policy into the hands of one or two honorable members to do with it what they liked; and it is also owing to that fact that the Government have brought the people to believe that it is not safe to allow the reins of Government to remain any longer in the hands of those gentlemen who at present hold them. The honorable the Attorney-General referred to the Land Bill as one of those cases with regard to which the Government were entitled to a large amount of credit, for the course they took last session. In speaking of the course they took, I must not confound it with the Land Act itself, or with the administration of it; and with regard to that, I must say that, whatever contracts may have been entered into, neither the present Government nor any other Government dare to interfere with them. For myself, I may say that I have always been led to regard an Act of Parliament, however imperfect it may have been when passed, and all contracts entered into under it, as sacred. But it is not so much to the Act or the details of it as to the working of the Act that I object; and when I come to refer to that question, I shall probably be able to put before the House a little more specifically the objections to which I have just referred. But at this stage I would again repeat, that the action which the Government took in respect to the Land Act was a kind of action that no responsible Government was justified in taking. What was the position the Government occupied. An examination of their estimates for the present year shews an anticipated land revenue, independent of land orders, of £50,000. Now, is the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government prepared to say, that when the Land Bill passed the House, he could have guaranteed that fifty shillings would be derived from it, or that he gave the matter the slightest consideration. It is to circumstances of that kind, to the combination of such circumstances, that we are indebted for the feeling that prevails almost universally throughout the colony; or, at any rate, in the towns and the populous districts of the colony, towards the Government. The honorable and learned the Attorney-General referred also to the Provincial Councils Bill, and to the course which the Government took on that measure last session, as being another feather in their cap. Now, what was the course that was taken by the Government in respect to that subject? The course was this: They allowed a private member to introduce it, to introduce a vitally important measure; and they got up and denounced it, one Minister after another; and said they would have nothing to do with provincial councils of any kind whatever. It will be in the recollection of some honorable members that I addressed the House upon that Bill; and I told the honorable member who introduced it, that, notwithstanding the course which the Government had taken in respect to the Bill, and notwithstanding their opposition to pro-

vincial councils, he would find that, during this session, a Bill for the establishment of Provincial Councils would be introduced by the Government. And here it is promised in the Opening Speech. Now, does not such a fact as this shew that the Government still have no policy of their own; and it is owing to this fact that they come to lay their Bills on the table of the House, to be discussed or ventilated—or worried, as an honorable member suggested—or anything else; I say, that it is to that course of action on the part of the Government—a course of action that shews they have no policy whatever—a course that must, if persisted in, end in confusion—that the present feeling against the Ministry throughout the country exists. If we are to have the same course of action pursued this session—and the only intimation we have had seems to tend that way—the sooner we arrive at a conclusion on this amendment the better it will be for the country. The honorable the Attorney-General referred to the possibility of a dissolution of the House; and looking to the possibility of that fact, and to the lateness of the period of the year at which we have been called together, the sooner the country is appealed to, if it is to be appealed to, the better. I can assure the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, in reference to the remark he has made, that I am not treating for office; and I can assure him further, that if the Government will confirm their possession of office, they will be welcome to it for me. We have been told that no charges have been preferred by the Opposition against the Government, and we have been told that we have no policy. Now, the honorable the Attorney-General, to whose speech I am at present principally alluding, was himself obliged to admit that an Opposition should not disclose its policy. In point of fact, if an Opposition were to do anything of the kind, it would be the worst course they could take. In the first place, who could be called upon to carry out an Opposition policy, if it were of a positive nature? But the policy of an Opposition is of a negative nature; and how is it possible to describe a policy of that nature? There was another charge to which the honorable member for South Brisbane, I think, referred the night before last; that was, with reference to the conduct of the Government in issuing a certain regulation limiting the amount of the deposits that would be received at the Savings Bank. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, who, before he went into office, preached economy and retrenchment night after night, certainly failed to shew the country any proof that he possessed a desire for either after he went into office; for during the last twelve months there have been more appointments gazetted than appeared in the *Government Gazette* during the previous three years. But, as if the honorable gentleman really meant to give us a proof of his retrenching inclinations, he proceeds to tam-

per with the regulations of the Savings Bank. At the time I refer to, the Savings Bank regulations permitted deposits to be made to any amount at the rate of five per cent. I have no doubt that the House will remember, also, what was the financial position of England at the time, and which ended in the reduction of the rate of discount at the Bank of England to two per cent. Now, that reduction of the rate of discount was not effected because of an excessive arrival in England of the more precious metals; nor did it arise from the fact that there was a superabundance of floating capital awaiting for investment beyond what was in existence in ordinarily prosperous commercial times; but it arose from the fact that confidence in all private securities was gone, and that parties who had invested their money in such securities sold out, to invest in Government securities at even one per cent. Now, the position of this colony at that time, and, to some extent, also, at the present time, was unfortunately very much the same. Confidence in all private securities was entirely gone, and, at the time the honorable gentleman adopted the course I complain of, the Government were borrowing money at eight and ten per cent., although at the time parties were hurrying to deposit money in the Savings Bank for five per cent. If the Government had received the money that was offered them at that time, they would have been able with it to pay off some of the money they had borrowed, and so have relieved the colony from a very large amount of the interest they had now to pay. But, instead of doing that, the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government issued a regulation to the effect that no sums over £500 would be received in deposit at the Savings Bank. Now, a more suicidal course of action than that it was scarcely possible to conceive. I shall now refer to a few matters connected with the department of Lands; and I wish to say at the outset that I have no desire to detract from any merit that may attach to the honorable gentleman who fills the office of Minister for Public Lands. But, I think, there are some circumstances to which I can refer that will prove a maladministration of the Land Act, and a general unfitness on his part to discharge the important duties of that office. How did he proceed to work the Land Act? What tools did he use? What were his appointments? And here I may observe, what is very well known to all the members of the Government, that every man who finds himself unable to succeed in anything else, feels himself qualified to discharge the duties of any office the Government may please to confer upon him. It is to this feeling on the part of the applicants that it is found, in dealing with two cases out of every three, that the applicants are altogether unsuited to the office to which they aspire. It is owing to this fact that there is no portion of a Minister's duty more onerous,

or requiring the exercise of more careful discrimination and consideration, or of a clear understanding and sound judgment, than when called upon to fill appointments under the Crown. Now, what was the course the Government took in making appointments under the Land Act?—and, in point of fact, I may put the same question to every one of them that has yet been made by the Government. I find in the list which I have of the appointments made for the discharge of the higher duties under the Act, a number of decayed gentlemen, having no claims upon the colony, and who have never been in a public office before, who possess no qualification whatever to entitle them to be considered men of business, or as men having any business habits; but who, by virtue of their appointments, have become pensioners on the colony. I would ask if this course was one that was likely to give confidence to the country in the working of an Act which, at the time it was passed, was regarded as an experiment? Is this the way in which the lands of the colony are to be settled to the satisfaction and for the advantage of the public? Is it not more likely that the Civil Service of the colony will be now regarded as of a most degraded character, and fit only as a refuge for the destitute? Is it not more likely that the service will be regarded as a mere appendage to our benevolent asylums, instead of being what it ought to be—an object of honorable and laudable ambition? At the time the Land Act was passed, we had a very large quantity of surveyed land in the colony, and not only in the district of the Darling Downs and the district of East Moreton, but also in other districts of the colony, that were suitable for agricultural purposes. But the Minister for Lands refused to allow those lands that had been surveyed to be selected for those purposes at the time of the Act coming into force. He, in point of fact, said to the applicants—“I am going to put those lands up for sale at auction, and you shall not have them.” Accordingly, within ten days, out came a proclamation of certain surveyed lands to be offered for sale by auction; and in the district of West Moreton alone he put up 90,000 acres of agricultural land at fifteen shillings an acre; and about the same time he put up a hundred town lots at the moderate figure of £100 an acre. In point of fact, the honorable gentleman, no doubt, believed he had got hold of the philosopher’s stone. However, when the sale by auction came round, out of the 90,000 acres he sold only two lots; and of the town lots he sold none. Now, this was a rather singular result as a beginning for a popular measure. The 96th and the 97th clauses of the Land Act state distinctly how lands passed at auction are to be taken up. That is to say, any person going to a land agent, and paying him the amount at which the land had been put up, could have it at once. There is not a word about deferred payments, or about the lands being classified. I do not say that it would

not have been better that it had been so; but I am dealing with the Act as it is, and with the honorable gentleman’s conduct in administering it; and I say that the course the honorable gentleman took afterwards, with respect to those lands that had been put up to auction, was both illegal and unwarrantable. What does he do? He issues another proclamation for which he has no authority, and for which there was less necessity; and in that proclamation he states that after a certain day, the lands would be open for selection at fifteen shillings per acre. Now the public had a right to take up those lands at the upset price, the moment they passed the hammer. Well, what does he do next? He issues another proclamation, before the date fixed in his previous proclamation—without waiting to see if any of the lands would be taken up at fifteen shillings an acre—stating that the lands were open for selection as first and second class pastoral lands, with deferred payments. Now, I ask the honorable gentleman to shew by what authority he set aside the 96th and the 97th clauses of the Act in the way he did? If my information is wrong, I can only say that I endeavored to get it from the best sources; and I think that these are pretty specific charges. But I started with my observations by shewing that according to the Constitution Act, we have nothing to do with charges at all. We have simply to do with the House, and the expression of a majority of honorable members here, of a want of confidence in the members of the Government. I am now going to refer to another matter connected with another appointment, and, in doing so, I shall endeavor to be as concise as possible. I have no doubt that many honorable members as well as myself must remember that the honorable gentleman who presides over the Works department was, during last session, very much engaged in throwing down the gauntlet to me in regard to the department over which I at one time presided; and he managed to put on the table, after he went into office, some reports by the engineer of the Southern and Western Railway. It is not for me to say that, over and over again, that gentleman has stated what is untrue. Whether in consequence of those reports, or from political motives—I must not confuse them, though I know all about it—a member of this House moved for the appointment of a railway committee. What was said before that committee I have not taken the trouble to inquire into. I do not know if it was through any suggestion of the committee, or whether it was the action of the honorable gentleman himself—but, at any rate, he had no authority for it—that he determined to introduce an engineer into the colony to examine the southern line of railway. There could be no objection to that—none whatever. But, before I point out the course the honorable gentleman took, I must explain another fact. It will be in the recollection of honor-

able members who took an interest in our railway question at the time, that about two years ago, the present Minister for Works in New South Wales, Mr. James Byrne, whom no one who knew him would take for an engineer, in answer to a taunt in the Assembly of New South Wales, to the effect that the Queensland railways would not only take the whole of the southern and western traffic of Queensland, but would secure a good deal of the northern and western traffic of New South Wales—in reply to a taunt of that kind, Mr. Byrne stated openly, and in the most distinct manner, that our railways were constructed on a wrong principle. Of course, as Mr. Byrne was no engineer, his information must have been derived from the railway engineer of New South Wales, who, it was very well known, was not on a very good footing with our railway engineer at that time. Under those circumstances, of all places in the world that we should have gone to for a disinterested report respecting our railways, certainly the colony of New South Wales was the last. Yet into that colony the honorable the Minister for Works throws himself, and rushes into the arms of the Minister for Works in New South Wales and his colleagues, who were too glad of the opportunity of sending an engineer here, fully instructed as to what he was to say and what he was expected to do. I know nothing of the gentleman except from report; but I have heard that while he was here he managed to collect a good deal of information that is now, it is said, being acted upon in his own department in Sydney. Now, I regret that such a course as that should have been taken. We had here Mr. Higinbotham, the chief engineer of the Victorian railways, who was examined before a committee, and who proved that he actually walked over the whole line. He gave evidence respecting the railway; and his evidence was confirmed by the evidence of Mr. Doyne, whom the honorable gentleman admitted, and correctly so, to be the ablest engineer in these colonies; and both of those gentlemen spoke in the highest terms of the Queensland railways. In fact everything contradicted the statement of the engineer from New South Wales, Mr. Mason. Here are those railways which have been for three years in operation, and during all that time there has not been so much as a single accident upon them; and, notwithstanding the badness of the times, and the dullness of the present season, those lines are fast proving their claims to the confidence of the colony. For a Minister of the Crown to go out of his way, and for a political purpose, to rush into the arms of an antagonistic department, is in my mind degrading and dishonoring the colony. I have already referred to the conduct of the Government with regard to the making of a road to Gympie; and I think sufficiently showed the question was not one of locality at all. It is not a question as to whether the people of Gympie have been can-

vassed, or whether the people of Brisbane have been canvassed, or whether the people interested in the road are anxious on the subject; but it is a question as to whether the making of the road would not be conducive to the interests of the whole colony; and I do not think that anyone who considers the importance of those gold fields can doubt for one moment as to the propriety and necessity of making a good and substantial means of communication to them at once. I have said nothing, I think, in the course of my address at which the Government can take any great amount of offence, and I have carefully refrained from doing so; but I must say that I have arrived at the conclusion, that regarding the whole of their proceedings—regarding the way in which they rushed into office originally—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You resigned.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: Well, if you would do as I did, when I was not defeated, you would resign when you are defeated; and a Ministry who would not do so when their principles were thrown out, would not be worthy of the confidence of the House. I have always shewn, and I trust I always will shew, that unless my principles are adopted by the House, should I again have the honor of being in the Government, I am perfectly prepared to adopt the course of action I have now suggested. I feel that our resigning has been much to the detriment of the colony, and especially of the southern and western portions of the colony; and from the treatment those districts have received, and from the exclusive character of the Government, it is impossible for the Ministry to have the support of the country. Therefore, I shall support the amendment of the honorable member for East Moreton.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that, in rising to address the House on the question before it, he had, in the first place, to express the extreme satisfaction he felt that, at last, so prominent a member of the Opposition as the honorable gentleman who had just sat down had been induced to come forward and relieve the Government from the silent opposition they had, until he rose, had to sustain. One would expect, when so prominent a member of the Opposition, and of the House, came forward, the Government would have heard something that would astonish them, and that he would have said something that he would have sustained by argument, and that he could have adduced facts to support. But, in the whole course of the speech of the honorable member, he had not heard a single statement that could be supported by evidence—not one. He would now endeavor to follow the honorable member through his speech, and he thought he would be able to convince all impartial persons who were in the House—those who were not members as well as those who were members—that there was not one thing which the Government had done that they had any occasion to blush for,

or any occasion to regret. The first thing which honorable members opposite found great fault with the Ministry for was, that they did not assemble the House in June. It was said that a direct pledge was given by some one that the House would meet in June. Now, he would assert that there was no such pledge given in the House, although out of the House there might have been. A question was put on the subject in the House by the honorable member for Warwick; and the reply given by his honorable colleague, the Colonial Treasurer, was, that he would, if possible, call the House together in June. Well, the honorable the Premier felt that there was a sort of implied pledge in the reply he gave, and, acting on that understanding, he recommended His Excellency to call the House together in June; but, subsequently, there arose very excellent reasons why the Houses should not be called together in June that did not exist when the question was put and answered, and which, in the circular sent round to members, the Premier very clearly explained. Had he occupied the position of Premier, perhaps he would have explained more. Now, he wondered whether the honorable member, in twitting the Government on that point, ever thought that, in interfering with the calling of Parliament together, he was trenching on the Royal prerogative. (Cries of "Oh, oh.") Well, he maintained that, in the exercise of the Royal prerogative, as the Representative of Her Majesty, His Excellency could adjourn the House, and call it together when he liked. His Excellency, in the exercise of the Royal prerogative, could adjourn Parliament tomorrow if he liked. He could do it now—this moment. The honorable member should have remembered that, in referring to the matter, and bringing it as a charge against the Government, he was trenching on the Royal prerogative. Every one of the reasons the honorable the Premier gave in the circular he sent to honorable members was quite true. It was quite true that the new Governor, Major Blackall, was expected to arrive before this time; and he might have arrived before this if his leave had not been extended in England. What was said about the vacancies in the representation of certain constituencies was also quite true. Two districts of great importance would have been unrepresented, if the Parliament had met at an earlier period of the year; and honorable members were themselves aware that such would have been the case, and that the statement, therefore, was correct. Another reason given in the circular for not calling the Parliament together was, that it was hoped the new Houses of Parliament would be ready for members to meet in by the time to which the prorogation was further extended. But the Houses were not finished yet; however, they were now in them. Another charge advanced by the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, was,

that by the second prorogation members who lived at a distance were subjected to considerable inconvenience. But he could unhesitatingly assert that in no single instance did any inconvenience take place whatever from that further prorogation.

An Honorable MEMBER: There might have been.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. There might have been, but there wasn't. Another very sweeping charge made by the same honorable member was, that the appointments made by the Government, during their tenure of office, were more in number than had appeared in the *Gazette* for three years previously. Well, he was not prepared to say whether that was correct or not. No doubt, a great many did appear in the course of the previous three years; but, in making such a charge against the Government, the honorable member might have been candid enough to say that such appointments were absolutely necessary, and had to be made, under the new Land Act. He might also have been candid enough to admit that the growing interests of the gold fields rendered additional appointments necessary. In fact, if the appointments the Government were blamed for making had not been made, the Government would have been blamed for not making them. It was just the old story of the soldier that was being whipped. Whip high or whip low, the drummer could not please him. As far as he was aware, not one bad appointment had been made; and if any of the appointments had turned out bad, it was in the cases of promotion of gentlemen who had been in the service, and who had not turned out so well as it was expected they would—appointments that were made in the first place by the honorable member who was now so severe on the Government. The honorable the Premier was also twitted by the honorable member for Ipswich, because the land revenue had not come up to what was expected. It was admitted in the Speech of His Excellency that the land revenue had not come up to what was expected. But why had it not done so? Principally because of the number of land orders, transferable and non-transferable, and cotton bonus orders that were paid in instead of money. Those orders came in, and came in, till he was quite sick of seeing them.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: Why did you not provide for them in the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The honorable gentleman who had been in office for so many years himself should have provided a way of dealing with them, so as not to injure the land revenue, at the time they were issued; but he did not do so. He thought nothing about them, except to give them away as sops to his friends and his servants. In referring to the small amount of revenue that had been received from the land, it should also be borne in mind that the Act had as yet been but a very short time in operation. It

had only been in force actually for about three months, and already a very fair amount of revenue was coming in from the land. Another very serious charge, which was levelled against the Government as a whole, was, that a private member of the House was allowed last session to introduce a Provincial Councils Bill. The honorable member maintained that the Government should have introduced such a Bill. Now, every honorable member was well aware, that when the honorable member for Rockhampton introduced his Provincial Councils Bill, he did not do so with the view of having it passed, but simply in order to get the opinion of the House upon it. That opinion he got—at any rate, from one side of the House—but he got very little, in the way of opinion, from the other. When the honorable member first spoke of introducing the Bill for that purpose, he warned him that from one side of the House he would not get much opinion, and he did not. But the honorable member for Ipswich had further said that the Government opposed the measure; and that he told the honorable mover of it that, notwithstanding their opposition to it, the Government would bring in a Provincial Councils Bill this session. Well, if every one had as good ground to go upon, his prophecies would generally be fulfilled; for it was distinctly stated by the honorable the Premier that the Government would bring in a Provincial Councils Bill this session; and if he recollected rightly, he stated something of the kind himself, and at the same time shadowed forth provisions of a measure of the sort which he could agree with. The honorable member for Ipswich had told the House that he was very jealous of his policy, and that he would not disclose it. Well, he could tell the honorable member that the Government did not want to know it. At the same time, he could tell the honorable member what his policy would be. Generally, it would be to outdo everything that had been done in the way of liberal legislation respecting the lands of the colony. He would be found putting up land at five shillings an acre, and selling it by auction. For his own part, he would like to see it at half-a-crown an acre; and if such should be the policy of the honorable member, he might rest assured on having his support, as well as the support of a good many honorable members at present on the Government side of the House. In the course of the debate, there had been frequent repetitions of the charge made by the honorable and gallant member for Ipswich about the regulation limiting the amount of deposits that would be received at the Savings Bank. He replied shortly to the charge of the honorable and gallant member at the time it was made. He said then, and he would say now, that the Savings Banks were never intended for receiving large deposits from capitalists. The whole object of the Savings Bank was to receive the small savings of the people; and he maintained

that a greater mistake could not possibly have been made by any Government than to have allowed capitalists, through the public banks, or otherwise, to have made large deposits at the Savings Bank, with the full power of withdrawing those large deposits whenever they chose. The banks and the capitalists might, between them, have, in that way, succeeded in getting the Government completely under their thumbs; as well as in, perhaps, destroying, ultimately, the Savings Bank for the purposes for which it was established. To make a comparison between the resources of this small colony and the resources of England, as the honorable member for Ipswich did, was altogether out of the question. It was the comparing of small things to great with a vengeance. It would, no doubt, suit some honorable members very well to see the colony placed under the thumbs of the banks, and of capitalists, as it might enable them to put forward their favorite schemes. And if those gentlemen were in power when such an event occurred, they would again bring forward a measure like the one they brought forward before, and that had done more harm to the colony than it would be able to recover from for a great many years to come—a measure for the issue of greenbacks and inconvertible notes. As soon as the capitalists put the screw on, they would have a measure brought forward like the one that was proposed on a previous occasion by his friend, the honorable member for West Moreton, when he held the office of Treasurer. He was reminded by an honorable member that the Savings Bank Act had been in force for four years; but it must be recollected that, during that time, there was very little capital in the colony, and the banks had very little money to spare. A great reaction had taken place since then, and now the banks did not know what to do with their money, and would be glad to deposit in a Government Savings Bank and receive the five per cent. interest. A wiser precaution was never taken than to limit the deposits. He should leave his honorable friend, the Minister for Lands, to reply for himself in reference to the administration of his own department. He was quite satisfied that he would be able to do so, and that everything had been done by him that could be done in the working of the Land Act, strictly in accordance with the provisions of that Act, so far as he and his colleagues could read it, which they had great difficulty in doing, and no wonder, after the many amendments which had been made in it. Then he came to his own department, in connection with which the honorable member had made some very severe strictures. The honorable member for Ipswich had charged him with having been always in opposition to him in regard to the railway works, and had stated that he had had great trouble in obtaining the report of the engineer. Now, the report referred to was that of the engineer-in-chief, a gentleman appointed by

the honorable member himself, which came to him in its regular course. It was not a special report sent to him. He had understood the honorable member to state further that the engineer had been fully instructed how to bring up that report. If the honorable member meant that for him, he must flatly contradict the assertion. He had never given any instruction, either to that gentleman or to any civil servant in his department, as to how he should make up a report; all he had ever asked for was the truth. With respect to the next charge, that he had acted in some degraded way, he believed that was the term, in bringing up some engineer from Sydney, who was supposed to be inimical to the Queensland railways, that was easily explained. Without referring to last year's proceedings, and speaking from memory only, he believed that at one of the sittings of the railway committee, in pursuance of a motion made by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and seconded by the honorable member for South Brisbane, he had written to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, and asked him if he could allow his engineer-in-chief to report upon the Queensland lines, or, if he could not do that, if he could recommend him some engineer of standing and ability. The reply was, that the engineer-in-chief could not be spared, but it recommended another engineer, a Mr. Barton, he believed, who had left the service for some time, and was then unemployed. He (the Colonial Secretary) wrote to that gentleman, and received a letter from him, stating that he was in delicate health, and could not devote the time required for the work. Some time afterwards, another communication, unsolicited, he believed, came from New South Wales, to the effect that a Mr. Mason would come for a short time; and before he was aware of his coming, that gentleman arrived in the colony, and he then proceeded to make his report. He pledged himself to the truth of that statement, and he asked whether that shewed that he was an interested party. Yet the honorable member for Ipswich had imputed motives to him, or had, at least, imputed that his action had been the result of political feeling.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said the imputation had not been directed against the honorable member personally.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, the report was sent in, and he believed it was correct in its main features. He had opposed it because he did not see the use of it; and to shew how little he could have been influenced by it, it was not sent up until some time after Mr. Mason had left the colony. He had a few copies of it printed, which he did not even shew to any of his friends. One of them he sent to the engineer-in-chief of the Southern and Western Railways, and asked him to report upon it; and that report had been laid on the table of the House. He thought he had said enough to shew that he had acted

fairly and conscientiously. He must observe that an irregularity had occurred in connection with that report, and that it had got into circulation, through the mistake of a civil servant, for which there was no excuse, though it appeared that he had acted inadvertently, who had allowed the editor of a paper to see it; but in justification of that person, he must say that he had done so because, having seen something in the *Darling Downs Gazette* about this report, he had been led to believe it was public property. The officer was suspended, but had since been reinstated. There was, however, he repeated, no excuse for any civil servant who allowed any information to become public without the consent of the head of his department. He was quite sure honorable members could always obtain such information as they required from Ministers of the Crown. For his part, he never refused it. The honorable member for Ipswich, in speaking upon this subject, had brought in the name of Mr. Higinbotham as being favorable to the Queensland railways; but the House must not run away with that idea, because that gentleman had expressly stated that he would give no opinion except upon points on which he was directly asked to pronounce it—no opinion of a general character in reference to these railways. He must take exception to certain remarks which had lately been made about him, if not in the House, outside of it—that he had appealed *ad misericordiam*. He was not much in the habit of appealing to anyone, and certainly was not one who was likely to ask for any man's pity. All he had appealed for was for fair play; and he put it to honorable members whether it would not have been more fair and manly to consent to an adjournment, and have the question fairly out, than to sit the whole night through, offering every obstruction to the progress of the debate. He thought it very strange that the Opposition should have adopted such tactics. For his part, he rather liked a little row in the House; he wished the attack to be made so that he might have something to reply to. Then, as to the "count out" of the previous night, he considered that, when the Opposition adopted such an extreme course, it was perfectly justifiable for the Government to make use of every form which the rules of the House permitted, in order to compel their opponents to state clearly and definitely what were the backslidings of which they complained. He believed that if honorable members would only mention a few more of the shortcomings of the Government, they would be satisfied upon every point. Something had been said about the want of policy on the part of the Government; but he thought no one could read the somewhat lengthy Speech which had been delivered from the Throne, and make that charge against the Government. They had prepared a number of measures, and several of them were already in print; and if the House were willing to discuss them,

the Government were ready to lay them on the table. Others were in a forward state. The policy declared in those measures the Government had long since made up their minds to abide by. The land question discussed last session was an extreme one, and he, for one, never wished to see it come on again in that House. He boldly affirmed that if the Ministry had taken up a position, and stood by it upon any Land Bill, the House might have gone on debating it for the next ten years without coming to any satisfactory result; and, without affirming that the present Act was perfection, he still maintained that it was a step in the right direction. He had a word to say about the policy of the incoming Government, for so, he supposed, he must call them. He had heard of a bit of that policy, and that was very distinctive. He would prophesy at any rate, and say that it would be to give everything to the south and nothing to the north. That was a piece of the new policy which had, perhaps, been unguardedly confided to a friend of his, and that was the policy shadowed forth by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Dr. O'Doherty; but it was, after all, only a paraphrase of the policy of the great Daniel O'Connell—it was, in fact, an appeal to physical force, and that was to be the policy of the incoming Government. During the last session, everything was for the north. Northern members could have got anything they liked to ask for—a Provincial Councils Bill, or anything they wanted. Another charge made against the Government was, that they refused to spend money without the authority of Parliament. The opposite was the very course pursued by the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister; and it was the large unauthorised expenditure he incurred which led to his being obliged to quit the saddle and give up the reins of office. The present Government had not that fault to atone for, for he was not aware that they had expended one shilling without the sanction of Parliament. However, he would confine himself to his own department. With regard to the much-talked-of road to Gympie, he maintained that the action of the Government, and the department of which he was the head, was quite in accordance with the exigencies of the case. A good deal of expenditure had been incurred on the gold fields of the colony, except on the northern gold fields, where no money had been spent. Diggers, as a body, required very little; all they asked for was to be left alone; and the storm which had been raised about this road had not originated with them, but with a few Brisbane people, whose pockets were interested in it. He did not blame them for looking after their own interests; but he thought any Secretary for Public Works who gave way to them would be unworthy of his office. It was his duty to see that the expenditure was kept, as much as possible, within bounds; and it was not the duty of the Government to open up every

fresh rush to the gold fields, although, when any gold field was thoroughly established, such as Gympie, for instance, they ought to take such steps as were necessary to connect it with the coast, and by more routes than one, so as to prevent the possibility of any scarcity of supplies to the diggers. Had not that been done? And where, then, was the necessity for hurrying on the road to Brisbane, which, of course, might have been done by a large expenditure? It could not be denied that, ever since Gympie had been proclaimed a gold field, the diggers had been supplied abundantly with all the necessaries, and most of the luxuries, of life; and if the road had been pushed on at a more rapid rate, by the employment of a greater number of men, no corresponding advantage would have been derived. It would have been very easy to do what was done last year, when some £17,000 was spent on relief camps; and he would put it to honorable members whether any work, representing even a thousand pounds, was done for it; whether, in fact, anything was done, except to make a large number of men more discontented than they were before. The road about which such an outcry had been made had not been neglected; it would very soon be open for any traffic; and instead of being, as the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, called it, a mere marked-tree line, it would be found to be a very good bush road, much better than the generality of roads in the colony. Some insinuations had been made that the southern and western districts had not received their share of expenditure; but he thought that no districts received a larger share than those very districts. It was well known that, during the previous session, almost every honorable member who asked for money was refused, and he should like to know what the House would think of the Government if they granted those requests in the recess. A great deal had been said out of doors—for it was necessary to go back to indignation meetings, as nothing was said in the House—to the effect that he had shewn no interest in the gold fields. He must give those statements an unqualified contradiction. He had been connected with gold fields for a long time, and had always been interested in their progress. He looked upon the diggers as an honest, manly, and indefatigable set of men; he had frequently had occasion to praise them highly, and a few rowdies would not alter his opinion. He would even refute this charge upon a lower ground altogether, and say that his interest was directly connected with the gold fields, and that he had perhaps a greater interest in this particular Gympie gold field than any other member in the House; and it was, therefore, grossly unfair to charge him with hostility towards the diggers, or a want of interest in their pursuits. He did not hesitate to say that the prosperity of the whole colony depended in a great measure upon the permanency of those diggings.

That charge against him was, therefore, absurd on the face of it, and scarcely required contradiction. He was not aware that he had anything further to say, but if any honorable member on the Opposition benches would mention any point in which he required information, he should be very happy to afford the fullest explanation in his power.

Dr. CHALLINOR said that the honorable member who had just sat down had justified the further prorogation of the House from June last, on the ground that it had been followed by no inconvenience to members. He might as well have said that if he threw a stone into a crowd, and no injury resulted, the act was justifiable. It certainly appeared to him that the Government had been guilty of a breach of constitutional practice, if not of constitutional law, by the revocation of the proclamation to meet for the despatch of business issued to the representatives of the people, as it would appear, for their own personal advantage. The honorable and learned Attorney-General had wished to make it appear that the House was interfering with the prerogative of the Crown, and had stated that the Governor could dismiss the Parliament at any moment. Well, that was never denied; but it was equally well known that it was the duty of the Governor in a colony having responsible Government to be guided by his advisers; and those gentlemen had no right to advise His Excellency to revoke that proclamation, the revocation of which might have been very injurious to the colony as a whole. Besides, what were the reasons assigned for that revocation? why, first, that two important constituencies would be left unrepresented; secondly, that the new Governor had not arrived, but that he might arrive in time to open the Parliament; and thirdly, that the new Houses of Parliament were not completed. Well, surely, two out of those three reasons, if not all of them, ought to have struck the Government before the last proclamation was issued. He found by the *Government Gazette* that the writ for the Leichhardt election was issued on the 11th May; he was not quite sure of the date of the writ for Clermont, but he believed it was previous to that, and the proclamation calling Parliament together for the despatch of business, on the 22nd June, was dated the 13th May—two days later. Surely they could not have been so ignorant of what was transpiring at the Government Printing Office as not to know that those two electorates were vacant at that time. But, he presumed, the Government had subsequently received some intimation from their supporters that it was unwise to have called Parliament together at that time. Hence the revocation. Or it might have been a preconcerted scheme; because it was well known for weeks before that the member for Clermont, and also one of the members for the Leichhardt, intended to resign, and the Government ought to have urged them to resign in time to have allowed those

two electorates to return new representatives before June. But they seemed to have pursued a totally different course, and advised those gentlemen to withhold their resignations to the last moment so as to enable them to prorogue Parliament to a later period. That was a reason which had, at any rate, suggested itself to his mind. Then, again, the Colonial Secretary had stated that the Government had acted very wisely in limiting the deposits in the Savings Banks to £500; but he thought that had been well answered by the honorable member for South Brisbane, who had pointed out that the same result could have been arrived at, as far as the banks were concerned, by issuing a departmental notice not to allow the banks to deposit any money. Honorable members had been told, again, that the banks had a large quantity of capital lying idle, and, at the same time, that it was the want of capital—foreign capital introduced into the colony—which prevented its resources from being developed, which was certainly a contradiction. Again, they had been told that the colony had suffered such a serious injury from the attempt to introduce the legal tender note system, by the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Bell, that it was not likely to recover from it for the next ten years; while the Government had before them, as a proof of the prosperity of the colony, the fact that, by last quotations, the Queensland securities were higher than ever, having reached 109 to 110 premium. Those were glaring inconsistencies. The honorable Colonial Secretary had also told the House that the Government had not only mentioned in the Speech from the throne that they were prepared to bring in a number of Bills—and honorable members might judge of their character from their titles—but that some of those Bills were actually in print. Well, did that commit them to anything at all? Why, it was known that they had a Bill printed when they assumed the reins of Government—a Land Bill. But what did they do with it? They allowed two members from the north, the honorable member for Rockhampton and the honorable member for Kennedy, to take the inside out of it and to put a fresh Bill into the old binding, and why should they not do the same thing now? The honorable and learned Attorney-General stated the other night, when the honorable member for Toowoomba quoted a precedent from the Parliament of Victoria in support of the course adopted by the Opposition that evening, that he should bring forward a higher authority than the Victorian Legislature. Well, he (Dr. Challinor) would do it for him; he would give him a precedent which even the fastidiousness of the Attorney-General could not take exception to—he would give him a precedent from the British House of Commons. He would quote Sir Robert Peel in Opposition; and the occasion he referred to was when he made use of those memorable words, addressed to the Government, “You

cannot expect me to prescribe for the patient till I am regularly called in." There was a precedent for him, and let him find fault with it if he could. The honorable member for Rockhampton, and the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, wished to award a meed of praise to the honorable Colonial Secretary for not having expended money upon the celebrated road from Brisbane to Gympie. The honorable member for Rockhampton had tried to be very humorous on the subject; but he thought it would not be a very difficult matter to take some of the gilt off the gingerbread with which he had tempted the House to praise that honorable gentleman. From his own statements that evening, he was more than ever confirmed in the opinion that, at the close of last session, the Colonial Secretary had stated that it would be quite unnecessary for honorable members to pass a vote or resolution for making that road; as, if the Gympie gold fields turned out as well as they promised to do, the Government would be willing to take upon themselves the responsibility of making an available road from those diggings to the capital, if such a road could be found. Yet, now, the Government came forward and affirmed that they could not construct that road, because the money had not been authorised by Parliament. He had nothing to say as to whether a good road had been found, or whether such a road was necessary; he simply stated the above fact, and left honorable members to draw their own conclusions. It was perfectly amusing, the other night, to hear the honorable Attorney-General attempting to convince the House that it would be positively unjust to the colony to make a road to Gympie out of the general funds of the colony for the advantage of the diggers and a few persons in Brisbane, and not for the benefit of the community at large. He (Dr. Challinor) recollected that, during the last session, at a certain stage of the Land Bill, the honorable member had stated to the House that he was in a regular fog in reference to the provisions of that measure. Now, he seemed to be quite oblivious as to what was contained in the Vice-regal Speech this session. He had taken the trouble to inform us, that while the Speech was, nominally, the Governor's, it was, in reality, prepared by the Ministry; and yet that Speech distinctly affirmed that it was necessary to unite the southern gold fields with the capital of the colony. The honorable member seemed, also, to have been oblivious of the fact, that that very night his honorable colleague the Colonial Secretary had tabled a motion, the purport of which was that it was desirable to make that very road; and yet he had tried to make the House believe that it would be unjust to the colony at large to construct it. Unless he had been utterly oblivious of those facts, could he have spoken with that sincerity and honesty upon which he had laid so much stress? If he had really

held those opinions, could he have been actuated by his duty to his constituents when he assented to that clause in the Vice-regal Speech? Honorable members had been told by one of the Ministers, in reference to the proclamation which appeared in the name of the Governor, but which had not received his signature, that, notwithstanding, there was the most perfect accord between His Excellency and his Ministers. That might be the case; but he maintained that if the Attorney-General was speaking honestly the sentiments of his mind when he said it would be unjust to the colony to make the road to Gympie, it only proved that, although there might be perfect accord between the Governor and his responsible advisers, there was not perfect accord between the Ministers themselves. The honorable and learned gentleman had asked the House over and over again why they did not dismiss the Government last session if they were dissatisfied with their legislative capacity. He (Dr. Challinor) was there to answer that question. He could tell the honorable gentleman, if he did not know it, that, but for the fear of bringing in the late Premier, that Cabinet would have been then and there remodelled or dismissed. He was in a position to state that some of the supporters of the Government, who were altogether dissatisfied with their conduct, had talked the matter over; and if they could have got one of the members from the north to take one department, and a certain member from the Opposition side to take another—why, then, it would have been good-bye to the Government of which the honorable Attorney-General was so proud of being a member. The honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, would not lay much stress upon the fact, but referred to it as a fact, that during the tenure of office by the present Ministry, the Queensland debentures had risen in the English market. Well, no doubt they had, and the honorable member was very wise not to lay too much stress upon it; for it was not because the capitalists of Great Britain had so much confidence in the integrity and capacity of the present holders of office that those debentures had risen in value. It was not because the colony possessed such resources for pastoral pursuits; she possessed those advantages before, and yet her securities had been sold at 86 discount to meet pressing liabilities. It was not, then, the pastoral resources of the colony which had caused the rise in its securities. What was it then? The increased value arose from two circumstances. One was, that there was a plethora of unemployed capital in England just now, for which no investment could be found even at two per cent.; and the other was, the indubitable evidence which had reached Great Britain of our immense mineral resources, especially gold and copper. These had given an impetus to the sale of our securities. But, let the time come when capital could find a safe field

for profitable investment in Great Britain at 8 or 10 per cent.; and then, if this colony required a loan at the hands of the same capitalists, it would be fortunate for Queensland if her debentures could be sold at par. Then, again, with regard to this celebrated Land Act. It had undergone many phases, and it seemed to be a perfect scapegoat for the present Government. At one time they were found taking credit to themselves for having carried such a measure, and at another they absolved themselves from any responsibility in connection with it. But he begged to tell them, that if they had stooped so low as to accept it in the way it was presented to them, they must take it with all its liabilities, just as a person who accepted a bill must take it with all its responsibilities. The honorable member for Rockhampton again had spoken of the necessity of a Provincial Councils Bill, and had affirmed that it was neither right nor proper that the House should be occupied with local matters, but that public works in the several districts should be managed by local councils, and that the Parliament should legislate only upon subjects affecting the general good. But he would tell that honorable member that that was contrary to the principles of the British Parliament. They did not think it unnecessary or beneath their dignity to legislate for local works. Where, he would ask, would the road trusts in Great Britain be, if such a policy had been pursued? Could gas companies be formed, or insurance companies obtain their powers without private Acts of Parliament? It was well known that no railway could be formed in England without a very large expenditure of money to prove to the British House of Commons that it was for the good of the country at large, or would not be prejudicial to local interests, that such an undertaking should be entered into. He maintained, therefore, that there was no precedent in the British Parliament for the establishment of provincial councils, and he believed that the introduction of such councils into this colony would only be a multiplication of the evils complained of. The honorable and learned Attorney-General had given his opinion as to the duty of electors to hold meetings in their own districts. He had understood him to say that it was right for them to hold meetings to discuss local affairs, but that they had no right to touch upon matters affecting the entire community. That certainly was not the principle recognised by any British constitution. Again, the Colonial Treasurer had told the House the other night that it was impossible for any responsible Government having a Land Act to administer, to do so honestly and conscientiously towards all parties. Now, he must confess he held an opinion that a politician who assumed that a responsible Government must of necessity be a corrupting and corruptible thing, had, by that assumption, shewn himself to be unworthy of office in such a Government, and, therefore,

out of his own mouth he condemned him. There was another matter he had almost forgotten, and that was on the subject of the Savings Banks. He hoped that Mr. Gladstone would be considered quite as good an authority on such subjects as the honorable Colonial Secretary. No one would doubt that honorable member's integrity and truthfulness, although they might his capacity for finance. What was the opinion of Mr. Gladstone respecting Savings Banks—an institution established in Great Britain he could hardly tell for how many years; for he knew that when he was quite a little fellow he had some money invested in one of those banks, which proved that they could not have been established within the last forty years. What was Mr. Gladstone's opinion of Government Savings Banks, and what were the principles upon which he had founded them in distinction to the savings banks previously in existence? They were established on the principle to give the people the very best security for their savings on the one hand; and on the other hand to utilize as much as possible those savings to the benefit of the country. Therefore, he asserted that, in the present circumstances of the colony, it was perfectly right and desirable, as long as the people were willing to entrust their deposits to the Government, for the Government to receive them. But they all knew why the banks did not want the Savings Bank: they dreaded the very idea of a National Bank of Deposit and Issue, and therefore they would crush in its very infancy—in embryo—such an institution; and, hence their earnest desire to bring all their influence to bear directly upon the Government, if they could, and, if they could not in that way, then through the members of the House who were under the influence of bank directors, and who watched them with a lynx eye. He (Dr. Challinor) was glad that the honorable and learned Attorney-General had referred to the line of action which the Government had taken during the debate, because it afforded him an opportunity of expressing his opinion on that subject. It so happened, that in consequence of the unique "count-out" last night, he (Dr. Challinor) went to bed much earlier than usual. As a consequence, he woke much earlier than usual; and, as he lay cogitating on his bed, during the silent hours of the night, he could not help thinking it was surprising that when Ministers found themselves in their present position, they did not reason with themselves thus:—"Once again"—to quote the elegant phrase which *once and again* we have introduced into the Vice-regal Speech—"Once again we are in our places as members of Her Majesty's Government to conduct the public business of the country. We have issued our programme for the present session, and if the document in which it is contained is not more lucid or classical than Opening Speeches usually are, it is nevertheless much,

very much, over their average length. Our friends from the north, too—the new member for the Leichhardt, Mr. Royds, and the new member for Clermont—are in their places: but where is the member who represents a portion of the middle district?—why is he not in his place? And why are our friends, the members who represent portions of the southern and western districts not in their places? It may be that a change has come over the spirit of their dream; and that, unwilling to wound our feelings by appearing in the list of our opponents, they have kindly kept away; or, it may be, that ‘coming events have cast their shadows before them,’ and that, unable to sustain the agony of witnessing the death-throes of the political entity which they were the means of bringing into being, they very prudently remained at home; or, it may be, they belong to that class of reckless politicians who can never be induced to take the slightest precaution to prevent a catastrophe, the occurrence of which they would never cease to deplore. But, whatever may be the cause of their absence, we will let them see—we will let our friends who are here see—we will let the members of Her Majesty’s Opposition see—we will let the representatives of the Press see—and through them we will let the public of Queensland see, that we are fully prepared to meet our fate—to abide by the present issue of events whatever it may be; that, if as an Executive, we must die, we will die hard—we will die as becomes men—we will die as becomes Britons. We will give them no grounds for casting obloquy upon our memories—we will give them no occasion to say that we fell ingloriously, ignominiously crying for quarter at the hands of our opponents, and no man said, ‘forbear’—neither will we give them any cause to point with the finger of scorn to the place of our sepulture, and, in the plenitude of their contempt, exclaim, ‘There they lie! unpitied, unhonored, and unwept!’” But, instead of noble conduct like that, what did the House see? Why, the Ministry, in this debate, reminded him of the poor unfortunate wife of “Bluebeard,” who, in the intensity of her anguish and suspense, was continually crying out, “Sister Anne! sister Anne! are they coming?—are they coming?”—and, failing a favorable response, like drowning men, they caught at straws, and, by availing themselves, in a most unheard-of manner, of the forms of the House, to postpone, if possible, the evil day—which would inevitably come, sooner or later—they would but increase the degradation of their fall.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS congratulated the honorable member for Ipswich, who had just sat down, upon the fact that he was still a member of the House, and observed that, instead of leaving his place vacant, as he had stated his intention of doing, during the recess, he had returned, this session, like a “giant refreshed.” However, he should not

attempt to follow the honorable member in his speech; but seek to answer those honorable members who had attacked the policy of the Government. He was not surprised that, during the recess, he had been the object of attack by a certain interested faction, who, by continually perverting facts in connection with his administration of the Land Act, had thought to imbue the people of the colony with the feeling that he had been using the power conferred upon him by that Act for party and corrupt purposes; and who had incited the people to hold public meetings, in order to have him branded as a traitor to his trust, in the hope of driving him from that office with confusion and shame. But he was determined, whatever they might say and do, that he would meet them face to face in that House, and answer the charges brought against him. That was why he was present, this day. He had waited patiently to see what charges would be brought forward, and it was only at the eleventh hour that any were brought forward. Any Minister, in the performance of his duty, must certainly expect criticism; but that criticism ought to be fair and impartial. If so, and he was honest in performing his duty, he could not but gain by the discussion and criticism of his administration; but the criticism that he had met with from the press of this country had been most unfair, and was alike disgraceful to the instigators of it, and to the journals themselves that published it. He could easily understand with what anxiety the public watched the working of the Land Act. No measure ever passed was fraught with so much power for good or evil. If he were dishonest, he knew that he held in his hands, in virtue of that measure, an engine for corruption and jobbery that was never held by the hands of Colonial Minister before; but, if he could not render a proper account of his stewardship, he would have no right to stand in his place in the House; and, if he could not give a satisfactory account of his administration of the Land Act, he must, of course, take, as he was prepared to take, the consequences. He had been accused of all manner of crimes. First, that he had given all the good land to the squatters, and kept nothing but the poor land for the people. Then, he had been accused of driving capitalists away from the colony. But it was useless to endeavor to recapitulate the charges that had been laid at his door. The first tangible one was the division of Canning Downs. As he said before, when he spoke on the main question, he should be prepared to defend the action he took in that case; and he would now do so. If honorable members would refer to the eighth clause of the Land Act, they would there see the power conferred on the Minister for Public Lands:—

“Within four weeks of the passing of this Act notice of resumption to the holders of runs within the settled districts as required by the forty-fourth clause of the Act twenty seven Victoria number seventeen and not already resumed

under the 'Agricultural Reserves Act of 1863' shall be given by the Minister for Lands and on the expiration of the period fixed by said Act of twelve months from the date of such notices such lands shall be open to selection by conditional purchasers or for sale by public auction or subsequent selection as hereinafter provided. Provided always that should any pastoral tenant within the said settled districts signify in writing to the Minister for Lands within six months from the date of the aforesaid notice his desire to have his run at once brought under the operation of this Act the commissioner for the district in which such run is situated shall indicate to the Minister for Lands such portions of such run as may probably be needed for townships or railway reserves and it shall be lawful for the commissioner to call on the pastoral tenant—"

not upon the Government—the Government had not the power to do it—

"to divide the remainder of the run into two parts as nearly as may be by a right line or natural feature and the commissioner shall then recommend to the Minister for Lands which portion shall be resumed by the Government and that a lease be granted in favor of such pastoral tenant for a term of ten years of the part of the run least likely to be required for selection or sale by auction not exceeding one-half of the entire run."

Now, the following was the letter he had received from the commissioner of the district, a gentleman, whom, presently, he should speak of more particularly, with reference to his qualifications—Mr. Francis Gregory :—

"Crown Lands Office,  
"Toowoomba, Darling Downs,  
"11th April, 1868.

"Sir,—I have the honor to transmit you a tracing of the run named in the margin, shewing its division under the Crown Lands Alienation Act, which has been submitted to me by the lessees for the purpose of selecting the portion to be resumed by the Government for alienation.

"On computing the area of the two portions shewn on the tracing, I find that the one to the north and east of the Condamine comprises 24,078 acres in excess of that to the south, which fact, I have no doubt, the lessees are aware of, and have thrown it in in consideration of the broken nature of the country towards the Main Range.

"Having carefully weighed the respective capabilities of the two portions of the run, I beg to recommend that the division colored yellow, comprising a total area of 98,554 acres, be resumed by the Government, and that a ten years' lease may be granted to the original lessees of that portion colored green, containing 74,476 acres.

"In making the foregoing recommendation, I have regarded the requirements of a numerous body of recent selectors on the northern portion of the Canning Downs run, who would be completely hemmed in and excluded from extending their holdings, should a ten years' lease of that portion of the run be issued to the present pastoral lessees; and, at the same time, have borne in mind the wishes of the inhabitants of Warwick, as conveyed in Mr. John Douglas' letter of the 13th ultimo, transmitted with your letter 68-1035—a

report upon which will be furnished on my return from Warwick, at the latter end of next week.

"I have, &c.,  
"F. G. GREGORY, C.C.L.  
"The Honorable the Secretary for Public Lands,  
"Brisbane."

From the statements contained therein, it would be seen that the commissioner bore in mind the interests of a large number of selectors who had settled down on a portion of Canning Downs, and who naturally wished to have some benefits under the new Land Act: they did not wish to be taken in, in the ten years' lease. Then, also, there were the people of Warwick to be considered: they wanted land for commonage, under the terms, as construed, he imagined, by the honorable member for Eastern Downs; that was to say, the land given for commonage was to be excluded from selection. He said there was some difficulty in the matter;—that there was nothing to prevent the sale of the land—that, to get the commonage in the way the honorable member wanted, it would be necessary to evade the Act. If the land were withdrawn from sale by auction, and parties required it for more useful purposes than commonage, he must allow it to go. He felt that he could not altogether satisfy the wishes of those persons who were settled down on a portion of Canning Downs, a little distance from Warwick, or the wishes of the people of Warwick themselves; and he had to take into consideration the claims of both parties. He found, however, that there was still considerable land available on Rosenthal run, which could be given to them without any evasion of the Act. However, he wanted time for consideration, in order that he might see how he could grant the amount of commonage which the honorable member required, without evading any provision of the Act.

Mr. DOUGLAS begged the honorable gentleman's pardon. The correspondence in which he was engaged did not refer to commonage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS could only say that all the honorable member's letters referred to the same land. He found that he could grant considerable commonage to the town of Warwick, by proclaiming a certain portion of land at once—some 7,000 acres—which could not be taken up by selectors, because it was situated within two miles of the last town lot. He was glad to be able to thus meet the wishes of the honorable member, without evading the Act. As he understood, the people of Warwick wanted commonage that was not to be sold except by auction.

In answer to a remark interjected by Mr. CLARK,

Mr. DOUGLAS said he had not acted for the people of Warwick, but for the people of Eastern Downs. He did send in a petition from Warwick.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The letter referred to by Commissioner Gregory,

in his letter, which had been read, was this:—

“Brisbane, 13th March, 1868.

“Sir,—I have been requested by certain of my constituents to represent to you, that in their opinion, and in the event of the division of the Canning Downs run, under the provisions of the ‘*Alienation of Crown Lands Act*,’ it would be expedient to reserve for the public use that portion of it, or a proportion of that portion lying to the south of the Condamine, and extending towards the table land of New England.

“I have, &c.,

“J. DOUGLAS.

“The Honorable the Minister for Lands.”

Honorable members would exactly understand that the division of the land rested with the lessee of the run, and that, after it was divided, he (the Secretary for Public Lands) had to choose which of the two divisions he would resume. He could not, if the lessee had divided his run fairly, turn round and say that he wanted it done in some other way. If anybody could shew him that he was wrong in that interpretation, he would acknowledge that he was wrong. Well, in the case in question, the lessee had presented a very fair division, and one which the commissioner recommended, as set forth in his letter. Though the portion recommended for resumption by the Government was the largest, there was a certain amount of range and scrub in it, which left the balance of available country in it about the same as in the other portion. As the honorable member, in his letter, did not say his constituents wished the common to commence at the town, but only upon the south side of the river; and, as the commissioner had regarded the selectors who were already settled down on the run, he (the Secretary for Public Lands) thought he had a right to take their claims into consideration, as well as those of the people of Warwick. The selectors had made their homes, and wished to have some advantages under the Act, for the future extension of their holdings; the people of Warwick only wanted grazing for their cows—a large commonage that was not to be alienated to anyone. From long conversations he had had with the honorable member for Eastern Downs, that was the knowledge he arrived at. Well, he concluded to give the people of Warwick commonage close to their town—between three and four thousand acres of Canning Downs run, and seven thousand acres on Rosenthal run. That, close to their doors, he considered sufficient to meet their claims. He was aware that a very large portion of that could be secured to them, and that it could be done without any evasion of the Act—without withdrawing it for sale by auction; and that there was no fear of parties coming in to purchase it. A letter appeared in one of the public prints—the *Courier*, of the 19th June—that seemed to have carried away everyone in reference to this matter; at all events, he

had heard of its being quoted in public meetings. That only shewed him, however, how easy it was to gull the public. That letter was used by public speakers at the indignation meeting. He would not certainly give prominence to it—for he could not give much credit to the writer of it—only that he wished to produce a letter from Mr. Gregory referring to it:—

“HOW THE LAND ACT IS EVADED.

“To the Editor of the Brisbane Courier.

“Sir,—In my letter to you dated September 20, 1867, on the foul dummeying system that is being carried on in this district, I promised that I would give information as to how these dummeying gentry would fulfil the letter of the law by cultivation, &c.

“Although the present Land Act has done away with the restrictions then in force, still it may be interesting to your readers, and instructive to the liberal members of the Legislature of Queensland, to learn how the public estate is being seized upon in this district.

“I will commence with Canning Downs, the intended ‘granary of Queensland.’ The Condamine River flows through it for about thirty-four miles, and all the *bona fide* settlers I can find on this part of that watercourse, or on ten miles of Farm Creek, twenty-two miles of Emu Creek, and nine miles of the south bank of Swan Creek—in all, about seventy-five miles of permanent water, do not exceed ten families. All the remaining part of that country, unoccupied by those settlers, is under sheep. The above river flows east and west through the run; and the breadth of the run, north and south, between Swan Creek and the Condamine, is twelve miles. If any of your readers doubt the above statement, let them look at the plan of the parish of Wildash, and they will find that all the country described is alienated for ever from the public; only 3,000 acres on Emu Creek, that Mr. Wildash and his brother, and the head stockman, and the sheep overseer, could not manage to lease. Although it is classed as first-class pastoral, I myself, and many others, would willingly pay fifteen shillings an acre for it; but our commissioner, Gregory the Second, in order that no troublesome settlers should go inside the wire fence, gave a ten years’ lease of those 3,000 acres, the best land in the colony. He then jumped from there, seven miles farther off, and commenced at Warwick, where he gave a ten years’ lease of 74,000 acres, south of the town, notwithstanding that a numerous signed petition had been previously sent down to Mr. Lamb, praying for a town common in that locality. The ‘pet Lamb of the wool-sack,’ however, could not think of taking any of these 74,000 acres away from the Canning Downs ewes.

“I have made a calculation of the number of acres alienated and leased on Canning Downs, and find it to be 65,000 alienated, and 77,000 leased for ten years.

“Having seen a proclamation in the *Government Gazette*, however, that 81,000 acres of Canning Downs were open to selection, I saddled my horse in a hurry, and rode over to the run. On coming to peg No. 1, however, I discovered my mistake. The land open to selection consisted of a dense scrub on the back of the Main Range, with the grey rock peering here and there through

its sides. It would take a balloon to ascend to its top, where no white man has ever trod. This is the land we are offered to select on here. So much for Gregory the Second's classification. You may recollect that Gregory the Great, of Brisbane, gave us, some four years since, for an agricultural reserve, 'Jiber land'—land that would pauperise a millionaire, and, at the best, was only second-class pastoral. The reign of the Gregorlys will be long remembered in this district.

"But, Mr. Editor, it would be too much to take up any more of your valuable space with the doings of these two men. I may just inform you that Mr. A. Wienholt has secured the Gladfield Reserve, and also his run. The (would-be) Honorable C. Green has got Goomburra, and Mr. John Deuchar has got his run too. I wish the latter luck with it. He bought it for from £1 to £1 10s. per acre. This gentleman detested dummying, of course; that system has never been put into practice on his run. However, from the bounds of the colony to the bounds of Drayton district, not one of us could ever get an inch of ground.

"I am keeping my eye on the land office here, and making it a study. When I go in I walk round the wall, looking at the maps, to see if any fresh run is resumed 'for the use of the public.' On the resumed side of the runs, I always find the words 'leased for ten years' written up, and the other side is unresumed. So the following is the pass-word for us:—'No land for you, poor men; come to-morrow, and you will get the same.' Still, Mr. Editor, we find that, when we turn our backs, the squatter goes into the land office, and gets what is previously refused to us. Now, I do not blame the land agent; he must obey orders. I was in conversation with the commissioner once, when he informed me that when Rosenthal run was divided, the part next Warwick would be the best to resume. I remonstrated with him on the subject, and explained the undesirability of such a course, but in vain. Since then I have learned the cause of his having been so determined on resuming the eastern half of the run. There are 6,000 acres of a dense scrub at the west of the town, and 3,000 acres of a green-wattle scrub. These he is to give, together with the Bald Mountains, to the town of Warwick as a common. There is also, on the resumed half, a splendid wash-pool, the land around which, however, is valueless; so the late lessee will get 2,500 acres for it, and still have the use of it. Then, we get the Gap Mountain, the Ugly Mountain, and the remaining second-class pastoral land; the lessee, on the other hand, gets 7,800 acres second-class pastoral, and the Government, or rather the public, lose about 100,000 acres of agricultural land on Thane's Creek, Rogers' Creek, Grey Mare's Creek, Lagoon Creek, and the Condamine River.

"Then, again, if those creeks on the west of Rosenthal are leased, there will be no homestead nor selector in the district of Warwick—no one but squatters. I will let you know more on this point when the run is divided.

"Should this letter catch the eye of Mr. J. Clark, M.L.A., I beg to remind him of his pledges and promises when he was brought forward as a candidate for our suffrage by me, at Mr. Tulloch's, on the Agricultural Reserve, and a vote of confidence was unanimously passed in him by the large meeting assembled. I have to inform Mr. Clark

that his supporters and the public require his services—first, to aid us in getting a town common, not Rosenthal scrub, but on the 'Jews' Retreat,' Canning Downs Run; and, secondly, to cause the best land on the squatting runs to be resumed for the public. If the Government do not grant these our requests, he is called on by his pledges to his constituents to oppose them, and aid the Opposition to remove them out from office.

"Yours,

"J. P. O'DEMPSEY.

"Heifer Station, June 14."

That had been used before an excited assembly to shew the "robbery" that had taken place! If the fair lands of Canning Downs had gone, they went before he (the Secretary for Public Lands) came into office, when a certain honorable gentleman was in office, who had it in his power to give away those lands under pre-emption—which was merely a permissive right;—but under that right the best land was gone. He had heard a great deal about Killarney, and had seen some scores of letters on the subject;—he looked at the division that had been made by the commissioner, and there he saw that he had most of Killarney run;—in fact, all that was left of it—all that had not been given away by the gentlemen who sat on the Treasury benches a little while ago. It was the only part of the run that had water frontage; and, in making the selections, he always bore in mind the desirableness of getting for the farmer's water frontage. Getting that, he felt that he was all right for once—that he was carrying out the wishes of the honorable member for Eastern Downs, who had wished for a proportion of the land on the south of the Condamine, extending towards the table land of New England. He considered that the Warwick people got the best of the table land, especially when he saw that every inch of the land on the banks of the Condamine had been previously alienated. He found that about 200,000 acres had been given away under pre-emptive rights. That had been his great difficulty in dividing the land on the Downs. He always looked for water frontage for the small farmer, knowing well that he must have water—that he could not sink a well, which would cost too much money for his means. When he saw that last letter, he inquired who the writer was, so as to know what value to attach to it. He told the Surveyor-General that he was surprised at the tone of the letter, but that he did not believe the statements in it. He said his brother might make some reference to it, but that, as a Minister of the Crown, he could not take any notice of it. However, it appeared that the Surveyor-General alluded to the conversation in some letter to his brother, and this was a communication which he (the Secretary for Public Lands) received subsequently:—

"Toowoomba, 24th June, 1868.

"Dear Sir,—I understand from my brother that you would like to have a report from me on the

subject of the accompanying letter, relative to the Canning Downs Run, which lately appeared in the *Brisbane Courier*, and contains accusations against the officers administering the land laws in this district, of such a serious nature, as would, if true, demand immediate investigation on the part of the Government.

"Presuming that the information you require relates to transactions that have taken place since the new Land Act came into operation, as prior to that period I had but little to do with that branch of the department now called in question, and passing by the merely declamatory portions of Mr. O'Dempsey's very rambling and illogical statement, I at once proceed to point out the untruthfulness of all his most important assertions.

"In the first place, with regard to the division of the Canning Downs Run, it is scarcely necessary to state, that the total area of this run that was left available for division when the Crown Lands Alienation Act came into force, was, as nearly as possible, 173,000 acres, and comprised the three following portions of country:— Firstly, 17,500 acres within a short distance of the head station, and in close proximity to the town of Warwick, interspersed amongst, or surrounded by, portions purchased under pre-emption, or selected under the Leasing Act of 1866; secondly, 81,000 acres, in one block, at the eastern end of the run of which some 30,000 or 40,000 acres are either scrubby or mountainous, making, with the former 17,500, a total of 98,500 acres resumed and thrown open to the public for selection, instead of only 81,000, as stated by Mr. O'Dempsey. Deducting, however, from this area, say 38,500 acres for scrub and mountain (which, by the way, is a very liberal allowance) there still remains 60,000 acres of country available for selection. Thirdly, there is a block of about 74,500 acres on the south bank of the Condamine, which has been left for the lessees (and not 77,000 as stated), of which fully 30,000 are quite as scrubby or mountainous as the lands thrown out of the portion resumed by the Government, leaving barely 45,000 acres of available country, under a ten years' lease, the nearest point of which does not come within three miles of the boundaries of Warwick. What Mr. O'Dempsey states about my having given the lessees a ten years' lease of 3,000 acres of the finest land in the colony, in addition to the 74,500, is, therefore, a fabrication, without any truth to justify it. I should only be too glad to see him put in his application for the country referred to.

"The next statement, taken in the order in which they appear, is the Warwick commonage. In the treating of this subject, Mr. O'Dempsey not only totally ignores the fact that between 3,000 and 4,000 acres have recently been expressly set aside by the Government, as an extension to the Warwick town reserve, but would also like to have the remainder of the run in addition thereto; omitting to state under what law or Act of Parliament the Government can find a pretext by which to deprive the lessees of this, their only remaining right.

"With regard to the next statement, that on inspecting the plans in the local Land Office, he found written on one-half of each run the words 'leased for ten years,' and on the other half, 'unresumed.' I can only say, it is a gratuitous falsehood; the words 'open to selection' being

distinctly marked on the principal portions open under the Act.

"The next, and, perhaps, gravest charge of all which he brings against the officers administering the land laws, that land has been refused to the poor man, and afterwards given to squatters, is one that if he was called upon to substantiate, he would not only be unable, but, I am prepared unhesitatingly to affirm, is either a wilful untruth or reckless assertion made without inquiry; as, with the exception of those cases in which the lessees have, in the exercise of their pre-emptive rights, made prior selections, I can confidently assert that in no single instance have squatters had the slightest preference given them. This fact has compelled Mr. O'Dempsey to have recourse to the usual subterfuge resorted to by writers of his class, of making it a general charge, so as not to give an opportunity of a direct refutation.

"Lastly, with regard to his garbled statement of the conversation he had with the commissioner about the division of Rosenthal Run, I can only say, I put the direct question to him as to which he considered the best half to be resumed for the public; his reply was, to the effect, that I ought to select all the good land, both around Warwick and on Thane's and other creeks, without regard to the rights of the lessees; to divide the run first, and submit it to the Government to select either half for alienation, as provided by the Act.

"In conclusion, I would remark that I have not attempted to refute any of the mere insinuations contained in Mr. O'Dempsey's letter, as they are only the usual means used by unscrupulous persons who, in this way, endeavor to evade the consequences of unqualified falsehoods.

"I remain, &c.,

"F. G. GREGORY.

"The Honorable E. W. Lamb, &c., &c.,  
"Brisbane."

When he visited the Downs, he was not enabled to go as far as Warwick, and to inspect the land office there; but he saw many parties who had been in the office, and he asked them questions with reference to the assertions about the marking of the maps. He received the same information from them as he had received from Mr. Gregory, that the land was marked "open," "open." Yet that was the way people were blinded, and sensations created on the land question. Now, he would venture to say—he had made many inquiries on the subject—that the run was as fairly divided as any run could possibly be. The inhabitants of Warwick might be a little disappointed that they did not have the land immediately adjoining them; but, if they had got it, would it have been for the benefit of the country? He felt that, if he could find for them a piece of good country—such as Killarney, or that part of it which had not been given away—with water frontage, he had done all that was expected of him. He had met their wishes fairly; he had given them a good commonage to run their cattle on. Amongst the charges brought against him was, that capitalists had been driven away from the colony, because they

could not invest large sums under the Act. He had had numbers of conversations with gentlemen from the other colonies—though not with Mr. Fisher, who did not pay him a visit—with gentlemen who had come up from Victoria and New South Wales; and what they complained of was, that 2,560 acres of first-class pastoral land was of no use to them; that, if they could get 7,680 acres—the maximum of second-class pastoral—they would take up that quantity of first-class pastoral land. They knew too well what it was—they knew the country, and they wanted only the best land, and in quantity. The Act would not suit them, though it might answer very well for men with a couple of thousand pounds, who could work the land with their sons, and by fencing it in. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) would now answer the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister. He was glad the honorable gentleman had spoken, for he liked to have all the charges put together. He supposed they were all heaped on him—

Mr. LILLEY and Mr. BELL: No, no.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If any more were brought forward, no doubt the House would afford him an opportunity of answering them. The appointments that had been made by the Government under the Act had been attacked as unsuitable. The first was that of Mr. Coxen. He thought it was not necessary to inform the House that that gentleman bore a reputation for honesty and ability, and that no man had larger colonial experience. At all events, he was put in the largest place. Next was Mr. Gregory. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) had no hesitation in saying that a more talented man than he was not in the colony, or one of larger experience in connection with land. Mr. Gregory had been from his earliest youth connected with agricultural pursuits; he was an Australasian explorer, and had achieved not only a colonial but a European reputation. There was not a man of greater integrity to be found for the post he occupied. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) believed he was honest to the back-bone; and when any charges had been brought against him, he was convinced they were utterly untrue. Mr. Rankin was the next. He was known to be a man of good business talents. He was at one time the manager of a bank at Rockhampton—though that had nothing to do with country pursuits. He took a great interest in the Land Act, and had written many letters and articles upon it in the *Australasian*, which excited a good deal of notice. He was a man admirably fitted for the post he occupied. The next was Mr. Sheridan, who had been engaged in pastoral and agricultural pursuits, and who was a man well acquainted with business matters. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) had known him many years ago; and he knew that no one could bring a well-founded charge of incompetence against him. Mr. McDowell was selected out of the

Survey Office to fill the position he now occupied as commissioner of Crown lands. He gave great satisfaction in that position; and his aptitude for business pointed him out for promotion; and what better could be done by the Government with an officer who had given such satisfaction than to promote him? Mr. Sharkey was the commissioner in the Bourke district. He gave a great deal of satisfaction in discharging his duties there; and when the Land Act came into force, the appointment of commissioner under it was given to him, to save the expense of appointing a second officer, who would, likely, have very little to do for some time to come. Those were all the appointments. The land agents, many of them were land agents before. He now came to the gravest charge that had been made against him—the one made by the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister—as to the legality of his proceedings under the Land Act. He was charged, in the first place, by that honorable member with bringing forward too large an area of land for auction. Now, honorable members, he thought, would recollect that the honorable member for Rockhampton, in the last speech almost he made last session, urged “auction,” “auction,” “auction,” and there was not a dissenting voice in the House, as he thought, to that view. At all events, if silence was to be construed as giving consent, the House consented to that course. Well, he asked the Surveyor-General what quantity of land was surveyed and could be sold by auction, and that gentleman told him there was 600,000 acres of land surveyed and available for auction; and mostly situated in the neighborhood of towns and agricultural reserves. Seeing it would take six months before a sufficient quantity of fresh lands could be surveyed, he told the Surveyor-General to make out schedules of the whole of the surveyed lands, excepting those that would be brought into runs, and which amounted to about 200,000 acres, and to bring all the rest forward for auction. The Surveyor-General did so, and about 400,000 acres were scheduled, and brought forward for auction. If any surveyed lands were left out, it was contrary to the instructions he gave, and which were, that all the surveyed lands, with the exceptions he had mentioned, should be brought forward. The result was that, from the sales that had taken place, about £23,000 had been realised—not a very large amount, certainly; but a result that realised his anticipations so far. Then, he was met with a general cry that, by putting up all that land to auction, he had precluded all the small agriculturists from extending the area of their holdings, and had prevented other parties from taking up lands near towns. Now, it was intended that the Act should be a liberal Act, and that everybody should get what he wanted; and that there was to be no restriction whatever in taking up lands. Well, he brought forward

those lands, under the 83rd and following clauses, down to the 96th section of the Act; and he had them put up to auction. It was quite true that one of those clauses stated that lands once offered at auction, and not sold, could be selected immediately afterwards at the upset price, and without any conditions whatever. The honorable member for Ipswich had stated that when once a piece of land got into that category, it could only be disposed of in that way. Well, he would admit that that view also occurred to his mind; and he believed that the Act would bear that construction; but when he saw, from a careful consideration of the Act, that such a course was totally opposed to the spirit and intention of the Act, he declined to read the Act in that way. He saw that, by such a construction, any man could, by the stroke of his pen, defeat what was the whole object and intention of the Act. The Minister for Lands for the time being, for example, might, for purposes of his own, put up one-half of a run for sale in one lot, that it might be passed at auction, and consequently shut out from sale for ever afterwards, as it could then only be taken up by selection and purchase. Now, it would have been quite opposed to the spirit of the Act to have allowed the lands to be locked up in that way; and he was satisfied that, under the Act, he had power to put forward the land for sale under the system of selection with deferred payments. And he did so, but without withdrawing the land from sale as having passed the hammer, because it could still be purchased in that way as well. If he were asked, by what clause of the Act he did so, his answer would be that he did it by every clause in the Act, minus the ten clauses relating to auction. He had surveyed lands now, to the extent of 100,000 or 150,000 acres, that were to be brought forward for sale by auction; but, if he found there was not a sufficient demand for it, when it was offered, was he to be prevented for ever from selling it in some other, and, as he maintained, strictly lawful way? Now, that was the gravest charge that had been brought against him, and he held that he had sufficiently answered it. He had been charged with having violated the Act, but he had not violated the Act. What he had done was to carry out the spirit and intention of the Act, instead of binding himself down to the words of the Act, by which the purpose for which it was brought in and passed would have been altogether frustrated. Then, it was said that the Act had failed to produce a sufficient amount of revenue; but he denied that it had failed in that respect. The Act could hardly be said to have yet been three months fully in force, as the quantity of land offered under it, previous to the first of May last, was very trifling. He might, therefore, safely say that the Act had not been more than three months in operation. The quantity of land proclaimed for sale and sold by auction under the Act to the end of July last, was as

follows:—In the Moreton District there were 244 acres town lands proclaimed, of which half an acre was sold, bringing £4 14s. 3d.; suburban lands proclaimed 2,970 acres, sold 55 acres, bringing £54 15s.; country lands proclaimed 94,359 acres, sold 1,594 acres, bringing £1,583 8s. 1d. Darling Downs District, town lands proclaimed 269 acres, sold 6 acres, bringing £49 10s.; suburban lands proclaimed 4,251 acres, sold 48 acres, bringing £96 14s.; country lands proclaimed 64,453 acres, sold 17,879 acres, bringing £18,107 9s. 5d. Port Curtis District, town lands proclaimed 970 acres, sold 10½ acres, bringing £461 11s.; suburban lands proclaimed 13,147 acres, sold 28 acres, bringing £302 7s. 1d.; country lands proclaimed 9,194 acres, sold 18½ acres, bringing £27 17s. 3d. Wide Bay and Burnett District, town lands proclaimed 269 acres, sold 15½ acres, bringing £133 5s. 9d.; suburban lands proclaimed 6,081 acres, sold 132½ acres, bringing £201 1s. 6d.; country lands proclaimed 25,778 acres, sold 276 acres, bringing £207 7s. 6d. In the Leichhardt District there were proclaimed 119 acres town lands, and 408 acres suburban lands; but none were sold. In the Maranoa District, 99 acres town lands, and 1,010 acres suburban lands were proclaimed; but none were sold. In the Warrego District, 16 acres town lands were proclaimed; but none were sold. In the Kennedy District, there were proclaimed 171 acres town lands, of which 31 acres were sold, bringing £1,311 4s. 3d.; suburban lands proclaimed 2,926 acres, sold 243 acres, bringing £479 2s. 3d.; and 18,266 acres country lands were proclaimed; but none were sold. Altogether there were proclaimed in those several districts, 2,247 acres town lands, of which there were sold 63½ acres, bringing £1,960 15s. 3d.; suburban lands proclaimed 30,393 acres, sold 506 acres, bringing £1,133 19s. 10d.; country lands proclaimed 212,050 acres, sold 19,767 acres, bringing £19,926 2s. 3d., making a grand total of lands proclaimed of 244,690 acres, sold 20,336 acres, bringing £23,020 17s. 4d.; and that was exclusive of some lands sold at Rockhampton. The lands offered for sale under the Act up to the second of June last, were as follow:—West Moreton, town lands proclaimed 368 lots, making 166 acres, sold one lot of half an acre, bringing £4 14s. 3d.; suburban, 91 lots of 2,013 acres proclaimed, sold three lots of 55 acres, bringing £54 15s.; country lands proclaimed 888 lots of 58,374 acres, sold 13 lots of 1,263 acres, bringing £952 8s. 9d. East Moreton, country lands proclaimed 806 lots of 29,241 acres, sold 22 lots of 331 acres, bringing £630 19s. 4d. Warwick, town lands proclaimed 138 lots of 133 acres, sold six lots of six acres, bringing £49 10s.; suburban lands proclaimed 44 lots of 791 acres, sold six lots of 48 acres, bringing £96 14s.; country lands proclaimed 85 lots of 12,002 acres, sold 35 lots of 5,064 acres, bringing £3,951 10s. 3d. Toowoomba, country

lands proclaimed 314 lots of 27,808 acres, sold 148 lots of 14,155 acres, bringing £14,155 19s. 2d. Dalby, country lands proclaimed 56 lots of 16,142 acres; sold none. The totals here were 2,790 lots of 146,670 acres proclaimed, and 234 lots of 20,922½ acres sold, bringing £19,896 10s. 9d. Such were the results as to the lands that were offered for sale by auction under the Act. He next came to those that were offered for sale by selection; and this part would no doubt be interesting to the country. The return he was now about to read was a return shewing the number of applications accepted, together with their area and classifications up to the 1st August, 1868, under clauses 71, 46, and 66 of the Act. The number of applications for homestead areas was 140. In Brisbane, there were 49 applications for homestead areas, comprising 1,187 acres agricultural, and 2,875 acres pastoral lands; Ipswich, 54 applications, 2779 acres agricultural, and 1,745 acres pastoral lands; Toowoomba, 18 applications, 1,275 acres agricultural lands; Dalby, 1 application, 80 acres agricultural land; Maryborough, 7 applications, 315 acres agricultural, and 125 acres pastoral lands; Gladstone, no applications; Rockhampton, 5 applications, 361 acres agricultural land; Bowen, 3 applications, 140 acres agricultural, and 200 acres pastoral lands; Townsville, 3 applications, 240 acres agricultural land; making a total of 140 applications, for 6,377 acres agricultural, and 4,954 acres pastoral lands. Conditional purchases of from one to 100 acres; total number of applications 35 for 127 acres agricultural land, and 1,240 acres first-class and 911 acres second-class pastoral lands; from 100 to 200 acres, 18 applications, for 995 acres agricultural land, and 530 first-class and 1,325 second-class pastoral lands; from 200 to 500 acres, 29 applications, for 6,439 acres agricultural land, and 3,286 acres second-class pastoral land; from 500 to 1,000 acres, 42 applications, for 11,182 acres agricultural land, and 2,878 acres first-class and 13,390 acres second-class pastoral lands; from 1,000 acres upwards, 27 applications, for 3,200 acres agricultural land, and 37,568 acres first-class and 18,527 acres second-class pastoral lands; making a grand total of 114,068 acres of land agricultural, and first and second class pastoral, that had been applied for. Since the return was made out, further applications had been received by telegram for 57,343 acres, which brought up the grand total to 171,431 acres; and that was exclusive of applications under pre-emptive rights. The grand total of the applications that had been made under the Act, including the pre-emptions, amounted to 220,000 acres, and the 20,000 acres sold by auction would make 240,000 acres. That, within three months of the Act coming into force, was equivalent to a million acres per annum, which was equal to the whole of the land alienated since Separation, with the addition of thirty per

cent. So honorable members might easily understand that he had had his hands pretty well full, having to conduct such an amount of business within a few months. The quantity of land alienated, previous to the passing of the Act, was 800,000 acres; and, if the sale continued at the rate at which it was going on, there would just be one million of acres disposed of in twelve months. Including land orders there would be a revenue derived, at that rate, of about £31,750—that was, if land orders were, as formerly, included under the head of revenue. But so long as land orders and cotton bonus orders continued to be received in payment of land purchases, he was afraid that the amount that would be received in the shape of cash would be very small indeed. He thought he had now disposed, and satisfactorily disposed, of the charges brought against him with reference to the administration of the Land Act; and he would turn to refer very briefly to the subject of the gold fields. The Government had been several times attacked with reference to the want of a sufficient road to Gympie; but, he thought, it had been sufficiently proved that the Government had done quite as much for the gold fields as could be reasonably expected of them in the time. He remembered the time when the gold fields were first discovered in Victoria, and he would like that honorable members who spoke so much about a road to Gympie had seen the streets of Melbourne ten months after the gold discoveries. He visited Melbourne about that time, and he remembered that it was no uncommon thing to see any number of jack boots sticking in the middle of the streets. They could not be pulled out of the mud, and the wearers had had to relieve themselves from them as best they could, and leave them there. He remembered, also, that at that time there was a gentleman there, a gentleman of high family, a titled gentleman, employed in carrying people, at so much a head, across the streets; such was their condition with mud about ten months after the gold discoveries. He believed it was no exaggeration to say that several people were smothered in the mud. He had also visited San Francisco, and he remembered seeing a place where between £20,000 and £30,000 worth of merchandise was swallowed up in mud; and he afterwards walked over the spot as part of a good roadway. Rome was not built in a day, nor were the streets of Melbourne brought to their present condition in a day. He could tell honorable members that he had never seen a gold field that had progressed so much as Gympie had in the short time it had been in existence. Honorable members should bear in mind that immediately after the discovery of gold at Gympie, a considerable amount of money was expended in the making of a road to Maryborough. Though he did not wish to disparage the making of a road from Gympie to the metropolis, he could tell honorable members that what was urged

upon him during a recent visit to Gympie was the making of a road to Maryborough. There was not one man on the diggings that spoke to him about a road to Brisbane, and, therefore, the charge brought against the Government on that head was not one arising out of a grievance of the community chiefly concerned; for it was not a road to Brisbane they wanted but a road to Maryborough.

Mr. DOUGLAS said it appeared to him that none of the facts put forward by honorable members, in support of the charges preferred against the Government, were facts, as the question was viewed by the Ministry, who had to reply to any particular charge. However, he had now to make a few remarks with regard to some specific matters connected with his own district, to which the honorable the Minister for Lands had referred; and that in a way that it was inconsistent for a Minister to refer to them. The honorable gentleman had amply fulfilled his part in respect to those matters, by placing a notice on the paper for a committee to inquire into the administration of the Land Act. It was a piece of folly to attempt now to go into that question, for in dealing with it they got only some isolated facts that were asserted on the one hand and denied on the other, and so time was lost in discussion without any result. But he desired to direct the attention of honorable members to one or two facts; and he would, in the first place, say that he thought the honorable gentleman had misrepresented the correspondence he had had with him on the subject. Knowing it was of the greatest importance to some of his constituents that there should be a careful division of the land in the district, and fearing there might be too great haste used, he addressed the honorable gentleman on the subject, and stated his own opinion in the letter; but it was an opinion he had derived from others, and both they and he touched on the thing very lightly. He was not willing to accuse the honorable gentleman of all that he had been accused of. He was not willing to accuse him of corruption and incapacity; but he must say that the honorable gentleman's address, to which honorable members had just listened, had not shewn that he was a competent Minister—that he was competent to administer a difficult Act, and one which he had but a small share in framing. The honorable gentleman resumed some lands in the district of the Eastern Downs, and he did so against his advice and opinions—opinions which, as he had already observed, were formed on the opinions of others resident in the district. He had no need, therefore, to be astonished at the charges that were brought against the honorable gentleman from other quarters. But the charges brought against the honorable member by him were small compared to those that might be brought against him. The honorable gentleman was charged with having played into the hands of the capi-

talists; and the tenor of his remarks would lead anyone to believe that he had done so, but that he had failed. The tenor of the honorable gentleman's remarks was, that he had obtained but a small portion of their money from the capitalists. The honorable gentleman, in the course of his speech, quoted a remark of the honorable member for Rockhampton at the close of last session, about putting up the lands to auction, in justification of the course he had since pursued. Now, had the honorable gentleman put up all the land for sale that was likely to sell?—and had he put up any portion of the 340,000 acres in the Darling Downs that were surveyed for sale before he took office?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. DOUGLAS: If he had done so, he must have put up very little of it. Had the honorable gentleman taken any care to survey lands that would have been sold for cash? No. But what had he done instead? He put up large quantities of land that he knew would not be bought, and that, he averred, justified him in doing as he had done—in setting aside the strict literal interpretation of the Act. He did not exercise his judgment to put forward such lands as he knew would sell, but he put up lands that he knew would not sell—that would not bring the price at which they were offered; and when the land did not bring the upset price, he put it up for selection, to keep it, as he said, from the grasp of the squatter. The administration of the Act, according to the spirit of the Act, would have yielded a large revenue; and he maintained that the Act had failed in doing so through the course pursued by the honorable gentleman in its administration. With respect to the Savings Bank question, the honorable the Minister for Public Works had informed the House that the Government might have been brought to a stand-still, had capitalists and bank corporations been allowed to deposit large amounts in the Savings Bank, and which amounts they might withdraw at any moment. But that argument had been fully replied to. The Government could have prevented the banks from doing so; and they could have passed a regulation, to the effect that deposits over five hundred pounds could not be suddenly withdrawn. But if the banks knew they had a strong Government to deal with, they would not dare to do so; for the Government had a stronger power over the banks than they seemed to think they had. If the Government chose to act with resolution, the banks would not dare to do anything that would embarrass them; for the banks knew very well that the Government could compel them to give up their note circulation. Was it not a fact that it was to the Government that the banks were indebted for their note circulation. He remembered when the Savings Bank Act was first brought in. The honorable gentleman, Mr. Herbert, who was then at the head of the Government, took a great deal of trouble in respect to it,

As the Act originally stood, the Government was limited to receiving deposits not exceeding two hundred pounds; and it was on the direct understanding that the bank should be made the origin of a Government bank of deposit that the limitation clause was struck out. But further than that, he could assure the House that he knew of several instances, both of persons and of corporations, who were anxious to withdraw their money from the public banks and place them as permanent deposits in the Government Bank. Certainly the sums were smaller than those mentioned by the honorable the Colonial Secretary; but still they were large amounts of five hundred pounds and a thousand pounds. He knew that money would have come from Sydney itself to be deposited in the Savings Bank here, the depositors preferring the security offered by a Government institution to the security of ordinary means of investment, even with a higher rate of interest. And yet the Government had recklessly paid away eight per cent. upon money they had had to borrow, where they might have had all they required at five per cent.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Whatever might be the arrangements with the bank, the Government had not borrowed the money, nor had they paid interest at eight per cent.

Mr. DOUGLAS: If that was the case, what was the meaning of the paper that had been laid on the table of the House to the effect that the Government had done so. If what the honorable the Colonial Treasurer now stated was true, it followed that there could be no overdraft. However, it was neither that nor the administration of the Land Act, nor the road to Gympie, that separately, or even collectively, made up the question the House had now to deal with. The question was simply that neither the House nor the country had any longer confidence in the present Government. Honorable members had been in contact with the people from whom they derived their places here; had felt their pulses, and knew what they thought of the Ministry; and they now came to tell the Ministry what opinion the people held respecting them. It might be impossible for honorable members, on the Opposition side of the House, to establish all the charges that had been brought against the Ministry; and the only way in which it would be possible to establish them would be by obtaining their places. That was the only way in which it might be possible to find out what the Ministry had been doing. Now, it was generally felt that the present Ministry had misgoverned the country. Every syllable that was whispered led to that conclusion. But the Government could not be indicted as criminals and proceeded against with charges that must be sustained by conclusive evidence satisfactory to a legal tribunal. It was sufficient that the people were not satisfied with the Government. The Government might possess tact, but they

must also possess a feeling of sympathy with the people they governed; and unless that feeling of sympathy, which they felt in the people, re-acted from them on the people, they were unworthy of the position of holding the reins of Government.

Mr. CLARK said he considered it was due to the House that he should explain the course he proposed to pursue in respect to the question before it; and to tell the Government at once that he could not support them; and he would also tell them the reason why. At the same time he did not sympathise with the Opposition in the course which they had pursued. He did not at all sympathise with them in saying that, in pursuing the course they had adopted, they were not bound to make specific charges, and to support them. He considered that it not only rested with the Opposition to say that the Government did not possess the confidence of the country, if such was their opinion, but also to shew in what way they considered the Government did not possess the confidence of the country. Now, he believed, he would be able to shew why the present Ministry did not possess his confidence, and could not possess the confidence of anyone who represented the part of the country that he represented. He might state that he did not come down here prepared to support a great many of the charges which, he believed, he could bring against the honorable the Minister for Lands. Nor did he come down prepared to support the amendment that had been proposed on the address, for he did not know that such a proposition was to be made; and he did not know that he should be the only one that might be called upon to make specific charges in regard to the administration of the Land Act. If he had been in possession of many of the documents he had given notice of moving for, he would have been in a position to make those charges, and to support them. But there were some things which he could state sufficiently from memory, and could prove from memory, that had been done by the honorable the Minister for Lands,—he would not say purposely, or from a dishonest intention, for he believed that honorable gentleman to be as honest a man as there was in the colony. He must say, however, that he did not think the present Minister for Lands possessed that amount of ability that was necessary for the proper administration of the Land Act. But, further than that, he thought the honorable gentleman had acted illegally in respect to the issuing of a proclamation reserving certain lands for sale by selection after they had passed auction. What did the honorable gentleman do? He advertised certain lands for sale by auction, and they were put up at auction. They were passed at auction, and, after that, according to the ninety-sixth and ninety-seventh clauses of the Act, they were open to selection at once, at fifteen shillings an acre. Now, what did the honorable gentleman do. He proclaimed the land as open to

selection at fifteen shillings an acre with deferred payments. Now, that, he maintained, was distinctly illegal. The honorable gentleman now stated that he was justified in doing that, by the whole spirit and intention of the Act; because he held it was never intended that one man should have the power of placing lands in that position that they could not be sold. He also stated that if a Minister acted according to the letter of the Act, he could put up the half of a run for sale, and that, when it passed the auction, as the honorable gentleman held it would for the want of a purchaser of so large a block, it would be impossible to obtain its alienation, as no one would be able to purchase it by selection; and, therefore, it would be secured to the use of the squatter for ever. But what did the Act say; and that was what they had to do with. It stated that when once the land had passed at auction, the Minister had no right to deal with it at all, but that it should remain open to purchase by selection at the upset price. But he would follow that up by another question; and he would ask the honorable the Minister for Public Lands if he had reserved for sale, by auction, all the lands recommended to him for reservation by the lands commissioner for the Darling Downs district? Had the commissioner for that district recommended certain lands to be reserved for selection; and had the Minister for Public Lands allowed them to be selected, or rather had he proclaimed them open for selection? Now, he would bring another charge against the honorable member. It was a simple matter, but it must be remembered that it was those simple matters that the public felt. He would ask the honorable gentleman in what way had he worked the pro-squatting clauses of the Act? When the Bill was under discussion, the question arose as to how the runs would be got at within twelve months. The lessees of pastoral lands had to get twelve months' notice given to them; and unless they came under the operation of the Act they could keep their runs complete for twelve months after the passing of the Act, and consequently for that time no lands could be resumed for sale. The House accordingly inserted clause 40, in order to induce pastoral tenants to come under the Act; and what did that clause say? It said this:—

“40. At the expiration of two months from the passing of this Act all lands within railway reserves which as such are to be excluded from the part leased to the pastoral tenant and counted as part of the resumed half on the subdivision of any run as also the country land in the township reserves as well as all land in the reserves made or proclaimed under the ‘Agricultural Reserves Act of 1863’ shall till otherwise classified be deemed and taken to be agricultural land and shall as such be open to selection by conditional purchasers or sale by auction as hereinafter provided. Provided always that the commissioner shall not at any time have the power to classify any land in

such railway or township reserve as second-class pastoral land. Provided also that anything in this Act to the contrary notwithstanding the lessee shall be entitled to the lease of half his run for ten years under the provisions of this Act even if the same or any portion of the same shall be included in any agricultural reserve.”

And what did the next clause say? He would read it:—

“41. Previous to any land being open to selection under this Act except as mentioned in the preceding clause notification of its boundaries and the day from and after which it shall be open shall be given at least one month prior thereto by proclamation in the *Government Gazette* and nearest local newspaper. Provided that the Governor may withdraw from selection any land for the purpose of survey with a view to its being brought forward for sale as surveyed lots.”

Now, he would mention some cases, and leave the honorable the Minister for Lands to deal with them. He had read the clauses, and now he would state the facts of some cases in which he was concerned. The honorable gentleman, of course, framed regulations which were sent to the commissioner, and those regulations could be amended, as instances occurred shewing a necessity for it. The honorable gentleman also advertised large quantities of land for sale by auction, and in advertising those lands, he reserved them for selection after they had passed at auction. Now, to his knowledge, the honorable gentleman did not reserve any other lands for sale by selection except those that had passed at auction. Well, he knew some parties who made application for some of the lands that were reserved for selection in that way. They sent in their applications, and these applications were for surveyed lands; but their applications were refused, on the ground that they were reserved lands. Now, he believed that those persons could go to the Supreme Court, and demand that the land they applied for should be given to them. He himself had written to the honorable Secretary for Public Lands, stating that the farmers of Warwick—he spoke of his own district only—did not want to go and select land forty or fifty miles from their homesteads,—that they would rather have fifty acres round their own places than one hundred and fifty elsewhere. He had also drawn the attention of the honorable member to the fact that there was land there which had been surveyed and had never been put up to auction, and had requested him to allow certain persons to select it, which he contended they ought to have been allowed to do without applying to the Minister. He had received a telegram from the Minister, not answering his letter, but stating that the land would be thrown open on such a day in July; and that, if he wanted further information, he could get it from the commissioner or land agent. He came to the conclusion that the Secretary for Public Lands did not fully understand what he was doing; and he went to the commis-

sioner, and asked him if he knew any land to be open for selection in the month of July, and whether he had any instructions on the subject, and he said "no." He waited until the time stated, and there being no land open for selection, he wrote again to the Minister, and told him that the land he alluded to could not be the same as that to which he (Mr. Clark) had referred. That was not a matter of great moment, but it shewed that the Secretary for Lands was not up to his work. He felt loth to say a word against that honorable gentleman, for whom he had the greatest respect, but he must state the truth. He had no doubt he should be accused of great ingratitude for what he had said; because, in the public prints, he had been accused of having been allowed to take up land as that honorable member's thick-and-thin supporter. The fact was, and he said it not to defend himself, but to prove the charge he was going to make, he took up 580 acres of surveyed land in the railway reserve. He made application for it, although he had been told that there was no surveyed land open for selection, because he knew that under clause forty there was. His application was accepted. He then recommended a gentleman near him to make a similar application, which was also accepted. He presumed they were both passed, as he heard nothing further about it. He then went to several of his constituents, and told them that he had tried the question; that his application had been passed; and that he would write out applications for them for surveyed land, which he did in several instances, and drew out the plans. All these applications were rejected. He wanted to know why one should be accepted and the other refused. He would mention another instance which occurred also in connection with the Secretary for Lands. He could not say by what motive the honorable member had been actuated; but one court day in Warwick, out of thirty-three applications under the preemptive right, which, as long as the regulations as to frontages and so on were complied with, were perfectly legal, thirty were rejected. The commissioner said he had been instructed by telegram from the Secretary for Lands not to accept any application in the railway or agricultural reserves except for agricultural land. Now, was it likely that such mistakes as these could be made by anyone who understood the working of the Act? These were not charges of a very grave character, but he did not think they could be disproved. He would also ask the honorable Secretary for Lands one question. He saw something in the Opening Speech about 500,000 acres in the Darling Downs being open for selection. He had seen in the *Gazette* the conditions under which such lands should be thrown open. Now, he would ask the honorable gentleman whether all the land agents were furnished with maps for the use of selectors, so that the latter

might know the situation of the land they sought to take up? or, whether the public were left to find out for themselves which side of the line it was, and also whether one month's notice had been published in every case? If the correspondence he had asked for had been produced, he should have been able to go more fully into the case, and shew how far the conditions had been complied with; but he knew that in some instances, at any rate, the land agents had not been supplied with charts. He did not accuse the honorable Secretary for Lands of anything beyond an error of judgment; but in a question of such importance an error of judgment was fatal. Then, again, the House had been told by some member of the Government, he believed by the Premier, that the Act was almost unworkable. If that were the opinion of the Government, how was it that some reference to it was not made in the Speech from the Throne, to the effect that certain alterations were necessary? Honorable members were all aware of the peculiar circumstances under which it was introduced. He blamed no one for the defects in the Act; but knowing them to exist, he thought it was the duty of the Ministry, if it could be amended, to point out how it could be done; and he could only add that if the Minister for Lands had been prepared to take that course, it would have greatly strengthened his position. He had made only distinct and definite charges, and if the Government could not answer them satisfactorily, he should consider that he had shewn good grounds for not having confidence in the Minister for Lands. He had only one other point to refer to, and that was in reference to the proposed meeting in June. It was quite true that he was the member who requested the Government to say when they would meet, and he had certainly distinctly understood from the Premier's reply that Parliament would be called together in June. He believed every member of the House understood it as a distinct pledge to that effect; and he affirmed that the Government could shew no good reason why the meeting should not have taken place then, and, if it had, honorable members would now be going home. He had a few words to say in connection with the address in reply. Upon reading it through he had come across three words, which, if carried into effect, would be the ruin of the district he represented. He referred to the proposal to stop the extension of the Warwick line to Allora. If that were done the town of Warwick would be ruined; there could be no doubt of it. All the New England traffic, which was one of the great inducements to go on with the line, would be lost. He spoke from a personal knowledge of the country; and he must condemn the policy of a Government who could carry a railway sixty miles, and then decline to proceed with it another twelve miles, which

would make it pay—the said twelve miles being the very worst part of the road for teams. It would have been better policy for the Government to have said last session that they did not believe in the Warwick railway at any price, and to have stopped it then, than to leave it in an unfinished state, with an embankment here and a bridge there. He thought he had now fully shewn his reasons for the course he had taken. He considered that the Government had committed a breach of faith in stopping that railway. He did not say that he had received any distinct pledge that it should be continued to Allora; but he had always been told that it was progressing; and the paragraph he had seen in the Opening Speech was the first intimation he had received that it was to be stopped. He had only one more remark to make. It would probably be said that the fate of this debate rested with him; if the Ministry were in a minority, the onus would be upon him. But, he would ask, where was the honorable member for Maryborough, the honorable members for Dalby and Western Downs, the honorable member for Ipswich—where were they? If those honorable members had been present, he should not, perhaps, have had such a painful duty to perform. He affirmed that the fate of the debate rested with those honorable members, and not with him. He had come down to the House to do his duty, irrespective of any private feelings to whatever side they might lean. He did not intend to support the Government, and he would now state openly that it was not his intention to vote at all.

Mr. MILES said that, as the only real charges brought against the Government had been brought by the honorable member who had just spoken, he would rise for the purpose of moving the adjournment of the debate. It was not his intention to advise the Government to go to a division that evening; but as the only tangible charges had just been preferred by the honorable member for Warwick, he thought the Government ought to have time to consider them. He, therefore, moved the adjournment of the debate until Tuesday next.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he was glad he had been afforded an opportunity of replying to the honorable member for Warwick. That honorable member had spoken very much like a disappointed man, but he would not enter into that. He would confine himself entirely to the points touched upon by the honorable member. He had stated that he (the Secretary for Public Lands) had no right to bring forward at auction any lands in the railway reserves. Now, if honorable members would call to mind the debate on the Land Act, they would recollect that it was stated, over and over again, that that land was some of the best, and ought to be put up at auction. The honorable member had stated that he (the Secretary for Public Lands) was pre-

cluded from bringing forward any of that land by the fortieth clause of the Act. He had also quoted the Act to shew that one month's notice in the *Government Gazette* must be given. But the proviso shewed that the month's notice was not necessary, as the land could be at once selected. Then it went on to say—

“Provided the Government may withdraw from selection any land for the purpose of survey with a view to its being brought forward for sale as surveyed lots.”

He contended that that applied to both descriptions of land. Honorable members would recollect, that it was never intended, all through the debate, to withhold the railway reserves from sale by auction. The Government had full power to sell portions of those reserves; and he contended that, under the forty-first clause, he was empowered to deal with them. Then, he had been accused, by the honorable member for Warwick, of accepting his application for land in the railway reserve, and rejecting other applications of a similar character. That arose in this way,—that other parties might apply for their pre-emptive rights as a preferent claim. The lessee might apply for his 5,640 acres, and that was open for selection afterwards, while other applicants could only take up 640 acres. Therefore, if a person applied for first-class pastoral land, his application was rejected; because the Act stated that no applications could be received, except for agricultural lands, until the classification had taken place. That excluded the general public from applying for more than 640 acres until the land had been classified. The Act distinctly stated that this land should be subject to classification as to quality—as to quantity, there were no restrictions. Other persons, seeing the lessee taking up a large quantity of land under his pre-emptive right, thought they had as much right to apply for large areas. Some applications for very large areas of land, in those railway reserves, were put in, and he had refused to confirm them; because, he maintained, that no one could apply for more than 640 acres of first-class pastoral land except the lessee, who was not restricted as to quantity. As soon as he received those applications, he telegraphed to the commissioner, and told him he did not think he was acting rightly, and the commissioner had taken this to mean that the applicants for land under the pre-emptive regulations were not entitled, which was wrong. That was how the honorable member for Warwick's application was authorised. It was a mistake of the commissioner. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) had argued that no applications could be received until after classification, except for agricultural lands. Another charge preferred against him was that he had not paid any attention to the recommendations of the commissioner of agricultural reserves. That

he denied. There were something like 130,000 acres which he had reserved to be brought forward for sale by auction. There had been some cases where he had not confirmed the recommendations of the commissioner, because he thought too much water frontage was given, and for other reasons, which he was prepared to explain. Then, again, with reference to the charge that the land agents were not supplied with maps of the land, all he could say was that he had given positive orders that copies of all plans and charts should be exhibited at every land agent's office; and when the commissioner had informed him that his duties would not allow him to prepare those plans, he had given him permission to employ a draughtsman. If those plans had not been exhibited, it was a neglect of duty, and he was prepared to make the officers account for it. He had paid the greatest attention to that matter, and the land agent in Brisbane was, he knew, furnished with a very good chart. Another charge had been brought against him by the honorable member for Warwick, in reference to certain lands which he wanted to take up. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) had written to the Surveyor-General on the subject, who stated that there were some 300,000 or 400,000 acres in the neighborhood of Warwick, the titles to which were in some confusion. Several parties had held these lands under the six-penny conditions, and he believed they would be found to be forfeited. But as they had not been formally forfeited, he was unable to bring them forward. Some persons had intentionally refrained from complying with the conditions, in order that the lands might be brought forward for sale; and he believed that was the case with regard to the lands about which the honorable member for Warwick seemed to be aggrieved. At all events, he (the Secretary for Public Lands) had given instructions to the Under Secretary for Lands to ask him what lands he referred to, that he might go into the case. He did not know what lands they were, and the honorable member had only alluded to them in a general way as some lands near Warwick. He thought he had explained that charge, and in reference to the charge of not having reserved any lands for sale by auction, he must deny it; and if he had not confirmed all the recommendations made to him, he had had good grounds for rejecting them.

Mr. LILLEY said he had not intended to speak at all during this debate, and he did not intend to prolong it, as the result must be apparent to all—the Ministry would be in a minority. He thought the observations made by the Secretary for Public Lands would go far to convince the public that the course taken by the Opposition in this debate was a correct one. On the one hand, they had heard statements made, and on the other denied; and what possible advantage could be derived by any attempt to settle these details in the House? When every assertion was flatly

denied, there could be but one course to pursue in order to arrive at a decision, and that would be to call witnesses to the bar of the House, in order to put the Ministry on their trial; a course unprecedented in history, and not to be justified by any constitutional precedent. The Opposition had taken the proper constitutional course. The Ministers were the servants of the House, and their masters told them that they did not like them. There was common sense, as well as constitutional law. He had assisted largely in the composition of the present Land Act, and his honorable friends the members for Rockhampton and Kennedy, as well as the honorable member for Warwick, had also greatly interested themselves in it. The honorable member for Warwick had, to some extent, justified the pledge he gave at the time that Act was passed. He (Mr. Lilley) remembered well his words—"he felt a fear of it." It was described as an experiment; and the honorable member entertained a fear of the man in whose hands it was to be placed during the recess. The public voice had shewn that that fear was just; and the honorable member was perfectly justified in declaring that the management of that Act by the present Ministry had caused the loss of his confidence. He (Mr. Lilley) had also felt a similar apprehension, and he was in a position to disclose certain facts to shew that that apprehension was not a groundless one. When the public had been forced to resort to the Supreme Court of the colony to enforce the provisions of that Act, he thought it was time to affirm that its administration had been faulty. He could adduce many instances where persons who were entitled to land were compelled to have recourse to the Supreme Court, and did not get it even then. He had continued to feel that fear; and he must say he should like to see the administration of that Act, which was not so bad a one as it was said to be, entrusted to other hands, which he believed it would be—in the hands of men who would give it an honest trial; for now, he maintained, it would be impossible to go back in the land policy of the colony. It was not consistent with common sense that a land agent should receive one application for land and reject another. It was not consistent with law or with the spirit of the Act; and it was idle for the Government, through the Attorney-General, to attempt to defend their action upon technical grounds. One instance had been quoted, and there were others of a similar character, which proved that there was no honest desire on the part of the Government to administer the Act as it was intended to be. It was no use to be mealy-mouthed in such a case. The eyes of the public were opened, and, to use a somewhat vulgar phrase, the "gaff was blown;" and he maintained that, in view of the public distrust in the present Ministry, the Opposition had taken a proper course. What had been the

conduct of the Government during the last session? With the exception of the Minister for Public Lands, who appeared never to have understood the Act, or never to have intended to administer it honestly, which member of the Government had taken any part in framing it? The honorable Attorney-General had frankly declared that he did not understand it—that he was in a fog concerning it. Not one of the Ministers appeared to have taken the trouble to read it up and understand it. There were four men who could not be called a Ministry, who were placed in a corner and told to be good boys; while the House undertook to worry the Land Bill—he believed that was the term made use of last session. The House had a right to expect that the Ministry would try to understand and honestly to administer the Land Bill, and the House were about to declare that the Ministry had not done so. He must confess that he had watched the administration of that Act with considerable anxiety. Honorable members would do him the justice to say that he had shewn that anxiety when he had framed those penal clauses. He had only asked to have it faithfully and honestly carried out. It might have led to effects of which he had not dreamed, but still he wished to see it faithfully administered; and he should have wished to see the Government remain in office if they had done so. But when these several acts of maladministration came to his knowledge, he must confess he felt a fear that he had been a party to the infliction of an injury to the country. After what he had seen, he was compelled to give his vote for the amendment, not because of any chance of taking office in any future Ministry, but because he felt that the present Government had not discharged their duty to the country. Some of the arguments employed by the honorable members on the Ministerial benches had been most amusing. It had been stated, that since the occupancy of office by those honorable gentlemen, the Queensland debentures had increased in value. Honorable members could very well imagine the news reaching England, and causing the most thrilling anxiety in London circles, "Have you heard of the change of Ministry in Queensland?" "Are there any debentures for sale? Why, Mackenzie is Prime Minister." Up would go the securities at once. "Are there any securities in the market; Pring is Attorney-General?" Again they would rise; but when the fact was known in those distinguished and select circles, that the Ministry was graced by the suavity and amenity of the present Colonial Secretary, there would be a perfect rush for debentures, and up they would go again; and when it transpired that Lamb was Minister for Lands, the securities would reach the very climax. And the disaster would be terrible when they heard in England that Mackenzie and Co. were gone. Down would go the debentures at

once; there would no longer be a demand for them, there could be no doubt of it; and, therefore, when the honorable member advanced as an argument the rise in the value of debentures, he must have been laughing in his sleeve. There might be some one on the other side of the House gentle or simple enough to believe it, but he did not fancy the honorable member credited it himself. The taxation of the country was very great for its population, and that was the test by which capitalists judged a colony. But, while they knew the extent of its taxation, they knew also the vast and expansive nature of its resources; they knew that the colony was young, and they safely ventured to lend money upon the securities she offered to them, which they would not lend to an older community. With regard to the Land Act, he must say that he should like to see it thoroughly tried. He did not say it was a perfect measure, and he should like to have seen in the Opening Speech some suggestion of an intention to amend it in its details. In its broad principles, he believed the Act was a good one. He thought the several arguments which had been urged by honorable members on the Government benches had been refuted one by one by honorable members on his side of the House. A good deal had been said about the manner in which the Opposition had introduced the amendment, and the Government wanted to persuade honorable members that they ought to have waited until there was a full House. Why, in the British Houses of Parliament, they never waited for a full House. If honorable members, after repeated delays, and after having received due notice, did not present themselves, why the House must proceed with the business of the country. And when the Government asked honorable members to trust them, and to wait for a full House, they must have thought them unusually simple. They reminded him of the story of the student who had sold himself to a certain old gentleman, but who had a fixed time allotted him before the bond he had given became due. The period expired, and his satanic majesty appeared to claim his victim. The solitary candle in the room was burning in the socket. "Give me a little more time," said the student, "only till the candle is burned out." His majesty agreed to do so, upon which the student blew out the candle and put the end into his pocket. To wait until there was a full House would be much the same thing. He believed that if the Ministry could avoid it, there would never be a full House. The Opposition had taken the proper course, and the country was uneasy under the present Government. ("No, no.") He maintained that it was. The country did not trust even the honorable Attorney-General, that was to say, in the administration of the Land Act; with his own department he (Mr. Lilley) would trust him most freely. But the House was not then dealing with any professional department, but with the general policy of

the country; and he would ask honorable members whether they could leave the House for another twelve months, and safely entrust the administration of the Land Act to the present Ministry?

The question was put, and Mr. SPEAKER was declaring the voices, when

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL rose (being greeted with cries of "Spoke, spoke," and "Question, question"), and claimed that he was on his legs before the Speaker had declared the decision of the House. However, he should leave it to the Speaker to decide.

The SPEAKER: I must say, I did not see the honorable the Attorney-General. But, there is an instance of the same kind in "May's Parliamentary Practice," where a member did not catch the Speaker's eye until after the question was fully put; and the House immediately said that the member should be heard. The matter is in the hands of the House.

The question of adjournment was put, and resolved in the negative.

Mr. MYLNE moved—

That this debate be now adjourned.

The SPEAKER said he could not receive that motion. It had just been decided in the negative.

Mr. MYLNE moved—

That this House do now adjourn.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded the motion, and said he thought it would have been as well if the House had accorded to him the courtesy of hearing him on the previous motion. Doubtless, the Speaker was perfectly correct in the ruling he had given, that he (the Attorney-General) was too late in rising to address the House; and he had very properly put it that the rules of a higher House than this had allowed a member to be heard after the question was put. He certainly could not see why the House should be afraid of him. He might think they had treated him with very little respect, because his arguments were not worth much; for he had convinced no honorable member, or influenced him to change sides. However, the sentiments and opinions he expressed in the House were entirely from conviction, and must be taken for what they were worth, whether good or bad. He had heard, to-night, that the tactics of the Opposition were, that they would not get up to speak, till they got Pring up; and the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley had remarked of him that he was a very good lawyer—but the honorable member had stopped there. He could not exactly agree with some of the remarks of the honorable member. He wished further, without protracting the debate, to take exception to some remarks which had been made during its progress, and which ought to be answered. He had listened with considerable respect to the speeches of the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, and the honorable member for Warwick. With regard to the

generalities dealt in by the first-mentioned honorable member, and by other prominent members on the Opposition side of the House, he thought he was safe in saying that any impartial tribunal would come to the conclusion that a case had not been made out. If the leader of the Opposition could not make out his case, why, then, it must be weak in the extreme. The honorable member for Eastern Downs had stated that the charges made against the Government could not be proved, and that the refutation of the Government was ineffective. He (the Attorney-General) joined issue with the honorable member there; because charges made without a probability of obtaining a proper foundation to substantiate them could not be refuted, as there was nothing requiring refutation, and therefore the refutation could not be ineffective. The Government must be in possession of facts which the Opposition could not know anything of, as to the working of the Land Act; and, when they absolutely denied the correctness of the assertions made on the other side, he did not think he was saying too much in demanding that the Government should be accorded the greatest amount of credit. He maintained that the further the debate proceeded, the stronger was the position of the Government; and, if it were regarded fairly, and in a true political sense, as far as he could understand, or could gather from the speeches made, it was simply an attack and a defence—there was no evidence. It was for the interest of the colony that a Government should be in existence—that the Government in existence should possess the confidence of the people. In his opinion, there should be a fair trial given. He did not think the people of Queensland would endorse such a line of attack as had been made on the Government. He could not conceive that they as a body wished to be kicked about like a football, without knowing anything of the affairs of the country from those who wished to bring about a change in the administration. They could not wish for such a change upon a debate in which no information of a reliable character was afforded to them. He believed that if the Government were foolish enough to vacate their seats and allow another Ministry to take their places, the new Ministry would no more have the confidence of this country than the present one. The people had a right to understand what the new Government meant to do. He maintained that, if the Opposition sought to upset the existing Government, while he did not go to the extent of saying that they were bound to shew their policy, it would be more satisfactory for them to do so; and the probability was, that it would be best for themselves. He wished some of them would answer the question, which he was sure any of them could do—What would be their position if they were circumstanced like the present Government? He was well aware of the practical mode of answering the ques-

tion—to walk across the floor of the House. If the Opposition were in the position of the Government, and were perfectly sure of possessing the confidence of the people, what would they do? Did they really think, now, that they were going to effect their purpose? Did they really think that, from all they had done during the last three days, that they had the confidence of the people? He should be very glad to think that there would be a Ministry who had the confidence of the people. He was quite clear, or, rather, the conclusion he had come to was—that neither side of the House had the confidence of the people; and he wished the people would judge for themselves. But he did not think the House were in a position to judge for themselves.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition side of the House: Dissolve, dissolve!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He held the opinion that, if the members of the Opposition went into office, they would have no more confidence reposed in them than the present Government, until there was a re-distribution of representation, and until they got rid of those dissensions which could not be got rid of otherwise. He hoped they did not seek to bring about a change merely for the sake of office. A very short space of time would elapse before there must be a dissolution for the re-distribution of representation. He would only ask, whether it would be advantageous for the country to have a dissolution? He did not say that there was going to be a dissolution; but he said that, if the Opposition came into office, a week would not elapse before there would be a dissolution. It would be a very convenient thing for the Opposition to walk over to the Ministerial side of the House, and then say, "Oh; parties are such in this House, that business cannot be carried on; and we must dissolve!" If they had the interest of the colony at heart, surely to goodness, they might postpone for a short time—four or five months—going into the Cabinet!—surely the honorable member for East Moreton could wait for a short time before coming into the Cabinet! He (the Attorney-General) did not really see why that honorable member should be in such a hurry to get into office. He had been informed that the honorable member was the one to offer to move the amendment; he had heard that there was nobody else—no leader—to "bell the cat."

MR. LILLEY: The *Queensland Times*.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No;—though he might quote it. He wanted to know why the tried members of the Opposition did not come forward to oust the Ministry. It was simply a fact that had been affirmed—that the honorable members who formed the late administration were simply afraid to come forward, because the country would not trust them. However, he presumed that the division would take place this night, and the result would be soon known.

Whatever the result might be, he thought the matter had been very fairly discussed; and all he could say, in conclusion, was, that if any fault were found with the Government for the way they had acted in this discussion, he was glad of the course they had taken, because they had afforded the Opposition an opportunity of expressing their views, which they had done freely, fairly, and courteously.

The question of adjournment was then put and negatived.

The SPEAKER cited the following precedent from "May" in support of his ruling, just given:—

"On one occasion, in the Commons (27th January, 1789), the debate was re-opened, after the question had been declared by the Speaker to have been resolved in the affirmative; for a member had risen to speak before the question had been put, but had been unobserved by the Speaker; and it was admitted that he had a right to be heard, although the question had been disposed of, before his offer to speak had attracted notice."

The question was then put, "That the words proposed to be added be so added;" and

The House divided.

Ayes 13.	Noes 11.
Mr. Pugh	Mr. Palmer
" Macalister	" Lamb
" Lilley	" Mylne
" Stephens	" Sandeman
" Pritchard	" Ramsay
" Murphy	" Miles
" Francis	" Archer
" Bell	" Scott
" Groom	" Royds
Dr. O'Doherty	" Pring
" Challinor	" Mackenzie.
Mr. Garrick	
" Douglas.	

The address, as amended, was then adopted by the House.

The COLONIAL TREASURER rose and said: Mr. Speaker—In consequence of the division, to-night, I move that the House now adjourn, till Tuesday next, to give the Government time to consider the course they will adopt.

Question put and passed.