

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 1868

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ERRATA.

Page 6, column 2, line 45, for "16,000 pounds," read "amounted in value to £16,000"; and the like as to the following figures "26,000 pounds," "10,000 pounds," "260,000 pounds."

Page 53, column 1, line 20, for "former," read "latter."

Page 187, column 1, at the close of The Hon. T. L. M. Prior's speech, read "Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn."

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 19 November, 1868.

Address in Reply to Opening Speech.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

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

Mr. WALSH said he was sorry that he had to rise at so early a period of the debate. He thought it would have been satisfactory to the country and to the House if some member of the Opposition had risen earlier, and endeavored to indicate the course honorable members on that side of the House intended to pursue. As he did not view the question before the House as a party question, and as he had ceased to feel as a party man, he had risen at this early period of the debate to offer to the House such observations as he felt called upon to make. The first question for the House to consider was, whether an Address should be presented to His Excellency in the usual form. The Address in reply, he thought, had been very ably moved, and he thought that insufficient justice had been done to the two honorable gentlemen who undertook the duty of moving and seconding the Address; for he would say, without hesitation, that two better maiden speeches he had never heard made. He trusted those honorable members would not be deterred from pursuing the independent course they had adopted, by the observations of a scurrilous press. A more cowardly and unfair allusion than that which had been made to these two honorable members had never before been made in that incurably dishonest paper, the *Courier*. He took it as an indication that the country was wakening out of the lethargic sleep in which it had been so long entranced, when he found that the constituency which had hitherto been regarded as the hotbed of radicalism, sent two gentlemen to represent them in that House who shewed at the onset of their career a determination to act independently, and that they would not follow in the trodden path of their predecessors. The question now to be considered was, whether the Address in reply should be agreed to, or whether the amendment on the Address should be sanctioned by the House. As far as the Speech of His Excellency went, it seemed to him to be as good as any former Opening Speech; and, indeed he thought, it was a little better than those speeches usually were. There was very little in it, he thought, to find fault with. He quite agreed with the statement in the fourth paragraph—that the alienation of the Crown lands, under the new Act, was progressing as favorably as could be expected. That was a very guarded expression, but to say that much, was going a very great length. He

also agreed with the Address in reply, which contained the usual amount of repetition that was generally found in such productions. So much for the Speech and the Address. But it was the question of the amendment the House had to consider. The real questions they had now to deal with were these—Did the Government of the day possess the confidence of the House and of the country? Was the Government able to carry on the business of the country, or was there in the House the components of a better Government, and could those components be gathered together by any leader now in the House? Those were really the questions they had now to consider, and he would endeavor to express his opinions upon them. The first question was—had the Government done well, or had they not? Now he thought that every honorable member would admit that, in many respects, the Government had done very well; but in some other respects not so well. On the whole, however, he had not the least hesitation in saying that they had now by far the best Government Queensland had ever possessed, though he hoped the day was not far distant when they would have a better. He thought the Government had done exceedingly well. They had set the example of governing within their means, and that was something new and satisfactory in the history of Government in Queensland. Another thing they deserved credit for was, that they had not raised any public scandal in the country. During their term of office there had been none of those gigantic swindles that had marked the conduct of previous Governments, and resulted in the impoverishment of the country; and they did not see the finger of scorn pointed against the Government because of any tricks they had perpetrated. Now in that respect Queensland had much to be proud of. During the time his honorable friend the member for the Eastern Downs was in office there were, constantly, accusations being made against the Government for blunders that reflected very severely against the Government of the country. He thought that the present Government had been rather short-sighted and inattentive with respect to the gold fields. They had, he considered, made an enormous mistake in not attending better than they did at first to the gold fields, and providing such facilities for settlement as would have greatly tended to the retention of the population that crowded thither. He thought it was a sad mistake the Government made in not understanding, earlier than they did, the value of the gold fields. But, perhaps, hardly any other Government would have acted in any other way, for almost every one, for a long time, distrusted the permanency of the gold fields after they started, and but few were prepared to urge upon the Government the necessity of taking immediate steps for their development. It was proposed by the amendment that the present

Government should give way to some other, but he could not see what sort of a Government it was proposed should succeed them. The address he listened to on the previous day, by the honorable member for the Kennedy, in bringing forward the amendment, was the tamest speech the honorable member had ever made, and the accusations he brought against the Government, and the reasons with which he sought to support them, were about the weakest he had ever heard. He felt quite at a loss, several times, to understand what the honorable member was driving at. But he believed there were other reasons than those he advanced for the course he had thought proper to pursue on this occasion. He was, also, at a loss to understand how the conjunction of the extreme north and the extreme south had been brought about. How, the honorable member for the Kennedy, who represented the most northern constituency in the colony, had come to coalesce with the honorable member for the Eastern Downs, who had always hitherto been accused by the honorable member for the Kennedy with having badly used the northern districts of the colony? He could not understand the sudden conversion of the honorable member, and the extraordinary union between the north and the south. Nor could he understand why the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, was so suddenly overturned. It was that honorable member who was put forward by the honorable member for the Eastern Downs now, to move the amendment on the Address at the opening of the session in August last, but he was now set aside; and the honorable member for the Kennedy, formerly the most bitter opponent of the honorable member for the Eastern Downs, had the important duty assigned to him of moving the amendment, with the honorable member for Toowoomba to second it. When he looked at such incongruities, he asked who were the gentlemen whom the House was to be asked to give their confidence to, instead of the present Ministry. If the honorable member for the Eastern Downs had got up, and had, in one of those powerful speeches he could address to the House, unravelled the policy of the Government, exposed their conduct where they had been at fault, and shewn that they had not kept their promises, he could have understood the amendment as put forward by him in that way, and the honorable member might have convinced him of the necessity for a change of Government. If the honorable member had done that, he would, at any rate, have had his respect, and it might have been, his assistance too; but when he found him throwing overboard such a friend and associate as the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, and taking to his arms one of the greatest political renegades the colony had ever seen, along with the honorable member for Toowoomba, he felt he could not accord him either his

respect or his assistance. Now, he would like to know if Toowoomba politics would go down in the House—if any honorable member would strengthen his position as the leader of a party—as the head of a Government—by adopting the politics that were in vogue in Toowoomba. Now, he would ask what was to be the policy of the Opposition, if the amendment should be carried. That was something the House had a right to know. Did the honorable member for the Eastern Downs propose taking the honorable member for the Kennedy, and the honorable member for Toowoomba, into his Cabinet also. He apprehended that the two gentlemen who took the prominent positions of moving and seconding the amendment on the Address would, if it were carried, have a place in the Government that would be formed. But would the honorable member for the Eastern Downs ally himself to such politicians, neither of whom had ever made a speech in the House which the honorable member for the Eastern Downs was able to endorse. He would like to know if the honorable member was sincere when he put those two honorable members forward as his future colleagues. Now, he could not support the honorable member if he was to have two such colleagues; and he could assure the honorable member he could never succeed in forming a strong Government if he took them as his colleagues. If, however, it was his intention to do so, he would like to know who was to be the fourth member of the Ministry. How was it possible to expect there would be a common agreement between the honorable member for the Eastern Downs and the honorable member for the Kennedy? The honorable member for the Eastern Downs had committed himself to the construction of a railway between Brisbane and Ipswich; and would the honorable member for the Kennedy, he would ask, agree to the carrying out of such an undertaking as that?

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he must at once deny that he was in any way committed to the construction of a railway between Brisbane and Ipswich.

Mr. WALSH: But would the honorable gentleman say he would not, if he succeeded to office, endeavor to have a railway constructed between Brisbane and Ipswich? If he could not say that he would not, he felt bound to believe that he would; and, if a majority of honorable members could not be got to assist in preventing such an enormous swindle as that, he was afraid it would be carried out; and would the honorable member for the Kennedy, he asked, support a work of the kind, and swindle his constituents, to whom he so pathetically alluded last night? Such incongruities as he saw to exist on the Opposition side of the House were calculated, in his opinion, to destroy all confidence in public men on an occasion like the present. He would rather sit on the Opposition side of the House, fifty times over, than on the

Government side, if he felt he could do so; for he considered that the safety of the country very much depended upon an honest Opposition, but not on such an Opposition as occupied those benches now. He would also like to ask, where was the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas, last night, that he was not put forward to move the amendment on the Address? Could an abler hand have been entrusted with the task? And where was the honorable member for the Northern Downs, Mr. Bell, that he was not asked to move the amendment? The course that had been pursued was a shocking exhibition to the House, and fully justified the honorable member for Rockhampton in saying that there could be no hesitation as to the way honorable members ought to vote on this occasion. After the exhibition he had witnessed, he should be sorry to see the honorable member for the Kennedy in the Ministry. He should be sorry to see him in any Ministry that he felt disposed to support; for he would not know the minute when, from some fancied delusion, he would endanger his colleagues. The honorable member, in criticising the conduct of the Ministry, had stated what he should have stated last session—that, from the first, it was his conviction that the Ministry were not sincere in proposing the reduction of their own salaries. Now, he did not believe that a more unfounded statement was ever made. He believed the Ministry were thoroughly sincere in proposing to cut down their salaries. But, though the honorable member, as he had said, did not think they were sincere, he worked with them most cordially throughout the whole session.

Mr. FITZGERALD: No, no.

Mr. WALSH: Well, the honorable member gave them very material assistance in passing the Land Bill; and if that was not working with them he did not know what was. The honorable member said that his reason for deserting the Ministry was, that he could not get them to consent to his pet measures for the establishment of Provincial Councils. Now, that was only equivalent to saying that if he could get them to carry out his pet measures he would support them. He would not let the Government have a mind or a policy of their own, but would tell them that unless they would give him exactly what he desired he would not support them. Now was that the spirit that should characterise any one who aspired to be considered a politician. It was not a judicious course of policy to pursue, and it amounted, in fact, to a kind of log-rolling—that rotten system that had been condemned over and over again in the House. But if the present Ministry would not consent to introduce the measures of the honorable member, had the honorable member for the Eastern Downs consented to do so. Perhaps the honorable member for Toowoomba could inform the House if that was the case, and if the new Government that was to be had agreed to sanction such

measures. But why, he would ask, had they an Opposition working in the dark—working with tools they should not employ, and concealing from the country what were their intentions? He had now to put two important facts before the House, and they were these:—Were honorable members prepared to see a railway made between Brisbane and Ipswich? and, on the other hand, at once pacify the honorable member for the Kennedy by passing his Provincial Councils Bill? Those were two points to which he would like honorable members to give their attentive consideration before the question before the House was put to the vote. Perhaps some honorable members did not altogether comprehend the evil effects that would be wrought by Provincial Councils. His opinion of them was, that their establishment would have the effect of blotting out Queensland as a colony. He had carefully considered the question of their establishment for the last six months, and the conclusion he had come to was, that, if they wanted to put the finishing touch upon the fortunes of Queensland, they could not do so more effectually than by the establishment of Provincial Councils. He listened with considerable pleasure to the speech of the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas, and he was gratified in the extreme with his candid avowal of the policy of his friends on the Opposition side of the House. He also listened with sincere pleasure to the honorable member's remarks upon the sudden change that had come over the honorable member for the Kennedy; and he wished he could repeat the language used by the honorable member when he made such telling hits against other honorable members who sat on the Opposition side of the House. The honorable member, he thought, was fully justified in making the remarks he addressed to the House last night. He thought, however, that some of his observations respecting the appointment of police magistrates were rather severe, and he wished it to be remembered that it was the honorable member for the Eastern Downs who forced those police magistrates upon the country. The honorable member, when upon that part of the subject, should not have forgotten that it was while he was member for the Eastern Downs that a police magistrate was appointed at Warwick.

Mr. DOUGLAS: He thought he said that he considered there was but little necessity for a police magistrate at Warwick; that there was not much for him to do, and that there were other things which he might be required to do.

Mr. WALSH: Well, at any rate, it was while the honorable member represented the Eastern Downs, that the police magistrate at Warwick was appointed. But there were other places where police magistrates were not required; Gayndah, for instance. He believed that the police magistrate at Gayndah had little more than an hour's work

once a fortnight. The appointment, he felt satisfied, would not have been made but for the circumstance that the district was at the time represented by two ministers, and he was not wanted; for the town, he understood, swarmed with magistrates. For some of the reasons he had heard stated by other honorable members, and for others that had occurred to himself, he had no hesitation in saying that he would support the Government on the present occasion. He had not heard anything said that he felt would justify him in withdrawing from them his support. Everything that had been said by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House would, if he had sat upon that side, have induced him to walk over to the Government side of the House. He feared, that it would not be well for the country if there was to be a change of Ministry at the present time, and he therefore hoped that the Address would be carried by a fair majority, and that the House would set itself actively to deal with the proper business of the country. There was much work for the House to do, and the present was a most unpleasant period of the year to have to do it in. He trusted honorable members would see that a Government formed from the Opposition as it existed at present, would, if the formation of such a Government were possible, be utterly worthless as to any business that could be done during the present session. It was really painful to see such struggles for office on the part of those who had had a taste of the sweets of office. He thought that they might, at a juncture like the present, defer their desires, for they might rest assured that their time would come. There was most important work for the House to do, and which ought not to be delayed for the gratification of merely personal ends. There was the matter of legislation for the gold fields for instance, which should have been attended to six months ago. He thought it was impossible to estimate the amount of injury that had been done by the delay that had taken place in legislating for the gold fields. There were many other important questions demanding immediate attention; but with the reckless and hopeless scramble for office that was carried on, none of those questions could be attended to, and the country was losing by it, and the House was losing its character by it. He had no desire to see the present Government retain office one moment longer than was necessary; and if he could see in the House the elements of a better Government, he would at once and willingly support the amendment. But he did not see there were in the House the elements of a better Government; and, therefore, he would oppose the amendment. There were many questions he could mention as requiring immediate attention, but it was wholly unnecessary to do so until the question was settled as to who should rule, and who

should receive the salaries of £1,000 a year. That was the question that had been in agitation for the last six months, and the Opposition had made out the most wretched case on their side that he could possibly imagine. The honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas, last night charged the Government with having fallen into a very great mistake in announcing beforehand that they meant to make a serious alteration on the taxation of the country. He knew that the announcement in the Speech took most honorable members by surprise, and it was muttered about that the Government had made a great mistake. Now, for his part, he did not think there was any mistake at all, for there was a very wide distinction between announcing that it was intended to reduce taxation, and announcing that it was intended to increase taxation. He found it was the practice in the English Parliament invariably to give due notice when the Government intended to reduce taxation; and when they intended to increase it, to do as the colony had done—to do it without giving any notice at all. He found, as shewing the practice of the English Parliament, that on the 11th of March, 1842, Sir Robert Peel rose and made his financial statement, and in that statement he announced to the country that the Government contemplated making considerable alterations in the taxation of the country, and he enumerated no less than 260 articles on which it was intended either to abolish the duty altogether, or greatly to reduce it. Now, that was done in the course of the financial statement on the 11th of March, 1842. A very lengthened discussion ensued, and it was not till the 9th of May following that Sir Robert Peel was able to carry out the reductions he promised on the 11th of March. That clearly showed that it was the practice at home to give notice of intended reductions of taxation.

MR. DOUGLAS: Not particularising the articles.

MR. WALSH: Yes. Sir Robert Peel, in his budget speech in March, particularised the articles; and, on May the 11th, he introduced his Customs Act for the purpose of carrying out the propositions he made on the 11th of March; and the articles he enumerated in his speech on the 11th of March, were affected by the Customs Act that was passed in May—two months afterwards. He had thought it right to refer to that occasion by way of explanation, because there seemed to be some force in the remarks that were addressed to the House upon the point, by the honorable member for East Moreton, last night. But the honorable member seemed to have forgotten that there was a wide distinction to be made between giving notice of an intended reduction of taxation and giving notice of an intended increase of taxation. If the Government gave notice of an intention to reduce taxation, every merchant would withdraw from bond as little of the specified

articles as possible until the reduction took place, in order to protect himself against unnecessary loss; and would any honorable member say that the Government should not afford a merchant the opportunity of so protecting himself from loss, but that they should rather conceal the information, and endeavour to catch as much as they could. Such conduct on the part of the Government would be most reprehensible. He thought he had now said enough to clear up any doubt that might have existed as to the course the Government had taken in announcing a proposed reduction of taxation; and he would now resume his seat by again repeating his inability to support the amendment, and his determination to vote for the adoption of the Address.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said it had not been his intention to have risen to address the House on the question now before it at so early an hour; and it was only at a late hour on the previous night that he made up his mind that he would address the House at all. He conceived that the Government were desirous of making the debate as short a one as possible, in order that the business of legislation might be proceeded with as soon as possible. But, in consequence of one or two observations that had been made, partly by the honorable member for Rockhampton, and partly from another quarter, he made up his mind that he would say something that afternoon. He was not, however, about to say anything because he felt himself in an official position, or in any position recognised by either one side of the House or the other. He intended to express his own opinions and not the opinions it might be of the party with whom he was acting. At the same time he believed that he would express nothing but what the gentlemen upon his side of the House would be perfectly prepared to endorse. The honorable member for Maryborough, with the exception of the last point on which he touched, had never met the question involved in the amendment. He certainly attacked the Opposition, and asserted that it was impossible to constitute a good Government out of the gentlemen sitting on this side of the House; and, by so doing, he, at any rate, by implication, offered a deliberate insult to other honorable members of that House; because, however humble an individual might be, if he possessed all other requisites for office, the fact that he was a representative of the people in the House qualified him for any office he might be called on to fill. But when the honorable member for Maryborough and some of the honorable members who addressed the House last night, asserted that, from the action taken by the honorable member for the Kennedy and the honorable member for Toowoomba, they must by necessity form or become members of the next Government, if the present one were turned out, they certainly displayed an absolute want of all knowledge of constitutional practice. It

was not the practice of the Crown, or of the representative of the Crown in this colony, to be dictated to, as to the parties for whom he would send. If the amendment were carried, and the Government turned out that night, His Excellency might, if he pleased, just as soon send for the honorable member for Maryborough, or the honorable member for Rockhampton, as for any person on the Opposition side of the House. It was, therefore, perfectly absurd to say, because the amendment happened to be proposed by one gentleman and seconded by another, that, therefore, those two individuals must form a portion of the next Government. He thought that a somewhat unnecessary reference had been made to the honorable member for the Kennedy, and to some supposed compact which had been entered into between that gentleman and himself. Now, he was not aware whether any compact existed between the present Government and that honorable member; but, at any rate, he was entirely ignorant of any reason for such a compact having been broken, except one, which he would meet immediately. The honorable member for Rockhampton wished to know last night what his policy was, and also to what extent he had divulged that policy to the honorable member for the Kennedy. Well, in answer to that, he had only to say that he had divulged no policy. He did not represent any party, and no one knew that better than his honorable friend the member for the Kennedy. But he never hesitated to express to him his own personal opinions on public subjects, and he had done the same to the honorable member for Rockhampton. When the discussion took place last session on the Provincial Councils Bill, he stated that he would always advocate and support a large amount of local self-government in the north; and he had always stated that the north was entitled to financial separation as soon as it could be brought about; and when he had stated those two facts, he thought he had said enough to shew that, instead of being opposed to the interests of the north, he and those who sat on his side of the House would yet be proved to be the best friends the north ever had; and this fact the people of the north might depend upon—they would get nothing out of the present Government. But whether they did or not, was the honorable member for the Kennedy to be abused and insulted as he had been for leaving a side of the House to which he never belonged, and taking up a position on that side to which, by habit and education, he did belong; because he maintained that the honorable member for the Kennedy, from the very moment he stood as a candidate for that district—from the very moment he entered the House, had invariably gone with the liberal party in it. He would now endeavour to bring the House back to what he believed to be the real question before it. It was not, as he took it, to be disposed of on the principle

that honorable members had not been told the policy of the Opposition. He certainly did feel astonished last night at the honorable member for Rockhampton asking him what was his policy, because the honorable member had, not a moment before that, told the House that, as a statesman, he had been a failure. He was astonished to hear the honorable member put the question to any honorable member on this side of the House, when, not a moment before, he declared that he believed in the Government, and in the measures they were to introduce. Now, if the honorable member had confidence in the Government, and was satisfied with the measures they intended to introduce, he was perfectly right in sticking to them. But he thought it would have been much better had honorable members endeavored, instead of dealing with those collateral matters, to have come to the real question before the House; and that was—Had the House and the country confidence in the present Government? The only speech that had been made in defence of the Government was the speech made by the honorable member for the Burnett—the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government,—and the only one of the charges brought against the Government which he appeared to take up was the charge made by the honorable member for the Kennedy—that the Government had failed to carry out their promises of retrenchment. The answer made by the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to that charge was, that because the Government was defeated in their endeavor last year to effect retrenchment, by the Bill for the reduction of their own salaries being thrown out by the Upper House, after it had been passed by the Assembly, they considered it useless to again attempt retrenchment.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He never said so.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: Well, the answer made by the honorable gentleman to the charge was tantamount to that. Now, for his own part, he could not see that there was any possible connection between the two things. The one matter was dealt with by a Bill, the other was dealt with in the Estimates; so there could have been no difficulty whatever, because of the throwing out of the Bill, in carrying out the promises of retrenchment made by the Government—if retrenchment had really been the object of the Government in bringing in the Bill for the reduction of their own salaries. To refer to the Opening Speech, he quite sympathised with the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas, in the view he took of the seventh clause, announcing the intention of the Government to reduce the *ad valorem* duties by one-third. That view was objected to by the honorable member for Maryborough; but notwithstanding that he ventured to think that the view taken by his honorable friend the member for East Moreton was the correct one; and he would adduce an authority to

contradict the position taken up by the honorable member for Maryborough. The last argument which the honorable member advanced in defence of the Government was the weakest he could possibly have taken up; for what must be the effect of the announcement in the Opening Speech that the *ad valorem* duties would be reduced by two and a half per cent? Would it not be this—that all dutiable goods would be left in bond until the reduction took place, when they would be released, and the country would in consequence lose many thousands of pounds. But, his attention had been drawn to a piece of information which he found in this morning's paper, and which he would take the liberty of reading to the House. It was furnished by an officer of the Government, well qualified to give an opinion:—

“He regretted the proposed alteration in the Customs revenue, and warned the Legislature to be cautious in that respect. The very mention of such a proposal would tend to affect the revenue.”

Mr. WALSH rose to a point of order. He thought the honorable gentleman was well aware that he was out of order.

The SPEAKER: If the honorable member was quoting from a newspaper anything which referred to what had taken place in the House during the session, he was out of order.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER had not said that he referred to anything that took place this session, or any other session—or in Parliament even.

Mr. WALSH: He was reading a report of a speech made in the Legislative Council. The honorable member was reading from a newspaper.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he was reading a statement made by an officer of the Government—an authority—giving certain information.

Mr. WALSH: Would the honorable member deny that he was reading a speech?

The Hon. A. MACALISTER did not intend to do so:—

“Until that subject was decided there would certainly be a falling off in the Customs returns, for it was not likely that importers, if they saw a gleam of hope, would take more stock out of bond than there was actual necessity for. The position of the colony, however promising, did not justify the abolition of the *ad valorem* duties. Honorable members must recollect that the cultivation of sugar was seriously affecting the revenue. For instance, it was estimated last year that 2,000 tons of sugar had been manufactured in the colony, and this taking the place of the imported article deprived the revenue of a sum of £10,000, the duty being at the rate of £5 per ton. Again, it was estimated that fifty-five gallons of spirits were produced from one ton of sugar, and this on 2,000 tons represented 110,000 gallons. Thus the imported article was shut out, and a loss of £18,000 per annum resulted to the revenue. These were matters for reflection. He might be met with the argument

that although there was a loss in the above respect, still the colony regained the loss in an indirect way, consequent on the establishment of new industries, but that was a very poor way of dealing with the case. In the first place these sugar plantations were worked almost entirely by South Sea Island labor, by a class of men who consumed but few articles amenable to the revenue to any great extent. He therefore could not join the previous speakers in the reduction of the *ad valorem* duties. A change from seven and a-half to five per cent. was too sweeping in its nature altogether."

Now, that was the opinion of the Collector of Customs, an officer whose aid must have been called by the Colonial Treasurer in making up that paragraph of the Speech; and who must have assisted the honorable member at the head of the Government in his calculations of the revenue, and his estimate of customs returns; and, in the face of the honorable gentleman's announcement of what was to take place, he was contradicted by the proper officer. He (Mr. Macalister) doubted the paragraph from beginning to end, and he would state his reasons therefor. He had as good information as the honorable member at the head of the Government, and he told him that the customs revenue, instead of being on the increase, was on the decline. To make an announcement of that kind was very much like "clap-trap." When, and by whom was the financial policy of the Government announced to the House? Was it not by the Treasurer in his budget speech? Else, what was the good of a budget speech at all? He quoted a passage or two bearing on the rule laid down as to the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivering his budget, and as to the undesirableness and impropriety of referring to an alteration of taxation before the time had arrived for the House to take action thereon. If the fact was denied, he would defy the honorable gentleman to point out an instance to the contrary in the history of the Australian colonies. But, to return to the customs duties, the Honorable the Treasurer would, in the customs returns, a month hence, find the effect of that announcement that was made in the Speech. The present Government had been in office fifteen months; and to come before the House with a proposition of that kind proved that they were unfit for office. If he had nothing else to go by, but that, he should upon it give his vote against them. But there were other portions of the Speech somewhat remarkable—some he should not go into;—for instance, the statement that the railway from Toowoomba to Allora would be open for traffic early in the ensuing year. It was a remarkable circumstance that in the previous Speech from the Throne the Government announced that it was then their intention to come down to the House for a loan—

"For making up the deficiency in the amounts provided by previous loans for the completion of

the main trunk line; and, also, for carrying the line now under construction between Toowoomba and Warwick, as far as Allora."

Well, now, what was the meaning of that? As regarded the Land Act, he should take the words of the honorable gentleman, as delivered to the House in the former debate, on a similar occasion to the present, "that a more difficult or unworkable measure" was never passed by any Legislature. Was it unworkable? If so, why did he not do something with it? Why tell the House that it was working "as well as could be expected"? He could not reconcile those statements, and he left it to the Government to do so. He had already stated one or two reasons, of the most vital importance to the interests of the colony, why any honorable member on the Opposition side of the House should tell the Government he had no confidence in them. The Opposition had been told that they had no right to come forward in the way they did against the Government. But they could not shut their eyes to the position of the Government. They had carried into effect, as a Government, no pledge that they had given on entering office; which gave rise to the whole opposition against them. How, and under what circumstances, did they get office? He would not now touch upon the ear-wiggling and backbiting of which they had availed themselves, and which had served them in good stead; he would take their pledges. On the occasion of the debate on the budget of the honorable member at the head of the Government, his honorable friend, the member for South Brisbane, who had shortly before left office, made the following observations:—

"After carefully examining the figures he had obtained in July last, the Government came to the opinion that it would be necessary to make very considerable retrenchment, during the present year, in order to decrease the deficit at the end of the year 1867."

It was a well known fact that Mr. McLean, who had framed the Estimates for 1867, had been imported from the other side of the House; a more careful Treasurer could not have been:—

"After a careful consideration, the Government determined to reduce the Estimates for 1868 as much as possible, without interfering with the efficiency of the service, and to leave a margin for contingencies and for the Supplementary Estimates. Other reductions were immediately made. Had the survey on the Downs and in West Moreton continued to the end of the year, it would have entailed a very large Supplementary Estimate; but that was stopped. Early in July the necessary instructions were given to stop the survey. His (Mr. Stephens') colleagues had cordially seconded his efforts for retrenchment, and assisted him to commence in 1867 the reductions he had intended to have made in 1868. If the plan they had intended to have pursued with reference to reductions, &c., had been carried

out by the present Government, the deficit at the end of the present year would have been nearer £50,000 than £75,000."

That would have amounted to £25,000, which would have been saved if the present Government had carried out that retrenchment to which they had pledged themselves. Had there been any retrenchment? Was it not a fact that upon their going into office new Estimates were framed, and the economical arrangements of his honorable friend were set aside, and the largest expenditure ever sanctioned by the House was the result? Now the House were told that it was their fault. However, he was afraid, from all he could understand, that it would be impossible for the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to make a correct estimate of the revenue from the present position of affairs. What was the result of the increase of the revenue following on the increased population on the gold fields, and the importation of goods from England and elsewhere? All the old dismissed officers of former Governments had been put into places and good salaries given them. Commissioners of Crown Lands had been appointed—and a beautiful pattern of a Commissioner they had at Gympie;—and, as in the case mentioned by the honorable member for Kennedy, several gentlemen had been put to do the work that had before been considered only enough for one. Another objection taken by the other side to the procedure of the Opposition was the same as was made on the former occasion of a motion of want of confidence being before the House. The Opposition were charged with giving no reasons for their amendment. He (Mr. Macalister) maintained that they were not called upon for any reasons. He held that the conduct of the Government in tampering with the regulations of the Savings Bank was sufficient to condemn them as a Government, and, in his opinion, it showed clearly how incapable they were of fulfilling the requirements of their position. At the very moment that Government were borrowing at twelve per cent. and parties were rushing to the Savings Bank to lodge their savings, the Government issued an order that no deposit should be received of more than £500. He would suppose that the ordinary banks of the colony were in a position in which they were required to use their own capital, instead of having more money in their coffers than they knew what to do with! That order of the Government was a proof of the greatest weakness that could be exhibited. What was it the Assembly sought? If there was to be a Government at all, the administration must be conducted on those principles upon which responsible Government was based. But since the House last assembled, what had occurred? Immediately after the Assembly were dissolved the Minister for Lands resigned. He (Mr. Macalister) never heard the reason for that resignation, nor did he

inquire. It became necessary to find a Minister for Lands, if for nothing else, to work the Land Act. He had no authority to mention the name of any gentleman in this matter, but he defied the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to deny that he came to the Opposition side of the House and asked a prominent member of the Opposition to join him—a gentleman, too, who had voted against the third reading of the Land Act.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; I deny it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No, no.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: Did he not?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: Well, he was surprised to hear the denial. But if it were possible to have a stronger proof of their want of policy, it was in the way the Government made their departmental arrangements. One day the Works Department was combined with the Colonial Secretary's; another day, it was the Lands Department under the Colonial Secretary; and now, the Works was a separate department. He remembered the day when honorable members forming the Government, held that no Minister for Works was required. Now, however, it appeared that no Minister for Lands was required. Such casting about from one side to another was a sign of inherent weakness. The Government could not deny that after the refusal of the gentleman to whom the Lands was first offered, they offered it to another, on their own side of the House, who had also opposed the Land Act, and it was again refused.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: At length, the time arrived when another course was adopted. A gentleman who had not been in the colony for years, except as a visitor, and who never held a seat in its Parliament, reached the Downs—he did not know whether he was going east or going west—and the Lands Department was offered to him. He found a telegram waiting for him at the Railway Station, asking him if he would take the office of Minister for Lands? "No." Then he was asked if he would be Minister for Works; and he answered "Yes," and was gazetted. His qualifications for joining the Ministry were that he had contested the District of Leichhardt against a supporter of the Government. He (Mr. Macalister), did not believe that the honorable gentleman ever had one minute's interview with any of the then members of the Government. He should like to know what the policy was that he agreed to when he did take office. He asked the honorable member at the head of the Government if he accepted the politics of his colleague, as declared by him when he addressed the electors at Charleville; or, when he announced his views on State aid? And, he recommended to the consideration of his honorable friend for Rockhampton, the pro-

position which the honorable the Secretary for Lands had made for the re-distribution of seats; a new member for Leichhardt, one for Clermont, one for the town of Springsure—five members for the district of Leichhardt, in which, with the exception of Clermont, there were but sixty-six electors! If that was to be the representative reform which the present Government desired, the House had better consider carefully what they were about. If the Government thought that a Re-distribution Act was likely to go through the House with universal consent, it must be a very different matter from what they then proposed. It would not do at all. He (Mr. Macalister) had not, except by his voice and support, done anything to put the present Government out of office. He believed they were thoroughly unfit to be in office. If they supposed that any act of his was intended to bring about his own return, they were much mistaken. It might have that effect, but it was not intended to have it. He was perfectly prepared to support any Government in whom he had confidence, with a policy founded on principle, from whom he could receive a guarantee of sound liberal measures. But he would not be a party to keeping in office a Government who had no policy of their own on any question; no land policy to which they would adhere. They were prepared to play the same game this session as last, and the sooner the colony got a Government which would have its confidence, the better. He should support the amendment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY congratulated the House on the resurrection they had witnessed in the honorable member for Eastern Downs, and the considerable amendment observable in the speech which they had just listened to from him, and from which he derived a great deal of pleasure. After the exhibition of the previous day, he had been afraid that the honorable member had given up everything in despair. The honorable member had let the Government hear what his opinions were. He (the Colonial Secretary) begged to assure the honorable member and the House that, if the Government were so incapable as was represented, it was his own opinion that the previous Government had been very much worse. However, they would leave the settlement of those differences of opinion to the House, and, he trusted, be no worse friends afterwards. He should not follow him in his speech, but begin where the honorable member left off. He did not like that the honorable member should be so very ill-informed as he appeared to be, and he would recommend him to dismiss his staff of detectives. He told him that no honorable member sitting on the other side of the House was offered the office of Minister for Lands; but, he believed, a gentleman, with whom he agreed on very many questions and with whom he could act with satisfaction, was offered the Department of Works—a very different thing.

Mr. DOUGLAS begged to correct the honorable gentleman. The honorable member at the head of the Government had come to him and asked him to join his Government in the capacity of Minister for Lands.

The COLONIAL TREASURER rose to explain that he had denied the statement of the honorable member for Eastern Downs, when he said that a prominent member of the Opposition side of the House, had been asked to take office in the Government. He denied it, because, at the time he made the offer to the honorable member (Mr. Douglas), he was not a member of the Opposition side of the House. There was no House, and the honorable member had just addressed his constituents, stating that he had retired from public life. And, in doing what he had done, he (the Colonial Treasurer) did so in the full knowledge and conviction that the honorable member had retired from his party, and was in an independent position.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, he had to apologise to the honorable member for Eastern Downs for what he had said. This was the first time he ever heard that the honorable member for East Moreton, had been offered the office of Secretary for Lands. He must corroborate the honorable member's (Mr. Macalister's) statement, that the office had been offered to another gentleman who sat on the Ministerial side of the House, with whom he would have been delighted to act, and was refused. It was, indeed, offered to two gentlemen, and they both refused it. He should leave the honorable the Minister for Lands to defend himself on his policy of State aid, which he was sure the honorable gentleman never thought to see carried out by the Government, and which he never attempted to influence the Government upon: it was his own individual opinion. A strong point made by the honorable member for Eastern Downs, was, with reference to limiting deposits in the Savings Bank. That was fully answered when it was brought up last session; but if the Opposition went on reiterating charges there would be no end to discussion. He could only say that it was the wisest act of the Government, considering the consequences, if it had not been done. The Government were receiving thousands of pounds in the bank, which they had no use for, did not want, and which might have been called for at a most inconvenient time. And they would have had to pay five per cent. for it. It would have been an act of madness on the part of any Government, to have continued receiving immense deposits under such circumstances. It was well known that the English banks had for a long time previously been receiving more money than they could use, in London, at two per cent; and if the Government had not fixed the maximum deposits in the Savings Bank, those banks would have gladly placed their surplus money in the bank at five per cent. The honorable member for Eastern Downs

had spoken of retrenchment, and compared the Estimates which had been prepared by the honorable member for South Brisbane, with the expenditure of the present Government. It was all "clap-trap." It was well known that the only retrenchment made in the Estimates of that honorable member, was to cut off the whole of the Native Police, the only police protection the outside settlers had; and it was cut off root and branch. He challenged any honorable member to deny it. The ordinary police were also cut down to a number which could not have done the work of the colony. Any honorable gentleman who had been in office, must be aware—at any rate, he was—that it was one of the greatest troubles of a Colonial Secretary to find police protection for the outlying stations, and not for outside districts only, but for such places as Gatton and Laidley. The removal of a constable was a cause of agitation. The police force of this colony would bear comparison in point of efficiency with any police force in the world, looking at the scattered population and the wide extent of country to be protected. The influx of population to the gold fields at Gympie, the Cape River, and other places, had rendered it absolutely necessary to provide protection for those places, and if the Government had not done so, on their own responsibility, they would have got as much blame from honorable members as they now get for not retrenching the expenditure. With the exception of that, and the necessary appointments for working the Land Act, which the House must have known would entail a large expenditure, he maintained that the Government had not been extravagant in any way. Everything they had done was done openly, and without log-rolling. If they had committed faults, they were errors of judgment, not of intention; and no Government could be omniscient. With respect to the appointments which had been made, he would not say that in every single instance the Government had been successful in getting the best men. No Ministry could insure that; but he would maintain that the Government had reason to be proud of their appointments. It must also be recollected that they had very little latitude in the making of their appointments, because a resolution, brought forward, he believed, by the honorable member for the Maranoa, had been passed, to the effect that in the making of any new appointment, preference should be given to persons who had been in the service before, and who had been dismissed from economical considerations. This had been acted upon almost invariably. The only instances in which it had been departed from, were those in which there was something against the persons. In his own department, he hardly recommended a new appointment—he had not made one—except of persons who had been in the service before. The Opposition had a perfect right to move this want of confidence motion, but he did not agree with the honorable

member for Eastern Downs, that any member had a right to vote for it without giving his reasons for so doing. It might be that, in a savage country, it was perfectly correct to sneak up behind a member of the Government—if there were such a thing—and waddy him; but, in a civilized country, he thought an Opposition were bound to tell the Government their reasons for bringing forward a motion of want of confidence. He thought they had improved a little on the last occasion of an occurrence of this kind; but still he would say, that a lamer speech than that with which the motion was introduced yesterday he had never heard. Another fault found with the Government was, that they had stated what they intended to do with the tariff. There was a great difference between letting the country know that they were about to reduce the tariff and that they were about to increase it. The Government had fully considered the matter, and they felt that they could afford to make the statement that it was intended to reduce the *ad valorem* duty. It would take but a short time to pass a Bill on the subject. He thought persons would always vote for anything that touched their own pockets. He had no doubt that as much revenue would be produced from the reduced duty of 5 per cent. as from the present duty of 7½ per cent. There would not be the same inducement for smuggling, and the only reason for sending up salted invoices, which any honorable member who was acquainted with business knew was done extensively, would be removed. He should be very glad if the Government could do away altogether with the *ad valorem* duty, for it was a method of taxation he was not at all in favor of. With reference to the speech made in the other House, which had been referred to, he sincerely wished that the honorable gentleman who had made it had known his position better than to have made such a speech. He always sincerely regretted that the head of any department should have been placed in the Upper House. He believed it to be most unconstitutional, irregular, wrong. The present Government never made such an appointment. They found several gentlemen there who held official positions; and he thought that the least the Ministry could have expected from gentlemen so peculiarly situated was, that their financial projects should have been left alone. Personally, he had the highest respect for the gentleman in question; but everyone must know that the only one thing he thought of in connection with any measure was, to get in plenty of duty! He (the Colonial Secretary) had heard from him the most absurd remarks. As an instance, the honorable gentleman regretted the enormous loss the country was going to sustain by the manufacture of sugar and rum. If honorable members could see with him, that this colony was to suffer from the production of an article that we paid £150,000 a year

for, on the honorable gentleman's own showing, they had a respect for his opinion that he was very far from feeling. It had been said that the honorable member for Maryborough had insulted honorable members by saying that the Opposition were not fit to form a Government. He had not said that they were not fit, but that no four of them could agree, to form a Government; and he (the Colonial Secretary) thought, from the speeches he had heard from the other side, that in that charmed circle there could not be found four gentlemen to agree upon any policy. Any gentleman in the House, sent there by the people—if properly elected—had as much right to office as those in office now. But, he held that it was ridiculous to suppose that because an honorable member moved an amendment, and another seconded it, that either had a right to be sent for. They had no inherent right in virtue of that Act. He could cite a case in point:—His honorable friend (Mr. Sandeman) had been sent for to form a Government; and yet he had not brought forward a motion of want of confidence against the Ministry of the day. The usual course was, to send for the mover of the motion on which a Government were defeated; he knew that as well as honorable members opposite. The honorable member for Eastern Downs had told the House that he knew of no compact amongst the Opposition, while the honorable member for Kennedy, in moving the amendment, distinctly told them that there was a compact in existence, and had laid it down very clearly what their line of policy would be. He (the Colonial Secretary) should like to know by whom the House were to be guided?—He would not, for one moment, say which of the two gentlemen they were to believe. If there was a compact, it was hardly likely that the honorable member for Eastern Downs would be left out; yet he, as well as the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas, had no knowledge of it. He must repeat that he should like to know who were the members of the Opposition who had formed this compact; for he was not so fond of office that he might not, if he found they were likely to form a good Government, be disposed to go out to let them come in. Who were they? Certainly not leading members of the Opposition.

Mr. FITZGERALD, in explanation, stated—though the Honorable Mr. Macalister had sufficiently explained in his speech—that the honorable member for Eastern Downs had freely expressed his views, without binding any individuals or party; and his sentiments and views were the same as his own, and he agreed to act with the honorable gentleman.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, that was hardly a personal explanation. It was not usual for one honorable member to get up and explain what another honorable member had said. He still thought he had heard the honorable member for Eastern Downs say

there was no compact—that he had heard of none; and he ought to be allowed to answer for himself.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: He had stated that he had heard of no compact. He had expressed his personal views upon certain matters; but he had entered into no compact binding any party.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, it could not be binding on the honorable member for Eastern Downs. Really it was extraordinary—something like the truisms that the honorable member for the Kennedy had formerly carried through the House, which nobody would ever dispute. They were all parties to the compact—such a one as bound nobody. It absolutely meant nothing. The honorable member for Kennedy, in moving his amendment, had, it was said, astonished some people. Well, he (the Colonial Secretary) was not astonished at or by him, for he prophesied, the first week the honorable member was in the House, that he would be on the Opposition; he had stated that his proper place was on the Opposition side of the House. He was not mistaken. Now, that the honorable member was there, and saw of what the Opposition consisted, he should not be surprised to see him come back again.

Mr. FITZGERALD claimed the protection of the Speaker, and protested against what was perfectly false—his being put down as a supporter of the Government. He had never sat on the Government side of the House, but always on the cross benches. In the case of the Land Act, the Government had joined himself and other honorable members on the cross benches. He had opposed them on many occasions, and never was a member of their side of the House, or led them to believe he was.

Mr. WALSH said the honorable member for Kennedy always led him to believe that he was a member of the Government side of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The honorable member must be surprised at what a rope of sand he was depending upon. One of the heaviest charges against the Government was their expenditure. When the honorable member for Kennedy first came down to the House, it was with a resolution to insist upon retrenchment; yet, directly, he went in for a Land Bill which he must have known would entail an enormous expenditure. But, in charging the Government with not having retrenched, he was not candid enough to admit that the working of the Land Bill, and the development of the gold fields had necessitated a very large outlay, one beyond what could have been foreseen by any Government. Then, again, with respect to the charge which he had brought against Ministers, of introducing a Bill for the reduction of their salaries, well knowing that it would not be carried in another place—that it was an understanding that it should not pass. The idea that a number of independent gentle-

men should allow themselves to be led by the Government to throw out a measure of this kind, was simply preposterous. The Government had been quite sincere in what they proposed; and he gave the charge a distinct denial. The objections taken by the honorable member for the Kennedy, to the Land Act, were such as he had himself to thank for quite as much as the Government. He (the Colonial Secretary) was not enamoured of that Act, but it did contain one principle for which he had for years agitated, and which he had spoken upon in the House long before the honorable member for Kennedy had a seat in it, that was a reduction of the upset price of the land. He had carried a very simple land law in his head. Having once got the thin end of that wedge in, he knew no future Ministry could go back. He had given up a great deal of his prejudices for that, and he hoped to live to see the time when the very best land in the colony would be put up by auction at half-a-crown an acre; and let it find its actual value in the market. He did not believe so liberal a Land Act as the present would have passed for the next twenty or thirty years, unless it had been made an open question. No Government could have passed a land law of their own. It was too good a bone of contention for some parties. He never understood that he, as a member of the Government, was in the position of a tool. However, "live and learn." Notwithstanding the measure was very faulty, it was beneficial to the country. Honorable members should remember that the difficulties of initiating such a measure were enormous; and that duty was done by his honorable friend, the member for the Mitchell, who—though he had got a great deal of abuse and very little praise for the way in which he had carried out the law—he would say, had done it well, and there was not another member of the House—there was not a man in the colony—who could have done it so well. The difficulties that must have forced themselves on that honorable member's attention in connection with the Bill, were too much for any one man—too much for that man—and he (the Colonial Secretary) did not believe that, but for his very intimate acquaintance with the land law of the colony, he would ever have been enabled to carry out the Act in the way he did. He had no doubt the honorable member would yet reap his reward, and that before long. With respect to his leaving the Government, he very much regretted that the honorable member took that step. But he had been abused by both sides of the House, and most by those who had voted with the Government, and by the whole press of the colony; and, imagining and believing that the Government would be stronger without him, the honorable member left. To the insinuations that the honorable member had been sacrificed by his colleagues, he (the Colonial Secretary) gave a distinct denial. They were the only two Ministers in town at the time—

their colleagues being away—and when the honorable member informed him that he intended to resign, he did all he could to influence him to keep in office, and defy everything. So much for what was said about throwing him overboard. He was really going to say something about the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas; but after the service rendered by him to the Government, he must let him alone. The honorable member reminded him very much of the rocket brigade. The rockets were all very well if they could be directed against enemies—they were very effective, but they were just as likely to go backwards, and scatter friends as much as enemies. So with the honorable member; he had scattered his friends on the Opposition side most satisfactorily. If he (the Colonial Secretary) ever had any fears of defeat on the present question, they vanished after the honorable member's speech. He had no doubt he would vote against the Government, because he had noticed that in the House, the honorable member generally spoke one way and voted another. He would refer to some of his remarks on the subject of the deposits in the Savings Banks, as the action the Government had taken in that matter had been charged against them as a great offence to the whole community. During the last hour, while the House was adjourned, he had learned, upon as good authority as they were likely to have, that in New South Wales the limit to the deposits in the Savings Banks had never exceeded £200; and that had lately been reduced to a maximum of £100, and even then they were getting a great deal of money. The terms offered by the Queensland Government were considered so liberal by the public, that he was credibly informed large sums of money were about to be sent up here for deposit. He maintained that, since the present Government had been in office, they had never wanted money, and they had never borrowed at all, though they had sold some 6 per cent. debentures. The arguments used on the other side were, therefore, the most fallacious he had ever heard; and he felt the greatest difficulty in understanding how gentlemen possessed of ordinary common sense could bring them forward, except for purely party purposes. There was one subject which he had forgotten to refer to—not that he wished to shirk it, at all,—and that was the question of Provincial Councils. He had for years been in favor of as much local self-government as it was possible to give the community. No doubt, there had been, in this colony and elsewhere, great abuse of the powers of local government, in the cases of some of the municipalities, and abortions of Provincial Councils established; and, in saying this, he did not mean to reflect upon the gentlemen who composed them. It was the construction of the laws, and not those who carried them out, that he found fault with. But, in any system of Provincial Councils which might obtain in

this colony, he sincerely hoped that, so far from following the example of New Zealand, it would be taken as a beacon to be avoided. He believed it was perfectly possible to establish a system which, by taking a great deal of the work out of the hands of the House—and he quite concurred with the honorable member for Rockhampton, that the time of the House ought not to be occupied with petty local matters, such as bridges, roads, and lock-ups—matters which had frequently given rise to some of the longest and most tiresome debates in that House—not interfering in any way with the central Government, but confining itself purely to local works, and with a pretty wide margin, might work to great advantage. His honorable colleague, he was aware, had taken a great deal of pains in preparing a measure of that sort, and he should be happy to join any honorable members in making such amendments as might be found necessary in it, so long as it did not interfere with the rights and privileges of the House. Next, as to the division of accounts between the north and south, there was no desire on the part of the Government to keep back those accounts; but, before any step was taken it would be necessary to define clearly which was north and which was south—a line of division must be drawn before anything could be done. There were quite as many members, he felt sure, on the Government side of the House, anxious for separation between north and south, as there were on the Opposition side, if an Opposition existed at all, which he very much doubted. He would not take up the time of the House much longer, as he hoped that many honorable members would speak before the debate closed. He did not care how many there were. He had stated once before that he rather liked a shindy; and certainly, in the sense that he liked to see honorable members on either side of the House get up and express their opinions boldly, he did so. They were quite welcome to abuse him if they chose, and he believed that he was already the best abused man in the House. He must say, in conclusion, that the speech of the honorable member who moved the amendment was about the worst he had ever heard, and the way it was echoed by what he supposed must be called the daily press, and the manner in which the proposer and seconder of the Address were attacked, was about the worst things he had ever read in the annals of journalism. For his part, he cared little for abuse from that quarter, in fact, he had become quite accustomed to it.

Mr. BELL said he rose without any preparation to say a few words, being induced to do so by certain remarks which had fallen from the Colonial Secretary. He thought honorable members came down to the House intent upon getting through the business before them, and not to indulge in a wordy war, and waste valuable time. He was sorry to hear the honorable member taking a totally

different and unbusinesslike view of this duty, and endeavor to urge honorable members to speak and protract the debate as much as possible. The members of the Opposition had, in fact, been twitted with not wasting the time of the House, and had been likened to the savage who delivered his deadly blow in silence. For his part, he had only one object—to facilitate the despatch of business, and to settle the question in dispute as speedily as possible; and it was with this view that he wished to make a few remarks. Of what use was it to listen to accusations from one side of the House, and the *tu quoque* rejoinders from the other? Was the vote of any honorable member influenced by anything that was said, or the action that he had determined upon on entering the House, likely to be set aside by prolonging the debate? The course now pursued by the Government and their supporters was, in his opinion, an additional reason for considering them deficient in those business qualifications which a Ministry ought to possess. He did not intend to follow any honorable members who had spoken, through any of the charges and counter-charges they had preferred upon subjects, many of them altogether beside the question before the House; nor did he address the House in any party spirit. The general political position of the country, was the broad and important question which engaged his consideration. What was really the state of things? It was a very critical one. They were rapidly approaching a dead-lock; the power of the House was so evenly balanced that either side might find themselves in a small majority or a small minority; and it mattered little which party sat on the Government benches, since neither were strong enough to carry on the business of the country. He found himself, therefore, in this position, that while, on the one hand, he belonged to a party with whom he had worked for some time and was anxious to continue to work with; on the other hand, he owed a paramount duty to the country to do his best to bring about some Government sufficiently strong to pass those measures which were necessary to the welfare of the whole community, for it was clear that no such object would be effected by the division about to take place. He would therefore ask whether the course the Government were pursuing that evening, was a proper one? He affirmed that it was not, and that unless they resigned and allowed the Opposition to go in, even hopelessly, a dead-lock must inevitably occur. But if the Government went out, and allowed the Treasury benches to be filled by another set of men, honorable members might hope that before long a combination might be effected, and a strong coalition Ministry formed in whose hands the interests of the colony would be safe. He spoke entirely without party feeling. To him it was of little consequence how such a Government was formed. He did not want

to see an entirely squatting Ministry, nor should he approve of one composed of ultra anti-squatting members. If a coalition were formed, he could even support the present Government, provided some members were substituted for some of the present members whom he could not support. He did not, as he had stated, intend to follow previous speakers through all the questions of detail for and against the Government which the House had listened to. There was one of those, however, which had been dwelt upon strongly by the honorable member for East Moreton, upon which he must say a few words—the proposed reduction of two and a-half per cent of the *ad valorem* duty. That announcement he looked upon as a strong proof of want of business capacity on the part of the Government. It was not only unbusinesslike, but it was impolitic, whether the reduction was two and a-half or ten per cent. They should rather have considered the broad question whether such an objectionable duty could not be done away with. At any rate, to publish their intention beforehand was a foolish and unbusinesslike proceeding. He would conclude by saying that the only object he had in view was gradually to bring about the formation of a stronger Government than could now possibly be formed from either side of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he wished to preface his remarks by saying that he believed the amendment moved by the honorable member for Kennedy on the motion for the adoption of the Address, was, he believed, entirely without parliamentary precedent. He alluded to the nothingness of the honorable member's speech, and its utter want of charges preferred against the members of the Government. He rose in that House under considerable disadvantages. After a long absence from the colony he could scarcely be expected to be *au fait* to the politics of the day, and was obliged to take his cue from the reports of speeches delivered by honorable members on either side. He would make a few remarks on the speech of the honorable member for Kennedy. A more lame, a more impotent speech, he had never heard from the lips of a member of any assembly. He could only liken the honorable member to a water-logged vessel rolling about at sea from side to side, and unable to come to the surface. That was the idea which struck him in listening to the honorable member, labouring away, evidently against his own convictions, during a speech of an hour and a quarter. He had been unable, although he had listened attentively, never having heard the honorable member before, to find anything in his speech damaging to the Ministry, although he found a good deal in it which was calculated to damage the honorable member himself. He had discovered for the first time, in the aberrations of the honorable member, that he had been on the Government side of the House, and

had gone over to the other; that he had been almost the parent of the very Land Bill which he now so emphatically denounced; that, without his energy and perseverance, that Land Bill would never have been passed, and that his assistance had been rendered to the very members whom he now opposed. Then, all at once, a sudden thought had struck the honorable member, and he had deserted his friends and gone over to the opposite benches. He had been astonished, he might say shocked, at hearing the honorable member accuse the members of the present Government with having brought in as a sham, a mockery, and delusion, a Bill to reduce their own salaries, but with the full understanding that there were persons in another place ready to oppose its passing into law. Such an insinuation, in his opinion, reflected no credit upon the feelings or convictions of the honorable member. If that honorable member had considered the members of the Ministry to be guilty of political dishonesty, he should at the time have gone over to the other side of the House.

Mr. FITZGERALD: So I did.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: So he did, but when did he go over?—why, not till all the mischief was done, and now he was seeking to make more mischief if possible. He (the Secretary for Public Works) could only say that the fate of the honorable member for the next few months would be that he must *requiescat in pace*. He was politically defunct, and must only hope that at the conclusion of the session he would be able to retire a wiser and better man. The next speaker who followed the honorable member for Kennedy was the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, who, in the course of his speech, had referred to some remarks which fell from the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, on the occasion of his recent visit to Toowoomba. He there stated, in allusion to his having been burnt in effigy, some months previously, that he rose like a Phœnix from its ashes, and might be considered a member of a moribund Ministry. Then he came to the admirable, except upon one point, address of the honorable member for East Moreton. He thought that honorable member went rather too far in accusing the members of the Government of incompetency, and in pouring such broadsides into their ranks. But the honorable member had made one startling statement with reference to the indebtedness of the colony—that if Queensland had got into difficulties, so had the other colonies. The honorable member appeared to forget that the Government of this colony should have taken warning by the example of those colonies, to avoid the difficulties they had fallen into; and he maintained that if they had done so the Queensland Railways would not have been such costly and expensive works. Then the honorable member stated that these very railways paid——

Mr. DOUGLAS rose to explain. He did not say that the railways paid at present: what he said was that the state of the colony would even now compare with what it was in 1864.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member seemed to be in favor of railway extension, and if it could be shewn that they would pay, the Ministry would gladly go with him. But he would ask, had they given anything like a return for their outlay? Take the Southern and Western Railway. The expenditure for the past month had been £43,300, and the receipts £39,000. Did the honorable member in face of that fact mean to say that it was advisable to go into further railway construction? He was glad, however, to be able to say that when the Estimates were brought before the House some very considerable reductions would be shewn. No credit was due to him, as Minister for Works; it was due to his predecessor in charge of that department, and the gentlemen connected with it, who had worked honestly and conscientiously. He would then come at once to the speech of the honorable member for Eastern Downs, and more particularly to that part of his speech in which that honorable member referred to him, and to the appointment which he had received as Minister for Works. Now, why should the honorable member question that appointment? At the time it was offered to him and accepted, there was no Legislative Assembly sitting; there was no Parliament in existence, and he had quite as much right to accept the position offered to him as any other gentleman in the colony. He was, after all, one of the oldest colonists in the country; and if he had been absent for a number of years enjoying himself in England, he had never forgotten this colony, and in his small way, as Commissioner at the London and Paris Exhibitions, he had done all in his power to promote the interests of Queensland. Then he was not without experience in colonial legislation, having had a seat for four years in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales. Therefore, no honorable member on either side of the House could say that the appointment of Minister for Works had been offered to a man who was entirely unqualified to hold it. With regard to the mode in which it was offered to him—the offer was made by telegram, while he was at Condamine. He received a telegram:—“Will you accept the office of Minister for Works, with the gold fields attached?” This was at the township of Condamine, at eight o’clock in the evening; and he had accepted it gracefully—he meant gratefully. As to what he might have said on the hustings at Warrego, some latitude, he thought, should be allowed to him. He was six hundred and fifty miles away from his colleagues, and he could not communicate with them. He spoke then as he thought. Possibly if he had had a little more experience

he might not have expressed himself so boldly. The honorable member for the Eastern Downs had attacked him upon the subject of State aid, because of the opinions he expressed upon the subject at the time of his election, and urged the fact of one of the members of the Ministry holding such opinions on State aid as a reason why he could not vote with the Government. Now, he might be allowed to explain that when he returned to Brisbane after his election, he waited, along with his honorable friend the Premier, on the honorable the Colonial Secretary; and those honorable gentlemen, on that occasion, asked him what his opinions were on the question of State aid. He explained to them that he held very strong opinions on the subject; but he had said nothing in his speech to the effect that he would introduce the question into the House. All he said was, that if it were introduced into the House, he would support it, but that should his doing so tend in any way to embarrass the Government, he would resign his office rather than place the Ministry in a difficulty. The honorable member for Toowoomba had also attacked him for what he said when before his constituents with respect to the Re-distribution of Electorates Bill; but he would refer honorable members to his speech on that occasion, and ask them to say if they thought the honorable member for Toowoomba had correctly represented his remarks. If honorable members would consider what he said in regard to State aid, and a Re-distribution Bill, he thought they would admit with him that the course he said he would take, and the course his honorable colleagues would take, was justified in every respect. Another point taken up by the honorable member for the Eastern Downs, and largely dilated upon, was the announcement in the Opening Speech of the intention of the Ministry to reduce the *ad valorem* duties. Now, he firmly believed that, if no mention had been made in the Opening Speech of a reduction of taxation, advantage would have been taken of the omission, and honorable members on the other side of the House would have made it a charge against the Government that, in the face of an increasing revenue, they did not propose to diminish the burdens of the people. But they had made such a proposition, and, consequently, the charge was made against them from the opposite direction. Now, he would ask, what harm was there in making the announcement? Was it not usual for a Government when it was intended to reduce taxation, to give a few months’ notice; for this was not only a very different thing from an intended increase of duties, but it was the very opposite of it. One of the effects of the announcement, he believed, would be the doing away, at any rate to a very large extent, with the practice of salting invoices, of which so much had been heard lately. Some allusion had been made to what fell from an honorable gentlemen in

another place on the subject; and, he must say, he regretted the honorable gentleman in question should have made such remarks. He quite agreed with his honorable friend, the Colonial Treasurer, that there was no appointment under the Government better filled than the appointment held by the honorable gentleman; but he thought he must have somewhat forgot himself when he made the remarks quoted by the honorable member for the Eastern Downs. A friend of his, a resident magistrate in Wellington, did something of the same kind about fifteen months ago, during the tenure of Sir George Grey, the predecessor of Sir George Bowen, as Governor of New Zealand, and because of his doing so he had the option given him of resigning either his office as a resident magistrate, or his seat in the Legislative Council; and he chose the former. That was brought about by his having made remarks in the Legislative Council which, as an officer under the Government, he should not have made. He next came to refer to the Pastoral Relief Bill. As honorable members well knew, he represented a pastoral district that was suffering severely from the long-continued drought; and here he could not refrain from reading a portion of a letter he received lately from a friend, holding a high position in the district. The portion he would read was as follows:—

“Something *must be done* to improve the position of the outside squatter. We shall be ruined else. I don't know that you can reduce our rents, but you can certainly improve our tenure. I can speak, from my own experience, that no station can yield a return at present prices. It is a very disheartening thing to find, that after eight years of struggle, against early difficulties, such as Darling Downs, were experienced—after getting one's stock up to 50,000 sheep, *without debt*—I say to find that it *won't pay*, that we are getting into debt, that one's property is *of no value*, utterly unsaleable—I say it is a hard case. And it is not as though we had been drawing large sums from the stations; we have drawn next to nothing; all has gone in support of the station; and if I find it so, who have been paying no interest, and no mercantile commissions, what must be the state of the great majority of northern squatters who are *deep in* with banks and merchants? I look forward with the most serious apprehensions to the future, and would gladly be rid of the anxiety and responsibility, if I could do so without loss.”

The proposed Pastoral Relief Bill he regarded as one of the most important measures that could be introduced into the Legislature during the present session; and he hoped honorable members, on both sides of the House, would agree to put aside all party feeling when they came to consider it, with the view of affording relief as speedily as possible to those men who had risked their lives and expended their labor and their means in the development of the interior of the colony. With regard to the subject of Provincial Councils, if a minor system

were introduced—minor as compared with the gigantic system that existed in New Zealand, so that local works might be carried out by local taxation, he would cordially assist the honorable member for Rockhampton, or any other honorable member, in carrying out a measure for that purpose. As it was, no one could know better than the person who held the position occupied by him at the present time, the number of applications that day after day were made to the Minister for Works, through letters, from all parts of the country, for bridges here, dams there, wells somewhere else, and many other small matters that would be better settled outside the House than in it. The honorable member for the Northern Downs, in addressing the House, asked the very pertinent question—why continue this debate? Now, he would ask that honorable gentleman—who introduced it? Who had been mis-spending the time of the House, if it was being mis-spent? Were not honorable members on the Government side of the House quite prepared to proceed with the business of the country when they were met with this extraordinary amendment on the Address. If honorable members on this side of the House were attacked by honorable members opposite, were they not bound to repel the attack? Were they to sit *in silentio* and listen to the attacks, and without saying a word in defence allow the House to go to a division? Surely such was not the position that honorable members on the Government side of the House were expected to occupy. With regard to the length of the speeches that had been made, he would like to know which side of the House had made the most lengthy speeches. The most lengthy speech in the course of the debate had been made by the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas; and, therefore, the reference to long speeches came with a very bad grace from the Opposition side of the House. As to the dead-lock, and the chronic state, to which the honorable member for the Eastern Downs referred, how was that brought about? It was brought about, not by honorable members who occupied this side of the House, but by honorable members who occupied that side of the House. He was returned by his constituents with the full privilege of expressing his own sentiments, and his own opinions, and his own convictions. He had not come here to play battledore and shuttlecock for place, and pay, and power; but he had come here to do his duty as a member of the House, and, so long as he enjoyed it, as a member of the Ministry. When the division had taken place, whether the Ministry were in a majority or in a minority, he trusted that honorable members would vie with each other to put away all party feeling, and carry on the business of the country, and do credit to themselves and benefit their constituents.

Mr. MILES said he felt considerably embarrassed in rising to address the House im-

mediately after the eloquent speech honorable members had just listened to. But he was not only embarrassed on that account, but also because of the singular doctrine that had been laid down that afternoon in the attack made upon the honorable member for the Kennedy in walking from one side of the House to the other. He looked upon such an attack as an interference with the independence of honorable members of the House. He had, since the present Government came into office, sat on the Government side of the House; but because he had done so, he would not allow it to be thought that he was to be tied neck and crop, and obliged to remain there. He most decidedly protested against the doctrine that had been laid down. Was the honorable member for the Kennedy to be badgered and browbeaten as he had been because he changed sides from an honest conviction that he could not vote with the present Government? If such a line of conduct was to be pursued, not only would the honorable member for the Kennedy be driven from the Government side of the House, but several other honorable members. He had not been so cautious as the honorable member for Rockhampton, but had pledged himself to vote with the Government; and as he despised treachery and deceit, he would carry out the pledge. But he would like honorable members to bear in mind that when he thought proper—when the course the Government might pursue did not give him satisfaction or did not give his constituents satisfaction,—he would hold himself at perfect liberty to walk to the other side of the House. He would now proceed to refer to the amendment on the Address; and in the first place, he must say that he thought the honorable member for the Kennedy had made a very great mistake. It had been said that this was not a party question; but in his opinion it was a party question, and it was a party struggle altogether that they were now engaged in. Government could not be carried on without party struggles; but the present was a struggle for office and emoluments. At any rate that was his opinion, and he accordingly viewed the amendment with very great suspicion. It seemed to him to be a very extraordinary thing that the honorable member for the Kennedy should have thrown himself into the arms of those gentlemen whom, during a previous session, he was in the habit every day of abusing. If the honorable gentleman had been sincere for the benefit of the country, instead of throwing himself into the arms of honorable members opposite, he would have looked to the cross benches for gentlemen to form the members of a future Government. The honorable member would find gentlemen there who were quite competent to carry on the government of the country. He could not go so far as the honorable the Secretary for Works went, and say that the honorable member had not ability; for he considered that the

honorable member had lots of ability, which, if well directed, would be of great benefit to the colony. But he was very suspicious of him, because of his throwing himself into the arms of those gentlemen whom he formerly so vehemently opposed. He must also say that he did not think the honorable member had acted very fairly towards the present Government. As to himself, he had given the present Government his support generally since they came into office; but how long he might continue to do so he was not very sure. He believed they had got a considerable accession of strength in the honorable gentleman who now filled the office of Secretary for Works; but he would strongly enjoin that honorable member, when he again addressed the House, not to do so in such a bullying tone. An independent member of the House might assume such a tone, but it was the duty of a member of the Government to be courteous to every one.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS :
Whom did he attack?

Mr. MILES: The honorable gentleman attacked every one who expressed different views from those held by himself. With regard to the remarks made by the honorable member for the Kennedy, respecting the Bill for the reduction of Ministers' salaries, he knew that the Government brought in the Bill with all sincerity that it should pass; but the Bill was thrown out by the other House, which prevented him and other honorable members from taking that action with respect to the Estimates which they wished to take. He knew quite well why the Bill was thrown out by the Upper House. There were some Government officials in that House, and those gentlemen knew that if the Ministers' salaries were reduced, theirs must be reduced also. That was the reason why the Bill was thrown out, and the Government had nothing to do with its rejection. The honorable member also accused the Government with not being sincere in their desire for the passing of the Pastoral Leases Bill; but that he also denied *in toto*. The Government, he believed, and those who acted with them, were anxious that the Pastoral Leases Bill should be passed, and the opposition that Bill met with, was chiefly from the honorable member for the Kennedy himself, and he would take the opportunity of reading a portion of the honorable member's remarks when the Bill was before the House. The honorable member, on that occasion said, during the debate on the Crown Lands Alienation Bill—

“The Pastoral Leases Act of 1863 made very good provision for those who are occupied in the present unsettled districts, but their tenure, which under that measure, though uncertain, was practically a very good one, is now to be changed to a permanent one; what necessity, I ask, is there for such a change? But it is actually proposed to give them indefeasible leases for twenty-one years, and in some cases, to give

one man as much as 700,000 acres without any additional rental."

The honorable member for the Kennedy offered more opposition to that Bill, with the exception of the present honorable member for the Eastern Downs, than any other honorable member in the House. He did not refer to that matter so much for the purpose of vindicating the Government, as for the purpose of defending himself in the event of his constituents charging him, as the representative of an outside district, with supporting a Government of whom it was alleged that they would not pass the Pastoral Leases Bill. The next charge the honorable member brought against the Government was that of extravagance, and the creation of several new offices. Now, on that point, he perfectly agreed with the honorable member, and fully concurred in all that he said upon it, and he would refer to one or two recent appointments, of which he had some knowledge. There was, for instance, the appointment of a clerk of petty sessions at Warrego. He believed there was no necessity for that officer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The honorable member was quite correct in saying that there was a clerk of petty sessions at Warrego, but he was not appointed as such. He was merely appointed as a recording clerk, and held the other office, for which he received no pay.

Mr. MILES: Well, he could only say that he saw the gentleman gazetted as clerk of petty sessions, and there was nothing whatever about his being a recording clerk. However, he was very happy to receive the explanation given by the honorable the Colonial Secretary. The next appointment he had to refer to was, that of a police magistrate at Condamine. Now, he believed that if returns were moved for, it would be found that it had not been necessary to hold a court there three times during the last six months.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no extra expenditure incurred by that appointment, as the gentleman who held the appointment was to receive the amount that was voted for the expenses of the police magistrate at Dalby, going once a month to Condamine. That arrangement was to be done away with, and the amount for travelling expenses added to the stipend of the gentleman removed from Nanango to Condamine, which would be a promotion to a gentleman well known to the honorable member for the Maranoa.

Mr. MILES: Well, he was very glad to hear it, but the appointment was not notified in the way it had now been explained by the honorable the Colonial Secretary; and he really thought he was doing the Government some substantial service in fishing up the information he now received. The gentleman referred to, was, he knew, a most efficient officer, but what he objected to the appointment for was, that at the Condamine

there was really nothing for him to do. Besides, any one looking at the commission of the peace would see how unnecessary it was to appoint a police magistrate at Condamine.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The justices of the peace would not do the work.

Mr. MILES: Then, strike them off the commission of the peace. He would now leave that, and come to the Opening Speech, and there was just one paragraph in it which he would refer to. That was the fourth paragraph, which said that the Alienation of Crown Lands under the new Act was progressing as favorably as could be expected. Well, there was really nothing in that; but he wished to take the opportunity, as he was one of those who assisted in the passing of the Bill, of saying that he sincerely regretted that he had anything to do with it. If the Bill had to pass the House again, he would sooner cut off his right hand than have anything to do with it. Now, that was not because he considered the Bill to be a bad one, but because he thought it was not administered properly. When he had to apply to the honorable the Secretary for Lands upon business under the Act, he was told that the matter lay with the commissioner for the district, and that Government was powerless in respect to it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: So far, the honorable member was right; but what he told the honorable member was, that if he examined the Act, he would see it provided that the lands must be classified by the commissioner for the district; and that the Secretary for Lands was quite powerless in that respect.

Mr. MILES: Well then, he had to complain that the Act was unworkable, because of the working of it in a most important respect, being in the hands of an officer over whom the Secretary for Lands had no control; and seeing that that was the case, the office of Secretary for Lands might well be dispensed with altogether. The honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas, in referring to the charges made against the Government about the appointments they had made, said that in many cases the police magistrates in the interior might well discharge the duties of land agents. Now, the honorable member must have paid very little attention to the Act, or he would not have said so; for he would have found that police magistrates could not perform the duties of land agents, because the land agents were required to be in their offices from ten till four o'clock every day. As to the real question before the House, he felt he was in this position, as regarded the Government, that of two evils he had to choose the least, and he considered the Government the least. He would vote with them; but as soon as honorable gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House shewed him that they were able to form a Government, in which

he would have more confidence, and that would not be extravagant in making appointments, and expending the public money, he would go with them.

Mr. RAMSAY said he could not agree with the honorable member for Maryborough when he said that he did not look upon this as a party question. For his own part he felt that it was so much a party question that he had some hesitation in addressing the House upon it, as he was convinced that no amount of discussion would alter a single vote. He thought the nature of the objections that had been brought against the Government proved that the Opposition had really nothing very serious to complain of. They simply took this ground. They said they had no great fault to find with the Government, either as regarded their policy or their administration; and that if they were in the place of those honorable gentlemen they would probably follow something of the same course, but that they thought they had a majority in the House, and if so, it was their privilege to govern the country. Now, he did not mean to say there was any great fault to find with that, and undoubtedly, under their system of governing by majorities, it would be a most anomalous thing to find the majority on the Opposition benches. The system, however, had in it something like a reversion of the old maxim, "Measures, not men." The second part of the first paragraph of the Opening Speech commenced thus—

"The late period of the year at which you have been summoned would appear to suggest the desirability of your devoting your attention to measures of the most pressing importance only."

Every honorable member, he thought, would admit that there was a great deal of important business to be got through, and which could not be postponed any longer. Yet, if the amendment should be carried, and if, as was the custom, the honorable member who moved it should be sent for to form a new Government, more than two months would have to elapse before the House could again assemble, as it would be necessary for him to return to his constituency—one of the most distant in the colony—for re-election. The next portion of the Speech he would refer to was this—

"The many depressing influences affecting the pastoral tenants of the Crown in the Unsettled Districts, point to the necessity of affording them some immediate and substantial relief."

Now, he was afraid that, if anything, that was too liberal. In Brisbane, generally speaking, it was not known how bad things were in the interior. The accounts received from the west and the north were most distressing, and it was said that numbers of hardworking men, who had spent the best years of their life in subduing the wilderness, were being cast out of their holdings through the diffi-

culties they had attempted to contend with. In order, as soon as possible, to afford such relief to persons so situated, as could be afforded by means of legislation, was, he thought, one of the strongest reasons that could be urged why the amendment should not be carried. Legislation would not, of course, remove the drought or give relief from its consequences; nor would it raise prices, but it might enable the sufferers to obtain some amelioration of their condition. He thought that it would be of great benefit to those settlers if a Bill was passed improving their tenure, because then they might be able to raise money sufficient to enable them to carry on till more prosperous seasons came round. He hoped he was not expecting too much when he said he hoped that some steps would be taken immediately on that matter. He did not like to address himself to the honorable member for the Eastern Downs, who not only was an older man than himself, but had held some of the highest positions in the country, and it might give the honorable gentleman offence if he were to address him. But he thought he might venture to say, that if the honorable gentleman had come to the House, and said to the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government—"You see my forces, and know the power I can wield in the House—that it is a power sufficient to overthrow the Government,—but I am willing to sacrifice my personal interests to patriotic feelings; and seeing that immediate legislation is necessary in some respects, though I will go heart and soul in opposing some measures, yet I will assist you in every way in my power in passing a Pastoral Relief Bill, and other measures of pressing importance, and also join you in passing the Estimates, or at least passing a credit for three months, provided you will give me a pledge that the House will not meet later than April, and then I will rally my forces to have you thrown out;—if the honorable member had taken that course, he would have placed himself in a more honorable position, and in a far higher position in the opinion of honorable members on this side of the House, than he would do by succeeding to the office now by the passing of the amendment. He believed that if honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were to succeed to office, and were sufficiently strong to carry their measures, they would bring forward measures that would be satisfactory to the country. But he did not think, that if they were to succeed to office, now, they would be sufficiently strong to carry their measures; and one of the great evils the colony had too long suffered from was, that the Government was not sufficiently strong to carry their measures. He approved of the measures which the Government, in the Opening Speech, promised to bring forward, but he did not see that anything would be gained by discussing them now, as honorable members would be in a better position to

discuss them when they were before the House. With regard to the proposed reduction of the *ad valorem* duties, he must say that he could not agree with the remarks made by the honorable member for East Moreton, for he thought that if the state of the revenue was such as to admit of a reduction of taxation being made it would be proper to make it, and also that it was proper to announce it in the Speech. He did not see that the revenue would suffer very much from the announcement being made, because, for a short time, merchants could be allowed to release goods from bond in such quantities as they might require them, and then when the time for the reduction of the duties came they would resume taking out their usual quantities. The announcement being made prevented any injustice being done. If it had not been made, the knowledge might have leaked out to a few, who would have refrained from taking out goods, while those who were not favored with the information would have continued to release the usual quantities, and so have been subjected to considerable loss. The honorable member who moved the amendment commenced by saying, that those honorable members with whom he had hitherto been in the habit of acting would not be surprised to find him on the Opposition side of the House, and moving the amendment, when they heard his reasons for taking that course. Now, he must confess that he did not think the reasons the honorable member gave were sufficient to justify the change which had come over him. What did the honorable member's objections amount to. He complained that he had been deceived on four different points by the present Government; and these were, that they had not reduced the lavish expenditure they found existing when they took office; that they had not been so economical as he had expected they would be; and that they had not introduced a Provincial Councils Bill, nor a Pastoral Leases Bill. The first was, that the Ministry had not reduced that lavish expenditure they found going on when they took office. An answer to this had been given by one of the leading, and certainly one of the most talented members of the party with which the honorable gentleman had now allied himself; and who stated that, from his experience, no serious retrenchment was possible at the present time. He quite agreed with that; and he did not think that the retrenchment the honorable member alluded to consisted in the cutting down of the salaries of a few clerks. He fancied the honorable member alluded to something greater; but he thought that no retrenchment of the nature he alluded to was possible at the present time. Although the Government had not gone in for retrenchment, they had restricted the public expenditure in another way, for they had not gone in for a lavish expenditure on bridges, and railways, and immigration schemes. Now that

was the only way in which economy was possible at present. He thought the present state of the finances of the colony shewed that they had been wisely administered. The improvement that had taken place in the financial condition of the colony was wholly attributable to the circumstances of the Ministry being so careful as not to incur any unnecessary expenditure. He did not believe matters would have stood so well, if the former Ministry had been in power, for they would have felt that a lavish expenditure was necessary to their existence. In the course of the debate it had been charged against the Ministry that the majority of their supporters were from the country districts; and the character attributed to them in consequence was, that they were a squatting Ministry. Now, what was the meaning of that? If it meant anything, it meant that the Ministry were supported by the producers of the country; whereas the supporters of the late Ministry, and who now formed the Opposition, consisted of merchants and others, who lived upon the producers of the country. He did not use the word in an invidious sense, because all were links in the one chain that bound society together. But the towns produced nothing, not even in the shape of manufactures, and the wealth of the country was derived wholly from the country, and it was upon the productions of the country that every one in the country lived. Now that being the case, any large expenditure in the towns, was wholly for the benefit of those who lived in the towns, and such a pressure had always been brought, and always would be brought upon the Government for expenditure in the towns, that it would be difficult to control it; and the pressure, and consequently the expenditure, would always be greater when there was a Ministry in power, that represented the towns, than it would be when there was a Ministry in power that represented the producing interest. The next point the honorable member for the Kennedy complained of was, that the Ministry did not introduce an Additional Members Bill last session. Now the reason of that principally was, that the Alienation of Crown Lands Bill took such a length of time, that it was found quite impossible to get on with the Additional Members Bill, or any other measure; for honorable members would not, because of the period of the year to which the session had extended, remain any longer in town; and the honorable member knew very well that it was not owing to any disinclination on the part of the Government that the Bill was not passed. He was perfectly astonished to hear the honorable member make the Crown Lands Alienation Bill the ground of a charge against the Government, for that was his own pet measure. The honorable member, and some other honorable members, took the Bill as originally introduced out of the hands of the Government, and arranged its provi-

sions amongst themselves. He had heard of knocking a man down, and then kicking him for falling, and he must say, that on this part of the question, the conduct of the honorable member for the Kennedy towards the Government was something like that. The last objection was, that the Government did not pass a Pastoral Leases Bill. Now, the blame of that was probably attributable to the honorable member for the Eastern Downs, who stated that he and several other honorable members would sit permanently, if necessary, in order to prevent such a measure being passed. The charge that the Government had made bad appointments, was, he considered, no charge at all, for it was fully met by the contrary assertion—that the appointments were good appointments. Two of the appointments had been mentioned that night, and in both instances the explanations were, to the utmost, satisfactory. With regard to there being too many land commissioners appointed, that he thought was what no one could judge of, for the appointments he took it, must be regulated by the demand for lands; and the Government, he thought, could have no objection to multiply the number of commissioners, for they must know that the best way for them to secure popularity, was to provide the most ample facilities for people obtaining land. The honorable member for Toowoomba had said that there were 45,000 acres of land in the resumed portion of the Beauaraba Run, which if put up to auction, would have realised £100,000. Now, what was the fact—all that was applied for by the owner of the station, and he was in town at present, was, he understood, between 20,000 and 21,000 acres, and that even under the inducement of deferred payments. But he could further inform the House, that 12,000 acres upon the same proprietor's run, were offered and sold by auction. He was present at the sale, which took place at Toowoomba, on the 6th of the present month. The land, for he had examined it before the sale, was the very pick of the run; and here was the report of the sale. He read from the *Darling Downs Gazette* of the 11th instant:—

“A sale of Crown lands was held at Toowoomba on Friday last. It was understood that thirty-nine lots would be offered for sale, but five were withdrawn, and the remaining thirty-four were disposed of at the upset price, which was fifteen shillings an acre.”

Of course, a shilling an acre was a great deal better than the squatting rent, and the land taken up for ten years; still, it was not two pounds an acre. The honorable member had expressed his opinion; but he (Mr. Ramsay) was quite sure that no land upon Beauaraba, belonging to the same gentleman, was equal to that which had been sold, which, because of its good quality, was sold—a very natural result. He was a great advocate for sales by auction; and he thought it was a great pity that it was not adopted altogether. It brought

money into the Treasury, and it did away with all those troublesome conditions which the buyer otherwise had imposed on him. He had opposed the long condition of ten years; it was discussed over and over again in the House, and he did what he thought was right, in opposing it. He should oppose the amendment; and he hoped, when the question was decided, for the sake of the country, the public business would be allowed to go on.

Mr. ATKIN observed that, as he thought the House were quite ready to go to a division, he should not trouble honorable members by speaking for the amendment; but he would say a few words on behalf of his honorable friend, the member for the Kennedy, who was in that unfortunate position, that he could not reply to the attacks which had been made upon him. He could not but think it was a perfect godsend to honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House, that the honorable member for Kennedy should have moved the amendment on the Address; for, instead of speaking to the question, a great many of those honorable members had occupied themselves by making—he should not like to characterise their conduct as it deserved, but he would say—groundless accusations against him. The honorable member was accused of having come into the House as a Government supporter, and of having afterwards ratted to the Opposition from factious motives. The real facts were, that he had come down the session before last, strongly opposed to the policy of the late Government, and pledged to oppose them in every way. He found, however, a Government in power pledged to a policy of retrenchment; pledged to prove the accusations made against the Premier of the late Government, and to do justice to the outside districts, and particularly to the northern districts. He confided in their promises, and gave them his best support, until he found that they failed to fulfil their promises—that their pledges had been made simply to catch votes. He did not even then change his seat from the Government to the Opposition cross benches, for he always sat on the cross benches; but his conduct clearly showed that he had no confidence in the Government. At the end of the last session he voted against the Government on the motion of the honorable member for South Brisbane, respecting the secrecy of the Telegraph department, and on several occasions he voted against them; and on a motion for the suppression of the Standing Orders, he spoke as follows:—

“Mr. Fitzgerald said, he rose to speak to the motion for the adjournment of the debate. He had seen and heard many strange things since he entered the House, and he was not surprised at anything now; but, of all the strange things that had come under his observation, the last declaration of the Premier was the strangest—it was the most outrageous declaration he ever listened to.

Doubtless, he and the honorable member for Rockhampton were 'green.' Their constituents required, above all things, that some measure should be initiated this session for the re-distribution of electorates and for additional representation. He and the honorable member for Rockhampton had, at their elections, pledged themselves to do their utmost to secure such a measure of justice by supporting the Government. When they came into the House they found that the Government had receded from their original views about those matters."

Further on—

"He had no confidence in the pledges of the honorable member at the head of the Government, and he thought that the sooner he left office the better."

Again—

"More than 6000 of the permanent population could not be shewn to have moved. Was it possible that, for that small proportion, the interests of the inhabitants of the whole colony were to be retarded for two years?—for that was what it would come to, if the census should be postponed. The people who had gone to the diggings were not the permanent residents, but the shifting population—except heads of families, who would return. It would be three years before any new members could take their seats in the House. The present Ministry got into office on the pretence of being willing to make any alterations in the existing state of things; but, since they got in, they had been guilty of very disgraceful conduct."

In the face of that declaration could the Government say that the honorable member for Kennedy came from the Government side of the House to the Opposition side? The Government had failed in all their pledges; and, up to the end of last session, the honorable member had acted on that conviction, and proclaimed that he had no confidence in them. The honorable member had not come to the House upon any false issue with the Government. His opinion of the Government was in his address before his constituents—on account of which he had been twitted by the honorable member at the head of the Government for favoring the idea that arrangements should be made for the completion of the Brisbane Bridge—where it was his duty to speak out, and this was what he said about the Government:—

"Viewing the conduct of the present Ministry since they took office, their failure to redeem their promise to reduce the excessive expenditure of the Government—their weak and vacillating policy in reference to the Land Act and Pastoral Leases Bill—their attempt to upset the Census Act at the end of the session which they declared to be necessary before any increase in the representation could be made; their neglect to fulfil the pledge given by the Minister for Lands to proclaim large town reserves at Clermont, Springsure, and Nebo; the very short unsatisfactory notice and inferior place given to the vital subject of local self-government, in the extraordinary production called the Governor's Speech, at the opening of the late session; and

the unexpected step taken of dissolving the Assembly on the first occasion of finding themselves in a minority; viewing all these and other acts, I will frankly own, that the support I could give the Ministry would be a very unwilling one, wrung from me by the want of any intelligible fair plan for the future government of the colony by the southern progress party, and the consciousness of our having already suffered so deeply, and of our still continuing to suffer from the former acts of some of its prominent members."

That was the ticket on which the honorable member for Kennedy had been elected. He (Mr. Atkin) maintained that, in the face of such statements, it was a manifest injustice, and grossly untrue, to twit the honorable member for Kennedy with having changed his opinions and joined the Opposition because he had entered into a compact with its leader. The honorable member for Maryborough had accused the honorable member for Kennedy of being the greatest political renegade the colony had ever known, but, in the face of such conduct as had been referred to, such an accusation could not be supported even with his effrontery. The honorable member for Maryborough had been rightly described as an Ishmaelite—his hand was against every man, and it was perfectly consistent with his character, that whatever party was in power, whatever party in opposition, he generally opposed everything, and abused everybody. He had in his speech that day found fault with some remarks in the leading journal of the colony. His (Mr. Atkin's) sympathies were not, in the slightest degree, with those remarks, for he thought they had been better left out; but he read in the Registry the following list of the proprietors of the *Courier* newspaper:—A. H. Paimer, M.L.A., grazier; W. H. Walsh, M.L.A., grazier; Robert Ramsay, M.L.A., grazier; E. I. C. Browne, M.L.C., solicitor; T. B. Stephens, M.L.A., wool broker; and W. Baynes, butcher. If the honorable member for Maryborough complained of the article, why did he not exercise his influence as a proprietor? But, it was part of his creed to allege that every journal was scurrilous which did not praise the honorable member. There was only one journal in creation that had his favors, and that was the *Maryborough Chronicle*, which always sang his praises, and declared him the coming man, and not only the coming man, but the present man,—the only one who could save Queensland by being called to her council. As far as the scurrility of the press was concerned, there was not a man in the House who had written more scurrilous articles in the press of this colony than the honorable member himself. He (Mr. Atkin) gave that as his opinion and belief; he should like to be contradicted by the honorable member himself. The honorable member for Maryborough had spoken of the great importance of the gold fields, and alleged that the interests of the mining population;

and of the gold fields, had not been recognised. A reference to the debate on the motion for the abolition of the export duty on gold, as reported in that valuable record that cost the colony so much—he referred to *Hansard*—would show that at that time even the honorable member for Maryborough had not recognised the importance of the gold-fields, and was not then a great advocate for the rights of miners:—

“Mr. Walsh said that no one could be more anxious than he was to do justice to the north—that unfortunate part of the country which had been too long neglected for him to take any action which might obstruct its advancement. Honorable members must take into consideration the necessity of being just before being generous. The question of an export duty upon gold had been discussed not only in Queensland, but in the other colonies; and it must be borne in mind that the gold diggers were a singularly favored class, and that they possessed advantages obtained by no other landholders by their fee-simple. The right to dig for gold, for instance, was positively prohibited to the latter under the present leasing Acts. It was only by an export duty upon gold that any contribution to the revenue could be obtained from the gold diggers, for it was found that the payment of the license to dig was very commonly evaded in some ingenious manner. He must confess that, anxious as he was to see the gold fields of the colony developed, he thought there was a great deal too much sympathy shewn to this class of colonists. As a rule, they were men who were here to-day and gone to-morrow; three-fourths of them, he believed, cared no more for the colony, except to get as much gold out of it as they could, than the greatest foreigner. He, therefore, protested against the amount of sympathy shewn them, if it influenced the House in deciding the question. He did not think the sum of ten shillings a year was sufficient tax upon the digger, considering the great anxiety and the vicissitudes which gold-digging brought upon the colony; and, therefore, unless the honorable member who moved the resolution, or those who supported it, were provided with the means of re-placing the revenue so raised, he should certainly vote against the abolition of the tax.”

Of course, at that time, the diggings were not in the neighborhood of Maryborough; but since Gympie had sprung up, the future capital of the colony, a new light had dawned on the honorable member, and he brought forward charges of the neglect of the gold fields. Though he (Mr. Atkin) did not feel competent to speak on the subject, he held that for some time the Government did neglect the gold fields; they refused to believe in them. Perhaps they were perfectly right in the course of action they pursued. But the diggers were now perfectly satisfied, especially since the honorable the Minister for Public Works was up amongst them; and, judging from the report of the *Gympie Times*, received a deputation in his night-shirt. The honorable member for Rockhampton had declared, in his speech, that the Government had never had fair play,

and had not been afforded a fair opportunity of bringing their measures before the House. He had, too, confessed that he was one of the principal causes of that being so, because he had insisted upon his ideas being embodied in the Land Bill. The truth was, that the Government had been too yielding—they promised what they could not perform. That was one of the principal charges the Opposition brought against the Government. They could be moulded according to the wills of the honorable members for Rockhampton, Kennedy, or any honorable member in any part of the House. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition had been charged by the Colonial Secretary with making a compact with the honorable member for the Kennedy. The accusation had been denied; but had not the Government made a compact with the members for West Moreton for the continuation of the cotton bonus?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. ATKIN: That valuable work, which cost the colony £2,000 a year, showed in black and white what the honorable gentleman's opinion of the cotton bonus was. It was currently reported that the honorable gentleman had made such a compact, and he (Mr. Atkin) was very glad to hear, from himself, that he had not. The Government had denied that they had offered the office of Lands to a prominent member of the Opposition; but now it appeared that the gentlemen who formed the Cabinet were not more in accord than they tried to make out the Opposition; they had shown that they had no confidence in each other; for the head of the Government had offered the office of Lands to the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas, and the Colonial Secretary had not known of it. The Opposition might fairly throw back in the teeth of the Ministry all that they had said; and certainly hold that the Government had no policy of their own. The honorable the Colonial Secretary, and Secretary for Lands, admitted that he was perfectly aware the office of Works had been offered to the honorable member for East Moreton, (Mr. Douglas). Yet, the honorable gentleman had, in a debate on the Polynesian Laborers' Bill, which took place last year, stated that the honorable member for East Moreton would compare unfavorably with a blackfellow. To make overtures to the honorable member after such a declaration, of course led to the inference that the Colonial Secretary was ready to take a blackfellow to his bosom; and was even ready to retire to the decent obscurity of the Post Office, if he could get some member of the Opposition to support the Government. It should not be forgotten that those overtures had been made to a member of the Opposition, who had a few days before stated publicly in the House that he had no confidence in the Government. He (Mr. Atkin), thought the honorable gentleman should not have used such language

as he had used when referring to the views recently expressed in the Upper House by an independent member of that branch of the Legislature, "that he should have known his position better." If the honorable the Collector of Customs went into the Legislative Council as a Government hack or slave, such observations might be all very well, but if he went in as an independent member, it was an infringement of the privileges of the other House to make such a remark. It did not agree with what he had said a few minutes afterwards, as to the independence of honorable members of another place, not participating in an understanding or arrangement to throw out the Ministers' Salaries Reduction Bill. How the honorable gentleman would reconcile the inconsistency of the two statements, it was hard to see. Speaking of the policy of the Government on the Land Act, the honorable member said he had held liberal opinions on the land question. The test of that was his conduct in the House. He should have advocated, and stood by the views he said he held. But the Land Bill had only been thrown down for the House to worry. He (Mr. Atkin) maintained that, notwithstanding the course pursued by the honorable member for Rockhampton, he had been elected on the people's ticket. The demeanor of the honorable member when addressing an audience from the platform of the School of Arts, at Rockhampton, was altogether different from the manner he assumed in the House. There, he flaunted the red flag of southern dominion and greed in the faces of the benighted Rockhampton people, whom he thus demoralised; forming a strong contrast to the temperate, and even pleasing, speeches he delivered in the House. He exercised much the same effect upon the people of Rockhampton and the north, as the reading of the life of Jack Sheppard and the Newgate Calendar did upon the minds of the street youths of London. It debauched their imaginations to a certain extent. The speeches delivered by the honorable member with reference to the *ad valorem* duties, reported in both the Rockhampton newspapers, and which, though strongly opposed to each other, had faith in the honorable member—went to show that the south alone were benefited by those duties. How could honorable members pay attention to the observations of a gentleman in the habit of making such absurd and rash statements. Unfortunately for the House the honorable member for Rockhampton had the happy knack of seeming to believe what he said, and it was that that rendered his presence objectionable. Instead of pursuing a policy of retrenchment, the policy of the Government had been one of "entrenchment." They had been spelling the word the wrong way. He was willing to make one allowance for the increased expenditure necessitated by the Land Bill and the

gold fields, but he blamed the Government for not seizing the opportunities presented to them of consolidating offices in the Civil Service. They had found billets for their friends. How had justice been done to the north? It had been the invariable practice that when the claims of the people came into collision with those of the friends of the Government, the former suffered. As regarded the Government's treatment of the north, there was not a single instance in which they had had to decide between the people and certain of their supporters, but the people had gone to the wall. Take Clermont as an instance. Although a rich mining and pastoral district—it had had no chance of becoming an agricultural district—never more than £100 a year had been spent on it. The town inhabitants had never been able to get an acre of land. 35,000 acres had been proclaimed as a reserve by Mr. Lamb; but except 5,000 acres, it was the worst possible land, and would not support a bandicoot. At the same time there was plenty of land on the Peak Downs equal to the best on the Darling Downs. He did not wish to injure any of the pastoral lessees; but in common justice the wants of the people should be regarded. There were hundreds of men who wanted to invest their money in the district, but could not get the chance. One head of a family, with grown-up sons, having £1,800, had been obliged to go to Mackay to get what they wanted. Then, at St. Lawrence, the inhabitants numbering 150, could not get land they wanted thrown open. What was to be selected was no good. When the Government at last complied with a petition to put up some land, the sale was appointed to take place at Rockhampton, 130 miles away. The inhabitants of St. Lawrence could get no commonage. They could not apply for one, as none of them were freeholders, and the Government would not sell them any land. The Government were to be condemned by their own acts, and out of the mouth of their own Attorney-General, the greatest constitutional lawyer in the country. He had stated in the debate last year, which resulted in the accession to power of the present Ministers, that the late Premier, Mr. Macalister, was guilty of unconstitutional conduct in going across the House for a colleague, Mr. McLean. Yet, in office, the Government of which he was such a brilliant ornament, pursued the very same course in trying to seduce the honorable member for East Moreton. They had failed in their pledges to the country, and any honorable member who had heretofore supported them, was entitled to go over to the Opposition and vote against them. Though he (Mr. Atkin) was, afraid the House would not long have the pleasure of *Hansard*, he quoted it against them to shew their weakness, and the consistency of his honorable friend, the member for Kennedy.

The Government had been fifteen months in office, and they had not afforded any proof of competency, by effecting any reform. There never was a greater political abortion than the present Government—a mild term, used by the Colonial Treasurer. The Government had acted either dishonestly or incompetently; the former—if being able, they neglected to fulfil their promises; the latter—if, after promising, they failed to carry out their promises. They had also failed entirely to prove the accusations they had made against the late Premier, though no one doubted their wish to do so. He (Mr. Atkin) protested against the tone of the remarks of the honorable member at the head of the Government about the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis. He maintained that any gentleman had a perfect right to apply for a Government appointment, if he thought he could fill it in a proper manner, and be of service to the country. He earned the money he got, if he did his duty. It came with a very ill grace from the honorable member opposite, who, probably, had had as much public money, and done as little for it, as anybody, to make a charge against the honorable member for East Moreton for expressing his willingness to accept a Government appointment. He should vote for the amendment.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he rose to express his great regret at the present position of parties in the House, for he felt convinced that the colony was not likely to be benefited by it. He could have wished that things were otherwise, but he must accept them as they were, and in doing so, he would take the opportunity of stating why he thought they ought to claim the support of the House. It would be well for the House to take a retrospective view of political matters. On a previous occasion, when a vote of want of confidence was moved by the honorable member for East Moreton (Mr. Francis), the Parliament had been for some in existence, and members were well acquainted with each other's views, and might be said to be qualified to judge and pronounce a verdict upon the political acts and conduct of the Government. The present Parliament, he maintained, were not in that position. It was a new Parliament composed partly of old members, and partly of new; and although he did not for one moment deny the right of new members to exercise their privileges to any extent, still, he must observe, that they were not in as good a position to offer an opinion as older members, until they had had an opportunity of calmly considering the conduct and hearing the defence of the Government. It was, therefore, a matter of regret to him to learn that some honorable members had come into the House pledged to oppose the Government before hearing their defence of the charges brought against them; and, in fact, to vote in the dark. That was not the way in

which judgment ought to be pronounced against any body of men arraigned before any tribunal, whether it were the Legislature or any other assembly. It was not a general rule in life, and, he believed, was not the general rule in legislative bodies, though he was not in a position to deny that the right existed if honorable members chose to exercise it. A great deal had been said about the acts of the present Government. He had not heard all that had been said by honorable members in the course of the debate; but from what he had heard, he believed that some misapprehension existed, or that honorable members were mistaken in their views. The present Government, it must be recollected, took office on a particular occasion, not by moving a vote of want of confidence against the then existing Government, but because the head of that Government thought proper to retire from office, although he had a stronger Ministry than any which could now be formed from the Opposition benches, and because he believed he was not in a position to carry on the business of the country. Whether he acted rightly or wrongly, he voluntarily resigned the trust reposed in him by the Crown, and recommended Her Majesty's representative to seek other advice. It then became absolutely necessary that the Government of the country should be carried on, and another Ministry was formed in the hope that some administration of public affairs might be effected. Support was promised to the new Government, and the mover of the present amendment was one of its supporters. The Government, when they entered into office, propounded no policy; they were not in a position to do so; but a new Land Act having been promised by the outgoing Government, and the urgency of the question requiring immediate legislation, the Government who had so recently come into power thought it advisable that the question should be brought before the Legislative Assembly; and so a Bill was introduced by his honorable friend and then colleague, the member for Mitchell. Difficulties arose, and it was the unanimous opinion on both sides of the House, that if a Land Bill were to be passed at all, it must be one to which all members on either side of the House, as far as possible, must agree. A further difficulty presented itself, and, in the end, a committee of the House was appointed to bring up a report and frame a Bill, and upon that occasion a Land Act was passed. The honorable member for Rockhampton, and the honorable member for Kennedy, were undoubtedly the active movers of that measure, and he thought they deserved the thanks of the country for the active, energetic, and he might say, unwearied attention they gave to the duty imposed upon them by the unanimous wish of the House—he used the word unanimous, though, perhaps, there might have been one or two dissentient voices. And he ventured to say, that not

only the public of Queensland would pronounce it the best Land Bill for the country, but he knew that in the other colonies it was considered the best Land Bill that had been passed; at all events, the best in existence in these colonies. Now, was the Government to blame for that Land Bill? Certainly not. But the Opposition blamed the Government for the administration of the Act. It was all very well for one honorable member to get up and quote certain instances of alleged maladministration, and for another to talk of current reports, and for a third to find fault with the Government because he did not get something he wanted. But the charges brought forward only amounted to bare assertions, which were as easily denied as made. He should like to ask whether any precedent could be found for pronouncing judgment upon a Government upon premises of that kind. An attempt had been made, by a vote of want of confidence, to eject the present Government; but he had always been under the impression that when a Government had lost the confidence of the Legislative Assembly, or was supposed to have done so, by a number of honorable members sitting in opposition, the proper course was, for the leader of the Opposition to move the vote of want of confidence, for the very simple reason that it was laid down—that it was an established practice—that when the head of a Government, or a Government, was sought to be ejected by such a vote, the mover of the resolution intended to produce that result, was bound to take the place of the Premier of that Government, and to be prepared to submit himself to Her Majesty in England, or to her Representative in a colony, and to be sufficiently supported to carry on the administration of public affairs. But what was the case in this instance? Why, that in the last session of Parliament, the honorable member for East Moreton had proposed a vote of want of confidence, and the honorable member for Brisbane, who had been a supporter of the Government, but who found himself on the wrong side of the House at the last moment, seconded the amendment. The Government then recommended a dissolution—a recommendation, which was accepted by His Excellency; and the result was, that a new Parliament was now assembled. If he recollected aright, the honorable member for Eastern Downs then proclaimed himself the leader of the Opposition; and he (the Attorney-General) was surprised to find that the vote of want of confidence, which he fully expected to be brought forward at an early period of this session, was not moved by that honorable member; but that the old game was played over again, and the amendment on the Address moved by a ratter from the Government, and another old member, but not a leader of his party, seconded it. Where were the leaders of the Opposition? Where was the member who was always considered

the proper person to take that position? Possibly, he had obtained some information which shewed him that such tactics would be very dangerous. But, worst of all, the task had been confided to a member who had not even the confidence of his own party. The member who took upon himself to move a vote of want of confidence should be in a position to take office himself, and certainly should know beforehand that he had a certain party to support him. Least of all, should he arrogate to himself the power of upsetting the Government, and impeding the conduct of public affairs. It was not to be supposed that he could recommend to the Representative of Her Majesty that somebody else should take his place. He was bound to take office himself, or the Representative of the Queen might send for the gentlemen who had been ejected. Therefore, it was a very dangerous game to play, under certain circumstances. But why should not the acknowledged leaders of the Opposition come forward, and proclaim their position? Perhaps, he could suggest a reason—it would be inconvenient for the honorable member for Eastern Downs to come forward and proclaim his policy,—what he would do if he were sent for to form a Ministry; for he might have to say that he should at once come forward and ask for a loan of three millions; or if not three millions, at all events, such a sum as would add considerably to the debt of the colony, and perhaps increase instead of decreasing the present *ad valorem* duties. That would not suit the views of most honorable members, for even one of his strongest supporters had expressed his opinion that no loan at all was necessary. If other honorable members on the opposite side of the House would express their views as honestly as the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Douglas, had done, it would save a great deal of trouble. There was a great deal of inconsistency among those honorable members. He agreed with the honorable member for Rockhampton, when he stated, that the Opposition members who sought to eject the Government should afford the House an insight into their own policy; to explain their whole policy was another matter. How had the charges against the Government been proved? They had been charged with not having brought in a Re-distribution of Electorates Bill. Had they not at the earliest moment come forward with a policy comprising that very measure? The honorable member for Kennedy ought to have sense enough to know that when a vote of want of confidence was under consideration no other business could be brought forward for discussion. Therefore, he had yet to learn how a Re-distribution Bill could possibly have been brought in. The policy of the Government was shadowed forth in the Speech, and the value of the measures it referred to would have to be tested when those measures were before the House. Then

the honorable member went into the question of retrenchment: and was the House to be told, that the fact of a solitary member of the Civil Service, at Mackay, not being reinstated in his office, shewed a want of retrenchment. The honorable member stated that four other persons were sent up to do the work of that man. He was not going into the details of the case. There might have been good reasons. It might have been that the gentleman in question held so many offices that such a course was absolutely necessary. But was a solitary instance of that kind to be taken as evidence of a desire on the part of the Government not to exercise a spirit of retrenchment? He should say not. Then again, the honorable member came to the question of the Alienation of Crown Lands Act, and its administration. It was certainly not for the honorable member for the Kennedy to find fault with that Bill. If he did find fault with it, it was his duty to point out any defects in it when it came before the House again; that would be the proper course to pursue. Had he shewn any maladministration of the Act by the Government? He defied the honorable member, or anyone else, to prove such maladministration. For, although the way it had been carried out might not have suited the views of many persons outside and some persons inside the House, yet, from the peculiar construction of the Act, unless each case were taken into the the Supreme Court to be decided by the Judges, it was quite impossible to pronounce a decided opinion upon it. Therefore, unless honorable members could shew fraud, he maintained it was unfair to pass judgment upon any Ministry, considering the difficulties which existed in carrying out the law. He ventured to say, that any honorable member, on either side of the House, who might hereafter fill the office of Minister for Public Lands, would very soon realise the truth of these remarks. He believed those were the sum and substance of the charges brought forward by the honorable member for Kennedy. He was not going to quarrel with the honorable member for changing his views. If, since the time he sat in the last Legislative Assembly, when he was a young member, he had, upon reflection, thought fit to alter his political opinions, or had come to the conclusion that the Ministry had not acted up to his ideas of what they ought to do, he was not the man to call him to account for it; at the same time he did not agree with what the honorable member had said in moving the amendment. He was not aware that any other honorable member, who had spoken, had made out any case against the Government. He had listened attentively to the honorable member for East Moreton, and he had detected several grave mistakes, as he considered them, in that honorable member's address; which, as had been observed, was a very good one, but it might

have been better. In the first place, the honorable member had fallen into an error when he charged the Premier with prolonging the time for the re-assembling of Parliament, for the reasons he had given did not coincide with his assertion. Why, the honorable member asked, did not the Premier fix an earlier date, and then prorogue Parliament for a month. How could that have been done? There was no Parliament in existence until the members had met and chosen their Speaker. The Parliament had only been in existence since yesterday. The honorable member had also, he thought, with all respect, made rather a mistake with regard to the *ad valorem* duties. He had censured the Premier for introducing the policy of the Government in the Opening Speech, because the notice of an intended reduction of the tariff might have an injurious effect upon the revenue. Now, he could understand that such a notice might be attended with evil, if it had been a question of increasing the duties; but he failed to perceive that, as it stood, there was any force in the argument. If the honorable member referred to the proceedings of the House of Commons, he would find that the Government had acted strictly according to Parliamentary practice. He could not accept the honorable member's views on that subject at all. He should like to have seen a little more unanimity among honorable members on the other side of the House. He had certainly been pleased at the way—the skilful way—in which the honorable member for East Moreton had conducted his case;—whether he knew what that case was, was another thing; what was intended to happen, he could not say. But if the honorable member was indulging any airy visions of place or power, he had better dismiss them at once. The success of a colony depended of course upon the stability of its Government. Well, if the present Government were not stable enough to conduct the affairs of the country, because it had only a certain number of supporters, would the honorable member inform him how the Opposition, with a less number, were going to do so. If the Government, with fifteen supporters, could not carry on, how could the Opposition with fourteen;—why should the latter command the confidence of the country more than the former? If not, let the Government have an opportunity of explaining their measures, and be tried upon the merits of those measures; then the majority could carry the day. He should like to know how honorable members could pronounce judgment upon the Government when they had had no opportunity of judging of their policy, and, in point of fact, did not know it. He should like to hear some better reasons advanced than he had heard in the course of the debate. What was the Legislative Assembly to come to if Governments were to be turned out on the strength of such absolute rubbish as the House had been treated to about half

an hour ago, not even worthy of a hustings speech, and utterly unworthy of the occasion for which it was spoken. Honorable members were met not to create laughter, but to consider matters of importance, and to give solid reasons for the votes they recorded. He could say for himself, and he believed for the other members of the Government, that they had acted to the best of their ability in all they had done; and he thought every latitude ought to be allowed them to afford the House that information in reference to their acts, which might perhaps induce honorable members to come to a different conclusion than they were likely to come to. But of course if the House was in such a humor that it thought better not to allow the Government to explain their conduct, and to prove by the most searching investigation that their policy was a good one, and that their acts had been calculated to benefit the country, they would bring in a verdict which perhaps they might afterwards regret.

Mr. ARCHER said, that when he spoke last, he was under the impression he was speaking to the main question, and was not aware that he was addressing the House on the motion for adjournment. In the few remarks he was about to make he would take up as little of the time of the House as possible. His principal object in rising was to express his entire concurrence with the remarks which had fallen from the honorable member for Maranoa, in what he had stated about the honorable member for Kennedy having gone over to the other side of the House. He was of opinion not only that a member had a right to go from one side of the House to the other as he pleased, but that it became his duty to do so when circumstances indicated that that was the best line of policy for the interests of the country. He himself was of opinion yesterday morning that he should have to go over to the other side, and he had stated as much to the Ministers, whom he had until then supported. It was only when he heard the speech of the honorable member for East Moreton that he was convinced it would be an injury to the country, because he should be trusting to a rope of sand. The honorable member for Northern Downs had stated that evening, that speaking was of no use, as the speeches would have no effect in convincing honorable members. That he believed was perfectly true, as far as the vote before the House was concerned; but those speeches would have an effect upon the country, and kept it acquainted with what it was desirable should be generally known. He thought it had been clearly shewn that evening that the Opposition party were so utterly deficient in their principles, that they could not possibly carry out any measure for the benefit of the colony. Had he heard a frank and free expression of any principles which he thought worthy of adoption, he, for one, should have been ready to support them; but he did not think it was right to apply to him the terms which had

been applied. He said this, because he had been misquoted in that morning's papers. He had stated that he should have been happy to support a Ministry of which the honorable member for Kennedy was the head—feeling convinced that such measures would be introduced as he and that honorable member would be both anxious to pass. But, after listening to the speech of the honorable member for East Moreton, he had been obliged to come to the conclusion that no combination could be formed from the Opposition side of the House of sufficient strength to carry on the Government of the country. He had, therefore, made up his mind to support the present Government, who had promised to bring in certain measures which he believed would benefit the country. If they did not, he should support those who would. Some mention had been made of log-rolling, which was, as he understood the term, when honorable members met together to see in what way they could spend the money of the country in certain districts, giving other advantages to other districts. He affirmed that it was the duty of a member to desert the party who refused to carry through measures which he believed to be necessary, if he could find another party to carry them out. Even if he had been in England, in the House of Commons, he should have supported D'Israeli in his measures, and got all he could from him, and would then have supported Mr. Gladstone in his greater and bolder schemes. Log-rolling was something which was to the advantage of one particular district, but not to the whole colony. The honorable member for Clermont had made some remarks about him. He had complimented him upon appearing to believe what he had said. That was a quality which he should advise the honorable member to acquire as soon as possible. He might compliment the honorable member in his turn. He thought he had never heard a speech which displayed a more careful and retentive memory, or which better expressed the opinions of the speaker, than that which the honorable member had just delivered. In fact, it had given him such a high opinion of the honorable member, that he had come to the conclusion that the honorable member had mistaken his vocation, and that he ought to have been on the stage. The imitations of different members with which the honorable gentleman had favored the House, were of such a high order, and betokened so much talent, that they would have secured to the honorable member a considerable amount of fame upon any stage in London. He could, therefore, sincerely compliment the honorable member upon his talent as a consummate actor. The honorable member could not only act, but he could do so in various different capacities. In short, he reminded him of the old and almost forgotten fable of the man who blew hot and cold with the same breath. No one who had read the defence of the hono-

able member for the Kennedy in the paper which was under the distinguished management of the honorable member, would believe that, when it suited his purpose, he could take a very different view of the subject. He could only say that what the honorable member for Clermont had done, he had done admirably—he had acted to the life. It was certainly very refreshing to hear the way in which he had spoken of the honorable member for Kennedy, in view of what had lately appeared in the metropolitan press, and the outcry raised not only against the political but the personal sincerity of that honorable member. It was, he repeated, very gratifying to him to hear him so well spoken of that evening; as, since he had occupied a seat in that House, he had always had the pleasure of acting with that honorable member, and he hoped he should continue to do so. It was a great pleasure to him to hear that all that had been said about that honorable member was not only untrue, but that the very paper in which those statements had appeared, now looked upon them as a mere fiction. It was only lately he had seen in a paper, published in the Kennedy District, he believed it was the *Port Denison Times*, a very severe attack upon the honorable member for the Kennedy, calling upon him to answer some very serious charges brought against him by the Brisbane press. A paper called the *Express* had denounced the honorable member as one of the greatest political reprobrates, and had coupled his (Mr. Archer's), name with him. It was curious to see how easily convictions of this sort were arrived at, and how readily they were abandoned, when it suited the interests of a party. In spite of the character they had given the honorable member for the Kennedy, they were quite willing to receive him with open arms, in order to obtain the support of his position and ability to carry the motion they intended to introduce in the House. The honorable member for Clermont had paid him the particular compliment of saying that he looked as if he believed what he said. The honorable member was right in the opinion he then expressed, for he sincerely believed what he said, and, more than that, he only said what he believed. The quality was one that he would advise the honorable member for Clermont to cultivate, and he would find that the first essential for its cultivation was to believe what he said. He repeated that he did believe what he said, and when any honorable member found him saying anything he did not believe, let him produce the proof, and he, for his part, would walk out of the House. No charges, he felt convinced, but charges of change of opinion would ever be brought against him in that House, and changes of opinion were not only blameless, but sometimes unavoidably necessary; and he was prepared, if at any time he came into the House with different opinions from what he had hitherto held, to avow

them distinctly and openly; but no one would ever be able to shew that he stated a single fact that he did not believe, or that he supported a policy he did not believe in and approve of. He thought, that considering the admirable memory the honorable member had shewn he possessed by the copious extracts he had made from *Hansard*, which to him was very dry reading indeed, it was a great pity he had not rather applied himself to obtain extracts from two files of a certain paper to be found in the library, for had he done so, he would have been sure to find that at one time he defended the very policy which he now repudiated.

Mr. ATKIN said, that in the paper alluded to, he did not, as an individual, defend the policy which he now opposed. His connection with the newspaper in question was solely of a commercial nature, and the honorable member knew that he came to Brisbane a stranger, and that he supported the policy of the Government for the time, as it then existed, but he did not support the Government further than to maintain that they should have fair play. His connection with the newspaper alluded to by the honorable member was altogether of a commercial nature, just as much as that of the Attorney-General was with a client whom he defended in court.

Mr. ARCHER: The explanation of the honorable member was altogether unnecessary and irrelevant; for what he referred to, when he was interrupted, was the opinion expressed by the honorable member in a journal with which he was connected—that the honorable the Secretary for Public Lands, and the honorable member for the Kennedy and himself, should be tried and put for two years in gaol, for committing what the honorable member there called a felony. He was not alluding to a paper now defunct, or the honorable member's connexion with it. As to the question about the Gracemere run, and several other things, including, perhaps, the honorable member's connection with the *Express*, honorable members might have an opportunity of discussing these matters when the motion standing in his name on the notice paper, relative to the Gracemere run, came on for discussion. As he was observing, with respect to the honorable member's quotations from *Hansard*, it was a pity he had not shewn as good a memory in regard to the paper he was connected with. If he had, he would have found that in that paper he had contradicted almost everything he had said in the House; and viewing the intensity with which he attacked the honorable member for the Kennedy, and the gross manner of the attacks in his paper, he was surprised to find him now sitting beside that honorable member and supporting him—supporting, as worthy to be the head of a future Government, the man whom, a short time ago, he denounced as one who ought to be imprisoned for felony. For his own part, he always had,

and still had the highest opinion of the honorable member for the Kennedy, and he would continue to hold that opinion till he saw some better reason for changing it than was afforded by his passing over from one side of the House to the other—though he had been somewhat disposed to doubt his capacity when he saw him join that party, the leader of which had brought on Queensland those evils the colony was now suffering under. The honorable member also twitted the Government, by saying that they had made some compact with him and the honorable members for Ipswich on the subject of cotton bonuses. The honorable member was quite welcome to twit him with that if he liked. He knew, during the recess, that the question of the cotton bonus would come on for discussion this session, and being a member of the House, he took the opportunity of obtaining all the information he could upon the subject; and he would be perfectly prepared, if a vote for a reduced cotton bonus was submitted, to shew that he was willing, and the reason why he was willing, to do, what a year ago he would not have done. Now, he must assure honorable members, that, so far from any compact being made with him on the subject, he never spoke of cotton bonuses till he spoke about them the other day to the honorable member for East Moreton, and then he only said a word or two. The honorable member had also twitted him with the probability of his losing his seat; but what he said was only a repetition of what was brought before the House by the honorable member for the Kennedy last night. A threat of the same kind was brought before him last session, but neither that threat, nor any other threat would deter him from doing what, as a member of that House, he considered it to be his duty to do; and he would be quite willing to resign his seat at any time rather than sacrifice his conscience. The honorable member had also referred to something he said when addressing his constituents at Rockhampton. What he said was, that the south derived all the advantages that arose from the *ad valorem* duties. Now, he not only stated that at Rockhampton, but he would repeat it here; and more than that, he would add, that but for the enormous expenditure upon the southern railways, it would never have been necessary to put on the *ad valorem* duties; and if the *ad valorem* duties were to be continued, it would only be for the purpose of meeting the interest on the money borrowed for the purpose of carrying such public works further into the interior, or between Ipswich and Brisbane. He maintained, that from Burketown to Maryborough, the people of the north were taxed for the purpose of carrying on public works in the south; and he defied any honorable member to say that such was not the case; while the north did not derive any material benefit from the railways and other public works that were carried out in the south.

But further than that, honorable members would also find that the *ad valorem* duties were almost entirely absorbed in meeting the interest on the railway loans. The honorable member had also twitted him with having said at Rockhampton, that it was the intention of the House to vote a sum of half a million to make a road from Brisbane to Gympie; but, as in that particular, the report from which the honorable member obtained his information was incorrect, he could not expect the honorable member to be correct. Now, the fact was, that he said nothing of the kind in his speech at Rockhampton. What he said was, that so absurdly extravagant were the people of Brisbane, that it was proposed, at a deputation to the Colonial Secretary, who was the Minister for Works also at the time, and which deputation was accompanied by several members of Parliament, that a metalled road should be made from Brisbane to Gympie—a work which Mr. Raff, who was one of the deputation, said would cost more than half-a-million of money, and that it would be much cheaper to make a tramway. Now, he never said it was the policy of the Government to make either a metalled road or a tramway; but he referred to what took place at the deputation for the purpose of shewing the extravagant disposition of the people of Brisbane. He heard from a gentleman who was present at the deputation, that Mr. Raff only stated that a tramway would be cheaper, with the view of showing the absurdity of the proposal made by some other of the Brisbane members of the deputation, that there should be a metalled road made to Gympie. That was substantially what he stated at Rockhampton, and he did not see that he should withdraw from any portion of it. As to supposing that any man in the south, having a seat in that House, would be so absurd, and so devoid of common sense, as to make such a proposal, was what he could not do; for he could not believe that any honorable member could be so absurd; though he believed that the gentleman who had made a name for himself by the Gympie road might have gone in for such a thing. But it was to shew the absurd ideas that entered the heads of those who did not have to consider where the money was to come from, that he stated that one member of the deputation made such a proposition as he had mentioned. There were many other things he would like to allude to, but which he would refrain from alluding to because of the lateness of the hour. But for that, he would go on to shew the absurdity of the objections that had been raised to the announcement in the Opening Speech of the intention of the Government to reduce the *ad valorem* duties. It was perfectly plain to him that however well acquainted the gentlemen making the objections might be with the practice in Queensland, they were wholly ignorant as to what was the practice in

England when the Government contemplated a reduction of customs duties. Sir Robert Peel, when he intended reducing the duty on sugar, not only announced his intention beforehand, but, in order that the sugar business of the country should not be interfered with in any way, he arranged that sugar refiners and others requiring large quantities of sugar should, as soon as the reduction was carried, receive a drawback upon the quantity of sugar on their premises at the time. He did not conceal the intentions of the Government, nor did he seek to benefit the revenue at the expense of those whose business necessities compelled them to keep large stocks of sugar on hand. On the contrary, he told them they might go on with their business as freely as ever; that records would be kept of their stocks, and that, according to those records, a drawback would be granted them upon the quantities on their premises when the reduction was made. It seemed to him as if honorable members on the other side of the House thought the Government should take up a position opposed to the public. They seemed, by their arguments, to forget that the Government were only the servants of the public, and that it was the duty of the Government, as soon as they found taxation could be reduced, to make the reduction. A landlord might withhold information that would lead to his having to reduce his rents; but, in respect to the matter of the customs duties, at any rate, the Government were not in the position of landlords, but in the position of servants of the whole colony; and, therefore, it was their bounden duty to inform the people when they could relieve them of some of those burdens that weighed upon them so heavily. Now, it was not only an advantage, but a decided advantage, to find that the finances of the country were in such a position that even a small amount of the burden of taxation could be removed. He thought that everything that tended to show that their finances were on a sound footing, everything that tended to raise the credit of the colony in the market, ought immediately to be announced in the House; and, if it were not for the lateness of the hour, he would be able to prove to the House that Sir Robert Peel took the course he had stated he took, when he contemplated a reduction of the sugar duties; but he was anxious not to detain the House any longer. He had explained his reasons for desiring again to address the House; and he would now conclude by saying that he had not heard anything stated by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House that convinced him he was wrong in still trying to assist the Government to get their measures introduced into the House, and passed as speedily as possible.

Mr. LAMB made a brief explanation with respect to some of the charges directed against him, while Secretary for Public Lands, by the honorable member for Clermont. The honorable member, he said, had referred to

a petition that was forwarded to him when he was Secretary for Public Lands, praying that certain lands should be proclaimed for commonage around the town of St. Lawrence, and said that he had refused to grant the prayer of the petition. Now, what he did was quite the opposite of that, for the answer he gave to the petition was, that as soon as the runs alluded to were divided, portions of them would be set apart for commonage purposes. The present Minister for Public Lands, however, had since found that those runs could not be brought under the Act, as their leases, under the Orders in Council, had not yet expired. After explaining, also, the action taken by the Government in respect to applications for agricultural reserves on the Peak Downs, and defending the policy of prohibiting selections being made within two miles of any gold workings, the honorable member remarked that he found it a most difficult task to answer charges so vague as some that had been made, and that were besides most absurd and trumpery.

Mr. LILLEY said that after the outpour of wrath by the honorable member for Rockhampton, he hoped the honorable member for Clermont would feel it to be his duty to maintain silence for the future. But he must say it appeared to him that the honorable member for Rockhampton did not sit quite so easily in his place as he wished the House to believe while the honorable member for Clermont was addressing the House. Several times in the course of that speech the honorable member appeared considerably agitated, and lengthened his face somewhat, as if he didn't like it. And the honorable member had shewn that such was really the case by the strong language he made use of in replying to it. He hoped that before next day the honorable member would have recovered his equanimity; but he very much doubted it. The speech of the honorable member for Clermont was a very able one indeed from so young a member, and he was sure that if the honorable member for Rockhampton had taken time to reflect, he would not have answered it in the way he did. He was not disposed to trouble the House with a lengthened speech, but he felt it was his duty to tell the honorable member for Rockhampton that he did not think he was in earnest in giving the reasons he gave for voting against the amendment. The honorable member could not induce him to believe that he was sincere when he based his opposition to the amendment upon the speech that was delivered by the honorable member for the Eastern Downs. He was sure that the honorable member could not himself seriously affect to believe that that speech in any way indicated that the ranks of the Opposition were disorganised. The honorable member for the Eastern Downs unquestionably gave expression to some opinions that were not held by all the members of the Opposition; but he would ask the honorable member for

Rockhampton if all the members with whom he would vote held the same opinions as he himself held. The thing was too transparent to require an answer. The honorable member also asked the Opposition what policy they could shew, that he might know if he could support them. Now, a vote of want of confidence in one Ministry was not a vote of confidence in another Ministry. The question that the House was now called upon to decide was, whether or not they had confidence in the present Ministry. No one would have the egotism and self-conceit to believe that he would be sent for by the Governor to form a new Ministry, in the event of the amendment being carried; and consequently to state in the House now the policy he would be prepared when he was at the head of the Government, to offer to the country. Would any one in his senses place himself in such a ridiculous position?

Mr. ARCHER: I would.

Mr. LILLEY: Yes. The honorable member for Rockhampton would, but they knew how egotistical he was. He knew the honorable member would, but he hoped he would give the Opposition credit for having more modesty. Now, as was known, the course of political action on such occasions was this. Honorable members were required to say that the present Ministry had not the confidence of the House. That being done, the Governor, if he chose, might send for the mover of the amendment; but it was well known that within the last fifty or fifty-five years the mover of the resolution had never been sent for, except on only one occasion. The honorable the Attorney-General had tried to lead the House to believe that the mover of the resolution must be prepared to take office, otherwise the fledglings in the House would be sent for again. But his honorable friend knew better than that. He knew that that was not what His Excellency was bound to do, or what the country would expect him to do—that it was not a matter of necessity he should do so. It was not for him to say that the present Ministry had not his confidence, for they knew they had not. The present Ministry were in a most humiliating position; and he did not know to what further depths of humiliation they were prepared to sink. But he knew what any minister or ministry that had a proper respect for themselves would do, on finding themselves in like circumstances. The head of a Government, having a proper respect for himself and for his colleagues, if in a session of Parliament he was defeated by a majority of two, and afterwards received power to dissolve the House, and then came back without a majority of even one to enable him to carry his measures through the House, would, as a politician, know it to be his duty to resign, and give the Opposition the opportunity of shewing if they could form a Government that would be able to carry their measures through the House. If that course were taken here,

it would be found that the Opposition would be able to form a Government that would be able to carry their measures through the House. He knew there were honorable members who would vote with the Ministry, but who had no confidence in them; and the Government knew that too; and under those circumstances, it would be a shame and a disgrace for the Ministry in the face of the colony if they continued to hold office. Oh! but there was the stability of the Government, said his honorable friend the Attorney-General. But the Government was without stability. It was an unstable Government that could not command a majority. But what need was there for a majority, asked the Government, so long as the Opposition could not put them out? and so long as that was the position of parties, they would have the daring impudence to stick to office. That was the position the Government were in, and if they were prepared to maintain that thoroughly humiliating position, let them do so. The time was not far off when they would be relieved from it. They could not carry on with satisfaction to themselves; but if they thought so, let them try it. The Opposition was strong enough to dictate to them what they would have them to do; or, if they chose, they could offer to them what the present Ministry and their supporters offered to a former Ministry—a factious opposition. The honorable member for Rockhampton let out the secret of his opposition then. It was all because of that Macalister. And now it was the old sore—his hatred of that politician Macalister opening up again. But he would ask the honorable member—and he believed he had a strong sense of honor—he would ask him to carry his memory back a few steps, and try if he could recollect upon what pretences the present Ministry assumed office. They brought a whole host of charges against Macalister, which they were to prove, by exposing the evidence, when they got into office. But they had not proved a single one of those charges; and having failed to prove them—having failed to do what they undertook to do—having failed to prove the charges they brought against Macalister, it must be clear to every one that they got into office by false pretences. Now, no man of honor, who supported those assumed charges of political dishonesty, could support the Ministry that got into office by undertaking to prove them, and had failed to prove them.

Mr. ARCHER: He had never opposed the honorable member for the Eastern Downs because he was dishonest, or anything of the kind, but because he could not concur in his policy.

Mr. LILLEY: The honorable member had misunderstood him. He did not say that the honorable member considered the honorable member for the Eastern Downs dishonest;

but asked how could he support a Ministry that got into power on the false pretence of undertaking to prove charges of dishonesty, had failed to prove them. They had failed to prove a single charge against the honorable member for the Eastern Downs. They even went so far as to impute personal dishonesty to him, in the matter of the railways; but they had not sustained the charge by a single proof. Proof of the charges against the old Ministry had been asked for, but it had not been produced. The members of the present Ministry also sought to involve the supporters of Mr. Macalister, in the charges they made against him; but even there they had produced no evidence. However, the question now before the House was, not whether Macalister was an honest man or not, but whether the House had confidence in the present Ministry or not; and, for his part, he most emphatically said he had not; and the reference they had made to the country, shewed that the country had not much confidence in them. Under those circumstances, the Government had a plain duty before them, which was to retire from those benches while they might do so with some little grace, or remain disgraced for ever. Now, having said that much on the question, as to the constitutional course to be taken, there were one or two other questions he had to refer to. The honorable the Attorney-General had informed the House that he could not construe some portions of the Act for the Alienation of Crown Lands; and yet the Ministry asked to be allowed to remain in office till they should construe it. But they had also said that it was unworkable. Now, if it was their opinion that such was the condition of the land law of the colony, why did not they propose an amendment of it? There was the most important Act on the Statute Book of the colony, and, though they professed their inability to construe it, they made no promise to bring in a Bill to remove the difficulties. Now, he would ask the honorable member for Rockhampton if he could support a Ministry that made such a confession, and yet took no steps to remedy the Act. But he knew the honorable member would support them—he was so wedded to them and to the class to which they belonged. He knew he was turning the honorable member's heart out to-night, because he had often heard him admit that he could detect his real reasons when he took up a far-fetched position. Now, let them suppose that the honorable member for the Kennedy, Mr. Fitzgerald, would be the gentleman sent for, if the amendment were carried. That honorable member had already distinguished himself since he came into the House, by his ability and his industry; and, he believed, there was no honorable member who could gather round him abler men, if he were called upon to do so—if he should take office. The honorable member for Rockhampton professed to like his policy; and,

therefore, when he called for the policy of the Opposition, he would point him to the honorable member for the Kennedy, and tell him—"There's your policy." What more did he want? But the honorable gentleman did not want a policy from the Opposition. What he wanted was a good excuse for voting as he intended to vote. Now, what was the position of an Opposition on an occasion like the present? It was not their part to lay down a course of policy for the gentlemen on the Ministerial benches to pursue. The part of an Opposition was to sit as critics on the policy of the Ministry. The time for the enunciation of their policy was when they were called on to assume office; and time was always given to a new Minister to retire in order that he might mature and bring in his measures, and make those the subject of a statement of his policy. It would be absurd to suppose that the honorable member for the Kennedy, if sent for to form a Ministry, could be called on to state, on the spur of the moment, what were the measures he would bring forward for the good of the country. He would, in the first place, have to select his colleagues; because, let it be remembered that this was a constitutional course too—for the gentleman who was sent for to form a Ministry, whether he was a member of the House or not, was not bound to send for Macalister, or Lilley, or any other honorable member of the House,—and here, he might be permitted to say, that he did not exchange a word with the honorable member on the subject, until he had moved the amendment. The honorable member, if he were sent for, might invite his honorable friend, the Attorney-General, to join his Ministry, for he had an absolute discretion accorded to him to choose whomsoever he liked. His honorable friend, the member for the Mitchell, stated last night, that the member moving a vote of want of confidence, must be in a position to carry on the Government, if he were called upon to do so, or he would not be justified in bringing forward such a motion. The honorable member said he found that in some celebrated work on the constitution, by Professor Hearn. Well, he had that work, and he had read it, but he thought he would be laughed at if he were to quote it as an authority.

Mr. LAMB: It was a collection of authorities.

Mr. LILLEY: No doubt, there were authorities quoted in it, but the work was not received as an authority, not even in the colonies; and it would be laughed at in England. But, what was the opinion of Hearn as to the course a Ministry should take in the face of a vote of want of confidence. It was this,—that unless the Ministry could show that they only, of all other members in the House, could carry on the Government, they must not presume to carry on the Government in the face of a vote of want of confidence.

Mr. LAMB: What he said was, that he thought he had read it in Professor Hearn's work, but he was not sure, or had found it laid down in the speeches of all the great politicians of recent times—Peel, Russell, and others, when there had been a change in the Government of England during the last twenty years,—that for a member to bring forward a direct vote of want of confidence on an address, was so unusual, that it had never been done till about thirty years back: and that the party who took upon himself the bringing forward of a direct vote of want of confidence against the Government of the country, was not justified in taking such a course, unless he was in such a position as to be able to command a majority of the House, and felt that he could make arrangements to carry on the Government of the country, in the event of the motion being carried.

Mr. LILLEY: Then all he had to say to that doctrine was, that it was absurd upon the face of it, for then there never could have been in England an unsuccessful vote of want of confidence. But did ever a Ministry in England find themselves in the position in which the Ministry were to-night—in the position of having been defeated, of having appealed to the country afterwards, of then finding themselves without even one of a majority, and still clinging tenaciously to office, and that in the very teeth of a vote of want of confidence. No. There never was such a thing known in the whole political history of England; and all the professors in the world would not induce him to give up his own common sense view of the case, and adopt such a view as the one put forward by the honorable member for the Mitchell, on the authority of Professor Hearn,—that the honorable member for the Kennedy would not be justified in the course he had taken, unless he could shew that he could command a majority of the House, and had made arrangements to carry on the Government. Something had been said of the way the Land Act had been applauded in other colonies. Now, so far as he was informed on the point, and he had as good information as any one,—and here he might say that he supported the Bill through its third reading—he knew that the Bill excited the laughter of the political leaders in Victoria. Though he did not mean to quote the Victorians as models, or to give up his judgment to theirs, yet, he wished to make that statement in opposition to the statement made by the honorable the Attorney-General when he said that the Land Act was received most favorably in all the other colonies. The Bill was far from being a perfect measure, but he believed it was very well adapted for this colony, and believing that, he was not prepared to vote for a substantial change of its provisions, though it might be amended as to its administration. But from all he saw and knew it appeared to him that the Bill

was in the hands of men who did not understand it, or who were too lazy to understand it, or who, from *malice prepense*, or vice, were determined to maladminister its provisions. He thought he had now touched upon all the points he intended to speak upon. He did not hear the whole of the debate, and he very much regretted he did not hear more of it; and in addressing the House at all upon the subject, as he had heard so little of the debate, he did so, because he thought it right he should correct some errors, coming, as they did, from his honorable friend the Attorney-General, whose position lent to his words a weight that did not otherwise belong to them.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said he felt at considerable disadvantage in rising to address the House at that late hour of the night, and after the able speeches they had just listened to; but representing, as he did, a metropolitan constituency, he felt he should not be doing his duty if he did not state his reasons for the vote he was about to give. He did not think that the occasion was one that required from him any lengthened statement; for it appeared to him that the ground they were travelling over in the debate on the present occasion was precisely similar to that they travelled over on the occasion of the late meeting of Parliament, when a vote of a similar kind was under discussion. Upon that occasion, he felt it his duty, on behalf of his constituents, to vote in favor of the motion of want of confidence in the present Ministry; and he did not see that anything had happened since to lead him to alter the opinion he then expressed. If he were disposed personally to alter that opinion, he felt constrained, by the opinion of his constituents, not to do so. The Government had appealed to them collectively, as a Government; and they had also appealed to them in the person of the most popular member amongst them—the honorable the Attorney-General—to say whether they could confide in them; and what had been the result? The result was, that he, as one of the members returned, had been returned by the almost unanimous voice of his constituency, on the distinct understanding that he should repeat the vote of want of confidence in the administration that he gave on the former occasion. It might be said that a change had taken place in the Government since that vote was passed, which ought to modify the views of honorable members in reference to them. Now, there was no doubt that such a change had taken place; but it was only a change in the *personnel* of the Government, and not in the character or constitution of it. It was true that the honorable member for the Mitchell no longer ruled the Lands Department; and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer explained to the House, yesterday, that in resigning his office, he resigned it because of the charges levelled against him in the House during the late debate. The honorable the

Treasurer further stated, that the honorable gentleman in resigning office did so in the face of the express disapproval of his colleagues. Well, now, the honorable gentleman was an old campaigner; and he could not but think that he, in making that statement, sought somewhat to gloss over the circumstances attending the retirement of that gentleman, and to make it appear that it was owing to the charges made from the Opposition side of the House that he retired from office. But, he thought that if honorable members looked at all the circumstances, they would find that such was not the case. They would find, on the contrary, that he retired from office, and that the changes resulting from that retirement from office arose, not from obedience to what was said by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, but because of the indignation and disappointment expressed by some of his own followers. His retirement from office resulted from his squatting supporters not being satisfied with his decisions, and the way he administered the Land Act; and it was because of the angry feeling that arose on the part of the squatting members during the debate that his retirement took place. What honorable member who was in the House at the time did not remember the effect produced in the House by the speech of the honorable member for Warwick? And who did not recollect how much the speech surprised the Government side of the House? Nobody, he felt sure, could deny that it was that speech that decided the retirement of the honorable member from office. It was the speech and conduct of the honorable member for Warwick, in connection with the speech of the honorable member for Maryborough—two honorable members who had up to that time supported the Government—that gave rise to the retirement of the honorable member from office. If there was any doubt entertained in any quarter on the subject, he thought it must be dismissed by what they saw resulted from the retirement of the honorable gentleman. On his retirement, was there any steps taken by the Government to guarantee to the popular party in the colony that the administration of the Lands Department would be carried on under more favorable circumstances for their interest? No. On the contrary, the Government took the most decided step they could take to act against the interests of the popular party, and appointed, as the successor of the honorable gentlemen who retired, the honorable member for Port Curtis, who, of all men in the colony was, he believed, the most unsuited to administer a Land Bill as it should be administered. That honorable gentleman had, that very night, broadly stated his disbelief in the Bill, and what his idea was as to what such a Bill should be—and that was simply a squatter's Land Bill; and the existing Act was simply a squatter's Land Bill under

the honorable gentleman's administration of it. Now, was such a man calculated to give confidence to the great body of the people in the country that he was the proper man to administer the measure? He maintained that it was an insult to the common sense of the country for those gentlemen to come here, dressed up in different clothes, but still the same Ministry, and ask a vote of confidence from this new Parliament. If those gentlemen were retained in office by the vote of this evening, they would be retained in office by the vote of the honorable members for West Moreton, and also by the vote of the honorable member who moved the Address, and who succeeded in the House an old and valued servant of the people—Dr. Challinor. Now those gentlemen had been told to-night already, and he would tell them again, and he told them himself as an elector of both Ipswich and West Moreton, that in coming into that House and supporting the present Ministry, they in no way represented their constituents; and, in saying that, he appealed to the one question alone on which he maintained the whole body of them had been returned to the House. The whole body of them, he repeated, were returned to the House at the last election, to see, by the course they adopted, that the cotton bonus should be continued. Now which of the Ministers had the disposal of the cotton bonus?

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: The Colonial Secretary.

Dr. O'DOHERTY: He maintained, the Minister for Public Lands. Now, he found in *Hansard*, volume V., that, speaking of the question for a grant of land to Captain Hope, the honorable the Colonial Secretary, and now Minister for Lands, also said:—

“He felt bound to protest against all these bonuses, in whatever shape they were brought forward. A large sum of money had already been spent in this way to encourage cotton growing. Honorable members seemed to forget that the revenue was suffering from a heavy bonus in the shape of a differential duty on sugar, and he could not see that Captain Hope was entitled to a grant of land more than any other successful cultivator. He should not be at all astonished, after this, to see the late Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Fitzgibbon, coming down for a grant of land, for having successfully introduced railways into the colony. He should always protest, to the last, against these bonuses of all kinds.”

Now that was the gentleman whom the honorable members for West Moreton came to the House to support. He asked them how they could faithfully fulfil their duties to their constituents—to himself, as one of them—in supporting an honorable member who made use of remarks of that kind in regard to a question of vital importance to the interests of their constituents? He might be told that, in consideration of their support, the Minister would consent to forego

his convictions in this matter. He was informed by one honorable member for Ipswich, that a compact had been distinctly entered into. In the face of that, he might regard the honorable the Colonial Secretary as a man, to a certain extent, unworthy of the confidence of the House as a Minister. There was one point in the honorable member's character that he had admired him for, and that was his consistency, ever since he came into the House; and he had thought he was the last man in the House or in the Government who would, to obtain the votes of the honorable members for West Moreton, swallow his convictions and be guilty of political inconsistency. He could not but record his satisfaction that the popular side of the House had two members from the north. He regarded the adhesion of the honorable member for the Kennedy, and the honorable member for Clermont, as the most fortunate event which could have occurred at this crisis of the colony, and he hoped that the adhesion of those gentlemen, representing as they did, an overwhelming majority of the northern people, would result in the final settlement of all those party discussions in the House, which had for so long put a stop to business, and in the cessation of that class legislation which had threatened to interfere with the true progress of the colony. The Opposition had not won over the honorable member for Rockhampton; but he (Dr. O'Doherty) was convinced that his adhesion would follow in a very short time. Before that honorable member was returned for Rockhampton, the electorate was contested by the honorable member for the Kennedy, and he was beaten; and he (Dr. O'Doherty) was confident that the honorable member for the Kennedy represented now, as then, the feelings of the constituency. He hoped that the vote on the present question would very speedily put an end to the party squabbles which had so long prevailed. He agreed with the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley, that the honorable gentlemen now sitting on the Treasury benches did not represent the feelings or opinions of the people of this colony; and he would, as long as he had a seat in the House for the premier constituency, resist class legislation. He did not oppose honorable members as members of a class, but because they sought to promote the interests of their body to the detriment of those of the other classes of the community. With the honorable member for Northern Downs, he would deplore, as much as any man could deplore, government by class and class legislation. In the Government that would succeed the present Government, he trusted to see all interests largely represented; and, also, in their following and supporters. He should vote for the amendment.

The question was then put—

That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Ayes, 15.

Mr. Pring
" Palmer
" Mackenzie
" A. Hodgson
" S. Hodgson
" Ramsay
" Archer
" Miles
" Sandeman
" Thorn
" Lamb
" Royds
" Thompson
" Forbes
" Walsh

Noes, 15.

Mr. Fraser
" Pugh
" Macalister
" Stephens
" Francis
" Groom
" Williams
" Murphy
" Douglas
" Thornton
" Fitzgerald
" Atkin
" Bell
Dr. O'Doherty
Mr. Lilley

The SPEAKER said: The votes being even in the division—it being a "tie"—it now becomes my duty to give the casting vote. I am happy to say it is a very plain track I have to follow: it is the old conventional rule—that is, that the Speaker's vote should not be the means of any change. I shall, therefore, vote with the "Ayes."

Question—

That the Address, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted.

The House divided.

Ayes, 15.

Mr. Pring
" Palmer
" Mackenzie
" A. Hodgson
" Ramsay
" Walsh
" Forbes
" Lamb
" Thorn
" S. Hodgson
" Miles
" Archer
" Sandeman
" Thompson
" Royds

Noes, 15.

Dr. O'Doherty
Mr. Lilley
" Bell
" Fitzgerald
" Atkin
" Stephens
" Macalister
" Francis
" Groom
" Thornton
" Douglas
" Murphy
" Fraser
" Pugh

The numbers being equal, the Speaker again gave his casting voice with the "Ayes," and declared the question to have been resolved in the affirmative.