

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 30 DECEMBER 1868

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 30 December, 1868.

Election of Chairman of Committees.—Vote of Credit—Supply.—Ways and Means.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved,—

That T. P. Pugh, Esquire, be appointed Chairman of Committees of the whole House.

He was not aware, he said, that there would be any opposition to the motion; and he believed he was nominating a gentleman to the office of Chairman of Committees, who was considered to be in every way worthy of the confidence of the House. Mr. Pugh had, for a considerable time, discharged the duties of the office, and that in a way which shewed he was well qualified for the position. He had, therefore, great pleasure in proposing that Mr. Pugh be again appointed Chairman of Committees of the whole House.

The Hon. R. PRING said that, without wishing for a single moment to detract from the qualifications of Mr. Pugh for the office of Chairman of Committees, he, on behalf of honorable members sitting on the Opposition side of the House, and for himself, and as following out the usual course on such occasions, had to propose a gentleman who, he believed, would fill the office equally as well as Mr. Pugh. It might be a special qualification of Mr. Pugh that he had filled the office before,

both with profit to himself, and perhaps, with some degree of benefit to the House; but, if his memory served him right, he had heard many questions as to the correctness of Mr. Pugh's rulings, raised on various grounds. But he would not even put those arguments forward against the election of Mr. Pugh on the present occasion; but, as he conceived that each party in the House, in a representative House, had its choice as to who should rule in the position of Chairman of Committees, and because it could not be concealed from the House that this was a party question, and that it was always a battle royal in such Assemblies, when a Ministry came into power, and asked to put in its favorite, therefore, he rose to claim the right to follow the usual practice, and propose his favorite. Now, he was to propose a gentleman who possessed equal qualifications for the office with Mr. Pugh, though he had never yet sat in the chair—a gentleman who, in his opinion, possessed higher qualifications, higher abilities, more shrewdness, and who, from the nature of his profession, was more calculated to be up to the mark in discharging the duties of Chairman of Committees. The only recommendation he could conceive Mr. Pugh had for re-election was, that he had previously held the office. No other—and he was one of those who wished to see him out of the office. Therefore he was prepared to propose a gentleman in whom the Opposition side of the House had every confidence. But he would take this course for another reason, and that was, that he could not conscientiously vote for a gentleman as Chairman of Committees—and who, as such, was supposed to act impartially—who, on the hustings, when there was no necessity for his doing so, pledged himself to turn out the then existing Government. Mr. Pugh having given such a pledge, the then existing Government, now the late Government, who with many of their former supporters, sat now on the Opposition side of the House, could not be expected to have a great degree of confidence in him in the office of Chairman of Committees. Under those circumstances Mr. Pugh could not have the confidence of the late Government, nor could he have his. But apart from that fact, he would regard the election of Chairman of Committees as a party question, though it was treated differently on some occasions. But the battle had to be fought between parties, for the hatchet was not yet buried, and the sooner they commenced the sooner they might end. Now the gentleman he was about to propose was one who was worthy to fill the office, not only from his professional qualifications, but on account of his acknowledged talents, and his unwearied assiduity to every branch of public duty to which he had ever yet devoted himself. He was satisfied that the gentleman would soon be able to master any difficulties that might arise at first in the discharge of the duties of the office. The gentleman he had to propose was

the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Thompson; and he would therefore now propose as an amendment, that the name of T. P. Pugh be omitted from the motion, and the name of John Malbon Thompson inserted instead.

Mr. TAYLOR said the honorable member who had just sat down had informed the House that he brought forward Mr. Thompson in opposition to Mr. Pugh on certain grounds. Now he could inform the House that he intended to oppose the re-election of Mr. Pugh on other and different grounds; and those grounds were that in his election speeches Mr. Pugh deliberately stated that he would repudiate, as far as he could, certain Acts of Parliament that had been passed to effect certain ends. Now those Acts affected his interests considerably, and when he read Mr. Pugh's election speeches he swore deliberately that he would oppose his re-election as Chairman of Committees. He did not, like the honorable member who had sat down, look upon this as in any way a party question, and therefore if Mr. Thompson should be carried by his vote, it would not, so far as he was concerned, be upon party grounds. The honorable the Secretary for Public Lands would no doubt remember well his remarking to him when he read Mr. Pugh's speeches, that he could have no faith in a man who announced such diabolical principles. But he would like to know if Mr. Pugh had been receiving pay as Chairman of Committees since August last. It had been told to him that that gentleman had been deriving pay as Chairman of Committees from the first week in August last, when the House adjourned, up to the present time. Now was such really the case? Was it true that, month after month, he sent in vouchers and was paid salary regularly? Both Governments were alike concerned in it. The late Government as well as the present; and therefore it seemed to him absolutely necessary that there should be a third party formed—a party that would act in a more manly and honest way than that; for he thought it was nothing less than downright robbery. He had also been informed that another gentleman was paid during a dissolution, and when he was not a member of Parliament; and it was time, if such was the case, that an end was put to such extravagance. He should decidedly vote for Mr. Thompson on the present occasion, and would do so for the reason he had stated—that he could not have faith in a gentleman who would declare himself as Mr. Pugh did on the hustings, in favor of repudiation. He would insist, when the House was again broken up, that the salaries of officers should not be paid till they were re-elected. It was a direct robbery, that they should have to pay for services that were never performed.

Mr. FRANCIS said that there was only one ground on which he could support the amendment, and it was certainly not from any real

or supposed deficiencies on the part of his honorable friend Mr. Pugh, for he thought that the way in which that gentleman had conducted the laborious duties of his office last year must have spoken volumes in his favor. But it was complained outside the House that a member, by accepting such an office as that, to some extent, did injury to his constituents. There was no doubt that, in some respects, the constituents of a member who held office was placed at some disadvantage, though, in other respects, they might derive some advantage. He had come to the conclusion that, on many grounds, it would be preferable to appointing the Chairman of Committees for the duration of Parliament, that that officer should be subject to annual appointment. He did not look upon the question as a party one, nor had he anything to do with what Mr. Pugh had said on the hustings; but inasmuch as that gentleman had held the office for one year, it seemed to him desirable that there should be a change in the appointment.

Mr. BELL said he did not wish to give a silent vote on this question. He differed from the reasons given by the honorable member who spoke last, as to why he would vote for the amendment. That honorable member said he would vote for the amendment, not on party grounds, but for other reasons which he had given. Now, for his own part, he would vote for the amendment purely on party grounds. He had no reason to object to the conduct of Mr. Pugh as Chairman of Committees. While listening to him during the many debates in which his decisions had been called in question, he was unable to recall to recollection any decision that had given him any cause of complaint against the Chairman of Committees. But it might be considered in some degree peculiar, nay, inconsistent, in him, who had for many sessions supported the gentlemen who now occupied the Treasury Benches, suddenly placing himself amongst those who were in opposition, to them, and, as one of that Opposition, coming forward to vote against them on a question that generally greatly interested an Assembly on an occasion like the present. His reason for objecting to those honorable members who now occupied the Treasury Benches was not one of an individual character. It would be inconsistent in him if he were now, after many sessions of adhesion to them as a member of the Government, and also as a private member in Opposition, to attempt to throw any discredit upon them of an individual character. But as a collective body he looked upon them as most objectionable, at this season and at this time. He found them collected together as a Government, formed in a hasty manner, without consideration, and without good effect. He found they had not, in collecting themselves together as a Government, considered the best interests of the country; or endeavored to

form a Government consisting of men who were recognised as leaders in Parliament, and who were likely to secure the support of a majority of Parliament. Therefore, he for one, retired from amongst them, and formed one of the Opposition. It was not for any personal reasons that he retired from amongst them. It was not that he had not received advances from the Government, which should lead his observations to be of a most delicate character with regard to them. He had been asked, and it was the strongest thing he could say in favor of the present Ministry, to take a seat in the Cabinet either with or without a portfolio. But his objection to them was that they had formed themselves into a class, into an anti-squatting Government—without one member of the squatting interest amongst them. He had only one comparison to make in regard to them, and that was that they were inferior to a degree to the Government that preceded them. The Government that preceded them was also a class Government, and represented none but the squatting class. He objected to them mainly on that ground, and he now found that the gentlemen composing the present Government were equally of one class as the previous Government—but of the opposite class. The members of the present Government were bound together by an anti-squatting propensity. If he had had any doubt as to whether he should support them, it would have been all wiped away by the speech of the honorable the Secretary for Public Lands, a short time ago, at Gympie. Instead of taking those broad views which so prominent a statesman should have taken in respect to public questions, the honorable gentleman told the people at Gympie, that in New South Wales, and in Queensland, and in every position he had held, he found himself obtaining the indulgence of the people when most opposing the squatting interest—that he had received the share of public favor he had hitherto possessed on those grounds, and that he now put himself forward as the opponent of that class. Now, he would ask, were those the grounds upon which a member of the Government and a leading statesman in this colony should put himself forward. That such opinions should guide the governing body in this House, or would receive the support of the country, the result of the voting that day and throughout the session would shew would not be the case. Perhaps it would be told to him that party spirit should govern the party politics of a Government in such a colony as this, and he might even be referred, for example, to the position parties took in England. But there were no grounds whatever for comparison. There were no strong party ties in this colony; and if they did exist, it should be the object of leading men to put an end to them; but they had been aided and abetted by the speech of the honorable the Secretary for Public Lands

at Gympie recently. He would not allude to the election speeches of the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, because strong as those speeches were of a class character, it was not on that ground, or upon the grounds of those speeches he opposed him on the present occasion; but he trusted the effect of the Opposition which he would add his vote to on this and on future occasions, would help to bring about what last session he said he would like to see—and that was that the Treasury benches should not be occupied by the representatives of either one class or another. In this country there was a tide and a time for all classes, and it should be the endeavor of gentlemen who aspired to leading positions in respect to public affairs, to rise above those party and paltry affairs that might be calculated to catch votes, or please the populace or a number of diggers at Gympie. But those were not the views that should be enunciated in the House. He should for his own part be glad to see even a dead-lock, if it would have the effect of reconstructing parties and bringing about a strong Government. It was time that leading members should set their faces against the promotion of party spirit and party warfare, which had proved detrimental to the public interest, not only in this but also in the other Australian colonies, and which he had hoped they might have had the good sense to have evaded here. He would not further occupy the time of the House, but would merely repeat his intention of supporting the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said, he would not have spoken on the question before the House, but for the remarks which had just been made by the honorable member who last addressed the House. It had been sought to represent the question as a party one, but he denied that it was so, for it made not the slightest difference to the Government who was elected Chairman of Committees, but he was certainly astonished when the honorable gentleman who had just spoken, gave his opposition to the Government as the ground on which he intended to vote against the appointment of the gentleman they now proposed as chairman. It should be remembered that Mr. Pugh, when elected on a previous occasion, was by no means supported by those gentlemen who composed the present Government, but that he was then brought forward by those gentlemen who now opposed him. With reference to what fell from the honorable member respecting himself, he certainly deplored that the honorable member should have made such observations, which were the result no doubt of misapprehension. The honorable member had accused him of raising the cry of class against class, when on a recent occasion he addressed a public meeting at Gympie. Now, he most emphatically denied having done anything of the kind, for his object was altogether otherwise.

It was in the course of speaking against class legislation, that he made certain remarks which had caught the honorable member's attention, but which he had altogether misconstrued. So far from being an advocate of class legislation, he would willingly aid to the utmost of his power to put down anything of the kind; or to keep it from obtaining existence, either in the matter of representation or of legislation. With regard to the motion before the House, if Mr. Thompson had been brought forward, and Mr. Pugh in opposition to him, neither gentlemen having before filled the chair, he should have voted for Mr. Thompson; but in this case, one of the gentlemen had filled the chair, and that circumstance gave him a right to be preferred on the occasion of a fresh election to fill the office.

Mr. PALMER said he begged leave to raise his voice against the latter part of the speech of the honorable member who had just sat down. He could not admit that any honorable member possessed a hereditary right to the position of Chairman of Committees because he had on some former occasion filled that office. He must deny that position most emphatically. His principal object in rising was, to refer to the question put by the honorable member for the Western Downs, with respect to the payment of salaries to the Speaker and to the Chairman of Committees during a dissolution. The honorable member would find in the Votes and Proceedings, number sixty, second session of 1867, that on the motion of the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie, the following resolution was agreed to:—

"That the Government be authorised to pay to the honorable the Speaker the unexpended balance of the vote for the office of 'Speaker' for the current year, which accrued between the dissolution of the House on the 29th May last and the re-election of Mr. Elliott, on the 6th August following, and that the same authority be held to apply to the late Chairman of Committees."

Upon that resolution, salary was paid to the Speaker and to Mr. Coxen. He was not prepared to defend the payment of salary to gentlemen who were not, at the time, members of the House, but, as the matter did not come within his range of official duty, he did not make any particular inquiries about it. However, the honorable member would see that the resolution he had read gave a certain authority for the payment being made; and, as honorable members were aware, it was open to the Parliament to deal as they might think fit with unexpended balances. As to the motion before the House, he had no hesitation in stating how he intended to vote on the present occasion. He was going to vote against the Ministry, as he wished to shew them that when they proposed what the Opposition wanted they would be supported by the Opposition, and that when they proposed what the Opposition did not want they would be treated the other way.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL in reply said, that if he had any personal feeling to actuate him on the present occasion, he would certainly have found it very difficult to decide as to which way he should vote. Both the gentlemen who had been proposed were his personal friends; and no gentleman more sincerely possessed his good feelings than the honorable member who had been proposed by his honorable and learned friend opposite. Still, he knew of no valid reason why he should not vote for Mr. Pugh, who on the last occasion was proposed by the honorable gentleman who now opposed him. It was true that the election of Chairman of Committees was sometimes made a question for the trial of party strength, but it could not be made that unless the Government consented to the question being so regarded. He knew of no valid reason why his friend the honorable member for the Northern Downs, Mr. Bell, should decide to measure the strength of parties by so small a question. If there was to be a long continued and bitter struggle, he would prefer to fight it out on a broader and wider question. He declined, therefore, to accept the motion as a party question. But, while he said so, he would at the same time assure his honorable friend that much as he regretted his defection, he would fight the battle with him in the House, and if need be, out of the House, if his honorable friend would make the struggle one of principle. It was quite time that his honorable friend left his former colleagues, as he had said he had done; and, at the same time, he most heartily reciprocated the feeling his honorable friend expressed, when he said that he did not leave from any personal feeling. He believed it was quite true what his honorable friend said, that he feared the present Government collectively, but he had no reason to fear them personally; and he was sure his honorable friend would meet them manfully and pluckily when they wished to meet him. Now, he must repudiate most distinctly the assertion that the Ministry was either a class Ministry, or that it was an anti-squatting Ministry. If it became an anti-squatting Ministry, it would be by the honorable gentleman opposite withdrawing from them, or placing themselves in such an attitude that the Government would not be able to do what they wished for the squatting class. He had the best feeling for every class in the colony, and he repudiated the assertion that this was a class Government. If any one class chose to separate itself from the Government, and refused to extend to the Government that support which was necessary for the carrying of useful measures, let the fault be upon that class, but not upon the Government. How could the present Government be described as a class Government? Without saying a single word against honorable gentlemen who had retired from these benches, he would ask the House to contrast the

formation of the late Government with that of the present. They had, before the present Government, a Ministry composed entirely of squatters, who were still more objectionable, because they had at their disposal the lands of the colony, and at the same time, had a strong interest to do what was wrong. He did not say that they actually would do what was wrong, and would give them credit for the largest patriotism; but, at the same time, it was their interest to act contrary to the interests of the public in connection with the lands. They were mortals, though, if he believed his honorable friend the member for Port Curtis, that gentleman was more than mortal. Of course he spoke only of the influences under which mortals sometimes fell. Now the present Government contained representatives, he might say, of all classes. He himself was a lawyer. The Colonial Secretary had business connections with some honorable members opposite. The Minister for Lands and Works was another lawyer, and the Postmaster-General was a squatter. If his friend had made up his mind to place himself in a hostile attitude to the Government, no doubt he would fight them manfully; but he would not accept the position that the threatened fight was between squatters and non-squatters. That position might be forced upon the Government, but for the present, he entirely repudiated it, as he declined to accept the question before the House as one with a party issue. He wished to see justice done to all; and he hoped, when the struggle came, it would be on a question of principle, and not on so small a question as the one now before the House. The reasons advanced by the honorable and learned member for the Burnett, for voting against Mr. Pugh, were wholly different from those afterwards advanced by the honorable member for the Western Downs, and by the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis. The reasons given by the honorable and learned member, therefore, were not sufficient to justify him in regarding this as a party question. The question before the country at the last general election, was as to whether the country was in favor of the then existing Government or against them, and candidates were called upon to say whether they would support the Government, or do their best to turn them out. Mr. Pugh said he would do his best to turn them out; and if the honorable member was to be punished for giving such a manly expression of his political views, by being deprived of the position he formerly held in the House, he could only say that he very much regretted it. He did not believe his friend the honorable member for the Northern Downs, would feel justified in voting as he proposed to do; but for his own part he would of course vote for the motion, though he believed that, if the House determined to elect his friend Mr. Thompson, they would have a chairman who would give the most careful

attention to the duties of the office, and deal fairly with respect to all questions he might be called upon to decide.

The question was then put, that the words "T. P. Pugh, Esquire," proposed to be omitted stand part of the question, and the House divided as follows:—

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Ayes, 10. | Noes, 14. |
| Mr. Fraser | Mr. A. Hodgson |
| " Thornton | " S. Hodgson |
| " Murphy | " Taylor |
| " Jordan | " Bell |
| Dr. O'Doherty | " Ramsay |
| Mr. Atkin | " Mackenzie |
| " Williams | " Walsh |
| " Macalister | " Royds |
| " Lilley | " Pring |
| " Stephens | " Francis |
| | " Forbes |
| | " G. Thorne |
| | " Lamb |
| | " Palmer |

The amendment was then put and agreed to without a division.

VOTE OF CREDIT—SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved,—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended, as will admit of the carriage, in one day, through the Committees of Supply, and Ways and Means, of a Vote of Credit for the year 1869.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved,—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1869.

The Hon. R. PRING said he deemed that the motion afforded him a fitting opportunity for offering a few remarks upon the present position of the Government, the position of the members of the late Government, and the position of the House in general. He was not led or induced, yesterday, to make any remarks, because he thought that the statement made by the honorable the Attorney-General and Premier was a mere statement of his intended policy; and, as no motion was before the House, it was not the proper time or place for him to speak upon that subject. But, as there was now a motion for going into Committee of Supply, which was intimately connected with the business of the Government, he should express his own ideas on the present state of affairs, and, also, inform the House on the course of conduct he intended to pursue—which he should do without any fear or hesitation whatever. The late Government had been deposed from office for various alleged reasons, none of which could be substantiated or were likely to be: they were shadowy reasons, simply assigned by a certain party for the purpose of placing themselves upon the Treasury benches. The first charge—not made in the House, where the members of the late Government would have an opportunity of defending themselves—had been proved to be wholly unfounded, not only by the solemn declaration of the honorable member for the Warrégo, whose

character had been impugned by it, but also by the candid admission of the present Minister for Public Lands. Such conduct on the part of members of a Government must necessarily tend to great distrust of them by all well-thinking people. Why should it be necessary for a member of the present Government to bolster up his own position by asserting that to be true which he was not in a position to prove? What could have induced him to make such allegations, he (Mr. Pring) could not understand, unless the Minister endeavored by such means to apologise for the presence of the Government in the Assembly, and for himself as their representative, in the place in which he had made the charge referred to. All the other reasons assigned for the deposition of the late Government were equally shadowy. The charges made by the Premier, when he addressed the small boys outside the Union Hotel, at his nomination, and those made by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, at South Brisbane, would be equally valueless. He (Mr. Pring) hoped those charges would be brought forward in a specific way, in the House, in order that the members of the late Government might have a chance of defending themselves, there. The Government had access to all the papers, and they should bring forward their charges in a tangible shape, so that they could be answered. If they did that, they would be answered in the same way, in the same truthful manner, as the charge made against the honorable member for the Warrego had been met, yesterday. If the honorable the Minister for Public Lands had not thought fit to make the *amende*, the way in which the honorable member for Warrego spoke would have carried conviction to any man's mind that the truth was on his side. What conclusion had he (Mr. Pring) come to? That the present Ministry had obtained their seats on false pretences. Was he to be told that such language was unparliamentary? It was the language used by the honorable the Premier over and over again. The false pretences on which the Government had obtained office were apparent to the country. The late Government had been taunted with having no policy, while the Opposition insisted that they had one, although all the energetic endeavours of the honorable member for Rockhampton could not extract it. It had not been extracted, and could not now be, because they had not a policy then, and, as the Government, they had not one now. Undoubtedly, there had been a certain amount of dissatisfaction against the late Government collectively; but there were honorable members who, while they objected to that Government, objected rather more strongly to a Government composed as the present was. Indeed, the late Opposition had led the House to believe that they would form a party; but it was pretty clear that there was no party. At the time the want of confidence

motion was carried they did not contemplate the formation of a cabinet. They had to run about at the corners of the streets to obtain the material. Even the very honorable gentleman who moved the vote of want of confidence was so astonished that he could not undertake the burden and responsibility. According to the Premier, his active assistance was sought, just as if his assistance had not been sought long before and a reply given. He thought his weight in the country would assist in stopping party disputes. Why, the experience of this afternoon showed that they were not stopped—that they would be stronger and more violent than ever;—and to much better purpose. It was, no doubt, a very pretty picture to contemplate: the Premier stepping forward, for the benefit of the country—*pro patria amore*—at a great personal sacrifice, and immense loss of practice and professional pay—poor fellow!—to put an end to all party disputes! But it did not “go down” with him. He (Mr. Pring) knew the value of such *nisi prius* practices too well to be deceived by them. It would have been more to the purpose had the honorable gentleman sacrificed himself to the country and not accepted the position at all. He confessed that when the vote of want of confidence was moved, the position of the House was such, that the public business could not be carried on with any chance of success; therefore he did agree with his colleagues upon a resignation, in the hope and belief that a new Ministry would be formed, commanding a large majority, comprising members from both sides of the House. If the late Ministry had adopted the tactics which the present Premier seemed to wish to adopt, they might have acted otherwise. They did not resign with the idea that a weaker Ministry would take their places—a Ministry which could not command a majority on the first vital question brought before the House. It was all very well for the honorable the Attorney-General to say that he did not regard the matter which had just been decided as a party question; but he must know that it was one of the questions on which party battles were fought. He would not take the defeat; but, as was told him before, by himself, the Premier would not resign until he was turned out, “neck and crop.” When the honorable gentleman was hounding the poor honorable member for Rockhampton—he (Mr. Pring) did not know whether it was by putting salt on his tail, or what mode he had of treating an intractable member—he stated, as reported in *Hansard*—

The SPEAKER called the honorable member for Burnett to order. He could not quote a speech made in the same session.

The Hon. R. PRING said he thought he could not quote from a newspaper report; but that he could quote from *Hansard*.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE: Not in the same session.

The Hon. R. PRING learned that to his surprise. However, he bowed to the Speaker's ruling. If he could not quote the honorable the Attorney-General's words—he wished he could, for they were telling—he would state the substance: that if the House unmistakably passed a vote of want of confidence in the members sitting on the Treasury benches, it was the duty of those members to retire; it was acting improperly to attempt to hold office against the express wish of the House. The honorable gentleman had used much stronger language, in his own happy way. And, if such was his view, at that time, he could not have altered since. As yet, however, he was quite right in not accepting the defeat of the Ministry on small matters. He (Mr. Pring) did not argue that the appointment of the Chairman of Committees was a party question, but he thought it was always considered one. He maintained that a Government, to be stable, ought to be sufficiently strong to command a majority on any question they might think fit to bring before the House; and certainly they ought to be in a position to carry the man they proposed as the Chairman of Committees. The defeat they had sustained shewed that they were not so strong as they thought.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Hear, hear.

THE Hon. R. PRING: It shewed that the House would not stand the sort of Government at present in existence. It would be better for a dead-lock to occur, if the result was the formation of a Government which would possess the confidence of a good majority in the House and represent all interests in the community. The present Government were one-sided, actuated by an ill-disguised hatred of the most influential class in the colony; and he, for one, would never rest until he saw the present Ministry—shattered! He had no desire to see the late Ministry return to office, but he was prepared to support a Ministry which represented every class, and would do justice to every class. The Government of this country would have to be reconstructed. He could remember the time when the Attorney-General's words would lead him to the conclusion that the honorable gentleman would not support the pastoral interest at all, nor take advice from the squatters; but now that that interest was nearly defunct, he promised to do something for it. However, it was high time that the Government of Queensland should be good—when those party squabbles which had existed so long should come to an end. It was perfectly sickening to see what was going on in another colony, where one Ministry was always going out and another coming in. He would only be content when he saw a strong Government representing the different classes of the community, or rather those different classes represented by able men. When that was secured he would be satisfied, whether he had the fortune, or misfortune, of

being in the lot. Such a Government ought to be and would be formed. It was not a question whether the present Government produced a particular kind of policy or not, but whether they were a real working Government. It was during the recess, when the money had to be spent without the supervision of Parliament, that the mischief was done, and when the interests of every class required to be represented in the Cabinet, so that, after mature discussion, that might be carried out which was most beneficial for the interests of all. It was then that class legislation "worked the oracle." A Cabinet Council, which constituted a Government, ought to stand in the position of a number of delegates sent from the different classes of the community to watch their interests in the management of the general Government of the colony, just as much as delegates of different colonies who were sent to one given place to watch the interests of each colony on questions affecting the whole.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: No, no.

THE Hon. R. PRING: It might not be always possible to get every class represented; but it was, at all events, possible to have in the Government some representative of the most influential class in the colony. He could not understand why there had been any difficulty about the matter; for at the time the late Government left office there was ample material for carrying out the principal which he advocated. The opportunity was not seized, and he was afraid the late Opposition never intended to attempt anything of the kind; believing themselves strong enough to carry on, with the help of those who had assisted the late Government, and who might be induced to assist the new one rather than waste time further. If the House should not get on better this session than last, some radical change was necessary. He thought there had scarcely ever been a Government in this colony possessing the confidence of the people. It was said the late Government had no policy. What policy had the present Government? Why, a policy not differing, as far as he could understand, from that of the late Government. If any one would take the trouble to read the speech of His Excellency the Governor, upon the opening of the session, it would be found that it indicated a policy identical with that sketched by the Premier yesterday. There was to be an Additional Members Bill, said the policy of Mr. Mackenzie: so, also, said the Premier, yesterday. The late Premier had said it would be necessary to introduce an Immigration Bill: so said the present Premier. A Re-distribution of Electorates Bill was to be introduced as early as possible: so, also, said the Premier yesterday.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No, no. Not in the same session.

THE Hon. R. PRING: Provision was to be made as to the gold fields: so said the Premier

yesterday. Provincial Councils!—not a word about that subject from the Premier, because it was dangerous ground! The present Premier said nothing about it. As to the relief of the pastoral tenants, the late Premier did understand it: the present did not. The policy of the late Government was a trifle superior to that of the present Government. True, the late Opposition had said the late Government policy was a policy in name only. They had not given them time for the introduction of Bills. All he could say of the policy of the present Government, was, that they had only strung together the Bills of Mr. Mackenzie which they had found in the departments—a policy ready “cut and dried” for them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he had not read a single one of the Bills—except that of the honorable member for Maryborough.

The Hon. R. PRING: They would have improved him, if the honorable member had read them. He was surprised that a gentleman of such talent should not have read them. The honorable gentleman had, also, taken occasion to say, elsewhere, that the late Government had copied all their Bills from South Australia; yet, now, he said he never read one of them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He had said that half of their legislation had been so taken; and he still said so. The honorable member knew it.

The Hon. R. PRING did not believe there was a Bill prepared by the late Government taken from South Australia. He was certain, now, that the honorable the Premier did not know what he said—he had not read the Bills. He was astonished, next, to find that the honorable the Colonial Secretary, when addressing the South Brisbaneites, recommended a South Australian measure. But from the Ministerial statement, made yesterday, it would appear that the policy of the present Government, such as it was, was drawn—by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, from New Zealand; by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, from South Australia; and by the honorable the Attorney-General, from Canada; and the Postmaster-General, he supposed, from nowhere. For a Provincial Councils Bill, the Premier looked to Canada; and for a gold fields policy, he relied on Victoria. The very regulations for the gold fields which were laid on the table, yesterday, had been prepared by the late Government to afford the miners temporary relief, until more extended legislative action could be taken. It was alleged that the late Government had been guilty of disgraceful management with respect to the gold fields. The honorable the Minister for Lands and Works had been feted at Gympie, and taken down shafts—from which he (Mr. Pring) would not have cared had he never come up—yet he did not come forward with any gold fields policy; nor was he able to shew where the late Government had failed in their duty to the gold fields. The present

Government had no policy of their own, and they asked for time to enable them to bring down that which they found in the Bills prepared by the late Government. He durst say, a stroke of the pen here and there, and a proviso introduced at the end of a clause, would be made to change those measures;—but he would be able to recognise them. He knew them all. Having stopped short, after a little pressing, the honorable the Attorney-General had gone into the future policy of his Government. He had got an Insolvency Bill from the merchants. Was that his policy? It was the policy of the late Government, accepted from influential merchants, and recognised as a measure to be introduced and supported by them. Perhaps the present Government were going to do the same? Honorable members who were guilty of such conduct as theirs, could not expect his support. The Premier, in his statement, had gone into minor matters, which he (Mr. Pring) did not consider belonged to a Government policy. Such was the question of water supply. It might be discussed by-and-by; but, he thought, if provincial or district councils were to be established, they could provide their own water. That portion of the statement was a jumble altogether. The Premier had dived into education. He was a great man, indeed, on that subject!—very interested in it! Education was a very good thing; but it required a very great deal of consideration in the House. Did the honorable gentleman mean the education of every man, woman, and child? He, Mr. Pring, agreed with what the honorable gentleman had said about the Trustees of Public Lands Act; but he thought the measure had been introduced by the honorable gentleman himself—.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No;—by the honorable member, himself, and his colleagues.

The Hon. R. PRING: At all events, he was inclined to agree with the honorable gentleman, that when land was put in trust for public purposes, the trustees should not be empowered to mortgage it. No right to sell was given; but the power to mortgage, which had been given, had overridden every safeguard, and upset trusts. There was a portion of the Premier's statement which he had not been prepared for; that referring to the Pastoral Relief Bill. He did not expect that, when an honorable member undertook to form a Ministry and to lead a party, he should be the first to ask his opponents to assist him. He had understood the honorable member to say that he did not know much about pastoral matters, but that he would ask one or two honorable members connected with the pastoral interest to come forward and assist the Government to draft a measure for the purpose of affording the pastoral tenants the relief they required. That was not conduct consistent with the head of the Government fronting a strong Opposition. He (Mr. Pring) objected to the

present Government because they had no stake in the country. Where were their broad acres and money investments in the colony? What was to prevent any one of them from "up stick and away," to-morrow? Men in that position were not fit to rule the colony for nine months out of the twelve, with no check upon them. Let those men whose interest was in the colony, whose money was invested here, be at the head of affairs.

AN HON. MEMBER: Where is yours?

THE HON. R. PRING: Unfortunately he had none to invest. Where was the monied interest—where was the mercantile interest—represented in the present Government? Where were their broad acres?—where was their stake in the country? He said the monied classes were unrepresented; the wealth of the colony was not represented, in any way whatever, in the Government. There should be some one in the councils of the colony to stand up for the producing resources of Queensland. He was not saying anything disrespectful of the members of the Government;—he was speaking as a politician. Personally, he was good friends with all of them; but he spoke politically, and he spoke what he believed to be perfectly correct. He did not speak as the head of a party, but as a representative of the people—as a representative of a pastoral district. He should like to know what the present Government knew of the districts of Leichhardt, Wide Bay, and Burnett, or of Maryborough—the great central districts of the colony? He wanted to see some one in the Government of practical ability, whose services would be of avail in rescuing the fallen fortunes of the squatting class. There was no one in the Government capable of rendering such services. There was not, heretofore, a Government who had not been able to bring some knowledge and experience to bear upon that important subject. He said a Government in which the great pastoral and agricultural interests of the country were unrepresented ought not to be allowed to exist. He was exceedingly anxious that those interests should be taken care of. Even if he were to take the assurance of the Attorney-General that the pastoral tenants would be taken care of, the present Government were not the men who should do it. They might be all good men individually, but they were not, as a whole, the men that ever could or ever would be a good Government.

MR. THOMPSON said he would take the present opportunity to thank the House most sincerely for the high compliment paid him in electing him Chairman of Committees. It was a compliment he did not expect, and one which had taken him by surprise, though it was none the less grateful to him on that account. He had no words to express his sense of the compliment paid him. He wished, however, to make a few remarks with reference to his acceptance of the office. The matter was brought to his attention so suddenly, and he had had so little time to

consider it, that he had no opportunity of ascertaining whether he should be able to perform his duties satisfactorily. He would, however, only retain office so long as he could do so; and he promised to do his best for their faithful and efficient discharge. It might be that circumstances would arise which would prevent his continuing in office, and he craved the indulgence of the House in case it might at a future time become necessary for him to resign. He did not know until a few moments before the House met that he was to be proposed. The session would not, he understood, be a long one, and during the month's recess that was about to take place, he would have an opportunity of considering the matter; and if it was not discourteous on his part he should wish the House to allow him that indulgence.

MR. FRANCIS wished to say a few words on the present position of affairs, and what seemed to him was his duty in the House in the present position of parties. Once for all, he would be sorry, indeed, to have it supposed that because he for a time sat on the Opposition side of the House, he in any sense identified himself with the late Government. And, in reference to what had been said by the honorable member who last spoke, he held that that Government had proved themselves almost as incapable and unworthy as it was possible for a Government to be; simply because they had had no policy to avow—no policy which was suited to the condition of the country, and which they had the courage to avow. In a political sense, they had acted dishonestly, inasmuch as they sought the interest of one class, while professedly they were the servants of all. He had no sympathy, at all, with the late Government. The House, however, had not to consider the merits or demerits of the late Government; but, what could be said of the gentlemen who now occupied the Treasury benches? If there was one animal in the world which he detested, it was a rat; and, therefore, he felt rather sore and uncomfortable in the position he had been called upon to occupy; and he had no doubt the same feeling animated the mind of the honorable member for Northern Downs, when he gave utterance to his opinions, a short time before. Apparently they had deserted their party; but, in reality, their party had deserted them—deserted those principles which were freely maintained during last year—and had taken to their bosom gentlemen who gave up their principles and went over to the enemy's camp. By-and-bye, it would be seen that he and the honorable member for Northern Downs were the consistent men, and that the others had been inconsistent. It was not worth his while to refer to the insinuations thrown out, as to what must necessarily be one of the motives which had induced him to adopt the

course he had taken. He was sorry to see that even the honorable the Attorney-General did not think it beneath him to cast about the same insinuations, which might be expected from men outside, but which he was sorry to find coming from such a quarter—namely, that he and the honorable member for Northern Downs could only have been acting from a sense of injury in having been left out of the arrangements of the new Government. He scorned to reply to such insinuations, but would simply say, that the men he looked up to as models in political life, had never been distinguished for their love of office, or known to have much care for such things: they had other and higher aims. He had now said all he ever intended to say on this question. He wished to say something, however, as to the present position of affairs, and the claims of the Government upon the support of the House. It was much to be regretted that the statement of the Premier agreed so little with the declaration made by a member of the Government in another place, when the latter stated that it was their intention to make known a decided policy. For his life, he could not discover, with the best and most friendly intentions towards the Government, any signs of a decided policy. It was well known that he (Mr. Francis) was for a decided policy, and ever had been. If the Government were for practical measures, such as they themselves had acknowledged the position of the country demanded, and if they had the manliness to state their intention to bring such measures forward, they should have his thorough support. He was sorry to say they had not shown that they had the courage to do so. It was notorious that the expenditure of the colony was increasing beyond belief. No one defended it in private. The members of the present Ministry had been advocates of economy, while in Opposition, but now they were in power, had they the courage to do away with all unnecessary expenditure? Were they for such a policy still? He thought the House would agree with him that one in every three men in the public service, at this moment, was unnecessary, and might be dispensed with. Had the Government the courage to adopt such a policy as that? But there was another subject which he regarded as more serious even than the enormous expenditure. He was said to be perfectly insane about the Land Act, but he, nevertheless, wanted to know what the Government meant to do about that Act? The Premier had stated in public, that in his opinion there was not a clause in that Act which did not require amendment, and the Minister for Lands and Works had spoken repeatedly during its passage through the House in condemnation of that measure. He wanted to know whether—acknowledging those facts, which indeed were patent to all, as to the working of the Act—the Government would say that such condemnation should go no further? He was

not prepared at the moment with the facts and figures necessary to show how utterly ruinous in its character the Land Act was; but he hoped to have another opportunity of addressing the House on the subject. It was a matter of notoriety that the best lands of the colony were being thrown away for an old song; and that it cost more to work the Act than the revenue derived under it. The honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, made a decided hit, last year, when he said that it would be easy to sell some four millions of the best lands of the colony, and so extinguish the public debt.

Mr. RAMSAY: He had said he thought it would be very desirable, but he did not say it would be an easy thing to accomplish.

Mr. FRANCIS: The unequalled public estate, as it was called, of the colony, had been pledged as security for the enormous loans for immigration and railway purposes, and yet the lands were being thrown away. If, by parting with the lands, the encumbrance of the public debt was lessened, he would not object; but the effect of the Land Act was merely to lessen the security to the public creditor, without decreasing the burden of debt. The policy of the Land Act was a policy of repudiation, and unworthy of the favorable consideration of any statesman. In saying this, he (Mr. Francis) believed he was expressing the opinion held by the present Government. Every acre of land acquired before the present Act came into operation, every description of real property, had been lessened in value, by one-half, since that Act came into operation. This was a most serious business, and he could not, for the life of him, consent to its consideration being delayed to suit the necessities of any party. The question must be dealt with. Why, in the name of goodness, were there not among them men who were competent, and had the courage, to deal with it? The Act put a premium upon fraud, false swearing, rascality, and sending in false declarations as to the value of land. The absurd arrangements as to classification put it in the power of any dishonest man to rob the State; and he (Mr. Francis) had yet to learn that robbing the State was a different thing, morally, from robbing a private person. There were found persons in the most obscure places taking up free selections. Were the Government prepared to deal with those matters in a manner suited to their necessities?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hear, hear.

Mr. FRANCIS: Considering that they had taken to their bosom the honorable members for Kennedy and Rockhampton, to whose statesmanship the country was indebted for that precious measure, he could not but stand in doubt as to what course the Government would take with reference to the Land Act. When he considered the origin of the Government he could not see any other course open to him than to stand aloof. His ideas

and knowledge of parliamentary practice were derived from observation of what took place in the English House of Commons. He never read or heard of a Government formed in the way in which the present Government had been. It was perfectly without precedent, and therefore parliamentary rules as to the proceedings of private members no longer held good, and every man must, therefore, chalk out for himself the course which, to his judgment, seemed fit. He did not know how far he was justified in referring to the formation of the Government, but he believed the compact between the two high contracting parties—the late Opposition and the honorable members for Kennedy and Rockhampton—had been referred to in the House; he knew that the honorable member for the Kennedy attached very much importance to that compact, and had taken great pains with its production; he knew that the honorable member believed that there was something very definitely and distinctly specified about Provincial Councils in that document. In vindication of his conduct in seeming to desert his old friends, he must state that he looked with the same abhorrence upon a proposed Provincial Councils Act, as he understood it, as he did upon the Land Act, as he understood that. He would be no party to jockeying or cajoling the House into that measure under any compact. No man more heartily admired local self-government than he did, and he would be in favor of something like that sketched out by the Premier, yesterday; but there was no knowing whether that was intended, or whether every tradition of party was to be sacrificed and every principle abandoned that ought to guide the Government as public men. He would only support the Government in such measures as, in his own opinion, were conducive to the interests of the colony. Notwithstanding that they were entitled to no support from him, if the Government would use the present opportunity wisely and well, and would stand by the principles which the leading members of their party had professed, mindful not of their strength or weakness; not counting heads, or considering whether such and such a measure was popular or unpopular, but always ready to do what was right; they should have his support. And, not only would they have what at present he was afraid they very much wanted—their own self-respect—but they would prove themselves entitled to the respect of the community.

Mr. WALSH said, that after the very able speeches which had been made that evening by members of the Opposition, the House had a right to expect that the Government would not only enunciate their policy, but also make some attempt to justify the charges they had hurled against the late Ministry. He did not suppose that, whatever the delinquencies of the present Government were, the House would be justified in with-

holding the necessary vote for carrying on the Government of the country; but until they replied to the charges brought against them, and attempted to substantiate those they had brought against their opponents, he, for one, should be prepared to cut down that vote to the minimum amount. He had often raised his voice against the outcry that the Government of the day had no defined policy, but he would ask any conscientious member of the House, whether the present Ministry had, up to this time, shewn any policy at all which justified them in ousting the late Government, and denouncing them in the terms they had done. He emphatically declared that they had not. Gross charges had been brought against the late Government, charges of incompetence, dishonesty, and all sorts of crimes by the present occupants of office, when they were in Opposition, and repeated by them during the first flush of their victory. Some very grave statements in reference to acts alleged to have been perpetrated by the late Government had been made in another place, and the Government must have considered the Postmaster-General justified in making those statements, or he would never have made them; it was a part of their policy to attempt to vilify their opponents. Now with the exception of a sort of wishy-washy attempt on the previous evening, no defence of this line of conduct had been offered, and he affirmed that before the House could place confidence in the present Ministry, they were bound to call upon them to substantiate their own objections,—to shew that they had a policy of their own and that they were better men than those they had turned out, and that they could be trusted with two months' supplies. He should be glad to be convinced that they were, but he did not think that the little which had been said by the Premier the night before, was sufficient to justify the House in granting it to them. The proposition that the House should adjourn till the 19th January, and then after a few days to April or May, appeared to him to want the stamp of genuineness. He could not feel that the Ministry really intended this. ("Oh yes," from the Government Benches.) He was glad to hear it, but he must say the proposition was, nevertheless, one of the most extraordinary he had ever heard. The very men who were always taunting their opponents with having no policy, now actually asked for two separate sessions, both to take place within three or six months, and asked the House to set to work during both these sessions to tinker up the constitution of the country. He could not conceive that the constitution of the colony could be looked upon as such a plaything as to be treated in this way. Then again, was it not a most insidious suggestion that an addition should be made in January to the number of members in the House, in order to make a re-distribution of electorates in April. Why

did not the Government say what that re-distribution was to be, so that honorable members might have time to consider such important changes; why did they not at once let the House know that they intended to strengthen the South at the expense of the North? The House, he maintained, ought to know what the Government wanted from them on the 19th January, that they might have time to ponder over it. He thought he had never listened to a more unhappy announcement—especially from a Government who had continually taunted their predecessors with having no policy, nor brains to carry out a policy. Why did they not, when they came into office, and found all the necessities they required ready to their hand, come forward and say to the out-going Government—“We find that you had a policy prepared, and that you are much better men than we expected.” Then again, was it not a lamentable exposition of weakness on the part of the Premier, on the previous day, to ask some squatting member to come forward and lend his assistance in dealing with the relief of the pastoral tenants of the Crown. The present Ministry had challenged the votes of squatters when the Land Bill was before the House; they had even alluded to their voting on the question as unbecoming men of principle, and yet they now asked those very men to assist them in passing a measure in which their interests were as vitally concerned as they were in the Land Bill. When the House met, he had expected to hear a distinct line of policy—some bold schemes or startling measures—but all he had heard was a cry about the atrocious crimes of their predecessors with regard to the Land Bill. The first thing the Minister for Lands should have done when the House met the previous day, was to point out where the mismanagement of his predecessor had existed. It would be most unseemly on the part of the Government to remain silent, especially after the speeches of the honorable member for Dalby, and the honorable member for East Moreton. The members of the present Government had practically denounced the Land Bill throughout, but had they shown any defined policy in connection with that Bill? No; and he could tell them that so long as they were associated with the honorable member for Kennedy, they would not dare to alter it. He was not disposed to grant the Ministry—or indeed any Ministry—any large sum of money, who would not undertake to make some radical alteration in that Bill. Let the Government, at any rate, give the House some assurance that they would endeavor to amend an Act which made a man almost perjure himself before he could obtain a piece of land—a Bill which gave rise to so much false swearing, so much impersonation, so much wickedness and fraud. No Government, he repeated, should have his support who did not tackle that iniquitous measure. He thought he had said enough to shew that it

was inadvisable to endow the Government with larger powers than were absolutely necessary. He should like to receive from them some absolute pledge that the House would meet again on the 19th January next; and when they did meet, unless the Government came forward with some distinct and defined policy, he should offer them his determined opposition. He hoped they would give the House some proof that they merited confidence; but he had yet to learn, speaking politically, that the present occupants of office were as good men as those they had displaced.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said the honorable member for Maryborough had denounced the Ministry as having no policy, but the honorable gentleman failed to allow them time to state their policy. They did not ask for more forbearance than had been accorded their predecessors, who entered office in a very extraordinary manner, and were permitted to hold it for fifteen months, during which time they were assisted by the then Opposition to pass their measures. The honorable member had made a long speech, but he appeared to have had no other object except to speak against time, and to bring out certain generic terms which were peculiar to him. That honorable member had frequently denounced the Land Bill, but in the course of all his opposition to it, he had never heard him make one practical suggestion in connection with it. For his part he had never approved of the Bill, and his opinions on the subject were as strong as ever. He had never approved of deferred payments, and he had always been in favor of a fixed price being put upon the land instead of a sliding scale, though he admitted that he was ready to give way to a certain extent to public opinion. The House had been told that not only had the Ministry no direct opinion on the Land Bill, but that they did not possess a financial policy. He contended they had. They went in for retrenchment, and they could produce practical results of it already. If they were allowed a short time, they would be found to have made great progress towards bringing the expenditure considerably within the revenue of the colony. It was not intended to have two sessions during the present year; what was asked for was an adjournment until January 19th, when the Ministry would state their policy, and ask the House for a further adjournment until April or May next, at which time the proposed measures could be freely discussed. The short period they had been in office rendered it impossible for them to prepare all the Bills they intended to submit to the House. He could not see that there was anything in the speech of his honorable colleague to call for the denunciations which had been made against the Government, by the honorable member for Maryborough. The honorable member for East Moreton had referred to the proposed Provincial Councils Bill, and

had stated that if the Government went in for Provincial Councils, he should oppose them. But it all depended upon what was meant by the term, Provincial Councils. If he remembered aright, a Bill of that kind was passed by the House some eight years ago, and he was also aware that a Bill was prepared by the late Government to establish Provincial Councils. It was, therefore, too much to denounce the present Government, in ignorance of the merits or demerits of the Bill they proposed to introduce. He thought the honorable member for Maryborough had been unfortunate in his reference to the speech of the honorable Premier on the previous day. He was not aware that his honorable colleague, in referring to the Pastoral Tenants Relief Bill, had begged the squatting members to assist him with it, and he had yet to learn that because a class of persons were directly interested in a particular measure, they were thereby precluded from offering any suggestions on the subject. He had no desire to detain the House; in fact there was no question before it except to go into Committee of Supply, and it was the first time he had ever known the occasion taken advantage of to attack a Government who had barely taken their seats. Surely the Government were entitled to a little more forbearance than the honorable member for Maryborough seemed willing to give them, and their request, which was not an unreasonable one, might be granted. They asked only for two months' supplies, and an adjournment to the 19th January. What was there unreasonable in that? It was in strict accordance with even the principles of the honorable member himself, that the Government should not spend money without authority, and yet while the honorable member objected to give the Government two months' supplies, he appeared to expect that they should bring forward and dispose of several important measures in the meantime. He thought honorable members would best consult their dignity, unless they intended to turn out the Government, by voting them supplies for at least one-sixth of the year. The Government, unless they were expected to go into detail, had disclosed their policy as much as either the House or the country could reasonably ask for.

Mr. PALMER said he had no doubt the honorable member who had just sat down had disclosed all the policy which the Government had, and that was none at all, except what they had obtained from the late Ministry. Their only policy was to keep their seats. There was one portion of the speech of the honorable member for Maryborough which had been entirely passed over, and that was the part in which he had referred to the charges made on the hustings against the members of the late Government by the present holders of office. Having made those charges they were bound to substantiate them.

He challenged them to do so; he challenged them to point out one single instance in support of those charges, and more especially with reference to the Land Act. No members of the late Government had selected land on the Downs, or attempted to pay for it with non-transferable land orders. Could the present Government say as much? That question was not dealt with it; there had been a good many selections at Yandilla and elsewhere. He repeated, the Government were bound to shew in what respect their predecessors were corrupt, or if they had made a mistake in bringing forward such charges they were bound to admit it. He defied them to shew that in any one single instance any improper or dishonorable action had been committed in connexion with the Land Act. The Government had made assertions which they could not prove. A good deal had been said by the honorable Secretary for Lands about Provincial Councils, and he had spoken about a Provincial Councils Bill, passed some eight years ago, but that was only an attempt to mislead the House. If the proposed measure at all resembled that Bill it would be in direct opposition to the opinions hitherto expressed by members of the Government. He regretted that the Colonial Treasurer was not in his place, that the House might know what the policy of the Government was. He had had plenty of time to take his seat. Honorable members had been told that the main object of the Government was retrenchment, and that the Government had already retrenched. It was very easy to talk about retrenching, but no one knew better than the honorable member himself the difficulty in carrying out such intentions. In what was the retrenchment to consist? Was it to be comprised in a dash of the pen by which all the police in the outside districts were to be swept off the Estimates, as had been done once before? Or were the salaries of the Civil servants to be cut down, or were the Government going to decimate them, or to knock off every fifth man? He thought the House should have been told in which direction this retrenchment was going to be made. He had considerable doubt whether the Estimates would even be brought forward, for he believed that when the Colonial Treasurer returned and read the speeches of his colleagues he would be quite ready to accept the fate which he (Mr. Palmer) had foretold long ago. The Ministry had, on the hustings, charged their predecessors with maladministration of office, and he now called upon them to prove their statements. Instead of bringing forward these vague general charges of maladministration of the Land Act, let them try a case in the Supreme Court. There were penal clauses in the Act to punish offenders. With respect to a vote of supply, he thought that, after the way the Ministry had shirked every question that had been put to them, with the view of obtaining from them an

explanation of their policy, the House would hardly be warranted in granting a vote for two months. The proper way to deal with them would be to give them only a week's supply at a time, and then something might be got out of them. With the exception of the Provincial Councils Bill, which the House was told would be similar to the one foreshadowed sometime ago, the Government had not stated a word as to what their policy would be.

Mr. A. HODGSON desired to state that his remarks on the previous day in personal explanation were not levelled at all against a member of the present Government in another place, but were levelled particularly against an honorable gentleman who was formerly a member of the Assembly, and who attacked him personally in another place. With respect to the charges made by the honorable gentleman, he felt they were levelled against him and his colleagues collectively; and as the charges referred to matters connected with the Works Department, he, as Minister for Works, felt called upon to repudiate them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS desired to observe that it was most unfair to try and fix him by his allusions to the Provincial Councils Bill. The question as to the extent to which any Bill of the kind would go must be judged of when the Bill was produced.

Mr. PALMER, as a matter of explanation, said he took the whole of the remarks made by the honorable member for the Warrego on the previous day to apply to a statement made by a member of the Ministry in another place. He had had the honor of a seat in the House for some time now, but not sufficiently long to enable him to remember when Mr. Gore was a member of the House. Hence he fell into a mistake.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he had been asked to enter into explanations upon so many subjects, that it would be utterly impossible for him to meet the wishes of honorable members, no matter how desirous he might be of doing so. When his honorable colleague, who now held the office of Postmaster-General, some time ago asked that the House should adjourn to the 19th of January, the House refused to accede to the request, on the ground that if the House adjourned to that time the Government would, during the first few weeks of January, be expending money that was not voted by Parliament. The House, however, agreed to adjourn to the 29th of December. The Government accordingly met the House yesterday for the purpose of asking for a temporary supply, desiring to have such reasonable time granted to them as would enable them so to prepare their measures, as to be able to announce their policy when the House again met. The course of having to enter into a statement of the proposed policy of the Government, before they had had time to prepare their

measures, was a most unusual one—but it was a course that had been forced upon him. He, however, gave a short outline of the policy of the Government, though he must object to the course of demanding of the Government an explanation of all their measures, and their policy, before they had had time to mature and prepare their measures; or a statement of their policy of retrenchment, in the absence of the Treasurer. He hoped the course that had been taken was not an indication of a desire to offer a factious Opposition to the Government. He and his honorable colleagues were entitled, by constitutional practice, to receive a fair trial; and he hoped, that for the sake of the dignity of the House, that degree of consideration would be extended to them. He asked for a very short time to prepare the measures the Government proposed to bring forward; but if a larger supply were granted, it would be all the better for the Opposition, should they succeed in putting the present Government out of office shortly after the House resumed. He did not think it would be considered necessary for him to enter, at present, upon a reply to all the charges that had been levelled against the Government from the other side. The writ certifying the re-election of the Treasurer could not, he understood, reach the honorable the Speaker till about the 18th of the month, and the Treasurer, therefore, could not possibly take his seat sooner than the 19th of the month. The Estimates could not be prepared and submitted for a few days longer; and, as honorable members were aware, it would be impossible to go on with the ordinary business before that time. He, therefore, appealed to the business sense of honorable members to aid him in obtaining what he asked for. A great deal of misunderstanding appeared to have arisen in the minds of honorable members about what had been said in another place. He believed there was no intention on the part of his honorable colleague to level any accusations in another place against the late Government, or against any member of it. He knew that his honorable friend had not the slightest intention to attribute malversation of office to the late Secretary for Works. However, he was not desirous of lengthening the discussion. He hoped the House would now agree to his request, which he thought was a most reasonable one,—to grant supply for two months, and adjourn to the 19th of January.

Mr. A. HODGSON wished to know whether, in the event of the House granting a two months' supply, the honorable the Premier would undertake to meet the House on the 19th of the month. He thought that if the honorable gentleman would give a pledge to that effect a great deal of discussion would be avoided.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he held in his hand a telegram, which he had received in the course of the day, from his honorable

colleague the Treasurer, stating that the return to the writ for the election for the Kennedy could not possibly reach the honorable the Speaker till the 18th of January. That being the case, it would be impossible for his honorable colleague to take his seat before the 19th of January, and something might occur to make it longer. It might be more convenient that the date of adjournment were changed to the 26th of the month. That would only be a week longer, and if honorable members would consent to that, he would give a positive pledge that the House should meet on the 26th of the month.

Mr. WALSH wished to know whether if the House agreed to adjourn to the date now proposed, the Estimates would be laid on the table on the 26th of the month.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, he did not think it would be possible for the honorable the Treasurer to have the Estimates prepared by the 26th. If he could do it he would; but at any rate it would be possible to have them prepared and laid on the table a few days afterwards.

The Hon. R. PRING remarked, that after all the only object the Opposition could have in voting only a month's supply, would be to compel the Government to meet in a month. But he scarcely thought it was fair, to ask the Government to pledge themselves to introduce the Estimates or any other measure, on the first day of the meeting of the House. Indeed it appeared to him to be somewhat questionable, if the Government should lay the Estimates on the table on the first day of sitting.

Mr. FORBES desired to enter his protest against the way in which the time of the House was being wasted, in recriminations and recriminations, and he could not see that any good could result from what had taken place. When the House met again, he did not expect that there would be anything like the measures submitted to them, that had been promised by the honorable the Premier in his explanation on the previous day. Before they could pass an Additional Members Bill, it would be necessary to repeal the two-thirds clause in the Constitution Act. Such a measure would have to be sent home for the Royal Assent, and it could not be returned sooner than in about twelve months. There was no need, therefore, to be in a hurry with an Additional Members Bill; and by the time that the Royal Assent was obtained to the Bill for the repeal of the two-thirds clause, the House would be better able to deal with an Additional Members Bill, and to pass a beneficial measure. With respect to retrenchment, he did not see there would be anything of the kind. The policy of all Governments seemed to be one of extravagance. He did not see that any step had been taken by the Government lately in power to reduce extravagance, nor did it appear to him likely, that any step would be taken by the present Government to reduce extravagance. The land policy initiated by the late Government, had driven

the country back for a period of at least ten years. The extravagant expenditure in connection with public works was a trifling matter in comparison with the great injury that had been inflicted upon the colony by the land policy of the late Government. He did not intend to offer the present Government any factious opposition, and would give them a fair opportunity to bring forward their measures. He believed the greatest difficulty the Government would have to encounter would be with the Provincial Councils Bill. He had given considerable attention to the working of those institutions in New Zealand, and it appeared to him that everywhere they had turned out failures; and even in the matter of Municipal Councils in this colony, the extension of those institutions had proved to be anything but beneficial. All those institutions seemed, as a rule, to imitate the extravagance of the central Government. If the present Government could do without establishing Provincial Councils, and without extending municipal institutions beyond their present limits, they would, in his opinion, confer a very great benefit on the country, and would be deserving of the gratitude of the country. But if they had sold themselves and their principles to others for the purpose of gaining over the support of those who, by their land policy had done more evil already than could be remedied in twenty years—if they had so sold themselves for the sake of obtaining the support of two gentlemen, whose whole aim and effort appeared to be directed to the establishment of Provincial Councils, then they would be unworthy of the support of honorable members on either side of the House. He was disposed to give the Government a fair trial, and he was disposed to extend the time asked for, in order that the public business might be proceeded with in a satisfactory way when the House did meet. But he expected that the honorable the Treasurer would be getting himself so full of his Provincial Councils scheme, with its South, Middle, and Northern Provinces, that, when he came to make his budget speech, he would get into such a state of confusion he would not even be able to understand himself. However, when the House met again, he trusted it would be for the purpose of going on with the business of the country. If the measures they brought forward should be such as might not, in his opinion, be conducive to the welfare of the country, he would consider it to be his duty to oppose them. At present, however, he would not offer them a factious opposition, but would give them a fair trial.

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE said that, when he asked the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to give a distinct pledge that the House would meet on the 19th of January, he alluded to a pledge he was asked to give of a somewhat similar kind. It had been charged against him that he gave a pledge, and did not keep it. But

he did not give a pledge. He only said that it was his intention that the House should meet on a certain day. But the honorable member had given a pledge that the House would meet on the 26th of January, and he was willing to receive it. He did not wish to prolong the debate, or to follow up the speech of the late Attorney-General, or of the late Colonial Secretary; nor would he, on his own account, take any notice of the charges made against the late Government, but that he must assert that the Government, whom he was disposed to give a fair trial to, had themselves to blame for the debate which had taken place in consequence of the reckless charges, made both on the hustings and in Parliament—that was, by a member of the present Government in another place—against the late Government. Now, when honorable members came to notice what took place in another House, he maintained the restriction was confined to private members, or to business generally. It did not apply to the case of a member of the Government, who might be taken to task for what he said, whether it was said in this House or in the other House. A member of the Government was in a different position from a private member, sitting in another place. He was a responsible officer of the Crown; and, therefore, he might be taken to task for what he said in another place. He was present in the other chamber when the charges referred to were made, and therefore he did not require to rely for his information upon a newspaper report; and he must say, that a more outrageous and unprincipled attack he never listened to. It was satisfactory, though strange, to find the honorable the Secretary for Lands rise in his place and repudiate the attacks made by his colleague. He had been greatly struck with the similarity of the speeches of some honorable members at present on the Opposition benches and the speeches of honorable members now on the Treasury benches when they were in opposition; so much so, that he was almost inclined, in some degree, to believe in the transmigration of souls. Honorable members were now asked to wait a little and the Government would tell them what was their policy. Well, the late Government, when they were asked to state what was their policy referred honorable members to the Governor's Speech, and promised that if they were allowed a little time the policy would be more fully seen in the measures that would be submitted. No, said honorable members, we won't give you time; and now that they were in office themselves they asked for time from those to whom formerly they would not allow time. His honorable and learned colleague in the representation of the Burnett, was quite right in what he said the other night, when he stated that the policy of the Government was just what appeared in the Governor's Speech, and for every part of which there was a Bill ready prepared in the several Government offices.

He did not see, that under such circumstances, the Government could require so much time as they asked for to prepare their measures, and submit them to the House. The honorable member who now held the office of Colonial Secretary used to accuse him, while Colonial Treasurer, of having stolen his policy, and if the charge was correct, the honorable member could only say that he had now got his own policy back again. The question before the House was one of finance, and therefore came more directly under the department of which he himself was formerly at the head. Now, as so much had been said against the late Government, and while he would generally repudiate the charges brought against their administration, it might not be considered too much, if he should refer particularly to the charges which had been brought against himself. The honorable and learned gentleman now at the head of the Government, told his constituents on the occasion of his re-election, that he had heard from his colleague,—the Colonial Treasurer, he supposed, as the honorable and learned gentleman confessed that he did not know anything about financial matters himself—that the late Government had been very reckless in their expenditure; that they had expended large sums without the authority of the Parliament, and that there would be a deficit of about £80,000. The honorable the Colonial Secretary told his constituents at South Brisbane something to the same effect, and added that it would be necessary to bring in Supplementary Estimates to cover the unauthorised expenditure of the late Government; and he went on to speak of the bad practice of spending money without the authority of Parliament. Well, he would very willingly support the honorable member in trying to get rid of the bad practice, which was not initiated by the late Government, but had been in operation since the time of Separation. The late Government entered office in August, and in September they laid on the table Supplementary Estimates for money spent by the previous Government to a larger amount than had been mentioned by the members of the present Government as a charge against the late Government. He now, however, came to what was the great question in this matter—and that was making the country believe that the late Government had spent far more than their income. It was rather premature to state what would be the state of affairs, but he believed it would be found that during the last two months the revenue from the Customs had not been so elastic as formerly; and, but for this circumstance, there would have been no deficit at all. But if there was a deficit, it would, he believed, be so small as not to bear comparison with the deficit of any year since 1862. From 1862 to 1867 the deficits altogether amounted to between £300,000 and £400,000. During 1867, the deficit was between £60,000 and £70,000. Now, presuming that the deficit

for 1868 amounted to £6,000, would that not, he asked, be a great step in the right direction; and could any previous Ministry shew such a result? As to spending money without the authority of Parliament, he would take the year 1867 for example; and there was no year since Separation in which the House set itself so determinedly to the work of retrenchment. There were considerable reductions made then, and those reductions were accepted by the Ministry of the day, but all the reductions that were then made on the Estimates-in-Chief, appeared again on the Supplementary Estimates to the amount of about £112,000. Now, what had been the case in 1868? The Government had had the gold fields to contend with—and however much they might have contributed to the increase of the revenue, they had occasioned a proportionate expenditure. The Government had also had to initiate the administration of the Land Act, which involved an expenditure of between £10,000 and £13,000, but that could not be called an unauthorised expenditure; nor did he see that the cost of making the road to Gympie could be called an unauthorised expenditure—especially when they bore in mind the part that was taken by the metropolitan members at the indignation meeting held on the subject in Brisbane. Now, honorable members and the country would see, from those facts, that even with the necessities that arose for extra expenditure, necessities which previous Governments had not to contend with, the charges of greater extravagance made against the late Government were not borne out. Honorable members would also see, in a few days, that the deficit between the revenue and expenditure was incomparably smaller than in any year since 1862, when he left office formerly, as Colonial Treasurer. The question now before the House was whether the Government should receive a credit for one or two months. He thought it was little matter which they gave, and for his own part he was willing to vote for the two months.

Mr. TAYLOR said that so far as he understood the question it was this—that the Colonial Secretary, in place of the Colonial Treasurer, who was absent, came and asked for a certain vote to carry on the credit of the colony for one or two months. The motion had led to a discussion on the policy of the late Government and of the present Government, and an immense amount of abuse had been very freely used on both sides. Now those gentleman who had been doing so, should remember that when the Macalister Ministry was turned out of office by the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie, and the honorable member for Port Curtis, Mr. Palmer, they hounded the honorable gentleman who was then at the head of the Government, to death almost. They abused him right and left, and plucky as he was, he was not at all times game to face the House. They raked up everything they could against him, whether it

was true or not it was all the same to them; and when they got him down they kicked him when he was down. It was said that the honorable gentleman was not very well, and that, accompanied by the then Postmaster-General, he went down to Melbourne for a change of air; and that he did so at the expense of the colony. But if that were so, it was an undoubted fact that the visit of those two gentlemen to Melbourne at that time was of great benefit to the colony, and greatly raised the character of the colony in the eyes of Victorian politicians. But the powers of abuse brought to bear against Mr. Macalister were very great indeed, and he was accused of malversation of the railway department, of jobbery everywhere, of putting one favorite here and another favorite there; having a railway station erected for the advantage of one friend at one place, and another for the advantage of some other friend at another place,—but not one of all the accusations made against him had been borne out. He, for one, objected to such general charges being made. If there was any truth in them, those who made them ought to have brought some specific case, and have tried it. It was very disgraceful to indulge in such general accusations from time to time, and it only tended to lower the credit of the colony wherever such abusive interchanges were read. It had been the policy of some of the colonial papers to run down the railway policy, some of the main interests of the colony, and the squatters, which were the only salvation of the colony. But the paper that chiefly indulged in that had stopped it now, and the House had taken up the duty. There was no doubt that Mr. Macalister was very much abused by the Government that succeeded him, and there was as little doubt that they had failed to substantiate any one of the many charges they had brought against him. When he looked over the "Votes and Proceedings," it was surprising to see the questions that were put to Mr. Macalister when he was at the head of the Government, with the view of entangling him in some way or other. Well, what did they find now? Why, that Mr. Macalister and his party had got back into power, and that they turned round and did the same thing to those whom they had turned out. On the hustings, they launched forth into general accusations against the late Ministry; and he was only astonished to find that those gentlemen were so thin-skinned as they seemed to be, considering the heavy charges they unhesitatingly made when it was their turn. He knew very well that if he were to ask the honorable the late Colonial Secretary, out of doors, what he thought of the charges made against the late Government, he would say, in his off-hand way, "Oh, I take no notice of them." But that was not the case; for when they were made in the House, he got up and repudiated the charges, and denounced the accusers of the Government with all the force he could muster—and that was a good deal,—and

challenged, dared, his accusers, to prove the charges they made. Now, he must again repeat that those party bickerings were very disgraceful and caused a great waste of time. He did not know why the motion was for a vote for two months only. He would suggest that it should be for three or four months, or for any length of time, but let it be for the payment of salaries only. The Government had got a week's more grace, to prepare their measures, as the writ of election of the Colonial Treasurer would not be received till the 18th January. Well, he did not see how the Estimates could be prepared in a week after that; but he would give a month for the work to be done. There was no doubt, that when the Treasurer appeared and made his budget speech, he would be most vehemently attacked, and the debate on the Estimates would last for a good many weeks; and, as the late Colonial Secretary said, the present Ministry might not last very long. As to the honorable member for the Kennedy, though he might believe in him as a man of business, he did not believe in him as Colonial Treasurer. He regretted that the honorable member at the head of the Government had given a pledge that he would bring forward his measures at a particular time. He thought it was very undignified in him to do so; and if the strength of parties in the House were to be tried in that way, he thought it would be better to have a Ministry formed of all the members of the House who had never been in office before. He hoped that when the House got into committee, honorable members would give the Ministry a vote for three or four months' credit, for it was simply a question whether the present Ministry or their successors would have the benefit of it. As to the programme shadowed forth by the honorable the Premier, about meeting on the 19th of January, and passing the Estimates, and a Pastoral Relief Bill, an Immigration Bill, and an Increase of Members Bill, the honorable gentleman would find himself greatly mistaken in thinking that all that work would be accomplished in the easy way he seemed to anticipate, and within three or four weeks. He would find the Increase of Members Bill a stiffer joint to swallow than he appeared to imagine it would be. If the two-thirds clause were not repealed in the first instance—and that would take about a year to do—it would take at least six months to pass an Additional Members Bill. Now, what, he would ask, was the use of meeting about the end of January, doing off one or two Bills, and sitting some months over them and the Estimates, and then adjourning to meet in a few weeks afterwards to pass another set of Estimates. He hoped the Opposition would give way, and allow the Government to have four months' supply. He, for one, would vote for the longest possible date; for he was satisfied that their meeting again in January would be a total failure, so far as business was concerned.

The motion was then agreed to, and the House accordingly went into Committee of Supply.

On resuming, the Chairman reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, which was then read to the House, as follows:—

That a sum not exceeding £80,000 be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the charge of certain Civil Services, to the 25th day of February, 1869.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY then moved,—

That this resolution be now adopted by the House.

Question put and passed.

WAYS AND MEANS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved,—

That this House do *now* resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty.

Question put and passed.

Whereupon the Speaker left the Chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole accordingly.

On resuming, the Chairman reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, which was then read to the House, as follows:—

That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year 1869, a sum not exceeding £80,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY then moved,—

That this resolution be now adopted by the House.

Question put and passed.