

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 1869

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 27 January, 1869.

Ministerial Explanation.—The Governor's Responsible Advisers.

MINISTERIAL EXPLANATION.

Formal motions and routine business having been disposed of,

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL rose and said,—Mr. Speaker—Before we proceed with the remaining business of the day, I may inform the House that I am in a position to state that I have a reasonable prospect of being able, before the meeting of the House, tomorrow, to form a Ministry that, I believe, will command the support of a fair majority of the House. I have every facility placed in my hands for that purpose by my honorable colleague, the Colonial Treasurer. He has acted in a way, at all events, that I believe enables me to have a very reasonable prospect of being able to form a working Ministry, by to-morrow.

Mr. WALSH presumed that the motion on the paper, in his name, was not affected by the intimation just given to the House by the Premier. He addressed the honorable gentleman, through the Speaker, and informed him that his motion was directed at Mr. Charles Lilley. It mattered not to him (Mr. Walsh) what coalition was formed by the honorable member at the head of the Government: it was his duty to proceed against Mr. Lilley, and against Mr. Lilley's Government, and he did not wish him to think, for a moment, that any party he could make on either side of the House could divert him (Mr. Walsh) from following out his motion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have no objection to meet the honorable member's motion; and I can well understand why he directs it at me.

THE GOVERNOR'S RESPONSIBLE ADVISERS.

Mr. WALSH, by leave, amended the motion standing in his name on the notice paper, and moved it as follows:—

"1. That His Excellency's Responsible Advisers do not possess the confidence of this House.

"2. That the above resolution be forwarded to His Excellency the Governor."

He said he wished it to be most distinctly understood that he regretted that the duty he had to perform should be imposed upon him: it was not one which he had intended to take upon himself, but one in which he would most cordially assist any other honorable members. He felt that only such a motion could place the Ministry and the Opposition in their proper positions in the House. It was at the earnest request of the late Minister for Lands and Works that he undertook the responsibility of introducing the motion; and, he believed, it was actuated by proper motives.

Having been grossly assailed, yesterday, by the Premier—in a manner to wound his feelings—if the honorable member for Eastern Downs had brought forward the motion himself, it might be said—and the world would not be too charitable—that he acted from personal motives. But he (Mr. Walsh) did not believe the honorable member for Eastern Downs could be justly so charged, even if he performed the task himself. From a conversation he had with the honorable gentleman, yesterday, so convinced did he appear to be of the unrighteousness of his late colleagues, of their unfitness to conduct the business of the country, that, for the public welfare, every one of them should be removed from office. Had his honorable friend explained to the House as clearly as he had to him (Mr. Walsh) how that was, he would have shown that he was perfectly justified in taking the course appointed to himself on the present occasion. The honorable gentleman was not in the House to verify what was now said; but, no doubt, he would be in attendance very shortly, and explain matters clearly. Now, having taken upon himself to bring forward such a motion, it was incumbent on him (Mr. Walsh) to give his reasons for it; and he should be very much mistaken if they were not sufficient to convince the honor and the intellect of the House that his proceeding was justifiable and correct. It had been laid down most eloquently and most forcibly by the Premier, not long since, that no Ministry who had not the confidence of a majority of the House ought to carry on the Government; and, admittedly, the late Government had not a strong working majority—in fact, it had been proved that, unless in a full House, they had not adequate support at all. There seemed no probability whatever of the present Government obtaining a working majority in the House. It had been said, and, no doubt, in a feeling way, with the best views, that the great desire of the present Government was to have a fair trial, in order that there might be no more delay in the public business; but, experience had shown that a weak Government could not carry on the business of the country, and to delay longer, on that plea, would be to fritter away the time of honorable members. Had anything been done by the Government in power? Were there not rumors to justify the House in supposing that the Government would never command a decent majority? Did that exposure of yesterday indicate that the Government would ever command the confidence of the House or the country? Therefore, he (Mr. Walsh) thought he was advancing the very strongest reason against the continuance in office of the present Ministry, when he said, with the best intentions towards them, that they had not, and could not get, a working majority in the House. The statements made by the honor-

able the Attorney-General against the honorable member for Eastern Downs, his late colleague, must inevitably separate them for ever. Their views could never coincide. If they could, then those honorable members would be proved to be the greatest political hypocrites, the greatest misleaders of public opinion, the greatest falsifiers of each other's character, that any colony had yet produced. It was impossible for them ever to combine again;—the Premier and the House could never expect the honorable member for Eastern Downs to act but in opposition to him;—it was totally impossible that he could do otherwise, after the charges that had been brought against him by the head of the Government. Why could not the present Ministry ever hope to obtain a majority in the House? Because there was a sufficient number of honest and independent gentlemen in the House who would always reprobate them for the way they had obtained the reins of power. Their conduct towards their predecessors in office—the way in which they had hounded them down—covered them with shame for ever. He never gave them his support—he was never in the secrets of the late Government—but he would say that there never was a body of men more grossly maligned, or worse treated, than they had been. Could he, then, support gentlemen who had been guilty of such conduct towards their predecessors as the present Government? Could they ever expect forgiveness to be extended to them by the supporters of the late Government? He called upon the House to say if he ever was a supporter of the late Government, until he saw the shameful way in which they were treated? He never could become a supporter of a Government such as the present, who had scrambled for office in the way they had done—by unjust means. His second reason, to justify him in bringing forward the motion, was that unconstitutional, that shameful threat, which was uttered by the Premier, yesterday. No man of spirit would support any Government that made such a threat. The rumor was, in town, that the honorable gentleman had in his pocket the means of dissolving the Assembly. That aroused opposition amongst the honorable gentleman's own friends, and of every honorable member—as such a thing ought to do.

Mr. FRANCIS: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: He meant, essentially, honorable members. What conclusion could he come to, if he now voted with the Government? That he was afraid to go to his constituents: by such a vote he would brand himself a coward. Although it had been recalled, while that threat rang in their ears, the House never could—he never would—consent to support a Ministry whose head uttered such a threat. He trusted, for the honor of His Excellency the Governor—he trusted, for the safety of His Excellency, as well as for his honor—that there was no foundation for such a threat. He trusted for the sake

of that gentleman who presided over the affairs of this colony—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL rose to order, and objected to the use of His Excellency's name in that way.

Mr. WALSH said he had no doubt that the Premier would object to everything he said; but he repeated what he had said, and he hoped his words would reach His Excellency. It was his duty to endeavor to get his voice heard by His Excellency, so that he should not acquiesce in the unconstitutional proceeding of the present Ministry. If there was no other thing than that threat to dissolve, the House would not be justified in allowing them to carry on the business of the country. But their conduct was doubtful and objectionable from the beginning—it was dreadful. Their conduct towards one another was of that character. From the very moment they entered upon the enjoyment of their unrighteous Government—before they were sworn in, they commenced—they were wrangling with each other. The statement of the Premier, yesterday, amounted to this:—He knew from the first that his honorable colleague, the late Secretary for Lands and Works, was a traitor—that he was working against him.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was one of those rumours that had reached him, that the honorable gentleman was not working cordially with him and the Government. He said he had heard it; he did not say that he knew it.

Mr. WALSH: The honorable member must pardon him for saying what he had said: as the statement had fallen on his ear, he understood that the Premier had charged the honorable member for Eastern Downs with being a traitor from the commencement. However, the Premier had given his colleague summary notice, and dismissed him. Was it not monstrous that the Premier should attempt to carry on the Government with such colleagues as he now had? He (Mr. Walsh), was not in the House to defend Mr. Macalister. He knew that honorable gentleman was a great public sinner; he knew that there had been inflicted, by him, a great burden of debt on the country. That honorable member was the delinquent; it was by his policy—by his dodge—that the country was so deeply in debt. But was it fair of the Premier, after he had taken to his bosom the greatest political renegade the country ever produced, and when he (Mr. Walsh), knew that he looked on the honorable member for Eastern Downs as a very tower of strength to his Ministry—was it fair, he asked again, to say that he mistrusted the honorable member from the commencement? Yet, nothing that the Premier could do, would cause him (Mr. Walsh), any surprise. No doubt, he would be ready to take the honorable member for Eastern Downs again to his bosom. But the statement made to him by his honorable friend, Mr. Macalister, yester-

day, utterly precluded that; bad as he was, as a politician, the honorable member for Eastern Downs would never consent to that. If the Premier fancied, at any time, that he could dispense with the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, he (Mr. Walsh), had no doubt he would do so. And, he would dispense with that great weakness of the Ministry, the Colonial Secretary. No doubt, that honorable gentleman would, some day, get a proclamation putting him out of office. Assuredly, his days were numbered; and he must go, as soon as ever it suited the ideas of the Premier. Until yesterday, the honorable member at the head of the Government never ventured to make such assertions as he had made against that popular southern member, Mr. Macalister; but, after that exhibition of his (the Attorney-General's) unfitness for his position—after telling the House and the country that he would not let the late Secretary for Lands and Works into his office to put his private papers to rights—after treating him as a man arrested on a warrant would not be treated, for even he would have a right to go into his own house—after treating his late colleague as a burglar—he asked to be allowed to go on with the Government. The honorable member, the late Secretary for Lands and Works, had to send to a late subordinate in his office to get his own papers;—he was not allowed to enter his office even for that purpose. There was the spectacle of a gentleman, who had been the hope of the country for years, treated as a burglar;—as if a policeman had been set to watch him, with instructions not to lose sight of him.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL begged to correct the honorable member for Maryborough. The honorable member for Eastern Downs never applied, at any time, for his papers; and he was not watched.

Mr. WALSH: The honorable the Attorney-General did really say, that "he knew him, the honorable member for Eastern Downs, too well to let him back into his office." The honorable member for Eastern Downs had not even been allowed to go into that office which the honorable the Premier had often affirmed that he and he alone was fit to manage. No doubt the other colleagues of that honorable gentleman would receive similar treatment. As for the Colonial Secretary, he could almost assure him that his days were numbered. He must also allude to the very unfair way in which the present Government had treated the Bills and documents left by their predecessors in office, and the way they had falsified those documents. He considered their conduct in that respect most atrocious. The members of the late Ministry were not ashamed of anything they had done; each member had, perhaps, his own crotchets, but they were prepared to work harmoniously and to help each other. When they were about to go out of office they had certain Estimates prepared; and,

although he (Mr. Walsh) very seldom interfered with the members of that Government, he did upon that occasion caution the then Colonial Secretary not to leave those Estimates in the hands of his successors, and judging from the false pretences with which those gentlemen had come into office, he was led to believe that they had not been honestly dealt with. The present Ministry had in fact seized upon those documents and made use of them in the most unjustifiable manner for political purposes. The honorable member for the Maranoa, and the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Taylor, in addressing the House on the previous night, referred to these Estimates as a proof that the late Government proposed to increase the salaries of civil servants to an enormous extent; but from what the late Colonial Secretary stated in the House the previous day, it appeared that they did not propose to do anything of the kind, but that all that was proposed to be done was to enter on the Estimates the full amount of the salary which these servants were already receiving. The Government must have supplied these gentlemen with copies of these Estimates for merely political purposes. But they did worse than this—they took the Bills left behind by the late Government, and seemed to take the earliest and most fragmentary drafts in preference to the later ones, in order to make political capital out of them on the hustings. His fourth charge against the Government was with reference to the Commission of the Peace lately issued. He would not mention names, but he had letters—he might almost say by the score, to the effect that some of the worst characters in the colony had been placed on the Commission of the Peace by the present Ministry. He knew one or two of the greatest blackguards in the colony who had been so honored, and, in one instance, he knew that one of the Ministry was aware of it, because he had told him so. The Commission of the Peace had become not only a farce, but an actual crime. Yet, for the sake of gaining a little political influence in certain quarters, a gross injury like this had been inflicted upon the colony. He was satisfied that the time had arrived when the power to appoint gentlemen to the Commission of the Peace ought not to be left in the hands of a Ministry. His fifth charge against the Ministry was, that they acquiesced in the vile prosecution of Ross Lewin. A more indecent act they had never committed. He might say that he did not know Ross Lewin, and believed that he was no better than he should be, and that the trade he was engaged in was one that would bring disgrace on the colony; but for all that he should be very sorry to see the man dealt with in an illegal manner, and yet this was what had been done by the connivance of the Government. Ross Lewin had been charged with committing a rape—and by whom? By a *man*! Did ever any

one hear of such a case before? Nay, he was charged by two men with this offence—two men actually conspired to trump up this charge against him; and although he (Mr. Walsh) could not prove it, he had his suspicion that a Minister of the Crown instigated the prosecution—the conspiracy. He would acquit the Premier of this, but that gentleman became a party to the proceedings at a subsequent stage, and actually attempted to overawe the magistrates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he must interrupt the honorable member, and deny that he attempted to do anything of the kind. What he did in the case he did in the interest of Ross Lewin quite as much as in the interest of the public. He had merely sent an officer down to watch the case.

Mr. WALSH said, that what the honorable member did bore the aspect of attempting to overawe the Bench, and the Attorney-General had no business to send the Crown Prosecutor on any such errand. His sixth charge against Ministers was with respect to the cancellation of selections made on certain runs on the Darling Downs district, namely, Yandilla, Beauraraba, and Jimbour. In reply to a question put by him (Mr. Walsh) the previous day, the honorable gentleman said that "certain selections of land on the resumed half of the Yandilla Run had been cancelled by the Government, but none on either Beauraraba or Jimbour. The return which he then laid on the table would furnish the particulars asked for." The return was ordered to be printed. Now, he directly charged the Government with giving, in this instance, an answer which was not in accordance with the facts. He would appeal to the honorable gentleman who sat opposite to him (Mr. Miles), whether he did not apply for land on Jimbour Run, and whether his application was not cancelled at the same time that the applications for land on the Yandilla Run were cancelled? He believed that within the last week he had the money returned to him which he had paid down for selections on the Jimbour Run more than a month ago. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government might put his own construction upon the case, but when answers intending to mislead were given by the Government it proved that they were not a Government deserving of confidence. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government had furnished him with another reason that day for having no confidence in him or his colleagues. The most sacred trust which a Government had, was, perhaps, to take charge of and provide for the proper treatment of those who were physically and mentally incapable of taking care of themselves. Honorable members were aware, that recently through the public press, certain grave charges had been made in connection with the management of this institution. Some two years ago, he had exerted himself to get a commission appointed to inquire into the

manner which the Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo was conducted. The commission was not at all a satisfactory one, but the result of the inquiry was that gross management, and even criminal practices, had been indulged in by some of the warders, and several of them were dismissed in consequence. Lately a number of very serious charges had been again made in the newspapers against the manner in which that institution was being conducted, and when he saw the commission which had been appointed to inquire into this matter, his suspicion was aroused that the heaviest and most serious offences would be again slurred over. He maintained that in a matter of such a serious nature as this the Government should have sent some one higher than a Custom House officer to conduct the investigation. He had no confidence in the Government sending up a subordinate of their own, and possibly a toady. The last charge he had to make against the Government was, that rumors were now going up and down, and were admitted and deplored by friends of the Government too, to the effect that secrets of State, changes in the administration, threats of dissolution, and other important matters in connection with the Government of the country, were promulgated by Ministers in places where no Minister of the Crown ought to be seen to enter. It had come to be a common remark, that if you wanted to hear the latest political dodge—the last political movement, you must go into places where no Minister of the Crown ought to be seen. He had no personal feeling of enmity against the Premier; but if every one of these charges against his Ministry was not utterly untrue, they were no longer deserving the confidence of that House. He trusted that, in the course of his speech, he had not made a single remark which was personally offensive to any member of the House. He had spoken against the Ministry only in his capacity as a public man; and he sincerely hoped that the debate would be carried on with the same determination which he had shewn to avoid personalities.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that, apart from the fact of his being a Minister of the Crown, it was necessary for him to reply to the charges brought against him by the honorable member for Maryborough. He thought that honorable member, for whom he still felt a good deal of friendship, should have known him better than to believe him guilty of such charges, but he nevertheless entertained the hope that, although that honorable member might be opposed to him politically, they would not cease to be personal friends. But how was he to defend himself from a charge like this of the rumours which were said to be afloat respecting him? Did the honorable member charge him with revealing these State secrets?

Mr. WALSH said he mentioned no name.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL; Well, did the

honorable member charge the whole Ministry with going in a body to this place that was so bad as not to be named? It was impossible to refute charges like this because they were not clearly specified. What State secrets had been revealed, who revealed them, and where did it take place? Unless this were explicitly stated, the charges must fall to the ground. He could only say that they were utterly false as far as he knew, both of himself and his colleagues. He knew the honorable member so well, and knew that he was such a perfect political Ishmaelite, that if the friends he had now taken to his bosom were to cross over that night and take office, he would be just as ready to attack them, as he had attacked the present Ministry. He knew that there were rumors against him, among persons who were not his friends, but he was not the only one who suffered in like manner. He had heard of gentlemen who had been guilty of not only spreading rumors, but of afterwards endorsing them, and writing anonymous letters to the newspapers for the purpose of damaging those who had always acted as his friends. He (the Attorney-General) had been accused of not sending a sufficiently influential commission to inquire respecting the management of the Lunatic Asylum. But it must be remembered that the superintendent of that institution had been many years in the colony, and had always borne a high character; and although certain anonymous writers in the newspapers had preferred charges against him, he (the Attorney-General) would not be justified in turning him out of his place until clear and specific charges were proved against him on good evidence. If dismissed warders and discharged lunatics were to be the only accusers, it would be desirable to act with great caution to prevent injustice from being done. He (the Attorney-General) had not shirked from his duty in the matter. He had determined that the matter should be investigated, because he believed that it was only due to the gentleman against whom the charges were brought, as well as in the interest of the general public, that the charges should be deeply and fully gone into, and it remained for those who had charges to make, to appear and make them openly. If it were proved that he had been lax in his duty, he should not hesitate for a moment to deal with the case as he thought it deserved. It was manifestly unfair of the honorable member to rake up rumors like this and bring them forward as charges against the Government of maladministration. He (the Attorney-General) had only been in office some eight weeks, and during the whole of that time had been pretty well pestered with political matters. As the House was aware, it was not likely that he could during that time go over the journals of the House in order to rake up the alleged wrongs and grievances which the honorable member was perpetually bringing before the House. If he were to

search back in the records of the House in this diligent manner, he might possibly be able to rake up something against the honorable member himself. With respect to the case of Ross Lewin, he was charged with something worse than indiscretion—he was accused of being the accomplice of persons who had conspired to injure that individual. Now the case against this man was an absurd one, and he had thought so from the first; but as it was a charge connected with a system which was obnoxious to a large section of the public, it was his duty to satisfy the public that the law was observed. He had sent an officer of the Government, not the chief, but a subordinate officer, and told him not to prosecute, but to watch the case. He maintained that this was no more than what he ought to have done under such circumstances. With regard to the answer he gave the previous day, as to the cancelling of applications for land on the Yandilla, Beauraraba and Jimbour runs, he had taken the usual course adopted by Ministers under such circumstances. He took the question of the honorable member and had it forwarded to the Under-Secretary for him to supply the proper answer. If that officer had not done so he would be called to account for the omission, but he was quite sure the House would not believe that he came down foolishly with a wicked lie in his mouth on the subject of these selections, as it would be very easy for the honorable member to find out the truth for himself. It was a statement which could be so easily detected, if it was wrong, that it was impossible to gain any advantage by wilfully making it, if he had been disposed. With regard to the threat which he had been said to have held out to the House, if they did not adopt a certain course, he again said, most emphatically, that there was nothing in the words he made use of which could be construed into a threat. He had made use of the words in answer to a question addressed to him, and he must remind honorable gentlemen that the House he now met was not elected at his instance—it was not brought together by his pulling the wires, but was called together by the late Ministry, and if he was not allowed the opportunity of bringing forward his measures, he had a constitutional right to tender advice to His Excellency which, if accepted, would lead to a dissolution. He was not the first Minister who had had to face a House with a minority, and as there was a majority so adverse to them from the first moment of starting, as not to allow them to bring in their measures, they had claimed this right to a dissolution. He supposed he might venture to say that Mr. Pitt and the late Sir Robert Peel were greater Ministers than the late Premier of this colony, and he would shew that they defended this course. In 1783 it would be found that Mr. Pitt resisted the attempt of the majority of the House of Commons, on

the ground that it was irregular to endeavor to control the prerogative of the Crown in the choice of its Ministers, by denouncing them without waiting to see their acts. It was very possible that some honorable member might say, "Why did he not say this before?" At any rate, he had afforded a precedent for the course he had pursued. Then, again, Lord John Russell, another statesman, who might be considered quite equal to the head of the late Government, had in 1841 expressed his opinion, that if the House should continue to refuse its confidence to him, it would be impossible for them to continue in office, provided there was a Ministry capable of being formed to succeed them; and he asked the House whether a strong Government, who could command a majority in the House, could be formed out of the members who were now so utterly opposed to him. Therefore, he maintained, it would become his duty, in such a contingency, to advise His Excellency to dissolve the House. Whether the Governor would accept that advice was another thing; but, at all events, he had constitutional precedent for offering it. Surely there could be no harm in saying that! There was a later instance than those he had quoted—in December, 1834, in which Sir Robert Peel carried this principle so far as actually to obtain a dissolution, and that was done solely in order to obtain a fair trial for the King's Ministers. He had quoted these precedents, but had not the slightest idea of holding out a threat, for he should not himself relish the idea of being coerced into any particular course of action. What else were they to do? Were they to go on for ever as they had been going on of late—six gentlemen on one side of the House contesting with six on the other as to who should hold office, and neither side be able to retain it when they had got it? He knew he was holding his position very obstinately; but it was for the purpose of remedying, if possible, the state of things which had so long existed, and which did not add to the dignity of that House. Then, again, they were accused of stealing the measures of the late Ministry. The honorable member for Maryborough said it was audacious that they should take the Bills of their predecessors, and he even accused them of selecting the worst Bills they could find in their drawers for the purpose of making an improper use of them.

Mr. WALSH explained that he charged them with making political capital out of the incomplete measures of their predecessors in office.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL maintained that they had a perfect right to examine any Bills they found in the Ministerial offices, and form their own opinions respecting them. With respect to the appointments to the Commission of the Peace, he believed that he and his colleagues did really endeavor to compile a full and good Commission of the Peace, independent altogether of political considera-

tions, and if it could be shewn to him that anyone had been appointed on that commission who was unsuitable to fill the post, he should be very ready to take the proper steps to have him struck off. But until this was done he could not do anything. He was himself utterly unconscious of any such persons being appointed as those referred to by the honorable member. Neither was it fair to charge the present Ministry with the whole responsibility of this. Recommendations were sent in for the appointment of certain persons, and it might happen, therefore, that several Ministers would have a hand in the making up of a new commission. It was very difficult indeed for a Ministry to make sure that they did not appoint improper persons; and he quite agreed with the remark which had been made, that a Government ought to be relieved of this duty. He had been drafting a Bill the other day to allow of local elections to the magistracy, according to the old Saxon rule; but the subject was surrounded with great difficulties. He had, he thought, replied to all the charges which had been made against him, and saw no necessity for making any further remarks on the subject. They were there to carry on the business of the country. He did not know whether the House would permit them to do so. He denied that he or his colleagues had done or said anything which they had not a constitutional right to say and do; and he hoped he should receive that amount of consideration from the House which he had an undoubted right to claim.

The Hon. R. PRING said, that after hearing the debate which had taken place during the afternoon, and being fully impressed with the great importance of the question before the House, and also wishing to give that opportunity to the present Government which the Premier had claimed, he rose to move the adjournment of the debate—not with the view of throwing any impediment whatever in the way of the Government, but for a few simple reasons which he would submit to the House, and the cogency of which, he thought, the House would fully admit. It had been said by the honorable the Premier in the course of his remarks, that he would, so far as he could, persevere in carrying on the administration of the Government of the colony until he had had a fair trial; and so far as his determination to do that was concerned, he thought the honorable gentleman was perfectly justified; and he, for one, would be sorry that any impediment should be placed in his way against his having such a trial; but up to the present moment the honorable gentleman had scarcely put himself in a position to claim the fair trial he asked for. It was possible, however, if the debate were adjourned, that the honorable the Premier might very shortly come down to the House with a much better reason for claiming that fair trial than he had shown since he assumed the reins of office. When the honorable the Premier took office,

he succeeded in forming a Government, which was incomplete in its formation, but which was subsequently completed before the House met. When the Premier met the House, he, as was usual, made a statement of the intended action, or course of action, of the Government; but he was not at that time prepared to fully open to the House—as he did not think he had any need to do—his course, or intended course of action. He, therefore, very properly, asked for time, and the only dispute he was aware of on that occasion between the members of the Government and their supporters and the Opposition, was simply the amount of money that was to be voted, and the limit to the time. The Premier, after hearing the discussion on both sides of the House, acceded to the proposition which, he believed, emanated from the Opposition side of the House; and was contented to take a vote for a certain amount, and also to consent, on his part, to an adjournment of the House until the 26th of January, for very cogent reasons, which he at the time explained. The position of the Ministry was now altered very much; and he thought that the motion which was put upon the paper on the previous day, under existing circumstances, was a very proper motion, but it might turn out under circumstances which might be laid before the House next day, that a continuance of the debate upon the vote of want of confidence would have no good result whatever; because it might be that the Opposition side of the House would be perfectly contented with the Ministry that would be submitted to them by the Premier, which might be called a coalition Ministry, or anything else he liked; but which the honorable gentleman might be able to satisfy the House was composed of such parties that it ought to have a fair trial. When, on the previous day, his honorable friend the member for Maryborough tabled his motion, he was in a very different position to what he at present occupied. The Ministry came into the House, not a Government. It had lost one of its members. It had lost one of its most important members—the presiding genius in the Lands and Works department. The Government was incomplete. He did not mean to say the honorable the Premier was in a position to have filled up the vacancy immediately. He did think he was; but at the same time to say the Government was complete would have been the height of absurdity; and, therefore, in the absence of a complete Government, and considering the then position of affairs, the consequence was, that the Opposition came to the conclusion that there was no stable Government in existence—no stable Government that it could place reliance in; and, therefore, it was deemed expedient that a vote of the House should be taken in reference to the Government, as it then stood. But after listening to the debate this afternoon, and hearing from the statement of the Premier that in all pro-

ability he would be enabled to inform the House next day that a complete Ministry had been formed; and, as he understood him to say, formed from both sides of the House, to meet the wishes of both parties, and so enable him to carry on the business of the country, which was especially necessary at the present time, he now rose to move the adjournment of the debate, in the hope that, next day, they would be informed that such a Ministry had been completed as would render the further discussion of the motion before the House unnecessary. He rose to move the adjournment of the debate for no other reason whatever; and if other honorable members wished to carry on the debate, or even to bring it to a conclusion that night, they could do so; but it appeared to him that if a Government was to be formed, and that two or three members of the House were to join it, their presence in the House during the discussion, or the division, would be very wrong. For any honorable member who might have been offered a seat in the Cabinet, and who would be gazetted next day, to vote on the motion, would be a very improper thing for him to do. It might also be a very unpleasant thing for an honorable member in that position to walk out of the House; and to spare him the pain of any unpleasant remarks, he now moved the adjournment of the debate; and he hoped that next day the honorable the Premier would be able to bring forward a Ministry which he and honorable members now on the Opposition side of the House could support, and which would enable the business of the country to be carried on, though only for the next three months.

Mr. A. HODGSON said the words that had just fallen from the honorable member for the Burnett, were exactly the words that had brought him on his legs. He agreed with the honorable and learned gentleman, that if there was a member of the House at the present moment who held the offer of an appointment under the present Ministry in his pocket, or who had, either directly or indirectly, any offer of a seat in the present Government, the best course, and the proper course for him to pursue, under the circumstances, was to quit the chamber. He believed honorable members could understand the motives which had led the honorable and learned member for the Burnett to move the adjournment of the debate. If, as might be possible—and he gathered his reasons from the words which fell from the honorable the Premier, in reply to certain charges brought forward by the honorable member for Maryborough—if he intended to re-construct his Government, what must his action be with regard to the House; and in what position would he be placed if the motion for the adjournment of the debate were carried? He would probably come to the House next day, and declare that certain members of the House had taken office, and that, in conse-

quence of their having taken office, certain seats were vacated. In what position would the honorable the Premier then find himself? He would be deprived of the valuable assistance, and the votes of, perhaps, two, three, or four members of the Government. The honorable and learned member for the Burnett was a lawyer, and he (Mr. Hodgson) did not pretend to be even a bush lawyer, but it was as plain as possible, as plain as nose on face, that the reason the motion for adjournment was brought forward, at least, to a certain extent, was to deprive the Ministerial benches of some of the support which they had at the present time. He sincerely hoped that, before they adjourned, the motion of the honorable member for Maryborough—a motion of a direct vote of want of confidence, in the plainest possible English—would be decided to-night. On three different occasions had honorable members come there to discuss votes of want of confidence, until they almost knew the exact words which would fall from the lips of honorable members. They knew very well that the present was an attempt, a puerile, futile, foolish, and disconcerted attempt on the part of the honorable member for Maryborough to hurl those gentlemen from the Ministerial benches. No doubt, if the motion were carried, they would see the honorable member for Maryborough sent for, and they would see him enjoying the sweets of office, of which he would have deprived the present possessors. Under any circumstances he should have risen to address the House on the present occasion, for, he maintained, that every honorable member of the House was, at a time like the present, responsible, not only to his constituents, but also largely responsible to himself, for the course of action he might take; and, for his own part, he would not care to enjoy the countenance of an honorable member who was not careful of his own honor. If the remarks that had been made by the honorable and learned member for the Burnett, were intended to apply directly to him or to any other honorable member, all he could say was, that he intended to answer them. There was no doubt that certain rumors had gone abroad respecting the re-construction of the Ministry,—that certain rumors had gone abroad during the last forty-eight hours, that certain honorable members had been offered office in the present Ministry; and he had now to inform the House that he was one of the honorable members who had been placed in that position. In order to clear himself from any misconstruction, and to stand well with the House;—and he should be sorry to have a seat in the House if he did not stand well with honorable members—he would, with the permission of the House, inform the House, in a few words, of what had actually taken place between himself and the honorable and learned the Attorney-General. On Monday last, the

Premier called at his house—and he lived about two miles out of town—and informed him that Mr. Macalister had resigned office. The honorable gentleman then asked him if he would take office under him. Much of the conversation that took place between them on the occasion was of a private and confidential nature, and he thought he would be entirely wrong to divulge what then fell from the honorable member. He must, however, say that he considered it a high compliment to be offered a seat in the Ministry, under the circumstances which the honorable the Premier brought under his notice; and he asked him, after hearing his opinion on certain subjects, on which he felt and always would feel a very deep interest, with regard to legislative action, that he should have a certain time allowed him to make up his mind as to the course he would pursue. He was aware that a steamer had left Sydney with the English mail, on Saturday, at midnight, and that there were on board that steamer four or five honorable members of the Legislature; and he told the honorable the Premier—what, no doubt, he himself very well knew—that the steamer would arrive in time for those honorable members to attend the meeting of Parliament. He also told the honorable gentleman that, previous to giving his answer as to whether he would accept office in his Ministry, he would like to have some communication with one or two of those honorable members. The steamer had been delayed, and the honorable gentleman gave him till ten o'clock on Tuesday morning to return an answer. Up to that time, however, the steamer had not arrived, and he then wrote the letter to the honorable the Premier, which he was now about to read, and which the honorable gentleman had given him permission to read. It was as follows:—

“Montpellier, January 26, 1869.

“My dear Lilley,—Ten a.m., the time agreed between us, has expired, no steamer from Sydney is signalled, and you are perfectly free to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Macalister's resignation as soon as you think proper, so far as I am concerned. At the same time, I am quite prepared to act under you as Premier, heartily and honestly, provided two members, including myself, are introduced into the Ministry from the Opposition benches—any less number would only weaken your party, and damage me politically.

“I am prepared to work under you as Minister for Works and Gold Fields, provided there are five Ministers in the Legislative Assembly, at a fixed salary of £800 per annum.

“You tell me that you have the key to the situation, and that it is in your power to form a strong Government. I have given you my views. I will conclude by saying, that I hope you have no intention of nominating a squatter as Minister for Lands.

“Yours very truly,

“ARTHUR HODGSON.”

That was the letter he sent to the honorable the Premier. In consequence of that letter,

the honorable gentleman called at his house ; and he might say most truthfully, without detailing any account of the conversation that passed between them, that from that hour to the present, he had not the slightest idea of the honorable member's intentions as regarded himself. He, therefore, maintained that he had a perfect right to be present in the House on the present occasion, and that he had a perfect right to vote, as he intended to vote, against the resolution of the honorable member for Maryborough. In the few remarks that fell from him in the House, on the 29th of December last, he said what he was now prepared to endorse—that he would give the present Ministry a fair and impartial trial. He also, at the same time, said he was not aware of the tactics of the Opposition ; but that, for his own part, he would give the Government a fair, a liberal, and an honest support, provided they introduced measures consistent with his views and political opinions. Now, what was the state of affairs at the present moment ? He maintained that those gentlemen who occupied the Ministerial benches had not had the slightest opportunity afforded them of submitting their measures to the House. Honorable members did not know what was the nature of the measures they contemplated bringing forward ; for the House, he repeated, had not given them an opportunity of bringing forward their measures. Now, he must again, as on a former occasion, inform the House, that he did not come there to play at battledore and shuttlecock for place and pay, but to forward legislation as best he could, and, to the utmost of his humble ability, contribute to promote the welfare of the colony. He was quite prepared to hear it said that he had deserted his party ; but he maintained that he had deserted no party. Every honorable member knew that, Curtius like, he leaped into the lap of the late Government when it was in a moribund condition. He was on his way to the Warrego at the time he was telegraphed to, asking if he would accept office in the Government. It mattered not to him whether the Government was in a moribund condition at the time or not, but he felt it was his duty to take office, if it was considered by others that his doing so would be for the benefit of the country. It was under those circumstances that he took office, and where was now the party that was then in power ? His late Premier and chief colleague—he presumed honorable members would soon be deprived of his company, for reasons that it would be indelicate for him, at present, more particularly to allude to. When the honorable the Premier called upon him on Monday last, he thought that, in this matter, he might have the co-operation of the honorable member for Port Curtis to assist him in forming with the present Ministry, a strong and honest Government. It was with the view of obtaining that honorable member's assist-

ance, that he wrote the letter he had just read to the House ; and certain words in that letter, he did not hesitate to say, more particularly alluded to that gentleman. But, when he came to the House on Tuesday, he met the honorable member, who at once twitted him with having deserted his party, and informed him that before taking any steps in the matter, he ought to have consulted his party. But he would now take the opportunity of informing the honorable member, and every other honorable member, that he belonged to no party ; and he would repeat it, that he belonged to no party in the House. He might almost say there was no political parties in the House, for honorable members, he maintained, were at variance on no political grounds whatever. The Opening Speech that was placed in the hands of His Excellency, at the opening of Parliament, by the honorable member for the Burnett, might, he maintained, have been equally well placed in his hands by those honorable gentlemen who now occupied the Ministerial benches. From his own observations, during the short time he had of late been resident in Queensland, and watching political events from time to time, he unhesitatingly asserted that votes had been recorded, not for political measures, not for the good of the country, but for men—for place and emolument—for men, not for measures. Now, if he entertained that opinion, and he did entertain it—and it was the opinion which he, as one having a large stake in the colony, felt forced to entertain—he would, he maintained, be wrong if he were offered an office under the present Government, as an individual member, to refuse it. He thought there could be no possible harm in his mentioning one measure which was particularly dwelt upon in the course of the conversation that took place between the honorable the Premier and himself. That was a Pastoral Relief Bill. He asked him particularly about such a measure, and the honorable gentleman pledged him his word and honor that he would co-operate honestly and heartily with him in passing a measure of the kind through the House. Now he did not address the House as a squatter, although he should be the last man to say that he was not a squatter, but he addressed the House as a Darling Downs farmer and freeholder. Though he had passed through all the phases of a pioneer squatter, under most favorable circumstances, he admitted, he still had a strong feeling for those gentlemen who had risked their lives and their money in seeking to develop the interior of the colony. *Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.* No honorable member of the House could more fully understand the difficulties which the outside squatters had experienced than he did. When he was told by the honorable the Attorney-General that he would support the views that he submitted to him ; and when he was further assured that on other political matters he was at unison with him, he had

no hesitation in saying he would join him, on the stipulation mentioned in the letter he had read to the House. It was a matter of little moment to him whether he was called on by the honorable the Premier to take office under him or not. He felt that, as an individual member of the House, he had a right to state the exact position in which he was at present placed; and no words, threats, or disagreeable remarks of any kind whatever would deter him from doing, as he intended to do, and that was, at once, to take his seat on the Government benches.

Mr. PALMER said he thought there was very often wisdom in silence; and that, before many days had passed, the honorable member who had addressed the House would agree with him. He thought that, before he was much older, the honorable member would come to the conclusion that it would have been much better for him to have observed silence on the present occasion. The explanation they had heard from the honorable member might have been very well left to the Premier to make; and it would have been more strictly in accordance with Parliamentary practice to have left it to the Premier to explain any proceedings he had taken for the formation of a coalition Government. He never knew before that it was usual for honorable members to get up in the House and tell everything that was said to them, or what propositions had been made to them. That had generally been left for the head of the Government to do; and, he thought, it would have been better under the circumstances, if the honorable member had allowed that course to be taken on the present occasion, and have allowed the Premier to state as much or as little of his proceedings connected with the formation of a Ministry as he liked. As far as he was concerned, he would only say that if the Premier succeeded in forming a coalition Ministry, and he could see from its component parts that they were likely to bring forward good measures, no man in the House would more heartily or more willingly concur in passing such measures. But he thought it would have been better, under the circumstances, if they were to have a coalition Ministry, that the proposal that the debate should be adjourned, should have been carried without any further remarks. The observations made by the honorable member for the Warrego had not had the tendency of throwing oil on the troubled waters of the present debate. They were uncalled for in every way. The honorable member had done him the honor to allude to him, and he could only say, with reference to those allusions, that he never gave him any reason, that he was aware of, to suppose that he would join him in any way in a coalition Ministry. He had always expressed it as his own personal opinion that he would not join a coalition Ministry with the members of the present Government; but he did not, on that account, blame any other honorable

member who thought he could work with them, for doing so. He never gave the honorable member, or any one else, the slightest reason to suppose that he would join a coalition Ministry, and, therefore, for him to have waited for the steamer to be signalled, by which he was to arrive, was a waste of time. There was not the slightest prospect of his joining the honorable member in a coalition Ministry of any sort. The honorable member had stated his reason for taking his seat on the Government side of the House, and concluded by taking his seat on that side in a very decided manner,—in a manner more demonstrative perhaps than was altogether creditable to himself. He thought that the honorable member might have left him alone, for he well knew that he had over and over again declared that he would not take office. He believed there was some intention of making offers, indirectly, to him, on the previous day, but he was so thirsty that he could not wait for them; but he could assure the House that he had no intention of accepting office, even if it had been offered to him. The honorable member for the Warrego had said that one of his principal reasons for taking his seat on the Government side of the House was, that the present Ministry had not had a fair trial. Now, he altogether differed with the honorable member there, and he denied that the Ministry had not had a fair trial. But he would even go farther and say that, since the resignation of the late Ministry, there had never been a Ministry to give a fair trial to. Honorable members had always been met by the fag-end of a Ministry; and so the House had never had an opportunity of giving the Ministry a fair trial. The Ministry had never had sufficient strength to go into the dock and stand a fair trial. As, long ago, he had told them would be the case, they had fallen to pieces from inherent weakness; and as well might strength have been expected in a rope of sand as that the Ministry could hold together. He expressed that opinion some time ago, and he thought the result showed that he was a true prophet. In attempting to speak to the motion before the House, he somehow felt as if he were going to have a tilt at the wind. It would really, he felt, be almost a waste of time to speak to the resolution, for he did not know who the Ministry were; but he had a word or two to say in regard to some of them. There were three honorable gentlemen sitting on the Treasury bench a few minutes ago, and a fourth had just been added by the honorable member for the Warrego taking his seat there. But honorable members did not know who were Ministers and who were not. Perhaps, as coming events, it was said, cast their shadows before, the honorable member was to be one of the re-constructed Ministry, and if so, he would wish him God speed. He thought it would have been well that the proposition of the honorable and learned member for the Burnett had been accepted,

and that the debate had been adjourned until the House could be informed who the Ministry really were;—for a Ministry might be formed that would give general satisfaction. He was anxious to see a strong Government formed—one that was likely to possess the confidence of the House, and of the country, and one that would be able to carry measures through the House with power. Looking at the component parts of the present Ministry, he must say that he could not place confidence in them. So far as they had gone, up to the present time, there was not a single act of the Ministry that he could regard as well considered, well executed, or well intentioned. The honorable member for Maryborough had made certain charges against the Ministry. Of course of those which consisted only of rumour he should not take the slightest notice, but those which consisted of acts he considered every member of the House and every person in the colony was qualified to form an opinion upon, and to declare it. He looked upon the formation of the Commission of the Peace as one of the most sacred trusts which could be confided to any Government; and, looking at the names added to the list of justices of the peace, a great many of whom he knew, by the present Ministry, he could only come to the conclusion that a great number of these additions had been made for merely political purposes. In the remote districts of the colony magistrates of the territory had more power in their hands, save for life and death, than any judge of the Supreme Court; and looking at the appointment of justices of the peace, as he did, as a most sacred trust, he felt that to prostitute that trust for political purposes was one of the basest acts that a Ministry could be guilty of. Now, to his certain knowledge that had been done in many instances. He was credibly informed that so far had that been done, that men whom he did not suppose any Ministry would have been base enough to put on the Commission of the Peace, had they known their antecedents—had been appointed—and that not from any want of magistrates, which might have excused it, not upon the recommendation of any country bench, by which the Ministry might have been misled, nor on the recommendation of one of their own officers, as had been done before, and which resulted in some very bad appointments; but purely for political purposes, appointments had been made to the Commission of the Peace which were a disgrace to the country. He was prepared to mention privately to the Premier, if he desired him to do so, the names of the parties to whom he alluded, but he would not name them openly. He was not prepared to state that the very last executioner of the law had been placed on the Commission of the Peace, but he was prepared to say, and he believed he would be in a position to prove, that the very next person, a sort of sub-executioner—had

been appointed a justice of the peace—a man who had carried out the sentence of the law more than once, and on the person of more than one individual, in the colony; and in the district to which he had been appointed a justice of the peace—there were persons who had been operated upon by that honorable J.P. He further charged the Ministry, collectively and individually, with the exception, he believed, of the Colonial Secretary, with perverting the Estimates, and for electioneering purposes making wilfully incorrect statements of the debt of the colony and of the Estimates left by the late Government when they went out of office. On the previous evening he explained some of those mis-statements in the course of his reply to some of the charges of extravagance that were made against the late Government, and which professed to be founded on the Estimates that were left in the office—improperly, as he was afterwards told by the honorable member for Maryborough, who seemed to know what the tactics of their successors would be. Now, he could inform the House that when he went into office, it was with one determination—and he thought he could say that as long as he was in office he carried it out—and that was to have no concealment where no disadvantage to the Crown could happen, and, in everything, to tell the truth and take the consequences. He started with that resolution, and he never regretted carrying it out, so far as he was concerned. He might indeed say that the whole of the Ministry took that resolution at the outset, and kept it to the end. The Estimates were left in the office by his honorable colleague, the Premier, caring little what use might be made of them; but knowing well that if he and the other members of the late Ministry were spared the use of their tongues, they would be able to refute any calumny that might be cast upon them in consequence of their Estimates. He noticed that, in the *Brisbane Courier*, the remarks that were made last night against the late Ministry on account of the Estimates, were fully reported, but no notice whatever appeared of what he said in reply to those remarks. Now, he would repeat that the only increases that were made in the Estimates, over the Estimates of the previous year, were in connection with the appointment of officers for the carrying out of the Land Bill, officers for the administration of justice on the gold fields—but the number of which officers was to have been reduced by the late Government—and for the extension of the police force, which was rendered absolutely necessary by the influx of population, and which was loudly called for by honorable members who might now find it convenient to denounce such increase as extravagance. With those exceptions, and, he thought, two instances, as well as he remembered, of an addition of £100 to the salaries of police magistrates, that were cut down £100 each

the previous year, and whose salaries, as he thought, ought not to have been cut down, but it was by accident, as he believed,—he referred to the salary of Mr. Landsborough, the police magistrate at the Gulf country, which was cut down from £500 to £400, and the salary of the police magistrate at Maryborough, which was cut down in the same way—with those exceptions, the only additions were those made to the Under Secretaries of the different departments; and, as he explained last night, there were no increases virtually in those cases. What appeared to be increases, simply arose from calling a spade a spade, and shewing what those officers were actually receiving. According to the Estimates, as they were formerly prepared, those officers appeared to be in receipt of say £600 a-year, and the public believed that that was all they did receive, while the fact was they might be receiving £100 or £150 more from contingencies, and in other ways. Well, the late Government were determined that the country should know what they were doing, and therefore they put down the full amount received by those gentlemen, and, put it in the power of the House to cut down the amounts if they thought fit. Now, those were the only increases that could be found on the Estimates of the late Government. He had also good reason to complain of the very bad use to which the draft of a Bill, found in the Treasury he presumed, had been put by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer in his recent electioneering speeches. He alluded to the draft of a Bill for the re-distribution of electorates. His honorable friend, the late Premier, fully explained that matter on the previous evening, but his observations did not appear in the public press, and, therefore, he would now substantially repeat the explanation. The Bill had been talked about in a most unfair manner by the honorable member for the Kennedy—the late Colonial Treasurer he supposed he might almost call him, as he had heard he was going out directly. If the honorable gentleman had taken the slightest pains to inform himself, if he had taken the ordinary pains which a Treasurer would be supposed to take, to convince himself of a fact before stating it to the public as a fact—he would have discovered that it was only a rough draft of the proposed Bill, and that it was not even the latest draft of the Bill. He held in his hand the latest draft, and there was not one word in it of the mixing up of those boroughs about which they had heard so much spoken. That was merely a thought put upon paper for the consideration of the Government, but it was never brought before the Cabinet. In the latest draft which was to have been brought before the Cabinet there were no boroughs mixed up, unless Drayton and Toowoomba were to be regarded as boroughs. Now, the way in which the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had commented upon the Bill was,

he thought, a very unfair proceeding. It was a very unfair advantage for a member of the Ministry to take of the draft of a Bill found in his office; and not only was it unfair, but, in his opinion, it showed that the honorable member was unfit for the office he held in the Ministry, for correctness was more especially necessary in the Treasurer than in any other member of the Ministry. But even the Estimates were not to be taken as the Estimates of the late Ministry, for any honorable member who had been in office knew very well that the Estimates might be altered over and over again,—and probably they would have been altered,—until they were placed upon the table of the House. It was, therefore, very unfair of the present Ministry to have referred to those unfinished Estimates in the way they had done when before their constituents for re-election. He was very glad to hear the honorable the Premier disclaim any intention of threatening the House on the previous night with a dissolution; and he accepted the explanation as freely as it was given, though he, in common with many members of the House, certainly did take it as a threat when he said that if his Government—not any particular Government,—but the Government which he was at the head of, was not supported, he was prepared to recommend His Excellency to dissolve the House, and that he had good reason to believe his advice would be taken. Now, he never acted under a threat, and he was therefore willing to believe that the Premier did not mean his remark as a threat; but as to what he really did mean he had not yet quite made up his mind. The honorable gentleman had also told them that one reason why he might advise a dissolution was that this was not his House. He would admit that it was not, and never was his House. It was a House that was brought in on a dissolution that took place on the recommendation of the honorable member for the Burnett. But the honorable and learned gentleman must remember that it was his House in this respect, that though he never had a majority in it, the late Government having gone out of office when they had a majority of one, he, nevertheless, chose to come into office. He undertook to form a Ministry and to carry on the Government, when he knew that he not only had not a majority, but had not a sufficient number of supporters to form a quorum. Now, having accepted office under such circumstances, and having formed his Ministry, although of members who formerly sat on the Opposition side of the House, the honorable gentleman was not entitled to a dissolution, if the House chose to say that they would not have either him or his Ministry. He thought that that was a doctrine that would not be disputed; and he had yet to learn that the Governor was bound to dissolve the House to keep any man or set of men in office. He thought the honorable and learned gentleman would find that the

instructions to Governors were set down in very different language, and that they would not bear such a construction; and the despatch that was written to the late Governor of Victoria would, he thought, shew that it was not any part of the duty of a Governor to keep any set of men in office. More than one Governor had been told that he must remember he was not the Sovereign, but merely the representative of the Sovereign, and that, therefore, he had not the same powers as the Sovereign. The instructions to the Governor were pretty strict, and to the effect that he must not identify himself with any party, or lend his countenance or support to any party whatever. He hoped it would not be supposed that in those remarks he was making use of His Excellency's name in the way in which it was at first understood to be used last night. He could now say, in conclusion, as he had said before, that if the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government would allow him to give him a little advice, he would recommend him to accede to the proposition of the honorable member for the Burnett, and consent to the adjournment of the debate. If the honorable member was to continue in office, and if he was to re-construct his Ministry by the union of members on both sides of the House, there would be no need for the debate to continue; but if a Ministry of that sort was not in contemplation, and if the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government would announce that to the House, he and other honorable members of the House would be prepared to go on to a division to-night. If the Ministry was to be formed partly of members from both sides of the House, and if the Government would bring forward liberal measures, he would be happy to support them. It was not his intention to go into faction fighting. He was afraid of party squabbles, and was prepared to support a coalition Ministry in which he could place confidence;—and he could assure the honorable the Premier, that if such a Ministry should be formed, he would support them, and, as long as they behaved themselves, endeavor to keep them in office.

The Hon. R. PRING said, that as the House appeared disposed to discuss the motion of the honorable member for Maryborough, he would not press his proposition that the debate should be adjourned. He desired, however, to assure the House most emphatically, that he made the proposition in the most *bonâ fide* manner, and he thought it would have been accepted *nem. con.* He did not submit it with any intention to draw the badger; but it appeared that he had most effectually done so, and that if he had any such intention, he could not have more completely succeeded, and the honorable member for the Warrego would remember it. Now, he would ask the honorable member to say what right he had to assume that he intended any reference to him in the remarks

he made, when he made the proposition that the debate should be adjourned. He could tell the honorable member that he was very far away from his thoughts, and always would be; for, after this, he would not trust the honorable member the length of his little finger—no, not even the breadth of a hair. If the honorable member would give him permission to state his reasons for making those statements, he would do so, and that pretty distinctly. The honorable member had taken the trouble to read to the House a document that had been cooked for the purpose. But did the honorable member take him for such an ass as not to see through the manœuvre.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member is out of order in replying.

The Hon. R. PRING: He was not calling any other honorable member an ass. If he was calling any one, an ass, it was himself, and he supposed he had a perfect right to call himself an ass if he liked.

The SPEAKER: He did not refer to anything about asses.

Mr. A. HODGSON said he hoped the honorable and learned member would not lose his temper. He could assure the House that the letter he had read was not, as the honorable member seemed to imagine, cooked for the purpose. It was written by him in his own house, and never was seen by the Attorney-General till it was sent to him to Brisbane by his (Mr. Hodgson's) coachman.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL called attention to the fact that the motion for adjournment was withdrawn.

The Hon. R. PRING: He had been called to order; but he did not know what the point of order was. He had called himself an ass: that was not unparliamentary. If he had called any other honorable member an ass, it would be.

The SPEAKER wished to know if the honorable member for Burnett had withdrawn his motion.

The Hon. R. PRING: No; he had risen to reply.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member had no right of reply on his motion for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. WALSH disclaimed any intention of bringing forward his motion of want of confidence, because, in the event of its being carried, he, as the mover, would be "sent for."

Mr. TAYLOR thought the House desired to hear the remainder of the honorable and learned member for Burnett's speech, and that he should make a motion to that effect.

The SPEAKER: It was for the House to decide a matter of that kind. It was his duty to call the attention of the honorable member for Burnett to the fact that he was in the wrong.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The matter to which he desired to draw the attention of the House was, whether it was the motion for

adjournment, or the original motion they were dealing with. The honorable and learned member for Burnett commenced by stating that he withdrew his motion for adjournment. He (the Attorney-General) thought it would be necessary for the Speaker to state to the House whether it was withdrawn or not.

The Hon. R. PRING said he had risen to say that he withdrew the amendment; but as he found the House not willing to listen to him, he had gone on to the general question. He did not remember that he had no right to reply, and he was proceeding to answer the peculiar remarks of the honorable member for Warrego; and, as he was not called to order, it was no business of his to stop himself.

The amendment was, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. MILES said he was sick and tired of the squabbles that were going on, and it was time they drew to a close. He was exceedingly glad to find honorable members deny that they were so fond of place as they seemed to be; but he could only say that appearances were against them. Since August last, nothing had been done to advance the public business, all the time being taken up in squabbles for place and power. He hoped that before the House separated, to-night, a conclusion would be come to upon the motion before them; and that the business of the country would thenceforth be proceeded with. He would state, at once, that he would vote against the motion of the honorable member for Maryborough. The Ministry were entitled to a fair trial, and he thought the House would allow them to bring forward their measures, and judge them by those measures, and upon those, decide whether or not they were deserving of the confidence of the country. If he understood the honorable member for Warrego aright, he was to have the position of fifth Minister. If that was the case, at the proper time, he, (Mr. Miles) would have a word or two to say about it; and he thought he should be with the honorable member for Maryborough before long—because he knew the extravagant habits of the honorable member for Warrego, for the little time he had been in office. Unless the honorable the present Colonial Secretary could put a check upon him, the same characteristic would mark him on his return to office. However, he was not going to prejudge. He was prepared to give the Ministry a fair trial, because he wished that the course which had been hitherto pursued in the House to come to an end. That course was disgraceful; and, holding that opinion, he was glad to say that he gave the late Government, from first to last, his support. It was very bad of those honorable members, now, to come forward and assail the present Government before they could bring in their measures. If he were to be a party to throwing any impediment in the way of the Government, his

constituents would send him about his business; and very properly so. They did not send him to the Assembly to join in squabbles about who should be in office. The suggestion as to the appointment of a fifth Minister stuck in his gizzard. He hoped, however, that the Government would promise, and carry out their promise, to economise. When the late Government did so, they went on over-running their Estimates and making fresh appointments. The present Government must do better than that. With reference to the Land Act, for his own part, he was perfectly independent of any Government. What he was entitled to, he would have, or he would know the reason why. He had a strong will, and while he believed he was right, he would stand out for his own. He had selected on the Jimbour Run; it had been proclaimed in the *Government Gazette* as open for selection, and he made selections in the names of members of his family. For those selections he paid cash. He was not going to talk about rumours willingly; but it was rumoured, and the rumours reached him, that those selections were to be cancelled. He felt annoyed, and he went to the Minister for Lands, and put the question to him, whether or not the rumour was true? The Minister told him that there had been so much dummying he was determined to put it down, and that he would cancel the selections. "Very well," he (Mr. Miles) said, "Mr. Secretary for Lands—I have selected that land under an Act of Parliament; I have paid the money down for it, and I will have what I have a right to—what is mine." He had no hesitation in saying that had the Minister cancelled those selections, he would have committed an illegality. It was not for any vote of his (Mr. Miles,) that that was not done; but, he believed that when the Minister came to consider the matter over, he felt that he had not the power to do it. When he was on his way down to town, the land agent at Toowoomba came to him, to the railway station, stating that he had received the money back, to return to him—the money which he (Mr. Miles) had paid for the selections. He said to the land agent, that the Queensland Government were not flush of money, and that the best thing that officer could do was, to take it back and send it down to the Treasury—that he had bought the land, and, whether it should prove a good bargain or a losing one, he was satisfied with it and meant to keep it; that what he had a right to, he would keep, and fight for. The best thing the House could do, was, to settle the question before them, now; and give the Government a fair trial for the measures they might introduce. And, if their measures were for the good of the country, he should be very happy to give them his support.

Mr. RAMSAY, on rising to address the House, said, he was not sure that he could make himself heard; at the same time, he did not wish to give a silent vote on such an

occasion as this. When he returned from Sydney, yesterday, it was with the full intention to support the Government, as, thereby, he would assist to expedite the business of the country. But it appeared that the Government were so very weak that he was in some doubt whether such a course would not be the worst to take, and whether the best course would not be to pass such a vote as that proposed by the honorable member for Maryborough, so as to forestall a coalition. Should the decision of the House be unfavorable to that motion, or otherwise, and should the head of the Government, by to-morrow, be able to form a good coalition Ministry, he (Mr. Ramsay) should be prepared to give them his support. It was a matter of perfect indifference to him who was on the Treasury benches. He did not think that the House understood, exactly, what the honorable member at the head of the Government said, when he referred to the course he would take if he were not allowed what he considered a fair opportunity to bring forward the Government measures—that course being to advise the dissolution of the House. It seemed to him (Mr. Ramsay) to be so extremely objectionable, whether for this individual case, or as a matter of practice, that he thought His Excellency the Governor would not, upon mature consideration, consent to it. He fancied that the only rule on which a dissolution could be now granted was that the Assembly was not the House of the present Ministry—that the House had not been elected under their auspices—that the existing Government had not had the pulling of the wires in the general election. He did not understand the Premier's expression: he durst say it was a *lapsus* of the honorable gentleman. It was hardly possible, however, to admit the honorable the Attorney-General's case. Here was a Parliament that had never proceeded to business, except to turn out the late Ministry; and then followed the consequent introduction to power of the present Ministry. Why should they be granted a dissolution? If such a rule were carried out—if every person that came into power, for however short a time it might be, and found himself weak, were granted a dissolution for that reason—if for sake of power and position, or from avarice, gentlemen liked office and desired to keep it—where would they end? They would do nothing but meet to change, and the country would be hardly ever free from the excitement, the expense, and all the evils of a general election. On this point he would read two or three short extracts, very pertinent to the present position of affairs, which had been formerly brought before the attention of the House by an honorable gentleman, a late colleague of the present Government, who, on the occasion in question, spoke in the interests of those gentlemen. They would show that the highest authority in England did not at all allow that the dissolution of the

House was justifiable on such grounds as those. Mr. Gladstone said—

“That a dissolution was only to be justified when two things occurred—when there was a great political question to be decided, and when the Minister advising the dissolution had a reasonable hope that a new House of Commons would take a different view of that question from the view entertained by the existing House of Commons. And, negatively, Mr. Gladstone laid down the proposition that no Ministry has a right to go to the country merely to decide whether it shall remain in office.”

Again, referring to the same subject—a dissolution was always “exceptional.”

“Far from having an inherent personal right to dissolve, a Minister must always show why he does not resign, and why he dissolves. In order to make good his use of the power of dissolving, he must show that there are special reasons why immediate recourse should be had to an extraordinary and irregular manifestation of the national will.”

Once more :—

“It is no reason for a dissolution, that the Ministry recommending it was not in office when the existing House * * * was elected. *There must be something beyond this reason!*”

There was no higher authority than Mr. Gladstone on that subject;—at all events, he was quite enough authority for the guidance of the Assembly. If a dissolution was objectionable on the meeting of Parliament, last August, when the late Government were in office, how much more so, at the present moment. No practical legislation had been done for many months, and, for want of it, the affairs of the country were at a standstill. There were many measures required urgently, of which he thought honorable members who seldom moved out of Brisbane hardly knew the importance. The Government had given notice of an Immigration Bill; but no notice was given of a Pastoral Relief Bill. It was proposed to introduce, at the public expense, a number of laboring men, while they were careless of driving out of the country the employers of labor. He had just come from Sydney, and he had there had the opportunity of hearing what was said by the principal mortgagees of stations in this colony; and they said, that if something was not done quickly to remedy the evils under which the pastoral interest at present suffered, the stock in the country would be driven down south, and the stations, here, abandoned. That might appear an idle threat; but men would not go on spending money, year after year, without hope of a return; they would come to the conclusion that the first loss should be the last, and withdraw their property and capital from the colony. He (Mr. Ramsay) did sincerely hope that a Pastoral Relief Bill of a much more liberal nature than was ever passed before would save this country from abandonment. It might be that the abandonment would be for only a limited time; but,

if it took place, it would certainly be attended with most disastrous consequences to the colony. To proceed to another matter:—If the House were asked to support a Government, they ought to be told who that Government were, and what they would do. What was the policy of the Minister for Lands? Was he to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor? The honorable the late Minister for Lands was not in the House—he was politically defunct: therefore, *de mortuis*, and all that. If his acts could be considered as those of the individual, he (Mr. Ramsay) would take no notice of them; but such was not the case. The Act gave no such power to the Secretary for Lands as he had exercised; the power was given to the Governor in Council—in other words, to the Ministry of the day; and the Ministry as a whole must be held responsible. Nothing, he (Mr. Ramsay) thought, was worse than the manner in which the Lands Department had been managed. The Land Act had not been administered so as to bring in revenue, but its operation had been considerably mystified. Yet that was one of the charges against the late Government; and, to a certain extent, the cause of their defeat. But what did the country now find? That there was no security for those who took up land. That which was taken up one day was declared forfeited the next, and regulation followed regulation until nobody knew what was best or correct to be done. In the first place, with regard to the selections on Canning Downs Run. Could anyone tell him why they were cancelled? They had been taken up by some of the most respectable men in the country—some of them honorable members of the Legislative Council, some members of this Assembly—men who would no more be guilty of dummying than would the Postmaster-General himself;—and for what possible reason they were cancelled he could not see, as he understood that those men had complied with all the conditions the Act required: they had paid their money, and complied with all other requirements. There could not be any dummying. But this and other questions would be decided in the Supreme Court. Under the Land Act of 1866, a great deal of land had been taken up; for a twelvemonth the rent had been paid—in some cases the second year's rent had been received by the Government—yet the whole batch of those selections was now rejected. If the Government had had reports from their officers that the conditions had not been complied with, then he could have understood their action; there would have been some reason for it. What was wanted in the administration of the Land Act was certainty and finality. When a man went to take up his land, he should be able to feel that he made a *bonâ fide* bargain; that what he purchased was his own, to do as he liked with it, and have all the benefit that could be derived from it. He (Mr. Ramsay) would give his vote in the way in which he believed it would most expedite

the business of the country—against the motion; and he should be very happy if the head of the Ministry could show that he would be able to form a strong Government, at once.

Mr. LAMB remarked that he thought he ought not to give a silent vote on the present occasion; yet he had considerable diffidence in addressing the House, because he felt like a man who had for some time been under a ban. Charges had been made against him in another place, and he had been waiting to hear them brought forward in the House—to know exactly what they were—so that he could answer them. He had fancied that possibly something might have been done, of which he was not aware, under his administration of the Land Act of 1868, to lead the public to think that he was a participator, in appearance, in some jobbery. But a light had dawned upon him: relief had come at last! It was now discovered that whilst those attacks were being made upon him—since he left office—a great deal of dummying was going on, aided by officers of the Supreme Court, one of them a very able member of the Assembly. No doubt, having had the opportunity of looking behind the scenes, and learning the way in which such things were carried on, they, under the cloud of an attack on himself, thought it would effectually divert attention from themselves. He charged gentlemen who were sitting on the Ministerial side of the House—Ministers and their friends—with being the principal dummies in the transactions in land, which dummying took place after he had left office. Few non-transferrable land orders were put in during his tenure of office; and in the only three cases in which they were put in, with applications for leases, he had every reason to believe that they belonged to the parties in whose names they were made out, and in whose names the applications were made; so that the great amount of dummying and mal-practice which had been spoken of elsewhere, occurred after he had left office. When the matter was alluded to, his good name was thought of little moment, and he had almost feared, really, that he might be thought by the public to be a party to it. What had the Government done since he left office? Why, almost every regulation they had made was cancelled!—they made a regulation one week, and the next cancelled it. Parties who had taken up land under the sixpenny leases clause of the Act of 1860, had been called upon to pay eighteen-pence an acre arrears; so that those who had applied for their land some four years ago, would have had to pay six shillings an acre, down, instead of what he (Mr. Lamb) believed the Government had a right to demand, only eighteen-pence. The public saw that that was a great injustice—that it was ruination to a large number of industrious persons. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, and others interested, had

ventilated the subject, and the persons whose ruin was thus threatened had sent in a petition against it: though he (Mr. Lamb) saw that the honorable member just named had improperly tried to shift the blame of that regulation from the present, to the shoulders of the late, Government. He assured that honorable member that it was the intention of the late Government to call upon those parties to pay only eighteen-pence. Every officer of the Lands Department knew that had been his intention. The present Government eventually cancelled that objectionable regulation of theirs, and issued another—the same that the Mackenzie Government had intended to issue, to the effect that those landholders under the Act of 1860 had to pay only eighteen-pence. Now, he came to the Act of 1866. What had the present Government done under that? Acted with equal inconsistency. He believed he was within the mark when he said that there were somewhat like 200,000 acres of land taken up under that Act. In the latter part of 1867, he supposed there were many hundreds of agriculturists who had taken up land in that class of selection: they were to have cultivated within twelve months from the date of selection, or to put up improvements to the value of five shillings an acre, in which latter case, they were exempt from cultivation. He knew that the great bulk of those selectors were not able to break the ground, solely in consequence of the prevailing drought. It appeared that the new Government, when they came into office, wished to see the results of the taking up of that land. The way they went about it was, to make an example of the rich man; 24,000 acres on Canning Downs were cancelled, on the plea that the holders had not complied with the conditions of selection, and a month was given them to show cause why their land should not be forfeited. Had the Government issued a notice to the effect that the whole of the 200,000 acres were forfeited, he (Mr. Lamb) should not have objected. He contended that it was the duty of the Government to show, to prove, that the conditions were not fulfilled; not to call upon the holders to show cause. But, apart from that, if they had cancelled all, as he before said, it would a *bonâ fide* transaction on the part of the Government. No, no; they would make only certain persons, within a specified area, the victims. He happened to know that there were some *bonâ fide* agriculturalists in that 24,000 acres; and he held that injustice should not be done to one of them. Even if ninety-nine men in a hundred committed a breach of the law, the one just man should not be condemned. He advised greater discrimination by the Government than they seemed to exercise. The course that the late Government had intended to carry out in the matter was, that, considering the severe drought, the selectors should have twelve months allowed them either to cultivate or

to put up improvements of the value of five shillings an acre. But they were turned out of office before they had time to do so. He was of opinion that a resolution of the House would have enabled them to make that concession. There was a precedent for it, in relation to the sixpenny leases; and the Government could have acted in the same way towards the leaseholders under the Act of 1866. At any rate, they could not pick out 24,000 acres in one place and decide, by a stroke of the pen, that the holders of land therein were wrong. Under the Act of 1866, there was a greater number of *bonâ fide* agriculturalists, than under the Act of 1860, because the Act of 1866 was the first under which the price of land was lowered by deferred payments, extending over eight years. Although the sixpenny leaseholders had their land at so low a rent, they had in the end, to pay one pound an acre for the fee-simple. Now, he would again refer to matters in connection with the Act of 1868. What was the course of the Government under that Act? They made certain cancellations of selections one week, and the next annulled them: yet that was done by the very gentlemen who accused him of vacillation and malversation. There was the case of the Yandilla selections. The House all knew the names of the selectors—they were known all over the colony. But the Government had withdrawn a great portion of the land, to be put up to auction. He did not, at all, blame them for that action: they had a right to do it, if they found that there was no legitimate demand for the land. But he should not be accused of malversation in connection with those selections; because the selections took place after he had left office. Even officers of the Supreme Court, members of the House, and of the Government, had assisted to dummy—were actual participators in the very job;—yet, they accused him of malversation. Well might the Government speak of jobbery, when they themselves were behind the scenes, and knew so well how the thing was done. One person would go to one officer of the Supreme Court, and ask him—“Can I make such a declaration, as an honest man?” “No, you can't.” He then went to another, who, in answer to the same question, said, “Yes, you can.” The declarations were made; the jobbery was perpetrated; and the Government knew by whom and under whose advice. Then, there were the Jimbour selections. He found that those selections—he knew, as a positive fact—that they had been cancelled. An Executive Minute was passed to that effect; and, he heard that one of the selectors went to the Government and stated that, as to the pastoral land, he cared nothing for it, but the agricultural land he would have, saying that he had the opinion of the best lawyers in this colony and in the neighboring colony that he could enforce his right. With reference to the vote he would give, to-night, it ap-

peared to him that there was no Ministry—at least, only a fragmentary one. First, there was the defection of the late Secretary for Lands and Works; and, an intimation that a second member of the Ministry would retire—a change that took place in the course of the sitting; and then an honorable gentleman from the Opposition benches crossed over, sat down on the Ministerial benches, and said he was going to join the Ministry. He would, however, gladly give the Government a little more latitude than they had allowed him and the late Government; and he would wait till they had time to state the course they intended to pursue.

Mr. BELL, for same reasons, regretted that the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Burnett was withdrawn. He thought that the House would have been in a better position to discuss the motion before them, after an adjournment for twenty-four hours. He could well conceive the different feelings which prompted honorable members on each side of the House;—he could well understand the feeling of honorable members who occupied the Opposition benches, in putting forth a motion for the purpose of embarrassing occupants on the Treasury benches, and their reluctance to get the consent of the House to that motion, which the country might regard unfavorably; and he could equally well understand the feeling of the honorable members of the Ministry towards a motion which, even if postponed, might affect their position as a Government. He thought it was well understood, even by that honorable gentleman himself, that the motion was addressed to the head of the Government. On all grounds it would have been better to have acceded to the motion for adjournment. His own (Mr. Bell's) impression had been, till a late hour, that the motion of the honorable member for Maryborough was for a direct vote of want of confidence in the Government generally; but, in the speech of the honorable member, there were words used, and a direction of language, which must have given the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to understand that it was otherwise meant—that the motion was against himself. His object in rising was not for the purpose of speaking at length upon the general question of debate, but to endeavor to persuade the honorable member for Maryborough to withdraw the motion. Whether or not, the motion would be brought forward on another occasion, it was plain that honorable members were not now in a fair position to discuss it—unless they were prepared to discuss it irrespective of argument, or of anything but party feelings. He was one of those members who held an utterly independent position in the House, irrespective of sides or parties; and he had, in virtue of that independent position, a strong desire to see a powerful and stable Government formed out of the remains of the present Ministry. He had heard it said that there was a hope

felt by the honorable the Premier that he would be in a position to name to the House, to-morrow, certain gentlemen who would form a coalition as members of his Government, which coalition would be satisfactory to the House; and he (Mr. Bell) was prepared, if the gentlemen whose names were to be disclosed were satisfactory to him, to give his support to the Government. If, on the other hand, he was called upon, now, to give his vote on the motion before the House—irrespective of any future Government that might be so formed—he had no other position to take than one of direct opposition to the Government as they stood. Could anyone, for a moment, in justice to those honorable gentlemen, decide that the position which they now occupied would be the one they would occupy when they met the House to-morrow? He thought, therefore, that the honorable member for Maryborough would consult the convenience of those honorable members who had considered his motion in all its bearings, if he would withdraw it, to-night—even if he was determined to bring it forward again, at an early date.

Mr. TAYLOR said he thought no honorable member should give a silent vote on the question, particularly himself. After the remarks he made last night, with regard to the Ministry, he wished to put himself square with the House and the country. Last night he had the presumption—he had committed the crime of presuming—to give advice to the honorable and learned gentleman at the head of the Government. He advised him to resign; or, if he did not care to resign himself, to get his Treasurer to resign. He was glad to say that his advice had been taken. The Premier did not choose to retire himself, but his Treasurer had resigned; and, one of the difficulties was removed; because he (Mr. Taylor) could not support a Government in which his friend, Mr. Fitzgerald, occupied a place. The Premier had not only got rid of an obnoxious colleague; but he had—also following his advice—gone to the Opposition benches, or, rather, to the cross benches, which were more honest, and got two colleagues. He should now give the Government his vote. No doubt, when the motion of want of confidence was brought forward the honorable mover anticipated a triumphant ending to it; but, because his (Mr. Taylor's) advice had been taken, the ending would be otherwise. The honorable member for Maryborough should not have pressed his motion, after hearing the rumours that had been abroad during the day. Some honorable members had promised to support the honorable member in the fullest opposition; but the honorable member could not expect it now. He knew that the honorable member had a great liking for a fight—that he was happy when he could attack somebody or something; and that he was ever ready for it. As for argument, that did not matter;

the less said about it the better. When that good and gentle member for the Burnett, Mr. Pring, came forward with his motion for adjournment, it was in good faith, and with the best intentions; and he (Mr. Taylor) could not understand the attack that had been made upon him. The House were wasting another valuable night. Upon what? Why, they had had discussions upon the Land Act, upon legal advice given by Attorneys-General, and upon the action of officers of the Supreme Court; and, in fact, upon all sorts of rumours well and ill founded; and they were no wiser, now, than they were at three o'clock, after having wasted enough time to have sufficed for the passing of a Pastoral Relief Bill. And all for what? To hear themselves talk! They might, after hearing a few more speeches, go to a division. He should vote against the motion, for the reason that the Premier had followed his advice. There were more than himself who wanted to go to a division, and to get away.

The Hon. R. PRING said he had so seldom received any credit for political honesty of purpose, that he must express his thanks to the honorable member for Western Downs, for what he had said. It was quite true that the peculiar circumstances of the case yesterday were very much altered since the speech of the honorable the Premier this evening. It was impossible, in view of the proposed new arrangements, that the House could come to any direct conclusion, and, as the Premier expected to be in a position to-morrow to carry on the business of the country, he had, in order to afford the Government time to complete their arrangements, moved, in a *bonâ fide* spirit, the adjournment of the debate, and not from any party or factious feeling, although he had been charged with being a bush lawyer, and roundly abused for the suggestion. He had made this suggestion to two honorable members, Messrs. Thompson and Ramsay, who had approved of it, and he had also obtained the consent of the honorable member for Maryborough.

Mr. JORDAN said he felt convinced that the honorable member for Maryborough would, in the interests of the country, withdraw his motion, for if not, he would assuredly find himself alone in the division. He could not help observing, while the honorable member was delivering his speech, that the expression of his countenance was not at all in keeping with the hard words he was uttering. The merry twinkle in his eye, and the pleasant smile that beamed on his face when he had made some of his hardest hits, looked very much as if he did not, seriously, mean half he said. What advantage, he asked, would be gained if the motion now before the House were carried, and if the members now sitting on the Opposition benches were to change sides, and come again into power? The House had been told that the policy of the present Government was precisely that

of their predecessors; then where would be the benefit from a change, as the same measures would be carried. The loss, however, to which the country would be put through the delay which the success of the motion must involve, would be incalculable. During the whole previous year absolutely nothing had been done—

"I've lost a day, the King who nobly cried,
Had been an Emperor without his crown."

How much shame should we take to ourselves that we have wasted a whole year in disputing about what party of men shall receive the honors and emoluments of office? From what he had heard when away, and from what he had seen for himself, he thought the case might be thus stated. The former Ministry, after having received a fair share of support from the Opposition, and having availed themselves of the talent of two clever members from the North, succeeded in passing through in a lengthy session, one Bill. Very little else was done. The condition of the country was wretched; practical measures alone were earnestly called for; a very great reform in the matter of expenditure had been promised; but literally nothing, or next to nothing, had been done, except the passing of one Bill, "The Alienation of Crown Lands Act," at the commencement of 1868. When the House met for the new session in that year, the Ministry who had up to that time done nothing legislatively, were said to have shewn also a great want of administrative ability. They had done nothing, worse than nothing, during the interval, and the Land Act had been shockingly administered. The then Opposition very naturally said, "The Government we have had in power for some time have done nothing, they continue to do nothing, and their policy is a do-nothing policy." Meanwhile the country was rapidly going to ruin, and a motion of want of confidence in the Government was carried. The Ministry availed themselves of their constitutional right, and appealed to the country. The result of that appeal did not give them a working majority. The Opposition, who had given them a fair trial, very naturally proposed the vote of want of confidence in them again. It was not carried, the Ministry saving themselves by a majority of one, but the division proved they had not a working majority. Now, a member of the Opposition wished to turn out the present Government because they had not a working majority. The circumstances of the case, however, were very different. The late Government had a fair trial; they had the help of the Opposition, and of the clever members from the North; and they had done nothing. Was the House to wait another year, to allow a universal collapse to take place in the colony, because of the necessity of having a squatting Ministry to do the business of the country? He did not care whether the Ministry was composed

partly of squatters or otherwise, as long as the business of the country was proceeded with. He did not believe in the absurd distinction between squatters and others. Some of the most liberal men in the colony were squatters, and the reason why many who followed that pursuit, were on the Opposition benches was, he believed, because they were continually denounced as squatters, and almost compelled to separate themselves from the liberal party. The distinction thus drawn was mischievous, and this arraying of the squatters, as such, against all other parties was, perhaps, one of the great reasons why nothing had been done in the colony, though such an admirable commencement had been made in 1860. If they would only give the present Government time to mature their measures, he felt assured they would be such as would command the support even of many members on the other side of the House. They had not had a fair trial. Before they had time to turn round they had been compelled to meet the House; before they could lay one measure on the table they are denounced as incompetent, judged, censured, and condemned by the honorable the late Attorney-General—not because they were not men of intellect and education, not because they were not men of integrity, not because they did not represent the opinions of a large majority of the people of the colony, for he knew they did—but the honorable gentleman asked, where were their broad acres? What the honorable gentleman asked, was to prevent them from “up stick and away?” Because they had not three or four gentlemen among them representing the pastoral interest, they were not to be allowed to do anything at all. The honorable the late Attorney-General would give them no quarter, no time, no consideration, for he was determined to upset them. They had had great difficulties to encounter. There was the unexpected defection of the honorable member for the Northern Downs, Mr. Bell. That was a great loss to them. Then came, he would not say the defection, of his honorable colleague, Mr. Francis. Then came the affair of the late Minister for Lands and Works, and the Colonial Treasurer, which all regretted. Under these complicated difficulties, the Premier was goaded, harassed, badgered, and, in a reply to a question from the honorable member for the Western Downs (Mr. Taylor), it was elicited from him that, under the circumstances, the Government had a clear constitutional right to a trial, and, if that was denied, that they had a right to do something else. He did not hear anything in the shape of a threat. He was reminded by the House that evening of the state of affairs eight years ago, when there was a conservative Government—he would not say a squatting Government, because he was resolved to discard the phrase. But members in the House representing the pas-

toral interest went with them as supporters. They would not have moved a step in advance if they could have helped it. They would not have agreed to the abolition of State-aid, to a liberal system of education, or to a liberal Land Bill, if they could have helped themselves. It was only through the exertions of the then Opposition, that State-aid was abolished, that a liberal system of education was put into force, and that a thoroughly liberal Land and Immigration Bill was passed; and if that Bill had been worked properly the colony would have been in a very different position now. The Government of that day had frequently very narrow escapes—sometimes a bare majority of one, and on a division on a very important matter, they only saved themselves by the casting vote of the Speaker. Every liberal measure was made such by the Opposition, who were determined that the business of the country should be proceeded with. That was the key-note they ought to strike that night, and he believed they had struck it. They were going to carry on the business of the country. He was going to help, and he believed the honorable member for Maryborough would withdraw his motion.

Mr. ATKIN said he quite concurred in the opinion that it would be desirable for the honorable member for Maryborough to withdraw his motion, for it was extremely inconvenient to honorable members to be called upon to decide upon it in ignorance of what arrangements were in contemplation, especially as it seemed extremely probable that a strong Government would be formed within the next twenty-four hours. He was absent from the House when the honorable member for Maryborough addressed it, but he believed that honorable member had stated that he brought forward the motion at the express desire of the honorable member for Eastern Downs, and many honorable members would be gratified to see the happy change, and to see the honorable mover of this resolution acting in the capacity of lieutenant to that honorable member. But it appeared to be extremely probable that the honorable member for Eastern Downs would take part in the new arrangements for forming a Government, and, in that case, he would scarcely be able to congratulate himself, supposing the motion to be carried, on the success achieved by his lieutenant or aide-de-camp. For his part, he had never been in favor of coalition Governments, and he did not find either in the history of Colonial Parliaments or the British Legislature that they had ever been successful. Still there were, undoubtedly, occasions when, in order to advance the interests of the country, it was almost necessary to form a Government of that character in order to prevent a dead-lock from taking place. Now, what was the present position of things? The Estimates of 1869 were not yet passed; the representation of the people

was very inadequate; the pastoral tenants of the Crown were calling loudly for relief. But nothing had been done to remedy these grievances, and as there was nothing but ruin staring the people in the face, some prompt measures must be resorted to. Under the peculiar circumstances of the case, therefore, and although he did not approve of coalition Governments, he should support any Ministry which might come into power, who would afford the requisite additional representation, and relief to the outside squatters, and who would get on with the Estimates. He was not going to enter upon the defence of the gentlemen who now occupied the Treasury benches, but it had been stated by an honorable member on the other side of the House, who had emphatically condemned the Government, that they had made use of the Estimates left by their predecessors in the Treasury, those Estimates being in an incomplete state. Well, of course, the late Government might have intended to alter them, but the in-coming Ministry could only take them as they found them, and he would venture to say, for he also had seen them, that a more disgraceful set of Estimates had never been introduced by any Government in the colony. Why, the entire revenue of the colony only amounted to £700,000 or £750,000, and the Estimates-in-Chief reached the enormous sum of £792,000, independent of the Supplementary Estimates, which, experience had shown, were generally about fifteen to twenty per cent. on the others. Consequently, if the late Government had carried out those Estimates the expenditure of the colony would not have been far short of £900,000 to £1,000,000. He must confess, that he could not agree with the honorable member for Port Curtis, that a new Government had no right to make use of the documents left by their predecessors. The late Government had boasted that they were going to carry out a system of rigid retrenchment, but as that honorable member himself had remarked, their only attempted retrenchment was the striking off the Native Police expenditure, which could not be dispensed with. They had, therefore, set a very bad example. He did not intend to take up the time of the House by making any lengthened remarks. He hoped that, in a very short time, a Government would be formed who would command the confidence of both sides of the House, and enable honorable members to pass the Estimates, and to carry those measures which were so urgently called for. For the reasons he had given, he should oppose the motion before the House, if it were pressed, but he had too much reliance on the good sense of the honorable member for Maryborough to think that he would not withdraw it, especially considering the awkward position in which he might otherwise place his friend and adviser, the honorable member for Eastern Downs. At any rate the honorable member could withdraw the

motion until the next day, when he could bring it forward again, if he found that the new Ministry were not, in his opinion, strong enough to carry on the business of the country.

Mr. FRASER said he agreed with the honorable member for Western Downs, that no member ought to give a silent vote on such an occasion as the present. He hoped the honorable member for Maryborough, considering the tone the House had now assumed, would withdraw his motion. During the short time he had been in the House, it had been a matter of deep regret to him that so much time was taken up by certain members on each side of the House in contentions, to the entire neglect of the interests of the country, which were in such a very depressed state, and which, so long as such a state of things continued, would never improve, but always get worse and worse. He thought the present Government had not had that fair trial to which they were so fairly entitled. They never had a chance of proceeding with the business of the country, and the contentions which had taken place among them might have been expected under the circumstances. No course of legislation would entirely deliver the colony from its present unfortunate position, but that condition might be greatly improved, and if they addressed themselves at once to their business, they would give an earnest of their sincere intention to do that. As a member representing a very important constituency, he thought he had a right to appeal to them to lay aside all party feeling, and unite in passing such measures as would advance the true interests of the community at large. He believed, with the honorable member (Mr. Jordan) that if the late Government had remained in office, a strong Opposition might have been sufficient to enable the House to do all that was required; but a new Ministry had been formed, and he thought they should, at any rate, receive a fair trial, and the consideration to which they were entitled. Certain honorable members had not by any means fulfilled their intentions of giving the present Government a fair support, and he was quite sure they could not justify themselves to the country at large. Some members seemed to think that the colony was created solely to afford them scope for their ambition, and the display of their oratorical ability. No doubt, one or two unpleasant hitches had taken place, and misunderstandings had occurred between members of the Ministry, but that was not at all an unusual thing under the circumstances; and as honorable members had just received the assurance of the Premier, that his arrangements would probably be completed in the course of another day, he did trust that the Government would be allowed a fair trial, and that the business of the country would be proceeded with without further obstruction or delay. The necessities of the colony were urgent; affairs

were in a most critical position, trade and commerce were languishing, and it behoved those who had really the interest of the colony at heart to shew that they were anxious to further its advancement, without respect to private feelings or party faction. He did not intend to touch upon the various topics referred to by previous speakers. Many of them were foreign to the question at issue, and would come on for discussion at their proper time and place. He would content himself with urging honorable members on both sides of the House, by giving the Government a fair and liberal trial, to place themselves in a position in which they would justify their conduct to the House and to their constituents.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said he thought the honorable member for Maryborough should not be permitted to withdraw his motion, as it was due to the Premier that it should go to a division. Grave and serious charges had been brought against the Government, and more especially against the Premier, by that honorable gentleman. It was quite clear that those charges had been proved to be without any foundation, and, as far as he could see, the House was prepared to express its strong disapproval of them. Under these circumstances, he should protest against the motion being withdrawn, except in the usual way, by going to a division.

Mr. WALSH rose to explain that he placed himself entirely in the hands of the House. He had done his duty by ascertaining the feeling of the House, and he would either withdraw the motion, with the consent of the Premier, without prejudice to the question at issue, or he should expect some honorable member to move the adjournment of the debate. Several honorable members had not spoken, as they thought it was understood that the motion would not be pressed to a division, and they should be allowed an opportunity if there was to be a division.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that, were his own feelings concerned, he would consent to the withdrawal of the motion, but when he was requested to accompany that withdrawal with the condition that it should be without prejudice, he felt bound to press it to a division. The attack had been directed against him personally, and the division on the motion should be placed on the records of the House.

Mr. PUGH said he thought the Premier had taken the proper course, and he should press the motion to a division. The Premier's speech, in reply to the mover of the resolution, was, in his opinion, quite a sufficient answer in itself to all the charges brought against him as head of the Government. He deprecated constant Ministerial changes, and trusted that the business of the country would be proceeded with. The puerile, factious, and fatuous work of the past few months would tend to lower the Legislature,

which had hitherto held a very respectable position among the other colonies, very much in the opinion of people elsewhere. The practice of allowing honorable members to carry motions to adjourn the debate from time to time, on various pretexts, virtually resulted in a repetition of the same speeches, night after night, to the obstruction of the real business of the country. The House had already expressed its opinion of the paltry charges preferred against the honorable Premier, by the mover of the resolution, but he thought it was only due to the honorable member at the head of the Government, that the result of the debate should be placed on the records of the House.

Mr. FRANCIS said he had regretted, from the first, that the motion had been tabled, as it seemed that they were not giving the Ministry that fair trial which it was only good policy, as well as fair and just, to let them have. The motion was premature. He had never heard a word which reflected unworthily on the character of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government. Separating him from his colleagues, and looking upon him under the circumstances as the Ministry, he was bound to express his confidence in the present Government. He might say, that so thoroughly did he believe, and had always believed in the political sentiments of the honorable the Premier, that he found on the occasion of the late elections that honorable gentleman's address to his constituents was almost identical with his own, and, with one mistake which might be forgiven—he alluded to the honorable gentleman being deluded by the Land Bill—he had never had any occasion to differ with him. He hoped the honorable member would take into his counsels not men of wealth and high position, but men who entertained the same political sentiments which he himself professed. Hitherto it appeared that the men of most weight and position were alone considered fit to rule the country, and if that principle were carried out it would be almost as well to adopt the practice of the Dutch settlers, who put their candidates into the scale, and the heaviest man carried the day. The late Government had had a fair trial for some fifteen months, and the House expressed an opinion that they were not to be trusted; but the present Government had not had even time to place their policy before the House. He was sorry to see that the Premier had not considered it consistent with his dignity to allow the honorable member for Maryborough to withdraw his motion, for it looked, in consequence, very much like a political dodge, and the end of such dodges would be that the party with whom he (Mr. Francis) was anxious to act, and with whose principles he for the most part agreed, would forfeit all confidence. He was no believer in dodges, nor was he a politician, for, so far as he could read the vocabulary of this colony, the word "politi-

cian" meant "rogue." He would vote against the motion, and would adhere to those principles which the Premier and himself held in common. He would do this, though it had been said he had sold himself to the squatters.

Mr. PALMER: They wouldn't buy you.

Mr. FRANCIS: He wished to see those measures adopted which were for the good of the country, and he should therefore sit in judgment upon the Government, and only support them in such actions as, in his opinion, would tend to advance the general interest.

Mr. WALSH said, in consequence of the courteous way in which the Premier had met him, he would be willing to withdraw his motion, simply with that honorable gentleman's consent, leaving out the words "without prejudice" from his previous offer.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was entirely in the hands of the House.

Mr. GROOM said he must object, in consequence of the strong terms which had been applied to the Premier and other Ministers, to the withdrawal of the motion. If the Premier consented to the withdrawal of the motion, he would be admitting the allegations made against him. He (Mr. Groom) should certainly vote against the motion. The honorable member for Maryborough had abused the Premier in no measured terms, he had designated the Colonial Treasurer as the greatest political renegade possible, and had charged the Government with having got into power on false pretences, and with being a most unrighteous Government. He should certainly vote against the motion. He was quite prepared to endorse the remarks made by several honorable members as to the extravagance shewn in the Estimates of the late Government, and even if he had made up his mind to support the motion of the honorable member for Maryborough, those Estimates would have prevented him. A great deal had been said about appointments to the Commission of the Peace, but so long as responsible Government existed, there would be complaints of that nature. The Government were obliged to listen to the representations of influential persons in the different districts, and he should very well like to see the practice adopted which prevailed in Victoria, of doing away with territorial magistrates altogether, and appointing borough magistrates. The honorable member for Port Curtis had mentioned individual cases of recent appointments to the magistracy which, in his opinion, were highly creditable. It might be the honorable gentleman was correct, but he would mention a case of several magistrates having collectively behaved themselves in a manner that proved their utter unfitness and incompetency for magisterial duties, and these gentlemen were appointed by the Government of which the honorable member for Port Curtis was a member. What he referred to took place at Charleville, and he

found the following letter upon the subject, in the *Dalby Herald* of the 23rd instant, under the heading "Itinerant Justices":—

"Sir,—Several parties were summoned before the Bench, here, on Tuesday, for breach of the Scab Act. The principal case was against the "super." of the Bank of New South Wales, who travelled 30,000 sheep from Burenda to Angellala Junction without branding, and was, therefore, liable to a fine of £750; or, at the lowest rate permitted by the Act, of £125. The bank, however, had two J. P.'s in its employ. These gents (I wish I could say gentlemen) were put on the Bench, and, of course, the bank gained its cause, a penalty of ten shillings being inflicted, to meet the hardness of the times.

"I send you an outline of the case, in order that banks and merchants (who own nearly all the stations about here), may see the necessity of keeping these very handy J. P.'s in their employ. There are no less than three of them, hereabouts, in want of a permanent job; some more will be on the tramp soon. So if you hear of any billets going, send me word, and I'll put you on the track.

"N.B.—No questions asked, and no money returned."

The same journal contained a police report of the case, which was heard by a bench of six magistrates—the gentlemen, acting, no doubt, on the principle that in the multitude of counsellors there was wisdom. It appeared that they were unable to decide the case at the first hearing, and accordingly adjourned for two hours. When they returned, they found that the Sheep Inspector had not a witness to swear that the sheep in question were the same sheep that he had seen pass from the Burenda Station to the Angellala Junction Station, and, on that account, the magistrates dismissed the case. Now, he could tell the honorable the Colonial Secretary of a magistrate, not a hundred miles from Toowoomba, who made a living by his being a magistrate. He received bribes; and he had no visible means of obtaining a livelihood, so that he might, at any time, be taken up under the Vagrant Act. That person's name was on the Commission of the Peace, and that being the case, he went from place to place, in consideration that his expenses were paid. There were other cases which he could mention, of a similar kind. He had been asked to table a distinct motion, in which the name of the magistrate he referred to should be mentioned, but he declined to do so, as he was not the member for the district in which he resided. He now came to refer to another matter which the honorable the Premier should take into consideration. It had been urged that the Premier did wrong in the case of Ross Lewin, and when the motion of the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, for a select committee, came on, they would no doubt have considerable discussion as to the working of the Polynesians themselves. He would rather that the honorable member

had proposed to bring in a measure for the repeal of the Polynesian Act altogether; and then they would not have any more of those cases that had been occupying the police courts for some time past. As to the question before the House, when he considered the strong terms that had been used, he thought the Government would be wrong to consent to the motion being withdrawn; and that they should insist upon its going to a division. He was astonished that the honorable member for Maryborough had brought forward the motion; and he had led the House to believe that he did so at the instance of the honorable member for the Eastern Downs, though the honorable member most severely censured him for seconding the vote of want of confidence that was proposed under the advice of the same honorable gentleman on a previous occasion. He was very much surprised that the honorable member for the Eastern Downs was not in his place to night, as he might have done considerable service in affording honorable members correct information as to the exact position in which matters stood. The honorable member for Maryborough had said that the present Government was the most unrighteous Government that ever was; and was particularly severe upon the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. Now, for his own part, he must say he very much regretted that the honorable member for the Kennedy had not had an opportunity of proving his capability for the office of Treasurer. The honorable member, he believed, was one of the most able members of the House for such an office; but he had not had fair play, and the public were beginning to think so. The public were beginning to think that there was some other motive than what was represented, for the treatment the honorable member had received; but the time would come when the honorable member would occupy a distinguished position in a future Government, if not in the present one. He hoped the honorable the Premier would insist upon the motion being carried to a division, and, if so, he would support him.

Mr. WALSH rose and said, that since the motion was first proposed, he had had a conversation on the subject with the honorable the Premier, and with several other honorable members, and had thereby been led to believe that on both sides of the House there was a very general desire that the motion should be withdrawn; and with the consent of the House, he was willing to accede to that desire, on the understanding that he did so without prejudice to the reasons that had influenced him in bringing forward the motion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that, personally, he had no objection to the motion being withdrawn, but unconditionally. The honorable member, however, very well knew, that the power to consent to the withdrawal of the motion did not altogether rest with him. Any

honorable member might object, and in that case the motion would have to go to a division.

Mr. WALSH: The proposition for the withdrawal of the motion came from the Ministerial side of the House; and he believed it was made to him in all good faith. It was pressed upon him by honorable members on both sides of the House; and, in particular, by the honorable member for Clermont, who most feelingly suggested to him that he should bow to the request that had been so generally made to him. Since then, however, he had heard cries of "divide" from both sides of the House, so that he was in some measure justified in suspecting the sincerity of the individual representations that had been made to him, as to the general desire that the motion should be withdrawn. Several of the honorable members who had called for a division were amongst the first to assure him that it was their determination to address the House upon the motion. They had, however, for some reason which he could not ascertain, departed from that determination, and were now the most clamorous for a division, without availing themselves of their right to address the House on the motion. Such treatment was most nefarious. It was treatment such as he could never have expected to have received from any honorable member. But that treatment was not confined to honorable members on the Opposition side of the House; for honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House, whose duty it was to have spoken on such an occasion, in defence and support of the honorable and learned gentleman whom they considered it their duty to support and defend, had also, it appeared, been wholly oblivious of their promises to him to address the House. In all sincerity, he desired to assure the honorable the Premier that he did not blame him as having had any hand in such nefarious treatment. Greatly opposed as he was to the honorable and learned gentleman at the head of the Government, and prepared as he might in consequence be to believe a great deal that might be said against him politically, he could not believe that he could be a participator in such deception as he had experienced. But it appeared that at the last moment some of the followers of the Government could be hired, and employed to do such dirty work as, up to the present time, was wholly unparalleled in the history of the Parliament of Queensland. The question involved in the motion had been altogether burked by the conduct of some honorable members. When it was understood that the Government were to take two or three honorable members from the Opposition side of the House, honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House, acting, no doubt, under some Ministerial influence, suddenly shewed an extreme anxiety that the question should go to a division.

Dr. O'DOHERTY desired, with permission, to interrupt the honorable member, in order

to assure him that it was he who was the first to object to the motion being withdrawn; and he most emphatically denied that in making such objection he was in the remotest way influenced by any honorable member of the Government. It was, he believed, the honorable member for Western Downs who first suggested that the motion should be withdrawn.

Mr. WALSH: He was quite well aware that the honorable member for North Brisbane was the first to protest against the motion being withdrawn; but he was equally well aware that the honorable member tacitly agreed to the proposition in the first instance. At that time, however, there was what might be termed a full House, but when the honorable member found there was a thin House, as far as the Opposition side was concerned, he rose and protested against the withdrawal of the motion.

Dr. DOHERTY said he desired to deny, and that most emphatically, that he was influenced by the appearance of the Opposition benches to object to the withdrawal of the motion. From the commencement of the debate he was of opinion that it was due to the honorable the Premier, after the unscrupulous nature of the attack that had been made upon him by the honorable the member for Maryborough, that the motion should go to a division, in order that the opinion of the House, as regarded that attack, might be distinctly expressed and recorded.

Mr. WALSH: The honorable member for North Brisbane was present when the proposition was made that the motion should be withdrawn. That was not at the commencement of the discussion, but after several speeches had been delivered,—and he made no objection then to the withdrawal of the motion. He must again repeat that the treatment he had received was the most unfair, and the most treacherous, he might say, that could, in his opinion, have been visited upon any honorable member, especially, in respect to a question of such paramount political importance. He must say that he liked fair treatment. He liked to give it, and he liked to receive it; and, especially, he liked to receive it from those honorable members who professed a desire to co-operate with him, and who actually promised to support him. But not only had honorable members on the Opposition side of the House broken their promises, but honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House who had promised to address the House on the motion—had not kept their promises, and he would have been satisfied if they had kept their promise, even by opposing the motion, as some honorable members on that side of the House had done. Some of them had refrained, from what cause he knew not, to fulfil their promise. While he said this, he desired again to repeat his belief that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government

had not, either directly or indirectly, sought to influence those honorable members to be silent; for the honorable gentleman, he felt assured, was not aware of what some of his supporters had in store for him. But he maintained it was the duty of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, who knew, as well as he himself did, the charges it was his intention to bring forward, to have stood by him, to have kept their promises, and to have been present to support the motion either by their voice or their vote. No charges could have been more distinctly stated than he had stated the charges he brought against the present Ministry. And he would appeal to the House and to the country, to say, if any of those charges had been met and answered. If he could think that the honorable the Premier had met and answered one of those charges sufficiently, and that, therefore, the charge had been wrongly brought, he would, unhesitatingly, apologise to the honorable gentleman. But the honorable gentleman had replied to the charges with a lawyer-like and politician-like evasion. Not one of the charges he made had been met; and not one honorable member on the Ministerial side of the House had dared to deny one of them. Till the bait was thrown out, in the course of the debate, that there would be a strong coalition Ministry formed on the following day from gentlemen sitting on the cross-benches, there was, he knew, a strong determination on the part of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House to proceed against the Government and to support the motion; and he was convinced that had they been true to their promises—had they been true to themselves—there would have been no room to doubt that the motion would be carried. Under all the circumstances that had been brought into view during the debate, he thought it was the most justifiable course that ever the friends of the Government could have adopted—to recommend that the motion should be held in abeyance, or withdrawn, till honorable members were sufficiently informed to know who really constituted the Ministry—to know to whom the motion applied, and whom they were voting against. Honorable members objected to the motion because they did not know to whom it referred,—because they did not know who were the Ministry. They refused to pass such a motion as against the honorable gentlemen at the head of the Government; and, besides, they desired to support the Government if they found that it consisted of gentlemen of whom they could approve. Such being the case, they felt that they could not support the motion, because if they did so, as they did not know who were the Ministry, they might afterwards find that they had voted against gentlemen whom they would be very willing to support. They could not vote for the motion because they did not know who they were voting

against. He could not allow this debate to close without recording his protest against the conduct of the honorable member for the Warrego. He now spoke in the name of a political party, and in the name of the people of the country; and, in doing so, he must say that such a desertion he had never witnessed, and such a speech, in defence of that desertion, he had never listened to. The conduct of the honorable member, and the speech which he had delivered, would yet prove to be most injurious to the management of the business of the House, and injurious to the welfare of the country. If ever there was a traitor in the camp, according to the speech of the honorable member, he charged him with being one. Never, in all his life, had he witnessed such a sudden conversion, and never, in all his life, had he witnessed such a sudden desertion. The only conclusion he could come to respecting the honorable member was, that he was the most determined place-hunter that it was possible to find. For the last fortnight the honorable member, it might be said, had been activity itself in the efforts he put forth against the Ministry. He spared no exertion to compass the overthrow of the present Ministry. When he met any one in the street his first words to them were—"What can we do to get rid of this Government?" And yet, after all, the honorable member unhesitatingly and unblushingly joined the very Ministry whose overthrow he was eager to accomplish only a few days before. The conduct of the honorable member, and the speech he had delivered, would have a most disastrous effect upon the welfare of the colony, as it was affected through the proceedings of that House; and he could inform the honorable member that whenever he joined a Ministry he would be the weakest point in it. He certainly did think, when the honorable member was returned to hold a seat in that House, that with his great knowledge of the country, and the great stake he held in the country, he would render great and valuable service in the House; but after the exhibition he had given of himself, after the specimen he had presented of his ability, after the eagerness he had displayed in hunting after office—for it appeared to him that the speech of the honorable member to-night was merely a solicitation to be admitted to office—to be appointed a Minister in the re-construction of the Government,—after all that, it must be apparent to every other honorable member that the honorable member for the Warrego would be an element of weakness in any Ministry he might join. Surely the honorable member should have had more regard for his late colleagues than to have turned round so suddenly and told them that he was quite prepared to join their opponents, and that he would join any other Government for £800 a year. The honorable member had altogether made an exhibition of himself of the worst kind,

Not content, however, with doing that, he had also described the motion before the House as futile and puerile; but that the honorable member did not himself believe that such a description was correct was manifest from the fact that he did not attempt to shew that the motion was either futile or puerile. The honorable member knew that he could not attempt to shew that such was the case, without at the same time shewing his own inconsistency. He could not attempt to disprove charges, which only a week ago he was himself prepared and anxious to advance—and he might inform the House that it was the honorable member who had chiefly instigated him in the first instance to bring forward the motion. A fortnight ago no one was so severe in denouncing the Ministry as the honorable member for the Warrego; and, viewing his conduct then, and his conduct now, he unhesitatingly charged him with an incurable and an insatiable craving for office, for nothing else could possibly have induced the honorable member so suddenly and so extremely to turn against his late colleagues as he had done. He now desired again to repeat that not a single charge he had brought forward had been refuted; and if only one had been answered he would have willingly apologised to the honorable the Premier for having brought forward the motion, and would have unhesitatingly withdrawn it; but he maintained that, in the estimation of any unbiassed politician, there had not been in any of the speeches that had been delivered, anything like a reply to any of the charges that had been advanced. He would therefore, ask honorable members again if they thought they would be justified in supporting a Government, no one member of which could answer any one of the charges? Now, he would ask, what was to be the policy of the Government? As yet they had not given the House the slightest indication of what was to be their policy; and he would ask if honorable members were not justified in supposing that as they had appointed to the Commission of the Peace, a man who was in former years the common flogger, the policy they would adopt would be akin to that of the days of convictism and corporal punishments? The honorable the Premier, he understood, had given an assurance that the ex-flogger would be removed from the Commission of the Peace, and until that removal took place, no honorable member would be justified in supporting him, or his Government. Now, with respect to the charge of cancellations in the matter of certain land selections, he had not observed any desire on the part of the Government to give any explanation about them. It appeared that the honorable member for the Maranoa, made certain applications for land in an irregular way, and that the applications were ordered to be cancelled. Now it had been stated by one of the Ministry, that there were no cancellations. It appeared, however,

that there had been, and that the deposit money had been offered back to the honorable member for the Maranoa. When the land agent tendered the money back to the honorable member for the Maranoa, it must have been done, not, he supposed, on the agent's own authority, but at the instance of some member of the Government. The honorable member for the Maranoa admitted that the proceeding was virtually a cancellation; and it was quite evident that it was so. When the agent, who had received money, was told to hand it back to the honorable member, the proceeding was undoubtedly equivalent to a cancellation. Now, he demanded on behalf of other selectors, of the selectors at Yandillah, that the Government should pursue the same course, as in the case of the honorable member for the Maranoa. On behalf of the selectors at Yandillah, the House was bound to see that the same justice was meted out to them that was meted out to the honorable member for the Maranoa. He had only further to say that he felt satisfied he had done his duty. And he felt equally satisfied that the Government had not done theirs. The evils they were allowing to fall upon the colony, and which they could prevent, would assuredly fall upon themselves. When there was some chance of the formation of a coalition Government, he regretted to see that such a proceeding should have taken place as had been witnessed in the House to-night. He thought it would now be impossible to form any coalition Government that would survive beyond a few weeks. It might be possible that such a Government as might be formed would, by toleration and by compromise, be able to pass the Estimates and a few pressing measures; but even those would not be of a satisfactory nature. It would not be possible to carry on business as it ought to be carried on. The measures that might be passed would only be a series of compromises like the Land Bill, which was not only a disgrace but an injury to the colony. Those who bought and those who sold were equally disgraced under its provisions. That measure was itself a monument of the evil of a coalition Government. Such a Government was only a Government in name. It was not a Government in reality. It was only a coalition of politicians who were in reality opposed to each other, but who, by their coalition, managed, for a time, to humbug the people. He believed that such a coalition as was likely to be formed, would do no good to the country; but would only for a time deceive the people. He felt that he had now done his duty, and he must say that he was thoroughly disgusted with the whole conduct of the present Ministry; and he hoped honorable members would never again see such a lamentable display as they had seen to-night, of humbug on the one side, and treachery on the other.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he would be very happy to do all in his power to effect a conciliation of parties with respect to the motion before the House, but he was afraid he would not be able to prevent the motion being carried to a division. He very much regretted that the honorable member for Maryborough had thought it necessary to reiterate some of the charges he advanced in the course of his opening speech, as most honorable members on both sides of the House were now satisfied that there was no foundation for them. He would be very glad to see the motion withdrawn unconditionally, but, as the honorable member was aware, it was in the power of any one honorable member to require that the House should go to a division upon it.

The motion was then put, and the House divided as follows :

Ayes, 2.	Noes, 18.
Mr. Thompson	Mr. A. Hodgson
„ Walsh.	„ S. Hodgson
	„ Atkin
	„ Taylor
	„ Forbes
	„ Groom
	„ Murphy
	„ Pugh
	„ Thornton
	„ Francis
	„ Fitzgerald
	„ Fraser
	„ Miles
	„ Jordan
	Dr. O'Doherty
	Mr. Williams
	„ Stephens
	„ Lilley.