

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 28 JANUARY 1869**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Thursday, 28 January, 1869.*

Misreporting and Misrepresentation in a Newspaper —  
The Ministry.—Committee of Elections and Qualifica-  
tions.—Adjournment.

MISREPORTING AND MISREPRESENTA-  
TION IN A NEWSPAPER.

Mr. MILES made a personal explanation, in correction of a misreport of his speech in the *Courier* newspaper of this day.

Mr. LAMB, also made an explanation with a similar object. In reference to the Yandilla selections, which had been a subject of remark in his speech on the previous day, which speech was not properly reported in the *Courier*, he stated that he had since learned that there was a legitimate demand for the land at the time it was withdrawn; two gentlemen were here from Sydney, requiring to take up 3,000 acres, but they had to go without it; because a Minister of the Crown had banded together some dozen men, acting under his advice that they could make declarations, to take up the land.

Mr. ATKIN: Name, name.

Mr. LAMB: Mr. Mackay and Mr. Creswell.

Mr. ATKIN: The name of the Minister.

Mr. LAMB: He would name the Minister; —he named Mr. Macalister, and one who

acted under his advice was the honorable member for Clermont himself.

Mr. PALMER said he was not going to complain of being misreported. He was so accustomed to it, that he never expected to be properly reported; so he did not complain at all. What he wished to call the attention of the House to, was a short paragraph in the leading article of the *Courier* of this day, as follows:—

“The treatment of the mover at a later hour of the evening by the whole House, and markedly by his own friends, was offensively contemptuous, even the seconder of the motion, Mr. Palmer, walking out when the division was just about to be taken, whilst Mr. Lamb rambled through the lobby, and Mr. Pring had gone home.”

He did not wish to have it go abroad to the country that he deserted, in any way, the honorable member who had moved the motion; and he denied that he had done so. He came into the House to vote, but the honorable member for Maryborough—feeling that, owing to the dodge that had been concocted during the evening, many honorable members had left the House—asked him not to vote, and to prevent any one else he could from voting, so as to leave only the tellers to record the division on his side. The honorable member for Maryborough had not been deserted; it was at his own request that he (Mr. Palmer) and other honorable members did not vote. The motion was pushed to a division by what he must call a contemptuous dodge.

Mr. MILES said the honorable member for Port Curtis was taking a most extraordinary course. He was one of the proprietors of the *Courier*, and, surely, the House was not the place for a proprietor of that journal to find fault with his own property.

Mr. PALMER: If the honorable member for Maranoa had any knowledge of the matter, as he ought to have, having been a proprietor of a newspaper, he would know that any proprietor of the *Courier* had no more to do with what appeared in its columns, than the honorable member himself. The honorable member had been a proprietor of the *Guardian*, and he (Mr. Palmer) would like to know if the honorable member was to be held responsible for what had appeared in that rag?

Mr. WALSH took exception to the remarks of the honorable member for Maranoa. It was the duty of an honorable member of the House, when he saw a breach of privilege committed, even in a newspaper of which he was a proprietor, to call the attention of the House to it; and to shew what he thought of the inferiority—the criminality—of that newspaper. Such conduct was highly creditable to the honorable member for Port Curtis. He (Mr. Walsh) had no hesitation in saying—and he said it with shame to himself—that the way in which the *Courier* was conducted; the systematic way in which the privileges of the House were invaded, by the

lying reports which were published in its columns, for political and party purposes, was incurable, and would be incurable, as long as there was one individual connected with that journal. The way in which lies were promulgated, and expressions put into the mouths of honorable members, that were never used—the systematic misreporting of the proceedings of the House—the systematic misrepresentation of nearly everything that took place—amounted to a breach of privilege; and, he believed, the time would come, sooner or later, when it must be noticed by the House. No honorable member cared what the editor of the paper chose to say, or for what appeared in the leading articles;—he was employed to tell lies—to make false representations;—to write slanders was his pabulum. Colonial editors were employed to write lies and bad grammar. But, when a proprietor, the manager of the paper, took care, systematically, that his friends in the House should be reported properly, and his opponents misreported in the most atrocious, in the most scandalous manner, it was the duty of the unfortunate proprietors of that paper, if they could, to put a stop to it. He denied that the *Courier* correctly set forth what took place in the House; its reports were falsehoods both by suppression and by publication; and, though he was one of the unfortunate proprietors, he was unwilling to be thought a consenting party to the iniquity done—to the slanders perpetrated by that journal.

Mr. ATKIN said he could imagine no more difficult or unfortunate position than that of an individual who had invested money for a political purpose—

The SPEAKER: There was no question before the House.

Mr. ATKIN: He should conclude with a motion—he would move the adjournment of the House. He could imagine no more difficult position than that of an individual who had invested money in a newspaper for a political purpose, and found that his enterprise had not borne fruit. It was a very singular fact that the honorable member for Maryborough said he was in that position. It was singular that no member of the House had evinced a stronger inclination to dabble in newspapers than the honorable member for Maryborough; and it was a still more singular fact that he was always complaining that the newspapers with which he was connected published lies. He (Mr. Atkin) did not know whether that connection had anything to do with it; but, at all events, it was a monstrous thing for the honorable member to be always complaining in the House about the *Courier*. If the proprietors had not control over a newspaper, who had control? With reference to the alleged dodge about which the honorable member for Port Curtis had spoken so strongly, he (Mr. Atkin) was one of those who would have consented willingly to the withdrawal of the motion of the honorable

member for Maryborough, had not the mover insisted that the withdrawal should be at the request of the Premier. But he could not consent to such a humiliating condition. As far as he was concerned, there had been no political dodge; and those, also, who insisted on the division with him had no concern in any dodge. He moved—

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. WALSH denied that he had asked the Premier to request him to withdraw his motion; and he appealed to that honorable gentleman to confirm what he now said. After the disgraceful dodge resorted to by the honorable member for Clermont, he was surprised to see him get up in the House and make the statement they had heard. It was a disgraceful dodge—

Mr. ATKIN rose to order. He resorted to no disgraceful dodge. He appealed to Mr. Speaker: the honorable member was too much accustomed to give way to his imagination and to give loose to his tongue. He put it to Mr. Speaker whether the language was in order, or whether it was likely to promote that good feeling in the House which ought to exist?

Mr. WALSH: The honorable member was one of those who counselled him, yesterday, to withdraw the motion; and, as soon as he consented to do so, he appealed to the Premier—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Perhaps the honorable member would allow him to say that he should not take any part in a debate to revive any unpleasantness.

Mr. WALSH: By a disgraceful dodge, after several honorable members had left the House, the motion was not allowed to be withdrawn, and the honorable member for Clermont was a party to it.

Mr. ATKIN pressed the point of order on the attention of the Speaker. The honorable member for Maryborough had applied the words "disgraceful dodge" to him, in connection with the proceedings of last night; and he now desired that honorable member to understand that he would not allow him to do so, either inside or outside of the House. He wished Mr. Speaker to rule if such language was in order.

The SPEAKER: Certainly, I think not. The honorable member is not in order in applying such language to any honorable member.

Mr. WALSH bowed to the ruling of the Speaker, and admitted that the language was too strong. He insisted that he obtained the tacit consent of the Premier to the withdrawal of the motion, the honorable gentleman stating that many of his followers acceded to it. The honorable gentleman never told him, afterwards, that he had not obtained their consent. He (Mr. Walsh) had been treated most unjustly, and by no one more so than by the honorable member for Clermont; because that gentleman had, in very kind language, counselled him to

withdraw the motion, and, afterwards, without rhyme or reason, objected to its withdrawal. That was an act of treachery.

The motion for adjournment was, by leave, withdrawn.

#### THE MINISTRY.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Sir—I am now in a position to inform the House that I have made arrangements to carry on the business of the country. I have to announce that the Honorable Thomas Henry Fitzgerald has resigned the office of Colonial Treasurer, and, also, his seat at the Executive Council; also, that the Honorable Thomas Blacket Stephens has been appointed Colonial Treasurer, giving up the office of Colonial Secretary. These are the resignations. The Honorable Arthur Macalister has been appointed Secretary for Public Works and Mines; the Honorable Arthur Hodgson, Colonial Secretary; and the Honorable James Taylor, Secretary for Public Lands. The last three gentlemen are also appointed members of the Executive Council. I beg to lay on the table the *Gazette* containing these resignations and appointments. I now move—

(1.) That the seat of the Honorable Arthur Hodgson hath become and is now vacant, by reason of his acceptance of the office of Colonial Secretary, since his election and return to serve in this House as Member for the Electoral District of Warrego.

Question put and passed.

(2.) That the seat of the Honorable Arthur Macalister hath become and is now vacant, by reason of his acceptance of the office of Secretary for Public Works and Gold Fields, since his election and return to serve in this House as Member for the Electoral District of Eastern Downs.

Question put and passed.

(3.) That the seat of the Honorable James Taylor hath become and is now vacant, by reason of his acceptance of the office of Secretary for Public Lands, since his election and return to serve in this House as Member for the Electoral District of Western Downs.

Question put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE OF ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS.

Mr. RAMSAY, as Chairman of the Committee of Elections and Qualifications, moved—

That the committee have leave to adjourn until Tuesday, the 16th March next.

He made this motion, because it was necessary that the committee should have all the electoral rolls of the different districts of the colony in their possession. The committee had applied for the rolls at the Colonial Secretary's Office, under the seventeenth clause of the Electoral Act; but, out of twenty-two rolls, only seventeen were forthcoming. The rolls for Fortitude Valley, Port Curtis, Rockhampton, Warrego, and Maranoa, were not to be found in that office,

The committee had been enabled to supplement the seventeen rolls from the office of the Government Printer, whence they had received the rolls for Fortitude Valley, Port Curtis, and Maranoa, and, also, for Rockhampton; but this last was informal, and it would be necessary to have it certified, and it must be sent back, there, for that purpose. The roll for the Warrego could not be found, anywhere, and must be written for. The adjournment was necessary in order that the rolls might be procured.

Mr. PALMER stated, that the whole of the rolls were in the Colonial Secretary's office, when he occupied it. If the roll for Warrego was not there, it had been taken away. What rolls were not found in the Colonial Secretary's Office, were got from the Government Printing Office; and he had had the whole before him, as Colonial Secretary. He might state how his attention was called to them:—At the time of the election for Port Curtis, an intimation was sent up, from some club in Brisbane, that "it mattered very little whether Palmer was elected, as he was not on the roll." But, he (Mr. Palmer) had taken good care to be on the roll for Brisbane. He thought, then, that he would try if the honorable member for Clermont was on the roll; and he found his name was not on any roll.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was altogether unable to answer the question, Where the rolls were, now? Yesterday, he received a letter from the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, requesting that he would give instructions to the chief clerk in the office to attend with the whole of the rolls, and the clerk informed him that there were one or two of the rolls deficient, that the roll for Warrego had not been received. That was all the information he could give. He had never seen one of the rolls himself, nor was he aware that they were in the office, until the occasion in question.

Mr. ATKIN said it was extremely satisfactory to know that the honorable the Colonial Secretary, in whose custody the rolls were, hunted out the names of his political opponents. There was nothing in the world to prevent the honorable member from manipulating those rolls as he liked. There were certain manuscripts in his office, as records, which should not be left at the discretion of that honorable member to be interfered with. Whether his (Mr. Atkin's) name was on the roll, he did not know, and he need not now inquire; but a more disgraceful admission he never heard in his life, or one more unworthy of him, or more calculated to damage the late Colonial Secretary's political reputation, than that which had just been made to the House.

Mr. PALMER: If he had thought it worth his while, he would have called attention to the remarks of the honorable member for Clermont; but he denied that he ever said that he had inspected the rolls for a political purpose, or that they were ever in his custody,

except nominally. He inspected them, not as Colonial Secretary, but as a private member, for his own information.

Mr. ATKIN: Might he ask if any private member could go into the Colonial Secretary's office, and inspect the rolls?

Mr. PALMER: If any honorable member had come to him when he was in office, and asked to inspect them, he should have had every opportunity to do so. The rolls were public property.

The Hon. R. PRING: He could tell the honorable member for Clermont that the rolls were public documents. He had been in the Colonial Secretary's Office many a time, to see the roll of his district, and he never knew the rolls were private property. Any honorable member had a right to go into the Colonial Secretary's Office and demand to see the roll of his own district. He (Mr. Pring) had never heard such an absurdity, as that it was otherwise.

The motion was agreed to.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—

That this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, the 16th March next.

He said he thought this arrangement would meet with the sanction of the House, when he stated that it was his intention, upon re-assembling, to discharge the business of the year 1868, and then, after a prorogation of probably one or two days—as a matter of form—to enter upon the business of this year; so that, in fact, the one session would embrace the business of two sessions.

Mr. MILES said he would like to put a question to the honorable member at the head of the Government. Had the Government the necessary supplies to carry on?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes. He begged to say that he had supplies to carry on.

Mr. WALSH remarked upon the extraordinary position in which the House now found themselves. He had hoped, he said, that the duty would not have devolved upon him of rising to oppose the extravagant proposition of the Premier; he thought that some member of the late Ministry would have done so: those honorable members should know that it was their duty to get up and make some remonstrance. He felt himself quite unable to approach the subject in a proper way; he had not had the time to prepare for it. Never, he believed, had an Assembly been placed in such an extraordinary humiliating position as that in which the House found themselves at this moment. They had been told that the business of the country ought to be proceeded with. After being cajoled to meet on that pretence, they found that business was procrastinated, day after day, by the quarrels and the inability of the Ministry to proceed. The very men who had deprecated in others the least delay, now impeded the business, and asked for another adjournment for six weeks. This was a

stultification of everything they had done, and a contradiction of every promise made by them since the House last met. Every excuse that they objected to in the last Government, they now made for themselves. The House were told a short time since, that an hour's delay could not be granted, that opposition would be fatal to the country, because its absolute business required immediate attention; and, now the Premier came down with a cool request that they should adjourn for six weeks. Some protest should be sent to the country against this most disgraceful exhibition of Ministerial frailty. Some more prominent member than he should get up. Was there no honorable member who had a better right to do so? It was impossible for any Englishman to find adequate language to denounce the dodgery, the trickery, the scheming, the deception, which had been perpetrated in the Assembly Chamber during the last two or three nights. All Tuesday was taken up by the Premier and the present Minister for Works denouncing each other. Each told the other, in the strongest language, that the country did not trust him: and now the degrading, the disgusting, the unmanly spectacle, was exhibited to the House, of those two individuals, who had so maligned and black-guarded each other, going into the Government together for the paltry object of place. They could have no other object, for patriotism could not dwell in the breasts of such men. For the sake of going into office they would shake hands together, take a common oath in the presence of His Excellency the Governor, to sit in amity at the same council board. Should this be allowed to pass tacitly? No; and as long as he sat in the House, it should never be said of him, as a representative of the people, that he sat a silent witness of it. Every honorable member of the House ought to raise his voice against it. Only on Tuesday, the Premier used certain language towards the honorable member for Eastern Downs, which he (Mr. Walsh) had taken down *verbatim*, and would read to the House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he should like to know if the honorable member for Maryborough's report could be trusted.

Mr. WALSH: He had compared it with the *Courier*, and he found it word for word with the report in that journal. The *Courier* could be true, sometimes. He wished it to be on the records of the House—though it was a disgrace to the country—the language held by the Premier towards a member of his cabinet whom he would not allow to enter his office again, but whom he now announced that he had, through the exigencies of his position as a shaly Premier, again taken as a colleague. The words referred to were as follows:—

"Honorable members, no doubt, knew that, some time ago, when no man would speak a word in favor of the honorable member for Eastern Downs, he had stood up for him—at a time when

no man in the House, and few men out of it, would trust him, he (Mr. Lilley) had done so. Now he had done with that trust in him."

Those were the words of the Premier on Tuesday;—those were words that followed his explanation of the treachery of the Honorable Arthur Macalister towards himself;—those were words which followed the history of two months' treachery, and systematic treachery, according to his own account, on the part of the honorable member for Eastern Downs. And, now, the House were called upon to believe that every word said by the honorable the Attorney-General, on Tuesday afternoon, was utterly false; or, that he had taken to his bosom, and into his confidence, again, a gentleman whom he would not trust, two days ago, to enter his own office. He (Mr. Walsh) blushed for the country when he recollected that those words would never be unregarded in the history of what he was obliged to confess was irresponsible Government in Queensland. Unless the present Minister for Works was the biggest rogue in the country, the Premier ought, in common courtesy, to have allowed him, when he wished to do so, to arrange his papers and other departmental matters. He (Mr. Walsh) felt ashamed to have to denounce so frequently those flagrant acts, those infractions of decency. He said so on the Honorable Arthur Macalister's behalf, and in deprecation of the cold-blooded action of the Premier towards a colleague. He had done what he thought was his duty, yesterday; and, now, he would quote, from what was beginning to be considered the leading journal in the colony, an opinion about the condition of the Parliament of Queensland. The writer, whether judged by friend or foe, was considered to be the fairest journalist amongst us. That writer said of the present Parliament—and, although amounting to a breach of privilege, it was true:—

"Of all the cants that are canted in this canting world, the cant of statesmanship and patriotism in Queensland has proved the most contemptible. The blindest and most enthusiastic advocate for what is called 'Responsible Government' in the colonies must now admit with sorrow and shame that the whole thing is a hollow mockery—a wretched, low, stupid farce, not worthy of being decently 'damned'—fit only to be hooted off the stage as an insult even to 'the gods.' Responsible Government indeed! why, the very words now stink in the nostrils of every respectable honest man."

He (Mr. Walsh), too, said that responsible Government, if, in a chamber like the Legislative Assembly, honorable members submitted tacitly to what they were asked to submit to this afternoon, would stink in the nostrils of the country; and their submission would cover them with everlasting shame:—

"We here confess candidly that we, for our part, could almost make up our minds to form one of a mob to go down to Brisbane and drive the present miserable horde of so-called repre-

sentatives of the people from the precincts of the people's chamber which they so wantonly pollute."

He honored the man who wrote that treason—he honored the man who spoke out:—

"A revolution in a young colony would be a strange sight, but it seems to be almost imperatively called for now, for there are bounds beyond which the patience and long-suffering of a people become a crime."

He had long viewed the apathy of the people of Queensland, and regarded it as a crime. They were now visited with the consequences of that crime. He would say, that in the conduct of public men they were now reaping the fruits of what they had allowed to be sown—in the burden of taxation which now pressed them down so severely:—

"Against those bounds the people of this colony are now being forcibly driven, and we warn the men whom the misplaced confidence of the constituencies has placed in a position for which they are proving themselves in almost every way unfit, that, come what may, and at whatever risk, they cannot possibly be permitted to play the fool much longer. The whole country is thoroughly sick of it. Outside the charmed circle of the members themselves, there is probably not a man in Queensland who does not feel disposed to spue the Legislative Assembly out of his mouth."

Those were bitter words.

Mr. PALMER: Very dirty.

Mr. WALSH: He was sorry to see any gentleman who could derive sport from such language as he was reading:—

"Such a spectacle as was presented in that House on Tuesday was never exhibited in this colony before, and it will be the fault of the people themselves if it ever is again."

That was the spectacle presented, on Tuesday, by the Premier attacking his late colleagues; it was that exhibition of mutual distrust of each other, and their low estimate of each other's competency and honesty, that the brave writer alluded to—

Mr. MILLS: He should like to ask, if the article was not written by the honorable member for Maryborough?

Mr. WALSH: The writer went on to say—and he (Mr. Walsh) confessed that, strong as his language was, he regarded it as correct:—

"We can find no words to express our disgust."

It was what he complained of, and what honorable members should complain of;—there was no language sufficiently strong to express the disgust which such proceedings as they had witnessed, evoked. Their hearts must swell in their bosoms when they were asked to sit calmly by, and say nothing:—

"To us it appears that the time has come for action—that remonstrance and invective are weak and out of place. One can argue up to a certain point, but that passed, there is no alternative but the forcible assertion of our rights. It is not denied that, in extreme emergencies, nations have

been justified in deposing their monarchs, whether hereditary or elective; and most assuredly no excess of false delicacy would prevent the people of a British colony from practically asserting the inalienable privilege of freemen—the right to act spontaneously in their primary assemblies, when the State machinery has got, as it has now here, hopelessly out of gear. We ourselves should be among the last to admit that such an emergency had arisen; but once forced to admit it, we should be among the first to act accordingly.

He (Mr. Walsh) said, that every word there written, every sentence, every fear expressed, was perfectly justified by the outrage perpetrated by members of the present Ministry, last Tuesday. But where would the writer find language to describe the proceedings of this afternoon? It appeared that the House had arrived at that state when it was the bounden duty of honorable members to forsake, if they could not correct, remodel, or redress the position, and leave it to be filled by able men who would occupy their seats. He could not allow the adjournment to take place, without most emphatically protesting against the way in which the government of this country was being carried on. He was sorry to be obliged to make use of such language as he had felt necessary on this occasion; but he could not sit still without entering his protest against the way things were going.

Mr. ATKIN said he agreed with a great deal that had fallen from the honorable member for Maryborough, though probably not from the same motives. He confessed that in the present state of public affairs, it was the duty of every public man to support whatever Ministry came into power. At the same time, he must enter his protest against the present combination. Immoral as such combinations were, he was prepared, so long as he sat in the House, to give the present Ministry his loyal support. So long as they were prepared to go on with those things which were in arrear, and advance the business of the country, he would do so. Although he promised that, after listening to the speech of the Premier against the colleague he had dismissed from his office, and, after seeing the position that that colleague took up in the House on Tuesday last, he could not help saying that the honorable member for Eastern Downs, going back to office was like a dog returning to his vomit. As an independent man, he felt he would have been disgraced if he had not got up and denounced such proceedings. In what light did the conduct of the Minister for Works appear? When the late Government met the House, he was leader of the Opposition. He promised to move the amendment to the Address, and, at the last moment, he backed out, because he was afraid he would be in a minority. Then he arranged that another honorable member should move it; and, on the late Government going out, he became discontented. Upon an old colleague of his forming a Government

he consented to serve under him as a subordinate. When he found that his party were likely to get into office, he made promises, with the view of bringing over supporters to his own side; but when he got into office, he appeared inclined to deny what he had promised on the honor of a politician and a member of Parliament. Then, at a time when it would be expected every sacrifice would be made for the benefit of the country, he had a personal quarrel with his colleague and his chief, and left the Government; when, instead of taking his seat behind them, he walked over to the Opposition side of the House. He had not the manliness to bring a motion against the Government himself, but put forward an honorable member to propose a motion which must have the effect of bringing into power the very party he had pledged himself to oppose. He (Mr. Atkin) protested against such conduct. It was a disgrace to Parliament, and only a corroboration of what he once believed, but afterwards disbelieved, of the honorable gentleman. No one would have been more ready than himself to have given the honorable member for Eastern Downs a straightforward support, if he would only have followed a straightforward course. But he would not submit to be dragged through the mire by the Minister for Works, or any other man. He did not blame the Premier; he considered it to be the honorable gentleman's duty to make the best arrangements he could; but, of all the cases of political prostitution he ever heard or read of, he never met with one more disgraceful than that, which he referred to, on the part of the present Minister for Works. He considered it his duty to support the Government, in order that they might carry on the business of the country; but he could not believe that they could stick together long. He hoped, in the interests of public morality, that the House would be spared any more such lamentable spectacles in the conduct of public men as they had seen this week.

The Hon. R. PRING said he could not allow this motion to pass without speaking on it. Although he was not going to oppose it, it would ill become him, taking, as he did, a leading position in the House, either on one side or the other, as circumstances called upon him, to allow it to pass without entering his protest—*pro forma*, of course—against the construction of the Government. When the public business was really brought forward in the House, he had no doubt that every individual member would give his utmost attention to it; but there seemed no probability of the House ever getting to the business. The constant cry for the past few weeks was, that the business of the country was impeded. The present Colonial Secretary (Mr. Hodgson) had complained that he had travelled 2,600 miles, backwards and forwards, to his electorate, and found no work done during the time he was away. The honorable gentleman could now, without doubt, travel

the 2,600 miles over again, and yet find no work done in his absence. Another six weeks adjournment was asked for, and no business had been done. If honorable members asked themselves fairly and frankly, Who had impeded the business?—the answer would be, the honorable member for Kennedy.

MR. FITZGERALD: No.

The Hon. R. PRING: If the country went to ruin, to-morrow, the fault would be at that honorable gentleman's door. He (Mr. Pring) charged him with being the instigator of the ruin of this country. It was through his machinations and back-door influence that the colony, after so many months, was without a stable Government—with a Government that would not possess the confidence of the House when they next met. A charge urged against the late Government by the supporters and members of the present Government was, that they had been in office fifteen months and done no business; and the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Jordan, in a very fluent speech—he (Mr. Pring) only wished he had had the opportunity of answering him; the honorable member would not fling his arms about so much—charged the late Government with having passed only one measure, the Land Act of 1868. That honorable member had travelled 16,000 miles to get a title! Whatever he might say of the Land Act, it was one which pleased the majority; and if altered in a few places, it would please all classes. It was not necessary for him (Mr. Pring) to draw attention to the difficulties the House had in passing it; but, at all events, it was considered that the session had been very well spent if that only was passed; and he should like to know if those who found fault with it, now, would spend hours and hours of labor, as had been spent upon it, trying to frame a suitable measure? The late Government, at any rate, were not to blame for the amount of work done during that session. Then, came the recess, after which the Government met the House again. Without rhyme or reason, and without any tangible charge being made against them, a vote of want of confidence was brought forward. The supporters of the present Government were asked over and over again to state their charges, but they could not. The consequence of that vote was, that the late Premier advised a dissolution; and the general elections followed. Upon the new Parliament assembling, the Government were in a different position from that in which they were before. They ought to have had a fair trial, then; the House ought to have waited to see if they would have brought in any measures likely to be beneficial to the country. But, no;—nothing of the kind was done. The new Parliament consisted of new members—many who never sat in the House before—who knew nothing of what the Government had done—who recorded their votes on the want of confidence motion,

again brought forward, in absolute ignorance of the facts of the case. Was not that a factious opposition? However, the Government that succeeded caused some of the opponents of the late Government still to sit on the Opposition side of the House. Were not the results that could be seen at the present moment a justification of his charge, that the late Opposition had brought about the present state of affairs? It could not be denied. A strong minority, who had chosen to break the Constitution, must take the consequences on their own shoulders. If the principles enunciated by the present Premier had been put into practice by the honorable member at the head of the late Government, he might have considered whether the powerful minority he possessed, might not have been increased before he took office. But that the honorable member did not adopt that principle, though he might have done so. He maintained, that when the present Premier found himself unable to form a Government sufficiently strong to command a majority of the House, it was his duty to advise His Excellency the Governor to send for the next best person he could name to form a Ministry, and he (Mr. Pring) should not have quarrelled with his choice if a strong Ministry had been formed. But the honorable member had never been in a position to carry on the business of the country, until the present moment, and there was no proof that he would be able to do so now. No business except of a formal character had been laid before the Parliament at all, and further than that, a dispute had taken place in the Cabinet, which, according to the admission of the parties themselves, occurred from mutual distrust and jealousy. The Premier it appeared had always considered the honorable member for Eastern Downs, a traitor, and he had always entertained certain feelings of mistrust, if not against the Premier, against another member of the Government. So that in consequence of that mistrust, the Government was entirely broken up. Then the honorable member for Eastern Downs resigned, and only three out of five were left of the members of the Ministry. He contended that under such circumstances, the Premier should have resigned then and there, because he was not in a position to carry on the business of the country, or to lay a single business paper before the House. But he had not thought fit to do so, and what had he done? If there had been distrust between the members of the Government, what distrust must there be now? The Premier could have no greater faith in the honorable member for Eastern Downs to-day than he had yesterday, when he had expressed the most damaging opinions against him, and he would ask whether members who could abuse each other as those two honorable members had done, like Billingsgate fishwomen, were fit persons to carry on the business of the country. He should like to ask how the

highest personage in the colony could place faith in such persons, when he became aware of the differences which existed between them and the reasons which led to them. Those were very serious matters. It might be that the present Government would be able to command a majority of the House by simple votes. But that was entirely accidental, and it was very doubtful whether the interests of the colony would be advanced. Well, he charged the honorable member for the Kennedy with being the cause of all this difficulty. If that honorable member had exercised a little more prudence he would not have found himself in such an awkward position. He gave the honorable member credit for acting with the best motives. No doubt, seeing that parties in the House were so equally balanced, he thought that by throwing the preponderating influence of the northern members into the scale, he should be able to form a strong Government, and he believed that the honorable member was equally anxious that his constituents should be well taken care of. He was also aware that the political influence which the honorable member was able to command, could not have been given to the late Government, as they would have declined to follow the policy which he would have dictated to them. Therefore, he maintained, that when the honorable member used that influence to turn out the late Government, he should have been prepared to form a Ministry to carry on the business of the country, and should not have allowed the House to wait for another three weeks—very probably another three months. He should be happy to support the motion for adjournment, although he did not believe the Government now formed was one which would carry on the business of the country, for two reasons—first, because he thought they would quarrel among themselves so much before the House met that honorable members would hear of more resignations and more explanations, so that he and other members would not be called on to upset them. Already he saw symptoms of distrust in the Government manifested by those who had been strong supporters of the Ministry before the recent additions to it were made. These gentlemen might support the Ministry collectively, but they evidently distrusted some of its members. For his own part, he thought a Government ought to be trusted individually and collectively, if trusted at all. If the Government did not fall to pieces by their weakness, but if they exhibited a firm determination of character—if the members composing it, each in his own department, out of the House, and collectively in it, honestly endeavored, in the management of the affairs of the country, to do that which was right and just, he certainly, for one, would give them his support. But he must say that he distrusted them collectively, and he should exercise his utmost power in endeavoring to ascertain whether they were really carrying

out the administration of the affairs of the colony in the way he believed they were carried out by the late Government, at any rate as far as honesty of purpose was concerned. If they did so, he would assist them in the passing of any measures which he considered necessary to promote the interests of the country.

Mr. BELL said he wished to make a few remarks on the position of the Government of the day. He was led to do so more especially because the last speaker had virtually told the House that the conduct of the late Opposition in voting against the late Government was unjustifiable, and that it was in consequence of their action that the colony was in its present disastrous condition. He felt that the action he had himself taken on the occasion referred to, together with his subsequent course of conduct, required that he should reply to that charge. The position of parties when the present Government took office was so evenly balanced, that he felt that the business of the country could not be proceeded with so long as they remained in that state. Party struggles would have continued, but for the defection of two honorable members from the Government party. He was one of those two, and he took the course he did, which brought about the discomfiture of the party to which he belonged, with no other object than to bring about the position of affairs existing at that moment. He disputed the correctness of the assertions of the honorable member for the Burnett, when he stated that the conduct of the late Opposition was unjustifiable. He contended that the state of the country and the spectacle presented to the House that evening justified it. He intended to give his support to the present Government, but he regretted that he was obliged to do so in consequence of the necessities of the times. He honestly admitted that if the business of the country would allow him to take a different course, he would do so; but he believed no man, with the interests of the country at heart, would attempt to overthrow any Government which had, at the present time, the means of carrying out the business of the country. He should not, however, lose the opportunity of expressing his distrust and disgust at the want of consistency, honesty, and dignity which he had found exhibited that day by the occupants of the Treasury benches. To use the words of another honorable member, he regretted that such a state of political immorality had been arrived at in this colony. He hoped, however, that the combination which had taken place would yet result in some important business management, which would be more satisfactory to the country. He was not sorry to see that a new member had taken charge of the Lands Department, for he believed the present Minister would do it greater justice than it received from the erratic, inconsistent, and ill-advised course pursued by the late

Minister. He was not, however, prepared to say he was pleased that the administration of the Land Act was in the hands of a pastoral lessee of the Crown, though he had no doubt that the gentleman now in charge of the department would take a broader view of the duty entrusted to him. He repeated that, in spite of all they might have to suffer, he had reason to hope that some good would come out of the combination of to-day. If the Government now formed could only hold together so long as the necessities of the country required, they might do some good, and, at any rate, purge themselves from the disgrace which attached to them, from the exhibition that had just been made.

Mr. FORBES said, that rather than keep the business of the country any longer at a standstill, he had promised the Premier to support almost any combination that could be formed into a Ministry, as it was absolutely necessary that some step should be taken to get through the business of the past year. But for all that he did not believe in the present combination. He thought it would only tend to bring about again a policy similar to that which, in 1864, had proved so destructive to the colony, and which had been the cause of all the evils which it now suffered from. He could not believe that any Government with which two Darling Downs members, and the late honorable member for Eastern Downs, were connected, could be formed, from which evil results would not follow. It was impossible that men who had committed the blackest acts which had ever appeared on the records of the House, could ever be honest towards the country. Political honesty was unknown to them. He warned the Premier that he had taken those to his bosom who would, sooner or later, jockey him out of the position he now held. Until the Estimates for 1869 were passed, he should, however, give the Government his support, although not his unqualified support. He considered the honorable member for the Kennedy a very ill-used man, but one who had the true interests of the country more at heart than any member of the Government. One member of the Government was a new man. Of him, he could only say that he hoped he would really exhibit the ability which his friends considered he possessed. Very frequently, however, assurance was mistaken for ability, as brass was for gold; and, in fact, he was almost inclined to agree with the honorable member for East Moreton, that, in colonial language, a politician meant a rogue, and a very great politician, a very great rogue. The honorable the Premier appeared to be aware of the importance of his position, and resolved to uphold it with dignity, even so far as to discharge a subordinate, who, he had reason to believe, was attempting to overthrow him. He hoped the honorable gentleman would continue in that course. He (Mr. Forbes) had great confidence in him, and he trusted that after the Estimates were passed,

the Government would be so purged, that in a few months, a Ministry would be formed who would be acceptable to the people. He was quite disposed to give the Government a fair trial, but, if after passing the Estimates and those measures which were immediately necessary, he should disapprove of their conduct, he should have no hesitation in withdrawing his support.

Mr. MILES said that the honorable member who had spoken seemed to think the Darling Downs influence was too great in the Ministry. He did not share in that fear. When he came to consider that the honorable the Premier, the Colonial Treasurer, and a member of the Government in another place, were in the Government, he did not think that anything was to be feared from the Darling Downs influence, more especially as the present Minister for Lands had also been considered as the fifth wheel of the Ministerial coach, and had possessed as much influence out of the Government as he would in it. He did not intend to go into the question of political morality, or anything of the sort. His object was to see a Government formed which could proceed with the business of the country, and he was anxious to give his assistance; but he would take the opportunity of saying that if he held the position of a distinguished gentleman in the colony, he would drive every member about his business and take the Government of the country into his own hands. The exhibitions of the last few days were, in his opinion, a disgrace to the country, and he hoped they would be put an end to at once and for ever.

Mr. GROOM said he wished to offer a few observations in justification of his adhesion to the Government on the present occasion. It was not because he believed in the component parts of that Government that he was going to support them. He regretted that the honorable member for Rockhampton had not accepted the position which was offered to him, of Minister for Lands, in the present Government. His acceptance of the office would have given satisfaction to the country, and he would have been in a position to deal with applications for land from the Darling Downs district, impartially and honestly. He must say, however, that whoever the Minister might be, the entire power was vested in the District Commissioner, and he thought there existed the most urgent public necessity that some alteration in the management of the land in the Darling Downs should take place. Notwithstanding all the complaints made against the late Government, notwithstanding the complaints made against the Commissioner for Darling Downs, when that Government was in power, when the late Minister for Lands and Works, Mr. Macalister, went to that district, he found no person who more entirely acquiesced in his amendments than the said Commissioner for Darling Downs. Now, he thought that when a commissioner was prepared to play into the

hands of whatever Ministry might be in office, it was high time that some change should take place in the department to which he belonged. He did not hesitate to say that the honorable gentleman who now occupied the position of Minister for Lands, would have better filled the post of Secretary for Public Works. He quite concurred in the opinion which had been expressed—that no Darling Downs squatter ought to be made Minister for Lands. But he could not overlook the fact that the colony was suffering from a very exceptional state of things. Adjournment after adjournment had taken place. The Ministry had received a vote for two months' supplies on the distinct pledge that they were then to meet to carry on the business of the country, and now a further adjournment was asked for to the 16th March. Of course he should support the Premier in that request, as the necessities of the colony demanded it; but he wished it to be clearly understood that he did not withdraw any of the observations he had addressed to the House on Tuesday evening, for he believed the honorable member for Eastern Downs had only withdrawn from the Ministry on personal grounds, and because he desired to become the Premier of the colony. Finding that he could not occupy that position, he was now quite ready to take office under the present Premier. No one had a higher opinion than he (Mr. Groom) of the administrative ability of the honorable member, Mr. Macalister, but he must say that he would have much rather have seen the honorable the Premier recruiting his ranks from the cross-benches. He concurred in many of the remarks made by the honorable member for Maryborough, and, he must say, a more amusing spectacle had never been witnessed than that which had that week been displayed by one honorable member rising and addressing the most offensive observations against the head of the Government, then putting forward another member to move a vote of want of confidence in that Government,—and then, within twenty-four hours, taking office again at the request of the Premier whom he had abused, and who had expressed an equal distrust of him. It would ill become him (Mr. Groom) as the representative of a large and important constituency, to affirm his perfect acquiescence in these arrangements. He would even go so far as to say that he had been requested by some of his constituents not to identify himself with any Government of which the honorable member for Warrego was a member. But the colony was in a position of great public exigency. The business of the country was in arrears, the Estimates had to be considered, and several important measures were loudly called for. Under the circumstances, therefore, and in order to get through this necessary work, he should support the Government in passing the Estimates, the Bill for the better representation

of the people, the Pastoral Relief Bill, and such other measures as may be necessary, reserving to himself the right afterwards to take whatever course he thought proper. He hoped the economical views of the honorable member for Western Downs would be of service to the Government, and that these views would undergo no change, as was sometimes the case when a member was transferred to the Treasury benches from his seat in the House as a private member.

Mr. FITZGERALD said he had only a few words to say. He should not take up the time of the House by noticing any of the remarks made upon his conduct by the honorable member for Burnett, as, at the worst, the charges could only amount to an error of judgment. He rose for the purpose of contradicting a remark made by the honorable member for West Moreton (Mr. Forbes) who had alluded to him as an ill-used individual. He did not consider himself an ill-used individual. When he joined the Government, he distinctly informed the Premier and his other colleagues that it would only be for a very limited period. His private business engaged him so much that he could not do otherwise. Probably some people would say that was only affectation on his part, yet he was quite satisfied that many honorable members knew sufficiently well that he was speaking the truth, and were aware of the circumstances under which he had consented to join the Government. When he found that complications had arisen, and that a certain gentleman was rather sore on account of certain things, which had caused him to leave office, he (Mr. Fitzgerald) was rather glad that something had occurred which would allow him to leave office in a graceful manner, without sacrificing the interests of his constituents. For that reason he took no credit for any great display of patriotism in tendering his resignation. Had he been able to do any good he would very likely have remained in office over the longer session, which was the term he fixed for himself; but, as the honorable gentleman to whom he had referred before was so determined in his opposition to him, he recommended the Premier to deal with him (Mr. Fitzgerald) as he thought best. The Premier did not ask him to resign, but he tendered his resignation himself, and he felt quite certain that if he had intimated to that honorable gentleman that he did not intend to resign, he would have received his fullest support and consideration. He was glad, for another reason, that circumstances had occurred as they had. He had certain notions of economy which, perhaps, might not be shared in by every honorable member. He was one of those who considered it the duty of the Government to take upon themselves the responsibility of pointing out where retrenchments were to be made, and that, even as far as the officers of

that House were concerned, the Government ought not to place on the Estimates sums which they thought ought not to be expended. That being his idea, he was very glad that circumstances had occurred within the last few days which enabled him to withdraw, because he did not think he could conscientiously, as Treasurer, have made such a financial statement as would have been agreeable to his colleagues, when he found how things were likely to go. He was pleased, in fact, to get out of office without having any actual disputes with his colleagues. He had not advised the formation of the present combination, nor did he believe in coalitions. He was, however, very glad that a combination had been formed which gave the House some hope that the business of the country, now so much in arrear, would be carried on. He should be glad to support the Government on all general questions of policy, which would meet his own views, and those of the people of the colony in general.

Mr. LAMB said that he thought no one would accuse him of saying behind any person's back what he would hesitate to say to his face, and he felt constrained, after the remarks which had been made by the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, to speak of a person who was not present. That honorable member had asserted that the Commissioner for Darling Downs had acquiesced in everything done by the late Minister for Lands and Works, Mr. Macalister. Now, he did not believe that, though perhaps in some things, he had. Of course it was impossible for him to be aware of certain combinations made by members of the House, and other persons outside, to take up certain land and then to sublet it. He was forced to receive the applications, and when the Minister did not agree to those arrangements, and drew his pen through them, he was, of course, obliged to acquiesce. He (Mr. Lamb) had heard the whole particulars from a member of the House.

Mr. GROOM explained that when he said the Commissioner for Darling Downs had acquiesced in every act of the late Minister for Lands and Works, he had not referred to any particular instance. But he had acquiesced with equal readiness to the acts of that honorable gentleman's predecessor. If, however, the honorable member preferred it, he would state that the commissioner acquiesced in the amendments suggested by the late Minister for Lands when they had reference to acts done by the honorable member (Mr. Lamb) himself, when in office, and which were alleged to amount to malversation of the Land Act.

Mr. LAMB said, he gave that a direct denial. He had frequently heard Mr. Gregory abused, but he must say that he thoroughly believed in that gentleman's honesty, and until it was shewn to him in black and white that any charge could be substantiated against that

officer, he should continue to believe him. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, no doubt, had found out that the commissioner was not so malleable as the Minister. It was not long since the honorable member had only to say "you must put this land up for sale by auction, and this for selection," or *vice versa*, and it was done.

Mr. GROOM said he must correct the honorable member. He never, either by word of mouth, or letter, directly or indirectly, asked Mr. Macalister, or any other Minister, to put up land for sale by auction in connection with Drayton or Toowoomba.

Mr. LAMB said, he would put the question to him in reference to the land at Gowrie. However, to return to his remarks on the position of the Government. He did not believe in the present arrangements, but as a *dernier resort*, and in order to get on with the business of the country, he should give them a fair support, where he could do so conscientiously, in all the measures they introduced, although he did not approve of the presence of five members in the Government in that House. He should express his opinion on that question at the proper time. He regretted to see such a preponderance of the Darling Downs squatting element on the Government side of the House. They comprised now two kings of Toowoomba, besides the ex-king, Mr. Hodgson. Not that he had any reason to doubt the honesty of either of those honorable members, especially that of the honorable member for Western Downs, though he had heard opinions to the contrary. He should not have risen, except that he had felt bound to defend the character of a gentleman who had served under him for some time, and who he believed had endeavored throughout to discharge his duty honestly and conscientiously.

Mr. GROOM said the honorable member had charged him with having influenced the Minister for Lands to put up certain lands at auction. He must deny that charge *in toto*. Neither to the honorable member himself, or to any other Minister for Lands had he ever made such a proposition. He knew that it would have been perfectly useless. He could only say that in consequence of the maladministration of the Land Act, during the Government to which the honorable member belonged, the colony had been swindled out of some £200,000.

Mr. LAMB said he referred to a time when the present Minister for Works was Premier and Minister for Lands.

Mr. GROOM replied, that that was before the present Land Act had been passed.

Mr. PALMER said that when—he could hardly say the present Ministry—but when the head of the present Ministry was announced, he took upon himself to utter a prophecy, which was, that the Ministry that might be formed would never, as a Ministry, meet the House; and he thought it would

now be admitted that his prognostication had been fully borne out. He thought he might draw a comparison between the way in which the business of the country had been carried on by the late Ministry, and by the present Ministry; and if he were to do so, he believed it would be admitted that if the late Ministry had been allowed to remain in office, the business of the country would have been very much further advanced. But those were now matters of the past; and he did not wish to detain the House by reiterating the statements about the way in which the late Government was driven from office, by what he must call a factious opposition. Now, as to the way the present Ministry had conducted the business of the country, he felt it to be his duty not only to express as strongly as he could his objection, but also most emphatically to protest against it. When the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government took office, he associated with him, as Colonial Treasurer, a gentleman who, from that day to this, had hardly been three days in his office. Well, during the absence of that gentleman in the North, the honorable the Premier came down to the House, and promised most faithfully, before the last adjournment was allowed, that the Estimates for 1869 would be placed on the table of the House immediately that the House met, if an adjournment was granted to the 26th of January,—the first proposition being that the House should adjourn to the 18th only. The question was put distinctly to the honorable the Premier by the late honorable member for the Warrego. The honorable the Premier demurred a little at first; but on the House evincing a willingness to adjourn to the 26th, the honorable gentleman faithfully promised that the Estimates would be placed on the table of the House on the day that the House met. The promise was, in the first place, that if the House met on the 18th, the Estimates would be placed on the table in a week afterwards; but subsequently the promise was that, if the House adjourned to the 26th, they would be placed on the table on that date.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The question put by the honorable member for the Warrego was, whether, if the House adjourned to the 26th, the Government would be prepared to proceed with business on that date.

Mr. WALSH: The question was put to the honorable gentleman who then occupied the office of Colonial Secretary, but now that of Colonial Treasurer, and who was understood, in the absence of the honorable member for the Kennedy, to be also performing the duties of Treasurer, and he distinctly stated that if the House adjourned to the 26th of January, the Estimates would be placed on the table of the House in a day two afterwards at the farthest.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He said within a week.

Mr. PALMER: The honorable gentleman

who was then the member for the Warrego accepted the promise from the honorable the Premier; and he would not take a promise on the subject from anyone else.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not as to the Estimates.

Mr. PALMER: Yes. It was as to the Estimates. The question before the House at the time, was, whether the adjournment should be to the 18th of January, and the honorable the Premier assured the House that if the adjournment was extended to the 26th, the Estimates would be laid on the table on that date. He, therefore, thought that before a further adjournment was granted, it was the duty of the honorable gentleman to put the Estimates on the table—and he supposed they were all ready. The honorable member for the Kennedy had altogether failed in the course of action he had cut out for himself as to retrenchment, and all the rest of the Ministry, he maintained, were implicated in that failure. For his own part, he must say that he never believed in the promises of retrenchment that were made; and he thought that the Ministry, in failing to place the Estimates upon the table, shewed that they could not carry out the retrenchments they imagined they would be able to carry out. Now, the Estimates must be ready, and, therefore, he had a right to demand that before a further adjournment was granted, they should be placed upon the table of the House, so that before the elections of the new Ministers took place the country might see how far the present Government were willing or able to carry out their promises. If the Estimates were not produced, he would take it for granted that the Ministry were not prepared to carry out their promises, and that the promises they had made were all bunkum. So far from agreeing with some honorable members, that the late Colonial Treasurer, the honorable member for the Kennedy, had been badly treated by the other members of the Government, his opinion was, that the honorable member had very badly treated himself. The honorable gentleman, he thought, had made a great mistake when he imagined that he was fit to be Treasurer—or could be made a Treasurer, and, he believed, the members remaining in the Government had found that out; and the reason for the extraordinary coalition that had taken place was partly, he believed, because the majority of the Ministry found they had got a square peg in a round hole, and it was necessary to have another member in his place. So far from the honorable member having done his duty to his northern constituents, he thought that no honorable member whatever had done so much abiding harm to northern interests as the honorable member for the Kennedy had done. The honorable member, he thought, had given to northern interests a blow from which they would not recover for several years to come. The honorable member seemed

to have been carried away with an overweening self-conceit—that he was the man to save the colony—that he held the balance between the two parties, and that whichever side his vote was given to, must be master of the Assembly. Now what did they see of the Ministry that the honorable member for the Kennedy took such a prominent part to bring into existence? Had not his prognostication been fully realised,—that they would fall to pieces like a rope of sand, without any opposition being directed against them. He had never seen a greater failure than had been exhibited in the case of the honorable member for the Kennedy; and he thought that the constituency of that district, and he might say the people of Queensland generally, would agree with him, that a more striking example of the “vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself,” had never been witnessed in that House. The honorable member seemed to think, that in putting out the late Ministry, it might be believed that he was advancing the interests of the country; but the fact was that the honorable member only desired to advance his own interests. The honorable member had made a most lamentable failure, and had done more injury to the North, of which he entered the House as the champion, than the most ardent enemy of the North could possibly have accomplished. He was glad to see that the bitterness that existed between the North and South, at one time, had been gradually dying out during the last eighteen months; but no greater enemy to the North than the honorable member had proved to be, had ever arisen; and from the seed that he had sown, a crop would spring up that it would take many years to eradicate. With respect to the coalition that had been formed, he could only say that, with one exception, he thought it was an improvement on the previous Ministry, through the fresh blood that had been introduced into it,—but he did not include in that phrase, the honorable gentleman who was out of the Ministry for about twenty-four hours, and was taken back again. He was impressed with the belief that they might look for some useful legislation if the two really new members were allowed to come back to the House. He must say that he had a high respect for the business talents of Mr. Taylor, the late honorable member for the Western Downs; and he would add that there were few members better qualified than the late honorable member for the Warrego, Mr. Hodgson, for the department he had undertaken. He believed that that honorable member would be a great assistance to the Ministry, or to any Ministry that he might join. He believed the honorable gentleman, Mr. Taylor, ought long ago to have taken office in some Ministry or other. But what was the House to think, or what was the country to think, of the third Minister that had been gazetted, the late honorable member for the Eastern Downs,

Mr. Macalister. They heard only on Tuesday last, and from the Premier too, that that honorable member was so bad that he would not trust him in his office for five minutes. Honorable members had heard the language that was addressed to the House by those two gentlemen with respect to each other; and what the country or the House was to think of the return to power of that honorable gentleman he was wholly at a loss to conceive. He must confess that he had seen so many strange things happen of late that he was beginning to think that it would be very difficult for him to be astonished at anything that might happen; but when he heard the rumour last evening, that that honorable gentleman was to come back into the bosom of the friend who had abjured him only on Tuesday last, and that that friend was to open his arms and again receive him, his amazement exceeded all bounds. At first, he was not prepared to believe the rumour, but it seemed that for once rumour was true. How the House or the country was to have confidence in a Ministry having such gentlemen for Premier and Minister for Works, he was wholly at a loss to imagine. It was, he maintained, a disgrace to the colony that such a thing should occur. The happy family, if he might call them so, had been brought together by the Premier in his Cabinet, and, notwithstanding the bad match he had made, he hoped he would be able to rule them. He had, however, but very slender hopes that the honorable gentleman would succeed. He believed that there was in the Ministry, even as it was now re-constructed, an inherent weakness that would prove destructive to it as to the recent Ministry; so much so, that he believed, if a six weeks' adjournment were granted, the Ministry, as it was now constituted, would not meet the House at the end of that time. It would, he maintained, fall to pieces within that time, from its own inherent weakness. The honorable the Premier had shewn that he was prepared to rule his Cabinet with a strong hand, but he would warn the honorable gentleman that if he did not cut the claws of some of his Ministers, he would find it difficult to keep them from tearing each other. A cabinet of Kilkenny cats would be nothing to them. If those Ministers, however, could hang together for six weeks, which he must repeat he very much doubted, and if they brought in measures which he considered would be for the welfare of the colony at large, they would have his cordial support. They would have a fair trial, and he believed it was the disposition of the House to give them a fair trial; but he warned them that the Opposition side of the House, at any rate, could not place faith in their promises. He now returned to the point from which he started, and maintained that the House was bound to have the Estimates laid upon the table before they agreed to an adjournment, so that honorable members and the country

might see the extent to which the Ministry were to carry out their promises of retrenchment, and how far their retrenchment, if there was any, was justifiable. He was astonished that that view of the matter had not struck previous speakers. The country, he thought, was entitled to know in what direction retrenchment was to be carried out. The House had been told that £80,000 was only about sufficient for two months. That was what they were told when, at the end of last year, they voted a supply to that extent. Well, the two months would terminate on the 1st of March next; but the House had just been told that the supply voted in December, for two months, would be amply sufficient to carry the Government through to the 16th of March. Now, it was impossible that the amount voted for two months could carry them through for that longer period, unless they were making very large reductions. Under such a view of the case, he repeated that it was the duty of the honorable the Premier to put the Estimates on the table; and if he did not do so—and he was pledged to do it—he should give the House some information as to the style or manner in which the retrenchment they had heard so much about was to be carried out. If that was not done, the Government would just go on as they had been doing; and when the House met again, on the 16th of March, honorable members would just have to go over the same ground as they had been going over every time the House had met of late, and then they would have another change of Ministry, another vote of supply, and an adjournment for the election of Ministers, and the business of the country would be kept at a standstill. Now, the House was not in the slightest degree responsible for the delay that had taken place in the carrying on of the business of the country. It was, altogether, the fault of the Ministry, and it was their own weakness, their own inherent weakness, that stood in their way. The House asked the Ministry to produce their measures, and to produce their Estimates, but they had been presented with neither, but after the distinct promise the honorable the Premier made when the House voted two months' supply in December last, and agreed to adjourn to the 26th of January, he called upon him to fulfill his promise, and to place the Estimates upon the table before the House again adjourned.

Mr. ARCHER said he should not have addressed the House at all, if it had not been stated that he had been offered a place in the present Ministry. The honorable member for Toowoomba had mentioned the circumstance, and in doing so, expressed his regret that he did not accept office. Now, as it had been stated in the House that he had been offered a seat in the Ministry, it might be well for him to explain why he did not accept the offer. At a former meeting of the House, after the general elections, he did all in his

power to prevent the House carrying a vote of want of confidence against the late Ministry. He then thought that the Ministry who were in power would be better prepared and more willing to carry out beneficial legislation than any other Ministry that could be formed. He was perfectly aware that the Ministry then in existence did not possess a working majority; but neither did the other side; and, in that respect, both sides were about the same. Now, he did not see that, because he objected to the putting out of the late Ministry, he was called upon to join in the present Ministry. No doubt, it was the duty of a public man to throw overboard the party he had been in the habit of acting with, and join any other Ministry that might be formed, if he saw that, by his doing so, he would be able to benefit the country. If he had found that the party he had been acting with were either unable or unwilling to carry out the measures they had promised, and which he believed would be for the welfare of the colony, he would have been prepared to leave that party, and to join a Ministry that was able and willing to carry out beneficial measures. But he did not consider that his joining the present Ministry would effect any very advantageous change in their position in the House. Had he thought that, by joining the present Ministry, he could have stopped the disagreeable squabbles they had witnessed in the struggles of parties, and that he could have benefited the country, and assisted in forming a strong Government that would have been able to carry on legislation with good effect, he would have considered it his duty to sacrifice party feeling, and to sacrifice the conviction that the late Ministry were prepared to do the utmost justice to every interest in the colony. He would have been prepared to sacrifice all political party feelings, and to have joined the present Ministry, if he had for one moment thought that his being in the Ministry would have contributed to the business of the country being vigorously and successfully carried on. But he did not believe that his joining the Ministry would have any such effect, and, therefore, he declined to join them. He hoped that, with such explanation, the Ministry would see that, though he did not join them, he would not act in opposition to them, except in so far as he would oppose any Ministry that would bring in bad laws. Now, so far as he was concerned, he could assure the Ministry that they would have a fair trial; and he would not assist to throw them out because they did not have a working majority. He would wait to see what their measures were, and by the standard they themselves furnished in that respect he would judge them. There had been a great deal said about the composition of the present Ministry as it now stood—by the acceptance of office by three gentlemen who had seats in the House yesterday, but were now deprived of

their places, and would have to go again and ask their constituencies to re-elect them to seats in the House. Now, he must say that the Ministry was a most extraordinary compound, but he had seen strange compounds before, and therefore he was not prepared to say that the present Ministry might not be able to pull together. He remembered seeing in one cage, a cat, a rat, a mouse, a terrier dog, and some birds, and they did not devour each other. He did not pretend to say which of those animals the several members of the Ministry might be supposed to represent, but even if they were as much opposed, politically, to each other, as the animals in the cage were opposed to each other naturally, they might, perhaps, manage to imitate the happy family; and if they could do so, and could show that they were agreed as to their measures, he believed the House would be prepared to judge them leniently, and to give them a fair trial. He thought on Tuesday last that the present Minister for Works—the late Minister for Lands—was most injudicious in attacking, in the way he did, the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government; and he thought, also, that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, was equally injudicious in his reply; because the honorable gentleman should have remembered that, especially in the position he occupied, he should speak of an enemy as one that might become a friend. Now, from the way in which both honorable gentlemen spoke of each other on Tuesday last, it would be difficult for the country to believe that they again became colleagues from any regard for the welfare of the colony, rather than from considerations of personal advantage. Two gentlemen who sat on opposite sides of the House, and used such language as they used to each other, he thought the people out of doors would have difficulty in believing that any coalition between them could be *bonâ fide* and real. He thought it would be better for honorable members, in future, when attacking each other on political grounds, to have more respect to private character than had been shewn during the present debate. Misfortune, it was said, often made a man acquainted with strange bedfellows, and political misfortune had driven the honorable gentleman at the head of the Ministry to the strange resource of taking back into his cabinet an honorable gentleman who left it only a day or two ago. For himself, he always distrusted the honorable gentleman, Mr. Macalister, as a politician, but he distrusted him much more than ever he did before, since his return to office. Before the honorable gentleman resigned office he was in a position to have remedied many of his old mistakes, and to have established confidence in himself by carrying out the duties of his office in a satisfactory way. But, he was sorry to say, there were strong suspicions that he had not done so, and that things had occurred in his office

which would be the cause of inquiry before a court of law. If that was the case, he congratulated both the House and the country on the circumstance of another gentleman having been appointed to the office of Minister for Lands. Though he looked upon the honorable gentleman as a source of weakness in the Government, still the new office, that of Minister for Public Works, which he had accepted, was the one in which he could do least harm. But he knew, that if, in that capacity, the honorable gentleman could carry on as he did when the colony was in a more prosperous condition, he might again become as dangerous as he was before. But the House and the country had obtained one of those lessons of experience from the honorable gentleman that were not readily forgotten; and the Treasurer and the Colonial Secretary would, no doubt, keep a tight rein upon him, and not let him again rush away into extravagance. In the lowly office in which the honorable gentleman was now placed, his position was that in which he would, as a member of a Ministry, be least injurious to the country. He would now like to say a few words upon what fell from the honorable member for Port Curtis, about a gentleman who, as he (Mr. Archer) thought, had not been fairly treated by the House. He referred to the honorable member for the Kennedy, Mr. Fitzgerald. He agreed with some other honorable members in thinking that the honorable gentleman had committed a very great indiscretion in his speeches in the North, and he had told him so. He was perfectly satisfied that there was no necessity for the honorable gentleman to have said anything at all in his speeches about his honorable colleague, Mr. Macalister. He believed he would have been re-elected for the Kennedy under any circumstances, and, therefore, he was very indiscreet in saying so much about his honorable colleague, or even mentioning him at all. Perhaps he was more than indiscreet in saying what he said about him (Mr. Archer); and he must say that he was very much annoyed when he read what the honorable gentleman had said about him, as reported in the papers. The honorable member had, however, explained to the House that he had been incorrectly reported, and he (Mr. Archer) accepted that explanation. In repeating the conversation that took place between them he did not, however, use language so strong as he (Mr. Archer) used, in expressing his opinion to him; for the words he used were—that the party he had joined would sell him. He advised the honorable gentleman strongly to support the Ministry that was in power, as he was certain they would get a great deal more from them for the North than they would get by putting them out, and putting others in. The honorable member, however, would not listen to him. The honorable member possessed far greater political advantages than he (Mr. Archer) ever possessed, as he had sat in other

Legislatures, and had elsewhere obtained great political experience, and, that being the case, he was all the more surprised that the honorable member was less distrustful than he (Mr. Archer) was himself. When the honorable member came down to the House after the last general election, he rushed into the arms of the Opposition at that time—and as soon as he effected their purpose as regarded the Ministry of the day—they effected their purpose, as regarded him, by getting rid of him. He did not blame the honorable the Premier for trying to strengthen his Government by any means that was within his power; and the honorable member for the Kennedy must allow that he voluntarily placed his resignation of the office of Treasurer in the Premier's hands. He did not, therefore, blame the honorable the Premier for the changes he had made; but, undoubtedly, had the other component parts of the Ministry been in earnest in carrying out those measures, to gain which, the honorable member joined them, they would have gone out themselves. It was because they were not in earnest that they remained in power. The honorable member for the Kennedy joined the Ministry, believing that the other members of it would go with him in carrying out measures which he looked upon as right and just for the North; and if they had been honorable in their purposes, they would have stuck to him, and would have gone out with him. But they had not done so, and he must say that, in his opinion, it was such proceedings as that which threw political parties in Australia into disgrace. It was the doing of mean things for the sake of sticking to office. If a Minister went into office with the determination that he would accept the first defeat on a great measure as an intimation to him to resign, he would save his political character; but if he went on with the view of sticking to office as long as he could, by the eyelids, if necessary—if he went in with that view, he might carry measures, and carry on the Government for some time, but he never would be looked upon by the House as a statesman either in principle or in practice. Now, he must say that he thought the honorable member for Port Curtis, Mr. Palmer, treated the honorable member for the Kennedy rather unjustly too. He believed the honorable member for the Kennedy joined the Ministry in the belief that he would be able to do a great deal of good for the country, and not from any overweening self-conceit. No honorable member in the House, he was sure, had a better head for figures than the honorable member for the Kennedy had; and if he had remained in the Treasury, and been supported by steadfast colleagues, he would have succeeded in effecting very large reductions. That was his opinion of the honorable gentleman; and he was sorry that so many honorable members on the Opposition side of the House had

had so bad an opinion of him; and he was sorry, also, that so many on the Ministerial benches had so bad an opinion of him. (Cries of "No, no.") At all events they had deserted him. (Renewed cries of "No, no.") They had accepted his resignation, and put another gentleman in his place.

Mr. GROOM: At his own request.

Mr. ARCHER: At his own request! If there was one action on the part of a Ministry which he would denounce more strongly than another, it would be that of sacrificing a colleague, at his own request, in order to save themselves. He felt satisfied that if the honorable member had remained in office he would have brought in Estimates that would have shewn such reductions as the House had never seen before. But he believed the Ministry were very willing to accept of his resignation, because they were not willing to give full effect to his scheme of retrenchment. Judging by the whole of their proceedings he very much doubted if they were willing to carry into effect all the retrenchments the honorable member proposed to carry out. There was another thing which the honorable member for Port Curtis said, which he (Mr. Archer) hoped would not prove true. The honorable member, somewhat elated apparently, by the realisation of his former prognostications respecting the falling to pieces of the Ministry, had taken upon himself to utter another prophecy to the effect that the Ministry, as it had been reconstructed, would also fall to pieces like a rope of sand. Now, it might be a very tempting thing to find one prophecy fulfilled. It might tempt one to prophecy a second time, but he thought it was a very dangerous thing to prophecy a second time; and he hoped the honorable member for Port Curtis would find that to be the case, by his second attempt at prophecy not being fulfilled. He hoped the House would meet the Ministry in a complete state on the 16th of March; and when the House did meet them again, he hoped to hear that, during the interval, they had so agreed amongst themselves that they would be in a position to submit a well prepared policy, and a well prepared financial scheme; and that they would shew themselves to be not merely politicians enough, but men enough, to walk out of office at once, if the House refused to support their political or financial schemes. To do so, would put them in a much better position before the country than did the sacrificing of one of their colleagues. It would be his duty, should the Ministry meet the House, as he hoped they would, to afford them his support; and he might say that under like circumstances he would have been more strongly opposed to the former Ministry than to the present, for he would have expected more from the Mackenzie Ministry than from the honorable gentlemen who now occupied the Treasury benches. He was afraid that the mess brought about

by the honorable member for the Kennedy first joining the Ministry, and then being thrown out by them, would have the effect of retarding the interests of the North for a very long time. Though he intended to support the Ministry, he would have supported it with much more pleasure if the honorable member for the Kennedy had continued to be a member of it; and in allowing him to leave them, the Ministry had shewn their present weakness, but he hoped in future they would be able to shew their strength.

Mr. FRANCIS said he would support the adjournment of the House, for a variety of reasons. The first, he might say, was that, in a month's time, they would have a cooler season for meeting; and it would be more endurable to attend to these squabbles in cooler weather; but he did not see there was any reason to hope that the business of the country was likely to make any rapid progress at the end of that time. Then, it seemed to him not to be denied, whatever might be said, and said with truth, against the present Ministry, that they were entitled to a certain reasonable delay. He was not certain if the delay proposed was not unreasonably long. He might say that, considering all things—and he hoped the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government would agree with him, for it was not in antagonism to him, but with the view of increasing confidence in the public mind, that he wished to say that, considering the frequent delays they had gone through already a month's further delay would be sufficient. He would say, for himself, that he would do all in his power, supposing his suggestion to be acceded to, to counteract any attempt, and he did not think that any would be made on his, at present, the Opposition side of the House, to embarrass the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, in consequence of the absence of his colleagues. He thought that would meet the necessities of the case. He could not suppose that there could be, in the mind of any honorable member, any design whatever to meet the Government with an adverse vote, on the re-assembling of the House; and therefore the absence of one of his colleagues could not be of any importance to the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government. For his own part, he must say, that in his estimation the present Government was almost as bad in its composition as it was possible for a Government to be; and yet, strange to say, so far as he could see, it was the best that was likely to be formed in the present condition of the House. He was not going to say one word that would add to the feelings of irritation that had been awakened during the last few days. In the course of the debate to-night, he had not heard anything that had pleased him more than the manly way in which the honorable member for Rockhampton had stood up for his friend the honorable member for the Kennedy; and in the same spirit he

might say that it would have been more dignified, if certain honorable members had refrained from observations respecting the honorable the Secretary for Public Works, Mr. Macalister, till the honorable gentleman was again a member of the House, and therefore in a position to defend himself. It would take a long time to go into all the outs and ins of the inexplicable mess that had taken place; and the longer they lived, the more would they see of the underworking of the affair. However much the conduct of the honorable gentleman, Mr. Macalister, might appear to be undignified and childish—and that it was so, he could not deny—he would say that the honorable gentleman had been sinned against also; and that such had been the case, time would shew. He must, however, say, that the conduct which needed defence was conduct that admitted of none. He would only say, further, in respect to the honorable gentleman, that honorable members should hold in suspense their judgment as to his conduct till he was in a position himself to explain it. The lesson, which all that they had witnessed of late should teach, was, that they should have done with all wire-pulling, and all secret arrangements and overtures from one party to another, and all sorts of diplomatic proceeding; and be above-board, and open and trustful to each other. That would pave the way for what they all professed a desire to see—a satisfactory progress made with the business of the country. There was one other reason why he thought an adjournment at the present time was desirable. He thought a short adjournment would give the Ministry an opportunity to arrive at some well digested scheme of public policy. He hoped there was in them a capability of arriving at that. Individually they were able men,—well intentioned men. There was only one quality he knew of in which they were deficient—and that was the courage to act up to their own convictions of what was wanted by the country. Now, he ventured to say that in this consisted the one quality that was essential to a strong Government, namely, in its having a well digested policy, adapted to the wants of the country; and he maintained that those gentlemen who were now in office—at all events five out of the six—were all individually, as far as he could ascertain their opinions, at one on the main points of a public policy adapted to the wants of the colony. There was the matter of retrenchment on a large scale in the first instance. He was surprised to find in the speech of one honorable member of the Government, before his constituents, that he was not in favor of a sweeping change; and it was a matter to him of great regret, that the honorable member for the Kennedy had left the Government, because that honorable gentleman had told him that it was a *sine qua non* with him, that there should be that great retrench-

ment, which honorable members knew to be inevitable. Now, he wanted to see the Government carried on with that object. It was impossible that they could go on in the colony paying £7 a head, every man, woman, and child, for the privilege of being governed. There was a moral certainty almost, that the revenue would be £100,000 less this year than it was last year, and, therefore, it would be necessary that the Government should stand by the principle announced by the honorable member for South Brisbane, when he was in Opposition. Why should they have honorable members saying one thing when they were in Opposition, and refusing to carry out the principle when they crossed to the Ministerial side. The principle was this—that their existence and progress as a nation, depended upon their keeping the expenditure of the year within the revenue of the year. Now then proceeding upon that principle, it was all important that the Government should come down to the House prepared with Estimates £100,000 less than those of last year. There was another point which he would hint to the Ministry, as also being an important element—and he was not to state it as an idiosyncrasy of his own, but as an opinion that was shared in by honorable members on all sides of the House,—that there must be a thorough liberal infusion of new blood into the House, on the basis of population. Now he would ask the honorable the Premier if he meant to be honest on that question?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes; certainly.

Mr. FRANCIS: He could assure the honorable gentleman that the eyes of the country were upon him, and as he dealt honestly with that question, would he have the support of the country and of the House. He was not sure—not knowing much, but suspecting a good deal—that the colleagues of the honorable gentleman were agreed with him on that point; and unless there was a wholesome pressure kept upon the Government by their supporters, that important question was likely to remain in *statu quo* for years. The next point which seemed to him to be all important, and one upon which they were all agreed, was the necessity of dealing with the Land Act. Every day they met they had the honorable member for the Mitchell on his feet, shewing how those charges which were wholesale brought against him, were capable of being explained; and also the honorable member for Port Curtis, and other honorable members, who had been at the head of the Lands Department. It was well known, and no one could deny it—let the honorable and learned member for the Burnett, Mr. Pring, say what he would—and the honorable gentleman used not to say anything in support of the Land Act—no man could deny this, that with all its beauties and merits, and all the fine things the Land Act was to do for the colony, it

was wholly unworkable. (Cries of "No, no.") No man could deny that, as nothing was done out of all the fine things the Act was going to do for the colony—amongst them, the abolition of the duties on imports,—it was perfectly unworkable. And the angels in heaven could not work it. As far as he knew, the shiploads of people that were to be brought here, would not be able to stop. He knew of two gentlemen who had come here to prosecute their fortunes in a legitimate way, and the only way they could do so was through the Supreme Court. It was impossible that that Act could be administered with satisfaction to any class of the colonists. He (Mr. Francis) did not want to hurt the feelings of the honorable member for Kennedy and the honorable member for Rockhampton, who still, he believed, looked with a good deal of pleasure on their bantling—and he honored them for having so much pluck;—but, he maintained, that there was no virtue in their bantling. The Act was not so bad in its working in East and West Moreton; but it was not made to work for either of those districts. There was no land in East or West Moreton which attracted the large buyers of land. The Land Act was made for the Darling Downs, and its operation on the Darling Downs was perfectly monstrous—fraught with ruin to the country, such as would bring upon this generation and the next many difficulties. As he said the other night, the public debt remained, and the security for that debt was gone. The railway remained, but the lands which were to have paid for it were being thrown away. As far as regarded the interests of the State, he begged to say, with all respect to the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, that he must deal with the Land Act. He did not know how the honorable gentleman meant to deal with it—not after the fashion of the penal clauses, he hoped;—but he would suggest that the proposal of the honorable member for the Burnett, Sir R. R. Mackenzie, be accepted, and that a committee of the House be appointed to investigate the working of the Act. Unless the work were taken up manfully, that Act would be the ruin of the Government of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. He (Mr. Francis) hoped the present Government would not be ruined; he hoped those predictions would prove false. Bad as they were, they were the only Government possible under the circumstances;—bad as they were, they were far preferable to the Government they succeeded—proved by a fifteen months' career—and, in consequence, he should wish them a long career of usefulness. He thought the proposition for adjournment should be modified; and, at the risk of displeasing, he proposed, by way of amendment—

That the question be amended by the omission of the word "sixteenth," with a view to the insertion, in its place, of the word "second."

Mr. ATKIN said the Government met the House on Tuesday last, to go on with the business of the country; and, had it not been for the treachery of the late Minister for Lands and Works, they would have endeavored to make up for arrears. However, he believed that nothing that had taken place would justify the long adjournment asked for, except that one of the honorable gentlemen taken over by the Government represented a distant constituency, and that the return to the writ of election could not be made in a shorter period. Considering the state of affairs, and that an additional Minister was in the Government, the public business might be proceeded with as early as possible—there was no need for a delay of six weeks. The Government were ready with their policy on Tuesday; and it would be disgraceful of the House to consent to another long adjournment; and he should therefore vote for the amendment. No doubt, reconciliations had to take place between members of the Ministry, but four weeks would be sufficient for that, and to enable them to have their policy re-arranged.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL had no hesitation in saying, at once, that he would not accept the amendment, to bring the business of the country again into confusion. Public business was brought into the present condition, chiefly because of the refusal of the House to give the Government reasonable time to prepare their measures. It could not escape the attention of honorable members that he had many difficulties before him in controlling those apparently conflicting elements that he had succeeded in bringing together—the honorable gentlemen in the present administration. But he trusted to be able to despatch the business of 1868, upon the meeting of the House: and speedily to go into the business of 1869; and, when the real business of those years was disposed of, honorable members might, if they thought fit, resume those party conflicts of the past, and renew the struggle for power. He now saw he had lost two members whom he had counted upon as supporters—the honorable member for Clermont and the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis. The honorable member for Clermont seemed to have gone off at a tangent.

Mr. ATKIN said he was assured by the honorable member at the head of the Government, this morning, that it was intended to adjourn for four weeks only. If the Government adopted a change without letting him know anything about it, they must thank themselves for objections to it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: When he met the House with all the Ministers, he hoped to be able to proceed directly with the business of the country. He held that, as far as possible, he should avoid appearing in the House again without his colleagues. He said distinctly that if the amendment was carried, that object would be frustrated.

What did he propose to do? He proposed to meet the House on the 16th March, and to despatch forthwith the business of 1868; and then, after a prorogation of a day or two—merely a technical delay—to go on with the business of 1869. So that, in point of fact, he should have brought the session back to its ordinary period of the year. It would be better for the House to get the arrears of business done, and then, for the rest, they could proceed as might then seem desirable. There had been one accession to the Ministry which gave him reason to hope that they would be able to effect still further and larger reductions in the expenditure than they at first contemplated. He must allow the Colonial Treasurer time to go through the Estimates and review the financial policy which he wished to submit to the House. He (the Attorney-General) had been somewhat surprised to hear what had fallen from the honorable member for Rockhampton. When he had had time to consult with his colleagues, and prepare a definite policy, he would be quite prepared to stand or fall by it. He should not have done his duty either to himself or the country, if he had left his post, at this time, through what he might call a factious opposition by some honorable members. This remark was justified by the persistence with which every reasonable proposition was met by those honorable members. The honorable member for Rockhampton, in referring to himself and the late Colonial Treasurer, said that he (the Attorney-General) had put his late colleague out of office. That remark was still more unjustifiable, coming from the honorable member, when he had admitted that he (the Attorney-General) had offered to put him in the place of the honorable member for the Kennedy. That was a still further guarantee that northern interests would be safe. He supposed they would be safe in that honorable member's hands. The honorable member was evidently carried away by his warmth of political feeling more than by principle, and was somewhat indiscreet. His remarks were still more unjustifiable when it was borne in mind that the honorable member was also offered the Department of the Lands: there was a still further guarantee that the Land Act of 1868 would be fully, fairly, and intelligently administered, as it would be in the hands of its author. If he (the Attorney-General) regretted anything more than another, it was the departure of the honorable member for the Kennedy from the Ministry. It was done at the honorable gentleman's own suggestion, in the first instance; and the honorable gentleman would bear him out in saying, that on condition of his remaining in the Ministry, he was prepared to stand or fall with him. Therefore, he hoped it would not be laid to his charge that he had deserted his late colleague. He was prepared to exer-

cise the powers and duties placed in his hands as Premier, as far as he could. He was responsible for the final action of the Ministry, and, as far as they possibly could, his colleagues should yield to him and act with him, without making him absolute over them. Being responsible, he expected that he should have, at least, trust and confidence from his colleagues. That he believed he should get at any rate from the majority, if not from all, of the gentlemen with whom he was at present associated. He must tell the House and the country, that it was evident from the beginning of the session, that the then Government could not carry on the business of the country. It was not so much a trial of political principle as a rivalry between parties for power. A coalition was inevitable if any business was to be done. He believed that, with the colleagues he had now, the Government would accomplish so much as he had laid out. He was in hopes they would do more—pass some measures for the good of the country. At all events, he should honestly try to do so. If he should fail to accomplish what he hoped, he was not at all desirous of clinging to the Treasury benches; he should endeavor to accomplish some measure of good, or he should retire altogether. He must now return to the late Colonial Secretary, the member for Port Curtis, and should read, in correction of his language, from "Hansard":—

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

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

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

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

Mr. PALMER would not interrupt the Premier in his reading. But, as that honorable member had chosen to give him a lesson on

etiquette, he wished to show him that he knew what was correct as well as the honorable gentleman himself did. He now appealed to the Speaker on a point of order: Was the honorable gentleman justified in reading from the report of a debate that took place in the present Session?

The SPEAKER: It was done in the House. It was unfortunately the case that any honorable member might speak on any subject, or do anything he liked, on such a motion. He believed it was perfectly in order to do so.

Mr. WALSH: The allusion by the late Colonial Secretary was to an answer made by the Attorney-General, and not recorded.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He made no such answer, recorded or unrecorded. The question was put so emphatically by the honorable member for Warrego, that he made a guarded answer. The honorable the Colonial Secretary, then acting for the Colonial Treasurer, said he would, if he could, have the Estimates prepared by the 26th. It was not of much importance; but he believed that every gentleman who stood in his (the Attorney-General's) position should feel that any pledge he gave in the House should be a true one. This much it was desirable that the public should know. The present Ministry had been formed to aid the despatch of public business. He might say that he thought they would have a fair support when they met the House. He was not at all surprised at the tone of the debate. He was not surprised that honorable members should express opinions on the formation of the present Government—it was extremely incongruous. Every honorable member should express his opinion—it was right to do so. How could he (the Attorney-General) expect, that, being compelled from public necessity to draw members from both sides, those on his side would be satisfied with Ministers from the other, and members on the other side be satisfied with Ministers from his own side? He took it that an adjournment to the 16th March was not an unreasonable request, under all the circumstances. If they were to be afflicted still with party contests, first, let the business be got into something like order.

Mr. FRANCIS said he was in the hands of the House, and, if the House wished it, he should be glad to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. WALSH: Did the House understand that the Estimates should be put on the table on the first day of meeting? The House had waited for the Estimates for nine months.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It would be exceedingly inconvenient that, at the end of a debate, he should give any personal pledge. He would do his duty, and he hoped the House would take his word for it—there would be no delay. He promised to do his best.

Mr. ARCHER: Surely the House might ask the Government that.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (*sotto voce*): That we intend to do.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL had no hesitation in saying that the Estimates would be ready almost on the very day the House met.

Mr. WALSH said he felt disposed to support the amendment.

The SPEAKER said the amendment was withdrawn. He asked the House distinctly if it was their wish that the amendment be withdrawn, and there was no objection. He was proceeding to put the original motion, when the honorable member rose to address the House.

After some conversation on the point raised, the Speaker's ruling was acquiesced in; and the question for the adjournment of the House to the 16th of March, was put and passed.