

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 4 MAY 1869**

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able members of the Legislative Assembly in the chamber of the Legislative Council.

The Speaker and honorable members accordingly proceeded to the Legislative Council chamber, and, on their return, the House adjourned till six o'clock.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER having reported to the House that His Excellency the Governor had attended the Council Chamber at an earlier hour that day and delivered an Opening Speech, read the Speech to the House. A select committee was then appointed, on the motion of Mr. Jordan, to prepare an Address in Reply. The committee having retired, shortly afterwards brought up the following Address:—

“To His Excellency SAMUEL WENSLEY BLACKALL, Esquire, Governor, and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

“1. We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled, desire to assure your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the person and government of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to your Excellency for the Speech with which you have opened the present session.

“2. We recognise the importance of the several topics you have mentioned, and the necessity for calm deliberation, with a view to their judicious settlement.

“3. We shall bestow our most earnest attention on the several Bills and questions to be submitted for our consideration; and we hope so to deal with them as to advance the general welfare of the community, whilst having regard to every legitimate interest that may be involved in them.”

Mr. JORDAN, in moving the adoption of the Address, said,—I regret that the Government have been unfortunate in selecting me to move the adoption of the Address in reply to the Vice-Regal Speech. I regret it the more because I am wholly unprepared to undertake that duty in the way I should like to see it performed. In fact, I have not had time, since my arrival from the country, to look over the Speech attentively. If I had received sufficient notice, I should have felt it my duty to refer to the various topics brought before us in His Excellency's Speech, with that deliberation and care which the importance of the subject demands; but it was not until I arrived here to-day that I had the faintest idea of being called upon to undertake the task which now devolves upon me, and since that time I have scarcely had an hour to spare. I think, sir, there are several circumstances upon which we may fairly congratulate the colony at the opening of this

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, 4 May, 1869.*

Meeting of Parliament.—Address in Reply to Opening Speech.

#### MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

The SPEAKER took the chair at two o'clock.

A message was received from His Excellency the Governor, through the Usher of the Black Rod, requiring the attendance of honor-

session, the first of which is that honorable members are in a good humor, and there is every probability, unless some sudden and unexpected change has taken place within the last ten days, that they will continue so. It is also, sir, a matter for congratulation that we have a good sound Opposition, which will strongly tend to keep Ministers in check, and so ensure careful legislation, without offering any factious opposition to the measures they bring forward. Then, I think we have a Government possessing the necessary elements of strength for carrying on the business of the country, especially as they represent more fairly and fully than any previous Government those great interests upon which mainly depend the advancement and general progress of the colony, as well as the pastoral interest, which must always be one of the most important. I think, sir, there is a very general feeling of sympathy with those gentlemen who made the first footprints of civilization in the wilderness, but who have recently had to fight a hard battle against adverse circumstances; and it is gratifying to see that steps will be taken to place their interests upon a more satisfactory footing, and to promote the general settlement of the country. It is satisfactory also to observe that the gold-mining interest will receive the consideration it is entitled to. It is impossible to attach too much importance to this interest. It was the discovery of gold in Victoria which made this country what it is—a great country, and destined, I believe, to be a much greater country still. I am not, perhaps, so sanguine as some people are on this subject; but we cannot fail to perceive that Queensland must, before long, be a large gold-producing country. The question of immigration, with which it is also proposed to deal is, in my opinion, one of the most important questions we have to consider. I believe that all persons are agreed upon this point, and even those who at one time were averse to the settlement of a large population in this colony, are now ready to admit that we do require immigration. Gentlemen engaged in pastoral pursuits require credit, ladies in town want servants, sugar-planters and farmers want labor; and I think a good sound system of immigration, which will induce a healthy stream of immigrants into the colony, is acknowledged to be the great desideratum. There are some persons, it is said, who desire this immigration to consist entirely of Polynesians; but I think they have favored the introduction of that class of labor, rather because no other kind of labor was to be found, than from any other reason. Were there no other interests to be considered than those of the grower of wool and the producer of cotton, the question would be different; but with the vast resources of Queensland, I think we must all be convinced of the want of that energy, enterprise, and capital, united, which we can alone hope for from the settlement of this colony by a

British population. Our resources are vast, they are almost unbounded, and we only need the hand of labor, and the purse of the capitalist, to turn them to account. I am very glad to see prominence given to the question of agriculture. I have always believed in the possibility of establishing a great agricultural interest in this colony; the success which has attended that interest in spite of the difficulties and obstacles which have attended it for years past, and the actual existence, at the present moment, of a large and thriving farming population, have, I think, set that question finally at rest. I repeat that I have always believed in the possibility of settling a large agricultural population upon the lands of this colony. It has been said by some that a great deal of the land is only fit for pastoral purposes; but, admitting for the sake of argument, that nine-tenths of it is so, there still remains one-tenth which comprises forty-three million acres suitable for agriculture. Now there are two or three hundred thousand persons on the other side of the globe, belonging principally to the middle class, going away to the States, to Canada, to all parts of the world except to Queensland, and taking with them their energy, industry, perseverance, and millions of money every year, to benefit the countries in which they settle. Experiments have satisfactorily proved that we can grow cotton equal to that which is grown in any other part of the world. I have been shewn some to-day, which I believe to be of as good quality as can be produced, and it is a great fact that last year the cotton exported from this colony was sold in Great Britain for £75,000; and there is every prospect, if the weather continues favorable, that the export of this staple in 1869 will be doubled. I am glad to see in the Speech that the House will be asked to consider the advisability of undertaking certain economic extensions of railways, in order to make those railways more fully reproductive. No doubt these lines of railway have been too costly, and if we had to construct them over again, we should, probably, be more careful; but it may be true economy to spend more money upon them rather than leave them unfinished, especially main trunk lines which are nearly completed. I trust that the additional expenditure which will be asked for will have the effect of rendering our railways a sound and reproductive enterprise. Upon the whole, sir, I cannot but express my approval of the Government programme. I think it shadows forth a prompt, energetic, and wise policy, suited to the times as well as to the condition of the colony; and, therefore, I very heartily, and with much pleasure, move that the Address which has just been read, be adopted.

Mr. DE SATGE seconded the motion. He did so because it was customary for the youngest member to do so, and it was a

matter of form which, it was understood, did not in any way bind him to support the policy of the Government. He thought the programme given in the Vice-Regal Speech contained nothing that should have been unsaid, although a good deal more might have been said; and that it was understood the Government, in inviting a northern member to second the adoption of the Address, showed their willingness to accord a fair measure of justice to the north of the colony. He would endeavor to give his idea of the wording of the Governor's Speech, as far as he could understand it. He was glad to see that it was proposed to introduce a Bill to regulate the gold fields of the colony. With regard to the Additional Members Bill, he gathered from the Speech, that it was intended to give a more equitable distribution of the representation to the northern districts. He hoped the relief proposed to be given to the pastoral tenants of the Crown in the unsettled districts of the colony, would be more liberal than that provided by the Bill before the House; that some modifications would be made, so that while the security of tenure was increased nothing could be taken away; and that in fact the squatters in those districts would have inviolable leases. That was what he understood to be the intention of the Government. With regard to the public works referred to as being in progress, he believed it would be for the general good that an extension of the northern railway to the Dawson should be made. He did not understand from His Excellency's speech that any fresh railways were to be undertaken, but that the northern line would be extended to the Dawson, and the Southern and Western Railway as far as Warwick. In reference to the proposed completion of certain local works upon which a heavy expenditure had already been made, he certainly believed it was necessary to finish them in order to obtain a fair interest for the outlay; but he also thought the burden of these local works ought to be borne by local revenue. He hoped, therefore, that the Darling Downs district, which benefited entirely from the Southern and Western Railway, would be taxed to meet the cost of it, and that land on either side of the railway to the Dawson would be reserved to defray the expense of that line. The squatters on the Darling Downs had the exclusive advantage of the southern railway, and if they got the transit of their goods for a hundred miles, at the rate of £2 per ton, while northern squatters had to pay occasionally as high as £20, it was but right that they should be made to pay for the luxury. He must again express a hope that the northern squatters, many of whom were already in the Insolvent Court, would obtain such a measure of relief, and such security of tenure, as would allow them to retain the capital they required to carry on with. Members of northern constituencies then in the House must agree with him that they could not, with any

degree of justice, support the Government, unless they obtained that fair and just legislation which they emphatically demanded. Further on in the Speech, he saw the Governor expressed his confidence that "the abundant knowledge of the circumstances of the country" which the House possessed, would suggest to them valuable additions to legislation. He was sorry the prorogation had not been for several weeks longer, and that, during that time, the Ministry had not gone up in a body to the North to make themselves acquainted with the requirements of those vast tracts of country for whose interests they had to legislate. There had been no ministerial tour in that direction, and he believed Ministers had never made themselves acquainted with the wants of that large territory. He hoped they would give some notice of their intention to do so during the next recess; for he could not see why, if they were able to take a trip to the Darling Downs in a comfortable railway carriage, they could not take a trip on horseback to the North, and see, for themselves, the hardships which northern settlers were undergoing. He had been much struck by the paragraph in the Governor's Speech, in which he referred to the severe depression in trade and commerce which had been felt in the colony since 1866. He trusted such a state of things might never occur again. He again emphatically repeated that the Government would err grossly, and mislead the whole colony, if they undertook any works in the southern portion of the colony for which the North would have to pay. With regard to the concluding portion of the Speech, in which His Excellency regretted "the private losses by our citizens, and much public inconvenience and general suffering," and hoped "that the spirit of economy would be roused by our reverses," he could only express a hope that the Government would thoroughly sift the various departments of the service so as to prevent the occurrences of any more defalcations to shake the public credit of the colony. As he had before stated, he thought a good deal more might have been said in the Speech; but as it evidenced a desire to do every justice to the North during the ensuing session, he had only to add, in seconding the adoption of the Address, that as long as they did so, he should offer them no factious opposition. At the same time, he did not pledge himself to support the Ministry in all their policy.

Mr. Groom said he thought it would be hardly right that the question should rest simply with the mover and the seconder, for honorable members should avail themselves of this opportunity of expressing their views on the programme of the Government; and, therefore, the House were not in a position to adjourn at so early an hour of the evening. He trusted that the apparent unanimity which characterised the House, at present,

would continue, and that it indicated the support which would be received, during the session, by the Government. For himself, he echoed the sentiments of the honorable mover of the Address, who stated that he regarded the programme of the Government as a liberal one. However, when their measures arrived at maturity, and were laid on the table, honorable members could best judge; and—as an open question—he could only state that if their Additional Members Bill was of the character of that which was before the House, last session, he should oppose it. Although that measure was styled an “Additional” Members Bill, its first clause provided for a “re-distribution” of electorates. During the ten days’ recess, he took the opportunity of looking through the Bill, and he had found that from fifty to one hundred of his own constituents were quietly put into West Moreton; so that one particular electorate was singled out for “re-distribution”;—why or wherefore, the honorable gentleman who had introduced the Bill could state. More particularly, he should oppose the Bill, because it did not meet the wishes of his constituents, who were especially interested in it. As regarded railways, he was disposed to take a different view from that of the honorable member for Clermont; and he took a different view of the paragraph in the Speech referring to public works, because that paragraph meant the construction of the line of railway from Ipswich to Brisbane. An honorable member below him suggested that it meant the continuation of the railway to Roma. It was a suggestion that the money expended on the railway from Ipswich to the Downs had been literally thrown away, unless the line should be brought from Ipswich to the metropolis; and that, unless this extension was made, the Darling Downs should be taxed for the railway. He (Mr. Groom) had no doubt that the senior member for West Moreton would, by-and-bye, tell the House that there would be a species of revolution in his district, if that principle were applied to it; more particularly in view of the new industries which were springing up, there, and which might make Ipswich and its neighborhood the Manchester of the colony. With regard to the Bill relating to the Crown lands beyond the settled districts, he should be quite prepared to give the Government his support, at the proper time. He was glad the Government proposed to bring in a Bill to simplify and amend the electoral law. As far as the southern districts were concerned, there could be no doubt that the revision courts—even those presided over by the district court judges—had pronounced different opinions as regarded the construction of the existing law; and, no doubt, there were hundreds of persons disfranchised, this year, who were entitled to have their names on the electoral roll. He did not say they were disfranchised from any political motive;

but the fact remained. It would be interesting if the Premier would turn up the opinions pronounced on the Act in 1868. If he (Mr. Groom) did not mistake, in the town of Ipswich, which seemed a very hot-bed of political disputes, no less than a thousand names had been struck off the roll; and the local bench even wrote to the late Colonial Secretary for a thousand envelopes, in which to send out notices to the persons objected to. If the honorable gentleman refused to supply the envelopes, he deserved credit for it. There were magistrates who seemed to consider that parties should go before the bench and make their claims. He was present in a court of revision, in 1868, when three or four electors made claims, and they were catechised in the most extraordinary way—Whether the deeds of their property were not in the bank?—Whether their property was not mortgaged? However, he only wished the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to compare the opinions pronounced on the Act in 1868, with those given in 1869: he would find how they differed. He thought the time had come when a change should be made. In his opinion, a measure should be introduced, to take the power of revision of the electoral rolls entirely out of the hands of the magistrates, and to make the district court judges, in all the districts in which they had jurisdiction, preside in the revision courts;—of course, providing that the clauses of the existing Act which appeared problematical should be made plain and to the purpose. In those districts where there was no district court, he would make the Crown prosecutors act as revising barristers; and where they could not attend, or in the event of death, he would make other provision. He would also provide for the examination of the rolls in the month of December, instead of at the period of the year enacted under the existing law; for therein was the *gravamen* of the serious mistakes that had arisen. It was notorious that political magistrates had taken their seats on the bench, and had opposed the registration of persons whom they knew would be opposed to candidates that they themselves favored or would bring out at future elections. That was grievously unjust. He supposed honorable members had read the remarks of Mr. Justice Keogh, in the city of Dublin, with reference to corrupt practices at elections. He thought that the conduct of political magistrates, in the Colony of Queensland, merited as severe a censure, and ought not to be tolerated. There was no doubt that the present Act was owing to what transpired at Ipswich, three or four years ago. It was introduced by Mr. Herbert, the then Colonial Secretary, and he (Mr. Groom) had no doubt that the occurrence referred to induced honorable members to assent to the measure. He assented to it, himself. The first court under it showed how bad it was. One person in Ipswich, about that time, objected to a great

number of electors, and the magistrates gave the costs against him—about £80; but, immediately, that person went into the insolvent court. Up to this time, nobody had been patriotic enough to put his hand in his pocket and pay the £1 deposit when objecting to any one on the roll; and that part of the law was virtually inoperative. He (Mr. Groom) did not know what the Bill of the Government would be;—he hoped it would be a good one. When it came before the House, he hoped to find that it made provision for what was necessary to be done, and that it would prove satisfactory to the country. With regard to the Bill for establishing local government, he hoped the Ministry would not be long before they laid it on the table; and he trusted that, in company with the establishment of local government, the extension and construction of railways would proceed. That was, doubtless, what the honorable member for Clermont referred to. The question of taxation on account of the existing works would soon be brought to a settlement upon the motion of which the honorable member for East Moreton had given notice: taxation upon land would be the very thing that was required. He should be prepared to give the Government that support to which the various measures indicated in the Speech entitled them; and he thought that if honorable members did the same, the House would not, in the end, regret that they had met so early in the year to do the business of 1869, and that when the session closed they would have passed some measures calculated to promote the prosperity of the colony generally.

Mr. FORBES said that though he had not intended to take any part in the discussion, yet he considered it was not right for the House to sit quietly to hear arguments on only one side of the question. The recess had been a very short one, yet in that time honorable members had found the departments of the Civil Service in a state of great disorganization. Facts had come to light such as never, perhaps, occurred in the history of the Australian colonies. He stated this, merely that the Government should know that the representatives of the people were watching them; and he hoped that his little advice would not be received by them as a matter of censure, but rather as a hint that they should set their house in order, and guard against what he could not but call the speculation that was going on in various branches of the Civil Service. He was told—it was the general talk—that in one department, the books which would lead to the knowledge of the defalcations in that department were missing—in other words, that they had been destroyed. He was told that some of the civil servants in that department were still retained. There was some talk of making them refund by a surcharge! That was not the style of thing that the House expected from the Government;—that was not what

he expected from a Government to whom he offered his support. Last session, he gave the Government unqualified support, and he now felt himself at liberty to speak as he thought proper; and he felt that he could not mete out to them that measure of praise which had been accorded to them by other speakers. He hoped the Government would take steps to prevent for the future such frauds as had taken place in the Civil Service; and that, with that view, they would make those persons who had acted improperly amenable to the law, so that they might meet with the punishment which they deserved. He was glad to see, by the speech of the honorable member who moved the Address, that the Opposition was strong, and that by being strong it would bring about the legislation which would be beneficial to the whole colony; and he agreed with him in believing that the Government should be strong, and, also, that the present Ministry had shown more signs of progress than any of their predecessors. He could not agree that the Government represented the pastoral interest; and he would say for his own part—he was deeply interested in pastoral pursuits—that he did not think the outside settlers could have any relief from Darling Downs legislation. With due respect to the honorable member who seconded the Address, he must say that there was not only the northern district, where outside settlers were located, but there was the western district, also; and, he believed, with the whole of the settlers of the western district, that they could not expect any relief from Darling Downs legislation. He was sure that they had better place themselves in the hands of the liberal part of the town representatives—of the members for the metropolis—although they did not know the feelings of the outside squatters—and a larger share of relief might be expected than they could look for from Darling Downs legislation. Therefore, he could not think that the Government, as at present formed, would ever set pastoral pursuits upon a satisfactory footing. With regard to the mining interest, which had been alluded to by the honorable mover of the Address, he (Mr. Forbes) believed that the greatest hope of the colony was in the discovery of extensive gold fields. The gold discovery had had its effect on other colonies, and Queensland must hope for improvement from it. The reports from the Government geologists led him to believe that the mineral resources of the colony were boundless. As to the agricultural resources of the colony, no doubt they would be developed, if there was an abundant population; and therein was involved the labor question. The honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Jordan, was, no doubt, well versed in those matters—in certain phases;—he who had spoken so frequently to great and intelligent audiences in the mother country;—and it would be folly in him (Mr. Forbes) to speak upon what the

honorable member had said. But he thought there were some matters which the honorable member was not exactly correct in. There would, however, be other opportunities to discuss the question, and he should be prepared to avail himself of them when it came before the House. There had been a great deal of cant upon the Polynesian question. That question having been before the people, in the last election, the people had recognised the utility of Polynesian labor by the return of members to the House who had advocated that question.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No, no.

MR. PALMER: Hear, hear.

MR. FORBES: Well, he would leave that to the House. He thought there were some other great interests to be developed in this colony;—he could not believe that agriculture alone meant anything else but endless striving and starvation. At any rate, it meant prohibition to any man getting on further in the world. The people of this colony were as capable of energetic action as people anywhere else, and they were capable of turning their attention to other branches of industry besides agriculture. If the resources of the country had been so developed as to give room for the exercise of the industry of the people, the colony would not feel so severely as it did the pressure caused by the depression of the wool market. Victoria, owing to the large mining interest, and the various manufacturing industries, as well as the agricultural interest, had not felt the depression to the same extent as other colonies. He should like to see something of this sort in the Address—That the Government were ready to foster and protect any new enterprise which might exist or be brought into existence. He should like them to say to the people that they could not all be farmers. One man might be a good mechanic, a good manufacturer, and, if his energies were turned in that direction, he would be right; whereas, if he were made a farmer, he would be useless. That was one of the mistakes into which the honorable member who moved the Address had fallen. He looked upon the subject as if there was to be no other interest but the agricultural and pastoral interests in this colony—

MR. JORDAN: No, no.

MR. FORBES: That they were paramount—that they were to be the mainstay of the country. But in a few years hence—knowing, as he did, what were the real facts of the last two years—there would be other producing interests. From the returns of the scab inspector, it appeared that in the Warrego district there was a decrease of 37,000 sheep. Unfortunately, he (Mr. Forbes) knew an individual who, out of 75,000 sheep, lost about 30,000; so that fact would give some idea of the value of the official statistics. It was quite possible that another year might bring about a similar result; and, in that case, the pastoral interest must be annihilated.

He spoke from very dear-bought experience when he gave his opinion upon the condition of the outside settlers. If a person invested five shillings a head in pastoral property in the outside districts, in seven years he must go through the insolvent court. He knew one settler who, for his run, paid rent to the Crown at the rate of fourpence three farthings a head of the sheep it carried. That was, to say the least, hard upon the outside squatters. Was it dealing with them in the way that the Darling Downs squatters had been dealt with, years ago? He only asked that they should be placed upon the same footing as the gentlemen occupying the Darling Downs country occupied years ago. There was a great similarity between their circumstances. About twenty years ago, in 1840, sheep were low in value, wool was low, and things generally were in about the same depressed condition as now. Those who went first on the Darling Downs had their runs at low rents, and held extensive areas for the pasturage of their stock on easy terms; so that they were able to raise themselves in the world. He was speaking to the Minister for Lands, who knew of all those matters as well as himself. The best course for the Government to take was, to look to the old Orders in Council; for he (Mr. Forbes) believed that, as regarded land regulations, the Orders in Council were the best system ever applied to or adopted in the Australian Colonies. Certainly, the Crown tenants in the western districts would not feel obliged to the honorable member who seconded the Address for demanding everything for the North.

MR. DE SATGE: He meant the western district also—the whole of the outside districts.

MR. FORBES: The North wanted railways, relief for the pastoral tenants—everything for the North. He had come to the conclusion that the honorable member was a great deal too far north for him! Even the Additional Members Bill was made to subserve to that desire. He had no objection to an additional member or two given to the North, but why must they all go to the North? What were the populous districts of the South to do? He, to some extent, agreed with the honorable member that, when the colony was in a position to do it, the northern railway should be extended and made a reproductive work. He believed there was some prospect of a line of railway paying, if it extended between two centres of population, or if it terminated as near as possible to a place where large traffic existed or large produce was raised. From all that he had heard of the Peak Downs copper-mining district, there was as much copper produced, there, as would pay for the working of the Southern and Western Railway, at the present time. That he had heard from parties whose authority he had no right to dispute. From what the Government laid down in the opening Speech, when the colony was in a position to undertake

additional responsibilities, the question of the extension of the northern railway might very fairly be considered. He did not know whether the honorable member for Clermont expressed a personal wish, or whether he spoke with a view to the favoring of the North, when he said that the prorogation should have been for seven weeks. If for the favor of the North, he should have given some reason for what he said. As to ministerial tours, the House knew something about them; but the House were never the wiser for them; and, if there was a ministerial tour to the North, they would be no wiser after it than they were now. Looking at the second paragraph of the Speech, the Bills alluded to there had been already before the House; and he trusted that they would be fully and fairly discussed. With regard to the Additional Members Bill, he had only to say, as he said when the Bill was before them on a previous occasion, that he did not like those half-and-half sort of measures. He would like to see a proper measure of general electoral reform. He felt that the House had something to complain of, because, while the Consolidated Statutes were going through the House, the Government did not introduce those alterations in the electoral law which would be a benefit to the country. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba had referred to the Ipswich magistrates in a very equivocal manner. He (Mr. Forbes) believed those magistrates occupied their positions with as much credit as any magistrates in the colony. He thought that when the judges of the land differed in opinion, such strong condemnation should not have been pronounced on the magistrates. There must be some degree of jealousy in the matter, when blame was attached to gentlemen whom he regarded as honorable men—men whom he regarded as the least likely to afford grounds for suspicion of their motives or acts. If the Ipswich magistrates had reduced the rolls by such a vast number of names as had been stated, it was because they were obliged to do so—to remove the accumulations of years; and they had done so to prevent the rolls being worked to advantage by a designing few. The latter were the persons who complained of the revision of the electoral rolls. No man who wished to see justice done to all classes in the district, would complain of the manner in which the roll had been revised. He would state, further, that during the inquiry of a committee of the Assembly, it had been shown that, at elections in that district—of the seven hundred electors, some persons had voted four times, some three times, and some twice; and that there had been personation to a great extent, and much other law-breaking. If every gentleman concerned had bestowed as much care on the faithful discharge of his duties as the Ipswich bench had done on the revision of the electoral roll, that election to which he referred would

have been capsize. He thought he had heard a Secretary for Works say—Show him a committee, and he would tell what their decision would be—.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Name.

Mr. FORBES: He next came to the matter of public works. It was evidently the desire of the Government—and perhaps their intention to take the opinion of the House on the subject—to carry out the extension of the railway between Brisbane and Ipswich. If any one could show him that produce could be brought down from Ipswich to Brisbane at a cheaper rate by railway than by water carriage—taking the present rates on the railway—that would be a good ground to save his opposition. There was another point for consideration. It was a complaint from one end of the colony to the other, that the people were overburdened with taxation; and most of the candidates in the last election pledged themselves not to go further into debt until the people had been relieved of some portion of the taxation. How then could any portion of the colony ask the Government to borrow money for the extension of works which would only bring Queensland further into debt? It was known that the present railways hardly paid their expenses; that the principal taxation, and also the public debt, arose from their construction. He believed in the construction of railways at some future time; but the House ought not to entertain the question till the bulk of the loans was repaid, and the revenue of the colony was in a condition to meet the interest of the necessary expenditure, so that Queensland could go into the money market in the best condition to make terms. Certainly, there was something palliating in that part of the Speech which said that the burden of local works must be

“ultimately borne by the districts receiving the advantage of their erection.”

That, he thought, was a more difficult matter to carry into effect than to talk about.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: The Brisbane waterworks.

Mr. FORBES: Yes: look at the Brisbane waterworks. He did not see that the interest on the cost of those works was ever charged against their revenues. He did not know how that was to be explained. Though the colony was responsible for the loan, the interest should be charged to the works. Having said so much about the northern railway, and the extension of the line from Ipswich to Brisbane, he would say in conclusion that when the colony could afford an extension, it would be found more advisable to the interests of the colony to carry it out in a westerly direction than any other. In that part of the Speech which was addressed to the Assembly, he found that—

“The Estimates will be completed and laid before you as speedily as possible.”

Of course, that was the stereotyped form,



"They will be framed with due regard to the efficiency of the public service, and to the amount of revenue available for the purpose."

By that he understood that the revenue was to be spent—that the whole was to be spent. That was the interpretation honorable members were obliged to put upon the paragraph, from their experience of former occasions. He hoped, however, that when the Treasurer came to speak upon the subject, he would be able to make it clear. With regard to reductions in expenditure, he (Mr. Forbes) trusted that the honorable gentleman would fully explain what was meant by the Government; for, at the present time, he was very sceptical and very distrustful of them on that point. Last session, the Government were in favor of retrenchment, and he hoped that they really meant it, this session. During the past ten days, however, an appointment had been made, which, if not against them in that respect, bore the construction put upon it by the honorable member for Maranoa. When, on a former occasion, that honorable member alleged that for certain services to the Government, a certain gentleman was to get an appointment, it was denied. He (Mr. Forbes) thought that, in such matters, the Government ought to be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion; and that, in future, they could not expect that their assertions would be taken for granted. The House would have to watch them, to keep them in order. He next came to a paragraph which referred to an unfortunate circumstance for the colony. There was no doubt that the Treasury Bills would have to be met. It was understood at the time the House passed the measure authorising their issue that they were to be paid off by savings; but, if the House maintained the present expenditure, with a decreasing revenue, he did not see how that was to be done. He always understood, further, that debentures were vested for the security of the moneys deposited by the public in the Savings Bank. If that had not been done, he trusted that some proper explanation would be made for the breach of trust in making away with debentures which the public was led to believe were vested for a specific purpose; and that something would be done to guide future Governments, and compel them to keep faith with the public. Considering the defalcations which had taken place in the Civil Service, and the class of men implicated, he did not think the country would be satisfied if those men were kept in office. He thought the Government should follow the example of the banks: for instance, engage in the junior offices and train up for the public service the respectable and well-educated youth of the colony; they would find that to the advantage of the country. Honorable members were supposed to give advice to the Government on those subjects coming within their control, and that advice should be honestly and fairly given, without any of those reservations which were

likely to bring about distrust of the Government. He must, however, say, that the ten days of the recess had not confirmed him in that confidence which he was willing to repose in the Government; and therefore he trusted the House would, at the proper time, have that explanation from Ministers—of what they had done, and as to their intentions for the future—to which they were entitled, and which would enable honorable members to believe that the Government had the interests of the colony at heart—that they had a desire to relieve it from its present position and restore it to that it formerly held, and make Queensland one of the most flourishing colonies in the world.

Mr. ARCHER said it was not his intention to follow the honorable member who last addressed the House through the whole of His Excellency's opening Speech; but he wished to make a few remarks upon it. Before doing so, he could not help congratulating the Ministry upon the different spirit which manifested itself in the House from that which followed immediately upon the general election. This was the second session of the present Parliament, and it contrasted favorably with what followed upon His Excellency's Speech at the commencement of the first session. Most honorable members remembered the stream of eloquence which flowed on that occasion and overwhelmed the late Ministry. Now, it was to be noticed that honorable members did not so much care to find fault with the Government as to try to legislate for the good of the country. He (Mr. Archer) was rather sorry to hear the honorable member for Clermont refer so continually to that part of the colony of which that gentleman and himself were two of the representatives. He thought it was simply an oversight on the part of the honorable member, for he must be aware that the western part of the colony was just as badly off as the northern, and that any remedy must be a general, not a local one. He knew perfectly well that the honorable member would assist the House in doing anything which would help the country to remedy the faults of past legislation. Having alluded to that error, he would at once state that he objected to the Speech, because it did not deal sufficiently with those large questions which, he hoped, were to be discussed this session. One or two large questions were, of course, brought prominently forward; there were those of the gold fields and of the pastoral occupation of land in the unsettled districts. No one would deny that those were questions of great importance to the general interests of the colony, and required prompt attention. Most honorable members had had an opportunity, during the previous session, of seeing the Bill on the latter subject which the Government had brought forward, and which he supposed was the one they would lay on the table this session; and they might, at all events, say that the Government had gone further than

any previous Government, in the right direction. But he was rather surprised to see that the question of local self-government was referred to in the Speech after nearly all the other subjects proposed for legislation. He thought that such a measure ought to be the first principal measure of the session. All the other proposed legislation was on matters which, though not perhaps as well regulated as possible, were yet going on; but local self-government was a question which, if to be of any value, would entirely alter the government of the country, and would take it out of the power of any Ministry to execute the proposed laws at—say, the Gulf of Carpentaria. He thought, therefore, that a measure to effect such an object should have been the most prominently referred to in the Speech. He now felt inclined to fancy—from the way it was mentioned in the Speech, and from the reticence of the Premier, last session—that the measure, when it did come before the Parliament, would be a very paltry one. He should be glad if he were mistaken, and he should give his most energetic support to any measure on the subject dealing fairly with the outside districts. Then, again, there was not a single word in the Speech about a measure, only second in importance to the question of local self-government—and perhaps not secondary even to it—and that was the settlement of accounts. Honorable members might laugh—these were rosy times—but they would find that settlement not a subject for laughter, before the session was over. They would find that if they wanted bridges or railways, they must first have such a settlement. Until a settlement of accounts had taken place, no justice could be done at all. It was very well indeed to bring in a Speech recommending an extension of public works, railways, and such like; but before doing so the Government ought to have told the House that they purposed to make arrangements for the separation of accounts as between the North and the South; and they ought to have inserted a paragraph to that effect in the Speech, if it was their intention to do anything of the kind—a paragraph stating, in effect, that there was to be a separation of accounts, and that each district was to be credited with its own revenue, and that the money collected in any district would be expended in it. How was it possible to raise money by local taxation for local works where the people were already smothered by taxation for the public revenue? They all knew very well that the railways and other great public works in the South were carried out at the expense of the public revenue. The whole colony was taxed to pay for them, while the benefit was not general, but merely local. He was astonished to hear the honorable member for Clermont express a belief that anything would be done for the North in the way of public works, and the extension of the railway from Westwood to the Dawson. Although, comparatively speaking, he was but a young

member, he was, nevertheless, too old a member to believe that anything would be done for the North without a large equivalent being exacted for the South. He utterly repudiated the idea that there would be a large expenditure for the benefit of the North without a larger benefit being secured for the South. Now, that was not the way he wished to see the northern railway carried out, nor was it the way by which justice would be done to the North. He was as anxious as the honorable member for Clermont to see the railway extended to the Dawson; and as soon as the House would pass a measure granting the North such a measure of local self-government as would enable them to manage their own public works, and as soon as they could prove that their revenue was sufficient to meet the interest on the borrowed capital that must be expended on such works, no one would be a more ardent supporter than he of the extension of the northern or any other railway in the colony. But he utterly repudiated what the Government called a small extension in the North, on purpose to secure a large extension in the South, as he also did the idea that a country which could not meet its present debt should be burdened with further liabilities; and not only that, but that parties who were utterly unconnected with the parts improved should pay a portion of the interest of the debt so incurred. He would like to know what the Government meant when they talked about extending reproductive works. What works were reproductive? Were railways reproductive works? They might be in populous countries, and might be even here but for the accumulation of interest. But what was the price of the railways? It was not the sum that appeared on the papers laid before the House, but that sum with yearly interest and compound interest added from the day they were begun. If the railway accounts were calculated as merchants calculated their accounts, and if the yearly interest were added to the original cost, he believed it would be found that the railways had never paid; and not only so, but that the interest had to be paid out of borrowed money. To talk about railways being reproductive works was all rubbish until it could be shewn that they produced a revenue sufficient to pay the interest upon the original cost, in addition to working expenses. He had heard it stated that the southern railway was reproductive; but he denied that it was in the power of the honorable the Minister for Works to show that it was reproductive, or that, if extended further to the west, or from Ipswich to Brisbane, it would be reproductive for years to come. However, he would not object to the southern railway being extended either east or west so long as the North was not asked to pay for it; and if the Government could show that the works could be carried out at the cost of the revenue raised in the district, no northern

man would object to it. He rather fancied that the honorable gentleman who inserted the paragraph in the Speech, about public works, had the completion of the Brisbane bridge in his mind. He referred, in particular, to that portion of the fifth paragraph which said—

“Your assistance will be solicited to complete certain local works upon which a heavy expenditure has already been made, and which would otherwise be entirely lost.”

He was very much mistaken indeed if that passage referred to the completion of the railways. On the contrary, he believed that it referred entirely to the Brisbane bridge; and he did not think there was an honorable member in the House who did not regret to see the bridge across the Brisbane not completed. If there had been in the Speech a clause to the effect that the Government not only intended to bring in a Bill giving local self-government, but to see that the revenue raised in each district was to be expended for the benefit of the people living in that part of the colony, no one in the House would have the slightest objection to the extension of any public works that might be desired. The expense of public works would then be borne by the people who derived benefit from them, and no northern man would object to their extension under those circumstances. No doubt there were many persons in the colony who would like to see the bridge over the Brisbane finished; but if the Government fancied it would be possible to drive any Bill through the House for the completion of that work, by means of any public loan, or through the State advancing the necessary amount, until they had shown some scheme by which the revenues of the different districts could be used by those districts, he could assure them they could only achieve such a result by exhausting the physical energies of the few men who would resist such an attempt to the last. Several honorable members had already referred to the Pastoral Leases Bill promised in the Speech; and he would merely say, respecting it, that though he had not the slightest interest in the districts likely to be most benefited by the measure, he would support the Government in carrying it through the House. The Bill might not be as perfect as it should be, but that was no reason why he should not support it: it might go a great deal further; but as the principle of the Bill was good he would support it, and, in committee, do what he could to have it amended where he might think it required amendment. The honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Forbes, touched upon the Polynesian labor question, and in doing so, said that some honorable members had been returned to the House upon that question. Now, he must say that he did not agree with the honorable member in that opinion; for he knew of no one who had been returned to the House on

that question; and he would go further and say that he did not believe any one had been returned upon that question. When he was addressing his constituents, he was asked if he was in favor of Polynesian immigration; and he said in answer, that it was a matter of very little importance to him, but that he had assisted in passing the Polynesian Laborers Bill simply as a means of preventing the islanders from being cheated out of their wages after they had performed their labor, as he had heard whispers to the effect that a large employer of that class of labor had really cheated his men out of their wages. He did not think the honorable member for West Moreton was justified in saying that any one had been returned to the House on that question. It was very probable, if a good Polynesian Laborers Bill was introduced he would support it. He was not prepared to say that, because the country had so far endorsed the principle, any honorable member should consider himself precluded thereby from supporting a better measure than the Bill that was passed during a former session. The opinion of the country had not yet been ascertained on the subject, for there had not yet been a measure before the House which had been so discussed and so brought before the country as to show whether the country was in favor of Polynesian immigration or not. He hoped the House would understand that he only made those remarks with the view of showing that he did not believe the country had altogether endorsed the Bill that had been passed. There did not seem to be any desire to get up a strong debate on the Address, and, therefore, he would only say further, that as far as he could at present see, the only grounds on which he thought he might be likely to oppose the Government would be those with respect to local self-government and separation of accounts. If the Government did not introduce a measure of that nature he would most decidedly oppose them. Before sitting down he would take the opportunity of warning the honorable member for Clermont, who seconded the Address, not to allow himself to be led away with promises of local benefits that were merely of a temporary nature. The northern members ought to go in more for the general principles they had always contended for, than for small and temporary local advantages that led to no general and satisfactory result. He was sure he would have the support of the honorable member in that opinion as to the object the northern members should keep in view. There was only one other observation he had to make, and it was this—that if the Government should show they were inclined to do what was just to the northern districts they might depend upon it that they would have his support; and certainly on no occasion would they find him offering them a factious opposition.

Mr. THOMPSON said that as he had come to the House pledged to retrenchment in

every possible way, he must oppose anything like an increase of expenditure. In regard to some of the measures that would be introduced by the Government, he might support them, and he might not. The course he would take would wholly depend upon the nature of the measures. He might possibly support an Additional Members Bill, but he could not say he would do so until he saw the measure proposed; and the same remark would apply to the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the Pastoral Occupation of Crown Lands. With regard to the insolvency law and the amendment of the Electoral Act, as they did not involve party questions, the House would no doubt agree to pass some sort of measures. But he now came to what appeared to him to be the main feature of the Speech, and he must say that he was very much disappointed by it. The Government, as a Government, he believed, had had at heart the distressed condition of the colony on account of the large debt with which it was burdened, and he was therefore much surprised to find several indications of an intention to put an additional weight upon it. The first indication was, that they were to have an Immigration Bill—that was to say, the country was to pay for the introduction of people into the colony. He was rather surprised at that, inasmuch as, if he did not very much mistake, the honorable the Premier, in his election speech, expressed the opinion that it would be perfectly useless spending money in bringing people here who would immediately leave for the other colonies, as they had hitherto done. He considered the majority of the money and land spent and parted with in introducing immigrants had been mis-spent and totally lost. They had introduced immigrants, but the attractions of the other colonies had taken them away. Where were all the thousands of persons that the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Jordan, was the means of introducing? Why, they had gone away grumbling—or, at least, the majority had, for there were comparatively few left, as he would, on some future occasion, show by statistics. He should oppose the spending of any money for immigration, but would be prepared to support a very liberal homestead clause, for the benefit of people who came to the colony. He would not pay for bringing people here, but when they were out, he would try and induce them to remain, in the manner he had stated. He would not give them land-orders, either transferable or non-transferable, for both had been disposed of; but he would make the holdings of immigrants dependent on residence for a period of years. That he conceived to be the only true system for promoting immigration, and thereby benefitting the colony. As one of a group of colonies desiring an increase of population by immigration, they must take care to protect themselves;—they must guard against bringing out immigrants to this

colony, at the expense of the Government, for the benefit of the other colonies. He found, also, by the Speech, that there was to be an “economical extension of public works.” Now, that was a term of a very general character, and he objected to it because he did not know what the term “economical,” in such a combination, might mean. He did not doubt, for a moment, that the undertakings would be economical; still, they would, to a greater or less degree, increase the debt of the colony. That clause of the Speech appeared to him to be so very vaguely worded that it was difficult to find out what it really meant. The “economical extension” of public undertakings might mean anything; and the only thing that he could understand it to mean was the completion of the railway to Warwick. As to bringing the railway from Ipswich to Brisbane, or carrying the northern railway to the Dawson, such extensions were altogether out of the question. In the same paragraph it was said that assistance would be solicited to complete certain local works upon which a heavy expenditure had been already made, and which would otherwise be entirely lost. That passage, he thought, must refer to the Brisbane bridge. Now he could not consent to any expenditure by the Government on the Brisbane bridge; nor could he consent to any guarantee by the Government for the payment of commissioners’ salaries to look after the work. Such propositions simply meant expenditure without a proper return. The completion of the Brisbane bridge might be a very desirable thing, but he would not consent to the expenditure of public funds for such a purpose. A steam ferry, he thought, would fully answer the requirements of the citizens of Brisbane for some time to come; but he could not allow the public to be taxed for a heavy expenditure on a purely local work. He could not understand what the Government meant by saying that—

“The burden of these local works must, however, be ultimately borne by the districts receiving the advantage of their erection.”

What did the Government mean by that? Was it that the bridge was to be paid for out of the public revenue now, and that they were to trust to the Brisbane corporation to repay them afterwards, or was it intended to pay for the work by the sale of lands on the south side of the river? As to the Polynesian labor question, the Government said nothing, except that they would ask the advice of the House upon the subject. Now, as they could not prevent those people from coming here, he thought the true principle on which to deal with the question would be that which would best secure that the Polynesians were properly treated when they did come. There was no fear of a slave population becoming established out here in consequence. Those islanders were not the class from which

slaves were made. They could not be governed by the lash, but only by kind treatment. They were sufficiently alive to their own interests, and perfectly well aware that they had their masters under their thumbs. He was very glad to see the allusion made to the extension of the cotton bonus. There could be no doubt that the production of cotton was an important element in the prosperity of the colony. That it was so was becoming more evident every year, and Ipswich exhibited a striking illustration of the fact. That town was spoken of some time ago as the "deserted village," but owing in a great degree to the cotton-growing industry in the surrounding country, the houses in Ipswich were again becoming occupied, and the shops largely stocked. In dealing with this subject, honorable members should bear in mind the difficulties growers had to contend with in endeavoring to establish the cultivation of cotton as a permanent industry in the colony. The present season had been a peculiarly trying one, and would show that cotton-growing was not all profit. Growers began with good hope, but the drought came, and, at first, caused them to lose all hope; then there were favorable rains, which renewed hopes of a good crop; but afterwards grubs and more rain came, and in some places the crop disappeared. If the Government would accept an amendment he would bring forward, when the subject came on for consideration, and thus slightly increase the bonus they proposed to allow, they would, he thought, meet the views of the settlers, and do an immense amount of good to the country. He would strongly oppose the expenditure of £1,000 a year, or any less amount, on an English immigration agent. Although that gentleman might have any amount of talent, he would oppose it for the same reason that he would oppose any grant to a German or any other touter for immigrants to the colony. They would only come to grief, by overstating their case. The tide of public opinion was turning in favor of the colony, in England, and he thought their safest plan would be to let things take their course, and not, by drawing highly colored pictures, induce people to come out here, and, after grumbling for awhile, to ultimately leave for some of the other colonies. Much had been said about the various constructions placed upon the Electoral Act by the different benches of magistrates. He found, however, that the same complaints were made of the English electoral law, so that the House need not take great blame to itself for having passed such a law. A great many amendments might be made upon the Act; and, altogether, it might be much simplified. The blame that had been cast upon the benches of magistrates, was, he considered, altogether uncalled for. Those gentlemen did not pretend to be learned in the law. The construction of an Act of Parliament was a most difficult thing; and

they could not expect benches of magistrates to construe Acts always correctly; and especially they could not expect them to do so in the case of so complicated a one as the Electoral Act. He saw, by the Speech, that they were to have a Loan Bill. That, he thought, was inevitable, in order to meet the Treasury Bills falling due, and other obligations; but, beyond that, he would oppose any further loan. The Government, he thought, deserved great credit for the course they had recently pursued in respect to defaulters in the Civil Service; but unless they continued to act as vigorously as they had hitherto done, and to weed out the service wherever there was occasion, he would not be able to support them. Another matter he would like to refer to before sitting down, was the appointment of a police magistrate recently. He was not fully acquainted with all the circumstances connected with that appointment, and he was not sure but the Government might be deserving of some censure for that appointment. He had now been in the colony for some time, and he knew of some gentlemen who had rendered the colony great and good service, to whom such an appointment would have been very valuable; yet they had been passed over, and a gentleman who had no claim on the colony had been appointed. Why was advantage not taken of such opportunities to provide for civil servants who had been discharged in consequence of their offices being abolished. There was, in particular, one gentleman, Mr. Barron—Why was he not provided for? Some explanation, he thought, should be required from the Government, in respect to those matters.

Mr. LAMB said that, as it was usual to make some comments on the Address, in order to let the country know how far honorable members were prepared to support the Government, he would take that opportunity of expressing his views on one or two of the matters referred to in the Speech. In the first place, he would congratulate the country on the prospect of the passing of a Pastoral Relief Bill; though, in his opinion, the measure of the Government did not go far enough in respect to the outside squatter, for whose benefit such a measure was chiefly intended. The Government of which he had the honor of being a member brought in such a measure, but they were not allowed to proceed with it. However, since then the country had been educated up to the absolute necessity for a Bill of the kind; but not by the eloquence of honorable members, but by the drought and the unseasonable weather which had lately prevailed over the whole colony. With respect to the gold fields, he must say he did not believe in the measure the Government proposed to bring before the House—if it was to be the same elaborate measure as was introduced last session. One or two clauses inserted in the old Bill would have been quite sufficient to meet the requirements of the case—one

doing away with the mining courts, and the other giving the commissioner power to decide upon titles and to summon witnesses, with an appeal to the district court to be held on the diggings every three months. He was himself instrumental in establishing mining courts, owing to a report being furnished, to the effect that mining courts would be sufficient. His own opinion at the time was, that they would not be sufficient; but he was influenced by his colleagues to abandon his opinion. As to the land-order scheme in connection with immigration, he never believed in it. The idea, he thought, was first taken from the *assignats* issued during the French Revolution, and any one who had attended to their history must have seen how dangerous they were in their operation. He believed that under the land-order system, if it were continued, it would be found that they would only be introducing people who would pass on to other colonies. With respect to the Additional Members Bill, he did not think the measure that was before the House last session would pass the House; but he had no doubt Ministers had gained something by experience, and had taken advantage of the recess to alter the Bill in accordance with some of the suggestions that were made during the discussions on the Bill last session. With respect to the extension of railways, he would neither vote for the completion of the railway from Ipswich to Brisbane, nor of the line to the Dawson, unless the Government could show they could get contracts taken at a very low rate indeed. He believed, however, the Government were in possession of information showing that railways could be made very much cheaper than they had ever yet been made in any part of the world. If that was not the case, he was very much misinformed. A great mistake had been made in appointing the Minister for Works, Commissioner for Railways, also. There were duties connected with the latter office that no Minister ought to be allowed to discharge. It was putting a Minister in a position in which he could commit any amount of jobbery. The whole valuation of lands that were resumed by the Crown for railway purposes were placed entirely in the hands of the commissioner, and the House ought, therefore, to be careful, so as to guard against jobbery. He would support a revision of the Electoral Act. He was not at all surprised at the diversity of opinions expressed by the revising magistrates, and he believed that, to a certain extent, the same diversity of opinion would prevail when the amended Act became law. He could not support any such Bill for local self-government as had been shadowed forth by the honorable members for Rockhampton and the Kennedy. When the Bill was shadowed forth by those honorable members, he was in the Ministry, and he then stated in his place, that as a member of the Government, he would oppose it. The people were already taxed too heavily; but under such a measure the burden

of taxation would be very largely increased wherever the Bill was brought into operation. He must say that, after the speeches he had heard from the ministerial benches, to the effect that the Ministry would not make any fresh appointments until discharged civil servants had been provided for, he was very much surprised to find that Captain Sadleir had been appointed police magistrate at Taroom. It seemed that some promise had been made to Captain Sadleir; but he could not, of course, say if that was correct or not. At any rate, seeing there were some discharged civil servants actually starving but for the assistance of friends, it was, he considered an insult to the colony to appoint a gentleman who had never been in the service, to an office, which many of the discharged civil servants, such as Mr. Barron, would have been glad to be appointed to, and the duties of which they were well competent to fill.

Mr. FRANCIS moved that the debate be adjourned.

Agreed to.