

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 6 MAY 1869**

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at your hands, and that you will endeavor, by all means in your power, to advance the general welfare of this colony.

"SAM. W. BLACKALL,  
"Governor.

"Government House,  
"Brisbane, 6th May, 1869."

# MANAGEMENT AND WORKING OF THE POLICE FORCE.

Mr. WALSH moved—

1. That a select committee be appointed to inquire into, and report upon, the expense, the management, and the working of the police system under the existing system, with a view to ascertaining what improvements can be effected in each; and if some more satisfactory arrangements cannot be made than now prevail for co-operating with the various benches of magistrates; and relative to the punishment and dismissal of men in the force; such committee to have power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of this House.

2. That such committee consist of Mr. A. Hodgson, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Archer, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. G. Thorn, Mr. Fraser, and the mover.

He said that, in moving for this committee, he did not wish to discuss the merits or demerits of the police force at the present time, as he thought it would be better for the committee to enter on its labors without prejudging the matter. He might, therefore, say that he had the consent of the Colonial Secretary to the motion being passed without his being required to give any lengthy reasons to the House why the committee should be granted. He had chosen the committee, as named in the motion, for the following reasons:—He named the Colonial Secretary as a matter of course; and he thought it only fair also to put down the name of the late Colonial Secretary; he also considered that Rockhampton should be represented by the honorable member for that town; the western district, by the honorable member for the Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay; Ipswich, by the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn; and Brisbane, by the honorable member for the city, Mr. Fraser. Of course, if any honorable member called for a ballot, he would be perfectly agreeable to the committee being appointed in that way; but he doubted if a fairer or wiser selection could be made than he had done. He hoped some good would result to the colony from the labors of the committee, and he trusted they would be able to relieve the commissioner from a great deal of the stigma that had been cast upon him, as well as do some good for the force.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he quite agreed with the remarks made by the honorable member for Maryborough, that the labors of the committee might be productive of very much good, and he begged to inform the House that, following up the promise made by the Government last session, the amended regulations for the police force had been

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Thursday, 6 May, 1869.*

Presentation of Address in Reply.—Management and Working of the Police Force.—Unfurnished Returns.—Mr. Robert Short's Petition.—Water Supply to Copperfield.

### PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that the House do now adjourn to Government House, for the purpose of presenting to His Excellency the Governor the Address adopted by the House in reply to the Opening Speech.

The motion was agreed to, and the House adjourned. On returning—

The SPEAKER said he had to report to the House that he had been to Government House, and had presented to His Excellency the Address adopted by the House in reply to the Opening Speech, which His Excellency had been pleased to accept and acknowledge as follows:—

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN,—

"I receive with great satisfaction the expression of your continued loyalty and affection to the person and government of our Gracious Sovereign, and I thank you for your Address in reply to the Speech with which I opened the present session.

"I feel assured that all matters of importance mentioned therein will receive calm consideration

passed by the Executive, were now in the hands of the Government Printer, and would be laid on the table of the House on an early day next week. He thought that with regard to the committee he might be allowed to make a little alteration. It might hardly be pleasant that on this committee there should be himself and the honorable member for the Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, and therefore he would take the liberty of suggesting that for the name of the honorable member, Mr. Ramsay, there should be substituted the name of the honorable member for the Maranoa, Mr. Miles, because, on account of his travelling a great deal, he might be acquainted with the police, and the officers they were under. He would also further suggest that the name of the honorable member, Mr. Forbes, should be substituted for that of the honorable member, Mr. Thorn. He took the liberty of making those suggestions without any feeling of any kind whatever towards the honorable members themselves.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE said, that as the honorable member who moved the motion had named the committee he desired, and as suggestions of alterations had been made, he thought it would be better that the committee should be selected by ballot. He therefore required that the committee should be appointed in that way.

A ballot was accordingly taken, and resulted in the appointment of Mr. Walsh, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Miles, Mr. Forbes, Mr. A. Hodgson, and Mr. Archer.

#### UNFURNISHED RETURNS.

Mr. WALSH moved—

That it be an order of this House, during the present session, that on each Wednesday when the House is sitting, immediately preceding the Orders of the Day being called, the clerk shall read out the titles of all motions for returns agreed to previously by the House, and not yet furnished.

He said he did not mean to take up the time of the House in urging this motion, because he thought the importance of his object must be self-evident to honorable members. Too frequently returns that were ordered by the House were never laid on the table. It was unlikely that any honorable member would ask for returns, unless he had an object in doing so. He himself could conscientiously say that he never did, and frequently, when he did ask for any, it was with the intention of founding a motion in connection with them. On more than one occasion he had had to complain of the inconvenience and disadvantage he had been subjected to, through returns asked for by him not having been forthcoming. The effect of the motion, if carried, would be that Ministers would be always reminded of their duty. No doubt Ministers had many matters of importance to attend to, and, consequently, were liable to forget matters of minor importance, or

their subordinates did for them. Now, if this motion should be agreed to, it would greatly relieve Ministers in future from misconstruction, on account of such returns not being furnished.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was very sorry that any honorable member had to complain of returns ordered by the House not being furnished; but yet he thought the rule proposed in the motion would hardly be a convenient one. He thought it would be better to leave it in the hands of honorable members, if they asked for returns, to remind the Government, if they were remiss in furnishing them, of the necessity of complying with the orders of the House. He thought it would hardly be right to require the clerk of the House to have the duty of reminding the Government of their forgetfulness. He thought honorable members who moved for returns, would not allow the Government to forget to produce them. He was not aware that any returns that had been moved for since the present Government came into office, had been delayed. He did not think the rule would be productive of any benefit, while it would lead to much delay in the proceedings of the House.

Mr. PALMER said he could see no reason why the Government should decline to accede to the motion. It would not involve a delay of more than two minutes each day. It was notorious that a number of returns asked for by honorable members, were not placed on the table within a reasonable time.

Mr. WALSH, in reply, said he had not anticipated any strong opposition to his motion, which he thought only embodied a very reasonable request. He should, if compelled to do so, press the question to a division.

Mr. LAMB said he was also of opinion, that it was necessary some such course should be adopted, for returns asked for by members were frequently lost sight of for a long time. He had known that to be the case in New South Wales, where in one or two cases, as long a period as two years had elapsed before the production of a return moved for.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that if the honorable member knew an instance in New South Wales, where a return had been kept back for two years, he only proved one of two things—either that the return was of very little importance, or that there had been gross remissness on the part of some of the officials. If the honorable member for Maryborough had shewn that any advantage would accrue to the House from the passing of his resolution, he would have been ready to support him; but as the proposition appeared to him likely to waste the time of the House to no purpose, he should oppose the motion.

Mr. PALMER called the attention of the House, to the fact that the honorable member for Eastern Downs had been first to break through the rule laid down by the Speaker,

that no member could speak after the mover of a resolution had addressed the House in reply.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he had followed the honorable member for Mitchell. The first transgression of the rule had therefore arisen on the other side of the House.

The SPEAKER said he had pointed out that this was the usual practice, and recommended its adoption; but he had not ruled that it was not competent for an honorable member to speak after the mover had spoken in reply. It was usual not to do so.

Mr. FRANCIS said he thought there were stronger reasons for passing the resolution before the House than for rejecting it. Every facility should be given to the representatives of the people, to obtain information upon all subjects. Hon. members had just been complimented by His Excellency upon their extensive knowledge of the affairs of the country; but, for his part, he must confess that he knew nothing, and that was his great and continued lamentation. He found when he had to move for returns, that there was always a struggle by some unseen person to prevent him from getting them; and when he did obtain them after considerable trouble, they were furnished in a shape which made them perfectly useless. There seemed to be a disposition, he would not say on the part of the Government, but on the part of some of those gentlemen behind the scenes, to keep members ignorant upon the subjects upon which it was their business to be informed. He thought the Government should afford members every facility to obtain the information they required, and he should therefore support the motion.

The question was put and passed.

#### MR. ROBERT SHORT'S PETITION.

Dr. O'DOHERTY, in moving, pursuant to notice, that the petition presented by him on the previous day, from Mr. Robert Short, of Brisbane, be printed, said that it represented the refusal of the honorable Speaker to certify to certain vouchers for services alleged by the petitioner to have been rendered by him to the Parliament, as shorthand writer, during the temporary absence of one of the regular staff. Of course, in undertaking the task of presenting the petition, and moving that it be printed, he did not intend in any way to question the justice or right of the Speaker's decision. He had no doubt, after reading the correspondence, that, inspired by the desire for economy, which, at the present time, had become a watchword in the House, he had determined, for the first time, he believed, to refuse his sanction to payments of this kind without first obtaining the sanction of the House. Therefore, the point he had to put before the House in asking for the printing of this petition, was, that in refusing to give his sanction to that payment the Speaker had, although acting very

properly in his capacity as an officer of the House, pushed his duties beyond what, most probably, the House would be prepared to uphold when they were made acquainted with the whole details of the case. Those details were very short. It would seem that this gentleman, Mr. Short, was employed, in the absence of one of the regularly-appointed shorthand writers, Mr. Barlee, who was unfortunately compelled to absent himself from his duties for a few days. He (Dr. O'Doherty) was himself personally aware that the cause which obliged that officer to absent himself was one which, in fact, there was no getting out of. It was caused by the great and fatal sickness of his child, and under the circumstances it was quite impossible for him to be present at his duties. It so happened that there was an important debate taking place in the House at the time, and the staff of shorthand writers required some substitute for Mr. Barlee. As he was informed, Mr. Short, the gentleman who petitioned the House, was applied to act as this substitute; and he was applied to, as was stated in the petition read on the previous day, by one of Mr. Barlee's brother shorthand writers, Mr. Byrne, by letter. That letter reached him late in the evening, and requested his immediate attendance, if he were prepared to accept the offer made to him. The letter of Mr. Byrne represented that the offer was made on the authority of the Speaker, and Mr. Short at once acceded to the request. It was most distinctly stated by him, as well as, as he was informed, the other shorthand writers, Mr. Byrne and Mr. Lindsay, that they understood that the same arrangement was to exist in the employment of Mr. Short as had existed upon all occasions previously, that was, that he was to be employed under the Speaker's authority, and was to be paid out of the public funds, as had been the case on all similar occasions when extra assistance had been required. The proof that both Mr. Byrne and Mr. Lindsay regarded the engagement in that light was shown in the fact that they certified to the correctness of the account when it was sent in to the Speaker. Well, it seemed that the Speaker refused to sanction the payment of the account, because he believed it was stated that he considered there had been an understanding with him that Mr. Barlee himself should pay the cost of his substitute. Now, he thought, in the first place, that any understanding which the Speaker might have probably considered to have been entered into with him was evidently an understanding with which Mr. Short had not been made acquainted. That was distinctly stated by him, and was also stated by the other shorthand writers, Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Byrne. Mr. Short was not aware of any understanding of the kind until he had sent in his account for the services which he had rendered. Well, under those circumstances, it did appear to him (Dr. O'Doherty) that, so far as the payment of the money to Mr. Short was

concerned, there could be no question of his right to receive it, and also of his right to receive it at the hands of the House, from those who had employed him. He distinctly stated, further, that he had no correspondence with Mr. Barlee one way or the other, and that he had no communication at all with him on the subject. He considered himself, as shewn by the correspondence placed before the House, employed by authority of the Speaker, as conveyed to him by Mr. Byrne, one of the Parliamentary shorthand writers. The account he had sent in amounted to £20 14s., and the charges were the usual professional charges of two guineas a day for attendance, and one shilling per folio of seventy-two words. He believed there was no question of any overcharge; the only question being, who was to pay the money. He might state that, upon several occasions, assistance similar to this had been rendered, and also rendered by Mr. Short, to the Parliamentary shorthand writers. He had been informed that several shorthand writers had been similarly engaged during previous sessions of Parliament, and the names of these gentlemen had been given to him—Messrs. Cooper, Bohm, Jones, Allen, and Wyer—all members of the Press. Mr. Short himself had been several times engaged before, under precisely similar circumstances. In all those instances, as the Speaker was no doubt aware, those gentlemen had been paid out of the public funds, without any question; and therefore he believed he was correct in stating that the Speaker had questioned, for the first time, the payment of accounts rendered for services of this nature. Of course, he did not wish to enter into the question of who should pay on future occasions, whether it should come from the party who absented himself, or from the public funds; but he certainly felt it his duty to advocate that Mr. Short should receive payment in the usual way—first, because there were so many precedents for it; and, secondly, because he thought it would be most unjust, unfeeling, and cruel, on the part of the House, to compel Mr. Barlee, considering the circumstances under which he absented himself, to pay the money out of the small pittance he received;—in fact, if he were called upon to pay it out of his salary, it would amount to this,—that because his poor child suffered, he would be called upon to pay a very large amount in excess of what he would have received during the same period if he had performed the duties himself, for he presumed that his salary would not, during that week, have amounted to more than £5, and the account was £20. He thought the House would agree with him, that this would be very cruel, and when they found this was the first time that such a payment had been refused, he had no doubt that they, as well as the Speaker, would see that it should be the last. He might also add, that not only had this system been invariably carried out in the

shorthand writer's department, but in the case of several gentlemen in the Civil Service similar arrangements had been made. He had been informed of several instances where gentlemen, occupying positions in the Civil Service, who, from illness, or the serious illness of some member of their families, had been compelled to absent themselves from their duties, had received the full salaries during the time. He knew, personally, of one case where a gentleman was obliged, from illness, to absent himself, and that for a considerable period. And in all these cases, during the whole period of their absence, their salaries were given to them, and substitutes were provided to fill their places until their return. He thought, that under the circumstances of serious illness either to an officer or to a member of his family, it seemed hard to make him pay a largely increased sum to that which he would have received as his salary during the same period. As a matter of course, everyone would understand that, in such a case, no person could be found to render the temporary assistance required, at the same rate as the service would be performed by the officer himself, whose engagement was yearly; and in this case Mr. Barlee would have to pay £20 for one week's service, during which period his salary would probably not amount to more than £5 or £6. Therefore, in moving that the petition be printed, he hoped the House would take into favorable consideration Mr. Short's claim, and that whatever decision they might come to afterwards, in reference to this subject—if they should decide upon changing the practice hitherto adopted, they would not make this particular instance the first.

Mr. G. THORN, who seconded the motion, said he had not much to add to the speech of the honorable member for North Brisbane, who had said all that it was necessary to say. As far as his observation went, the petition was respectfully worded. He was aware it had been stated that certain disrespectful words occurred in it, but that was in the correspondence, which it was necessary to embody in the petition, to prove the petitioner's claim. He could only say that, if the gentleman referred to did not receive his salary, after it had been shewn that members of the Civil Service had been paid under precisely similar circumstances, a very invidious example would be set. He considered, from what he had heard out of doors, and from the petition, that Mr. Short was entitled to payment. He had done his work; the vouchers had been certified by the two other shorthand writers, and, as far as he could find, he had the authority of the Speaker, through Mr. Byrne. Certainly there was nothing about payment mentioned in his communication; but it was clear that he had done the work, and that the charges were correct, which were, as he understood, two guineas a day for attendance, and a shilling a folio for

transcribing his notes. He did trust the House would admit the petitioner's claim.

The SPEAKER: Before putting the question the House will probably expect me to make some statement. The honorable member who has brought forward this petition has been entirely misinformed about the whole matter. I deny entirely that I ever gave any authority to provide a substitute for Mr. Barlee. The question was asked me by one of the shorthand writers—whether I would have any objection to allow Mr. Short to go into the box for Mr. Barlee, in his absence. I said, I had no objection, as far as I was concerned; but it must be understood that it must be an arrangement between him and Mr. Barlee, and that he must not look for payment out of the public funds. I most distinctly deny that I gave any authority to employ Mr. Short, as a paid substitute, to render services in this House. The honorable member for North Brisbane states that, on previous occasions, certain shorthand writers were engaged to do certain things, but they were engaged by the House, and this man was not. I desired Mr. Bernays to tell him how the matter stood, and I received from Mr. Short, in reply to Mr. Bernays' letter, what I considered one of the most impertinent letters, from a person in his position, I ever received. It was a most improper letter, and the petition embodying it is one which I think the House would do well to consider unworthy of consideration.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he recollected the time that Mr. Short was first engaged. A short time after he appeared in the gallery, several members came to him and asked him who was going to pay for the extra shorthand writer. He replied that he did not know, but would make inquiries, and he did so for their satisfaction, and the answer given to him was precisely what the Speaker had just stated, and he merely rose to mention it in confirmation of the Speaker's statement. He was told that leave had been given to Mr. Short to go into the gallery to supply the place of one of the shorthand writers who was absent in consequence of illness in his family, but that the Government would not have to pay for his services. That seemed to him to be a perfectly correct arrangement, as there were the two other shorthand writers both there with nothing to do, as there was nothing going on in the other House, and up to that time there had not been a single committee meeting. He simply mentioned this in confirmation of the Speaker's statement.

The SPEAKER: Considering that the House was in committee, the other shorthand-writers could easily have done the work during the whole of that week.

Mr. JORDAN said he felt some hesitation in expressing his views on the subject before the House, especially considering the action which the honorable Speaker had taken in the matter. He should be sorry to do any-

thing which was not strictly correct. But the case appeared to be this:—The House had it in evidence—that was, they had it in the correspondence—that Mr. Short had been engaged by a letter written to him by Mr. Byrne, and Mr. Byrne stated in that letter that he had the authority of the honorable the Speaker. He thought that was the point with which they had to deal—that was, in fact, the only question they had to consider—whether they should pay for the services which had been rendered. Perhaps Mr. Byrne did not receive the authority of the Speaker; perhaps he misunderstood him; but he distinctly stated in his letter that it was on the authority of the Speaker that he engaged Mr. Short's services. Now, if anyone was to blame, it was Mr. Byrne. Mr. Short had nothing to do with any conversation which took place between the Speaker and Mr. Byrne.

The SPEAKER: It was not Mr. Byrne who spoke to me, but Mr. Lindsay.

Mr. JORDAN: Well, Mr. Byrne was one of the Parliamentary shorthand writers, and there was a letter from him which stated distinctly that the engagement was made under the Speaker's authority. He believed the House need not travel beyond that letter. Mr. Short came and did the work, and he expected to be paid. He thought the House was bound in honor to pay him, and that it would be a disgrace to the House and to the colony if he were not paid. As to whether the payment was to come out of the public funds, or out of Mr. Barlee's pocket, that was another question. What were the circumstances of the case? Mr. Barlee had a sick child. That child was likely to die. The child did die, and under those painful circumstances were they to depart from the usual course and refuse to pay Mr. Short, or compel Mr. Barlee to pay him. Take another view of the case. Supposing it were decided that Mr. Short should be paid, and the money deducted from Mr. Barlee's salary. Well, if that should be the decision of the House, Mr. Short, if he had one spark of feeling in him, must return the money to Mr. Barlee. No gentleman in the House placed in Mr. Short's position would retain the money—£20—in such a case, when the salary for the time would only have amounted to about £5. Mr. Short would feel bound in honor to hand the money over to Mr. Barlee, and the result would be that Mr. Short would not be paid at all—that would be the effect of the decision of the House. He did not think that would be honest, and, therefore, if the matter were pressed on the House, he should certainly protest to the last against Mr. Short not being paid out of the public funds.

Mr. PALMER said he thought the honorable member who had just sat down had put the case in an entirely wrong light. He had commenced by stating that Mr. Byrne had acted as the Speaker's agent, but the honorable the Speaker had distinctly denied that

he had done so. Why, anybody might constitute himself another person's agent, but it was necessary to prove the agency, for no one could be the agent of another unless he was appointed.

Mr. JORDAN : There is the letter.

Mr. PALMER : The Speaker had told the House that he had given no authority to employ Mr. Short, and there the attempt to establish the agency failed. Then the honorable member had made an *ad misericordiam* appeal to the House about Mr. Barlee. He was sure that every member of the House felt sorry for that gentleman's affliction, but it did not appear that he had anything whatever to do with the matter; he was absent from the House at the time, with the Speaker's permission, and that was all they knew about him. An arrangement was made between Mr. Byrne and Mr. Short, and they must settle it among themselves. The House had nothing to do with it; and if he had been in the House on the previous day, when the petition was presented, he should have objected to its being received; for he thought that the smuggling a most disrespectful letter to the Speaker into that petition should have been sufficient to involve its rejection. The question was now whether the petition should be printed, and he, for one, should decidedly oppose it.

Mr. THOMPSON said it appeared to him that there was a great principle involved in this case—whether the decision of the Speaker in a matter of this kind was to be questioned. The Speaker had stated that he had given no authority for the payment of this work, and it was understood that when any member of the House made a statement his word must be accepted. He had merely given a simple authority for another person to be substituted, as a matter of convenience for an officer of the House, and no honorable member could question his statement. He should therefore move an amendment on the motion, not only on the ground of the disrespectful nature of the petition, but because of the undesirability of allowing it to be supposed that the Speaker of that House could be brought to task by any person acting, or permitted to act, in the gallery of the House. It had been the custom, of late, for persons dismissed from the public service—and he thought it was one of the vices of representative Government—to appeal to the House, and to bring their grievances before Parliament, instead of seeking their remedy in a court of law. It appeared to him that the right of petition was to enable persons to obtain their rights when they could not get them in the courts. But no legal redress had been sought in this case, which did not appear to him to be one which affected the right to petition, and if he had caught the words of the petition when it was read the previous evening, he should certainly have opposed its reception. For the reasons he had given he should move, by way of amendment—

That the Order of the Day for the reception of this petition having been incautiously made, the same be expunged.

Mr. HALY seconded the amendment.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said that before the motion was put he wished to say a few words. He he did not desire in any way, as he had already said, to question the justice of the Speaker's decision. Placed as the matter was before him, it seemed to be scarcely possible but that Mr. Byrne or Mr. Lindsay must have had some conversation with the Speaker, by which they considered they were authorised to send for Mr. Short; and therefore, taking the same view as the honorable member for East Moreton, that the letter in question was sent to Mr. Short by an authorised servant of the House, he thought the House was justified in taking the matter into consideration. Nothing, he repeated, was further from his thoughts than to question the decision or authority of the Speaker in the matter; but he took it for granted that the Speaker had possibly refused to sanction the payment of this amount, with a view of putting a stop to the arrangement which had been accepted and understood on previous occasions; and it was purely with the view of getting the House to consider whether, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, it would not be well to postpone any such alteration; for, as the matter stood, there did seem a difficulty as to how Mr. Short was to be paid; but as the Speaker had informed the House that he had given no authority to employ him, and the House must accept his statement, he did not see that he was justified in pressing the motion. He would therefore withdraw it, with the permission of the House.

Mr. MILES said he thought the petition should be expunged from the records of the House. If he had been guilty of such conduct as the honorable member for East Moreton, he should have made five hundred apologies for it. That honorable member had assumed the fact that Mr. Short had been employed by the authority of the Speaker, in a letter from Mr. Byrne, although the Speaker had stood up and told him that it was not done by his authority.

Mr. JORDAN begged the honorable member's pardon. He had simply stated that in the letter from Mr. Byrne the words were used "under the authority of the Speaker." He had not for a moment questioned the statement made by the honorable member.

Mr. MILES was very sorry to have misquoted the honorable member, but why did he quote the letter at all after the Speaker had assured the House that it was not written under his authority? The fact was, some honorable members thought the Government ought to go on paying everything they were asked, till they blundered into debt. He was one of those who asked, the other evening, when Mr. Short appeared in the

gallery, if he was there with the sanction of the Speaker. At that time there was little or no business doing, and as the shorthand writers had only three months' work in the year, if there was a little extra work at times, surely they could do it. He was astonished that any honorable member could bring forward such a petition, and he thought it should have been the duty of the honorable member at the head of the Government to reject it; and that he had not done his duty in allowing it to be received.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honorable member for Maranoa would hardly expect that he should take his opinion, or that of any honorable member, as to his duty. It was quite as much the business of the honorable member himself, as it was his, to move that the petition be rejected. His attention had been called to the wording of the petition, but he had thought it better to let the matter come before the House, as it appeared to him that the Speaker would like to have an opportunity of stating what really occurred. He did not think any honorable member would doubt what came from the Speaker's lips, and he did not see that there was anything in the petition that he need care for. He had therefore made no objection to the reception of the petition. It appeared to him that it contained some language which might, of itself, be considered irregular—and he had told the honorable member for North Brisbane so; but it was so embodied in the correspondence that he thought it might as well go. He thought it was necessary that honorable members should accede to the amendment of the honorable member for Ipswich, otherwise they would be—he could use no other term—giving the Speaker the lie.

Mr. G. THORN said that, with all due deference to the Speaker, there was some misunderstanding. It appeared that Mr. Short had received a letter from Mr. Byrne, which stated that he was employed under the Speaker's authority to do certain services in the gallery of the House. He had performed those services; and the question was, who was to pay him? He would like to know what had been the custom hitherto, when one of the shorthand writers had been obliged to absent himself from illness in his family. Had it been the custom to provide a person to fill his place?

The SPEAKER: There was no misunderstanding on my part: I gave no authority to employ Mr. Short.

Mr. G. THORN had no doubt, from the sense of the House, the amendment would be carried. It was clear, however, that Mr. Short had done certain work in the gallery; and he must inform honorable members that, when the debate on the budget was going on, the shorthand writers took down a good deal more than they did on any other occasion. He thought that was another reason why Mr. Short should be paid for his services.

But he wished to know whether other persons besides the shorthand writers were paid when they were ill, or were absent on account of illness in their families.

Mr. WALSH said that the zeal displayed by Mr. Byrne when he had a friend to serve, appeared to him, under the present circumstances, almost unaccountable. Until the honorable member for Ipswich got up, he must confess he was in some little difficulty as to what he should say on the subject. He felt that no doubt Mr. Short had performed work of which that chamber had had the advantage, and therefore there was not the least doubt that he should be paid for it. Therefore, he had been of opinion, and still thought that it was the duty of the Speaker, after having accepted his services, to see him paid. So far he agreed with what had been stated by those who had spoken in favor of the motion. But there was another gentleman whose name, he thought, should have been more particularly questioned, and that was Mr. Barlee. He thought it was discreditable that Mr. Barlee should have brought this person forward at all. This arrangement seemed to him an extraordinary one, and it seemed extraordinary that his services for three days should have amounted to £20. But this was not the first time that Mr. Barlee had brought the Speaker's name into discredit, and insulted him on that very question of extra reporting. If honorable members would look up the back files of the *Courier* they would find that some most insulting letters had been written by that same Mr. Short, of Brisbane, to the Speaker, addressed to the Press, and addressed to the Executive Council, with respect to some account of his. Whether Mr. Short on that occasion succeeded in getting paid he did not remember; but he knew that Mr. Barlee's and Mr. Short's names were mixed up in the matter at that time, as he thought in a manner most discreditable to themselves, and most insulting to the chamber. He believed neither the House nor the Speaker took any notice, at that time, of the way the latter had been treated on that occasion through Mr. Barlee, and now the same thing had been repeated again. They all sympathised with Mr. Barlee in his recent domestic affliction, but seeing how the Speaker had been treated on a previous occasion, he should at any rate have shielded him from undergoing a similar series of attacks and insults. Well, he admitted that Mr. Short ought to be paid, and thought it would have been better if the Speaker had seen him paid and deducted the amount from Mr. Barlee's salary. He might be wrong, but his opinion was that labor should always be paid, and that those who derived the advantages of it should pay for it. Holding that view, he had certainly felt somewhat at a loss how to address himself to the question before the House. The amendment of the honorable member for Ipswich, however, relieved him of the difficulty, and put the matter in exactly its proper light. Un-



doubtedly the petition ought never to have been received, and had not his attention been diverted at the time it was read, he should have opposed it, and he was quite sure it would have been indignantly rejected by the House. He was glad to see that the honorable member for North Brisbane had taken the remarks of the Speaker in the spirit he had, and he hoped the amendment would be carried unanimously, and testify at any rate that something was due to the Speaker in his position.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE said he thought it was unnecessary for him to tell the House that he would yield to no man, in respect to the honorable Speaker, for he hoped his conduct for many years had sufficiently proved it. He very much regretted the language which had unfortunately crept into the letter, and he very much blamed honorable members for not keeping their ears open when the petition was read, instead of now coming forward and saying that a person who had done work for them should not be paid, or that he should be paid out of the salary of a person who was compelled, in his dire distress, to be absent from his duties. He said it was unbecoming of the House to listen to such a proposition. He repeated that no man would regret more than he did that the Speaker should be insulted, and he was sorry that anything had occurred which would bear that construction. But this work had been done, and it appeared that an error had arisen among the shorthand writers, who found that they wanted assistance, and applied for it in the usual way. It was quite evident that the answer which the Speaker gave on that occasion was misunderstood or misapprehended, and was acted upon contrary to that honorable gentleman's intention—still the House had accepted Mr. Short's services, which must be paid for. He could not recognise Mr. Barlee's liability to pay for them. Supposing that gentleman had been dying himself, instead of his child, he asked whether that money would have been deducted from his salary? Unquestionably not. The whole had arisen from a misconception; and although he had stated no one regretted more than he did that the Speaker should be put to any annoyance, still the work having been properly done ought to be properly paid for.

Dr. O'DONNELL said, that as some strong comments had been made about the insulting language in the petition, he might state, in explanation, that on reading over the petition he had been struck with the language referred to, and had felt some hesitation about presenting it. The writer, however, had pointed out to him that, although seemingly the language was directed towards the Speaker, yet in reality it was not so. It occurred in a letter sent in reply to one written by the Clerk of the House, and Mr. Short told him that, if the letter were read with the context, it would be seen that it was not the Speaker who was referred to.

Mr. MILES called the attention of the Speaker to the fact that the honorable member for North Brisbane had already spoken twice.

The SPEAKER said the honorable member was out of order in again addressing the House.

Mr. FRANCIS (amid cries of question) said that the few words he had to address to the House would not occupy more than two or three minutes, and as the petitioner was, very probably, one of his constituents, he thought he might claim the right to speak on the subject. He hoped the House would pause before they did anything to restrict or limit the right to petition, which, in his opinion, was one of the most sacred privileges of an Englishman. He was sorry that petitioners, of late, seemed to have got into the habit of thinking they could effect their object by using language which they considered strong, but which was, in reality weak, and did not effect its purpose. It had struck his ears distinctly that words were being read which were very offensive, and he had asked at the time who had used the words—he referred to a phrase which comprised the expression *currente calamo*—as it appeared to him to be on the border of language which should not be received. But the Government did not object to it, and he forbore to do so. He hoped the petition would be considered on its merits. He did not intend to go at all into the question in detail. He rather thought the logic of the honorable member for Maryborough was faulty, as he had first shewn that the person had a claim on the House, and then attempted to take up the novel position that the House should refuse payment. He should like to see the petition printed. The House had certainly accepted Mr. Short's services, and he ought to be paid for them. It was very well for the honorable member for Ipswich to talk about courts of law. That House was higher than any court of law. Every one of Her Majesty's subjects in this colony had a right to petition the House, and he, for one, must protest against that right being infringed. He hoped, therefore, the honorable member would withdraw his amendment, and let the question go to the vote, in which case he should support the original motion.

The Hon. R. PRING said the question before the House involved a principle of great importance, and it appeared to him that members of the House were rushing hastily to a decision, with very little consideration. In the first place, many honorable members admitted that they did not hear the petition when it was read, and that was a great error. Curiously enough he had to say that he was there to defend the petition. Let justice be done to everyone, and let not every honorable member run away at once from the question because a few of them considered that their Speaker had been insulted. He had no wish to see the Speaker or any other member

insulted, but let them first see whether he had been insulted. The petition was from some one who had been brought into the House to do certain work for that House, and the principle of law was, that when work had been done it should be paid for—though whether it should be paid for to the extent sought by the claimant was another question. He could not come to the conclusion that the facts of the question warranted the House, after having received the petition, in acceding to the amendment, and expunging it from the records. He was free to admit that it would be highly expedient that the motion for printing the petition should be rejected; and, although he expressed himself in this way, he still wished to say, also, that he thought the Government should remunerate Mr. Short for the work that had been done by him; because he was perfectly satisfied that, so far as Mr. Short was concerned, and after the utmost scrutiny of the petition, it could not be said that any reflection was cast by him upon the Speaker. It was perfectly clear that the work was performed in consequence of the letter which Mr. Short received from the shorthand writers' department, which he believed was authoritative, and which, whether it was or not, certainly led him to the conclusion that he was engaged under the proper authority of the House. He (Hon. R. Pring) believed that, if the whole case were sifted, there had been a great mistake, and that perhaps the authority, or qualified sanction, which the Speaker himself gave to Mr. Lindsay was misunderstood by Mr. Lindsay or Mr. Byrne, and that the result of the misunderstanding was, that Mr. Short was induced to accept an engagement under mistake. But, he said, again, the work had been done, and no fault had been found with it; and, although the question of remuneration was not now before the House, yet, after this debate, the Government should certainly find the means to pay Mr. Short—he did not say anything about the amount, but fair remuneration for Mr. Short's services. He should now offer a few remarks to show why he thought the amendment of the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Thompson, ought not to be sanctioned by the House. He did not wish it to be understood that he found any fault with the honorable member for moving the amendment, because he might have thought that the petition did contain very offensive language to the Speaker. If he (Hon. R. Pring) was wrong in the reasons he would give to the House—it was only one vote; for honorable members would not go with him. He wished to assure the Speaker that no one in the House would be more desirous than himself to guard and keep the Speaker's dignity and position from insult; and, as long as he was a member of the Assembly he would assist in maintaining the dignity of the chair and the respect due to the Speaker's office—which must

always be preserved. But the House must not go to extremes, even for that, unless they knew that an intentional insult had been offered to the Speaker. He hoped the House would listen to him while he undertook to explain the petition, as he read it—and he had read it carefully. The petition might be regarded in two ways, no doubt: as containing an insult to the Speaker, or to the House through the Speaker; or, as containing nothing of the kind. The petition was from a gentleman who addressed the House in hope of getting some relief under certain circumstances; and, in endeavoring to lay his case before the House, he recapitulated, or rather embodied, in the petition, correspondence which had taken place. The petition contained no allegation against the Speaker. If it contained a single allegation disrespectful to the Speaker, *per se*, or one reflecting on him in any way, in or out of the House, that would make all the difference in his view of the petition; but it did not contain any. The petitioner, in his anxiety, had gone a little farther than he need have done to give all the facts of the case, and had quoted all the correspondence he had had in connection with it; but he had not gone further than was correct. There was evidence contained in the petition which went to show that, at one time, a certain letter written by himself would bear the construction that he doubted a statement made, not by the Speaker, but by another person—which made all the difference. Some men were very unfortunate in explaining their views in writing; but he (Hon. R. Pring) should not think Mr. Short was one of that class. He hoped honorable members who, before dinner, were going to vote for the amendment, would consider the case calmly. He thought it would be very hard that the honorable member for Brisbane, Dr. O'Doherty, who had presented the petition, should be put in the position he would occupy, if the House, after receiving the petition, should reverse its decision. Though regarding it as of dubious character, neither that honorable member nor those to whom he had referred it, had seen anything objectionable in it. At any rate, when that honorable member offered to withdraw his motion for printing it, his offer ought to have been accepted. It was clear that the petitioner took the view of the case, that he had proper authority for rendering his services. He did not care what kind of authority was given by the Speaker to Mr. Lindsay or Mr. Byrne, or what kind of communication took place between the Speaker and them, or between Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Byrne; his authority came to him through an officer of the Parliament, and, whether correct or not, placed him in the position he occupied; and, behold! the maxim, *Qui facit per alium, facit per se*, must apply. "Put me in the position of looking to the principal, and not to the agent," said the petitioner. If Mr. Byrne or Mr. Lindsay misunderstood

any communication made to them, or to Mr. Lindsay, by the Speaker, either of those gentlemen might be highly to blame for so doing; but that did not relieve the position, so far as Mr. Short was concerned. In his (Hon. R. Pring's) view of the matter, that was not the question before the House; though it did affect it to a certain extent, because Mr. Short put into the petition the letters which had passed between himself and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the parliamentary shorthand writers, and he alleged that the authority given to him by Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Byrne was understood by him to come from them as communicated by the Speaker. Further, in answering the letter of the Clerk of the Assembly, who denied that the Speaker's authority was given, he alleged that the denial was untrue—there was no direct charge—as made in ignorance of the circumstance that the letter from the shorthand writers, written by Mr. Byrne, showed that they had the Speaker's authority; and he evidently endeavored to insinuate that the Clerk of the House had made a mistake, in writing his letter, "*currente calamo*, with a fluency of composition" which had outrun his discretion, and that Mr. Bernays had made "statements which were inconsistent with each other." Evidently, that was to show that he considered Mr. Bernays, under the influence of a flowing pen, had written a little more than he might have done or intended. Construing the letters fairly, he (Hon. R. Pring) had come to the conclusion that there was no intention on the part of the petitioner to insult the Speaker, either in the petition or in the letters. The letters of Mr. Short were, he believed, very strong; and he could not conceal from himself that there was very great negligence in the matter, somewhere. There were the shorthand writers, Mr. Byrne and Mr. Lindsay, writing to Mr. Short in definite terms. Mr. Byrne would not have written such a letter if he did not believe he had authority for so doing; or if Mr. Lindsay did not understand that he had the Speaker's authority. There must have been some dreadful misunderstanding between the Speaker and them, or they would not, surely, have written so definitely as to the duties Mr. Short was to perform. Otherwise, the communications that had taken place, and which were in the petition, were of such a dubious character that, as he had said before, anyone might read them for himself, and come to his own conclusion upon them. He had read them all carefully, and he could not admit that there was any intention to insult the Speaker, or that the petition contained any insult to the House, or that there was any reason for expunging the record of its reception by the House. But he thought the motion for printing should be rejected, in order that the House should mark their sense of the character of petitions presented to them; or, in other words, that the public

should know that while the right of petition was conceded to them, petitioners should be very careful to petition according to usage and custom, and be careful of the language they made use of; and if, by the use of any injudicious language, a petition was rejected, the fault would be their own. He thought Mr. Short would suffer quite enough by having the motion for the printing of his petition rejected.

The SPEAKER said he thought it was only right for him to say that the letter referred to, written by Mr. Bernays, was written by his (the Speaker's) directions, and entirely approved of by him.

The Hon. R. PRING: Mr. Short did not know that.

Mr. FORBES said the discussion had now taken a very proper course, for he did not think the amendment should be entertained. He held that every member of the Empire who felt that he had a grievance to complain of, had a right to lay his petition at the foot of the throne; and he also had an equal right to petition the Assembly. The petition of Mr. Short had been received. If any amendment upon the motion were desirable, it was that the petition should be referred to the Standing Orders Committee, of which the Speaker was always a member, whose province he (Mr. Forbes) believed it was to consider it, and report upon it. When the report was before the House, the matter would have become a matter for fair and open discussion. He did not believe that the Speaker was personally concerned, as he was not the party against whom the offensive language alleged to be in the petition was aimed. If the petition were referred to the Standing Orders Committee, it would open up the whole subject of the position of the officers of the Parliament more fully than it had been opened before. It was not long since he had an opportunity of reading the report of a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament in New South Wales, which had been drawn up by the now President of the Council, the Honorable Terence Aubrey Murray, and which was a very elaborate document: it went thoroughly into the position of the Speakers of the House of Commons and of the various Colonial Legislatures throughout the British Empire; and, without entering into particulars, he might state briefly that the conclusion arrived at by the committee was, that the House had no right whatever to the management of the officers of the House, and the committee recommended that a Bill should be passed, providing the salaries of the President of the Upper House, the Speaker of the Lower House, and all the officers of the Parliament, and that thus the Parliament would be relieved from the position of having to vote the salaries of their officers from year to year. The officers were to be so immediately under the control of the President and the Speaker that it would place them in a thoroughly

independent position. Looking at the present case, as it had been so lucidly explained by the honorable member for Burnett, Hon. R. Pring, and taking his views of it, he (Mr. Forbes) thought they could meet it, without interfering, in the least degree, with the right of petition, by the withdrawal of the amendment and of the original motion; and then, he thought, the object the House wanted to attain would be arrived at. As the Standing Orders Committee was not yet appointed, he felt somewhat in a difficulty; otherwise, he should move that the petition be referred to that committee, so that the whole question might be gone into fully upon its merits, and a discussion at large take place upon the report of the committee, with the view of placing the House, with regard to their officers, in a different and a more satisfactory position than was the case at the present time.

Mr. WILLIAMS said if his honorable colleague, Mr. Thompson, insisted upon going to a division on the question, he should, most undoubtedly, vote against him. He did not wish to give a silent vote on the question. He should not have hesitated to do so, but from what the Premier had told the House, that if they voted for the motion they would vote the Speaker a liar. He disagreed with that altogether. He was sure that no honorable member would give a vote that would carry on the face of it such an impression as that. At the same time it should be borne in mind, and he wished it to be understood distinctly, that he would not give a vote bringing in as liars either of those gentlemen whose names were mentioned in connection with the petition. If the Premier was right in the construction he put on their votes, the House must understand that any honorable member who took his view—that to vote against the petition would be to brand those gentlemen liars—was equally right and was equally justified in using such an argument. It was clear, from the gentleman who wrote the first letter, that there was a distinct statement that he had authority. Was that to go for nothing? He (Mr. Williams) would not, on any occasion, give a vote that would call the Speaker a liar; neither would he give a vote that would call Mr. Byrne or Mr. Lindsay a liar. He did not know either of those gentlemen; but he did not wish to vote against them any more than against the Speaker. He did not think there were any lies in the matter. As the honorable member for Burnett, Hon. R. Pring, put it, he thought there was a mistake. The writer of the first letter would, no doubt, never have written it unless he thought he had authority to engage Mr. Short. He (Mr. Williams) thought his honorable colleague would have done the right thing if he had withdrawn his amendment when the honorable member for Brisbane, Dr. O'Doherty, offered to withdraw his motion.

Mr. LAMB said he was sure that the honorable gentleman who moved that the petition

be received never supposed that the petition contained anything insulting to the Speaker, and he was sure that no member of the House would lend himself, individually or collectively, to anything tending to insult the Speaker. If honorable members did such a thing, they would only be throwing dirt upon themselves, rather than the occupant of the chair. There was nothing the House should be so jealous of, as the right of petition. If a person felt himself aggrieved, he had a right to petition the House, and the House had a right to hear him. Perhaps his family was starving, because of a denial of his just claims; and were the House to refuse redress? Although on a previous occasion, he gave his vote against the reception of a petition from New South Wales, because reflections were made in it upon the House; after reflection, since, he doubted the correctness of that course, and he thought it would have been more advisable to have received that petition. Some honorable members doubted that there was an insult conveyed in the petition now before the House; and he advised the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Thompson, to withdraw his amendment, on the understanding that the motion for printing the petition should also be withdrawn. The matter of the payment of Mr. Short might well be left to the Government and the Speaker to decide upon. There could be no doubt that that gentleman was entitled to the money. The House had the benefit of his services. It seemed to him (Mr. Lamb) to be most undignified on the part of the House, to be squabbling for two hours over a matter of £20. It was as if gentlemen who had eaten their dinner squabbled over the payment for it.

Dr. O'DOHERTY: As he said before, he was willing to withdraw the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No doubt this was a very unpleasant circumstance which had arisen; but he was rather pleased than otherwise that it had arisen, and he would give his reasons for feeling so. He always felt that the position of the shorthand writers was anything but a proper one, or an agreeable one. It appeared that those gentlemen were engaged at so much salary, per annum, to do certain duties attached to the Parliament of Queensland; and they had full power, as he understood, to engage their services professionally in other directions, when not engaged by the Parliament. He found on the Supplementary Estimates a large sum of money paid to one of those gentlemen for extra services—paid by the Government, which he thought very improper. However that might be, those gentlemen were allowed to make all they possibly could out of the Government, and the moment any of them wanted leave of absence, the country was to supply some person to take his place. That was a wrong agreement altogether; and he (the Secretary

for Lands) thought some other understanding ought to be arrived at. A sum of £55 10s. was voted for one of those gentlemen for services performed at the gaol, during an inquiry there; and he thought that most improper. It should not have been paid by the Government. The shorthand writers had likewise power to engage themselves in other service, to the corporation and others, and gained enormous sums of money. Surely, when they wanted leave of absence, they had a right to provide a substitute themselves. The present arrangement was very unsatisfactory, and one-sided altogether. Those gentlemen should have due notice that their present engagements would terminate at a certain time, and a new arrangement be made; and, if they did not like to accept a further engagement, he supposed others would be found to fill their places. It appeared to him that the Government were entirely in the hands of those gentlemen. No doubt it was a very unpleasant thing to dispute an account for a few pounds; but the House did not know what the matter might come to, if they let it go on. The present was a most unbusiness-like arrangement, as he regarded it; and he called the attention of the Premier to it. He believed the money would have to be paid; still, it was the principle of the thing he looked at.

Mr. THOMPSON, in deference to the wish of the House, not that he thought he had done wrong in moving it, or that his arguments were wrong, withdrew the amendment.

The amendment, and the original motion, were, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

#### WATER SUPPLY TO COPPERFIELD.

Mr. DE SATGE moved—

That this House will, to-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering an Address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for 1869, the sum of £2,000, to be granted to the municipality of Clermont and Copperfield, for the water supply of the town of Copperfield.

He stated that he hoped the House and the Government would regard the motion favorably. In the first place, he wished to state that he would not, in the present embarrassed condition of the colony, have brought forward a motion for such a large sum of money unless it was absolutely wanted. He had been a resident, for a long time, in the neighborhood; and he had seen that a water supply could not be provided without the expenditure of a large sum of money; and, without a sufficient water supply, it would be impossible to keep a large population at Copperfield. The town was of much greater importance than honorable members who had not been there could possibly be aware of. His motion had been tabled in a former session, but he had no opportunity whatever of bringing it forward for discussion, and the Government

promised him a hearing in the matter early this session. The amount he asked for was too large to be passed by a mere Cabinet order, or he believed it would have been passed by the Government. The municipal council, in whose hands the money would be placed for expenditure, were a public-spirited and capable body, who would lay the money out judiciously. They had not the means of carrying out the work themselves—their funds were inadequate to so vast an undertaking; but they had done as much as they could—they had expended £60 in having the site examined and surveyed by a competent surveyor. An excellent site had been found, within half-a-mile of Copperfield, where a sufficient reservoir could be made that would cost £1,400. But although that sum would be sufficient to supply the town of Copperfield, it was not sufficient to supply the bullock teams of the carriers and wood carters as well. The carriers and wood carters comprised a large body of men, who dwelt a few miles the other side of Copperfield; they had no water; and, therefore, another £600 would be required for the purpose of providing a supply for them. That raised the sum to £2,000, which he asked for. It might be remembered that the House, some years ago, placed £2,000 at the disposal of the provincial council, for a water supply; but that sum had been expended entirely on the Peak Downs gold fields, and, as he thought, very judiciously expended in making dams. None of them were nearer than ten miles from Copperfield, and there was an independent population there—chiefly Chinamen—who used them to great profit. Some honorable members might possibly think that some of that money was expended within the municipality; but the Clermont lagoon, in dry seasons, was insufficient for the population of Clermont alone, and it, the nearest water, was three miles and a-half from Copperfield. He might mention that during the drought, last summer, about two hundred and fifty persons, the wives and children of artisans employed at the mines, were obliged to start for South Australia, through sickness, caused wholly by want of water. It was desirable that that should be remedied, and that the House should pay due regard to the importance of the Peak Downs copper mines, which was such that their requirements ought to be attended to. He had spent two days in riding over the ground, with the mayor and some other members of the corporation, where it was proposed to make the reservoirs, and he was in possession of some statistics, showing the importance of Copperfield. The mines, there, yielded at the rate of what would be, at the end of this month, when the furnace would be completed, 2,000 tons a year;—the present yield was at the rate of 1,300 tons. That 2,000 tons, at £80 a ton, represented £160,000, of which £84,000, or £7,000 a month, was spent within the township. To smelt the ore, the wood carters

had to draw 1,000 tons of wood per week, to the mine. His statistics were not only gathered on the ground, by himself, but supplied by the captain of the mine; and they might be relied on. There were 500 adults employed wholly by the Peak Downs Copper Mining Company; their families amounted to 250 more; besides which, there was a population of between 200 and 300, in addition, who were supported by the expenditure of the residents engaged on the works. That would make a population of 1,000 persons who were resident in Copperfield, which, it must be remembered, was a Government township; and they were entirely dependent on the Clermont lagoon for water, which, as he had before said, was distant nearly four miles. There were in Copperfield seven public-houses, doing an excellent trade, for many of the men spent most of their money there, being hard workers and hard drinkers. The contributions to the revenue from each of those public-houses might be fairly reckoned at £300 per annum each. There were seven or eight large thriving stores, and it might be calculated that they contributed £200 each, per annum, to the revenue. That would make a total of £3,500 contributed to the revenue, each year, from the township; and he (Mr. De Satge) maintained that, in the face of such a state of things, the Government could well afford to encourage an increased population there. The importance of the place would be very largely increased when two other mines were at work, as they would be shortly. But the water supply was not sufficient for the present residents of the township; and the sites that had been surveyed, at Sweeney's Gully and at David Jack's would meet their requirements. With respect to the gold fields, there were now three large dams there, which were absolutely necessary. All that was wanted was population to make the Peak Downs gold fields, in 1869, what they were in 1863-4, when two thousand diggers were at work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said the honorable member for Clermont had made a very excellent speech on the present occasion; and he had no doubt that he had put forward the strongest arguments that could be urged in favor of the motion. He had no doubt, also, that this question would be brought before the House session after session—and he might almost say, week after week—until some decision was arrived at, as to some general system for the supply of water to the different towns of the colony. As to the particular motion before the House, he must say that he thought the honorable member had altogether failed to prove—at any rate, to the satisfaction of his mind—that the municipality of Copperfield, or Clermont either, required the expenditure of £2,000 to obtain a supply of water for the inhabitants, or that there was not a sufficient supply of water already within a reasonable distance of those places. The honorable

member had himself admitted that a sum of £2,000 was voted two years ago for the supply of water to Clermont, and handed over to the municipal council for expenditure.

Mr. DE SATGE: For the gold fields.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, he was not previously aware where the money had gone—whether it had been expended for a supply of water to the gold fields, or for a supply of water for the people of Clermont. The honorable member had also admitted that the copper mines of Copperfield yielded £160,000 per annum. Now, surely, if they did that—with that amount of wealth, where the population numbered only eight hundred and twenty-one persons, the inhabitants of Copperfield ought to be able to supply themselves with water, as other towns of the colony had done where the districts did not yield a tithe of £160,000. But if the water around Clermont had not been bought up and secured by private parties, the people there would have had no difficulty in securing water for themselves. While he said that, however, he would desire not to be understood as meaning that, after a full inquiry had been made, he would oppose the granting of assistance to Copperfield for a supply of water, if a reasonable case of necessity should be made out. But it was not to be disputed that a great part of the municipality was in the hands of private companies; and, therefore, unless a stronger case was made out than the honorable member had established, he did not see that the House would be justified in voting £2,000, or any other sum, for the supply of water to Clermont. The amount asked for was large, and when the municipality asked for such an amount, they ought to show that £2,000 was really necessary. He must say that he did not see a sum of £2,000 could be required to provide a supply of water for 182 people. He could get a dam made for £200 that would be sufficient to supply the township of Dalby, and he did not see why a dam sufficient for the supply of Clermont and Copperfield might not also be constructed for that amount. Now, as they had entered upon a system of retrenchment, and as the Government were not in possession of such information on the subject as they would require before consenting to such a work, he would suggest to the honorable member to withdraw his motion; and he could assure him that the Government would be prepared to deal fairly in the matter. It would only be after the Treasurer had shewn what was really the financial position of the country, that the Government would be justified in consenting to such a motion. If the Government should consent in this instance, they would be obliged to consent in every other that might be brought before the House. It was exceedingly likely that, in the course of a fortnight, the Government would have information on the subject; and the Government would then, and after the Treasurer had made his financial statement, be better able to deal with it. In

the meantime, in the absence of further information than had been offered, he would have to oppose the motion.

Mr. PALMER said he did not expect, and he was sure no other northern member expected a different answer from the honorable the Minister for Works than the one he had given. Every allusion to spending money in the North—money, too, derived from the North—was met by the honorable gentleman in the same style, or even in a worse style, than he had done on this occasion.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I deny it.

Mr. PALMER: It mattered not to him whether the honorable gentleman denied it or not, for he could appeal from him to a larger tribunal—to the northern members, and to the people in the North. It had sometimes been in better style, but the same feeling had always characterised the honorable gentleman when mention was made of spending money in the North. The honorable gentleman, as a reason for not giving the amount now asked for, alluded to the sum of £2,000 that was voted by the House some years ago for the purpose of supplying the gold fields in the Peak Downs district with water. It had been very fairly put by the honorable member for Clermont that that sum had nothing whatever to do with the purpose for which this £2,000 was asked. The former sum was voted to supply the gold fields with water. The honorable the Minister for Works might not be aware that those gold fields were scattered, and that none of the dams made on them were within six miles of Copperfield. The Minister for Works said he knew nothing about the expenditure of that money; but it was the duty of the honorable member to know about it. The money had been expended by the provincial council of Clermont, and well expended. Another argument of the honorable gentleman's was, that if there was a company there realising £160,000 annually, and if they wanted water, they were very well able to make a dam themselves. That was a very peculiar reason. The members of that company, it was well known, were large capitalists in Sydney, where most of the profits went. They did not want water. The sum was asked for water for the residents and miners of the district—for laborers, store-keepers, and publicans, who contributed largely to the revenue, but for whom nothing had been done. The beggarly amount spent in the district was beneath contempt. The district was a most important one, and yet there was nothing spent upon the roads. Why, he had even to call the attention of the Government to the necessity of providing a boat for the conveyance of mails and passengers across the Mackenzie. This £2,000 would be a mere bagatelle after all. The land that would be sold there in consequence of such an expenditure on dams, would pay the amount three times over in a few years. Honorable members from the North had

actually to beg for their own money. They had a right to demand it. They knew that money was being spent on southern works—on the wretched railways, initiated by the Minister for Works—to thirty times the amount asked for in the motion for so essential a purpose. The people in the North, in order to pay for those extensive southern works, had to pay from £50,000 to £60,000 more than their fair share towards the expense of the General Government; and yet they had almost to beg for £2,000 for a supply of water. The honorable gentleman had, he thought, displayed very little engineering knowledge as regarded the construction of dams. He certainly thought the honorable gentleman would have obtained a great deal more knowledge of that kind than he seemed to possess, from the experience he must have had in connection with the providing of dams and waterways in connection with the railways. That experience ought to have taught him that £2,000 would go a very small way in some cases. That in some cases it would not go so far as £100 in others. He had seen a good many dams in his time, and he had seen one that cost £2,000 that did not stand any length of time, but went bodily down the creek one morning, while another in a different locality, that cost only £50, stood quite firmly. Any honorable member who had had any practical experience, and who had had to rough it in the bush, would know that. A minister rising in his place in Parliament, and speaking authoritatively upon a subject should be very careful in what he says. The honorable the Secretary for Works seemed to cast a slur upon the statement of the honorable member for Clermont, although that gentleman had personally examined the country he spoke about. They had a promise from the Minister for Works that he would have an inquiry made into the matter, and that if the honorable member for Clermont would withdraw his motion, they would hear a little more about the matter shortly. Now, he would recommend the honorable member not to withdraw it, but to test the feeling of the House, in order to see if those honorable members who professed a wish to see fair play exercised towards the North would act up to their professions. He would like to know how the Minister for Works was to get the information he spoke about on this subject. He knew the district well, and he was not aware that there was any Government official in the district, either professionally or by experience of the district, to report upon the subject. For his own part he was quite willing to take the assurance of the honorable member for Clermont, or the assurance of practical men, as obtained through the public papers, that this was a work that was absolutely necessary. Talk about retrenchment came very strangely, and with a very bad grace from any member of the present Ministry after the debate of last night, when

it was shown that fresh appointments were being made by them to a service that was already over-manned. That savored very strangely of retrenchment. There was a remedy shadowed forth in the Speech, for the northern districts, in the way of providing them with municipal districts. He did not, however, put much faith in the promise of the Ministry as to the kind of Bill they would bring in for that purpose; but he could assure them that any measure almost that provides for local self-government, and the expenditure of local funds, he would endorse with his support. At the same time he knew that while the honorable the Secretary for Public Works was in the Ministry he would take good care that none of the funds raised in any locality would be entrusted for expenditure to the local bodies. The honorable gentleman would take good care of that, especially as regarded the northern districts. He would certainly recommend the honorable member for Clermont to press his motion, and see whether northern members were to have the fair play they were promised or not.

Mr. LAMB said he would support the motion. It was well known that the Government were collecting £70,000 per annum from the northern districts, and expending it in the southern districts. He was certainly very much surprised at the want of memory exhibited by the honorable the Minister for Works with respect to the construction of dams, for he might have remembered that a dam at Maryborough, for the supply of a population of 800, cost £3,000. Now, at Clermont and Copperfield, there was a population of 1,100. There were 500 adults in the copper mine, 300 carters and citizens; and 300 women and children. Now, taking the rate of revenue per head paid to the Government by the colonists, those 1,100 people, in that district, paid to the Government £7,000 annually; but he would venture to say that they might very safely put down the revenue derived from the district at double that amount. As had been stated, it was quite well known that in some places a dam in some localities that would cost £2,000 would not stand, while in other localities a dam that would cost only £50 would stand. Now, he was quite willing to take the estimate of the honorable member for Clermont as to the cost of a dam such as would be required in the district, for there was no place in the colony where the people had more experience as to dams than at the Peak Downs, on account of the number of diggers that were there. Dams for the supply of water were works of absolute necessity in a colony like this, and ought to be attended to before another penny was spent for the extension of railways, or the carrying out of other extensive public works. It was of the utmost necessity that along the main trunk roads provision should be made for the storage of water. He understood it was the intention of the late Government to bring in a measure for

the supply of water to the interior towns. After the amounts that had been spent on the railways to Dalby and to Warwick, it seemed to him really extraordinary that the North should be ignored in a matter of such essential importance, when so small a sum as £2,000 was asked for.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was sure it was not necessary for him to assure the House that the Government had no intention to ignore the claims of the outlying districts, and there was no necessity for it. On the contrary they had every desire to meet the requirements of the outlying districts, and of every portion of the colony, in the matter of water supply. They recognised it as a first necessity to make such provision. All that he understood his honorable colleague, the Minister for Works, to say was, that he desired to be allowed a little time to make the necessary inquiries to enable him to determine what the amount of expenditure should be. That request was surely not unreasonable. It was the duty of the Government first to ascertain, wherever possible, the cost of any work asked for; and, secondly, to keep the expenditure within the sum voted. He trusted that honorable members would defer these money motions till after the delivery of the financial statement, if delivered within a reasonable time, so that they might see how the revenue stood; and whether it would be justifiable to accede to such votes.

Mr. HALY said that though he would support the motion, if it should be pressed to a division, he would recommend the honorable member to withdraw it for the present, so as to allow the honorable the Minister for Works an opportunity of inquiring as to whether the sum now asked for would be sufficient or not. If the motion was now agreed to, and the amount spent, it might then be found that it was not enough, and that they had just thrown away £2,000. He wished to take the opportunity of suggesting to the honorable the Minister for Public Works, that in considering the question of water supply, he might take steps to test the sufficiency of the tube wells that were now generally used in connection with all military expeditions, and which had proved so invaluable in Abyssinia, where he believed they had never once failed. He understood, from information he had personally received, that if those wells were sunk a certain depth and water was not found, they could easily be taken up again, and sunk elsewhere. The cost of one of those wells, delivered in this colony, would not amount to more than £12; and they threw an immense quantity of water. There need be no delay in testing them, as he was able to inform the Government that there were several of them in the colony.

Mr. GROOM said he was one of those who thought that the honorable member for Clermont had chosen an injudicious moment for bringing forward the present motion, though,



he would add, that in response to the appeal made by the honorable member for Port Curtis, if it should be pressed to a division, he would support it. This was not the first application that had been made for a sum of money to provide a supply of water for Clermont. He remembered that the former member for Port Curtis, Mr. Fitzsimmons, brought forward a similar motion, and the Minister for Public Works, on that occasion, promised that due inquiry would be made. Indeed the same promise was made then as was made now, but yet nothing had been done. He therefore thought that the best way to bind the Government to their promise, would be to pass the motion now before the House. He would like to know if it was the intention of the Government to carry out a proposition formerly made, to send out competent engineers to ascertain and report as to the best places to obtain water supply for the interior towns. He found that the estimate of Mr. Brady, for providing water supplies to the principal towns on the colony, amounted to £85,294; and he believed it was the intention of the late Government to ask for a vote of £100,000, for the purpose of carrying out the recommendations of Mr. Brady's report. He did not know if Mr. Brady went so far north as Clermont; but, at any rate, he produced a most reliable report upon the subject. He certainly thought it was high time the Government should bestow some attention to this question, which in this colony was one of paramount importance. He believed that the town of Rockhampton was as much entitled to an adequate supply of water as Brisbane, Ipswich, and other important towns, for which water supply had been provided. With those facts in view, he thought it would only be just and right that, when an honorable member representing so important a constituency as the honorable member for Clermont represented, made out so strong a case as had been made out for Clermont, the House should consent to the motion. The honorable member for the Maranoa incidentally made the observation "log-rolling." Now, he begged to assure the honorable member that he was actuated by no such idea when he rose to support the motion. This was the second time the House had been appealed to for a supply of water to Clermont, and with the same result so far, namely, a promise that inquiry would be made. He considered it was high time the question should be settled; and therefore, if the motion should be pressed to a division, he would support it.

Mr. FRANCIS said he felt it to be his duty to oppose the motion before the House. He had the honor of representing a southern constituency, and it might be said that he opposed the motion because of the old feeling imputed to the South of always refusing to do justice to the North. Now it was on account of no such feeling that he opposed the motion. He objected to all such

motions. He never made such a motion himself, though he had very strong grounds for making several such motions, if he considered it would be his duty to do so. In East Moreton the claims of the people had never been recognised in that House. When he heard so much of what was due to the North, it seemed to him that he was neglecting his duty unless, supposing those claims to be recognised, he set forth the claims of his constituents. He looked upon such motions as properly departmental, and as belonging to the province of the Government for the time being. A very strong case indeed should be made—one that would be tantamount, in his view, to a condemnation of the Ministry for neglect—to induce the House to interfere on the representation of any honorable member for any district, with the responsible Minister within whose department the work came. This was another illustration of what he said in the course of a discussion in the early part of the evening, of his want of knowledge of the facts of the case. He was willing to admit that the honorable member for Clermont had made out a strong case; but, unless he had been misinformed, the honorable member for Clermont had not told the whole truth concerning Clermont and Copperfield. His information led him to believe that the honorable member had only half-stated the facts; and that the residents of Clermont and Copperfield, whose claims on the sympathy of the House had been so ably set forth, had other claims than merely on account of their sufferings from want of water. The House had been reminded of women and children being driven away from the district from want of water; but his information led him to believe that the people there wanted not only water, but also wanted land, and could not get the one any more than they could get the other. The whole place, he believed was surrounded by a ring fence; and more than £2,000 would be required to meet the claims of Clermont and Copperfield, and to provide for the wants of women and children. If he might make a suggestion, it would be not to put £2,000 on the Estimates for the supply of water merely to the people; but also that a certain sum should be provided for the purpose of purchasing back from those gentleman who had absorbed it, the permanent water which God had placed there, and the land along with it, for the use of those people who had gone there to live. To do so would be a due measure of justice to the people of Clermont and Copperfield. He would be glad to be shewn that his facts were erroneous. He looked upon it that there was no more important duty that the Government owed to the colony than the providing of water supplies for the people; and he certainly trusted that not only Clermont and Copperfield, but also Highfields, Ipswich, and other places, might have their wants attended to before long. But any such supply should be carried out

on a systematic and methodical system. The whole question of water supply was intimately bound up with the progress and prosperity of the country. Show him a country where there was no water, and he would show them a country where there was no prosperity; and on the contrary, show him a country where there was an abundant water supply, and he would show them a country where there was abounding prosperity. He hoped it would be found that the motion before the House had not been made in vain, as directing the attention of the Government to a matter that could no longer be put off—The question of water supply not only for towns, but also for country districts. He hoped he had not said anything that could be considered offensive by honorable members for the North, for he could assure them it was his desire to do justice to all parts of the colony. He thought there was a good deal of truth in the statement that there had been an undue preponderance hitherto in the House in favor of the South; still he objected to honorable members taking from the shoulders of responsible Ministers the responsibility of responsible government, and putting upon the House the responsibility that belonged to the Executive. As he said when he rose, he should feel bound to oppose the motion.

Mr. MILES said he exceedingly regretted that the honorable member for Clermont had taken such an early opportunity of endeavouring to secure a vote to provide a supply of water for his constituents. He only hoped the honorable member would show an equal anxiety, when the Pastoral Leases Bill came before the House, to take care that the people should be supplied with land. As to the charge that had been made against southern members refusing to do justice to the North, he did not think that ever since he had had a seat in the House, he had voted against any motion asking that a sum of money might be given to the North, but on this occasion, and he believed it was the first time he would have to do so. It was of no use for the House to deal in this partial way with the question of water supply. The only places in the colony that had yet been supplied with water were the city of Brisbane, and the town of Maryborough. Not a single shilling had been expended on any other part of the colony for water supply. Ipswich was an important town, but not a shilling had been expended there; and so was Dalby, but nothing had been expended there, either. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba said, that he had no intention of doing any log-rolling. Now he was perfectly convinced that if the motion before the House should be carried, the honorable member would come down to the House, next day, with a similar motion in behalf of his constituents. He knew perfectly well the purpose the honorable member had in view when he promised to support the motion. Now, for his own part, he

held that it ought to be the duty of the Government to take up the matter of water supply to the colony as a whole; and not allow honorable members to ask for the expenditure of £2,000 here, and £1,000 there, for water supply. He would like to know how the Government could be expected to administer the affairs of the colony, and be responsible, if one honorable member was to come and ask for one sum and another for another. It was quite impossible they could do so. It was, he repeated, the duty of the Government to ascertain the wants of the different districts of the colony, and endeavor to supply the people with water. But there was another thing about this motion to be considered. They did not know that £2,000 would be sufficient for the work. They might vote this money, and it might be expended—as no doubt it would be—but in the construction of a dam that might, as soon as it was finished, be swept away. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that the House should have some reliable estimate of the cost of a sufficient work, before they voted any money for such a purpose. He hoped the discussion that had taken place would induce the Government to send some practical man to Clermont, to ascertain what would be the cost of such a work as this £2,000 was asked for. The honorable member for Clermont informed the House that the population of Clermont and Copperfield numbered 821 persons, but it—

Mr. DE SARGE: There were 1,000 persons, including children.

Mr. MILES: Well, it was 821 adults the honorable member said. Now, it was possible that the number might have greatly fallen off, because, as the honorable member himself had said, a great many women and children had had to leave for the South from the want of water. The town of Dalby, which had a population half as large again, had no water supply. Taking the figures from the last census returns, he found that the town of Dalby had a population of 1,244 inhabitants; and he was sorry the honorable member for the Northern Downs was not present to look after his district, for he took it that there was no place more requiring a supply of water than Dalby. But what was more, the municipality of Dalby had called for tenders for the erection of dams for themselves. Now, what would the people of Dalby think, after that, if they found this motion carried? Why, they would at once say, that it was of no use for them to carry on the work when they might call upon the Government to do it for them. But there was also another important town in the west that would call for a similar work, if this motion was carried; and he would very soon be reminded that he had been neglecting his duties, if he did not ask for a vote for water supply to his constituents. He, however, had a proposition to make, which he would bring forward at the proper time. When the Pastoral Leases Bill was before the House, he would insist on large

tracts of land being reserved in the neighborhood of townships, to be disposed of for the purpose of providing water supplies. The Government need not expect they would escape from that. He believed that the amount spent in providing Brisbane with water was £70,000; and that the rates were not sufficient to pay the interest on the borrowed money, but that the public had to assist in paying it. He did not, however, object to that; for he considered that that was the best laid out money they had ever expended. He hoped that the Government, in the case of all such works, would keep them in their own hands, and not let them fall into the hands of corporations. He hoped the honorable member would withdraw the motion, and that the Government would themselves at once set about the matter of providing water supplies for the people, as they were entitled to. If he found that duty was put off, he would be one of the first to support any honorable member in carrying such a motion as the one now before the House. Should this motion be carried now, the House might depend upon it that he would come down with a similar one next day; and other honorable members he knew would do the same thing. Knowing that to be the case, he would much rather the honorable member would withdraw the motion, and allow the Government to take up the question, and make provision for the supply of water to the towns throughout the colony generally.

Mr. WALSH said he hoped the honorable member for Clermont would not withdraw his motion, and he further hoped that it might be carried. In order to induce him to withdraw it, he had been told that the Government were at present considering some comprehensive plan for the supply of water to the towns of the colony generally. Now that was just what was said year after year when the question of water supply to any particular town was brought up; and just as regularly every year was the matter neglected. This had especially been the case when the honorable gentleman who now held the office of Secretary for Works had been in office. In 1865, the honorable gentleman gave an answer almost precisely the same. Referring to a motion of his on the subject of a supply of water for Maryborough, the honorable gentlemen, on the 4th of July, 1865, said—

“The Government have had the matter under consideration, and had determined that a competent engineer should visit the various places in the colony, and report as to their necessities, and the amount that would be required to provide them with a supply of water. When that was done, the Government would come down to the House with a proposition on the subject.”

That was what was said by the Minister for Works in 1865, but yet nothing had been done in the matter. He believed, however,

that the honorable gentleman did call for a report, but he was not in office when it was sent in. The honorable the Premier said, that he looked upon the supply of water to the people as a most important matter. If so, why was there no reference to it in the opening Speech.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In his first ministerial statement he said that he not only looked upon the supply of water as a most important matter, but as one that was not even second in importance to that of railway extension.

Mr. WALSH: The honorable gentleman, no doubt, said so; but what he was referring to was His Excellency's opening Speech, to which the House presented the Address in reply yesterday. On the 26th of April, 1866, the question of water supply to towns was again brought before the House by the then honorable member for Rockhampton, Mr. Fitzsimmons; and, relating to that occasion, he found the same stereotyped statement on the subject at page 95 of “Hansard.”

“The Colonial Treasurer said he would explain to the honorable member for Maryborough that the allusion in his answer to the question of the honorable member for Rockhampton was to the whole subject of the supply of water to the towns and municipalities of the colony.”

In a subsequent statement on the same occasion—

“The Colonial Treasurer explained that there was at this time, and had been for some time past, a system of expensive and elaborate surveys and estimates, in progress, for the supply of water to the different towns and municipalities of the colony.”

Such were the answers given in 1865 and 1866; and honorable members would see that they were the same as the answers given now. He knew quite well that the honorable member for Clermont would receive that answer, for the Government at no time seemed to have any other answer to give on the subject. Now, in the case before the House, the people were living upon lands that had been sold by the Government. The Government had got the money for those lands; and though the people were dying for the want of water, the Government told them to wait. They never heard of people having to wait for the construction of Government railways, at great expense. There was no question of waiting for money for that purpose; but when there was some scheme brought forward for the supply of water to the people—to those who had been especially wronged by the Government—they were told to wait. For the North it was always “wait, wait;” but for the South it was always “vote,” “vote.” As sure as £100 or £200 was asked for the North, the answer was “wait, wait,” for a comprehensive scheme. The honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, seemed to him to be the most unfortunate member in the House. The honorable member told the House, in the

course of his remarks on this motion, that he was making a speech on a subject he was not informed upon; and he seemed to labor under the hallucination that other honorable members were only half informed upon it. The honorable member, though knowing nothing of the matter, professed to be able to tell others that they were only stating half the case. Well, he thought it would be advisable for the honorable member to obtain information on those subjects he might desire to address the House upon, and not place himself in the anomalous position of telling others that they only half stated the case, on a subject which he himself said he knew nothing about. The honorable member asked what would the Dalby people think when they heard that £2,000 had been spent for water supply at Copperfield; but he would rather ask what would the people of Copperfield say when they found that the people of Dalby had a railway made to their very doors. The colony could not afford to do full justice to the suffering North, and the North did not expect so much, or ten thousand pounds would not suffice; but they did expect that such crying wants as these should be attended to, when the necessity had been so clearly pointed out by the honorable member who had made application to them. He thought it had been a mistake to settle a population in such a place, but that mistake had been made by the Government. Considering the claims of the North, and that it had been pointed out and could be shewn over and over again that the Government had made promises which they never carried out, he thought it was their duty to accede to these resolutions. He must confess that his wavering on the subject had been entirely set at rest by the honorable member for Clermont, and he thought it was impossible that there could be any opposition to the vote.

Mr. THOMPSON said, that in spite of what had been stated, he must protest against the expenditure of money in this way. He was very happy to see that the Government had put their finger for once on the right place, and had determined to check the increase in the Supplementary Estimates. He quite agreed with the honorable member for East Moreton, that a vote like this was wrong in principle; and that was his only ground of objection to it. If private members were allowed to get money in this way, the result would be that those members who were most importunate would get the most money, and the Government would have no control whatever over the expenditure. The constituency which he represented were actually drinking the drainage of the town; but, although the gentlemen interested in the matter with him could perhaps bring a great deal of pressure to bear upon the Government, he did not mean to come down to ask for money to be put upon the Supplementary Estimates to remedy this, and he hoped that other members would adopt the same course. It

seemed to him to be mean of honorable members, and beneath the dignity of the House, to be continually harping upon petty local wants; in fact, it seemed to him to be an anomaly for the Legislature to vote money for local works at all; and although he was opposed to provincial councils, he thought some mode might be adopted by which this could be avoided, and the expenditure in each district paid out of local revenue. He had come down to the House like many other members, pledged to retrenchment, and he should always be glad to support the Government whenever they came forward, as on the present occasion, to check those expenses.

Mr. ARCHER said he was glad the debate had taken place, because it was another instance to show how utterly unfitted the House was to deal with those questions. He thought it came with a very bad grace from a southern member to say that he would oppose a supplementary vote for this purpose, when the North had been so pillaged that they had no other recourse. The honorable member for Ipswich talked about some system of paying local expenditure out of local revenue, but how was it going to be done, and where was the money? It was quite right in principle to say that the House ought to have nothing to do with these matters; but the money must be disbursed by some power, either here or in the district, and there was only one way of getting it. He maintained that the view taken by the honorable member for Port Curtis was the correct one. The Government deprived the North of every penny they got, and then when they came down to the House, and asked for a small sum of money, they were told that they could not put anything extra on the Supplementary Estimates. The Government were always ready to cheer anything in favor of opposition to such applications as the one before the House; but it was absurd to compare that House with the British House of Commons, and to argue that no local works should be made the subject of a vote. Why, the Glasgow waterworks were applied for in the Imperial Parliament. Of course if a system of provincial councils had been established this application would have been unnecessary. The honorable member for Ipswich advocated the payment of local expenditure out of local revenue, but objected to provincial councils, which was simply a term of self-government, and until something like it had been established it was altogether unreasonable to prevent the wants of different districts being brought before the House. And when honorable members talked about general principles, they should be some fixed principles which everyone could understand. To talk about the British House of Commons was absurd, because there every member represented a place which was a municipality, or something like it; but, in this colony, every farthing of money had to be applied for to the central Government. He thought these facts

should be taken into consideration before the resolution before the House was disposed of.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was very commonly remarked that when honorable members changed sides in the House, their opinions also underwent a change, and the honorable member who spoke last had afforded an instance of this. The late Colonial Treasurer, Sir Robert Mackenzie, had laid it down as a principle, that motions of this kind, by private members should not be agreed to, but that all applications should be first made to the Government, and not direct to the House, because the Government would be unable to keep the expenditure within bounds. That principle had been strenuously advocated last session by the honorable member for Port Curtis. But he thought that a great deal of the discussion had not been directed to the question before the House. The honorable member for Clermont asked for a sum of £2,000 for water supply to Clermont and Copperfield. The reply he had received was, that Government were not in possession of any information in reference to the requirements of the place, but that they had set on foot certain inquiries, and would be prepared to take action as soon as they had satisfied themselves how much money would be required. There was no question as to the necessity of supplying Copperfield with water—the only question was the amount. £2,000 was a large sum for the Government to hand over to a number of irresponsible persons, without being in possession of any information as to the actual requirements of the district. He would venture to say that no Government would hand over such a large sum upon such insufficient data. The honorable member for Clermont had informed the House that he had spent a couple of days riding round the place, with the mayor and aldermen, and that the sum asked for would be required; but he would ask whether, if the Minister for Works had done the same thing, he would get the money. If this resolution were granted, the whole sum would go bodily out of the hands of the Government, who would have no control over it whatever. It would be utterly impossible for the Government to make both ends meet in that way. To give a case in point: last year between £2,000 and £3,000 was asked for, for a post office and telegraph station at Gladstone, and it turned out that the Government only found occasion to ask for £1,200 for it. It had never been attempted to be shewn that any plans or estimates had been drawn up for this work, the only idea of the probable cost being derived from a trip taken on horseback by three or four gentlemen; and, considering that, as had been stated, the Government had instructed the proper officers to make suitable inquiries, he thought the proper time for the House to take action would be as soon as the Government were in a position to know that the work could be properly done for the money. He must,

therefore, call upon the House to reject the application *in toto* in the first place.

Mr. FRASER said if the honorable member was going to withdraw the motion, he would not address the House on the subject, otherwise he felt bound to make a few remarks.

Mr. SANDEMAN suggested the advisability of adjourning the debate for a month, or until such time as the Government had made inquiries on the subject, and were prepared to give an opinion as to what they would do in the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS pointed out that if the motion were withdrawn, the honorable member could restore it to the paper at any time he chose.

Mr. DE SATGE then withdrew the motion.

#### MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved the second reading of the Bill to amend the Municipal Institutions Act of 1864. He said it would be in the recollection of honorable members that on the last night of the last session, a Bill bearing that title was passed though all its stages in that House. On the following day, on its introduction into another chamber, it was discovered that the draftsman had used certain figures which would have had the effect of making the measure applicable only to certain cases; and it was desirable that a Bill of the kind should be general in its character—at any rate, so far as regarded all properties belonging to the Government. As it would have been impossible, if the Bill had been amended, to have passed it that session, seeing that was the last day of sitting, and as the honorable member representing the Government in the other chamber knew that Parliament would meet again in eight or ten days, he withdrew the Bill. During the recess, the Government had had the Bill re-drafted. The measure, he might explain, would have the effect of preventing municipalities from levying rates on property belonging to the Government, that being provided in the first clause. The second clause repealed so much of the Municipalities Act of 1864 as gave the corporation the right to make such levies. Those were the only two clauses of the Bill, which did not require any further explanation.

Mr. GROOM said he was aware that any opposition to this Bill would be perfectly useless, but he wished to take the opportunity of explaining that the course of action taken by the municipal council of Toowoomba, was, in point of fact, forced upon them. As far back as 1865, the corporation of Toowoomba received a promise from the then Government, that the approach to the railway station then about to be formed, should be made at the expense of the Government; and Mr. Fitzgibbon waited upon them, and showed him his plans, and the action he intended to take. A certain bridge would have had to be made, and certain lands to be

purchased by the Government. The negotiation went so far, that the land was set aside for that purpose. Well, about that time the crisis came on, and the plans were abandoned; but there could be no doubt that promises were made by the Government, to take upon themselves the cost of the approaches to the railway station. A great deal of correspondence had taken place between the Government and the corporation, to see whether they could help the Government to carry out the original design, but Mr. Plews suggested certain alterations which were considered desirable. An application was then made to the Government, but nothing was done; and, in 1868, the approaches became so dangerous that it was considered necessary to do something to prevent accidents, and the corporation did go to an expense of something like £1,000 to make an approach to the railway station at Toowoomba. Now, he thought that when the Government refused to have their own buildings assessed, they ought, at least, to reimburse the corporation for the outlay they had made for them. Acting under legal advice, he believed the corporation had not pressed the Government for this claim, by suing them; but they were about to prepare a statement to be submitted to the Executive, and if that did not succeed, he should consider it his duty to bring the matter before the House, in order to see if he could obtain justice. He believed the corporation had given up the idea of assessing the railway, or any Government property, but they considered that they ought to be reimbursed to the extent of the outlay they had gone to, to render the railway accessible to the public. He should offer no opposition to the motion.

The question was put and passed, and the Bill read a second time.