

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 5 JULY 1870**

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Black Rod, at the Bar, requesting the attendance of Mr. Speaker and honorable members in the Legislative Council Chamber; whereupon the House proceeded thither to hear His Excellency deliver his Opening Speech to this Parliament.

The House resumed at half-past three o'clock.

#### THE KENNEDY ELECTORATE.

The SPEAKER stated that he considered it to be his duty to report to the House, that since the receipt by him, on the 24th July last, of the Writ of Election certifying the return of John Bright, Esquire, for the Electoral District of Kennedy, no such persons had ever presented himself to be sworn, or had subscribed the roll. Under those circumstances, it appeared to him that the member for Kennedy had been absent for one whole session of the Legislature, within the meaning and intent of section 7 of the Legislative Assembly Act (31 Victoria, No. 21.)

#### PRIVILEGE.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER rose to address the House on a question of privilege. He said he observed a gentleman present whose seat had become vacant according to the provisions of an Act of Parliament. Though he should be very happy indeed to see the gentleman to whom he referred holding a seat in the House, yet he thought it would be improper on his part to see him present contrary to the provisions of the Constitution Act, without calling attention to the fact. Section seven of the Constitution Act provided that—

“If any member of the Assembly shall for one whole session of the Legislature, without the permission of the Assembly entered on its journals, fail to give his attendance in the said House, his seat shall become vacant.”

He thought there could be no language more express than that. The name of the gentleman he alluded to was not recorded on the journals of the House during the last short session; and he was not aware that the gentleman had ever applied for leave of absence during the session, or any portion of it. With regard to this being a question of privilege, honorable members would admit that it was of the utmost importance that no gentleman should be allowed to occupy a seat in the House beyond the time he was legally entitled to do so. In “May’s Practice of Parliament,” page 252, it was laid down that—

“Where the question is *bona fide* one of privilege, the House will at once entertain it before any other business. This ancient rule was thus expressed in debate by an eminent authority:— ‘Nothing can be so regular, according to the practice of this House, as when any member brings under the consideration of the House a breach of its privileges, for the House to hear it—nay, to hear it with or without notice—whether any question is or is not before it; and, even in

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 5 July, 1870.

Meeting of Parliament.—The Kennedy Electorate.—Privilege.—The Opening Speech.—Address in Reply to Opening Speech.

#### MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

The House having assembled at twelve o'clock, pursuant to proclamation,

A message from His Excellency the Governor was delivered by the Usher of the

the midst of another discussion, if a member should rise to complain of a breach of the privileges of the House, they have always instantly heard him.”

Again, at page 254, “May” said—

“It has been said that a question of privilege is, properly, one not admitting of notice: but where the circumstances have been such as to enable the member to give notice, and the matter was, nevertheless, *bonâ fide* a question of privilege, precedence has still been conceded to it. Yet the giving notice has sometimes been a test of the character of the motion, and of its title to precedence on the ground of privilege. Thus precedence has always been given to a motion for a new writ, and such motion is ordinarily made without motion.”

Now, he held that it was quite clear from what he had quoted, that the seat of the honorable member should be declared vacant by a resolution of the House; and he would therefore move—

That a writ be issued for the election of a member to serve in this House for the electoral district of Leichhardt, in the room of Gordon Sandeman, Esquire, whose seat has become vacant by reason of his having, for one whole session of the Legislature, without the permission of this House entered upon its journals, failed to give his attendance in the said House.

The Hon. R. PRING seconded the motion.

Mr. SANDEMAN asked the honorable the Speaker to give his ruling as to whether the question raised was one of privilege.

The SPEAKER said he would not deliver a ruling, but would only express his opinion on the question that had been raised. It appeared to him, he said, that this was no more a question of privilege than that of a member taking his seat and voting whose return had been questioned and petitioned against, and who, they all knew, could sit and vote until his seat had been declared vacant by a report of the Elections and Qualifications Committee. The honorable member for Leichhardt was returned for that district, and had sat and voted in the House, and it seemed to him that he had as much right to do so as any member of the House, until a resolution of the House—of which notice must be given—should declare his seat vacant;—more especially so when it was seen, by the opinion of the law officers of the Crown in England, on the clause of the Constitution Act which referred to the matter stated, that absence during one whole session did not necessarily render a seat vacant. In that opinion the law officers said—

“In our opinion, the seats of the two members, Messrs. Sandeman and Fleming, did not become absolutely vacant in consequence of their non-attendance at the extraordinary session of the Queensland Parliament, held in the month of January, 1862. For, although it appears to us that the short session held at that period was a whole session within section 26 of the Colonial Act, ratified and confirmed by the Imperial statute, 18 and 19 Victoria, No. 54, yet, we think

that mere absence of the members referred to during an entire session, without personal *lache* or default, did not amount, on a reasonable construction of the enactment, to a failure to give attendance in the House. No such personal default is alleged or seems probable.”

In addition to that, he would call the attention of honorable members to Standing Order 18, which provided that an honorable member might be absent for fourteen days without leave being granted by the House. Now the session referred to did not last fourteen days; and, therefore, under all those circumstances, he declined to give a ruling on the question, but would leave the matter to be determined by a resolution of the House.

The Hon. R. PRING said he very much regretted that it should be his unpleasant duty to dispute the ruling of the honorable the Speaker—

The SPEAKER: It was not a ruling, but merely an opinion.

The Hon. R. PRING: Well, it was the opinion of the Imperial Crown Law Officers, and was read from a paper. He could not, therefore, accept it as anything else but a ruling; but, at the same time, he would accept the Speaker's explanation. The question of the vacancy of the seat for the Leichhardt came before the House in a very different way from the question that was submitted to the Imperial Crown Law Officers, and, therefore, the opinion that had been read had no reference to the case now before the House. The opinion of the Crown Law Officers at home had no application, because it had been determined at home that this House should be guided by their own Constitution Act; and the House could not travel beyond that Act. No doubt they derived much benefit from Home authorities; and where they found their own Standing Orders inapplicable they could adopt the rules of the Imperial Parliament; but that was voluntary on their part. Now the language of the Constitution Act was clear and unmistakable on the question brought before the House. The seventh section of that Act said that if a member was absent during a whole session without the permission of the Assembly, his seat should be declared to be vacant. Now he thought that, according to the provisions of the Act, the seat for the Leichhardt had become vacant; and, therefore, the gentleman who had formerly represented that district rendered himself liable to the penalties imposed by the Act, whatever they might be, if he took any part in the proceedings of the House until he was again elected for the Leichhardt or some other district. The opinion of the Imperial Crown Law Officers was a very guarded one; and it proceeded wholly on the words “failure to attend”; and the case was submitted in this way—whether, if a member was unable to attend during a whole session, and that, through no *laches* on his part, his seat should become vacant. Now, he would take the case under consideration,

and he would ask if the gentleman alluded to was not in this city twenty-four hours before the first meeting of the House last session. He had full notice of the meeting of the House, and he stated over and over again that he would not be able to attend the House because private business required him to go away; and, if that were not *laches*, he did not know what were *laches*; and he felt confident that if such a case were submitted to the Imperial Crown Law Officers, they would decide that there had been such *laches* as rendered the seat vacant. He knew the case that was submitted to the House, and the opinion that had been quoted, and he might inform the House that the words "failure to attend," as used in the opinion, should be interpreted as inability to attend from illness or some other serious circumstance. Suppose a newly elected member to come to the House, and that there was no quorum to allow of his being sworn in before the close of the session, it could not be held that there were personal *laches* there, or that, in such a case, the seat should, on the assembling of Parliament next session, be declared vacant. In such a case there would not be a failure to attend. The absence of the late honorable member for the Leichhardt was not owing to anything of that kind, for he was in this city twenty-four hours before the meeting of Parliament last session, and he pleaded press of business matters as his reason for not being able to attend; but no press of business matters could be received as a reason for setting aside the provisions of the Constitution Act. He could not accept the opinion of the Crown Law Officers as a precedent that would apply in the present case, so as to affirm that the seat for the Leichhardt had not become vacant, for the opinion proceeded upon the question of *laches*, but not as to whether the absence was wilful or not. The real object of the motion of the honorable member for the Eastern Downs, was to have the question discussed as to whether the absence of Mr. Sandeman amounted to such a "failure to attend," as the Constitution Act contemplated. The House would in that way have to decide the question; and the valuable opinion that had been read by the honorable the Speaker, would be taken into consideration with all the credit it deserved. The motion of his honorable friend was not so much directed to a question of privilege as it was directed to the question whether or not there was a stranger in the House. The fact of a gentleman being in the House who had no right to be in it, was the reason why the motion had been brought forward without notice; and the very circumstance itself prevented the possibility of notice being given. Notice could not be given, for the occasion did not arise till the stranger appeared in the House—and it was required that in such a case action should be taken at once. Therefore, on the appearance of a stranger in the House, the right to question his presence immediately

accrued. The present case, he believed, was one that rested entirely with the House. In what he had said he had stated what were his opinions on the subject; and, no doubt, other honorable members would give their opinions upon it. In conclusion, he would say that personally he had no wish that Mr. Sandeman should lose his seat. The question that had to be decided was one of great importance, and was the first of the kind that had arisen; and as the decision that might be come to would create a precedent for cases of a similar kind in future, the question was one that was worthy of the consideration of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS maintained that the question was not one of privilege according to the definitions of privilege in "May's Parliamentary Practice." The motion had been brought forward apologetically by both the mover and seconder. They said they were very sorry at having to bring forward the motion. But it was quite well known that their reason for bringing forward the motion was a wish to exclude the vote of the gentleman alluded to, because it would be in favor of the Government. As to the question of law, the opinion of the Imperial Crown Law Officers rested on the words "failure to attend"; but the construction they put upon those words was that there must be a wilful failure. Now in the case before the House there was no wilful failure to attend. No doubt Mr. Sandeman was absent, but he could not have anticipated that the session would have come so abruptly to a close; and might therefore have expected that, on his return from Sydney, he would be in time to comply with the requirements of the Constitution Act. The present case seemed to him to be one with respect to which the House ought to take evidence, instead of jumping at a conclusion, as honorable members were asked to do by the motion before the House. By the 18th Standing Order, a member might be absent for fourteen days without leave; but if the session did not last for that length of time, how could there be a breach of privilege on his part by his being absent? The 18th Standing Order said—

"No member shall absent himself during the session for more than fourteen days at a time without express leave of the House; and any member wilfully infringing this order shall be held guilty of contempt."

Now, the gentleman alluded to could not be deemed guilty of contempt, as he had not been wilfully absent for fourteen days, but was absent for only three or four days, and that on urgent private business. Section seven of the Constitution Act, relating to the Assembly, said, in effect, that if any member should fail to attend for a whole session, his seat should, on that account, become vacant. Now, there was no such failure, wilfully, on the part of Mr. Sandeman, for he had, by the 18th Standing Order, a right to be absent for fourteen days without permission.

Such standing order took away from this case any ground of imputation that Mr. Sandeman, in being absent during last session, which was brought to a close with unexpected abruptness, was guilty of contempt, or had committed a breach of the privileges of the House. If the House had sat for a few days longer, Mr. Sandeman might have been able to take his seat. The case, he maintained, was one that could not be decided by the House without evidence, so that honorable members might know the grounds on which they were called to give a decision. The House of Commons rules stated, in regard to such a case as the one now before the House, that where there was any doubt as to matters of fact, it was customary to refer the question to a committee. Now, he believed that if Mr. Sandeman were allowed to give evidence, he would be able to shew that there was no wilful absence on his part. This was a case with which they could not deal upon mere assertion, but upon which, if they were to deal with it at all, they must, according to precedent, obtain evidence. If, in such cases, they were to act upon the assertion of an honorable member in similar cases, it would become altogether unnecessary to have a committee of elections and qualifications. The question the House was now called upon to decide, was one of peculiar niceness; as the decision that might be come to would amount, necessarily, to a determination as to what constituted "a failure to attend;" and what amount of inconvenience would entitle an honorable member to be absent during a session, however brief, without leave being asked and granted. He ventured to predict that, if an inquiry were made, it would be found that Mr. Sandeman did intend to take his seat within the fourteen days' absence allowed by the 18th Standing Order. The honorable gentleman who brought the question forward, had mentioned the conduct of Mr. Sandeman, in appearing in the House, as being a breach of privilege. Now, he maintained that, if such was his opinion, the motion of the honorable member ought to have been written differently from what it was, in order to conform with the clause of the Constitution Act. The motion did not set forth that the taking of a seat in the House by Mr. Sandeman was a breach of privilege; and, therefore, it did not conform with the clause of the Act upon which it professed to be based. In conclusion, he would ask the ruling of the honorable the Speaker as to whether the motion should not distinctly set forth that a breach of privilege had been committed by Mr. Sandeman, and whether, if it did not do so, the House could entertain the motion in its present shape.

The SPEAKER said he did not consider that the question that had been raised was at all one of privilege.

Mr. ATKIN said he considered that, divested of all the legal verbiage with which the honor-

able the Minister for Lands had endeavored to invest it, the question came to be solely one as to the interpretation of a clause of the Constitution Act. The honorable the Speaker had said that the question was not one of privilege, but that it was a question which had to be decided by the House.

The SPEAKER stated that a new writ could not be issued for the election of a member for the Leichhardt until the seat had been declared vacant by a resolution of the House.

Mr. ATKIN: Well, the question was one that had to be decided on the common sense interpretation of a simple section of the Constitution Act. In the cases referred to the Imperial Crown Law Officers, the circumstances were very different from those of the present case. The session in the case alluded to was an extraordinary one, and the members, who were 640 miles distant, had not had sufficient notice of the meeting of Parliament to enable them to attend before the session was brought to a close. But in the case now before the House, special default was alleged. It was well known that notice of the meeting of Parliament was given some months before the meeting took place; and though Mr. Sandeman was in Brisbane twenty-four hours before Parliament met, and had full knowledge that the House was to meet on the following day, he wilfully neglected to attend. And he would ask the honorable the Colonial Secretary if it was not the fact that he had in his possession a letter from Mr. Sandeman, intimating his resignation of his seat for the Leichhardt, if he, the present Colonial Secretary, desired to use it. The honorable the Minister for Lands had referred to the 18th Standing Order, and maintained that it gave permission to an honorable member to be absent without leave for a period of fourteen days. But, before that order could take effect, the honorable member must make his appearance in the House during the session. Now, Mr. Sandeman did not do so. Besides, the Standing Orders could not over-ride an Act of Parliament. The question in the case of "Flemming and Sandeman," which was referred to the Imperial Crown Law Officers, was as to whether they were wilfully absent; and it was found that they were not wilfully absent. In the present case, Mr. Sandeman was wilfully absent.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had been asked by the honorable member who last addressed the House, if it was not a fact that he had in his possession the resignation of Mr. Sandeman, when he left the city prior to the meeting of Parliament, last session; and, in reply to that question, he had to state that he never had the resignation of Mr. Sandeman in his possession; nor did he believe that Mr. Sandeman ever intended to send in his resignation.

Mr. LILLEY said that in the case of "Flemming and Sandeman," he took some interest when it was brought before the House,



because he had some doubt as to whether the seats had become vacant; and he was glad to find that his opinion was supported by the Imperial Crown Law Officers. The question was at first referred to a committee, and it was found to be a question of such a nature, that the committee could not deal with it—that it was, in fact, a question that must be dealt with by the Assembly. In the present case, the question as to the vacancy of the seat for the Leichhardt had been mixed up with a question of privilege. The whole question, he thought, was this—that a stranger had no right to sit in the House and take part in the debates. Now, he maintained, that the House was the only competent authority to decide, that a stranger had no right to occupy a seat and take part in the debates. The right to hold a seat in the House was obtained by election, and by conforming with certain conditions prescribed by an Act of Parliament; and by committing a breach of those conditions, a member ceased to have a right to occupy a seat in the House. The language of the Constitution Act was clear and distinct upon the point. The clause relating to the question, stated that the absence of a member for a whole session rendered his seat vacant; and all the House now had to do was to order that a new writ should be issued for the election of a member for the Leichhardt. There was no need whatever for a committee of inquiry in this case. Mr. Sandeman had timely knowledge of the meeting of Parliament; but he left the town about twenty-four hours previous to the meeting, and there was no leave of absence for him entered on the journals of the House. As to the 18th Standing Order, he maintained that no standing order could override the provisions of the Constitution Act; and it seemed quite clear to him that the seat for the Leichhardt had been rendered vacant by the absence of Mr. Sandeman for one whole session. He did not think it was necessary for the House to enter into the question as to whether the honorable member intended to be absent or not; and he must say that he understood it was not the intention of Mr. Sandeman to be present. The last session was the annual session, and full notice was given of the time of meeting.

**AN HONORABLE MEMBER:** No supplies were granted.

**MR. LILLEY:** Of course not, for the House did not sit long enough to admit of supplies being granted. It was not an extraordinary session. It was not one, as in the case that had been alluded to, for the purpose merely of passing a Pleuro-pneumonia Bill. It was worse; and if he cared to describe it, he felt he would have to do so in terms that were scarcely allowed to be used by honorable members in the House. He would only, therefore, repeat that it was not a session called for by any extraordinary circumstance; and it was a session which every honorable

member ought to have attended; and any honorable member who was not present, must take the consequences.

**MR. HALY** said he never was more astonished in his life than when he heard it proposed to declare the seat for the Leichhardt vacant, on the ground that the honorable member, Mr. Sandeman, had been absent for a whole session. How could it be said that the last meeting of Parliament was a whole session when, in fact, there was not a single Bill passed? He was present for only one day; and, if he had been prevented by any accidental occurrence from reaching Brisbane at the time he did, his seat would, by the opinion of honorable gentlemen opposite, also have had to be declared vacant. Now, they had, he maintained, to decide this question according to common sense, and not by law; and every northern member should bear in mind that he might, by a variety of circumstances, over which he could have no control, be prevented from reaching Brisbane in time to attend Parliament during such a short session as the last. As had been pointed out, the 18th Standing Order allowed a member to be absent for fourteen days without obtaining leave, and the session did not last fourteen days. If he had not been present, he certainly should have maintained that his seat had not become vacant. The question was one of the greatest importance, and he thought it was one which should be left entirely to the House to decide.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS** observed that he could not say he knew exactly what the question was; and, before he voted, he should like to know what would be the result. He desired to know the question before the House, ere he made a few remarks upon the subject.

**THE HON. A. MACALISTER** was proceeding to explain, when

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS** said he simply asked the Speaker upon which question he was to address the House?

**THE SPEAKER:** The question is, whether this is a Question of Privilege.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS:** Then, if the House divided, and the question was carried as one of privilege, what would be the result of that?

**THE HON. R. PRING:** A new writ.

**THE SPEAKER:** Before the new writ can be issued, the motion must be made that the seat is vacant.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS:** Then, he found that honorable members had been occupying time uselessly. It would have been much better if the Speaker's opinion had been taken in the first instance; and then, at any rate, the House would have proceeded in something like a systematic manner. He had been informed, and for some time he had known, that there existed in the city of Brisbane a society for the advancement and propagation of liberal ideas,

for ensuring the good government of the colony. If the present proceeding was to be taken as evidence of liberality, he did not think much good would arise from the labors of that association. Though he took that view, yet he must congratulate the society upon the converts that its members appeared to have made in so short a time. What was the question? That one of the most important constituencies in the colony should be virtually disfranchised for the session; that because a certain honorable member chose to say that a certain other honorable member did not mean to attend the House, the Assembly were to refuse to take this member's word, and the word of others who could bear testimony in his support, and decide that the honorable member for Leichhardt should not take his seat in the House, this session. The Opposition said that the honorable member intended to resign, and that they knew it; and they would not take his word to the contrary. They intended to exercise their voting power of a majority, and were determined that they would disfranchise a large and important constituency, because, as the honorable member for Burnett, Mr. Haly, had said, it was a northern constituency. Was that beginning the session in a proper way? Even though the honorable member did intend to resign, was that the way to begin the work of the country?—in spite of the Speaker's ruling, and in spite of the honorable member's, Mr. Sandeman's, own word. If that was the way a majority of the House would act, if the question went to a vote—to the detriment of a large constituency—he could not regard it as liberality. What were the arguments of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley? That the House had a right to declare a stranger in the House, he (the Secretary for Public Works) granted; but surely that honorable member could not maintain that a gentleman returned to the Assembly by a large constituency was a stranger—he could not say that Mr. Sandeman, who sat in every Parliament of this colony, was a stranger. However, the question was to be tried. His own conviction, before coming to the House, was that the honorable member for Leichhardt had forfeited his seat; but that was not his opinion now. After hearing the arguments of his honorable colleague, the Minister for Lands, he did not think so. Till he heard those arguments, he was prepared to vote with honorable members on either side of the House who proposed to deal with the matter in proper form; but he was now convinced that the seat was not forfeited, and that Mr. Sandeman must have been fourteen days absent without leave before his seat should become forfeited. He could not conceive how, even for party purposes, any other construction could be put upon the Standing Orders. The House, no doubt, had power to declare the seat vacant;

but if they did so, it would be a violation of precedent. It was laid down in "May," that

"Whenever any question is raised affecting the seat of a member, and involving matters of doubt, either in law or in fact, it is customary to refer it to the consideration of a committee. \* \* \* This practice, in fact, extends to members whose seats are called in question by any member of the House, the same protection as that afforded in the case of controverted elections."

He believed that if the honorable member who was treated in the ruthless way attempted, should have to vacate his seat, it would be solely for party purposes. He regretted that the Speaker's first ruling, and the advice he had thought fit to give, had been set at nought. The circumstances under which Mr. Sandeman had not attended were exceptional. He asked the House to take them into consideration. Who could have expected that the session would so soon have terminated? He asked the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, was it to be expected that any honorable member could suppose—did he, himself, suppose—that in two days the strong Lilley Government would be upset? Were not they all taken by surprise; were they not all shocked; was not the country shocked, at the way in which the session closed? The honorable member for Leichhardt was shocked and surprised. Could he expect that advantage would be taken of his absence from two sittings? However anxious honorable members might be for a party triumph, do not let them single out individuals to suffer. This should not be, however anxious some of them might be for position, place, or pay. He hoped that honorable members on the opposite side of the House would assent to the Speaker's ruling, and allow the public business to go on.

Mr. SANDEMAN rose and said he claimed the privileges of a member of the House.

Mr. LILLEY: He is not a member.

The HON. R. PRING: This a question of privilege. I object to the honorable member addressing this House, because his conduct is in question. Nobody ever heard, when an honorable member's conduct is in question, that he should speak in the House. He ought to have retired long ago.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Before the House divides on this question, whether it is a question of privilege or not, I should like to say a very few words to them. The whole question, I presume, will hinge upon the division; and if the decision be that this is a question of privilege, it will be a case, then, of might overcoming right; for I have no doubt that the majority will resolve also that the seat is vacant. Before voting in this way, I should like certainly to call the attention of honorable members who do not come to this House simply for party purposes, but to legislate for the good of the colony and their constituents—I do not address

myself at all to the party members of the House, to members who make this simply a party question, thinking they will do their duty if they deprive us of one vote and disfranchise a large constituency; or to those who think this will be one rung of the ladder to office gained;—I address myself to honorable members who do not want office, who think for themselves, and who are independent of party;—I should like to call their attention to the fact, that it is a very serious matter to consider which is now before them. They are asked to say that an honorable member who was absent two sitting days should therefore forfeit his seat, and that his constituency shall be virtually disfranchised. That is the way to look at it. Who in the House would be safe, with such a precedent established? The honorable member's constituency will suffer, if the House carries the motion in the affirmative. Can we in any way control the elements? Can we bring northern members down, in spite of wind and waves? Can we be sure of our horses not knocking up, or of floods not detaining us, or of anything in the chapter of accidents not preventing any honorable member of the House being here two days after meeting? It is not a question whether Mr. Sandeman is here or not. Neither you nor I can know anything about Mr. Sandeman's intentions; nobody knows but himself. If he were allowed to speak, I dare say he would tell you that he could not attend the House at that time, and that he had no intention of stopping away for the session. I know as much about his intention as any one, as I have already stated, in explanation. Now, I ask the independent and impartial members, will they disfranchise a constituency, because the member representing that constituency cannot get here to take his place within two days after the House meets; and when he has it before him, in our own Standing Orders, that he may, without leave or license, be absent for fourteen days? I say any honorable member, living at a distance from town, would think himself perfectly safe, if business detained him in the country, in absentsing himself for that time without special leave, let alone for only two days. We have had instances of members absentsing themselves from the House without any leave for fourteen days. It has always been the rule, since I became a member of this House, that a member can do what he likes with himself for fourteen days—unless there is a call of the House. Mind, we are establishing a dangerous precedent if we vote in the affirmative on this question. It will be in the power of any party in the House to declare any seat vacant. This is leading up to it. "Mr. So-and-so does not behave himself as he ought to do; he laughed at my speech the other night; that is not right; and I move that his seat is vacant." That is what it will be next. I was very sorry to hear the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley saying

that the honorable member for Leichhardt was a stranger in the House. Now, I should have expected a lawyer of that honorable member's standing to require proof that Mr. Sandeman was utterly unable to attend the House.

Mr. LILLEY: I say the records of the House shew it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The records of the House shew nothing at all—nothing whatever. I should like to see the honorable gentleman point out to me what they say.

Mr. LILLEY: The fact that Mr. Sandeman's name does not appear on the records is very good evidence. And, it is also in the knowledge of many honorable members of this House that Mr. Sandeman was not in attendance.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I suppose every member whose name does not appear should vacate his seat? He might have been present, notwithstanding. If that should be the rule, it would be of very great inconvenience. It is the last thing that I would have thought of, moving that an honorable member's seat is vacant merely because he was not here on two sitting days. But if this question must go to a division, none of those honorable members—the glorious six!—who formed that minority in the division which terminated the last session ought to vote: it was mainly through their inability to do their duty, to carry on the public business, that the session did not go on, and that there was a recess of over six weeks. My honorable colleague, the Minister for Lands, has pointed out to me a letter of the honorable the late Attorney-General. The honorable member opposite argues so well both ways on this question—he gave us an example of his quality, this evening;—formerly on one side, now on the other. Either side of the question, he will give us his reasons, and make a speech with equal readiness. But I will not trouble the House by reading extracts from his letter. I regret very much that he is not on this side of the House, because the honorable gentleman would have argued as well for us as he has done for the Opposition; and, better, as his sympathies are with this side and with the constituency which it is now sought to disfranchise. I ask, again, the independent members of this House not to disfranchise the constituents who are not the least in fault.

Dr. O'DOHERTY, as one of the independent members of the House, and assuring the honorable the Colonial Secretary that he was neither looking for office nor expecting anything else from his present action, must say a word in explanation of the vote he should give on this matter. It seemed to him that the question had been put in the most conclusive manner to the House by the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley, who had deprived it of all legal quibble and confusion with which it had been surrounded by the honorable the Secretary for Public Lands

He could not see the difficulty of the House interpreting the seventh clause of the Legislative Assembly Act, which stated in emphatic terms that if any member of the Assembly should, for one whole session, without permission, fail to give his attendance in the House, "his seat in such Assembly shall thereby become vacant." They could not possibly pretend to have doubts about that language. The Minister for Lands had referred to the Standing Orders, which stated that a member could absent himself for fourteen days, without leave. But it seemed to him (Dr. O'Doherty) perfectly clear that that Standing Order was made for a different purpose from that to which the honorable gentleman applied it: and that its intention was that the session must last over fourteen days to allow of the Standing Order coming into operation. And, if the session did not last fourteen days, the seventh clause of their constitution must have effect. The honorable member for Burnett, Mr. Haly, spoke strongly of the possible harm to be done to northern members, by the members for Brisbane and Moreton disfranchising the distant constituencies; but he was not correct in his assumption, and could not ignore the law. Granted, it might be unjust to Mr. Sandeman, whom he (Dr. O'Doherty) would be very glad always to see in the House. He did not say this in any apologetic spirit, at all; but he most candidly and honestly averred that there was no member of the House he would more cordially greet as a member than the late honorable member for the Leichhardt, Mr. Sandeman. But, the House must go by their constitution, or it would be best not to have an Act at all. According to the strict letter of the Act, the honorable member's seat was vacant; and, therefore, *de facto*, the honorable member had no business in the House; and, *de facto*, the motion of the honorable member for Eastern Downs for the issue of a writ ought to be in order.

Mr. SANDEMAN asked permission of the House to speak.

The Hon. R. PRING objected. He would take the sense of the House, whether Mr. Sandeman was in a position with a right to address the House. He had been designated as a stranger by everyone—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, no.

The Hon. R. PRING: He had been designated as a stranger by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and by himself, and by others.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was not everybody. It appeared to him that the honorable the Speaker would be declared a stranger presently;—his ruling was taken exception to, and his advice disregarded. The question was, whether the honorable member for Leichhardt should have the opportunity to address the House, before they decided on a question affecting his posi-

tion. He (the Secretary for Public Works) asked the Speaker if the honorable member, Mr. Sandeman, should not speak?

Mr. LILLEY: On that point of order, he begged to say that he did not wish to throw any impediment in the way of the honorable member for Leichhardt addressing the House, if he could do so within the meaning of the Act, but, on his conviction, the honorable member's seat was vacant, and the House could not recognise him at all, and could not hear him speak. The question was one of privilege—there was a stranger in the House!

Mr. JORDAN rose to speak, but was interrupted by

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS, who said he should like the question answered, whether the honorable member for Leichhardt had not a right to address the House?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: His conduct being under discussion.

The SPEAKER: I think the motion has not yet been carried. I do think the honorable member, with all fairness and all justice, has a right to speak.

Mr. LILLEY: I move, sir, that your last decision be referred to this House. It is a monstrous thing that a person whose right to sit is under discussion is to be permitted to address this House—that we cannot ourselves decide who has a right to sit and speak in this House.

The Hon. R. PRING: I second it.

Mr. FYFE said he had listened attentively to the debate, and he found himself placed in a very peculiar position, inasmuch as he occupied the seat previously occupied by Mr. Milford, who was obliged to retire in conformity with the Act of Parliament which had been several times referred to. Mr. Milford did not occupy his seat in the House during a whole session of Parliament, the last. Now, if he (Mr. Fyfe) should vote with the Government, he would be in a false position, so far as all Parliamentary precedents were concerned; and it would be dangerous to initiate, to-day, a precedent contrary to the constitution. Notwithstanding apparent severity, the law was clear, and the law should be carried out: the seat was, in his humble judgment, vacant. If he should vote with the Government in favor of Mr. Sandeman retaining his seat as a member of the House, he should go back to his constituents at Rockhampton, and let Mr. Milford return to the House in his place. He trusted that both sides of the House would see the difficulty in which he stood. He conceived it to be his duty not to vote at all.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: A question of order, he understood, was before the House?

Mr. LILLEY: I will amend the form of my motion. I now move, formally, Mr. Speaker, that your last ruling be disagreed to.

Question put, and the House dividing, objection was made to Mr. Sandeman's vote by Messrs. Macalister, Lilley, and Pring.

MR. SPEAKER: I think the general rule—when an honorable member's case is under consideration—when a member is interested in the vote, applies; and that he should withdraw.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you rule that he cannot vote?

At this stage, Mr. Sandeman retired below the bar, and the division was taken:—

Ayes, 15. Mr. Fraser " Bell " Miles " McIlwraith " Thornton " Groom " Jordan " Atkin Dr. Benson Mr. Edmondstone " Stephens Dr. O'Doherty Mr. Pring " Lilley " Macalister.	Noes, 10. Mr. Palmer " Thompson " Williams " Thorn " Haly " Royds " Ferrett " Forbes " Walsh " Ramsay.
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Question—Is the motion now before the House a Question of Privilege?

MR. JORDAN said he had listened to the arguments which had been adduced on both sides of the House, and he thought it quite likely that the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was correct in his opinion, as far as the law was concerned. Yet there was a more important element in the matter. He was not quite satisfied that, by following the words of the law on this question, the House would not be committing error. He could not hide from his own mind the fact that the circumstances of the present case were very peculiar. The session lasted but two days, and the House had no evidence whatever before them as to the intention of the honorable member for Leichhardt to absent himself during the whole session. He was, therefore, rather disposed to take that gentleman's evidence that his absence during the last session was accidental, and that he did not intend it to last for the session;—especially after what they had heard from the Premier—which he (Mr. Jordan) was very glad to hear—that he had not had in his possession the resignation of the honorable member for Leichhardt, and that he knew the honorable member had not intended to absent himself during the session. After that, the House must be satisfied that Mr. Sandeman's absence was accidental; and he (Mr. Jordan) could not but think that the House would be doing the honorable member an injustice—at least, that they would be acting ungenerously, and taking an unfair advantage of the circumstances in which he had been placed, if they now decided that his seat was vacant. He thought the House must take into account the interests of the colony, and that honorable members must not take advantage of each other—one party over the other party—for the sake of a vote. He could quite understand how the honorable member for Fortitude Valley and the honorable member for Burnett,

Mr. Pring, should advocate this question from their strong leanings to the mere law of the case. As lawyers, they could simply take that view of it; but independent members of the House could take a broader view of it; and he was inclined to take the generous view of it. He thought it very likely that the loss of one vote, now, would be very important to his side of the House; but he could not see his way, generously and fairly, to turn a member out of his seat; and he should be taking a mean advantage of his opponent, if he did so. In this case, he should vote with the Government.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: As the honorable member for Leichhardt was not allowed to speak for himself, and as he happened to know something of the circumstances under which the honorable member was absent from the House last session, he thought he should make some explanation on his honorable friend's behalf. It so happened that the House met on a Tuesday, and that on the Saturday previous he met Mr. Sandeman on the Darling Downs. He knew that the honorable member left Brisbane some days, perhaps a week before; and he was told by him, then, that he was extremely sorry he was obliged to leave on the eve of the House meeting, but that it was an important crisis in his affairs. He understood from him, since, that the honorable member had not had the least intention of absenting himself for the session. He might say, further, that Mr. Sandeman had been returned three different times for the Leichhardt, and that he had been very assiduous in his attendance in the House; and it did seem very hard that it should be contemplated by some of them, that an honorable member who had sat there so long and so regularly should thus, by the motion before the House, be deprived of his seat. It might be in accordance with the strict interpretation of the Act, but the House must take notice of the matter. The question should be, whether it was advisable for the House to establish a precedent of the kind proposed. He should be very sorry if the House would adopt the motion. There was no saying what inconvenience it might lead to hereafter. A similar case might arise at any time. It would be impossible, sometimes, for members at a distance in the west, to attend within a few days after the opening of the session. He asked whether it could have been anticipated by any one that Parliament, which had not sat for seven months, would close in two days? Besides, there were many occasions on which, looking round the chamber at night, it would be found that many honorable members were not in attendance. He thought it would be a great injustice, certainly, not only to Mr. Sandeman, but to the constituency he represented, if his seat should be declared vacant.

MR. FORBES said he was sorry to see the House resort to a tyrannical means to deprive

an honorable member of his seat and the Government of a vote. He thought that the honorable and learned member for Burnett, the honorable member for Eastern Downs; and the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley, when they addressed the Assembly on the case of Messrs. Sandeman and Fleming, took the same view as was even just now expressed by the Minister for Lands.

The Hon. R. PRING said he was sure he did not.

Mr. FORBES observed that he could not immediately refer to the papers, but he certainly felt that he rightly apprehended their intention, from the proceedings taken at the time. It was upon the honorable member for Burnett's motion that the case was referred to the Committee of Elections and Qualifications. However, there was not that strong wish to turn those gentlemen out for having absented themselves for the session, which was manifested in the present case. The most liberal construction should be put upon the Act and upon the Standing Orders which were framed under that Act, and which were in conformity with its provisions. The Standing Orders allowed a member of the House to be absent without leave for fourteen days; and he maintained that the House were bound by them, if they meant what they said, and a fair construction was put upon them. He appealed to honorable members from a distance to say if they could tell whether at any time Mr. Sandeman's case might not be their own. He trusted that in other and more serious matters in which the privileges of the House were involved, honorable members would be equally observant and vigilant; matters far more important than the paltry and trifling one—the petty, mean, detestable thing—now brought forward for their consideration. It was of far higher consideration that a constituency should not be disfranchised than that an act of petty tyranny should be perpetrated under cover of the constitution. It had been asserted, and he had seen authority for it, which he thought had been quoted in the House, that the sessions of the House of Commons were called for the purpose of voting supplies for the following year; and that the annual session of the British Parliament must be taken to mean the session in which the annual supply was granted to Her Majesty. If they had half-a-dozen such sessions as the last, none of them would be the annual session properly so called. But honorable members on the Opposition side of the House took contracted views, and would go for nothing beyond the words written in the constitution; they would not see the evils that must arise from such a course of procedure. The words—nothing but the words!—they would stick to, and force upon the liberal members of the House; but he trusted the House would put the most liberal construction upon the Act, and upon the Standing Orders, and that they

would see the necessity of not making this case a precedent which would exhibit them as a disgrace to the whole colony.

Mr. GROOM said that however detestable the action taken by the Opposition side of the House might be to the honorable member who just sat down, he desired to state to the House and to his constituents why he should vote for the motion. He did not blame the late Government, who had retired, it might be, ungraciously from their position last session, for the proceedings on this occasion; but he attributed those proceedings entirely to the present Government. He was justified in saying so. It was the usual constitutional course, when a change of Government took place, for the incoming Ministry to be provided with sufficient representatives in the House to declare on their behalf that they had taken office, and to move that their seats had thereby become vacant. When the late Ministry had resigned, and their successors went into office, the members forming the Opposition were prepared to give the incoming Government cordial support; and what did they find? There were fourteen members on the Opposition side of the House, and there was but a solitary individual on the Ministerial side, and there was no quorum. He believed that the Government instructed their supporters to absent themselves, in order that there should be a prorogation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, no.

Mr. GROOM: It had been said in the House that the honorable members for Ipswich and West Moreton were instructed to absent themselves, the object being to incapacitate the honorable member for Warwick and the honorable member for Rockhampton from sitting. The last-named gentleman was not able to take his seat. He (Mr. Groom) did not believe, that in the history of parliamentary government in Queensland, there was an Opposition more generously disposed towards an incoming Government than the present Opposition had been to the present Government. The Minister for Works, he saw, laughed at that; but the country laughed at the "fantastic tricks" played by that honorable gentleman as a member of the Government. With reference to the gentleman most affected by the motion before the House, he (Mr. Groom) looked upon Mr. Sandeman as one of the most useful members of the House—one who had distinguished himself, not by "tall talk," to use a Yankeeism, but by services rendered to the House and the country; and his absence would be a loss to the House, and much to be regretted. He said this because he respected Mr. Sandeman; but he also respected the constitution under which that gentleman had been elected. The Government themselves were responsible for the meeting of Parliament in April being a session in the strict interpretation of the term. It had been so construed, according

to the Act, by the two ablest legal authorities in the colony—ininitely superior to the legal adviser of the present Government, as even an outside constituency had expressed its opinion upon his qualifications. Although he (Mr. Groom) voted against the Speaker's ruling, in the last division, he felt the greatest respect for the opinion of an honorable gentleman who had presided over the deliberations of the House so long, with distinction and dignity to himself and credit to the colony. Spite of the difficulties thrown in the way of the settlement of the question, he believed that, if honorable members took a plain practical view of it, there could be no doubt that the honorable member for Leichhardt had forfeited his seat; and, so strongly did his constituents feel that such was the case, that a requisition from them had been signed and presented to an honorable gentleman in another place to come forward to represent them in the Assembly. It was his intention to vote for the motion of the honorable member for Eastern Downs.

The question was then put and affirmed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he believed the House had hitherto been discussing the question of privilege. It now became necessary for them to say whether they would follow on to a decision on the original question brought forward by the honorable member for Eastern Downs. When he addressed the House before, he had not the advantage of knowing the opinions of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, who seemed to have taken, on a former occasion, somewhat the view which he (the Secretary for Public Lands) took on this occasion. He should not have spoken twice, even though he had the right to do so, if he had not discovered what he hoped would throw some light on the question. Mr. Lilley said—

“He thought that it was evidently intended that the House should exercise some discretion in the matter, and that it was left to them by the Act to declare the seats vacant or not in such cases, in order that they might take into consideration the reasons for the absence of any honorable member.”

As the honorable member now contended, no declaration of a vacancy was required—that Mr. Sandeman's seat was *de facto* vacant. Again—

“Put the case, that himself or the Colonial Secretary had been suddenly stretched on a bed of sickness during the two days the House met, and were, in consequence, unable to attend within the meaning of the Act. It seemed to him that there must have been some reservation intended in cases of inevitable absence.”

Taking that view, with the fourteen days' absence without leave allowed by the Standing Orders, he contended more strongly than ever that there had been no wilful failure to attend on the part of the honorable member for Leichhardt. If the Act said that absence alone would make a vacancy, he would go no

further; but it expressly used the words “fail to give his attendance,” which implied a wilful failure on the part of the person to attend. That was his contention; and seeing that confirmation of his view, he thought himself justified in referring to it.

The original question was then put, and the House divided:—

Ayes, 13. Mr. Atkin Dr. O'Doherty Mr. Stephens " Miles " Edmondstone " Lilley Dr. Benson Mr. Fraser " Groom " Thornton " Mellwraith " Pring " Macalister.	Noes, 11. Mr. Walsh " Williams " Ferrett " Thoru " Forbes " Royds " Haly " Jordan " Thompson " Palmer " Ramsay.
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#### THE OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER announced that he had, at an earlier period of the day, accompanied by honorable members, attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency delivered the Opening Speech of the present session of Parliament. For the purpose of securing greater accuracy, he had obtained a copy of the Speech to lay before the House. He then read the Speech at length. [*Vide* page 1.]

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

Mr. FORBES then moved—

1. That a Select Committee be appointed to prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor, in opening this, the fourth session of the fourth Parliament of Queensland.

2. That such Committee consist of the following members, viz.:—The Colonial Secretary, Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Ferrett, and the mover.

The motion, which was seconded by Mr. Ferrett, was agreed to; and the Committee retired to prepare the Address. On their return, Mr. Forbes presented the Address as prepared by the Committee. The Address, which was read by the Clerk, was as follows:—

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

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

“2. The measures referred to by your Excellency shall receive our most careful consideration, and we trust that your anticipations, as to the future prosperity of the colony, may be fulfilled.”

Mr. FORBES then moved—

That the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted by the House.

In doing so, he said that he had never risen to address the House with more pleasure than on the present occasion. The occasion, so far as he was concerned, was, he must admit, an extraordinary one, and, therefore, he hoped the House would bear with him in discharging the duty that had been cast upon him. In looking at the Speech, he thought that, on the whole, it was a speech that must meet with the concurrence of the House. Honorable members were, of course, aware of the difficult circumstances under which the present Government took office; and, therefore, if there were faults in the Speech, the House, he thought, should bear with them. The gentlemen constituting the present Government did not ask for office. Indeed, as he understood, office had, in a sense, been forced upon them; and, therefore, he maintained they were entitled, at the outset, at any rate, to the forbearance of honorable members. The first paragraph of the Speech related to the delay that had taken place in the furtherance of legislation. That was no fault of the present Government, but it was the fault of the preceding Government. The late Government almost silently submitted to defeat, and till they could shew some good and sufficient reasons in reply to those advanced against them, and which secured their defeat, it could not be supposed that they, while bearing the censure of the House—such censure not being removed—should again obtain the confidence of the House, and be allowed to take office, if the Opposition succeeded in throwing out the present Ministry. He hoped that the fair play usually conceded to every Government on their first meeting the House, would be conceded to the present Government on this occasion. Excepting the honorable the Premier, every member of the present Ministry was entirely new to office. The first paragraph of the Speech related to the delay that had taken place in matters of legislation. Now, that delay was not at all owing to any conduct on the part of the present Government, but was wholly attributable to the conduct of the previous Government; and until the late Government could shew something exculpatory of the charges brought against them, they must not expect to receive the confidence of the House, or to be supported in taking office if they should succeed in throwing out the present Ministry. He hoped that the same fair play that had been conceded to every Ministry would be conceded to the present Ministry; and honorable members must recollect that, with the exception of the honorable the Premier, every honorable member of the Ministry, as he had already stated, was new to office. It was deplorable to think that the colony was a million and a quarter in debt—

Mr. GROOM: No, no. It is not deplorable.

Mr. FORBES: Well, he thought it was deplorable that a small colony like this should be indebted to the extent of £1,250,000; and he was convinced that unless stringent measures were taken for the reduction of the debt, the amount would go on increasing; for he found that the annual deficiency amounted to between £27,000 and £30,000 per annum. The late Government, when in office, had many opportunities of effecting retrenchment, but they did not avail themselves of those opportunities. What steps did they take for that purpose? The honorable gentlemen who now occupied the front Opposition benches—what steps, he would like to ask, did they take, while in office, to carry out the policy they at present recommended to the House? He did not desire to dwell on the proceedings of the late Government during the recess, because the facts spoke for themselves. He would only remark that the whole of their conduct evinced a desire to court popularity; but he considered that a popular Government was a dangerous Government;—it was brought about at the expense of the community, and it was bought by the expenditure of the public money. There could be no doubt that the late Government sought popularity; and he held that, when a Government was what was called a popular Government, it was what ought to be regarded as a dangerous Government;—for popularity was usually bought at the expense of the community. Popularity, so far as he had ever seen it in operation, was bought at the expense of the community, and was bought by the expenditure of the public money—which expenditure was, of course, made with the view of securing popularity. Now, to such an extent had this craving for popularity gone that, he must say, it almost amounted to a corruption of the constitution of the colony. Every step had been taken to conduce to the promotion of the popularity of the late Government. It was a well-known fact that any Government that would carry out strictly, faithfully, and honestly, measures that would be beneficial to the permanent interests of the colony would be unpopular—especially with the larger constituencies. What, he would ask, had caused the present indebtedness of the colony? Had it not chiefly arisen from local expenditure, and from the Governor being pressed to sign warrants for the expenditure of money unauthorised by Parliament? They had the authority of Lord Granville that such had been the case. Perhaps some honorable members might tell him that he was wrong in saying that Executive authority superseded Parliamentary authority. Now, he thought that the Auditor-General, from the way in which he had brought the matter before the House and the country, deserved the thanks of the House for the course he had pursued. Judging by the report that was laid before

the House last session, every honorable member, he thought, must admit that the Auditor-General had done his duty to the country. In the despatch to which he alluded, Lord Granville stated that under no circumstances would he sanction certain local expenditure. Well, on account of this extravagant local expenditure, and partly also through neglect, it would be necessary to pass a Loan Bill to enable them to complete some of the unfinished works of the colony. So far, therefore, he agreed with the second paragraph of the Opening Speech; but he could not go farther at the present time. When the House came to consider the financial affairs of the colony, he thought it would be advisable to deal also with the question of funding the debt of the colony; because he believed that, by adopting such a course, the debt of the colony would be rendered less burdensome to the country. As to the sinking fund, which was originally proposed, and to some extent acted upon, he thought it might have been so managed that the bonds, to meet which that fund was proposed, might have been bought up, or nearly so. He would direct the attention of honorable members to the case of Jamaica. When Mr. Grant became Governor of that island, he found that two years' revenue was required to meet the expenditure of one year; but by the measures he adopted, and which included the funding of the debt, he succeeded in bringing the annual expenditure within the annual amount of revenue. He hoped that honorable members would set themselves to bring about such a state of things in this country, rather than go recklessly into public works, —at any rate, until it could be shown that such works would be reproductive. As to the matter of railways, it must be admitted that, at the outset, they had been misled. The statements upon which they were induced to enter upon the construction of railways were not correct. On the first introduction of the railway policy, they were assured that the railways could be constructed for £4,000 per mile. Now, the report of the Engineer-in-Chief showed that the cost of constructing the railway to Dalby had been £275,349 altogether, or, on an average, £5,587 per mile; and he believed the cost of constructing the line to Warwick would be double the amount of the estimate—or, in other words, that it would amount to £5,990 per mile. At the commencement of their railway undertakings, it was agreed that there should be a sinking fund for the redemption of the loan, and that the moneys obtained by the sale of lands through which the lines might pass, should be placed to the account of such fund; so that those districts should virtually pay for the construction of the railways by which they would be benefited. That intention—a good one, without doubt—was, like many other good intentions, never carried out. With respect to the steamers, he would not go so far as to censure the late Government in the matter. The late Govern-

ment was placed under very peculiar circumstances at the time when the contract as to the steamers was entered into. Therefore, rather than blame the late Government for the action they took on that occasion, he would prefer to defend them, considering the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed at the time. He thought it was a pity that the members of the late Government gave up the reins of government in so easy a way as they did; and he considered that if they had not themselves thought that they deserved to be turned out, they would not have given up so easily. The next paragraph of the Speech related to the profitable working of the railways. Now, he thought, it would be most desirable that the passenger and traffic charges should be fixed by Act of Parliament. He next came to the paragraph in the Opening Speech relating to the collection of customs. Honorable members must know that when the existing Customs Continuation Act came to an end, it would be necessary for the Government to ask for a renewal of it. Now, he thought that the Government should not be judged too harshly, especially when the circumstances under which they took office were taken into consideration. Another proposition in the Speech was, that there should be introduced a Bill to provide for additional representation. Now, nothing would please him more than that the Government should come forward and say that such was their policy as regarded electoral reform, and that they would stand or fall by it. As to the seventh paragraph of the Opening Speech, he fully agreed with it. A system of railways was there projected which it was proposed should be paid for by grants of land in alternate blocks along the line through which the railways might pass. But, in order to the carrying out of such a policy in a satisfactory manner, it was absolutely necessary that there should be at the head of affairs, men in whom the House had the utmost confidence. Now, he believed, that if something approaching to the original proposition for the construction of railways had been proposed by the late Ministry, they would have received the support of both branches of the Legislature. But such had not been the case. When he came to look at the speech of the Governor, last session, he could not see any great difference between it and the one now before the House. The only difference was, that the late Ministry intended to bring forward a Re-distribution of Electorates Bill and a revision of the electoral law; but he could not look upon that as important, because, as long as honorable members objected to the repeal of the two-thirds clause of the Constitution Act, and that clause was not repealed, he considered the late Government could not be in earnest in their desire for reform. With that two-thirds clause as a stumbling-block staring them in the face, how could they enunciate such a policy, and

how could he take their word? Of course, the late Government were going in strongly for railway extension. As their railway policy was in 1864, so it would be in 1870: they would proceed without any data as to the probable revenue to be derived, what the cost of the works, and what the good of them to the country. A railway from Ipswich to Brisbane, an extension of the northern line, an extension to Maranoa; and now, a little farther—a railway to the Gulf of Carpentaria! If a line were carried out there, the Government would be fit for anything, in the way of railway construction. It would be a glorious sight to go out on that line to see the unfortunate settlers living upon pig-weed and mutton. He looked upon that as one of those visionary schemes which would long be dreamt of before any attempt would be made to carry it out. He was open to conviction, but the thing came before him without any reason or argument to lead one's mind into that way of thinking; and, at present, he could not but regard it as an absurdity—he could not conceive it to be anything but a mad or visionary project. He did not say that the honorable member for Eastern Downs, who was the father of that railway policy, but was no authority, was mad; but he should listen with more respect to it, if proposed by the honorable member for Warrego, who was an authority. The programme which the late Government laid before the House was not, and it was a pity, accompanied by any explanation of their intention to carry it out. For instance, allusion was made in the Speech, last session, to the action that had been taken by the House with regard to the Supreme Court. The present Minister for Works had, in the second session of 1869, obtained a committee to enquire into the subject. Valuable evidence was taken, but nothing was done during the recess by the late Government; and all that had been done, at great cost to the country, was now lost.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, no.

Mr. FORBES: He trusted that the Government would ensure the resumption of that committee. It was, he conceived, the duty of the late Government, during the long recess, to have taken some action upon the proceedings of that committee. There were other matters which ought to have been attended to during that long recess, and which would have paved the way to beneficial legislation. It would take the present Government a long time to work themselves up to the position of familiarity with official arrangements of the honorable members who had preceded them; and they must have time allowed to them to mature a beneficial policy for the country. The honorable member who moved the amendment on the Address last session said there were "few men who would be willing to take steps to overthrow any Government in this colony, at this time,

merely for the sake of change." He (Mr. Forbes) only asked the House if they would adopt that suggestion. There was no occasion now to vindicate the dignity of the House as against the Government. He did not know of any *laches* committed by the present Government which needed condemnation. He was told that there would be an amendment on the Address. Well, if so, he trusted that honorable members would view calmly and dispassionately the policy now presented to them, which was conducive to the general welfare of the country, and that they would do nothing to bring about a change of Government merely for the sake of change. The Government were entitled to a fair trial upon their policy, as much so as any Government ever formed in the colony; and when it was considered that an entire change, a Government formed of men new to office, had been asked for over and over again, they were entitled to a fair trial more than any Government that had preceded them. He trusted to the spirit of fair play which he had generally seen shown by honorable members, for a fair trial. It was not fair that, at the commencement of the session, before the Government had time to do anything or to make their intentions known to the country, they should be condemned. Day after day he found in the metropolitan press one continual theme—the railway between Brisbane and Ipswich. If that it would pay and was for the good of the country—if it would be re-productive—if it would pay the working expenses and two-thirds of the interest on the outlay—in Heaven's name, let it be made! But he objected to it unless it was clearly shown what the cost would be, what the traffic, and that the work would be re-productive. Another matter referred to, every day, by the press was, that the members for West Moreton did not represent the interests of their constituents. There was one fact which, in his opinion, showed clearly the falsehood of that assertion, that the opinions of those members who had appealed to their constituents had been endorsed by them. Such an assertion was monstrous, and only showed the pandering, servile condition of the metropolitan press; it showed that the desired change of Government was not prompted by considerations for the benefit of the country. He was almost led to believe that, in respect to one of the papers, it was prompted by a desire for place on the Treasury benches, which would, perhaps, be more acceptable than the editorial chair. Alluding to the other newspaper, which he called a poor damp rag, and which contained nothing but poor namby-pamby matter—being shadow rather than substance—going in its advocacy beyond the extent of its wisdom—it was notoriously treated with ridicule by the people, and was now called, not the "old rag," but the "wet rag." But he had too long dwelt on that subject. There appeared to be no desire to show fair play to the Government; but he trusted that

whatever course would be pursued by the House, it would be satisfactory to the country, and conducive to its best interests; and that nothing they should do would bring about that extravagant expenditure, and those illegal acts, for which some Ministers had been so famous.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said: I think, sir, that this is about the proper time when I should give a Ministerial explanation to the House. I might have done it before the Speech was read, but I preferred, following the usual course—to do it when the Address has been moved and seconded. I now propose to state, in as few words as I possibly can, the views of the present Government. In doing that, I think it is proper for me to state how my Ministry came to be formed. It will be in your recollection, sir, and in that of the House, that, owing to the division which took place at the beginning of last session—and at close of it, too, I may say—the Ministry then in power, of which the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was Premier, resigned. I, in common with most other members of the House, was under the impression, on the Thursday, that another Ministry had been formed, or was close to its formation; and I was waiting till the usual time of the House meeting to hear that a Ministry had been formed, and to find that the *Gazette* had been issued notifying the honorable members who had taken office. I was doomed to disappointment, for no *Gazette* did come out that day; but I was sent for by His Excellency the Governor, who informed me that he had confided to the hands of the honorable member for Northern Downs, the mover of the amendment on the Address, the task of forming a Ministry, and that the honorable gentleman had come back and proposed to him to send for the honorable member for Eastern Downs, Mr. Macalister, as Premier. His Excellency informed me that he had refused that proposal, as he thought it would not be constitutional to take the name of a member of a Ministry that was at that time under the censure of the House, to form a new Government; although he had no objection whatever to receiving his name, or that of any other member of that Ministry, from Mr. Bell, in a list of Ministers. His Excellency also informed me that Mr. Bell had thrown up the task of forming a Ministry, and that as I was the only remaining member of the Government which had preceded the Lilley Ministry, he entrusted the task of forming a Government to me—which I take to be a thoroughly constitutional course. I have said before, and by many of my friends in this House—many honorable members, friends, I hope I may call them still, on the Opposition benches—

Mr. LILLEY: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is known that I did not want office—I did not look for office—and many of my arrangements were

made, not only for leaving the House, but for leaving Brisbane. But I considered that, in the then state of affairs—a Ministry having been put out on a vote of this House, and the honorable member who had moved the vote of want of confidence having failed to succeed in forming a Ministry of his own—it was my duty to receive His Excellency's commands; nay, more, I consider it is the duty of any man who puts himself forward in public life, under such circumstances, if he thinks he can do any good to the country, to take office, even at very great inconvenience to himself. I told His Excellency that I was not in the least prepared to be sent for, that I did not seek for it, and that I did not hope to succeed; but that I would do the best I could, even if I did not take office myself. I found, however, that, without taking office myself, it was quite impossible to get a Ministry together. On that ground you find me here at present. I may say to the House that, although I look upon the position of Premier of the colony as one of dignity and importance, I did not allow my own ambition to stand in the way at all: in offering the Treasurership to my honorable friend the member for Western Downs, who now holds it, I, at the same time, offered him the Premiership with it, which he refused to accept. That is all I may say about the formation of my Ministry, with this exception: I did try to induce my honorable friend, the member for Fortitude Valley, to take office as Attorney-General, which, after consideration, he refused. I almost regret that he did refuse. With that exception, office was not offered to any member of the late Government. I am happy to say that every member I asked to take office, with that exception, accepted. I do not know whether the House is pleased, but I am proud of my Ministry—very proud, indeed. I do not know what are the tactics of the Opposition; but I hear, and from what has occurred this afternoon, I think it is possible that we may be opposed "from the jump." That is quite on the cards, I think. We found, on coming into office, that we had succeeded, certainly not to a bed of roses, nor to any very grand inheritance, with an overdrawn account at the bank meeting us. Not that I mean to impugn the bankers in any way, for the Government bank has been exceedingly considerate to the Government. I think, for the benefit of the colony, throwing aside all party questions, that it is of the very greatest importance that a few of the most pressing questions should be passed before we come to the debateable ground. There are several things mentioned in our programme in the Governor's Speech which all sides of the House may very well join in advancing before we come to the debateable ground whereon we are likely to differ. I allude, in the first instance, to the financial statement of the Treasurer, which it is of the very greatest importance that you should have. I think it is of not any less import-

ance that the alterations proposed in the tariff and customs department should come under your notice as soon as possible. I think it of at least equal importance that a Loan Bill to provide for the wants of the colony should be passed—not alone sufficient to cover outlay already incurred on contracts entered into for building railways, but for other public works and for immigration purposes, for which large sums are coming due immediately, and are due now; and that the country should be in a position to meet those claims and to make payments at once in a proper manner. To meet that expenditure, it is really absolutely necessary that there should be a loan, whichever side of the House is in power. If the credit of the colony is to be sustained—and I should be sorry if any honorable member should think it is not to be sustained—it is of the very greatest importance that a Loan Bill should be passed at once, and that the Treasurer of the colony should be in a position to realise the amount as wanted. The amount that will be asked for may seem rather startling at first; but I have no doubt whatever that when the Treasurer comes to make his statement, he will be able to show that it is all wanted. The loan may look large, yet, absolutely not such a very great portion of it will be required to be put in the market at once. A considerable portion will be used to cover the deposits in the Savings Bank, which is a very desirable arrangement. I do not mean to hint that there is the slightest fear or danger of the safety of the deposits in the Government Savings Bank: the credit of the country is good, and its revenues are the security pledged for them. But it is deemed advisable that they should be covered by debentures, which, in the event of a run on the bank, could be realised upon at any time; and thus the Treasury will be in the best position, and in such an event no damage can ensue. At present this is not the case; but if there was a run on the Savings Bank, the Treasurer would have to enter into some inconvenient arrangement, which would be at a loss, being made under pressure, to meet the calls of depositors. I believe this must be clear; but the matter will be more fully explained by my honorable friend the Treasurer when he makes his statement. We propose to introduce a Savings Bank Bill, vesting debentures to the amount deposited in the Savings Bank in the hands of trustees; not taking the bank out of the hands of the Government, for if that was done, it would cease to be a Government Savings Bank at all. In the Loan Bill we have anticipated some of the notices of motion put on the paper, to-day, so far as including a sum of something like £50,000 to be expended upon roads and bridges in the colony. We consider that a legitimate purpose to borrow money for, more particularly when we look at the money that has been borrowed for railways, and the small portion of the colony which is bene-

fited by those railways, and the large proportion that derives no advantage whatever from them. Without going to the squatting districts at all, but to East and West Moreton and part of the Downs, it is of the highest importance and but simple justice to ask for £50,000, which we do not think too much, to be included in the Loan Bill, to provide and maintain roads and bridges, which I am sorry to say have been put into a worse state than ever by the recent floods. It is a very hard case that farmers who have paid a high price for their lands, and invested a large amount of capital on them, should be virtually shut out from the market by the want of means of communication therewith. There is also another purpose for which you will have to grant a loan to some extent. The Parliament, last session, passed an Act for the promotion of immigration; and, although most of the members of the present Government opposed the Bill in this House, after its passing, as a Government it is their duty to carry out its provisions and to give effect to the law. The Act cannot be carried out without money; the arrangements already entered into by the Agent-General at home, provide for a large number of emigrants to be sent out here; and, although it is supposed that the Act will pay its own expenses eventually, a large sum of money will be required to put it in operation. The cost of the German emigration alone will come to something like £18,000; and the total amount wanted will be from £45,000 to £50,000, if the arrangements of the Agent-General be carried out, and the number of emigrants he represents to be coming out are sent to the colony. If the money will ever be paid back again, which the promoters of the Act expect, is a question of time. Now, these are matters upon which very few members will differ; there can be no difference except as to matters of detail. The necessity for the whole of them being considered and decided on immediately, must be admitted by the House. Without any great stretch of imagination, all may be done in a very short time, if the House will go willingly to work. I believe the financial statement will take up an evening, at least; perhaps two evenings, for the debate. The proposed alteration of the tariff, and the Loan Bill, are next to be dealt with. Altogether, I believe, if the House goes to work with a will, everything can be passed in ten days. We can then approach what may be called debateable ground. As you have learned from the Speech, we think it our duty to bring before you the contract entered into for building a steamer for the postal service of the colony. The action of the present Government may have been misunderstood, and I wish to state what we have done. When in Opposition we had our own views on the subject, and we carried into office the same views, and we have not changed them—we entertain them, though, perhaps, modi-

fied to some extent. We did think it was a very arbitrary stretch of power on the part of any Government to enter into a contract for building a steamer without the sanction of this House; we did think there was no necessity for it; if there were, it would have been a very simple thing to call the House together to consider it. At the time the matter was entered upon by the late Government, there had been a very long recess, and the House might well have been convened. I wish the House to understand that this Government have done nothing in this matter. Any Government must have a very wide margin for expenses when the House is not in session, and we have done nothing in this matter except what I shall now state. The first thing that brought it up before us after our assuming office, was a letter from the agents of the Government in Sydney, Messrs. Eldred and Spence, to give additional time for the building of the steamer. We declined to interfere in the matter in any way, on the ground that no contract could be binding on the Government which was entered into without parliamentary authority. There has since been an application from Mort and Company for the first instalment. To that they got the same reply. The question stands in this way:—Mr. Mort will claim for loss. If the House votes the money, Mr. Mort will get his money; and the interest, of course, will have to be added upon the first instalment. Now, this question, also, shall be brought before you to be disposed of in a very short time, if you will devote your time and attention to it. We again think that your attention ought to be drawn to the remission of the national school fees without parliamentary authority. Perhaps there is not any of us prepared to say that it has not worked well. I know from the returns which I have received that the number of scholars for the first half of the year 1870 has been largely increased over the number in the first half of 1869; it is 2,300. I have not a return of the ages of the scholars, which may be a matter of moment. But we do think Parliament ought to be consulted upon it. The first we heard of it was in the Speech, in which the Governor dismissed Parliament last year. I think it is a dangerous thing to give a Ministry too much power. I should like them kept down to what they are legally able to do. With that view, we shall bring the matter before the House, and leave it to the judgment of the House, whether it will interfere with the remission of fees; but I, for one, the thing having been carried out, do not think it advisable to alter it. I do think, however, that the House should be asked for its opinion on the subject. This remission will involve £6,000 or £7,000 a-year additional expenditure to be provided, and that is equivalent to so much additional taxation; and that is a matter which may be fairly brought before the House. The fourth paragraph of the

Speech gives you our idea of what ought to be done with the railways to make them in some measure profitable. We find that one Minister runs the tariff up, another runs it down, another makes a differential tariff down the line: I do not say that favorites get their goods down for less than others, but some persons get them down from long distances cheaper than others get their goods carried for shorter distances. We think, therefore, that this is the time to put a stop to that, and to fix the rates of carriage by Act of Parliament. We know that there is a clause in the Railway Act which says that there shall be no differential tariff, but such is carried out. There is a great uncertainty as to what the tariff is. We have the example in England, I am informed, that the tariff is fixed by Act of Parliament; and I think it ought to be so here. On the particular matter of railways there is such a diversity of opinion that we see nothing for it, if we remain in power, but to ask for a committee of the House, which will thoroughly go in for a cheap system of railways. The improvements made at home, and, indeed, in the various colonies, in the construction of railways, renders it necessary that such a course should be taken before committing this colony to a very large expenditure for railways. We think; however, that a great deal of good might be done by passing a Bill to empower the Government to enter into agreements with parties undertaking to construct lines of railways into the interior—I think I may go so far as to say between Ipswich and Brisbane, if parties can be found willing in the same way—and willing to take Crown land in payment for the works. But we are not prepared to undertake such a thing as is set forth in a prospectus which I hold in my hand—a great “Australian North and South Railway and Immigration Joint Stock Company,” with a “capital of £20,000,000, in 1,000,000 shares of £20 each, £1 payable on allotment.” I am afraid that rather took the wind out of the sails of the honorable member for Eastern Downs—a railway from the south up to the far north, and out into the ocean! and to promote immigration at the same time! It is better than his proposal. It is anterior to his in date! This prospectus was sent up on the 22nd March; and there is a long article in the *Sydney Empire* of the 17th March, upon this gigantic project.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: Is that what you have taken your policy from?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. We carefully guard against any scheme like this—or, shall I say, the original, or the copy of it, initiated by the honorable member for Eastern Downs?

The HON. A. MACALISTER: I do not know anything about your scheme.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We carefully guard ourselves against that, and wish for a committee of the House to inquire into the systems of cheap railways, before binding the

colony to any very large expenditure on such works. I may tell the House that I did not introduce it into the Governor's Speech, because we might have spun it out till there was neither beginning, middle, nor end to it. We are in communication with the proper parties on the subject of telegraphic lines to Europe; and Mr. Douglas, the Agent-General at home, has instructions to negotiate for bringing the line, if possible, without injuring ourselves, to Queensland. But that is only carrying out further a subject initiated by the previous Government. We have instructed him, as far as possible, to ensure that end, in the carrying out of the work, even to the extent of guaranteeing five per cent. on the cost—if the House sanction it. We have carefully guarded ourselves against any mistake on this head. We had a notice of motion, to-night, on the subject of separation. For myself, I have, before now, at Rockhampton, given my views on the subject, as a private member of this House; and I do not know how the House will receive it. I was very much pressed, at the time of my election, to make it a Ministerial measure: I utterly refused, and I refuse now. Members of the Ministry can do as they like on this question, when it comes before the House. For myself, I shall vote for it. There are a great many ways of looking at it. I must look at the interests of my constituents more particularly than even those of other districts of the colony. I think it a great pity that the colony should be separated, and I look upon separation as a last resource; but I give it my adherence. I may mention that most of the Bills referred to in the Governor's Speech are in a forward state of preparation;—amongst them, that for additional representation—and that we are determined to go on with. This House is much too small. If there were no other reason for it, we are too apt, in a House of thirty-two members, to run into cliques and parties; to be unworkable, and to disregard the main questions affecting the true interests and welfare of the colony. Upon that ground, if none other, I shall bring in and support a Bill to increase the representation of the colony in this House, very largely—very largely, indeed. Of course, I do not know what the Opposition members of the House intend to do; but I put it to them, again, considering the manner in which we took office—that we did not want it—that the late Ministry had to leave in consequence of a vote of censure passed upon them by the House—that the party to the moving of that vote of want of confidence could not form a Ministry—that we are entitled to a trial by the House upon our measures. I do feel this, and very strongly. Nobody will admit as readily as I will, that if our measures do not suit the House, you are quite entitled to put us out. But I do put it to the House, whether it would not be better to sink party warfare,

which we have had too long, and to unite in passing measures that are absolutely necessary for the good of the country; and, when we come to debateable ground, let us fight it out. I am prepared to go to the country upon any main question. There will be no trimming on the part of this Ministry. It will not be a Ministry of expediency. I think I can say for my colleagues that we do not care for office. We took office, not at our own wish, nor even did we expect it; but having taken it, I do put it that we are entitled to a fair and impartial trial upon our measures.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he had a few observations to make to the House, and, he desired it to be understood that he regretted very much he should speak in opposition to the Government. He felt, and other honorable members on the Opposition side of the House felt, that they had placed themselves in a position to give the Government a fair trial. The question was, whether the members of the Government had placed themselves in a position before the House to receive a trial beyond what had already taken place. What he would regard as an unfair trial would be an attempt to get up a factious opposition, simply for the purpose of turning the Government out; while, on the other hand, he held that a fair trial was a consideration of their measures, provided the House were satisfied with their policy as announced. It was for the purpose of combating, as far as he possibly could, the Speech that had been delivered by the Governor in opening Parliament, that he now rose to address the House. It was certainly his intention, with the knowledge of honorable members on his side of the House, to propose several amendments to the Address. He regretted to observe that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, who had just addressed the House, had not noticed what was embodied in one of the amendments which he was going to submit. He regretted to hear the honorable gentleman refer to the contract for the steamer in the way he did; and, also, his remarks respecting the bank account, and the sneering propensities of the bankers.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY denied the latter accusation. He had said that we were under great obligations to the Government bankers.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: The honorable gentleman used the expression. He (Mr. Macalister) regretted expressions of that kind coming from the Government. They were not calculated to raise the credit of the colony. He saw nothing, himself, in the financial condition of this colony to create alarm in the mind of anybody respecting its credit and sound position. He felt that, instead of getting into financial difficulties, all we had to do was to make good financial arrangements. The honorable gentleman referred to the matter of the steamer in a very strange way. The Speech was the last

place in which a paragraph touching upon it should appear. It was a condemnation of the previous Government, and more than a condemnation. He thought that after the discussions which had already taken place in the House upon the subject of the steamer, and the subject of national education, they might very well have been left alone until the Estimates had been brought forward. If he understood the honorable member, he would imply that the Government had actually repudiated the contract for the steamer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: Yet the first instalment on the work had been refused. If that was not repudiation, he did not know what was;—if that was not giving the contractors the right to sue for breach of contract, he did not know what was. However objectionable the undertaking, there could be no doubt that the honor and credit of the colony were at stake; and the House were not prepared to back any Government who would imperil them. The honorable gentleman again, in the manner in which he referred to railways, gave him (Mr. Macalister) a very fixed opinion as to what the Government were going to do: there was to be a committee—in other words, the question was to be shelved. As he would shew, it was the only question of policy that the Government had referred to in the Speech. The House would see how much it was likely to receive attention from the Government. With regard to the company to which the honorable gentleman referred, there were twenty companies of that kind; and he could only tell him that he (Mr. Macalister) never heard of one of them, and that, instead of his borrowing ideas from them, it occurred to him that they had borrowed some from him. He was sure of this: that the honorable gentleman himself had borrowed some ideas from the Opening Speech of last session; in fact, the Speech today was a copy—a bad copy—a disgraceful copy—of the Speech delivered at the opening of last session. He would just refer to that:—He found in the Speech delivered by His Excellency on the 26th April last the following paragraph:—

“A Bill will be introduced containing the powers necessary to enable the Government to guarantee the interest on moneys to be expended by individuals or companies in the construction of cheap lines of railway.”

The present Government stated in their programme—

“You will be asked to empower the Government to contract with private individuals or companies for the construction of cheap lines of railway in the interior, and to pay for same by grants of land along the lines to be constructed.”

It was clear to him that the present Government did not understand the question at all. He should like to know what individuals or private companies would be found willing to construct lines of railway in the interior,

unless that interior were connected with the seaport of the colony. He was obliged to arrive at the conclusion that the Government railway policy was only a sham. He found also in the Speech of the 26th April the following paragraph:—

“4. To prepare the way for the introduction of Bills for a Re-distribution of the Electorates, and a revision and improvement of our Electoral Law, you will be desired to consider a measure repealing some provisions in the Constitution Act of 1867, which require unusual majorities in passing certain amendments of that statute.”

He found in the Speech just read to the House that his honorable friend went in for additional representation. Now, they had had an Additional Representation Bill laid before them year after year, until at last there was not an honorable member of any experience in the House who did not know that to introduce a Bill of that kind without first repealing the two-thirds clause, would be perfectly absurd. The honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Forbes, when referring to the conduct of the late Government, in connection with a Bill introduced into that House some two sessions ago, had stated that he would oppose the repeal of the two-thirds clause. It was introduced into the Speech of April with perfect sincerity, as nothing else would have obtained the object. Therefore, he affirmed that the introduction of the question of additional representation into the Speech of this session was tantamount to a simple announcement that the Government did not expect that Bill to pass into law. He found also in the Speech of April the following clause:—

“The Additional Customs Duties Continuation Act of 1869 will expire on the 31st December next, and you will be advised to reconsider its provisions early in the present Session.”

Now, the Government had taken credit to themselves for bringing forward this measure, and there it was in the Speech, clause 5—

“Bills to regulate the collection of Customs, for the better regulation of Gold Fields, for the amendment of the present very imperfect laws relating to Insolvency, to secure the payment of wages, to amend the procedure of the District Courts, to improve the Municipalities Act, and to provide for Additional Representation, will be submitted to you.”

With the exception of one Bill, he could say, positively, that he believed they were all old Bills which had been brought before that House year after year. The very fact that the Government announced their intention of introducing a Bill to regulate the gold fields, showed him that if they legislated in this direction they would do so in the dark. The late Government had introduced into their Speech, in April, this statement—

“7. An investigation into the state of the laws affecting Gold Mining is every day becoming

more needful, and I trust you will find time for this useful labor."

And the honorable Premier stated that the experience they had gained in endeavoring to get this matter through the House, convinced him that the appointment of a select committee would be necessary, before any safe legislation on the subject could be arrived at. The Insolvency laws were also referred to, and it would be found that in clause eight of the Speech of April, the late Government proposed to do the very same thing. The honorable member at the head of the Government had referred to the second paragraph of the Speech, as one of an urgent character, and, in point of fact, they were in office almost expressly to carry out that clause. He would read it—

"2. Among the first and most important of those, will be a Bill to enable a sum of money to be raised on Loan, secured on the general Revenue of the Colony, sufficient to cover the outlay incurred on, and the contracts entered into, for completing Railways and other public works, and for Immigration purposes."

Now, in the programme put forth by the late Government, which had been so often quoted, this paragraph would be found—

"12. You will be invited to provide for the various public works before-mentioned, and for the due security of the public trust funds."

So that the very matters the honorable member was so urgent to effect, and which he wished the House to think he had originated, were old measures put forward by a previous Government, and in existence long ago. The fourth paragraph of the Speech stated—

"The profitable working of the Railways is a question of much importance, and it is advisable that the charges for passengers and goods should be fixed by Act of Parliament."

Upon that subject he should give no opinion until the Bill was laid on the table of the House; but as far as he could at present judge from the information he possessed, he should not support it, for he believed it would be injurious to the working of the railways. The Speech went on to say, in the next clause—

"Your attention will also be called to a number of Bills not disposed of at the close of the session of 1869."

Why the very Bills themselves, which were not disposed of, were not mentioned in one paragraph, he could not see. But the general policy of the Government—their great card, was the last paragraph—

"7. You will be asked to empower the Government to contract with private individuals, or companies, for the construction of cheap lines of railway in the Interior, and to pay for same by grants of lands, along the lines to be constructed."

He had expressed his opinion, that the Government could not be sincere in bringing forward a proposition of this kind, because,

on the face of the paragraph itself, there was to be an authority given to the Government to carry it out. A Bill had to be passed by the House, and was it likely that anything of that kind would be done when the Government proposed to submit the whole question to a Select Committee? At any rate, the subject would be out of the reach of the House for another session at least. It simply meant, that the Government proposed to the House to pass a Loan Bill, to pass the Estimates, and probably to appoint this committee, and then the session would be at an end—he could see no more in it. He had been sorry to hear the honorable member allude to the colony, as being in such a desperate condition. That assertion was a direct contradiction to the last paragraph. Why, there were fifty reasons given for the prosperity of the colony; and he believed that wise legislation was only wanting to do away with all the difficulties under which it labored. There was no reason to deplore the condition of the colony in almost any respect. As he had stated to the House, it was his intention, shortly, to propose a few amendments to the Address; and he would mention them at once. The first was—

"That no Ministry will receive the confidence and support of this House, that is not prepared to introduce a financial policy that, in its fiscal arrangements, will not, for a time, aid and encourage the development of colonial industry."

He had been told, that such a policy was opposed to the principles of free trade, and would not be recognised. He was, himself, a freetrader, in the sense in which the term was applied in England. But the circumstances of this colony were widely different from those of the old country. When they found that the records of the Supreme Court showed a private indebtedness, to the extent of nearly five millions of money, and that interest on that amount was flowing out of the colony, to benefit persons in other colonies;—when enormous sums of money were being sent out of the colony every year to purchase articles of consumption, which could be produced here;—when they found that the result of all this was a reduction in the price of labor;—when they found hundreds of the most industrious colonists leaving Queensland to obtain employment elsewhere; and that the value of real property was so reduced, as to be almost worthless;—then, he said, that unless some scheme were adopted to secure the interests of the colony, and to prevent the out-flow of population, it would by-and-bye become altogether depopulated. He thought, therefore, that whatever arrangements were made, it was the duty of the House to insist that the financial policy of the Government in power, should embrace aid and encouragement to native industry. The second amendment which he intended to propose, was—

"That no Ministry will receive the confidence or support of this House that is not prepared to

initiate and carry out a general railway policy, which will include the immediate completion of existing lines, and the effectual opening up of the interior."

He was one of those who were altogether opposed to a stand-still policy. A young colony like Queensland must either progress or retrograde; it could not be kept in the same position for any length of time, and if they wished to encourage emigrants to come out to this colony, and settle there, they must open up the country by means of cheap and speedy modes of communication. His third amendment grew out of one of the paragraphs in the Speech, with regard to additional representation. He contended that additional representation was perfectly useless until the two-thirds clause was swept away, and he felt sure that every honorable member who gave the subject a thought must arrive at the same conclusion. There was another question to which his attention had been called—a very important question, especially to the northern districts, and he thought it should have been the duty of the Premier, as representative of one of those districts, to bring that question under the consideration of the House; for he should like to know of what use it was for a member to present himself to his constituents, and profess certain opinions, if he were not in a position to bring them forward, and advocate them before the Legislature. The honorable member was bound, whatever sides might be taken in the House upon it, as a northern member, to bring it forward. He, therefore, regretted to see that the honorable gentleman had not included in the Speech the great northern question of Separation. The next clause in his amendments was the final one, and, as he had before stated, it would have given him much greater pleasure if he could have gone along with the Government, if they had shewn a policy he could have supported. The members of the Opposition had waited carefully and patiently, in order to see what they had to do; but it had that day been announced that the Government did not intend anything at all, and it was absolutely necessary that the Opposition should put before the House the chief points of the policy they were prepared to endorse, and that they should submit to His Excellency a vote of want of confidence in the present Ministry. He would read the last amendment. (*Amendment read.*) And he would now move the omission of all the words after "Sovereign," from the Address in Reply, and the insertion of the following words in their place:—

And we beg further respectfully to inform your Excellency,—

(1.) That no Ministry will receive the confidence or support of this House that is not prepared to introduce a financial policy that, in its fiscal arrangements, will afford, for a time, aid and encouragement to the development of colonial industries,

(2.) That no Ministry will receive the confidence or support of this House, that is not prepared to initiate and carry out a general railway policy, which will include the immediate completion of existing lines, and the effectual opening up of the interior.

(3.) That no attempt to provide additional representation can be regarded as sincere that is not preceded by a repeal of the two-thirds clause of the Constitution Act.

(4.) That it is a matter of regret that, in your Excellency's Speech, no notice has been taken of the Northern question of Separation.

(5.) That, in the absence of any announcement in the Speech, delivered by your Excellency at the opening of this session, of an intention on the part of the Government to introduce measures to Parliament having the foregoing objects in view, we have no confidence in your Excellency's present responsible advisers.

Mr. MILES seconded the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said, the Government were certainly under some obligation to the honorable member for the clear way in which he had spoken. No one could any longer mistake the intentions of honorable members opposite. For the last few months the country had listened to protestations on the part of these gentlemen that they intended to give the Government a fair trial; to judge them upon their measures, and to accord them that confidence to which every new Government was entitled. For his part, he must confess he had placed very little reliance upon these professions. He had seldom done so, especially when they came from enemies, and therefore he was not at all undeceived by what he had just heard. He should endeavor to answer some of the objections to the Government programme taken by the honorable member for Eastern Downs. But before doing so, he must notice the disingenuous, ungenerous way in which that honorable member had alluded to his honorable colleague the Premier. He was quite sure that, except for party purposes, no honorable member would say that his honorable friend had referred to the purchase of the steamer by the late Government in either a sneering or disparaging way. He (Mr. Walsh) did not hesitate to say he considered the Speech one of the most temperate, one of the very best speeches he had ever listened to on similar occasions; and he thought the honorable member, if he wished to judge the Government, should at least have abstained from distorting the language they had made use of. He denied that any sneer whatever was intended or conveyed in the paragraph referred to—he denied it *in toto*. The late Government had purchased a steamer at the end of last year, and since that time, the present Government had had no opportunity of discussing the subject—the late Government took care to give them none until they died—died dumb, as had been properly remarked before. The honorable member for Eastern Downs had himself told him that he would oppose the late Premier tooth and nail,

if he rushed into that expenditure. Yet the honorable member and his supporters were now perfectly prepared, for party purposes, to condone the infringement of Parliamentary practice, and attacked the present Government for bringing the subject under the notice of the House. The honorable member was also in error when he said that the present Government had refused to pay the first instalment demanded by Mr. Mort for that steamer. They had done nothing of the kind. Possibly it was owing to the ability, or perhaps the want of ability, displayed by the then Attorney-General, that the contract itself did not say a word about the payment for the steamer. There was not a single word in the contract about payment, except that so soon as the first £4,000 was paid, the steamer would be the property of the Government. The present Government did not as yet know whether the Parliament would accept the steamer or not, and was it likely that they were going to pay the £4,000? They did what, as servants of the country, they had a right to do. They said, "We must first get the sanction of Parliament." They declined to act in an unconstitutional manner, and he must say, to the credit of Mr. Mort, that when he was shewing them the steamer, in answer to a remark from him (Mr. Walsh) that he was not quite sure they would be able to pay for it, and that the Government would probably be taken to task about it, that gentleman said—"Well, it is a purely constitutional question, and if I were a member of your House, I should vote against it." He had, certainly, quieted his conscience by saying, "But if I cannot make the country pay, I can, certainly, make one or two members of the Government pay;" and he (Mr. Walsh) had earnestly pressed upon him, for the sake of constitutional practice, to take that course. The honorable member for Eastern Downs had chosen to take great objection to the way in which his honorable friend had alluded to the originality of the design to make this enormous railway across the country, but he would mention another great railway authority. Mr. J. Thorneloe Smith had laid before him the same scheme, and it was, therefore, a question whether the honorable member copied Mr. J. Thorneloe Smith's scheme, or whether Mr. Smith copied that of the honorable member. It was now found that a Sydney firm claimed the credit of it; so that there were positively three different claimants, and a more preposterous scheme was never placed before any one, or planned, or spoken of, outside a lunatic asylum. That was so easy of demonstration, that it was hardly worth his while to establish it. The honorable member said he disagreed with the railway policy of the Government, because it did not embrace an extension of the railway to the seaboard; but he (Mr. Walsh) had yet to learn, that if this new design of the honorable members opposite, brought up for party purposes, were carried

out, it would bring the railway much nearer the sea than it was, at the head of navigation, at Ipswich. He could remember the time when the honorable member talked about a seaport, and it was his intention to give Brisbane the go-by. He then told his constituents that he would never consent to a line of railway running alongside a navigable river. The honorable member now sought to woo the opinions of the Brisbane people; he threw off the old love to take on with the new. What did the honorable member and his supporters really intend to do?—to add some £300,000 or £400,000 to the debt of the colony for a railway. And where did he propose to bring it?—to South Brisbane, where he (Mr. Walsh) had been told by competent engineers that no terminal station could possibly be worked. The honorable member intended, he believed, to bring it somewhere near the site of the new bridge.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he never intended to do anything of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He did not think the honorable member knew exactly what he intended to do. He had sought in vain for the instructions given by the honorable member, which had led to this increased expenditure for survey. He had certainly found an Executive minute in which Mr. Fitzgibbon's surveys were strongly animadverted upon, and the necessity of another survey referred to, but he had been unable to find any other instructions or authority for this increased expenditure. He had then applied to the engineers, and he would read a reply from one of them, which he believed would give all the information necessary. In reply to a letter addressed to Mr. R. B. Smith, from the Works Office, asking him who had instructed him to make those surveys, that gentleman had written, on 3rd January, 1870, to say that he had acted upon verbal instructions given by the late Minister for Works, on Sunday, at Mr. Taylor's house, at Toowoomba. Another engineer, to whom he had applied, did not appear to have received any instructions, verbal or otherwise—he must have made the survey from instinct. The honorable member for Eastern Downs, on the subject of gold fields, took exception at the policy of the Government, because they did not propose the appointment of a commission to inquire into it—he seemed to think they knew so little of the subject that they could do nothing of themselves. Now, it so happened that when the honorable member brought in his Bill, last session, that was the very point he (Mr. Walsh) had urged upon the House. The honorable member had therefore no right to find fault with the Government, because he could not possibly tell in what way they proposed to introduce their measure, and that the proposition to appoint a commission emanated from him (Mr. Walsh), and not from the honorable member. Then the honorable member made out a strong case against the



Government, because they wanted to have a committee on railways, when the whole prosperity of the country depended upon the completion of the line to Brisbane. He would ask, had not the country paid enough already for rushing heedlessly into railway expenditure? Had railways not cost the colony over three millions of money already, and what length of lines had been constructed for that outlay?—about 130 miles only on the Ipswich and Toowoomba line, which shewed a total cost of over £14,000 per mile. Yet, because the Government objected to rush at once into an extravagance which the country was not prepared to meet, the honorable member made that the ground of an amendment upon the Address. He could only tell the honorable member and the House, that if a little more attention had been paid to committees, and a little more attention to constitutional practice, and a little more rest and caution practised, not less than one million of money might have been saved, which had been frittered away upon railways in this colony. He had not been able to get hold of the figures to shew this, but he had no doubt that sum had literally been squandered. If the late Minister for Works had been a little less the victim of delusion, that would not have been the case. He found that over £85,000 had been paid to Mr. Fitzgibbon alone; and did the honorable member think that, if another 130 miles of railway had to be constructed, the Government would agree to pay that sum without ascertaining the cost to which the engineer was put who made the surveys? He had been assured that the very outside sum Mr. Fitzgibbon could have spent on those surveys was £20,000; and he did not hesitate to say, that if the honorable member had been a little more cautious, some £30,000 or £40,000 might have been saved to the country. The facts in reference to the payments to Mr. Fitzgibbon were in the possession of the Government, and they were quite sufficient to induce the Government not to rush into further outlay, without having all the information they could obtain to lay before the House. If it could be shewn that it would be advantageous to the country to make the line between Brisbane and Ipswich, the Government would be delighted to do it; but let them first ascertain what it would cost. It was his impression that when the railway was brought to Brisbane, which he supposed it would be some day, the tariff would not be increased one bit. There were a good many suggestions to lower the tariff, but none to increase it, and yet it would be very easy to shew that the charges were lamentably low. Still, although they had been reduced to a minimum, the traffic had not increased. They had been very unjustly reduced, too, by the honorable member in favor of the squatter, to the detriment of the small farmer in the neighborhood, so that the squatter could afford to sell his produce at a price which the other could not.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: The same rate would be charged to any person who sent the same quantity.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He maintained that a special arrangement had been made in favor of a certain person, and he pointed out the fact to show that it was impossible to cultivate a trade by such means. The small farmer who sent only four tons sent them at a disadvantage, because another person who sent twenty tons was able to do so at a reduced rate. He would also, as another proof of the difficulty of cultivating a trade, refer to the reduction of the passenger rates by the honorable member.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: The passenger traffic was nearly doubled.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: True, but the revenue had decreased. Another reason for believing that the extension of the line to Brisbane would not materially increase the profits on the whole line was, that the railway revenue was steadily falling off, from what cause they had yet to learn. It was an extraordinary fact, and it seemed like a punishment inflicted upon the colony for their extravagance, that from the very day the Allora line was opened the revenue from the railway had decreased. He had been informed that last year over £3,000 had been paid for drays coming down to Warwick; and he, for one, as Commissioner for Railways, as a parliamentary representative, and a steward of the public money, would be no party to a paltry contest with carriers who had to live and bring up their families upon their earnings, in order to get a few more bales of wool carried on the line. The Government wished to act constitutionally and legally. They had no power to make different charges, even if it were beneficial to the line to do so. He found that now wool was sent to and from Ipswich and Toowoomba, by special contracts, at 38s. per ton, while other persons at Toowoomba had to pay 60s. to Ipswich. He found that there were a great number of persons at Toowoomba who paid more for their carriage than other persons who were some miles beyond Toowoomba. He found that Mr. Tooth's tallow was taken down at 30s. per ton, while 40s. per ton was the Toowoomba price, and 60s. elsewhere. He found that one large squatter had made such a favorable arrangement with the honorable member, the late Minister for Works, that he actually got his casks and material carried for nothing. It was true he had to pay for them when they came down again; but there was nothing to compel him to send them down again, and he might, if he chose, supply the whole district with casks. That was one of the effects of the special arrangements made by various Governments which, he maintained, were illegal. He was quite sure they were unjust, and he was also sure that, from one cause or another, the railway revenue was decreasing. There was an agreement made with the large squatters by which they could get their goods

up for nothing. They were charged for the goods sent down, but they were not compelled to send goods down. Now that, he held, was an injury to the small producer, with whom there was no such agreement. Those were some of the reasons why he ventured to predict that it would be difficult for any Government to devise means for the full development of the railway resources of the colony. He was quite well aware that the working expenses of the railway were barely covered by the receipts; and he ventured to prophesy that whoever lived to see the railway extended to Brisbane would find that the fares from Toowoomba, Dalby, or Roma, would be no higher than from Brisbane to Ipswich. Whatever might be said in favor of their railway schemes, he unhesitatingly maintained that the railways had been the curse of the colony; and they still were the curse of the colony. There was an enormous debt resting on the colony, which gave, as a matter of course, cause for heavy taxation, and, no doubt, increased expenditure would occasion further taxation. The present ordinary roads throughout the colony were a disgrace to the colony; and it was those railroads that had ruined the colony. The farmers had been actually robbed by them. Many of the farmers had come to him with tears in their eyes, complaining that they had not the most ordinary facilities for the transport of their goods to market. It would, he maintained, be a disgrace to the colony to make more railways until roads were provided for the farmers, to enable them to bring their produce to the nearest market at the least cost. Now, where was it, he asked, that the railroads should be carried to? Why, the Government was asked to carry them to Roma. Now, that was simply to carry them into a wilderness. He admitted that the country in that district was splendid country for sheep and cattle, but certainly not, in his opinion, for farming and general agricultural purposes. If the railway policy, advocated by the Opposition, were carried out at the expense of the country, it would be a robbery of the country; but if it were done at the expense of capitalists, on the principles proposed, it would be a benefit to the colony. He held that if the line were extended from Ipswich to Brisbane, as proposed, the traffic would not be increased to the extent of 10,000 bales of wool per annum during the next ten years. Now, he maintained that no honorable member could say that Roma was ever likely to become largely settled by an agricultural population. In East Moreton there was a large population—a large farming population—and if there were a railway through that district, he felt confident that a large addition to the revenue would accrue. If they were to have railways, let them have them carried out in those districts where there was likely to be an increase of population, instead of having them through a district where their only advantage would be to afford greater facility for the

bringing down of a few more bales of wool annually. It was well known that a survey had been made for the construction of a line of railway between Ipswich and Brisbane, and the latest proposition was that the terminus should be at South Brisbane. Well, if that scheme were carried out, Queen street, in Brisbane, would soon be totally deserted, and the whole of the shipping would be transferred to the other side of the river. One of the most eloquent speeches the honorable member for the Western Downs ever addressed to the House, was against the construction of a railway between Ipswich and Brisbane; and one of the most eloquent they had heard from the honorable member, lately, was in favor of the line. But the country would no longer put up with such a changing course of conduct. To check such a course of procedure was one of his objects for going into office; but when he saw a better man come forward to occupy his place, he would be happy to give way. Taking all the circumstances of the colony into consideration, he hoped the House—misguided as it had been—would pause before it would inflict upon the colony, what he believed would be a great disaster, by rejecting the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech.

The Hon. R. PRING said he felt that, on the present occasion, he labored under some difficulty in addressing the House, because he felt he might be charged with being able to attune his conduct to the circumstances of the period; but he denied that such was the case, and he could assure the House that he did not estimate his character as, no doubt, some of his opponents did. He should be sorry to have lived so long as he had lived, and not to have gained information that would justify him in changing his opinions. He felt that it would be downright stubbornness on his part if he did not change his opinions to accord with the changed circumstances of the colony. If he had changed his political views, or could be charged with having done so, he could give a reasonable explanation for doing so. He had lived in the world too long not to know that all things changed, and that the ideas which he or any one else entertained at one time were not suited to the altered circumstances of the colony. The only regret he had in addressing the House from the Opposition benches was, that he should have to oppose the honorable the Premier—a former colleague, and a gentleman whom he highly esteemed. However, he must say that private friendship would not deter him from taking the position he did on the present occasion, and at this important era of the history of the colony. He was a colleague of the present Premier about two years ago, and at that time he supported the policy that was enunciated by the Mackenzie Ministry. Well, the policy now brought before the House by the honorable the Colonial Secretary was nearly identical with that of Sir Robert Mackenzie. But

the House rejected that policy, and the Government, in consequence, resigned. Now, as that policy was unacceptable to the House, he would not adopt it again. Since then the minds of men had changed, times had changed, and the circumstances of the colony had changed; and his views had also changed. And honorable members knew that, as they set their shoulders to the wheel, it was impossible to know what changes would be effected. However depressed the condition of the colony might be considered to be, there were, he maintained, in that House, men who possessed ideas and energy sufficient to float the colony into a condition of prosperity. He readily admitted that he had changed his position; and he had also changed his politics, but in doing so he had done no more than any honest man would do. Still he held that he had not changed his political views any further than, as he thought would be satisfactory to the colony—and that was sufficient for him. Now, when he changed his views, and joined the Lilley Government, and went in for the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway, he was opposed by the Attorney-General of the present Government; but the electors of the Burnett chose him in preference to the present Attorney-General. He was proud of that, because it shewed him that his constituents considered that he had taken the right view of the position of the colony—and they endorsed his opinion. The honorable member who moved the adoption of the Address had accused him of inconsistency in the matter of the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway, and had quoted from "Hansard" in support of his assertions. But the honorable member could not have understood the passage he quoted; and he would tell the honorable member that he would say the same thing now, under certain circumstances. When he advocated the extension of the railway from Ipswich to Brisbane, he stated that it had been proved to his mind, not only by calculations of his own, but by the calculations of those in whom he had reason to place the utmost confidence, that it would be beneficial to the colony to continue the line from Ipswich to Brisbane. The honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Forbes, had taunted him, and other honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, with desiring to obtain office for the sake of obtaining £1,000 per annum. Now, he denied the insinuation that such was the grounds of Opposition; and what was more, he would suggest to the honorable member that the notice of motion that had been laid on the table of the House in the course of the afternoon, proposing that he, Mr. Forbes, should be appointed Chairman of Committees, which would secure for him, if agreed to, either £300 or £500 a year, might have had something to do with his moving the adoption of the Address in Reply. He (Mr. Pring) had come there to do what he could for the good of the country, and yet he

was charged by the honorable member for West Moreton with being a member of a political faction, and with being desirous of obtaining £1,000 a year. He thought he had said quite enough to dispose of that gentleman. He would now come to the main question; but, just before doing so, he would take the liberty of remarking that the Government had assumed a most extraordinary position. Still, it was one he was not surprised at their assuming, because he knew that their combined power would not suffice to keep the Minister for Works straight. He would also desire to express his high appreciation of the very mild and quiet way in which the honorable the Premier so clearly explained his reasons for taking office; and he would ask permission to compliment him upon his taking office, because he believed the honorable gentleman did so from a sincere desire to benefit the colony. At the same time, he must say there was one thing he could not understand on the part of the honorable gentleman—and it was this. He could not understand why the honorable gentleman did all he could to turn the Lilley Government out of office, and the very next day after they succeeded to office, ask his honorable and learned friend to accept the office of Attorney-General in the new Ministry. It did seem surprising to him that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, on the day after his acceptance of office, should have rushed to gentlemen who had previously held the office of Premier, and asked them to take office under the present Minister for Public Works. That was one thing connected with the formation of the present Ministry that he could not understand. He must also say that he could not understand why the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government had asked the honorable member for Maryborough to join him; for that gentleman had always shewn himself to be, if he might use the expression, an untamable member—if ever there was such an one. Now, he did not see that the Ministry had any right to blame the Opposition for not giving them what was called a fair trial. What sort of a fair trial, he would like to ask, did the present Ministry, when in Opposition, give their predecessors? He felt inclined to ask whether honorable members did not agree with him in believing that the new blood that had been infused into the House did not shew an intention on the part of the country to effect an alteration in the policy of the Government? Now, the policy enunciated by the present Government was in terms almost the same as that put forth by the former Government; so that there was no credit due to the honorable the Premier for anything in the way of advancement. What right, then, had honorable members on the Government side of the House to endeavor to throw out the previous Ministry? Their opposition, he maintained, was of a purely personal nature. The motion upon which the late Government was thrown out

was one expressive of a want of confidence—and the motion was tacked on to the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech. The Opposition at that time admitted that the policy of the Government was good; but they tacked on to the Address a motion of want of confidence—and there it was on the records of the House. Now the policy of the late Government had been taken up by the present Government, as the honorable member for the Eastern Downs had shown; and he (Mr. Pring) must say, that he could not sit in the House and submit to be governed by a Ministry that would act in such a way. Of course, he hoped it would be understood, that he was not speaking otherwise than politically; for he should be very sorry to say an unkind word of any one of the members of the present Ministry. However, he would maintain that the late Government did not obtain a fair trial. They were compelled to resign; and he believed it had been found by the country as well as by the House, that the House, in throwing out the late Ministry, had committed a great mistake, as regarded the welfare of the colony; and if that mistake had been made a sneer of, the sooner it was rectified the better; and those members of the late Government, who might be hereafter entrusted with the reins of government, would be enabled to rectify it. He did not include all the members of the late Government in what he said, but he hoped to live long enough, to see the late Premier again in the position of Prime Minister of the colony. If the late Colonial Secretary was proud of the members of his Ministry, he (Mr. Pring) could say that he was proud to serve under him, and would be willing to serve under him again. He fully trusted him when he entered his Government, and never while he was a member of that Government, had he any reason to distrust him. And he would trust him again. He (Mr. Pring) had never had an opportunity of explaining his conduct, in joining the late Ministry, because the House was not in session when he did so; and having joined the Ministry so recently before the House met, it was not his duty to do what his leaders thought it was judicious not to do. He was too well trained in his profession not to know that it was not for him to get up and defend his leaders, who were in the House to defend themselves, if they thought fit. He believed that his colleagues endorsed his opinions; and he could assure the House that he endorsed theirs. He believed it would have been better, when there was no one found to second the adoption of the Address in reply to the Opening Speech last session, that his honorable and learned friend Mr. Lilley had at once sent to His Excellency the resignation of himself and colleagues. Were the members of the late Ministry to be accused of having resigned as dumb dogs, when it was well known that almost every member of the House was pledged to turn them out? He

believed that the course the late Ministry took on that occasion would result in again placing them at the helm of affairs. No doubt, every honorable member had his own notion as to what would be most conducive to the prosperity of the colony; but it rested with a majority of the House to decide as to the way in which the Government of the colony should be carried out. If there were two parties, differing in opinion, it would be for the majority to say which party should take the lead. Now, he opposed the present Government because, in the first place, he did not think their policy would be satisfactory to the colony. He believed their policy to be retrogressive, instead of progressive; and, further, he did not believe the Government intended to carry out one-half of the measures they proposed. He knew what they intended to do, if they could entrap the House into supporting them;—but he would not tell them, lest he might tell them too much. He had taken the trouble—and it was some trouble—to look up the speeches made by the members of the Ministry to their constituents, on the occasion of their re-election, and, judging by their speeches, the conclusion he arrived at was, that they intended to do nothing, bring nobody to the colony, spend no money, and yet pay off the debts of the colony. The honorable the Minister for Lands had two grand ideas—the promotion of cotton-growing, and protection for cotton-growers. Now, he wondered what the honorable the Minister for Works would go in for?—Probably, protection for sugar, or wool. No doubt, every member of the Ministry had his own little game. He considered the honorable the Minister for Works showed he was grossly ignorant on the subject, when he attacked his (Mr. Pring's) honorable colleague, Mr. Haly, because of his views in regard to protection. Why, the question of protection had given rise to some of the greatest debates that had ever taken place in the Imperial Parliament; and one of its results was to convert Sir Robert Peel, at one time the leader of the Tory party, to the adoption of the principles of free trade. Yet, on the question of protection, they had been told by the sage Minister for Works, that the House must not deal with it till the Ministry had stated what they were to do with it. As to the speech of the honorable member for the Western Downs, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, it showed that he was a greater squatter than ever he had previously appeared to be; and that he would go in for squatting more than ever he had done, because he thought it the most likely thing to promote the progress of the colony. Now, he must say that he looked upon the present Ministry as a Ministry that had no intention to do anything whatever to make the colony progress. If he gauged the Ministry by their hustings speeches, he must say that he could have no faith in them, for their politics seemed to be wholly distinct

from his. When he last addressed the electors for the Burnett, he had to tell them that he would support the extension of the railway from Ipswich to Brisbane. He went up to Tabinga, and rode to the castle gates of his honorable colleague, Mr. Haly, and asserted that he would support the extension of the railway; but his honorable friend and colleague did not come to the hustings to oppose him. However, he carried his point; and, on that occasion, his opponent was the present Attorney-General, who said he would never consent to the construction of the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. The Attorney-General, in saying so, thought, no doubt, that he was playing a great card, but he did not succeed. Well, if he had no faith in them before, what could he think of them now, judging by their speeches; and more especially when he found them pirating the politics of others? The tack was changed. Finding that the current of public opinion was against them, and that they had made a grand mistake in their hustings' speeches, they did as the Minister for Lands said—they "trimmed." Therefore, he could have no confidence whatever in the present Government. They came forward and asked the House to give them a "fair trial." After what he had read in the newspapers, he did not know what a "fair trial" meant;—he thought they had had trial enough—a great deal too much. It always appeared to him—and he coincided with what had been said by previous speakers—that, if they were honest politicians, the House would let them carry out their programme, admitting that they intended to do so. But he did not accept their programme;—their policy was not the policy that the country would care to have carried out;—it was a suicidal policy—it was one that would prevent this colony from progressing; and, he thought, it was one that would keep the land in the hands of the squatters. These had found the mistake they had made in making railroads to open up the country. If they had to consent, now, to the making of a railway to Toowoomba, they would not do it, and there would be none. It was an absurdity, now, to talk about not making railways. Was it not better to carry railways into East and West Moreton, and the interior, than to stand still? The object of making railways was to open up the land—to make available that which, at present, was not available—to increase settlement—to increase revenue. Those were the reasons why he advocated the extension of railways, on the principle laid down by the honorable member for Eastern Downs. If they could be carried out on that principle—which would require no money to be borrowed—then, he said, let the House, by all means, adopt that principle, and improve the colony. He could hardly talk coolly on the matter, to hear the Minister for Works' opinion as to running roads up and down East and West Moreton

for the benefit of the farmers. He could understand that as nothing else but a sop for the farmers—it was seed sown with a view to the future;—if there should be an election, that was the season at which the crop would be produced. He said, bring the railway down from Ipswich to Brisbane, and have a good system of road trusts to enable the farmer to go up to the various points of the line, and to send his produce to market, whether that was Brisbane or Ipswich. That was the proper scheme. And, now, in reference to the Queen's Speech—and a more miserable exhibition it was never his lot to see or listen to;—in the first place, it was an extraordinary document; and he ventured to say such a one was never laid before any Parliament, imperial or colonial; because, the first two paragraphs contained a censure upon the late Ministry, upon acts endorsed by the head of the Executive—the same head as of the present Government. How was the Governor advised, he asked, that such a document was ever prepared? It showed the utter ignorance of His Excellency's present advisers of what was due to their position and to the Parliament; and he would recommend them—and especially the Minister for Works—to make themselves acquainted with what was constitutional. He would shew what was the duty of an incoming Ministry to an outgoing Ministry:—

"All public officers are required to leave behind them, when they retire from office, whatever public documents may have come into their possession during their term of office, in order that a complete history of all public transactions may be preserved in the archives of the department. Private letters, however, do not come within this rule, even though they may exclusively relate to affairs of state. But no ex-Minister is at liberty to quote in Parliament from any document which he may have received while in office, unless it has first been made public by being laid before Parliament.

"When an Opposition comes into office, it is not expected to abandon its own engagements and adopt those of its antagonists. And though, as we have seen, it is customary for incoming Ministries to ratify and give effect to the intentions of their predecessors in the distribution of personal honors and rewards, yet they are under no such obligation in any matter which involves a question of public policy. If they disapprove of contemplated arrangements, agreed upon by their predecessors, but not fully completed when the change of Ministry took place, they are justified in peremptorily overruling such arrangements; and they may properly avail themselves of any technicality to refrain from the formal completion of a grant, appointment, or commission, issuable by the Crown, for which they are not willing to become responsible.

"It has never been the usage in England for any Government, upon acceding to office, to make use of its power and influence in Parliament, to bring under investigation the acts of its predecessors. Those acts were open to Parliamentary criticism when they were performed, and being uncondemned at the time, must be presumed to

have been sanctioned. It is, of course, competent to Parliament to investigate particular matters of complaint against individual ex-Ministers, whenever facts are brought to light which call for inquiry. But the power of a Government should never be employed against their predecessors in office, to obtain a censure upon their past policy for mere party considerations, or to promote an inquiry into the policy and justice of public measures which were undertaken by them whilst they held the reins of government."

That was from "Todd." He asked how the Minister for Works could reconcile his conduct when he attacked the late Minister for Works—until he actually caused unpleasantness from the number of times he was contradicted—when documents which would afford information were not laid before Parliament—how could he reconcile his conduct with what was laid down by Mr. Todd? No such line of conduct had ever before been witnessed. There could be nothing but recriminations, and who was to decide which was right and which was wrong? Such conduct by that honorable member was worthy of one who did not know his duties, and who never would know them, and who was always led away to attack and abuse everybody; and who, instead of supporting the policy of his Government—instead of advocating their principles, had made a speech that, so far as the Ministerial policy was concerned, might have come from the Opposition side. Not one word did he say why he consented to the Opening Speech as an exposition of policy; not a word of what he was going to do for the country, not a single word but abuse. Now, about the steamer. He (Mr. Pring) understood the honorable the Colonial Secretary to say that the contract was not repudiated. He could tell the honorable member, he hoped without being charged with discourtesy, that he was positively mistaken; he most solemnly said that the contract was repudiated by the Government, and he would prove it by the telegrams which were amongst the documents on the table, and he could prove it by the Executive minute that followed the legal opinion of the Attorney-General, which was not accepted, but was rejected as bad law—and upon his (Mr. Pring's) advice, absolutely. That legal opinion was now before the House. It had been adopted by the Cabinet, and was subsequently rejected upon his opinion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: How? We never had your opinion.

The Hon. R. PRING: No. The Government got hold of the wrong opinion—somebody else got the right one. That was how the honorable gentleman knew nothing about it. He maintained that the late Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lilley, was perfectly justified in what he did; and it was most unfair that this matter should have been included in the Speech, before the House could possibly decide whether the conduct or policy of the late Government in reference to the steamer

was a good one or a bad one. The whole of the documents should be laid before the House, and a motion founded on them at the proper time—when the House should be in possession of all information. But it was wrong, it was unconstitutional, that the matter should be mentioned in the Queen's Speech. He did not wish his word to be called in question, in any way; but he said, with the most sincere belief that he was correct, that the Minister for Works always said, and he had heard it mooted over and over again, that he advocated the construction of one steamer and opposed the construction of three steamers. For himself (Mr. Pring), he opposed, in the Cabinet, the construction of three steamers, but he agreed with the majority of the Cabinet in having one steamer. He might say—and the late Premier, Mr. Lilley, would allow him to say it—that that honorable gentleman told him he was wrong, and the Minister for Works was wrong in what they did.

Mr. LILLEY: Hear, hear.

The Hon. R. PRING: He should not weary the House, or further take up their time, by saying anything about the policy of contracting for the steamer. The time would come for that, and he had no doubt that the House and the country would endorse that policy. He believed that the present Government would have done the same under the circumstances. He admitted that it was not constitutional to do it; but he did not care for the opinion of the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Forbes, when he talked about Earl Granville's despatch. He did not care for the despatch, either. More than that, the Colony of Victoria refused to receive it. Let any honorable member tell him what Earl Granville had to do with that House? Perhaps his Lordship would find it out himself, by-and-bye. All we had to do, as colonists, was to look to our Parliament and to our Government, and to the Governor as the representative of our Sovereign the Queen. Honorable members would learn, if they read the proper books, that the Secretary of the Colonies was only a very ornamental appendage for the dispensation of patronage; but he greatly forgot himself when he wrote his despatch to a free colony under responsible government. This was not a Crown colony, that he was to rule. He might write any number of despatches he chose; they would have the same effect. But, after all, if any one would take the trouble to read the despatch referred to, he would see that it did not go so far as was said, even by the great press of New South Wales, which misapprehended its tenor. He did not go to the extent of saying that it was unconstitutional to expend money or to enter into contracts without the sanction of Parliament, but "under certain circumstances." Who was to judge of certain circumstances? The Parliament—the people, through their representatives. The Government had a right to do so, so long

as they were trusted by the Parliament. That was indisputable. Therefore, when a Government misconducted themselves, the Parliament was their constituted judge; and all knew that the late Government had been judged and punished. Yet the matter was raked up, again and again. Never was a more unworthy act committed by one Ministry towards another than that. Now, he would shew that the contract was a good and valid one, entered into between the parties to it, and not as the Attorney-General said—

“The contract is sufficient in form, and would be good if made between competent parties; but I think it fails in that particular, and is not enforceable by Mr. Mort until ratified by Parliament.”

He would stake his legal reputation that it was.

“I am of opinion that the Government cannot, without the express sanction of Parliament, bind the colony to such a contract; unless they derive special authority under some statute.”

He was perfectly satisfied they could. The Attorney-General was running his head against a post.

“I know of no statute giving such authority;”

He (Mr. Pring) did not suppose the Attorney-General did.

“for though the Postage Act (16 Victoria, No. 35) empowers the Postmaster-General, under instructions, to make contracts ‘for or in respect of the conveyance of mails by sea,’ these words would not, in my opinion, authorise a contract for building steamers.”

That was the opinion the Government got to repudiate the contract. Now, was not this repudiation?—

“The Treasury,  
Queensland, 7th June, 1870.

“In reply to your letter of the 3rd instant, making application for a payment of four thousand one hundred and twenty-five pounds (£4,125) on account of a contract between yourself and the previous Government of this colony, I have the honor to inform you that the present Government, being of opinion that they have no power, without the express sanction of Parliament, to commit the colony to any such contract, decline to interfere in the matter in any way whatever.”

He could construe it no other way. If Mr. Mort had liked to accept that as doing away with the contract, he could have commenced an action against the Government; that would have given him a right to do so. He (Mr. Pring) told the Government they would have to pay, whether the Parliament voted the money or not, for the Court would give judgment against them. The learned Attorney-General did not appear to know the simple distinction between the right of the Government to enter into a contract, and the voting of

money by Parliament. The contractor to do the work had nothing to do with the Parliament. If Parliament would not vote the money, the law would make the Government find it. Parliament never did enter into details. The Government were formed, and they put into operation, by their authority, such matters as contracts, which they, and not the Parliament, entered into. Was it not repudiation, when, by a contract, a certain amount of work was done, a certain sum of money should be paid, that money was not paid? Everybody who knew anything about a contract, knew that the money was paid from time to time as the work progressed. Voting the money by Parliament had nothing to do with the contract, although it might affect the existence of the Government. The present Government did not know what repudiation meant, if they said they did not repudiate the contract; but he knew that they had repudiated it. With the greatest respect for the honorable the Secretary for Works, and without wishing in the slightest degree to reflect upon his veracity, he (Mr. Pring) hoped that the conversation would be taken down carefully, that it might go to Mr. Mort, and that Mr. Mort would endorse what the honorable gentleman had said; because he wished the matter settled. The late Government wished the contract to be entered into, subject to the sanction of Parliament; but the contractor would have nothing to do with the Parliament; and how he could say the late Government had acted unconstitutionally, when he tempted them to do what had been done, he (Mr. Pring) could not conceive. There was a grave mistake somewhere, and he hoped Mr. Mort would set it right. He thought he had addressed the House at very great length on the most important matters in the Speech, and that he had shown that the late Government had been very hardly dealt with; and also, that the present Government scarcely understood their duties at all, and had committed very grave breaches of duty as Ministers. He did not believe in their policy; and he did not think they meant to carry it out; he never did, and never would, believe in them; and he meant to oppose them “tooth and nail.” Something had been said about the position assumed by the Opposition; but he was not aware that it was necessary for an Opposition to define any policy. It was only the duty of the Opposition to disagree with the policy of the Government as set forth in the Governor’s Speech; but, inasmuch as at the present season it would be highly inconvenient for the public not to know the state of political feeling in the House, it had been deemed judicious and wise that the Opposition should have a policy. It had been laid before the House, in order that it might reach the country, to prove to the country that the Opposition were well prepared with a good and defined policy, which they deemed would be more beneficial

than the one put forward by the Government; and the Opposition would, if permitted, in the course of events, carry out their policy. There were many other honorable members to speak; and he felt that he had detained the House too long already. He could go on talking for hours upon subjects of interest to the people of this colony. The Minister for Works laughed, but this was not a time for jesting, but for serious consideration. If ever an important debate took place in the Assembly, it was on the present occasion, when there were two well defined parties—when there was to be no log-rolling, which he hoped never to see again as long as he lived—to choose between; and it was no time for laughter. He hoped the House would not find fault with him for not going through the amendments *seriatim*; he should give them his support, sincerely believing that if ever a policy could be faithfully carried out embracing what was contained in those amendments, a new era would shine upon this colony.

Mr. HALY said he would not have risen to take part in the debate had not his honorable colleague mentioned his name and his station. He had before stated privately and publicly that he would support the late Government, to see what they could do, on the same principle as he now supported the present Government. But he must warn the late Premier, as a friend of his, against his supporters. He had been besieged for his vote, last session, against the late Government, prior to that honorable gentleman being turned out of office, and by those very members who now sat around him; and he had heard them say things of him which he told them he could not believe. He told the honorable gentleman when he met him in the street; and he now warned him not to trust them again. Honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were trying to run the country to ruin for the sake of Brisbane, and nothing else. Their railway policy would ruin the colony. The House had been told that labor was being driven out of the colony. He wished his honorable colleague would not leave the House, now he had got up to speak;—the honorable gentleman never faced him, though he had just talked about bearding the lion in his den at Taabinga;—he was not game to face him! It was the enormous amount of taxation which had to be paid, on account of the railway policy, that drove the labor away. Paying such an enormous amount in duties, he could not afford to pay such high wages, or employ so much labor, as before. He could bring nothing to his station that was not taxed; he could not sign a bill but he had also to pay a tax; and all that was on account of a paltry railway which could not pay its working expenses. And, now, the House were asked to make more railways. He was ashamed of the House: the Opposition were the very men

who deceived the late Premier, turned out his Government disgracefully, and yet were now supporting him and coming forward to vote against the present Government. The Opposition were not worthy of trust. He (Mr. Haly) did not assist them in any way to turn out the late Government, and they asked him for his vote. He now supported this Government, every member having unwillingly taken office. His honorable colleague, the late Attorney-General, had not stopped to hear what he had to say;—he could tell him something if he had remained in the House. The honorable gentleman had given him a challenge, and had promised to give him notice to meet him at Gayndah, or at any other polling place, or no polling place; but the notice never came, and he was not aware that the honorable gentleman had passed his station—had sneaked by like a drowned rat! The honorable gentleman could make a good speech in the House, could make black appear white; but he could not fight it out in the terms of his own challenge, and did not attempt to do so. But, even then, he would never have been returned, if he had not promised to behave himself, and be a good boy for the future. He had before told the honorable gentleman, that all he cared to be returned for, was the £1,000 a year as Attorney-General. He had made a tool of the Burnett, which returned him for that, which alone was what he wanted or cared for; and for all he said, he had not one iota of respect for the poor man, or for the colony. He cared for nothing but himself. He made the people believe that he was going to do wonders, but when he had the opportunity, why did he not do all those works, which he said were so necessary in the new era which was dawning on the colony? The honorable member for Eastern Downs, with whom his honorable colleague was acting, had been doing such works for years, and what was the result?—running the colony to destruction. If this colony was without responsible Government, was a Crown colony, it would have done better—

Mr. ATKIN: Treason!

Mr. HALY: He did not care whether it was treason or not; it was true. If Queensland was a Crown colony, the employers would be able to pay laborers their wages, and the country would be far more advanced in every way than it was. When he saw its affairs disordered by men who were not actuated by any desire for its interests, but solely for the emoluments of office, how could he think otherwise? He did not care for treason; let his constituents turn him out if they did not like it, but he would say it. The late Premier ought not to sit with such men. Let no one think he (Mr. Haly) was opposed to railways; for he was in favor of them, as he was in 1863, when he voted against them because the Government would not tell him what they would cost. Instead of about £4,000 a mile, they had cost nearer

£20,000. There was no stronger supporter of railways than he if they could be made at a certain rate, to work at a little profit. If they would only pay the interest, or part of the interest, on their cost, he would say the Parliament had a right to go on with them. If companies could be got to undertake and complete them, without draining the colony and impoverishing the Treasury, he had no objection. If they could be made for £2,000 a mile, send them throughout East and West Moreton, and up to Roma, without fear;—though the district of Roma would never be known as an agricultural country. The thousands and thousands of acres of good land in the Valley of the Brisbane, with all the facilities for irrigation at a small cost from the natural reservoir, the Brisbane River, pointed that country out as the future garden of Queensland; and it possessed advantages far exceeding those of the western country; and he hoped yet to see the Valley of the Brisbane a garden surpassing any part of East or West Moreton or Darling Downs. There were but a few squatters at Roma, and to make a railway to that point was a delusion. Population would not be got to settle there. Referring to the Station Wages Bill, which had been brought forward by the honorable member for Maranoa, he (Mr. Haly) characterised it as a popularity-hunting dodge. Squatters were not the only men who did not pay their laborers' wages. There was an unfortunate gentleman, upon whom he did not wish to reflect, representing another class, the farmers, who had not been able to pay his Polynesian laborers. No matter who employed a laborer, he ought to have his wages; and he never would support any measure directed against or to support any one class. If railways must be made, they must be made at a low cost, and be reproductive. But, in his opinion, the colony would never be made anything of until irrigation was established, and the steam plough was an institution; then, there might be immigration, and the people sent far and wide up the Brisbane, and on to Rockhampton. He was a practical farmer. Land in America was not worth a farthing—it would not keep a bandicoot—until it was cleared; and to compare any part of British North America with the Valley of the Brisbane, was an absurdity to any man who had been there. Of course he took into consideration the long and severe winter there. With irrigation, a crop could be secured here every season of the year. But a poor man could be put on the land and would starve; he wanted something else to live. To settle the land, so as to ensure a prosperous state of things, was what the Parliament should direct its attention to; he was hopeful yet to see it realised, and although not a very young man, he expected yet to see Queensland thrive—but not under the policy of the Opposition.

On the motion of Mr. Lilley, the debate was adjourned until next day.