

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1870

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 16 November, 1870.

Presentation of Speaker.—The Governor's Opening Speech.
—Retirement of Mr. Speaker Elliott.—Committee of
Elections and Qualifications.—Informal Petition.—
Address in Reply to Opening Speech.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER.

The House met at half-past ten o'clock a.m., and, on the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, proceeded to Government House for the presentation of the Honorable ARTHUR MACALISTER, as Speaker, to His Excellency the Governor;—

And, being returned,

The SPEAKER reported that the Assembly had been to Government House, and there informed the Governor that it had been thought courteous to acquaint His Excellency

that the Legislative Assembly had, in the exercise of their undoubted right, elected their Speaker; and that he had presented himself for His Excellency's approbation, as the member chosen by the Assembly for that high and honorable office; to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:—

"Mr. Speaker,

"I approve, on behalf of the Queen, the choice which the Assembly has made in your person, and I congratulate you on the distinguished position in which the confidence of the House has placed you."

After which, he had, on their behalf, laid claim to all the undoubted rights and privileges of the House, and prayed that the most favorable construction might, on all occasions, be put upon their proceedings; to which His Excellency had been pleased to make the following reply:—

"Mr. Speaker,

"I further recognise, on behalf of the Queen, all the lawful rights and privileges claimed by the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in as full and ample a manner as they have been heretofore granted or allowed by Her Majesty."

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

Shortly after twelve o'clock a message was conveyed by the Usher of the Black Rod, that His Excellency the Governor requested the attendance of the Speaker and honorable members of the Legislative Assembly in the Council Chamber.

The House having proceeded thither, and being returned;

The sitting was suspended until half-past three o'clock.

On the resumption of the sitting, certain preliminary and routine business was disposed of.

RETIREMENT OF MR. SPEAKER ELLIOTT.

The SPEAKER reported that he had received a letter from the Honorable Gilbert Elliott, late Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, which he read, as follows:—

"Brisbane, 15th November, 1870.

"Sir,

"I have the honor to beg that you will do me the favor to convey to the Legislative Assembly my most grateful and sincere thanks for the uniform support and consideration I invariably received from honorable members, as Speaker, during a period of sixteen sessions.

"I would gladly, too, take this opportunity of assuring honorable members if, by any act or words of mine, in the performance of my somewhat difficult and delicate duties, I have unwittingly given offence to any honorable member, I

unfeignedly regret it; and I trust that any errors I may have committed during the long period I have mentioned, may be attributed to those of the head only.

"It was at all times my most earnest endeavor to carry out the Rules and Orders of the House with strict impartiality; and if, in doing so, my career, as Speaker, has been attended with any success, I am quite aware that I owe it entirely to the cordial support I always received from honorable members.

"I could have wished that my official career had not terminated without first having had an opportunity from the Chair of personally expressing my grateful thanks and acknowledgment for the kindness and consideration I ever received from honorable members individually and collectively. That, however, not being possible, in consequence of the sudden close of the last session, I could only have recourse to this method of doing that which I should gladly have done from the Chair; and I may perhaps be allowed to add that I cannot contemplate the termination of my connection with the Legislative Assembly without great pain, causing as it does a severance (I trust, however, only official) between many honorable and much-valued friends and myself, with whom I have so long and cordially acted: but when I called to mind that I was in my seventy-fifth year, and that upwards of fifty-five years had passed over my head since I entered the public service as an officer of the Royal Artillery, thirty of those years having been passed in the colonial service, and sixteen sessions as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, without having been for one moment absent from the duties of the Chair, either from sickness or any other cause, I believed it to be high time, and it may perhaps be considered more than high time, that I should retire in favor of a younger and more able man.

"It now only remains for me to congratulate you, Sir, on your elevation to the honorable position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, feeling assured that you will receive from the House the same support and kind consideration that were ever accorded to me.

"I have the honor to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"GILB. ELLIOTT.

"The Honorable the Speaker of the
Legislative Assembly."

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY the letter was ordered to be recorded and printed in the Votes and Proceedings of the House.

COMMITTEE OF ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS.

The SPEAKER laid on the table his warrant of appointment of the Committee of Elections and Qualifications.

At a subsequent stage,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY presented a petition from the honorable John Bramston, one of the candidates at the election for the Mitchell District, against the return of the sitting member, Mr. Handy, and moved that it be referred to the Committee of Elections and Qualifications.

Mr. ATKIN: Before the question was put, might he ask the honorable gentleman if he would postpone making that motion until the Committee of Elections and Qualifications had been properly constituted? At present, the House had only the Speaker's warrant, laid upon table this afternoon. It was in accordance with the law that three sitting days must elapse before the appointment of the committee could take effect; and until that time had elapsed it could not be said that the appointment was without objection. There might some very serious questions, both social and political, arise upon the reception of the petition; and he appealed to the honorable gentleman who had presented it to the House to be so kind as not to make the motion for the reference of the petition to the committee until the expiry of three days. If the honorable gentleman could not comply, it would be extremely inconvenient to have a discussion on the matter; as, no doubt, the House would like the debate on the Address to come on next. It was from no factious motives that he (Mr. Atkin) made this request. He did so at the request of one or two influential members of his party, who were unavoidably absent. It could make no difference to any one concerned, and no possible injustice could occur to Mr. Bramston by the delay; because, under the Legislative Assembly Act, the honorable member, Mr. Handy, was not obliged for four weeks from the date of the petition, the 7th November, to give notice to the committee whether he intended or not to contest the petition and defend his seat.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In laying the petition on the table and in making the motion, as he had done, he had merely followed what he believed to be the law and the custom of the House. In fact, he believed he had gone a little beyond the law, because he did not believe it was necessary that he should move that the petition be referred to the committee. He believed it was only for him to lay the petition on the table, as it had been received by the hands of his Excellency the Governor: the Act said, that "as soon as conveniently may be" the petition should "be laid by the Governor or the Speaker before the Assembly, and shall, by the Assembly, be referred to the Committee of Elections and Qualifications." In laying the petition on the table, he had done what he believed to be in accordance with the Act; and in making the motion he believed he had acted according to established custom. What had to be done, the sooner it was done the better—the petition must be laid before the committee. So far as

pressing the motion for reference of the petition to the committee, he had no other motive; and he had no objection to waive the motion. With the leave of the House, he would withdraw it.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

INFORMAL PETITION.

Mr. BELL presented a petition from certain inhabitants of the town of Dalby, on the subject of the reduction of railway charges.

The petition was read by the Clerk at the table.

The SPEAKER said the petition contained a number of declarations, but no prayer. According to the Standing Orders—and according to the Standing Orders of the Imperial Parliament—every petition must contain a prayer; it must not be a document comprising a series of declarations. He recommended the honorable member to withdraw the document.

Mr. BELL: Of course he should have to bow to the decision of the Speaker, if it were decided that the petition was informal, and he must take it back for re-construction. But, it would be recollected, if the House would endeavor to call it to mind, that the very question raised in the petition had been debated in the Assembly before; and that the very words, "and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray," had been constituted a sufficiently formal prayer before.

The SPEAKER said he was not aware that the words, "your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray," in a document setting out facts, were ever regarded as a prayer in a petition to the House. The Standing Orders referring to the subject, stated that there must be a distinct prayer in the petition. A petition should never appear in the shape of a mere declaration. He did not say that it was irregular on that account; but he would suggest that, in order to comply with the Standing Orders of the House, the honorable member should withdraw the petition.

Mr. BELL: The intention of the petitioners was to put forward a respectful document; and he believed the object of a prayer to a petition was to prevent any declaration or assertion being presented which might raise a debate. It was true that statements were made in the petition—or declarations—but it was wound up in the form of a prayer.

The SPEAKER said he would read the rule on the subject:—

"All remonstrances must be coupled with a prayer to entitle them to be presented, and can only be received by permission of the House."

If the House would accept of the document in question as a petition, then their Standing Orders would not be observed; and he thought it was not advisable to set them at naught. At any rate, he should not permit it, unless the House so decided.

Mr. BELL: Then, with the permission of the House, he would withdraw the petition.

Withdrawn accordingly.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER reported that the Legislative Assembly had, this day, attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency delivered an Opening Speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which, for greater accuracy, he had obtained a copy, which he then read to the House. [See p. 4.]

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

The Hon. B. B. MORETON moved—

(1.) That a Select Committee be appointed to prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor on opening the first Session of the fifth Parliament of Queensland.

(2.) That such committee consist of the following members, viz.:—Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Johnston, and the mover.

The motion was agreed to, and the committee retired to deliberate. Being returned—

The Hon. B. B. MORETON brought up the report of the committee, which was read by the Clerk, as follows:—

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

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

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

“2. The various subjects alluded to by your Excellency shall have our most serious consideration.

“3. We receive with pleasure the assurance that the telegraphic line to the Gulf of Carpentaria will probably be completed during the ensuing year; and that settlement under ‘*The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868*,’ is progressing.

“4. It is also a subject of congratulation that our mineral wealth is steadily improving.

“5. In common with your Excellency, we deplore the war which we have heard of as raging in Europe. We shall endeavor to preserve a strict neutrality, though we beg to point out to your Excellency that, owing to the absence of any naval force upon our coast, our abilities in that direction are very limited.

“6. Should we be called on to assist in defending or preserving the independence of the parent State, we shall submit with patience to any sacrifice we may be called upon to make.

“7. We trust, however, with your Excellency, that peace may be soon restored, and that with it prosperity may return to us.”

The Hon. B. B. MORETON then moved—

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

In his doing so, he said, the usual practice had been followed, which caused this duty to devolve on a young member; and, as such, he craved the indulgence of the House. It was with great satisfaction he proposed the Address, because he found that the Government had shown a determination to grapple with questions of some importance—questions, the solution of which was urgently required. Moreover, in looking through the Opening Speech, he found there manifested evidently a spirit of economy, which, at the present time, was absolutely necessary. Although they might try to expand the colonial revenue, they must, at the same time, contract the expenditure; and he felt satisfied, after reading the Speech, that the Ministry intended to do all in their power to reduce the expenditure of this colony. Honorable members would see that the Government were bringing forward a Bill for the purpose of raising money to cover the cost of railways, electric telegraphs, and for the construction of roads and bridges. For this portion, as a country member, he might say, that after this unprecedentedly wet season, expenditure was absolutely necessary, not only in the district in which he resided, but in those districts in which the railway was completed, so as to cause the roads to act as feeders to the railway. Money was to be raised, also, to cover the Savings Bank deposits, which was necessary in the opinion of those who knew the state of that account. Then, there was to be a Bill to regulate distillation. He had been informed that the colony suffered a great loss for want of such a measure. Next came the most important question with which the Government would have to grapple—the division of the colony into financial districts. He looked upon that as one of grave necessity—the separation of the different localities, so as to have a certain amount of self-government amongst them. He only hoped that the Bill would have a decentralising effect; because, at the present time, when there was a necessary local work required which would cost only a few pounds, letters had to be written and telegrams despatched to head quarters, and considerable delay incurred, before the work could be done. If the Bill should have the effect of leaving local wants to be locally dealt with, it would promote greatly the welfare of the colony. Then came the Bill to provide additional representation. No doubt, upon the face of it, a great deal of difficulty would still be found in disposing of that question; but, he believed, if honorable members on both sides of the House would apply them-

selves to it, as a matter of necessity, it could be done. With regard to the Bill to regulate and amend the laws relating to Elections, those who had gone through the late general election must be aware that there was a necessity for improvement in the way that elections were conducted.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. B. B. MORETON: Next came Bills to fix the salary of future Governors; to provide for three Judges of the Supreme Court, and to regulate their salaries; to equalize and reduce the salaries of Ministers of the Crown, and to authorise the imposition of a tax of five per cent. on the salaries of all persons in the service of the Government. That shewed the intention of the Government to try to reduce the expenditure as much as possible. There was not the slightest doubt in his mind, and there could not be in any other mind, that the Civil Service wanted compressing, so as to be compatible with the colonial revenue: at the present time, it was far beyond the necessities of the colony. But, whether the proposed scheme of taking five per cent. off all salaries of those serving the Government was the right way of doing it, he could not say. He would not pledge himself to it, but would reserve to himself the right to give his opinion on the subject at a future time. The Bill to amend the Insolvent Law was a measure of necessity; in fact, so necessary that, should not the law be amended, he would almost sooner be an insolvent man himself than a solvent one—noticing, as he did, that many persons, after taking the benefit of the Act, seemed to be in a more flourishing state than before. A measure for the better regulation of the gold fields was necessary, because, he believed that, so far as the northern portions of this colony were concerned, Queensland would turn out a great mineral country. But to develop its great mineral resources, liberal and wise legislation was wanting. Bills to amend the railway laws, to facilitate the payment of wages, to amend the District Courts Act, and for the registration of brands, would be laid on the table. He was sure, as far he could see, the Government could not be blamed for not bringing enough work forward. The third paragraph of the Speech was this:—

“Your attention will be called to a provisional arrangement made between the late Ministry and the Government of New South Wales with respect to a Mail Service by steamer from Sydney to San Francisco, *vid* Auckland, which, though subsequently withdrawn from, I think deserves your serious consideration. You will also have brought under your notice a proposal for a line of steamers from Sydney to San Francisco, calling at this port, New Caledonia, Fijis, and Sandwich Islands, both on the outward and inward passages, making this port the first of arrival and last of departure on this continent.”

It was very necessary that our mail communications should be increased by every oppor-

tunity possible; by which means we were likely to extend and to connect closely our commercial relations with the other countries of the world. His Excellency had remarked on the depression of the pastoral interest, and its causing the abandonment of a large portion of country. It was very evident to all persons that a great extent of the northern country would be abandoned, and that there must be very liberal legislation indeed to cause it to be taken up again, and to restore it to its former condition of progressive settlement. In expressing regret for the war in Europe, no honorable members could be better aware of the difficulty which it would occasion to the colony than those who represented interior districts; for it would prevent people arriving in the colony for the labor supply, and in other ways it would affect our welfare. It was not at the present moment the trouble was felt; but very shortly it would be felt, and especially by those living in the inland towns.

Mr. JOHNSTON seconded the motion.

Mr. GROOM remarked that although there was a great deal in the Address with which probably both sides of the House could agree, there was, nevertheless, a great deal in the Speech which had not yet been explained to honorable members. They were informed in one paragraph of the Speech that the reason why Parliament had not been called together until the 15th November, instead of the 15th October, was in order that those “engaged in pastoral pursuits” might have time to complete their most important business, thus to

“enable every member to attend and give his undivided attention to the pressing duties of legislation.”

If any fact were required to go forth to the colony to prove that the present Government were to all intents and purposes a squatting Government, that alone would be sufficient. No other interest was considered, in any way whatever; every other interest was ignored—must be put down. No matter how others were engaged; they might sink or swim, or go to perdition—and the country, too—so long as the squatters could attend to their own interests. It was in perfect consonance with the action of the Government since they took office. If he went back to the time when the late Assembly was dissolved, and to the issue of the writs for the general election, he had only to look at the conduct of the Government then to see how beautifully everything was arranged in their own interests. The election for the district of the honorable the Secretary for Public Works was the first fixed: the nomination took place on one day and the polling on the next. Take the election for Clermont, which was lately represented by a gentleman who had successfully opposed the Government, and who made the best speech ever delivered in the House, Dr. Benson. Every possible arrangement took place calculated to effect his defeat: the

nomination was fixed for a certain day, and the polling took place three weeks afterwards! Yet Copperfield was distant from Clermont only three miles. What was the reason of that delay? To starve Dr. Benson out, and to favor a ministerial candidate—to allow time for the sending-up of messages and telegrams that the copper-mining interest must oppose Dr. Benson—that a squatter must be returned. Dr. Benson was one of the ablest men who ever occupied a seat in the House, and, he (Mr. Groom) said it without hesitation, who had given information to the House which no other honorable member ever gave. Every exertion was brought to bear by the present Government to keep him out of the House, and to return one of their most ardent supporters. One of the measures to be introduced by the Government was to regulate the laws relating to elections. He hoped it would be a genuine measure, and be passed, and that such proceedings as took place on Western Downs would be guarded against. He remembered the polling day, in the town of Drayton, when eleven individuals were brought in from a station called Eton Vale: those eleven electors were brought in on horseback; there was not to be the least contamination whatever of them till they got to the polling-place, for there was a gentleman riding on each side of them, all the way, to prevent contamination by contact with even a single one of the radicals of Drayton, for fear they might possibly give a vote to those who were supposed to represent the liberal interest. The question arose, whether those persons could do as they liked? From Westbrook, on one side, and Eton Vale, on the other, the poor unfortunate individuals were marshalled in, and compelled to give their votes in the squatting interest. If they did not, the next day they would be discharged.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

MR. GROOM: He was glad to accept that assurance from the honorable gentleman. He did know, however, that it was found out how certain persons voted—electors of Drayton and Toowoomba, and no doubt they had voted conscientiously—and they were told next morning to go about their business, they would get no work. He kept no sheep, as every one was well aware; but they were told to go to Mr. Groom, that he would give them sheep to shear; that they had voted for him, and that they must go to him for work! He hoped the Bill, if passed, would be one to get over such difficulties to persons as that; and that it would guard against the defeat of such a political principle as the ballot. For example, he would take the district of Western Downs, in which there were fourteen or fifteen polling places. According to the present Electoral Act, each deputy returning officer possessed the power, at the close of the poll, of going through the list of members, and declaring the result of

the voting. The polling place might be a station, hamlet, or village. Now, he (Mr. Groom) contended it would be a very great advantage to observe the integrity of the ballot, and, in place of allowing the deputy returning officers to declare the poll at their stations, to provide that they should lock their ballot-boxes, seal them, and send them to the returning officer for the district, so that nothing should be unduly divulged. There could not be the least doubt that, in consequence of individuals having voted a certain way in the late election, pressure had been applied to them, and by their own employers. If all the ballot papers were sent back to the Returning Officer, who ought to be a non-political officer, though that was not always the case, a very different result would take place. It did appear to him that the Government had ignored every interest in the colony except the pastoral interest; the agricultural interest had been entirely thrown aside. That appeared to him to be the construction of the first paragraph of the Speech. Then honorable members were told that they were to have a Bill to raise money to cover the cost of railway works, electric telegraph extension, and parliamentary buildings, and for the repair of roads and bridges. It had been stated that the present Government were going in for the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. He did not know whether the term "railway works" was intended to bear the same signification conveyed in a paragraph in a previous Speech, when the House was promised certain "economical extensions," which were generally understood to mean the completion of the railway to the metropolis. This looked very much like a second edition of it, as no definite meaning could be attached to the phrase, "to cover the cost of railway works." At all events, if they were not to have any railway works they were to have roads and bridges. During the late election a good deal of political capital was made out of the offer of the present Ministry to bring forward a sum of £50,000 for that purpose. Now he had not the slightest hesitation in saying that such a sum would be a mere bagatelle. Why the district of West Moreton alone, if justice were done to it, would require that sum, and he had no doubt every member of the House would say the same of the district he represented, especially in view of the disastrous rains which had lately fallen. Such a sum, he repeated, was a mere flea-bite, considering the large extent of country it was intended to provide for. It certainly acknowledged the principle, as he heard some honorable member remark; but that would not repair the roads and bridges of the colony. Something more than that was required, and he should have been much better satisfied if the Government had come down to the House with a Bill to regulate the roads of the colony, that it might be seen whether they really intended to put them in

repair. £50,000 would be altogether insufficient for such a purpose, and it would have been better for the Government to have adopted either the proposition of the Colonial Treasurer of New South Wales, Mr. Samuels, to impose a duty of sixpence in the pound upon all salaries over £200—a sort of income tax, in fact—or even a land tax of sixpence per acre, than to attempt to raise money in the way they proposed, by taxing the civil servants of the colony only. Then it was proposed to introduce a Bill for the division of the colony into separate financial districts. He believed the honorable member at the head of the Government had signed the petition to separate the northern portion of the colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A mis-statement, as usual.

Mr. GROOM: He was glad to hear the honorable member's denial. At any rate, it was stated that, had he not signed that petition, his seat would have been in danger. Well, they were to have a Bill to separate the colony into financial districts. He was aware the honorable Premier was in favor of separating the northern districts financially, but did he propose to separate the other districts—the districts of East and West Moreton, and Darling Downs, for instance, in the same way? There were a number of measures enumerated in the Speech, but it was understood that the House was only to have the first taste of them now, and that they were to discuss them in the beginning of March next. He thought the first of April would have been a more appropriate day for the second edition. Then they were to have a Bill to provide for additional representation. Now, he had attended the opening of Parliament for sixteen sessions, and he believed no Government had ever come down to the House during that time without making a similar promise; and in one instance only, in 1864, did Mr. Herbert, who was about the best tactician the House ever had, carry out anything of the sort. That gentleman did get the House to consent to six additional members. He (Mr. Groom) charged the Colonial Secretary with knowing perfectly well that no Bill for additional representation could be carried until the two-thirds clause had been repealed. When the honorable member for Fortitude Valley brought in a Bill to provide additional representation, what did the honorable gentleman say? Why, that if the honorable member for Fortitude Valley were sincere in his intention, he should bring in a Bill to repeal the two-thirds clause. Why was that course not adopted now, when the honorable Premier had a majority at his back, and might hope to carry it? Honorable members had then been told that it would be dangerous to repeal the two-thirds clause, but he could see no danger to the colony likely to arise from it, unless it had any connection with the last paragraph of the Speech, in reference to the

strict neutrality it was necessary to maintain. He was convinced of the utter impossibility of passing an Additional Representation Bill without repealing the two-thirds clause, and, therefore, he could not believe that the Government had any sincere intention of carrying such a measure. He believed the honorable member at the head of the Government had no desire to see large constituencies represented whose representatives might not be favorable to his views. There were other matters to which he might draw attention. Among other things there was a Bill to provide three judges for the Supreme Court, and to regulate their salaries; but if the District Court judges—those parasites upon the Government, as he might term them—were done away with, he should not object. He believed that in the western district there was a good deal of work to do, but that was the only district, and he thought a Circuit Court every three months might be established with advantage. Then the House was informed that a Bill would be introduced to equalise and reduce the salaries of Ministers of the Crown. He saw no necessity for the introduction of such a measure. If the Government were imbued with such strong feelings of patriotism that they were ready to give up their time in the service of the country for a smaller remuneration, why could they not refund a portion of their salaries? The House would offer no objection, and he did not think the Treasurer would oppose them. It must be considered that the colony was a growing one, and although the present occupants of the Treasury benches might be able to do without their salaries, the persons who succeeded them might not, and at the same time might be able to render services equal to the amount they received. He did not think the Government had any right to ask for a reduction which would bind their successors. Then there was to be a most extraordinary Bill—no less than a tax of 5 per cent. on the salaries of all persons in the service of the Government. No distinction was to be drawn between those who received £600 a year and the unfortunate employés who had perhaps only £80 or £100. Why, even the proposition of the Colonial Treasurer of New South Wales, to which he had referred, to impose a tax upon all salaries over £200, had been received with a howl of execration; and what would be thought of a Government who could make such a one-sided proposition as this? If they had said that in consequence of the depression of the times, the heads of the different departments who received high salaries would have to submit to a reduction, he would have supported them, even if £100 a-year had been knocked off, inasmuch as large increases had been made to these salaries without objection when the times were prosperous, and there would have been some reason in the reduction. He thought that instead of a wholesale tax of 5 per cent. all round, it would have been much better

for the Government to have exercised their own discretion in reducing some salaries and probably even increasing others. Then there was to be a Bill to re-organise the Volunteer force, whatever that might mean. It was only the other day he had seen that the colonel of the volunteers had been placed on a war footing. Had that any connection with the last paragraph, and was the colonel to go as *attaché* to the plenipotentiary ministers who were to be appointed? At all events, side by side with that announcement, there was a notice in the papers that the Government could no longer pay for an assistant drill instructor, and that all parties holding arms were to take them back to the armoury. So that if, as it appeared, the real volunteers were to receive no assistance from the Treasury, he should certainly, so far from supporting the Government in this measure, give his most hostile opposition to what he could only term playing at volunteering. The twelfth paragraph stated that several important measures would be introduced; among others, a Bill to encourage the investment of private capital in the construction of railways. He did not know whether that Bill embodied the scheme which the Colonial Secretary had read to the House during the last debate which took place in it, when he referred to some company who were prepared to construct railways in this colony for grants of land. Then there were to be Bills to consolidate the railway laws, to facilitate the payment of wages, to amend the District Courts Act, for the registration of brands, and others. No doubt these measures were all of them important, but he wanted to know how, at the close of the year and during its hottest portion, honorable members could be expected to give their undivided attention to these matters. He undertook to say that if the Treasurer unfolded his budget to the House, and if the time of the House were directed exclusively to its consideration, it was as much as would be done; and in point of fact he might tell the honorable member at the head of the Government that he should avail himself of every form which the House allowed to resist the passing of any Additional Customs Bill, or a single financial measure, until additional representation had been given to the colony. The Government knew quite as well as he did that until the two-thirds clause was repealed there was no more chance of passing an Additional Representation Bill than there was of passing a poll-tax; and, until those electorates which at present were unrepresented had justice done to them, he should avail himself of every opportunity which the forms of the House allowed, to prevent the passing of other measures. Representative government had become a complete farce in this colony, and it was time that the population of the country, and not merely sheep and cattle and gum-trees, were represented. It was only right that the whole of the colony

should be in a position to decide how the proposed custom duties should be distributed. He thought the honorable gentleman who was at the head of the Lands Department, whose action had tended much to the settlement of the country and gained him some amount of popularity, would have seen the necessity of this. He hoped that honorable member would not fear to grapple with the dummifying question. The late Minister for Lands had stated that to do so would involve the country in interminable lawsuits, but he did not pay much attention to that opinion, whether it was given by the late Attorney-General or the Attorney-General in prospective. He should like to ask the honorable gentleman himself if he were prepared to grapple with that question, not on behalf of the Government of which he was a member, but for the good of the country at large. Was he prepared to say that the Government were powerless to take action for fear of involving themselves in lawsuits? If so, he maintained they ought to come down to the House with a Bill to authorise the Government to take action in the matter. Now there could be no objection to the principles of the Bills the Government proposed to introduce, but the programme was entirely spoilt, inasmuch as it was not to be played out until March next; and when March came something or other would probably occur to cause a further postponement. He could tell the honorable member at the head of the Government that the question of additional representation could not be delayed any longer; and he was surprised that the honorable member had not dealt with it in a more liberal spirit. Some three or four years ago the country had been put to the expense of a census, in order that a Redistribution Bill might be passed. He was told that a Bill for Additional Representation was in course of preparation; but it would be the greatest farce to found such a Bill upon the census of 1867, as the greater portion of the interior had since that date been more or less depopulated by the new system of fencing runs, and in a great many cases Polynesian had taken the place of European labor. He did not think it would be necessary for him to detain the House with any further observations. He did not intend to offer any factious opposition to the Government—he was prepared to occupy a perfectly independent position in the House; but he was also prepared to give a hostile opposition to what he considered unjust measures. As far as the Speech as a whole was concerned, he considered it the most precious piece of humbug ever put before the Legislative Assembly; because the House was only to have a taste of the measures it promised now, and then to wait until March to discuss them. It was not the fault of members on his side that the House was not called together at an earlier date. There would have been as good an attendance of members a month ago; and the reason given

for the delay, in the first paragraph, was partial and unjust, as it only considered the interests of one class, while other important interests had equal claims. He again repeated that he should take advantage of every form the House allowed—even to dividing the House upon financial questions, shilling by shilling, and even penny by penny—in order to resist the grant of the smallest sum of money for additional customs or increased taxation until a Bill to provide for additional representation had been passed by a majority of the House.

The Hon. R. PRING said the Speech which had just been read was a very long one, and some of the paragraphs—certainly from the sixth to the twelfth—were of a most extraordinary character, and must have been framed by an extraordinary mind. It appeared that the Government had required some eight or nine months to produce this Speech; and after that time the country was in no better position with regard to a progressive policy than it had been before, while a great deal of valuable time had been lost. He wondered whether the Government ever considered what the requirements of the country really were? Did they think it required a policy to satisfy only one section of the community, or a policy calculated to meet the wishes of the colonists generally, and to raise it from its present state of depression to a condition of prosperity? The policy enunciated in the Speech before the House, in his opinion, would in no way conduce to such a result. What the colony required was a policy of progress and reform, and he looked to the Speech in vain to find any indication of such a policy. It was rather a standstill, he might even say a retrograde, policy which was enunciated, and that was a policy the country would not accept. It was one which might or might not be carried out by the present Government, but the time would come when the people who ruled the colony would insist upon a very different one. He presumed the Address in Reply to the Speech would be passed without amendment, but it was not because honorable members on his side of the House did not propose an amendment which might have the effect of causing the Ministry to resign that they acquiesced in the Speech or the Address, or in any single part of them. In the first place, the Speech was so peculiarly worded that it was difficult to say what the policy of the Government was until an explanation was afforded of the principles of each Bill as it was laid upon the table. He objected to the first paragraph altogether. He did not think it was becoming on the part of the Government, after what had taken place since April last, to come down to the House and offer such an apology for delaying the transaction of the public business; because the state of the colony and the necessity for immediate legislation had been admitted and dwelt upon by the honorable member at the head of the

Government. Yet that honorable member was now found delaying that legislation until the latest possible period—for what purpose? To enable his own friends and supporters to attend to their private business to the neglect of the business of the country. He contended that a member of Parliament was bound to make his own convenience subservient to his duty to the country, otherwise he had no right to offer himself as a candidate. He considered this apology to be an insult to the House and to the people of the country, and he declined to accept it, for he could not understand why a person engaged in pastoral pursuits should have more difficulty in managing his private business than any other person. It was a humiliating position for a Government to come down to the House with a majority at their back and to commence *ad misericordiam*. He thought he could distinguish the bold Roman hand of the member of the Cabinet who framed that paragraph, but as he was not going to lay himself open to an action for libel he would say nothing further about it. Then he came to the second paragraph, and if he were to draw upon his imagination he believed he could also state the author of that also. It would have been far more satisfactory if the Government had stated for what purpose the railway loan was required. If it were to cover past indebtedness the House would no doubt assent to it, but he thought reference should have been made to the exact railway works it was intended to cover. He felt perfectly certain it was not intended for any new works. He could not conceive that the honorable Premier would ask for it for the completion of the Brisbane and Ipswich line; because in that case he knew there would be a member of the Cabinet, the members for West Moreton, and the three members for Ipswich, ready to leave his ranks, and the honorable member was not in a position to allow such disaffection. He did not believe the honorable member had the slightest idea of such a thing. Still less did he ask for it for the Rockhampton and Westwood line; and still less would he ask for any sum of money for a line from Maryborough to Gayndah, or any branch line in that direction. He therefore came to the conclusion that the amount of money to be raised by loan for railway works could only refer to the completion of the line from Allora to Warwick, the amount for that portion of the line being, as he believed, still owing. As to electric telegraph extension, they were all in favor of it. He believed it was a great boon to the country, and he for one should not object to borrow a sum of money for that purpose. With regard to the sum asked for parliamentary buildings, he did not find fault with the Government for meeting expenditure incurred by a previous Government. But he thought there must be a screw loose somewhere or other, and that some further information on the subject should be obtained

before the Bill was passed. He had an idea that there were certain Crown lands or buildings which were supposed to be set apart to cover the cost of the parliamentary buildings. In reference to the construction of roads and bridges, it had hitherto been the principle that the money for this purpose should be taken out of the consolidated revenue; and if, before there was a single railway in the colony, the revenue was found sufficient to maintain the public roads, how was it that a sum was now asked for to be raised by loan for this purpose? Why, no loan which the House was likely to pass would be of any use. How far would the sum of £50,000, asked for by the Premier, go, if placed in the hands of Mr. Tiffin, or the Surveyor of Roads at Rockhampton? It would be a mere drop of water on the ocean. It would, at any rate, only benefit that portion of the country which was lucky enough to get it expended upon it. If a sum of money for the repair of roads and bridges had to be borrowed by loan and paid for by taxation, it must be based upon some system of equal distribution, and even then £50,000 or £100,000 would be quite inadequate. Did the honorable member mean that this money was to be spent in West Moreton, or was it to be expended at Broad Sound, or where else? Perhaps it was intended for the road between Brisbane and Breakfast Creek, or the road to the Water Works, or possibly to make a good road to Kenallan. Where could such a sum be laid out so as to advantage the community at large who would be taxed to pay for it? He looked upon this promise on the part of the honorable gentleman as a sprat to catch a mackerel—a sop of £50,000 to catch a number of votes. He anticipated that the House would be asked for a loan for carrying on immigration; because he could scarcely conceive that, after the Act of the late Parliament, so recently passed, for the promotion of immigration to this colony, it would remain a dead letter for the want of funds, or that a complete stoppage of immigration would be approved by any party. At the same time, he must confess that he regretted that the Emigration Act of 1869 was ever passed. He was convinced that although immigration, at that period, required the serious consideration of the then House, he was not at that time, or now, satisfied with the Act itself, or the mode in which it was passed. He well remembered that previous to the passing of the Act, and the time was opportune, it had been well considered by many persons greatly interested in immigration how a good system could be most economically carried out. But, he regretted to say it, a measure had been approved of which created an expensive system, and one that the colony did not require. He was convinced that, even now, after it had been in full operation for a long time, and had succeeded, that the course which it was previously intended to pursue,

and which ought to have been pursued, was the proper one. A limited system of immigration should have been carried out, instead of one requiring a large establishment to be formed in the mother country on a most expensive scale. The business at home might have been performed by the gentleman who was at that time managing emigration affairs for this colony; and under his auspices, he (Mr. Pring) felt certain that there would have been maintained a stream of immigration proper for the wants of Queensland—inexpensive and equally beneficial with the present system. The House were now called upon to sanction the raising of a large loan to carry out an expensive system. It appeared to him not to savour of that retrenchment which he had heard preached so much by the Ministry, and of which he failed to discover any signs. As to the amount of the loan to be appropriated for immigration he had no means of knowing, but in the performance of his duty he could not pass in silence over the subject. The amount necessary to be raised to cover the Savings Banks deposits must, of course, be raised. That was a very proper subject for consideration, and one which, he thought, the new members of the House would not be disposed to oppose. The mode in which the deposits were proposed to be covered he did not know. He presumed that if authority were given to raise the amount due, it would not be paid into the bank as a fund to meet any withdrawals of deposits; but that, the loan having been authorised, debentures sufficient to cover the amount owing would be set apart as security always available, and to cover the withdrawal of deposits by the Government—as they had been in the habit of doing, and as he believed they did now. He was glad to find that the Premier acknowledged in the same paragraph the necessity of keeping faith with the builders of the steamer “Governor Blackall,” and that the honorable gentleman was prepared to pay them the money which should be found to be due on the contract when he was in a position to do so by a vote of the House. He believed he was correct in saying that it was always intended—he was not sure whether any member of the late Government had an opportunity to state so to the House—to come down to the House to ask that the money due upon the contract should be covered by a loan. It was unnecessary, therefore, to say that he had no objection to that portion of the paragraph; and as to the expediency or in expediency of the contract, he said nothing, for he felt assured that all the papers and documents connected with the transaction would be called for, and, when they were laid upon the table, he was satisfied the late Government would be proved to have acted in a manner conducive to the prosperity of the country, and, certainly, to have facilitated the proper and efficient carrying out of the mail service of this colony. He also felt assured that, instead of the

colony being at all likely to be saddled with any extra expenditure, or any expenditure which would not be profitable, the result of investigation and debate would prove that money would not only be saved to the country, but that we should be independent, for the future, in a branch of the public service second to none—namely, the mail service. In reference to meeting the cost and charges of raising previous loans, the House would admit that provision was necessary. He would go to the second sentence of the second paragraph, which referred to

“A Bill for granting to Her Majesty certain duties of Customs, in lieu of those granted by the present Act, which will expire on the 31st December next.”

This was one, to his mind, of very great importance. If the paragraph had claimed or recognised the passing—or rather the extending—for any period, of the present Additional Customs Duties Act, he should have been inclined to say that there was an extreme necessity that the renewal or extension should be proceeded with immediately, provided that the House was of opinion that the present system of *ad valorem* duties should be continued in this colony. But he found it was not the intention of the Government to present to the House a Bill similar to the Additional Customs Duties Act. He anticipated that an alteration was about to be made in revenue matters, and the mode of raising the revenue by duties would be on a different principle; and, perhaps, the mode of taxation might also be altered; or it might be, that, in addition to the *ad valorem* duty, the House might be required to sanction a measure of increased taxation. A question involving the interests of every person in the community must receive the serious consideration of the House; and it appeared to him (Mr. Pring) that it would be impossible for the House to deal with a Bill of such a character until they were fully informed of the financial position of the colony, and also of the proposed mode of taxation. When they were fully informed upon those points, by the Treasurer, and when they had discussed the matter of the financial statement, then they would be in a position, and only then, to entertain the Bill. He had little hope, therefore, that a Bill of such a character would pass this year; and therefore they must be prepared, in consequence of the delay which had occurred in calling Parliament together, to allow the present Additional Customs Duties Act to lapse; and, until the new Customs Act should be passed, the revenue would suffer to the extent of the money which was now received through the collection of the *ad valorem* duty. How that deficiency of revenue would be made up, it was not for him to say. Whether it was proper that the House should have been placed in such a

position was a matter which, no doubt, would be considered by-and-bye. But, at all events, if it so happened that the colony should be in the unfortunate position of suffering a loss in the revenue—a loss that could not well be supplied, unless by retrospective legislation, which could not for a moment be listened to by the House, according to his view of the matter—the blame must rest on those who had contributed to the delay and to placing the House in the position in which they now found themselves. He could say a great deal upon the question; but, at present, he thought it was inexpedient to do so; and, indeed, he should scarcely have attempted to make any remarks—any he had made he might well have abstained from, and not have addressed the House at all—only that he felt it his duty to do so, for reasons which he was not ashamed to give. He had no intention to say anything disrespectful of the Government; he had no intention of pressing any amendment which might tend to embarrass them in carrying on the affairs of the country; but he conceived that on the meeting of a new Parliament, when proposed measures were brought forward, embracing matters of the highest importance to every member of the community, too much discussion could not well be, because it did not bind or affect in any way the position of the Government, by placing obstacles before them. But discussion on such an occasion informed the Government and the country of the views on particular questions of great public importance which individual members held who addressed the House; and, also, who intended to support the Government, or otherwise, on those questions. It guarded, also, against the difficulty of its being supposed that because an honorable member allowed the Speech to pass without comment, he did not recognise the policy enunciated in it; or, that he allowed himself to be dictated to; or, that it was not a policy which he considered the right one, and which he would be prepared to consider when the proper opportunity was afforded to him. He (Mr. Pring) thought it would be well if, in the course of this debate, honorable members would announce their views on some of the most important matters connected with the affairs of the country, on which, no doubt, there was a divided opinion. It was not for him to say which side held the better opinion; that must, in all probability, be decided by the House, in the shape of legislation. But, unless there was discussion, they would never be able to frame laws most conducive to the welfare of the country. Although the debate might not have the effect of altering altogether the minds of the Government, it might have the effect, possibly, of inducing them to shape their policy somewhat differently, and make it more acceptable to the country. It might be beneficial for them to do so. With regard to the Bill to regulate distillation, there was

now a good deal of distillation going on in the colony which required sharply looking after. There should be inspectors looking after it who ought to be working men. He never liked to come down to the House and speak of a thing as rumoured, because rumour was not to be relied upon; but he understood that a gentleman was appointed Chief Inspector of Distilleries who had been taken out of an office in which he was second in command to the Auditor-General—he was far better than the Auditor-General—he was taken from his office, the duties of which no man in the country was more capable of fulfilling, and had to undertake duties that he knew nothing about. It might be that a chief inspector of distilleries was required; but he (Mr. Pring) could only say this, he intended to vote against the salary of such an officer. He had heard so much about retrenchment and the necessity for strict economy, that he felt bound to do so. He would tell the Government who should exercise the functions of the office of chief inspector of distilleries—the Collector of Customs;—a fine, active, able man, who could ride about and look after the business very well. He was the proper man. Let him work a little, and then he would have time for the formal duties of the Customs department. What on earth was a separate officer wanted for, as chief inspector of distilleries? To receive the reports of the working men who looked after the smuggling—the men who were on the spot where the distillation took place. Those were the men who were wanted; men who would be active in looking about, like the coast-guard at home. He denied that there was any necessity for a paid appointment of £500 a year for a chief inspector. He saw that Ministers proposed to decrease their own salaries. He should not be surprised, when the Bill was brought forward, to find it apply to future Ministers, like that which was to apply to “all future Governors.” Now, he came to the question of the division of the colony into separate financial districts. So far as he was concerned, he should oppose such a proposal. It was a thing unheard of, and he trusted, for the sake of the Government, that they would be able to point out an example of any colony or dependency in which such a proposal was carried out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: New Zealand.

Mr. PRING: New Zealand was not divided into separate financial districts. He should be open to conviction, by-and-bye, if it was proved to him, although he was opposed to it—even to financial separation of the North, where only it was required, if required at all in this colony—and he could never advocate it. He could not conceive what was the use of the Colonial Treasurer, the Colonial Secretary, the Minister for Lands, the Minister for Works, the Attorney-General, and the Postmaster-General, if not to manage the

affairs of the country, including the finances. If those six men could not manage the finances of a little colony like Queensland, he did not know what to think, especially when the House were told that by-and-bye there would be separation at Dawes Range—when the colony would have only one port, and that Maryborough! It was almost as much as to say that the finances of the colony were not at present distributed in a proper and equitable manner. He very much doubted whether he should himself advocate even financial separation for the North, because he disliked anything like an *imperium in imperio*. There should be a Government for the whole colony, and the House should not allow it to be interfered with in any way. More than that, he was quite certain that if the country should be divided, there would be more squabbling, more wrangling, and more heart-burning in the separated districts than there ever could be under the existing system of government. The question of additional representation, the most important of all mentioned in the paragraph, opened up a large field for discussion. He would have nothing to do with additional representation. He advocated, or rather he submitted to, a Bill for additional representation once in his life, and that should be the last. He only regretted that in his ignorance—he seldom confessed he was ignorant—he did allow the Additional Representation Act to be passed. He knew, now, that it ought not to have been done, and that since that measure had become the law of the land, subsequent legislation had not secured the proper representation of the colony, though it was a question which every man in the country had at heart, and, in point of fact, it was the principal one demanding settlement. The Constitution Act provided for a number of members of the Legislative Assembly in 1859; shortly afterwards it was discovered that the colony was not properly represented in the House, and an additional number of members was added; and, now, after the lapse of years, when every thinking man in the colony had come to the conclusion that not increased representation was required, but rather a redistribution of representation, only the old remedy was to be carried out by the Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: You do not know how it is to be carried out, yet.

The Hon. R. PRING: He could read, and he understood that the additional representation proposed by the Government must be an increased number of members to the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: You have not seen the Bill.

The Hon. R. PRING: He could understand that increased representation based upon the redistribution of electorates would be quite a different proposition from that intended to be laid before the House by the Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: You do not know what it will be.

The Hon. R. PRING: He did know, perfectly well. And, if the Government intended to increase the representation of this colony by redistribution of electorates, and based upon population, they would have proposed to bring forward a Bill to repeal the two-thirds clause. That was the answer to the Premier, and one that he defied the honorable gentleman to reply to. The repeal of the two-thirds clause must be a condition precedent to increased representation, based upon the redistribution of electorates.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Ministerial side: No, no.

The Hon. R. PRING: Thus one must follow the other, if anything was really meant by the popular legislation which it was proposed to lay before the House. At all events, he could only say the Additional Representation Bill must be an extraordinary matter for legislation. And, he took leave to have an opinion upon what the Speech said the Government intended to do.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: But what you never saw.

The Hon. R. PRING: He did not want to see the Premier's Bills. He could tell what they would contain as well as the honorable gentleman himself. Now, he should not support any Bill for additional representation upon the basis which he assumed would be attempted to be established by the Government. He trusted that the policy which he announced and advocated would find favor with many honorable members, if not with the majority of the House; and he said most emphatically that until he was promised, or until he knew, that the repeal of the two-thirds clause would be made a prominent feature of legislation, this session, or as quickly afterwards as possible—so soon as the most pressing business had been disposed of—he would not allow, so far as he could effect it, one penny to be granted to the Government or any other business to be transacted. The people must get their rights. The proper representation of the colony was a question which touched the heart of every man; it did not affect any class of men merely. The people had a right to rule the colony: they ought, must, and should soon have their rights; they would not be dictated to by a class. The time was come when that class must succumb, gracefully; and they would find that they would be dealt with tenderly, and delicately, as far as possible: their feelings would not be injured, though their pockets might be slightly touched. Honorable members on the Treasury benches might laugh, but this was not exactly a question for laughter; it was a question that required serious consideration. He would venture to predict that the people would have their own, and that before long. This would be found a correct prediction, and he would be proved to be a true prophet. It was not to be supposed that because he advocated representation on the basis of

population, and the redistribution of electorates, he should for a single moment, favor any legislation the effect of which would be injury to the class alluded to, or to any other class. He could not see that, because the system of representation which common sense told him was the correct one was objected to upon the score that a certain class would be injured by it, though it was for the benefit of the whole colony, such a line of proceeding by which he thought to advance his principles was not advisable for any right thinking man. What he demanded was, that, as the times progressed, and as population increased, the representation of the colony should be corrected; and now was the time when an alteration must take place; and those who opposed such progressive action by legislation did not advance with the age. It was obvious that the increase of population which had taken place in this colony demanded a redistribution of electorates, which remained virtually the same now as they were in 1859, when there was a small population.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

The Hon. R. PRING: Very nearly the same. Perhaps the honorable gentleman would explain, by-and-bye, when he favored the House with his opinions. The representation was, as he had said before, altered by the addition subsequently of six members and the creation of a new electorate or two, and by the division of some of the original districts. Since 1859 population had been encouraged, and thousands and tens of thousands of acres of land, which, at that time, were only used for the grazing of sheep and cattle, were now occupied by human beings, and tilled, farms established and mills built.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Where are the mills established? We should like to know.

The Hon. R. PRING: He questioned very much if the honorable gentleman knew much about anything but cattle and sheep. That accounted for his having always cattle and sheep running in his mind. Facilities had been increased for the squatters of the North. The honorable gentleman always took care of them. He would not have let the Emigration Act pass, last year, if it had not been for the twenty years' leases. The honorable gentleman knew that as well as he (Mr. Pring); and that they differed upon that question; and that a compact was made, "You scratch me and I will scratch you—you pass the Pastoral Leases Bill and I will pass the Emigration Bill." He knew all about those things as well as the honorable gentleman. Was there anything in the name of Premier? He did not know that the honorable gentleman was better than other men because he was called the Premier. He once knew a horse called "Premier," and he could not find that he was better than other horses. He had ideas of his own on politics as well as the honorable member at the head of the Government, and he meant to keep them—as long as he had health and strength;

and when he had not, he would leave politics alone. But he must not allow the honorable gentleman to disturb his equanimity. The people were not equitably represented in the House. Let him instance Ipswich, with 730 voters on the electoral roll, and three members.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: You are not one.

THE HON. R. PRING: He was not one. How many voters were there in East Moreton, with only two members? He asked whether that system of representation was the proper one, or whether it did not demand alteration for its injustice to the country? He could point to other instances, and he named the town of Rockhampton, with a population of 6,000, and with a large population on the surrounding gold fields—there were 700 persons in New Zealand Gully, twenty miles from Rockhampton—which was represented in the House by one member only. That alone bore him out that he was correct in the view he had taken that a redistribution of electorates was what the country required. The Premier knew that he could not carry his Additional Representation Bill, because he could not get a majority of two-thirds to pass it. He hoped he might live to see the day that the honorable gentleman could command such a majority! Why did he not bring in a Bill to repeal the two-thirds clause? It appeared to him, if he was a judge—

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Not yet.

THE HON. R. PRING: If the House chose to take the Bill dictated to them by the Government, which he was sure the House would not do, they would fail to meet the wishes of the country. The Premier knew that it required a very strong Government to prevent a strong and able minority, composed of materials such as the present Opposition, from holding the rod *in terrorem* over the Government; and that such a minority could, in effect, make the Government do all they required or directed. He (Mr. Pring) was glad to see that the Premier was about to introduce a Bill to amend the laws relating to elections. He hoped that, if they had not altered their ways, the honorable gentleman would tell honorable members sitting behind him that they must do so now, and that they must be prepared to support him in passing a proper measure under which they could represent their districts without bribery and corruption and personation. As regarded the salary of future Governors, it appeared that the Government were following the example of New South Wales. He did not know that the policy of following in the footsteps of another colony was a good one. He did not know whether the Bill was announced from a desire for retrenchment, or for any other purpose; nor whether the Governor's salary was at present more than adequate to keep up the dignity of the position; but he thought that if the allowances were struck off altogether, or considerably curtailed, that would be the best mode of retrenchment.

Cutting off £500 a-year from salaries might be supposed to be retrenchment, but it was not, whilst contingencies were allowed; for the country would be found no better off than before the reduction. However, why the poor "future Governors" should be cut down he did not know. As to the appointment of a third judge, and the regulation of the salaries of the judges, he knew nothing about the terms on which the third judge was to be appointed; but he knew that he once submitted a scheme for dealing with the subject. In his opinion the Metropolitan District Court was not required, and he thought it should be done away with. He knew that the universal belief was that the large expenditure connected with that court might be abolished, and that the whole of the work could be done—and it had been admitted by the Judges themselves—by the Judge for the Western District, in consequence of the facilities afforded by the railway. If the Metropolitan District Court were thus done away with, a considerable saving would be effected, and such arrangements could be made that actions at present cognisable in that court could be as cheaply tried in the Supreme Court: the way of doing it was obvious—they had only to regulate the scale of costs in respect of actions under a certain amount, and it was settled, so far as suitors were concerned. But he (Mr. Pring) was far from saying that a third judge was not required as a court of appeal. He wished to remark that there was no necessity at all for the Government to reduce their own salaries. He never thought that a thousand a year was too much for any man who devoted his honest labor, as a member of the Government, to public affairs; and he had heard that stated many times in the House, not only by those who had been in the Government, but by honorable members who never held and who would not occupy ministerial office. He thought he could point out a way of retrenchment: abolish the office of Postmaster-General as a ministerial office; let that officer do his own departmental work—instead of appointing a chief clerk, a short time ago, to do it; and thus £600 a year would be saved. The Postmaster-General was brought up to the height of a Minister of the Crown, and now it was proposed to put Ministers down to the level of the Postmaster-General. What did the Postmaster-General do in the Ministry? He would be far better attending to the business of the post office than meddling with the politics of this country. The post office was an important branch of the civil service, and one that required attention; and there was no need to pay another officer £600 a-year to do the work for which the Postmaster-General was paid, and which he would have to do if he were not in the Ministry, where he was not required. The Postmaster-General, as a political appointment, was worth nothing. He (Mr. Pring) maintained that the Colonial Secretary could perform

any executive work connected with the Postmaster-General's department, or the telegraph department. He should like to know what the Postmaster-General of this colony knew about telegraphs, unless from talking with Mr. Cracknell, the superintendent? It was a farce, his being in the Executive, or his being a political officer, as he had nothing to do which any other Minister could not do without him. Now, the poor civil servants were to be taxed equally, so that the unfortunate servant who had only £150 a year would have to submit to a reduction of £7 10s. Why should there be a direct tax upon that class of the community alone? For his part he should have made no objection to an income tax, and should not have hesitated to state the amount of his income; but why the civil servants alone should bear the burden of direct taxation he could not conceive. Why was there not an export duty upon bales of wool sent from this colony? One paragraph asked the House to consider the depression of the pastoral interest, and to see whether additional facilities could be given to induce the reoccupation of country. Why, he repeated, should the civil servants be mulcted in a direct taxation of five per cent., and the squatters, the richest class in the country, allowed to go scot free? He would never sanction such a gross injustice. If the revenue of the colony was in such a state as to require direct taxation, let everyone pay alike. The civil servants had no champion in the House; he was not their champion, but he could not consent to see a class of persons, whose salaries were barely sufficient to enable them to support their families and to appear in decent costume in their offices, oppressed with a direct tax, while other classes bore no share of the burden. And now, with regard to the Volunteer force, if ever there was a time when the country demanded an investigation into that force, that time had arrived. Not that he anticipated that the reorganization of the volunteer force would affect the position of this colony during the present war, or that if the French or Prussians visited the colony it would make the least difference whether the force were reorganised or not. Thank goodness, Queensland was 16,000 miles off, and he hoped neither Prussians or French would come here except to settle on the lands. But it appeared to him that the force had required reorganization from the very first. The question was, how was it to be done? Would it be an expensive operation? He could not say. But he did say, that if the volunteer force were to be kept up in this colony it ought to be aided and supported by the public revenue. It seemed to him to be a solemn farce to recognise members of the force who had joined a volunteer corps at the inducement of the Government of the day, and then to find that the whole system, after the cost it had entailed, was to be

rendered useless for want of support, and that the volunteers themselves had to pay the expense of keeping it up out of their own pockets. He could only hope that the force might be reorganised upon a proper footing, and that would be a very different one from the present. Some were of opinion that what the colony wanted was a militia. Now, honorable members would recollect the time when it was positively dangerous to talk about a Militia Bill, and when a person using the term might have found himself in danger from an infuriated populace. That time had, however, gone by, and under the protection of the House and the Serjeant-at-Arms, he should not hesitate to use it, and to say he thought it a very proper thing to consider. If, however, the volunteer force received assistance from the House, it ought to be so constituted that it would be possible to enforce some kind of military discipline; for unless the officers could exercise a proper control over the men, it would never be in an efficient state. There were a number of bills mentioned in the twelfth paragraph, many of which appeared to have been laid on the table of the House before. With regard to the provisional arrangement entered into with the Government of New South Wales to establish a steam mail service between Sydney and San Francisco, he had no doubt that when the question was brought before the House for discussion, the action taken by the Government would be approved of. He should give his support to the proposal to grant a retiring allowance to the late Speaker, though at the same time it must not be allowed to come forward as an example. He held strong ideas on the subject. The late Speaker had held the office for a number of years. He was the first Speaker, and up to the close of the last Parliament he had occupied the chair of the House, and, therefore, considering his peculiar position, he should not object to give him a retiring allowance. Then there were several paragraphs addressed to honorable members of both Houses. With reference to the Land Act of 1868, they were told that it was working satisfactorily, and that its provisions had been extended to some of the unsettled districts. He would like to know why some of these unsettled districts, in which, to his knowledge, there were thousands of acres of excellent land, had not been made settled districts. If it had been found advisable to bring these districts under the provisions of the Land Act, the easiest manner to have done so would have been to make them settled districts. Then, in paragraph 10, reference was made to the success which had attended the cultivation of sugar. He only wished the same success had attended the cultivation of cotton. He did not think, however, that the House required this information in view of the numbers of tons of sugar exported from the colony. The same remark was made in reference to the mineral deposits of the colony; these resources had

been known for a number of years. Then, with regard to the war—he believed they all regretted it, but how it had been peculiarly disastrous to the Australian Colonies, he was at a loss to imagine. He maintained it had not, nor did he believe that the stoppage of the war would affect the prosperity of the colony—he did not think it would interfere with it at all, one way or the other. Perhaps it was because wool had gone down twopence in the pound that this paragraph had been inserted—that made it peculiarly disastrous to the Australian colonies. He declined to accept such a statement. Would the honorable the Premier point out how it had affected the commerce of the colonies? If fewer ships were sent out, it was not in consequence of the war: there were many other reasons to account for that. He was aware that the imports were decreasing; but they had been decreasing for some time, and there were twenty reasons for that decrease besides the war. He hoped peace would soon be restored; but, whether it was or not, he did not believe the prosperity of the country would be affected. Then he came to the Address in Reply, and what was it? The second paragraph stated that the various subjects enumerated in the Speech would have the most serious consideration of the House. Well, that might or might not be: it depended greatly upon the temper of the House when they were brought forward—he had seen a good many subjects not receive serious consideration. The third and fourth paragraph meant nothing, but he wondered who concocted the next one:—

“5. In common with your Excellency, we deplore the war which we have heard of as raging in Europe. We shall endeavor to preserve a strict neutrality, though we beg to point out to your Excellency that, owing to the absence of any naval force upon our coast, our abilities in that direction are very limited.”

He wondered whether the honorable member who framed it understood anything about the laws of neutrality;—how they were to be preserved, and how His Excellency was to assist the House in keeping them? That paragraph was altogether beyond his comprehension. The House was not the arena to discuss the laws of neutrality—the House had nothing whatever to do with the question; it was one for the whole community. It was a question which had been decided by Imperial legislation, and if the House were to assist at all, it could only be by passing a law to that effect, and that they had no right to do. Therefore, why should the question have been introduced into the Speech? The next paragraph pledged the House to assist or defend the independence of the parent State, if necessary, and to submit with patience to any sacrifice they might be called upon to make. He hoped they would be patient, but how they were to assist the parent State he could not see. She had taken away all her soldiers, and not left a

single ship here, or any means of defending the colony itself. Did the Government expect the Volunteer force, in its reorganised state, would be able to protect the parent State? He had now gone through the Speech, and touched upon the different subjects; but he might as well have left it alone for all it contained. He would take the liberty of making a few more remarks. There was no doubt that the ultimate prosperity of the colony depended entirely upon the legislation of that House, and upon those members of the community who watched that legislation. He hoped, therefore, that legislation would be of a liberal character, and that the measures about to be introduced would embrace some system of progress and reform. He hoped he had been mistaken as to the policy shadowed forth in the Speech; but if he had not, he should endeavor, with the assistance of those who coincided in his views, to carry out such a one as was necessary for the country. He should be willing to accept even a small measure of progress as an instalment, and to do that it would be better that members on either side of the House opposed to each other should make concessions, so that some measure of success might be attained. If, on the other hand, the wishes of a large majority of the people of the colony were disregarded, and he found the opinions of members on his side were that the policy of the Government was not conducive to the interests of the country, he should endeavor to carry out by every means the policy which he considered to be the proper one. In saying this, he might add that he stood in a very high position; for when he looked round the House and saw what a large proportion of the whole population was represented by himself and the members who held the same views which he held—two-thirds at least—he felt that if he should not succeed in carrying out what he conceived to be the true policy for the country, he should have, at any rate, the satisfaction of knowing that he had the good wishes of a large majority of the colonists. He should also feel that he had faithfully represented his constituents who had sent him to guard their interests in that House.

Mr. KING said he thought all parties must join in congratulating the Government on the exertions they had made to bring so many measures before the House. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba seemed to imagine that almost all these Bills were to be postponed until March next. Now, as he understood the intention of the Government, it was only the Bills referred to in the twelfth paragraph, which would be postponed; and all the measures mentioned singly would be proceeded with. He believed the House would be able to get through the most of them—at any rate, the most important. He was sorry to say he differed with the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba in the interpretation he put upon different passages in the Speech.

The honorable member had objected to the way in which the railway works had been alluded to in the first paragraph, but to him (Mr. King) the mention of those works was a matter for congratulation. The honorable member appeared to be disappointed that no provision was promised in the Speech for those great undertakings which had landed the colony in its present position, and which he hoped they had seen the last of for some years. The loan mentioned in that paragraph was intended to cover a variety of other works. He certainly agreed with the honorable member for North Brisbane, that an enquiry was necessary into the expenditure upon the parliamentary buildings, before granting any further sum. There was also a sum for roads and bridges. For many years past this question had been considered, and petition after petition in reference to the roads of the colony had been laid upon the table of the House, praying for some system of equal distribution. He was, therefore, astonished to hear the honorable member for North Brisbane advocate the system of neglect which had so long obtained. He believed this Loan Bill was extremely necessary. He understood there were a number of Treasury bills which required to be redeemed—for otherwise they would have to be renewed, a course which should be avoided if possible. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba had expressed his intention of opposing the renewal of these bills, or the passing of any bill granting further supplies until some measure of additional representation had been passed, and had stated that that could not be done until the two-thirds clause had been repealed; but, as these duties would expire on the 31st December next, the course which the honorable member proposed to adopt would have the effect of plunging the colony into a serious difficulty—at all events, until the House met again. He would remind that honorable member that, a few months ago, when the House did not represent the country more than it did now—and he admitted that the colony was not properly represented—the honorable member had made a speech to his constituents, in which he recommended the introduction of a new tariff, embracing the imposition of additional customs duties upon imported goods. The only inference, therefore, which could be drawn from the honorable member's statements was, that he objected to any additional customs duties unless his own friends were in power. The honorable member for North Brisbane also objected to expend money upon roads and bridges out of the loan account, because that expenditure had hitherto been made out of the consolidated revenue; but the honorable member should recollect that the greater part of the revenue was now taken up in paying the interest on the railway loan. The third paragraph he would make no comment upon, as he understood nothing of distillation,

The fourth paragraph proposed the separation of the colony into financial districts. Now, up to the present time, the revenue had never been fairly distributed; that was possibly to be attributed to the system of parliamentary government as hitherto practised. There had always been a good deal of competition between the different districts, but to the local jealousy which had existed, the honorable member for North Brisbane had now added a further jealousy between the northern and southern portions of the colony. With regard to the question of additional representation, it appeared to him to be the most important feature in the Speech, and the one in which the public took the greatest interest. It was singular to observe how little southern members appeared to know of the state of things in the North. They were continually drawing comparisons between the East and West Moreton districts, but their information seemed to be entirely confined to those districts. In a lecture given the other night by a gentleman who had been for some time a distinguished member of the House, this was particularly observable. They appeared to be ignorant of the fact that the district of Wide Bay, which embraced a population of over 12,000 persons, had only one representative. Great stress had also been laid upon the large number of voters in East Moreton. He did not attach much importance to that assertion, because it was quite possible to stuff the roll with the names of a number of persons—dead men, absentees, and others—so as to make the number appear larger than it should be. The honorable member for North Brisbane would not consent to the passing of any Bill for additional representation, but he wished to have a Bill to amend the electoral districts. He feared, however, that the honorable member would find it difficult to obtain the concurrence of his party to any Bill which provided for the distribution of districts that did not lie immediately around Brisbane. If the honorable member and his friends wished to act in a fair and liberal spirit, he would ask them to consider impartially the Bill which the Government proposed to introduce. There was a very large population in the North, and especially in the neighborhood of the gold fields—not composed of squatters—who were looking anxiously for the passing of some measure which would allow them to send representatives to that House; and if honorable members opposite insisted upon the repeal of the two-thirds clause, they would do great injury to these people. For if this colony were ever to prosper, this class of the community must be recognised, and the time would come when they would refuse to be trodden down any longer. The honorable member for North Brisbane, in referring to the Land Act, had talked of reducing the influence of the squatters in the House. Now, if that influence were ever reduced, he would

venture to say it would be done by additional representation. He did not think the two assertions of the honorable member—that he was in favor of a popular Government, and that he would oppose additional representation—were at all compatible. Most of the other Bills referred to in the Speech were of small importance in comparison with those he had touched upon. It was proposed to impose a tax of five per cent. upon the salaries of the civil servants. Now, he entirely concurred with the honorable member for North Brisbane in what he had said on that subject. He could not see why the civil servants of the colony should be taxed more than any other class of the community. They were not overpaid; for he believed if their salaries were compared with those given for similar services in the other colonies, they would be found to be much smaller. At all events, there could be no doubt that persons receiving not more than £150 a year ought to be exempted. He imagined that this tax might be forced upon the Government by the present constitution of the House, which gave the casting vote to one or two members, and prevented the Government from adopting any decided system. In his opinion, the proper way would be to reconstitute the service, and if possible, to amalgamate the offices without reducing the salaries; but he did not imagine that could be done until additional representation had been granted. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba had made one remark which was so characteristic of the party of which he was such an eminent member that he could not help noticing it. The honorable member was discussing the first paragraph of the Speech, and he wanted to know why the squatters should be the only class whose interests were to be considered, and he had pointed out that there were other interests such as the agricultural—the cotton and sugar—interests in East Moreton. It never seemed to strike that honorable member that there were similar interests flourishing in other parts of the colony, and that they were very small in East Moreton in comparison with Wide Bay, Mackay, and other places in the North. Still less did it strike him that there was another very important interest utterly unrepresented in that House, and one in which a very large proportion of the population were engaged. The honorable member had not a word to say for the miners. Now, he contended, and he always should contend, until that interest was properly represented, that it was the most important interest in Queensland. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba also objected to additional customs duties of any kind, and stated that he would prefer a land tax for the purpose of defraying the cost of constructing roads and bridges, and that the expenditure should be entrusted to road boards. He entirely agreed with him upon that point; and he believed that when the House was reconstituted, and every interest

had fair play, a land tax might be levied with advantage, and that those districts through which a railway passed should pay out of such a tax the interest upon their railway loans; and that, where there was no railway, the tax should be expended in the construction of roads. In the meantime, it was quite impossible for the Government to make any definite pledges on the subject.

MR. DE SATGÉ said he did not think this was the proper time or place for a tirade upon electioneering matters; but, as the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba had referred directly to him, he could not allow his remarks to pass unanswered. The honorable member had stated that he (Mr. de Satgé) had taken the place of one of the ablest members of the House, Dr. Benson, and had commented upon the circumstances of his election. He would, however, point out that the delay which had taken place between the nomination and the polling day had been more in favor of his opponent than himself. At any rate, he (Mr. De Satgé) had been returned by a mining constituency, and that constituency had returned him after having had plenty of time to deliberate, and after hearing the able address of his opponent. That constituency had decided that the policy enunciated by the present Government was the policy best calculated to meet the wants of their district. The honorable member had, therefore, spoken ignorantly and without due consideration when he taxed him with displacing an abler man in order to advance the pastoral interest. He did not see why the pastoral interest should always be spoken of so disparagingly. The squatters in the House represented as much worth and respectability as any other class; their principles were quite as liberal, and they were actuated by a desire to promote the general good of the colony. There was a continual attack on the part of the metropolitan members against the squatters, and it was high time that some member representing that interest should say a few words in reply. He entirely agreed with most of the clauses in the Speech, but there were one or two which called for a few remarks. With regard to the second clause, he hoped that when the Colonial Treasurer made his financial statement, and proposed certain customs duties, he would shew a fair tariff, and not tax one interest to the injury of another. For example, a case had lately come under his notice where the machinery for a meat-curing establishment had been heavily taxed, while the duty upon similar machinery employed in sugar growing had been exempted from the duty. He hoped the Government would see that this invidious distinction was not allowed for the future. The division of the colony into financial districts had been so ably discussed by the honorable member for Wide Bay that he would not touch upon that subject. With regard to additional representation, he was

sure that the honorable members who had addressed the House at such length could never have seen the draft of the proposed Bill, or they would have seen that the Government intended to deal fully and liberally with this question. He understood it was their intention so to divide the different districts that no district should have more than one representative. The Bill would, therefore, in reality, be a Redistribution Bill. That was what he understood to be the case; and he was sure such a measure would give satisfaction to the country, and there would be no necessity to repeal the two-thirds clause. He had pledged himself, as member for Clermont, to vote for the abolition of that clause; but if this Bill were introduced, the same object would be attained, and a good deal of valuable time would be saved to the country. The want of a Bill to amend the law relating to elections had long been felt. He had had a great deal to do with elections, and knew the defects which existed in the present law, and he was glad the question would be brought before the House. He quite agreed with the honorable member for Wide Bay that the tax upon the civil servants was rather unjust. He believed it was very necessary, but he would tax the larger salaries, exempting those which did not exceed £100 a-year. The investment of capital in the construction of railways in the North would be of the utmost possible importance to the colony. At the present time, the inhabitants in the northern districts of the colony were clamoring for separation; but he believed that if railways were constructed in certain districts in the North, so as to afford means of easy communication with Rockhampton, an end would be put to the cry for separation. Was it not strange, he would ask, that the Darling Downs, a comparatively small district, though it was excellent country, should have extensive railway communication, while the large districts in the North, comprising as good country as the Darling Downs, should not have one completed line? A railway that would give to Rockhampton the prosperity that would arise from the traffic along the Dawson and the Barcoo would, he was sure, satisfy the Rockhampton people. They would then attend to their business, and leave off clamoring for separation; for, in fact, it was not separation but commerce they wanted. This was not the time to clamor for separation, as there was at present a general desire for a federation of the several Australian colonies; and when it was considered they should unite to try and defend themselves against invasion by a foreign enemy—which he hoped they would never be called upon to do. Now, such a railway as he had alluded to was absolutely required in the North: and he had come down to support its construction. He would, however, oppose any further railway extension in the South. There was no need whatever for a railway between Ipswich

and Brisbane. There was extensive railway communication with the interior beyond Ipswich, and between Ipswich and Brisbane there was excellent river communication. While such was the case in the South, he, as well as others, had to travel over hundreds of miles of the most wretched roads imaginable. In his opinion, the only faulty point in the Opening Speech was that it did not promise the too long withheld railway to the Dawson—even by offering inducements for the investment of private capital if the Government could not afford the money. The railway from Rockhampton was quite an abortion, and perfectly useless unless it should be extended to the Dawson. Honorable members of the Government had pledged themselves to a scheme of financial separation, but he was sure that such a pledge would not have been exacted had the railway from Rockhampton been extended to the Dawson. He felt confident that if the line were extended to the Dawson, it would be a paying one. The eighth clause in the portion of the Opening Speech addressed to the Legislative Assembly, referred to the progress of settlement under the Land Act of 1868. Now, he could personally vouch that the Government had afforded every possible facility for settlement on the lands in the northern districts, for some portions of the lands he occupied for pastoral purposes had been proclaimed for selection. It was a well-known fact that most of the revenue of the colony was derived from the squatters, who grazed millions of sheep,—at certain seasons to their loss, and in some cases their utter ruin,—but he would say, that as soon as others could be found to purchase the lands now occupied by the squatters, and return an equal amount to the revenue, by all means let them have the lands—but not till then. The land that had been thrown open for selection in the neighborhood of the district he represented was all of a first class character. Now, if people could get such land, and were not prepared to buy it, would the Government be justified in going to great expense to survey large tracts of country for which there were no purchasers? If people were not prepared to buy land of such quality, and in such neighborhoods, why should not the grazier, who had occupied it, and worked hard upon it for many years, not be allowed to continue to occupy it? The wish of every one in the colony was to have plenty of money in the Treasury, and he did not see how they could obtain the fulfilment of that wish unless the Government encouraged interests of a settled nature. As soon as purchasers came forward, let them have as much land as they could pay for. Now, he would ask honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, if they were aware that by the interferences which had been made in respect to the occupation of the lands, the Treasury had lost about £23,000? How were the Government to finance in order to

make up that amount? The squatting interest returned £170,000 a year to the colony; and, therefore, was second only to the customs in the production of revenue. He did not therefore see that any man should be ashamed of being a squatter, or the representative of a squatting constituency. The honorable gentleman who was Colonial Secretary when he (Mr. De Satgé) formerly occupied a seat in the House, was an honorable example of the pioneer squatter. He went out into the then unsettled districts, took up land, stuck to his run, made money, and when he had done so, took an interest in political matters, and at great expense to himself occupied an official position in the Government of the country. He was a friend of the great liberal and progressive party, and would support them in forwarding any reasonably practicable measure they might bring forward for the advancement of their views. He was entirely in favor of manhood suffrage, and if the Government introduced a measure based upon that principle, he thought it was all the liberal party could ask for. The adult population in the North was quite different from that in the South. In the South, the population was comparatively new, and could not encounter the hardships incident to a life in the northern districts. He thought that, as to additional representation, such a concession as he now made on the part of the squatting and outside districts was as much as the liberal party could ask. Towards the end of His Excellency's Speech, the success that had attended the cultivation of sugar was referred to as a subject for congratulation. He fully agreed in that opinion; and he could assure honorable members that it was only necessary for them to visit the district of the Mackay to understand the value of the sugar-growing industry. He had no hesitation in saying that it was one of the most valuable interests along the coast. Even up to the present time, there were several millions of money invested in it, and he was glad to say it was flourishing without the aid of protection. The Gold Fields Bill was, he understood, to be wisely and necessarily altered this session or next. There were honorable members now in the House who would be able to deal with the subject in a more practical way than it was dealt with when the present Gold Fields Act was under consideration, and those gentlemen would be able to render valuable assistance to the Government in amending the Act. He regretted that the Speech did not offer any encouragement for the discovery of new gold fields. He thought it would be of the greatest advantage to the colony if experienced miners were encouraged to follow the footsteps of Mr. Daintree; and some inducement ought to have been held out to geologists and practical miners, to come from other colonies and prospect the districts in this colony that were considered to be auriferous. What was £50,000 as compared with the benefit the country would, in

all likelihood, derive from a survey of the gold producing districts?—and with such attractive country, in that respect, as existed in the North, he did not see why the House should not vote such a sum for survey and prospecting purposes. In the district where he resided he had gone out with several prospecting parties, and wherever they entered upon prospecting operations they found at least the color of gold. He certainly considered that around the district of Clermont there should be a geological survey of the mineral districts, and especially of those that bore indications of being auriferous. He hoped a resolution to provide for such a survey would be brought forward and carried into effect. Such a resolution would have his most earnest support. Generally he agreed with all that was stated in the Opening Speech, and would support the Ministry in their proposed measures, so far as he understood them at the present time.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY then rose and said—I shall endeavor to address the House in as few words as possible, in explanation of the several measures the Government propose to bring forward. If I do so it may not only save the time of the House, but save honorable members following the example of the honorable and learned member for North Brisbane, who, in the course of his speech, went on guessing at the nature of the measures proposed to be brought forward. With regard to the debate which has taken place, I must say that the Opening Speech has been attacked in the mildest form I ever heard an Opening Speech dealt with since I have had the honor of a seat in this House. I believe there was no Speech ever made or printed that any man of intelligence could not find fault with and shew its worst points. For my own part I think the Speech is a very good one, and I am prepared to support it. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba—who, I suppose, is now to be looked upon as the leader of the Opposition—finds fault with the Government for not having recommended His Excellency to summon the meeting of Parliament at an earlier period. Now, it is my opinion, and I believe it is the opinion of most honorable members, that honesty is the best policy; and the Government, acting on that principle, has stated frankly and distinctly their reasons for not calling the House together at an earlier period. I deny, most emphatically, that the delay was for the purpose of giving any unusual advantage to the squatters. It has been the custom of almost every previous Government to bring the Parliament to a close at a time when the squatters required to return to their stations to attend to their shearing; and to enable them to do so, many Bills were allowed to fall through—or, to use a common expression, there was a general massacre of the innocents. Besides, honorable members would, and that justly, regard me with contempt, if I had been ass enough

to have called Parliament together at a time when I could not have the fullest possible support. To have done so would have exhibited as bad generalship as has characterised the management of the French army during the present war. But I could not possibly have called the House together until about a month ago, as the last writ was not returnable till then. A month at the most was all the delay for which the Government was responsible. The delay in legislation was altogether owing to the conduct of the Opposition during last session, who refused to allow the Government to go on with their measures. I asked them to meet us on neutral ground, and allow us to go on with measures which every honorable member admitted were of a pressing nature, and then to fight out any questions as to which there was a difference of opinion; but the Opposition refused to do so. Now the Ministry can only be taxed, at most, with delaying the meeting of Parliament for one month; and I think the result shews that we were right in the course we have adopted, for there never before was an instance of every honorable member being present, except one, at the opening of the session; and that honorable member is now in his place—and, no doubt he would have been present on the previous day but that he had to attend to pressing professional duties. I refer to the honorable member for North Brisbane, Dr. O'Doherty. I therefore deny and repudiate most emphatically the assertions of the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba that the allusions in the first paragraph of the Speech shew that the present Ministry is entirely a squatting Ministry. As to the Land Act for 1868, the Government has equitably administered it over the whole colony. We have never interfered with the principles of the Bill, with the view of checking settlement in any district in the colony; and for my part, I am prepared to take the sense of the country on the subject. We have not given advantages to squatters or others beyond those provided for by the Act. I unhesitatingly challenge any one to shew that we have departed from a line of strict impartiality in the administration of the Land Act of 1868. I now come to the Ministerial programme, as shadowed forth in the Opening Speech. As therein stated, the first of the Bills we propose to introduce is one to enable the Government to raise, on the security of the general revenue of the colony, a sum of money sufficient to cover the cost of railway works. Now that is to provide for money already expended on railway works, and not to provide for new railway works; also for the extension of the electric telegraph. Well, that, I think, speaks for itself, and so I need not make any observations about it. In another part of the Speech we state that it is further proposed to extend our present lines of telegraph to Goondiwindi in the southern, and Springsure in the northern portions of the colony. There

may also in addition be a small sum required to complete the line from Cardwell to the Gulf of Carpentaria, which extension, I may say, has already been contracted for. Then, as to the expenditure on parliamentary buildings, it is not for the extension of the buildings, but for the purpose of providing for sums already expended on the buildings. For the construction and repair of roads and bridges it will be necessary for us to ask for a considerable sum; but, until the Colonial Treasurer makes his financial statement, I cannot exactly mention the amount; but I may say that something between £50,000 and £100,000 will be absolutely necessary for such works during the next year. We do not expect to complete the main roads in the usual way of making macadamised roads with that amount, but we will be able with it to make bridges where they are urgently required, and to mend a good many pieces of roadways that are now impassable in very wet weather, and by such means afford producers at all times the opportunity of coming to market. I can assure the House that we will not expend the money in a way that will allow of any future Government or of any honorable member saying, that it had been spent upon what were usually called pet districts. The money will be spent where it is considered it will be most usefully spent, and in accordance with a schedule accompanying the Bill and specifying where such works are most required. With respect to the matter of immigration, I entirely agree with the honorable and learned member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pring, in saying that we do not require the expensive system now maintained in England, nor the number or class of immigrants that come out. But when we came into office, we found an Immigration Act in existence, providing for the carrying out of the existing system. It was not for us to put a stop to the system so established, and, therefore, we determined to carry out the Act as it stood, until we should have an opportunity of consulting the House on the subject. It will, therefore, be necessary to raise money in order to enable the Government to meet the expenditure incurred in the carrying out of the present system of immigration, so far as that expenditure may exceed the balance of the previous vote. The honorable and learned member for North Brisbane was mistaken in saying, that the members of the present Government assisted in passing the present Act. Such was not the case; for I and others, who acted with me when the Bill was before the House, strenuously opposed it; but when we found we were outnumbered, we tried to get passed as good a Bill as possible. If we had not been outnumbered, the colony would not have been encumbered with the expensive agency at home—costing for the Agent-General £1,000 per annum, and for office expenses £5,000 per annum. As regarded the Savings Banks Loan, the amount that would be asked for would only be such as was sufficient to enable the

Government to secure depositors by the issue of debentures; so that, in the event of a crisis, the Government might be able to make use of the deposits in the Savings Bank, instead of being obliged to make expensive arrangements with private banking establishments for the advancement of money. In regard to the cost of the steamer "Governor Blackall," we have not changed our opinion as to the ordering of the construction of that vessel by the head of the previous Government. We still think that the ordering of that vessel was a mistake. We believe that if any Government could order the building of one such vessel, they could order the building of a fleet of iron-clads. At the same time, we consider that the credit of the colony should be strictly maintained, and that, to preserve the credit of the colony, the steamer should be paid for. The second clause of the Ministerial programme proposed that there should be a Bill introduced for granting to Her Majesty certain duties of customs, in lieu of those granted by the present Act, which will expire on the 31st December next. It is hardly necessary for me to say that an absolute necessity exists for the introduction of such a measure. As honorable members are aware, the Customs Duties Bill will expire at the end of the present year, and it is, therefore, necessary that provision should be made to pass some other measure, or to renew the existing Act. The Government has been threatened by the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba—and I am not sure but the honorable and learned member for North Brisbane followed suit—that if the Government did not do certain things, they would not be allowed to pass this or any Bill on the subject, and, therefore, they would not obtain any revenue. Now, I must say that I consider that to be a most foolish threat; because it is not the Government but the country that will suffer by its being carried out. I suppose the members of the Government could manage to do without their screws for a few months, for they knew pretty well that they would be forthcoming afterwards. The Government, as a Government, would not feel the delay; but the public throughout the whole colony would feel the effects of it. If the Customs Bill were allowed to expire, all the money that ought to be paid into the Treasury would find its way into the pockets of importers and merchants. No doubt, the civil servants, however, would suffer. The next measure proposed was one to regulate distillation. Well, I must say that such a measure is absolutely necessary, and if the honorable and learned member for North Brisbane had waited until he had seen the Bill, he would have saved himself a very great deal of trouble. The honorable and learned gentleman had amused himself, as it appears to me, in the course of his speech, in setting up dummies for the pleasure of knocking them down. The honorable member had been

only guessing at the nature of measures he never saw, and never had the opportunity of seeing. He should have waited till the Bills were submitted to the House before entering upon a discussion of them; for until they were laid on the table of the House they did not form a fair subject of debate, unless they were to be objected to *in toto*. As to the division of the colony into financial districts, that is a question, as every honorable member knows, the Ministry is pledged to carry out if possible; and we will bring in a measure for that purpose at the earliest opportunity. Such a measure must command the earnest attention of honorable members on both sides of the House, whether they may be in favor of it or not. The Ministry will bring in a Bill on the subject, and it will be for honorable members to vote for it or against it, or amend it. Then, there is the Additional Representation Bill; and I hope honorable members will refrain from discussing it until they see it. I may at present be allowed to state that it will be proposed by the Bill to add to the House twenty additional members. It will not be a hole and corner measure, but a general measure applicable to the whole colony. By the Bill, if carried, the country will be divided into different electoral districts, every district to have one member. There will not, however, be any necessity for a new election, so far as the present members of the House are concerned; because every honorable member may choose what portion of the electorate, as divided, he will continue to represent. The additional members will be elected for the other portions. If honorable members should not like the Bill they can reject it; but it is ridiculous to take up the time of the House discussing it till it is before the House. I think the Bill may be passed without repealing the two-thirds clause of the Constitution Act. However, if the two-thirds clause can be repealed by a simple majority of the House, by all means let it go. Of that, however, I have some doubts, because, if it can be so repealed, it is no safeguard whatever. The New South Wales Constitution Act was amended by the repeal of the two-thirds clause, but not by a simple majority as had been stated, or by a two-thirds majority, for the motion for the repeal of the clause was carried without any division whatever. As to the proposed Bill to amend and regulate the laws relating to elections, the Government have found that there exists an absolute necessity for such a measure, and we have taken as a model the Elections Act of Victoria, with some modifications. The Government have done so because they have found that the Victorian Act works exceedingly well. The Government are also prepared to bring in a Bill providing for manhood suffrage after six months' residence in the colony. We think that that will be a better and safer system than the present. The next point I have to refer to is the reduction of

the salary of future Governors. This is only the first of a series of reductions which it is proposed to make; and in dealing with the subject, honorable members should take into consideration all the proposed reductions. We have been twitted about proposing the imposition of a tax of five per cent. on the salaries of the civil servants, and asked why we did not propose that there should be such a tax levied on all persons having fixed incomes. We have also been asked why we did not tax ourselves. Well, we have begun with the Governor; we are to reduce the salaries of Ministers, and of members of the Civil Service. The paragraph relating to the civil servants is wrongly worded, and I take the responsibility of that. It should not have been the imposition of a tax of five per cent. on their salaries, but a reduction of five per cent. Now, when I consider the falling off in the incomes of those with whom I am acquainted, I do not think there is any ground for complaint on the part of the civil servants because of their salaries being reduced five per cent. Besides, the cost of living is much lower now than it was when the existing rate of salaries was fixed. It is not intended that the reduction of Ministers' salaries should apply to future Ministers only, for we intend that it should apply to ourselves after the beginning of next year. I do not mean to say that £1,000 a year is too much for a Minister of the Crown, if he gives proper attention to his duties; but proposing a reduction in the salaries of Ministers shews we are in earnest in our purpose to economise—especially as we intend beginning with ourselves. Now, as to the Volunteer force, I have always considered that it was placed on a wrong footing. The volunteers, I most readily admit, constitute a very valuable local force; but I have always considered that the system under which the force has been regulated and dealt with was a mere farce; and I know that other honorable members concur in that opinion. The small amount of money that has been annually voted for them, has been squandered upon staff officers; and, besides, discipline has not been sufficiently enforced under the present system. I have the draft of a Bill prepared for the purpose of effecting a thorough re-organization of the force. At the same time I may state that we have not put a farthing on the Estimates for the volunteers, because we considered that it was of no use to continue the present system. The Ministry are, however, satisfied that the House, if the proposed Bill should be passed, will consent to vote a sum—not a paltry £500—but a sum sufficient to provide the volunteers with uniforms, arms, ammunition, and pay an officer to give them proper military instruction—which officer should have nothing else to do but to attend to the force and give such instruction. In the twelfth clause honorable members would, in the measures there enumerated,

recognise some old friends. The Bill for the amendment of the insolvency law is, I may say, almost the same as the one drafted by the honorable and learned member for North Brisbane when he held the office of Attorney-General in a previous Government, only there are some improvements. The Bills to encourage the investment of private capital in the construction of railways, and to amend and consolidate our railway laws, are new measures. The Bill to facilitate the payment of wages is, to a certain extent, a re-draft of the Bill that was introduced, during a former session, by the honorable member for the Maranoa. The only difference is, that instead of confining the application of the Bill to the squatting interest, as was the purpose of the honorable member's Bill, the Bill we propose to introduce will have a general application. The next Bill on the list is one for the amendment of the District Courts Act. The Government consider that such a measure is highly necessary. Then comes the Registration of Brands Bill. That is a Bill that was before the House formerly, but dropped through because there was not time to have it passed through its last stages before the close of the session. That measure has already been so fully discussed that I think it may be very speedily passed. It is proposed that several other Bills should only be read a first time, this session; and I believe that all the Bills which the Government propose to bring forward may be passed, if there is more work and less talking than usual. The Ministry are prepared to sit and finish all the business referred to in the Opening Speech, if honorable members think that it would be best to do so. The Ministry, however, think that it would be more convenient for honorable members that there should be a short session, ending about Christmas, and that the House should meet again not later than March, when the accumulated business might be disposed of; so that the House should not be in session during the summer months. Such is the programme the Ministry put before the House, and we are willing to go through with it this session; but, of course, it is for honorable members to say whether or not they are willing to sit on till the programme is disposed of. There is some business, however, besides the Estimates, that must be got through this session. I do not think there is much of a factious spirit amongst us; but no amount of faction would justify the House in putting off the two first Bills mentioned in His Excellency's Speech to the end of the year. It would be detrimental to the credit of the colony if we were to do so—and the credit of the colony is dear to us all. Now, unless a Loan Bill and a Tariff Bill are passed before the end of the year, the credit of the colony will be gone. In some one shape or other both those Bills must be passed by the end of the year; and I put it to the good sense of the House to allow both those Bills to pass.

The rest of the Speech almost explains itself. As to the clause relating to a provisional arrangement between the late Ministry and the Government of New South Wales, with respect to a mail service from Sydney to San Francisco, by way of Auckland, honorable members are aware that the arrangement has been withdrawn from. I was, however, strongly urged by the Government of New South Wales to refer to the subject in the Opening Speech. I have, accordingly, done so, and I will on a future day bring the matter before the House by resolution. I may, however, inform honorable members that there is another course we will propose, which, if preferred by the House, will make Brisbane the first port of arrival and the last of departure. It will, however, cost considerably more than the arrangement proposed by the late Government. The provisional arrangement entered into with the Government of New South Wales, by the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley, was for a mail service from Sydney to San Francisco, *via* Auckland; but our proposition is for a line of steamers from Sydney to San Francisco, calling at this port, New Caledonia, Fijis, and Sandwich Islands, both on the outward and inward passages—making this port the first of arrival and last of departure on this continent. By the former arrangement the two colonies were to pay £10,000 per annum between them, of which amount we were to pay two-fifths and New South Wales three-fifths; but our proposal will cost this colony itself £10,000 per annum. As to the extension of the telegraph to Cardwell, the House has been fully informed, and the other extensions proposed have been long promised. The telegraphs pay very well and are a great advantage to the public. As to the telegraph for connecting communication with the European companies' lines, South Australia has obtained the preference, but the Government is under a penalty of several thousands of pounds for every day the line is not in working order; and I do not see how a line through such an extent of unsettled country can be kept in constant working order. As to the ninth clause of the Speech, it only states what is a fact—that the depression of the pastoral interest has caused the abandonment of a large extent of country. That is especially the case in the Flinders district and throughout the North. Now, unless some measure is passed to enable those lands to be re-occupied, they must remain unoccupied, which will cause a very great loss to the revenue of the colony. I know of many capitalists who would take up the forfeited runs if they had some security in law that they could get possession of them. It must, therefore, be evident to every honorable member that an alteration of the law relating to forfeited runs is absolutely necessary in order that the forfeited runs may be taken up. No capitalist could be expected to take up

country, and stock it, if he was not sure of being able to obtain possession of the run. And it has nothing to do with our supposed fondness for the pastoral interest. The pastoral interest is a very great interest in this colony. Nobody will deny for one moment that, if that interest suffers the whole colony suffers, as a rule. I do not think that can be refuted. Well, we have attended to other matters. We have mentioned that the success attending the cultivation of sugar is a matter of congratulation; and we believe it to be—I believe it is—"an established industry and a source of permanent wealth to the colony." We wish it every success, as we also do to the gold fields. It is, as I said before, the easiest thing in the world to pull a Speech to pieces. I only know that I wish the honorable gentlemen who pull it to pieces would write one for me the next time I want one. I would just as soon bring in their Speech as any other, and I would have no objection to bring in their Bills—they would have just as much chance as mine of escaping fault-finding. However, everything we have stated in the Speech we have said honestly, and we mean to carry it out if we can. I do not think that the House can complain that we have not given them work enough to carry on with. I have been told, outside the House as well as inside, that we have done nothing—that we have prepared two Bills, which we want to pass and then send honorable members about their business. We have shewn, not only in the Speech but otherwise, that we have done all that we profess: every one of the measures mentioned is in print; some are ready to be placed in the hands of honorable members; some of them require re-modelling to some extent, and the Elections Bill requires some alteration in the schedule. Every one of them is nearly ready to bring before the House, if honorable members will allow us to bring them forward. My honorable and learned friend, the member for Brisbane (Mr. Pring), was very severe and sarcastic on the Address in Reply and the last paragraph in the Speech. He wanted to know why it was we speak of the war as "peculiarly disastrous to the commerce of the Australian colonies." I will tell him why. Because of the fall in wool; because of the want of buyers from the German and French markets—instead of spending money in the purchase of our wool, they are engaged in cutting each other's threads short. The war has thus had a very material effect upon us, because of the derangement of commerce; and, as well as of wool, it has reduced the price of cotton, which is an article of large export from this colony. So, I think, we were justified in referring to the war in the terms used in the Speech. My honorable friend said that wool has fallen two-pence a pound. Is that nothing? I wish he knew how much wool has fallen, he would speak a little more feelingly. It is not two-pence, or four-pence, or six-pence a

pound. Perhaps my honorable friend will be much astonished when he is told that wool has fallen a shilling a pound, in some instances. I want to know if he thinks that has any effect on the colonies?

The Hon. R. PRING: Not on this colony. All the money goes to the banks, and goes out of this colony. That makes a vast difference.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is a great pity that the money does not stop here. It goes somewhere. I think that we are justified in saying that this war has interfered very much with the commerce of the Australian colonies. It is also proper to put into the Speech, that His Excellency feels

"confident I may rely upon your assistance to preserve that neutrality which Great Britain has, fortunately, so far been enabled to maintain."

My honorable friend was very severe on the Address in Reply; but I think we shewed him, or tried to shew him, that we were sensible we could not do much:—

"We shall endeavour to preserve a strict neutrality, though we beg to point out to your Excellency that, owing to the absence of any naval force upon our coast, our abilities in that direction are very limited."

The honorable gentleman said, indeed, that he could not understand that at all. I will tell him what is meant by the "absence of any naval force." If a French or German ship come into our port to-morrow, she may set our neutrality laws at defiance, because we have no naval force on the coast to maintain them. I think that is the explanation. It may not have struck the honorable gentleman before. It is a very good reason for our saying that we shall do so to the best of our power. We have literally no power: we have not a ship; and, I say it is very little to the credit of the parent country that we should be at the mercy of any country at war with Great Britain. But I am quite sure that the inhabitants of this colony will do their best to preserve neutrality. The honorable gentleman said this House has nothing to do with it. I say that this House has everything to do with it. This House is the country; and I say this is a figure of speech that we are perfectly justified in using. In conclusion, sir, I may compliment you, and the House in general, on the accession of new members. The speeches we have heard from the new members who have favored us this evening, have been, I am sure, far beyond the average of first speeches in this House. I am exceedingly glad to find that we have such an acquisition of talent. I have no doubt that the new members who have not addressed the House will shew, equally with those who have spoken, that the dissolution has not been in vain, but has produced very good fruits.

Mr. GROOM, by permission, directed the attention of the honorable member at the

head of the Government to the eighth section of the second paragraph of the Opening Speech.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, in replying to the suggestion; I omitted to do so, unintentionally. A Bill will be presented to provide for three judges of the Supreme Court and regulate their salaries. This, sir, is an old Bill, with a little fresh matter grafted on it; and it was drafted by my honorable and learned friend the member for North Brisbane (Mr. Pring), when we were in office together. I believe there is a great necessity for a third judge of the Supreme Court, to make it a court of appeal, and to do away with the Metropolitan District Court. It is the old idea of the honorable gentleman now attempted to be carried out, feeling, as we do, the growing necessity for a court of appeal. I do not believe it will add very materially to the expense of the country, because the salary of the judge of the Metropolitan District Court will be saved, and £500 a year will almost make up the difference. At the same time it is proposed to increase the salary of the Chief Justice. Every member of this House has felt the peculiar position, almost a ridiculous one, of the Puisne Judge having a salary of £2,000 a year, while the Chief Justice has only £1,500 a year. We propose to increase the salary of the Chief Justice to £2,000 a year, leaving the salary of the Puisne Judge also at £2,000, as is provided for under Schedule B; and that the salary of future Puisne Judges shall be £1,500 a year. It is a very short Bill.

Mr. JORDAN said the House had been informed by the honorable the Colonial Secretary that the expenses in Great Britain on account of emigration were £5,000 a year.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: £5,000 a year, office expenses.

Mr. JORDAN: He might just state that the cost of the sustentation of that department, in Great Britain, during the period in which he had the honor of being at the head of it, was exactly—nothing, to this colony! In fact, it was a source of revenue. In this way:—He had been sent home to carry out emigration under the Crown Lands Act of 1860, which contemplated the immigration of persons who paid their own passages, and who received land in return on their arrival in the colony; and it also provided for the introduction of persons whose passages were paid by others; but it did not contemplate, at all, assisted immigration. After some experience, he devised a plan of assisted emigration, which yielded over £50,000 for the purpose; and that £50,000 he spent over the whole period, and it paid not only his own salary, but the salaries of the clerks in the office, printing, and, in fact, the whole of the expenses of the department, and left £3,000 a year to the revenue. He was not aware what the cost might be of the Emigration

Department, at home; he did know, however, that if the Agent-General for Emigration took means which would be certainly within his reach, he could revive the assisted emigration, and that, he (Mr. Jordan) was convinced, would be the means of bearing all the cost at home, as well as furnishing this colony with a valuable class of immigrants. He might mention, further, that, during the three years he was at home, seventeen thousand persons arrived in this colony, who brought with them a million of sterling money. A number of those were of the farming class of Great Britain, and they came here to settle down on our lands. The object of sending home an Agent-General was, that that particular class of immigration might be established along with the assisted class. He thought that should be ever borne in mind; for which reason he deemed it desirable to call the attention of the House to those facts, in connection with the statement made by the Colonial Secretary.

The question was put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said: I have it in command, Mr. Speaker, to inform this House that His Excellency will receive the Address at half-past eleven, to-morrow.