

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 1870**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, 30 November, 1870.*Committee of Supply.—*Mr. Lilley's Resolutions as to Sale and Rental of Crown Lands, Immigration, and Public Works.*

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY—MR. LILLEY'S RESOLUTIONS AS TO SALE AND RENTAL OF CROWN LANDS, IMMIGRATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply.

MR. LILLEY said he believed he was in order in moving a contingent or substantive resolution, which he thought deserved the consideration of the House before going into Committee of Supply. He thought it was time that some of the questions which had already been mooted in connection with the land system, immigration, public works, and the revenue of the colony, should be considered with a view to elicit an expression of opinion from the House. He thought it was highly expedient to establish some land system, which would yield a permanent revenue to the colony, and that it should be established in connection with some well-considered scheme of communication between this country and Europe. It was also, in his opinion, desirable to carry out some judicious plan of public works, under which the contributions to the revenue from each district would be expended to the advantage of that district. If some such policy were carried out in a wise and liberal spirit, the prosperity of the colony would, he believed, be materially advanced. With this short preface, he would beg to move—

1. That the question be amended by the omission of all the words following the word "That," with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words "in the opinion of this House, it is desirable to make provision for a judicious system of immigration and a liberal scheme of public works, which shall ensure due regard to the interests of the different districts of the colony."
2. That the revenue to be derived from the sale and rental of the Crown lands in each district should be applied towards meeting the interest of all money expended on public works in such districts.
3. That with a view to further the above objects, it is expedient to alienate the public lands in fee simple, at a low price, or at the cost of survey, reserving a perpetual annual rent, proportioned to the special advantages of their location.

If he had not been so closely engaged in another place, he should have been prepared to go more fully into these questions. But if he were not mistaken, the principles embodied in the resolutions had already recommended themselves to the adoption of honorable members, and they were, he was quite sure, in conformance with the views held by

a majority of the colonists. Of course they would require to be subjected to the serious consideration of the House in all matters of detail; but he hoped that in affirming the principles they contained, he should receive not only the support of honorable members on his side of the House, but also the support of some honorable members, at least, on the Government benches. It would be well, he thought, to discuss these resolutions, if that could be done, without any party spirit; and he hoped that by giving some practical effect to them, and by establishing a liberal system of dealing with the public lands of the colony in connection with immigration, and a judicious system of public works, the object they all sought to attain, an extensive settlement of the colony, might be attained. With very few exceptions, and those were persons who harbored ancient prejudices, he believed honorable members were all agreed as to the necessity of continuing some suitable scheme of immigration; and he believed that if some system were introduced in connection with the public lands, under which persons desirous of settling in the colony could obtain their land at the cost of survey—and if they got as much back in the shape of public works as they paid annually for rent, it would be nearly free—a very large population might be introduced into the colony at a small cost. The third resolution, he believed, lay at the root of the whole question. As far as the present system of immigration was concerned, the best feature in it was the provision which allowed persons in the colony to send for their friends, and he thought that portion of the system should be brought into more extensive operation. The public lands should, in his opinion, be the great lever to attract the population required for this colony. He believed that if immigrants were encouraged to come out, if readier and cheaper access to the land were afforded them, and money were judiciously expended upon public works with a view to the improvement of those lands, a considerable population would annually be drawn, not only from Europe, but from the neighboring colonies. If such a scheme were carried out, land in all the colonies would be reduced in price, because competition would be enforced, and the general prosperity of the whole country would be advanced. He was not one of those people who were jealous of the success of their neighbors; for it was quite a mistake to suppose that the prosperity of one colony was not felt in all the others. It would be quite possible to carry out a liberal scheme of public works, because the revenue from the lands, according to the scheme he proposed, would go on increasing from year to year, and would provide the means for raising large loans for public works. He had considered, and indeed had partially prepared while he was in office, a Bill for the construction of lines of railway upon the guarantee

principle ; but he must confess, he had never entered very heartily into the views of some honorable members as to the practicability of this plan. It had been tried in other countries and had failed, and he was not very sanguine that it would answer here. He had always, however, been of opinion that the investment of money in public works, judiciously entered into and carried out by the Government economically and so that the colony received the value of the outlay, was a good and safe investment. He had always advocated that, in the distribution of revenue, justice should be done to the outside districts, who were struggling against many difficulties, and that if there was any surplus revenue it should be employed in improving those districts. It seemed unjust, for instance, that the revenue raised from customs duties in Rockhampton should be expended in improving the roads in East Moreton. It would of course be urged, that he ought to have brought forward resolutions similar to these while he was in office ; but in answer to that he would say, that no man was able at once to mature all the measures which, according to his judgement, were for the good of the country, and this was especially the case with the Premier of a coalition Ministry. The time too might not have been altogether ripe for the introduction of such measures, however sound they might be in themselves.

MR. THORN : Rest and caution !

MR. LILLEY : The honorable member spoke of rest and caution, but it was one thing to rest and another thing to stand still for ever. A man might act very wisely by resting on the top of a hill to prepare himself for the descent, but he certainly would be a great fool to stop there and expose himself to the fury of the elements. He believed it was prudent at that time to rest, but there was no reason why, now, some bolder and more comprehensive policy should not be introduced, and he hoped great things from the altered frame of mind which characterised honorable members opposite, who now spoke hopefully of the prospects of the colony, instead of predicting, as they used to do, its utter ruin. The colony was now in a sound condition, as much so as any colony in the group, and he hoped that lamentations like those which the prophet of Maryborough had uttered some time ago would never go forth to the world henceforth. The colony was in sound condition, he repeated, if not in its limbs at any rate in its constitution. The second resolution he had moved, which referred to the sale of and the revenue to be derived from public lands, he thought he had touched upon sufficiently. The foundation of the scheme was, that the land revenue should be applied to the construction of railways, roads, and public works for the benefit of the districts which contributed it. With a more liberal land system, there would be a more permanent and settled prosperity. The lands would not be alienated without fixing some duty upon

them, which would return an annual revenue, and that revenue would be expended in the district in which it was raised. He did not see why the citizens of the North should have to pay for the formation of roads, bridges, and railways in the Darling Downs, and he thought that it would be only fair and right that these districts should have the benefit of their own resources, and from the increase of those resources. There would be some difficulty in fixing the rent that the land should bear, and there might be an objection to enter upon this plan on that account. He believed that the rent should be decided by the advantages which the district possessed. In some districts the tax should not be more than sixpence an acre ; but he did not believe in fixing the rent in districts that possessed railways and good roads at the same rate as in districts that had not these advantages. He believed that the revenue would be greatly benefitted by this mode, for people would select the best land, where they thought they would have a prospect of making it pay the rent. The details of this system would, of course, have to be considered, but he saw no difficulty in it himself. He did not propose to include lands already alienated ; he believed they might be justly and legally taxed, although he thought they might form the subject of a separate tax. He thought honorable members might now approach the discussion of these resolutions with a clear understanding of the principles they contained, and he would, therefore, leave them for the House to consider.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he could hardly make out the object of the honorable member in moving these resolutions, unless it were to frustrate the Government in their intention to proceed with the Loan Estimates that evening. If the resolutions were brought forward for the purpose of eliciting the opinions of honorable members, he could only say he entirely concurred with the honorable member in the principles they expressed, and would go hand-in-hand with him, and give him every assistance he could, in carrying them out. Ever since he had been in the colony he had advocated the principle of giving away the land to the people at a nominal price and levying a rent upon it ; and although a great proportion of the lands of the colony were now alienated, it was not, perhaps, too late in the day to found some scheme by which the propositions of the honorable member might be put into operation. With regard to immigration, again, no one saw more clearly than did he and the members of the Government the necessity of introducing some better and less costly system than the one now in force. They all knew that the immigrants did not come to the colony half fast enough ; but the way in which they were now rushed into the country, as well as the class of immigrants, were not the best calculated to produce the best results. If, by removing certain odious restrictions

which existed, immigrants could be attracted to the colony without the present heavy expenditure for immigration purposes—and he believed that could be done—a great advantage would be gained. He hoped that would be done while the present Government were in office. He hoped the House would hear no more of the charges which were continually being brought against the Government and their supporters, to the effect that they were adverse to the introduction of additional immigration. They were quite aware that, if the population were doubled, the prosperity of the squatters would be proportionably increased. It was too late in the day to bring forward such false charges and stupid accusations. They were as anxious as other honorable members to establish a proper system of immigration. He entirely agreed with the resolution which provided that the revenue raised in each district should be expended upon the improvement of that district; but there were difficulties in the way of carrying out that principle, and probably the honorable member would unite with the Government and bring his great talent to assist them in perfecting such a scheme. At any rate, there would be no objection on the part of the Government to that proposition. He could not help, however, asking the House, and the honorable member himself, how it was that such first-rate principles—principles which had commended themselves to such a large majority of the colonists, had not been brought forward by the honorable member himself? Why had not the honorable member, who had had such splendid opportunities, who commanded such a majority that he could have done almost anything he chose, brought forward these golden schemes for the advancement of the colony? (Coalition! from the Opposition benches). Then why had the honorable member submitted to coalitions? Why, he had invited them himself; he had been the author of all the coalitions, and without them he would never have held office so long. How was it that, when the honorable member was in power, he had brought in a Bill which had the effect of locking up certain lands of the colony for twenty-one years;—a Bill which he (Mr. Walsh) looked upon as a robbery upon the country. Those were contradictions he could not understand; at any rate, they carried their moral with them. He thought the honorable member for Fortitude Valley ought never to be in a Ministry, because he never did anything while he was in office. On the other hand, when in Opposition, he was one of the most valuable members of the House; and he hoped, for the credit of the honorable member himself, and for the good of the country, he would long remain so. The honorable member stated that he never went on to a hill-top to proclaim a wrong; but was the honorable member aware of what was said of him: that if he had not been found on such high places sounding his trumpet for the

benefit of the country, he had been found in quagmires and other places where he was doing no good at all. If, however, the honorable member would put his resolutions into a practical form, the Government would cheerfully lend him their assistance in giving effect to them. He hoped, after there had been an expression of opinion from honorable members on both sides of the House on the subject, they would be able to proceed with the business of the day.

The question that the House go into Committee of Supply was then put and the House divided:—

Ayes, 14.	Noes, 14.
Mr. Palmer	Mr. Lilley
" Ramsay	Dr. O'Doherty
" Thompson	Mr. Jordan
" Moreton	" Edmondstone
" King	" Fyfe
" Haly	" MacDevitt
" Wienholt	" Bell
" Scott	" Miles
" Ferrett	" Stephens
" Forbes	" Atkin
" Thorn	" McIlwraith
" De Satgé	" Morgan
" Royds	" Pring
" Walsh	" Handy.

The SPEAKER said that in order not to prevent the House from proceeding with the order of the day, and going into Committee of Supply, he should vote with the ayes.

The amendment was therefore negatived.

Mr. LILLEY said he had never before seen such an exhibition on the part of any Government. That a member of the Government, without a word of assent or dissent from his colleagues, should accept the resolutions which had just been moved, and then vote against them was a course of action which he believed was without parallel. He was quite justified in believing that the Government had no intention whatever of assisting him, and they could not, therefore, expect him to assist them in passing their Loan Estimates. He would now move that the House do adjourn until to-morrow.

The SPEAKER said the House having decided that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question, he was bound to put the question without debate, and the honorable member's amendment could not be put. No honorable member, in order to set himself right, could move the adjournment of the House. He should, therefore, again put the original question.

Mr. STEPHENS moved—

That the debate be now adjourned.

That was a question which had not been put, and he asked the Speaker's ruling on the point.

The SPEAKER said the amendment could not be put.

The Hon. R. PRING rose to move the adjournment of the House. He had yet to learn that any honorable member could not move the adjournment of the Legislative Assembly at any time, or at any stage of the business. In moving the adjournment of the House until the following day, he wished to say

that he was prepared, with many other honorable members, to have adopted the very sound and excellent resolutions submitted to the House by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. They contained principles undoubtedly welcome to the general community; so welcome indeed were they to members on that side of the House, that they accepted them and were prepared to support them with great cordiality. They appeared also to be welcome to members on the other side of the House, because the Minister for Works had seen nothing objectionable in them, and had accepted them on behalf of himself and his colleagues, and he had not been contradicted by any member of his party. In consequence of that action the debate had not been pursued, because it was not necessary, for the reason—as he understood it—that they would have come in concurrently with the consideration of the whole question in committee, and been discussed there and then. Having been treated in this way, honorable members on the Opposition side did not feel disposed to give way; and if the Government thought they were going to pass their Estimates and Loan Bill just as they liked, they were very much mistaken.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS explained that the statement he had made was to the effect that if the resolutions proposed by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley were brought forward in a definite form, and in a form in which they could be carried out in practice, the Government was prepared to accept them. But the resolutions now before the House were not in a practical form.

Mr. STEPHENS said he thought the Government had acted very shabbily in first accepting of the resolutions, according to the speech of the honorable the Secretary for Works, and then voting against them. He would press upon the honorable member at the head of the Government to allow the resolutions to pass, seeing they were of great importance. If the resolutions were passed, it would be perfectly competent for the House to follow them up by other resolutions; and honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were prepared, in that way, to adopt a course that would have the effect of facilitating the passing of the Estimates. As he could not agree to the resolutions being thrown over in so hasty a manner, he would support the motion for adjournment, in order that honorable members might have an opportunity of more fully considering them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY denied that there had been any shabbiness on the part of the Government, in opposing the resolutions submitted by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. No one knew better than the honorable and learned member the force of the proverb, "*Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes.*" The Government, though not objecting to the purposes of the resolutions, voted against

them on the ground that if they were carried, the result would be that the Speaker could not leave the chair, and consequently the House could not go into Committee of Supply. Now, it was understood that the House was on that day to go into Committee of Supply. He thought the resolutions, as they were of so important a nature, should have been printed and circulated to honorable members before the House was asked to agree to them. He thought that the only member who was likely to oppose the resolutions of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, was the honorable member for South Brisbane—judging by the course that honorable member had hitherto pursued in respect to such matters.

Mr. LILLEY said the complaint against the Government of having acted shabbily in the matter, was based on the ground that they had voted against the resolutions, after leading the House to believe that the resolutions would be supported by the Government. He did not think there was anything in the resolutions that could be objected to; and he believed that the principles embodied in them would be approved of, not only by most of the inhabitants of the colony, but even by many of the supporters of the Government, if sufficient time were afforded for their consideration. No one, he thought, could say there was anything objectionable in the last resolution, especially as it proposed that the rent should be fixed at a low rate. He did not think that after the way the Government had acted in this matter, the House should be expected to go into Committee of Supply, especially as he made it distinctly understood that in bringing forward the resolutions he had no wish to prevent the House going into Committee of Supply. He was now on the Opposition side of the House, but had he been on the Government side of the House, he would have brought forward the resolutions. He would give the Government as much support as he possibly could. He knew that the Opposition could not put them out, and for his part he had no desire to do so. The honorable the Minister for Works had admitted that the principles embodied in the resolutions were approved of by the Government, and he was sorry to find, after such an admission, that the Government acted in so factious a manner respecting them. If they were despotically inclined, they should be strong enough to carry out their purposes, but he thought they were not so. He had only further to say that he would support the motion for the adjournment of the House.

Mr. THORN said he entirely disapproved of the resolutions that had been introduced by the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley. He thought they were intended to introduce, by a side wind, the construction of a railway between Ipswich and Brisbane. The effect of carrying the resolutions would be to shelve the Estimates for a week. He should certainly support the Government in opposing the resolutions. The

action of the Opposition, since the meeting of the House, had been to try and trip up the Government; but they had not yet succeeded in doing so, and he hoped they would not succeed on the present occasion.

Mr. BELL said he felt sure there was no intention on the part of the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley, in bringing forward the resolutions before the House, to place the Government in a position of difficulty in the matter of passing the Estimates. Had the Government allowed the resolutions to pass, he believed that the difficulty the House was now in would have been avoided; and he thought that, if the Government was not beyond taking a suggestion from the Opposition, it would be well for them to allow the decision that had been arrived at to be rescinded, and allow business to be proceeded with.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that the Government did not so much object to the principles embodied in the resolutions as they objected to the introduction of the resolutions, on the ground that they believed they were brought forward with some secret intention to obstruct the passing of measures the Government proposed to submit for the consideration of the House. He was quite well aware that the Government had brought in some measures that were objectionable to honorable members on the Opposition side of the House who were hankering after office. While saying so, he wished it to be understood, that he did not mean that remark to apply to the honorable member for the Northern Downs, though he considered that that honorable member was a victim to the scheming of the honorable member for South Brisbane. He believed that the measures the Government intended to introduce would, if passed into law, be beneficial to the country. Now, the honorable member for South Brisbane wanted a few days' delay, in order to have an opportunity of concocting some scheme for the purpose of ousting the present Government, so that he might himself have the chance of returning to office. He must say, that he did not understand the speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane; and he was not alone in that opinion, for he was told by a gentleman who was formerly a member of the House, that the more he knew of the honorable member for South Brisbane the less he could understand him.

Mr. DE SATGE reminded honorable members that it had been agreed to on the previous day, that it was absolutely necessary the financial Bills proposed to be brought forward by the Government, should be passed as quickly as possible; especially as it was intended the session should be so short; and as there were other Bills of admitted importance to be brought forward. He thought the honorable member for Fortitude Valley should have given notice, in the usual way,

of the resolutions he had proposed, in order that honorable members might have had an opportunity of considering them before being called upon to discuss them. But the honorable member had not done so; and had thereby hurried the House into a debate on questions of a most important nature, and had consequently obstructed the House dealing with measures of pressing necessity. Now, as the honorable and learned member, when he was at the head of the Government, had, during the recess, acted in a very unconstitutional manner—for the ordering of the steamer without the previous sanction of the House was, he considered, highly unconstitutional—he ought to speak in a hushed voice. In his opinion, the Immigration Bill which was brought in by the Government of which the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was the head, was also unconstitutional.

The motion for adjournment was then put and negatived on division. Ayes, 12; Noes, 15.

Mr. ATKIN moved that the debate be adjourned.

Mr. STEPHENS said he believed that every honorable member on the Opposition side of the House was willing to go on with the Estimates; and all they wished for was a fair discussion of the resolutions which had been introduced by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. Now, the discussion had been burked by the honorable the Minister for Works accepting the resolutions on the part of the Government, and next by the Government and their supporters rejecting them. He was quite willing to support the statement of the honorable the Colonial Secretary, for he was always straightforward, and he knew that the honorable gentleman was sincere when he stated that the course he took was solely with the view of getting into Committee of Supply. But the passing of the resolutions before the House would not in the slightest degree have prevented the House going into Committee of Supply. There was no honorable member who knew better than the honorable the Colonial Secretary that it was impossible to go on with business in the face of a large minority.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS rose to order. He said he had known an honorable member being taken in charge for using the word "burked," and he, therefore, submitted that the word was unparliamentary.

Mr. STEPHENS apologised for having used the expression, and regretted that he should have followed the example of the honorable member for Maryborough in so doing. He thought that under the circumstances a great deal of time would be saved by permitting the adjournment of the debate, and proceeding with other business.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that the members of the Government were quite prepared to go on with business, and endeavor to have measures passed that would

be beneficial to the colony. He, himself, had much private business to attend to, but being a member of the Government he was willing to waive it in order that measures of pressing importance might be passed; and he hoped the honorable the Colonial Secretary would not allow himself to be turned aside from the course he had said he intended to follow, by the honorable member for South Brisbane.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he would have been willing to assist the Government, as far as he could, in going on with pressing business; but because of the turn proceedings had taken, he felt that he must support the adjournment of the debate. If the resolutions which had been proposed by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had been accepted by the Government, he would have supported the Government against the motion for adjournment. The principal measure which the Government proposed to bring forward to-night, was the Loan Bill. Now, as that measure was intended for the carrying out of extensive public works, he thought that members on the Opposition side of the House should be afforded some time to consider it, before being asked to consent to the second reading of it. He understood that it had been stated by an honorable member of the Government, that it was necessary the Bill should be passed immediately. If such were the case, the Government had themselves alone to blame for any delay that might take place in the passing of the measure. He considered they were also to blame for not calling the House together at an earlier period, and so doing away with the necessity for rushing through important business.

Mr. KING said he thought the usual course of giving notice of resolutions should have been adopted by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. He might state that, from the perusal he had given them, he agreed with them in the abstract; but, he believed they had been brought forward with the view of preventing the House going into Committee of Supply. It appeared to him that the object of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was to have his resolutions forced through the House, in order to obtain some popular advantage before the reform measure of the Government became law. Now, for his part, he would oppose any extensive works being gone into until the number of members was increased.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the honorable member for the Warrego had stated that the Government were to blame for not calling the Parliament together at an earlier date. Now he wished to inform the House that the honorable member himself had asked him that the meeting of Parliament should be put off till this late period. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley was, generally, very courteous in his language, but, in the course of the present debate, he had used language which the Government had good right to complain of, inasmuch as he had

spoken of the conduct of the Government, in respect to the resolutions submitted by him, as being shabby. Now, he must deny that there was any shabbiness in the course pursued by the Government in the matter. The Government had voted against the resolutions in order that measures which they considered to be of pressing public importance should be passed without delay.

Mr. LILLEY said he considered that the charge he had made of shabbiness as against the Government was not only just but was well founded. He felt he could not acquit the Government of blame for the trick they had resorted to in order to stifle the debate on the resolutions he had brought forward. It had been attributed to him that he had some deep and secret design in bringing forward the resolutions he had submitted for the consideration of the House; and that had been done especially by the honorable member for Wide Bay, who asserted that the resolutions were brought forward in order that he, and perhaps other members on the Opposition side of the House, might be able to accomplish something before a Bill was passed providing for an increase of members. Now, he could not understand what the honorable member referred to, unless it was the construction of the railway between Brisbane and Ipswich. Well, he would frankly confess to the House that he hoped to see that work carried out; and he did not care, though, with that view—the carrying of the resolutions, if they should be carried—should have the effect of throwing out the present Ministry. He said so the more definitely because he could assure the House that he had no desire to return to office; but he knew that, if he did return to office,—and honorable members knew it—he would have one colleague less than he had had hitherto. Now, he thought that the resolutions he had brought forward were well timed; and that, as regarded their introduction, they had been sufficiently explained. It would not have been possible, as had been demanded by some honorable members, to have entered into full details of the principles to which they referred. He believed that, if the resolutions were agreed to by the House, they would afford the best guarantee that could be given for the maintenance of the credit of the colony. He would support the adjournment of the debate, because he considered that an opportunity should be afforded to the country of considering the resolutions.

Mr. JORDAN said he would support the motion for adjournment. He thought the resolutions, if agreed to, would have the effect not only of promoting public works and immigration, but also of keeping in the colony the immigrants who were brought to the colony, and in that way promoting settlement. That was the policy he had always advocated. Now, he must say that when he heard a member of the Government state that

the Government agreed with the principles of the resolutions, he certainly thought they would have been accepted by the Government and their supporters.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that if the adjournment had been moved for on the clear and distinct ground that some honorable members wished, for the purposes of amusement, to attend the meeting of the Caledonian Society, which he understood was to be held that night, he would not have objected to it; but as the motion had been put forward on public grounds, he considered it would be his duty to use his utmost endeavors to attend in his place at seven o'clock, and continue to carry on the business of the colony as long as he could secure a sufficient number of members to form a quorum.

On re-assembling after the recess for dinner,

Mr. ATKIN called attention to the state of the House.

The House was "counted out," there not being a quorum present, and adjourned by the SPEAKER to the next sitting day.