

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 1871

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 14 November, 1871.

Subpœnas served upon the Clerk.—Address in Reply—
Resumption of Debate.

SUBPŒNAS SERVED UPON THE CLERK.

The SPEAKER informed the House that he had received a letter from the Clerk, which he would read to the House. It was as follows :—

“ Legislative Assembly Offices,
“ Brisbane, 14th November, 1871.

“ SIR,—I do myself the honor to inform you that I have received subpœnas to attend as a witness before the Supreme Court, in two cases, viz. :—*Lilley v. Cowton and Another*, and *Lilley v. Parkinson and Others*; and am informed by the plaintiff's solicitor that the evidence required from me will involve facts and occurrences connected with the business of the House. I do not feel at liberty to give any such evidence without the express leave of the House previously obtained; and accordingly take the earliest opportunity of reporting to you the position in which I find myself placed.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ LEWIS A. BERNAYS,

“ Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

“ The Honorable the Speaker.”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—

That the Clerk have leave to attend the Supreme Court, in pursuance of the subpœnas served upon him; and to give such evidence and produce such records as the Court in its discretion may require in the interests of justice.

The motion was agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY—RESUMPTION OF
DEBATE.

On the order of the day being read for the resumption of the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech,

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS rose and said that before the debate was resumed he desired to lay upon the table of the House some papers with reference to certain charges which had been made against the administration of the Public Lands Department. He had not yet obtained all the papers as to those charges, but so far as he had got them he would place them before honorable members for their information. The first case he would refer to was that of *Schneider*. In respect to that case he would lay on the table the report of the Commissioner, Mr. McDowall; and he thought it would be found to form a conclusive answer to the charge in respect to that case. Mr. McDowall in his report stated that—

“ Darling Downs District,

“ Public Lands Office,

“ Toowoomba, 1st November, 1871.

“ SIR,—I have the honor to report that John Schneider's application was ‘accepted subject to the land being opened to selection’ on the 12th of April, 1871. It was accepted under these con-

ditions, because I told the applicants on the court day that it was extremely doubtful whether their applications could be confirmed by the Minister, as I did not think the land could be considered open to selection, but I would let the Minister decide.

"Your telegram, dated 29th April, 1871, instructing me to advise applicants that their applications could not be confirmed, arrived when I was away upon field duties at Pikedale and elsewhere.

"I returned on the 3rd May and instructed the land agent, by wire, on the 4th, to advise applicants. It appears that the land agent notified two of the selectors on the same day, and asked them to advise Schneider. They promised to do so.

"On the 10th May, Schneider attended the land court, and was personally informed that his selection could not be passed. Since then, Schneider has been in the office, I believe, more than once, to get information as to the mode in which the land would be dealt with.

"I am not aware of the nature of the improvements that Schneider has made; but, if possible, I will examine the ground upon my next visit to Warwick.

"The notification to Schneider, that the refund was awaiting his reception, was sent through the Warwick agent, and was posted here on the 29th June.

"I have the honor to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"(Signed.) A. McDOWALL,

"Commissioner.

"The Under Secretary

"Public Lands, Brisbane."

There was also a further report from Mr. McDowall on that case, which was as follows:—

"Darling Downs District,

"Public Lands Office,

"Toowoomba, 10th November, 1871.

"MEMO.—Improvements by Schneider on rejected application No. 449, examined on the 7th November:—

"Bark gynyah in an unfinished state, value	£	s.	d.
...	3	0	0

"Horse yard of four panels, two-rail fence	0	8	0
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"Pig-sty	0	3	6
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"TOTAL	£3	11	6
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"The improvements are of the most temporary description, and are rather over-estimated in the above valuation. Schneider was a discharged shepherd from Rosenthal, and having a few head of goats, pigs, sheep, and geese, wanted somewhere to camp with them, and appears to have settled on his selection, because it was near where he had been living and suited his convenience.

"He has not turned a sod of the ground even for a garden, and in fact has done nothing but what any traveller would do who had made up his mind to camp in one place for a couple of months to spell.

"(Signed.) A. McDOWALL,

"Commissioner.

"The Under Secretary

"Public Lands, Brisbane."

He thought it must be evident from those reports that there was really no hardship whatever inflicted in that case. The next case he came to refer to was the one as to the exchange of land at South Toolburra. He would also now lay upon the table some papers relating to that case, and if further papers as to the charge respecting it should be required, he would be happy to produce them. He might state, that the arrangements for this exchange of lands was made by the Lilley Administration. He believed that arrangement to be a perfectly just and legitimate proceeding, and he accordingly carried it out. The honorable member for Eastern Downs, Mr. Thornton, had called on him, and told him that it was the only land in the district which had an available frontage to the Condamine, and gave him a written statement to that effect, which he would now read:—

"SIR,—I request you will reserve from sale 160 acres of land to be sold on Thursday next, being the only frontage to the Condamine River, lot 37, parish of Pratten."

"I have, &c.,

"EDMOND L. THORNTON.

"The Minister for Lands."

He (the Secretary for Lands), however, ascertained, upon further inquiry, that the representation made to him by the honorable member for Eastern Downs was not correct, and he wrote to the honorable member to that effect. His letter was as follows:—

"Department of Public Lands,

"Brisbane, 22nd July, 1870.

"SIR,—Referring to the request recently made by you to the Minister for Lands for the withdrawal of lot 37, parish of Pratten, from the sale of Crown lands recently held at Warwick, on the ground that the lot comprised the only available frontage to the Condamine River in that locality, which request was complied with, I have the honor to state, by direction of the Secretary for Lands, that it now appears that the land (lot 37) has no frontage to the Condamine River, and that the previous Government had agreed to exchange it with Mr. Lester, manager for the lessees of Rosenthal, for a portion of land having such frontage. It will now be necessary to have the land (lot 37) offered at auction, to admit of Mr. Lester becoming the purchaser, the purchase money to be taken as paid by the land converted to the Crown in lieu of it.

"I have the honor to be,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"(Signed.) W. ALCOCK TULLY,

"Under Secretary.

"Edmond L. Thornton, Esquire,

"Warwick."

He had been given to understand that the reason why the Government wished to get the land from Mr. Lester in exchange was, that they believed that the Louisa reef ran through it. In the whole of the proceedings in that case, he believed the Government was actuated by the best intentions. He considered that the arrangement was a very legiti-

mate one, and he carried it out, as he was bound to do, whether it was right or wrong. The next case he came to was that of Mr. Rendall, which had been brought under the notice of the House by the honorable member for Wide Bay, Mr. King. Now, if he had not mistaken the nature of the complaint in that case, it appeared to him that Mr. Rendall got exactly the land for which he applied. He believed that there was, at one time, some difficulty about the matter, but if so, it was afterwards rectified. The papers, however, were on the table, and it would be seen by them that unless he had misconceived the nature of the complaint, Mr. Rendall had got his land. There was still another charge he had to refer to. It was the one with respect to the case of Mr. Fitzgerald. He believed that some delay took place in the matter of the classification of Mr. Fitzgerald's selection, but he could not, at present, account for the way in which any delay occurred in that respect. He had written for a report to be furnished to him on the subject; and when he received the report it would, no doubt, be found that some cause would be assigned for it. If the delay was of an unjustifiable nature, he was not at present in a position to account for its having taken place. There were other papers in connection with those cases, which he would produce if it was desired that he should do so. But any honorable member could examine them at the Lands Office at any time. He did not know if the House wished that the papers in respect to the cases he had mentioned should be printed, but he would now lay them on the table.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said he thought it must have occurred to every honorable member on the Opposition side of the House during this debate, so far as it had proceeded, that the chorus of approval with which the supporters of the Government had greeted the Opening Speech was only equalled by the extreme complacency with which the honorable the Premier had praised this latest work of his genius. The honorable gentleman had said that it was a good Speech. Nay, he even went so far as to say that he considered it was a perfect Speech; and he further said that he did not care a straw as to what honorable members on the Opposition side of the House might think of it. He did not think that such declarations, coming from the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, would surprise any other honorable member; and certainly he must say that, for his own part, they did not surprise him—though he would have been surprised to have heard any other gentleman who had held the high position of Premier make such statements. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government should have remembered that the Premier was a paid servant of the country, to do the work of the people; and he should also have remembered that when he was addressing the House he was

addressing the representatives of the people. Now he thought it would have been more dignified, and more becoming for him, to have told the House that, in framing the Speech, he had endeavored to do so, as he thought, honestly with a view to meet the wishes and requirements of the various interests in the colony. Now, instead of doing that, he repudiated all but one section of the community. He had put in the Speech all that he considered would be for the benefit of that class; and as for the rest of the people he thought they ought to rest and be thankful. Now, while the honorable gentleman was addressing the House, he at one part of his speech acted in what appeared to him (Dr. O'Doherty) a very disrespectful manner, by the way in which he tossed the Speech across the table towards the Opposition side of the House, and warned honorable members of the penalties he was prepared to inflict if they did not adopt the Speech. No doubt he felt that he was master of the position, and that he might do anything he liked. Well, it must, he thought, be admitted that the honorable gentleman was very strong; but that was principally, if not wholly, owing to his having again succeeded in securing the support of the Ipswich members. In order to obtain the majority which he at present had in the House, and thereby strengthen his position, he had done everything in his power to secure the support of the Ipswich clique; but £1,600 a-year of the public money had to be spent to secure to the Ministry the support of those members. When the honorable the Premier cast his glance upon the back benches of the Government side of the House he would there observe a goodly array of representatives of the squatting class; but they consisted only of the agents, superintendents, and others who were more or less connected with the interests of that class; and they were all bound into one firm phalanx for the support of those interests. If the honorable gentleman cast his glance a little further along, he would see in one new member—the honorable member for the Warrego—the representative of the great Australian and New Zealand Pastoral Company, who had secured his election to a seat in the House to look after the interests of that company. He would also see beside the honorable member for the Warrego, the scion of one of the members of the house of Morehead and Young, the great New South Wales squatters—and who, it was stated, held between them no fewer than 110 stations under mortgage in this colony—condescending to accept a seat in the House, for the purpose of representing the interests of the squatters in the Mitchell district. Those honorable members were, no doubt, well paid for the services they might render to the respective companies they represented; and they had been sent to the House to support the Government, in order, as far as

possible, to secure the furtherance of squatting interests. He should say that he thought those honorable members would be great fools if they did not take advantage of their position, to secure the support of the present Government, which was altogether a squatting Government, for the advancement of the interests they represented. It was no wonder to him, that the Premier, when backed up as he was, and feeling himself therefore in such a strong position, should come down and offer to the House and to the country such a Speech as he had offered on the present occasion; or that, in offering it, he should attempt to bounce the House into receiving it, instead of asking honorable members, in a respectful and courteous manner, to receive it. He thought every honorable member in the House would agree with him, to accord to that honorable gentleman the palm as to ability to bounce; and for the cool and determined way in which he distinguished himself in administering bounce, on some occasions, when he addressed the House. The honorable gentleman had been struck off, to the life, by a writer in his own paper, on Friday last. He thought honorable members would agree with him in believing that the honorable member could not better apply a portion of his fortune than to secure the services of a gentleman who shewed so much ability in his writings. "Bohemian," referring to the proceedings of the House, on Wednesday last, said:—

"I was pleased with the Vice-regal Speech, on Wednesday. I think, with Palmer, that it is a very good Speech—an excellent Speech—and I have no doubt he spoke the literal truth when he said a great deal of trouble had been taken to lick it into its present shape. Mind you, there is a good deal of quiet humor, and sly biting sarcasm in Palmer, although many persons do not seem to see it. I consider that Speech about as fine a piece of ironical writing as I have met with for a long time. The solemn, pompous, ungrammatical style of Regal and Vice-regal Speeches is imitated to perfection; yet, under the guise of an exposition of Ministerial policy, the Opposition are 'chaffed,' stroked the wrong way of the fur, and poked up in the most irritating manner possible, without having a chance of retaliating, except by denying that the Ministry mean what they say. All the force of this kind of retaliation is lost by the cool, calm attitude assumed by the Premier and his colleagues. They have done nothing but hold office in the interest of the class to which they belong,—and they don't mean to do anything more."

He did not think that the honorable member could be more correctly described than he was in that paragraph; and he did not think that any gentleman holding the office of Premier should conduct himself in a manner that laid him open to be described in such a way. He maintained that anyone who conducted himself in the way the honorable Premier had done, should not be allowed to exercise the power that was vested in him without check or control. The Premier had

done all that was in his power to lessen and cause to be undervalued, the political power and representative importance of the Opposition. He (Dr. O'Doherty) considered it was a most fortunate thing that there was such an Opposition as the one now in the House, to hold the present Government in check; and that the honorable members composing it were backed up by the public opinion of the country to such an extent, that he felt assured the Premier would yet find his power crumble before it like a rope of sand. The Premier had warned honorable members as to what he would do if the Address in Reply should not be agreed to; but he would retort upon him a warning on the other hand. He would warn him of the fate which, in other colonies, had invariably fallen upon the class to which the Premier and his supporters belonged, when they persistently pursued for too long a time the course which the Ministry and their supporters were now pursuing in this House. He would commend to their attention the words of wisdom that appeared but a few days ago in the squatting organ of Victoria. Referring to the old race of squatters in that colony, who persisted in a course of conduct similar to that which the squatters in this colony were now obstinately intent upon pursuing, the *Argus* said:—

"The squatters may take warning by the consequences of their conduct with regard to the lands. With a selfishness which was only equalled by their short-sightedness, they held on desperately to the last, begrudging even so much as a rood of ground to the actual cultivator. Had they been wise, they might have come to terms, and all their bitter experience of the last ten years or more might have been spared them. But no persuasion or remonstrance could rescue a clod from their clutches, till at length the popular wave passed over them, and the old race of squatters perished beneath its waters."

Now, for himself, he could most truthfully say that he was heartily sick and tired of the constant political turmoil that existed with respect to the land question, which was brought before the House every other session. Nothing on earth would afford him more heartfelt satisfaction than to be able to recognise, in the Premier of this colony, a statesman who was worthy of the name, and who was capable of carrying on the great political work required by the colony. To such a statesman he would willingly give his undivided allegiance as Premier of the colony. But such a man would require to be, in his personal character, without reproach. Such a man should have given, in the first place, evidence to the House that he was able, not only to govern the colony, but that he was also able when at home to perform the minor, but not less important, work of governing himself. He should also have given evidence of an honest and earnest desire to rule the country, not for the benefit of any one single class or sect or party in it,

but he should have given evidence of his desire to govern the colony for the benefit of everyone in it. He should also have recognised the importance of realising the vast resources of this young colony, which the energies of the colonists had but as yet merely tapped; and, recognising the importance of developing those resources, he should have done all that was in his power to advance their development by offering every reasonable inducement for thousands of their hardy fellow-countrymen, who were crowding one another out in the over-populated cities of the empire, to come out to the colony, and thereby relieve those over-crowded cities, and, at the same time, secure a large accession of population to the colony. By such a course as that a double benefit would be produced, for it would enable those who were starving at home—or next thing to it—the opportunity, by industry and frugality, of securing to themselves happy homes, and a degree of prosperity which they never anticipated they would enjoy; while a large increase to the population would have the effect of largely increasing the revenue, and, at the same time, diminishing individual taxation. He thought the Premier of the colony should have a soul above bullocks, and that he should have a higher destiny in view for this beautiful Queensland than to make it a vast wire cage for the enclosing and breeding of cattle and sheep, and for the enslavement of Polynesians. He should also be prepared to co-operate heartily with the other Australian colonies, and should evince a determination to endeavor to make this colony one of the brightest jewels amongst those which would constitute the great federal states of Australia under the Crown of England. Such were the leading points he expected to see displayed on the part of a statesman worthy to hold the position of Premier at the present time, and to carry the colony through what he considered to be a crisis in its destiny. Now, when the honorable the Premier challenged his unconditional allegiance to him and the policy of his Government, under penalty of being turned out of the House, it became, he thought, his duty to criticise the claims of the honorable gentleman to his allegiance. He did not think that the Premier had any right to ask or expect such an allegiance from him. He had never previously, since he had the honor of a seat in the House, made any allusion to the personal conduct of any honorable member in the way of disapproval, but he held it to be his duty to do so on the present occasion, and that, therefore, he would be fully justified in doing so. The position he took he felt he was fully justified in taking. Now, he maintained that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government had no right to disgrace, as he had done, the high position he occupied. Unless the whole of the Press throughout the colony had grossly maligned

the honorable gentleman, he charged him with having brought great disgrace upon himself, and discredit on the Government of which he was at the head. It would be remembered that, about eighteen months ago, Mr. Bell, who was now Colonial Treasurer, felt called upon to speak in the most denunciatory terms of the honorable gentleman who, at that time, held the position of Colonial Secretary. He would read the remarks that were made by the honorable member on that occasion. He said:—

“I think it will be conceded on all sides of this House, that the recess is the time when the greatest confidence is required in the Government, and especially in the Premier. But, sir, what conduct were we treated to in the course of the recess? When this House is sitting it is itself a check—it has a sufficient hold on the most reckless Government or the most licentious Premier. But, sir, what conduct were we treated to in the course of the recess? I say it was conduct which, if it cannot be made impeachable by the House, was such as I trust will meet with the severest censure which this Assembly can pass upon it. I say that if it does not meet with that censure, we, as representatives of the people, are not worthy of the position which has been entrusted to us. If we do not mark our disapprobation of that conduct of the Premier which, in the eyes of every man, woman, and child in the colony, has brought down degradation upon and tarnished that high position which the honorable member has been placed in by the House, we acknowledge that we are worthy and fully represented in the leader we have chosen.”

Now he would venture to call to the minds of honorable members who were then in the House, the fact that those observations were made wholly on surmise; and there never was, till lately, a single fact brought home to justify the remarks then made by the present Colonial Treasurer. The honorable gentleman whose character was assailed on that occasion, had since explained to the House that those surmises originated with the honorable member for Maryborough, the present Secretary for Works; and in making the explanation, he told the honorable member that he repelled with scorn the slanders and surmises which had been so industriously circulated against his character, by him and his agents. Now, there was no doubt that those slanders and surmises were very industriously circulated on that occasion; and he had no hesitation in saying that in consequence of those slanders and surmises, and by the strength of the statements then made by the honorable member, Mr. Bell, he was induced to vote against the then existing Ministry. The result of the decision which the House came to on that occasion was, that the Colonial Secretary was almost ignominiously expelled from office. He would ask the House if they were to have one law for one gentleman, when holding the office of Colonial Secretary, and a different and opposite law for another, when filling that position? He would repeat that the whole of the Press throughout the

colony was always holding forth the conduct of the Colonial Secretary during the recess, when on his election tour; and his conduct was such as shewed that the honorable member was not only unable to govern the colony, but also that he was unable to govern himself. While he regretted that he should feel called upon to refer to the conduct of the honorable gentleman during the recess, he at the same time felt that under the circumstances he was quite justified in doing so. According to the threat held out by the honorable the Premier, it seemed to him that he would either have to obey his behests or walk out of the House. Now it was his duty to state to the House that he would not accord a blind allegiance to the honorable the Premier, or to any Government of which he was at the head. He might be told that the Speech from the Throne was the speech of the Ministry, and not the speech of the Colonial Secretary. It was notorious—and he believed that no honorable member, even on the Government side of the House, would have the hardihood to deny it—that the Government was a purely squatting Government. It was a Government that consisted almost entirely of Crown tenants, and it was backed up almost entirely by the squatting interest or their representatives. Now he maintained that such a Government should not be the Government of this colony, as he did not believe that they could so govern the colony as to advance the welfare of any other class of the community but their own. He remembered that on a previous session an honorable member on the Government side asked why the Opposition side was always harping about the squatters; and it was pointed out that, at that time, the Opposition had Mr. Bell on their side, and Mr. McIlwraith, who was a tower of strength in himself as a squatter. He believed that both Mr. Bell and Mr. McIlwraith would do him the justice of saying that he for one never trusted either of them. Now, what he thought they should give their attention to, as the leading policy of the country at the present time, was to see that the administration of the lands of the colony was carried out in a way that would provide for the rapid and easy settlement of a large population on the land; and it was because he regarded the land to be the property of the people that he considered the country should not be governed by a Ministry consisting of Crown tenants, or those who were deeply concerned in promoting their interests. He might be told on this point that at present they had an honest gentleman filling the office of Secretary for Lands. Well, he would not dispute that, for he had as high an opinion of that gentleman in respect to his honesty, and in every other respect, as anyone could desire; but he would tell him that however much he might desire to act honestly in the administration of the lands, so far as he himself was personally concerned, he did

not believe he would be allowed by his colleagues to carry out his honest intentions in that respect; and that if he attempted to do so, the same treatment would be meted out to him as was meted out to Mr. Lamb, when he held the office of Secretary for Lands under the present Premier. A great deal had been said about the honest administration of the lands at present, but it was only the other day they were told by the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba that an organised system of *espionage* and *dummying* was carried out on the Darling Downs under the very nose of the commissioners. Similar statements had been made by the honorable member, Mr. King, as to the administration of the lands in the Wide Bay district, where *dummying* was also carried on, and where, as it was found that it would be to the interest of the Crown tenants there to have the lands cut up in small blocks, the lands were cut up in that manner. Now he was told not long ago that a regularly organised system of *espionage* and corruption was carried out in the Survey Department; so that, except where they might be willing to allow, no one but the Crown tenants could get a single acre of land on the Darling Downs, for, by some mysterious process, they came to know what lands were applied for, and that in time to enable them to prevent such lands as they might wish to obtain for themselves being taken up by others. Well, he had stated those facts to shew his reason for saying most unhesitatingly that he had no confidence in the administration of his honorable friend, Mr. Thompson, as the honest administrator of the lands of the colony. He would tell that honorable member again that he could not afford to be honest; for the moment that he was so, and kicked over the traces, he would experience the same fate as that which had befallen Mr. Lamb. It was not his intention to go into the details of the Speech, but as he had stated *ab initio*, he was opposed to the rule of such a Government as were now occupying the Treasury Benches, especially when he saw that they were solely supported by the squatters of the colony; and he should, as long as he had a seat in the House, in spite of any threats from the honorable the Premier to turn him out, and so long as the forms of the House would allow him, continue to oppose the honorable gentleman's rule. And what was more, if he was turned out of that Chamber, as no doubt would be the case by another outrage on the constitution, he should not hesitate with his honorable colleagues to call upon the people, who, after all, were the source of all power, to step in, and with their strong arm destroy the usurpation of power by the squatting class.

Mr. BUCHANAN rose to make a personal explanation. What the honorable member had stated about his being the paid representative of the Australian and New Zealand Pastoral Company, was entirely false.

Mr. KING rose to a point of order. The honorable member—

The SPEAKER said the honorable member for the Warrego was not in order in accusing an honorable member of saying what was false.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he merely wished to make a personal explanation. The honorable member had stated that he was simply a paid representative of the Australian and New Zealand Pastoral Company; whereas it was nothing of the sort, as he was a large shareholder of the company, and simply in the colony to advance the interests of the shareholders.

Mr. RAMSAY said he did not know that he should have taken part in the debate were it not that remarks had been made by two or three honorable members that required some explanation from him. First of all he would refer to the remarks of the honorable member for the Kennedy, in which the honorable member had denied a statement which he (Mr. Ramsay) had made, that the honorable member was returned at the election before last pledged to support the present Government. Now the honorable member had, no doubt, a very good memory, but he (Mr. Ramsay) had no hesitation in saying that it had deceived the honorable member in reference to what took place at the election referred to. The probability was, that as the elections had followed so close one upon the other, the honorable member had now forgotten what really did take place at the first one. But his (Mr. Ramsay's) memory was very clear upon the point, and there were particular circumstances connected with it which had tended to strengthen his recollection. Indeed the honorable member had said something more than that he was pledged to support the present Government. He said at the same time that he stated that he was pledged to support the Government, that his sympathies were with the Opposition in a very great measure. That occurred on the very day on which he (Mr. Ramsay) had to attend a meeting of the Cabinet, and he related what had taken place to those of his honorable colleagues who were present, and no doubt those honorable gentlemen would recollect it. He was thus perfectly certain the honorable member used the words, although, no doubt, from the causes he had mentioned, the honorable member had forgotten them. But it was also proved by another circumstance. He did not suppose the honorable member would think that he had dreamed that remark about the honorable member's sympathies being with the Opposition; but if they were so, why, he would ask, did the honorable member take his seat on the Government side of the House? Surely if the honorable member's sympathies were with the Opposition, he would have taken his seat among them, but the honorable gentleman did not do so. He (Mr. Ramsay) must therefore most distinctly

adhere to the statements he had made on the hustings in regard to the matter. He had referred to the subject, as his statements had been contradicted—not that he attached much importance to it, but he thought it was as well to explain what had really happened. He should not indeed have given it that prominence which it had received from the newspapers, were it not that it came in with another matter of which he was speaking at the time. He wished it to be known now that he had the words *verbatim*, which were used by the honorable member at the time. Now, with regard to the second subject, which was one of more general interest, namely, the letter which he had given to Mr. Davenport—he would now, with the permission of the House, state how it was that he wrote that letter, and would then read it. The circumstances were simply these:—Mr. Davenport called at his place the day but one preceding the election for Western Downs, and after partaking of dinner, said that it was his intention to go to Spring Creek, and address the electors, on the following day, and asked him to accompany him and do the same. He (Mr. Ramsay) told him that he had already addressed the electors both at that place and at Emu Creek, and as they were all perfectly acquainted with his sentiments, it was not necessary for him to go again, as he had other business to attend to. But, on Mr. Davenport's pressing the matter, he said that if Mr. Davenport liked, he would give him a few lines stating his opinions. That gentleman said he would like to have them, and so he (Mr. Ramsay) wrote off a few lines at the moment, of which he had fortunately preserved a copy. He might say, that he always preferred to put his opinions in writing rather than speak them; because spoken words were likely to be misconstrued, especially when there were no reporters present, as was sometimes the case at those meetings, and one person might interpret what he said, one way, and another person might form quite a different opinion. The letter was as follows:—

“Eton Vale, August 14, 1871.

“DEAR SIR,—In reply to your request for an explanation on my part of my views on the subject of—

“1st. A duty on imported flour;

“2nd. The desirableness of constructing the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway;

“I beg to say, shortly, that when Treasurer, I proposed to place for revenue purposes a duty of 25s. a ton on imported flour, which would have been carried had it not been objected to by the Opposition members. This rate I would increase, if occasion required, to £2, as I consider such a tax preferable to high *ad valorem* duties.

“2. I have always said that the present railway must, sooner or later, be carried to deep water, whether at or beyond Brisbane; and I would be quite willing to see a certain moderate sum applied annually to the completion of this and other important public works.

"I write in great haste, so am unable to enter into these important subjects so fully as I would like to do.

"ROBERT RAMSAY.

"G. H. Davenport, Esq."

He also added the following words, in order that there should be no misunderstanding:—

"I would be willing that the expenditure I have alluded to should be initiated during the approaching session."

Now, that was the letter about which he believed a great deal had been said, and there was not a word in it which did not tally with what he had said over and over again in that House and on the hustings; and he certainly was very glad that he did write it, instead of going and addressing the people at Spring Creek, as he could see by the avidity with which some of his remarks in that letter were seized upon, and the garbled reports which had appeared in the newspapers, that if he had expressed his opinions verbally on that occasion, there would have been statements made in regard to what he said, which could not have been so satisfactorily refuted. He might state, that with regard to the import duty on flour, he merely looked upon it as necessary for revenue purposes. He was as opposed to it as any person could be, but he considered it was preferable to the imposition of high *ad valorem* duties—not that he considered those duties were not the best means by which customs duties could be raised, but because they had the fault of opening the door to fraud; and he considered it was their duty, as legislators, to look as much to the preservation of morality in the community, as the preservation of material interests. For that reason, and for that alone, he should be in favor of reducing the *ad valorem* duties. Now, he had to make a few remarks on the speeches which had been made during the present debate, and he might say that he did so with pain, as some of them were not of that agreeable tone and character which he would have liked to have heard. More particularly were the speeches of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and the honorable member for Wide Bay, most disagreeable and objectionable in their tone and spirit. It was evident that their object was to revive the old class feeling which had existed—a feeling, he hoped, which was fast dying out. Those honorable members had certainly made the most disagreeable remarks it was in their power to make—and, certainly, they had the power of making very disagreeable remarks indeed—and what was more, was that they were put in such a way, that it was difficult, if not almost impossible, to reply to them. They made accusations in such general terms, that they could only be answered generally. In the first place, those honorable gentlemen had accused honorable members on his (Mr. Ramsay's) side of the House, of a want of intelligence—of being evil and arch con-

spirators, and that there were many people outside who believed that some members of the Government would be guilty of any atrocity; also, that the administration of the Land Act was corrupt, and many other charges. Now, it was useless to answer such accusations as those, and, in fact, how could honorable members on his side of the House answer them? It was of no use their saying that they were as intelligent as the honorable gentlemen opposite, and that they were not arch conspirators. There was only one way of replying to them, and that was by the *tu quoque*, or school-boy's old fashioned mode of retorting. Now, he was not going to condescend to meet them in that way, but what he did intend to do was to pass them over in silence. He supposed that they afforded some satisfaction to the honorable members who uttered them, and he was quite sure that they did the other side no harm, as there was not, he believed, a member of that House who would believe them. When he said that such accusations did honorable members on his side of the House no harm, he meant that they would do no harm to them as individuals of a party; but they did a great deal of harm by disgracing the House in the eyes of other colonies, and lowering the tone of its debates. He would, indeed, have been sorry if there were strangers in the House when such language was being used, as it would leave a most injurious impression on their minds; for what could they think of the Government if the statements were true, or of the honorable members who made them if the statements were untrue? He had been very sorry to hear the attack which had been made by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley upon Sir Maurice O'Connell, who was one of their oldest colonists, and a gentleman who had filled with honor some of the highest positions in the Parliament and the country—a gentleman who had always carried with him the respect of the public, whose decisions had always been considered satisfactory, and who enjoyed popularity up to the time when he gave that decision which did not suit the views of honorable gentlemen opposite, with all classes of the community. Up to that time, he could not go abroad without being well received; and yet, at the very moment he gave that decision, and he (Mr. Ramsay) firmly believed it was a conscientious one, he was exposed to all the abuse they had heard from the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. If actions might be judged by their consequences—a theory he (Mr. Ramsay) did not altogether agree with—there was no doubt Sir Maurice O'Connell could look with some satisfaction to the result of his decision. He found the House almost at a dead-lock and he granted a dissolution; and the country had spoken out in no uncertain tones, and had sent back the Government with a larger majority than they had when the dissolution was given. In fact, he might say that the

result of the late elections had been to reduce the struggle to a little more than a question between Brisbane and the other portions of the colony. He would repeat that assertion, as he believed that in most cases the gentlemen who represented outside electorates, and who sat on the Opposition side of the House, were returned purely on account of their personal popularity, and that their constituents—those, for instance, of the honorable member for Rockhampton and the honorable member for Maranoa—would be quite as well pleased if they were sitting on the Government side of the House.

Mr. MILES: No.

Mr. RAMSAY: Well, he had heard something which led him to believe that such was the case, and when they found that a stranger to the colony could go and poll within two votes of the number polled by the honorable member himself, who was an old member, and a gentleman well known in the district, he thought there was some truth in what he had stated. In fact, had not most extraordinary steps been taken, the stranger would have been returned—for it was not because they wanted their member to sit with the Opposition. Now, he would ask, what was the object of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley in directing such a personal attack on Sir Maurice O'Connell? Was it merely to vent his ill-feelings, or his anger, on account of the action taken by Sir Maurice O'Connell, or was it for some other reason? They had heard the honorable member say that he would endeavor to take such steps as would prevent that honorable gentleman from ever again administering the Government of this colony; and then gave as his reason for so doing, that the honorable gentleman was in embarrassed circumstances. But that might not be any fault of Sir Maurice O'Connell—and he did not believe it was any—for there was many a good man who had been in embarrassed circumstances, and he believed the honorable gentleman would do his best to pay his creditors to the last penny; for he (Mr. Ramsay) had never heard that the honorable gentleman was putting away his money in a private purse; but, on the contrary, he believed that every penny the honorable gentleman received was devoted to the purpose of paying his debts. But it seemed the honorable member was determined that Sir Maurice O'Connell should feel his wrath, and that all should feel his vengeance who had in any way thwarted him, for again, they found the same course pursued in regard to Mr. Macalister. That gentleman, who was one of the oldest members of that House, had been appointed to the Speaker's chair, in recognition of his many services, and at the time of the appointment not a word was said against it by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. He never adduced one reason why the appointment should not be given to Mr. Macalister, until after the dissolution, when he followed that gentleman with the

greatest vindictiveness—followed him to his constituents, and used every means in his power to keep him out of the House. Then again, when the honorable member found that the newspapers, in commenting upon his conduct, made use of expressions not half so strong as the honorable member himself used in that House, he brought actions for libel against them; and although he did so, he yet went down to that House and accused the Government of gagging the Press. He (Mr. Ramsay) must say that he had been very much surprised that the honorable member for South Brisbane should have listened to such an accusation and remained silent, as he must have known it was untrue.

Mr. STEPHENS: It is true.

Mr. RAMSAY: Well, the honorable member was managing director of the paper, and he knew that the Government never interfered with it in any way.

Mr. STEPHENS: I deny that.

Mr. RAMSAY: Well, at any rate, he had never seen a leader or a single thing that was inserted in that journal until he saw it in the paper next day. Could the honorable member say that a single article appeared without his having first seen it?

Mr. STEPHENS: Many a one.

Mr. RAMSAY: Well then, the honorable member could not deny that he had the entire management of the paper. He could not deny that, at all events. He (Mr. Ramsay) should now like to notice the inaccuracies that were made in the speeches of some of the honorable members opposite—for instance, the honorable member for Wide Bay made one which might not be of much importance; but still, when honorable members spoke, they should be as correct as possible. That honorable member said that the present Government deserved no credit for the excess of the revenue over the expenditure, as it was entirely due to the increased customs duties. The honorable member again said that the Government side of the House only represented a fourth of the population of the colony, and, at the close of his speech, he altered it to one-third, which shewed how little he cared about the correctness of his statements. Then, again, the honorable member was corrected by another honorable gentleman who told him the proportion was as seven to five. He mentioned that to shew how incorrect were the statements of which the House could itself judge, and, therefore, how incorrect others might be of which they knew nothing. The honorable member had also stated that the squatters had absorbed all the good land in the colony under the ten years' leases, whereas it was well known that it was the resumed portions of the runs that were affording land for the extension of settlement that was taken place all over the colony. Speaking from his own knowledge he could say that all the runs he knew were very carefully divided indeed, and in such a manner that the public and not the squatter got the

advantage. He (Mr. Ramsay) knew that on his own run of Tent Hill every good bit of land had been taken away, and that he had been left nothing but the scrubby heads of creeks. Now, perhaps, the honorable member thought he was improving his case when he made such statements as those—statements which were proved to be incorrect; but he (Mr. Ramsay) believed that nothing had a worse effect on, or damaged a man so much as making statements that were inaccurate. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had stated that throughout the whole of his administration his object was so to dispose of the lands as to make them pay for the construction of railways. Now, he (Mr. Ramsay) had searched through the whole of "Hansard," and had found nothing to bear out in any way the honorable member's statement. He had the twelfth volume of the debates, and he would like the honorable member to point out anything in it to support his statement.

Mr. LILLEY said that the policy he advocated was, that all public works should be paid for out of the land revenue.

Mr. RAMSAY said he had the words in the book he held, and had copied them out. The question before the dissolution appeared to him to be the Ipswich and Brisbane railway, and not the lands; but it did not affect his argument in the least, which of the two it was, as they had been told that the same delays were to be repeated but upon a different question—namely, additional representation. The question of additional representation he admitted was a more legitimate subject of contention; but he thought it was rather soon to be threatened with all these pains and penalties concerning it. The Government were about to introduce a Bill for additional representation, which was as liberal as they could make it, and which he hoped would satisfy honorable members on the other side of the House. He was quite agreeable to admit that additional representation was requisite, and that a redistribution of the electorates should come at the proper time; for he considered that nothing, for instance, could be more unfair than the honorable member for South Brisbane should represent a constituency of about 260 adult males, while his honorable friend at the head of the Government represented something over 2,000. He considered that the adult male basis was the proper one, for there was this objection to the mere population basis, that the population was always changing. The last census returns would shew that, whereas the Kennedy district had increased 80 per cent., in West Moreton something like 51 per cent., and Western Downs 40 per cent. in population during the last three years, North and South Brisbane had only increased 2 per cent., and in some districts there was an absolute decrease, although this latter was caused, he believed, by bad seasons and some other causes; but the slow progress of North and South Brisbane was, he believed, owing to their posi-

tion. One great reason—which was in reality the principal reason—which had always been brought forward as an excuse for a minority being opposed to a majority was, that, although honorable members opposite were a minority in that House, they were in a majority in the country. But whoever, he would ask, heard such an argument? Had they not a constitution under which they were elected, and after election were they not all equal in the House? What would be thought if such language were used in the House of Commons? Why, in that House, it would be found that the honorable member for Marylebone represented a constituency of two hundred and eight thousand people—or nearly double the whole population of this colony; whilst the member for Calne represented somewhere about five thousand persons. Was it to be urged, on that account, that the one should have more power than the other? Nobody knew better than the honorable member for the Valley that such an argument would be perfectly unconstitutional. Such things were never thought of. One honorable member's vote was considered just the same as another's, no matter what might be the number of his constituents; and it was unconstitutional for a minority to factiously obstruct a majority. Then, again, the honorable member had made a statement—which, really, was perfectly incomprehensible to him (Mr. Ramsay)—to the effect that, for some time previous to the dissolution, scouts were out in some of the electorates canvassing for votes. It was a pity the honorable member had not been a little more exact in his statement, and mentioned which the electorates were, as then the Government would be prepared to meet the charge. So far as he (Mr. Ramsay) was personally concerned, he could say that he knew nothing about the dissolution until just before it took place; and he believed that the statement of the honorable member would be found to be another of those inaccuracies which characterised the speeches of honorable gentlemen opposite. Then, talking of the interest which had been taken in the elections by the members of the Government, he could only ask, what was it compared to the interest taken in them by the leaders on the other side? At all events, Ministers had not gone stumping about the country in favor of their supporters, as had been done by the honorable gentleman opposite, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. As the appointments to the Upper House had been referred to by some honorable member, he (Mr. Ramsay) would briefly refer to them, as it had been stated that the two gentlemen appointed were defeated candidates. That was another inaccuracy, as Mr. Taylor was not a candidate at the last election, although he had been defeated at the previous one. But, presuming he had been a candidate, was it to be supposed that the fact of a man having once contested an

election unsuccessfully was to debar him from being appointed to a seat in another House, presuming he was worthy of it? Why, such a thing would be preposterous. As the honorable member well knew, Mr. Taylor was an old colonist, and had been most useful in the district in which he resided, and had by his exertions raised himself to a good position. In all respects, he was, in his (Mr. Ramsay's) opinion, a most suitable person for the honor conferred upon him, and he trusted no worse appointment would ever be made to that Chamber when it came to the honorable member's turn to make one. He considered that there was nothing in that appointment to find fault with, and that it was a most unfortunate instance for the Opposition to bring forward, of partiality on the part of the Government. He should not allude to the speech of the honorable member who had last addressed the House, for two or three reasons—first, because he considered it was a sufficient answer to itself; and, next, because he did not think that the leader of the honorable member's party would be very much obliged to him for making it. He would not, also, refer to the charges which had been made by the honorable member against his honorable friend at the head of the Government, as he (Mr. Ramsay) had not had an opportunity of communicating with his honorable friend on the subject. But he did want, in justice to the character of a gentleman who was absent from the colony, to say a word or two in reference to a statement made by the honorable member for Toowoomba and Drayton, regarding the treatment of certain Polynesians employed on the Westbrook Station. He did not know that he should have alluded to it at that time had not documents in connection with it been sent to him, that day. The honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba made the following statement:—

“In connection with the Polynesian question, the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government had said that he was not aware of a single instance in which these islanders had been badly treated. He would give the honorable gentleman credit for having given the subject a good deal of consideration, but he (Mr. Groom) would draw his attention to the case of the South Sea Islanders employed on Westbrook Station, and he (Mr. Groom) dared to say that they had been treated worse than the slaves in the Southern States had been. These unfortunate creatures were suffering from acute inflammation of the lungs, and they were allowed to lie on the floor without medical attendance. Their employer had sent them to the Toowoomba Hospital, but as he would not pay for their medical attendance they could not be taken in, and so they were allowed to lie there and die like dogs. Two men he believed had died, and if a *post mortem* examination had taken place, it would have been proved conclusively that they died solely from the want of medical attendance and proper comforts. He merely mentioned this to shew to the honorable member that these men, at least in some places, were treated more like brute beasts than human beings.”

Now, he held in his hand a letter from Dr. Armstrong, a medical practitioner at Toowoomba, who attended the two men referred to, and that gentleman stated that in consequence of what he had seen in the newspapers, he had applied to the honorable member and asked him why he had made such a statement, and in reply the honorable member said that he had never made the statement which appeared in the *Brisbane Courier*. It was fortunate, however, that the Parliamentary “Hansard” appeared that morning, as he (Mr. Ramsay) had compared the two reports, and found that they exactly tallied, and it was not probable that both would be incorrect. He would now read a letter he had received from Dr. Armstrong:—

“Toowoomba, 13th November, 1871.

“DEAR SIR,—I saw Mr. Groom this morning, and accused him of making a mis-statement with regard to the treatment the Polynesians have received at Westbrook. He says the *Courier* of the 10th did not report his speech correctly, and that he never made the statement attributed to him. I can assure you that only one Polynesian died at Oakey Creek, and that he had been ailing since his arrival in the colony. Some others had been suffering from inflammation of the lungs, which has been very prevalent and fatal amongst the whites here lately, but not one of them have died, nor have any of them been at any time sent to, or refused admittance to the hospital; they have been attended by me at a much greater expense to the station. I have been to Oakey Creek two or three times to see them, and they want for nothing; they have good clothes, blankets, and plenty of food. I make this statement to you in common justice to Mr. Beit, who is absent from the colony; and if you think it necessary to do so, and will call on Mr. Elliott to hold an inquiry into the matter, you will get official information to prove the total untruthfulness of the statement as attributed to Mr. Groom in the *Courier* of the 10th.

“I have, &c.,

“WM. ARMSTRONG,

“Medical Practitioner.

“Honorable A. H. Palmer, Colonial Secretary.”

It also happened that a magisterial inquiry would prove the truth of what Dr. Armstrong had stated; for it appeared that Mr. Elliott, the Police Magistrate, at Toowoomba, had previously examined the men, and the report of that gentleman coincided with what Dr. Armstrong had stated. Mr. Elliott said in his letter:—

“Toowoomba Police Office,

“29th September, 1871.

“SIR,—I have the honor to inform you that I went to Oakey Creek on the 27th instant, and held an inquiry into the cause of death of a Polynesian named Selledelman, in accordance with instructions contained in your telegram of that day's date. I took the evidence of Mr. Ross, the superintendent, upon oath, and the statements (not on oath) of two Polynesians, and have forwarded the depositions to the Attorney-General.

“The next morning I inspected all the Polynesians at Oakey Creek; they appeared in good health, and contented. I asked them if they had any complaints to make; they said no, they had

plenty blanket, plenty ration, and plenty tobacco, and one of them ran to his hut and brought a handsome wooden pipe to shew me, of which he seemed very proud. Mr. Ross informed me that he had sent two Polynesians who were unwell to the head station, where they were attended by a medical man.

"I have, &c.,

"GILBERT ELIOTT, P.M.

"The Honorable the Colonial Secretary,
"Brisbane."

Now, he considered that he had no alternative, but to make the statement he had made, in order to clear the character of a highly estimable gentleman, and to shew that the charges made by the honorable member for Toowoomba were entirely contradicted. He did not intend to say one word more, except in regard to an extraordinary statement made by the same honorable member, in reference to the value that stations in the vicinity were to that town. The honorable member said, mentioning the stations of Gowrie, Westbrook, and Eton Vale, that they were not worth £100 each, annually, to the town of Toowoomba. Now, he (Mr. Ramsay) was in a position to say, that the expenditure on those stations was not less than £20,000 a-year; and it would be strange if a large proportion of that sum did not find its way into the hands of the storekeepers at Toowoomba. He knew that some thousands of pounds would, in the course of the next week or so, be paid away as wages to shearers, &c., and he was sure that after shearing and washing, a great deal of money was spent in the town. The shearers and washers were, however, getting to be a more respectable class of men than formerly, and instead of knocking down their cheques in public houses, they now took their money home and spent it on their families.

Mr. MACDEVITT rose for the purpose of making a personal explanation in regard to the conversation which had taken place between him and the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay. Some time after the general election before last, that honorable gentleman had been pleased to reiterate a statement which he (Mr. MacDevitt) had already had occasion to correct through the press—that he (Mr. MacDevitt) had called upon the honorable gentleman and had informed him that he had been pledged to support the Government, although his sympathies were with the Opposition. It was true that he had had a conversation with the honorable member relative to certain improvements at Townsville; and in urging upon the honorable member the necessity of the Government proceeding with those works, he mentioned that the people at that place had been so impressed by the promises of the Government to do justice to the district and the North generally, that he (Mr. MacDevitt) had promised them that if returned he would support the present Government to the extent of giving them a fair trial. The honorable member had gone further, and stated that he,

on coming to the House, had taken his seat on the Ministerial benches; but that was incorrect, as he (Mr. MacDevitt) sat on the cross benches, in the same way as the honorable member for Warwick had done, when he stated, a few evenings back, that he was not pledged to the Government, but intended to act independently, and proclaimed for himself, in his speech, an independent course. That was what he believed every honorable member would say, was the course he (Mr. MacDevitt) had adopted since he had been in the House. He would now repeat that he adhered to the unqualified denial he had given to the statement of the honorable member for Western Downs, and he could only account for that statement from seeing the honorable member in the company he was in, namely, that of the greatest truth-teller in Queensland.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY rose to order. The honorable member rose to make a personal explanation only.

The SPEAKER said the honorable member for the Kennedy was not in order.

Mr. MACDEVITT said that that was the only way he could account for the honorable member's statements.

Mr. STEPHENS said the honorable member for Western Downs had not been at all sparing in the lecture he had given to honorable members who addressed the House in the earlier part of the debate, on the propriety of improving the tone of the debate. Now, he (Mr. Stephens) thought it would be as well if some of their debates were improved in their tone; for since he had been in that House he had not listened to a more disgraceful personal allusion to any member of that House than that which had been made by the honorable member for Western Downs in the closing of his speech. He referred to the remarks made about an honorable member not at present in the House, but whose business was well known to the House; and they were told by the honorable member opposite that it was because the shepherds and the washers now spent their money on their families, and did not spend it in drink, that the honorable member for Toowoomba and Drayton was dissatisfied with the expenditure on the stations in his district. That he (Mr. Stephens) considered was a most disgraceful personal allusion. Before proceeding to the subject of the present debate, he would, at the risk of providing amusement for the public, go a little into his own private business—so far, at least, as it had been alluded to by the honorable member for Western Downs. Rather than go into that private business, he had for three years sat in that House—sometimes he confessed with considerable amusement—and listened to the taunts thrown against him by members of the present Ministry, who were co-proprietors with him in the *Courier* newspaper. He had listened to them quietly, not being willing to amuse the public with quarrels or disagreements among the shareholders of that paper. But the other evening, the honorable member at the head of the Govern-

ment had made a statement which he (Mr. Stephens) could not allow to go unnoticed, namely, that he was managing director of the paper, and as such was solely responsible for all that appeared in that journal; and that the shareholders were not responsible. Now, the first portion of that statement, that he was managing director, was perfectly true; but the second, that he, as managing director, was responsible for all that appeared in the paper, and that the shareholders were not responsible, was directly opposite to the truth. As the former he was responsible—but to whom? To the shareholders, and to them only—to no one else—not, as the honorable member had insinuated by the way he put it, to the subscribers and the public who, by their advertisements, supported the paper. He was responsible to the shareholders only, and he wished that to be distinctly understood. The honorable member might also have said, if he had been disposed to give the information fully and honestly, that there had not been an editor of the *Courier* since the company was formed, who had not received strict instructions as to the course to be pursued by him, and those instructions were in existence yet. What was more, his (Mr. Stephens') superintendence was within the limits of those instructions. It would be readily understood that that was by no means a pleasant position for any man to occupy, and he was ready to admit the truth of what had been said by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, that he was in bad company—there was no doubt of it. Probably the honorable members opposite also thought that he was in bad company at the present time. Although he was not in the habit of talking about his own private business, it would be necessary for him to do so to some extent on the present occasion. Some three or four years ago, during the crisis of '66, he had felt the pressure of the times; and he believed he was not the only man who did so. He felt it to such an extent that it affected his health very seriously, and what between that cause and a desire to pay his creditors, which he was always desirous of doing, he had to sell the newspaper. There were honorable gentlemen there present who knew that he had wanted them to buy the journal, but they declined to do so. A man, however, could not choose his customers, and not being able to sell to those whom he wished, he had to sell to those who were willing to purchase. It was therefore sold by him to a company, with the distinct understanding that it should be carried on on commercial principles, and that it should not become the organ of any particular political party; and it was distinctly understood that, in carrying it on on commercial principles, a reasonable and considerable accordance with the opinions of its subscribers was necessary. There were, however, two of the shareholders—Messrs. Ramsay and Palmer—whom he never saw upon the subject, and he therefore did not know what explanation

might have been made to them; the others, however distinctly understood the arrangement. He had not been able to dispose of all the shares, and he was obliged to hold a great many himself, which he was prepared to sell at any time, as it was his most earnest desire to get out of the affair. Things went on pleasantly enough for three or four months after the company started, but after that some of the squatting shareholders directly broke their words and commenced a series of attempts to get control over the leading columns for the purpose of converting it into a squatting organ. The way in which they did that was worthy of them. It was never said by any of them that it should be a squatting paper, or that any change should be made in its politics; but they said, "We must have its tone and style improved," and the next thing proposed was that a fresh editor should be employed. First of all, the editor was to be censured, and then the game was that he was to be dismissed—editor after editor, with the hope that they would get one to suit them, but they had not yet succeeded. There were a number of resolutions to that effect on the books, every one of which was moved by the squatting proprietors. He had heard some marks of dissent from honorable members on the opposite side, and he might say that he would not have mentioned his private business had he not been forced to do so by some of the members of the Government. He would now read a letter which was written about four months after the company was formed. It was dated from Eton Vale, and would give some idea of the objects of the gentlemen to whom he had referred.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS rose to a point of order. Nothing, he was sure, gave him greater pleasure than to listen to the honorable member speaking in the way he was; but he thought the honorable member was not in order in intruding those private affairs upon the House.

The SPEAKER stated that the honorable member for South Brisbane was perfectly in order in explaining anything that had been alluded to in debate respecting himself.

Mr. STEPHENS would read the letter of which he spoke. It was as follows:—

"Eton Vale, Drayton, October 7, 1868.

"GENTLEMEN,—As it will be very inconvenient for me to be present at your meeting, to be held on Monday next, I will be obliged if you will allow the following letter to be read on the occasion.

"When I agreed to become a shareholder in the company, having for its principal object the carrying on the *Courier* newspaper, it was on the distinct understanding that the paper was no longer to be the violent party organ which it had been up to that time, but was to try to assume a higher and more impartial position; in effect, to take the *Sydney Morning Herald* very much as its standard, and to criticise measures not men. This change in the management of the paper has never taken place, and it is now a more violent

supporter of party than it was before the change was made in its proprietary. When I spoke to some of the shareholders on this subject some weeks ago I was told that the change in the proprietary was looked upon in the town with great suspicion; that an opposition paper was started; and that it would be ruinous to the interests of the company to make public any change in the principles on which the paper was to be conducted. I was quite disposed to accept this as a reason for a very gradual change in the tone of the paper; but I now find that no change at all is being made, and I am very much inclined to think that none is intended. Under these circumstances, perhaps the simplest way will be for those of my partners who differ from me to buy my share in the company, as I cannot with any consistency remain a shareholder in a paper which expresses views quite opposed to those I am known to entertain; and I feel that my conduct now is open to this construction—that I hold certain opinions on important public questions, but that in order to make a speculation in which I am engaged a more profitable one I allow the dissemination through the whole colony of totally opposite opinions. This is a state of things that it would not be proper in me to allow to continue longer than I can help. I will, therefore, be glad, if a change in the management of the paper is not considered desirable by a majority of the shareholders, to sell my share to one of the body.

“I am, gentlemen,

“Your obedient servant,

“ROBERT RAMSAY.

“The Shareholders, Brisbane Newspaper Company.”

He was quite sure that it was not pleasant to the honorable member for Maryborough to hear all those things, and no doubt if they were a little dirtier, he would have liked them better. Now, in the letter he had read, the honorable member for Western Downs stated—

“I cannot, with any consistency, remain a shareholder in a paper which expresses views quite opposed to those I am known to entertain.” But, did the honorable member not know, that his (Mr. Stephens’) opinions differed greatly from the honorable member’s?—and yet he could not see the inconsistency there would be in his (Mr. Stephens’) remaining a shareholder. The honorable member could not have his opinions ignored; yet, at the same time, his (Mr. Stephens’) opinions, although he was a much larger shareholder, were to be ignored, to please the honorable member. If it was inconsistent in the honorable member to remain a shareholder, why did he go into the company at all, as he could not have expected that pure squatting views would be advocated by the paper? He would admit that the honorable member had not been to many meetings, but the letter which had been referred to was read at the next meeting by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, and was followed up by a resolution that the tone and character of the paper must be improved; that the editor must be censured; and that to improve the tone, they

must send to Sydney or elsewhere for another editor. Two or three months afterwards the question was raised again; and although he (Mr. Stephens) had once succeeded in saving the editor from his castigation, by his casting vote, he was then dismissed. That gentleman was as honorable, as faithful, and as able a man as ever a newspaper company had; and he (Mr. Stephens) had not the slightest hesitation in saying that he was dismissed—as he was shortly afterwards—with the view of impressing upon the writers for the paper the fact, that the squatters had their thumb upon it, and that they would meet with the same fate if they did not please them. That was the way in which the thing was begun. He would take that opportunity of remarking that the honorable member for Northern Downs, Mr. Bell, had never been a proprietor of the *Courier*; but some years ago the honorable gentleman had one share transferred to him as security for the payment of a promissory note. That bill was paid, and the honorable member had never had any interest in the paper. He might say that the transfer of that share back again, which was given two years and a-half ago, was somehow mislaid, and in consequence of that the honorable member’s name had appeared on the register of the paper. But to shew the extent to which the squatting proprietors wished to carry out their views, he might state that it was not long ago that a resolution was brought up at a meeting to discharge the manager, although he was one of the best bookkeepers in the colony, and saved them from such losses as had occurred in the management of the *Guardian*. The reason given for that was because he was a relation of his (Mr. Stephens), and therefore under his influence. There was no other charge made against him. He would state, most distinctly, in connection with that, that the honorable member for Western Downs, who was a most violent man, although honorable members might not suppose it, acted previously in such a manner as to use his influence as a member of the Government to make some of the shareholders, who were exposed to that influence, vote with him against their will.

Mr. RAMSAY: That is not correct.

Mr. STEPHENS: That was the case absolutely. Now in order to rid the paper from that unseemly anomaly—and he admitted it was unseemly—but, so long as there were four squatting proprietors, it was impossible for the paper to speak out with freedom—it was of no use saying the manager was responsible, for the shareholders alone were—so long as there were four such proprietors, and four mercantile proprietors who wished to make the paper a mere commercial affair; in order, as he observed, to save the paper, and as he knew his constituents would not thank him for throwing away £2,000, and as his political reputation was suffering from the company, he offered to sell to the company his shares, which he held, at £500 each, at a

reduction of £100, or to buy theirs at £800, which was an advance of £200. That would be either to pay at the rate of £80, or to sell at £60.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: And sell yourself?

Mr. STEPHENS said he was quite prepared to hear that from the honorable member. He would admit that the honorable the Colonial Secretary, and the honorable member for Western Downs, were prepared to accept that offer, but it could not be carried out because some would not agree to it. They said, "No, if Stephens buys us out he will advocate the same principles he did before." That was given as their reason for not selling. Well, then, how could the honorable member at the head of the Government say that the shareholders were not responsible for anything that occurred in the paper? They had bought it, as they thought, for a political organ, but they had never yet succeeded in making it one of their own; or to give it more "tone," as they called it—but they had succeeded in gagging it. They had never succeeded, as the honorable member for Maryborough had done, in going in and out as they pleased, and dictating to an editor. The honorable member had attempted to do that with the *Courier*, but he (Mr. Stephens) had prevented him from doing so many a time. The only paper over which that honorable member had that power was the *Maryborough Chronicle*, on which he had a mortgage, and which constantly bore the proof of the honorable member's scurrilous pen. It was no breach of trust to say that, as with the *Daily Guardian*, so with the *Courier*, if the reporters got any information from the honorable member they were sure to be sold. The main reason for that was, because of his character for veracity, and there was not now a reporter who would take any information from the honorable member on that account. Now, how was it that those gentlemen had not succeeded in getting an editor who was appointed by themselves to do their will? It was for the reason that they only held four shares out of the twelve, and the other shareholders had before them the example of the *Daily Guardian* newspaper. He was quite prepared to say that some of the shareholders were unscrupulous enough to do anything to advance their own party views—there was no fear of his plain speaking losing him anything—but how was it they had not succeeded? Why, by the example of the *Guardian*. They were the owners of four shares, and it would be dishonest to make the owners of eight suffer. They had the fate of the paper he had named before them, and it would have been dishonest to have ruined the holders of the other eight, which they certainly would have done if the paper was turned to the purpose they wanted. Some five years ago the squatters bought the *Guardian*, and after running it for two years,

and spending £100 per week upon it during that time, for the special purpose of advocating their principles, and making it a squatting organ, he had heard them boast even now that they had got their value for their money, as they had succeeded in putting Macalister out of power, and had stopped Sir George Bowen from issuing the greenbacks. They had spent over £9,500 in something like ninety-five weeks, and they had not, he believed, paid up yet, as there was a sum, he believed, of about £1,400 still due by the liquidators, and which they kept renewed on bills. He knew, as a fact, that when some of those bills were presented for payment they were asked to keep them yet, as some of the fellows were coming down to Parliament, and they expected to get it out of them. The majority of the *Courier* proprietors were not prepared to spend £9,500 in less than a hundred weeks in carrying on the paper as a squatting organ. He would repeat, that it was not honest of a minority of shareholders to follow a similar course, and destroy the property of the majority. It was impossible to find a paper that was successful, which was not conducted in conformity with the views of the majority of its subscribers, and damage inevitably resulted to any paper which did not adopt that course. Without damaging a paper in any town it could not be made a squatters' organ, and it was perfectly well known that even in the large city of Melbourne it was most difficult to maintain such a paper. He made those statements, and especially that referring to the *Guardian*, for the purpose of shewing the House that daily papers were not things to be played with; and, that the knowledge of that fact, by the four proprietors of the *Courier* who desired to conduct a newspaper business on proper business principles, and with the view of getting interest for the money invested in it, was the particular thing that was successful in preventing the *Courier* from being under the absolute domination of those other members of the company who wished to convert it to their own political purposes. It was unpleasant to a man to speak of his private business in this way. But he had been constantly attacked about it, in connection with the paper, for no other purpose that he could see than to damage his political character. At any rate, the attacks made upon him were calculated to leave the impression on his constituents that he alone was responsible for the paper, and that he advocated one thing in its columns and another in the House; whereas, he had sufficiently shewn that his control was merely within narrow limits, defined by the proprietors. But he had confidence in his constituents that they possessed a great deal more generosity than the proprietors of the *Courier* who sat on the Ministerial side of the House, and that they would judge him honestly. And that was all he wished. He would say nothing more on that

subject, and he would apologise to the House for having said so much; but what he said had been forced from him by the statements made by members of the Government in the House. Coming to the question in debate, the adoption of the Address, he said the House were met after five months' adjournment—the matter had been gone into so clearly by his honorable friend, the member for Fortitude Valley, that he need not do more than cursorily refer to it—carried by a majority of one, followed by a dissolution; a proceeding which he had no hesitation in designating as unconstitutional, as much so as it was possible any act of a Ministry could be, and the only reason for which was to maintain the squatting class and the squatting Government in power. One of the highest constitutional authorities—which had been before quoted in this debate—Todd, distinctly denied the propriety of a dissolution merely to determine the question whether an administration should continue in office or not. The Acting-Governor, at the time, gave as his reason for granting the dissolution, that he wished to keep the present Government in office, and, thereby, he was directly opposed to that authority. What were the facts of the case? The present party, the political squatting party, had had three dissolutions in three years;—they had had two within ten months. He (Mr. Stephens) ventured to state that such a state of things was utterly unprecedented; and that his honorable friend, the member for Fortitude Valley, was right in saying that it was only brought about by pressure. The honorable and learned gentleman had been blamed for alluding to the circumstances of Sir Maurice O'Connell; but the disgrace was in the fact itself, not in bringing it into daylight. Honorable members knew very well that it was talked about at the corner of every street in every town in the colony, that we had had an Acting-Governor who was not independent, who received a large salary—the House would have the information, next day, why it was so large—to enable him to be independent, and who was unable to live in accordance with his position. That position should be occupied by a man in independent circumstances; and so large a salary was given that the person who occupied it should be enabled to live in accordance with it. He (Mr. Stephens) said that that salary had not been used in that way. It was not exactly known where it went to; the creditors of the honorable gentleman were anxious to find that out. It was pretty well known that much of it was "boned" by one creditor. The Attorney-General had denied a statement made during the debate by the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley, in which there was one error. The honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley had said that the Attorney-General had advanced money to prevent the bailiffs being put into Government House. He

should have said that the Attorney-General had taken a great deal of trouble to advance public money to keep the bailiffs out of the private house of Sir Maurice O'Connell, and to enable him to keep his position as Acting-Governor. That was about the fact, and that would not be denied. He (Mr. Stephens) should not have taken so much trouble about this matter, but for the Premier, who, in his speech, had made it so much worse than it at first appeared. The Opposition had a statement from the Acting-Governor, published in the *Government Gazette*, in answer to a deputation that had waited upon him, in which His Excellency said that his Ministers had advised him to grant the dissolution; and yet the Premier had told the House that the Acting-Governor had put pressure upon his Ministers to take a dissolution. That made the case absolutely worse than it was before. Honorable members all knew, before, that pressure was put by Ministers upon the Acting-Governor; but now they knew that the screw was turned so hard upon him as to make him sing out and cry to them, "Take the dissolution!" It was too bad to place any man in such a position.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Nothing of the sort.

MR. STEPHENS: He hoped the country would never again witness such a disgrace. If the colony must have an Acting-Governor, let him be a man in an independent position; not a member of the same class as was the Ministry, and bound to work for that class, to maintain class government, and to act in such an unconstitutional manner as did the late Acting-Governor. The House, as he had said before, were met after a lapse of five months; and the Premier seemed rather to crow over his doings. No doubt the honorable gentleman had succeeded in his design. He had not called Parliament together until the five months for which he had originally adjourned the Assembly had expired. What were honorable members to make of all this? In the Opening Speech, they were told that it was very necessary for them to proceed with the business of the country without delay. Why so necessary for them to be quick? Simply because the Government had kept back the meeting of the House two months longer than was necessary after the last election. Parliament might have been called together earlier but for the paltry triumph of keeping the Assembly shut till the date of the adjournment. When they were met, there was no change whatever in the policy of the Government, who said they took exactly the same position as before. It appeared to him (Mr. Stephens) that the Opposition were bound to accept that challenge, and to take up the debate from the adjournment of five months ago. Their duty to their constituents left them no choice. If there was not much business transacted to this time, so near Christmas, the

blame undoubtedly rested on the Government, who had put off the Parliament for so many months. The House had been told by the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, that the adjournment was an excellent thing. He had no doubt that the political firm of Cribb and Foote thought it was, and they were to be highly complimented on the result of the elections; but he decidedly did not agree with that view. He admitted the majority of the Government; he admitted that they had gained Warrego and Mitchell from the Opposition, which districts did not contain as many hundreds as the district of East Moreton did thousands of inhabitants. It was seen that representatives had been sent into the House for those districts, not by the electors, but in order to protect, as was admitted, the interests of a company.

Mr. BUCHANAN: He had said, for the interests of the country.

Mr. STEPHENS: The honorable member had used the word "company." With two exceptions, honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House were political squatters. The Opposition had been told that it was bad to put class against class. Oh! shocking. Again, he repeated that it was very bad. But, if there was any disgrace in putting class against class in this country, let the disgrace be upon those who did it, not upon those who did not. Here, for the first time, that he was aware of, in the Australian colonies, was a squatting majority in the Assembly composed of gentlemen who were, with two exceptions, political squatters. He would say decidedly that he had not the slightest animosity against squatters, or their trade or occupation. There were as many honest as in any other class of the community. He would do nothing by legislation to damage them; and he would do anything for them that he believed to be right; he would deal fairly with them, in every way. But, there was a difference between squatters as men following their occupation in the country, and political squatters—men who came into the House for the purpose of protecting the interests of absentee companies—men of one interest, and wedded to it, of one class and devoted to it—who formed and supported a Government of that class and administered the affairs of the country in the interests of that class. It was impossible for a political party of that description to maintain ascendancy for any length of time. He had the opinion, and he ventured to express it, that the present Government majority would melt away, or that this Parliament would not last long. It was quite possible to obtain an addition of members and to gain numerical strength in support of a Government, and, at the same time, to lose in moral strength. Never, in this colony, had reports been so rife of corruption of all descriptions practised by the Government, as during the last election. It was well known that the

telegraph was used—he would not say by others than members of the Government, because he was not in possession of that information—for the purpose of transmitting addresses and instructions for the Government, and candidates in their interest, and for their supporters.

Mr. GROOM: Hear, hear; Western Downs.

Mr. STEPHENS: And, it was also known that one could hardly take up a country newspaper without finding that some Ministers were travelling about—one at Warwick, another at Maryborough, and another somewhere else—making promises of roads, and so forth, and that some of the Ministers never went anywhere without canvassing. He would point to the case of the Minister for Works, who had remonstrated with the people of Kennedy for returning a member of the Opposition, and recommended them to return a representative in the interest of the Government. That was a specimen of the sort of thing done by the present Government, who were supported by men of one class, banded together to advance their personal interests. The honorable and learned Attorney-General had made a mistake, and he (Mr. Stephens) would point out what that honorable gentleman represented. He had been returned for Burnett, that last resort of members of a Government who could not get elected by any other constituency—that was always ready to open its arms to any member of a squatting Government.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER on the Treasury Bench: Pring.

Mr. STEPHENS: That district was a purely squatting electorate. It contained one hundred and ninety-two runs, and of that number one hundred and twenty-five were registered in the names of the mortgagees, and eighty-three of them were in arrears for rent. If that was not a specimen of a rotten mortgage constituency, he did not know what was. What the Attorney-General represented were absentee mortgagees, who held two-thirds of the district. There was a combination in the House of the party that had ruled the country almost from the date of Separation—that of the Darling Downs squatters and the Ipswich and West Moreton members. His (Mr. Stephens') object in referring to this was, that throughout the late election the Opposition members were constantly charged with the extravagance of the railway system. A reference to the facts would shew that members now in Opposition had strongly opposed the railway policy; and there were many present who were then in the House. In a House of twenty-six members, thirteen, including the Speaker, entered into a compact, under Mr. Herbert's Government—and they assembled to discuss it in the Colonial Secretary's Office—for the finest job of log-rolling ever seen in Australia. Some members wanted a line to Dalby, others would not consent to it unless they got a line to Warwick, and the members for Leichhardt

would not agree to either of those lines unless they got a line for Rockhampton. They agreed to all. The constituencies of Darling Downs, and Ipswich, and West Moreton, and Leichhardt, and Burnett, were answerable for inflicting the present railway system upon the country. When he said inflicted, he meant that he and others would not have complained of it if it had been carried out under a common sense system. The thirteen representatives of those districts had banded together in supporting every extravagance of that system as against the other representatives of the colony, and carried it through. He (Mr. Stephens) knew he took part in exposing that extravagance when it was no easy task. He should not have alluded to it, now, if the "pure merinos" on the other side of the House had not in their canvassing taken special care to throw upon the Opposition the blame for all the extravagance and mismanagement of the railway system. In a pure class Ministry, supported by a pure class majority, the Minister for Lands was the only exception. He was not a squatter. He was the one amongst the Ministers who was constantly boasting, in the House and before his constituents, of his honest administration of the Land Act. It was really very amusing to see him get up and blow away so earnestly on his own penny tin trumpet, because he could not get anybody else to blow it for him. He (Mr. Stephens) believed him to be an honest man, and personally he had great respect for him. He believed that he thought he administered the Land Act honestly; but he worked it honestly for the benefit of his squatting masters. This was no doubt perfectly true; and there was equally little doubt that the lands had never been more dishonestly administered as far as the general requirements of the public were concerned. He took it to be one of the highest duties of a Minister for Lands to see that sufficient land was open for selection wherever there was a demand for it, so as to encourage settlement; and, if the land laws were defective, it was the duty of this honest Minister—he merely used his own words, and not disrespectfully—to initiate legislation to remedy the defects which existed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS denied that he ever used the term, speaking of himself. The honorable member's own paper, he believed, applied it to him first. Honesty of administration was a manly qualification; but he had proved, he trusted, that he had something else besides.

Mr. STEPHENS: That was the honorable gentleman's boast.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did not take it as a boast.

Mr. STEPHENS: Well, he would take the honorable gentleman's statement, that it was not much to boast of. He administered the lands honestly for his squatting masters, and he shewed a remarkable appreciation of the duties of his office. He had said that it was

not possible for him to examine and decide every case. Of course not. He had officers to deal with details. But he did not seem to be able to go beyond the merest details of his office. There were higher duties for a Minister for Lands, but the honorable gentleman did not seem to appreciate them. For what purpose were the Land Acts passed? For the purpose of keeping the land in the hands of the squatters, or for the purpose of assisting settlement on the land? He (Mr. Stephens) thought they had been passed for the purpose of providing various ways for selling and leasing land, and enabling people to settle upon it. One of the highest duties of the Minister for Lands was to see that there was sufficient land open for settlement, where there was a possible demand for it; and, if the law presented any difficulty to his so doing, to initiate legislation for the purpose of giving the people facilities for settling on the land. Yet the honorable gentleman had not shewn that he had the slightest idea of discharging such important functions. He asked for instances of improper administration, and he should have some. The House very courteously had allowed the honorable gentleman to make a second speech, for which he (Mr. Stephens) was very glad; and he had laid on the table triumphant answers to those instances which had been brought forward, amongst them Schneider's case. The answer in that case was, simply, that the land was not open for selection. How came it not to be open for selection? It was the duty of the Minister to have land for a man who wanted it. That man had applied for the land, apparently for the purpose of settlement. His going on to it proved that, although he had erected only a bark humpie. The land was in the resumed half of a run, and being so, according to the Land Act, it ought to have been open for selection. It was surveyed land. But a previous Government had withdrawn all surveyed lands from selection, for the purpose of putting them up to auction. That was not for the purpose of putting them into the hands of the squatters, who were not entitled to them. In this particular case, all that was required, instead of the Minister for Lands proclaiming the land open for selection, was an Executive minute.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was not the case.

Mr. STEPHENS: Then, he was misinformed. It was surveyed land, and kept from sale on that ground. He would suggest another way. If the Minister had any desire for its settlement, why could he not have allowed the Surveyor-General—as in another case in which the Government had paid twice for surveying land, which, nevertheless, the Surveyor-General treated as unsurveyed land—to have cancelled it and sold it? Neither in that case nor in any other did the honorable gentleman shew any desire to let the people get on the land. In any case where it would

be dishonest to keep the people off the land, the honorable gentleman made a show of letting them on; but where it was his duty to withdraw land from the squatter, and to throw it open for selection, he did not do so. The House were told that there was a demand for land around Dalby and Drayton and Toowoomba, and that men had gone away because they could not get it. Supposing the Minister for Lands went up there and stated that as land was wanted, it was necessary to resume some out of the ten years' leases, whom would he meet in the Cabinet when that question was to be decided upon? His honorable colleagues for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, and for Northern Downs, the Colonial Treasurer, who held runs nearest to the towns named, and who would, of course, be affected by such resumption. Some years ago, there used to be a row every week about the unconstitutional proceeding of having five Ministers. Now, there were six. He (Mr. Stephens) asked, whether those two honorable gentlemen were in the position to act fairly to the public, if the Minister for Lands proposed to them to decide as Ministers upon the resumption of their runs for selection and settlement? No man ought to thrust himself into a position where he could not give an unbiassed opinion. If the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, thought he could give such an opinion, the House would put him to the test. Some day or other he would have to throw up those leases. Again, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, whom the Ministry had taken from the Opposition, before they had tied up another member from the same side as Speaker,—was he not interested, if the Minister for Lands went to the Cabinet with such a question? The unconstitutional practice of the present Government was specially to preserve the leases of the lands of the Darling Downs to the largest landholders, who themselves sat in the Cabinet. Was it human nature to expect that honorable gentleman to be convinced that land was wanted by the people? There were not two more honest or straightforward men than the two honorable members named; but, somehow, their interests led them in the present case to take views which he (Mr. Stephens) conceived not to be in accordance with the interests of the public. They, no doubt, honestly believed the country would be ruined if the ten years' leases which they held were resumed. The position in which they were was a block to the settlement of the people on the Darling Downs. He would take another case, affecting the honest administration of the Government, and to shew that they were a Government of one class. Supposing that the Minister for Works had any reasonable appreciation of his duties, by which local works could be removed from the arena of the Assembly, and put under the management of local bodies: that would

involve a land tax. Now, those same Ministers, whom he had just spoken of, held about 120,000 acres of land in the neighborhood of Drayton and Toowoomba, purchased partly under pre-emption, that is under an exclusive right, without competition; and how could the unfortunate men who could not now get an acre of the remainder, expect anything approaching justice from such members of a class Government, whose interests were directly opposed to the interests of the people in that manner? It seemed perfectly hopeless. The Minister for Lands did not shew any appreciation of the requirements of the public, thinking that sufficient land was open for selection; and he had said that if men wanted to pick out bits of the country that they fancied, he would not be one to encourage it. On referring to a return laid on the table some time ago of leases of runs, he (Mr. Stephens) found that in the district of South Kennedy were fifteen blocks of country, all adjacent, taken up by Arthur Hunter Palmer; that those blocks contained 1,100 square miles; that somehow, by the most curious coincidence, exactly one-half of that country was available, and the other half unavailable; that was, the latter could be held without any payment of rent for it. The whole had been held about two or three years ago by the Crown tenant named; but about that time he dropped payment upon seven blocks, or five hundred and ninety square miles. Upon the part that was available, two hundred and ninety-five square miles, the rent was twenty-two shillings per square mile, or £324 10s. There had been a little adjustment of the boundaries, and he just took the calculation roughly. Now, what action did the honest Minister for Lands take? It would be in the recollection of honorable members that he brought in a Bill, last session—the title of which he (Mr. Stephens) had forgotten, but it was known as the "half-crown Bill"—by which the rent of runs which had been dropped—that was to say, which the occupiers had failed to pay rent for and had forfeited, and which could not be got possession of except at auction—was proposed to be reduced to that sum, which was low enough. A special provision in that Bill made it apply to the particular case just named—that in North and South Kennedy, and some other district—South Kennedy just catching those runs—forfeited runs should not be put up to auction, but that the previous lessees should be allowed a preferential right to take them up, at half-a-crown per square mile. So that this honest administrator of the lands, and his chief, had brought in a Bill to allow the former holder of those runs, for which £324 10s. rental per annum was paid when dropped, to take them up again at a rental of £36 17s. 6d.—or one-fifth of a farthing per annum per acre! There were five hundred and ninety square miles of country, only half—or two hundred and ninety-five square

miles—of which was available, and upon which rent was payable at the rate proposed in the Bill; so that the fact was, if the Bill had been passed, that country would have been occupied by the original lessee, who was to have had the exclusive right, as against the general public, of taking it up at something less than one-fifth of a farthing per acre of the available country, and at less than one-tenth of a farthing, or the forty-first part of a penny per annum per acre of the whole extent. That was the sort of legislation that the House was insulted by! Would anyone say, after that, that there was no personal interest to be served by a class government in getting themselves backed in the House by a class majority that obeyed them in everything? Such a state of things was disgraceful. But the disgrace was in the facts, not in bringing them to daylight; and it was the duty of the Opposition, as the representatives of the people of the colony—at any rate, of a large majority of the people—to bring those facts to the fore, and let the people see how things were managed by a squatting Government. There was one other subject to which he (Mr. Stephens) wished to refer, and that was the conduct of the Government with regard to the Polynesian slavery question. He had seen the Polynesians at work in pretty well all positions and at all trades that they were employed in, here; and he said unhesitatingly, as the result of what he had seen and of the expressed opinions of reliable persons, that sugar-farming did not require black labor; and, as he had been told repeatedly by persons in this neighborhood, there was no process in sugar-growing more trying on their constitution than there was in growing maize; and he was quite satisfied that it was the fact. But, he was not inclined to discuss the question on such a low ground as that. He maintained that Queensland had better not have sugar than have slavery. There had been a great deal of effort to shirk the question and to blind the public to it. Innumerable papers had been drawn up with reference to it. It was horrid to speak of anything being wrong. In English newspapers, and especially in Government documents, everything was done to smooth it over. There had been innumerable denials of anything wrong—"We were the real clean potato!" But he stated unhesitatingly that it was well known from the beginning that those natives could not be got at the islands, unless either by fraud or violence. Otherwise, it was impossible to procure them; and, for the credit of the colony, he thought it necessary that the plain open facts of the case should be stated in the House. This colony professed to get them, by virtue of an Act of Parliament, under agreement. But an agreement, to be of any value, must be mutual—it must be equally understood by both parties. It was perfectly clear that the captains of the

ships, or the agents, neither knew nor cared what occupations the Polynesians were put to when they got to the colony. If they did know, it was equally clear that it would be out of their power to explain to the Polynesians what they were to do here. The number of those men who had come a second time to the colony was so exceedingly small as to be the exceptions that proved the rule, that they did not like their service in Queensland. It was impossible to explain to men who had never worked before, in their own islands, what it was to work for ten hours a-day for six days in the week, or one hour a-day; for they did not know what systematic work was;—and how, then, could they be made to understand the sort of agreements to which they were made parties? It was utterly impracticable to explain to the naked savage, what such an agreement was. There was no one on board the vessels who could speak his language. The captains could not do so, nor could the Government agents. They picked up a native, sometimes, who was supposed to act as interpreter; but, in nine cases out of ten, who knew that he could make himself understood by the recruits. From the state of circumstances known, there was no doubt that fraud was committed in getting the men; and the step from fraud to violence was very small indeed. The truth, as to the nature of the traffic, was being acknowledged now, but very slowly, that the men taken from the New Hebrides and the other Polynesian islands, were taken by kidnapping. Well, it may be said by some persons, that Queensland ships do not kidnap. Oh! no. It was all done by the Fiji traders. In return, the Fiji men said it was all done by the Queensland men; and the two just threw the charge back from one to the other. What was the duty of the House? It was no use attempting to deny, any longer, that there was kidnapping. That was a plain fact. The only course the House could take towards retrieving the character of the colony, was, to wash their hands of the accursed trade altogether, and have nothing more to do with it. He (Mr. Stephens) would allude to the conduct of the Government in the matter. A short time ago, the "Jason" arrived at Maryborough, having an accredited Government agent on board, a very old and respected resident of Maryborough. At that time, the Government had in their possession sworn statements by persons who had been on board of her, that kidnapping had taken place on the previous trip. She had made other trips as a recruiting vessel under a Queensland license. It was well known that there were two or three persons living in Brisbane who had been on board of her, and who were prepared to swear to the same thing as was in those statements which the Government had had for four or five months in their possession; and they were now living within a dozen miles of where he stood. They had been in the habit

of giving him accounts of what took place when they were on board that vessel—cutting off canoes, and taking the pigs and yams of the natives, and calling them gifts made by the natives kidnaped to take them on board. Whether such things could be legally proved was not to the purpose now. He would say nothing at all about the cases before the court. But it was reported to a member of the Government who was in Maryborough at the time of the last arrival of the "Jason," that the Government agent, whom it was their bounden duty to protect, had certain charges to make. There never was a case more clear. On hearing that a charge of kidnaping was to be brought against the vessel by the Government agent, the duty of that Minister was to do nothing himself, but to refer the matter to the Attorney-General, as the legal member of the Government, who would take the proper course.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Hear, hear.

MR. STEPHENS: But what did that Minister do? He telegraphed to the Premier and got from him, on insufficient information, his consent to the appointment of a commission to investigate the case. What power had that commission, supposing that they had obtained all the facts of the case? What was the effect? If it had been definitively proved before them that kidnaping had taken place, they could have done nothing. The Attorney-General would then have had to go to work. Why was he not set to work, at first? The board sat. An application was made by the Government agent, or on his behalf, that the board should be adjourned, on account of his inability to attend from illness. What was the course taken by that blessed commission? They were to inquire into sundry charges, and they would not wait to hear the accuser; they said, "We will hear the defence right off," and they did so. He (Mr. Stephens) never heard of any one being brought into a court as a defendant, and being called upon to swear before an accusation was heard, or to give evidence before the complainant was heard. The whole proceeding, from beginning to end, was improper; and, if it were not so serious a case as a charge of kidnaping, it would be laughable, so completely had the Government succeeded in damning themselves over it. He never knew anything to re-act so completely upon its instigators, as the attempt to get rid of that case by an irregular inquiry. He believed that this was done to blacken the character of the Government agent, whom the Government were bound to protect, and to cloak the vessel, and prevent a genuine inquiry being made. He would not refer to the case further than to say he thought it a pity that the owners and agent of the vessel could not be placed in the position which the unfortunate captain and sailors now occupied. The other day, there were published accounts of the proceedings of

two other vessels which had been recruiting for laborers. Of one, the "Isabella," the captain's log was full of such extracts as the following:—

"— Sent the boat ashore, and whilst the chief mate and two of the ship's crew were visiting a camp, the natives (Sandwich men) made off with the boat."

"— Landed at a native camp, where there were about forty natives assembled, who, without the slightest provocation, attacked the men in the boat with stones, spears, and arrows, three of whom were severely wounded with poisoned arrows, and one badly hurt in the head by a blow from a stone."

"Proceeded to Aurora, and on the following day, as the boat was making along the shore of the island, the crew were savagely attacked by the natives on shore, who fired poisoned arrows at them, and threw a volley of stones. Several of the arrows fired into the boat were brought on board. On the 20th, visited the island of St. Clair, where the boat's crew were again attacked during the afternoon by the natives, the arrows falling into and around the boat as thick as hail. The boat's crew returned the fire with their revolvers and guns for a considerable time, when the boat returned to the ship, bringing with them a number of trophies in the shape of poisoned arrows, but fortunately again escaping scatheless."

Those were some of the descriptions of the great peaceable trade that Queensland was carrying on under an Act of Parliament. Yet he did not refer to that Act without giving the Premier credit for the best intentions and fair dealing, in connection with it. But it was shewn that the Act was a great error. Since the account from which he had quoted was published, the report of the Government agent on board the "Isabella" was published. In it, he said:—

"— Forty-four Polynesian laborers—twenty-eight from New Hebrides, and sixteen from Solomon Group—after the unusual and unnecessarily long voyage of five months and twenty-one days."

He (Mr. Stephens) was in great hopes that that was a style of thing that would not last long. Then, there was a statement of the extreme unwillingness of the people to come to Queensland; and another statement that—"Many have been and are taken away against their will."

This statement was made by the Government agent:—

"Many have been and are now taken away against their will. They are induced, under various pretences, on board vessels and carried off; and in the case of the Solomon Islands, where the recruiting is carried on, canoes alongside are destroyed, and the natives taken out. One master of a Fiji vessel at the Solomon's voluntarily gave me the information, 'that having come a long way for laborers, he took them one way if he could not get them another, and considered he was doing them a favor by taking them.'"

That was exactly what the slavers of the West Indies and Southern States used to

say: it was better for the negroes, doing them a favor, to take them away from Africa. It was a real slaveholders' argument.

"As we picked up a canoe floating about with a hole in it in the morning, where the evening before he said he got a number of boys, I have not the slightest doubt myself but that it was one out of which he had taken natives."

"Five masters of Fiji vessels, besides other members of their crews, in all numbering fifteen, lost their lives from the time we first arrived at Havanah harbor until we returned there again; in one instance, at the island of Mona, a vessel was taken by the natives, and all hands, with the exception of the captain, murdered. We ourselves, at the island of Pentecost, had two of the crew and a native boatman wounded by poisoned arrows, and one native wounded on the head with a stone. Happily no bad effects followed."

The report also says:—

"The boat was fired upon on two different occasions, no one being wounded—arrows and stones, however, striking her; in fact, few if any vessels have escaped having men either killed or wounded."

Did that not clearly shew the character of the trade that was encouraged by Act of Parliament? He would now read another extract:—

"For my own part, after hearing and seeing a great deal in reference to the matter, I attribute the disaffection to a long system of fraud, violence, and cruelty practised on the natives,—that they have been and are wronged, everyone with whom I have had any conversation admits; the only point of dispute seems to be by whom it was committed. The missionaries give Queensland vessels credit for greater part of it, under the impression, I think, that they, by that means, will induce the Home Government to put a stop to the trade. The Queensland vessels put it down to the Fiji; and they, on the other hand, say it is Queensland vessels."

Now he maintained that there was no other way of clearing their character from the charge of being concerned in a species of slave trade, than by getting rid of the accursed thing altogether. But yet they found a member of the Government doing all that it was in his power to do in order to shirk inquiry into the matter, and so to damn the character of the Government agent, whom it was his duty to protect. The Government agent went on to say, with regard to this trip:—

"That the natives were then fairly and honestly dealt with I took good care to see."

And he also said,—That the natives were properly treated, and everything went on correctly. Now, how did that, he would ask, tally with the statement taken from the log—

"The following day sent the boat on shore, and obtained nine natives from the king."

Was that getting them by their own free will; or was it not rather precisely the way in which the vessels, on what was called the middle passage, used to obtain slaves for the

Southern States of America? The captains of the vessels obtained the slaves from the kings of those portions of the West Coast of Africa which they visited. Now the last extract he had read distinctly stated that nine natives were obtained from the king; and he understood no natives could be got without the consent of the king. It might be said that there was no compulsion in their coming when they got the consent of the king to do so, but it was pretty well known that the natives could not refuse to come if the king said they must; for they knew that if they refused they would be killed and eaten—as the Earl of Belmore had very correctly put it; and they accordingly preferred coming here to being eaten—and he thought they shewed good sense in that. Now he would repeat that the system of obtaining those islanders was similar to that pursued in obtaining slaves in former times, for the Southern States of America, and the West Indian islands. The arguments used in favor of the trade were the same, and the arguments used in defending it were the same, as were used in support of the African slave trade. It was true they had an Act of Parliament for regulating the trade, but it was impossible to get the natives to understand the nature of an agreement; though it was supposed they were made to understand the nature of the agreements before they went on board the vessel. Those natives must therefore be taken either by fraud, or by force—and there was evidence that force was used in some instances, when it became necessary to resort to force to obtain them. The sooner, therefore, they branded the trade in that House, by the name it was known by all over Europe, and in all the other colonies—the sooner they branded it as slavery—the better it would be for the fair fame and reputation of the colony. How was it to be expected that European laborers would be induced to immigrate to the colony, when they knew that they would have to live and work with men who were brought here as slaves? Yet, they had a Government that encouraged this kind of slave trade. Now, news had recently been received giving an account of one of the terrible results of this slave trade. He referred to the murder of Bishop Patteson, one of the most self-denying and devoted men in the world, who was struck down by the natives of one of the islands, in revenge for outrages committed by white men—the crews of vessels engaged in carrying on this trade; but whether the vessels were from Fiji or Queensland had not yet been ascertained. He must say, for himself, he had great hopes that the murders which had taken place would stir up the British Government to send out cruisers to put a stop to the trade; but, even if such should be the case, the fact would still remain as a blot upon the reputation of the colony, that they had stuck to the trade as long as they could; and that they did not

discontinue it, but that it was put down by the action taken in respect to it by the Imperial authorities. He would now leave the subject, and come back to a statement that was made in the House the other day by the honorable the Premier, who said, in the course of his speech, that the prosperity of the colony largely depended upon the squatters. That was a very old doctrine, and one that had often been made use of before; but if the honorable the Premier had stated the reverse, he would, in his opinion, have been nearer the truth. His wish was not to see the squatter in any way injured, but rather to see him benefitted; and he maintained that the squatters were benefitted by the settlement of the colony; and that consequently their prosperity would increase as population increased. But they would not see that such would be the case. For them to oppose the settlement of the country was, in his opinion, about the worst thing they could do for themselves. The settlement of a large and industrious population in their vicinity, would provide a market for their produce, and more customers for their beef and mutton,—and they would also be benefitted in many other respects. The course that was now being pursued by the squatting party here, as regarded the settlement of population on the lands of the colony, was the same as was pursued by what was called the "Right Party" in Victoria, which was composed of squatters and others interested in squatting pursuits. They, also, were opposed to the spread of population; but when they had been overruled, and population poured into the colony, and great portions of their runs were resumed and peopled, they were surprised to find, some years afterwards, that they were making more money than they had ever done before, and were rapidly increasing in wealth. That, they discovered, was altogether owing to the settlement of population. He was speaking with a squatter the other day who told him that he had experienced very much the same thing—that since his run was divided, and the half of it taken up and settled with a white population, he was deriving more from the half he retained than he did before from the whole of the run; and that he attributed to the fact that the settlement which had taken place in his neighborhood had provided a large and ready market for his fat stock. Now, such being the case, he hoped that honorable members on the Government side of the House would properly estimate those facts, and that they would be convinced by them of the benefits they would themselves derive from people being allowed freely to settle on the lands of the colony. In the face of such experiences, however, they had the honorable the Premier coming down and saying that there was plenty of land throughout the colony open for selection; but what was the use of people applying for land if they could only get it in little bits, and only where the Government chose to

offer it? Now, he maintained that there never would be any satisfactory settlement of this land question till there was free selection before survey established over the whole colony; and he would warn honorable members on the Government side of the House not to persist in their present course too long; and he hoped they would see the necessity of coming to some compromise for the settlement of the question. There was an agitation on the subject about two years ago, and it might soon be revived. Some compromise should be come to now, and free selection before survey established all over the colony, and the land allowed to be taken up in limited blocks, as in the case of New South Wales. If something of the kind was not done, now, the people might demand to be allowed to settle on the lands, and might take them up in unlimited blocks, which was a state of things he would very much regret to see come to pass. He did not think there was any other subject on which he required to speak. He believed he had spoken pretty plainly, and that he had used good homely English. If he had said anything that was hurtful to the feelings of any honorable member, he had no intention, whatever, of apologising for it, so long as the statements he had made were correct; but at any rate he believed he had succeeded in being courteous in the way in which he had stated his facts. He would only add, that he considered that the political conduct of the whole of the squatting party, from the first to the last of them, including Sir Maurice O'Connell, was a greater disgrace to the colony than the merely mentioning of facts could possibly be—and there were many more facts connected with their political conduct that he could mention. The disgrace was in the facts and not in the mentioning of them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he was sorry the honorable member who last addressed the House had left; but he hoped he would soon return. He did not know why the honorable member had left the House, unless it was that he was afraid to hear the whole truth spoken about his private affairs, and the private affairs of others to which he had so largely alluded. He did not think the honorable member himself at first contemplated delivering such a speech; for he knew that if he referred to the affairs of a private enterprise in the way he had done there were honorable members in the House who were prepared to meet him. The honorable member seemed to think that the whole burden of the country rested on the history of the *Guardian*, the *Express*, and the *Courier*; as the greater part of his speech referred to those papers and to the Polynesian question. Now, he could tell the House that the honorable member bought the *Guardian*, with its proprietors; and, therefore, he was himself responsible for whatever was wrong in it; and as to the Polynesian Laborers Bill, he actually voted for it when it was before the

House, though he now thought fit to condemn it. That, he thought, must be sufficient to shew the absurdity of the honorable member's position with respect to this question. What was more, he used every endeavor to improve his own circumstances by allying himself with the other gentlemen who were now proprietors of the *Courier*—whom he now accused of trying to ruin him; and he, not long ago, offered to sell the *Courier* to the proprietary; and to sell his constituents, if the proprietary would buy up the paper. Why did he come with a written statement, saying that he would go out of the House for three years if they would buy it, and give him a larger share in it than he had? and the answer he got was that the proprietary did not think him worth buying at any price. He did not, however, it seemed, find it convenient to tell that to the House—he did not state that he was willing to leave Parliament for three years if he could only get a larger interest in the paper. It seemed that he had not the manliness to remain in the House and hear that part of the truth spoken to his face; and, no doubt, that was the reason why he had left. When the proposition was made to him as to buying the paper, and buying the honorable member out of Parliament, he rejected it with scorn. He would rather have thrown his money into the river than have been a party to such a base proposal as the honorable member made. Now, it was a gentleman who had acted in that way, who had got up, and, for party purposes, had endeavored to set class against class, by referring in the most scandalous terms to the introduction of Polynesians into the colony, and branding it as a species of slavery. It was altogether the reverse of what was correct to say that there was any such a thing in Queensland as slavery. Nothing could be more repugnant to the feelings of the white inhabitants of the colony than to say that slavery existed here. No such a thing as slavery existed in this colony; and what was more, no such a thing as slavery could exist, and would not be allowed to exist in any British possession, wherever the people possessed the watchful criticism of the press, and the active care of their representatives. At the time when the colony was being slandered at home for participating in a system of slavery, the honorable member and his coadjutors took up the cry here, and also denounced the trade as a system of slavery. Now, he held that the man who did so, and those who acted with him in the matter, could not be regarded otherwise than as calumniators of the colony; and they ought, he considered, to be hunted out of it. He would not refer to the cruel and heartless allusions which the honorable member for Wide Bay had made with respect to Sir Maurice O'Connell. Indeed, he regretted having to refer to them again, at all. The remarks made by the honorable member, to-night, with regard to that honorable gentleman, he looked upon as a sort of reproduction

of what was said about that gentleman and his private affairs, a few nights ago. Surely, it was not to be said, that because a man was poor he was dishonest;—surely it was not to be said, that because a man did not possess great wealth he could not do his duty to his country, or that he was unconscientious. Now, he protested against a high-spirited and honorable gentleman being attacked in the way Sir Maurice O'Connell had been attacked, especially when he was not in a position to defend himself. He had known Sir Maurice O'Connell for a period of twenty-five years, and during that length of time he had never heard a word uttered against that gentleman's character. He admitted that Sir Maurice O'Connell might have made mistakes—and who had not?—but they were mistakes of the head, and not mistakes of the heart; and his honor had never been affected by them. He was glad to learn that the honorable member had had the good taste, as soon as he had finished his speech, to go and apologise to Sir Maurice O'Connell for what he had said respecting him.

Mr. KING said he did not apologise for anything he had said. What he said to Sir Maurice O'Connell was, that he regretted his private circumstances should have been discussed in this House, and that on account of some of those with whom he was connected. He would regret that the private circumstances of any honorable gentleman should be discussed in the House if there was no sufficient ground for doing so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well he believed that those were not exactly the words the honorable member did make use of; but, at any rate, as he himself said, he spoke regretfully to Sir Maurice O'Connell on the subject. Now, he would ask, if it was not the fact that there were some honorable members in this House, who, for week after week, and month after month, were not able to meet their bills as they became due, and who actually were ashamed to look some of their creditors in the face—who could not act independently, and according to their own convictions of what was right, lest by doing so they might take a course that would clash with the interests of those with whom they had business transactions. He thought the remarks of the honorable member for South Brisbane were particularly weak when he attempted to argue that the majority of the proprietors of the *Courier* should not be controlled by the minority, and that he cut the ground from under his feet as regarded his political conduct,—for the honorable member took quite a different and opposite line of conduct as regarded the principles upon which the proceedings of the House should be carried on. Now, the complaint of the Government was, that the minority of the representatives of the country were attempting to control the majority of the representatives of the country. He was sure that if the honorable member was on the Government side of the

House, he would again change his opinion on that point, and argue that it was the duty of the minority to submit to the majority. In the course of his speech, the honorable member referred to a certain letter. Now, when the honorable member brought forward the accusations against the honorable member for Western Downs, there was not, so he believed, a single member in the House who credited him; and when he read the letter—and it was an excellent letter, and a beautiful letter—a letter which did credit and honor to the House, inasmuch as it was written by a member of the House—he glanced down the faces of honorable members opposite, and he was glad to observe that those honorable members sitting beside the honorable gentleman appeared to be heartily ashamed of him. The honorable member, after abusing, by innuendoes, several honorable members in the House, began most unwarrantably to abuse him, personally, on the subject of the Polynesian question. Now, he perfectly agreed with the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, in thinking that the Polynesian question was one that ought not to be discussed at present, as the law had very properly been put in motion on the subject; and, therefore, any discussion that might take place in the House upon it, could scarcely fail to influence, to some extent, the minds of the jury, before whom the trial might take place, as to their verdict. The honorable member seemed not to have taken that circumstance into consideration; but leaving it out of view, he went on to state that the captain of the same vessel had, on four previous occasions, been charged with carrying on nefarious practices. Now, that, he held, was a base allusion for him to make; but the honorable member also went out of his way to say that he would have liked to see the owner of the vessel put on his trial instead of either the captain or any of the crew. Now, that he looked upon as an attempt to vilify the character of one of the most honorable men he had ever known. That gentleman would not, as the honorable member knew, be guilty of wilfully injuring anyone, whether black or white; and he was sure that he would be the last man in the world to connive at anything that could be regarded as slavery. The honorable member next went out of his way to attack him (the Secretary for Public Works), and charged him, as a Minister of the Crown, with not taking action at Maryborough for an inquiry to be made as to information which had been given him about a charge of slavery against the vessel, and with having evaded the question of inquiry into the charge by ordering an inquiry to be made into some other matter. Now, the only charge he had heard made while he was at Maryborough,—and he believed it was made to him on the hustings—was that the Government agent, during some portion of the voyage, was badly treated by the captain. He would tell the honorable mem-

ber that, notwithstanding what had taken place, there was not a man in the colony for whom he had a greater respect than for the Government agent referred to—although he had brought charges against him. There was not a better man to be found than he was when he was in a correct state of mind. The honorable member knew what action had been taken as to the charge against the captain for badly using the Government agent, and its result. Well, he did not prosecute the charge of slavery, and he could inform the honorable member that as there had been no prosecution as to the charge of slavery, the owner of the vessel came to him and earnestly desired there should be one, that he might have an opportunity of clearing his character of the stain which he felt rested upon it, by a charge having been made against him of trafficking in slaves. This charge, he believed, was made against the owner in a public place. He promised the owner that if any charges of slavery against him or the vessel were distinctly preferred in the proper way, they would no doubt be inquired into. He was not aware at the time that he had the power himself, as a Minister of the Crown, to order an inquiry to be made; and, therefore, he telegraphed to the Colonial Secretary to obtain his sanction to do so. The Colonial Secretary immediately replied, telling him to appoint a strictly impartial board, consisting of gentlemen who had nothing whatever to do with the matter. He then appointed the Mayor of Maryborough, and the Police Magistrates of Gympie and Gayndah, to inquire into the matter. Now, those were three strictly impartial men; and he might add that the two latter were perfect strangers to him. Such was the commission appointed; and could anyone, he would like to know, influence those gentlemen in the bringing up of their report? As soon as the inquiry was instituted, he left Maryborough, and he had not spoken to any of the members of the commission since. He was satisfied in his own mind that whatever the report might be it was the best the commissioners felt they could bring up on the subject. One of the commissioners, the Mayor of Maryborough, was, he believed, a strong and determined opponent of Polynesian immigration. So much, then, for the charges that had been brought against him upon this head. A more malicious charge had never been made against him than the one made by the honorable member for South Brisbane—that he had endeavored to prevent any inquiry being made as to whether the vessel was or was not employed in a species of slave trade. Now, he denied that the introduction of Polynesian labor into the colony partook in any way whatever of the nature of slavery. But he could say more; he could tell the House that when the Polynesian Laborers Bill was before the House, he protested against it, because he saw that if it were passed into law, it would be looked upon as giving the

sanction of the Government to a trade that might come to be regarded as a species of slavery. However, when he saw that the Bill would be carried, he did all that was in his power to have the clauses made as strict as he possibly could, in order to secure that employers should be compelled to treat their Polynesian laborers humanely and justly. So much then for his share in respect to providing for the introduction of Polynesian laborers. When this debate had somewhat advanced honorable members on the other side began to address the House in a way characteristic of themselves; and made it appear that nothing but recriminatory abuse was to be indulged in. According to honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, there were no good or honest men on the Government side of the House;—some were too rich, and some were too poor—some had too many sheep, and some had too few; and so on. Now, was that the way, he would ask, that, in the opinion of honorable members opposite, all classes in the colony were to be fairly represented in the House? He must protest against such a course, which could only have one effect—that of, not benefitting the colony, but of putting class against class, and that merely for party purposes. The sole object of the Opposition, last session, was, to get on to the Government benches, but they did not succeed. They only succeeded in shewing that it would be impossible, from the course of action they were pursuing, for the business of the country to be carried on; and, consequently, they rendered it necessary for the House to be dissolved. A fresh election then took place, and instead of their coming in with a good working majority, they had come back with their numbers somewhat diminished; and they had got themselves into such a state of temper on that account, that they could not find language too strong to express their feelings of chagrin because of their defeat. Several honorable members on the Opposition side of the House thought they had been long enough out of office, and because of the great hunger they felt to again be in office, it seemed they would stop at nothing—not even the most unfounded abuse, if they thought that by such means they might secure their object; but he need hardly tell those honorable members that their longings after office would not have the slightest influence in the way of inducing the Ministry to resign, as they were actuated by a stronger desire to promote the true interests of the country, and by a sense of their duty to their constituents, than by a wish to gratify honorable members opposite. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had been so ably answered by his honorable friend, Mr. Ramsay, that he felt it to be altogether unnecessary to take up the time of the House by following him, for he could only go over the same ground. The speech which was delivered by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley,

in reply, was, he must admit, very fairly reported in the *Courier*; and if the speech of his honorable friend, Mr. Ramsay, should be reported with equal accuracy, he would venture to say it would be admitted by the public to be a full and complete answer to the speech of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. If the public did not, after reading that speech, see that it was by purely party purposes and pecuniary motives the Opposition were actuated, they must be very blind indeed. He thought the speech of his honorable friend, Mr. Ramsay, was the best answer he had ever heard given to the speech of an ex-Premier on such an occasion as the present. The honorable members for Fortitude Valley and South Brisbane had started with all their usual stock of ingredients for the carrying on of party warfare. They wanted increased representation, they wanted the lands to be taken from the squatters and given up to the people under a system of free selection before survey, and that something should be done to make the colony progress; and they also wanted immigration. Now, he thought that as regarded immigration, all the arguments of those honorable members were sufficiently answered by the honorable the Premier when he said that, before immigration could be resumed, it was necessary, in the first place, that the means should be provided for carrying it on. The sinews of war had to be provided before they could again establish a system of immigration,—just as in the case of any other undertaking. Now, the proper time for discussing the question of immigration would be when funds were asked for immigration purposes, and when the people were clearly informed as to what the expense would be, and also as to what might be the expected benefits to the colony of a renewal of immigration. The colony had been paying, he believed, somewhere about £40,000 per annum for bringing people to the colony, and many of those who were brought here left almost immediately afterwards for the other colonies, or elbowed the older settlers out. That being the case, it came to be for the people to consider whether they would continue to be immigration agents for the other colonies; or whether they would adopt some better system than they had had hitherto of attracting people to the colony, and inducing them to remain in it when they came here. The arguments which had been brought forward to shew that the squatters were opposed to immigration, were so fallacious that he was astonished to hear such arguments advanced. Why, the squatter was, perhaps, more interested and more directly benefited by every shipload of immigrants that landed here than any other class of the community. It used to be the cry against the squatters that they were seeking to ruin the laborers of the colony, by bringing so many people to it; and now the charge brought against them was, that they desired to obstruct immigration.

Honorable members on the other side of the House maintained that the lands of the colony should be thrown open for the settlement of a large population upon them; but he would ask them, why the honorable member for Fortitude Valley did not throw open the lands to the people when he was in possession of the reins of power in 1869? And he would further ask why, instead of doing so, he brought in a measure for the locking up of the lands from the people for a period of twenty-one years? It was solely because he desired to continue in power that he declined to bring in a measure for opening the lands for settlement; and the honorable member knew that it was only by the support of the squatters that he would be able to remain in power. That was why he desired to buy the support of the squatters; and he believed the honorable member would do the same thing again if he were in office. When, in 1869, the honorable member introduced his Pastoral Leases Bill, he (the Secretary for Public Lands) denounced its provisions throughout; and told the honorable gentleman that if he persisted in having it carried, he would be doing an injustice to the colony. He also, at the same time, declared himself to be in favor of free selection before survey, and he had been so for the last twenty years. He recommended the honorable gentleman to throw open all the lands of the colony to free selection. The honorable gentleman was then in power, but he was in Opposition now; and, therefore, it suited him to argue in favor of free selection. When the Bill was before the House, he told them, as would be found in "Hansard," vol. ix., page 203, that—

"The Bill before the House had been brought in in consequence of promises exacted from the present Government by numerous members in that House."

Again, he told them, as at page 204 of the same volume of "Hansard"—

"The warning which he (Mr. Walsh) gave before, when the previous land Act was under consideration, had come true; and if the Government were going to allow the Bill before the House to be manipulated in committee by the very men who were, or who would become, holders of land under it, and who would derive all the advantages of it, that, he had no hesitation in saying, was a departure from all principles of statesmanship, and it was depriving the people of this colony of their patrimony for the transient support of a section of the House for popularity in the House."

Now, let honorable members inspect the records of the House, and they would see for themselves that it was the squatters who supported the honorable member when he was in power, and that it was by their votes he was able to remain in power. Let honorable members look at the record and they would see that when the House divided on the Bill, it was found there were no tellers for the "Noes," Mr. Walsh being alone. Honorable members opposite had protested against

the use the Government had made of the telegraph during the elections; but he would not allude to that matter, at any length, at present, as he observed there was a notice of motion on the paper bearing on the subject, and when the motion was brought forward he would have an opportunity of fully discussing the question. The inconsistency of the arguments of honorable members, as to the use of the telegraph with reference to election proceedings, he must say, rather amused him. They maintained that they had every right to interfere with the elections in whatever way and to any extent they pleased; but that the Government, if they used the same means to secure the election of a gentleman who would support them, they would be guilty of a crime of the highest magnitude. If honorable members opposite would only look at their own conduct, they would find that they took every possible advantage of the telegraph to advance their own position. When the honorable member for the Kennedy, Mr. McDevitt, left to attend to his election, that honorable gentleman and he parted as good friends—in fact, he thought the honorable member was a partisan of the Government; but on his returning, he went about Maryborough with his friend, the honorable member for Wide Bay—they went about from house to house together, spreading the most uncomplimentary and incorrect statements about him, with the view, no doubt, of influencing his election. Now, after the honorable member had treated him in that unfair way—which he himself would not have done in the case of any constituency—he complained that he (the Secretary for Works) had attempted to interfere with his election; because, as he desired to secure the return of another gentleman for the Kennedy, he had sent a telegram to a friend in the district with that view. The gentleman whom he desired to see elected, if he had been returned, might not have done his duty to the constituency so well as the honorable member had. He would now say a few words on the general questions before the country. The Ministry were charged, in the first place, by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, with bringing up an insolent Governor's Speech, and with having done what the honorable member did not hesitate to say was a dishonor and an outrage to the country. Those were the charges that were made by the honorable member against the Ministry before the dissolution. Those were the charges, the honorable member said, to which the Ministry had laid themselves open before the last dissolution. Well, the Ministry appealed to the country after those charges were made, and in the face of those charges, were returned by the country with a large majority—thus in the most unmistakeable manner endorsing the appeal, and ratifying the proceedings of the Government. Now, though the Ministry were in a strong position, they

had no desire to take advantage of it for any purpose whatever but that of enabling them to do that which they believed would be for the benefit of the whole colony. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had informed the Government that the only business they would be allowed to go on with this session was the passing of a measure providing for additional representation. Now, when a measure of that kind was passed, the country would again be appealed to; and he was confident that the present Ministry would again be returned, and that with a stronger majority than they had at present. The Ministry were quite prepared to go on with a measure for additional representation. In fact, all last session the Government endeavoured to bring forward a Bill for that purpose; but it did not suit honorable members opposite to allow them to do so; and yet they charged the Government with having failed in their duty to the country, with having made promises which they had no intention of fulfilling, and with being a do-nothing Government. Now, all that was done with the view of obstructing the Government, and, if possible, succeeding in getting their places. The Government promised to govern the country constitutionally, and, he believed, they had done so; but the blind public could not or would not see it. The Government also promised that they would carry on the business of the country within their means—that they would not spend money beyond what the colony could afford, or which the House had not voted. Now, the Ministry had fulfilled that promise also; and he thought it was worthy of all praise that they had done so; for this was the first year since separation that the expenditure had been kept within the revenue. Now, it had been asserted from the Opposition side of the House that this satisfactory state of things was owing, not to any action on the part of the Government, but to the fact of the Opposition having granted the Government additional taxation. That, he must say, was a most remarkable statement to be made by the professed liberal party. There was a confession—that they had granted additional taxation. It would have been more correct if they had said, inflicted additional taxation. He was very glad to hear the straightforward remarks of the honorable the Premier, as to the intentions of the Government, and as to the course that he would take in respect to increased representation. He hoped the honorable member would be able to carry out his policy on that question, and he believed he would. He was glad also to hear him say that the Government would not be diverted from their purpose to carry out those measures which they believed would be for the good of the country. It was not because the Government were strong that they would do less than they had promised to do. They would not shirk the question of additional representation. That they would leave for

the Opposition to do; and if it had not been for the course of action pursued by the Opposition last session the country would have been more adequately represented now. There was one matter he could not sit down without alluding to, and that was the reiteration of the honorable member for Wide Bay, charging him with laying on the table of the House cooked returns respecting the Gympie Gold Fields,—knowing the returns to be cooked. A similar charge was made by the honorable member on a previous occasion and was fully answered. He would say now, as he said before, with respect to the charge, that it was utterly incorrect. The charge which the honorable member made, and which he had now reiterated, was a gross slander against the character of the gentleman by whom it was prepared. The return was made out strictly in accordance with the instructions of the House; and for his part he did not see it for more than about ten minutes before he laid it on the table. The return, as he had already said, was prepared by the Auditor-General, and it was a gross slander upon a gentleman of such well-known integrity to accuse him of preparing a cooked return to be laid upon the table of the House. The Auditor-General would not be guilty of doing such a thing. He (Mr. Walsh) would repeat that it was a calumny upon the Auditor-General, and a gross slander, to say that he, who was not a member of the House, and could not therefore defend himself, could be guilty of producing a cooked report. If there was any blame, it rested upon the Auditor-General, but he (Mr. Walsh) would say again that it was a vile calumny upon that officer, as a man of honor, for the honorable member for Wide Bay to say that the report was cooked. Let the honorable member move that the Auditor-General be summoned to the bar of that House, and shew how the report was prepared, if that would suit the honorable member, instead of the honorable member coming to attack him (Mr. Walsh) over and over again.

Mr. KING said that he intended to move for a committee, but as it was rather a disagreeable subject for a committee, he did not intend to ask any honorable members to sit upon it, but would leave them to be appointed by ballot. He was perfectly prepared to prove, when the committee was appointed, that the return was cooked.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that he was glad the honorable member had given notice to move for a committee, and he would promise the honorable member his support. At the same time, he did not believe that any return coming from the Auditor-General could be cooked.

Mr. MILES: I have seen plenty of them. The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS believed not. The honorable member was referring to an old report prepared by the Treasurer some years ago, but he did not

believe that in the honorable member's time there had been such a thing issued from the Auditor-General's office as a cooked report. He knew that he (Mr. Walsh) would be the last man to ask the Auditor-General for such a thing, and no one knew better than the honorable member for South Brisbane that it was impossible for Mr. Darvall to lend himself to anything of the kind. He trusted that the acerbities which had been introduced into the debate, and especially by the honorable member for South Brisbane, would not be the rule of the session. He thought there had been enough of that last session, and he did not believe that those honorable members who had commenced those acerbities, and seemed inclined to indulge in them so freely, would in any way advance their cause or promote the interests of the people in effecting those great changes which those honorable members considered were so important to the country. He believed, that instead of making personal attacks upon other honorable members, they should endeavor to bring about good legislation. Both sides of the House agreed that legislation was required—that Acts had to be altered or repealed,—but that would not be done by introducing gross personalities. Now, for instance, it was acknowledged that the squatting element was very great in the House, and he would ask, whether anything would be gained by exasperating those gentlemen and making them believe that they had not a reasonable man opposed to them? Those gentlemen had been called paupers, dead-heads, cormorants, and what not; but if the country was to have legislation, if they were to have railroads, if they were to have reforms, would they be hastened by such a course of proceeding? Would they not rather be retarded by such speeches as that of the honorable member for South Brisbane that night? Ought they not to shew that they wanted to see measures carried out which honorable members opposite stated were necessary, but which never could be carried out while the present course was followed? Conciliate the squatters, was what he advised. Honorable members opposite could not beat down stronger men than they were, by blows. The honorable member for Portitude Valley was well aware of that, for did not the honorable member take the squatters to his arms, when he wanted their assistance, and did he not give them the Pastoral Relief Bill?

MR. LILLEY: No.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member was wiser then, but now he was surrounded by a bad lot. Look at all the good things the honorable gentleman said of the squatters in 1869! He (Mr. Walsh) thought it would be far better for the honorable member's character, and he was quite sure, for the colony at large, if he were to cease from making his constant attacks upon the class of the community he had referred

to, and endeavor to do something in the way of good legislation, it would be much better for his character as a politician.

MR. PRING much regretted to find that the new Parliament which had been called together recently by His Excellency the Governor, was not likely to be productive of that great benefit to the colony which all hoped, and he believed his late Excellency, the Acting-Governor, anticipated, when, to use his own words, he said that an appeal to the constituencies was, in his opinion, the only means of remedying the stagnation of public business which then existed. That was a resolution which he had apparently come to under the advice, as he stated, of his responsible advisers. They found, however, thus early in the session that that anticipation was scarcely likely to be realised, because the appeal made to the country was not really any appeal at all; because the political position of parties remained the same; and because the people of the colony were not represented, and those who were represented by their representatives were not listened to; and because the remonstrances of their representatives were treated with contempt. Therefore it was not likely that their representatives, so long as they knew their duty, would ever submit to be dictated to. Now, how could the people hope to be constitutionally represented when an unconstitutional act was committed by the Acting-Governor, who ought to have known it? Because, if he answered the deputation which waited upon him, as it appeared in writing, then he committed an unconstitutional act, as it was not constitutional for him to act as he did in his place. He (Mr. Pring) was not going to refer to the late Acting-Governor more than in his political character. He maintained now, as he had maintained before, that the position of the Government at the time of the dissolution was one very peculiar, and perhaps there was not another similar case to be quoted. There was a Government unable to carry on the business of the country—professedly so according to the statement of the honorable the Premier. Being unable to do that, there was an adjournment for five months. Now, he would ask, whether it was to the interests of the country that a Government which could not carry on its business should shut up the House for such a long period as five months, merely for the purpose of keeping office? But the honorable the Premier, in the plenitude of his strength, and the obstinacy which was characteristic of him, thought that he could do as he liked with the colony, and that it was which induced him to take the advice of the honorable member for Western Downs—for honorable members knew that it was the advice of that great statesman upon which the honorable the Premier acted. Now what was the position of the Acting-Governor at the time he gave that dissolution? He ought to have

known that it was against the interest of every individual, and most injurious to the colony, to postpone the public business for five months. He (Mr. Pring) certainly looked upon it as being little short of ruinous. Yet there was no escape from it. The Acting-Governor had committed the act, and recorded the deed, and no act of his could recall that hasty adjournment. The Opposition looked aghast at the state of affairs, and they drew up a respectful petition to the Governor asking him not to dissolve Parliament, but to call it together in order that the business of the country might be carried on. If it was correct, as had been stated by the honorable the Premier, that the dissolution was forced upon him by the Acting-Governor, that very act was unconstitutional, as the Governor then thrust himself between the people and the Government. He affirmed that a dissolution procured in such an unconstitutional way could not be expected to produce anything satisfactory, and he looked forward to see the great game played over again, until there was another adjournment, and another dissolution. He would remind the House that the people were not going to act upon the advice of the last honorable speaker, and be conciliatory. But be conciliatory, said the honorable member. Have no legislation, but pass the Estimates and go home. But the representatives of the people would not be doing their duty if they submitted to any such thing, and he therefore agreed with what had been laid down by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and other honorable members, that the Opposition would not permit the business of the House to be proceeded with until that species of legislation which was desired by the people was freely accorded to them. He did not call that a factious Opposition which the majority of the people had declared to be the only policy for the Opposition to follow; for there could be no doubt that the mass of the people of Queensland demanded from honorable members on his side of the House a course which they, as representatives of the people, deemed it right to pursue. Therefore he did not deem it a factious opposition, and he felt bound to adopt such a course himself from reading the reported speech of the honorable the Premier—that the policy of the Government was the same as that of last session. True it was, or, as the honorable member was reported to have said, that—

“He thought it was a good Speech—a remarkably good Speech; a great deal of trouble had been taken with it, and he was quite satisfied that it was a remarkably good Speech.”

Now, it was a good Speech, but it was remarkable in not affording any information to any one, and he was at a loss to know how it was that it cost the honorable the Premier so much trouble. The honorable gentleman, he could

easily understand with “Bohemian,” must have laughed within himself, and thought the Opposition were all very stupid. But he (Mr. Pring) thought that an honorable gentleman who wished to be called a statesman, did not shew much of the statesman when he wrapt up his thoughts in such a way that nobody could understand him. What was the good of the Speech? What was the good of reading that document to the assembled Parliament if nothing could be made out of it? The honorable Premier himself, when he came down to the House threw as much light on the document as the Speech itself shewed. He was not in the House at the time the honorable member made his speech, but he believed he might take the report of it in “Hansard” to be substantially correct, and he thought it was just what the honorable gentleman would say. Now, the first paragraph of that celebrated Speech professed to afford some information which he (Mr. Pring) believed the honorable the Treasurer himself did not possess. He did not mean to cast any slur upon that honorable gentleman as a man of figures, but it was intended to let no one know what was done—and the honorable member had entered into a conspiracy with the Premier—but if it was a fact that the revenue would more than cover the expenditure, he would like to know whether the expenditure covered the Supplementary Estimates; for honorable members must recollect that the Supplementary Estimates for 1871 and 1870 would be pretty considerable, and if the surplus would cover the Supplementary Estimates it must be very considerable also. But, in talking with an honorable member—and premising that the surplus would cover the great expenditure he had mentioned—he was reminded that increased taxation was asked for last session by the present Government, and the Opposition foolishly agreed to it. Everything was taxed—*ad valorem* duties upon everything—except the tax upon flour, which he (Mr. Pring) and others fortunately prevented. And now he had his doubts, when the truth was got out, that the paragraph in the Speech would bear out what was indicated. Then came the paragraph about the dissolution—

“The adjournment of the Legislative Assembly, followed by its dissolution and a general election, have occupied so much time that it is of more than usual importance that you should proceed without delay to the dispatch of the business which will be brought before you.”

Now, his opinion was that they ought to get to business, and should have got to business long ago; but the business of the country had been delayed, so that the honorable the Premier should have that great array of black coats and white waistcoats behind him, which it was quite pleasant to sit and contemplate. It was quite pleasant to look at their calm and serene countenances; in fact, they looked like men who had enjoyed a good dinner. As to the business, it had not bothered them

very much, and he was very much afraid that it would not. Now, the paragraph, part of which he had read, was very curiously worded. After the delay had been mentioned, attention was called in it to the necessity for additional representation. But what had the delay in the meeting of Parliament to do with that? and yet the House had been told by the honorable the Premier that it was a beautiful Speech, a lovely Speech, that he was really quite fond of the Speech. There was no doubt that the reference to new representation should have been in a Speech by itself. But what increased representation were they to have? He saw the honorable member the Premier smile. The honorable member knew what representation he meant to have, and he (Mr. Pring) knew what representation honorable members on his side of the House meant to have. If the honorable the Premier was to speak again, he would tell them to bide their time, but he (Mr. Pring) smelt a rat. He saw the paper on his way down from Roma. The honorable member for Warwick, who was the mover of the Address, let the cat out of the bag, for he said that increased representation must be upon population.

Mr. CLARK said that if the honorable member referred to "Hansard," he would see that he (Mr. Clark) had said that he was not in favor of representation solely based upon population.

Mr. PRING: It was quite enough for the honorable member to say population basis.

Mr. CLARK: I have not seen the Bill.

Mr. PRING did not say that the honorable member had seen the Bill. He was not going to make unguarded statements on the present occasion, as he was arguing, and not making mere assertions. Now, he would tell the House what that increased representation would be. It would be the old Bill, and they all knew what that was. It was thoroughly exposed by the honorable member for East Moreton last session, and was not on a population basis. It would be a bone here and a bone there to the people, whilst the Government and its supporters would keep all the crust and giblets, and when the honorable gentlemen went out they would be returned with three or four of a majority. He had no doubt that the honorable member had such a Bill, but they would see whether the united strength of the squattocracy of Queensland would be able to effect that which they so much desired. He had great faith in a minority, but not so much as in a majority, but certainly not in the majority that he saw in that House—he thought not—as he believed that that majority would dribble away, or something would arise that would send them home. He would express his fervent hope that the first attempt at legislation, would be to obtain proper representation for the people of Queensland. As to the fifth paragraph about water supply—well, there was no doubt that a supply of water was much needed, and

he sincerely hoped that if the Government did anything in that direction, they would get better water than at present, and as good as they could by legislation. In the next paragraph they were informed that two members of the Government went to Melbourne, to be present at a conference, and he had no doubt that the honorable gentlemen enjoyed themselves. They next came to the paragraph about Railway extension, and really that was grand, and he had no doubt that the people outside of the colony, and some of those in it even, would suppose that the honorable the Premier was going to consider the whole subject in a fair and equitable way to the whole country, and as between one district and another. But, if they thought so, they were very much mistaken, for it appeared that they were to have what was called Scott's committee over again. There would not be much gained from it, and if the same members were appointed, why it would only be to consider making a railway in the North. He would mention that if separation was to take place at Dawe's Range, or where the Rockhampton people seemed to desire it should be, all the legislation for a northern railway had better wait.

Mr. FYFE: No, no.

Mr. PRING: The honorable member might say, "No, no"; but he (Mr. Pring) said, Yes, yes. Then, they next came, in the Speech, to the paragraph about a number of Bills which would be re-introduced. Next, again, was a question which materially affected the colony, and that was immigration; and although the honorable member for Maryborough had charged the honorable member for Fortitude Valley and the honorable member for North Brisbane with bringing forward their stock subjects, yet he (Mr. Pring) did not consider that immigration could be viewed in that sense. He considered that the colony was pining and drooping from want of immigration, and he would not hesitate to give his reasons for saying so. Immigration was the only thing, in his opinion, which would now resuscitate the colony; and he maintained that to be a most dangerous doctrine which was laid down by the honorable member for Maryborough, that the colony must wait until it could find the money to introduce a stream of immigration. Then, he would ask, how long must it wait? Did any honorable member in that House think that the revenue would exceed the expenditure?—if so, to what extent? Would it exceed it so much, within the next fifty or even a hundred years, that the colony could save enough out of the revenue to carry on immigration? He said it would not. Then, what, he would ask, was the use of arguing in that way, if the argument was not based upon reason? They must have immigration, at any cost; and the way to have it was by loan, of course. If it was not necessary, and they could do without it, why, then, they need not borrow money

for a useless purpose; but what he maintained should be done was, first, to ascertain if immigration was necessary, and, if necessary, then go in for a loan, and not use that fallacious argument of the honorable member—wait till you have the money. Did anybody think he (Mr. Pring) would wait till he got the money, if he was hungry and wanted a dinner?—no, he would borrow the money, even if he did not repay it. Did the House think the colony wanted immigration? The paragraph in the Speech thought it did not. He was very sorry the Government should have pursued the line of conduct indicated in that paragraph. The honorable the Premier himself voted for the second reading of the Immigration Bill, and, if he (Mr. Pring) recollected rightly, it was never denied by the Government of that day that a sum of money—a large sum—would not be required, to carry out the Act, and if he remembered rightly, a large sum was voted for the purpose of introducing immigrants. Now, the appointments of immigration agents had, he was sorry to say, been very unfortunate, and he attributed to that, to a great extent, the falling off of immigration. Not, he meant, to the gentlemen themselves personally, as he believed that they were strictly honorable men, and did their best for the colony, but it was evident that they were not fitted for the position. The first, Mr. Douglas, had most extraordinary views of his position;—he might have been right, but he (Mr. Pring) was sorry to say that he did not agree with him. The second appointment—that of Mr. Archer, was not a happy one. In the first place, his expressed views of matters in the colony were totally at variance with the position he occupied as Emigration Agent, and he (Mr. Pring) was not sorry to see that he had resigned. At the same time, he had been sorry to see the appointment of a gentleman as his successor, who held an inferior position in the Emigration Department, and from the fact of his salary having been increased, he (Mr. Pring) concluded that the Government did not intend to appoint another Agent-General, and that they did not intend to continue to bring out a large number of immigrants. That part of the Speech was, therefore, highly unsatisfactory to him, and he trusted before the session was over, there would be some discussion on the subject, in order that a steady stream of immigration might be introduced into the colony, which would tend very much to improve it, not only as regarded the promotion of settlement, but also the advancement of the interests of everyone in the community. He now came to the last paragraph, which he might say was intimately connected with immigration—he referred to the Polynesian question—and he was sorry to be obliged to come to the conclusion that Polynesian immigration had seriously interfered with European immigration. He could not help arriving at that conclusion, for after what had been published in the home newspapers—

after the despatches which had been written on the subject of slavery in Queensland, it was almost absurd to suppose that the public mind at home was not imbued with the dread of mixing black with European labor. Therefore, the whole Polynesian question should be immediately considered, and that very carefully. Now, of course, in dealing with the question of Polynesian labor, he was not going to say anything that might which would interfere with any question which would shortly be brought before the Supreme Court of the colony, but merely to refer to the remedy which should be applied to cure what he believed to be a radical disease in the colony. He would say most emphatically that the Polynesian Laborers Act must be repealed. That was the remedy. In the first place, he did not believe that the Polynesians were necessary to the colony for the growth of sugar, and it was of far more importance that the character of the colony should be maintained—that European emigration should be firmly established, than that a few people should make their fortunes by the employment of those islanders. Now, the Act must be repealed if they wished to restore the character of the colony. He knew himself that it was absurd to use the word slavery in connection with the colony of Queensland; but there was not the least doubt that those unfortunate men had in every instance been brought to the colony by fraud, and that he was prepared to prove.

MR. FERRETT: No.

MR. PRING did not care about the honorable member's "No." He repeated that the men were brought by fraud, and he challenged the honorable member to prove the contrary.

MR. FERRETT: No.

MR. PRING would ask, what that word "no" meant, except from ignorant persons? He repeated again that they were brought by fraud, if not by violence; and he would shew how it was that they had been introduced by fraud. The Polynesian Laborers Act of the honorable the Premier was introduced from the very best intention and for the best purpose, and indeed was supposed to be a good Act: and, no doubt, if it had been carried out in its integrity, it would have been a good Act; but it had been rendered useless. The Act was based upon instructions, sent out to the colony by the Secretary of State, for the introduction of Coolies; and it was more for the purpose of providing for the Polynesians on their arrival than to provide for their introduction. But the Act unintentionally afforded encouragement to those who chose to speculate in human flesh. Did any honorable member in that House, or anyone in the colony, believe that any Polynesian ever quitted the South Sea Islands of his own free will? Not one. And if he did not, how did he get to the colony except by fraud? The vessels were sent down nominally to

bring up any Polynesians who might wish to come to Queensland; but he ventured to say that there never yet was a Polynesian who wished to come, if the true facts were placed before him; and therefore he was brought by fraud, if the honorable member for West Moreton knew what that meant. If the honorable member thought he (Mr. Pring) meant legal fraud, he made a mistake: but there was such a thing as moral fraud; and if the honorable member took the trouble to study the law, he would soon know the difference. The men who went in vessels to get the Polynesians did not go alone to savage islands, or they would soon meet the fate of poor Bishop Patteson. But no; they went first to a friendly island, and obtained there a boat's crew and an interpreter; then up sail, and away they went. The boat's crew was landed when they came to an island where they thought they could procure natives, and the next business was to consult the chief, who made his bargain with them. He (Mr. Pring) wondered whether the honorable member for West Moreton knew what that bargain was. He would tell him. Sometimes it was a tomahawk and sometimes a tomahawk and a knife, and perhaps a few beads, as a present for the chief when he sold his men—of course reserving a few to eat. The men were then taken to the ship, put into the hold till out of sight of land, and now and then allowed to have a little fresh air and exercise on deck. The same thing went on over and over again until the vessel was loaded. They then returned to where the boat's crew belonged and landed them and the interpreter. Away the vessel went, the laborers in the mean time never having signed any agreement, or if they had, one they could not understand, and the Government agent being as much use on board as the lamp on the table of that House. The tomahawk and the knife were the purchase money. Now he would ask the honorable member for West Moreton whether that was the proper system for a free country? When the Islanders arrived in the colony, they were no doubt well treated; but he maintained that it was the duty of all, whether English, or Irish, or Scotch, to prevent laborers being introduced in the manner he had described; he would leave out the violence for the present. If the Polynesian wished to come to the colony of his own free will, he could come without any Act, and if he did not choose to come, why should he be forced? Let the Act be repealed and let Polynesians come in the same way as Chinamen, or Germans, or anybody else. If they could not come in that way, then he said, in God's name, don't let them come at all. He again said that if they wanted to wipe off the stigma now resting on the colony, they must repeal the Act. He did not wish to be thought charging the Government with acts of omission or commission in reference to the Act; and he sincerely hoped that the

repeal of the Act was their intention, as he did not suppose they ever intended to carry on a system which was not believed in by the people of the colony. He trusted that the remarks he had made that evening, which were strictly true—for he was speaking advisedly, being aware of them—would have the effect of making the Government repeal the Act, and he, for one, would thank them for it. He had little more to say that evening, but the debate had taken a long time and he was unwilling, as a representative of a large constituency, to have given a silent vote. He regretted very much that there should have been any personalities indulged in; but it must be patent to the public that it was almost impossible, in a state of political excitement, where the people were ranged against a class, to refrain from using strong language. Although he had heard honorable members on his side of the House charged with using such language, yet he must say that he had heard some, since he had been in the House, used on the other side also, by the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay. He thought the remarks he had made would sufficiently exonerate him from any wish to become a factious oppositionist. That he was an oppositionist he confessed, but he thought that if the Government had taken a lesson from last session and moderated their tone, the present session would have passed very harmoniously. He could scarcely think that the honorable the Premier had been induced to adopt his present policy by any increased majority. The honorable member might, perhaps, think honestly that he was consulting the interests of the colony by following the policy laid down by himself, and which was supported by the majority; but he (Mr. Pring) craved leave to observe that if the honorable member did believe in that policy, that belief was induced by the bias of his own mind, that imperceptibly led him to a wrong conclusion as to what ought to be done in the management of the affairs of the country. They all knew how much bias would interfere with every man, no matter his position in life; it influenced the statesman and the soldier, and the man of business—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: And the lawyer.

MR. PRING: Yes, and the lawyer. He knew, himself, that in his profession he was always influenced—in fact, he looked at one side always—that of his client, and did not care to look at the other; but a lawyer was in a very different position from a statesman at the head of a Government, who should be free from bias. He (Mr. Pring) rather imagined that the honorable member was wedded to the old theory and notion that the squatters were absolutely necessary to the existence of the colony. But honorable members knew that times had greatly altered. Some fifteen or sixteen years ago, no doubt, the squatters were necessary, as if it was not

for them, who spent a large amount of capital on the colony, the colony would not have prospered perhaps as it had done. But he did not see why, when the time came, the country should not produce another class of men, although he could not see that the policy now being adopted would have that result; for it appeared to him that what the people really wanted they were not allowed to have, because a powerful class was now ranged against them—a class brought into power under most extraordinary circumstances—likely to be continued in power for a short space of time, but very unlikely ever to be returned into power again. That the honorable members opposite must be aware of; and, he thought that, if they acted prudently, and the Government was wise, they would do themselves what the honorable member for Maryborough had recommended the Opposition to do—namely, to be conciliatory. Who was, he would ask, to be conciliatory? Not the squatters, not the gentlemen who had formed themselves into a party, but the outraged people. He certainly must say that he was amused to hear the honorable member for Maryborough giving that advice, but he was not at all astonished.

Mr. MILES was understood to say that, though a member of that squatting interest which had been so much descanted upon during the debate on the Address, he was not one to be included in the class that was led by the honorable member at the head of the Government. He assured the House that the honorable member for South Brisbane had risen one hundred per cent. in his estimation, by the manly statement he had made. He had thought that the honorable member was working into the hands of that dominant class, and he was proud to find that he had been mistaken. When the Minister for Works rose, he thought that that honorable gentleman was going to state to the honorable member for South Brisbane, that he had some serious charge to bring against him; but after all had been said and done, it came to this—That the latter offered to resign his seat if he got the control of the business of the paper under some special arrangement; and it was no charge at all. If the honorable member for South Brisbane found that his private affairs urged him to give up his seat in the House, surely there was nothing dishonorable in that. The Minister for Works had made a very lame charge indeed. It was not often that he (Mr. Miles) was found agreeing with the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government; but on the present occasion he could agree with him in his statement, that the Governor's Speech was a very good Speech, and he was willing to agree with him that the Speech had taken a long time to prepare; because, if one wanted to act with deceit, it was necessary to take trouble to work up and cover what it was not wished to shew. He thoroughly concurred in the

Premier's remarks, that he had given a great deal of time to the Speech, as a great deal was required in trying to deceive. When the honorable gentleman adjourned the House for five months, he told them that all the country required was administration, and the Speech was in exact accordance with that statement. But he (Mr. Miles) was not deceived, for all the Premier's trouble; because, long since, he was aware what the document would be. In fact, he had recommended the honorable gentleman, many months ago, to close the House altogether until December, and only to call the Parliament together when there was just sufficient time to pass the Estimates for the ensuing year. The honorable gentleman might as well have taken his advice literally. As it was, he had acted up to it in spirit, and the Speech was in exact accordance with the professions of the Government. As one following the same occupation as nearly all the Government and their supporters, he would venture to give them a little advice—that they should take warning in time. They could not be so blind as not to be cognisant of what had taken place in the other colonies. They must see that from their opposition to the great bulk of the people, the squatters of Victoria had been hounded and driven out of the colony, across the Murray—as a drover stimulated his cattle with a stock-whip. As a squatter, he should be sorry to see that class treated injuriously. He was a *bona fide* squatter, and had nothing to do with mortgagees, who were the curse, and would be the ruin, of this colony. Queensland, the people felt, was ruled by foreign mortgagees, who held two-thirds of the lands of the colony. Those mortgagees and their representatives here knew perfectly well that if they encouraged immigration, that meant settlement; and settlement meant, further, the disgorging of their large possessions and the giving up of the territory they held. Let honorable members who sat behind the Government take warning by what had occurred elsewhere; let the Government and their supporters make just and timely concessions to the wishes of the people. He assured them that there was not an honorable member of the Opposition who wished to do an act of violence to them, or to any class of the community; if there was, he would not sit beside them. He always found that when the *bona fide* squatter, the man who worked with his own means, required any assistance or encouragement, it was sure to be obtained on the Opposition side of the House. From experience, he knew that honorable members on the Government side had not the slightest intention to give way one iota to the popular wish. But, if they did not give way, the time was not far distant when they would regret the course they were following. In 1868 there was a squatting Government, who, professing a desire for increased representation, had a census taken; but nothing further was done.

The same state of things was repeated now. Increased representation was desired more than ever. A census was taken, and 1872 was approaching without anything being done to give increased representation, any more than there was after the previous census. Yet the Government must go to the expense of taking an account of the population simply for that, without the slightest intention of giving increased representation to the colony, unless they could carve and cut the map to make things suit themselves. If the House permitted the Government to do that, they would not do justice to the great bulk of the people. Thirteen members of the Opposition represented 75,000 of the population; and the same number of members on the Ministerial side of the House, including the Ministers themselves, and the members for their most populous districts, represented 37,000; thus giving the Opposition a majority of 38,000. He was utterly ashamed of such a state of things. Referring to the late dissolution and the general election, he denied that the latter was an appeal to the country. It was an appeal to bribery and corruption; while the former was an usurpation of the Government of the country. When the late Assembly were about to adjourn, the Colonial Secretary, he well remembered, warned certain honorable members that they would never come back. He laughed at the honorable gentleman, and perfectly enjoyed it. But the mortgagees hounded him like a native dog during that election, and they very nearly had his seat. The honorable gentleman sent his Attorney-General from Brisbane, employing other legal gentlemen to do his work meantime, to influence the electors. That, he (Mr. Miles) called honest government! However, he could assure the Government that a very large number of squatters voted for him, in spite of the political foreign mortgagee class. They were the curse of the country, and anything that he could do to wipe them out he would do, so satisfied was he on that point. He had been opposed by them because he had introduced a measure to Parliament to pay the wages of the shepherds and others employed on their stations; but he believed that measure redounded to his credit, and to the credit of all who supported it. Wherever he went through the country, he was received with pleasure on account of it. He was proud of it; for although it had been taken out of his hands it became law. A threat had been made to repeal it; but he trusted that there was sufficient firmness in the House not to allow that. Going to the country, the Ministry had mustered all their forces from every point of the compass. Wherever they could pick up a vote, they had done it. But he had the satisfaction of knowing that their contest with him had cost their party £3,000. Every vote recorded had cost them, on an average, £25! He had the satisfaction, at all events, of knowing that they had had to

disgorge some of their ill-gotten gains, which they had dragged out of the country. The honorable member for Warrego had gone about offering bribes to the electors. He promised a ball to the electors wherever he went, and he had given one at Charleville. He (Mr. Miles) had that high opinion of the honorable member's integrity, that he thought such things could not have been done by him, knowing that he was thereby committing an act of bribery—that he left himself open to a prosecution for bribery and corruption; but he warned him not to play with him again, in that way; for if he ever dropped upon him, again, he would answer for it, the honorable member would not get out of his clutches. The honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, coupling him with the honorable member for Rockhampton, had said his election was due to his personal popularity; that if the electors of Maranoa knew their member was going to oppose the Government, he (Mr. Miles) would not have been returned. Well, he did not think anyone in the House would charge him with being deceitful. He always spoke plainly; and honorable members knew that he had said, point-blank, that he was opposed to the present Ministry, or to any class Government. There was another matter he wished to say a word or two about. The Government were horrified about the remarks which the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley had made in reference to the late Acting-Governor. He thoroughly concurred in every word said by him; and everyone would have felt disappointed if the honorable gentleman had not attended to that case. It was a well-known fact. He had no wish, indeed he had no heart, to rake up unpleasant matters; but he had a public duty to perform to his constituents, who had sent him to the House to look after their interests. If there was a public functionary who had done wrong to their interests, they expected him to speak out. And speak out he would. He did not agree with honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House, and so he sat with the Opposition. He cared for nobody. It was a public rumor that the Acting-Governor was in pecuniary difficulties, and that the Government assisted him on certain conditions: the Government had assisted him, and they could not deny it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was not true.

MR. MILES: It was admitted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was the first time he had heard of it.

MR. MILES: Well, he could assure the honorable gentleman that if he paid to shut up everyone's mouth who talked about it, it would cost a great deal of money. A telegram in the last news from England was to the effect that His Excellency the Governor would shortly be removed hence to New South Wales. What would be the effect? Was Queensland to have a bankrupt Acting-Governor again cast upon the colony to

trample upon the liberties of the people? He said, No!—and he held that the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had a perfect right to speak out plainly on that subject. He had no wish to go out of his way to speak harshly of anyone, but if persons would force themselves into a position for which they were unsuitable, they must take the consequences; and he said that no man in the position of the late Acting-Governor had a right to take upon himself the duties of the representative of the Queen. Therefore, he hoped he should not see that honorable gentleman in that position again, unless he could take it with independence befitting it. There was another subject to which he would refer, and while upon it he would take a paragraph or two from the speeches of John Bright, which he thought would apply remarkably to the circumstances under discussion:—

“My own honest opinion is that the course which has been pursued by the Government is one of true Conservatism. I think nothing can be less Conservative than that Parliament should have these questions of representation, questions affecting the basis of power, discussed in this House during every session, and discussed throughout the country during every Parliamentary recess. There were some striking things said in this House on the 1st of March in the year 1859, when two right honorable gentlemen (Mr. Henley and Mr. Walpole) who sit opposite withdrew from the Government of Lord Derby and explained to the House the grounds of that withdrawal. The Member for Oxfordshire made use of these observations:—‘If one thing can be more destructive to our Constitution than another it will be to have a Reform Bill every few years; and that will be the case if you cannot settle your system upon such grounds that you can reasonably hope that it will stand, I do not say for a long time—finality is out of the question—but for a decent number of years. If you cannot do that, you will lay the foundation for revolution.’ The foundation for revolution in almost every country, unless history lies dreadfully, has been laid by those who have pretended to be specially Conservative.”

Now, the Government or their supporters ignored that, and denied the appeal of the people. But he warned them, again, that there was a point of endurance that it would be folly to go beyond! The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, in the course he was pursuing, refusing to give the country fair representation, was rushing obstinately to an end that would bring him to sorrow. Depend upon it, the people would not always submit tamely to gross acts of injustice. He did think that the inhabitants of this colony had been very forbearing to the class that sat on the Ministerial side of the House. Much of the interior of the country was fenced in; but not only that, the highways were fenced in. He did not mention this as a grievance, but only to shew the forbearance of the people, who allowed a class to shut up the thorough-

fares of the country. He had had, himself, when travelling, to get out of his conveyance to open five gates within fifteen miles. He thought it was monstrous; and he meant to take some opportunity to compel the parties who closed the public thoroughfares and highways to keep porters at their gates to open them for those on the roads. It was, he thought, only just that, if they wished to close up the country, they should have somebody to open and close their gates, to leave the thoroughfares of the country passable. He regretted exceedingly that it was his duty to bring a subject before the House—which he proposed to do in a more substantial manner than the honorable member for North Brisbane, Dr. O’Doherty—that, to him seemed to require explanation, before the debate was concluded;—he alluded to the conduct of the honorable member at the head of the Government at Rockhampton. He had been hopeful that the Colonial Treasurer, perhaps, would have brought it about. He meant, at any rate, to give the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government the opportunity to reply; he would move an amendment on the Address, so as to give him the opportunity of explaining to the House that the newspapers had not stated, perhaps, as they did not always state, exactly the truth, and to shew that he had been slandered or vilified by the local press. He did not think he would be doing justice to himself, or the House, to allow the matter to go without having some explanation from the honorable gentleman. He had thought that the Secretary for Works, when he was addressing the House, might have given some explanation on behalf of his colleague and chief; or, as he had said, that the Treasurer would have brought it about. Because, he knew that the Treasurer was a man of very high moral character; and he thought, after what had been done by him formerly, he would have given some reason to the House for the conduct of the Premier. As that had not been done, he felt bound, therefore, to put matters in such a shape that the Colonial Secretary should himself have the opportunity to persuade the House that he had been treated unjustly. He had the report of the honorable gentleman’s speech and proceedings at Rockhampton before him; but it was not likely he should read it to the House. All he could say was, that if it was correct, he looked upon the conduct of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government as most damning to the colony.

Mr. GROOM: What was the name of the paper?

Mr. MILES: A supplement to the *North-ern Argus*, a Rockhampton paper. He moved—

That the question be amended by the addition thereto of the following words, to stand as a fifth paragraph, viz.:—We are of opinion that the public misconduct of the Premier, Mr. Palmer, at

Rockhampton, renders him unfit to hold his present position as your Excellency's adviser.

In moving this, he should be permitted to leave it to the honorable gentleman's explanation, in case he did explain, whether or not he would subsequently withdraw the amendment. It was only fair to give the Premier the opportunity to contradict the violent representations of himself. He was really inclined to think—at least, he hoped—that the report was incorrect. From what he knew of the Treasurer, if that honorable gentleman thought that the Premier had conducted himself in the way reported, he would not be sitting where he was; at least if he (Mr. Miles) was to judge by the course taken by the Treasurer on a former occasion, when he moved a vote of want of confidence in the Government that had previously sat in the House, and commented very severely upon the private character of the Premier. He was very sorry, but the present case was more blameable than that, because the conduct of the Premier now complained of, if correctly reported, was in public; and if that conduct was as reported in the paper in his hand, it could not be too strongly condemned, and the House would not be justified in tolerating it. If the honorable gentleman explained it away, he should be very glad to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he desired to make a few remarks in answer to the honorable member who just sat down. He should not speak of the duties or the rights of mortgagees, because they were quite beyond the honorable member's understanding. He presumed the honorable member was never in the position of a mortgagee—that he never foreclosed a mortgage under circumstances of any kind?

Mr. MILES: Oftentimes.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Well, that was enough. Upon his election, which the honorable member had spoken so velubly about, and connected with which he had brought so many charges against the squatters, or foreign mortgagees, he asserted that the banks and merchants had advanced £3,000—that was, the money was advanced to ensure his defeat. He (Mr. Morehead) stigmatized that statement as utterly untrue; it was an unmitigated falsehood; and he challenged the honorable member, whether he made the statement from his own knowledge or other information, to prove it.

Mr. MILES explained that he simply stated he had heard so.

Mr. MOREHEAD denied it, now, in the House.

Mr. GROOM rose to a point of order, and objected that the charge of "unmitigated falsehood" was unparliamentary and disorderly.

The SPEAKER: It was decidedly out of order.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, if the statement was made, it was utterly untrue.

The SPEAKER had understood that the statement had been made in the House.

Mr. MILES: He had stated that he heard so; he could not state it as a fact.

Mr. KING called for the Speaker's ruling, because he understood the honorable member for Warrego to charge the honorable member for Maranoa with uttering an unmitigated falsehood outside the House, and he wanted to know if such language, or such a charge, could be made in the House?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The honorable member for Wide Bay misunderstood the Speaker, who did not say that an honorable member could say inside the House that a statement made by another outside the House was untrue. The Speaker in his ruling had specially referred to what took place in the House.

Mr. KING was proceeding to address the House in explanation; when—

The SPEAKER said the honorable member for Wide Bay was making a supposititious case. He was dealing with the case before the House, and he had ruled that the language was out of order.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Further, the honorable member for Maranoa had stigmatised ninety-six of his constituents as having been bribed at a cost of £25 a-head. Well, he (Mr. Morehead) should not like to represent a constituency of which nearly one-half of the electors were bribeable; and he did not think the honorable member for Maranoa had complimented his constituents. The honorable member had made the statement that the squatters were not producers, or that they did not benefit the country in any way.

Mr. MILES: No, no.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Well, the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, made a statement the other night to the effect that certain exports of squatting produce had fallen off a-quarter of a million sterling since 1867. He did not tell the House, however, that the total exports had increased. If he would take the statistics of the colony, he would find very good figures in proof of that. The exports of squatting produce coastwise were valued at £1,322,954; borderwise, £527,097; total, £1,850,051. He (Mr. Morehead) found that the value of gold exported last year was £489,539; copper was exported to the value of £64,439; and the total exports produced by other industries of the colony was £129,603. Those were from public returns, and they did not shew that the squatting interest was not progressing. He quite agreed with the Premier that the Speech was a very good Speech, for nothing had been said against it. No honorable member who had spoken had tried to deal with it. He thought the honorable gentleman could hardly have dealt with the House in any other way than he had done. He had gone to the country, and he came back with a majority, and he could not be expected fairly to deviate from his policy as long as he

was supported by that majority. As long as the honorable gentleman carried out the liberal policy that was set forth in the Speech, he would support him :—

“He would be glad to see it provided, by any measure that might in future be brought before the House for the amendment of the present Act, that land for grazing purposes should merely be leased, and that only for other purposes it should be sold, but in much smaller blocks than could be obtained at present.”

He (Mr. Morehead) quite endorsed that. Yet he and other honorable members had been styled gorging cormorants, who wished to keep all the land in their own hands. He assured the Opposition that there was no intention on the part of the squatters to keep the lands from the people, whenever the people wanted them. There was an intention on their part to keep men from the other colonies coming on to their runs and dispossessing them.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition side of the House : Hear, hear.

Mr. MOREHEAD : If, as had been argued by the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, the squatting interest was stagnant, it ought to be fostered, not crushed. If the Opposition could shew the House any other occupation that would take the place of grazing, they should do so; but until they could, the squatters were perfectly justified in keeping the lands. A class cry had been raised, not on the Government side of the House, but by the Opposition; and he could not say why it was raised. He could not see why one interest should not work with another; and he could not see why the squatters should be necessarily antagonistic to other interests. He did not think they ever had been. Another thing he had to speak about was this :—It was surely not fair, between man and man, and not more between party and party, to condemn a Ministry unheard; to say that the Re-distribution Bill was unconditionally bad, and so on. Would it not be better to see the Bill, rather than condemn it unseen? He would not detain the House longer, except to say that he thought the lines of new members had not been cast in pleasant places. Before they spoke, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley complimented them on their intelligence. He (Mr. Morehead) did not think, at any rate, that the old members of the House shewed the young ones a good example in their want of moderation.

Mr. LILLEY explained that his observation was not applied to the young members.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY observed that there was an understanding, on the last night the House met, that the debate should terminate this night. That, of course, implied that no other matters were to be imported into the debate on the Address. The honorable member for Maranoa, who appeared to have been engaged to do the dirty work of his

leader, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley—

Mr. LILLEY rose to order.

Mr. MILLES asked his honorable friend to give way, and allow him to speak. He took the responsibility of the step of moving the amendment entirely on himself.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : As the honorable member professed to follow a leader, his duty was not to vitiate the promise made by that leader, that the debate should terminate to-night, and he should not have introduced a fresh motion for debate. Now, he had been charged with, really he did not know what, by the honorable member, but, he presumed, something very disgraceful and discreditable. At any proper time, he should be quite prepared—he was not the least afraid, nor was he to be deterred by the honorable member or any other honorable member—to defend himself before the country, and to meet any charge, if only the truth were spoken. But let it be the truth. That was all he asked. He did not know what crime he had been charged with. He had heard that a most scurrilous production had appeared in one of the newspapers, here, the particular one which was said to be edited by a gentleman on the Opposition benches; but he could not say that he ever saw it. He could safely say that he never did see it. He had been informed that it contained a most scurrilous account of him; that it represented him as having been in a state of drunkenness, and using a variety of indecent remarks, which he never could have used, at a public meeting at Rockhampton. Now, he would simply state to the House the source from which that telegram emanated; and he would leave them and the country to judge as to the truth of it. In the late election for Port Curtis, he was opposed by a gentleman—he supposed he must call him—who was absolutely ashamed of his own father's name, and who was supported by another gentleman—he must call him, he supposed—the editor of the paper, whose name he really did not know, for he had figured under two, at least, since he (the Colonial Secretary) was first acquainted with him, for which that gentleman might have very good reasons. That opposition was raised by a telegram—he believed he was perfectly correct in what he said—sent by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, to the candidate at Rockhampton, promising him that, in the event of his contesting the election with the Colonial Secretary, and being defeated, he (Mr. Lilley) would provide him with a seat in the Upper House. He had no hesitation in saying that that was the bribe which induced the Opposition candidate to contest the constituency of Port Curtis with him—with what success every one knew! With all the venom, all the malice, all the lies, he could invent about him, that candidate polled fifteen votes. He believed the people of the district were the best judges of what he

(the Colonial Secretary) was, and they had backed him by a majority of one hundred and seventy-six votes to fifteen, thus endorsing their opinion, often expressed, that he possessed their confidence; and by their votes, he sat in the House as the representative of that district. With respect to his conduct at the Rockhampton meeting, he had before confessed, he would hardly say with shame, but with contrition, and he confessed again, that his conduct was not exactly what he should like it to have been. He had taken more brandy and water than agreed with him; but he had not taken one drop more than he had often taken, and hoped to take again, and hoped to speak under in the House; but he confessed that, between that and the excitement—and most from the excitement—caused in the meeting by eight hundred human beings, he supposed he must call them, who met him with opposition on the platform, with howlings, with howls—

Mr. FIFE: No, no!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps the honorable member would allow him to proceed? He never was accustomed to such treatment; he got excited by it, and it was too much for him; but now he was "entered" to it, as was said of sporting dogs, and he promised the House it would never cause him to forget himself again. He was over-excited by it, and he did tell the meeting what he thought of their conduct and of them; he told them that he did not care a curse for them; but that he made use of the language imputed to him by the *Argus* was a downright lie, and in this he would be borne out by those assembled, as indeed he was. He did more. When they would not hear him, he jumped down amongst them and dared them to touch him. His Irish blood was up, and he was ready for a fight. Nobody did touch him—in fact, the people hoisted him on their shoulders and cheered him. He confessed it at once—he was over-excited, but more by the howls of the people, there, than by anything he had taken to drink. That the people did not think much worse of him was sufficiently proved by the fact that, on next day, one of the largest assemblies ever met in Rockhampton patiently heard him address them, and received him with cheers. He did not know what more he had to reply to. He had stated at Rockhampton all he had now said. If the honorable member for Maranoa sought to humiliate him and to drag a confession out of him, he had gained his object. He only wished the honorable member's hands were as clean as he seemed to wish to make others; if they were, he congratulated him. He was not going to appeal to the courts of the colony. He had been asked, over and over again, to enter an action against that notoriously blackguard rag; but if his character during thirty years of the past, and for the future, was not sufficient to enable him to live down that attack, he was not fit to be in the House.

Mr. GROOM said he for one must pronounce his opinion upon what he had just heard from the honorable the Colonial Secretary. It was the first time he had heard anything from him, although the honorable gentleman said he had stated something before. He must say he was extremely gratified, as a member of the Opposition, and one who did believe the representations the honorable gentleman had referred to, at the exceedingly emphatic contradiction he had given them. The paper referred to was industriously circulated in his district. One was addressed to himself, and his conviction was, that the charges against the honorable gentleman were literally true; and he thought he was justified in saying that nine-tenths of the people on the Darling Downs believed it to be true. So far from being angry with the honorable member for Maranoa, the Colonial Secretary ought to be glad and thankful to him for giving him the opportunity to deny the charge made against him, that he had used such language as almost raised a blush of shame to read. It would not be creditable to the country that such a report should have remained uncontradicted. He trusted that the honorable member for Maranoa would now withdraw his amendment. He desired, now, to offer an observation or two in respect of something that had been said by the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, whilst he was absent from the House. The honorable gentleman had read a letter from Dr. Armstrong, in which certain statements, reported to have been made by him (Mr. Groom) in the House, were contradicted. He made it a rule never to read the newspaper reports of the speeches that he delivered in the House; but his attention having been called to the report in the *Courier*, he found that it was inaccurate. He never stated that "two" Polynesians had died at Westbrook; but that "one" had died at the station, and that another was lying on the side of his bed seriously ill, and that when spoken to about his illness, he pointed to his chest and side, to shew where he was ill. Dr. Armstrong was telegraphed for, and had the man removed. He thought he was right in saying that the treatment the man had received was not with the concurrence of Mr. Beit, the owner of the station. That gentleman had given orders that the Polynesians should be treated rather kindly; but the superintendent of the station treated them rather unkindly. Mr. Beit, for some reason which he (Mr. Groom) did not know, and which that gentleman would not explain, although written to by the Chairman of the Hospital Committee, would not subscribe to the Hospital; and his was the only station on the Downs that did not subscribe to that institution. There was a hydropathic doctor on the station, who treated the people there. From the actual observations he had made in the House, he did not think the honorable member for Western Downs would have descended to cast such imputations upon another as he

had made upon him (Mr. Groom) in the course of his remarks, this evening. He now stated that the days of drunkenness and debauchery on the part of the shearers engaged on stations were passed away. The men were, as a rule, married and frugal; and when the shearing was over, they took their cheques home to their wives, or put them in the Savings Bank. He had heard from Mr. Perkins, who had purchased barley to the value of about £4,000 from the farmers of the district—the very men who went to the shearing on the honorable gentleman's (Mr. Ramsay's) station—that about £3,000 had been deposited in the local Savings Bank. He trusted that there was no honorable member of the House who was anxious to get a living out of the drunkenness, and debauchery, and folly of his fellow men. He did not wish it, and it was most unfair of the honorable member for Western Downs to have made such remarks as had fallen from him to that effect.

Mr. KING, in answer to the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, said he was not at all certain that the honorable gentleman, in criticising his speech, had taken into consideration the whole of the additional taxation which was created by the passing of the new tariff. There were several items, not merely the increased *ad valorem*, but a number of specific duties added, which afforded only another reason why he could not tell that there was any increase of revenue, irrespective of the increased duties, between the present time and the date of their passing, as compared with any previous period. He must, for his own part, confess that if there was one subject more confusing than another, it was the quarterly returns of revenue published by the Colonial Treasurer;—what with land orders of one description or another, worked from one side to the other of the account—cotton bonus land orders, transferable land orders, and non-transferable land orders—it was impossible to get at a clear understanding of them at all; and he should be very much surprised if, at the end of the year, there should be £50,000 cash over and above the total expenditure. The honorable gentleman (Mr. Ramsay) had also criticised a statement which he had made with reference to Mr. Taylor's appointment to the Legislative Council; and he thought his remarks on that case were very much beside the question. Because Mr. Taylor was not a candidate at the last election, his appointment was justified. That gentleman was a candidate eighteen months ago, and was then defeated. Now he (Mr. King) contended that if, in the first place, it would have been improper to nominate Mr. Taylor to the Upper House only six months ago, it was most certainly equally improper, in the second place, to nominate him who was a defeated candidate eighteen months ago. Another observation which he had made, and

which had been commented upon, was as to the refusal, or the neglect of the Government to nominate any members of the Council representing the northern districts of the colony; which should have been done if that House had any pretensions to represent the interests of the colony at all.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government always desired that the Council should. Seats had been offered to three northern gentlemen, and refused; and he believed that if they were offered to thirty, they would be refused.

Mr. KING: The honorable the Secretary for Lands had laid some papers on the table which he imagined referred to the case which he (Mr. King) had spoken about; but they did not, at all. He supposed they would all be brought up, some time, and that there would be a debate upon them. He thought it would be impossible for the honorable member for Western Downs, or any other honorable member, to take a tracing of the land and justify the subdivision of runs in the Wide Bay district. The honorable member had also accused him of making an unfounded assertion in saying that the number of the population of the colony represented by honorable members on the Opposition, as compared with the number represented by honorable members on the Government side of the House, was as one-third to two-thirds. But the compilation of the census was not yet completed, and therefore it could not yet be known what was the number of the population. Any estimate, therefore, could only be given as being an approximation. There was not, however, very much difference between the proportion stated by him and that stated by the honorable member himself. The honorable member who stated that the proportion was as five to seven, was very much out of his estimate. It had also been made a subject of complaint that the private affairs of Sir Maurice O'Connell had been referred to; but he maintained that the affairs of every public man might be referred to in that House, if there was any justifiable reason for doing so. Now, it was a well known fact that honorable members on the Government side of the House on every occasion they had an opportunity, referred to the private affairs of honorable members on the Opposition, asserting that not only did they not represent the country, but that they were a set of loafers. Such was an indication of the nature of some of the speeches delivered against them. A gentleman who was present at the Ministerial banquet that was held at Ipswich, stated at the banquet, not in the House, that if the Ministerial candidate for the Maranoa were returned, he would give the electors a ball, and that he was a gentleman of means, and could at any moment discount a bill for some large amount. But it seemed never to have struck the mind of that gentleman that there were members who sat on the Opposition side of the House, who could do the same thing. It had been a constant

theme of honorable members on the Government side of the House, to refer to the private affairs of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. It might be considered to have been in bad taste for the honorable member for Fortitude Valley to refer to the private affairs of Sir Maurice O'Connell, but there was not an honorable member on the Government side of the House could throw a stone at the honorable member, or at any other honorable member on the Opposition side of the House for doing so, for they and their supporters invariably, during the late elections, referred in their speeches to the private affairs of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. Now, he hoped that honorable members of the Opposition would not have so many taunts thrown at them as to their affairs this session as they had last session. In particular, he hoped he would not have the honorable gentleman at the head of the Ministry, the honorable member for Port Curtis, referring to his (Mr. King's) private affairs so much as he did last session. As to the conduct which had been charged against the honorable member for Port Curtis, there was no doubt that whatever his conduct may have been, he would continue to receive the support of those honorable members who now sat on the Government side of the House, so long as he continued to bring forward measures calculated to support their private interests. The crime or offence of which the honorable member for Port Curtis had been accused, was not, in his opinion, of such great magnitude that he would be disposed to make much of it. There might be some offences that did not trench on a man's character so as to affect him as a man of moral truth, and the offence charged against the honorable member might be one of those. It had been admitted by the honorable member himself, that he was slightly intoxicated at Rockhampton on the occasion which had been referred to, and that he made use of strong language towards those electors who were offensive to him. Now, though the honorable member, according to his own statement, might have had more brandy and water than he ought to have had when he was to appear before a crowded political meeting, it did not follow that such a circumstance would affect his character for truthfulness. For his own part, he had the highest opinion for the honorable member; and a higher respect for him than he had for some of his colleagues and supporters, who perhaps had never been drunk yet, and probably never would be.

The Hon. R. PAINE remarked, that it fell to his lot when this question was previously before the House to ask that its further consideration might be postponed, as it would not be possible for either himself or the honorable member for Fortitude Valley to be present if it were taken up on the next sitting day. He would not have been doing his duty if he did not do what he could to attend to

the affairs of his client; and from what he had heard to-night he was confirmed in his opinion that he was right; for the trial, in which the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was the plaintiff, had been twice referred to in the course of the debate to-night. The trial, as honorable members were no doubt aware, was one for alleged libel, against which the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had thought fit to defend himself, as the libel was one which charged him—a gentleman holding a high position, who had held the highest position that anyone in the colony could hold next to that of the Governor—it charged him with fraud, and with fraud as a barrister. Now, if the honorable member had not taken the course he had done to clear his character, he could not have continued to hold the high position he did, or to have continued to deserve the high opinion that was entertained of him by his brethren at the bar.

Mr. MACDEVITT said, the honorable the Secretary for Public Works and Mines had complained that he had endeavored to influence the election for Maryborough as against him; but, at the same time, the honorable member informed the House that he had, by telegraph, endeavored to influence the election for the Kennedy, though he believed that he (Mr. MacDevitt) was a partisan of the Ministry. Now, he could inform the honorable member that at home a private member was at liberty to use what influence he might possess over a constituency in favor of the candidate belonging to his own party, but it was held to be a high offence for any Minister of the Crown to interfere with elections. That was what he had referred to, and that was the course which the honorable the Minister for Public Works and Mines took when he went on his election tour. Now, when any gentleman in his position takes such a course, he falls into the snares of his own setting. The honorable member for the Western Downs, referring to the proportions of the population represented by either side of the House, maintained, that though the Opposition might represent a larger number of the electors of the colony, the Ministry, having a majority of members on their side, were entitled to exercise a preponderance of power in the House; but that argument went to prove the necessity that existed for an extension of representation on the basis of population. The honorable the Colonial Secretary, in the course of his speech in reply to the speech of the honorable member for the Maranoa, thought fit to allude, in terms which, it appeared to him, were anything but suited to the high position he occupied when he referred to the attacks that had been made upon him by the editor of the *Colonist*—the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Atkin. Now, if the health of that honorable member had been such as to have enabled him to be present in his place, the remarks made by the honorable the Colonial Secretary

would have been nothing compared to the reply the honorable member would have made to them. The honorable the Colonial Secretary had stated that it was the honorable member for East Moreton who chiefly circulated the unwarrantable reports that were spread abroad against him; and that those reports were of such a libellous nature, that he would have been justified in carrying the matter before the Supreme Court, but that he had no wish to clear his character by asking for damages, even though the attacks that were made upon him had been of a blackguard nature. Now, if there was anything libellous in the matter, it was not necessary that the honorable gentleman should have gone into court asking for damages, for he could have taken his case before the Criminal Court, and have asked that branch of the Supreme Court to clear him from the accusations that had been made against him.

Mr. FYFE said he regretted exceedingly that he felt it to be his duty to contradict the statement made by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, when he said that there was nothing but howling on the part of the people of Rockhampton when he entered the meeting. He considered it was unjust towards the people of Rockhampton for the honorable the Colonial Secretary to say that such was the case. He maintained that the people of Rockhampton were not an insulting people. They did not insult the honorable the Premier; and that was distinctly shewn by the number of votes the honorable member polled there on the day of election. He himself took no part in the election, but when he came to Brisbane, he sent some telegrams to Rockhampton on the subject. He had made those few remarks, because, as the representative of Rockhampton, he could not allow the statement which had been made with respect to his constituency by the honorable the Colonial Secretary to pass unnoticed. The people of Rockhampton respected the honorable the Premier, but they had a rod in pickle for the honorable the Minister for Works. They liked the manly and bold character of the Premier, but they were not sure about the Minister for Works. He would like to know what the Ministry were to do for the North, and he could tell them that they had a glorious opportunity at present of doing a great deal of good for the country generally, and especially for the northern districts; and they would see that for themselves, if they would only look forward for ten years, as to what would be the result of adopting a wise policy at the present time. The measures which would be brought in by the Ministry might shew their policy; but he had some doubts of its being of a nature that would satisfy him. He had heard it said that it was not possible to convert a squatter, and every honorable member on the Government side of the House was either a squatter or was connected in one way or other with squatting.

As to any land policy that might be brought in by the present Ministry, he had great doubts as to the amount of liberality by which it would be characterised, when he saw who were their supporters. He had had some personal experience of the liberality of the squatters. He paid rent himself, in 1862, for 100,000 acres of country for grazing purposes; but the Darling Downs squatters would not allow his sheep to remain on the country, and they obtained the power to do that by the course of legislation that was carried out in favor of those gentlemen opposite. It had been said by the honorable member for Clermont that no person was fit to take charge of sheep unless he had had a good deal of colonial experience. Well, twenty-five years ago, he took a flock of sheep through the Black Forest, in Victoria, and that, he considered, shewed that he had had a good deal of colonial experience. Now, he would say that it should be the duty of the Government, at the present time, to conciliate rather than obstruct the representatives of the people. What were the rights of property about which so much was said? Why, they were only acquired advantages, as against others, in most cases; but the rights of man were of themselves inherent. Those who now occupied the lands of the colony were not the pioneer squatters. The pioneer squatters were put out by the present Crown tenants, and honorable members opposite only represented wealth and the banks of the colony. They did not represent the squatters, who were the really only independent and *bona fide* occupiers of the soil, as Crown tenants. Now, what was wanted by the colony was that men should come here who would settle on the land; and legislation should be directed to inducing such people to come out from the home country. Instead of encouraging the introduction of Polynesians, they should do all in their power to attract people from Scotland, England, and Ireland; but as to Polynesians being brought here, he thought the sooner that kind of immigration was put a stop to, the better. He would not occupy the time of the House any longer, because the object he rose to speak about had been achieved. He rose merely to say that the people of Rockhampton did not treat the honorable the Premier with disrespect. If the honorable gentleman was of opinion that they did, he could only say that his own opinion was quite different. As to personal references, he thought that the fewer of them that were mixed up with the business of legislation, the better. More work would be got through in a shorter time. Their work also would be of a better kind, and the country would, consequently, derive an increase of benefit.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said he only desired to add his support to the request that had been made to the honorable member for the Maranoa, that he would withdraw his amendment. But he also thought it to be his duty to call atten-

tion to the conduct of the honorable the Colonial Secretary; and to state to the House that the reports of the proceedings that formed the subject of those reports, were not prepared for any paper in Brisbane, but for papers in other parts of the colony. He would remind the honorable the Colonial Secretary that the reports which appeared in the *Colonist* were the same as those that appeared in the Rockhampton papers, from which, no doubt, they were copied. Now, he must say for himself, that he hitherto was prepared to consider that those reports were correct, as they had not received any substantial contradiction until to-night. The honorable gentleman had, to-night, made a candid confession as to his conduct at Rockhampton; and he was sure that, if he had done so before, the statements put forth in the reports would have vanished from the minds of everyone long ago. There was one statement which the honorable the Premier had made in the course of his speech, to-night, which he thought was wholly uncalled for, and that was where he made an attack upon a gentleman who was connected with the *Colonist* newspaper, and who was a member of the House, but was now absent through severe illness, and could not, therefore, defend himself from the attack which had been made upon him. Now, under those circumstances, he thought the honorable the Premier should not have referred to him in connection with the matter at all, especially in the way he did.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The honorable member had evidently mistaken him. His allusions referred to the *Northern Argus*.

Dr. O'DOHERTY: He was very much pleased to hear the explanation; but he was not the only one who had fallen into the mistake. The honorable member for the Kennedy was under the same impression. He thought that if the House was to continue to maintain the respect that was due to it, petty personal references between honorable members—especially in the case of a gentleman who was in the position the honorable member for East Moreton was in at present—must be discontinued.

Mr. CLARK said he should not have again risen to address the House but for some remarks that had been made by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley and the honorable member for Eastern Downs. He had always hitherto been under the impression that it was the custom to treat young members with some degree of consideration, but he must say that he did not now think so. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had said that he and the honorable member for the Warrego were not learned members or barristers, or practised statesmen; and then he went on to say, farther, that he could not compliment honorable members on the Government side of the House with possessing any great amount of intelligence. Now, as he and the honorable member for the Warrego were the mover

and seconder of the Address, he thought they might fairly consider that the reference was particularly made to them.

Mr. LILLEY said he did not refer to the honorable member.

Mr. CLARK: Well, he would like to know whom he referred to.

Mr. LILLEY: To honorable members opposite.

Mr. CLARK: The honorable member for Eastern Downs said he was astonished to see his honorable colleague and friend sitting on the Government side of the House, after he said he would support the Opposition. Now he must say, he believed that if he were to sit on the Opposition side, he would fail to obtain a seat in the House when he returned for re-election. As to being either the friend or colleague of the honorable member for Eastern Downs, he denied that such was the case. When he desired to have a friend or colleague, he would seek for them amongst others than those to whom the honorable member belonged. The honorable member had also accused him of having broken his pledge to his constituency. Now, he had not done so, and his constituents knew it; for what he said to them was plain and straightforward. What he said was this—

“For his part, he would not pledge himself to support any set of men, but would give his support to the present Ministry, as he believed them to be the best the colony had had.”

That was the pledge he gave to his constituency. His opinion of the Opposition was not a high one, and their conduct had shewn to what lengths they would go to obtain office. Now, he would like to know in what way it could be said he had broken his pledge. He had taken his seat on the cross benches on the Government side of the House; and he was a supporter of the present Government, and would continue to be so as long as he considered they did their duty to the country, but no longer. With respect to his election, he was placed in a peculiar position, for he was elected during his absence from Warwick, and the electors would not take a refusal from him to represent them in the House. In fact, they thrust him, as it were, into his present position. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and the honorable member for Wide Bay, had both said that religious opinion was imported into the election. He denied that such was the case—at any rate, on his side; but he could not say as to whether it was or was not on the side of the other candidate. Now, so far as was known as to the election—and he had seen a good many persons who voted on the occasion—he was sure there was nothing of the religious element imported into the election proceedings on his part. It was true that disturbances occurred, and he must say that he very much regretted that they did occur, but they originated with the men who worked against his men. All the part his men had in

the disturbances was that they were considerably injured. Now, what did the honorable member for Eastern Downs do on that occasion? A sense of his conduct might have led him to be silent with respect to the election. The honorable member was in the back parlor in front of which the rioting began, and he was asked to go outside and endeavor to quell the disturbance; and the answer he gave was that he would rather go and face as many wild animals. He then bolted out at a back window, and so escaped—a very graceful mode of retreat certainly. He believed that but for personation, the honorable member would not have been a member of the House. When Mr. Macalister saw a man come up to personate an elector whom he had seen at a long distance a day or two previously, he gave him into custody, and the man was lodged in gaol. The honorable member afterwards asked Mr. Macalister if he was to let out the man whom he had given into custody for attempting to personate, and said that, if he did not, they would all go and pull down the gaol. Well, Mr. Macalister did let the man out. Now, if he (Mr. Clark) had been in Mr. Macalister's place, he would have let them go and pull down the gaol, and then the matter would have become one for the interference of the police. On further inquiry as to the voting, it had been found that there were no fewer than sixty cases of impersonation. The honorable member had spoken of him as his friend and colleague. Now, that was a piece of downright impudence on his part. The honorable member—for he supposed he must call him that—was no friend of his. He (Mr. Clark) had never been in his house; and the honorable member had never been in his (Mr. Clark's); for he would not allow his family to associate with the class to which the honorable member belonged.

Mr. LILLEY said the honorable member for Warwick had sought to deny what was proved in a court of justice, and that by some of his own party. Now, he hoped he would never again hear from a young member such a speech as they had just heard from the honorable member for Warwick. He must say that he did not think it would be very creditable to the honorable member for Eastern Downs that he had been in the house of the honorable member for Warwick. There were practices took place, he understood, in some houses in the Eastern Downs that were not very much to be approved of; and it would not say much for the character of the honorable member for the Eastern Downs if he had been in the house of the honorable member for Warwick. Now, he knew that the contest was first taken up on account of religious feeling, and that it was first raised by those who supported the honorable member for Warwick. The honorable member had most ingeniously read from a paper a passage of a speech that was made on his behalf. That speech, from which he quoted,

was one that was made by his brother for him. As to personation at the Eastern Downs election, they had heard about it again and again from Mr. Macalister, and from the honorable member for Warwick; but there was also personation carried on at Warwick. There was no doubt that the influence of the honorable member for Warwick, and that of his family throughout the district, had not been beneficial to the country. Now, when the honorable member made an attack upon the honorable member for Eastern Downs as to the proceedings at the election for that district, his doing so might, he thought, have raised a blush upon his own cheek. Why, was it not the fact that the roll for Warwick was revised by his own brother, and that one of the men in his employment was made returning officer for Warwick and for the Eastern Downs too?

Mr. CLARK: The electoral roll was not revised, either by his brother or anyone else. The old roll was used because it was discovered that the notices were not sent out in time to those who were entitled to have their names placed upon the roll.

Mr. LILLEY: The honorable member's brother was on the bench at the revision of the old roll, too.

Mr. CLARK rose to explain that the old roll was not revised. He went back to the period mentioned by the honorable member.

Mr. LILLEY said he would accept the two explanations given by the honorable member. It appeared that the honorable member's brother was on the bench, and being on the bench, neither roll was revised.

Mr. CLARK wished to explain. It was simply this:—That the roll which the honorable member said was revised, he (Mr. Clark) said was not revised, for the simple reason that those who were on the roll did not receive the proper notices to attend. That was not the first time, then, but was not any less than the third time. The reason why the roll had not been revised was that the Clerk of Petty Sessions had sent out improper notices. There was something informal about them.

Mr. LILLEY said that the reason was, that the brother of the honorable member and other magistrates were not able to manage the roll, because they found an independent Police Magistrate, who could not be easily got out of the way. But perhaps it was not fair to say anything about the roll, because, if there was not any revised roll, it was a wonder how they had the honor of the honorable member's company there that night. Still, if they were to lose the honorable member, he did not think it would be any loss either to the dignity or to the intelligence of the House.

Mr. THORNTON said that, after listening to the remarks of the honorable member for Warwick, it grieved him to say how the late election was carried on. He did not wish to dirty his hands with meddling in it any more.

On the morning of the election, the brother of the honorable member for Warwick went with him (Mr. Thornton), and said that he was the cause of the disturbance, and that he and his party would yet turn him (Mr. Clark) and his friends out of the town. He (Mr. Thornton) denied that he belonged to any religious party, but said that he would meet him at any time, Thornton to Thornton and Clark to Clark. The honorable member for Warwick stated that he (Mr. Thornton) was in the back parlor of an hotel when the row occurred, on the night of the election; but the honorable member knew nothing about it, as he was in the front parlor, and not the back. He was there with the intention of looking after a gentleman who had been wounded in the affray, when the honorable member's own brother ran away in the most dastardly manner, and left his friend to his fate—a thing that he (Mr. Thornton) would suffer to be lynched before he would do—turn away and leave a friend in a *mêlée*. He admitted that he went out of the house as stated, and that he would not go into the streets where the stones were flying about. But that he was afraid was one thing, and that he wished to avoid the stones was another. They were not satisfied with stones, but one man had the front of his mouth blown out, so that they did not confine themselves to "Paddy's fire." As to having an invitation to the honorable member's house, he never wished it. He certainly would have liked to have been able to work with the honorable member for the benefit of the district, but it appeared that he was not to do so.

Mr. MILES said that when he moved the amendment which had been discussed, he merely did so for the purpose of getting some explanation on the subject. He found that that explanation had hardly been what he wished; but on the whole, with the consent of the House, he would withdraw his amendment. He would take that opportunity of returning the compliment of the honorable member for Warwick, and say that his (Mr. Miles') side of the House had a very little opinion of honorable members on that honorable gentleman's side of the House.

The amendment was then, by leave, withdrawn.

The original question was put, and the House divided with the following result:—

Ayes, 17.

Mr. Palmer
 " Thompson
 " Walsh
 " Bell
 " Bramston
 " Ramsay
 " Johnston
 " Ferrett
 " Clark
 " De Satgé
 " Wienholt
 " Scott
 " Buchanau
 " Morehead
 " Thorn
 " Cribb
 " Royds.

Noes, 11.

Mr. Lilley
 " Pring
 " Groom
 " Thornton
 Dr. O'Doherty
 Mr. Stephens
 " Edmondstone
 " Fyfe
 " Hemmant
 " Miles
 " King.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

That this House do now adjourn until to-day, at 3 o'clock p.m., to proceed to Government House, there at half-past 3 o'clock, to present to the Governor their Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech.

The motion was carried.