

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 7 MAY 1872

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 7 May, 1872.

Supply.

SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1872.

Mr. STEPHENS said he did not rise for the purpose of opposing the motion that the House go into a Committee of Supply, if the object of the honorable the Treasurer was to take two months' supply, so as to prevent the inconvenience which would occur to any department, through supplies being stopped altogether; but if that was not the honorable member's object, the honorable member must be aware that he would meet with opposition. The honorable member must know, that until the Government were prepared to go on with the Electoral Districts Bill, which was No. 9 on the Business Paper, the Opposition would refuse to go on with the Estimates; and he would, therefore, again impress upon the Government, the advisability of going on regularly with the business of the country, in the order in which it should be taken, so that it might be proceeded with, without further delay. In saying that he would be ready to support the House going into Committee of Supply, he would refer to the position assumed by the honorable the Premier, in the last speech made by that honorable member, who then stated most distinctly, that he would have Supply for nine months, or to the remainder of the year, or would have none at all. Now, he could not see that that was a correct position for a Government to take; and, if he recollected rightly, the honorable gentleman said, that if he could not

have nine months' supply, which would be for the remainder of the year, he would not spend another shilling. He had been very much inclined to think, when the honorable member was addressing the House, that there was a considerable amount of bounce in what the honorable member said—that he would not pay a shilling. There were some moneys, which he (Mr. Stephens) knew very well could not be paid; but saying that he would not pay a shilling, was something very like bounce on the part of the honorable member. It reminded him of what had occurred on the occasion of the House refusing to pass the Bill for meeting the Treasury Bills, which had to be paid on the 31st of December, last year. In moving that—

“So much of the Standing Orders be suspended, as will admit of Resolutions of Supply and Ways and Means, and Money Bills, being initiated and passed through all their stages in one day,”

the honorable the Treasurer stated that if that business

“remained unperformed up to the end of the session, the financial credit and the financial honor of the country would be sacrificed;”

but had that come to pass? He thought not. Again, the honorable member said in the same speech, that if the Bill—meaning the Treasury Bills Bill—was not passed,

“such a state of things would be brought about, as had never yet been brought about in this colony, and which had never yet been asked to be brought about by the most extravagant Opposition that had ever existed in this or any other House of Assembly that he had ever heard of.”

But yet the honorable member condescended to say that—although that he had the money ready to meet those Bills. Those were the statements put forward by the Government, through their Treasurer—that those bills would not be paid except the House then agreed to pass a Treasury Bills Bill. Again, on the 20th December, which was a week later, the honorable the Colonial Secretary moved that Government business take precedence of all other business, and in referring to the question of the Treasury bills, managed to put an “if” in. The honorable member said:—

“What would be the result of continuing their present obstructiveness to the progress of the Government business? Why it would be this, that if their debentures were not met by the thirty-first of the present month, they would stink in the market, and become a bye-word. Pennsylvanian bonds would be nothing to them; and all that would be brought about entirely by the obstructiveness of a small minority in the House.”

Now, they had had the honorable the Premier, and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, condescending to make those statements to the House, and to allow them to be reported and to go forth to the holders of our debentures in England and the colonies—statements in which it was most distinctly said that those debentures would not be paid; yet

knowing at the same time that they had funds to enable them to pay them, and also that there were two, if not three, Acts of Parliament which necessitated their being paid, thus doing away with any vote of the House being required to deal with the matter. Therefore, he could not see the object of making those statements, except to mislead some of the supporters of the Government. They knew on his side of the House perfectly well that those bills would be met, and they were met, on the very day—the 31st of December; not only that, but he ventured to say that they were met in a perfectly legal manner, although the House was not yet in possession of all the information concerning them. A short time after the statements he had quoted were made, he ventured upon a statement in that House, that the debentures would be paid; and some honorable members afterwards thought it was a sign of weakness on the part of the Government, that they should have been paid, but instead of that, they had only done their duty in paying them. The weakness was in going to that House and depicting the disastrous consequences which would result by the Opposition refusing to provide for such payment. Now, he ventured to say that the statement that the honorable the Premier would not pay one shilling if Supply was not voted, beyond what he might have in hand, was another piece of bounce in the same way. The honorable gentleman had gone through some portions of the Estimates, a few days ago, and in alluding to them, had pointed out, in not altogether unfair colors, the evils that would arise if those sums were not paid, and the various departments got out of gear. But the honorable member had not taken all the Estimates—he had not even commenced at the beginning—he took the schedules, but omitted the first page; and yet the honorable member wished the House to believe that before all the Estimates had been passed none of the salaries could be paid. He noticed, as included in the items in the first page, that of “Executive and Legislative.” Now, did the honorable member mean to say that unless he could get through the Estimates for 1872, the payments under that head would be stopped? Did he mean to say that the payment of the expenses in connection with the Governor’s establishment would not be made—that those in connection with the Executive Council would not be made? Did he mean to say that the dignity of the Legislative Council would be infringed upon by a refusal to pay the salaries of its officers, simply because the dignity of the Government would not allow them to accept two months’ supply, or to take Supply in any other manner than that in which they asked for it? Did the honorable member mean to say, when he knew that he had only to let his Treasurer ask for two months’ supply, and get it at once—when he knew he had it in his power to pay all the salaries whenever he liked—that he would refuse to sacrifice his

dignity, and would allow the whole departments of the service to get out of gear? Did the honorable member mean to say, also, that the salary of Mr. Speaker, of the Chairman of Committees, and the other officers connected with the Legislative Assembly would not be paid, simply because of the dignity of the Government being sacrificed? Did he mean to say that the salaries of the public officers, for the month of May, should not be paid until those to the end of December were passed? Again, he would take some other items. On the next page they had the honorable gentleman’s own department, and he believed the honorable member had not mentioned anything about his Under Secretary not being paid. He saw there mentioned, the police, the establishment at St. Helena, the gaols, education, and several things the honorable member had not mentioned at all. It was but fair to the honorable member to say that, although he began by stating that he would not pay one shilling, and had given notice to that effect to the police, he had been careful not to go so far as to say that he would carry the disorganization to such a length as to allow all the prisoners to go free. The honorable member had not gone so far as that, yet that was a natural consequence of the course he threatened to pursue—for did the honorable member expect the civil servants to give their services without being paid? He thought the honorable member had rather put his foot into it. The honorable member had said that after the money in hand was spent, not another shilling would be paid. Did he mean by that that the gaols would be thrown open? He (Mr. Stephens) thought not. Again, would the office of the Commissioner of Police be abandoned the same as the others? would the Lunatic Asylum be thrown open?—for the honorable member, it must be remembered, said there would be nothing to carry that on with. He did not think, however, that the honorable member would carry out his threats to that extent, but that he would make some arrangements for carrying on the public institutions. Again, with regard to the Custom House—the honorable member had taken care of that, and thought that some way could be found to pay the officers of that department, in case they would lose the revenue; but how did that tally with the honorable gentleman’s former statement, that not one shilling should be paid unless he had the Estimates for the remainder of the year? Then again, they came to the pilots and lighthouses. Did the honorable member mean to say that because he could not get Supply as he wanted to have it—in a form to suit his dignity—and he might have it, as he knew he had only to ask the House for two months’ supply—did he mean to say that unless his course was adopted, he would carry out what had been a deliberate threat, and that the lights in the lighthouses along the coast would be put out, and the lives of the pas-

sengers and sailors by the coasting steamers and other vessels be imperilled? He thought the honorable member could not mean that.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I said nothing of the sort.

MR. STEPHENS: The honorable member had not made up his mind whether the lights should be put out.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I repeat again, most positively, that I said nothing of the kind.

MR. STEPHENS: Well, he had a note—

THE SPEAKER said that, as the honorable the Colonial Secretary had denied making use of the words, the honorable member was not in order in repeating them.

MR. STEPHENS said he must then accept the honorable member's flat denial; but he must repeat his statement, that he had the words.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not true.

MR. STEPHENS: He would, however, take another item in the Estimates—the railways of the colony—were they to be stopped? At a very great expense to the country, they had now a line of railway to the interior, which had created a perfect monopoly of the traffic between the capital and the western districts; and did the honorable member mean to say now that that was to be stopped, and all the railway department thrown out of gear, because the Opposition, in his opinion, had not sufficiently considered his dignity? If the honorable member did not threaten that, what did he mean? Why, the whole speech of the honorable gentleman was one huge threat that, unless Supply for the remaining nine months of the year was passed, every department and the whole business of the country would be brought to a standstill, and he would do as much mischief as he could—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hear, hear.

MR. STEPHENS: If the honorable member was resolved upon adopting such a course, the whole responsibility would rest upon his shoulders, inasmuch as the Opposition had stated, over and over again, that they were willing to give the Government two months' supply, or what was necessary. Again, there was the post office, on which the whole trade, and more than the whole trade, of the colony depended—for he ventured to say that, in many respects, the private correspondence was more valuable than the mere trade correspondence—was that to be shut up? Did the honorable member mean to say that? For, if the honorable gentleman carried out his threat of not spending another shilling, he must shut up that office; or he must make a similar arrangement to that which was made in Sydney, which he had, however, long ago said he would not. Again, was the electric telegraph to be stopped?—but he ventured to say that there was not much danger of that, as long as the Government had the power of sending free messages. The House

had been threatened with all those things, unless the Opposition consulted the dignity of the Government, and allowed them to have Supply for nine months. There were some other items on the list which the honorable member had referred to. The honorable member told the House that he had already written to the various hospitals and benevolent asylums, to inform them that they would have no more money; and it appeared that those were the only things that the honorable member said positively he had stopped payment to. Now, it seemed to him (Mr. Stephens), when that statement was made by the honorable the Premier, that it was rather mean upon his part that the poor sick men in the hospitals should be the first and only men against whom any action was taken by the Government. He did not think that was the right thing exactly, as those men were the least able to provide for and protect themselves. He had, however, been the most surprised at the honorable gentleman's making such a direct statement as he made on that occasion, that if the House did not vote nine months' supply, he would not spend a shilling at all. He had been the more surprised at that, considering that, only the evening before, the House had been treated to a long lecture, from the honorable the Minister for Lands, upon constitutional law. Now, he thought that when the Government lawyer read them such a lesson as that, his chief should have profited by it, and should have refrained from making threats which were unparliamentary. He believed himself that, notwithstanding all those threats, the honorable member would do as he did in regard to the Treasury bills; and that, although he might make a wry face over it, he would, after all, eat the leek. With regard to the constitutional lecture of the honorable the Minister for Lands, he might say that he had listened to that honorable gentleman attentively, and that he thought there was considerable force in some of his remarks; but, unfortunately for the honorable member, they all applied to the position taken up by the Government. Now, the whole of the honorable gentleman's remarks—the whole of his lecture upon constitutional law—amounted simply to the one thing, that, since the year 1784, no attempt had been made to delay supplies in the British House of Commons—that it had then proved a miserable failure—and that, since then, no Parliament would take upon itself the grave responsibility of stopping supplies.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: Hear, hear.

MR. STEPHENS said he would now read the main extract, which was as follows:—

"That the responsibility had become too great for so perilous a proceeding. The establishments and public credit of the country are dependent upon their votes, and are not to be lightly thrown into disorder."

He perfectly agreed with that, and yet the honorable Premier went to that House, and told honorable members that the public establishments of the country should be thrown into the utmost disorder, unless he could get Supply to the end of the year. The honorable member did that, although he was perfectly well aware that he had only to propose it—which nobody else could do—and he would have a vote of Supply which would prevent all the establishments of the colony getting out of gear. Yet, with that knowledge, he was willing to take all that grave responsibility upon himself; he had been offered Supply, but he would have it in one particular form or not at all.

MR. THORN: The question is whether the minority shall rule the majority.

MR. STEPHENS: Both sides of the House were ready at any time to vote sufficient Supply to go on with—to prevent the public establishments being thrown into a state of disorder—and yet that was refused. But he would take another view of the case. It generally took from six to eight weeks to get through the Estimates, but he thought they could be passed in three or four weeks. Now, even supposing that the House went into Supply now, if the threat of the honorable the Premier was carried out—not to pay one shilling till the Estimates for the remaining nine months of the year were passed—the officers would certainly all be one month's vote in arrear. It would, in that case, therefore, in order to avoid a disarrangement, be advisable to take a short vote. He was, as he had said before, quite prepared to go into committee and vote two months' supply, and he would recommend the honorable the Premier not to take the responsibility of upsetting everything, when he knew that he had only to propose it, and that amount of Supply, or what was necessary, would be given to him.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane was, as usual, a tissue of misstatements from beginning to end.

The SPEAKER said the honorable member was not in order in imputing misstatements to any honorable member.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY thought it was time enough for the honorable the Speaker to interfere when the House found fault.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition: Oh, oh; Chair, chair.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY would repeat what he had to say in a different form. He was not to be put down by any honorable member of the Opposition, or by all of them together.

DR. O'DOHERTY said it seemed to him that it was the honorable the Speaker whom the honorable member wished to put down.

MR. LILLEY rose to a point of order. The honorable the Premier said he would repeat what had been ruled out of order, in a different form. He submitted the honorable member could not do that.

The SPEAKER said that the honorable member was out of order in making use of the word "misstatements," and could not impute them in other words.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had heard the term "misstatements" used a hundred times before without a member being called to order; he had also heard a word which had been objected to repeated hundreds of times in different ways.

The COLONIAL TREASURER submitted that the word was not at all out of order, as a "misstatement" need not necessarily be a wilful misstatement.

MR. KING said the question was not whether the word "misstatement" was out of order—but saying that an honorable member's speech, as usual, was a tissue of misstatements. If the honorable member backed out of it by saying that he did not mean a wilful misstatement, why then the feeling of the House was decidedly against him.

The COLONIAL TREASURER wished to have the honorable the Speaker's ruling whether the word "misstatement" was disorderly.

MR. LILLEY: Not the word itself—but an honorable member being accused of uttering a tissue of misstatements.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that honorable members opposite had, last session, violently contradicted the honorable the Speaker's ruling, and had set it at defiance; but now they appeared to arrogate to themselves, not only to be the sole rulers of the country, but the sole exponents of what was right or wrong in that House. He was not going to submit to that, and he did not hesitate to say that the speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane was a tissue of misstatements.

The SPEAKER informed the honorable member that he was out of order in repeating the words.

MR. J. SCOTT said that there was a good deal in what the honorable the Minister for Works had stated, as only the other night an honorable member of the Opposition made a most gross personal attack on the honorable the Attorney-General, and the honorable the Speaker did not then take any notice of it.

The SPEAKER said that the rule was, that he did not take notice of disorderly language until his attention was drawn to it by an honorable member of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said no honorable member had called him to order on the present occasion.

MR. MOREHEAD moved that the House dissent from the ruling of the honorable the Speaker.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS trusted his honorable friend would not pursue that course. There was no doubt that the honorable the Speaker had misunderstood his honorable colleague, the Premier. Honorable members on his side of the House considered it only natural for the honorable member for South Brisbane to make such statements.

Mr. KING rose, when——

Mr. THORN rose to order. The honorable member had already spoken.

Mr. KING: The honorable the Minister for Works had spoken twice.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member cannot speak again.

Mr. KING said he had a motion to make——

The SPEAKER: There is no question before the House. I have already ruled the expression used by the honorable the Colonial Secretary to be out of order.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY would then ask the honorable the Speaker for his ruling, as to how he was to put it if he wanted to say that the honorable member made a misstatement.

The SPEAKER: That the honorable member may have been misinformed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That would not meet his meaning.

The SPEAKER said that he was not prepared to say that the word "misstatement" was disorderly, but that charging an honorable member with making a tissue of misstatements was out of order.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Was the word "misstatements" unruly, or the word "tissue?"

The SPEAKER said it was not customary for the Speaker to debate his ruling with the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was at a loss then to know how to put it. He did not know how to express his thoughts if he was not allowed some freedom of debate. He had heard the word used a hundred times, and he did not know how to put it off, for if he said it was a lie, that was out of order. He maintained that "misstatements" was in order; but he would bow to the ruling of the honorable the Speaker. He would say, therefore, that the speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane bristled with statements which were not facts, nor anything like facts, nor cousins-german to facts, nor even the most distant relations to facts. When he spoke on the subject, a few evenings ago, in the manner alluded to by the honorable member for South Brisbane, he carefully guarded himself by saying that unless the officers in the service of the Government gave their services to the Government on credit, the public service could not be carried on.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He had never made such a statement—that the Government would put out the lights in the light-houses along the coast; but what he did say was, that, if Supply was not voted, it would be in the power of the Government to put them out. He had never even insinuated that the Government would put them out. He had distinctly stated, as he had stated before, that, if Supply was not voted, the civil servants would have to give the Government credit—and so they would, if they continued their services. He also took care

to draw a distinction between the sums which the Government, according to law, were empowered to pay, and those which they could not; and, in reference to his statement about the Customs officers, it was based upon the belief that the revenue collected by the Customs could be used for the payment of the officers employed in collecting it. What was more, he believed that all revenues could be used in payment of the officers by whom they were collected; but, in the absence of his honorable colleague, the Attorney-General, he could not speak positively on that point. The honorable member for South Brisbane had accused him of refusing money to the hospitals first, because they could not defend themselves; but, in explanation of that, he would state the facts. They were very simple—namely, that the very first application the Government had received for money, which they could not give, was from the Benevolent committee; and, naturally, as the Government had not the money, they had to refuse the application. Then, the House had been told—and that was one of the things in the speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane which was not a fact—that the House had refused Supply. But, in reply to that, he would say that the House had never refused it—it was only a small minority which had refused it, which was a very different thing to the whole House refusing it. The question was not one as to whether the Government were refused Supply, but whether a small minority of the House—a minority so small that they could not go on with business or even form a quorum in the House—should dictate to the majority. If the majority of the House had refused him Supply, he would at once have bowed to their decision. The question was not, as the honorable member for South Brisbane had put it, whether the Government would take two months' supply and get on with the business of the country in a miserable pettifogging manner, but whether the Government should break through a great constitutional principle and give way to a minority. That was the question before the country——

Mr. THORN: And before the world.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: And whether the Government were to be dictated to by the honorable member for South Brisbane, and others, by their accepting, as a charity, a dole of two months' supply. The great question was, whether they should set an example and a precedent to the British Colonies all over the world that a small minority was to rule the majority. He would repeat that, by a minority, he would not consent to be ruled; and he maintained, again, that the responsibility of the present obstruction must rest entirely with honorable members opposite, and not with the Government.

Mr. LILLEY said he had not been in the House during the previous week, when, as he had perceived, his name had been very freely

used in the course of debate. Of course, he could not expect honorable members to refrain from making use of his name during his absence, which, in the present instance, was owing to professional engagements. Even if he had been in the House, he could not have been of much service, seeing the position which the Government had taken up, of refusing to accept Supply for two months, and to go on with the business of the country. It was of no use for the honorable member at the head of the Government to attempt to deny that the minority had a right—

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: No, no.

Mr. LILLEY: Why, really the mere mention of such a thing as the minority having any rights, appeared to startle honorable gentlemen opposite, so much so, that they would not let him finish what he was going to say. He, however, contended that the minority had a right to insist upon keeping such a check upon the Government, as to force from them some reasonable legislation. If the doctrine of the honorable the Premier held good, he would like to know of what good was a minority—where was the use of their going to that House at all? If it was decided that they were to exercise no power, all that was necessary to be done after every general election, was, to proceed to ascertain who were in the minority, and then let the majority go to the House and carry on the business of the country. But minorities had rights—they had, at least, the right to go to that House and instruct the majority, if they were so ignorant. They had that right; but they, also, had the rights which the laws of England had conferred upon them long years ago, one of which was to obstruct the passage of supplies, in order to obtain for the people a just recognition of their rights.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: No, no.

Mr. LILLEY: Did honorable members opposite, by those cries, wish to persuade him and the people outside of that House, that there had not been such a right conferred upon minorities? Although the steel had not been used for some years, and, as said by the honorable Minister for Lands, might be a little rusty, still the metal was true, and might yet prove a useful weapon in the cause of the people. But, so far from the Opposition having used it, it was the honorable gentleman opposite who had drawn it for their use. Now, the Opposition had offered the Government two months' supply, which was equal to three months', and which would relieve them from the doubtful, unconstitutional, and illegal position in which they were now placed; but that offer had been refused, and they wished to live upon credit in preference, which, in his opinion, was in itself rather unconstitutional. He doubted very much, indeed, whether the Government had the least right to adopt such a course, when they knew that they had only to ask the House for Supply

and that it would be granted; but no, they would not take it and act in a legal way. He said, again, that the minority had a perfect right to stop Supply, but they had not done so at the present time—on the contrary, it was the act of the majority. On the abstract question, what was the position of a minority? but to avail itself of every form of the House, to wring from the majority the full liberties of the people; to stop every action on the part of the majority that would be an evasion of the constitution, or of the liberties conferred by it, and to make such evasion an impossibility? If they were to bow down to an absolute majority in that House, what was there to prevent that majority from usurping the whole government of the country? Why, they might do as they pleased—they might even send home the Governor in a ship. There was nothing they could not do, in the way of absolute government, if the minority were to submit to their course of conduct. Now, a great deal had been said about the minority in that House not being able to make a quorum, or to do any business; but such was the position of affairs in that House that, if they could make a quorum, they would be in the majority instead of the minority. That was the absurd position they were placed in by the Standing Orders; but it must be remembered that the present minority in that House would present, proportionately, a very large minority in the House of Commons. He was sorry to say that sometimes the honorable member at the head of the Government spoke hastily, and without consideration, and sometimes, consequently, contradicted what he had said on a previous occasion. He was not in the House when the honorable member spoke last week, but he had referred to "Hansard," which he had no doubt was not correct again. It appeared that from the earliest days the Premiers of the colony had accused that publication of not being correct. First there was Mr. Herbert, then Mr. Mackenzie, then Mr. Macalister, no doubt Mr. Lilley, and now the present honorable Premier. Well, in the present instance, "Hansard" happened to agree with what the honorable member for South Brisbane had stated, and therefore it might be correct. It said—

The SPEAKER informed the honorable member that he was not in order in quoting from a previous debate, this session, on the same question that was before the House.

Mr. LILLEY: Then what was the use of "Hansard"? they had better burn it. Well, he would not say where, but in a certain publication the honorable the Colonial Secretary was made to say—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS rose to order. The honorable member could not read from a book.

Mr. LILLEY said he was not reading—he was merely looking at a book.

The SPEAKER informed the honorable member that he could not read from a book.

MR. LILLEY: He was not reading. Surely, if his eyes went in the direction of a book, that was not reading.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member knew he could not quote from the book or read from it.

MR. LILLEY said he was not reading from it. He was not quoting from any particular book:—

"The harbors and rivers would not be attended to, and he would tell the Opposition that supposing the Government were determined to go that length, every light on the coast would be put out."

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: "Supposing."

MR. LILLEY: Well, that was the beginning of the bounce—that "supposing the Government determined to do such a thing"—well, he was supposing; and was it not startling, and a disgrace to the colony, that the honorable the Premier of it should even have allowed such a thought to have entered into his mind? In the same publication he also read that

"There would be no harbor of refuge."

Now, if those two things were taken together, the very thought of such a thing would be equivalent to murder. To leave ships at sea without a light to guide them on the coast, when coming to Queensland—could anyone imagine anything worse? That the lights should be extinguished by the Premier of Queensland, so that ships coming in at night through darkness and storms, straining every eye to see the long looked for lights, but doing so in vain, because they had been put out by the Premier of the colony, was something perfectly frightful. Honorable members knew, however, that it would take stouter hearts than those possessed by the honorable members of the present Government to carry out such a proceeding.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I never thought of it.

MR. LILLEY: It was known that the idea had entered the honorable member's head, if not uttered; but the honorable member should not have allowed such a thought even, to have entered into his head. It was nothing to the honorable gentlemen opposite to shut up hospitals against the wretched shepherds, whom they and the honorable members who supported them, fenced out of their runs, and sent them down half blind to live upon the contributions of the township people.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: Oh, oh.

MR. LILLEY: He had seen that with his own eyes, and on one occasion, when he paid an official visit to the hospital, he expressed his surprise at seeing there so many poor shepherds. He had official knowledge of it, and therefore honorable members opposite need not pretend it was not true. He was not surprised that those honorable members should laugh when he was talking about the disgrace of putting out the lights on the

coast, or that they should jest when he mentioned that shepherds were sent down to the towns to die. It was the old dictum of political economy, "men grow rich, let the poor man die." It was, however, utterly absurd for the honorable the Premier to think that he was going to frighten honorable members on his (Mr. Lilley's) side of the House, like a lot of children, by telling them that the lights would be put out, and they would be left in the dark, because those honorable members knew that he could not do it—that he dared not put out the lights on the coast, for the honorable gentleman knew full well that it would not be upon the heads of the Opposition that the blame would fall, but upon the heads of those who refused to go on with the business of the country. It was no answer to say that it was the dignity of Mr. Palmer—that Mr. Palmer's coach stopped the way—that his dignity, or the dignity of the honorable members with him, would not allow them to accept two months' supply. He considered that the dignity of the Government should have dictated to them the necessity of going on with the Redistribution Bill on the day mentioned—that they should have kept their promise to the people of the country, and have thus shewn to the country that they intended to act honestly and in good faith. He believed that had that Bill been proceeded with, it would have passed its second reading—not that he meant to say that it was a fair Bill to the country, or such as should have been submitted to that House—and he believed some honorable members opposite agreed with him in that respect—but because it was based upon a new principle, and it was possible, that accepted as a matter of expediency, something like a fair measure might have been made out of it, if it had been allowed to be sifted and amended by honorable members in committee. Honorable members on both sides of the House recognised and admitted the necessity of proceeding with such a measure; and if the honorable the Premier, instead of taking up the position he had assumed, had allowed it to be passed through its second reading, they would have been at the present time a long way through the schedules. The honorable member had no excuse whatever for his present conduct, as he had been offered Supply if he would proceed with the business of the country; but had refused it, simply because, as he (Mr. Lilley) believed, the honorable member was never sincere in his wish to give the people the policy indicated in the Governor's Opening Speech. He thought he had referred to the whole of the honorable member's speech; but he would say again, that if railways both in the North and South were stopped, if redistribution was stopped, and if the business of the country generally was brought to a standstill, it would not be the fault of honorable members sitting on the Opposition side of the House, but of honorable members opposite, who would not accept a reasonable and

fair offer, and one which would give them the means of carrying on the public business. The Opposition could not give up their position, as by so doing, they would have to confess to their constituents that they had lost the last check they held over the Government to compel them to proceed with the legislation of the country. Honorable members opposite had proved that the Opposition still had a most effectual check, by refusing to allow any business to be done, until they had sufficient guarantee that the business of that chamber would be honestly carried on. It was not too late now for honorable members opposite to accept the proposition which had been made; and if they did so, they could get through a considerable quantity of work that night, as their tempers were not disconcerted. He might say that he had been very sorry to read such a speech as that delivered by the honorable the Premier, as he had thought at the time that it was exceedingly unwise. He did not believe in any man hinting at doing anything that he was not prepared to carry out. But to plunge a colony, like Queensland, into a state of absolute disorder, to gratify some false notion of dignity on the part of the Government, appeared to him to be an act not only foolish in itself, but criminal.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had not intended to speak that evening, as he thought that it was absolute folly for honorable members on both sides of the House to continue the present wordy debate, and as he believed it would not have the effect of altering a single vote, or determine any honorable member on either side in the slightest degree. He had been very much surprised at some of the remarks which had fallen from the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, who had spoken last—he was surprised at that portion of the honorable gentleman's speech, where he endeavored, with some force and ingenuity on his part, to fix on the honorable member at the head of the Government, a statement that he (the Colonial Treasurer) was convinced the honorable member never made in that House, at least with a determination the honorable member sought to place on it. The honorable member opposite was not in the House when that speech was delivered, but he was, and he certainly did not hear his honorable colleague say that he would put out the lights along the coast. He did not say such a thing, but merely that it would be within the power of the Government to do so. Now, no man with any common sense would believe, for one moment, that it was within the reason of any other man to do such an absurd act. He believed that the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, in putting such a construction upon the honorable the Premier's remarks, had attempted to let it be thought by people out of doors, that his honorable colleague had said so, and thus make political capital out of it; but such a thing had never been said. The honorable member had also spoken very strongly about the rights of a minority when

in Opposition. Now, he did not care whether the Opposition was a strong or a weak one; the principle was the same. He would admit, if the honorable member wished it, that the present Opposition was a strong one, and would form, what would be considered, proportionately speaking, a large Opposition in House of Commons. Supposing that was the case, and supposing the honorable member was right in his claim, that certain rights were inherent in the minority, did not the honorable member think that the Government side of the House had their rights also? Now he would ask, who was to give way? It must be admitted that honorable members on his side of the House had a right to exercise an opinion upon the present or any other question, equally with honorable members opposite; but when the two opinions clashed, as they generally did—in fact, they knew that there was no debate of a party character where the two sides did not disagree—who was to give way but the minority? Why, he would ask, should there be any different course followed on the question now before the House from that followed on any ordinary question? If the minority was to rule in the one instance, why not in all instances? Why should not the same question be raised always? He would also ask, if the Government gave way on the present occasion, whether the Opposition would not have a right to set that up as a precedent on any other day, of allowing a minority to rule the country? He would say that the minority must give way; it was of no use a deliberative assembly pretending to be guided by a majority, unless, when it happened that opinions clashed, the minority assented to be governed by the majority. But supposing that the course now attempted was successful for a short time, if carried out to the very extreme, what would be the result? Even supposing honorable members on his side of the House had not the same stamina as honorable members opposite, they might hold out, and what then? What would be the result? Were they to suppose that the minority could ever shew that they were right in objecting to the claim which the majority put to them, in the shape of the Estimates which they had a right to claim, and which they were entitled to? Nothing had been shewn by the minority, either before the House or to the country, that the Government had yet done anything that entitled the minority to assume such a position in regard to Supply, as they had done this session. Now, he claimed on the part of the Government that everything had been faithfully done that they had promised to do, up to this point. It was true that honorable members opposite said that they had no faith in the Government; but what had the Government to do with the faith or want of faith of honorable members opposite? If the Government came before the House with a dependence on the faith of the Opposition,

what business would be done? The Government came there on prescriptive right; and they had a right to ask that the Estimates should be voted in due course. But what had the Opposition done which, as a minority, entitled them to assume a position that, he maintained, they had no right to assume? The matter was not the stoppage of Supply by the minority—as it had been put by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley—in the way that was at one time practised in the House of Commons. The Opposition could not stop Supply, because they were in a minority; and, as had been said, the minority could not presume to speak for the House. No minority could do so, and they could not stop Supply; and therefore the minority were acting unconstitutionally in assuming the position of a majority, and attempting to stop Supplies. It was true that if the minority thought that they were doing some good service to the country by checking the Government, there would be a reasonable ground for their persistent opposition; but he had not yet heard any argument advanced from that point of view that entitled the Opposition to pursue the course they were following, or to assume the position they had taken up. The honorable member for South Brisbane seemed to think that, because on a previous occasion the Government told the House that some disorganisation in the finances of the country would result from the stoppage of supplies at one time, and because the disorganisation he predicted did not take place, the Government held out a hollow threat—that they held out a threat which they were not entitled to make; and that therefore any threat of the kind made now was one of a kind that the Government were not entitled to make. But the honorable member for South Brisbane did not also inform the House, as he ought to have done, that when the Government, at the time he referred to, asked for the passing of the Treasury Bills Bill, they had no intention of performing any of the irregular, or it might be illegal acts which the Opposition were now attempting to force upon the Government every day. The Government never expected that the Opposition would have done otherwise than have met them in the usual way to provide for a portion of the public debt which was then about to become due. The Opposition had no means of knowing, perhaps even the Government did not know, perhaps neither side of the House knew, if the Government was in a position to meet the Treasury bills, unless a new Treasury Bills Bill were passed, by the House placing the Government in a position to do so.

Mr. STEPHENS: Then the Treasurer was not fit to be Treasurer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Well, he at any rate knew that, if there were two courses that might be pursued, the strict business course, and the regular and proper course, was the one which the Government ought to adopt; and not the irregular and improper

one which was forced upon the Government by the Opposition.

Mr. LILLEY: The statute enabled you to pay them.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He knew that the statute enabled the Government to pay them; and he admitted that it was under the statute that the Government did pay them; but the Government knew that that was not the proper course to adopt.

Mr. LILLEY: It was a question of public policy.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The honorable member for South Brisbane had taken upon himself to chastise him for making a statement which he believed was a correct one. The honorable member said he knew at the time that the Treasury bills would be paid. Now, he knew that at the time the honorable member made the statement, he had no means of knowing that they would be paid. The honorable member might have, on that occasion, jumped at one of his rash and hasty conclusions, which enabled him to make statements in support of his arguments; but the honorable member could not possibly know how the bills were to be met; and yet, in the darkness he was in, he took upon himself to chastise the Treasurer who managed, in the disorganised state of the finances that had been brought about by the honorable member himself whilst Treasurer, to meet the liabilities of the Government. But the honorable member was now desiring to bring about a similar state of disorganisation as existed whilst he himself was Treasurer. He seemed to think nothing of the Government spending money that was not voted by Parliament. He seemed to think the Government, year after year, should be in financial straits and difficulties; and that the Government should go on paying moneys that they ought not to pay, because they had not been voted by the House. Now, he most strongly deprecated the course the honorable member had shewn it to be his desire to bring into practice in this colony; and he thought it was quite time that honorable members shewed a desire to fall back upon the strict and regular order of carrying on the business of the country; for if the Government gave way on this occasion to honorable members opposite, there might never be again any desire on the part of the House, to continue the regularity of its business, which he thought was one of the very first parts of its duty to be careful of. He thought it was impossible that the Opposition could expect that, at this stage of the question, and seeing the position the question had assumed, the Government could give way. He thought it was impossible, even if the Opposition were capable of shewing stronger reasons than they had yet shewn, that now, at this stage, the Government could retire from the position they had taken up. He trusted that honorable members opposite would see that, in principle, they were utterly wrong; and that they would heap upon them-

selves the odium of the country, if the course they were pursuing were carried to any larger extent.

Mr. WIENHOLT said he had listened with much attention to the speeches of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and of the honorable member for South Brisbane; and he must say that more weak and illogical speeches he had never heard in that House. It shewed, he thought, a conscious weakness of their cause when they had to harp continually upon the alleged statement of the honorable the Premier that, if supplies were not voted, the lights on the coast would have to be put out. Now, they knew that the allegation was not true, and that the honorable the Premier never made such a statement as that the lights on the coast would be put out. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had, he thought, also gone very far out of his way in attacking the proprietors of stations in the way he did, and charging them with driving their shepherds into the hospitals of the towns without making any provision for them. That was another statement that was not correct. The proprietors of stations did not drive their shepherds into the hospitals of the towns; and he had no doubt whatever that there were more patients from the electorate the honorable member himself represented, sent to the hospitals, than were sent from stations. He believed it would be found that the outside stations and country districts contributed to the support of charitable institutions to a far larger extent than the towns did. However, with regard to the question before the House, he would like to ask, what it was that honorable members opposite wanted—what they really wanted? He would like to know what they expected to gain from the indefensible, and, as he might term it, outrageous course they were following. Did those honorable members wish to prove to the world that constitutional government, here, was a farce—a delusion, and that it had proved, here, to be a complete failure? Did they wish to prove that government by a majority of Parliament was no longer to be the rule in Queensland? Was constitutional government to be overthrown; and was the example of the Imperial Parliament, which was so ably set down before them, the other day, by the honorable the Minister for Lands—was it to be ignored? Had honorable members on the other side of the House made up their minds to prove that there was a party in the Assembly so unscrupulous as to overlook entirely the interests of the country for the furtherance of their own petty party schemes—so careless for the future of responsible government as to twist from their real use the forms of the House?—forms that were made for the purpose of protecting freedom of debate—a party that were striving to establish a precedent that a minority, however small, might, by an obstinate perseverance in wrong doing, oblige the Govern-

ment, though supported by a majority, to adopt the measures and the policy of the minority. The course that had been pursued by honorable members opposite had already struck a severe blow to responsible government in this colony. The monstrous and unprecedented position they had taken up might be seized upon by any unscrupulous party in future as a precedent, and used by them to enable them to accomplish their own ends—careless as to the confusion into which the affairs of the country might be thrown, and callous as to the position into which they might sink large numbers of their fellow colonists. He trusted, however, that the unflinching determination of honorable members on the Government side of the House to uphold constitutional government, and the good sense of honorable members on the other side of the House, would prevent the establishment of any such unconstitutional precedent being fixed to this Legislature. It appeared to him that honorable members opposite were striving to take advantage of the magnanimous, though, perhaps, unwise, action of the Government at the close of the last session, in providing them with a way of escape from the untenable position in which they had then placed themselves. The Government, by accepting three months' supply when they might have insisted upon twelve months' supply, afforded honorable members opposite a way of escaping from the entanglement of the obstructive course of policy they had been pursuing, without the mortification of shewing to the country, and to their constituents, that they were in the wrong, and that they had acted in a way that was unconstitutional. He desired it to be understood that he was not now upholding the conduct of the honorable the Premier on that occasion; but the honorable gentleman might, perhaps, have adopted the course he did, in the hope that though there might be a small evil in his doing so, a great good would come out of it. He had no doubt that the honorable gentleman did what he then did, believing it would be for the benefit of the country, and consented to bring in a Bill this session, as he had done, for the establishment of single electorates—a system of representation which the honorable gentleman had always advocated, and in which he (Mr. Wienholt) had always believed. But honorable members had now something beyond the present to think of. They had now the very foundations of the principles of responsible government to uphold. The question now was one as to the sacrifice or not of the constitution under which they were governed; and he would say most distinctly and unhesitatingly, in the face of the House and of the country, that if the shameful tactics of a factious minority, in obstructing all business, by taking advantage of the forms of the House, and moving that the Chairman of Committees report progress, or report no progress, and

motions of that sort, and have them repeated from day to day, and throughout every sitting, though they were negatived by large majorities on every occasion—if, he said, such shameful tactics were allowed to prevail, there would be an end to constitutional government, so far as this colony was concerned; because no party would require a majority in future in Parliament, and any party would only have to be unscrupulous enough to resort to the dodge of perverting the forms of the House, in order to accomplish its ends. Now, what was the shallow excuse the Opposition offered for the course of conduct they were pursuing? With some, it was that they wanted the Redistribution Bill passed; with others, that they had no faith in the Government; and, again, with some of them, that, though they believed the Government to be sincere, they had no confidence in honorable members who sat behind the Government. Now, he would ask, if they were going the right way to work by stopping all legislation by such prettexts as those? It appeared to him from their conduct that the Opposition did not really want the Redistribution Bill to pass. His thorough opinion was that they wanted another dissolution of Parliament, by which they hoped they might be able to gain some advantage.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear.

MR. WIENHOLT: No doubt some of the honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, were afraid that they would lose their seats if the bunches by which they were returned were broken up. If honorable members opposite really wished to see this Redistribution Bill passed into law, let them vote the Supply that was needed for the carrying on of the business of the country—the Supply that should have been voted last session—the Supply for this year, of which several months had already gone by, and which Supply, a great majority of honorable members of this House was anxious and willing to grant; and so let those honorable members opposite shew that the rule of of this country was that of a majority in Parliament. As the honorable the Premier had justly and truly remarked, the statement that the Ministry could not obtain Supply was a mere subterfuge; for the Ministry could obtain Supply as soon as the Opposition should cease from obstructing Supply in the manner they were doing—a manner that three or four brainless idiots could carry out as well as them. Honorable members opposite, when they stated that if Supply was granted, honorable members sitting on the Government side of the House would not remain to proceed with any other business, knew full well that they were stating what was not correct, and what they had no grounds for stating. Honorable members on the Government side of the House were as desirous of proceeding with useful legislation as honorable members on the Opposition side of the

House were. He believed that they had the general welfare of the colony, and of every interest in it, far more deeply at heart than honorable members on the Opposition side of the House; and though they were not always parading their views in that respect, and making a stalking-horse of them, still he thought they had at heart the interests of the community they represented, and that they had a desire to promote the prosperity of all classes in the colony; and that, he thought, was more than honorable members opposite were anxious to do. Now, he was at a loss to understand what honorable members opposite hoped to gain by the course they were pursuing. Did they imagine that, for a moment, the Crown would tolerate their action in refusing Supply, which a great majority of the members of the House were willing to grant? Did they imagine that the Ministry, who had a large majority in the House, would resign, or that they would be asked by the Crown to do so? That a large majority should give way to a small and factious minority would be absurd; such a thing had never been heard of in the history of constitutional government. Now, he would ask honorable gentlemen opposite to pause in the course they were pursuing. It was a course which, they must know, would be extremely detrimental to the colony. It was a course that would prevent the passing of useful legislation, and that would meet with the detestation of all the people in the colony, and snap the popularity that some honorable members opposite thought they possessed throughout the colony. In the name of common sense, then, he would ask them to withdraw from the position they had taken up, and which was one that was totally unprecedented in any British colony.

MR. KING said that from the way the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government first talked about the Government having the power of putting out the lights on the coast, it might be taken that it was a part of his purpose to do so, if the Opposition did not consent to vote the Estimates for the remainder of the year; but he was glad to find that the honorable gentleman had withdrawn from that position. No doubt he felt that he dared not do so; but he now dared to talk of starving the unfortunate inmates of the hospitals, and in that way punishing the Opposition for the course of conduct they were pursuing. Now, he thought that the honorable gentleman, for his own credit, as well as for the credit of the colony, ought to adopt some other way of punishing honorable members on the Opposition side of the House than that of inflicting injury on the helpless inmates of the hospitals, the lunatic asylums, and other benevolent institutions of the colony. He did not think it would tend to increase the popularity of the party in power, that when they had the power of putting out the lights on the coast, and stopping the salaries of the civil ser-

vants, they would refrain from doing so; but would, instead, stop the supplies to the hospitals, and thereby make the helpless suffer—those who were unable in any way to help themselves. Now, there was not one in the country, whether in those institutions or out of them, but would know that it was the Ministry, and not the Opposition, that were stopping the supplies for those institutions; for the Opposition had offered repeatedly to grant such a measure of Supply as would enable the Government to carry on the business of the country, and meet all their ordinary expenditure; but they would not accept of the proposition made by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. As to the question of majorities and minorities, he would admit that it was a principle of parliamentary government that majorities should rule; but it was a first principle of parliamentary government that the Parliament should represent the people; and that was what the House, as at present constituted, did not do, and had not done for years past. Now what right, he would ask, had the honorable member for Western Downs, and other honorable members on the Government side of the House, to come here and talk of themselves—and that to men as good as themselves—as coming here by divine right; and altogether ignoring the people out of doors? In the matter of representation, constitutional government had here become a farce, and had been so for years past—ever since some of the unpeopled districts, at the time of the establishment of responsible government, had become largely peopled. The purpose of representative government was that the people of the country should be represented. At the present time, large numbers of the people in many of the districts of the colony were not represented; and when they had set that state of things to rights, then he would admit that majorities in the House ought to rule. But still, even then, the rights of the majority would be subject to be guided by the rights of the minority. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had stated that the minority had no right to object to the passing of the Estimates, because there was a majority willing to pass them; but was the honorable gentleman to tell the House that if the Government brought down Estimates for ten years, and they had a majority willing to pass them, the minority had no right to oppose them? The honorable gentleman also told the House that there was a majority on the Government side of the House that would not vote to turn the Government out in any case; and what did that mean but this, that if he had brought down Estimates for ten years, instead of for so many months of this year, the Government had a majority that would support him? Now, it had been the determination of the people, for years past, that there should be increased representation in the House; and the present Bill was the sixth that had been brought in for the pur-

pose; and the people were watching the dodges of the party at present in power to prevent additional representation. Such being the case, the Opposition, who, he maintained, represented the majority of the people, were entitled to take advantage of every legitimate means to resist the passing of the Estimates, in the meantime; and to enforce the rights of the people, in demanding the passing of the Redistribution Bill before consenting to pass the Estimates for the remainder of the year. Honorable members were in the position of partners in a firm—they were partners in a firm, of which the people were also partners. Now, in a business partnership, the principle observed was that the profits, as well as the losses, should be shared amongst the members of the firm, in proportion to the extent of their respective interests. Viewing the matter in that light, were the majority of the people, he would ask, to be deprived of their fair share in the representation of the colony, and the minority to receive more than their fair share? He maintained that the constituencies represented by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House contained two-thirds of the population of the colony; and they also contributed two-thirds to the revenue. Fully two-thirds of the taxation of the colony was levied on the constituencies represented by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER on the Government side of the House: It is not true.

MR. KING: The honorable member said it was not true, but he would yet shew him that it was true. When the Redistribution Bill had come into operation, he would be able to shew the honorable member that it was true. He would shew him that the population that would then be represented on the Opposition side of the House furnished two-thirds of the revenue; and the Opposition would not allow that two-thirds of the revenue to be spent by a majority of honorable members in the House who represented a small minority of the people out of doors. They had been told that the Opposition refused to discuss the measures of the Government. Now, he denied that such was the case. He for one had not done so, and he had not heard that any honorable member who sat on the Opposition side of the House had refused to do so. All that the Opposition wanted was discussion. They asked the Government to bring forward their measures, and to let the House proceed with them. But they would not do so. They would not bring them forward and allow the Opposition to discuss them. They had brought forward a number of their measures, placed them on the notice paper, and had got them read a first time, but they had allowed them to stick there. None of the measures of the Government that had been read a first time had yet been brought forward for a second reading. Now, with regard to the agreement that was come to last session,

the understanding was, not that the Government were to bring in a Redistribution Bill and merely lay it on the table of the House, but that they were to proceed with it and pass it. It was not to be supposed that honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were such fools as to vote supplies for three months, on the understanding that the Bill was merely to be brought in and laid upon the table. The understanding most undoubtedly was, that the Bill was to be brought in and discussed. Honorable members on the Opposition side of the House did not say that the Bill was not a good one. They said, as some honorable members on the Government side of the House had said also, that it was not such a measure as they would like to see become law as it stood at present; but they admitted that it might be made a good Bill in committee. The honorable member for Western Downs had spoken of there being a party in the House who were always attacking the pastoral tenants, because of their possession of the Crown lands of the Colony. Now, he thought, when they looked to the experience of the colony of Victoria, they would see that there were good grounds for those attacks. No people knew better than the Victorians, that there was not a more unscrupulous party than the Crown tenants; and the contest that was carried on with them, through their representatives in the Legislature of Victoria, with respect to the desire of that party to monopolise the lands of the colony, was both a long and a severe one; and now, here they were fighting, in 1872, a battle with the Crown tenants in this colony, with respect to the lands of the colony, similar to the battle that was fought in Victoria, in 1858. The honorable member, it was also well known, had considerable influence with the Government, and he hoped that he (Mr. Ramsay) would use his influence with the Government to adopt a course of action that would enable them to provide for the hospitals and other charitable institutions of the colony, to pay the civil servants, to carry on such public works as were in progress, and meet the general expenditure necessary for carrying on the business of the colony. The honorable gentleman had also asked, if the Opposition imagined that the Representative of the Crown would tolerate the continuance of the unconstitutional course of conduct pursued by the Opposition? Well, he (Mr. King) did not know, nor did he pretend to know what the Representative of the Crown would do, or what he would not do. But they had the fact that a representative of the Crown had sanctioned a more unconstitutional course of conduct on the part of the Government, than it would be to tolerate the present conduct of the Opposition. The course of conduct to which he alluded, was described by the highest authorities at home as being unconstitutional; as would be seen by the despatches that were now in the possession of the House. The Government had obtained the power they at

present possessed, and held it by the majority they were enabled to secure, through the unconstitutional dissolution that was allowed them. But the majority in the House, as he had already stated, represented the minority of the people, while the minority in the House represented the majority of the people; and, but for the unconstitutional dissolution which the present Government obtained, the present Opposition, instead of being in a minority, would have been in a majority. Now, the honorable member at the head of the Government had not shewn any precedent, that would justify the Opposition in giving way under present circumstances; and until he could shew such a precedent as that, he hoped he would not call upon them to recede from the position they had taken up; but, failing his being able to do so, he hoped that, in order to facilitate an agreement being come to between parties on both sides of the House, or such a conclusion being arrived at to this dispute as the honorable gentleman desired, he would at once bring forward a precedent, that would shew to honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, why they should resign the rights of the majority of the people to the majority in the House—who were the representatives of the minority of the people—a majority that was obtained by the Government by a fluke; for it was by having talked over and succeeded in seducing the Representative of the Crown to grant them a dissolution—which was an unconstitutional dissolution—that the Government were able to secure a temporary majority by the elections that followed. Now, the majority, as it had been obtained by unconstitutional means, was undeniably an unconstitutional majority; and, therefore, he maintained that the minority were fully justified in abiding by the position they had taken up.

Mr. THORN said that the question before the House appeared to him to be one, not of the stopping of aid to the hospitals, or the putting out of the lighthouses on the coast, but as to whether a majority should rule in the House—whether they should form a precedent that would be handed down, not merely to Queensland and the other Australian Colonies, but to the world, that a minority should be allowed to rule? and whether parliamentary government should cease, and some other form of government should take its place? The honorable member for Wide Bay, and the honorable member for Toowoomba, had said a good deal about honorable members on the Government side of the House tampering with the electoral rolls of the colony. Now, he could assure those honorable members, and every other honorable member on the Opposition side of the House, that if there was one thing respecting which honorable members on the Government side had been more negligent than another, it had been the revision of the electoral rolls. If they had paid as much attention to the revision of the electoral rolls as honorable members opposite

had done, the Government would have had a majority of two to one. He and other honorable members were quite well aware of what was going on throughout the country, on the side of the party represented by honorable members opposite. He had been informed that the agents of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and the honorable member for Wide Bay, were busy in several districts of the colony, getting the rolls stuffed, under the provisions of the Elections Act passed last session; and he understood that, at the present time, Mr. T. P. Pugh, the secretary of the Registration Association, was now at work in the Burnett and Wide Bay districts, getting the rolls stuffed for those districts; and so the honorable the Minister for Works had better look out next election.

MR. LILLEY: If the honorable member wished a contradiction, he could give it him. What he had said was not true.

MR. THORN: He knew that Mr. Pugh was now in those districts, and that he had been at Bundaberg and Mount Perry.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: And at Gladstone too.

MR. THORN: Yes, and at Gladstone too; and there were agents of the association in other districts of the colony for the same purpose. A good deal had also been said by the honorable member for Toowoomba, and the honorable member for Wide Bay, about the conduct of the magistrates in the matter of attending at the revision courts. Now, he maintained that the magistrates everywhere did their duty in attending at those courts, and they sat every day up to the last day allowed them by the Act, for the purpose of enabling parties to substantiate their claims. Instead of obstacles being thrown in the way of parties wishing to substantiate their claims, every facility was afforded them for doing so. He would, therefore, recommend the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba to make himself better acquainted with the facts of the case before he again brought such charges against the magistracy as he had done. As he had said already, the questions at issue at the present time, were—whether the minority should be allowed to rule the majority? and whether there was to be parliamentary government in Queensland or not? When the railway question was brought forward, it might be found that there would be about the same minority opposed to the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway; and he would warn the honorable members for Brisbane that they must not be astonished if the anti-railway party in the House offered the same unconstitutional obstruction to that question, as honorable members opposite now offered to the question before the House; and he could assure honorable members of the Opposition, that they had taught him, and some other honorable members on the Government side of the House, a lesson in the art of obstruction, which they would not readily forget. Now, assuming that the Government accepted of

the two months' supply, which the Opposition were willing to concede, and that they passed the Redistribution Bill, what would be the next step? Why this—that the Opposition would offer to dole out to the Government supply for another month or two, until some other measure was passed, say the Immigration Bill; and then another month's supply, till the Railway Bill was passed,—and so on, till the whole of the Government measures had been disposed of. That, he had no doubt, would be the course the Opposition would pursue; and let honorable members on that side of the House contradict him if they could. He was glad to hear the honorable the Premier say that he would not submit to such a degradation. If minorities were, on all occasions, to carry on such a course of obstruction as the present minority were doing, there would be an end to all legislation. It was not a Redistribution Bill that honorable members opposite wanted, but an Additional Members Bill, because they were afraid of losing their power if a Redistribution Bill were passed. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had said that single electorates had been condemned at home by the most thinking men of the day. Now, he maintained that the reverse was the case. Single electorates, honorable members opposite must admit, would completely destroy the representation of minorities. The present Earl of Derby, when Lord Stanley, and also Mr. John Bright, both condemned the principle of the representation of minorities; and consequently, he took it, that they would be in favor, or, at any rate, would not be opposed to single electorates. The honorable member for Wide Bay would, he had no doubt, like to see another dissolution. The honorable member did not want a Redistribution Bill, for he knew that, if such a Bill were passed, his power would have departed; and no doubt, he would found his argument for another dissolution on the fact of the Elections Act, passed last session, giving residential suffrage. By that Act, there would be quite a host of names added to the rolls of the colony; and, perhaps, under its operation, a slight difference might be made in the representation of the Wide Bay and Burnett Districts, but that difference would be counteracted in other districts. Now, he would ask the Opposition whether, in the event of every measure, or nearly every measure, mentioned in the Speech being passed, they would consent to the passing of the Estimates for 1873? He would ask the member for Wide Bay, and the honorable member for South Brisbane, to answer that question, but he feared they would not; and if they did not, it would shew the insincerity of their public professions, and prove that it was the Government benches they wanted, and not that the business of the country should be proceeded with. The vocation of those honorable members would be gone if they allowed the business of the colony to be proceeded with; and the

real fact of the case, he believed, was that those honorable members were jealous of the Government, because of their bringing down such a liberal programme. He hoped some honorable member on the Opposition side would answer the question he had put, as to whether the minority would allow the Estimates for 1873 to be proceeded with, in the event of most, if not all, of the measures in the Ministerial programme being passed? Honorable members opposite seemed to overlook the largeness of the majority which the present Government had. They had a majority of six in a House consisting of only thirty-two members; and that majority was proportionately about as large as a majority of 120 in the House of Commons; and it was, therefore, a larger majority than Mr. Gladstone had at present, which he believed was only about seventy or eighty. He, therefore, was greatly pleased to hear the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government express his determination not to give way, and thereby admit that the majority was to be dictated to by a paltry and small minority. It struck him that there was one thing which the honorable member for Wide Bay, and the party he belonged to, wanted in particular, and that was, as he had said before, a dissolution, and he then gave his reasons for thinking so. He, for his own part, was strongly opposed to frequent dissolutions; and he was opposed to the last one. Suppose that the present Ministry was defeated, and that the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was called upon to form a Ministry, and that he succeeded in doing so, and he found himself in this position when he came back to the House, that he was unable to carry on, and therefore asked for a dissolution, His Excellency might refuse to grant him a dissolution. In fact, he believed that the honorable member would not have any right to ask for a dissolution. All the leading English authorities were opposed to frequent dissolutions. The dissolution that was obtained by Sir James Martin, of Sydney, not long ago, was condemned, although the Parliament that was dissolved was not one that was formed under Sir James Martin's administration. But, in addition to that, the English authorities had laid it down, in a message to the Governor of South Australia, that the Governor of the colony was not to grant a dissolution until every section of the House had been tried, and had failed to form a Government. Now, that being the case, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, if he could not succeed in forming a Ministry, or in carrying on the business of the country, would have no right to ask for a dissolution. He knew some of the dodges that certain parties on the other side of the House had been carrying on, and he could tell the honorable member for Fortitude Valley that there were honorable members on the Opposition side of the House who were more cunning than he was himself; and he could tell

him, also, that if the parties he referred to got the opportunity, they would hold on to office longer, and with a firmer tenacity, than he would. There was no possible dodge, he believed, that the party he referred to would not resort to, in order to gain and to hold possession of office; but it was well known to every honorable member in the House that it was not in the nature of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley to descend to dodges. He could assure the honorable member that there were some honorable members sitting on the same side of the House with him who were trying all they could to "sell" him; and he could assure that, with all his knowledge of them, he did not thoroughly know the craftiness of the honorable member for Wide Bay, and the honorable member for South Brisbane. He could tell that a conspiracy was being hatched by honorable members who sat on the Opposition side of the House to depose him from the leadership of the Opposition. Now, he hoped the honorable member would set himself right with the House; and that he would assist the Government in getting Supply. He could assure honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, that it was his desire to see almost every measure in the Ministerial programme carried out. Nearly every measure promised in the Opening Speech would have his support. He would be no party to any adjournment till every measure was discussed—so far as the interests of his constituency, and the interests of the constituency of every honorable member who sat on the same side of the House with him, were concerned.

MR. MOREHEAD said he thought honorable members on the Government side of the House might now return the compliment that honorable members on the Opposition side paid them last session, when they called them dumb dogs. Now, he would ask honorable members opposite, if they could not find any more vituperative language to use towards honorable members on the Government side of the House? Was their fund of such language wholly expended, and their dictionaries completely exhausted? It seemed to him that honorable members opposite were quite at a loss for anything more to say. He thought he observed, a little ago, a wink in the left eye of the honorable member for South Brisbane, for the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Griffith, to get up and address the House; but the honorable member did not take the hint. He would now turn to the speech of the honorable member for Wide Bay. That honorable member had no animosity in his mind towards anyone. He was full of the milk of human kindness towards everyone, and it never curdled in his breast. But there was a great amount of dull monotony about his speeches; so much so, that sometimes when he rose he soon emptied the House. That honorable mem-

ber had stated that last session the Government agreed that a Redistribution Bill should be brought in and passed this session on the consideration of the House voting supplies for three months of the present year. Now, he did not understand that such was the nature of the compromise, nor did any honorable member on the Government side of the House understand it in that way.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Nor on the other side.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No, nor any other honorable member on the other side. He was certainly surprised at the hardihood of the honorable member for Wide Bay coming forward, night after night, and time after time, repeating assertions that had been made over and over again by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, and which had been as often met and refuted by honorable members on this side. The honorable member referred to the speech of the honorable member for Western Downs, who made one of the most able speeches he (Mr. Morehead) had ever listened to in the House; and he must say that he was proud to sit on the same side of the House with a gentleman who could make such a speech. The honorable member, in doing so, alluded to Victoria, and stated that here they were now fighting the same battles as were fought with the Crown tenants in Victoria in 1858. But the honorable member omitted to notice that Victoria was a small colony, and that Queensland was a large colony; and that Victoria was densely peopled, while this colony was very sparsely peopled as yet. The population of Victoria was to that of Queensland as five to one. Now, therefore, there was no analogy, he maintained, between the two colonies as to the requirement for lands for settlement, and for agricultural purposes. There was plenty of land in this colony that could be thrown open; and that being the case, he maintained that the cry about opening the lands was only used by the Opposition as a bastard means to obtain popularity, which, by honest means, they could not gain. There had also been a great amount of talk about a fraudulent dissolution, and that it was in consequence of it that the Government had secured the majority they had. Well, let the dissolution have been fraudulent or not, there was this fact, that honorable members were here in virtue of having been elected by their respective constituencies, and they were here for the purpose of carrying on the legislation of the country. He did not think, however, that the dissolution could have been so very fraudulent as it was sought to make it out to have been, when they found that the honorable the Premier was returned by so large a majority as he had over that obtained by any other honorable member of the House. What honorable members on the Government side of the House had to contend against was, not only a factious Opposition, but also a hireling and venal press, for the *Brisbane*

Courier, he maintained, was bribed by the party opposite.

Mr. STEPHENS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He would tell the honorable member that he cared as little for his cries of "Hear, hear," as he cared for his speeches; and he would tell that honorable member again, as he had told him before, that his speeches, as they appeared in the *Courier*, were very different from what they were as delivered in the House. Now, suppose, as was the case, that he was opposed to the extension of the Southern and Western Railway between Ipswich and Brisbane; and suppose he refused to consent to the line being made—that he would oppose it tooth and nail, and would persist in opposing it, and that he got several other honorable members to join him, and that they said they would divide and divide, and would not grant the railway—how would those honorable members who were in favor of the railway, and strongly in favor of it, like that? But those who were opposed to the railway, if they acted in that way, would only be pursuing the course chalked out for them by the Opposition on the present occasion. However, he took a better view of the duties of honorable members than to adopt such a course; and he would say that if it was the will and determination of a majority of the House that the railway from Ipswich to Brisbane should be made, he would not offer any factious opposition to it. A happy thought was thrown out by his honorable friend who had just sat down, when he remarked that if the Government accepted the temporary supply now offered to them, and went on with the Redistribution Bill, and got it passed, they might then be offered a further temporary supply for the passing of the Immigration Bill; another, say for a couple of months, for the Railway Bill; so much for the Gold Duty Bill; and as the honorable member for Wide Bay was in favor of the repeal of the export duty on gold, there might not be much time occupied upon it, and a month's supply might be sufficient to go on with till it was passed; and then there would be so much offered for the passing of the Married Women's Property Bill; and so on, until all the measures of the Government, or most of them, were disposed of. Now, he would ask, was this sort of opposition to be made to every measure, or was it to end with the passing of the Redistribution Bill? He was extremely sorry to hear the honorable member for Fortitude Valley make the attack he did upon the squatters, when he spoke of their driving from their stations their sick shepherds and servants to be supported in the hospitals by the charity of the towns. He certainly expected better things of the honorable member than that he should speak in that way of the squatters. In regard to that portion of his speech, he fully upheld all that was said by his honorable friend, Mr. Weinhold, when he affirmed

that the outside districts sent fewer patients to the hospitals than the towns, and contributed more towards their support. He hoped the Opposition would now adopt a wiser course than they had been pursuing, and would no longer continue to impede legislation.

Mr. MILES said it did not seem to him that there was any prospect of parties on both sides of the House coming to a mutual understanding on this question. He thought it was very much to be regretted that the Government had put themselves in such an awkward position as they had done, by refusing the offer of a vote on account. It could not be denied that whatever evils might result from their refusal to take this vote for a few months, would altogether lie on their shoulders. Honorable members on the Opposition side of the House had been told that they had no right to distrust either the Government or their supporters. Now, when this Government came into office they told the House that it was administration, and not legislation, that was required; and with such a statement as that before them, were the Opposition not entitled, he would ask, to look with suspicion upon the policy of the Government? Honorable members on the Government side of the House, when they were before their constituents, at the last general election, denounced honorable members on the Opposition side of the House for wanton extravagance, and a wish to pursue a policy that would plunge the country into debt, and consequently render increased taxation necessary. Now what did they see but this, that the Government, in the face of all those accusations, came here and produced the very policy of the Opposition? On those grounds, then, he maintained that the Opposition had a right to be suspicious as to the programme of the Government. But, besides that, they saw this, that though the Redistribution Bill was at the head of the business paper this day week for a second reading, the order was postponed, and the Colonial Treasurer moved that the House go into Committee of Supply. Now it would be utterly impossible for honorable members on this side of the House to submit to be treated in that way. They could not permit such a course to be pursued. They had a perfect right before the Estimates were passed, and before any further measure of Supply was granted, to demand that some guarantee should be given them that the Government would go on with the Redistribution Bill, and other important measures, which they had promised. Then the action which the Government had taken with respect to telegraphic communication with England, and the Torres' Straits mail route, shewed that they were prepared to do the very thing they accused the Opposition of intending to do. Those projects, if entered upon, would involve the colony in a large expenditure of money, and would, no doubt, be used by the Govern-

ment, when the Estimates were under consideration by the House, as a pretext for refusing votes for public works. Now those various considerations, he thought, furnished abundant reason for the Opposition demanding some guarantee for the passing of the Redistribution Bill. He looked upon that Bill as the most important measure in the Ministerial programme. For his own part, he would be satisfied with the Bill if the fifth clause were struck out of it; but in saying that, he wished it to be understood that he only spoke for himself. He did not know if any honorable member on the Opposition side of the House would also be satisfied with the Bill if that clause were struck out of it. He had shewn to the House that the Opposition had good reason to be suspicious of the conduct of the Government; and as a proof of a want of their sincerity in regard to furthering railway construction, he would direct the attention of honorable members to the first motion on that day's business paper, in the name of the honorable the Minister for Works. Now that was a question which he was sure honorable members of the Opposition would not have had the slightest objection to discuss, more especially as in the letter from Mr. Vickery, that gentleman mentioned the desirability of proceeding with the settlement of it as speedily as possible. Mr. Vickery stated:—

"The projectors are anxious for an early acceptance or refusal, as the time is exceedingly favorable for the embarkation of capital in judiciously planned enterprises; and if delay occurs, they may become so occupied with other undertakings as to be unable to give their attention and capital to this."

It was clear to his mind, from the manner in which that motion had been postponed from day to day, that the Government had no wish to deal with it on its merits. It was also equally clear to him that they had no wish to open up the lands of the colony to settlement. It could not be disputed by honorable members opposite that there was no part of the country so well calculated for the construction of railways on the principle proposed, than that asked for by Mr. Vickery, and that there was no more desirable method of having railways constructed than that of giving grants of land to the constructors of them; and he had heard the honorable the Minister for Works say that the moment such a proposition was made, the Government would take it up. But what was the fact?—why, that although the notice had been on the paper for a fortnight, it had been postponed, day after day, by that honorable member; therefore the Opposition had just grounds for doubting the sincerity of the Government. The honorable member had also said that if the people of Maranoa wanted a railway they should come forward with a similar proposition; but what, he would ask, was the use of any persons bringing forward a scheme for the construction of a railway by payment in land, when

it was well known that the Government had no intention of dealing with a similar proposition which had already been made to them? It was undoubtedly a great pity that the Government had adopted such a course in regard to the proposition of Mr. Vickery, as it had been agreed to by honorable members on both sides of the House, that if railways were constructed they should be on the plan proposed by that gentleman. Besides that, if the motion had been agreed to, it might have proved to be the initiation of a system which would provide railway communication with many of the outlying districts of the colony. They had been treated to a long lecture on constitutional government by the honorable member for Western Downs (Mr. Wienholt), who had said a great deal about the Government having a majority in that House; but he would remind honorable members opposite that the people were the real government of a country.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: Oh, oh.

MR. MILES: That was so, and there was no doubt that there was a large majority in favor of the course taken by the Opposition, and therefore they had the majority on their side. They had also been told by the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn, that certain honorable members on the Opposition were undermining the honorable member for Fortitude Valley; but he could assure the honorable member that he was not one of them, and as to the cunning mentioned by the honorable member, he could also assure him that it was all on the honorable member's own side of the House. The honorable the Colonial Secretary had made some remarks about charitable institutions, and he would take that opportunity of replying to what had been said by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, as he could bear testimony to the fact that the country districts contributed largely to the support of the hospitals; but, at the same time, he must say that the principal sums were contributed by the working men themselves, and not by the squatters.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear.

MR. MILES: He knew of one station in the Maranoa district, from which a donation of nearly £100 was made to a hospital, but that was not by the owners of the station, but by the working men. He could also say that there was a large number of men who were sent down from the interior to the Brisbane Hospital, because, in the country hospitals, they had not the materials to treat all cases, and men were turned out as incurable and sent down to Brisbane. It was only the other day that he obtained an order from the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Edmondstone, for the admission of a man to the hospital. The man, who was from Maranoa, was, it was true, a paying patient; but he mentioned that as an instance, to shew that

men did come from the interior to the Brisbane Hospital. He did not think, himself, that there was much use in prolonging the present discussion, for it appeared that honorable members on both sides had made up their minds that neither would give in. All he could say was, that whatever the result might be, the Opposition would be blameless. They were quite prepared to vote supplies to the Government for a period, to enable them to go on with the business of the country, and unless they had come to such a determination, he should not have felt justified in offering the present opposition. He looked upon the Redistribution Bill, imperfect as it no doubt was, as a Bill of very great importance to the country, and thought that it would, at any rate, be an improvement upon the present state of affairs. Honorable members opposite recognised that fact, but they did not want any change, they would rather let things remain as they were. They only represented one-third of the population, and consequently they knew that if a fair measure of redistribution was passed, it would alter the representation so much that they would not go back to that House with such a majority as they then had. They knew very well that, if they had redistribution, the power would pass from their hands, and thus they were determined to trifle with the House. Even supposing Supply had been granted to them as they wanted it, the Bill would have been withdrawn; in all probability the session would have been closed, and honorable members not again called together until the Estimates for 1873 were required. That, at least, was his opinion; and believing, as he did, that that would have been the course pursued by the Government, he felt bound to support the Opposition in the stand they were making. He trusted, however, that the Government would, even yet, think better of the course they were pursuing, and he would go further, and say, that if they had the interests of the country at heart, they would see the advisability of accepting the very reasonable proposition which had been made to them, of two or three months' supply, to enable them to carry on the business of the country, and to get the question of redistribution settled. The honorable member at the head of the Government had stated that he should consider it a degradation to the Government if they accepted such an offer as that made by the Opposition; but, he thought the country would think more of the honorable member if he put such a sentiment as that in his pocket, and pursued that course which would be most beneficial to the country generally.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he would not have troubled the House that evening with any remarks, as he considered that the whole matter had been exhausted, and it was useless for honorable members to go on bringing accusations against each other, had he not wished to reply to some remarks

which had been made by the honorable member who had just sat down, in respect to the application of Mr. Vickery. Now that honorable member had stated, that if the Government had had any desire to carry out such a plan as that proposed by Mr. Vickery, they would, at once, have proceeded to the consideration of the resolutions on the paper which referred to that subject. He would, however, tell that honorable member, that, earnest as the Government were in support of that scheme, he had no hesitation in saying that they considered the preservation of the constitution of the country of far greater importance than any proposition of Mr. Vickery. He had done all he could to encourage the introduction of private capital for the construction of railways, or any other public works; but he was not prepared to sacrifice the credit of the colony for the sake of any person. Honorable members would find that he was perfectly sincere in his wish to see Mr. Vickery's proposition accepted; but he would not go on with the consideration of it, at the sacrifice of the credit of the colony, or of the dignity of the Government of the colony, whether that Government was one of which he was a member or not. The honorable member had been rather unfortunate in his allusions to the practice, at the Brisbane Hospital, of receiving incurable patients. There was no doubt that that institution was most laudably conducted, and the honorable member was quite in error in saying that it was only made a reception for incurable patients, as only last week a woman called upon him, saying that her husband could not be admitted into that institution, as he was pronounced to be incurable. He believed that incurable patients were turned out, and therefore that hospital offered no more inducements than any country hospital. The honorable member should have been more careful before he made such a statement. Honorable members opposite had stated that when they got what they wanted they would vote Supply; but he thought the honorable member for Fortitude Valley did not really know what the honorable member for South Brisbane, or any of his supporters, did want. He noticed that the honorable member ejaculated something when he said that; but that was the way honorable members spoke, or, to put it in other words, they so mistrusted the Government, that until they got what they wanted they would not vote supplies. Now, he would ask whether the conduct of the Opposition during the last twelve months had not been such that the Government could not put confidence in them? The honorable member had used that old stock subject, that the Government only represented one-third of the people; but without going into arithmetical calculations, he would ask, how many persons that honorable member represented?—only one or two, so far as he knew. The honorable member did not find him getting

up and making those boasts, because he felt that his seat for Maryborough would be quite as insecure as the honorable member's would be at the next election; for he thought, to secure his seat, the honorable member must be a hypocrite, which he was not—and would have to make statements which he did not believe in—which the honorable member could not do, and therefore the honorable member's seat would be as insecure as his own would be. But for the honorable member to get up and say that because they did not represent the majority of the people they should not be allowed to govern, was an absurdity, as they had been sent to that House by their constituents, the only power that could send them. Yet, day after day, honorable members went to that House and told honorable members that they did not represent the people of the colony. It was childish. Who, pray, was to carry on the government of the country if it was not the representatives that were constitutionally returned? He would repeat the argument that he used on a previous evening, and say that if that House did not represent the people they had no right to pass any measure at all; they should refrain from passing the Redistribution Bill and the Estimates. Yet, all that was said by honorable members opposite, who were thus cutting the very ground from under their feet. He saw that the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was yawning, another had example he had caught from the honorable member for South Brisbane; and he supposed that was to remind him that he was making a long speech. He would point out, however, that the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, in criticising the speech of his honorable colleague, had endeavored to make out that that honorable gentleman meant that minorities had no right in the House. The honorable member said, that according to the ideas of the honorable the Premier, minorities had no right in the House; but nothing that the honorable the Premier said could possibly lead anyone to such a conclusion. What his honorable colleague did say, however, was, that if they were to have parliamentary government at all, the minority must submit to be governed by the majority. If honorable members opposite wished to know the use of minorities, he would tell them what it was. It was to find out that the majorities were wrong, and constitutionally, and by argument, to increase those minorities up to majorities. That was the proper course to be pursued; but, under the leadership of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, minorities had been degraded into factious Oppositions, and had lost the valuable character they once had in the Parliament of Queensland—they had degenerated into mere factious, useless opposition. Instead of the honorable member saving his power, he was frittering it away; and instead of attempting to gain a majority of the House, by swelling, constitu-

tionally, the minorities, he was obliged to resort to the last remedy of a politician, which was faction. What would the honorable member for Fortitude Valley have said of the honorable the Premier, if he had seen him, night after night, obstructing the business of the country, simply because he could not get his own way? Why, he would have got up and denounced the honorable gentleman in much stronger language than he himself had been denounced, and would have told him that he was a dishonor to his Queen and a blight on the prosperity of the country; he would also have asked, in his pathetic tones, whether this fine country, with all its magnificent resources, and which was destined to hold such a high position in the countries of the world, was to have its progress stopped by such party tactics as those shewn by the honorable member? That would have been the course pursued by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley; and he would say, as he had said before, that he believed no honorable member so much regretted the position into which he had been forced by the honorable gentlemen with him, as the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and that no honorable member would get out of it sooner than he would, if he could. Then again, that honorable member talked about the majority of the House using their power unconstitutionally. If that was the case, why was it that they did not find the honorable the leader of the Opposition get up and make a direct charge against the Government of an unconstitutional use of their power? Why did the honorable members opposite not get up and prove that such was the case? He would guarantee to the honorable member, whoever he was, that if he did prove it to be the case, there were at least half-a-dozen honorable members on the Government side of the House who would immediately join him. But the present mouthings against the Government, of what use were they, except to bring ridicule upon the most valuable component of the Government of a country, namely, the Opposition? He prided himself upon the fact that when he had the honor of sitting on the opposite side of the House, if he had not done any good, he at least had never degraded himself by carrying on such tactics as those of the present Opposition, or by asserting that the minority should rule the majority. It was not the first time he had heard the words, that the great object of an Opposition was to wring from the Government a redress of their wrongs. But, he would ask, what wrongs had the Government endeavored to inflict? They had brought in a number of most useful measures, which they would have passed had it not been for the obstruction of the Opposition. Not only, indeed, had the Opposition obstructed them, but they said, "Until you pass what we want, you shall not have Supply." What constitutional right had any Opposition to say that the Government should not have their Estimates

until they got what they wanted—until some measure they wanted was passed? What constitutional right did the Opposition possess to authorise the honorable the leader of it to get up and make such a statement? Last year they wanted the Ipswich and Brisbane Railway—now they wanted the Redistribution Bill: it was first the railway that they vowed should be made before the Government had Supply, or could do any business; but now they had changed their cry, and he would ask the honorable member, as a lawyer, what constitutional right had he or the Opposition to get up and make such a demand upon the Government? The honorable member must know that there were men like the Opposition on the Government side of the House, who had equal spirit with him; that there were men who had an equal amount of patriotism, and who were equally desirous of keeping up the dignity and credit of the country. Was it possible that, after being openly threatened, as the Government had been, that they would give in? No, it was not; and he would go further, and say that they would be utterly unworthy of the high position they held generally in the estimation of the people of the country, if they surrendered to the demand made upon them. He would take the opportunity of saying that the honorable member for the Mitchell had been unusually felicitous in the remarks he had made that evening, and he had been particularly struck by the able argument the honorable member had put forward—that if the present tactics were carried out by the Opposition, and if the Ipswich and Brisbane Railway was not made by the present Government, which was a strong Government, it would never be made when that Government got on to the other side of the House, as it would only be necessary for himself, and a few other resolute members, to get up and oppose it as a grievance, to prevent its being proceeded with. Now would not that be as fair as the course of conduct pursued by the present Opposition? He believed it would. He would now look at the matter in another light. He had for years before separation took place, had his views on the subject of the future capital of Queensland; and when a member of the Parliament of New South Wales, he had warned the House that separation should not take place until such time as a suitable place for the capital of the future colony should be fixed upon; and although he had not thought proper to follow up those views, he could say that the longer he lived, the more convinced he was of the correctness of the stand he then took up. He said at that time, that if they granted the capital to the young colony at the extreme southern end of it—at Brisbane—the whole legislation of the colony for years would be directed towards benefiting and consolidating the power of that end of it. Experience had since proved that his predictions were correct; and that that had been the great aim of all the Parlia-

ments of Queensland. He could now say that the course which had been pursued by the Opposition during the last two sessions, pointed out to him that the only panacea for getting out of the difficulty, into which they had been forced by the unconstitutional conduct of the Opposition, was the removal of the capital. That was the only remedy, and it had been forced upon the Government; and the Imperial Government must be told that affairs had got into such a position now, that there was no getting out of it, except by removing the capital. That faction was stopping the business of the country—that the minority were obstructing the majority; and that that obstruction was carried on by members who were living in the metropolis, and who, therefore, were indifferent to the waste of the public time. When that was represented to the British Government, so surely would the idea be forced upon them, that the only remedy would be found in removing the seat of Government. He would warn honorable members opposite, that as surely as they continued to pursue the tactics they now pursued, they were driving nails in the coffin of the city as the metropolis; and so surely would the capital of the colony be removed from Brisbane. He was sure that his constituents—that the people of Rockhampton, and that the other northern constituencies, would not much longer submit to the present course being pursued; and he verily believed that, within twelve months from the present time, a petition would be sent down to His Excellency the Governor to forward home, with forty or fifty thousand signatures attached to it, asking for the removal of the capital of the colony. That, he would impress upon honorable members opposite, would be solely owing to the conduct pursued by them. He had not advocated, in his own district, the removal of the capital, but only in that chamber; but he could see that that would be the result, as he was satisfied that the honorable members opposite were shewing to the British Government that they only viewed the other extreme of the colony from its present distance from the seat of Government, and cared not so long as they studied themselves only. But once let the capital be set down at Rockhampton, which was a suitable place—or plant it at Bowen, which was more suitable—or take it to Maryborough, which was most suitable of all—and he ventured to say that, when honorable members opposite were—as the supporters of the Government were at the present time—taken away, at a great expense, a long distance from their homes, and could not afford to waste their time—when they could not any longer play their own game except at considerable inconvenience to themselves—there would be a very different mode of conducting the business of the country. At present there was hardly one honorable member opposite who was inconvenienced by having to attend the House. They did not

care about the Gold Fields Bill, which he had been so anxious to get passed, or any other important measure. It was amusement to those honorable gentlemen to leave their homes of an evening, and go to that House, and carry on a factious opposition to the Government, which cost them nothing; but let the capital once be removed, and once propose to remove those honorable patriots from their homes—but he did not think it would be possible to remove them—he did not think there was one of the three honorable members for Brisbane who could be moved—who would consent to do so much for his constituents, that had reposed so much confidence in him—and the case would be very different. He was satisfied, however, that other honorable members would still continue to sacrifice their own convenience for the benefit of the country; and he had suggested to honorable members on both sides, the only way in which the business of the country could be carried on. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley called a suggestion his (the Secretary for Public Works)—but it was not his—that the Government should send in their resignations on the next day; but, supposing they did so, he would promise the honorable member that the lesson he had been taught by him should not be lost, but that he would pay the honorable member back in the same way. The honorable member should remember that “what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander”; and he might depend upon it that when he brought down a Governor’s Speech to that House, and made all sorts of promises, he would get up and say that he did not believe in them; and he would then go on reading from “Hansard” the abundant testimonies of the example he had for so doing, and would, no doubt, cause the honorable member to bitterly regret the day almost that he was ever born—a politician. He was quite sure that the honorable member would see—and he knew the honorable gentleman took a great interest in the country, and had made it his home—that by the course he had pursued, he had set the most vicious example that any politician had ever seen. He would like to know the way in which the honorable member intended to extricate the country from its present position. He could not command a majority; he never allowed any question to go to a division; no, that was carefully avoided, as that would be a record of the honorable member’s weak position. How, then, did he intend to shew the Government how it was to be done? He was sure the honorable member did not know. He would tell the honorable member that the present game had lasted long enough; he had tried for months to conquer the majority, but he could not. Did the honorable member believe that there were measures necessary to the country, and that the Government did not intend to carry those measures on? Until he did that, he could give no indication

to the House that he intended to let the Government carry them on at all. The argument put forward by honorable gentlemen opposite was, that if the Government would take two or three months' supply, they would assist the Government in carrying on the business of the country. But it was not for the Opposition to do anything of the kind. They should tell the Government, when they brought in a programme, that they must stand or fall by that programme; that they would not have their assistance in passing their policy, because it was not the policy of the Opposition. That was the proper course for an Opposition to take up, and was the position assumed by the Opposition in the House of Commons. But it was not the course which had been adopted by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley when Premier, who, by his pleadings, on several occasions, had tried to get the squatting members over to assist him in passing measures. He had always considered that that was a very gross departure from parliamentary practice; for the Government should not ask for the support of a single member of the Opposition. He had seen enough of the consequences of Governments asking for that support; he had seen the wretched Land Bill of 1868, for instance; and he had been ashamed of the way in which that Bill had been rushed through. The true business of an Opposition was to watch closely the Government, give them fair constitutional power, and if they could not approve of their measures, to oppose them; but to accept such an offer as the Opposition had made, would be to degrade the Government in the eyes of all right-thinking men in the colony. It was an offer that no Government could accept, and he should himself most firmly deprecate passing any measures with the aid of the Opposition.

Dr. O'DONERTY said he wished that the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had the opportunity which the honorable the Minister for Works suggested he might have, of testing the opinions he had formed, as the head of the Government; for he was quite certain that, were the honorable member Premier in that chamber on the next day, he would not take the unwise course which the Government were now pursuing—of preventing the very important measure of Redistribution being discussed until he had obtained all supplies for the year. The honorable the Minister for Works had been giving them a lecture upon the functions of an Opposition, but it seemed to him that there were honorable members on his side of the House who were quite as capable of understanding and appreciating the functions of an Opposition as that honorable member. The honorable member had informed them that one of their duties was to try and increase their minority to a majority; but it appeared to him that that was exactly what the Opposition at the present time were endeavoring to accomplish. They, however,

took a different course, in doing it, to that recommended by the honorable gentleman, who thought that they should spend months in that House in endeavoring to persuade the honorable members sitting on the back benches opposite to side with them; but they had come to the conclusion that that was a perfect impossibility. They were too well aware, as they had proved to the House, that those honorable members had been returned simply for one purpose, namely, to legislate for one class and protect one interest. They might be wrong, but he thought he could answer for it that there was not a single honorable member on his side of the House who differed from him in that respect—that the honorable gentleman opposite had been returned, unconstitutionally, to that chamber solely for that special purpose—to protect the one particular class. It seemed to him, therefore, that under such circumstances it would be simply a waste of time for honorable members on his side of the House to attempt to convert honorable members opposite to their way of thinking. He must confess that the defence of the Government, as put forward by the honorable the Minister for Works, was a very bad one; because the honorable member, to support it, had attempted by threats to draw away honorable members from the duty they owed to their constituents. Only a couple of nights ago, the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, with that remarkable persuasive power he possessed, attempted to adopt the same rôle in regard to the honorable member for Rockhampton, and with some success, if rumor was to be believed. Public rumor said that the staunch member for Rockhampton had been so overcome by the persuasive arguments of the honorable member, or other valuable considerations, that he intended to walk over to the other side of the House. But he thought he knew the honorable member for Rockhampton better than to place any reliance on such a rumor, for he knew the honorable member to be too old a veteran in that House and elsewhere, in support of the rights of the people in the colonies, to be bought over by any argument of the kind. He knew that the honorable member could not, by threats, or by any persuasions that could be used by the Government, be bought over to a betrayal of the popular cause. He had not yet begun to despair of the rights of the people of the colony; but if he found that his old and respected friend, the honorable member for Rockhampton, from any such reasons as those he had adduced, was willing to betray his trust to his constituents, he should almost be inclined to give up the cause of the people in despair. The honorable member, the Minister for Works, had taken a different rôle again, that evening, from that of the honorable member for Western Downs. That honorable member cast his eye over the unfortunate members for Brisbane, and thought to frighten them by saying that there

would be no chance of a railway from Ipswich to Brisbane, and that the capital would be changed. Now, he wished to goodness the capital was changed, if, while it remained at Brisbane, they were perpetually to have such Governments as the present one. What had been the benefit derived from Brisbane being the metropolis? Why, it had been brought down to be one of the most miserable capitals in the colonies. It had been cut off from the trade of the western districts and other parts of the colony, and had been left quite isolated; and the capital, that ought to be in the position of commanding the trade of the colony, had been entirely deprived of the advantages to which, by its position, it was entitled. He only wished to goodness that the capital was changed, for it could not be made worse than it was. He did not think it was any advantage to a city having a good port to be made the political capital, as it was perpetually besieged by questions like the present; and he only wished they would change the capital, rather than treat it as it had been treated, and was treated at present. Another threat which had been levelled against them was the non-completion of the Ipswich and Brisbane Railway, as the result of the course pursued by honorable members on his side of the House; but he noticed that not a word had been said about the Northern Railway. He would now tell the Government that he would make them a present of the railway;—he represented Brisbane, and he would not budge one inch from the position he had taken, for the railway or for the capital. He did not care one farthing about the railway, whether its construction was impeded or not by his action or that of honorable members with him, so long as he felt that he was doing his duty to his constituents and to the country, at the present time. That, he considered, was the first duty he had to fulfil, and he was sure that there was not an honorable member near him who would not back him up in that opinion. There was no doubt that the construction of the Ipswich and Brisbane Railway was a matter of the most vital importance to the people of Brisbane; and, lately, he believed it was of more importance than ever, owing to the valuable tin discoveries that had been made, on the border of the colony, in the western district. He thought the honorable the Premier, and other honorable members, must be aware of that, and that the very valuable mineral discoveries which had been made rendered it most important that the great trunk line should be completed as speedily as possible, so that they might attract the trade that might arise on the borders of New South Wales. They would find that every effort was being made in New South Wales to obtain that traffic; and yet he found the honorable member for Warwick, whose constituents were most interested in getting all that traffic, sitting quietly in his place and backing up the Government in their gross

obstruction to business. He would like to ask that honorable member, whether his constituents were as one with him in the course he was pursuing? He would like to know whether the honorable gentleman's constituents were satisfied with the Government programme—whether they were satisfied with the manner in which Warwick had been treated in the Redistribution Bill?—

MR. CLARK: Yes.

DR. O'DOHERTY did not believe that they were. The honorable member might sit in his place and say what he liked; but he (Dr. O'Doherty) would say that they were not satisfied. He might, also, go to the honorable members for Ipswich and West Moreton, and ask them, whether their constituents were satisfied and contented with the Government programme? No, the honorable members knew very well that they were not; and it was because the Government, also, knew that they were not satisfied, that they would not go on with their Redistribution Bill. They knew very well, that if they went on with it, the great Ipswich and West Moreton combination would melt away like snow. It was not because of the wound to their dignity, that they refused to accept the proposition of the Opposition; and he might say, that to his mind, it did seem the most preposterous thing for the Government to talk about their dignity. He thought that word "dignity" came with very bad grace from the Government—because there were half-a-dozen gentlemen, Ministers!—why, remove those six, and what difference would there be between the honorable members opposite and the honorable members on his own side of the House? It came with very bad grace indeed from the Government for them to come forward, because they were six in number, and say, "Our dignity is touched." He would say, that the House did not think much of their dignity. Honorable members on his side of the House were in earnest; they had the interests of their constituents to consider, and those only; and for that reason they were different to honorable members opposite. Goodness knew that he was heartily sick of all that waste of time, and he would venture to say, that every honorable member was sick of it also. They had gone to that House to do their duty and nothing more; and he repudiated the statement of the honorable Minister for Works, that he went there to indulge a party spirit. It was because he conceived that he was performing his solemn duty to his constituents that he was there; and if he was not doing his duty, let them, and them alone, tell him he was not, and he would cease his opposition the next day. He would, however, be unworthy of his position, as a representative of the most important constituency in the colony, if he had allowed himself to be crushed down by the Government, and had not taken up the stand he now occupied.

MR. FERRETT said he rose on the present occasion with a great deal of regret that he should have to speak again on the motion

before the House. The honorable member who had just sat down seemed to think that he did his duty to his constituents more than any other honorable member in the House; and he also talked very largely about his representing an important constituency. Well, he did not doubt that the honorable member did represent a very important constituency; but there were other honorable members who represented important constituencies as well as he did; and he himself was one who did so. The honorable member also said that he considered he was doing his duty to his constituents in supporting the Opposition. Well, he (Mr. Ferrett) considered that he was doing his duty to his constituents in supporting the Government. Now he must say that he had never heard such a silly speech from the honorable member for Fortitude Valley as he had heard from that honorable member to-night; and as for the speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane, it was just such a speech as they always heard from him. As for that honorable member taking up the position he took up about his making unfounded statements, it was of little use his doing so, for he had been more than once charged with that. Now, if a statement was not a fact, it must be a misstatement; but the honorable member did not prove, one of the statements, or rather misstatements that he made; and if he could not prove them he had no right to make them. Now, not one of the honorable members on the Opposition side of the House had proved that the course they were pursuing was a constitutional one. The fact was, they all felt that they had no constitutional ground to stand upon; but that, on the contrary, they were taking advantage of the forms of the House, and distorting them so as to make them apply to purposes for which they were never intended. The Opposition was in a very small minority, and yet they took advantage of the forms of the House to control the majority. But it was never intended by those forms that the minority should so have the power of controlling the majority, as to be able to obstruct the Government, and put an end to all legislation, as the present minority in the House were doing. Now, looking at the way the Opposition had taken advantage of the forms of the House to prevent business being proceeded with, he thought it would be well that, as he had previously suggested, some alteration should be made in their Standing Orders, so as to prevent any honorable member repeating, in the course of the same debate, a motion which had previously been determined.

Mr. HEMMANT said he thought the honorable the Minister for Works, in stating that he would pursue the same course that the Opposition were now taking, when he came to be in opposition, used about the weakest argument he had ever heard come from the Government benches. He had listened with great attention to the speech of the honorable

member—and he generally listened to him very attentively—and he was struck by the circumstance that there was not in his speech, on this occasion, a single word of abuse of the honorable member for Wide Bay. It was the first speech of the honorable the Minister for Works that he had listened to in which there was not abuse of that honorable member. He hoped it was the commencement of a new era with him, and that the honorable member would in future abuse other members on the Opposition side in their turns—if it were only for the sake of novelty. The House had heard again from that honorable member about the removal of the capital, but not about the honesty of the Ministry. They had not played the card as to honesty, this time; but they had played the card as to the removal of the capital. The honorable member for Maryborough, he thought, must be looking out for another constituency; and, when he heard him speak about the removal of the capital to Rockhampton, he thought he must be looking out for a change in that direction. The honorable member at the head of the Government had spoken about the dignity of the Government; but he thought he would shew more dignity if he would adopt a less bullying tone when he addressed the House, and especially the honorable the Speaker. Last session, the honorable the Premier said the House was told that there was to be no business done till the question as to the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway was settled—and he (Mr. Hemmant) had only heard that question mentioned incidentally—but the whole battle now was on the same ground as it was then. As to the question of the right of a majority to rule, he would grant that, if the House properly represented the people, the majority should rule. But the House did not properly represent the country, and that was the ground of objection taken by the Opposition to submitting to the present majority. Honorable members on the Government side of the House were bound together by one interest. It was well known that there was not one of the Government supporters who was not more or less interested in squatting pursuits, and that tie bound them together so closely and so strongly that it was a waste of time to endeavor by argument to convert them. If this question was to be settled at all, it could only be settled in the way in which honorable members on the Opposition side of the House had attempted to settle it; and that was, that no supplies should be voted till the question of the Redistribution Bill was settled. It was somewhat amusing to hear the new-born zeal of the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn, and the honorable member for Maryborough, in respect to railways and other public works. It was well known that there were no stronger opponents to railways than those honorable members; but now, when this dead-lock was brought about, they pretended great zeal for the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. The honorable member for

the Western Downs, Mr. Wienholt, complained of the dodges of the Opposition, and of their taking advantage of the forms of the House to obstruct the business of the country. Now, he maintained, that the Government were resorting to a more disreputable dodge than any the Opposition could be accused of, by their not coming to the House on private members' days to assist in forming a House, and enabling private business to be gone on with. It had been said that they were not taking the course that was pursued in the Imperial Parliament; but what would be thought of the Premier of England, if he were to say that if the Opposition would not assist him in carrying out his demands, the Ministry would not come to the House on the days set apart for the business of private members? Forty members only were required to form a quorum of the House of Commons, and a similar proportion would only require two members to form a quorum in this House. Now it appeared to him, therefore, that the Government were taking a far more disreputable course than any that had been taken by the Opposition. He did not see that any advantage could result to either side from those recriminations that were carried on from night to night; and he thought it would be well that the Government should take a day or two to consider as to some course that would enable this dead-lock to be brought to an end. He would not be so presumptuous as to suggest any course that should be adopted; but he thought it was useless for honorable members to have to come there, night after night, when the Government refused to go on even with their own measures, until they obtained Supply; and that they also refused to come to the House and go on with business on the days set apart for private members. The Government had had a five months' prorogation, and two dissolutions, and surely that gave them sufficient time to mature their policy, and perfect their measures. He would suggest that they should discuss the principles of the various measures on the paper, instead of proceeding in the way they had been doing; and, if the Government declined to do so, he hoped that, with the array of talent they possessed, they would be able to improvise something by which a different state of matters from what existed at the present time would be brought about, so that the House might be able, in one way or another, to go on with the business of the country.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not know that this discussion would be of much practical advantage to anyone, though it had been conducted for several days, except in one respect, and that was that the true issue might be placed before the people. He had been listening attentively, and with much interest, to know what was the issue the Government, or their supporters, wished to lay before the people; and he had heard a great many false

issues from them. The honorable the Minister for Works, who spoke last from the Government side of the House, appeared, as regarded honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, to measure their corn by his own bushel. He was sorry the honorable gentleman was not in his place, but still he would proceed with his remarks as to what he had said. The honorable gentleman had said that when he should again be on the Opposition benches, he would get two or three other honorable members to join with him to carry on, what he called the disgraceful tactics which the Opposition were now carrying on. Now, he did not think that, if the honorable gentleman considered the tactics of the present Opposition were disgraceful, it would be either dignified or exemplary of him to adopt them when he should be on the Opposition side of the House, or to induce others to do so. He believed that he (Mr. Griffith) was as mild tempered a man as there was in the House; but he must say that his feelings were roused to indignation by the way in which the honorable the Premier, and the honorable the Minister for Works, spoke of honorable members of the Opposition. Those honorable gentlemen affected to treat honorable members on the Opposition side of the House as if they were a lot of naughty boys. The honorable member at the head of the Government attempted to bully and bounce the Opposition, and told them that the Government would do this, and the Government would do that, in a way as if they could do whatever they wished, irrespective of the Opposition. On a previous occasion the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government had told the House that, if the supplies were not voted, the lights along the coast might be put out. That was an observation that was made by the honorable member at the head of the Government; but the honorable gentleman had since denied that he had said so, by way of a threat, or that he had any intention of doing such a thing. However, they had been threatened to-night by the honorable the Minister for Works, with the removal of the capital and the stoppage of the railways and other public works, if the supplies were not voted. Now, what was the use, he would ask, of putting forth frivolous threats of that kind; and what credit would any Government get by making statements of that sort? The question before the House was one that must be dealt with upon its merits. The true issue was not, as it had been represented to be, a desire to get place and pay—a desire on the part of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House to get possession of the Treasury benches; yet it had been repeated over and over again, that the object of the Opposition in pursuing their present course, was to get over to the other side. Now, how could that be the case? he would ask; for though they were to cross the floor of the House, they could not all be

Ministers. What advantage, therefore, would they gain by sitting on the other side? He ventured to think that honorable members on the Opposition side were as likely to get benefits for their constituents, by extorting them from the present Government, as they would be to get them from a Ministry that more particularly represented the interests of the constituencies of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. For his own part, he was not anxious to see any change of Government take place merely for the sake of change; and it was obvious, and must be well known to every honorable member on the Government side, that the real struggle between parties was not one for place and pay. He had heard the conduct of the Opposition described as consisting of a series of dodges, and of shameful and disgraceful tactics. He had heard some very hard and vituperative language used by the Government towards honorable members of the Opposition, and it seemed to him that all the vituperation came from the Government side of the House, for he could not charge his memory with his having heard any language of that character used by honorable members of the Opposition. Indeed he might state, almost as a matter of fact, that no such language had been used by the Opposition; and he hoped that they would not hear any more of it from the Government side of the House. Some honorable members on the Government side of the House seemed to think that honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were not sincere in what they were doing.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear.

Mr. GRIFFITH: He did not know what reason the honorable member for the Mitchell, or any other honorable member, had for thinking so; for he thought the Opposition members could shew as good reasons in proof of their sincerity in the course they were pursuing, as honorable members on the Government side of the House could shew in proof of their's. He believed that every honorable member on the Opposition side of the House was as likely to give as independent a vote for the good of the community as the honorable member for the Mitchell. Now, as to the speech of the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Wienholt, he had heard it spoken of as a most statesmanlike speech; but it appeared to him that, in the opinion of the honorable member, as expressed in his own speech, the whole question at issue—and that where there was a serious political difficulty—might be easily determined by a simple sum in arithmetic—that all that it was necessary to do was to reckon up how many votes there were on the one side of the House, and how many on the other, and then decide in favor of the greater number. But surely it would not be contended that they were to be governed by the rules and principles of arithmetic and mathematics, where flesh and blood and men's lives were concerned. It was quite

true that under ordinary circumstances Government could not be carried on by a minority, but sometimes circumstances arose of such an extraordinary nature and importance as demanded of the minority that they should take a stand against the majority. Had there ever been, he would ask, any instance in which the majority in Parliament had not been, at first, opposed in the case of questions of great public importance, to the wishes of the majority of the people? Let them take the case of the Reform Bill, for example. Though it was carried, of course, by a majority, was it not at first strenuously opposed by the majority, and supported by the majority, who were interested in maintaining the state of affairs then existing? And the House of Commons, at the present time, saw that it was necessary that some concessions should be made to the popular will; and that by their timely making those concessions, impending difficulties would be averted. Now, he would ask, was it not the case that, in almost every instance, the demand for the redress of grievances came from the minority? But the question here had been treated, this evening, as if there was no grievance, and as if the question was altogether one of party warfare only. Honorable members on the Government side of the House had said that the conduct of the Opposition consisted merely of paltry tactics for party purposes. Now, he maintained that such was not the case. The Opposition believed that the representation of the people was inequitable, and they desired to see the law altered so as to secure a fair representation of the whole colony. The Opposition said, and said honestly, that the law must be altered; and they wished to see it altered; and they were taking the steps which they believed would best conduce to the accomplishment of that end. If they had desired to attain any other end—if they had desired to obtain possession of the Treasury benches—they would have adopted another and quite a different course. If it had been their desire to get possession of the Treasury benches, it would have been insane for the Opposition to have followed the course they had followed. The honorable the Minister for Works had accused the Opposition with endeavoring to obstruct the Government in the matter of legislation. Now, he denied that such was the case. What the Opposition desired was, that the Government should go on with the business of legislation. The honorable gentleman had also said that there was no precedent for the course the Opposition were pursuing; but he (Mr. Griffith) did not much care for the want of the authority of precedents in all cases. He supposed that at one time there was no authority, by precedent, in the House of Commons for the stopping of supplies; and if there was no authority, by precedent, for the course the Opposition here were now pursuing, let them make one. He thought it

would not be a bad precedent to establish—and honorable members opposite had so condemned the conduct of the Opposition, that they could not possibly, with any degree of consistency, under any circumstances, adopt it. Again, they were told that the conduct of the Opposition was unconstitutional; but what that meant he did not exactly know, except that it was what was unusual, or what was contrary to the principles of the constitution, or something which the speaker disliked. Now, he maintained that, when there were new wrongs, there must be new remedies provided for them; and those new remedies would, of course, necessarily be unusual. Then, they were also told that the great constitutional principle involved in the present struggle was, as to whether a majority or a minority should rule. Now, it appeared to him that, if things were to go on as they had been going on, neither the majority nor the minority would be able to rule, for no Government could go on without legislation. There would be no Government except that of administration; and some honorable members of the present Ministry had said that, in their opinion, that was all that the colony required. Now, the Opposition did not think so. They thought the country could not do without legislation; and what they wanted to do was to compel the Government to proceed with those important measures that were on the paper. But the Government said they would not do so, and that they would have Supply. Now, he would like to know what the Government really did want. The Government maintained that the majority should rule; and if that principle was to be carried out to its full extent, supposing that the majority numbered sixteen and the minority only fifteen, the minority might go home, and allow the Government, with their supporters, to pass such measures as they liked. According to the position taken up by the majority, the minority had no right to make suggestions even, no matter how strong they were. But the Opposition were, in this instance, a small minority, and therefore it was maintained that they ought to do as they were told, and consent to the wishes and the will of the majority. If such a state of things as that had always prevailed, and had been allowed to prevail, they would not have had, here, the state of things that at present existed; nor would they have had, at home, the same state of things as at present existed there. It was altogether owing to the energetic labors of determined and earnest-minded men, that they had obtained the constitution under which they lived. Now, he would have thought that where there was a necessity for something to be done, and where there were two parties, and each sufficiently strong to prevent the other from doing what was dictated by the other, there would be some sort of compromise come to between them. It might be beneath the dignity of the Government to go on with the work of the

country—which was all that the Opposition asked them to do—but why did they refuse? It was not because it was the work of the country, but because the suggestion that they should do so came from the Opposition side of the House. It was not at all a question as to whether the majority or the minority should rule in the House. There was an important element left out of the question, in the arguments that had been advanced by honorable members on the Government side, as to the right of the majority to rule. Those honorable members seemed to forget, altogether, that there was such a thing as public opinion. Did they think that the Opposition could have stood there for one day, or for one hour, and have pursued the course they had done, unless they had known that they were supported by public opinion? Not only were they supported by the press—which one honorable member had called a hireling and a venal press, and that was because it did not support his side of the question—but almost every person they met, in every part of the colony, said that the Opposition were right. Why, even the organ of the Government, the *Queensland Times*, had gone so far as to say that the course the Opposition were pursuing was the right one to be adopted. Now, he was firmly of opinion, that for whatever evils might befall the colony, because of the present position of affairs, the blame would be wholly cast upon the Government. The Opposition asked the Government to go on with the work of the country, but they refused to do so, and that simply because the suggestion came from the Opposition—because it came, not from themselves but from someone else. Was that, he would ask, the way the Government of a country should be carried on? The Government of a country should be guided by the sense of the whole community, and not merely by a sense of their own dignity. But was the dignity of the Government in any way wounded by accepting a suggestion from one who sat on the Opposition side of the House? For his own part, he would be happy to make any concession in his power, consistent with his public duty, in order to relieve the honorable member at the head of the Government from the difficulty he felt himself to be placed in because of his dignity, in order that the business of the country might be proceeded with. Now he would like to ask, what was to be the end of all this? It was perfectly clear that the present state of things must come to an end some time. It was evident that the Government were quite strong enough to be able to refuse to go on, and that the Opposition were strong enough to prevent them getting supplies till those measures which they considered to be of the greatest importance to the colony were dealt with. There must, under such circumstances, be a dead-lock; but it could not continue for ever. If honorable members on both sides of the House were to sit face to face without doing anything, it was clear that someone must inter-

fere, or the constitution would have to be abandoned. Now when it came to that, on whom would the blame be of such a state of affairs? If he thought that the blame would be on the Opposition side of the House, he would not continue to sit on that side. But he saw that the course the Opposition were pursuing was a clear one, and that whatever trouble might come, the blame would not in future be cast upon them. But it certainly would fall upon someone. He ventured to think that never, in the history of the world, had any great trouble arisen, by fighting for a shadow, without the blame falling upon those who fought for the shadow, instead of falling upon those who fought for the substance. He heard some honorable members on the Government side of the House laughing, because he spoke about fighting for a shadow; but that was what they were fighting for. Those honorable members were opposed to public works being gone on with, and the Opposition were desirous of going on with them.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: No, no.

MR. GRIFFITH: Those honorable members were not disposed to believe anything that was said by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. They seemed to consider that the Opposition were not in earnest in saying that they were desirous of going on with the business of the country; but the Opposition were pursuing this course because they saw it was the only way by which they could compel the Government to do something. The question had been asked—what did the Opposition hope to gain by pursuing their present course? For themselves, nothing; but for the country, that which the country had been struggling for, for years. That was the object which induced the Opposition to pursue their present course; and if there was any better object that could be set before them, and which they could hope to gain, he should support it in preference to the present policy of the Opposition.

MR. JOHNSTON said that this question of going into Committee of Supply had already been debated from every point of view. It had, in fact, been debated till everyone was disgusted with it. The whole question seemed to him to be, whether the Government were bound to uphold their policy, or whether they should give way and go over to the Opposition benches? There was no one could appreciate a good Opposition more than he did, for he held it to be the very essence of good government. He believed that if it was possible that any agreement could be come to now between the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government and honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, they might yet get on with the business of the country, and get through a considerable amount of work this session. No suggestion had yet been made as to any arrangement that might be arrived at. Now,

though not in the confidence of the Government, yet as an independent member of the House, though sitting on the Government side of it, he would suggest that the Estimates should be taken to-night and to-morrow night; and that Thursday, which was a private members' day, should be given up to the consideration of the Redistribution Bill. That would not be a great concession on the part of the Opposition; and if the suggestion was accepted by the Government, it would mark their desire to take up the business of the country, and to go on with it. Such an arrangement would also, he thought, place both parties in a better position towards each other. If the Opposition agreed to that course, it would shew that they were sincere to pass the Estimates. If the Government declined to accept it, independent members would then be more at liberty to act on their own belief. He made the suggestion with the view of bringing the existing state of things to an amicable close.

MR. EDMONDSTONE said that, on his part, he had no objection to the suggestion made by the honorable member who had just sat down, if it was put in the opposite way. He thought that the Redistribution Bill should be first discussed, and that Supply should be taken afterwards. According to this arrangement, it would be ascertained what objection there was to the Redistribution Bill; and he believed it would be found that the objection on the part of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House was very small indeed. He believed the feeling on the Opposition side of the House, so far as he had been able to understand it, was that the Bill should be accepted, though not exactly in its present condition. His own impression was, that though the Bill had been brought in by the honorable the Premier, he did not expect that it would pass; and his reason for thinking so arose out of that part of the explanation of it, given by the honorable gentleman, where he alluded to the way in which he had divided the electorates of West Moreton and Ipswich. He then mentioned that the way in which those electorates had been divided might endanger the passing of the Bill, unless honorable members now in the House were allowed to select their own seats, and particularly the electorates they had represented before. Now, it appeared to him, that unless there was such a stipulation in the Bill, it would not be likely to pass. The country had long demanded that there should be a redistribution of electorates. They asked for reform in 1863, and in 1864 they were promised it; and six additional members were then added to the House for the purpose of having legislation better attended to. Since that time, the country had been crying out for further legislation, but as yet they had got nothing, though there had been a great deal of time wasted in discussions upon the subject. If the Government, though they might not expect that the Bill would pass, would take it up and have it dis-

cussed, the House and the country would be so far satisfied as to their being in earnest about it, that, he did not think, there would then be any objection to go on with Supply. As to the threat about the removal of the capital, he looked upon that as all nonsense.

The motion was then agreed to, and the House went into Committee of the Whole.

Mr. LILLEY moved that the Chairman report no progress.

The motion was put and negatived by a majority of 15 to 8.

The COLONIAL TREASURER then moved that the Chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Agreed to.

The House having resumed,

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the committee have leave to sit again to-morrow.

Agreed to.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House then adjourned.