

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 28 MAY 1872

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 28 May, 1872.

Supply.

SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, for the purpose of considering the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1872.

The motion was carried, and the House was put into committee.

The CHAIRMAN put the question—

That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1872, the sum of £1,124 for salaries and contingencies in connection with the establishment of His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. STEPHENS moved—

That the Chairman report no progress.

Mr. FYFE said it had been expected by himself and some other honorable members of the committee, that the suggestion which they had made for a compromise would have been adopted, and that the present miserable dead-lock would thus have had a termination put to it. He was sorry to find, however, that such was not the case. He believed that some three or four honorable members who sat on the Government cross-benches, had pledged themselves to a proposal that in the event of the Opposition granting Supply to the Government, they would, if the Government then refused faithfully to carry out their programme as announced in the Opening Speech of the Governor, immediately cross over to the Opposition side of the committee. There had also been another proposition which had been put forward by the honorable member for Warwick, and concurred in by the honorable member for the Kennedy, and other honorable members; and he believed that if either of those propositions was accepted by the committee, the business of the country could be proceeded with, and the country would go ahead. It was quite evident that some compromise must be made. The Opposition evidently did not feel inclined to yield, nor would the Government yield; so that if neither party would yield, nothing could be done. It struck him that if in the present state of affairs the Government yielded the position which they at present held, and allowed the course proposed by the Opposition to be adopted, it would be tantamount to their agreeing to a vote of want of confidence being passed on them.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no; Yes, yes.

Mr. FYFE: Now, it was a question whether such a state of things as that would be desirable at the present time; at all events, he had never heard it mooted that it was desirable to have a change of Government. If a vote of want of confidence was the object, why a change of Government must be the result,

But he did not believe that the Opposition wanted a change of Ministry, for unless there was a Redistribution Bill passed, in the event of a dissolution and another appeal to the country, it was not likely that the Opposition would go back to the House any stronger than they were at present. He thought, therefore, honorable members should consider what would be the result of continuing the present course of action. Speaking for the constituency he represented, he thought that the petition which he had presented that day, although wrongly worded, represented the feeling of a large majority of his constituents, and it was of course their interests that he was bound to consider. The town of Rockhampton was at present suffering very much from the want of money to carry out public works, which were most necessary, and to afford employment to the people there; and in consequence of the present state of affairs, and the public works being stopped, many persons were leaving the place. That, however, he apprehended was not the position of Rockhampton alone, as there must be other towns inland, which were suffering quite as much. Under those circumstances he felt that it would be his duty to vote with the Government on the present question, and occupy a seat on the cross-benches opposite. He much regretted having to take such a step, but looking from the point of view he had mentioned, he must say, that he thoroughly agreed with the views expressed in the petition of those by whom he had been sent to that House. He was certain that the position he might assume in the next division would be substantially approved of by the whole of his constituents, and if it was not, why then it would be easy for him to go back to them and resign the trust they had placed in his hands, and contest the election again. But he felt that he was not sacrificing any principle in the course he was about to adopt of voting with the Government. His conduct would no doubt appear strange, and might be called a desertion of that party with which he had always acted, but he could not help saying that he felt that the party were leaving him. Even if he voted with the Government, he would not be sacrificing any principle, as he should still retain to himself the right to use an independent vote when the Redistribution Bill was under consideration, and would then, no doubt, be found voting as often with the Opposition as with the Government. Seeing that the Government and their supporters were faithfully pledged to carry out the measures which were announced in their programme, he could see no other course open to him than to carry out what he had stated, and act in accordance with the wishes of his constituents.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: Hear, hear.

MR. JOHNSTON said that the question of the dead-lock had now been discussed from

every point of view from which it could be looked at; and from what he had gathered during the time it had been under discussion—and he had been a close observer of the state of affairs in that House—the great stand made by honorable members on the Opposition benches seemed to be, that if the Government were granted Supply, they could not be relied upon to go fairly on with the Redistribution Bill. The honorable the Premier had, however, always promised that he would agree to any amendments in the Bill, when it was in committee; and as in reality there were no principles in the Bill, he thought there would be very little to fear on the ground of the Bill not passing much in its present shape. He could only say, as far as he was himself concerned, that he believed he would, when the Bill was in committee, be as often, or more frequently, found voting with the members of the Opposition as with the Government. It was most desirable that the present obstruction to business should cease, for it had been most clearly shewn by surrounding circumstances, that legislation was very much wanted. Seeing the state of affairs into which the House and the country were fast drifting, it was, he thought, high time that some decision should be arrived at by honorable members on both sides of the committee. He took it that the honorable the Premier was as desirous of carrying through the Redistribution Bill as any honorable member opposite; and if he did not think so, he would not continue to occupy a seat on the Government side of the House for another moment. He was so desirous of seeing the business of the country proceeded with, that he would pledge himself, that in the event of the Redistribution Bill not being taken through all its stages by the Government, he for one would immediately walk over to the other side of the chamber and vote with the Opposition.

MR. CLARK said that he did not know that it was of any use his again saying what he had already stated about the present state of affairs; but in order that honorable members opposite should not have a leg to stand upon, namely, by disputing the good intentions and integrity of honorable members on his side of the committee, he wished to repeat, that he perfectly coincided with all that had just fallen from the honorable member for Ipswich—that if the Government did not carry out the pledges they had made in the Speech of the Governor, he (Mr. Clark) would pledge himself to vote against them. But he believed the Government did intend to carry out their promises; and he had no reason to suppose that they would stultify themselves by not doing so. He could now say, that if the Opposition were not satisfied with what he had stated, it was all they would get from him. He should vote with the Government so long as he believed that they were actuated in their conduct by a wish to promote the good of the country.

MR. GRAHAM said he most cordially joined with the honorable members for Ipswich and Warwick in the remarks they had just made, and he would say most positively, that if Supply was granted, and the Government did not honestly carry the Redistribution Bill through all its stages, he would cross the House and vote with the Opposition. He wished it to be understood, that if he saw any dishonest action on the part of the Government, he would immediately walk to the other side, and give his vote with the Opposition.

MR. MOREHEAD said he merely rose for the purpose of saying, that he should be ashamed to sit on the side of the House on which he was then sitting, if he did not believe that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, whom he had the pleasure to support, honestly intended to carry out all the pledges he had made.

MR. FERRETT was understood to say that if any honorable member thought the Ministry would not carry out their pledges, especially after what had been stated by the honorable the Premier, it would be his duty to cross over the House; at any rate, if he found that the Government did not intend honestly to carry out their programme, he should do so.

MR. KING said that the proposition which had been made by the honorable member for Ipswich, and the other honorable members who had followed him, amounted to simply this much—that if honorable members on the Opposition benches would surrender the rights of their constituents into their hands, they would give the Opposition a guarantee that they would do the best they could for them. The members of the Opposition, however, sat there to perform a duty to their constituents, and that duty certainly would not be performed by their surrendering the rights of those constituents into the hands of honorable gentlemen opposite. It was their duty to argue and to fight for the rights of their constituents, who had sent them to that House for the purpose, and that duty they intended to perform. But the proposition of the honorable member for Ipswich, and the other honorable members, amounted to what?—Why they wished virtually to annihilate the Opposition. Those honorable members said—“Commit political suicide, and we pledge ourselves that if the Government do not do what we like, we will walk over to your places and form the Opposition.” The present dead-lock—whether that was a parliamentary term for the present state of things in a parliamentary assembly he could not say;—at any rate, whatever it was, it had arisen solely through a determined attempt on the part of the honorable member at the head of the Government to over-ride the Opposition—that Opposition which he (Mr. King) would assert, notwithstanding what might be said by the honorable gentleman or his supporters, was as necessary to the proper parliamentary government of a country as

the honorable the Premier himself, or any other member of the Government. But from the very moment the present administration was formed—a little more than two years ago—no insult to the Opposition had been spared by the honorable gentleman; no affront which could have been offered to them, had been omitted by that honorable gentleman and his supporters, and nothing had been spared to stigmatise in every way the honorable members who were in opposition to them. Every attempt had been made to crush out from his (Mr. King's) side of the House all independent feeling or action of any kind. He held that it was the duty of the Opposition to take care that the present attempt should not succeed. He considered that it was a duty they owed to the people of Queensland to maintain the rights of a parliamentary Opposition in that House; and for that reason they could not surrender in the manner proposed by the honorable member for Ipswich and other honorable members. It appeared to him that, if a compromise was to be effected, both parties must yield something; but, if one side yielded and the other did not, how could it be then termed a compromise? It was none whatever. Now, the proposition which had been made to the Opposition was, that they should give an absolute, unconditional surrender to the Government; and therefore that was no compromise. If they maintained the position they had assumed, and believed they were right in so doing, they could not surrender unconditionally to the Government. When they found, however, that they could not carry out what they wanted, they might say that they were willing to make the best bargain they could on behalf of their constituents; but they could not put aside all the claims they had made in that House, and abandon the position they had obtained for themselves. It had been said by an honorable member, that, if the Government would not give way, the Opposition must; but the Opposition did not take that view of it, and he would at once tell honorable members opposite that, whether the Government intended to give way or not, the Opposition had no intention of doing so. It would have, therefore, to be fought out to the end, and he thought that there was at present considerable uncertainty as to when that end might come. He would suggest to honorable gentlemen opposite that it would be a wise thing to consent to some compromise, and that they should seek rather at effecting that, than asking the members of the Opposition to give an unconditional surrender. He could assure the honorable member for Ipswich that the offer made by him and other honorable members that evening, had only had the effect of putting the settlement of the question further away than ever. The Opposition were prepared to accept fair terms by which they might ensure the rights

of their constituents ; but they would not consent to an unconditional surrender of those rights, and that the honorable member for Ipswich and others knew full well. Therefore, when honorable members opposite assumed that tone, and talked about an unconditional surrender of the Opposition, because the Government would not yield, it only tended to prolong the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. He had felt very sorry that such a speech should have been made by the honorable member for Rockhampton as had been made that afternoon, as it had only had the effect of placing any agreement between the two sides further off than ever. With reference to the petition which had been presented by that honorable member that day, it was known very well indeed that it did not represent the feelings of the people of Rockhampton. It was known very well that at the last general election, the honorable member was returned as a supporter of the Opposition, by a majority of two to one against his opponent, who was a supporter of the Government. It was also known that the honorable member had, up to the commencement of the present session, been supported by the people of Rockhampton in the course he had taken, and they were now, he (Mr. King) had no hesitation in saying, strongly in favor of his continuing to follow that course, and approved of the policy of the Opposition. Therefore, for the honorable member to say that he was not leaving his party, but that they were leaving him, was simply nonsense, as the Opposition had not shifted from their position one inch. But what was that great petition which had come down? Why, it was signed by 400 people out of a population of some 6,000 or 7,000, and was that to be taken to represent the people of Rockhampton? It had been got up at a public meeting, then hawked about that town, and every wretched man who was in the employment of a Government supporter, and therefore could not say no, had been obliged to put his name to it; and then it was sent down as a petition from the Rockhampton people. Last session the supporters of the Ministers in Rockhampton had tried to get up a similar dodge, but had failed. They held a public meeting, and what was the consequence? Why, several resolutions were brought forward, but they were all negatived. And now, to avoid that, and having got wiser he supposed, they had prepared a petition—obtained by various means a few signatures, and sent it down to that House as coming from the people of Rockhampton. He had no hesitation in saying that the people of Rockhampton had nothing to do with that petition, whatever. He was glad to say that, as he should not like to believe that it emanated from the people of that town, for he believed that if they felt the sentiments expressed in it, it would go far to seriously affect the future of that place. There were many constituencies which had been working

harmoniously with the people of Rockhampton—who had supported the claims of that town on every occasion; and were those constituencies now to be told that because the people of Rockhampton wanted the Northern Railway, and were willing to give up everything else for the chance of obtaining it, the interests of every other town in the colony were to be sacrificed? That was the real meaning of the petition, and therefore he was happy to say that he believed it was not signed by the people of Rockhampton, and that they knew nothing about it. He ventured to say more—that if the honorable member went up to Rockhampton in the interests of the Government, he would not secure the same number of votes that he had on the last occasion. He ventured to say also, that the only honest and proper course for an honorable member to pursue who was returned to that House to support a certain party, and instead of doing so, turned round and voted for that party he was sent to oppose, was either to resign or refer to his constituents for their approval. He could only say that he (Mr. King) had been returned to support a certain policy, and was pledged to go in for additional representation; and in taking his present stand he was only acting in support of the principles he at that time enunciated. When he entered that House, two years ago, he was returned to give a sort of support to the Government, and he resolved to give them a fair trial; but he stated at his first election for Wide Bay, when on the hustings at Maryborough, that he would be prepared to refuse Supply, if additional representation was not granted by the Government. It could not, therefore, be now said, that in refusing Supply, he was acting from any factious motives. He could not depart from that line of conduct without the sanction of his constituents, and he was perfectly well aware that it would be useless for him to ask for that sanction, because the opinions held by them at his election were held by them far more strongly at the present time. He was perfectly aware of one thing—that if the people of Rockhampton did not want additional representation, the people of Wide Bay and other districts did want it, and would have it. Therefore, if the people of Rockhampton did not want it, they could go without it; but they had no right to exclude other districts from having it, which did want it. He would conclude by pressing upon the attention of the honorable member for Ipswich, and the other honorable members who had since spoken, that in any case like that of the present, there must be some concession made by both sides, and that it was perfectly useless to expect that one side would give an unconditional surrender to the other. The Opposition had stated most clearly, that they would go as far as they could to meet the Government, in order that the present difficulty might be overcome, and the business of the country proceeded with. It was, however, perfectly impossible that they could

surrender unconditionally and entirely to the Government; or that, as a political party representing important constituencies, they could surrender into the hands of the Government the rights of those constituencies, which rights they were bound to maintain. They had been returned to protect those rights; they had to act for themselves, and it was their duty to do the best they could for those who returned them. In conclusion, he would impress upon honorable members opposite, that if for any long time they happened to remain members of that House, it might be that they, in their turn, would be members of an Opposition; in such a case they would be very sorry if the course of conduct they were now endeavoring to establish became a precedent, namely, that the head of a Government was to go down to that House and say, "If you do not do what I want, no business shall be transacted."

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

Mr. KING : He believed honorable members opposite would bitterly repent, if any such precedent as that was set up; but still there was no doubt that there would not have been the present difficulty if the honorable member at the head of the Government, had not made such a threat; a threat which had never before been made in such plain language in any Legislature. He ventured to say again, that honorable members who supported that honorable member, would, some time or other, very much regret such a precedent, if it was established; but he did not think that there was the slightest fear of that being the case, as the honorable members of the Opposition were fully determined to stand out as firmly as the Government. Those who thought that because the Government would not give way the Opposition must, were very much mistaken. Therefore, instead of trying to force the Opposition to surrender, he would suggest to those honorable members opposite who were disposed to act independently, that they should devote a little of their time and ingenuity to devising some scheme for a compromise by which both parties might surrender a little, and by that means be able to meet one another and proceed with the business of the country.

Mr. FYFE thought the honorable member who had just sat down, had misunderstood some of the observations he had made. He was quite sure that so long as the two honorable members, the leaders of the parties in that House, continued to act as they were now doing, there would be no compromise whatever; but if, as he had suggested some days ago, those honorable gentlemen met together, they might be able to devise some plan by which the present unsatisfactory state of things might be ended. That was one reason why he had delayed taking the definite step he had decided upon taking that day—of voting against the Opposition. He thought, however, after what had fallen from the honorable member for Wide Bay, that

there would not be any compromise. With regard to the petition which he had presented that day from the people of Rockhampton, he would maintain, in spite of what had been said to the contrary, that it did represent the majority of the electors of that town. He would state that most emphatically. And as regarded the pledges he was charged with having made to his constituents, he might say, that he was the only member in that House who was left to act independently—he had, therefore, sacrificed no principle, or broken any pledge. He represented at the present time, a much larger portion of the population of Rockhampton than when first he entered that House. He had made repeated suggestions for a compromise to be made, and he still hoped that there would be some compromise. If that could not be done, he could only carry out the determination he had announced of supporting the Government.

Mr. STEPHENS said he had listened with considerable pleasure to the speeches which had been made by honorable members opposite in regard to their proposed compromise, and it had struck him that he could not do better than follow the example they had set him, and make the same declaration. There was no doubt whatever, that it was a great pity that affairs should be in the present position, and the country kept at a standstill, and every attempt should therefore be made to enable them to proceed with business. With that view, he was fully prepared to follow the example of honorable gentlemen opposite, and make the following suggestion—that if the Government went on fairly and honestly with the Redistribution Bill, which was admittedly the first business of the session; if they proceeded with that measure, and gave the country a good fair Bill, and then the Opposition members afterwards in any way attempted to obstruct the Government in obtaining Supply, he would undertake to leave their ranks, and cross over, if not exactly to the Government benches—to the cross benches on the Government side of the House.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

Mr. STEPHENS : It struck him that that was precisely the same proposition that was made by honorable members opposite, and was the sort of offer the Opposition had had made to them. He would himself have no hesitation in pledging himself to that course, and he therefore trusted that the honorable the Premier would see his way clear to go on with the business of the country.

Mr. MACDEVITT said that it appeared to him that whatever opinions honorable members and the public outside might be disposed to take of the present state of things, there was, at least, one feature in it that they must deplore. He thought that any honorable member, or any person anxious for the proper government of the country, could not

do otherwise than deplore the honorable member at the head of the Government going down to that House, and saying that unless a certain thing was done, he would stop all other business from going on. Now, he trusted that he fully appreciated the merits of the present dispute; but it appeared to him that the honorable members who supported the Government could, on reflection, arrive at no other conclusion than that there could be nothing to justify an honorable gentleman who was entrusted with the important duty of conducting public affairs, going to that House and standing in the way of the performance of that duty. Now, he had noticed, when the honorable member for Wide Bay alluded to the remark of the honorable the Premier, namely, that till Supply was granted, no other business should be done—that the honorable member for Western Downs said “No, no.”

Mr. RAMSAY: The honorable member is mistaken; I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. MACDEVITT thought he heard the honorable member say so. Well, if the honorable member did not say “no” to the proposition made by the honorable member for Wide Bay, namely, that the present divisions had their origin in that remarkable statement of the honorable the Premier, then he might take it for granted that the honorable member agreed with that statement.

Mr. RAMSAY: Really the honorable member is mistaken. I expressed nothing of the sort.

Mr. MACDEVITT: Granting that it would be very unfair to impute to the honorable member for Western Downs either a denial or an acceptance of that proposition, still it was clear that the animosity which now existed had its origin in the statement made by the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, which he (Mr. MacDevitt) considered was a most unwarrantable one to come from any gentleman holding that position. He thought that an honorable gentleman who, by force of a strong party, was entrusted with the management of the affairs of a great and rising colony, should make it his business to bring parties in that House together, so that they might work for the public good, rather than, to use an old phrase, put faggots to the fire and set parties one against the other. He thought that that was a complexion of the quarrel that every honorable member must deplore; it was one that, from the first, he had very much regretted. After such a proposition as that which had been made by one of the honorable members who represented the large and populous constituencies in the North, which was as fair as could be expected from any honorable member anxious to protect his own dignity and the opinions he espoused, he thought that something should have been said by the honorable the Premier; he thought that after what had been said, that honorable gentleman would,

from his own mouth, have ratified the proposition made by the honorable member for Clermont, namely, that Supply should be taken day by day with the Redistribution Bill, and that there should be no unfair pressure as regarded the Appropriation Bill. Had that been done, he (Mr. MacDevitt) would have been willing to take part with such an arrangement, which he thought would have been perfectly constitutional. But no—not a word was said. Like Shylock, honorable members opposite must have their pound of flesh; they must have what they wanted, or do nothing at all. They must come down and force honorable members on the left of the chair into an unconditional surrender. “You must be starved out; I am the Premier, and until you come and make your submission on your knees, there shall be no Supply; the civil servants shall not be paid; the police shall not be paid; public works shall be stopped, and the coast lights shall be put out.” That was the jeremiad of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, instead of doing his duty to the country, namely, throwing himself as far as possible into the breach, and bringing parties together. When it was thought that some honorable members on the cross benches were anxious to make some amicable arrangement, what had the Government done? Why, neither the honorable the Premier, nor any honorable gentleman forming part of his Government, had thought fit to consider the matter at all. The only consideration which it had been thought fit to give it was that of the honorable the Premier himself, who rose during the speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane and reiterated again what he had stated before, that there should be nothing done, or something to that effect, until the Appropriation Bill had been passed. Now, he thought that the time had gone by when honorable members representing a large and preponderating proportion of public opinion—when they, as the powers of the people, should be intimidated into such an unworthy position as that in which the honorable members for Ipswich, Warwick, and Clermont were—that if the Government should fail in their promise to pass the Redistribution Bill, after having introduced it, they would desert the Government. Why, what else, he would ask, could be expected from them? The honorable member for the Mitchell had also repeated that assertion; but in his (Mr. MacDevitt's) opinion, if a Government proved so forgetful of their promises, they should be condemned to everlasting infamy. He quite agreed with the honorable members he had named—that, as honorable men, they could not support any Government who would be so forgetful of all the pledges they had given. But there was another element in the dispute between the political parties which the honorable the Premier had overlooked, and that was that the Opposition, which was quite as necessary to the

existence of that House as the honorable gentleman himself and his supporters, could not be forced by his dictatorial tone and manner into a position in which, if they continued, it would be necessary for them to abrogate and surrender the rights of their constituents. The honorable member for Clermont thought fit to allude to the proposition to which he (Mr. MacDevitt) had alluded, which was perfectly explicit in its terms, and perfectly moderate both in the form and manner in which it was made, but that proposition appeared not to have been thought fit to be mentioned by the honorable leaders on either side of the House. In regard to the action taken by the honorable member for Rockhampton, that honorable member had stated that if he departed from the course he had hitherto pursued, he would represent a greater majority of his constituents. He, however, would take leave to differ from that honorable member, and in doing so was supported by the inexorable logic of facts. One was, that the gentleman by whom the honorable member was opposed at his last election, had since been appointed to a seat in the Legislative Council, which shewed that he had represented the opinions of the Government, whilst the honorable member for Rockhampton represented the opinions of the Opposition side of the House. And what had been the verdict of that important and populous electorate? Why, that there had been a majority of two to one in favor of the present member, for the honorable member had, in his majority, doubled the number of the votes polled by his opponent who stood in the Government interest. But he thought, at any future election, the result would be exactly the reverse, if the honorable member departed from the course he had hitherto pursued; and that instead of the majority he had previously had, he would be in a minority of one or two.

Mr. FIFE: No, no.

Mr. MACDEVITT: They all knew the great personal influence of that honorable member in the district he represented; and he believed that that personal influence would always secure for the honorable member a great amount of public support; but he was only judging of the feelings of the people of Rockhampton at the last election, and the manner in which it terminated; and, he still maintained, that at another election, even with the support of his late opponent, the honorable member would find the result very different, and, as he said before, one to two. He had only to add that until he had heard the honorable member for Rockhampton allude to the proposition which had been made, he had not thought it necessary to make any observations on the present crisis. He thought that every honorable member who took an interest in settling the present question, must feel great diffidence in rising, feeling afraid that he might remove still further any chance of an amicable compromise; but, he trusted, from the remarks he

had made on a former occasion, he had shewn himself fully as anxious as any other honorable member to remove the disgraceful obstruction to the public business. He believed that the disgrace of that obstruction arose from the conduct of a tyrannical majority in endeavoring to force their views upon what was a minority in that House certainly, but a minority which represented a vast preponderance of the power of the people.

An HONORABLE MEMBER: No, no.

Mr. MACDEVITT: He heard an honorable member say "No, no," which he believed was one of the proverbs with which the honorable member for the Mitchell treated the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I beg the honorable member's pardon. I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. MACDEVITT was sorry he had made any mistake, but he thought that out of the mouth of babes sometimes came wisdom, and therefore he had allotted the remark to the honorable member for the Mitchell. However, he was alluding to the expression "No, no," to the statement he had made, that the present obstruction to the business of the Assembly arose, in his opinion, from the conduct of the majority in that House; and if he was wrong he would be glad to be set right, even by the honorable member for the Mitchell. He would assert again that it was due to the fact that the majority who sat on the right of the chair seemed determined, and without any consideration whatever, or without any regard to the preponderance of the power of the people represented by honorable members of the Opposition, to force their views on the minority. How could any honorable member say "No, no," to that proposition, when he remembered that the honorable member at the head of the Government had gone to that House and said that until the Appropriation Act was passed no other business should be done? He maintained confidently that that was a proposition for which there was no precedent, either in the constitutional history of the old country, or in the history of any colony which was possessed of responsible government under the constitution of Great Britain. There was no precedent which could be brought to justify the statement of a Minister of the Crown that until something was done to gratify a personal wish on his part, no business should be done. Arguing from that point, it would be the duty of a Minister, when he found that such was the case—that he had some personal wish to accomplish—to withdraw from the position he occupied, and leave it to others to perform the duties he was himself unable to accomplish. He would not go the length to which the honorable member for Rockhampton had gone, and say that giving way on the part of the Government to a reasonable extent, in the present instance, would be equivalent to their accepting a vote of censure upon themselves.

He did not for one moment imagine that. He did trust that the opinion which had been personally expressed by himself, and since repeated by the honorable member for Ipswich, that some compromise would be effected, would be carried out, or that if nothing was to be done, that the House would be informed of the *ultimatum*—that if the honorable member at the head of the Government would not come to any terms, he would at least deliver that *ultimatum* to the House, in order that such steps might be taken as were necessary. Why, the time had gone by when the public would any longer listen to that pedagogian way of dealing with the business of the country—the time had arrived when, if there was obstruction to proceeding with the business of the country, such obstruction must be removed. If the supporters of the Government were determined to endorse the extraordinary, violent, and unconstitutional statement of the honorable the Premier—that there should be no business done until after the passing of the Appropriation Bill—let the House have the *ultimatum*: let them come clearly to some conclusion. Let there be an end to the farce of honorable members going down to that House daily to conduct the business of the country, and wishing to pass measures which were necessary, whilst the Government stood in the way of passing any such measures. The Government retorted on the Opposition the stigma of such obstruction, but if that were so let there be a clear understanding; and if there was a remedy for it, let it be applied. But did not that consideration bring them back to the belief, which could not be resisted, that there must be a screw loose in the conduct of the Government, who were responsible for the government of the country at the present time. They must be told that there was a power in the constitution which enabled the Government to carry on the Government against the Opposition; but it appeared to be out of the power of honorable members opposite, and they had also pinned themselves to the promise that they would do no business. The time had now arrived when such a statement as that—that until the Appropriation Bill was passed no business should be done—would lead all persons interested in the good government of the country to see what could be done to put a stop to such a state of affairs. He believed that the honorable the Premier was himself endowed with no small amount of good sense, and that if it had been left to him alone, the present crisis would have been settled; but the honorable gentleman had sitting behind him a power which intended that he should keep his place and do nothing. They had been told by the honorable member for Western Downs that there should be no compromise, and they knew that that statement had also been made by the junior member for that electorate. If it was to be the case that there was to be

no concession on the part of the Government, and no surrender on the part of the Opposition, why then let the matter be submitted to that gentleman whose duty it would be to suggest a remedy, and thus put a stop to the farce of honorable members attending that House day after day, pretending to pass measures for the good of the country, and pretending to deliberate on measures which they had no intention of deliberating.

Mr. WIENHOLT said he rose for the purpose of saying how glad he was to hear from the honorable member who had just sat down, that all the great cry which had been raised of late by the Opposition, to the effect that the present obstruction was because they had no faith in the promise of the Government that they would go on with the Redistribution Bill, was mere moonshine; and that the honorable member believed that if the assurances made by the honorable member for Warwick were ratified by the Government, that it would be impossible for the Opposition to refuse to go on with the business. It was thus clearly proved that all the present obstruction was caused purely by some party feeling.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not know that he should have addressed the committee at all, but for the particularly personal attack which had been made upon him by the honorable member for the Kennedy. He believed that that honorable member had purposely introduced his name into his speech for the purpose of attacking him—

Mr. MACDEVITT said, if he might be permitted to make a remark, he wished to explain that he certainly had not intended to make any personal attack on the honorable member. So far from that, he could say that there were very few honorable members on the opposite side of the House for whom he entertained a greater respect, than the honorable member for the Mitchell.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that he had been disarmed by the explanation of the honorable member, but he still wished to draw attention to the remark of the honorable member, that the propositions which had been made by certain honorable members for a settlement of the present question, had been ignored by the leaders on both sides. Now, he did not know why the honorable member had said that. Then again, the honorable member had talked about the strong arm of the people.

Mr. MACDEVITT: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The honorable member had, in other words, talked about appealing to the strong arm of violence to solve the present difficulty, and had done so on previous occasions. He would say more—that the honorable member had grossly altered facts as addressed to that House by the honorable the Premier. He presumed he might quote from Tennyson—

“The lie that is partly truth is always the worst of lies.”

and state that when the honorable member said that the honorable the Premier stated

that he was not prepared to go on with business, the honorable member stated what was not the case. The honorable member must have read the papers, and must therefore have known that what he said was wrong. The honorable the Premier had not said that he was not prepared to go on with the business of the country, but that he would have the Estimates for 1872, to which he was fairly entitled, before he would do any other business. That statement had been so often misquoted that he was anxious to contradict it now. He did so, although he knew that whilst what the honorable member had said would be printed, what he was saying would not be—yet he did not like such statements to go forth to the public, and remain uncontradicted by the servile, hireling, and venal press which they unfortunately suffered from. He would again say that he entered his protest against the accusations which had been made against the honorable the Premier by the honorable member for the Kennedy going into print uncontradicted.

Mr. MACDEVITT said he would not detain the House very long, as he had nothing to add to what he had already stated, except that he fully agreed with the honorable member for the Mitchell in respect to one of his statements, but altogether differed with respect to another of them. As to the servility, the venality, and untruthful character of a portion of the press of the colony, he fully agreed with him. He was not aware if the honorable member, at the time he spoke, had in his mind the *Maryborough Chronicle* and other journals of a similar character, the sources of whose inspirations were well known; but if he meant those papers, he fully agreed with him in his opinion of them. As to the other statement of the honorable member, that he (Mr. MacDevitt), on a previous occasion, as well as on the present, had spoken of a resort to the strong hand of violence or to any course that was not in strict accordance with what was constitutional, he utterly denied it. If he did make use of any such expression, it must have been a *lapsus linguae*. At any rate, he did not mean to say anything of the kind, and as the honorable member had not quoted from his speech any expression that would bear such an interpretation, he thought he might content himself with the denial he now gave to the statement. As the honorable member, however, had spoken of violence, he would tell him that it was by the violence which had been done to the constitution that he now formed a part of the majority in the House; it was by the violence which had been done to the constitution that they (the Opposition), and he said it emphatically—they were the minority; that they, though representing a large preponderance of the people of the colony, and of the interests and wealth of the colony as well as of its population, were out-numbered by honorable members who represented but one interest of the colony,

and whose constituents were numbered by dozens only, while the constituencies of the Opposition were to be numbered by hundreds; and it was by the violence which had been done to the constitution, by which the preponderance of the political power of the many had been given to the few, that honorable members opposite were able to resist the passing of those remedial measures that were urgently required at the present time for the development of those new and important interests that were almost daily springing into existence in the colony.

Mr. KING said he merely rose for the purpose of refreshing the memory of the honorable member for the Mitchell. That honorable member said that it was from the Opposition side of the House the objection to go on with the business first came. Now, if he would refer to the proceedings of the 30th of April last, he would find that the honorable the Colonial Secretary then stated that, without they got Supply, the Government would do no other business.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not wish to be misunderstood. What he intended to say was, that the honorable the Premier, as he understood, was quite willing to go on with the other business of the colony, if he obtained Supply for 1872, or to go on with it along with Supply, but that he would have Supply.

The question, that the Chairman report no progress, was then put and negatived by a majority of 15 to 11.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY then moved—

That the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The motion was agreed to, and the House having resumed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

That the Committee have leave to sit again on the following day.

Agreed to.

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