

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 3 JUNE 1873

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 3 June, 1873.

State Education.—Address in Reply to Opening Speech

STATE EDUCATION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved for leave to introduce a Bill providing for State Education in Queensland. He said that in bringing

forward this motion he desired to make a few remarks. He considered it necessary to do so, because he had seen, to-day, that the Bill had been printed in a newspaper. He did not mean to say that there was anything wrong in that; but it was, to say the least of it, a very unusual proceeding to publish a Bill before it had been circulated to honorable members, and he begged to inform the House that he had in no way sanctioned it; and no honorable member could be more astonished than he was to see it in the newspaper. He merely wished to state to the House that he had nothing whatever to do with it. He had given a copy of the Bill to a number of persons in confidence, as was often done with other measures; but when he did so he had no conception that the Bill would be verbally printed in the newspapers. If he had thought it would have been printed in the newspapers before it was circulated to honorable members he would not have given away any copies of it; and if he had wished that it should be printed in the newspapers he would have given copies of it to all the newspapers.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill having been introduced was read a first time.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, he desired further to state, with respect to the motion, that the notice had got out of its place, and had been inserted under the head of Government business. As honorable members were aware, the Bill was not introduced as a Government measure, but though it belonged to general business he hoped it would receive the support of a majority of the members of the Government.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH—*Resumption of Debate.*

The Hon. R. RAMSAY, after a brief pause had ensued after the Order of the Day had been read for the resumption of the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply, rose and said he was in hope that some honorable member opposite would have risen to continue the debate, but as it did not appear to be the intention of any honorable member opposite to do so, and as it would be a pity that so interesting a debate should be nipped in the bud, he would trouble the House with a few remarks while honorable members opposite would have an opportunity of arranging their thoughts on the question. In the first place, he would say that he thought the honorable gentlemen now in office, after a tenure of office extending over a period of three years, had every reason to congratulate themselves that no greater objections could be found against them than those which had been brought forward in the course of the debate. He had read with a great deal of care and attention the speech of the honorable member for Ipswich, who moved the amendment on the Address in Reply, and he must say that he felt considerable difficulty to find anything in it of much importance to reply to. After reading the

honorable member's speech carefully as he had done, it seemed to him that the principal point of objection brought by the honorable member against the Government, and certainly the one which he endeavored most to press upon the attention of the House, was, that the Ministry had not in His Excellency's Speech given an epitome of their policy. Now, it was new to him to learn that after a Ministry had been a certain length of time in office that it was necessary for them to give a *résumé* of their policy on every occasion of the opening of Parliament, and particularly when, on an occasion like the present, their policy was well known to every honorable member of the Legislature. But if the honorable member thought it was necessary for the Government to give an account of their policy on every occasion when the Governor opened the Parliament, how much more, he would ask, was it necessary for the honorable member, who, though he had not for a considerable time been a member of the House, yet, on the very first day of the Session, asked honorable members, by a motion of want of confidence, to call upon the Government to give up their policy and follow him—how much more, he asked, was it necessary, under those circumstances, that the honorable member should, in bringing forward such a motion, explain what was his own policy? Now, the policy of the present Government had been before the country for several years, and, in fact, it was to be found written in the history of the colony for the last three years; but where was the policy of the honorable member to be found? Certainly not in his speech, for throughout the whole of it he had not said one word as to what were his opinions on any of the leading questions of the day. Now, the House, he presumed, would like to know what were the views of the honorable member with respect to the land question, to which he had himself specially referred. He complained that the Government had not explained their policy, but neither had he explained what was his. He said he would like to see every one able to go on the lands of the colony without danger and without difficulty. Now, that was a very vague indication of a policy indeed; and he would like, for his own part, to have a more distinct definition of a land policy than that. He was not aware that, at the present time, there was any difficulty or danger to persons going and settling on the land. The honorable member's definition of a land policy was somewhat equal to saying that they should like to see all the people virtuous and happy. Now they all, no doubt, wished to see the people virtuous and happy; but how were they to secure that? What the honorable member's views on the land question were, might, however, be explained by what was afterwards said on the subject by the honorable member for Wide Bay, who wished to see free selection over the whole

colony. That was certainly a little more than was said by the honorable member for Ipswich, the leader, at present, of the Opposition; but still it was very vague and indefinite, for free selection might mean many things. For instance, it might mean limited or unlimited free selection; and which did the honorable member mean? If he meant limited free selection, at what extent would he fix the limit? At 360 acres, or 640 acres, or 1,280 acres? And what would be the price he would fix per acre? Would it be five shillings an acre, or ten shillings an acre, or twenty shillings an acre? Or did he intend that there should not be any fixed price at all, and that the provisions of the Land Act of 1868, and the Homestead Areas Act of last Session should be extended in their application over the whole colony. Now, he maintained that if that were to be done the effect of it would be ruinous to the whole colony. Such a policy, if carried out, would be followed up by dummyming on a scale that could scarcely be imagined. They would have hosts of monied people coming up from New South Wales and the other colonies, bringing their dummies with them, and picking out the very eyes of the country. The effect that would follow from the proceedings that would take place under such a state of things would be of a most demoralising and pernicious character. They would soon find a very much worse state of things existing here than even what existed in Victoria at the present time, where dummyming was carried on to an almost incredible extent. On the subject of dummyming in Victoria, Mr. McDonald, of the Castlemaine District Survey Office, wrote as follows:—

"I have to report that, in my own opinion, dummyming for squatters was comparatively rare, while that for large farmers and men of means was much more frequent. I was credibly informed that a Mr. David Ham, a speculator and commission agent at Ballarat, had no less than twenty-eight dummies engaged selecting in different parts of the district; and I am sorry to have to report upon the daily increasing recklessness with which sworn declarations are made in respect to land, which is absolutely painful; and I think one or two prosecutions should be instituted to check the practice before the country is utterly demoralised."

Now, he could not but think that such a course would be followed here if they had a policy by which it would be facilitated, and that it would be attended by equally demoralising effects. Then, as to the education question, the House would no doubt have liked to have heard something from the honorable member in explanation of his views upon that question; but the honorable member did not utter one solitary word as to his views upon the subject of education. He did not say whether he was in favor of compulsory or of voluntary education; but he asked honorable members to follow him without his informing them as to where they

were to follow him to, or in what course he was to lead them. Now, strange as it might seem to some that the honorable member should come forward with an amendment of the kind he had proposed without enunciating any policy of his own, it was stranger still to see that other honorable members would follow him without being informed as to what his policy would be. It almost seemed to him that the question of policy was altogether one of secondary importance on this occasion, and that the primary object of some honorable members opposite was to accomplish the overthrow of the Government, and succeed in installing themselves in office. This was the second time the honorable member who had moved the amendment now before the House, had pursued the same course. When the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government came into power the second time the honorable member at the head of the Opposition pursued a course similar to that which he had taken on this occasion, and proposed a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry. On the previous occasion he proposed the motion before the Government had an opportunity of expressing to the House what their policy was to be; and now he proposed a similar motion without stating what were his own opinions on some of the leading questions that engaged public attention at the present time, or what course of policy he would himself pursue. The honorable member had besides complained that the Government had not explained what their policy was. But, as he (Mr. Ramsay) had already said, the policy of the present Government was written on the history of the colony for the last three years; and there would be very little difficulty in informing the honorable member as to what that policy was, or as to what its effects had been. When the present Ministry took office they found the country in a state of hopeless depression, and honorable members opposite while in office had been hopeless and reckless—and he said so advisedly. If they found a businessman whose affairs were in such an inextricable state of difficulty and embarrassment that, in order to be able to carry on, he had to borrow money at accumulating interest, and that he did so without making any provision for re-payment, they would be justified in saying that he was in an utterly hopeless position, and that he was acting with almost fatuitous recklessness. Now, that was exactly the state of affairs the present Government, when they succeeded to office, found to have been in existence in the case of the preceding Government; and they then laid down for their own guidance a course which they had steadily adhered to up to the present time. When they came into office they said to themselves that they would foster the resources of the colony, and curtail all expenditure until they had succeeded in bringing the revenue into such a position as would justify

them in increasing the public expenditure; and with that object in view they made every possible provision for the progressive advancement of the colony. Well, that course they had pursued in spite of all the censure and all the misrepresentation they had been subjected to, both in the House and out of it, and in spite of all the abuse that had *ad nauseam* been heaped upon them by honorable members, and through the press. The Government paid no attention to all that, but took immediate steps by the initiation of a new tariff, and the cutting down of all expenditure as far as was consistent with a due regard to the absolute requirements of the colony, to promote an improvement in the state of the revenue. Now, one of the first things they did was to expend a large amount of money in deepening and otherwise improving the river and harbor of Brisbane; and the result was that they now found vessels drawing fifteen and sixteen feet of water, and which could not previously come up the river beyond a certain distance, lying alongside the wharves of the city; and he hoped that when the Torres Straits' Mail Service was established, they would see the steamers connected with that service coming up to Brisbane, instead of transferring their passengers, their mails, and local cargo to small steamers and other craft in the Bay, and proceeding on to Sydney. They had also laid out a very large sum of money in the improvement of the roads of the colony, especially throughout those districts that had not, and were not likely to have for some time to come the advantage of railway communication, and the consequence was, so far as Brisbane was concerned, that many farmers were now able to bring their produce to compete in the Brisbane market from districts between which and Brisbane the possibility of communication was previously, at all times of the year, most uncertain and precarious. They had also expended other large sums of money which had been voted during the tenure of office by their predecessors, but which those honorable gentlemen had not the energy or courage to spend—moneys that had been voted for the construction of public works in the city of Brisbane itself—and he thought he might safely say that the city now presented a very different appearance from what it did when the present Ministry succeeded to office. Again, as soon as the time arrived that they found their revenue and expenditure in a state of equilibrium, and that they were in a position to expend more money, they did not hesitate to do so; and they did not require any pressure from outside to be brought to bear in the matter. It had been stated over and over again that they were indebted for their policy to the Opposition. Now, he emphatically denied that such was the case. The policy of the present Government had been their own from the commencement, and he was happy to be able to say that up to the present time it had been carried out success-

fully for the general welfare of the whole colony. Then, as to the matter of the railways, it was asserted by honorable members opposite, that the Government had stolen their policy as to railways; but he took leave to deny that such was the case. The railway policy of the present Government was their own, but it materially differed in one respect from the railway policy of their predecessors. It differed in this respect, that the present Government proposed only to carry out their railway policy when they found the state of the revenue was such that they could afford to do so; but the previous Government were to carry out the railways at a time when the country could not afford them; and the results had proved that the course the present Government had pursued was the right one. (Laughter). Honorable members opposite might laugh, but he would prefer to hear them argue. He would again repeat that the policy of the Government was chalked out by them when they entered upon office, and they had steadily and consistently carried it out. Then, on the subject of immigration, it had been said that the Government had no policy of their own upon that question either, and that the present immigration system had been forced upon them. Now, the fact was, that when the Government came into office the Act that was in force was quite impracticable, and therefore worthless. It was well known that it was a pet scheme of the honorable member for South Brisbane, but notwithstanding that, it was, as he had said, altogether impracticable, and the Government proposed the measure that was now in operation, and by which they had succeeded in bringing a large number of immigrants to the colony, and the Government were at the present time expending large sums of money for that purpose under the provisions of the Act. As to the railway, he would repeat what he had already stated, that the Government did not propose the construction of railways till they found that the colony could afford them, and when they saw that the state of their finances was such as to be able to afford railways, the Government undertook the construction of railways. The Government had also, from the prosperous condition of the colony, felt justified in asking the House to vote a large sum of money for the purpose of laying down a deep-sea cable for the purpose of completing telegraphic communication between the colony and Europe, and they also asked, and obtained, the necessary powers to enable them to take action in the matter of the establishment of a steam postal service by way of Torres Straits, both of which undertakings would be of great benefit to the colony, and which the Government would take steps to carry out as soon as they found the colony could afford them. Now, all those matters formed part of the policy of the Government when they entered upon office, and which they had gradually and consistently pursued up to the present time. They had, besides, introduced

a number of liberal measures, such as the Act providing for the extension of the franchise, and the other for the granting of homestead areas for *bond fide* settlers, and other measures that had been overlooked by honorable members opposite. He believed that the policy of the Government had been generally acceptable to the colony, and if they remained longer in office they would continue to adhere to their policy. He felt he would have a little difficulty in unwinding some parts of the speech made by the honorable member for Ipswich in moving the amendment; and perhaps, he might, in replying to it, impart more meaning to his words than the honorable gentleman seemed to attach to them himself; but there was one subject to which the honorable member alluded particularly—and the allusion was received with cheers by honorable members opposite—and respecting which a great many mis-statements had been made out of doors, and the subject had also given rise to a number of articles and letters in the *Courier* and other newspapers. He referred to the remarks of the honorable member as to the way in which the last loan was disposed of. It had been repeatedly stated that the course which the Government adopted for disposing of that loan had resulted in a heavy loss to the colony. Now, so far from that being the case, he believed it had been the most successful financial transaction that had ever been effected by any colonial Government, and he would endeavor to show to the House and to the country, and he hoped he would be able to persuade them, that such was eminently the case. There were two ways of looking at the question. They might look at it as a question *per se*, or they might look at it in connection with other transactions of a similar nature. Now, he would view it in both ways, and in the first place he would deal with it as a transaction by itself. It would, he thought, be agreed that there could not have been any other way adopted of initiating a transaction of the kind than the one which had been adopted by the Government, namely, that of calling for tenders from all the different colonies of the Australian group, fixing a limit, giving ample time for tenders to be sent in, and opening the tenders when the specified time had elapsed. Now, all that had been done by the Government, and the fact that the limit had not been fixed too low, had been proved by the result. When the tenders were opened it was found that out of £1,386,200 which had been tendered for only £61,400 was above the limit that was fixed by the Government. Of course they accepted that amount, and deposited £100,000 in the Savings Bank as security for the sums lodging by the public. They had then the balance in their hands, and the question was—what were they to do with it? Now, it must be borne in mind that they occupied amongst the colonies the position of pioneers in a matter of this nature. In fact, it fell to the part of the

youngest of the Australian colonies to be the first to place on the market a loan at 4 per cent. They had nothing to guide them in the matter; but the tenders that were sent in, and the opinions of monied men in Sydney and in the other colonies; and those opinions were all against them, and the result of the tenders sent in was very discouraging indeed. As he had already stated, only £61,400 was tendered for above the limit, while other tenders for various sums up to the total amount of £460,400 were sent in at between 80 and 82, and for a considerable amount the tenders were below 80. Now, as he had stated, those were their guides, and their only guides in addition to the opinions of monied men, and their opinions were all against them. And it must, therefore, be seen that they were placed in a position of considerable difficulty as to what course they should adopt. Then came the offer of the Bank of New South Wales to take the balance at the minimum price, and what under the circumstances was the Government to do? Now, suppose they had taken advantage of the offer and had accepted it, the effect of placing the whole of the balance of the loan in the hands of a monetary institution having the command of large means would have been the withdrawal of the whole of the balance from the market except to the extent of such sums as the bank might choose to place on the market at a nominally high rate; and the effect of that would, no doubt, have been to increase the credit of the colony to a considerable extent. Well, the Government were in this position that they had advertised for a loan of half a million of money, and had fixed a minimum below which no portion of it should be disposed of. A certain amount of it had been taken up at a price above the minimum, and they had the opportunity offered them of disposing of the balance at once. Now, it was of the utmost importance that the Government should endeavor to maintain and improve the credit of the colony to the utmost extent in their power. Well, they had a great deal more than the half of the loan remaining to be disposed of when the bank offered to take up the balance at the minimum; and it was to be expected that if the colony advanced, as there was every reason to believe it would, it would become necessary to place other loans in the market, and therefore, for that reason, if there was no other, it was of the greatest importance that the credit of the colony should stand as high as possible. After apportioning the £61,000 that had been tendered for above 86 and placing the £100,000 in the Savings Bank, it would have been perfectly ridiculous to have fixed a higher rate than 86 for the balance, and the only thing they could have done would have been to dispose of the remainder of the loan in dribblets; and by doing so they would have placed themselves in the hands of monied men, and of the monetary establishments in Sydney and elsewhere, and

the price of the debentures would have gone down, and they would have had to dispose of the rest at a much lower price. They might have been told, and that with some show of reason, that by the course they had adopted, they had sacrificed the interests of the colony, and that for the sake of saving one or two per cent. they had allowed the colony, as regarded its financial affairs, to be dragged through the mire. But they had an example to justify them. They had the case of New Zealand before them. Some short time after this colony advertised for tenders for their debentures, the colony of New Zealand advertised for a loan; and at that time the financial position of that colony was quite as good as that of this colony, and they placed their loan on the market at 90½, but even at that rate they could not succeed in obtaining a single tender, and their attempt was therefore what might be called a dead failure. Now, by the course pursued by this Government there had been nothing of the nature of a dead failure, because they had not fixed the minimum too high. He maintained, therefore, that the action taken by this Government had been attended with great success, especially in the way of establishing the credit of the colony. As to the statement that sales had taken place in the Sydney market at 94, he could assure the House that the sales at that rate did not extend to any considerable amount. The Bank of New South Wales held a good many of their debentures, but they had not been able to dispose of many of them at 94. Some of the newspapers had stated that the money was not wanted; but that was not correct, and the proof that it was not correct, was to be found in the fact that the loan account was overdrawn to the extent of £17,000. Now it might be asked by some honorable members, where had the money gone? Well, though it was not his province to go into details, he would mention a few particulars that he thought would be sufficient to convince the House that it had been expended in a perfectly legitimate way. It would be found by the financial debates of last session, that the Government had to provide £100,000 for Treasury Bills that fell due on the 31st of December last; and that the sum required as security for Savings Bank deposits amounted to £150,000. Then there was wanted for loan expenditure in the colony between £30,000 and £40,000, and there had to be sent to England for emigration, railway expenditure, silver coin, *et cetera*, £120,000. Now, that was altogether independent of the £100,000 that had to be sent home to pay the interest that fell due in July last year. The course the Government had pursued had kept them in easy circumstances; and though they had not drawn one penny more than was absolutely required, the loan fund was, as he had stated, £17,000 in debit. Another statement had been made to the effect that the Bank of New South Wales had been

able to declare a dividend of fifteen per cent., owing to the success of their speculations in the debentures of this colony. That circumstance had been very gravely alluded to in the newspapers, but it was entirely without foundation; and the same papers might have noticed that the Commercial Bank, which had nothing whatever to do with the debentures of this colony, and which carried on precisely the same business as the Bank of New South Wales, and in the same places, had declared a dividend of twenty per cent. Now, he maintained that the sole reason why the banks had been able to declare such high dividends was altogether owing to the improvement that had taken place in business generally throughout the Australian colonies. But there was another way of looking at the question; and he would ask honorable members to consider how the action taken by the present Government had resulted, as compared with the results of the action taken by previous Governments in the case of similar transactions. He would not trouble the House by going into the particulars of all the loans negotiated by previous Governments; but he would confine himself to the last that was negotiated, before the present Government succeeded to office. The amount of that loan was £1,170,950. It was offered at six per cent., and it was disposed of at an average of £90 Os. 9½d. The interest the colony had to pay on the nett sum received under that loan amounted to £6 13s. 3½d., while the portion of the present loan which had been disposed of, and which bore interest at the rate of 4 per cent., had brought £87 Os. 9½d., and the interest which the colony had had to pay on the amount received came to £4 11s. 10½d.; so that while this loan had realised within 3 per cent. of the loan raised by the previous Government at 6 per cent., the country had been saved to the amount of £2 ls. 4½d. per cent.

Mr. STEPHENS: What was the date of the loan at 6 per cent., to which the honorable member referred?

The Hon. R. RAMSAY: The date was 1866, but he would take any other loan for the purpose of comparison, though he did not think it was necessary to take up the time of the House by referring to them all. He had no other object in referring to this loan but that it was the last loan that was raised by the previous Government. That was not all the advantage, however, arising from the 4 per cent. loan. The loan raised by the previous Government at 6 per cent. had to be redeemed at par in twenty-five years, while the debentures issued by the present Government had not to be redeemed till forty years. There was still this other advantage, that while the cost of negotiating the 6 per cent. loan amounted to £28,497, the cost of negotiating the last loan at 4 per cent. amounted to only £617. Now, he considered that, by that fact alone, he was entitled to maintain that the loan raised by the present Government had been

most successfully disposed of; and perhaps the honorable member for South Brisbane, when he addressed the House, would inform honorable members as to the way in which he himself negotiated some Treasury bills at six per cent. He might say that, with regard to the issue of this debate, or the division that might take place upon it, he did not care, so far as he was personally concerned, whether it was in favor of the Government or not. During his connection with the Government he had had a great deal of trouble and a great deal of responsibility, and very little for it indeed; still, he had some strong reasons for wishing to see the present Government continued in office, and one of his reasons was that he should like to see them possessed of the power of expending the money that had been raised by loan. There was a million of money to be spent, and such was his confidence in the present Ministry that he would like to see them have the expending of it; and, certainly, he did not wish to see its expenditure entrusted to honorable members opposite. With every respect for the honorable member who moved the amendment, he desired to state that while he held a high opinion of him as a lawyer, he did not hold a very high opinion of him as a financier. He was inclined to believe that there was some truth in what he was told by a personal and political friend of the honorable member—that personally and professionally he was a very good man indeed, but that in the matter of finance he would not trust him to go marketing for him; and as he held a similar opinion with respect to the honorable member, that was one of the reasons why he should not wish to see a change of Ministry at the present time.

Mr. HEMMANT said he extremely regretted the course that had been taken by the Government last week in refraining from entering the Chamber to form a quorum. Whatever might be said as to the course that was taken by the Opposition last session—a course which he considered was fully justified—he did not think it could be urged that any grounds of justification existed for the course that was taken by the Government last week. As it was understood that the Government were not to introduce any measures of a political or party nature, he thought it did not redound to their credit that they did not aid in forming a House, to allow of the discussion on the Address in Reply, and the amendment upon it, to be proceeded with. The honorable the Minister for Lands, in the course of his speech, seemingly endeavored to divert the attention of the House from the real question at issue, so far as regarded his own department. The charge made against him was, that though he had been in office for three years, and was aware that dummying had been going on, he allowed deeds to be prepared for lands that had been taken up under the dummying process, and took the chance of those deeds not passing out of the

hands of the Government. Now, the country paid large salaries to the officers of the Civil Service, and he certainly thought they might be better employed than in the preparing of deeds which it was intended should not be issued. But although the deeds had been prepared, anyone would suppose that the Minister at the head of the department would have taken care that they would not have fallen into the hands of the person or persons in whose favor they had been made out. It was a most extraordinary thing that orders should be given that deeds for certain lands should not be issued, and yet that the officer through whose hands all deeds had to pass should not be informed of it. Such a way of carrying on the business of the country would be disgraceful to the smallest shopkeeper in the city. A great deal had been said about the honorable member for Ipswich not having enunciated any policy in bringing forward his amendment. Now, he must say it appeared to him that it was no part of the business of the honorable member, or of any honorable member on the Opposition side of the House, to supply a policy for the Government. The honorable member for Western Downs might shake his head at that; but he could inform him that such was the opinion expressed by Sir Robert Peel. On a somewhat similar occasion, in the House of Commons, that honorable gentleman, in answer to the charge that he had not indicated what his own policy would be, stated that when he was called in it would be the proper time for him to prescribe. And it was not necessary that members of the Opposition should be agreed in respect to the details of any policy, till they were brought together and had to draw out a united policy. At the present time the question honorable members had to do with was, whether the policy of the present Government, so far as it was known, was such as deserved the support of the House; and that being the case, it was quite unnecessary for them to speculate as to what might be the policy of some future Government. He was quite astonished to hear the honorable member for Western Downs speak in the way he did about the policy of the Government; for he could assure him that the opinion out of doors, and that even amongst the friends of the Ministry, was that the Government were only carrying out the policy of the Opposition. Their railway policy was well known to be that which had always been contended for by the Opposition; and he himself had heard the honorable the Minister for Works state, that it was no part of the policy of the present Government to support the carrying out of railway works; and that as to immigration, the Government had no more intention to introduce immigrants than they had to introduce merchandise. If those were not the opinions of all the members of the Government, they were, at any rate, the opinions which had been expressed by the honorable the Minister for Works. Then

the tariff which was introduced by the Ministry was so materially modified by the amendments proposed by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, as to be quite a different measure when it had passed from the one that was brought in. The proposition for financial separation also emanated from the Opposition, as well as the measure for increased representation, for which the present Government took all the credit to themselves. They also announced that it was their intention to reduce the salaries of the Civil servants by 5 per cent, but instead of that they proposed by the Estimates to increase the salaries of the heads of all the departments. But they had certainly carried out one part of their own policy, and that was the passing of a measure for the registration of brands. He would give the Ministry credit for the initiation and carrying through of that measure; and he would further say that he believed it was an excellent measure for the purpose for which it was intended. Whether it had worked well or not, at any rate it had been carried by the Government, and so far they were entitled to credit for that portion of their policy. Before going farther he would like to refer to one or two of the statements which had been made by the honorable member for Western Downs. In the first place, he might say that he thought that nothing could be more absurd—he would not say unfair, because its utter absurdity redeemed it from any such charge—than the comparison which that honorable member had instituted between floating the loan of 1866, which was the year of a general commercial panic, and the loan negotiated lately in the flourishing times enjoyed everywhere. The honorable member also went on to say, that one of the great difficulties the present Government had in floating the new loan was that the debentures were for forty years, whereas those of 1866 were for twenty-five years only.

The Hon. R. RAMSAY: No. He only mentioned that incidentally—that it was an advantage to the Government having forty years to run instead of twenty-five.

Mr. HEMMANT said he found, on referring to the Loan Act of 1872, that the debentures were to be repaid in twenty-five years, so he really could not see where the difference was, or how that could affect the question.

The Hon. R. RAMSAY: The Loan Act stated that the debentures were to be redeemed in not less than twenty-five years; but the Government had exercised, as he considered, a wise policy in making them run forty years.

Mr. HEMMANT would read the clause, so that honorable members could form their own opinion of it: it was as follows:—

“All sums borrowed under the authority of this Act shall be payable at any time after the expiration of twenty-five years from the time of borrowing the same.”

The Hon. R. RAMSAY: That had nothing to do with it.

Mr. HEMMANT: They were empowered by an Act of Parliament, and yet now they were told that that had nothing to do with it. If that was the kind of interpretation put upon the Act by the Government, it appeared to him to be only another instance of the kind of legal advice they obtained from their law officers. They might just as well say that they were not bound to issue debentures which were payable before the termination of a hundred years. The honorable member had also made the statement that the loan account was overdrawn to the extent of some £17,000. Now, in reference to that he might inform the House that, on the day before the meeting of Parliament, he had obtained some information from the Audit Office, up to April 30—which was the latest date that the returns were made up to—or about a month ago. He presumed the return to be correct, and by it he found that up to that date, of the £500,000 worth of debentures issued under the Act of 1872, £462,200 had been sold, realising £401,187 4s. 11d. The total sum expended, chargeable to the loan to the same date, was £146,551 0s. 7d. The return also stated that it must be borne in mind that part of that expenditure was incurred in anticipation, and, consequently, prior to the passing of the Loan Act. If that were the case he could not understand how it was that, although barely a month ago the Government had a balance of upwards of £400,000 of the loan to their credit, the account had now been overdrawn to the extent of £17,000. He hoped that was one of the subjects that would receive some explanation from the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, when that honorable member addressed the House. He would ask, what was the financial position of the colony at the end of last year? He found that up to last April there was a surplus revenue of £140,000; so it was actually the case that up to that time, according to the return, they had only spent the last year's surplus. That put the matter in a different aspect, especially when they took into consideration the rapid strides the colony had been making. In connection with that he thought it would not be out of place to call the attention of honorable members to what he considered the extreme egotism of the Government in taking credit to themselves for the prosperity which the country was at present enjoying. Now, it was quite true, that it was in the power of a Government to accelerate that prosperity; but it was utterly impossible for the efforts of any Government to prevent or retard the units which composed the mass, from improving their own condition. He had seen, a few days ago, a return published in one of the papers, showing the relative financial position of the four colonies of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Queensland; in each of the other colonies there had been quite as favorable an increase in the revenue over former years as there had been in Queensland; in

fact the whole world was enjoying a prosperity to which it had been a stranger for some time, and to say that Queensland owed hers to the sagacity with which affairs had been conducted, was, in short, egotistical. With regard to the floating of the loan, the honorable member for Western Downs had evidently misunderstood the objection which had been raised by the honorable member for Ipswich, and which, after all, was a real one. If the debentures, for instance, were, in the opinion of the Government, worth £90, how was it that they were sold for £86; and if they were only worth £86, why were they purchased by the Savings Bank at £90? Why was it that the Government, after having put a reserve of £86, tendered at £90? He certainly had heard of persons running up their own goods at a sale in order to get a balance, but he could not see how that would apply to the Government. He would now refer, for a few minutes, to the manner in which the Law Department was administered, and he really thought that that would be one special cause to induce honorable members to join the vote of want of confidence against the Government. He would not refer to the litigious spirit displayed by the Government, although it was very much to be deprecated. They had, no doubt, a perfect right to go to law, but if they did go, it should be in a proper manner, and as cheaply as possible; and in regard to that subject he would like to have some information as to the amount in fees which had been paid to the honorable the Attorney-General during his tenure of office on account of those lawsuits. He intended to move for such a return, as he thought it would be both instructive and interesting. Some remarks had been made by both the honorable member for Wide Bay and the honorable member for Toowoomba to the effect that Mr. Davenport had been persecuted by the Government. Now, he had not taken that view of it, but, on the other hand, he thought that that gentleman had persecuted the Government, and he was of opinion that when reports of the proceedings in Mr. Davenport's case went to the other colonies, the forensic abilities of the honorable Attorney-General would not be very much enhanced. They would find that *caveats* were lodged one day and removed another, at the expense of the Crown; and did it not seem absurd that when a *caveat* was lodged in one name and dismissed, it was lodged in another, and so on until it had been lodged, he supposed, in the names of all the Ministers? There was another question somewhat connected with that subject, and that was the extraordinary proclamation which had been issued by the Government, depriving persons residing in the western districts of the criminal jurisdiction of the District Court. It did appear strange to him that because one jury gave a verdict which honorable members opposite liked to maintain was bad—that because twelve jurymen had given a corrupt verdict, a stigma was to be cast upon the whole community in

that district, and it was to go forth to the colonies that the district of Roma was so corrupt that it could not be said with confidence that a jury could be got to return a just verdict. There never was so extraordinary a proclamation. Honorable members would recollect that at the time of the celebrated five months adjournment, the Government went back for a precedent as far as the reign of James I., but he never heard of a case like that he was now referring to, except what was an approach to it in the time of Lord Morpeth, when persons were removed for trial from one part of America to England—a proceeding which had been said by writers to have at the time greatly embittered the feelings of the people of that country towards the British Government. He hoped the honorable the Attorney-General would be able to give some precedent for depriving a whole community of the convenience of a District Criminal Court, because one jury had given a verdict displeasing to the Government. If the people of that district were such hardened ruffians as they had been represented, surely they were not to be entrusted with the decision of civil suits—that was an anomaly he could not understand. He believed, however, the real fact was, that in the opinion of the administration there was something particularly sacred in sheep and cattle that required special protection, for which people were now to travel some hundreds of miles. One statement made by the honorable the Attorney-General had rather taken him by surprise—that the voice of the people outside was with the Government—that he was satisfied that if the people were polled, they would be in favor of the Government. That had taken him by surprise, because, if there was one doctrine laid down and reiterated by the Government during the last session, it was that the majority of that House should be taken as representing the feelings of the people. Yet, now the honorable members opposite wished to appeal to the people outside, which was no doubt premonitory of another dissolution, but was certainly reversing the theory laid down by them last session, when circumstances were different. The honorable the Attorney-General stated that the objections of the honorable member for Ipswich were too vague, and consisted only of points of detail; but as the honorable the Treasurer and other honorable members had not yet addressed the House, he (Mr. Hemmant) would refer to another subject which, perhaps, would also be termed one of detail by the honorable gentleman, but was one which had attracted a large amount of public attention during the last two months; he was alluding to the seizure of certain goods by the Customs. As that was in connection with the collection of *ad valorem* duties, he would first of all ask honorable members to bear in mind that when those duties were increased, it was against the opposition of the then Colonial Treasurer, the Honorable Mr.

Ramsay, who, he believed, had always consistently opposed them on the ground that they tended to demoralization, and to injure the honest trader. When in office, that honorable gentleman took some steps to protect the revenue and traders from being defrauded by false invoices. Well, the duties had been increased from eight to ten per cent., principally through the efforts of the present Treasurer, who, last session, had said that they were very good ones, and that the proper way to administer the Act was to take more stringent precautions against fraudulent entries. Under the old Customs Act, under which most of the prosecutions of the kind to which he was now referring were laid, it was within the option of the Collector of Customs either to confiscate the goods, or prosecute and obtain the penalty. But the rule which had generally been carried out in this colony was, that when a large quantity of goods were smuggled, they were confiscated, and nothing more was said in the matter; if, however, the party smuggling happened to be an unfortunate steward of a vessel, who had smuggled perhaps a few pounds of tobacco, he was immediately taken before a magistrate, and the penalty was sought for; and in default of payment, which was utterly beyond his means, he was sent to gaol for three or six months. In fact, during the last twelve months that had been the case, and persons had been sent to gaol for various terms. Now, if there was one thing which a Government should pride itself upon, it was dealing out even-handed justice to all—whether rich or poor. He wished it to be understood in the remarks he was about to make, that he did not wish to say anything offensive against Mr. Donkin, the gentleman whose case he was alluding to, because the only difference between his case and that of others was, that Mr. Donkin happened to be found out; but he maintained that whenever the Government found out such a case as that, they were bound to follow it up. In the month of March last Mr. Donkin passed at the Customs, entries for certain packages of hardware containing American shovels and axes. He obtained a certificate of delivery, but before the goods left the wharf they were detained by the Customs officer, in consequence of evidence of fraud appearing on the face of the invoice. He had been told by persons in the trade that it was the practice to pack American shovels in cases containing five, ten, or twelve dozen each, but the packages in question were passed as containing only one dozen each. When information of the seizure got outside, it caused considerable agitation when it was surmised that no proceedings would be taken by the Government in the matter. He would point out that by the 8th section of the Customs Act of 1870—

“If any package entered for duty is found to contain goods not mentioned in the entry or invoice or if any goods are found which do not

correspond with the description thereof in the invoice &c. such omission or non-correspondence shall appear to the Collector of Customs to have been made for the purpose of avoiding the payment of the duty or any part of the duty on such goods or if it shall appear to the Collector of Customs that in any invoice or entry any goods entered for *ad valorem* duty have been undervalued with such intent as aforesaid or if the oath or declaration made with regard to any such invoice or entry is wilfully false in any particular then in any of the cases aforesaid all the packages and goods included in such invoice or entry shall be forfeited and the importer of the same shall for every such offence forfeit and pay a sum not exceeding two hundred pounds or less than ten pounds to be recovered before any two or more justices of the peace sitting in petty sessions in the district where such offence to be tried shall be alleged to have been committed.”

Now, he contended that it was one of the charges against the Government, that with the knowledge of the facts staring them in the face, with their attention being drawn by the public journals to that very particular clause, with their being shown that it was distinctly their duty to enforce the penalty, no attempt had been made to enforce it, nor would be made if they were to judge by the present Government. Three months had been allowed to elapse since the seizure was made, and in consequence of that, it was publicly stated that the law officers of the Crown had refused to prosecute. That appeared to be a most extraordinary thing. They had gentlemen paid most handsome salaries to perform certain duties, and yet they neglected to perform them. To show the nature of the transaction, he might mention that after the goods were confiscated, they were sold by auction and realised £275, although the original invoice was only \$111, and it was only upon that the duty was originally paid. Honorable members opposite might say that it was quite possible it was a mistake, but what was the conduct of Mr. Donkin after the seizure?—and here honorable members would perceive the Government had no excuse—why, when he found that the goods were detained, a clerk of the firm was sent to amend the entry to the extent of £30. Supposing the goods had been merely a consignment, and Donkin knew nothing about them, why did he depart from his original entry and amend it by £30? If it was an error of the consignor, whose name he would mention—Mr. Stubbs, of Sydney—how was it that the entry was amended? He certainly thought the case was one which should claim the attention of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, and that the House should be informed of the grounds the Government had for believing it was a *bona fide* affair so far as Donkin was concerned—why the entry was amended, and why the goods when sold by auction realised so much above the invoice price. It might be said that it was not intentional fraud to pass a case containing twelve dozen shovels for one dozen;

again, it was unnecessary to say whether Donkin did the dirty work for Stubbs, or Stubbs did it for Donkin; or whether it was a *bonâ fide* consignment;—but the goods had been confiscated, and it was the bounden duty of the Government to enforce the penalty, which was one not alternative but in addition to the confiscation of the goods. It had been pointed out by the Collector of Customs, in the Upper House, that the penal clauses had been introduced for preventing fraud, and he (Mr. Hemmant) certainly thought that the House was entitled to some explanation from the honorable the Treasurer, in his reply, as to why the penalties had not been enforced. He might say that, when the Government were making important reforms as regarded the Civil servants—their not being allowed to act as directors in private companies—they should have gone farther, and declared that the salary now paid to the Crown Solicitor was not sufficient, but that he should be paid more and retire from all private practice. He did not wish to say one word against that officer, but, at the same time, it was not right that a partner in a private firm should hold the important position of Crown Solicitor. He might point out, as effectually disposing of the *bonâ fides* of the transaction of Mr. Donkin, that, in addition to the falsification of the quantity of shovels, there was also one in regard to the American axes. Several persons engaged in the hardware business had gone to him and asked him to bring the matter before the House, and it was only in pursuance of that request that he was now doing so. In reference to the *bonâ fides* of the matter, he might mention that American axes were sold by weight, and that in the cases confiscated there were four different kinds invoiced under one description; but it was invariably the custom not to invoice them all round, but according to weights. There was another point which might very properly be brought forward by him in connection with the question he had just mentioned. Honorable members were no doubt aware that during last year there had been a considerable amount of sugar manufactured at St. Helena. Now, having been informed that that sugar had been disposed of to certain parties in the city—a statement he could not believe—he went to the office of the honorable member at the head of the Government, for the purpose of getting some information on the subject. That honorable member happened, however, to be absent in the North, and he then wrote to the Under Secretary, asking to be supplied with the quantity of sugar made at St. Helena, and how it had been disposed of—at the same time he stated that he should make use of the information. Well, he received a reply to the effect that 65 tons had been manufactured, of which 14 tons had been used by Government departments, and the balance sold to a private mercantile firm for £500. He argued that

that was wrong in principle—that the Government had no right to sell public property in that private way;—if they pursued that course in regard to sugar they might with equal reason dispose of the public lands in the same way; all public property ought to be submitted to public competition. Then again the Government had taken great credit to themselves for the successful working of the Immigration Act; but that was not the opinion of the public at large, inasmuch as the complaint was that immigration had been virtually strangled, and it was the universal opinion that that was in consequence of instructions which had been sent home to Mr. Daintree. Of course, that could not be known, but the fact of such an opinion being entertained showed the danger of a Government going into office, and then eating the policy of their opponents. For instance, how could anyone suppose that the honorable Minister for Lands went heart and soul into the immigration scheme, after the statements which were made by that honorable gentleman when the Bill was before the House? There never had been a time in the history of the colony, more favorable to the introduction of immigrants—when more were required; why, it was well known that, on their arrival, they were all snatched up in a day or two, and it was a universal complaint amongst the farmers that the class of people they had been accustomed to depend upon were all absorbed by the public works. The honorable Minister for Lands appeared to be quite satisfied with his land laws, and thought no alteration was required; but since he had had a seat in that House, he (Mr. Hemmant) had been in close communication with farmers and others, and they did not agree with the views expressed by the honorable member; on the contrary, there was great dissatisfaction in many parts of the country. He could point out one instance in the Logan District where eight square miles of a run had been thrown open for selection under the Homestead Act of last session. In one case, a selection had been taken by a gentleman holding a station there, and others had been taken by his employés. In another, a selection had been taken by a magistrate of Brisbane, who it was not very likely would go to Tambourine to reside. It was very mortifying that persons who wished to take advantage of the Act, and who went out to take up land, should find that it had all been applied for by jackeroos on a station and by a Brisbane magistrate, for it could not be supposed that those persons were going to reside on the land and cultivate it. It was only reasonable, therefore, that persons should complain of the working of that Act. If it was not the fault of administration, it was of legislation; and if the Government, by their administration, could not avoid such things as he mentioned, they should have given notice of an intention to introduce a measure to prevent such abuses in future. The only other observation he

would offer to the House was to reiterate what he had said before with regard to the policy of honorable members on his side of the House. It was not necessary that all those honorable members should hold the same views on all subjects; and it would be very absurd for the honorable member for Wide Bay, for instance, to stand up and enunciate a policy with which other honorable members might not agree. That was not the question—but the question was, whether they had confidence in the Government or not? The real question was, did they believe in the present Government?—and not, did they believe in those who might succeed them? The question of confidence in the present Government was the one before them, and was the one upon which every honorable member should give his most careful consideration before coming to a decision on the subject.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he really thought, after the very able speech which had been delivered by his honorable friend, the member for Western Downs, there would at least have been some better reply to it than that which the House had just heard from the honorable member for East Moreton. He certainly thought that the honorable member for South Brisbane, if able to do so, would have risen to reply; but, instead of that, they had heard a speech from the honorable member for East Moreton, which, he was quite sure, not only the honorable member's constituents, but also everyone who heard or read it, would consider an utter failure as a speech to be delivered on such an occasion as the present. He believed also that everyone would deeply deplore that the honorable member should have thought fit to go down to that House and make the unfair personal attack on the family of a gentleman in the city, that he had done.

MR. HEMMANT: No.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable gentleman said "No;" but he thought he had never heard an attack in worse taste made, not only against a gentleman, and a citizen of Brisbane, but also against the relatives of that gentleman.

MR. HEMMANT: I utterly deny such charges. I never alluded to the gentleman's relatives.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, he would take the honorable member's assertion, although it was well known that a relative of the gentleman attacked that evening had formerly been a political opponent of the honorable member. If not, he was doing the honorable member an injustice. He was not, however, doing him an injustice when he said that the attack which he had made upon a gentleman and a respected member of the mercantile community was not at all creditable to the honorable member. There were, as the honorable member well knew, other means of directing the attention of the Government to a matter, without taking

advantage of his position in that House to attack a private individual. Why had not the honorable member called for the papers on the subject, instead of asking the House to condemn the Government? Why had not the honorable member done that, and thus have allowed the House to judge whether Mr. Donkin was the great delinquent the honorable member had made him out to be that evening. Now, he knew nothing of the case whatever—neither Mr. Donkin or any member of his family had ever spoken to him on the subject; but he did know that there was a feeling prevalent outside, that the attacks which had been made upon that gentleman by a portion of the public press were made on account of the political opinions of his relatives. It was most un-English—most unmanly—to make such an attack upon any person before the correspondence had been laid upon the table, and he did not think the public would accept such an *ex parte* statement as that which had been put forward by the honorable member. All he could say was, that he had never heard anything of the case, as he was out of the colony when it occurred. He thought, however, that some charges of a graver nature should have been brought forward against the Government by the honorable member for East Moreton before he could justify himself in seeking to turn out the present Government. The honorable member should have given some more satisfactory reasons as to why he was opposing them—as to why he was thus acting in defiance of the wishes of his constituents. Neither the honorable member nor the honorable members for North Brisbane could deny that they were acting against the wishes of their constituents, who, he was certain, if polled, would almost to a man say that their members were not representing them in the course they were now pursuing.

MR. LILLEY: No.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member said "No," but he thought the honorable member believed to the contrary. He knew that there had been an effort to get up an agitation meeting on Saturday last, and, no doubt, honorable members were under the impression that they had support from that meeting, although it really was an utter failure. Why, at the meeting they were actually afraid to hear both sides of the question, and when a respectable citizen, Alderman Heal, who had on many an occasion been the chief champion of the chairman, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley—when he wanted to speak, and that too in a city where he was so well known, he was not allowed to do so. That very gentleman who at so many public meetings had demanded for the honorable member that fair hearing which was denied to himself.

MR. LILLEY: No; nothing of the sort.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He knew better. Mr. Heal had done so many a time, when he had been in the chair at the

honorable member's meetings, but did he get that fair hearing the other night?

MR. LILLEY, and HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Yes, and got it too.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Heal asked the meeting for a fair hearing, so that he might reply to the statements which had been made, and that was the only reason why that gentleman was opposed and put down. He would now tell the honorable members for North Brisbane, and also the two honorable members for East Moreton, that they were going diametrically opposite to the wishes of their constituents, who desired to see the country continue in its present prosperity, and not plunged again into a state of degradation, simply because their members might get into office. That again reminded him of the wonderful friendship which had so suddenly sprung up between the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, and the honorable member for South Brisbane. Why, the present was the only session during which those honorable members could be got to even look at each other, and now they were sitting together—

MR. STEPHENS: Why, I supported him, and voted for him at the last election.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member for East Moreton did not know that. Well, affecting as it no doubt was to see that sudden friendship, still more strange was it to see the friendship which had sprung up between the same honorable member and the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn. Why, last session, if the honorable member for South Brisbane did not speak, he was asked by the honorable member, Mr. Thorn, why he did not; and if he did speak, up jumped the honorable member for West Moreton and told him he knew nothing about what he was talking. Now, those honorable members were going into each other's arms, and all because the Ministers had no policy. He would, however, inform honorable members opposite that the Government had a policy; he would tell them also that one of the policies of the Ministers was to keep incompetent men out of office; one was to prevent the return to office of the honorable member for South Brisbane, inasmuch as the country never did anything but suffer from the pernicious ministry of that honorable member. The great policy and object of the Government was to prevent such an unholy alliance as that between the honorable members for East Moreton and the honorable member for South Brisbane, and between the honorable member for West Moreton and the same honorable member, for they well knew the rancorous feeling which existed between those honorable gentlemen. There was not a finer representative of the people than the honorable member for West Moreton now was in the eyes of the honorable member for South Brisbane; already that honorable member might, in prospect, be Post-

master-General, or even Solicitor-General, or some other member of the Cabinet. But it was part of the policy of the present Government to prevent the country from being disgraced by such an unholy and unprincipled alliance, for he ventured to say that if any six honorable members opposite took office, it would be one of the most disgraceful and unprincipled alliances that ever occurred in that House, and one of the most hopeless for the country. He had been in hopes that the country would have been saved from the calamity of seeing the honorable member for South Brisbane return to office as Treasurer, or even at all; but if the honorable member for East Moreton did not show more talent for the position of financier than he had displayed in his reply to the speech of the honorable member for Western Downs, he was afraid that the return to office of the honorable member for South Brisbane was inevitable. One of the first charges brought against the Government by the honorable member, Mr. Hemmant, was for not moving for a suspension of the Standing Orders, so as to pass that most necessary Bill, to enable the Supreme Court business to be carried on as it should be. Now, he contended that it was of the utmost importance to the colony that an acting judge should be appointed immediately, but that such was not done was not the fault of the Government, who had been told by the new leader of the Opposition that nothing should be done until the Address was passed. The honorable member most distinctly announced that as their policy—

THE HON. A. MACALISTER: I made a reservation in favor of that Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS had no doubt the honorable gentleman intended to make such a reservation, but he did not think he did so. More than that, however, so averse was the honorable gentleman to any business being done, that he had actually opposed the Honorable Attorney-General bringing forward his motion that evening.

THE HON. A. MACALISTER: I never did anything of the sort. It was objected to by some other honorable member—I did not say anything.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It had been objected to by some honorable member on the other side of the House, and the honorable member being leader, should have prevented it.

THE HON. A. MACALISTER: If the honorable member will allow me, I will set him right. I said it was mentioned in the Governor's Speech, according to Parliamentary usage, but I thought the paragraph should have gone further.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He was only showing that the honorable member for East Moreton found fault with the Government for not having passed the measure, and yet the opposition had come from that honorable member's own side of the House. The honorable member had also attempted to make a great point, because his (the Secretary

for Works') honorable friend had demanded that if the Opposition claimed to have the duty of governing the country, they should give some policy, and said that the Opposition should not give a policy until they were in power. Why, it was the policy of the Opposition to cause a change of power, and to make honorable members change their places in that House. Did anyone mean to say that the country was to be reduced to such a state of political degradation that the people were at the next election to support a Ministry that had no policy? He did not believe in that. He would follow in the footsteps of his honorable friends, and show that the present Government had a policy, and that whether, as they were charged with doing, they had adopted the policy of the Opposition or not, they had one, and had carried it out. If it was the policy of the Opposition, how was it that honorable gentlemen opposite opposed it—what fault could they find—was it because it was the Government who were carrying it out and not themselves? In the name of goodness what was it, but because there were some six or seven gentlemen who wanted to get into office?—gentlemen who cared nothing about the welfare of the country—gentlemen who cared nothing about the wishes of their constituents—gentlemen who cared nothing about public opinion, or the state of public affairs, so long as they could attain their one desire, which was, office. On the other hand, it had been proved that it was the policy of the Government which had caused the prosperity of the country. On looking opposite, he saw at least two honorable members who aspired to the position of Attorney-General. He knew that there were three honorable members who were quite ready to take the office of Colonial Treasurer, and supposing there was no office for the honorable member for West Moreton, if the worst came to the worst, why a new office could be created to gratify the ambition of that honorable gentleman. He could be the new Minister for Education;—in fact, he was told that the honorable member for Ipswich, on seeing the honorable member, pointed to him and said, "There goes our Minister for Education!"—that occurred in the streets of Ipswich. Those were the motives which induced the opposition to the Government, and not only to them but to the best interests of the country; and if he did not feel that it was opposition to the future welfare of the country, he would not persevere one moment longer. He, however, did feel that its best interests were in jeopardy, and if they could not awaken the people outside to a knowledge of their danger, he for one would do his best on the floor of that House. It was a well-known fact that the Government had never had a fair trial, and whatever they might have done for the good of the country had invariably not only been referred to in the most slighting way, but they had actually been falsified. Why, so

much was the metropolitan press opposed to them, that he had been told only a day ago, by several very influential citizens, that they had tried to get into the papers letters favorable to the Government, but could not. He had seen a copy of one letter, the writer of which appealed to the leaders of the Opposition to let the people think for themselves; but nothing of the sort had appeared in either the *Courier* or the *Telegraph* newspapers. He had endeavored to show that, except from the floor of that House, the Government had had no means of making known to the country the many important works they had performed. Another charge brought against them by the honorable member for Ipswich was, that they had given no information in the Speech regarding the gold-fields. Now, a greater mistake than that could not be made, as he did not hesitate to say that it was only since the present Government had taken office that the public had been kept constantly alive to the existing state of affairs on the gold-fields. He might inform the House that, previous to his taking office, the reports from the various commissioners had always been suppressed, but he had taken particular care to have them published in the public journals—invariably that had been the case; yet, in the face of that, the honorable member stated that the Government had afforded no information in respect to the gold-fields of the colony. If publicity had not been given to the conduct of the Government—to their exertions in carrying on works for the benefit of the country—or information had not been given to the public of departmental alterations, it was entirely due to those important matters not having been published in the press. For instance, he would take the papers laid on the table of that House during the previous week, some of which were of vast public importance—for instance, that in respect to the construction of railways. How was it that not one word had been said about them? Could there have been anything more interesting to the people of North and South Brisbane, than that report about the terminus—where could there be anything which more affected the pockets of the people of Brisbane?—yet, although they had been printed a week, not a word had been allowed to appear in the public prints. Yet he ventured to say, that both those documents were a credit to any Government; they were fair, impartial, and instructive—they were in fact too fair, too impartial, and too instructive for the honorable member for South Brisbane to allow to see daylight. Those were some of the acts of injustice of which he complained; they were the rewards meted out to a Government. Those were the things which kept the people in such ignorance of the Government, and which placed the Government in such difficulty regarding the people of the country. Why, when the honorable member for South Brisbane was in office, if his Government did anything that

he thought would meet with the approval of the public, it would appear immediately in the columns of the *Courier*, and be followed up by leader after leader in that journal. But where was that important information now? He would say that the person who was the means of keeping it from publication was doing an immense injustice, not only to the Government but to the country. That was especially the case with the metropolitan press, the leading political friends of which wished to keep the public in ignorance of what was done by the Government. The honorable member for East Moreton had asked what the Government had done, and said that they had introduced no Bills of importance. In reply to that he would say, that they had introduced more measures in number, and more for the weal or woe of the country, than any previous Government had done. The honorable member should have been more careful before he made such a statement, as he (the Secretary for Works) could most unhesitatingly say that during the three years they had been in office, they had passed more Bills for the welfare of the country, than any other Government had done.

MR. THORNTON: Names?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There was no occasion to mention names. The honorable member who paid such attention to his Parliamentary duties could not require the names. He must confess that when he heard the remarks of the honorable member for East Moreton in regard to the administration of the Loan Act, he had done so with pain; for he had always looked upon that honorable gentleman as one qualifying himself for being sooner or later Colonial Treasurer; but after his trashy talking, when referring to that Act of Parliament—that the Government had not power to issue debentures payable at forty years—he certainly felt that there was a better chance for the honorable member for South Brisbane. Why, the clause of the Act distinctly said that they could not issue for less than twenty-five years.

MR. HEMMANT: No.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The words were—"shall be paid after the expiration of twenty-five years." That was not that they should not be paid forty years after the time; if it was not included in the description of "any time," what was it? He maintained that that was the strict meaning of the Act; and to show that, those persons who had read the Act with much greater care most probably than he had, he might mention that people were taking the debentures payable at forty years; and he did not think anyone would imagine that if the clause was capable of misconstruction, people would invest their money in our securities.

MR. LILLEY: They can demand payment at any time after twenty-five years.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: With all due deference to the great legal authority,

the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, he would say that they could do nothing of the kind; and he would stake his legal ignorance on the point that all they could do was to demand their money after the expiration of forty years. The honorable member for East Moreton had made out a very bad case; and after all, if he thought the Government had acted in the interest of the country in making the bills run for forty instead of twenty-five years, why could he not have displayed a little patriotism, and not have found fault? Was the country to be brought to a stand still, simply because certain honorable members could not see that the Government had been doing everything they could for the benefit of the country? The honorable member again was particularly unfortunate in his allusions to the honorable the Attorney-General. The remarks made by the honorable member were very unnecessary—very uncalled for, and would have been much better omitted altogether from the honorable member's speech. He would, however, advise the honorable gentleman when he moved for a return—and he would support him in such a motion—that he should extend it a little more, and move for a return of fees paid to all Attorneys-General; he could promise the House that it would be a most interesting and instructive document.

MR. STEPHENS: There were none before the present Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS would tell the honorable member that when the honorable member was Colonial Treasurer he paid lots of fees.

MR. LILLEY: No.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was a common practice, and he, as a private member at the time, had taken exception to it. It was the practice during the time the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was in office—it was the practice during the time the honorable member for South Brisbane was in office—and he did not hesitate to say that it had been the practice since the present Government had been in office.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was not a new practice on their part; it was merely following the old one of their predecessors.

MR. LILLEY: That is not true; I never received any fees whilst I was in office.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Does the honorable member say that during the time he was in office fees were never paid to other honorable members?

MR. LILLEY: That is different.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He would be very sorry, indeed, to say one word that he could not substantiate respecting the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, but he felt perfectly sure that the honorable member for South Brisbane, when in office, allowed fees to be paid.

Mr. STEPHENS and Mr. LILLEY: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He would ask the honorable member for Fortitude Valley whether, in that memorable case of *Macdonald v. Tully*, he did not recover £17,000 damages against the Crown, and was not he then Attorney-General?

Mr. LILLEY: Mr. Pring appeared for the Crown.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well then, the honorable member whilst Attorney-General prosecuted the Crown, and got £17,000 damages, and his then colleague, Mr. Pring, was for the Crown, and paid by it.

Mr. LILLEY: He was not my colleague.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Whatever honorable members might say, it had been the practice for Attorneys-General to receive fees long before the present Government took office, but he had always condemned the practice, and, if he recollected rightly, he moved for a return of all moneys paid in that way, and that in that return were moneys paid to the Attorney-General. The honorable member for East Moreton had been severe on the Minister for Lands because some of his country friends had found fault with the Act, as they could not get the land they wanted. Well, he (the Secretary for Works) had never heard any of those complaints; all he had heard of the honorable member's constituency was, that they had got as much as they wanted; and his honorable colleague was perfectly correct when he said that applications for land were coming in every day, and that they had only to ask for it to get it. He knew that the greatest facilities had been given to persons all over the colony to take up holdings when they required them. Honorable members on the Opposition side of the House doubted some of the statements he made respecting the payments of moneys to members of Parliament; but he begged to say that his observations were framed upon a return which had been furnished to Parliament. Possibly the return was incorrect; and he durst say that the honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley would be able to explain that it was incorrect. However, the document was on the table of the House, and it should be accurate. He found there—Moneys paid to the Honorable Charles Lilley, for November, 1868, £13 17s. 9d. What that meant, he did not exactly know. Salary, Mr. Lilley, for January, £83 6s. 8d.; and, on the 25th December, salary, £83 6s. 8d.; also, between the first and the second payments, fees, £79 18s. 6d. to Mr. Lilley. He had no doubt the honorable member would be able to explain it—he did not, for one moment, say he would not;—but he did say that his remarks appeared to be justified, at any rate, by the return. This was the position he wished to hold. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley must remember that the observations were drawn from him by some very invidious remarks made by

honorable members on the Opposition side. Now, he (the Secretary for Works) proposed to address himself to the serious consideration of the subject before the Assembly and the country. He thought this was about the most critical period of the country's fortunes that had ever arrived; and he did not hesitate to express his belief that a false step at this moment would materially affect the weal or woe of the country. He believed implicitly that anything which took place now, from party faction or for political objects, or from whatever cause it might happen, by which the governmental state of affairs of the colony was interfered with—in other words, if the present Ministry went out of office and were not succeeded by a Ministry with a similar policy to theirs—that was what he wished to impress upon the House—if they were not succeeded by gentlemen with a policy of their own, like that which had been pursued for the last three years, without any deviation; the change would be fatal to the best interests of the colony, which would be injured in its present prosperity; and there would follow adversity and perhaps a consequent period of depreciation such as had happened before. If he went out of office to-morrow, and that policy was still to be pursued, he should not care, so dear did he hold it to his heart. It was, he believed, imperatively necessary that the present arrangements of the country should be continued. He would undertake to go out of office at once and give way to the gentlemen on the other side of the House, if he could feel assured that they would pursue the course which the present Government were following for the good of the whole colony. It was because he feared disturbance on that subject that he apparently clung to office;—it was because he wished not to see a good policy disturbed by political or factious motives. The colony had been governed for three years with great advantage upon a policy which, he contended, if not designed for the advance of the country, had not been inimical to its prosperity; it was a policy which went on beneficially with the country as it progressed. The people recognised it, and gladly endorsed it. There was no objection in the country to the action or conduct of the Government. Where was the electorate, where were the constituents, where were the inhabitants of towns—except when drawn together by such a meeting as that of Saturday evening last, in Brisbane—who objected to the policy of the present Government? He believed that the railway policy of the Government was one wonderfully adapted to the present requirements of the country and conducive to its interests. There were other subjects as momentous, which had been specially initiated by the head of the present Government, which should not be disturbed any more than the railway policy. There was that for maintaining a postal service of our own, which should not be interfered with. Again,

the telegraph arrangements, for direct communication with Europe, should not be interfered with. Was it not important for the country, that the Government having initiated such a mighty undertaking, should be allowed to carry it to a successful end? At the very moment when honorable members on the Opposition side were talking of not having confidence in the Government, the Governments of the other colonies were reposing the greatest confidence in them, for the arrangement of telegraph and mail services; and they had actually confided to his honorable friend, the Premier, to conduct those arrangements to completion. If it was only for carrying out the present excellent system of immigration, which had been sneered at in the course of the debate; if only for carrying to a successful issue the telegraph and the postal arrangements, most important now; it would be bad for the country to have any disturbance of the present holders of power. As a very old colonist, and one who took the deepest interest in Queensland, he feared for its welfare any disturbance in the present direction of affairs; and he felt bound, therefore, to examine the whole question raised before the House and the country with that end in view. Who was now the disturber? Why, the honorable member for Ipswich, whose friends were, a few short weeks ago, canvassing the Government to find whether there was any chance of his getting into the Speaker's chair.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: No, no.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He said the honorable member's friends were canvassing the possibility of his getting into the Speaker's chair.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: It is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He said the honorable member's friends.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: Who are they?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Never mind. He said, further, that within the last month, the honorable member himself mentioned the matter to the Government—

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: It is untrue that I ever canvassed the Government; I never did anything of the kind.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member did go to a Minister of the Crown and say that his highest ambition was to become again the occupant of the Speaker's chair, and that that was his view.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: Ah! that is another thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He did say that if his colleagues had asked Mr. Speaker to retire from the chair and made the honorable member for Ipswich a promise that he should have it, the honorable member would have been found sitting on the Ministerial side of the House. He was justified in alluding to the matter. Would

the honorable member contradict him on that point—that he went to a Minister's house and said what was his object? Here he (the Secretary for Works) found a gentleman who had become a member of Parliament, and, simply, because the Government had not the power to place him in the Speaker's chair, he put himself at the head of, or he was elected to lead, those honorable members of the House who some time ago denounced him as the biggest—he would not say what!—in the colony. His honorable and learned friend, the member for Fortitude Valley, went over the whole colony, dogged his steps everywhere, and denounced him as a malefactor—as the evil spirit of the country! And now, because the honorable member for Fortitude Valley would not get up and lead them, those honorable members opposite, to get the vote of the honorable member for Ipswich, who could not get the chair, would have the honorable member for Ipswich as their leader!—him whom, a very few years ago, they not only hunted from the Assembly Chamber, but tried to hunt into the Insolvent Court. Such was their animosity against him, then, simply because he had occupied the Speaker's chair. And, now, let him (the Secretary for Works) ask, if the country was to confide its affairs into the hands of the honorable member for Ipswich, if that honorable gentleman was to be selected as the Premier of this colony—what did the honorable member for Fortitude Valley say about him?

Mr. LILLEY: What did he say of you?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He had a lively recollection of what the honorable gentleman had said, but that was no reason why he should not read what the honorable member had said of the leader he was now following—

Mr. LILLEY: No, no.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member was sitting under the leadership of the honorable member for Ipswich. He (the Secretary of Works) had not the slightest doubt that honorable member would take office under that leader, or take something from him. He had no doubt that he had got a promise from that leader.

Mr. LILLEY: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, he was not glad to hear it, because he knew that it would come whether or not. What did the honorable member for Fortitude Valley say? He took the guidance and control of public opinion over the colony; and if a man affronted him, he attended meetings over the country, and denounced him to the people. What did the honorable member say the last time he met the honorable member for Ipswich in public? The House should hear it, cut from the *Courier*—

Mr. LILLEY: Then, it can't be true.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Which endorsed and sedulously propagated all the things said by the honorable member and other honorable members on the same side of

the House against the present leader of the Opposition :—

"Mr. Lilley on coming forward, said :—Gentlemen, I perceive that the returning officer is not aware when he has a gentleman to deal with, and that gentleman a fearless one."

This language was, he (the Secretary for Works) was sorry to say, used by the honorable member to the returning officer for Eastern Downs, a gentleman whom he did not know, but who no doubt was a very respectable person :—

"If he had refused me a hearing I should certainly not have allowed the matter to remain quiet. Now, gentlemen, how dare Mr. Macalister to stand before this electorate and call himself the *Honorable* Arthur Macalister? He call himself an honorable!—a gentleman who has sold every Ministry that he had ever anything to do with. I believe he has gone round the country trying to vilify my character. How dare he take my name in vain? Mr. Lilley went on for some length in this strain. He (Mr. Lilley) impressed upon the electors the necessity of not returning Mr. Macalister. He was certain to sell them, as he had done before."

Those were almost the last words the honorable member had uttered in public respecting the honorable gentleman, whom he now submitted to as leader. He (the Secretary for Works) did not mean to say that those words were correct. He said that a harsher and more unfair opposition no gentleman ever met with in this country than the honorable member for Ipswich. He believed that that Opposition was unjust, and an insult to the Parliament; as, in that matter, it was because the honorable gentleman had chosen to take the highest position which it was in the power of the House to bestow. The honorable gentleman was dogged about the country and attacked; and that was an instance of the way he was talked about by his present supporters. Here was another remark of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, which the House should hear :—

"Mr. Lilley then referred at considerable length to the action of Mr. Macalister in accepting the Speaker's chair. In doing so Mr. Macalister had sold his party, and he had left them in the position of a minority instead of a majority. Mr. Lilley denounced him in bitter terms, stating that he was unreliable as a partizan, and was as unstable as water, as fickle as the wind, and as timid as a hare."

Was the country to understand that a gentleman whom the honorable member for Fortitude Valley so regarded when they last met in public was to be put forward at the head of affairs, to upset the whole prosperous arrangements of the colony, and for mere party purposes?—

"The remainder of Mr. Lilley's speech was composed of an attack upon the present Government ;"

and so on. He (the Secretary for Works) had quoted those remarks, and he could quote

a great deal more, from the *Courier*, of the remarks of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley and other honorable members of the House who acted with him, to show the opinion they held of their present leader. What had occurred, since—what had come over the country—what great crisis had arrived—to account for the change in them, or in that man who was as unstable as water, as fickle as the wind, as timid as a hare; who had sold every Ministry that he had ever anything to do with; who was once gazetted out of office by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley? Yet, now, the confidence of the country was to be reposed in him, and the guidance and control of its affairs placed in his hands! He (the Secretary for Works) did not believe the honorable member for Ipswich deserved that character. It was party and political embitterment that had been aroused against him. Great injustice was done to him and to the country when the honorable gentleman was so persecuted. What was he to think of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House who agreed with the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and who endorsed every word that had been said by him—who never apologised to the honorable member for Ipswich, and never withdrew the bitter expressions which had been used towards him? What were the House to think of those honorable members, who, for the sake of the vote of the honorable member for Ipswich, had elected him their leader? When such unnatural events arose in the colony, he (the Secretary for Works) should not be doing his duty if he did not refer to them. If all that honorable members on the other side of the House had said was correct, what proof had they given—what proof had the honorable member for Ipswich given—that he possessed the necessary qualifications to assume such an important position as he was assuming at this moment in the Legislature, and before the country? The only qualification that he (the Secretary for Works) could see, and that the honorable gentleman was proved to possess, was the very last one that he should wish to have—he was fit to lead honorable members on that side. The honorable gentleman now came forward, a disappointed suitor for the Speaker's chair, the nominee of the very gentleman who had opposed him so bitterly, and who had used stronger language towards him than ever was addressed by ex-colleagues to ex-colleagues; he came before the House without any policy of his own, whatever, and, without any argument, charged the Government with having no policy, and asserted his right to drive them out of office. Upon what grounds did the honorable gentleman proceed? His first complaint, which was embodied in the amendment upon the Address, was, that the Government had no policy, and that therefore they did not possess the confidence of the House. Well, it was impossible for the

Government to say what the honorable gentleman meant by a policy. The Government had one policy, which the honorable member for Western Downs (Mr. Ramsay) so ably illustrated, this evening; and that was, a settled policy to do everything for the benefit of the country, and for the advancement of its interests. They had been told by the Opposition that they had adopted their policy. In the name of heaven! what more did the Opposition wish? Giving them the advantage of the argument for a moment—he did not admit that it was true—it meant that their policy was a better one than the policy of the Government, and that if the Government had followed their own policy, they would have been doing something bad for the country—which they had not done. All he could say was that, whether it was theirs or the ministerial policy, it was a good one for the interests of the country, which were not obstructed or destroyed by it. The country reaped advantage from it, and the people were gratified with it. The country was no more aware at this moment of such an opposition against the Government policy, than he was aware of the internal affairs of China. He maintained that the Government had a stable and unceasing policy ever since they took charge of the administration, and that it was one for governing all parts of the country alike. Even the honorable member for Wide Bay could not deny that. He (the Secretary for Works) maintained that the country was never so fairly or so evenly governed as under the present administration. The honorable member for Wide Bay knew, and his constituents knew, that what he said was strictly correct. The honorable member had a power of writing to the papers, of scribbling letters, by which he managed to keep a few factious persons in a state of restlessness; but for all that, his constituents of Wide Bay were satisfied with what the Government had done and were doing for their district, which was treated justly, in common with every other district of the colony. Even Brisbane was fairly dealt with. No similar amount of good was ever done before to what was effected since the present Government took office. Why had they done this? He (the Secretary for Works) admitted that it was not any great partiality for Brisbane—he did not pretend to have it; but it was because the Government would be just to all the colony. That was their policy—to govern the country equally. What was the natural following of that? Progress and prosperity. The first thing the Government attended to was, the improvement of the harbors and rivers of the colony. They did not begin with the North; they did not neglect the South or any part. Commencing at Nerang Creek, at the southern boundary of the colony—see what good had been done to the waterway there! See what good had been done to the Brisbane, compared with the “rest and caution” policy

of the Ministry that the honorable member for South Brisbane had been such an ornament of: they would have lived and died before it would have occurred to them, or before they would have discovered what the judicious expenditure of a few thousand pounds had accomplished for the improvement of the river navigation.

MR. LILLEY: Read the Speech of 1870.

MR. STEPHENS: We found the money and made the arrangements; you carried them out.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They never did anything of the sort. He believed that the honorable member for South Brisbane had something to do with selling the dredge; but the honorable member put the money into the Treasury, and as far as he knew, never intended to spend a penny of it. He defied him to show it, or to prove that he did more. But the Government did not stop at the port of Moreton Bay; they did for Wide Bay and for Maryborough as much as they could. As far as they could, they opened Bundaberg, and facilitated communication with Mount Perry, notwithstanding the scandals and the libels that had been circulated against the Government. Instead of keeping back that district, the Government had really exerted themselves beyond their strength and power to advance it. They had had great difficulties to contend against, in the divided interests of the people. For months he (the Secretary for Works) was obliged to stop, not only on that account, but because his own officers were divided in opinion as to what was best; but he was determined to do what was best, and he had succeeded. Go to Gladstone. The Government had not been idle there. Again, go to the Fitzroy, and see what improvements had taken place. At Broadsound, at Mackay, could be seen what the Government had done, and the attempt they had made to redress the injury which had arisen from the recklessness of their predecessors. Go to Townsville, to Cardwell, and see the same thing. There was not a single port, there was not a single river—more, he would say, there was not a single road, in the colony that had not received fair and liberal treatment at the hands of the Government, as far as means went; and not only that, but the public buildings of the country had been looked after as they never were before by any Government. And, yet, they had no policy! Their policy, as shown by their acts, was for the good of the country—for all of it equally. As far as the public buildings were concerned, he did not hesitate to say that he had found those of Brisbane a disgrace to the country. They were more like pig-styes than public offices. If honorable members would not admit those facts, the public outside would do so. The Government had adorned Brisbane. The office that he sat in upon entering the Government was absolutely pestilential. Take the Supreme Court; its

precincts had been a disgrace to the Government, and an insult to the community.

Mr. LILLEY : So it was now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS : He pointed to the Post Office ; as it was with that, in Brisbane, so it was with every office in the country. He mentioned this to show that it was the Government policy to deal fairly with every part of the country. An important part of their policy was railway extension. Notwithstanding what honorable members asserted, he had said over and over again, that when the Government could afford it, when the country could be got clear from that slough of trouble with which the late Government had had a great deal to do, they would make the railway ; and the Government had faithfully done it. He durst say that he had thus made himself very unpopular with the people of Maryborough by the extension of the railway ; but, true to the policy with which the Government had started, when there was no ground for delay, when the country could afford it, the work was done. He ventured to assert that if the late Government had remained in office, the railways would not have been commenced, to-day. The honorable member for Ipswich was particularly unfortunate in another part of his observations, when he stated that no Parliament knew less about the mining interest of the country than the present one ; that neither the Governor's Speech, nor Ministers themselves had given any information on the subject. That was absolutely incorrect. It was not necessary that the mining interest should be dragged into the Speech ;—no harm and no good could be done thereby. But the mining interest was, at this moment, in a particularly prosperous state ; and the greatest satisfaction was felt throughout the country with what the Government had done. He referred particularly to Gympie, which had been placed upon the pinnacle of prosperity, because the present Government had dared to issue leases of mining areas, and thus to give security to capital. That was part of their policy ; but it was not the policy of the late Government.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER : It was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS : When he went into office, there was a great difficulty in giving leases to the miners of Gympie or any other place. But from that time to this his almost constant request to the officers of the department had been to expedite the issue of such leases as the Government were justified in granting ; and he did not hesitate to say that, so far as Gympie was concerned, that part of the policy of the Government had been attended with the happiest results. When he went into office, only fifty leases had received the sanction of the Government, while there had been actually a hundred more applied for, that the people could not get ; and he did not hesitate to say that owing to the delays, and obstacles, and difficulties presented, those

people abandoned them. During the rule of the present Government Parliament was kept especially well informed upon the mining interest. He (the Secretary for Works) was speaking for his own department, especially of the gold fields. He had initiated a matter of very great advantage—he did not take much credit for it—in the periodical publication of the issue of miners' rights. That was never done before ; and it had now the most wholesome effect. It not only enabled residents on the gold fields to know "who's who"—who held miners' rights upon the respective diggings, but it gave the police information which they should have had before. Until the present Ministry went into office, the Government stifled the good news that used to come down from the northern gold fields—it was not allowed to transpire. He found, upon going into office, telegrams which should have been published two months before. He published them, he thought, afterwards ; but they should have attracted numbers of people from the South to those gold fields. He had caused the publication, whenever practicable, of various information about the gold fields of the colony. Yet, by the very gentlemen who did not give information at all, the Government had been accused of not putting the Parliament in possession of information about the gold fields. The gold fields all over the colony were in the most flourishing and contented state. They were never more so, he believed. He never heard a word of complaint from them now against the Government officers. Admitting, as he did, that the present mining regulations were not what they ought to be, he mentioned that he was trying as hard as he could to get up a new set. He had long been of opinion, and he believed that the miners themselves were of the same opinion, that the Gold Fields Bill, as framed by the commissioner who had been appointed by the House to take evidence about the gold fields, and to draw up a Bill for their regulation and management, was utterly unsuitable to the present position of the mining interests of this colony ; the machinery was unwieldy, and not adapted for the requirements of population. The Government, instead of taking that Bill, were endeavoring to take another course. They were getting advice from their own commissioners on the several gold fields upon which to frame such regulations as should give general satisfaction. That had been the duty and study of his office for a long time ; and he might tell the House that the Government had taken the opinions of a great many miners of experience. He believed that, in the course of a week, he should be able to promulgate a system of regulations that would please all parties, and conduce still further to the prosperity of the gold fields. He furnished the House with that information, and he could promise the honorable member for Ipswich that, whatever those gold fields regulations should be,

or however they should come out, they would not be such a botch, such a disgrace to the country, as the regulations which were now in force, with which he believed that honorable gentleman had had a great deal to do. The honorable gentleman was very severe on the subject of what he called the "litigious spirit" of the Government. The Government had done nothing but what their sworn duty compelled them to do. What did the honorable gentleman mean? Were the Government to submit to fraudulent demands upon them? Were they to sit down and allow powerful claimants to come in and demand sums of money which they knew in their hearts that they had no claim to? As a proof of that, the contractor for the Warwick railway, after assuring the Government that he had no claim against them; after getting them to settle claims more liberally than their own engineers would have done; after leaving them with the expression used by himself, or if not, made use of in his hearing—"Thank goodness, we have closed one railway contract without a lawsuit;"—after all that, he sent in a claim against the Government for £30,000. A more barefaced claim never was preferred against man or Government. Were the Government, for the sake of political position, or for the sake of propitiating this man or that man, to allow the country to be deprived of that money? Was he to sit in his office and submit to a claim that was utterly at variance with justice, and say nothing? No. Then it had been said to him, "Why didn't you go to arbitration?" and, further, "that the contractor would have taken a few thousand pounds," if the claim had been sent to arbitration. Such an offer was never made to the Government, or to him, by the contractor. But do not ask him as a Minister of the Crown to have anything to do with a man who could send in a claim upon the Government for £30,000, and who would take a few thousands for it. He did not value office, but he did value the character of the country; and he could not be got to submit to such a man in a matter of that kind. Now, as to arbitration. He had had to do with two or three cases of arbitration, and he could assure the House that never so long as he lived would he have anything to do, again, with arbitration. Arbitration, as against the Crown, was synonymous with robbery. He should rather appeal to a jury of the country. As to the claim of Mr. Williams, what did the jury do? Reduced it from £30,000 to £13,000; the Government thus getting a reduction of £17,000. But the Government gained no credit for that. It was to be used against them, first, that they went to law, and then that they would not go to arbitration. He (the Secretary for Works) trusted that the claim would yet be made by the officers of the Crown, whomever they might be, but £3,000. Instead of the Government being supported in their

righteous determination to resist that demand upon the public purse, they were charged, for party and political reasons, with having resisted such a claim. He gloried in what they had done. That resistance was one of the things that he would hereafter refer to with pleasure as having been done while he held office in the Government. If the country should ever have to pay that contractor more than a few hundred pounds, it would be a shameful wrong; and the country would be shamefully robbed. Was it not a very extraordinary thing that members of the Opposition always complained, directly or indirectly, at the street doors or in the shops, of the Government extravagance—that the Government were not pursuing the "dummi-ers"? Yet, what did he find, at this moment? From the remarks of the honorable member for Ipswich, it looked as if the honorable gentleman held a brief from one of those same dummies. He (the Secretary for Works) listened with great attention, the other night, to the honorable gentleman's speech; and he came to the conclusion that the honorable member held a brief from Mr. Davenport, and had something to do with the lively articles which had appeared in the Ipswich and Warwick papers in support of him. No one could have listened to the speech and have read the articles without thinking that the writer and the speaker were very closely connected with one another. He found that there was drawn up a regular band of those persons who wanted to get something out of the Government. There was the great railway contractor, and the grand dummy, meeting with the members of the Opposition day and night; they were shepherding them constantly. Those were the honorable members who professed to be so virtuous upon the subject of the alienation of the Crown lands, and who condemned the Government for not checking the dummies. Yet they met at their political meetings, those very dummies and others who made claims upon the Government! If the country did not take warning by that, he should be very much astonished. He would say, with all due deference to the House, that he thought it was a very unfortunate thing for the country that those powerful men who took up land contrary to law, and who made claims against the Government, should be found, day after day and night after night, closeted with the gentlemen who were trying to get into the next Government. The honorable member for Ipswich had said that the Government were not justified in going to law unless they had an irresistible claim. Did anyone ever hear such trash? How were the Government to tell whether they had an irresistible claim until it was tried? Every claim that he had brought into court, in the course of his life, was said by his solicitor to be irresistible; but he had found that what his lawyer told him was not always true, that the law was very uncertain,

and that new facts came out in evidence, the existence of which he did not know before. And so, in Williams' claim. The jury evidently found that there was a great deal to be considered on both sides. He (the Secretary for Works) certainly thought that the Government had an irresistible case—

Mr. STEPHENS: No, no.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: But they did not lose £17,000 of the claim. The honorable member for South Brisbane said, "No, no;" but the action was for £30,000, and the verdict was for £13,000. Therefore the jury told the contractor that his claim was £17,000 more than it should be.

Mr. THORN: The lawyers always ask double what they get.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It had been stated in the public prints—he had, of course, no means of replying in the press; he felt justified in referring to the matter—in connection with the railway system, which was very dear to his heart, that the honorable gentleman who had moved the amendment upon the Address was always in favor of bringing the line into North Brisbane; and the honorable gentleman's friends now said so. He should be prepared to show that that was an error, so far as his information went, and he had documentary evidence. The honorable gentleman never was in favor of the line coming into North Brisbane. The honorable gentleman was always so overshadowed by the honorable member for South Brisbane, that he never had a policy of his own on that subject. He (the Secretary for Works) took this opportunity of warning his friends and the citizens, that if the line was brought into South Brisbane it would be physically impossible to bring it to North Brisbane. He had taken all the pains possible to be right on this subject, and, from the knowledge he possessed, he did not hesitate to say that if the line was taken to South Brisbane, it would be as great a failure as the present terminal station at Ipswich had proved, as the present terminal station at Toowoomba had proved, as the present terminal station at Dalby had proved, and would materially affect and have a baneful influence upon the future prosperity of North Brisbane. The railway would not go over the present bridge; he did not see how it was possible. The level of the bridge might be raised; but how was the line to be got up to it? South Brisbane was a swamp; and the terminus was not to be at the bridge, as honorable members professed; it was to be at the Alice-street ferry. The dodge, he said, was to get it down to the Alice-street ferry. The engineers had received instructions to make the terminus somewhere about the front of Bell's store, in South Brisbane. He need not tell anyone that if the line was once got down on the main street of South Brisbane, no engineer would ever get it up to North Brisbane. Let the people look to it. How was the railway to be got thence, unless a loop-line was made down to Lytton, which

was the original project. As soon as the terminus was placed in South Brisbane, whether the colony had to pay for it or not, North Brisbane must go over to the south side—North Brisbane would feel the effects of it, as its business would go over, and very soon South Brisbane would be again in that prominent position which it held when he first came to this country. The terminus could not be made and the traffic not go to it. That was impossible. Now, what was their policy as to the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. The Government proposed that it should cross the river in the neighborhood of Oxley Creek; and be carried thence down the north bank of the river, and have the terminus in North Brisbane. That was their policy in the matter, and it was their policy solely because they considered it would be for the good of the colony that the railway should follow that route, and that the terminus should be in North Brisbane; and he could assure the House that the Government were not actuated by any personal considerations in adopting that route. It was a decision come to altogether upon engineering recommendations; and so recently as a fortnight or three weeks ago, he knew no more what way the line would go than he knew what way any line in the world would go. He formed no opinion himself on the subject, but left it to be dealt with solely as an engineering question; though he must say that he always hoped it would be brought into North Brisbane, because he considered a great injury would be done to the city if the terminus was not in North Brisbane. They had been told that it was never intended by the honorable member for Ipswich that the terminus should be in South Brisbane, but that it was his intention that the railway should be brought across the bridge, and have the terminus in North Brisbane. Now, he could not admit the accuracy of that statement, for he held in his hand an Executive minute, authorising the survey of the line from Ipswich to South Brisbane, and from a perusal of that document he was strongly impressed with the belief that the honorable member for South Brisbane exercised a powerful influence in getting the survey of the line directed to be made to South Brisbane. He had seen it in print before, but he had searched up the original document in the course of the day, and it was signed by Mr. Macalister, Mr. Stephens, and Mr. Lilley. Now, he did not hesitate to say that that survey was carried out by the Government of which the honorable member for Ipswich was at the head, in defiance of a resolution of Parliament. Mr. Blakeney, now Judge Blakeney, brought in a motion for the survey of a line between Ipswich and South Brisbane. That motion was negatived by the House, but no sooner was Parliament prorogued than this Executive minute, which he held in his hand, was drawn up. It was in the handwriting of one

of the clerks of the department, but there was this significant thing in it, that there was one word in the handwriting of the honorable member for Ipswich. One of the recommendations in this minute, as originally prepared, was, that, in the carrying out of the survey as proposed, the attention of the engineers should be given as to the best mode of approaching Brisbane. Now, so far, that was fair enough; but he found—and it was in the handwriting of the honorable member for Ipswich himself—that the word “South” was inserted before the word “Brisbane.” Now that, he thought, was proof positive, and ought to be abundantly convincing to honorable members that it was not the intention of the honorable member, when in office, to bring the line to North Brisbane.

MR. LILLEY: What is the date?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The date is the 14th of December, 1869, but Mr. Blakeney's motion had been negatived.

MR. LILLEY: The motion by Mr. Blakeney was in 1865; and so the honorable member was quite wrong in saying that the survey was ordered during the recess that followed the session in which the motion of Mr. Blakeney was considered and negatived.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, he found he was wrong, so far as this particular document was concerned. It was quite true that Mr. Blakeney had left the House before this date; but, at any rate, within a month or two after Mr. Blakeney lost his motion, the Government took those steps.

MR. LILLEY: The honorable member was confounding what took place in 1865, with proceedings that took place in 1869.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No; he was not. This was an order for a fresh survey.

THE HON. A. MACALISTER: The honorable member was quite mistaken. The motion of Mr. Blakeney was dealt with in 1865, whereas the Executive Minute he was referring to, was dated in December, 1869.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, no matter, though that might be the case, they found here this most extraordinary thing, that a document brought before the Executive Council had been interfered with by the honorable member for South Brisbane, by the addition of the words “Ministers recommend.” Now, he would like to know what was the meaning of such hanky panky work as that—one minister inserting the word “South” before “Brisbane,” and another adding the words “Ministers recommend”? But that was not all the information he possessed. He had been told that this was not an official document, but that it was only a memorandum for the consideration of the Government. But they had this fact that it was signed, not only by the members of the Ministry, but also by the Governor himself; and so it was in every respect a regularly constituted Executive Minute; and it came

from the Executive Council to the Minister for Works with the authority of the Governor. Now, he was not so new to office as not to know the value of a document of that kind. In looking over the official correspondence on the subject, he found the following paragraph in a letter to Mr. Thorneloe Smith:—

“With reference to the *approach to Brisbane*, two points are open, either of them of sufficient importance to create matter for controversy. The first with the view of having the station at South Brisbane, would have the great advantage of the contiguity of the future Brisbane Bridge, and the fact of there being a reserve upon which a railway wharf might be constructed, with the *éclat* of being opposite the Parliament Houses.”

Now, there was another very important document, which showed where it was the intention of the Government of the day to take the railway to. In another communication Mr. Thorneloe Smith said—

“The termination of the new line is opposite the Alice-street Ferry (*i.e.* according to field section); as staked out, it ends, or rather commences, opposite Mr. D. Bell's warehouse.”

That fully bore him out in what he had stated as to the intention of the honorable member for Ipswich, and showed that his intention, so far as it could be gathered from official documents, was, that the terminus of the railway should be in South Brisbane, and opposite Mr. Bell's store. Now, he maintained that the railway could not be brought to North Brisbane, if it was carried to so unsuitable a place. But he had still more information on the subject. Another engineer, Mr. R. D. Stephens, was employed to report upon the subject, and what he said was this—

“The site for the station, on the new line, would be opposite to D. Bell's warehouse.”

THE HON. A. MACALISTER: What is the date of the report?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The 20th May, 1870.

THE HON. A. MACALISTER: You were yourself in office at that time.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was quite true, but the work was commenced during the time of the Macalister Ministry. The paragraph he was proceeding to quote from Mr. Stephens' report, was as follows:—

“The site for the station on the new line would be opposite to D. Bell's warehouse, and good ground can also be obtained here, though I fear from the close proximity of the line to both river and road, the station arrangements would of necessity be extremely cramped. The strip of available ground is but very narrow indeed; and as Brisbane station, with all its goods-sheds, engine and carriage-sheds, and workshops, &c., must necessarily cover a large area, this marked want of width will be found to be a very great drawback.”

Now, the whole of that applied to South Brisbane; and so amazed was the department on the receipt of that document, that he caused a letter to be written to Mr. Stephens,

asking him to state under what instructions he had acted in this matter, and whether such instructions were in writing, and if so, to furnish the department with a copy or copies of it. That request was made because the department could not find out amongst any official documents what instructions Mr. Stephens had received. Now, Mr. Stephens, in reply to that letter, wrote as follows:—

“I acted under the *verbal* instructions of the late Minister for Works, given to me on Sunday, the 24th of April, 1870, at Mr. Taylor’s house, in Toowoomba.”

Now that was the way their railways were to have been made—by verbal instructions, given at Mr. Taylor’s house in Toowoomba, on a Sunday. That was the way that hundreds and thousands of pounds were to be squandered in the construction of their railways. Could any sane man, he would ask, entertain a doubt for one moment as to what was the intention of the former Ministry about having the terminus at South Brisbane; and could anyone after that have any doubt as to the unfitness of the honorable member for Ipswich to come into office, and be the constructor of the railway works of the colony? He had been told that there was considerable distrust as to the policy of the present Government in respect to the carrying out of the railway works. Now the question was one that should be open to the fullest discussion; and it was of the most vital importance to the future welfare of the colony that it should be discussed in a fair and impartial spirit; and that was the way in which he would himself desire to have it discussed. The idea of the honorable member for Wide Bay, was, that by employing large contractors, they would be able to know how much they were going to expend. Now, it was just for that reason—that they might know exactly what they were to spend—the Government had gone upon the principle of employing a number of small contractors. By entering into large contracts, they could not know how much the works were likely to cost, but in small contracts the Government could, to a certain extent, control the expenditure. To prove the recklessness of the charges that were brought against the Government on this ground, he would read a return showing what had been the cost to the country of entering into large contracts; and he would ask honorable members to say if they thought the country should again rush into large contracts, when it was seen what was the amount of the contracts, and what was the amount of their expenditure? He found by the statement he held in his hand, that the contract entered into for the Bremer Bridge was £12,000, and that that amount was exceeded by £1,643 10s. 2d. Now he looked upon that as a very large amount in excess on a work of the kind. Then he found that the contract for the works between Ipswich and the Little Liverpool

Range was £86,900, and that it was exceeded by £968 16s. 3d. That was, of itself, a trifling matter, he would admit. The contracts for the works from Grandchester to Laidley, and from Laidley to Helidon, combined, amounted to £155,684 1s. 9d., and the excess amounted to no less a sum than £56,301 2s. 3d., nearly £60,000 in excess of the contract price. Now, was that a right thing to allow? But he had not yet done. There was the contract for the line from Murphy’s Creek to Toowoomba. The contract price for that work was £286,640, and the excess amounted to £97,616 5s. 5d. Then the contract of Mr. Bourne for the line from Toowoomba to Dalby was £212,815 5s. 10d., and there was expended in excess of that amount no less a sum than £22,613 17s. 10d. The contract of Mr. Williams for the line from the Gowrie Junction to Allora, and from Allora to Warwick, amounted to £267,565 18s. 9d., and there was expended in excess, £28,010 13s. 4d. Then, as to the Northern Line, the contract of Barry, Rourke, and Munro was for £155,000, and it was exceeded by £17,609 5s. 2d. Altogether, he found that the total expenditure on their railway works, over the contract prices, amounted to nearly a quarter of a million of money; or, to be correct as to the figures, the total amount over the contract price was £202,206; and yet, after such an explanation as that, the Government were rebuked by their opponents for not entering into large contracts for the carrying on of their railway works. He believed that the system of the present Government for the construction of the railways would be found to be preferable to the system of large contracts; and, that the works, in being carried on by the able men to whom they had been entrusted, would be completed at less than the contract prices. It was only yesterday that he was informed that certain work was being done at 4s. 6d. per foot, and that work of the same kind, during the time the honorable member for Ipswich was in office, was paid for at the rate of 8s. per foot. Notwithstanding the high compliments that had been paid to large contractors, he found that the country had been shamefully done by them. Now, what, he would ask, was the meaning of the cry for the employment of large contractors. For his own part he must confess that he would rather see the men of small means in the colony enjoying the profits arising from those works, than see the money doled out to them by large contractors; and especially when they had also the assurance that the work would be as well, if not better, done by them than it would be done by large contractors. He knew that the work on the line between Brisbane and Ipswich was well done, and he was fully satisfied that so far as the construction of the line had been proceeded with, the work would compare, and that favorably, with work of a similar kind on any portion of the existing lines of railway in

the colony; and not only that, but the works would be carried out at something like a saving of from forty to fifty per cent. on the cost of the lines that had been already constructed. It had been alleged that it was altogether a political dodge on his part that the Government entered into those small contracts. Now, that was quite a mistake, for there was nothing of the kind; and a more unfounded charge could not possibly have been made. The only object the Government had in entering into those small contracts was to effect a saving of the public money. He could firmly assure the House, that he did not personally know any of the contractors on the line, and that he did not think he had spoken to any three of them in his life; and yet it was said that the entering into those small contracts was all a dodge of his for political purposes. Why, the engineers had pledged their professional reputation that they would make the lines cheaper than any of the lines that had hitherto been constructed in the colony, and he believed they were doing it. But there was nothing the present Government could possibly do that would give satisfaction to some honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. If they entered upon the construction of railways they were told that they were filching the policy of the Opposition; and they were even found fault with for trying to have railway works constructed more economically than they had hitherto been constructed; and yet he had never found any of those gentlemen coming forward to do anything, by advice or otherwise, to assist the Government in the advancement of what would be for the good of the colony. He had never, so far as his department was concerned, got the least encouragement from honorable members opposite; and for that, as well as for other good and sufficient reasons, he failed to see why he should give way to them. A great deal had been said against the way in which it was proposed to bring the line into North Brisbane. Well, the responsibility of the recommendation rested solely with the engineers; and if their statements and calculations were not correct, the blame or disgrace would fall altogether upon them. But he believed that those officers had honestly advised the Government; and they strongly advised the Government that the line should be brought into North Brisbane. The large farming community that was settled between Ipswich and Oxley would be greatly benefitted by the line coming down the south side as far as Oxley; and by the line crossing the river at Oxley and coming down to Brisbane, a great extent of country that was at present unoccupied along the north bank of the river would be taken up for villa residences and for cultivation; and, taking that fact into consideration, he maintained that the cost of bringing the line down the north side of the river from opposite Oxley Creek would be considerably less than the cost of bringing it all the way down the south bank

to South Brisbane. Now, it would be of very great benefit to North Brisbane, and, as regarded commercial facilities, to the benefit of the whole colony, that the line should be brought to North Brisbane. But that was not all. The Government proposed, also, to make the terminus in the very heart of the city—at a site from which tramways could be made radiating to all the wharves along the river side,—to Harris's wharf, to wharves that might be made at the Botanical Gardens, and to the Queen's wharf, which the Government proposed making at Petrie's Bight. It had been most mendaciously stated by a writer in the newspapers that, including the bridge across the river at Oxley, the line from that point would cost about £200,000. Now, he could tell the House, positively, that the cost of bringing the line down the north side of the river from opposite Oxley would be less, including the cost of the bridge across the river, than the cost of bringing the line down the south side all the way to South Brisbane. But, though it cost £20,000 or £30,000 more, still, by all means, let them bring it to North Brisbane rather than into what was actually a swamp in South Brisbane; and he could assure honorable members that, if it was once taken there, it would not be possible to get it out again. That was what was done in the first instance in the case of Toowoomba, and last session he was under the necessity of asking the House for a sum of money to have the station taken out of the swamp. Now, as regarded the station at Ipswich, he did not think that the Parliament, if it had been consulted in the matter, would have consented to the terminus being in South Ipswich, or to the construction of the bridge to bring it there. And he was quite sure that the construction of the bridge was not, as a particular work, authorised by Parliament.

Mr. GROOM: The sum of £7,000 was voted for it by the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, he could only say that so far as he had information on the subject, the Parliament was never asked to sanction the work; and besides that, there was eight or nine miles of the route along which the line went, that the Parliament was never asked to sanction. Now if the present Government had acted in the same way, they might have also committed the House to the construction of the line from Ipswich to North Brisbane by whatever route they wished. But the Government preferred to come to the House before proceeding further than the House authorised. The Government determined that they would not carry out a foot of the line that had not been authorised by the Parliament. He now came to refer to some remarks that were made the other evening by the honorable member for Wide Bay, in respect to the land question. The honorable member had made a very pathetic appeal to honorable members to support the Opposition, if they wished the difficulties connected

with the land question to be advantageously settled. The honorable member in effect stated, that now was the time for gentlemen who held disputed titles, and who were the holders of large runs, to come forward and make their peace with the Opposition. (No, no.) Well, of course those were not exactly the words used by the honorable member, but that was the construction he put upon them, and if they did not bear that construction he would like to know what other construction could be put upon them. The honorable member said that if the land question was not settled soon it would be all the worse for some people, and that it was only by the Opposition side of the House that the holders of large tracts of country could expect to get the question satisfactorily settled. (No, no.) Well, he might be doing the honorable member an injustice, but that was the impression produced upon his mind at the time, by what he stated. Another great charge brought against the Government by the honorable member was, that they had, on the eve of a general election, come before the House without announcing a policy. Now he did not think it was necessary that they should do so; and if it had been thought necessary that they should do so, he believed they could have written out a policy that would have been highly attractive to the people of the colony. But the Government held the opinion that it was not necessary for them at the present time to announce a policy; and that especially as they had no wish to come before the country with any *ad captandum* statements as to the course of policy they intended to pursue. Now he thought it was highly creditable to the Government, that, being in the position they were in, they did not, on the eve of a general election, come forward with an attractive policy, upon which, if a vote of want of confidence should be passed by the House, they could appeal to the country. The honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, quite ignored that fact, when he accused the Government of having met the House without announcing a policy. But there was also this fact, that ever since the present Government had been in office, they had had a distinct policy, which was well understood by the people, and which consisted in fostering the various interests of the colony by every means in their power, and acting fairly towards all classes of the community. Almost the first thing they did when they came into power was, to announce a distinct and liberal policy. They asked for the large sum of £100,000 for expenditure on the roads of the colony; and there had been a great deal of good done throughout the colony by the way in which that vote had been expended. He believed that more good had been done to the colony by the expenditure of that money than had been done by the expenditure of any similar sum by any previous ministry. By the judicious way in which that amount of money had been ex-

pended, they had enabled farmers in almost every part of the colony, who had previously often had to witness their produce rotting before their eyes, to bring their produce regularly to market. And this further advantage had been gained, that by the making of roads through districts that had hitherto been neglected, settlement would be greatly facilitated. He had been told not later than to-day, that in a particular district of the colony, where new roads had been made, and others improved, since the present Government came into office, settlement had taken place to a very great extent. He maintained that nothing could be done that would tend more to the benefit of the colony than a wise expenditure of money in such a way. He knew it had been said that this expenditure had been made for the purpose of increasing the political power of the Government throughout the colony; but, those who said so, altogether overlooked the fact, that, by the way in which the money had been expended, through road boards, the Government had voluntarily divested themselves of a great deal of political power which, otherwise, they could have exercised, if they had wished to do so. Formerly, the money for the improvements of roads was expended on the fiat of the Minister at the head of the department for the time being, but the present Government had asked the people of the several districts to come and assist them with information as to the way in which the money should be expended; and yet, the Government, after they had done that, were told that they had distributed the vote so as to increase their political influence throughout the colony. Now, he most emphatically asserted that the Government had never prostituted their position, either in the expenditure of money or otherwise, for the purpose of promoting their political influence; and he had made it a rule in the Works Department to know nothing as to the political views of those who might have occasion to attend there in connection with the promotion of public works in any part of the colony. He had never done it himself, and he had never encouraged it. He had never taken advantage of his position as a Minister of the Crown to say one word of a disparaging nature to any member of any constituency with respect to the political views of the representative of the district to which he belonged. Now, though the Government had divested themselves of this important means of exercising political power, they had never got the least credit given them by the newspapers as for the course they had adopted with respect to the expenditure through local road boards of the amount voted for the formation and improvement of roads. He must say that he felt he would always be able to look back with the greatest satisfaction to the system the present Government had initiated in respect to road making. The people had been led by it to

take an active interest, themselves, in the prosecution of road works in their respective districts, instead of depending altogether upon the action of the Government; and one great benefit arising from that was the certainty that the money would not be wasted as it had been some years ago. He had little more to say. He supposed they would go to a division on the question, but he considered that one of the greatest disadvantages that could happen to the country at the present time would be that the Government of the colony should be at all disturbed. He felt fully assured that any gentlemen who might succeed them, let them be ever so able or patriotic, would not be able to carry out all the works of a public nature, and which were absolutely required, that had been initiated by the present Government. Those honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, who had the good of the country at heart, knew full well that the present was not the proper time to attack the Government; and that those who, from political or other motives, desired to see the Government turned out, should have waited for the period of a general election. He had no hesitation in saying that he did not think any new Ministry that came into office at the present time would be able to bring to a successful termination some of the great undertakings that had been entered upon by the present Government; such as the mail service by Torres Straits, or the completion of telegraphic communication with Europe, by means of a line of their own. Nor did he think that any political party would be able to carry on the railway policy of the country in the masterly way in which it had been done under the present Government. He thought that honorable members, before they gave their votes on this occasion, should bear in mind that they had the interests of their constituents to consider. They should remember that they were at this moment in the possession of a most important trust, and one which they had to exercise, not for their own benefit, but for the benefit of the country at large. If any suffering should take place to the country at the present time, from this party and political strife, the blame would not only rest upon those gentlemen who promoted it, but also upon those honorable members who did not exert themselves at the present moment to prevent the colony from being plunged into what he believed would be little less than a state of anarchy and confusion; which, it seemed, some honorable gentlemen opposite were prepared to face—so desperate were they to get into office, and to have the opportunity of carrying out their own political purposes. Ever since the present Ministry had been in office, there had been an incessant endeavor to get them turned out, on the part of some honorable members opposite, in order that they themselves might get into office. Now, it was not more than twelve months ago since the House voted a million of money for public works, and so far

as he had been able to ascertain, the feeling of the country was, at the time, and still was, one of satisfaction that the expenditure of it had been entrusted to the present Government; and by the way they had expended it, the Government proved how fully they appreciated the confidence that had been reposed in them. If honorable members opposite got into office to-morrow, how would they be able, he would ask, to carry on the Government of the country? They would be in a similar position as regarded power in the House as the Government was at the present time; and it was not at all to be supposed that, with an equal number, if not a majority of members with them, should they have to take their places on the Opposition side of the House, they would allow their successors to carry on. It would follow that there would have to be an appeal to the country; which would occasion a delay of several months in the carrying on of public business; and in all probability the result of the appeal to the country would be that the House would be very much the same as it was now. (No, no.) Well, he knew that honorable members now on the Government side of the House were always told, that on a general election or appeal to the country, not one of them would succeed in being returned; but it had always happened after any such occasion hitherto, that on the House resuming most honorable members on both sides were able to exchange assurances of their presence, and to say to each other—"Here we are again." He maintained that if there was a general election now, the future House would consist very much of the same members as constituted it at the present time. But during the interregnum that would be occasioned there would be a total suspension of all important public works, and that, necessarily so, from the want of Parliamentary authority to carry them on; and one of the consequences of that would be that upwards of a thousand men would be thrown out of employment for several months. If such a calamity were to happen as, that the honorable member for South Brisbane should succeed to the office of Treasurer, the financial affairs of the whole colony would be thrown entirely out of gear, and there would be sure to be some hanky-panky work carried on. But in the matter of the public interest, it would be a very serious matter if the present Ministry were to be removed from office; for one result, at least, would be a delay of some of the most important public affairs of the colony for several months.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, he would ask honorable members opposite, whether, if they succeeded to office, they were prepared to go on with important public works without the authority of Parliament? And any change of Government, at the present time, would inevitably eventuate in a dead-lock; for, as he had already said, it was not to be expected that honorable

members on this side of the House would give way to an equal number of honorable members on the opposite side of the House, who might succeed them in office. Now, the real question before the House, at the present time, seemed to him to be whether six honorable members on the opposite side of the House should take the place of the present Ministry; and in that there was involved the further question—whether the terminal station of the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway should be in South Brisbane or in North Brisbane? Those were the two principal questions at present pending before the House for the determination of honorable members. Ever since the Government had laid their plans as to the completion of the line before the House, and it had come to be known that there was a probability of the terminus being in North Brisbane, the honorable member for South Brisbane had made it a great question, and that especially in the newspaper over which he had sole control, that the terminus should be in South Brisbane.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why, there had been letter after letter in the *Courier* urging that the line should be brought to South Brisbane.

MR. STEPHENS: But not to stop there.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member knew very well that if the line was once taken to South Brisbane at all, and the terminus placed opposite Mr. Bell's store, it would never be possible to get it out of that position. In determining to bring the railway to North Brisbane, and to have the terminal station in the centre of the city, the Government had been actuated solely by a desire to perform what they considered to be a duty to the city, having regard as well to the convenience of its large population as to its importance as the great centre of the commerce of the colony. The chief purpose of the line from Ipswich to Brisbane would be marred if the terminus were made at South Brisbane. The Government, in taking the course they had in this and all other matters, had been actuated solely by a desire to perform what they conscientiously considered to be their duty to the colony; and whether they might be successful on the present occasion or not, he would go into division with the fullest satisfaction that the Government, ever since they took office, had not only endeavored to do their duty to the colony, but had endeavored to do it more sincerely than any Government that had preceded them.

MR. MACDEVITT: With the gloom that surrounded the greatest criminal when brought before the bar of justice, there was always some little gleam of sunshine, and it would appear from the vehemence with which the honorable the Minister for Works had pleaded his defence that he was determined to avail himself of the little bit of sunshine that he could see amid the clouds which had

gathered up around him. In the present trying situation they now had that honorable gentleman professing himself as the great friend of the people of Brisbane, and developing himself in the new character of champion of the rights of what he had formerly been pleased to call the rowdy constituency. He was sure that the people of Brisbane would not be very proud of the connection, particularly with a comrade whose companionship in the past was a guide of what he would do in the future. Now the House had heard a great deal about the railways, and other public works, which were being carried on by the Government; but he would ask the honorable member, and his honorable colleagues, whether they had ever been sincere in advocating the execution of those particular works? He would ask them why, in the first Parliament of their term of office, they used to treat those matters as things not even to be spoken of; and if they had been sincere in the matter they certainly had not shown that sincerity by their previous conduct. Now it appeared to him that in approaching the present very grave question of the vote of want of confidence in the Government, every person should be impartial in considering how he should vote, particularly when that vote would tend to bring to an end a defaulting Ministry, or return to power a good Government. He would not attempt to refute the assertion of the honorable member for Western Downs, who said that the policy of the Government was to be judged by their acts during the three years they had been in power; but he thought that upon looking over those three years, and the various public acts of the Government, people would not come to the same conclusion as that honorable member. He would, however, first of all answer, and that shortly, the long argument of the honorable the Minister for Works as to the extravagance of former governments—as to the large sums of money paid to railway contractors. Why the honorable gentleman sat on the right side of the very gentleman who was instrumental, and mainly so, in that expenditure—who brought such large profits to the contractors, and yet now he charged honorable members with it who were sitting on the opposite side of the House. That was the result of the tirade with which the honorable member had treated the House upon that subject, and he certainly thought the honorable gentleman should have gone a little more into the present situation before he held forth in that *ad captandum* style, because it was a speech much more suited to an *ad captandum vulgus* than to an assemblage of educated gentlemen. Now, as far as the Government had a policy when they entered office, he would just see what it was. It consisted of three things:—first, they advocated retrenchment and a stoppage of all public works, or do-nothing policy; next, he believed it was a policy of the honorable

member at the head of the Government that there should be justice done to the North, or, in other words, a re-adjustment of the financial affairs of the country generally; another feature of their policy was an amendment of the gold-fields legislation. Now, first as to the policy of financial re-adjustment. Now, they had the honorable the Premier bringing in a Bill on that subject in two or three successive sessions and in two or three different shapes, and it was quite clear the honorable gentleman had no precise notions on the subject, for it was very certain that if he had had any very clear ideas he would have endeavored much more vigorously to carry them out. But, no, there was an attempt in the first session, renewed in the second, tried in the last, and the result was that nothing had been done in the matter. Then, as to the gold-fields policy of the honorable Minister for Works, who seemed to claim special credit for his administration of that department—and he might say that it was only fair to that honorable gentleman to say that he believed he administered the affairs of the gold fields with great zeal. He was a most indefatigable Minister for Mines, according to his own ideas; but his sphere of action was both narrow and restricted, and outside of it he had no liberality. With reference to the question of mining leases, to which the honorable gentleman pointed with so much satisfaction, he might mention that no doubt there had been a good deal of good done by the establishment of such a system, and by the leases the honorable member had advised his Government to grant; still it must be borne in mind that that system had been somewhat abused, because it was notorious that not only were there mining tenures held on lease, but that large areas had been taken up, and that considerable blocks of auriferous country were locked up from the miners, the holders of them keeping them only for purely speculative purposes, and not for the purpose of being worked. Whether that was owing to the failings of the honorable Minister he did not know, although he had been told that the honorable gentleman followed that question of leases as anyone would follow a hobby that he loved. As to gold-fields legislation generally, he would trouble the House with a few remarks to show that, although repeated promises had been made by the Government to bring in a comprehensive measure on the subject, no such measure had yet been passed. First of all, in the year 1870, there was a promise that gold-fields legislation being so unsatisfactory, it would be necessary to introduce some reforms; and during that session there was a Royal Commission appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the subject of such reforms as might be made in gold-fields legislation, and reporting upon them. That Commission was reported, and in the following Parliament it was stated in the Opening

Speech that the report had been considered, and that a measure based upon it would be introduced by the Government. That Parliament, however, went on, and no such measure was introduced. The next session came, and the honorable Minister for Works certainly did propose the passage of a measure through its first stage, but then it was dropped. There, then, they had the Ministry in three successive Parliaments, and in the Governor's Speech on one occasion, giving promises of legislation; but no performance. He contended that it was the duty of the honorable Minister who was entrusted with the responsibility of that important department of the Government to have insisted upon something being done, but nothing had been done. In reference to another matter connected with the gold fields, he might mention the resolutions he had had the honor to pass through that House in 1870, which granted to the Government power to give rewards for the discovery of new gold fields, and for continuing the geological survey of the colony. Those resolutions were not opposed by the Government, although they were not supported by them generally; but at any rate, they appeared on the records of the House as having been passed in the usual way. Now, three years had elapsed since then, and nothing had been done in the matter. He had noticed that at the commencement of the last session—he was not in Brisbane at the time—the honorable member for Wide Bay drew attention to the failure of duty on the part of the honorable Minister for Works in that respect, and that that honorable gentleman in reply alleged as an excuse, that he considered that the question was to be dealt with by the Royal Commission on the Gold Fields, which was granted by the first Parliament. Now, the honorable member practised his usual insincerity in making that excuse, inasmuch as the vote for the appointment of a Commission passed on the 6th December, 1870, and the resolutions for rewards passed on the 20th of the same month; so that how the Commission was to deal with the question of rewards, he could not well understand; he would leave it to the honorable member himself to explain so lame an excuse as that. He might also mention, that in the first session of Parliament, the honorable member for Wide Bay, and other honorable gentlemen sitting with him, endeavored to procure an abolition of the duty on machinery for sugar and quartz crushing purposes, which certainly seemed to be a very small concession to make to those industries, which, in the North especially, were prosecuted under so many difficulties; yet the very honorable member who professed to foster those industries, and took credit for doing so, opposed that motion. Again, the same honorable member opposed the abolition of the export duty on gold, as also did the other members of the Government; but at the end of last session, finding popular opinion

so strong on the subject, they came down with a compromise, which, as they had a majority at their back, the House was bound to accept. Now in all those matters, the Government had shown that they had failed in their duty so far as the gold fields were concerned. They had had the avowed assertion of the Government, that when they took office the legislation on the gold fields was in a deplorable condition; they had evidence of the appointment of a commission, which cost a large sum of money; they had the evidence of three sessions of Parliament; and yet in the face of all that, nothing had been done. There was then a failure of duty, which he regretted to say had to be laid at the door of the honorable Minister for Works. Then again, as to another part of the policy of the Government on taking office, namely, retrenchment: well, the only proposition ever made by them in that direction was, the miserable Bill which had been alluded to, which was to take off 5 per cent. from the salaries of the Civil servants—that was the only movement in the way of retrenchment he was aware of, and that certainly was a very sorry performance of so large a promise. He would next allude to another particular in which the honorable member at the head of the Government might have been said to have proclaimed a policy, and that was separation of the North. The honorable member had gone so far as this in that particular—that, at the time of his election for Port Curtis, he signed a petition to the Home Government in favor of separation. It was true, as the honorable member had alleged, that he signed it as “A. H. Palmer, grazier;” but beyond signing that memorial there was no other proof of his separation policy—beyond merely signing a petition as an electioneering measure to prevent defeat. He thought that, so far as the Government could be said to have had a policy at the time of taking office, it was included in those three measures, and those they had failed to carry out as made to the country and embodied in the Governor’s Speech at the first meeting of Parliament. He had next to go to other matters, and glance at their history, and that was the policy they either stole from the Opposition, or which they accepted under very undignified pressure. First of all, in regard to the question of representation: well, they had the honorable the head of the Government bringing in a measure during the first session of Parliament for the improved representation of the people, and which proposed to give twenty additional members. The next session met, and there was no mention made in the Governor’s Speech of any measure which proposed to increase the number of representatives in that House; so completely was the pie-crust character of the promises of the Government, that after six months the honorable the Premier had apparently forgotten them altogether. His late lamented friend, Mr. Atkin, himself introduced a measure to

supply the want caused by the forgetfulness of the Government, and then it was, that the honorable Colonial Secretary came down and stated that he would, in the following session, bring forward a measure to meet that great want. Then they had the honorable gentleman bringing in his measure, and, as he (Mr. MacDevitt) said at the time, the honorable gentlemen, when proposing it, pronounced its funeral oration; he made no attempt, in fact, to pass it. In the next Parliament there was a promise of a Bill for additional representation: well, the House had sat for a considerable time, when the honorable member for Wide Bay, recollecting how unfaithful to his promises the honorable member at the head of the Government had been, introduced a measure, and then it was the honorable gentleman promised to bring in a Bill as a boon in prospect, at the same time making promises to do better. That had been the shuttlecock character of the honorable the Colonial Secretary in that most important department of his policy—that was the policy which was forced upon the honorable gentleman by the Opposition, and accepted so reluctantly by him. He considered, therefore, that the position he now took up was impregnable—that throughout his term of office, the honorable member had shown that he had no heart in that matter, and that he promised to grant additional representation because he was persuaded to do so by finding that the Opposition were so firm that they would not be trifled with. He would now refer to the question of public works, but only shortly: he had this, however, to say, that whenever any public works of importance—even those of the greatest importance—were brought before the House—namely, the railways—the honorable the Premier ridiculed the idea of them. He ridiculed the idea of a railway between Ipswich and Brisbane; but on the pressure of the honorable member for Clermont, he entertained the idea of an extension of the northern line. With reference to the Ipswich and Brisbane extension, the honorable gentlemen said it would be such an expense that he would never be the man to make it—not for the reasons now stated by honorable members, that the country was not then ready for it; but the reason given was that there was a good road and a navigable river, and that it would be improper conduct, and unworthy of a statesman, to expend money on a railway when there were already existing such great facilities for the conveyance of traffic, namely the road and the river. If honorable members would refer to “Hansard,” 11 and 12 vols., 312, 338 pp., they would perceive that the honorable the Colonial Secretary believed that pressure would be brought to bear upon the Government to construct that railway, but that he would never be the man to make it, as there was existing abundance of provision for traffic between the two places by the road and by the river. So that it was

rather extraordinary for the honorable members opposite now to come forward and take the credit of making those works. It was well known that the Government had obtained a dissolution in the most unconstitutional manner, because the Opposition had taken such a firm stand in reference to that work, and, therefore, the honorable Minister for Works must know how utterly futile it was for him to make such disingenuous statements; especially as at the very time the question was being entertained, the people had actually constructed an effigy of the honorable member, and erected it on the very site now proposed by the Government for the terminus of the new railway. He thought it was an insult to the intelligent community of North Brisbane, to expect them to swallow such statements as had been made. There was another in the policy of the Government to which, before passing from the present question, he would briefly refer, and that was the manner in which the honorable Minister for Works proposed to construct the new railways. There was some show in the honorable member's argument on behalf of a system of small contracts. The honorable member said that he proposed to save the large profits which were made by large contractors, and to give them to the Government: now, if the honorable gentleman could do that, no doubt it would be most praiseworthy on his part, and the Opposition would not quarrel with such an arrangement, for they were not only interested in having those public works constructed, but were also interested in having them made as cheaply as possible. He would ask the House, however, to review how railways were made elsewhere, and to consider how the system proposed by the honorable Minister for Works had worked elsewhere. Why, it was a notorious fact, according to information he had received from an engineer who was entirely disinterested—who was not a member of that House, and who was not in any way interested in the construction of the lines, but was, and he believed successfully, prosecuting another industry, a gentleman who for some time was Treasurer of this colony—that the proposed system of making railways had at one time attracted the greediness of companies in England, who thought that they would take the profits of the contractors. Now, those companies, which no doubt managed their affairs as well as this or any other Government could do, found it was necessary to give up such a system, as by it they had been launched into expenditure far beyond their means. They found it was utterly futile to expect to make any saving by doing away with contracts, and that when they had a contract properly guarded they had some ground upon which to go, and could estimate their probable expenditure, and make such provision that the funds might be forthcoming. It was an old and exploded system, and it was a reversion on the part of the honorable member to that old ex-

ploded system;—it was the old story of “penny wise and pound foolish.” The honorable member might make small savings in some ways, but he would make large losses in others. He could hardly help smiling at the honorable member's innocent opinion that the workmen, if employed by the Government, would do a better day's work than if they were employed by a contractor. He ventured to say that there was no person outside of that House, and no honorable member except the honorable member himself within that House, who was under such a complete delusion as that. He could imagine the honorable member being under that delusion in this way:—The honorable member would announce to the chief engineer that on such a day he would visit the line; that officer would communicate the news to the officers under him, and so on throughout the works the news would go, “the Minister for Works is coming up the line to-day.” He could well understand how the honorable gentleman would find all the men shouting and digging away with the greatest enthusiasm; and it was only under such circumstances as that, that anyone could be deluded into the idea that men would work better for the Government than they would for a contractor. As the honorable member was in fault in that respect, so was he in his idea that his new system would be a saving. He did not wish to say one word against the able gentleman who had charge of the northern section, as he believed that he would do his duty well, without saying that others would not; still he could not help looking upon it as the initiation of a system of robbery and corruption that might not be in existence at the present time. But having small contracts led to money finding its way through so many channels, that it would be impossible to do away with jobbery; there would be so much chance of coming against some man that could be got at, and hence it was that he objected to the system; although, as he said before, he had not the least doubt that the gentleman in charge of the northern line would do his duty. There was another matter in which the Government had adopted the policy of the Opposition, and that was, the lands. Upon that question, honorable members must make it a certainty that the policy of a Government must be wise, liberal, and just. A former member of that House had traced the administration of that question to antiquity, and they had the spirit of Tiberius Gracchus hunted up. Now, he would not be disposed to go so far back as that; but the history of the colony itself would show them that if they wished to be prosperous they must adopt a policy such as he had mentioned. They had a tract of country larger than New South Wales, and considerably larger than Victoria, and even the district he represented was as large as the latter colony; and with that magnificent heritage in their possession, it was too much to be told that the great

interior of the country should have no other use than for the stockwhip and shears, and that that which drew from the earth its first fruits should be ignored. He did not believe that honorable gentlemen opposite would reject that as unworthy of their consideration; but, if they were sincere in the matter, how was it that it was owing to the resolutions of the honorable member for Wide Bay for the resumption of certain lands in the Burnett district, that they first had, from the honorable Minister for Lands, a promise to satisfy, in some way, the demand of the people on that subject? Why, there had never been any mention made of it by honorable gentlemen opposite, until it was proposed by the honorable member for Wide Bay, to resume certain runs which were required for settlement, and which should be resumed under the 10th clause of the Act. It was only after that, that the honorable Minister for Lands went down to that House with his Homestead Bill, and it was now stated by that honorable gentleman that that Act had satisfied the people of the colony. So long as there were cases similar to Rockhampton, where within a stone's throw of the city, a large area was leased to a few individuals for ten years, whilst there were thousands living within the town who could not get land, it could not be said that the Homestead Act was a success. It was only a miserable expediency, and had been proposed to stop agitation, and not with any sincerity to see it carried out, as it should be. He should also say that the discipline of the Lands Office was so defective that it was perfectly clear to any person that the Government was not sincere at all either in introducing land reform, or in giving facilities to the Act as it existed. He believed that the intentions of the honorable Minister for Lands were not to be so much blamed, but that honorable gentleman was completely overborne by the authority of the honorable the Colonial Secretary, which he would not permit to be questioned, and was so circumscribed by the honorable member, Mr. Ramsay, that with those two impediments, he was unable to make the necessary reforms in the Act of 1868, and meet other requirements the public demanded. If that was not the case, how was it that those reforms had not been made? Honorable members had only to bear in mind the consequence of certain instructions given in that department. Why, there had been such an act in administration as would completely scandalise anyone, because, whilst it required the sanction of a Minister to receive only the simplest application, they had the honorable Minister for Lands going to that House and telling honorable members that the reason why a most important mistake had been made in his department was, because a subordinate clerk had issued grants—in fact, that he delegated to a subordinate clerk a most important duty. Now, that was not right; but there were other things connected with the Lands

Department which showed that there was no serious intention to reform the abuses of it, and he would illustrate that by telling honorable members what might happen to a gentleman who had business with that department—he might say a gentleman coming from his own district, the Kennedy. Well, he went to the office with business that required decision from the honorable Minister for Lands. He addressed a letter to the Minister, and in due course that was received by the Under Secretary. Then, what was done with that? Why, that officer, immediately handed it to a responsible clerk, who recorded it, and then handed it back to the principal Under Secretary, who endorsed upon it a reference to himself—he being also Commissioner for Crown Lands. Next, he sent a letter across the passage to the Crown Lands Office, and inasmuch as he could not be in both places at once, he had to leave clerks in the other department to do his duties. Well, immediately he went to the Crown Lands Office, the same routine had to be gone through as in the Lands Office—and honorable members must bear in mind that there was a difference between the Crown Lands Office and the Lands Office. Next, there had to be an elaborate report drawn up by a clerk, which was referred to the Commissioner for Crown Lands, who, if he approved of it, handed it to the Minister for the time being. That gentleman considered the report, and gave his decision accordingly; if favorable, it was handed to the Commissioner for Crown Lands, who then sent it to the Under Secretary for Lands, whose clerk, for the second time, recorded it in his department, and drew up an elaborate minute for the Executive Council. The papers then, with that elaborate minute, disappeared, and if the unfortunate gentleman who had business to do, called a few days afterwards, he was told that the papers had disappeared, and had gone for the consideration of the Executive—a place where they might remain for a term of months. However, they appeared again in the Lands Office, were again noted and recorded by the clerk, and then actually the Under Secretary instructed an officer to address a letter to himself notifying the decision come to by the Executive, made a memo. addressed to himself, and directed the officer to convey the decision to the applicant. After that description, he (Mr. MacDevitt) thought there would be no honorable gentlemen who had read Dickens' account of the Circumlocution Office, who would consider that author's description overdrawn. Now he believed that there would have been some desire on the part of the honorable Minister for Lands to have remedied that state of things, if he had not been interfered with and controlled by other members of the Cabinet. He would now refer to the manner in which Crown grants were issued, and he thought honorable members would think that if it was not strange that the grants referred

to were issued in an irregular manner, it was strange that other grants were not issued instead. He believed, generally, the Surveyor-General received information that certain lands had been purchased from the Government, by the Treasury informing him that remittances had been received for lands purchased in various ways. The Surveyor-General then prepared a deed of grant, and the parchment in that form was sent by him to the Lands office, where the receipt of the deed was noted and recorded, and it was sent up by the Under Secretary, after consideration by him, for the signature of His Excellency. It was returned from Government House, with His Excellency's signature attached, to the Lands Office, from whence it was sent to the Colonial Secretary's Office to have the great seal of the colony affixed to it, and there the same forms of receipt and so forth were gone through. From there it was sent back to the Lands Office, with the great seal on it, and was again noted and recorded. From there it went to the Surveyor-General, who again got a look at his handiwork. It was then copied into a book in the Surveyor-General's office, and the original was returned to the Lands Office, and from there sent to the Registrar-General. Honorable members would thus perceive that those matters went through so many hands that it was not very difficult to understand the mistake which occurred. If it was a fact that Mr. Geary had instructions given to him to do certain duties, how was it that he escaped?—the whole thing was a most damaging confession to the Government. That Mr. Geary was looked upon as a responsible officer was a most damning confession for the honorable member to make in that House—that the mistake arose through trusting the whole matter to a subordinate clerk, was, he considered, a most vain excuse, and only shewed that the honorable Minister for Lands was not altogether ingenuous when he made it, and that, whatever his efforts for reform, they had been counteracted by unhappy influences. The honorable Minister for Works had pointed out how the Government saw to the wants of the different constituencies in the colony, and, *ex uno disce omnes*, the honorable member instanced Townsville as a place where works had been carried out under his paternal care. Now, those works were commenced before the last general election, and an engineer was sent up in post haste at the very time he (Mr. MacDevitt) was going up to make arrangements for his election. He would leave honorable members to judge for themselves of the neglect shown to that place previous to the election, and to compare that with the immediate dispatch of the officer afterwards. Then the honorable gentleman had instanced Mackay as another place where works had been carried out; and he was sorry he had instanced that place, for, although at the last election there were there a great many

Government officers and supporters of the Government, things were very different now. He mentioned that, as the honorable member said that the opinion there was in favor of the Government. He would ask honorable members to listen to what the *Mackay Mercury* lately said about the present Government:—

“The Queensland Parliament has been again prorogued until the 28th of May. These frequent prorogations are wholly unjustifiable, and will throw back the session so late that there will be only time to go through the ordinary routine business, and no opportunity will be given the House to discuss properly many of the questions that should be decided by them, and some of which are of the highest importance to the country at large. It would appear that Mr. Palmer and his colleagues are somewhat hesitant of facing the House, and answering for some of their proceedings during the recess. There will doubtless be a strong Opposition to be encountered by the Ministry, and several very unpleasant questions to answer. The Minister for Lands must expect an attack on some of the questionable proceedings connected with his department; and he will do well if he is able to explain to the satisfaction of the country, the serious charges brought against that portion of the service. The natural inference to be drawn from these frequent prorogations is, that Mr. Palmer and his friends are so fond of office that they mean to retain it at all hazards, and by postponing the meeting of the Assembly so long, that when they do come together, press of business will not give time for the criticism they have so good a reason to dread.”

Now, that was a journal which certainly had never supported him, but had always been a warm partisan of the present Government. He could also quote from the *Ravenswood Miner*, which was published on 10th May, but he would not quote from that paper further than as follows:—

“They will be met by a firmer Opposition than they might expect, and we already hear murmurings about a dead-lock. If the Opposition determines to have recourse to this extremity, they have good reasons for it, and we should be prepared to support them, if the alternative is a vote of supply for the whole of next year, which would give the Ministry the power of delaying the meeting of the new House, prolong their tenure of office, and afford them opportunities of further displaying their power of maladministration—a result far from desirable.”

He thought those opinions showed pretty clearly what the country press in the far North thought of the proceedings of the Government. Well, to resume what he had been saying, it seemed to him that, coming to as an impartial a conclusion as he could, it could not but be admitted that the Government had failed as a Government—that they had propounded no new policy embodied in the legislation of the country; that they had adopted only measures propounded by the Opposition; that they opposed a policy at one time, and had adopted it at another. How could any honorable man say, then, that

he had confidence in such a Government? Was it not known that their tenure of office was only gained by unconstitutional means—means which had been the cause of bringing opprobrium upon the highest officer of the State? What had they got from the Government, but broken promises of measures which had to be forced upon them in the end? He would say so particularly in regard to the honorable Minister for Works if he were present in the House—that he had mainly kept office by stuffing into men's ears false reports, and by bribing constituencies, in order that their member should support the Government. He had the authority of the honorable member for Rockhampton for saying that he was told by the honorable the Premier last session, that if he did not support the Government, they should not have the Northern Railway. He considered such proceedings were most discreditable, and should at once be put a stop to. It was enough for the Government that they had been fruitless in policy—that they should accept it from the Opposition;—for had honorable members not been told by the honorable the Premier that it was not a policy that was wanted, but that the administration of Under Secretaries was all that was required for Queensland? He thought, when the honorable the Premier and his colleagues relegated themselves to the position of Government clerks—because, after all, that was the position they assumed—they had fully realized the idea of the Government stroke by the grave errors they had committed in the management of the Lands Office, particularly if what the honorable member for East Moreton had said be true. It should be the first duty of a Government to prescribe as far as it could what was right, and remedy what was wrong. That was the first duty, and without the confession of the honorable Minister for Lands, it was evident the Government had failed to realize the duties of statesmen. He thought no honorable member should, under existing circumstances, say that the Government possessed his confidence, but that he should look forward to the time when its administration would be at an end.

Mr. CLARK said he should not have risen to address the House, this evening, had he not received intimation from the honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition, that he would not allow the House to separate without coming to a division. He should much have preferred to address the House tomorrow. However, he considered it was a duty he owed to his constituents to let them know why he should vote on behalf of the Ministry on this occasion. It would not be treating them with that courtesy they deserved, did he not distinctly state his reasons for doing so. He always maintained the position in the House of an independent member. On several occasions, well known, he had opposed some of the most important measures of the Government. He had not hesitated to state,

in his place, what he considered right and proper; and he could not be considered by any honorable member of the House "a thick and thin supporter" of the Ministry. He knew that, at all events, so far as his constituents were concerned, he should not be misunderstood; and he spoke to them, now. He did not agree with the Ministry in everything; in fact, he had serious reasons for not agreeing with their land policy. As was known to honorable members, last session, he thought it his duty to oppose very strongly one important measure introduced by the Government; that was the Homestead Areas Bill. He should take this opportunity of correcting the honorable member who last addressed the House, and who had said it was only after the honorable member for Wide Bay had given notice of motion for the resumption of lands in the Wide Bay District that Ministers introduced that Bill. He remembered perfectly when the Minister for Lands gave notice of his Bill; and it was before the honorable member for Wide Bay had given notice of his motion.

Mr. KING: It was the session before, I introduced it.

Mr. MACDEVITT: The promise was made in the previous session to Mr. King.

Mr. CLARK: At all events, he was certain that the Secretary for Public Lands intended to bring forward the Bill before that motion.

Mr. KING: No, no.

Mr. CLARK: He recollected that the intimation of the Minister influenced his vote on that occasion, as he should most certainly have voted for the motion of the honorable member for Wide Bay, had he known that the measure then promised by the Minister was of such a nature as he afterwards found it to be, and such as he could not accept. It was with a distinct understanding that a large and comprehensive measure of land legislation would be introduced by the Government that he voted against the motion, and he was very much disappointed indeed when the Bill was laid on the table. It was well known that he opposed the Bill to the utmost. He was rather surprised that the honorable member for Kennedy condemned the measure as he did, considering that the honorable member had supported it, and that it had received the support of the whole Opposition.

Mr. MACDEVITT: I did not condemn it; I said it was not up to the requirements of the colony. I took it as an instalment of justice.

Mr. CLARK: That was condemnation, in his estimation. At all events, the only honorable members who really backed him up in opposing that Bill were two who sat on the ministerial side of the House, the honorable member for Burnett and the honorable member for Clermont. They had joined him in opposing a measure which they considered, as he did, not up to the requirements of the country; and he had been surprised that all his endeavors to get liberal land legislation

for the colony were thwarted by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. When he spoke to them they said, "Let us break the neck of the ten years' leases; we must get what we can; if we reject this Bill, we shall have no land legislation at all this session." They were very lukewarm indeed. Under the circumstances, he thought they could hardly claim that the Ministry had adopted their policy. He should have no objection to vote against the Ministry to-night, did he see that their places would be occupied, in case of defeat, by better men. He could not see it. On the contrary, he was painfully aware that if the Ministry were defeated, their places would be occupied by men who could not agree amongst themselves, and whose first quarrel would be about "the division of the spoil." He knew ten honorable members on the Opposition side of the House who were candidates for office, and there were only five offices to be filled! He could hardly know how they were going to agree in the distribution of five offices amongst ten men. There was no occasion for him to answer the charge made against the Government, that they had no policy. It had been answered, and very ably answered, by the admirable speeches made by the Ministers who had spoken, which must have carried conviction to the minds of those who were open to conviction. He was perfectly well aware that no amount of talking would alter the division; but he was not now speaking so much to the House as to his constituents. He felt bound to let his constituents know the reasons for his action. Although the Opposition stated that the Government had no policy,—they had been rather reticent with regard to their own—yet something had leaked out which certainly would not incline him to support them. The honorable gentleman who moved the amendment, also made a very admirable speech. No doubt he was reticent, as a future Minister ought to be; but the honorable member for Wide Bay, who followed him in the debate, was not as careful as a gentleman ought to be who aspired to be a Minister. He was not as reticent as his leader, and he "let the cat out of the bag" when he said that he, and those who thought with him, went in for free selection all over the country. He (Mr. Clark) stated before in the House, and he repeated it, that as long as he was a member he would never sanction that policy. He knew what it meant—he knew what it was—he knew how it had worked in other countries, and in the colonies, where it had been tried—and he must state that a more suicidal policy could never be advocated, nor one more unjust. There was no occasion to go into that question now; it would come on, and would be discussed at the proper time, and it would not be exhausted in one night's debate. Had the honorable member for Wide Bay stated that which must take place, and which would take place, under this Ministry, or under a

new Ministry, when the new Parliament should meet—when, whatever Ministry held power, they must adopt a liberal land policy—he should go with him: the settled districts would have to be extended, and settlement would have to go on upon that extension. How far the extension of the settled districts would have to go, he (Mr. Clark) did not know and could not say. But that would be the best way to give effect to a liberal land policy; not to throw open the whole of the colony to free selection, which would ruin the many without benefiting the few, or anyone soever. To extend the settled districts, to give room to the people to occupy the land—that would benefit all and be a hardship to very few. The free selection cry would revive the old feeling of "squatters against farmers," which had died out, he was happy to say, at all events, in his own district. Now, there were very few honorable members in the House who would like to get up in their places and say what he had said. There were very few who sat for a constituency, such as he represented, that was particularly interested in land. His constituents were chiefly men who got their living by land, and nothing else. A cry that would open up the land to them would get their support. Very few honorable members who represented a large farming population would speak as he did. But he had declared before his constituents, and they knew, that he did not come to the Assembly as a mere delegate, to say only what they wanted him to say; but he came as their representative, to say what he thought was right. They had confided in him more than any other honorable member could boast of. He was elected for Warwick when he had been three years living out of the country. He was elected without his asking for a single vote—at a time when he was a thousand miles away from the colony. When he came back, afterwards, though they did not require any pledge from him, he chose to pledge himself, and he met the electors; and his pledge was:—That he would support the present administration so long as they conducted the affairs of the country for its benefit; that he would cease to support them whenever they did not do so; that he would support the administration for carrying out the railways, because he believed that they were both individually and collectively honest, and that there would not be that corruption in the conduct of affairs such as there had been. He dwelt at considerable length upon the way in which the railway works had been conducted; he distinctly pledged himself to advocate a railway between Ipswich and Brisbane, only when it could be carried out by honest men. If anyone wished to know how the railways were made, and if his honorable friend, the Minister for Works, should not be properly reported, he referred the anxious inquirer to a small pamphlet which he held in his hand, entitled "Facts and

Figures of Railway Management." It was published at Warwick, and could be had for a shilling—and it was worth the money! He distinctly told his constituents that he would not support any Ministry to make railways that he could not consider would make them properly; and, also, that he would not support the men who had made our railways. Now, the Government had no policy, said honorable members of the Opposition. He was very sorry to say that the Opposition had no policy; or, rather, the kind of policy that they had, was not by any means creditable to them. Their policy was, to endeavor to blacken the characters of their opponents; and to resort to all sorts of dodges in order to prevent them from attending the House, *et cætera*. He had some delicacy in mentioning this; and, if it was not notorious, he should not mention it. But, under the circumstances, he did not see why he should refrain from mentioning what most honorable members had heard—he referred to the "Basilisk" affair;—though he believed that most honorable members did not know how it originated. That absurd story, which, by-the-bye, had not a word of truth in it, was, for political purposes, spread about; for one, by a gentleman who was going to his constituents, and who took very good care that they should hear his version. Of course, when three or four had heard the story told by him as "good news," something "so very frightful," it was repeated, no doubt with embellishments, until, by the time the honorable member addressed his constituents, every man—he (Mr. Clark) might perhaps say, every woman and child, too—in the town knew it so well that it was sufficient for the honorable member merely to allude generally to it to be understood. "Oh!" cried his hearers, "of course, we all know about that." That honorable member was very careful, indeed, to mention it in a general way only; but, as heard, his allusions were conclusive to the minds of his listeners. He would not commit himself, in any way:—"Why, after the Premier's conduct on board the 'Basilisk,' who, I should like to know, would support the head of the present Government?" He did not say anything direct about it; he knew quite well that they were sufficiently primed beforehand with the story. Now, he (Mr. Clark) knew for a fact—he had heard it from officers on board the ship when he dined with them—he did not mention names—that the story was the most abominable falsehood that was ever uttered; and he assured the House upon his word of honor, that he had heard every word of the story contradicted by those who were on board at the time it was said to have occurred, and that there was not one word of truth in the accusation. Now, he should like to know what was to be thought of the man who could descend to such baseness? Other things had happened, but they were of very little consequence. On Saturday night, he was served

with a *subpœna* to attend the Warwick District Court, sitting to-day. He did not attend the court, at any rate. The document he held in his hand summoned him to appear as a witness in a case of which he hardly knew anything: he knew something about the men whose names were given having had a dispute about a mining claim, but nothing further. He saw that if he did not attend the court, he was liable to a fine of £50. If he was liable to imprisonment, he would not attend. It was a dodge to keep him in Warwick; and that was the fact. He knew nothing about the case, and he could give no information; and he determined that he would not attend. He threw the *subpœna* to the winds. Immediately upon receiving it, he wrote to the clerk of the court—of course, he used proper language—and told him that he would not and could not attend, knowing nothing of the case, and that he would not neglect the interests of his constituents and the interests of the country by remaining away from the Assembly; and he asked the clerk to tell the judge. He did not know whether he was fined £50 or not. That was the kind of policy which the Opposition appeared to be adopting, just now.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Tell the name of the attorney.

MR. CLARK: He must say that he could not compliment them upon it. Better would it be if they had no policy at all, rather than adopt such tactics as he had described. During the recess, the papers in the pay of the Opposition teemed with charges against the Government as to their distribution of patronage; and it was said that the friends of honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House were favored, and that if anyone married the relation of a Minister, he was immediately accommodated with a place. One particular charge was, that a gentleman who had been sent to Rockhampton at a very large salary, was simply put there because he had married the relative of a lady who was married to one of the Ministers. He (Mr. Clark) had taken particular care to inquire about that, and it appeared that that charge also was utterly untrue, and it was very well known to the Opposition. He should like to know, if it had been true, whether the House would not have had it repeated over and over again *ad nauseam* during this debate? If the "Basilisk" affair had been true, would it not have been brought up and repeated? Fortunately, it was not true. He could not find words to express his contempt, his utter disgust, for men who could condescend, for political purposes, to take away the private character of an opponent. He should not be surprised if he was accused of murder next week. If there was no other reason why he should support the Government, he should do so because, at the present moment, large and important railway works were in progress. He had been over the railway works; he had seen the way in which they were being

carried on; and he could state distinctly that so far as he could judge they could not possibly be improved, and that the system was satisfactory to all practical men. When he wanted information, he went to practical men. In proof of it, he went to the hut of an old navvy, the other day; the man had had large experience on railway works here and elsewhere, and at home; and he (Mr. Clark) asked him his opinion of the railway works now in progress; if the present system of carrying on the works, by small contracts—it gave everybody a chance—was better than letting large contracts to capitalist contractors. What was his answer? He said: "Decidedly! As a working man, I know the disadvantage of being under a large contractor; I know I should be ground down in order that he should make his large profits."

Mr. STEPHENS: Made work.

Mr. CLARK: "Now, I shall share in the large profits of the large man; and, instead of one man making enormous profits, they will be divided amongst a great many."

An HONORABLE MEMBER: And the cost to the country would be the same.

Mr. CLARK: And, he was given to understand that the railway would not cost as much as under a large contractor. He could easily understand it, too. There was another reason why the Government should be supported, and it was that the Premier had given notice of an Education Bill. An accusation had been made against the honorable gentleman of not making the Bill a Government measure. Well, the honorable gentleman had placed it perfectly clearly before the House: the Government were not agreed upon it, and they could not vote against themselves. The Premier had brought in the Bill, and he left the House to decide upon it. The Opposition had not said what they would do about education, if they should come into office. He (Mr. Clark) did not believe that they could agree upon it. As he had reason for the assurance that the honorable gentleman intended to push the Bill through the House, if possible, he certainly considered that a very good reason why he should support him. He knew very well what would take place if it should not be passed this session—education would be used as a cry by the Opposition. He should very much dislike to see that, as he knew very well the amount of ill-feeling that it would create: bad blood would be saved by the settlement of the education question, this session. The Opposition did not wish it to be settled. What with their cry of "free selection," and "godless education," and their usual tactics, they would work the people up and do much harm. He thought the meeting that was held lately, and the excitement of the mob, by the braggadocio of certain gentlemen, was injudicious; and he was sorry that the people of Brisbane were so easily gulled by them. If those gentlemen came to Warwick they would not

be listened to. If they attempted to address his intelligent constituency they would be hooted from the town. He supposed the atmosphere of Brisbane was not conducive to intelligence, as he was able to say it was not to health. He was sorry that he was obliged to pass some part of the year, here. The Government had embellished the city; but the citizens wished to kill everybody who visited it. The streets were a disgrace; and the effluvium that pervaded them was enough to cause an outbreak of cholera. He thought there was some medical influence at work to keep the place in such a state, as that influence was so potent in other respects. Much had been said about the lawsuits in which the Government were engaged. What were the Opposition to do if they came into office? Drop the lawsuits? They could not do it; and they knew that they must carry them on. The thing was easily explained, and—though he was sorry that one class should benefit by the lawsuits—was inevitable; and any Government that succeeded the present one must do the same as they did and go on. It was all nonsense to talk about persecution. But the Opposition would not come in. There was not the slightest chance of their forming a Government. He was happy to say that having disobeyed the *subpœna*, he was in his place to support the Government, who would defeat their adversaries in the House, and who had the support of the country, he was certain. The country would keep them in office in preference to honorable members of the Opposition, who had shown their utter incapacity to do anything in a proper way. The eagerness shown by the Opposition to occupy the place of the Government was very indelicate. Those honorable members must know that when the new Parliament met, there must be a change. It was even a question whether the present Government would remain in power. But it was absolutely indecent of honorable members, for the sake of a few pounds and a little patronage, to endeavor to turn out the Government, when they could retain office only a few months. It was perfectly certain that when the country should have been properly appealed to, any Government that might be formed from the Opposition would not have the slightest chance of standing in the new Parliament. He utterly scouted the idea that they could stand. In fact, he had too high an opinion of the gentlemen who would enter the House to think so. However he disagreed with the present Ministry, he would overlook a great deal for the good of the country; and, as he knew well that so far as land legislation was concerned, whoever might be in power, they must bring forward a land policy, he felt bound in conscience to support those who he believed had the good of the country at heart. He had not come to this conclusion without serious consideration. He declared that it was his duty to

his constituents, and to posterity, to support the Government in the present crisis.

Mr. THORN said he did not wonder at the honorable member's conscience being satisfied now, seeing that to secure his vote for the Government it had been necessary for the Minister for Works to shepherd him all the way to Warwick and back. He knew that when the honorable member came down to attend the House last week, his opinions were entirely with the Opposition. He believed that the Education Bill had been published in that day's *Queensland Times*, simply for the purpose of raising dissension in his (Mr. Thorn's) electorate; but he had no fear of such a proceeding damaging him in the opinion of his constituents. With regard to the motion of want of confidence, he regretted exceedingly that the Premier was associated with his present colleagues. He would guarantee that the honorable gentleman could, by going down Queen street, pick up, at random, five men who would make far abler ministers than they. He had the greatest respect, personally, for the Premier; but he must say that he had not the slightest particle of respect for any of the other Ministers. The Bill to amend the Railway Acts of the colony, was undoubtedly introduced by the Minister for Works for purposes of corruption. The honorable gentleman had stated that that was the object of the measure, and subsequent events had proved the truth of the statement. It was meant to be held *in terrorem* over the heads of property owners through whose land the railway would pass, and all those who pleased the Government would be treated liberally, while the threat would be held out to the "naughty boys" of being handed over to the tender mercies of the Railway Arbitrator. It was a monstrous measure in every way, a measure that even a Communist would never bring in—meant to be a means of bribery and corruption; and he felt greatly surprised that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government should have sanctioned such a measure. By it a precedent was furnished for the resumption of all lands by the Government; and in future it would be quite open for any member of the Opposition to propose that all the wheat-producing lands of the Downs should be resumed on payment to their owners of what was considered a fair compensation—the price that had been paid to the Government originally for the lands. It had been said that there was not much land available for wheat growing, owing to climatic influences, only the tit-bits along the Warwick Railway line. But that land, last year, produced over thirty bushels of wheat to the acre; and he did not think the day was far distant when this land would be put to its proper use. It was stated by Anthony Trollope that no country could ever be popular with farmers that did not grow this cereal; and, therefore, such a course might yet be deemed necessary. The Government might thank themselves for it; they

had established a precedent for it, by the passing of that most unjust Bill. He could hardly help alluding to the fact that since the present Ministry came into office they had been constantly engaged in litigation: which was another of the reasons why he had been compelled to withdraw from them his support. In all cases they had come off second best. He could never reconcile himself to follow any Ministry that had such a litigious spirit. Regarding the action of Mr. Williams, he had been credibly informed that that gentleman, before the commencement of the proceedings, was willing to accept from the Government a very small sum—in fact, one barely equal to the costs of the lawsuit that had ensued; and he (Mr. Thorn) maintained that the non-acceptance of his proposal, and the refusal of the Government to allow the matter to go to arbitration, proved the grossest mismanagement, and that the Government were careless of squandering the public funds in fruitless litigation. Regarding the subject of law reform, a Commission for which was authorised last session, he asserted that the Attorney-General was not earnest in the matter. The policy of that honorable and learned gentleman since he came into office, was to make law intricate and mazy, instead of cheap and effective. Why were not at least two non-legal members of the House put on the Commission? He (Mr. Thorn) contended that there were men in the Opposition side of the House as capable of grappling with that question as any lawyers on the Ministerial side. He would back himself against either of them. Regarding the issue of the deeds of grant to Mr. Davenport, he could state, from his three years' experience in the Lands Department, that such documents must first be sent to the Executive Council for approval before being sent to the Governor for his signature. That, at all events, was the practice in his time, and the Minister for Lands could state the reason why it was changed. He believed that there were only two solutions to the question:—Either the Minister for Lands had prepared the deeds, and allowed them to go out of the office with an ulterior object—the *carrots*, to wit—or he had had them prepared ready for the next general election, to be held out as a bait to Mr. Davenport to support the present Government. He (Mr. Thorn) believed that there were two gentlemen in the Government, the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Works, who were capable of any amount of corruption. With regard to the administration of the Lands Department, he maintained that as long as it was under its present head, the working of the Act of 1868 would be rendered as intricate as possible. If the Minister for Lands was the immaculate man he wished to make himself out, why did he not bring in a Bill to make the Act plain? He (Mr. Thorn) wanted to know if there were any conditions under the Act of 1868, save rent, residence by bailiff, and the sticking

up of boundary posts? Why, if there were not, did the honorable gentleman not bring in an Amendment Bill making stringent conditions? Why did he not also bring in a Bill to meet the cases of those who had allowed the three years to expire without procuring their certificates—small selectors who had complied with every condition, but who, from thoughtlessness, never asked for their certificates till beyond the time? He (Mr. Thorn) would wager that nine-tenths of the settlers under the Act were without their certificates. Why also did not the immaculate Minister for Lands deal with the great Davenport case when he first came into office? He knew all about it. He had the "Votes and Proceedings" of 1867 to guide him, and the report of the famous committee of inquiry into lands taken up in reserves under the Act of 1866. Judging from the honorable gentleman's past administration, it was high time that some honorable member from the Opposition side of the House was placed in charge of his department. He accused the Minister for Lands of mal-administration of the Mineral Lands Act. It was from this cause alone that a large mining population was not settled in West Moreton. There were not the same facilities given to West Moreton miners as were given to Gympie, Rockhampton, and Mount Perry men. Why was there no application clerk at the Ipswich Land Office to guide people in the taking up of selections; and why was more than twelve months allowed to elapse before the selectors had their lands approved? Against the Postmaster-General he also brought the charge of inefficiency in the control of his department. In support of this charge he instanced the regulation regarding the registration of telegrams transmitted by post.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The regulation was rescinded the moment it was brought to the notice of the Government. There was no such regulation in existence.

Mr. THORN: He had a paragraph from the Rockhampton *Bulletin* which brought the matter out clearly. No doubt the regulation ought to have been rescinded. The heaven-born minister who initiated it ought to be cashiered. He (Mr. Thorn) would not have him in his Government forty-eight hours. The paragraph was as follows:—

"The restrictions put on telegraphic messages within the last few months, render them in many cases utterly useless. Surely some other plan can be adopted than compulsory registration. On the 22nd ultimo I sent a telegram from Gladstone to my servant at Emu Park, instructing him to meet me in Rockhampton with horses. This telegram (for which I paid, at the same time, postage and registration fees) ought to have gone out by the Emu Park mail on the same day, but, from some red-tapeism, all that my servant received was a notice from the postmaster in Rockhampton that a registered telegram awaited him in that office, accompanied by a form which he was requested to sign, acknowledging the receipt of the telegram.

The telegram was then forwarded to him by the next week's mail, he thus receiving it five days after I myself had reached home. In the second case, a telegram was sent to me from Brisbane on the 8th instant. On the 12th, the Emu Park mail went without it, and I only got it yesterday (ten days after its despatch), through being casually in Rockhampton myself. The object of this telegram also was totally defeated through the delay in its delivery. Telegraphic communication becomes thus useless to people who are not within daily reach of a post office where registration can be effected."

That was about a month ago. The most serious charge which he had to bring against the Government was the manner in which the Elections Act had been worked. Under the present system of registration it would be quite possible for electors outside an electorate to vote for a district for which they were not qualified. As instances of this, he mentioned the cases of Fassifern and Stanley rolls. It was possible for electors of Bulimba and the Logan to elect the Fassifern member. He maintained that the fault was owing principally to the class of revising magistrates appointed by the present Government. Before a gentleman was appointed to the commission of the peace, he should undergo some examination in the geography of his own district, at all events, if not of the whole colony. The action of the Government in regard to the Roma District Court was calculated to defeat the ends of justice. The Minister for Works, in his control of the road expenditure, favored one district at the expense of another. Wherever he was blarneyed and told by the people that he was a heaven-born Minister, he gave them the means of making roads better than existed in the Municipality of Brisbane; but the districts where the people spoke their mind were utterly neglected. In proof of this he cited the case of a portion of East Moreton which he (Mr. Thorn) had lately visited, and which contained some splendid land. That country would be immediately settled if it were rendered accessible by the formation of roads, but the inhabitants settled nearest to it informed him that the Minister for Works was in league with some of the pastoral lessees in the neighborhood to keep the district dark. He (Mr. Thorn) resolved to test this question, and, at the request of some of the inhabitants, applied for a small grant to make the necessary roads, and received a reply from the Minister, briefly to this effect:—

"Referring to your communication of 17th instant, I have the honor to inform you that the foreman of works reports that the crossings—Spring Creek and at Doyle's on the Logan—are not, as yet, of sufficient importance to warrant the expenditure requested in your letter under reply."

Why did not the honorable gentleman answer his letter at once? No; he waited nearly a fortnight to see which way he should give his vote. He (Mr. Thorn) had every confidence

that the place referred to would be one of the most thickly settled on the Upper Logan within a very short time. He also maintained that the southern districts of the colony, where the greatest portion of the revenue was raised, were entitled to more consideration than they now obtained. He urged the appointment of an engineer of roads, the same as in the northern division. There were many works of magnitude required in Southern Queensland, and he thought it was owing to there being no engineer here that they were not commenced. This was the proper time for a reduction of the *ad valorem* duties, when the country was prosperous. The people were now taxed very heavily, and it was possible that the present prosperity would not last. He was certain the country could not bear any further taxation, should a turn of depression again take place. The whole fiscal arrangements of the colony ought to be altered, and he blamed the Government for not considering them. The *ad valorem* duty ought to be reduced at least one-half, or swept away and fixed duties substituted. Had the Government done this, they might have had some policy with which to go to the country. A great deal had been said regarding the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway, and he would give his reasons why he believed the railway should come to South Brisbane, and cross the bridge, instead of being brought across the river at Oxley. A very large amount of traffic would be lost unless the line was brought through the thickly populated part of the country, and through South Brisbane into the heart of the city. On the west side of Oxley there was comparatively no population, whilst on the east side there was a large population; besides, the Logan, Oxley, part of Bulimba, and part of Fassifern would make use of the line. As a commercial speculation, the line through South Brisbane into North Brisbane, he deemed would be best. He hoped a verdict would be taken on this question to-night. It was useless for the Government to hold out longer, for the voice, not only of the representatives of the people but of the whole country, were against them. He would cordially support the amendment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving that the debate be now adjourned, said that he would give his reasons for doing so, at once. He had a good deal to say on the subject, and he did not think that any honorable member on the opposite side of the House would expect that he should make a speech, such as he would require to make, at that late hour of the evening, even if he were the only member who had now to address the House. But there were other honorable members who would have a good deal to say on the question before the House, and they could not expect that their speeches, delivered at that late hour, would be reported in the newspapers in the morning. Now, he maintained that he had a perfect right to conduct his warfare in the House on whatever

battle grounds he chose to take. Something had been said about his not having assisted in making a House last week, but he contended that he had a perfect right not to assist in forming a quorum last week, and to decide for himself when he would allow the question, so far as he was concerned, to be brought to a division. But he had no hesitation to say, now, that the mind of the Government was fully made up that they would go on with the debate, to-morrow, and have it brought to a division to-morrow night. With that understanding, to which he believed there would be no objection, he would move that the debate be now adjourned.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he did not feel altogether certain that he would be justified in acceding to the proposition now submitted to the House by the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government. As honorable members were aware, the honorable gentleman had the opportunity of addressing the House on Thursday evening last, and again on Friday forenoon, if he had chosen to make a House. But for his own convenience, and that of his supporters, he refrained from making a House on Thursday evening or on Friday forenoon. For those reasons, he was not sure if he would be justified in acceding to the proposition, that the debate should be now adjourned. He was perfectly willing to meet the honorable gentleman in all fairness, and if he gave any further reason in addition to what he had given, there might not be any objection on the part of the Opposition to the motion. But he did not think the reason the honorable member had given was sufficient to justify the House in consenting to the motion. It was now only eleven o'clock, and surely the honorable gentleman would not address the House for three hours; but even if he did so, that would bring them to two o'clock, which would not be too late, or perhaps he should say, too early, to come to a division.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought the reason his honorable colleague had given why the debate should be now adjourned, was quite a good and sufficient one. The honorable gentleman, he thought, was quite right in stating that the speeches that might be delivered by honorable members at that late hour would not be reported in the newspapers in the morning; and honorable members on the Government side of the House were as desirous that their speeches should be fairly reported in the newspapers as honorable members opposite were desirous that theirs should be reported.

Mr. KING said they must recollect that they were there for the purpose of carrying on the business of the country; and they were told by the Government that it was highly important a certain measure should be passed enabling the Government to appoint a third judge of the Supreme Court. But notwithstanding the urgency there might be for such

a measure, the Government had allowed two days to be thrown away, and he did not see, therefore, that they were justified in now asking the debate to be adjourned; for it amounted to asking that certain legislation should be postponed, which the Government themselves said was of pressing necessity. He thought that under all the circumstances the Opposition would be guilty of culpable weakness, if they acceded to the demand now made by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, after the way the Government behaved last week.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that so far as the measure relating to the Supreme Court was concerned, he wished to relieve the mind of the honorable member for Wide Bay of all anxiety on the subject, by informing him that the winter vacation of the Supreme Court commenced on Saturday next, and it would not, therefore, be necessary to press on the debate, in order to the immediate passing of the measure to which he referred.

The question that the debate be now adjourned was then put, and the House divided as follows:—

Ayes, 15.	Noes, 15.
Mr. Palmer	Mr. W. Scott
" Bell	" Lilley
" Bramston	" Griffith
" Walsh	Dr. O'Doherty
" Ramsay	Mr. Fyfe
" Ferrett	" Stephens
" J. Scott	" Miles
" Buchanan	" King
" Wienholt	" MacDevitt
" Graham	" Edmondstone
" Handy	" Groom
" Royds	" Hemmant
" Clark	" Macalister
" Thompson	" Thorn
" Cribb.	" Thornton.

The SPEAKER, in announcing the division, said it now became his duty to give his casting vote; and he would give it in a way that would not have the effect of obstructing the public business. He therefore felt bound to vote with the "noes."

The motion was accordingly negatived.

Mr. HANDY said he was sorry the division had resulted in the way it had. The course the honorable the Speaker had taken in giving his casting vote with the "noes" was no doubt perfectly right and constitutional, and was in accordance with the established rules of the House. As to the question before the House, he for one knew his own mind, and no one else knew how he would vote upon it. He was anxious to address the House on the question, and as he had heavy responsibilities on his shoulders and heavy charges to meet, and as he desired to be perfectly understood by the public out of doors, he was anxious, if the favor might be accorded to him, that his speech should be fully reported. Now, he felt that if he were to address the House at that late hour of the evening he could not expect his speech to be reported as he should like it to be in the newspapers, and it was for that reason he voted for the adjournment of the debate, as he wished to clear himself before the public from the charges that had

been made against him. He would like his speech to be reported in the press, and as he could not, were he to speak at that late hour, expect that it should be, he felt he could not consent to anything but the adjournment of the debate till the following day. He would therefore move that the House do now adjourn till to-morrow.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he apprehended the honorable member had precluded himself from the right of again addressing the House, because, though he had moved the adjournment of the House, there was no question before the House but the main question, at the time the honorable member rose.

The SPEAKER stated that the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Handy, had not spoken to the main question, but only to the question of the adjournment of the House, and he concluded his remarks with a motion to that effect.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he could not but consider that the honorable member had spoken on the main question, because, after the division that had taken place, there was no other question before the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he believed there were several very important speeches yet to be addressed to the House; and he considered, that from what the honorable member for North Brisbane had said, and from what he knew had taken place out of doors respecting him, an opportunity should be afforded him of having his speech in defence of the charges which had been brought against him reported *in extenso*. There were also honorable members on the Government side who had to address the House before the main question was brought to a division, and were they to speak to-night they could not expect that their speeches would be reported in the newspapers. They had listened patiently to the long speeches that had been delivered to-night, and he must confess that he, himself, was one of the parties guilty of making a long speech; and he thought it would only be fair to honorable members on both sides of the House who had not yet spoken, that they should be afforded the opportunity of addressing the House at a time when there was a probability of their speeches being reported; and it was due, not only to themselves, but also to their constituencies, who would, of course, wish to know the reasons their representatives might have for the course they should take with respect to the important question now before the House.

Mr. MACDEVITT said he could not avoid expressing his surprise at the undignified and what appeared to him to be the crouching attitude which had been taken by the Government in respect to this question. The honorable the Minister for Works had argued that the debate should be adjourned, and the only reason he gave was that an opportunity might be afforded for the speeches of some honorable members who

had not yet addressed the House being fully reported in the public press; but was that, he would ask, to be taken as an adequate reason for the decision of the House on a question of so much moment to the country, as the one now before it, being further postponed? It was now a week since the House met, and since this question was fully brought under their consideration; and he did not see that there should be any further delay in coming to a decision upon it. The honorable the Colonial Secretary, and other honorable members on the Government side, who might wish to address the House, had had ample opportunity to do so if they had availed themselves of it. If they had aided in forming a House on Thursday and on Friday last, they would have been able to address the House at a time when they might have expected that their speeches would have been fully reported.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it seemed to him that the crouching attitude the honorable member for the Kennedy attributed to him was that he objected to the question before the House being pressed to a division to-night. Now, the fact was, that when he proposed the adjournment of the debate, he understood, and he had some reason for it, that the honorable member for Ipswich, who was now the recognised leader of the Opposition, would consent to it on the understanding that the debate should be proceeded with to-morrow. He was quite astonished when the honorable member rose and asked that he should give further reasons in support of the adjournment than he had given in moving that the debate should be adjourned. And he might now inform honorable members that he had stated to the honorable member for Ipswich, in the passage to the Chamber, that he would ask for an adjournment of the debate, in order that the speeches of honorable members who had not yet addressed the House might be reported in the papers; and he understood that the honorable member would not object. But it would seem that from that want of cohesion which it would appear characterised honorable members opposite in the whole of their proceedings, that some one of them had succeeded in prevailing upon the honorable gentleman not to consent to the adjournment of the debate, and to insist that it should be gone on with. Now, he would take the liberty of informing honorable members opposite that he was too old a Parliamentary warrior to consent, while he held the position of being at the head of the Government, to the closing of a debate on a question of such a nature as the one now before the House, until such time as he might choose. And he would also inform the House that he did not choose the debate should close to-night, and that he would not consent to its closing to-night; and he would further tell the honorable member for the Kennedy that such was the nature of the cringing attitude the honorable member had charged him with having

assumed. Honorable members opposite must take him for a child, for a baby, if they thought that he would be driven into anything like a cringing attitude so long as he had so many honorable members to back him up in the course which he considered it to be his duty to pursue. He had not forgotten the tactics of the Opposition last session; and he would ask honorable members opposite if they really supposed that the Government, and honorable members on the Government side of the House, had not learned something of Parliamentary tactics from the course which they themselves pursued last session? He proposed the motion for the adjournment of the debate as a matter of courtesy towards honorable members on both sides of the House; but, as it had been objected to, he might tell honorable members that the Government and their supporters were prepared to sit up all night if necessary, and carry on the debate; and he would not have honorable members opposite be too confident but that, if they did sit up all night, the Government might be able to beat them. They might sit in their places as long as they chose, but he could tell them he was determined this debate should not be brought to a close to-night; so they might spare themselves the hardship of sitting up. The debate might be carried on, but certainly there would be no division. They could sit there all night, and no doubt honorable members could be found who could talk as much nonsense as was talked, night after night, last session by honorable members opposite.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Or read it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; or read it. They might read some of the nonsense that was uttered last session by honorable members opposite; and even some of the speeches that were delivered by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley.

MR. LILLEY said he had no doubt that if some of the speeches that were delivered by honorable members last session were now read to the House they would have the same effect as they had last session, and would frighten honorable members on the Government side of the House. He did not think that independent members of the House could approve of the course that had been taken by the honorable the Premier on this occasion, in daring them by swagger and bounce to carry on this debate, and he certainly did not think that it would become his position to imitate the example of the honorable gentleman. He would only say that, if it was the wish of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House to sit up all night, and till to-morrow night for that matter, he was prepared to sit up with them. It was well known that he was not in any way interested in the result of this debate, beyond the interest he took in it as an independent member of the House, desirous of discharging, what he conceived, to be his duty to his constituents. There could be no

doubt that the honorable the Premier was, as he himself had said, an old warrior in Parliamentary conflicts; but yet, he must remind the honorable gentleman, that he had seen him running away. Now, he would like to ask, if the honorable gentleman felt a little more sure of his footing than he did on Thursday last, when he refused to enter the House? What, he would like to know, had given him the confidence to swagger and bounce as he had done to-night? He claimed to be as old a Parliamentary warrior as the honorable gentleman was. In fact, he was an older Parliamentary warrior. He believed that, as regarded Parliamentary service, he was the father of the House. Now, he would like to know what had taken place behind the scenes since Thursday last, that had given the honorable gentleman the courage to crow so loudly as he had done. He did not wish, for his own part, to sit up all night any more than the honorable member did; and he was afraid that it was the lateness of the hour that had put the honorable gentleman a little out of temper. Now, if he might venture to hint it to him, his desire to retreat to-night was that he wanted, even now, a little longer time, as he might be expecting some old soldier yet to come up to his support. And he would tell the honorable gentleman that, if he were the leader of the Opposition, he would not give him the benefit of another hour. He was afraid that there was some talk going on behind the scenes, but there would be no swerving of him from his purpose, no matter what amount of delay might take place. His mind was firmly made up to vote with the Opposition, and in favor of the course of policy which he had always supported, and which he believed to be the best for the welfare of the colony. He did not suppose that the speech of the honorable member would occupy more than two hours, and, so far as the Opposition were concerned, they were prepared to remain and listen to him. They all knew what course he would take, and he did not believe that the honorable member's speech, or the speeches of any other honorable member that might be delivered, would have the effect of influencing the mind of any member of the House as to the vote he intended to give. He believed that every honorable member had made up his mind as to the vote he would give, whether it was known to other honorable members or not, and there was no need therefore for further delaying the business of the House upon the question now before it. He considered that, in every respect, it would be much better to bring the debate to a close without any more delay. For his own part, he would give the honorable member every fair play, and he would remain in the House and listen to his speech, no matter how long it might be; but in saying what he had to say, he hoped the honorable gentleman would not do himself the indignity of assuming a bouncible manner. In conclusion, he

would desire to impress upon the honorable gentleman the fact that, he was always most effective in what he said when he was least offensive.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said it appeared to him that if the motion for the adjournment of the House was carried, the question as to the Address in Reply, and the amendment which he had moved upon it, would fall to the ground. He thought the motion for the adjournment of the House should be withdrawn, and that the debate on the main question should be continued. Like the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, he was quite prepared to sit up all night and listen to the debate; and abide the decision that might be come to upon the question, no matter what it might be.

Mr. FYFE said that, in order that the House might get rid of the difficulty in which the main question was placed, as had been pointed out by the honorable member for Ipswich, he would move the previous question.

After some conversation amongst honorable members, Mr. FYFE said he would withdraw his amendment.

Mr. HANDY then said that, with the permission of the House, he would also withdraw his motion for the adjournment of the House.

The SPEAKER put the question as to whether it was the mind of the House that the motion for the adjournment should be withdrawn.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no.

The question, that the House do now adjourn, was then put, and the House divided as follows:—

Ayes, 13.		Noes, 16.	
Mr. Palmer		Mr. Lilley	
" Bell		Dr. O'Doherty	
" Cribb		Mr. Pye	
" Buchanan		" Edmondstone	
" Wienholt		" Griffith	
" Clark		" Groom	
" Royds		" W. Scott	
" Thompson		" MacDevitt	
" Handy		" Macalister	
" Graham		" Thorn	
" Ramsay		" Walsh	
" Ferrett		" Thornton	
" J. Scott.		" Hemmant	
		" King	
		" Miles	
		" Stephens.	

The question was accordingly declared to have been negatived.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER then rose and said, that as it was, of course, quite competent for either side to keep the House up all night by merely moving alternately the adjournment of the House and the adjournment of the debate, and as, therefore, if honorable members on one side of the House had made up their minds not to allow the question to be brought to a division to-night, it would be only fighting in vain, and would be a waste of time now to continue the contest further. He considered it was anything but desirable that they should pursue such a course on a question of such importance as the one now before the House; and he further considered that the House should not come to a decision on such a question in

a hurry. As he had no wish whatever that any honorable member should be prevented from fully expressing his opinions upon the question, and as the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government had said that he would make a House to-morrow, and would allow the question to be brought to a division to-morrow night, he would offer no further objection on the part of the Opposition to the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. FERRETT then moved that the debate be adjourned till the following day.

The motion was agreed to, and the House adjourned.