

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 5 JUNE 1873

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 5 June, 1873.

Presentation of Address in Reply.—Governor's Answer
to Address in Reply.—Position of the Ministry.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The SPEAKER, on taking the Chair, said that, in pursuance with the resolution agreed to by the House on the previous day, he would now proceed with honorable members to Government House, there to present to His Excellency the Governor the Address in Reply, adopted by the House on the previous day, to His Excellency's Opening Speech.

GOVERNOR'S ANSWER TO ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The SPEAKER, on returning, said he had the honor to announce that he and other honorable members had waited upon His Excellency the Governor, and that he had presented to His Excellency the Address in Reply which had been adopted by the House. His Excellency had been pleased to accept the Address, and to make the following reply:—

"To the Honorable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

"GENTLEMEN,—I thank you for the Address which you have just presented to me, and for the expressions of loyalty towards Her Majesty which it contains. I rely upon the assurance which you give me that the various subjects to be brought before you shall receive your careful consideration; and I pray that your deliberations may prove conducive to the best interests of the colony.

"NORMANBY.

"Government House,
"Brisbane, 5th June, 1873."

POSITION OF THE MINISTRY.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: Before any other business is proceeded with, I would remind the honorable member at the head of the Government that, when moving the adjournment of the House last evening, he said that he would, to-day, be prepared to make a Ministerial statement as to what were the intentions of the Government. I believe that this is the proper stage of the proceedings for the honorable member to do so.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I never said so. I never said anything of the kind, or anything about a statement.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: Then I will ask the honorable gentleman what he intends to do after the vote of last night? Does the honorable member intend to carry on business by virtue of the casting vote of the Speaker?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: With the reserve that I expect to come up, I do intend to carry on business.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: Well, then, Mr. Speaker, I shall move the adjournment of the House. But before I express any opinion on the course the Government seem determined upon following, I should like to read one or two extracts from a speech made on a former occasion by the honorable member when that honorable gentleman was in Opposition. In 1867, when the Government of which I was the leader had a motion of want of confidence moved against it, the honorable gentleman now at the head of the Government stated:—

"The Ministry must be very well aware, even if the amendment was not carried, that looking at the style of support they had received from many honorable members, they had not the most distant

ghost of the chance of a working majority, and looking at their position in that way, they must feel that it became their duty to resign."

Now, I would ask the honorable member at the head of the Government, whether he is, at this present moment, taking into consideration the character of the support he should have received last night, and that which he did receive; whether the same principle as that laid down by the honorable member in 1867 could not be applied to himself on the present occasion? At the time I resigned, although my Government had a majority of two, for in a House so small as this with that majority, much less with a majority of one, which the honorable member was in expectation of having, it was utterly impossible for any Government to carry on the business of the country on three or four nights in the week; but the present Government had not even a majority of one, inasmuch as the vote last evening was decided by the casting vote of the honorable the Speaker, who followed the conventional rule that the Speaker should vote for carrying on the government of the House. But that is not the way to carry on the business of the country. I would again remind the honorable member, that when the Mackenzie Government were in office in 1869, a vote of want of confidence in them was carried, ayes 15, noes 15, and that notwithstanding that Government was composed of squatters, they felt that they should resign, and did so; and I believe that in so doing they followed a proper and strictly constitutional course. I, therefore, think that unless the honorable the Premier is prepared to give some higher reason for remaining in office than he has done—than that of waiting for a supporter, who it was thought likely might come to the House—it is very much like trifling with this House and the affairs of the country. We are here to do the business of the country, and not to be told by the honorable member that we are to wait until he has a reserve of support. It is all very well for the Government to say the majority of the House constitutes its legislation; but I would remind the honorable member, that that must be obtained by other means than simply by the casting vote of the Speaker. It appears to me that the honorable member's own statement, last night, was quite sufficient to warrant me in moving the adjournment of the House. The honorable gentleman then stated that no Government that could be formed out of that House could have a working majority, or one sufficient to enable it to carry on business; and if that was the honorable member's opinion last evening, surely it must be his opinion still; and the honorable gentleman could not deny that he had not a working majority. The honorable gentleman must also be aware that from the number of dissolutions he has already had, he is not on the present occasion entitled to another. The honorable gentleman may have a desire to

carry on business as long as he can, until the time arrives for issuing the writs for the general election, but he is not entitled to another dissolution on the present occasion, especially when he remains in office solely by virtue of the casting vote of the Speaker. The honorable gentleman has no right to remain in office on the casting vote of the honorable the Speaker, and it appears to me that the only object of the delay which the honorable gentleman wishes to create is caused, in the first place, by his knowledge that he cannot get a dissolution, and in the second, that in order to obviate that difficulty, the honorable gentleman will go on the best way he can until the time arrives for issuing the writs for the general election. Now, that is not the position in which the House should be placed, and I therefore move—

That this House do now adjourn,

in order to give the honorable gentleman an opportunity of considering the matter.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir, the honorable member for Ipswich might have spared himself a good deal of trouble, and certainly a great deal of breath, if he for one moment thought that any argument he could bring forward would influence me in the course I intend to take. If the honorable gentleman thinks that I am going to be influenced by what he says, he is very much mistaken. Now, sir, I have very carefully considered the state of the question. I have very carefully considered the state of parties, and, I may say, that I have very carefully considered the state of the country; and although, as I said last evening, and as I now repeat in all sincerity, I would, if I consulted my own personal feelings, most gladly give up my position as Premier, and most gladly give up the government of the country, yet, looking at the state of the country—looking at the material of which the Opposition is composed, and looking at the fact that if that Opposition came into power tomorrow, they would not have sufficient time before the new elections took place to do any good to the country, I feel obliged, although very much against my own inclination, to endeavor to carry on the business of the country with the support I now have in the House. There is no analogy whatever between the cases which have been referred to by the honorable member for Ipswich and the present state of affairs. When the honorable member himself had a majority of two, and resigned, why I thought, as I still think, he was a fool for doing so; but, still, the honorable member had a right to please himself. Of course, when I use the word "fool," I do so only in a Parliamentary sense. At any rate, I thought he was wrong in the course he then adopted, and exceedingly green; and the conclusion I came to was, that the honorable member resigned in a temper, because some of his supporters deserted him. I still entertain that opinion, and believe that the

honorable member resigned because he was under the impression that no other party could take his place, and that he would come back with increased power. I maintain, sir, that in a House of thirty-two members, if a Minister has a majority of two, it is a working majority. When the Mackenzie Government, of which I was a member, resigned on the casting vote of the Speaker, I strongly opposed that resignation, but of course the option of resignation is entirely in the hands of a Premier, and when Sir Robert Mackenzie resigned, there was no help for it. But, Sir Robert Mackenzie is not Premier at the present time—nor is the honorable member for Ipswich. But I am Premier; and I may at once tell honorable gentlemen opposite that I take upon myself the whole responsibility of endeavoring to carry on the public business, with the knowledge that no business of any great party consequence will be brought forward, and, as has been stated by the honorable member for Ipswich, in one of his electioneering speeches, this is in fact a moribund House, and thus actually without the powers of legislation. That is a very different position from those quoted by the honorable member where a Ministry met the House at the commencement of a session, where a great deal of business would have to be done, and in which they would have to pass their Estimates. When my other supporter arrives, which I have every reason to believe will be shortly, I shall then have a quorum in the House, and a majority; and I contend, therefore, that I am perfectly justified in the course I am taking. The honorable member for Ipswich seems to think that I am not entitled to another dissolution; but I may tell the honorable member that it is not the least likely, seeing the worse than uselessness of it—even presuming the Opposition got into office before the new elections—that I should dream of asking for another dissolution. I have maturely considered the whole question, I have thought over it frequently since last night, for then I had a pretty good idea of the position I should be in, and I have believed it to be a duty to myself, to my colleagues, and to my country, that I should endeavor to do my best to carry on the small business of the present session as well as I possibly can.

Mr. KING said he was not at all surprised at the declaration of the honorable the Premier—that he intended to stick to office as long as he could; nor did he think that such a statement would take any honorable member by surprise, inasmuch as the Government had gone from one policy to another for the sole purpose of remaining in office. The honorable gentleman had stated that when there was such a close division, as there had been on the previous night, it was necessary to look at the character of the supporters of the vote against the Government, and also to how the Opposition was sustained; but he would say that the tie

made by the Government on the previous evening was made by means that would not bear investigation. The honorable member for North Brisbane had, not a couple of hours before he recorded his vote, said that no one knew how he was going to vote, and yet the honorable the Colonial Secretary said that, some days before, he knew how the honorable member was going to vote—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The honorable member is always misquoting me; I said nothing of the kind.

MR. KING: They knew that there was no measure of importance likely to be brought before the House, as the Colonial Secretary had said, but supposing there were, he would like to know what the situation of the House would be, if any questions had to be decided by the vote of the honorable member for Brisbane, Mr. Handy; an honorable member who went backwards and forwards from one side of the House to the other according to the inducements held out to him. It was quite plain to everybody that the object of the Government was, to obtain a third dissolution, or three in the space of three years, and to keep themselves in office. They could never have remained in office without having a dissolution once a year;—they had had two, and if they were to remain in office until August, they would have three dissolutions. Now, the object of those dissolutions was to introduce into the House a small ring of pastoral tenants, who would pay themselves out of the Crown lands of the colony—a class who would sit in that House as a compact ring to legislate only for themselves, and to obstruct any legislation which was for the benefit of the colony generally. The great object of that class was to have the wire pulling at the elections, in order that the greatest facilities might be afforded to them to introduce into the House more of their own ring. There had been an attempt in Queensland to maintain that class in power, by repeated dissolutions, and the honorable member for Port Curtis would remain in power as long as he could by any means. He did not hesitate to say that the dead-lock was the direct effect of the unconstitutional dissolution given to the present Government, and he would venture to say that if the honorable the Premier got another, the result would be as it had been before in Queensland and in other colonies. It was a maxim that attempting to establish one Ministry by driving the other portion of the House, had always ended in anarchy, and he mentioned that because it must be fairly understood, that when the present Government go to the country, they must be prepared to return forty-two squatters; of course there would be some independent men amongst them, who would be returned to oppose the squatters, under the guise of liberalism, but who would, in reality, support the squatters. But, as he had said before, if the Government could return

forty-two squatters, or nominees of squatters, they would be safe, but if they could not return forty-two, it would be advisable for them to let the business of the country go on and not have a third dissolution. Now, however, that they were degraded in the eyes of the country, the best thing they could do was to resign, in order that the elections might be carried on freely. He could tell the honorable Premier what would be the result of the elections; he knew what the honorable gentleman expected, but he believed if the Government even had the elections in their hands, the result would be nearly a tie. There would be a Government who would do every thing they could for their own supporters against Opposition candidates—not only that, but there would be free telegrams—all the candidates supporting the other side would send O.H.M.S., if not themselves, by Ministers on their behalf; a privilege that supporters of the Opposition, the representatives of the people, would not have. Of course, that was a considerable advantage to the Government, and, as he had said, there might be a small balance in the House in their favor, but what would be the results? Why, that they would have to go out after having a third dissolution, and then the Opposition, on taking office, having only a small majority, would require another dissolution—in fact, there was no chance of another House going on for twelve months without a dissolution. Well, their own party would not allow them to go on with important legislation with the bare majority they had on the previous evening, and he did not suppose that the honorable member for Ipswich would grant supplies to enable them to meet a new House, and if the House was to meet in November, was it wise to hold on for six months to office, for the purpose of obstructing the liberal party? Every honorable member knew what the fight was about—it was about the opening up of the lands, and that if there was a new House elected under the present Government, there would not be a party sufficiently strong to throw open the lands. He thought that when the present Government left office, they would leave behind them a reputation worse than that of any Government which had ever governed in the Australian colonies.

MR. MILES said he did not rise for the purpose of speaking on the constitutional question, but to remove a delusion from the eyes of honorable members of the Opposition, namely, that it was of any use to refer to the practice of late Governments so long as there was a Premier superior to any they had ever had—and he hoped to any they might have. Now, that honorable gentleman had designated the honorable member for Ipswich a fool, for resigning as he had done; and then they were told that nothing should remove him (the Premier) from the position he held. The only thing he (Mr. Miles) could suggest, would be to yoke up a team of

bullocks and haul him out. Now, the honorable member had talked about a dissolution taking place in a very short time, and in reference to that there was a very nice little paragraph in the Governor's Speech, which was to the effect that the Government would not ask to pass the Estimates-in-Chief for 1874, but only for a sum sufficient to carry on the business of the country. But the Government had supplies to last them until the end of December, and what then was that request intended for? The fact was, that the Government had gained their position by a violation of the Constitution, and they intended to retain it by the same means. In regard to the reverend member who had voted with them, there was nothing so vile that he would not be guilty of. He was not at all surprised at that gentleman, but he was surprised that the great Premier, who would not be dictated to by anybody, should allow himself to be supported in power by a purchased renegade to his country. With the support of that gentleman, the honorable the Premier termed everyone who had gone before as fools for resigning; but all he (Mr. Miles) could say was, that he hoped that great supporter would be the last of his class. The honorable the Premier was supported by an honorable member who, after riding down his famous ride from the Mitchell, was not in that House ten minutes when he wanted to know whether, if the Government went out, he would be appointed Chairman of Committees. If the Government had got to such a low ebb as to rely upon the support of such a man as that, they had got to a very low ebb indeed.

Mr. WIENHOLT: There had been a very violent attack made by the honorable member who had just sat down, and by the honorable member for Wide Bay, upon the honorable member for North Brisbane, and it was one just worthy of the tactics of the Opposition. For his own part, he considered that the way in which the honorable member, Mr. Handy, had been used was most unfair; and, moreover, he thought that the press, in not reporting the able defence made by that honorable member, and the clear reasons given by him for voting with the Government, had behaved most unfairly. After attacking that honorable member as they had done, the least they should have done was to report his reasons for acting as he did. The honorable member for Wide Bay said a great deal about a third dissolution, but he had never said anything about the unconstitutional conduct of honorable members opposite in obstructing the business of the country for months as they had done. The honorable member had not told them that such unconstitutional conduct as that was never met with at home; but the honorable member never saw two sides of the question, but could only see one—and that his own—and, therefore, he acted very unfairly.

Mr. THORNTON said it was quite evident to him, that the Darling Downs clique were

getting the better of the judgment of the honorable the Premier, and he was sure that the liberality of that honorable member's views could not be coerced by any other party in Queensland. The liberal party had now been sold twice by a North Brisbane member, and on one occasion he was sitting by the honorable member, Mr. Macalister, and the late Mr. Atkin, when a gentleman, who had since gone over, gave as his terms of support the Chairmanship of Committees; and surely if he would make terms with one party, he was liable to be charged with making terms with another. The only reason why the head of the Government was acting as he was, was that he might lock up the lands of the colony; and that his Government might do as they had done before—take the flesh, and throw the bones to the people.

Mr. GRIFFITH: There had been a great many things to see in this colony before, in addition to those alluded to by the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Wienholt. That honorable member had charged the Opposition with unconstitutional conduct, but he thought the House had seen that day what an unconstitutional course the present Government could take under certain circumstances. In addition to that, he had seen within the last few days, something which very much reminded him of a character drawn in a work written by the late Lord Lytton, called "A Strange Story." He had no doubt many honorable members had read that book. The principal individual in it was possessed of great mental ability, great mental powers, and of considerable beauty—and in that latter respect, the parallel he wished to draw was not exactly correct; but by some extraordinary means, the man's soul had been taken from him during his lifetime, so that he remained merely an animal. The theory throughout put forward by Lord Lytton was, that a man might go through life without any moral feeling. Now, he (Mr. Griffith) had always disbelieved in such a creation, but at the present time, after what he had seen take place, if anyone asked him, he could not say that he disbelieved it; that was, at any rate, about the most charitable construction he could put on the action of a certain honorable member. There was also one more remark he had to make, and that was, that it was a most extraordinary statement for the honorable member at the head of the Government to make, when he said that he did not know how the votes were going until the previous evening; because no one could have been surprised at the result after they had seen the honorable member for North Brisbane walking from one side of the House to the other as he had done.

Mr. HANDY thought the motion for adjournment had been made simply with the object of having another opportunity of attacking him a second time; and he presumed that at the public meeting to be held that evening he would be attacked a third

time, and after that, perhaps, he would be burnt in effigy. But he would leave it to the voters of Brisbane to show whether he was wrong or not in the course he had taken, and he had that confidence in the people of North Brisbane, that he believed they would return him at the head of the poll again. He had heard in town that the secret of his purchase had leaked out, and so he might as well make a clean breast of it. There was such a position to be made as that of Agent-General for this colony in California, and as he had been accused of having been bought, he might as well say at once that there had been several applications for that appointment—amongst others, one by his honorable colleague, Dr. O'Doherty, who perhaps, on that account, felt riled with him. He thought, however, that after he had given his vote conscientiously it would not alter the feelings of friendship towards him, but, to his surprise, he that day had met a number of honorable members of the Opposition, and they had passed him by in the street —

Mr. HEMMANT: Hear, hear.

Mr. HANDY: That honorable member was not a friend of his, and he never wished him to be; he should indeed be very sorry to have it supposed that he was. The honorable member was not such a great man always, but some few years ago there was a certain fire, and there were various circumstances connected with it, with which perhaps honorable members were acquainted, and the honorable member suddenly became a great man, a merchant. The honorable member might be an educated man, but he certainly was the last person he (Mr. Handy) would wish to see in his house. The honorable member had provoked those remarks, for when he (Mr. Handy) went into that House to give his vote as an independent member, how should that interfere with private friendship? He, however, wanted the private friendship of no man, if the way in which he gave his vote was to be made the ground for it. He had been bought, and he supposed the honorable member for North Brisbane had heard the price. The honorable the Premier said that he had pretty well guessed how the division would be, and so might he, if he believed some members of the Opposition. He had been told as an inducement to follow their leadership, that another honorable member who voted with the Government would be there to vote, and he had been told that the honorable members, Mr. Wienholt and Mr. Morehead, would vote against the Government.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Name, name.

Mr. HANDY: If the honorable member was in the House he would give his name, but he did not wish to be so personal as other honorable members had been. The Government had every right to expect the honorable member for the Burnett to vote with them, as he had always supported them last session, and it was wrong to twist the words of the

honorable the Premier so as to make it appear that that honorable gentleman depended upon him (Mr. Handy). He had to thank one and all of the honorable members for that second attack upon him. Then, again, something had been said about the Crown Prosecutors; why, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley knew that he had resigned that office.

Mr. LILLEY: No, no.

Mr. HANDY: The honorable member said, No, no, and he would be very sorry to bandy words with the honorable member; but he would say that when he handed in his resignation to that honorable member, he said, "Don't be a fool, keep it."

Mr. LILLEY: It is a lie.

Mr. HANDY: What I have asserted, I have asserted on my word. The honorable member says it is a lie, I desire to be put right.

The SPEAKER: Does the honorable member desire the words to be taken down?

Mr. STEPHENS: With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that you should not suggest any course to an honorable member.

Mr. J. SCOTT: The Speaker was asked to protect the honorable member, and simply suggested a course.

Mr. HANDY: At that very time a little dispute had arisen between myself and the Judge of the District Court, a purely personal matter, and the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was counsel for me, and the case was going into court.

Mr. LILLEY: No.

Mr. HANDY: If the honorable member would look over his retainers he would find out, but the honorable member persisted in bounding him down. Well, he gave up that position against the advice of the honorable member, who was then Attorney-General. There had not been fair play shown to him. He had given, on the previous evening, the reasons why he had voted as he did, and not one tittle of what he said was reported in the paper, that morning; and he had gone to the evening paper, and asked the editor to publish his speech in a supplementary sheet, and he was told that it could not be published. He had not the slightest hope of getting fair play in the papers, especially as one was presided over by the honorable member for South Brisbane, and the other had declared that he was going to desert his party before he had himself thought anything about which way he should vote. If the people outside were to know the circumstances and the reasons for giving his vote as he had done, it was only fair that his views should have been published as well as those of other honorable members. It was very strange that almost every word uttered by the honorable member for South Brisbane, or the honorable member for Wide Bay, was reported, whilst what he said was studiously kept out of the papers. The honorable

member, Mr. Thornton, stated that he had twice sold Brisbane.

MR. THORNTON: What I stated was, that the Liberal party had been twice sold by a Brisbane member.

Mr. HANDY thanked the honorable member, who had only reiterated what he (Mr. Handy) had said on the previous evening. He did not blame the honorable member, Mr. Edmondstone, but the honorable member, Dr. O'Doherty and Mr. Fraser had most decidedly sold Brisbane three years ago, when they so vilified the honorable member for Fortitude Valley at a public meeting, that his (Mr. Handy's) blood boiled, and he twice attempted to get up and speak against such conduct. The honorable member for Maranoa had referred to him, but the honorable member should not say much, as he could tell him more than he knew. Next came the junior member for East Moreton, who had given them an account of a new animal, one without a soul; but if the honorable member spent his time at the University, reading trashy novels, he must have very much wasted it. The honorable member talked about an animal having no moral restriction, but what restriction had the honorable member, himself? Well, whether it was an animal or not, the honorable member should not have been so personal. It had been said by that honorable member that all knew how he (Mr. Handy) would vote; but no one knew that he would have given it as he did. He gave it independently, as he always would do; he would not allow himself to be coerced by any party.

Mr. HEMMANT thought the Government must view with feelings of unmixed satisfaction the valuable acquisition; but he did not think that when the reserve arrived, which had been alluded to by the honorable Premier, feelings of that satisfaction would in any degree be shared in by the gentleman composing that reserve. He had been rather surprised that the honorable member, Mr. Handy, should go down to that House and complain of honorable members of the Opposition passing him in the street, after he had so flagrantly betrayed the party he was returned to support. The honorable member had referred to a fire which took place on premises occupied by his (Mr. Hemmant's) firm some six or seven years ago, and only one of two explanations could be given of the insinuations made by the honorable member. One was, that he (Mr. Hemmant) had set fire to the premises himself, and the other was that the success of his firm had arisen from the profit they had made out of the insurance companies. Now, he was loath to bring private matters before that House, but he felt that on the present occasion it would be necessary for him to do so, and that he might be excused. He might inform the House that the stock was insured for £10,000 at the time of the fire, but was estimated to be worth between £13,000 and £14,000, and

that after the fire an inquiry was held by the insurance offices involved, and the books of his firm were submitted to them. On the following morning the largest company gave a cheque for the amount of their insurance, and the others did so as soon as they could hear from Sydney. His firm had also at the time a valuable interest in the premises, which, in fact, had been erected in part by themselves, but were uninsured, and the lease of which had a considerable time to run. He could also tell the House that when the honorable gentleman was a candidate for the Mitchell he gave a promise to some of the constituents of that electorate, while on a canvassing tour, that if they returned him he would vote for the Government, and this, too, it will be remembered, at the time he was professedly in the interest of the Liberal party, at whose expense he went, to the extent of some £70 or £80. At the time Mr. Handy was contesting the electorate of North Brisbane, he (Mr. Hemmant) mentioned this bit of treachery to some of the honorable member's supporters, and the honorable member, Mr. Handy, one day called on him (Mr. Hemmant) and asked him if it was true, as he had heard that he had given currency to any such report, and would he have any objection to tell him the name of the person from whom he received the information, at the same time strongly denying its truthfulness. He admitted at once that he had heard it, and would write to his informant and ask him if he made the charge on his own knowledge, or from hearsay, and let the honorable member, Mr. Handy, know the result. He accordingly wrote to Mr. Morehead, and that gentleman confirmed its truthfulness, and gave him (Mr. Hemmant) full liberty to use his name in connection therewith. He, therefore, sent on to the honorable member, Mr. Handy, Mr. Morehead's note; whereupon Mr. Handy sent him a long letter defending himself from the accusation, and said he was astonished that he (Mr. Hemmant) should credit the statement of Mr. Morehead, a supporter of the Government, in preference to his, a supporter of the Opposition. So much, then, sir, for this, the latest addition to the ranks of the Government supporters.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said he felt that he also was called upon to defend himself upon the present occasion, against the aspersions that had been attempted to be cast upon him by his colleague, the honorable member for North Brisbane; and, in doing so, he might be allowed to say, that perhaps he was the oldest acquaintance of the honorable member in this colony. Ten or twelve years ago, the honorable member waited upon him, in his professional study, in Sydney; and he was then habited in the garb of a Roman Catholic clergyman. He, Mr. Handy, had then just arrived from California, where, as the honorable member informed him, his health had been gradually impaired by his

zeal in the performance of his sacred duties ; and he came to him to ask his advice as to the desirability of his remaining in Australia. He (Dr. O'Doherty) examined the honorable member professionally, but he regretted to say, that probably he did not examine him sufficiently well. At that time, he was himself on the point of leaving New South Wales and coming to Queensland, and the reverend gentleman asked him to use his influence with Dr. Quinn, Bishop of this colony, to have him appointed Roman Catholic missionary in Queensland. Well, on arriving in this colony, he did as he was requested ; but Dr. Quinn seemed to know more about the gentleman than he (Dr. O'Doherty) did, and refused to have anything to say to him. Such was the man who had presented himself in the varied political character the honorable member had done in this colony ; and he would venture to say that there was not an honorable member in the House who knew much about him—even though his religious prejudices might be as strong as those of the honorable member for Warwick—who, in his inmost heart, could have any other feeling but that of contempt for the honorable member. In pouring out his venom to-day, the honorable member had sought to cast some of his slime upon him ; and had endeavored to assail him because of the fact that he had been desirous of representing this colony in the honorable capacity of agent for the Government in California. Now, he had not the slightest hesitation in admitting that such had been the case, and that he was still desirous of doing so. Proposing, as he had done, and as he still did, to visit that great and young country, it might be for a lengthened period ; he had yet to learn that it would be any discredit to him to hold such a position. It was not unlikely that the honorable member obtained his information on this point from the honorable the Colonial Secretary. Now, he would challenge that honorable member, or any other member of the Government, to say that from anything that had occurred between them and himself, either personally or by letter, they could in any way calculate on receiving his vote. The truth was, that it was at the suggestion of the honorable the Minister for Works himself that he made his desire known to the Government ; and that honorable gentleman, in the course of a conversation he had with him on the subject, expressed a strong opinion in favor of an agency of the kind being established, not merely in California but also in the neighboring colonies. These were the facts of the case. He thought he had been sufficiently long in the position of a public man in this colony to enable him to bear with perfect equanimity any charge that might be brought against him by the honorable member. He might further take the liberty of saying that he had ever sought in the whole of his public conduct in this colony, and elsewhere, to be guided simply and solely by

principles which he thought it would be of great advantage to the quondam reverend gentleman, if he could even understand.

Mr. LILLEY said he could not understand why it was that always, when any matter of a personal nature arose in the House, his name should be dragged into it. Now, so far as his conduct with respect to the honorable member, Mr. Handy, was concerned, he thought that the course he had taken was such as he was fully justified in taking. He had passed him in the street in the course of to-day without the slightest mark of recognition ; and he was moved to do so, not only by the affected apology he gave for his vote last night, but also by what occurred long ago, and previous to the honorable member having a seat in that House. He must say that he was sorry he had ever had anything to do with the honorable member getting into the House ; and he might also add that he acted against the warning voice of others when he appointed him to the office of Crown Prosecutor for the Western District. The honorable member had stated that he resigned that office of his own accord. But the facts were these, and honorable members after hearing them could judge for themselves, as to how far his resignation was voluntary or not. Shortly after his appointment, he charged the District Judge with drawing pleadings and receiving fees for doing so ; and, in some instances, prejudging cases that were to come before him. The judge brought an action for slander against him ; and Mr. Handy having then placed his resignation in his (Mr. Lilley's) hands, he told him that if he wished to keep his position, he would have to defend the action, otherwise his resignation would be accepted. As Mr. Handy declined to defend the action, his resignation was accepted. Now, he was not at all astonished that anyone who acted as the honorable member—who was prepared to do as he did last night—should feel that his conduct could only add to his infamy ; and that it was such as would not bear investigation. But he had found that there were men in this world who would do anything, and who would even seek to sanctify lust with the name of a conversion in religion. Now, he maintained that he had a full right to expect that the honorable member would have voted with the Opposition last night, but he did not do so. If he felt any hesitation as to the course which it was his duty to pursue, he could have remained away and not have voted at all ; and he would now ask him if he thought he could persuade the electors of North Brisbane to return him again as one of their representatives ; and if he should ever come forward as a candidate for that or any other constituency, he (Mr. Lilley) should certainly not exercise any influence he might possibly have to aid in his return ; and he very deeply regretted that he had ever exercised any influence to bring into the House such a man as the hon-

orable member. Seeing the consistent course the honorable member took during the whole time of the dead-lock, it was impossible for him or any other honorable member to foresee that he would take such a course as he took last night. The disclosures that had been made respecting him, and the language of the honorable member himself, in fact, were quite sufficient to lead him to disbelieve almost anything he might say; and he did not believe that there was any man in Brisbane who would venture to defend him, or who felt that his conduct could be defended, except on the ground that he was a man that was hard up, and needed to sell himself.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE said that he must also express his sincere regret that he had had anything whatever to do in connection with the nomination of the honorable member for the representation of North Brisbane. The honorable member, in alluding to him personally, expressed his surprise that he was present at the public meeting at the Town Hall; but he could inform the honorable member that he was equally surprised to hear the honorable member, in addressing his constituents, say, that he would not join in any vote of want of confidence until the education question was settled. He never thought there was any chance of defection on his part till then. The honorable member had said that he was coerced into the course he had taken, but by whom, he would ask, had he been coerced? Now, the honorable member knew that he had never spoken an unfriendly word to him, or respecting him, up to the present moment; but he had endeavored to show the honorable member the benefit or injury that would follow to the country and to his party according to the way he might give his vote. He had said before, and he would now repeat it, that no one would more regret the course he had taken than the honorable member himself would.

Mr. THORN said he was perfectly astonished, after the expression of opinion that had been given at the public meeting at the Town Hall as to the conduct of the honorable member, Mr. Handy, he had not recanted before this time. Now, for his own part, he would not place himself in a position of antagonism to the opinions of so large a meeting of his constituents. So confident was he that he was acting in accordance with the views of his constituents in this matter, that he would challenge his colleagues to resign, in order that they might obtain the opinions of their constituency upon this question; and if they would agree to do so he would, on his part, hand in his resignation to-morrow. It had been stated by the honorable the Premier that he (Mr. Thorn) was a dodger. Now, he was not aware before that such was the case; but he thought there could be no doubt that the honorable the Minister for Works was the artful dodger on the Ministerial side of the House. He cer-

tainly claimed to himself to be a bit of a diplomatist; and the honorable the Premier well knew that he acted the part of a diplomatist at the last election; and perhaps he might be able to wield the same degree of power as he did then, at the next election, against the honorable the Premier. That honorable gentleman knew very well that, had it not been for him, the late honorable and much to be regretted member for East Moreton, Mr. Atkin, would have succeeded in most if not all of his purposes. He regretted that the honorable the Colonial Secretary had stated that he, while he was on the other side of the House, had continually bothered him; for he could assure the House that during all that time he never asked the honorable gentleman for any personal favor whatever. The only favor he ever asked from the Government, was one in respect to what he believed would be for the general good of the colony. The honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Ferrett, knew nothing of what he was talking about when he referred to him as having voted for the Railway Bill. The honorable member had confounded the Railway Bill, the title of which was altogether a misnomer, and which would have been more properly called a Bill to amend the railway laws, with the resolutions that were brought before the House for the extension of the railway to Brisbane. Now, he could inform the honorable member that he voted in favor of the resolutions, and that he opposed most strongly the so-called Railway Bill. With respect to the case of the Ministry, he would certainly advise them to resign; for he considered it would be a most undignified thing for them to continue to hold office, if they were only confirmed in it by the casting vote of the Speaker. He would also tell the honorable the Attorney-General that if he thought he (Mr. Thorn) would vote for an additional judge, he was greatly mistaken; and he could tell the honorable member that his chances of being returned at the next election to occupy a seat in the House, were as small as his prospects of obtaining a judgeship.

Mr. GROOM briefly defended himself from the accusation that had been brought against him on the previous day by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, of making charges that he was unable to substantiate, and in respect to several cases which he had brought under the notice of the House, he read letters and other documents, which he maintained, fully justified him in the course he had taken.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he thought the honorable member had had sufficient experience to know that matters of the kind he had referred to could be better attended to in another way than that of bringing them before the House. He could assure the honorable member that he received letters, almost daily, of a similar kind to those he had read, and every endeavor was made on the part of the department to redress the grievances of which they com-

plained. He might also inform him that the Government had already taken action for the accomplishment of the works, to which the letters he had read alluded. While he was on his feet, he thought it was his duty to say a word with reference to the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Handy. He considered that very great injustice, indeed, had been done to that honorable member. Whatever his defects personally might be, he was entitled to be regarded in that House as the representative of one of the most important constituencies in the colony. Now, what in the name of justice had the honorable member done that he should be singled out to be spoken of in the way he had been? Why, it was a matter of fact that he had done nothing more than what had been done by other honorable members on the other side of the House. It was well known that other honorable members had crossed the floor of the House; and what had the honorable member done more than they, he would like to know, that such language should be used towards him? The honorable member did not hold his seat in that House as a delegate; and the citizens of Brisbane, he hoped, would not submit to have it thought that they had been guilty of such a thing as to return a gentleman to represent them in the capacity merely of a delegate. The honorable member had a conscience like any other man, and was quite as much at liberty to vote according to his conscientious convictions as any other man. Now, what, for instance, he would ask, was the difference between the honorable member for North Brisbane and the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn? The honorable member, Mr. Handy, was, he considered, fully justified in the course he had taken, for he had received a petition from his constituents calling upon him to support the Government; and he believed the honorable member supported the Government on the most important question that would engage the attention of the House this session. But, because he did not support what were the ideas of some of his constituents, was that any reason why he should be hounded at and assailed by honorable members opposite? Was that any reason why the honorable member should be treated as a dog would not be treated? He believed the honorable member would rise in the estimation of the electors of Brisbane because of the course he had pursued in voting with the Government; and that they would be convinced he had been actuated by public and not by personal motives in doing so. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had spoken strongly against the honorable member for North Brisbane, but he had spoken as strongly against others; and, in particular, he had spoken as strongly against the honorable member for South Brisbane, against the honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Macalister, whom he now supported, and against

the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn, and others, who now supported him. There was abundant testimony of that, and, therefore, the honorable member for North Brisbane might rest satisfied that the language which had been used against him by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was not one whit stronger than that honorable member had used towards other honorable members. As regarded what had been said by the honorable member respecting his honorable colleague, Dr. O'Doherty, he did not think he went a bit too far. It was undoubtedly true that Dr. O'Doherty was an applicant for the situation of agent in California, for this colony. It was also quite true, as that honorable member had himself stated, that he did not make overtures to the Government on the subject; and that he did not sell himself or propose himself. But the honorable member had offered his services to the Government as agent in America for this colony; and it must, therefore, be evident to the House that such being the case, the Government could have managed, if they had so wished, that he should not be in the position he was in at the present moment.

Mr. MacDEVITT said, he had listened to what the honorable gentleman who had just sat down had said about the Government sending some one to California. Now he would suppose the case of some one who had left that country in the position of a disgraced priest; and he would consider the position in which such a one had placed himself by coming to this country and handing a series of forged letters on his own behalf to the Venerable the Archbishop of Sydney.

Mr. HANDY: If the honorable member was in any way referring to him, he might tell him that what he was stating was untrue.

Mr. MacDEVITT: He thought he might take advantage of the honorable member's contradiction as a proof of the conclusion to which he might invite the attention of honorable members by-and-bye; and here he would only remark that anyone could, he thought, sufficiently judge for himself of the value that was to be attached to the character of a man who sought for new service on the strength of forged letters.

Mr. HANDY: As the honorable member seemed to be distinctly referring to him, he begged to say that all that the honorable member had said was utterly untrue and libellous; and if it were said out of the House he might answer him otherwise than he could do in the House.

Mr. MacDEVITT: Well, he did not wish to take any notice of any statements that might be made by the honorable member, with whom he had ceased to have anything to say years ago; but he was astonished to hear the honorable the Minister for Works taking up his part and endeavoring to defend him. Now, the honorable member had been charged with having made a bargain with the Government; and they had had the

admission that a bargain had been concluded between him and the Government; and yet they were also told that the honorable member no doubt had a conscience, and that he would vote according to his conscience. Conscience! Why, in such a case it was enough to make one pause to hear the word used. That was part of the defence that was set up for him by the honorable the Minister for Works; but he would ask, if any honorable member who had heard the *sotto voce* remarks of that honorable gentleman, could have any doubt as to what was his opinion of the abandoned character of the honorable member? Now, honorable members on the Opposition side of the House had the courage to stand up and vindicate the character of the colony, and so far as it was in their power they had endeavored to do so, and to protest against such a demoralising example being set up in the colony. As the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had stated, he felt a loathing in having been brought into contact with such an abandoned character—such a piece of carrion. He hoped, from what had taken place, that the people of North Brisbane would be able to judge as to who represented their interests in that House, and who best merited their support. The honorable the Minister for Works had affected to think that the honorable member for North Brisbane was induced to give his vote in the way he had done from a strong regard to the petition that had been presented to him, asking him not to vote in a way that might embarrass the Government. But was there not incontrovertible evidence that that very petition originated with the honorable the Minister for Works himself? Was it not stated last night, that it was concocted by the railway valuator and the railway arbitrator; and was it not the fact that both of those were recent appointments by the Minister for Works? and there could be no doubt that he had brought all his influence to bear upon those officers in this matter. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had just asked him to state, that a gentleman had told him that if he and some others who signed the petition had known with whom it originated, they would have cut off their right hands rather than have signed it. Now, it would be in the recollection of honorable members that the honorable member for Ipswich had, in the course of his speech, pointed out the undignified attitude in which the Ministry would place themselves if they attempted to carry on the Government of the country without a working majority; and it was asked why, as other Ministers had resigned when they had a majority, the present Ministry should not resign, when the voting on both sides of the House was equal, and the Ministry were alone supported in their position by the casting vote of the Speaker? The answer which was made to that question by the honorable the Colonial Secretary was worthy of note. That honor-

able gentleman, with an arrogance not becoming the position he held in that House, said that Mr. Macalister, when he was Premier, resigned, though he had a majority; and that Mr. Mackenzie resigned, when Premier, though he too had a majority; but that he (Mr. Palmer) was the Premier now. Well, that was a very bad argument indeed to be used in justification of the honorable gentleman continuing to hold office when he had only the casting vote of the Speaker to support him; and it was one that would not redound, personally, to his credit, or be calculated to promote the prospects or advance the prosperity of the colony. He thought it was fair, in a debate like this, to consider the circumstances of the case. The first thing to be borne in mind was, that it was the essence of Parliamentary government that an administration should have a working majority in the representative house—a good substantial working majority. It required only a minute's consideration to see that if the majority was a small one, it was liable to be influenced by circumstances of an undesirable nature. Our representative institutions were in danger. One could easily understand the temptation that was held out to a Minister to purchase a single vote that would give him a majority in this House; and one could as easily understand a promise given by the leader of an Opposition to induce persons from the Government side to come over and put them in a minority. The argument was unanswerable. The danger of corruption was increased, and it was made a certainty almost that the free action of the prerogative would be interfered with, if an administration was permitted to be carried on by a small majority. Take existing circumstances in the House! The Colonial Secretary had been saved from destruction by proceedings that had been characterised as a disgrace to the colony. How was the majority composed? It was known that one of the most important and one of the staunchest supporters of the Colonial Secretary, at the close of last session, declared in unmeasured terms that the honorable gentleman did not come up to their expectations. The honorable member for Warrego opposed him on a measure of finance, and pointed out that the Colonial Treasurer was not only incompetent for his position, but that he did not answer, or could not understand, the arguments addressed to the House by him; and the honorable member carried the House with him. On a question of finance, there was no doubt the honorable member for Warrego could not be counted on by the Premier, whose majority was so slender. At the end of last session the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Wienholt, manifested disaffection and bitterly denounced the abuse of power of a strong administration; and it was rumored during the recess that that honorable member had withdrawn his confidence from the Premier. In the present

crisis those honorable members had rallied round the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government: that was more creditable to them than disaffection; but the circumstances of the case showed that the majority of the Premier hung very loosely together. As to the precedents which had been quoted, he (Mr. MacDevitt) should refer to the first dissolution of Parliament in this colony. Mr. Herbert was met by a division of twelve to twelve, and had a majority by the casting vote of the Speaker, as under present circumstances. No doubt he was entitled to a dissolution; he advised it, and he got it;—evidently admitting that he either should have resigned the Government or dissolved Parliament. He accepted the position. As far as reason and precedent went, the Colonial Secretary was now holding the Government by putting a strain upon the Constitution. He (Mr. MacDevitt) had not the slightest belief that anything he could say would influence honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House; but he was anxious to leave on record the opinion he entertained in this important crisis. He should finish his observations by alluding to those matters to which he drew special attention at the outset, to show that his information was not indisputably authentic in its character: he believed it, but he confessed it was hearsay. It was a subject that he had had no desire whatever to approach; and he had studiously avoided coming in any way into a collision, by which observations such as had been made might have been provoked. He felt that what he should say might not carry much weight; because it might beargued that on those special matters he was prejudiced, or at any rate, had very strong feelings. Hence, he should have much preferred to have consulted his own satisfaction and to have been relieved from entering upon so very distasteful a subject. He trusted that this was the last debate of such a character that the House would see. There was no desire on his part to hound down any individual in the House; but there was a desire to fix as far as he was able to do it, an indelible stigma of infamy upon conduct which he believed was unparalleled for a base and atrocious character.

Mr. HANDY rose to make a personal explanation, if, he said, the House would let him do so. He did not mean to be personal in any way in his remarks; and, this afternoon, he carefully avoided touching upon personal character. Unfortunately, while he was speaking—he had not intended what he said to apply to honorable members in the House—he alluded to the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, who had called “Hear, hear,” and thus attracted his attention, and he was personal to him. He now apologised, as a gentleman. He was provoked by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley when that honorable member said that he (Mr. Handy) wanted to sanctify lust by a change in his religion. That honor-

able member was very violent in his language sometimes, and this was not the first time. He had spoken violently against his present leader. Whether he felt any compunction or regret he (Mr. Handy) could not tell; but he never gave the honorable member any reason for such violent language as had been made use of by him. When he addressed the House, he was explaining why he gave his vote, and he wanted to do so. Although the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was sometimes carried away by his imagination, and his language—

Mr. KING: Was that a personal explanation? He rose to a point of order.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He thought that, under the circumstances, the indulgence of the House might be extended to the honorable member for Brisbane, on this occasion, that the honorable member might make the explanation he thought necessary.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER: What did the honorable gentleman mean by “the indulgence of the House”? Was that a personal explanation?

The SPEAKER understood that the honorable member was explaining, in answer to statements that had been made respecting what he had said.

Mr. HANDY: Quite so.

Mr. KING: It was about what the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had said.

Mr. HANDY: He should say no more about that honorable member, as that was a sore point. He gave no cause for the personal attack which had been made upon him by Dr. O'Doherty, who, with Mr. MacDevitt, had been certainly offensive to him. He would put himself right with them. Dr. O'Doherty had made an allegation—but it was not worth while dwelling upon it. He (Mr. Handy) would come to the real question that hurt him more than anything yet. There was nothing referred to by those honorable members that was not known to the House and the country, about him. But there was one statement of Mr. MacDevitt's, which he pronounced to be utterly inconsistent with truth—to be utterly untrue;—that he (Mr. Handy) ever arrived in Sydney and presented forged papers to any man. He would have those papers here, for the inspection of all. He told the honorable member, Mr. MacDevitt, that he defied him to say the words outside the House, where he would bring him up to court: if he would say them outside the House, then he (Mr. Handy) would set himself right.

Mr. MacDEVITT rose to order. He thought the honorable member was not making a personal explanation. If he was—how would it be possible for him (Mr. MacDevitt) to prove the signature of the Archbishop of San Francisco?

Mr. HANDY: Then the honorable member ought not to make the assertion: it was not the conduct of a gentleman.

HONORABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear.

The SPEAKER interposed.

Mr. HANDY : He would have those papers, here, for the honorable member to satisfy himself, and to stop his slanderous tongue about him.

The SPEAKER again interposed.

Mr. HANDY : He would withdraw the expression. He could not help being hot under it. He was a gentleman ; and he could account for every day of his life, probably better than the honorable member for Kennedy could do. He should conclude by saying that the charge made by the honorable member for Kennedy was not only unfounded, and untrue ; but he was in a position to contradict it effectually by the documents themselves ; and he challenged him to repeat it outside.

Mr. FYFE said such language should not be tolerated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER : Such had been the course of the debate, that it would have been impossible for him to have suppressed it.

HONORABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear.

The question was then put and negatived, and the House rose.