

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 24 JUNE 1873**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, 24 June, 1873.*Personal Explanation. — Municipal Contracts Bill. —  
Supply.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. MACDEVITT said he was desirous, with the permission of honorable members, of making a short statement. Immediately before the rising of Wednesday's sitting, in reply to a threat then made to him by the honorable the Speaker, that he would name him (Mr. MacDevitt) to the House, he used language to that honorable gentleman of an irritating and personally offensive character. For this he wished to express to the House, and Mr. Speaker, his regret—a regret which, he could assure them, was entirely sincere. He did this, first, because he believed that mere personality was always to be deprecated; and, secondly, because it was unnecessary for the indignant resentment he had felt at a threat, which he considered then, and still considered, altogether uncalled for.

The SPEAKER said he felt grateful to the honorable member for the course he had adopted in apologising to himself and the House for the expression he used on the occasion referred to. He, and, he felt sure, the House, would cordially accept his apology.

## MUNICIPAL CONTRACTS BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he rose for the purpose of moving the second reading of a Bill to amend the Law relating to Contracts with Municipal Councils. The measure was, as honorable members would perceive, a very short one, and its only object was to relieve the Municipal Councils of this colony from a disqualification which did not, he believed, exist in connection with similar bodies in any other part of the world. The section of the Municipal Institutions Act of 1864 which had the effect of disqualifying all persons engaged or interested in any contract connected with a Municipality, was prepared in the same language as a similar section in the Municipal Corporations Act of England; but that section had been found too harsh in its operation at home, and an amending Act was therefore passed. That amended Act had, he believed, been adopted in every other

colony except Queensland; and in order to assimilate the law here with that in force in the other colonies, and in England—and in order to prevent aldermen, mayors, or auditors from being harshly dealt with if they entered into contracts of certain kinds, this Bill was introduced. The whole pith of the measure was contained in the first clause, which was, in effect, that these gentlemen should not be disqualified if they entered into any lease or contract for the sale or purchase of land, or any agreement for such lease, sale, or purchase, or for the loan of money, or any security for the payment of money only. This clause would allow contracts of that class to be entered into. The second clause was a necessary provision. It was to the effect that no member of a Municipal Council should be allowed to vote in any matter which came before the Council, in which he had, either directly or indirectly, any pecuniary interest. The remainder of the Bill provided for putting an end to legal proceedings which might have been taken, or were now pending; and that no alderman, mayor, or auditor, who was now interested in any of the agreements or contracts allowed by the Bill, should have his seat declared vacant in consequence. With these remarks, he moved—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. GROOM said he did not rise for the purpose of opposing the Bill, but in order to express his opinion that the Government ought to have come down with a general measure for the complete amendment of the present Municipal Act. That Act had been in force since 1864, and it was then copied *verbatim et literatim* from a Bill introduced in the Legislature of New South Wales by Mr. Cowper; and although the measure was rejected by that colony, it was accepted by the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, and was now the law of the land. During the period it had been in force, about nine years, scarcely a session had passed without either a private member, or a member of the Government, being compelled to come down and ask the House to pass some measure for its amendment. He believed that he was correct in stating that about eighteen months ago it was the expressed intention of the honorable member at the head of the Government to introduce a more complete and comprehensive measure on this subject; and that honorable gentleman solicited the members of various Municipal Councils to give their opinions as to the nature of the amendments they thought necessary. He therefore fully expected that that honorable gentleman would have introduced a more comprehensive and suitable Bill for the management of municipal institutions generally. There was no doubt, as had been stated by the honorable the Attorney-General, that this disqualifying clause was not in force in any of the other colonies. It would be in the recollection of honorable members that a case occurred not very long

ago in the city of Brisbane, which resulted in an alderman being unseated, because he had accepted a lease under the Corporation. A question also arose the other day about the lease being in his name; and he thought that now the Attorney-General was perfectly justified in introducing this measure, in order to meet that and similar cases. He hoped that whatever Government was in power next session, their attention would, at an early portion of the session, be directed to the necessity for a new Municipal Act. The present Act very much interfered with the successful working of municipal institutions; and there was scarcely a clause of it that did not require improvement.

The question was then put and passed, and the Bill was read a second time.

#### SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply.

Mr. KING said he rose for the purpose of moving the Resolutions, of which he had previously given notice:—

1. That, in the opinion of this House, the financial condition of the colony is unsatisfactory, since, during a period of great prosperity, taxation is maintained at such an excessive height that no reserves are left to fall back on in case a period of depression should follow.

2. That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that provision should be made for a large reduction of taxation;—the loss of revenue to be replaced by the income which may be derived from the Crown lands, if freely opened for occupation.

In moving these resolutions, it was his intention—for the convenience of debate, and also in order to shorten the debate—to speak to them both at once; but he had to request that they should be put to the House *seriatim*. It might, no doubt, be thought somewhat surprising that the financial position of the colony should be declared unsatisfactory by one of that party, which obstinately refused to believe, a short time ago, that the colony would never recover from the state of depression in which it then was. And it would be thought still more extraordinary that that party which maintained that certain expenditure was requisite for the advancement of the country, should now find it necessary to protest against extravagant expenditure; while, at the same time, the men who a few years ago believed only in the vitality of the country as one vast sheep-walk, and who refused to believe that the position of the colony would authorise the expenditure of a comparatively small sum to complete existing lines of railway, now, within two years of that time, rushed into the most extravagant and unnecessary outlay for the completion of our railways, the construction of telegraphic cables, the establishment of mail routes, and, in fact, into the expenditure of a sum far in ex-

cess of anything they could previously have contemplated, or even thought of. But it was not his purpose in speaking to these resolutions to attack the sudden conversion of the present Ministry to the principles of the Opposition. But it might be proper that the same party who had contended that the condition of the colony was satisfactory, that its vitality was uninjured: that its resources were such that, in a short time, prosperity would return—he maintained that it might be perfectly justifiable, and in keeping with their views, to insist that, when in the height of prosperity, they should so regulate their expenditure that when a period of depression came upon them, they might not be found embarrassed or overwhelmed by the consequences of reckless extravagance during that prosperity. There were circumstances connected with the debt of Queensland, and the manner in which that debt had accumulated; and also circumstances connected with the manner in which the taxation of the colony had been managed, which were so extraordinary, and so unprecedented, that they demanded the careful consideration of that House, and which ought, in his opinion, to be laid before the people of the colony, so that they might have an opportunity of passing a verdict on the financial position of the colony at the ensuing general election. In the first place he would make a few observations on the debt of the colony, and in doing so he would take the figures furnished in the table attached to the Estimates for 1874. It there appeared that the public debt amounted to £5,253,286. That included the whole of the authorised loans, only a small portion of which had not yet been expended. But the colony stood committed to expenditure which would very much exceed that amount, because there was no doubt whatever that the works already initiated and commenced would not be completed without another loan. They might, however, take it that at present the debt of the colony, so far as the country was now called upon to pay for that debt, was £5,253,286. He would now compare this debt with the debts incurred by other colonies, and by more settled and populous countries. He found that, according to the return of the Registrar-General, the total population on the 31st of December last was 125,146, including Polynesians, Chinamen, and others; and the present indebtedness of the colony, therefore, amounted to £42 per head. That was to say, that the whole of the people of this colony, numbering about 125,000, were mortgaged to the public creditors to the extent of £42 per head. The debt of New South Wales, in 1871, amounted to £10,614,330, but the population being 503,981, the indebtedness per head was only £21 1s., or exactly half that of the debt of Queensland, when distributed over the population. The debt of Victoria in the same year, 1871, was £11,994,800, and the popula-

tion being 731,528, the amount per head was only £16 8s. per head; whilst in South Australia the debt, in 1871, was £1,944,700, and the population being 185,626, the amount per head was only £10 9s., or about one-fourth that of Queensland. In Great Britain, which, he believed, was generally considered the most heavily taxed country in the world, the debt in 1871 amounted to £736,141,900, but there being a population of 31,817,108, the amount per head was only £23 2s. That was the state of affairs in Great Britain—with an immense population, immense resources, and vast stores of accumulated wealth, the indebtedness of each member of the community scarcely amounted to more than one-half of the present debt of the people of Queensland. This, he thought, was a result which could not be considered satisfactory, unless, indeed, it could be shown that this debt had been incurred for the purpose of works which would be reproductive—that this enormous amount of money had been expended in such a manner that a greater return might be expected in the future. But he was afraid that this was not the case. He did not think it could be shown that the debt of Queensland, or, at any rate, the greater part of it, had been incurred for the purpose of reproductive works, or in such a way as to increase the revenue in the future. Some works had certainly been reproductive to a certain extent—railways for instance; but he maintained that the expenditure connected with those railways had been in the past, and was to be in the future, according to the estimates which had been laid before the House, very much greater than was necessary. He asserted that a large amount of money had been squandered, and was now being squandered, which was quite unnecessary to render those railways effective, as reproductive works. While one-half the money was being spent on railways as reproductive works, the other half was being squandered for the purpose of purchasing constituencies and bribing individuals.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government side of the House: No, No.

Mr. KING: He certainly thought that the figures he had quoted would show that there was every reason for looking upon the debt of Queensland as a subject which required the gravest consideration. But if they looked, not only at the debt itself, but at the manner in which that debt had increased and was increasing, it would strike honorable members as even more extraordinary. When the present Government took office in the beginning of 1870, the debt of the colony was £3,021,186, while the population was 109,897. The indebtedness, therefore, at the end of 1869 amounted to £27 9s. 9d. per head; and during the time the present Government had been in office it had increased to £42 per head, or nearly £15 per head on the whole population. In these three years the public debt had increased £2,232,100, whilst the population

had only been increased by 15,249 persons. At the same ratio of increase of population, and the same increase of debt, it would require only three years longer of the present administration to launch the colony into hopeless insolvency. He thought, therefore, that the ratio of increase of debt, and the ratio of increase of population, was matter for the most serious consideration of the House. They were bound to examine carefully and to see whether there might not be some system found by which the population of the colony might be increased more rapidly, and the debt kept within reasonable limits, so that the proportion of indebtedness might be diminished instead of increasing as at present. But he was sorry to say that he could not see any symptoms in the statement made to the House by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer the other night, or in the estimates before honorable members, of an attempt to rectify this unsatisfactory state of affairs, which had been brought about by the present Government. They had heard a great deal about a surplus—a surplus obtained, for the first time, during the administration of the present Government. They had been told by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer that at the end of the present year, if his estimate should prove correct, there would be a surplus of £200,000; but looking at the Supplementary Estimates with which they had been furnished—Supplementary Estimates for 1872, £42,000; Supplementary Estimates for 1873, £119,000; and a Supplementary Loan Estimate of £44,000, which, together, made about £205,000, it was clear that this surplus would rapidly disappear. It was not proposed to charge the Supplementary Estimates for 1872 and 1873 against the Loan Account, so that there would be about £162,000 to come out of this anticipated surplus of £200,000; and as it was probable that we should have Supplementary Estimates, No. 2, for 1873, that would swamp the whole of the difference between the Supplementary Estimates now before the House and the surplus of £200,000 anticipated by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. In addition to this, they had a Supplementary Loan Estimate of £44,000. This was the beginning of a new loan, and it fully corroborated what he had before stated—that the works now in progress would require a much larger expenditure than was now contemplated before they were completed. If they wanted corroboration of that, they could find it in the fact that the Government came forward at this early period—in less than twelve months after the last Loan Act—and asked the House to sanction the expenditure of this £44,000, on account of a new loan to be taken at some future time. Now, having in view these facts, and the further serious fact that the revenue was decreasing in some most important particulars, he did not think that this House should be dissolved without giving some expression of opinion on

the financial administration of the colony. He believed that this question of financial administration was one of the greatest questions that could possibly be raised at the present time in this colony. Financial depression, and all its unfortunate consequences, had been severely felt throughout Queensland. It was felt during the year 1866, when, owing to the pressure of adverse circumstances, and owing to the collapse of the public works, and to the actual insolvency of the Treasury, a large portion of the colonists of Queensland, who had been brought to our shores at great expense, were forced to fly to the other colonies to there find an opportunity of earning their living, which they could not find here. Ever since that time we had been struggling against the results which had sprung from that commercial panic, and also against those who took advantage of that panic and the distress which accompanied it, and held it up as a reason, and argued upon it as a ground, why the colony should not pass beyond the position in which it was then left. It was therefore extremely desirable that the financial affairs of the colony should be carefully managed; that our expenditure should be so limited, and our resources so well calculated, and that they should be so justly balanced, that no similar deficiency—no similar insolvency—should ever overtake us again. And, as he had said before, it was the duty of the House to see, during a period of great prosperity, that preparation should be made for any depression which might follow. At the present time, as his first resolution stated, although we were in a most prosperous condition, taxation was maintained at the same height to which it was forced, most unwillingly, when the ordinary sources of revenue failed. When it was found that our revenue was falling off to a serious extent, recourse was had to unprecedented and severe taxation to enable us to meet our engagements and pay the interest on the public debt. A high tariff was adopted as a desperate remedy for a desperate disease. It was adopted for the purpose of raising money by any means, so that we should be able to pay the interest on our debentures. They were told that unless something were done to raise the revenue to the highest possible pitch, the interest on our debentures would not be paid, and Queensland would be dishonored in the markets of the world. To avoid the disastrous consequences which would follow from that, they sanctioned taxation to an extent which, he believed, was unprecedented and unparalleled in the history of Parliamentary government. They increased the amount of the Customs duties to such a degree, that, compared with the other colonies, they were unprecedented. In Queensland, in 1872, with a population of 125,146 persons, the amount of revenue received through the Customs was £403,641, or £3 4s. 6d. per head. He had not been able to get all the returns from the other colonies for 1872, and

he would therefore have to make use of those for 1871. The Customs revenue of Victoria, where the tariff was of a highly protective nature, during 1871 amounted to £2 Os. 3½d. per head. In New South Wales, in 1871, the Customs duties yielded revenue equal to £1 14s. 1½d. per head. In South Australia, in 1872, the Customs duties amounted to £1 16s. 11d. per head; and in Great Britain the same class of duties amounted to only 12s. 9½d. per head. To show more clearly the disparity between the method we had adopted of raising revenue, and that adopted in other colonies, he would take a parallel case between Queensland and South Australia. In Queensland, in 1871, the total revenue was about £799,000, and in South Australia during the same year the total revenue amounted to £778,000, so that there was only a difference of £20,000 between the two; but, whilst in Queensland the amount received from customs duties was nearly one-half the total revenue, the amount received from the same source in South Australia was scarcely one-fourth of the total revenue. He had not gone into the question of customs duties in Great Britain, because it was well known that there the customs revenue was small in proportion to the total revenue of the country. But he thought it fair to draw a contrast between South Australia and Queensland, because the position of these two colonies was in so many respects similar. They were nearer together in point of population than any of the other colonies, and they resembled each other in the vast extent of territory they possessed; and they found, on comparing the customs revenue of these places, that that of South Australia was, in proportion to population, only one-half of that of Queensland. It should also be borne in mind, in dealing with this question, that excessive taxation had a most injurious effect in limiting and checking the development of trade. By placing excessive burdens on the people—such as a tax amounting to £3 4s. 6d. per head for customs duties—they were not simply robbing the people of that amount, but they were diminishing the trade of the colony, and also the capacity of that trade to give employment to the people. If the trade of Queensland were relieved from these excessive burdens in the shape of taxation, it would not be at all extraordinary—in fact, he felt fully justified in saying that that trade would be much larger in a very short time than it was now; and, of course, the increase in trade would be followed by the employment of a very large number of persons who were not now employed, and by this means the advancement of the colony would be materially assisted. The people would not be so heavily taxed, and there would be abundant means of employment for a much larger population than was now in the colony. He hardly thought it necessary to quote instances to show that it was expedient that a reduction in taxation should be

made. When an excessive tax was imposed for a particular purpose, that tax should be repealed as soon as the occasion which called it into existence had passed away.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. KING: They had repeatedly seen this in Great Britain. A tax was imposed for a particular purpose—such as for carrying on a war, or to meet some expenditure of an unusually heavy nature—and as soon as the occasion had passed away, the tax was taken off. This was frequently the case with regard to the Income Tax. Whenever there was war, or anything in the way of extraordinary expenditure required that tax was immediately increased; but as soon as the occasion which demanded that unusual taxation had passed away, the tax was again taken off. But, apart from the question of the Income Tax, they found that during the last fifteen years there had been a very large amount of taxation removed in Great Britain, solely for this reason: that as the prosperity of the country increased, the revenue increased with it, and it had, therefore, become possible to remove taxation instead of increasing the outlay. It appeared that all we thought of here was to increase the outlay. We were a most prosperous colony; we had a most flourishing revenue; and the proposition now submitted to the House and the country was to increase the outlay in proportion to the increase of revenue—to swallow up the remainder of the revenue, however large it might be, in unnecessary expenditure. But what he asked was, that in place of pursuing this course, and increasing our outgoings, they should take advantage of the increase in the revenue to reduce taxation. The table he was about to quote would show that that was the position taken up by the Government of Great Britain between the years 1857 and 1872. During the fifteen years embraced by this period, taxation had been repealed in the United Kingdom to the extent of £42,738,284. But some of these taxes were only repealed for the purpose of the imposition of others bearing more justly on the general public, and the taxes imposed amounted to £15,672,246, leaving a balance of taxes repealed and actually done away with in the course of fifteen years, amounting to £27,066,038. He thought, as he believed had often been pointed out, that the safest course for the Legislature of Queensland to pursue was to follow in the tracks of the United Kingdom; and he thought they could not do better than follow the practice of that country in our financial policy, because that was one of those matters in which they had the advantage of large experience, which we had not. Their financial policy had been tested by the experience of two hundred years continuously; and they had maintained a debt, which was until recently, if not now, the heaviest national debt in the world, through the whole of that time without dishonor, and without being made a grievous

burden on the people. And they found that the financial policy of those charged with the administration of the affairs of that great country was not, in a period of prosperity, to even apply a surplus for the purpose of paying a portion of the public debt, much less to increase expenditure so as to bring it on equality with the income; but when they had a large surplus in hand, what they immediately did was to undertake the reduction of taxation. It was a fact, acknowledged by statesmen in the United Kingdom, that by a reduction of taxation they increased the general wealth of the country, which was reserved to draw upon at some future time when they found it necessary. This system was the very reverse of ours at the present time. As he had expressed in the resolution, our taxation was now so high that we had nothing to fall back on in case any emergency arose. They had a ten per cent. *ad valorem* duty, and it would be impossible to still further increase the taxation of the country. They had unfinished railways on hand; and, supposing they found it impossible to borrow money—supposing another period of depression occurred—that colonial produce was again depressed as it was a few years ago, and that it was again necessary to impose fresh taxation to prevent the dishonor of our debentures—where was it possible to put that taxation on? Would anyone say that the revenue would be increased by raising the *ad valorem* duty to twenty per cent.? On the contrary, he was convinced that it would result in a diminution of the revenue. He was at a loss to know where the honorable the Colonial Treasurer would look for this fresh taxation. The people were now taxed up to the utmost farthing they could bear; and he maintained that it was the duty of the Government, in the present prosperous state of the country, to make provision to reduce taxation, in order that they might, in time of depression, have a reserve to fall back upon. In the second part of the resolution he had stated that the loss to the revenue resulting from the reduction of taxation should be recouped to the Treasury by opening up the Crown lands for occupation. There could be no doubt that a large revenue might be derived from the Crown lands of the colony, if the Government turned their attention to this as a source of revenue. To give some idea of how the Crown lands of Queensland were managed at the present time, he would read some returns for the information of honorable members. In 1872, according to the published estimates, the total Crown lands revenue of the colony was £331,633. In New South Wales, which was a smaller territory, in the same year, the revenue from that source was £341,580. In Great Britain, where there were scarcely any Crown lands at all, where the Crown lands were almost nominal, the revenue in 1872 amounted to £375,000, or £44,000 more than the same revenue in Queensland. He thought these returns were sufficient to show

that the Crown lands of this colony were not administered upon the same principle on which they were dealt with in other countries. They were not dealt with for the purpose of raising revenue. In speaking on this question, he must call the attention of the House to the fact, that small as this revenue now was, £331,000, there was a great probability that it would be seriously diminished very soon. He found that a diminution had already taken place in the land revenue during the past year. The estimated land revenue for 1873 was only £30,000 less than the revenue of 1872, and he found that the same revenue for 1874 was only estimated at about £10,000 more than 1873. It might be said, and he admitted that there was some justice in it, that the land revenue had been swelled to a large amount by applications for mineral lands, but they could not expect that revenue to be maintained at the same height in future years. There were other items in which a diminution had only commenced, and in which it must become more serious as time went on. He found a diminution in the rents under the Act of 1866 of £4,500 for 1873, and a further diminution of £500 for 1874. Then, this revenue would come to a close altogether after the close of next year. It was not a permanent revenue, and that was also the case with the rents under the Acts of 1868 and 1872. The revenue derived from the rents under the Act of 1868 would cease altogether in 1878, and a great portion of it might cease long before that, because there was a provision in the Act by which the whole of the purchase money of land taken up under it, might be paid up after a certain period of occupation. He presumed that a considerable portion of those rents had already been paid; because he found that in 1873, the diminution in the revenue amounted to £19,629. He also found, that even counting the revenue which was expected to arise from the Homestead Areas Act of 1872, the estimated revenue for 1874, for rents under those Acts, was not equal to the rents which were actually received in 1872. It was plain, therefore, that our land revenue was falling off. They had also been told by the honorable the Minister for Lands, that day, that the Government did not intend to provide further land for occupation during the present session, and, under these circumstances, fresh applications for the purchase of land could not be maintained at the same rate that they had been coming in hitherto. They had been dropping off, and would continue to drop off until more land was thrown open for occupation. When that would be was indefinite, if the policy of the present occupants of the Treasury benches was maintained. As he had before stated, these payments would come to an end in 1878, and they would then have to face the fact, if the present policy of the Government were maintained, that nearly the whole of the land revenue would be gone, and they would have nothing whatever to replace it.

These statements, and these figures, which he had taken from the Estimates, clearly proved the necessity of providing a large area of land open for occupation in every district in the colony. As a matter of simple justice to the people of Queensland, every man desirous of purchasing land should be able to get it; but as a financial necessity at the present time, the land revenue should not be allowed to diminish any further than it was now diminished. On the contrary, so far from a diminution being allowed to take place, the land revenue should be increased in such a manner that by that means they would be able to make a considerable reduction in taxation. This was a question which would strike the people of Queensland. Stripping away from matters of finance and taxation all the blinds by which they were surrounded, it would be seen that the people of the colony were taxed to the extent of £3 4s. 6d. per head through the Customs department, in order that the Crown lands of the colony might be kept in the hands of a few persons of a certain class, who were making immense profit out of them. These lands, if thrown open to the public, would supply the colony with a princely revenue. No colony in the Australian group would for a moment allow such a means of revenue to be at their feet without making use of it; but, because some few men were making a large profit out of it, it was tabooed, and when the Treasurer required a revenue he would have to look elsewhere for it. They were told that the proper place for the people was in the towns; that they should go into the towns and work, and raise a revenue by taxing themselves, and by paying customs duties unprecedented anywhere else in the world, in order to provide a revenue, and thus enable these men to occupy the best lands of the country for a mere nothing, and make their fortunes out of them. Now, he thought it was quite time that this question was put fairly before the House, and before the people of Queensland, as between the squatters and the inhabitants of the colony. Here was a squatting Government enforcing a customs tax of £3 4s. 6d. per head on the people, in order that the pastoral lessees of the Crown might be able to enjoy their runs rent free; for the paltry sum they paid was no rent at all—it was a mockery. Honorable members were informed last week by a member of this squatting Ministry, that a run held by an honorable member on the Opposition side of the House—not a first class run, or anything like Jimbour, Jondaryan, Eaton Vale, or other crack runs on the Darling Downs—was worth six times the rent the lessee was paying for it, and that honorable member, who was a squatter, and a Minister of the Crown, had a right to know the value of the run referred to. He said, at the same time, that he would pay six times the rent for it that the present lessee paid, if he could get it; and if

that run, which was not one of the crack runs of the colony, was worth six times the rent that was now being paid for it, what must be the value of other runs on the Darling Downs, and in the Warrego, and other first class districts? Why they must be held for less than one twentieth of their value, while, at the same time, the revenue which ought to be contributed by these runs, was being raised by heavy customs duties levied on the people. Now, he maintained that they had a right to protest, and his object in moving these resolutions was to protest for himself, and on behalf of his constituents and the country, against being any longer taxed, as men who were bound by the sweat of their brows to raise a revenue which was to be appropriated to enable honorable gentlemen opposite to hold their runs for nothing, or next to nothing. What benefit did the people derive from the present system? None whatever. They were kept off the land in the first place, and this in itself was an outrage, because the land belonged to the people; and whether they resided in towns, in the interior, or anywhere else, they had a right to occupy it if they desired to do so. First of all, they were kept off the land—treated as trespassers— forbidden to occupy it or cultivate it—and then they were taxed to make up for the loss of revenue occasioned by that proceeding. In the first instance, they were injured, as well as insulted, by being kept off the land; and then they were still further injured and insulted by being told that the land could not be opened for sale, because it was required by honorable gentlemen opposite, who would not, therefore, allow it to be sold, and that they must make up the revenue by heavy taxation, which would otherwise be derived from those lands. What were the further results of this squatting system the people were taxed to maintain? One of the great advantages the Australian colonies afforded in the eyes of English emigrants was the cheapness of living, and especially of animal food. Nothing had done more good to these colonies than that impression. The belief entertained by workingmen at home that, by coming to Australia, they would be always certain of employment, and that they could feed their families on good wholesome food for far less than ever they could hope to do it for in the United Kingdom, had been one of the greatest inducements to them to emigrate to these colonies. At home, they were not always sure of work, but here employment was certain at all times, and, at all events, they could get cheap meat. This cheap meat had, he believed, done more to induce emigrants to come to Queensland than all the labors of our Emigration Agents. But what did they find now? They found that we were losing that great advantage—that great inducement to people to come to Queensland. The price of meat had risen considerably, and it promised, at no distant date, to be nearly as high as in the United

Kingdom. What, then, would they have to offer to emigrants to induce them to leave their homes, and all their associations, and come sixteen thousand miles to an unknown country, where, perhaps, they did not know a single individual, and where the cost of living would be just as great as in England? This was what would result from this great increase in the price of meat, which was entirely due to the present obnoxious system of squatting. It was due to the fact that under the present land laws, as now administered, the rearing of stock was confined to one particular class in the community. He maintained that such a thing had never been heard of before. Such an audacious idea had never before struck the brain of any man, except men who had been reared as these Australian squatters had been reared—to consider themselves the absolute rulers of the country, and the only class worthy of consideration. They had heard of monopolies being granted in England in the time of the Tudors and in some continental countries, by which the supply of food was limited to certain individuals for their profit; but, he would ask, did it ever enter into the brain of any man to make a monopoly of the breeding of sheep and cattle—to say that only one class in the community should be privileged to breed sheep and cattle? And yet this was what they were told was the case under the present system of squatting in this colony. They had been told by the honorable the Premier that they should not have a system of freehold grazing farms, because it would be only putting out one squatter to put in another. That honorable gentleman appeared to think that only squatters should be allowed to breed stock, and he would not, therefore, take the land they now held from them in order to give it to others who would also breed stock upon it. The squatting party had, to some extent, acknowledged the agricultural interest. If a man were satisfied with a small portion of land for the purposes of cultivation, he might have it, but not for the rearing of stock, because that was a sacred right of the squatters of Queensland, and it was not by any means to be thrown open to the people who would carry on the same business on freehold land. But he contended that as a measure of justice to the people, they were entitled to have the lands of the colony thrown open for their use—that they should be at liberty to enter upon those lands, to purchase them from the Government at the upset price, or on reasonable terms, and to occupy them in whatever way they pleased; whether for the breeding of sheep or cattle, or the cultivation of crops. That was, however, a matter which might be more properly argued on the Land Bill, but he was commenting on it in its bearing on the financial position of the colony. He maintained that, for the purposes of revenue, the Crown lands of the colony should be opened; but if honorable gentlemen opposite said they should not

be open for that purpose, he would not now insist upon that question. But he maintained, that if these gentlemen occupied the lands of the colony, they should not throw on the shoulders of the community at large the burden of providing revenue which might be derived from those lands, which they held for their private benefit. He asserted that the present customs duties, amounting to £3 4s. 6d. per head, was only in another shape paying the rent of the lands held by the pastoral tenants of the Crown; and that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, in his Estimates for next year, instead of putting down "Customs revenue, £570,000," should insert "Rents of Crown lands, obtained by means of customs duties." If the Crown lands of the colony were dealt with honestly and impartially, they might be placed in a position to do away with the *ad valorem* and other customs duties entirely, and open our ports as free ports to the whole world. We would be able to derive our revenue solely and entirely from our lands. Give the people free land and the free right to go upon the land. That was the ticket for Queensland. Give us free land, and we would find funds out of that land which would enable us to open our ports to the trade of the whole world. When that free trade came in, and when the people who came in along with that free trade found that there were lands upon which they could immediately settle, it would be found that there was no occasion to have an Agent-General preaching at home to doubtful listeners. With free trade, open lands, cheap provisions, and reduced taxation, they would have thousands of men coming to the colony; not men requiring the colony to pay their passage money, but men who would come to settle upon the lands, and who would bring money with them to assist in developing the resources of the colony. Why, every Englishman desired to have a chance of getting land of his own. Every Englishman was desirous of being freed from that which every Englishman abhorred more than anything else—the visits of the tax gatherer. Let the colony have free trade, and do away with the obnoxious duties altogether; and he contended that, in the present state of the revenue, they were entitled to a reduction of taxation. And if they were met by the honorable the Treasurer saying that he could not afford it, why, then he would say, Take an equivalent out of the Crown lands of the colony, which were now held at a nominal charge for the benefit of only a few persons. In conclusion, he begged to move the resolutions standing in his name.

Mr. HANDY thought that perhaps an early enunciation of his views on the resolutions which had just been put, might have the effect of shortening the debate, and he therefore took that early opportunity of stating what course he intended to pursue if the amendment was pressed to a division. In stating his views he could not help referring

to the last fortnight's debates in that House. He remembered the vote of want of confidence being proposed, and also that on last Wednesday night three or four honorable members of the Opposition had, without the consent of their leader or ex-leader, persisted in obstructing the business of the House; and now another apparent attempt was made for the same purpose. He could not do more at the present time than to say that his intention was to vote against the amendment. When he considered the position of the honorable member who moved that amendment—that he was not the leader of his party, or even the ex-leader, but only about the fifth spoke in the Opposition wheel—he thought the honorable member should have left it to some more important member of the Opposition to bring forward such a proposition as that he had made, especially as that was the second time the honorable member had obstructed the public business. He recollected that last session, because that very honorable member could not get something he wanted himself, he walked out of the House and left the Opposition for two whole months to fight their battles without him. Yet now, the honorable member was going before the leader of his party and the ex-leader, and was presuming to dictate to the whole House what they should do. He (Mr. Handy) for one, would not have it, and the honorable member understood his meaning. The honorable member was one of the four or five who obstructed the whole business on the previous Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, who prevented any business being done on those days, and he would ask him, what were his motives now?—for the honorable member must have a motive. There must be something at the bottom, besides delivering himself of a grand speech which he hoped to have reported, so that it might go before his constituents. There was one thing to be considered, that the Education Bill was coming on, and perhaps the honorable member wished to obstruct the ex-leader of the Opposition, and all other honorable members who wished to have that measure passed, until the House was dissolved, so that that question should be made a political and party one at the general election. Now he (Mr. Handy), for one, did not want to see that question made an electioneering party question, and he had stood out against that from the beginning. The honorable member was only trying to throw dust in the eyes of the public, and was evading that question, or why did he and others keep up the House all night last week? Why had not the honorable member then have accepted the proposition made by the honorable member at the head of the Government, seconded by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and supported by the leader of the honorable member's party, so that the business of the country might go on? An offer had been made by the honorable

gentleman at the head of the Government that the Education Bill should take precedence on Thursday last—

The SPEAKER: The honorable member cannot refer to a question which is to come on as an Order of the Day.

Mr. HANDY: He wished to say that an offer had been made that if private members would forego their business, the Education Bill should take precedence; but the honorable member and others had obstructed the business so that it could not come on. If the Education Bill had been allowed to commence on Thursday last—

Mr. MILES: Question.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member is out of order in referring to an Order of the Day lower down on the business paper. This is not the time to refer to it.

Mr. HANDY: the business of the country had been obstructed most decidedly by the persistency of three or four honorable members of the Opposition, without the consent of their leader, or ex-leader, and in consequence of that, most important business had been shelved for the past week. Another attempt was now made by the honorable member for Wide Bay for no other purpose than to shelve the education question, and for that reason, if for no other, he should vote against the amendment. Before the House met at all, he stated publicly that he would not join any party or any vote of want of confidence until that bill became law, nor did he intend to do so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The honorable member for Wide Bay had requested the House that evening in a very elaborate, and no doubt, well prepared speech, to agree to certain resolutions he had brought forward, but he was quite certain that the honorable member never expected that his speech would influence a single member when he made it. He thought it must be quite evident to the House, what the honorable member's motives were in making that speech; it was quite evident on the face of it, that it was an electioneering address upon which the honorable gentleman intended to go to his constituents now that a general election was close at hand. Of course the House could not object to have its time taken up in the delivery of such speeches, if honorable members thought proper to make them there instead of in their constituencies. In referring briefly to the honorable member's speech, he must say at the outset, that there was scarcely a word or an argument in it that he could not altogether disprove, and with which he did not thoroughly disagree. He thought he might safely say that he had never heard a speech in that House which was more fraught with incorrect arguments, false logic, and baseless assertions, than the one just delivered by the honorable member. He thought it would be difficult for any other honorable member than the honorable member for Wide Bay to address such a speech to the House,

because it required a great deal of self-assurance for an honorable member to deliver an address containing arguments which he must know could not be accepted by that House. He would do the honorable member the justice to say that he was one of the most strong-minded members of that Assembly. Now, the honorable member had attempted to delude the House from a reasonable course of argument on the subjects he had brought forward before that Assembly for its consideration, by endeavoring to show that the position of the colony in regard to taxation, and the conduct of public affairs, was thoroughly opposed to the state of things in Great Britain, and that therefore they must necessarily be pursuing a wrong line of action in not following closely in the footsteps of the mother country. He would ask, however, whether there could be the slightest analogy drawn for one moment between the position of this young colony and that of Great Britain. The honorable gentleman also drew an analogy between the public debt of Great Britain and this young colony, forgetting, that here, the Government were obliged, for obvious reasons, to spend a large sum of money annually in improvements, for making the country habitable—which it was not necessary to spend in Great Britain—such as railways and other large public works. Neither, as regarded taxation, was there the slightest analogy between Great Britain and this colony, because it was a notorious fact that in all colonies the taxation was higher per head—necessarily so—than in Great Britain. Yet such was the style of argument brought forward by the honorable member to induce honorable members to alter the course which he (the Colonial Treasurer) was certainly satisfied they intended to pursue, namely, that there should be no alteration in taxation in the present state of the colony.

Mr. KING: How about the salt duty?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He could quite realise the indignation that would be expressed by that honorable member if the Government were foolish enough to come forward at the present time with a measure for the reduction of taxation; and he was quite sure that every word the honorable member had said would not be too strong in the condemnation of a Government who attempted to do such a thing at the present time. He was glad to find, that if he understood the feelings of the country on that question, there was no desire existing to see any alteration of the tariff at the present time made by that House. On the contrary, the feeling of the country was, that any interference with the tariff at that particular time would be a most objectionable course to pursue. But if they compared the conduct of the honorable member for Wide Bay now, and his conduct in reference to the motion for the abolition of the duty on salt, was it not quite apparent that the honorable member himself

was not serious in his present proposition, except for the sake of party warfare? He believed the honorable member would find the greatest difficulty when he addressed his constituents, in explaining away his objection to the reduction of the duty on salt, and he took it that one of the objects of the honorable member, which had induced him to make the electioneering speech he had addressed to the House that evening, was to show that he would desire on a broader scale the reduction of the tariff generally. Now, the course taken by the honorable member that evening was one that no other honorable member could possibly be surprised at, inasmuch as it was much of a piece with the course he had always pursued towards the present Government: on that ground no great surprise could have been experienced. But the honorable member, in the course of his remarks, seemed, when dealing with the past history of the colony, and the action of the present Government, to meet, by a portion of his own words, all the objections he had himself brought forward. The honorable member told the House that if it did not take care they would find themselves, by the action of the Government, involved in the hopeless career of extravagance that the country was in some years ago; and yet, in the same breath, he also blamed the Government for not rushing into that extravagance, which he condemned, because the colony was not in a state of insolvency. The honorable member's own statements were therefore an answer to his objections to every charge he had brought against the Government. He thought it would be confessed by every honorable member that it had been only common prudence on the part of the Government to exercise what the honorable member termed rest and caution, and to refrain from expenditure when the country was in the insolvent state it was in three years ago. The honorable member had not only referred to the past history of the colony, and to the insolvent state in which it was at one time, but he had shadowed for himself a fear that it must necessarily fall again into a similar position. Indeed, on listening to the speech of the honorable gentleman, it would almost appear that it was absolutely a misfortune for the country to get into prosperous circumstances. The honorable member argued, that because there was a surplus revenue, and they were enjoying a prosperity they had never experienced before, it was the time for the House to be more economical, and to look more carefully into its public expenditure. Now, he could not agree with the honorable member, nor did he think the constituencies would agree with him. He quite agreed with him that it would be necessary to reduce the taxation of the country, and he was quite sure that the Government which was in office when the new Parliament met, would feel that it should be one of their first acts to bring in a scheme for the purpose; but, he maintained, that it

would be very foolish for any Government to follow out the proposition of the honorable member, and refrain from the necessary expenditure which their resources warranted. Now, the Government had informed the House that it was not their intention to introduce any scheme for reducing taxation at the present time, and he considered that the reasons they gave for not doing so, were sufficiently good.

Mr. FYFE: No.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He did not know whether it was the intention of the honorable member to force his resolutions to a division that night, or whether his object had not been sufficiently obtained in taking the opportunity of making an electioneering speech, which might, or might not, be reported. If that was the honorable member's object, he was quite confident that the opinions of the House would not be changed by it. Now, that portion of the honorable member's speech in which he referred to the squatters, was, of all others, the most absurd. The honorable member objected to a Government, supported solely, as he termed it, by stock breeders; but, he would ask, were there not stock breeders in England; and were they a separate class? So what difference was there between the sheep breeders in this colony and those in other parts of the world, except that here they had the misfortune to be called squatters. But because certain gentlemen devoted their money and energies to the breeding of sheep, the honorable member contended that they were a different class to any other in the colony, and should therefore be treated differently. But no government had ever attempted to prevent any man from breeding sheep, yet so soon as a man devoted himself to that occupation, he must necessarily become, according to the honorable member's opinion, one of that objectionable class alluded to by the honorable member. It was a manifest absurdity, one which perhaps might do well enough for an electioneering speech, but which certainly was not an argument which should be put forward in that House. The honorable member had also endeavored to persuade the House that the sooner the squatting community was wiped off from the colony, as a class, the better it would be for the colony. But he (the Colonial Treasurer) did not believe for one moment that even the most ultra-liberal member in the colony would ever deny that the squatting community were a useful class. It would not be denied by the strongest oppositionist that they were a producing class, whose existence conduced much to the advantage of the colony, and that it would be the greatest misfortune to the colony if they were removed from it; so that that argument was one which was not suitable to that Assembly, and one which, he thought, would hardly do even for an electioneering speech. One of the great advantages of this colony was the easy means of

obtaining land, and thus promoting the settlement of the country in a manner which could not be done in America, where the land was not so suited for pastoral pursuits; and, therefore, for the honorable member to get up and say that it would be an advantage to the colony if the squatting class was wiped away by a stroke of the pen, was an utter absurdity on the face of it. Now, the honorable member referred to the falling off in the land revenue as between 1872 and 1873; but if the honorable member had looked closely into the matter, he would have seen that there was no reason for dissatisfaction. The explanation, which was very simple, was, that in 1872 there was a difference to the disadvantage of 1873, because, in the year 1872, large payments had been made for land taken up under the Act of 1868; that was the natural consequence of the Act itself. Referring to the Act generally, it could not be denied, although he had himself most strongly opposed it, that it had worked very well and satisfactorily in the colony, and it had upon its face the prospective advantage of providing a continuous land revenue to the colony. But that was on a piece with all the arguments of the honorable member, and, as he had said before, he had never heard a speech so fraught with bad logic, imperfect argument, and baseless assertions, as that delivered by the honorable member. He thought he might summarise all he had to say in the few words—that he thoroughly disagreed with the resolutions, and that the Government had over and over again placed their opinions before the country in regard to that very question the honorable member had adduced. In conclusion, he would say that he hoped the resolutions would meet with the favor they deserved.

After a pause of a few minutes,—

Mr. MACDEVITT said he thought it would be a pity that such an interesting debate should be permitted to close without hearing the opinions of other honorable members, particularly of those on the Government side of the House, upon the very grave questions submitted for their consideration, by the resolutions of the honorable member for Wide Bay, on the motion that the Speaker do leave the chair. The honorable gentleman who rose to answer the arguments contained in the speech of the honorable member for Wide Bay seemed to have adopted the, with him, very unusual proceeding of appealing to logic. The honorable gentleman repeated several times that the speech of his honorable friend the member for Wide Bay was one of imperfect logic, unsound argument, and baseless assertions. But he (Mr. MacDevitt) was not aware that that was a sound position for a Minister of the Crown to take up in replying to a speech like that which had been delivered by the honorable member for Wide Bay—a speech which was replete with facts, the true inference from which, no matter how the honorable member might pass

them by, would be criticised throughout the colony, in a manner altogether different from that supposed by the honorable gentleman, and altogether unfavorable to the deductions that honorable gentleman would wish to be made. If such a course as that pursued by the honorable gentleman was to be adopted, if that system was to go on, if honorable members were to content themselves by simply saying there was no argument in statements made—that there were no facts—then there would be an end to all deliberation in that House. He had noticed that when the honorable Treasurer read his financial statement, it was bristling with figures and facts, but when the honorable gentleman rose from his place in that House to reply off-hand to the speech of the honorable member for Wide Bay, which was replete with facts, the honorable gentleman simply stated that the speech was without argument, logic, or sound assertions, and appeared to think that all that was sufficient for him to do was to meet the honorable members arguments with denials. Now, he was sure the honorable Treasurer would permit him to suggest that it would have been far more consistent with the immense erudition of figures the honorable member had displayed a few evenings previously, if he had gone into details in answering the speech of the honorable member for Wide Bay. The honorable member only went so far as to say, that the condition of the colony and Great Britain were not analogous; he said, certainly, that this was a new colony and Great Britain was an old country; that was certainly true. But if there was no analogy, still he thought no honorable member would contend that they should not follow in the footsteps of the financial policy of Great Britain. The honorable member for Wide Bay, in a very clear and lucid manner, pointed out how, for centuries, the revenue of Great Britain had been manipulated to provide for expenditure, but the honorable Treasurer apparently considered that it was quite sufficient for him to answer the arguments drawn by that honorable member from a comparison between this colony and Great Britain, by saying that there was no analogy whatever between them. The honorable member for Wide Bay would certainly have been very foolish if he had attempted for one moment to maintain that there was a great analogy between the two, but the figures of the honorable member were important, not as establishing an analogy, but as establishing a comparison which might be very important to this colony. Now, the taxation of the United Kingdom was £3 2s. 6d. a-head, whilst in this colony it amounted to something like £7; he did not know the exact sum, but it was considerably in excess of the sum per head in Great Britain. It must, however, be borne in mind that that sum per head in Great Britain included the interest payable upon the National Debt, and that after that interest was deducted, there would be a sum of

very little more than £2 per head. But again, let them look at the position of Great Britain. There, there was the enormous cost of providing for a large standing army, a navy which it was fondly hoped was capable of resisting the navies of the world, a very large colonial expenditure, and a diplomatic service; all that had been provided out of that £2 per head, or something like one-third of that per head in our own territory. He considered that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had failed to maintain the position which he held as financial manager of the colony, if he could go no further than to say that the analogy did not exist. He would repeat, that the arguments put forward by the honorable member for Wide Bay was very important indeed—which was that as the colony was now enjoying an accidental prosperity, it should be the duty of them as legislators to make it permanent, as far as their light would enable them to do so. They had been blessed with large mineral discoveries of an important character, discoveries which had not only brought wealth to individuals, but had also swelled up the revenue of the State; there had also been a large increase in the great staple products of the colony, wool and tallow, and the colony had received great value from them, owing to accidental circumstances in the London markets. He submitted, therefore, that it became the duty of the honorable Colonial Treasurer, and the honorable gentlemen associated with him, to take into consideration the lesson which the honorable member for Wide Bay sought to learn from the past—that the present state of prosperity might not always exist; that there might not always be a balance on the right side, and that it thus behoved the Government to make provision for a rainy day, if it should ever arrive, so that the colony should not be thrown into that hopeless and reckless condition, which, according to the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, it was in some three years ago. The best way of creating a reserve, upon which they could fall back when necessary, was not to withdraw from the people, by vexatious taxation, the profits of the people—profits created by their own industry. The honorable Treasurer thought to get out of the difficulty by falling back upon the fact that the present Parliament being in *articulo mortis* it was not the proper time to enter into a discussion of this matter. But he would ask, if that was not the time to enter into deliberations affecting the taxation of the colony, how was it that the Government, only a few days back, supported a proposition, made by a private member of that House, for the reduction of the duty on salt, and not only that, but chose to sit up, hour after hour, for the purpose of carrying a reduction which was so distasteful to honorable members on his (Mr. MacDevitt's) side of the House, that they considered themselves justified in resisting it. It

certainly was rather inconsistent for the honorable Colonial Treasurer to tell honorable members now that they were not to consider the question of taxation, when only a few nights previously he had himself supported that proposition for the reduction of the duty upon one particular article. It might be said, as indeed it had been said, that the tax upon salt was inconsiderable in the amount it yielded to the revenue, and therefore would not affect it much if abolished; but there were many other items which were equally inconsiderable, and would not in their abolition affect the revenue. He might, for instance, mention that the obnoxious *ad valorem* duty of 10 per cent. on machinery was not so great, and would be productive of far greater advantage to the colony at large if removed, than the duty on salt. He would ask honorable members to look at one case, and then at the other. In the one case the abolition of the duty was advocated, because it might prevent the loss of a million of sheep in two years, but if in the other case the duty was taken off quartz crushing machinery, they would encourage an industry which promised to be more productive to the State than the industry represented by the honorable member at the head of the Government.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. MACDEVITT: Honorable members opposite might say "no," but he would ask them to look at the development of the resources of the colony caused by quartz-crushing, in the northern districts more especially. What had given such a value to stock, but the discovery of the rich mines in the North? Why it was mainly owing to the increased market, which the miners in the northern district had created, that stock breeding was so prosperous at the present time. So that whilst the honorable Colonial Treasurer might say that the present was not the time to enter into discussions upon questions affecting the revenue, and yet seek to excuse the abolition of the duty on salt on account of its insignificance, he (Mr. MacDevitt) would say that the removal of the imposition upon quartz-crushing machinery, in the present circumstances of the colony, was a matter of far greater importance than any other. Why, rather than lose their sheep, squatters would use salt even at an increased rate—if they would not, they certainly showed themselves to be very bad farmers. But it was different with the miner, who could not make the money required for the purchase of machinery before he had that machinery to assist him in developing the wealth of his mine. He hoped the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, before he again stood up and sought to answer arguments which he could not refute, would be prepared with something better than simple denials; and he could not help remarking that it appeared to him that if there was any absurdity in the speeches of the two honorable members—the honorable

Colonial Treasurer, and the honorable member, for Wide Bay—it rested with that honorable gentleman who did not seek to refute but merely to deny. In addition to that, however, it would have been far more in accordance with the knowledge professed by the honorable Minister for Finance if he had based his arguments on facts—that was to say, if the honorable gentleman had any at his command. That honorable member was not one who frequently condescended to impute motives, and therefore he (Mr. MacDevitt) thought that the imputation he cast upon the honorable member for Wide Bay—that he was merely making a speech to his constituents—might have been very well left out. They were told by metaphysicians that people who possess faults to any extent are in the habit of imputing them to others; and therefore he said that the honorable Treasurer, in making that imputation against the honorable member for Wide Bay, would be himself most likely to make such an effort. Honorable members were well aware that the honorable member for Wide Bay was not in that necessity; they all knew that at the last election he was unopposed for his present constituency, and that it was by only a few votes that he was defeated in the Maryborough constituency by the honorable Minister for Works, so that it was quite clear that the honorable member was in that happy position that he need not resort to that unworthy use of the privileges of that House to make an electioneering speech to people outside of it. For it was well known that their duty was not to make speeches to people outside, but to deliberate for the welfare of the country generally. It appeared to him that any honorable member who considered the resolutions before the House would at once see that the discussion of them would do good, and that the time had come, even though it was on the eve of a general election, when it was far more important to have a declaration of their financial policy from the Government than after that election was over. That was a proceeding to which the Government had not committed themselves, but to his mind it was of the last importance that they should give some idea of their intention in that respect. The honorable Treasurer said that when the new Parliament met, the question of revising the tariff would be considered, and that supposing the present Government were in office, they would be willing to give it their consideration; but they all knew that if the Government tided successfully over the approaching elections, there was no security that they would do anything of the sort, particularly if there was not some guarantee from them to some particular course of action. The honorable Treasurer had talked a great deal about absurd arguments, but it appeared to him (Mr. MacDevitt) not to be a very sound argument for that honorable member to use—that the Parliament was on the eve of dissolution—

that there were to be important changes to be made in the tariff, but what those changes were they declined to disclose. If the honorable member would permit him to use his own words, he would say that that was very absurd. There were honorable members on both sides of the House who had the interest of the colony at heart, and they should force the Government to give some explanation of their intentions; if not, the honorable Treasurer would go back to that House with *carte blanche*, emulate the conduct of his predecessor, and propose, perhaps, a duty of twenty-five shillings a ton on flour. He did not anticipate that that honorable member would pursue any such course, but from all the House knew of the honorable member, he might do so; and, for all they knew to the contrary, he might claim the right to do so. He trusted before the debate closed that they would have from one honorable member of the Government some declaration on that subject.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he quite agreed with the honorable Colonial Treasurer that the statement of the honorable member for Wide Bay had been a tissue of absurdities, to one of which he would draw attention. The honorable member stated that the public debt of the colony was about five millions, and that taxation per head had increased to about £17 since the present Government took office; but the honorable member must have forgotten that out of that five millions there was a loan of one million not actually raised. The last loan was for £1,460,000, of which only £500,000 had been issued, so that the million which was yet to spare would reduce the £17 per head to £9 or thereabouts. It was very amusing to hear honorable members who had constantly twitted the Government on their rest and caution policy, now come forward and recommend economy in expenditure, and a reduction of taxation.

Mr. KING rose in explanation, and said that he had stated that a portion of the last loan was not yet expended; if the honorable member for the Warrego would consult his arithmetic, he would find that the sum per head was not £9 but £7.

Mr. THORN said there was no doubt whatever on his mind as to the course he should pursue in regard to the resolutions of the honorable member for Wide Bay. The subject of taxation was one to which he had given a great deal of consideration, and it had been because he doubted the capacity of honorable gentlemen opposite to deal with such an important question that he had voted against them on the occasion of the motion of want of confidence in them being brought forward. There was no doubt that, considering the present great prosperity of the colony, some rebate should be made of the obnoxious *ad valorem* duties. But there was one thing that the honorable Colonial Treasurer had not the gumption to see, namely, that if he had gone down to that House with

a measure for reducing taxation, the Government would have had a trump card to play at the approaching general election. Honorable members opposite knew very well the course he would take on the present occasion, as, when he sat on their side of the House, he invariably voted against increased taxation, and was thus found oftener with the Opposition. He then thought, as he did at the present time, that honorable gentlemen opposite could not know the feelings of the people outside in regard to the *ad valorem* duties. Now, they all knew that the Government had gone into all sorts of extravagances; they sent two delegates to Sydney to be present at the Conference, and he did not hesitate to say that those delegates in the hands of such statesmen as Mr. Parkes and Mr. Francis were as mere children. He knew that the failing was all one way, and that if the proposed mail services were carried out, instead of New South Wales sending any letters by Torres Straits, they, and also the southern part of this colony, would send all their letters *via* California, so that, in fact, all the colony would have to be a most expensive toy. He certainly must blame the honorable Premier for not entering into some arrangement with the colony of Victoria for a postal service, and he had always been in favor of each colony paying its fair share of the three routes. When there was a disagreement between the two colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, it was the duty of the Queensland Government to have seen the best arrangement they could make, and, he believed, if they had done so, they could have made far better terms. A great deal had been said about the reduction of taxation, and he must say that he had been very much astonished at the Government supporting the partial reduction of taxation they supported a few evenings back. On that occasion he had not offered any factious opposition to the motion of the honorable member for the Burnett, but he thought it was wrong that one single article should be selected upon which the duty was to be taken off, when other articles, such as machinery, were not to be exempted. Why, he would ask, could not machinery have been included in that motion? The reason was patent. The Government went in for a reduction of the duty on salt so as to catch the vote of the honorable member for the Burnett, and that weighed on the mind of the honorable Premier when he supported the motion. He had also noticed that at the conclusion of his financial statement the honorable the Treasurer asked for a sum of £174,000, which was a most extraordinary thing. Why had not the honorable member asked for the usual sum of £100? The Government must not for one moment suppose that honorable members were blind as to the reason for making that proposition; he believed himself it was brought forward at the suggestion of the honorable member for Works; for, if it

had been passed, they would not have met the new Parliament until next April or May. That was the intention of the honorable Colonial Treasurer when he moved for that amount; and when once they had got it, honorable members might go about their business, and no more would be heard about the Education Bill, or any other Bill. The honorable Treasurer said it was not the time to interfere with taxation, but he (Mr. Thorn) thought the same rule would apply to another very important matter for the consideration of the House, namely, the Education Bill, in the passing of which the honorable member at the head of the Government pretended to be most sincere. The honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Handy, had endeavored to make out that the Government were sincere in their desire to pass that measure; but if that were so, how was it, he would ask, that it was put down at the bottom of the paper?

Mr. FERRETT rose to a point of order. The honorable member was referring to the Education Bill, which was not before the House at the present time.

The SPEAKER: An honorable member could not now discuss any measure which was lower down on the business paper as an Order of the Day.

Mr. THORN said he did not wish to discuss it, but merely had introduced it as a reason why the question of Supply should not be settled that evening. Why should not that important question of education be taken, and then, after that was disposed of, they could, perhaps, take Supply. He must say that he objected to Supply being granted until other things had been redressed.

Mr. GRAHAM thought that if any honorable member had previously been in doubt as to whether the House could be justified in not considering a scheme for the reduction of taxation at that particular time, the speech which had been delivered by the honorable member who had just sat down would have decided him; because, if the Government had in their hands such a trump card—the large grappling power of which they had heard so much of, by a mere stroke of the pen reducing the *ad valorem* duty to five per cent., and they did not use that trump card; they must have, most undoubtedly, some good reasons for not adopting such a course. There could not, in fact, be a better proof of the sincerity of the financial policy of the Government than that very circumstance—that they had not taken advantage of that grand trump card mentioned by the honorable member to go to the country upon. The honorable Colonial Treasurer had been twitted a good deal by the honorable member for the Kennedy with not going into figures to reply to the arguments which had been used by the honorable member for Wide Bay; but it appeared to him (Mr. Graham) almost foolish to compare this colony with Great Britain, when drawing attention to the

amount of taxation upon people in England there. The honorable member forgot that in Great Britain the Treasurer was not called upon to provide for making railways and roads, or for an expensive system of immigration, which, alone, annually absorbed nearly one-tenth of the entire revenue. Nor was the Government in England called upon to provide for a sparsely populated country of vast extent, where, if the population increased one hundred fold, the expenses of Government would scarcely be any greater; in fact, the more instances that arose before him, the more clear it was to his mind that the calculations of the honorable member for Wide Bay went for nothing. He would therefore go to another point. The honorable member for the Kennedy asked what it was that gave their present value to sheep, if it was not the large mining population in the North? Now he was quite willing to allow that the increase of population in the North had had some slight effect in raising the price of stock, but not so much sheep as cattle; but the principal cause was the decrease in numbers, which had fallen from eight millions to four millions in a few years, and then again the rise in the price of wool in the home markets; so that the value of sheep had increased two-fold, and in some instances three-fold. Then, again, there was another cause which the honorable member for the Kennedy, being a member of a learned profession, or the honorable member for Wide Bay, were not likely to be aware of, and that was the vast number of sheep which were being sent across the borders, to the colony of Victoria, to supply the markets there. If those honorable members referred to the returns of Riverina, they would find that mobs of from 10,000 to 15,000 sheep were constantly crossing the border to go to Victoria. And that led him to a great point in the speech of the honorable member for Wide Bay, that if the land was thrown open to small graziers, who could occupy small farms, instead of allowing large tracts to be occupied by squatters, the price of meat would be reduced. Now, he would draw the attention of the honorable member to Victoria, where there were a large number of small graziers and farmers, and yet in that colony the price of meat had always been higher than in the other colonies. The argument of the honorable member, therefore, cut both ways; but he would inform him that the price of meat would always be regulated by the demand—by the population there was to consume it. He scarcely thought it necessary to reply to the honorable member's remarks, generally, about the squatters as a body: that honorable member had vilified and abused them as being an injury to the colony, and, in fact, had spoken in such a way as to shew his utter ignorance of what the squatters in Queensland were; it was, therefore, hardly worth while to follow that portion of the honorable member's address. But the honorable mem-

ber seemed to have an idea that the squatters of Queensland were confined to a few gentlemen owning runs on the Darling Downs, and there, again, shewed how little acquainted he was with the subject. He (Mr. Graham) did not hesitate to say that the squatters, as a body, were the most industrious, self-sacrificing, unselfish, and at the same time worst paid men in the colony. There was no doubt that there were some firms who had gained wealth from following squatting pursuits and from possessing station property, but they were the exception, and not the rule; and he ventured to say that, for one squatter who had grown rich, there were ninety-nine who had been ruined in their attempts to open up the country. There were hundreds of men at the present time who were giving up all the luxuries, and, in many instances, even the necessaries of life—at any rate, all the luxuries of civilisation—in their endeavors to open up new country. Referring to what he said before the adjournment, he understood that a remark he had made had given umbrage to honorable members on the Opposition side of the House: he had characterised certain statements which were advanced during this afternoon as a piece of clap-trap, and he now wished to recall the expression. He, however, denied that the squatters, either as a class or as individuals, grew rich at the expense of the working man, or that the squatter absorbed all the reward of labor in the colony. There were a few wealthy squatters in the colony who had made fortunes; but they had invested large capital to do so. There were others who had achieved an honorable and, to them, satisfactory independence, by the sweat of their brows, and by devoting the best years of their lives to the work they were engaged in. What they had, however, was not more than a very moderate independence. On the whole, the squatters of this colony were the worst paid body of men, the worst rewarded for their labors and for the capital they invested in their pursuit; their returns were not anything like the gains of those colonists who were engaged in other pursuits in the towns of Queensland. Of course, that was nothing to the argument; but he was induced to make those remarks by what the honorable member for Wide Bay had brought before the House. But there was another part of the honorable member's speech which required refutation. The honorable member had said, upon the authority of a statement by the honorable member for Maranoa, that the last-named honorable member was not paying one-fourth of the value of his run.

Mr. MILES: One-sixth.

Mr. GRAHAM: The honorable member was not paying, at the present time, more than one-sixth of the rent that his run was worth. He (Mr. Graham) was willing to admit that that was a fact. If he was going, to-morrow, to turn one of those grazing-farmers of whom

the honorable member for Wide Bay had talked so much, he should most certainly be inclined to give more for land that had been extensively improved than for a bare piece of new country. If the honorable member's run was worth a good deal more than he was paying the Government for it, that was no doubt due to his own skill and energy in improving it. When he took up the country, at first, the rent he paid for it was doubtless fully up to its value. In the course of years the honorable member expended his labor and capital upon it, and improved it, and raised its value: the difference between what his run was worth now and what it was worth at first was his own legitimate gain. Of course, it might be an open question, whether the existing system of appraisement was the best for valuing the runs leased from the Crown. However that might be, it would not be justifiable to raise the rents of runs until the terms of the present leases had expired. It could not be maintained that the rent of runs in this country was too low, when it was seen that there were many runs for which the small amount required by the Government was considered too much. If those runs were really worth more than the rent put upon them by the Government—if the rent was so far beneath what the runs were worth—how was it that they were not taken up long ago at the original nominal value? Why were so many runs abandoned during the temporary depression, four or five years ago? Why were they being so slowly taken up, now? There was sufficient proof that the country, when first taken up, was not undervalued at the rent exacted by the Government. When a man had gone out and occupied unsettled country, and when, after years of occupation, his country became more valuable than it was originally, it was only fair that he should derive the benefit resulting from his labor and expenditure. Perhaps such a man might, in a few years, sell his run for a large sum of money. The in-coming tenant paid for the improvement of the property which the original holder had made. Perhaps, when the runs had to be valued, before being released, the better way would be to put them up to auction.

Mr. MILES: Hear, hear. That is it.

Mr. GRAHAM: It was only just to the original tenant that he should be paid for his improvements. However, he (Mr. Graham) doubted very much whether, when all was done that could be done, in testing the value of the runs by putting them up to auction, the colony would be very much a gainer thereby, or the land revenue be much increased. It was a plan that he should have no objection to. As to the remarks of the honorable member for Wide Bay, about throwing open the country and covering it with grazing-farmers, with men who would raise sheep and not belong to the class of sheep-breeders, he (Mr. Graham) confessed that he

could not follow his idea. The honorable member had given the House no idea of the area of the country to be thrown open, or of the tenure under which the grazing-farmers were to hold their lands. Until he gave the House some details, and went more fully into the subject than he had done, he (Mr. Graham) was unable to follow or support him.

Mr. HEMMANT agreed with the honorable member who had moved the amendment, that the financial condition of the country was unsatisfactory. The country, he further agreed, was entitled to know, on the eve of a general election, what was the policy of the Government. Was this policy to be a free-trade policy or a policy of protection? Was taxation to be reduced? The Colonial Treasurer had admitted that it ought to be. How was it to be reduced? This might be done in various ways. It might be done by reducing the *ad valorem* duties by a large per centage, or by largely increasing the free list. He held that a considerable enlargement of the free list would be most conducive to the prosperity of the colony and the comfort of the people. He for one must say that the Darling Downs returned an inappreciable amount to the land revenue, at the present time; and that the revenue would be largely increased if the runs were fairly valued. But, he supposed that, after what had taken place with respect to the salt duty, nothing would be done, before the new Parliament met, for the reduction of taxation. He hoped that between this and that time the Government would endeavor to frame something like a financial policy.

The question was put—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—and the House divided:—

Ayes, 16.	Noes, 12.
Mr. Palmer	Mr. Stephens
" Blamston	" King
" Ramsay	" MacDevitt
" Thompson	" Miles
" Bell	" Thorn
" Walsh	Dr. O'Doherty
" J. Scott	Mr. Edmondstone
" Ferrett	" Groom
" Buchanan	" Thornton
" Wienholt	" Macalister
" Morehead	" Griffith
" Clark	" Hemmant.
" Tyto	
" Graham	
" Handy	
" W. Scott.	

The question—That the Speaker leave the chair—was then put and affirmed; and the House resolved into Committee of Supply.

When the committee adjourned, on Wednesday last, the following motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER was under consideration:—

"That a sum not exceeding £170,000 be granted to Her Majesty towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the colony for the year 1874."

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he must again point out with surprise how unusual it was that the Colonial Treasurer should have made such a proposition as that now

before the committee: instead of asking for £100, as was usual, for the salary of the porter and messenger at Government House, he had asked for £170,000 for the service of a year, which the honorable gentleman himself had partly admitted the Government were not entitled to. Without attempting to discuss the Estimates of 1874, which had been placed before the House—in accordance with the words of the Treasurer himself, he denied that it was the duty of the House to discuss those Estimates. He desired to draw the attention of the House to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor at the commencement of this session:—

"The Electoral Act passed by you during the last session of Parliament having provided for a very large increase in the number of the representatives of the people, and for a complete re-distribution of the electorates, I should have preferred, were it possible, to leave to the new Parliament to be elected under that Act, the settlement of all questions of importance. There are, however, some matters of pressing necessity, for the settlement of which I have thought it necessary to ask your advice and assistance."

And those matters of pressing necessity were enumerated by His Excellency:—The Acting Judges Bill, the deviation and extension of the railway to Brisbane, telegraphic communication, and the steam postal service *via* Torres Straits. All were contained in the first part of the Speech addressed to Parliament. Under such circumstances, he thought that the Opposition side of the House was entitled to demand some substantial reason why the Government were to come down to the House and ask for any portion of the Estimates for next year. And he made this demand upon grounds taken up by His Excellency the Governor last year, in answering the memorial presented to him by a number of honorable members of the Opposition. The occasion arose from the Opposition objecting to vote the Estimates for the year, though they were perfectly willing to vote Supply for two months. With regard to that portion of the memorial, His Excellency said:—

"To grant Supply in a lump sum, without examination of the Estimates, is a course which should be resorted to on very rare and special occasions, and to do so to a Government in which you profess to have no confidence, is, in my opinion, to abdicate, not your own rights, but those of your constituencies who have entrusted this important duty to your charge; and I can well understand, even a member who has perfect confidence in a Government refusing to grant Supply in such a manner."

Now, that was the argument advanced by the present Government against accepting Supply for a portion of the year. They denied that there was a possibility of apportioning that supply; it was altogether unconstitutional and opposed to Parliamentary practice to do anything of the kind. After that, it was rather much for them to come

and ask the Opposition to give them their Estimates for next year, to enable them to keep the doors of the Assembly closed until the month of April next. Did the House agree to a proposition of that kind, the result would be that the present Government would have held office for two years without having any session of Parliament beyond the present month. And, as the Treasurer had said, this was a moribund Parliament; it was now in the last stage of its existence;—yet Estimates were placed before the Assembly that surpassed all previous Estimates in amount, and the House were asked to vote £170,000 of the total amount. Of course, if that amount was voted, nothing would be heard of the sitting of Parliament until the Government had spent it all; and, then, probably, another two or three months' supply would be brought forward for another vote, before the House could discuss the Estimates. If the Government were desirous to go into next year without Parliament, why could they not adopt the practice they had adopted for two years past, of spending money on their own authority. There were now before the House Supplementary Estimates for 1872, as well as those for the present year of £170,000. If the Government were anxious not to meet Parliament again during the present year, they needed not to bring forward Estimates for the beginning of 1874. The Treasurer, in talking about the question of taxation, told the House that under the hopeful condition of the colony, with an elastic revenue—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS rose to order. He did not think it was competent for the honorable gentleman to refer to a debate of this session, or to read from a report of any speech in that debate.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: He was entitled to refer to the speech of the Treasurer, which was delivered in the present debate. The honorable gentleman was decidedly wrong.

The CHAIRMAN: If, as he understood, the honorable member for Ipswich was referring to a speech in the present debate, the honorable gentleman was quite in order.

The HON. A. MACALISTER said he did not think there was another member of the House who would take such an objection as had been raised by the honorable member for Maryborough. He was referring to the honorable the Colonial Treasurer's observations in the financial statement. The honorable gentleman had said:—

“Under these hopeful conditions of the colony, with an elastic revenue, and an apparently assumed annual increase, it would doubtless, under any circumstances, be expected by a majority of members present, and probably by persons interested outside this chamber, that I would, before sitting down, submit to the committee a resolution, having for its object either a direct reduction of taxes, or a revision of the present Customs tariff.”

It was no wonder, after that statement, that the Opposition side of the House were very anxious to get the resolutions that they proposed to-night put before the country; because that very statement of the Treasurer was, in itself, an admission that the taxation of the country was of such an amount that the people could no longer tolerate it. In the last session of the present Parliament, the Government could not have done a better act than to propose a reduction of the burdens of the people;—no act would have given more satisfaction to the country than their coming down to the House with a proposal for the reduction of taxation. The Colonial Treasurer had stated that, if the revenue went on as it was now increasing, at the end of this year there would be a surplus of £200,000. What, then, was to prevent him from proposing, not only the reduction of the salt duty, but, to a considerable amount, the reduction of the *ad valorem* duty? That would have told more in favor of the Government with the country than anything else. It was quite clear that the Government had made up their minds that they would not propose a reduction of the *ad valorem* duty; but that between this and the meeting of the next Parliament, they would spend the revenue, and then come down with Supplementary Estimates which would swallow up the additional receipts:—

“Taking into account, however, the very exceptional conditions under which the House is at this time assembled, I feel assured that honorable members will not expect any proposal of the kind from me.”

That was just the objection that he (Mr. Macalister) made with regard to voting Supply for next year. The House had met under “very exceptional conditions.” They had complied with every request contained in His Excellency's Speech. Why should they take upon themselves a duty which belonged undoubtedly to the next Parliament? He had not the slightest doubt that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government would tell the House that it would be utterly impossible to get the new Parliament to meet during the present year. No doubt procrastination was one of the charges of which the Government had been proved guilty; because it had been their practice to extend a prorogation, even an adjournment, over five months. There was, however, no excuse for extending the general election beyond the 31st of August. On that day, the new Act would come into force. The writs could be issued one month before that, and the elections could take place in September. There was nothing to prevent the House meeting by the end of October or the beginning of November; and they could go to business even if five writs were not returned. He went on the constitutional principle that if the new Parliament could meet during this year, and it being admitted that the present Parliament did not represent the country,

it was the bounden duty of the Government to dissolve the present Parliament without delay, and to call the next Parliament together as soon as possible; and, if they did that, there was not the slightest doubt that the Government would get the whole of their Estimates in time for next year, if they required them. But, to come forward now to ask for a sum of money for next year, without asking for the whole Estimates, was simply to anticipate what the Government had no right to anticipate—a change of Government. The Colonial Treasurer had admitted that if the present Ministry remained in power, no portion of the £170,000 would be required. On what principle had the honorable gentleman a right to say that there would be a change of Government? He was supposed not to anticipate anything of the kind. If there should be, there would be plenty of time before the end of the year for the Government to obtain supplies. He would say nothing about the course the Government might have taken. There were Supplementary Estimates for 1872 and for 1873, yet the House were not asked to go into the consideration of those Estimates. It appeared that the Government were determined to have the £170,000 for next year or nothing. He (Mr. Macalister) did not think they would get it, although he regretted it very much; because there was private business before the House which he should like very much to see disposed of before anything like the present conflict should arise. He should be very glad if the Colonial Treasurer would postpone this matter for a week or a fortnight, to allow the general business to be proceeded with. But if the honorable gentleman persisted in asking for supplies from a Parliament that was dead, he (Mr. Macalister) must move—

That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

Mr. FYFE said he thought it would be a judicious act on the part of the Government to accept the proposition from the other side of the House—to get the private business that was on the paper disposed of before the Government insisted upon the present motion being passed. It was the duty of the Government, notwithstanding their position, to allow all private measures that were before the House to be considered. They should not, of course, afford the same consideration to new business brought forward after this evening. He was as much identified with the Opposition as with the Government; and he had not the slightest hesitation in saying that he would vote with the Opposition on a question of constitutional government. He was anxious for the business of the country to go on; and, for that reason, when business was proposed by the Government, he supported them when they desired to proceed with it. As the representative of the largest constituency in the North, he had a right to take up such a position; and his position was independent enough to enable him to speak

and to act as he did, irrespective of parties in the House, or outside.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. FYFE: He said so, as he had a right to say it, notwithstanding the ironical cheers of honorable members.

Mr. MACDEVITT: Oh, no!

Mr. FYFE: Very well. There was no man in the House who could influence him. He thought he should take this opportunity to make a personal explanation.—Rumors were afloat that he had been bought by the Government, and that he had sold the Opposition. He had not the slightest objection to state, on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, and speaking as an independent member, that he never asked the Government for the value of a snap of his fingers. He thought the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government would have the candour to say, and the courtesy to answer, whether he (Mr. Fyfe) had, directly or indirectly, asked him for anything; and he challenged him, or any other man on the Ministerial side of the House, or any honorable member on either side of the House, to say that he ever did so. He should sit down until he got an answer. It was, perhaps, a difficult question; but, in the position he occupied, he could not stand it that he should be talked about, and his actions misrepresented, without challenging boldly the fullest investigation of his conduct as a representative of the largest constituency of the North. He could not stand such rumors, and not take notice of them. He would not again record his vote in the House until he was answered, by both sides, whether he had ever asked either party for anything for himself.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he understood the honorable member for Rockhampton to put a question to him:—Did he (Mr. Fyfe) ever ask him (the Colonial Secretary) for anything for himself? As head of the Government, he could only say—as he assured the honorable member before, several times—that the honorable member never asked him for anything for himself.

Mr. FYFE: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The honorable member had asked for a great deal for his constituents that he was not likely to get; but, for himself, he never asked anything. Nor, did he ever ask for an office for a friend, even.

Mr. FYFE: That was right. He stood free. That was what it was to be an independent member of the House! That was a weight off him. He was glad of that. To a certain extent, it had taken a burden off his shoulders; because calumnious rumors, slanders, were circulated, even in the press. Now, he must say that he objected to the course of the Opposition, at present; there was no necessity for it; he could not see the utility of it: yet he sympathised with what they wanted, and he did not feel that he would be justified

in resisting their demand. No man was more indebted to the Opposition than he, for everything that had been obtained for Rockhampton. He was not indebted to the Government. The Opposition had forced upon the Government the railway and the public works which were to benefit his constituency. That he said most emphatically. Thus he was obliged to speak, to assert his privileges as an independent representative. Though he objected to see representative government dragged through the dirt, as was the case at present, when a Ministry ruled by virtue of one man's vote; yet, when it was a question between business and no business, he felt bound, in the interests of his constituents, to assist in going on with the work of the country—he having already asserted his opinions on the constitutional question, by voting with the Opposition. It might be that an autocratic Government was to be established; that representative institutions would be set at naught; that a head gaoler would preside over the colony's affairs; but we had hardly come to that yet. If nothing else, the education question summoned every man to his constituents to speak to them openly upon it. What a pity it was, that there was not a window in every man's breast, that he might be judged according to his true feelings, let alone his professions. There was a good time coming, and this was a great country, and it behoved men who had patriotism to work for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said the position taken up by the Government on the introduction of the financial statement was, that though, no doubt, the favorable prospect before them would justify the reduction of taxation, yet this being a moribund Parliament, they did not propose any such measure, and, for the same reason, they did not ask for the supplies for next year, but only for a vote on account. If the Treasurer's speech was read by honorable members, they would find that such was, in effect, his honorable colleague's statement. The honorable gentleman who led the Opposition to-night, had referred the House to a paragraph in a document issued by His Excellency the Governor, in which His Excellency laid down that it must only be in certain peculiar cases that votes on account should be taken. No honorable member would deny that that was a good and sound doctrine. The question arose, what were those peculiar cases? The present occasion presented one.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition side of the House: No, no.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: One had only to look at the Parliamentary precedents to prove it. If honorable members looked at May's "Practice," they would see that votes of credit, or votes on account of Supply, were often granted when a dissolution was imminent:—

"Thus, for example, in 1841, one-half only of the Estimates, as presented to the House, was

voted, in anticipation of a speedy dissolution, and appropriated; and the remaining half was voted by the new Parliament."

Again:—

"In 1850, money was voted on account of several grants, before Easter, and the remainder was voted after Easter; and, in 1857, in anticipation of a dissolution, votes were taken on account, for four months. \* \* \*

Again, in April, 1859, votes on account were taken upon all the heads of expenditure, in order to provide for the public service, until after an approaching dissolution; and the votes were completed by the new Parliament."

Now, the present occasion presented a case in point exactly; and one of those very peculiar cases pointed out by His Excellency as justification for taking votes on account. If honorable members gave the Government this vote on account, they would see that it did not bind them to the Estimates, because it would be a vote on account of service, and somewhat restricted; it was not like the vote of last year, which gave the Government great latitude. The honorable member for Ipswich had not been quite fair in his quotation from the Treasurer's speech in "Hansard;" and, perhaps, the House would pardon him (the Secretary for Lands) for reading the whole paragraph, which the honorable gentleman had only partially cited:—

"Taking into account, however, the very exceptional conditions under which the House is at this time assembled, I feel assured that honorable members will not expect any proposal of the kind from me. The reasons which have weighed with the Government, and decided them not to ask for the usual annual supplies for the coming year, and which are, doubtless, considered sufficient to induce honorable members opposite to place difficulties in the way of such supplies being granted were they asked for, apply with equal force, and, indeed, with even greater force, to a question involving possibly not only a simple reduction of taxation, but, it may be, a revision of the tariff."

The HON. A. MACALISTER said he should like to answer the objections of the Minister for Lands. The first was, that grants might be made under peculiar circumstances, and the honorable gentleman had quoted the speech of his Excellency the Governor:—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not quote at all.

The HON. A. MACALISTER: If the honorable gentleman would only go a little further, he would find words used by his Excellency the Governor:—

"To grant Supply in a lump sum, without examination of the Estimates, is a course which should be resorted to on very rare and special occasions, and to do so to a Government in which you profess to have no confidence, is, in my opinion, to abdicate, not your own rights, but those of your constituents who have entrusted this important duty to your charge."

Now, with regard to the second objection, and the precedents of the House of Commons; the honorable gentleman did not recollect that the financial year in England did not

correspond with ours; and he had forgotten that, not only in the Governor's Opening Speech, but by the Government in the House, the admission was made that the Assembly did not represent the country; and, therefore, the Government had no constitutional right to Supply.

Mr. STEPHENS said he thought if the honorable member again referred to the instance he had quoted, he would find that it related to votes of the same year, and a vote was taken for four months on account. But, in the present case, they had Supply voted for six months and a-half of the year, and he could not understand why they should ask for more. If they were discussing the Estimates for 1873, instead of the Estimates for 1874, he admitted that the precedent quoted would apply, and that it would be necessary to grant something of the kind; but such was not the case, and no substantial reason had been shown why this vote should be allowed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said it was perfectly immaterial whether the Estimates were for this year or next year. He maintained that a moribund Parliament could give a vote on account, and that this was one of the cases referred to by His Excellency the Governor. Whether the financial year was the same or not, did not in any way touch the point. He would refer to a case to show that when a vote was taken on account, the incoming Parliament voted the rest of the money. Here the custom was to meet about April or May, and the authorities perfectly justified them in taking a vote on account until the next Parliament met. He would now quote another authority which was even stronger than those he had already mentioned:—

“Again, in April, 1859, votes on account were taken upon all the heads of expenditure, in order to provide for the public service, until after an approaching dissolution; and the votes were completed by the new Parliament.”

Mr. STEPHENS: For the services of the same year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That does not matter.

Mr. KING said the honorable the Minister for Lands had let the cat out of the bag. He had told the honorable members, what they knew pretty well before, that the new Parliament would not meet until April or May next.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he rose for the purpose of making an explanation. It was not right for the honorable member to impute such a statement to him. He had made no such statement; and, as for letting the cat out of the bag, it was absurd, because there was nothing to be let out.

Mr. KING: The meaning of the honorable gentleman was perfectly clear.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I deny the meaning placed on my words by the honorable member.

Mr. KING: Supposing, as the honorable member for Ipswich had pointed out, the new

Parliament did not meet until April or May next, the present Ministry would have carried on the Government of the country for two years without a regular session of Parliament. This could not be called a session. They had been told in the Governor's Speech that in consequence of the approaching elections this House would not deal with any important questions. They had heard a good deal about the dignity of the Government. They were certainly very dignified; but they showed their dignity in a very peculiar way—by remaining in office on the casting vote of the Speaker for instance. In fact, the manner in which they asserted their dignity was not only peculiar, but rather contradictory. At the end of 1871, they were offered Supply for three or four months of 1872; but the dignity of the Government would not allow them to take Supply on account. They adjourned during January, and when the time arrived for paying the civil servants it was still beneath their dignity to accept Supply on account. They threatened that the light-houses would be put out, and that other irreparable injury would be done to the colony, because their dignity would not allow them to take a vote on account. And now, although they had Supply for six and a-half months of the present year, they considered it consistent with their dignity to ask for a vote on account for 1874. How were they to reconcile this extraordinary discrepancy in connection with the maintenance of their dignity? At one time they would have nothing less than full Supply for the year, and on another they asked for a vote on account. The whole thing was manifestly absurd. He sincerely wished that the Government would think less of their dignity, and a great deal more of their duty to the country. He could not conceive what the object of the Government could be in going on in this way. If they could not take a vote on account for 1872, when the debts of the colony had become due, and it was urgently necessary that payment should be made, with what face could they now come to the House, in the middle of 1873, and ask for a vote on account for 1874?—especially after the valuable expression of opinion on constitutional law with which they had been favored by His Excellency the Governor. The House had been told that they would be abrogating their functions, and he did not know what they would not be doing to their constituents, if they passed a vote on account. He hoped honorable members would not be so disrespectful as not to regard that opinion on this subject. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer, in speaking at an earlier period of the evening, was pleased to say that he (Mr. King) had made an electioneering speech for the purpose of having it reported. He was obliged to the honorable member for this expression of opinion, although he did not admit that it was an electioneering speech. But honorable members on that side of the House had some excuse for making electioneering

speeches. They had not the control of electioneering estimates. They had not £160,000 or £170,000 in the shape of Estimates to go to the country with. On looking at the Estimates for 1874, he found that they amounted to about £117,000 more than the Estimates for this year. How did this increase arise, and how was the money apportioned to be spent in the different districts in the colony? There were a few items he would read from those Estimates:—

“Roads in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts, £10,000; Darling Downs and the Western districts, £8,000; Moreton, East and West, £14,000; opening, closing, and surveying roads, £3,000; total, £35,000.”

How was it that they were asked to vote these sums in the lump, without any division being made as to the different localities in which the money was to have been spent? These sums ought not to read in the way they appeared in the Estimates. They ought to read “Amount required for securing the return of Ministerial candidates, Southern Division, £35,000—to supplement the amount placed by the Pastoral Association at their disposal to carry on the next elections.” Then, again, in the North, there was a sum of £9,000 for the Rockhampton, Gladstone, and Springsure districts. Of course, the Government would not condescend to name the portions of those districts in which the money was to be spent. It was to be entirely at the disposal of Government candidates, and if any one of those candidates found that the opposition against him was strong, he would be authorised to promise the expenditure of the whole £9,000 in a particular district in order to secure his return. He hoped honorable gentlemen opposite did not imagine they were going to get road votes passed in that way, without any information being given as to how, or where, the money was to be expended. Constituencies represented by Opposition members did not get much justice from the Government. There had not been a farthing spent in such constituencies except what was expended for the especial object of getting their present representatives thrown out during the next elections. He believed it had been acknowledged on several occasions that the House did not exercise sufficient supervision over the expenditure of public money. They had authorised the expenditure of money without knowing in what locality, or in what manner it was to be spent; and he was disposed to be much more strict in the future, and to insist that in every instance in which it was practicable, the items should be fully set down in the Estimates. He would no longer tolerate these dodges in the expenditure of public money, by which a Minister could place £10,000, or £20,000 at the disposal of particular candidates, and bribe constituencies. He hoped that whenever the Estimates for 1874 were submitted to the House they would have the items set down in detail, and not in the way they were now prepared—as, for

instance, £10,000 for the Wide Bay and Burnett district. They should specify so much for roads about Maryborough; so much for roads about Gympie; so much for the road from Maryborough to Gayndah; so much for the road from Bundaberg to Mount Perry—so that every important locality should receive its fair share, and the disposal of the money should be determined by the importance of the road, and by the amount of traffic that passed over it, and not by the exigencies of the Government.

Mr. STEPHENS said he was somewhat astonished at the very unusual course which had been taken by the Government on this occasion. The usual plan after making the financial statement, was, to take the Supplementary Estimates first. In the first place, they should take the Supplementary Estimates for the previous year, and he observed that further Supplementary Estimates for last year, amounting to £42,648, were now before the House. The whole of this money had been spent without authority, and the usual and proper course in bringing the Estimates forward for consideration was to ask the committee to sanction these Estimates first, the money having been already spent. They should then proceed to the Supplementary Estimates for the current year. They had Supplementary Estimates for the present year, amounting to £119,292, a large portion of which was now in course of expenditure, and the whole of that sum could not be expended without a vote being obtained, without violating the rules of the House. It was usual to take these first, and last of all the Estimates for next year. As far as the Estimates-in-Chief were concerned, he would point out that no illegality could arise in connection with them until January next, because the money would not be required until that time. Why, under these circumstances, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer should reverse the usual course, and ask for a vote of £170,000, which, according to his own admission, he did not need, leaving in abeyance the Supplementary Estimates for last year, which required Parliamentary sanction, and which would not be entered in the Audit books as payment until that sanction was obtained; and also the Supplementary Estimates for the present year, amounting to £119,000, which also required the sanction of Parliament before the whole of the money could be spent; why that honorable gentleman should propose to leave both of these over until after dealing with the Estimates for next year, he could not understand. It was directly contrary to the usual course. He was put rather more in a puzzle with respect to the matter when he read the statement of the honorable gentleman in his financial speech. He stated:—

“The reasons which have weighed with the Government and decided them not to ask for the usual annual supplies for the coming year, and which are, doubtless, considered sufficient to in-

duce honorable members opposite to place difficulties in the way of such supplies being granted, were they asked for."

The honorable gentleman seemed therefore to have anticipated that the committee would place difficulties in the way of granting supplies for 1874; but why should he anticipate difficulty in getting the whole of the supplies required for that year, any more than a portion of them?—especially taking into account the constitutional question raised on the Ministerial side of the House, last year, that by granting a lump sum the House would be foregoing its functions and its privileges; and that all expenditure should be allotted under the hands of the different departments. The honorable gentleman said he anticipated that, if he asked for the Estimates for 1874 in detail, honorable members opposite would place difficulties in the way; but he had no reason to suppose that difficulties would be placed in the way of granting the whole supplies required for 1874 that would not be put in the way of granting supplies for four months. The only reason why he should have anticipated any such difficulty as he had intimated was something like this:—If the whole of the supplies for 1874 were voted, the Government would be independent of Parliament for a considerable period. But he would point out that, if the committee granted the supplies now asked for, the Government would be perfectly independent of Parliament until May next. He could not, therefore, understand why the honorable member had departed from the usual custom. Again, on looking at another portion of the honorable gentleman's speech, he found that, in the only place in which he referred to the vote now under the consideration of the House, he stated that he did not need that vote. Why, then, should he take the very unusual course of asking for that vote, which he believed would be met with opposition, and which he said he did not require? The honorable gentleman said—

"Honorable members opposite will, of course, accept my assurance"——

Of course, everybody who knew the honorable gentleman would accept his assurance—

"that the Supply on account of 1874 is asked for more in their interests than that of the present occupants of the Treasury benches, for, should the present Government remain in office, the amount will not be needed."

Honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were quite prepared to admit that, but they did not want the proposed provision. If it were done for their especial benefit, they would forego all claim to it, and have the regular course of procedure adopted in place of that proposal. It would be inconsistent and wrong to grant it, and although they were all extremely grateful to the honorable the Colonial Treasurer for making the proposal, they declined to take it. If the Supply

asked for was not needed, why ask for it; and if it was needed, why not say so? When the Government required it, that would be quite time enough to ask for it. The honorable gentleman also said:—

"It is only in the event of a change of Ministry that Supply for the early months of 1874 will be required, during the time occupied in the election of new Ministers."

But if there should be a change of Ministry, surely the outgoing Ministers would not refuse Supply, and it would be quite time enough to vote it then. He could not see a single statement in the speech of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer to show why he should make such a proposition to the House. It looked as if he wished to be opposed. He said he anticipated opposition to granting Supply for 1874, and that it would be useless to ask for it, and yet he now came forward and pursued the very course which would call forth that opposition. He hoped the honorable gentleman would not insist upon this unusual course of taking the Estimates for 1874 before the Supplementary Estimates for 1872 and 1873, which absolutely required the sanction of Parliament at this time. He could easily understand the arguments of the honorable the Minister for Lands applying in all their force to the Estimates for 1873, if they were now under the consideration of the House; because, if the House adjourned for some months, a vote on account would be necessary, but nothing of the kind could occur with reference to 1874. A good deal had been said during the course of the debate that evening with respect to the reduction of taxation, and the competency of the House, as at present constituted, to deal with that question. Now, it certainly seemed to him that if the House were competent to vote away money out of the public funds, it was equally competent to enter upon and decide the question of a reduction of taxation.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. STEPHENS: He thought it was fully as competent for them to save the pockets of the taxpayers of the colony as to throw their money away; and it was, therefore, quite as justifiable to go into the question of reducing taxation as to go into additional expenditure. He did not think that anyone would doubt the competence of the House to deal with that question. In fact, as a matter of justice, it would be much more advisable to endeavor to save the people some taxation than to take the other course, and vote these large sums of money and spend it. If the question of reducing taxation was to be left until next year for settlement, this House need not trouble itself much about the matter. He thought it would be generally admitted that the Government were bound by their Estimates, and honorable members had now before them the Estimates-in-Chief for 1874, Supplementary Estimates for this year, and Supplementary Estimates No. 3 for 1872. In addition to the Estimates for 1874, which had been laid

on the table, they would, no doubt, have Supplementary Estimates for that year, and, perhaps, further Supplementary Estimates; and they must not, therefore, take the Estimates for 1874 as anything like the actual expenditure which would be required, but only as an approximate estimate of what would be necessary for the year. During the year there were Supplementary Estimates No. 1, for money which might be expected to be voted that year. Then there was Supplementary Estimates No. 2, for money expended without authority; and, sometimes, there were three or four Supplementary Estimates. If the Supplementary Estimates for 1874 should be on anything like the same scale as those now on the table, the estimated revenue for 1874 would entirely disappear; it would all be gone, and they need not trouble themselves in the least about the question of the reduction of taxation. He found that a great mistake had been made by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer throughout his speech. The general tenor of that speech was calculated to leave the impression that it would be quite within the power of the next Parliament to reduce taxation if they thought proper; but, although, as there would be a surplus of £200,000 this year, it was not only competent, but possible, to reduce taxation for the remaining half of this year, yet, if the honorable gentleman's Estimates were carried out, and the Supplementary Estimates Nos. 1 and 2 were on anything like the same scale as those now before the House, the total expenditure would amount to about £1,125,000. The estimated revenue for 1874 was £1,141,200; and nearly the whole of this—or about £1,125,000, would disappear if the House voted the Estimates as prepared, and the Supplementary Estimates on the same scale as those now before honorable members. Under these circumstances, the whole of the estimated revenue for next year, with the exception of about £17,000, would be swept away. To his mind this was a sound reason why the question of the reduction of taxation should be taken into consideration at once. There could be no doubt that however large the revenue might become, the Government of the day, whoever they might be, would always be found able to make the expenditure equal to the income; and if they did not catch up to it in one year, they would in another. There were other reasons for coming to this conclusion. Look at the way in which the expenditure had increased. He had not taken the Auditor-General's Report, because it was such a cumbrous and complicated mass of figures that nobody could make anything out of it. He simply took the sum voted for 1871. The authorised expenditure for that year was about £830,000. He might be told that out of those sums there would be a certain proportion of lapsed votes, but it was not necessary to dwell very strongly upon that, because it did not

materially affect the question. Well, as he had before stated, the expenditure for 1871 was about £830,000; and the expenditure for 1874—calculating, of course, on the supposition that the Estimates as proposed for that year, and Supplementary Estimates in similar proportion to those now submitted, would be passed—would be about £1,125,000, thus showing an increase of about £300,000 in the space of three years. The expenditure during the present year would be about one million; but then, again, there would be lapsed votes, and taking that off, the expenditure in 1874 would be about £170,000 more than in 1871. This was a very large increase indeed, and the increase next year would bring it up to nearly £300,000 more than in 1871. At the same time it must be understood that he did not mean to say that the expenditure would reach that amount; but, what he said was, that if the Estimates as submitted to the House were passed, and the Supplementary Estimates were on the same scale as the present ones, it would be so. He therefore said, and he said it strongly, that they should not vote these great increases in the expenditure. By doing so, there could not be the slightest doubt that they would swamp the whole increase in the revenue, and he was the more inclined to think that this would be so from some of the figures which the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had placed before them. He would only refer to one instance. The honorable gentleman estimated that the customs revenue for 1873 would be £50,000 more than 1872, and he then reckoned that there would be an increase of £75,000 next year over the present year. But on what ground was this result arrived at? He could certainly see none. He could easily understand that the increase, during the present year, should be large. It was during the latter part of last year, and running into this, that the increase had taken place; and it arose from the increased returns from our gold fields, and from tin and copper discoveries, and the increase in price in England of almost every article of export. It was anticipated that this would give an increase of £50,000 over last year; but why the honorable gentleman should estimate £75,000 more next year than this, he could not understand. It seemed to him that the honorable the Treasurer had placed himself in this position—He had got tired of under-estimating the revenue, and he now went in for something very much larger, and he (Mr. Stephens) thought he had run the risk of estimating a great deal too much. While on this question of customs revenue, he would make a few further observations respecting it. He did not know exactly what the population of the colony was at the present time, but taking it that at the end of this year the population would be from 137,000 to 140,000, he then found that the estimated receipts for customs duties during 1874, would amount to something like

£4 per head. They had thought three guineas per head a very large sum, and why the revenue should amount to £4 per head next year he could not understand, especially when the sugar duties were nearly nil, and the spirit duties were falling off considerably, in consequence of the quantity of rum which was now produced in the colony. There was no doubt that a considerable number of articles were now produced in the colony which were previously imported, and on which *ad valorem* was paid; but while they had all these things against it, how the honorable gentleman could see his way to raise the revenue from three guineas to £4 per head, next year, he could not conceive. This was however, more a matter of detail than he had intended to go into. He only wished to point out that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was likely to be a good deal out in the revenue he had estimated for next year. He thought he had fairly shown that, at the rate of increase in the public expenditure which had taken place, and was likely to take place during next year, the House, by that time, need not trouble itself in the slightest degree about the reduction of taxation. They would not then be able to reduce anything. Whatever might be the increase in the revenue, they would manage to spend it all. It appeared to him that this question was of vast importance to the colony. The only financial feat the present Government had accomplished, so far as he could remember, was that they had succeeded in raising the taxation of the country; and he thought he heard the honorable member for Western Downs saying, when he brought forward that tariff—he hoped the honorable member would correct him if he were in error—that if it did not produce the requisite amount of revenue, he did not know where else to look for it. There was no other means of raising the requisite revenue. He remembered the honorable member saying something of that sort. There could be no doubt that increase of taxation brought a reaction with it—that they did not get so much more money in proportion. He thought the great bulk of the customs duties were of such a nature that any further increase would result in a considerable reduction in consumption, and, for this reason, it would be an exceedingly unsafe course for the Government to pursue. He did not suppose that anybody anticipated that the present prosperity in the customs revenue would be permanent, or that the prosperity of the colony had raised this source of revenue to such a height that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer could expect to receive £4 per head of the whole population, man, woman, and child, during 1874, when from £2 15s. to £3, or £3 3s. per head, was the standard before. It must be considered that even this was an exceptionally large amount to receive, and the estimate of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was therefore a very unsafe calculation to go upon. It was not at all unlikely

that a continuance of this system would lead the colony into speculation somewhat similar to what took place seven or eight years ago; and if they got that old speculative spirit through all classes of the people again, and through the Government, they would certainly have a reaction, and a decrease in our revenue would be sure to follow. A decrease in the price of our produce in England might also cause a reduction in the revenue. Taking all these things into account, he believed it would be far wiser, now that the revenue was so much larger than the expenditure, to take into consideration the reduction of taxation, so that they might be placed in such a position that when adverse times came again, and the customs revenue had to be considered, they would not have the Treasurer saying he did not know where else to look for requisite revenue. He thought it was not wise to make taxation too tight. He was certain that they would not have a surplus revenue for more than three years together, because they would always find the expenditure creeping up to the revenue. This reminded him of a remark made by an honorable member that afternoon. There was a great difference between borrowing money for reproductive works, and spending it in large salaries, and for other things from which there was no return; and he thought that if honorable members on the Opposition did go in for public works on borrowed money, that was very different from approving of the Government spending large sums in salaries, and for other purposes, by which the general expenditure of the colony was largely increased. Once this class of expenditure was increased, it would be impossible to reduce it again without inflicting serious injury, and in all probability they would not succeed in doing so by any means. He, therefore, thought that the best thing to be done in the present prosperous state of the revenue was to be cautious, and to take steps to place the colony in such a position that, when a reaction occurred, it would not catch them in such a fix that they would not know which way to turn to get out of it. The practical conclusion to which he had arrived from these considerations was this: That they had better not touch the Estimates for 1874, if they did not consider the whole question; and this brought him back to the consideration of the original proposition—that they ought not to interfere, in any way, with those Estimates. No one would, for one moment, dispute that they ought to say they would not touch the expenditure, unless, at the same time, they dealt with the question of taxation. If the question of taxation was to be referred to another Parliament, let them also remit the expenditure to that Parliament. He had shown that, if they carried the Estimates of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, or voted any portion of them, and that the Supplementary Estimates afterwards came on in the same scale as the Supplementary Estimates now before them, and they were also passed,

they would settle the question of a reduction of taxation; because, by so doing, they would prevent the possibility of any reduction. They had been told that the reduction of the present customs tariff had better be left to the next Parliament—the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had told them so—and he maintained that they should leave the expenditure of the public money to that Parliament also, and remit the whole matter to them. The honorable gentleman said he did not ask for the whole of the Estimates for 1874, but only for a portion; but honorable members were quite as justified in opposing a portion as in opposing the whole. The honorable member also said that he did not want the money—that it was for the convenience of honorable members on the Opposition benches, and, as far as that was concerned, honorable members on that side of the House declined to take it. He thought the honorable gentleman ought to withdraw the proposal for £170,000 for 1874, and take the usual course of proceeding with the Supplementary Estimates first. It was absolutely necessary that he should have the sanction of the House for the £42,000 he had spent in 1872 without authority; and the less time that was allowed to stand over the better. He hoped the honorable member would see the propriety of taking this course.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought he should not be required to follow closely the whole of the arguments of the honorable member for South Brisbane, in reference to the several subjects to which he had referred in connection with the financial statement he had recently made. But he would briefly refer to one of those subjects upon which the honorable member had touched at greater length than any of the rest. It was one of those fruitful subjects for speculation and debate which had better be dismissed in as few words as possible. The honorable member disagreed with his estimate of the customs receipts for 1874, and he believed that he and that honorable member would continue to differ on that subject, and that they might discuss it until the end of 1874 without coming to any satisfactory conclusion. He would shortly state his ground for having arrived at this estimate; but, before doing so, he might inform the House that he considered the whole of the Estimates for 1874 were exceedingly moderate. In almost every instance in which he made an estimate for 1874, the amount set down was under the amount estimated by the head of each department. The Collector of Customs had, he might state, estimated the receipts for 1874 considerably higher than the amount which he had placed before honorable members. His reasons for estimating the revenue of 1874 so much more than that of 1873 were:—Large prospective immigration, the expenditure of public money, and the general progress of the colony. The probable results from these causes between this and next year, were such that he felt justified in making the estimate he had placed before the

House. He did not think it necessary to deal with this question further, as it was not a very important one at this time. He would now refer to the rejected favors which that side of the House had attempted to give to the Opposition. He now saw that nothing would please honorable members opposite. The Government had endeavored to induce them to accept that, which he was satisfied, if they accepted it, would prove of immense convenience to them, if they came into office at the beginning of next year. He could illustrate this by what might happen, however soon the elections took place. Supposing the honorable member for the Kennedy was the new Attorney-General; they all knew how long it would take him to appeal to his constituents, and in this respect this vote of £170,000 would be invaluable to honorable members opposite. But, to the Government, it was of no consequence whatever, because, if they pursued the course they intended, which was to bring about the elections as soon as possible, they would return in sufficient time to ask Parliament for the Estimates for 1874. In fact, so little did the Government care about it, that they had no desire to press the favor which honorable members opposite appeared to value so lightly; and he would, therefore, with the permission of the House, withdraw the resolution.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: On the understanding—and he wished honorable members to distinctly understand this—that it was done without any factious object. The Government had no desire to force this on the House, because they gave it more for the consideration of honorable members opposite than for themselves; but he thought they had a fair right to ask that, if this were withdrawn, the House would fairly, and without any factious opposition, proceed with the consideration of the Supplementary Estimates.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That being so, and as the Government were desirous that business should proceed, and, with the consent of honorable members, he would withdraw the motion.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he was very much pleased to find that the Government had adopted the course they had now resolved upon. He thought it was a sound constitutional course, and he would be sorry if, even with a majority of one, they attempted to press the resolution. With regard to the Supplementary Estimates, he could assure the honorable the Colonial Treasurer that there would be no factious opposition displayed, as far as he was concerned, to prevent their consideration. He trusted that, with this assurance, there would be no difficulty in going on with other business.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, with the consent of the House, withdrew the resolution.