

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 18 MAY 1875

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House as member for the electoral district of South Brisbane, Mr. Speaker do issue a writ for the election of a member for the said electoral district of South Brisbane.

In making a motion of this kind, sir, it is not usual to say anything, but in this instance, which I believe is the very first in the Parliamentary history of Queensland of a Minister of the Crown resigning his seat, and retiring from office, through illness, at such an early part of the session, I may be permitted to state that, so far as the Government are concerned, it is a matter of the deepest regret that we have lost the services of my honorable colleague.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: More particularly as he has taken a deep interest in the land policy of the Government, which we regard as of the utmost importance to the future welfare of this colony. I think that, in speaking of Mr. Stephens, and the distress under which he is now unfortunately laboring, both sides of the House will agree with me in testifying our personal respect for that gentleman; and that, although it may be doubtful as to his return to this House, I still live in the hope that he may; and I am sure we will all join in expressing our sympathy for him in his present distress, and in the hope that he may be spared to resume his seat amongst us at some future day.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. PALMER: I can say sincerely, for myself, and I believe for every honorable member on this side of the House, that we deeply deplore the cause of Mr. Stephens' resignation. Differing from him, as we almost invariably have done on anything that might be called party politics, still I have great respect for his talents in this House, and I deeply regret that illness, above all things, should have deprived the House of his services. But, at the same time, nothing can blind me to the fact that, were Mr. Stephens in the House, it would be my duty to oppose him; and the worst I can wish him is a speedy return to this arena, in which he so often distinguished himself, and in which he may in the future further distinguish himself. I am sure we all deeply regret the honorable gentleman's illness.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The motion was then put and passed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said: I have to intimate to the House that, some few days ago, I referred to the fact that I had received verbal communication with reference to Mr. Stephens' resignation of his office of Secretary for Public Lands, and it was only this afternoon I received the letter, which, I regret to say, contained his resignation. I have simply to state that no action has yet been taken in this matter, but I shall be in a position in a few days to state what course the Government propose to pursue.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 18 May, 1875.

Resignation of The Honorable the Secretary for Public Lands.—Ministerial Statement.—Mail Communication Coastwise.—Supply.

RESIGNATION OF THE HONORABLE THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS.

THE SPEAKER: I have the honor to announce to the House that I have received from the Honorable Thomas Blacket Stephens, a letter, resigning his seat in this House for the electoral district of South Brisbane.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move—

That as the seat of the Honorable Thomas Blacket Stephens, Esquire, hath become and is now vacant, by reason of his resignation thereof, since his election and return to serve in this

MAIL COMMUNICATION COASTWISE.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved, pursuant to notice—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the following resolutions:—

1. That, in the opinion of this House, the present means of communication between the different parts of the colony are inadequate and unsatisfactory.

2. That the Government be empowered to enter into an agreement with any company, whose head-quarters in the Australian colonies shall be in Queensland, for a service, to be performed upon the following basis:—

a. The annual subsidy not to exceed £10,000.

b. The company to keep not less than five steamers, of not less than 400 tons register, and a guaranteed speed of not less than ten knots per hour, constantly running in Queensland waters.

c. Communication to be maintained weekly between Brisbane, Cooktown, and the intermediate ports.

d. The time table to be arranged annually, subject to the approval of the Postmaster-General.

e. The subsidy to be payable from the commencement of the service.

f. The term of the proposed agreement not to exceed seven years.

g. All mails to be carried free.

3. That these resolutions be transmitted to the Legislative Council, for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

He said, as he believed it was understood by the honorable members on both sides of the House, that the debate on the motion should take place at the next stage of the proceeding, he would now merely move it, with a view to facilitating business.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to further consider Supply.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he understood that the debate on the financial statement should be taken on this motion, and he rose with that object—for the purpose of initiating a discussion on the financial policy of the Government. It would be in the recollection of honorable members that when the present Ministry came into power last year, they did so, from a financial point of view, under the most favorable conditions. They had an accumulated balance exceeding £350,000, which being reduced, as the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had stated, by the amount of interest then due, not formerly charged against that year, left a clear balance of £240,000. Entering office under these conditions, it was a matter of great consideration to the Government, in the first place, how to dispose of that accumulated surplus; and, in the next place, what to do with the surplus revenue which might reasonably be expected under

the then circumstances of the colony, judging from an accumulation of £116,000 in one year, and they had also the accumulated surplus of £240,000. The Government then submitted certain proposals, which were accepted by that House. With reference to the disposal of the £240,000, the Government said that, considering how it had accumulated, it would be the proper thing to devote it to public works, which, under other circumstances, would properly have come out of loan; the House accepted that proposal, and the £240,000 was accordingly appropriated in that way. The next question for the Government to consider was, how to deal with the probable increase of revenue over expenditure in future years; and here a question came in which might very gravely have been adopted in considering how to dispose of the £240,000, but he would not enter into that now, because the House agreed to the disposal of that sum in a certain way; and he would leave that and return to the policy of the Government, as shown by their subsequent action. Now, one would suppose naturally that the first course which would suggest itself to any Ministry placed in this position—in anticipation of a surplus revenue—would be to reduce taxation; but the Government, of which he was then a member, took a different course. It was quite open to them to have come down and submitted estimates something like what had been done before, giving to the colony the usual amount of public works, and carrying out the system of government something in the same style. The Government, however, considered that reducing taxation to a very considerable amount would be an injudicious policy, because it would hurt the business people of the colony, and interfere too much with the finances. Their policy was to reduce taxation to a certain extent—their proposal was £30,000, but he saw it had come up to £38,000—and gradually pave the way for a further reduction of £80,000; which was, in fact, to do away with the *ad valorem* duties altogether. That was the policy of the Government, at that time, as put forward by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer in his financial statement; and now, in reviewing the action of the Government, they had to consider how that policy had been carried out. They had started with a surplus, in the previous year, of £116,000, and they had every reason to anticipate a greater surplus from the same tariff in the next year, and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had proved that there would have been a considerable surplus. Now, he wished to direct the attention of the House to the position the Government occupied at the present time. In order to quietly drop down to this decrease in taxation, and at the same time to dispose of the surplus, the Government came forward and asked the House for a considerable amount of money—a larger amount than was ever asked for by any previous Govern-

ment—for the public works of the colony; and this was done, as he had previously stated, because it was thought injudicious to make a large reduction in taxation, which would result in undue interference with business arrangements. But there was another reason which influenced the Ministry in adopting this course at that time, and to which considerable prominence was given by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer in his financial statement of last year, and that was this—that it was in the programme of the Ministry to introduce a Local Government Bill, by which moneys raised in any particular part of the country should be appropriated for expenditure in that portion. That matter was very seriously considered by the Government, and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, with, he (Mr. McIlwraith) believed, the concurrence of the whole of the Cabinet, went to the extent of promising that such a measure should be introduced. The argument then was to put the roads of the colony into proper working order, to expend as much as possible out of the finances in the meantime, and then they would be in a proper position to introduce this Local Government Bill. That was the position in which the Government were when they started last year, and he should now call the attention of honorable members to the position in which they now found them. Now, the expectations of any man who had looked into what would probably be the arrangements for the next twelve months, would have been to find the honorable the Colonial Treasurer coming down and saying, “Well, we have spent this large sum of money—we were allowed to spend it by Parliament last year; we anticipate still a large surplus, and, carrying out our programme, we will further reduce taxation—we’ll not put so much to public works, but we’ll reduce taxation, and gradually taper off, and bring the public works into the natural position they were in before.” But what did they find? Instead of spending this large amount of money, authorised by Parliament to be spent on public works, they had neglected that, and had raised the expenditure of almost every department in the colony to such an enormous amount that, instead of being able to come down and ask for the carrying out of such works as the country required and expected—instead of saying they were in a position to take off so much taxation, and to still go on with public works to a greater extent than had ever been done before, except in the year 1874—they came down with a beggarly, miserable lot of works that beat anything of the kind done by any previous Ministry. They could not afford to spend the money, because the whole of it had been monopolised in the actual working of the various departments.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear.

MR. MCILWRAITH: That was the position of the Government so far as their financial

policy was concerned, and in order to prove his assertion he would now call the attention of the House to certain facts, which he had, at very considerable trouble, elicited from the financial statement of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer and the tables which had been laid before the House by that honorable gentleman. In making that statement the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had placed before honorable members most elaborate tables—tables upon various matters which he did not think would have been brought into the financial statement at all, and he did not mean to take up the time of the House unnecessarily by referring to them. But there was one table, which, if it had been laid before the House, would have facilitated the discussion on the subject to a very considerable extent. It was a table which, at any rate, would have saved him two or three days’ work, and which, he believed, would have saved honorable members a considerable amount of thought and trouble if it had been placed before them. He referred to table J, which was circulated, amongst others, at the time the financial statement of 1874 was made, showing the balances of lapsed votes and those brought forward, and also the unauthorised expenditure during 1873. That table was of immense use to honorable members in enabling them to see the actual financial position of the Government, because what they wanted to know was, not the position that the Under Secretary of the Treasury occupied with regard to the money which passed in and out of his hands—they would find that clearly stated by Mr. Drew, in the *Government Gazette*, as placed before Parliament. That statement simply showed the money that came in and the money expended, and it showed a balance of £39,446. Now what he wished to direct the attention of the House to was, what this actually meant. It meant simply this: That certain moneys had come into the Treasury and certain other moneys had gone out, leaving a balance of about £39,000. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had taken a good deal of trouble to explain to the House that as it happened constantly that moneys voted in previous years were expended in the current year, and that moneys voted for that year were left over for future years, and as they actually squared each other in this way, it was unnecessary to pay much attention to them. But what he wished more particularly to draw the attention of the House to was this:—That last year was one in which immense sums were voted for public works; it had been a year in which the expenditure in all the departments, except the Department of Public Works, was enormously increased; and it had been a year in which the amount carried forward to be expended in this or future years—for which they were liable, and for which no provision had been made in the Estimates—had never been equalled in any previous year; and he thought the House

should have expected from the honorable the Colonial Treasurer a clear statement, showing the actual position of the Treasury with regard to the liability of the colony in these matters. The Government were permitted by the House to expend a certain sum of money for certain purposes, but they took upon themselves, without the sanction of the House, to spend a certain amount more. There was also an arrangement that had been in vogue with all Ministries, by which amounts that had been voted in previous years were allowed to lapse, and he thought if the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had come down and told the House how much of this money had been spent on account of the previous year, what amount was left, and what were the actual liabilities of that year, he would have laid before the House a very different balance. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had made up the balance, and if his figures would be of any service to the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, he would place them at his disposal. He had made them up, and would place them before the honorable the Treasurer in two ways; and he might draw attention to the fact that he was bound to take that honorable gentleman's figures, and he took them after a very great deal of trouble; in fact, he might assure the House that he read them over three times before he could get at the facts, and draw the balances he had, and such as they were he would submit them. The estimated expenditure for 1874 was £1,160,514, and the Supplementary Estimates—including the Supplementary Estimates which the House had sanctioned and the additional Supplementary Estimates which had not yet come down to the House—amounted to £76,006, bringing the liabilities to £1,236,520. Now, the actual revenue was £1,160,947, leaving a deficiency of £75,373. The lapsed votes, he maintained, ought to have been put on the table of the House in the same way as they were shown in table J last year. He had had to find them out of the financial statement in a roundabout way, and he was not in a position to question their accuracy, but he was willing to give the Government the benefit of every penny of that amount. There was a great deal which, very likely, ought not to have been allowed to lapse, because it might suit the Government to allow as much as possible to lapse, and thereby enable them to make the statement look as attractive as possible. However, he took it that the amount of lapsed votes was £52,317, and deducting that from the balance of £75,573, it left a debit balance against the Government on the year's transactions of £23,256. He did not think that was a very alarming position for the colony to be in. He did not wish to make any alarm that the colony was in a bad financial position; because, looking at the fact that the revenue, with the reduction of taxation, £37,000, had actually increased £40,000, it was clear that it was in

a perfectly sound state—to say it could not be better, would be going rather too far. With a reduction in taxation amounting to £37,000, the revenue had shown an increase over the previous year of £40,000, and that was a splendid financial position. But what they wanted to know was, in what manner the Government had acted in regard to the moneys committed to their charge. He had shown that, if the facts had been correctly stated, there would have been shown a deficit on the year's transactions to the amount he had just named, £23,256. He had now put the matter one way, and, as he said before, he would put it in a different way, so as to make it, perhaps, a little more plain; because, although he had taken a great deal of trouble with the question, perhaps the House would not be able to follow him clearly. He would therefore put it in another way, which would lead to exactly the same result; and he wished to point out to the honorable the Colonial Treasurer that, in taking the decrease in revenue, he took the Estimates as reduced—that was, £510,000 for Customs, not £540,000, that appeared in the Estimates for last year, therefore allowing the £30,000 that the honorable the Treasurer said would be the probable reduction in taxation by the change on the tariff. The decrease in revenue from the estimate was £32,053; then there were Supplementary Estimates voted, £31,551, and Supplementary Estimates not voted, £44,455, making a total of £108,059, from which he had to take the estimated surplus, £32,486, leaving the same balance as before, £75,573; and in the same way, taking the whole of the credit of lapsed votes, the same debtor balance was shown as in the previous case, £23,256. This table was of advantage in showing the position of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer in this way: He had £76,006 more work to do, and £62,053 less to do it with, thus putting his estimates out to the extent of £108,059, allowing £30,000 for the decrease in consequence of the change in the tariff, and leaving, as he said, a debtor balance of £23,256 against the transactions of the year, instead of a credit balance of £62,486. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had been out of his calculations with regard to revenue, £30,000 by the change in the tariff after making his estimates, and in addition to that he was out £108,059, and yet by decreasing the amount of work done, and by manipulating the votes of one year with the votes of another, he had actually tried to show a credit balance of £23,256. He would draw attention to the excessively wrong system of putting the Treasury accounts before the House in such a way. Why, under such a system, it was at the option of any Treasurer, in placing his statement before the House, to manipulate the moneys voted by Parliament just as he liked. He could come down with a balance in his favor in two ways. He might not spend the money voted in the previous year and carry it over to the next year, and there

were a dozen ways in which it could be done. At all events, he had simply to keep back from spending money to make the balance in the way he (Mr. McIlwraith) had stated. There was another point in which the balance appeared in, perhaps, a worse light. There was a balance of £23,256, and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had referred to the elasticity of the finances; but he would caution him strongly against looking for elasticity in the country's affairs if he only proposed to maintain it by the sale of land. An amount of £67,377 had been realised by the sale of land; the estimated amount was £48,000, so that he actually got from that sale £19,377 in excess of his estimate, and had it not been for that he would have been out £43,000 instead of £23,000. That was the position he would have been in. In the next table he would show the way in which the Government expenditure had been carried on; bearing in mind the way the Government started—that their great ultimate object was to reduce taxation, and to do so gradually; and to spend money on public works until the time came when they could gradually taper off and the Local Government Bill could be brought in. Well, how did they actually spend the money? If the House would bear with him while he read down the estimate, they would see at once the way in which they were authorised by the House to spend it, and the way in which it had been spent. The amount authorised in the schedules was £17,904, and the expenditure was £20,571, showing an increase of £2,667 in that branch. In "Executive and Legislative," the authorised sum was £11,554, and the expenditure £12,279, an increase of £725. In the Colonial Secretary's Department the amounts were, £298,143 authorised, and £322,835 expended; an increase of £24,692. In the Administration of Justice—which was always an increasing item, for he would back lawyers against any men in the country, excepting, perhaps, doctors, to spend money—the sum voted was £17,110, and the expenditure £18,606, an increase of £1,496. In the department of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer £86,982 was authorised, and £100,853 expended, showing an increase of £13,871. In the Public Lands Department there was an increase of £2,676, the amount authorised being £44,159, and the sum expended £46,835. Now he was coming to the point. The Public Works Department showed a decrease of £84,179, the amount authorised being £305,600, and the expenditure £221,421. In the Postmaster-General's Department there was a decrease of £8,662, and in the Auditor-General's Department a decrease of £31. Now, put into plain language, what did this mean? It meant simply this: That the Government had accumulated an enormous amount of expenditure on departmental work, and refrained from doing the actual necessary work of the colony, which would yet have to be done, and the difficulties

would probably be left for some future Treasurer. Here they had the departments increased to an extent that was actually alarming; and that was not the only thing that had gone on last year. He found, on looking into the matter a few minutes ago, that in the first quarter of 1874, the expenditure was £194,309, and in the first quarter of 1875 it was £220,375, showing an increase of £26,066. Then taking the revenue, he found that in the first quarter of 1874 the receipts amounted to £285,344, and in the same quarter of 1875 the amount was £285,519, showing an increase of only £175. That was, that where they had an increase of revenue of £175, they had an increase of expenditure to the extent of £26,066. Now he could scarcely think the honorable the Colonial Treasurer could possibly consider these satisfactory figures. Carrying out the same idea, he would now draw the attention of the Government to other figures, which he would hand to them as soon as he had done. The estimated expenditure of 1875-6 was £1,155,835, and in 1874 it was £1,121,710, showing an increase in 1875-6 of £34,125. The Government proposed this increase, but they forgot the point to which he would draw attention:—That they were to be a Government of economy; that they were to pay an enormous amount for public works; and then that they were to taper off gradually to a reduction of taxation in future years. But what was their position now? They had increased the estimated expenditure for 1875-6 by £34,125, and how much had they proposed to increase it, as far as works were concerned? Why, instead of an increase, they actually proposed to reduce the amount under that head by £106,792 less than was voted for 1874. The amount voted for 1874 was £305,600, and the estimated expenditure for 1875-6 was £198,808. They actually proposed to decrease the expenditure on public works to the extent of £106,792, and, at the same time, to increase the general expenditure—although they were a Government pledged to reduce taxation—by £34,125. Another table would bear out the argument he had just been using, and he would simply direct attention to it by reading it. The expenditure in 1873 was £954,856, and in 1874 £1,109,380, leaving a balance of £154,524. The revenue for 1873 was £1,124,107; and for 1874, £1,172,760, showing an increase of £48,653. These figures told exactly in the same way as the previous statement he had made in reference to the estimated expenditure of 1874 and 1875-6, and the estimate for works proposed to be done during the coming year. He would now notice a few of the remarks made by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer in making his financial statement on Tuesday last. That honorable gentleman said:—

"The railway receipts are more gratifying, showing an increase of £12,000, coupled with a small but actual decrease in the working expenses,

and I think that one of the most gratifying features in connection with the Railway Department.”

He (Mr. McIlwraith) thought so, too, but he would like a great deal more information as to how this came about; because they might manage to adopt the same system, and reduce expenditure in other departments. He would like to know if it was through the indefatigable exertions of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer in directing the affairs of the railway workshops, and other railway works, that all this had been done? He certainly thought the House was justified in asking for further information on this point, and he would be glad to hear it. There was one matter in the financial statement upon which some information was given which he did not expect to see there, but he expected to have heard a good deal about it before the financial statement came on. The honorable member said that, during 1873, they received so many persons into the colony from the United Kingdom and Germany, and then he went on to say:—

“Unfortunately, the proportion of persons who pay their own passages seems steadily to decrease, and I am satisfied that it is not from inability on the part of persons emigrating to pay that this occurs, but from the want of the advantages which the colony holds out to emigrants being properly placed before them.”

He need hardly say that they had had a hint about what this was meant to justify, and the honorable the Treasurer, thinking he had not clenched the matter, referred to it again further on. He said:—

“I believe in New Zealand last year the expenditure on account of immigration almost reached, if it did not exceed half-a-million sterling, and I think this sum of £250,000 will last for the next two years and a-half. I believe, if a proper system of lecturing were carried out, we would considerably increase the proportion of those who contribute towards the cost of their own passages, and that would enable this vote to last considerably longer than we could otherwise expect.”

Now, he thought he was only expressing the opinions of the House and the whole of the country, when he said he must congratulate the honorable the Colonial Treasurer on having at last found out a reason to put before the House why Mr. MacDevitt was sent home.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear.

MR. McILWRAITH: If there was one job more disgraceful than another, it was that Mr. MacDevitt was appointed. And it would appear he was appointed, not to find out who were willing to come to the colony, but he was to find out how much money they had got, and see whether they were able to pay or not, and if they were, they should be allowed to come. Upon his word, it was the most sneaking business could be asked to be done by any man, and it was a disgrace to the colony that such a job should have been perpetrated. He thought

the Government ought to answer for having perpetrated such a cruel jest upon these gentlemen as to state that as the only reason why they had gone home. The honorable the Treasurer had given the reason, and, like a financial man, he stood up for his own department. There was nothing he felt so much as that a man should not pay; but if they invited people to come to the colony, and said they would pay their passages, how could they find out whether they could pay or not? If they could induce them to come without paying, of course it would be a different thing. If they offered free passages, and got men who had money, there could be no error; but they should not go about to pick up “the lame, the halt, and the blind,” who might feel disposed to come to the colony. They wanted a man with money in his pocket and it was a matter of very little consideration to the country whether he had money to pay his passage or not. That was a matter between himself and his conscience, and no amount of Government machinery would prevent men from coming out free as long as free passages were offered. There was another argument that the honorable member used in favor of immigration—he did not wish to contend with him on the subject of immigration, because he thoroughly believed in it, as did also the honorable member; but he did not wish to see a good cause spoiled by a bad argument:—

“If honorable members take into consideration that every immigrant who arrives here is a consumer of dutiable goods alone to the extent of £3 per annum, and that immigrants are introduced at an annual cost of 15s. only—that being the interest on £15 7s. 5d.—I think they will agree with me that is one of the very best purposes for which we can borrow money.”

The logic was not very close, and one might almost consider that when the Treasurer made that statement he wished the House to understand that the difference between the 15s. and the £3 was profit to the country. He (Mr. McIlwraith) guaranteed that the £3 would be spent by the present Government on the government of the immigrant, and the 15s. would be lost, judging by the way the Estimates were manipulated by them. Although the Treasurer had not arrived at his conclusion on fine logical grounds, yet he sympathised with his conclusion. The real argument in favor of immigration was much stronger than the one advanced by the honorable gentleman; and the House ought to stand up for it. The fact was that the colony actually gained more than the paltry amount of the difference between 15s. and £3, per annum, by each immigrant introduced. He wished to call the Treasurer's attention, if he wanted an argument, to one that he used in this House years ago, and that was—the cost of bringing a man into the world. That was the actual value that an immigrant was to the colony.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. McILWRAITH : The honorable member for East Moreton would answer that : he was a thorough man of figures, and would go into the matter. That was the idea which actuated the policy of the Prussian Government for the last three years against immigration. Having gone into a calculation, that Government deliberately set its face against emigration. It had been found that every man born in Prussia cost the country £112 10s. If that £112 10s. went to Australia, it was a gain to this country and a loss to Prussia. That was no fancy idea of his (Mr. McIlwraith's) own ; it was a fact for fair argument, and it was one that actuated the Cabinet of Berlin with regard to the measures taken to discourage immigration :—

“ Dr. Engell, director of the Prussian Statistical Bureau, has considered the subject from the point of view of political economy. He divides the life of a manual laborer into three periods :—15 years of unproductive youth ; 50 years of labor ; and the balance a period of unproductive senility. The productive period should, first, pay the expenses incurred by parents and others in the juvenile period ; second, should satisfy the daily wants and maintain the productive period of the individual ; the third, should produce a surplus fund for sustenance during the aged period.”

That was a plain logical inference :—

“ He computes the cost of producing a manual laborer in Germany at an average for both sexes of 40 thalers a-year for five years, 50 for five more, and 60 for the third five ;—in all, 750 thalers, or £112 10s. He reckons Germany loses this sum for every emigrant who leaves. This view guides the Prussian official mind, and has long influenced all the acts of the Government.”

Every immigrant that came to this colony, though he brought not a single stiver in his pocket, was worth £112 10s. to the country ; the only cost that Queensland had to bear was the cost of his carriage hither. If the Treasurer had thought of that argument, or if the Government had considered it, they would not have sent home men to lecture, especially for such a paltry consideration as he had advanced. The more the immigrants had in their pockets, the better for this country.

HONORABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear.

Mr. McILWRAITH : While on the subject of political economy, he should refer to one table which was brought forward by the Treasurer in his financial statement, showing the imports and exports of the colony. Though perhaps it was perfectly right that the honorable gentleman should have referred to that in reviewing the position of the colony generally—and he should say more on this point, only that he saw it had been the usual practice with other Treasurers—yet he did not see exactly its connection with the financial statement. At the dinner given to the late Governor of this colony, in November last, in the Parliament House—honorable members would remember that the *Courier* refused to report the speeches, but still a report was

published, and he had read that report—the Colonial Secretary made a speech. The honorable gentleman's peculiarity was such, that whenever he (Mr. McIlwraith) saw an idea emanate from him, he asked, first, not what was the value of the idea, but, where did he get it ? The same idea being brought forward by the Colonial Treasurer in his financial statement, he knew now. He was not astonished at the Colonial Secretary—he should not be astonished at anybody—coming out with that idea of political economy after dinner ; nor should he be astonished at the honorable gentleman doing so at any time. The strength of the colony was by him attempted to be shown by the fact of the exports being more than the imports. Well, it had got to be an axiom of political economy—it was never questioned at all—that the profit of a country was the amount which the imports exceeded the exports ; so that if, in England, the exports were £10,000,000 and the imports were £11,000,000, the £1,000,000 difference was actually the profit to the country and that which made the increase of its wealth. What the Colonial Treasurer said, was, Queensland had given away £3,000,000 and had received £2,000,000 back. Where was that £1,000,000 ? It was not in the pockets of the people : it must appear somewhere.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Hear, hear.

Mr. McILWRAITH : He was going to speak a little more about it. The Treasurer had told the House that £300,000 of it was in the banks ; but where was the balance ? Was it really profit, or was it the other thing ? The Government did not know how to account for it. He should account for it. A great amount of it was in absenteeism.

HONORABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear.

Mr. McILWRAITH : The Treasurer had gone wrong with regard to the political economy of the matter, and had certainly lost a good chance of giving the House a lecture upon it ; because absenteeism was applicable to many things. He could show four different kinds of absenteeism :—There were the rich run-owners, drawing large amounts of money from the colony and spending it at home. There were the large landed proprietors who had invested here, and who, glad in the good times to get a return for their money, felt no further interest in the colony. Another kind of absenteeism which was of great importance in considering the difference of the value of imports over exports, was in the gold produce ; that was, what the diggers who went out of the colony took away with them. When a man made £500 on the gold fields, he went down to some place in the South and spent it ; he did not remain in the colony where he had acquired it. Then, lastly, the profits of the seaboard carrying trade went entirely out of the colony. Although not reducing the imports and exports, absenteeism might be illustrated in another way :—There was the absenteeism of the men who lived out of town and who left

the poor people who lived in town to make the drains ; and, those poor people not being able to do the work, had to go and ask the Government for assistance to do the work of the town. Instead of the old fashion, when people lived in the town where they carried on their business, well-to-do folks went out of town now, and left the poor people to live in the town, who were unable to carry out the local works required to make the town what it ought to be. No man would rejoice more than he (Mr. McIlwraith) to see the Treasurer come down to the House showing that the imports were increasing over the exports ; because the excess of imports would be profit to the colony. There was another subject mentioned in the financial statement which the House should have much more information upon than they had, and that was the additional vote of £25,000 which the Government asked for to finish the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. Last year, honorable members would remember, the Government asked for £203,000 to complete that line ; and he should not forget for a while how aghast the House were at the immensity of the sum, and what difficulty the Government had in getting the vote. He had to show the House what a difficulty the Government were in ; that they accepted the position, and must make the best of it ; that estimates had been gone into, and that the amount asked for would complete the railway ; and the House were further assured by himself, on behalf of the Government, that there would be a saving of £47,000, as he had examined the estimates. He was satisfied, from the exorbitant prices that the works had been put down at by the late Chief Engineer, that an actual saving could be effected of considerably over £40,000. It was in furtherance of that object that he had been forced to take the step most disagreeable to himself of getting rid of the services of the gentleman who was then Chief Engineer, and putting into the office another who, he believed, would carry out the works for the amount that he had estimated. That was all perfectly well known to the House and to his late colleagues. Yet the Government now said that £25,000 more was required to finish the railway, and not a single word was said to show the necessity for it, let alone an explanation why the anticipated saving could not be effected. But that £25,000 would not complete the railway ; it would have to be supplemented. Would the Government tell the House how much the railway was to cost, and when it would be done ? The House would bear him out that the Treasurer had repeatedly and distinctly gone against the Government incurring any expense for works until details were given to the House in order to obtain legislative sanction. It was odd that the honorable gentleman should put before the House such a proposal without a word of explanation. He (Mr. McIlwraith) was confident that if the money

asked for to finish the railway was to be expended in carrying the line further forward to the wharves, the House should at the first opportunity have information upon it. He believed that therein was the reason why the Government had told the House nothing about it. £25,000 would be a sufficient sum to commence the extension of the line from the station to the wharves. Whether that was the intention of the Government or not, that matter must be brought before the House, for them to deliberate and give their opinion upon, as to whether the Government should or should not spend the public money in the way suggested. Referring again to the repeated statement of the Treasurer that it was not the proper thing for the Government to ask the sanction of the House to schemes which were not properly put before them, he asked, were ever such rude undigested schemes put before any House as the Government had put forward this session ? There was the Carpentaria scheme, and there was the railway to Gympie. The House knew what the first was, for they had heard the Secretary for Public Works upon it ; but they did not know what the honorable gentleman had to say about the Gympie scheme. It was recommended and the honorable gentleman was satisfied with it ; and upon the slight opinion he had got, the honorable gentleman was about to go in for as big a failure as ever was made in this country. But it was not only for what the Government had done, but for what they had not done, that the Government had to account. They had made a distinct promise that the Bundaberg Railway should be done ; and they had been most remiss in the way they had treated it. The Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Works had gone to Bundaberg and promised that a railway should be made in that district ; and, now, without any steps having been taken except those of the engineer who rode over the ground, the Government said they would throw that scheme aside. The gentleman who had reported upon the line would not like to vouch to the House for his estimate. Again, one of the most elaborate surveys that was ever made in the colony was made by the present Chief Engineer of the line from Warwick to Stanthorpe. The Government did not desire to proceed with that line, and they ordered another survey. The Treasurer had warned the House that that line had not been dropped out of their programme. He should like to know what was their programme. The present policy of the Government was, he believed, to carry a line to Roma. That was his policy. But he wanted, in addition to that, to know what was their policy in the matter of railways. He should like to be assured of the policy that they had not departed from. It was very important for the House to know what was the railway policy of the Government, because it was the very thing to stave off opposition ; and if the Government intended to carry out railways, they

would get far more support than they had at the present time. He had gone through most of the important topics of the financial statement, and the figures he had put before the House proved conclusively that the Government, instead of reducing taxation, as they had proposed, instead of being in a position to carry on a moderate amount of public works, had increased enormously the actual cost of government that was going on year by year. The Treasurer had made a difficulty for himself. He had been tutored by two lawyers, the Colonial Secretary and the Attorney-General, the two most extravagant men in the colony. If the honorable gentleman only dealt with the finances himself—no man was more able than he—his estimate would be well; but if he took advice from men like those of his colleagues, he would lead the colony to the bottom of that declivity which she had commenced to go down this year.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he was rather surprised that the honorable member for Maranoa, after such a very severe criticism of the acts of the Ministry during last year, should have sat down without moving an amendment upon the motion before the House. The remarks of the honorable member were so exceedingly general that it was quite possible he might have found some difficulty in fastening upon any particular part of the policy of the Government to which he could take objection. In the first place, he objected very strongly to the conduct of the Government, during 1874, in connection with the expenditure of votes for public works; and he said that the favorable balance which the Treasurer had been able to show was due to non-expenditure in the Works Department. Well, the honorable member was Minister for Works during ten months of 1874. Such an argument should not have been brought forward by him; because, it was evident that, if any saving was made in the Works Department, it could not have been made during the last two months of the year. No one would venture to assert that any reduction was made after the honorable member had left the Ministry. He asked, what the Government did with the money? He was entitled to know as well as anybody else what the Government did with the money expended during last year; but he went to considerable trouble to show that if different things occurred which did not occur, there would have been a deficiency instead of a surplus; that if the Treasurer had not forced land into the market by auction, there would have been a deficit; that having the land under his control, that honorable gentleman manipulated it so as to be enabled to show a surplus. The amount received from sales of land by auction during 1873, was £18,343; the amount estimated by the Treasurer for 1874, was £18,000; and the amount realised during that year was £19,422, or £1,422 more than

the estimate, and about £1,000 more than was realised in 1873. It was perfectly absurd for the honorable member to endeavor to make the House believe that the colony was saved from a deficit solely by the Treasurer forcing the sale of land by auction to the extent of £1,000 more than was sold in 1873! The honorable member also endeavored to point out that in addition to the under-expenditure in the Works Department, there was a large over-expenditure in other departments, and he quoted in support of that, the returns of expenditure in 1875, as compared with the expenditure during the first quarter of 1874. He did not divide the expenditure of 1875, and distribute it over the different departments; because, if he did, he would have found that a very large item of increase was owing to the expenditure upon works which had been voted in 1874, and that an extraordinarily large amount of the previous year's vote was expended during the first quarter of this year. The honorable member made an allusion to what he considered an extraordinary demand for £25,000 for the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway; and he said very truly that the House ought to have some information upon that subject. The House ought to have much fuller information than any Minister could give in a speech. The manner in which that railway had been conducted was such as called for an inquiry; and he (the Secretary for Works) ventured to assert that if honorable members on the Opposition side asked for one, it would be granted very fast.

MR. MCLLWRAITH: To-morrow.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: As to the saving to be made on the vote granted last session, all he could say was, that when he came into office the Chief Engineer did not contemplate any saving. The first question he asked was upon that point. There would not only be no saving out of the former grant, but it would take the £25,000 now on the Estimates in order to complete the railway according to the original plan.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: No more?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That sum would not include any extension, such as the honorable member for Maranoa suggested to the House. It was within the province of the Government to make a short survey of the extension, particularly when a commission were sitting upon the subject of wharfage, and were extending their inquiries to the connection of the railway with the wharves in the city. When the Government were in a position to give information sufficiently specific to the House on the subject, honorable members might be sure that it would be laid before them. The survey was in hand, but it was not yet completed; and the Government could not lay any information on the subject before the House at the present time. Allusion was made by the honorable member for Maranoa to the disappointment which must be caused to the country, and which existed amongst honorable

members, because the Government were not able to bring forward all the extensions of railways which had been spoken of from time to time. He must be perfectly aware, however, that any Minister, in making a promise to a constituency that public works would be carried out, must be understood as giving a promise entirely dependant upon the financial condition of the colony.

Mr. McILWRAITH: Let him keep his tongue inside his mouth.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He ventured to say that in his intercourse with the gentlemen of Bundaberg and Maryborough who had an interest in railways, he distinctly stated that the undertaking of those works must depend upon the financial position of the colony. He doubted if it was possible to manufacture a railway policy that would divert opposition in the House. It was not denied that there were several districts in the colony which required railways; and, in taking up the matter of cheap railways, the Government had shown their earnestness in a railway policy. A low average for the construction of railways, such as the colony now possessed, was £6,000 a mile. That was more than the Government should give to realise a profit from the new works desired. If the Government could reduce the cost to £2,000 a mile, they might be able to carry out extensions with considerable rapidity in the several districts where railways were required; not confine them to one or two districts, but distribute railways over the colony, wherever there was sufficient population. In bringing forward a proposal and estimate for the construction of a new and cheap line, on a new system, the Government showed that they recognised the wants of the colony. Cheap railways were a necessity of this colony; and the Government said they were willing to do all that the colony demanded. The question then arose—How were the railways to be constructed? Out of loan or revenue? The Government must have a revenue to warrant them in borrowing money, as, in borrowing, that would show the public creditor where the interest was to come from. The honorable member for Maranoa, in criticising the financial policy of the Government, alluded to the Customs returns as showing an increase very gratifying when it was considered that taxation had been decreased by a large reduction of the *ad valorem* duty; but the honorable member did not direct attention to the land revenue. If he had done this, he might have shown that while, in 1872, the Government received on mineral selections £45,976, in 1874 they received only £11,000; a diminution on one item alone of nearly £37,000. The rents under the Act of 1868 were £22,000, against £14,000 in 1874. During this year that item disappeared, because the Act of 1868 had expired. Taking the two items, there was a diminution of revenue of nearly £60,000, without any cor-

responding increase in all the other items of revenue to make up for it. Add the amount representing the *ad valorem* duty taken off and the amount by which the revenue was reduced, the total would be £80,000 during the present year; so that it became evident that the country could not expend money and have it too. Now, it was plain that if the Government went into railway extension, which was their policy, they must either increase the land revenue, or go in for a large loan. If they should not go in for a large loan, they had no other means of constructing railways except by large land sales. For that reason he did not think it was possible for the Government to bring forward a policy of railway extension that would please honorable members on the Opposition side. The honorable member for Maranoa had objected to the financial statement, but he did not dispute that there was a balance of £39,000 in favor of the year 1874.

Mr. McILWRAITH: Of course there was. He should question the honesty of Mr. Drew if he did not admit that.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That would not have existed, said the honorable member, if a greater expenditure had taken place during the year. Well, it was the duty of the Government to keep the expenditure within the revenue; and as long as the expenditure of the year did not exceed the revenue of the year, there could not be a deficit. When the accusation was brought against the Government of increasing the departmental expenditure, the present Ministry might very fairly compare their estimates with those of their predecessors in that respect. He had the estimates of the Palmer Government, published just before they left office, and the estimates of the present Government for 1874. Between their respective estimates of revenue, there was no remarkable difference; but in their estimates of expenditure, he found that there was a difference of £118,000, being the increase of the estimates of the present Government over the estimates of the Palmer Government. The increase occurred altogether in two departments, those of the Colonial Secretary and the Secretary for Public Works. The increase in the last-named was £96,000, which was voted last year for roads: that was not increase of departmental cost, it was expenditure on public works. It was put on the estimates for the reason that, during the years 1870-1-2, two Loan Acts were introduced by the late Government, in each of which was included £100,000 for roads and bridges in the different districts of the colony;—that was, the usual expenditure out of revenue for roads and bridges was supplemented by £100,000 per annum out of loan expenditure. The present Ministry decided that expenditure for works which were not of a permanent character should not be provided for by loan, but out of revenue. Therefore, a sum was provided for in their estimates for 1874,

which would raise the expenditure from revenue upon roads and bridges to about equal to the amount that the Palmer Government had provided from revenue and loan; and they did not place £100,000 in their loan estimate for those works, as would probably have been done by honorable gentlemen now in opposition. The increase in the Colonial Secretary's Department was nearly £100,000, and he could show how a great deal of that arose:—There was an increase of £7,000 in the Colonial Stores—not in salaries, but entirely in the item of "Stores." He took it for granted that the stores were required, or they would not have been asked for, and as the Palmer Government had asked for £10,000 more, for arms for the police, &c. But instead of £17,000, the present Government asked for £7,000 only. There was an increase of 50 constables in the Department of Police, and their pay amounted to £6,000. There was £13,000 accounted for at once. Next came the items for judicial police, in which it was generally supposed no extravagant expenditure would take place. There were the salaries of police magistrates and clerks of petty sessions, increasing the estimates of the present Government £2,700. But then he found that there were new appointments:—There was Cooktown, £750 to provide for a first-class magistrate and a clerk of petty sessions there; Nerang Creek, a new police station, £25; Cardwell, £500 for a police magistrate who was never appointed; St. Lawrence, another seaport, £350; Brisbane, £200 for the services of a deposition clerk, who was required since the clerk of petty sessions had more work than he could possibly do. If he went on, he could show that where expenditure was increased it was necessary. The Palmer Government would have had to provide for Cooktown. In other respects there were great reductions indeed by the present Government upon the estimates of their predecessors. For instance, increases were proposed by the Palmer Administration to a number of police magistrates at minor places, which the present Government did not adopt: Banana, Clermont, Copperfield, Gladstone, Goondiwindi, Inglewood, St. George, Surat, Tambo, and Taroom. On the estimates of the Government charged with gross extravagance, those increases did not appear; and, when honorable members compared the estimates of last year, they would see for themselves that such a charge was not well founded. If there were any specific charges made against the Government, it would be very easy to meet them. The Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary were the most extravagant men in the country, it was said. The estimates from which he had quoted showed that the extravagance was with honorable members on the other side of the House. Whatever other expenditure was incurred by the present Government was to provide the accommodation required by the public—for

the purpose of placing police magistrates in such places as Cooktown and Palmer, and where the establishment of benches were most required;—not for increasing the patronage of the Government by raising the salaries of small officers in out-of-the-way places to a figure incommensurate with the work they had to do. If the debate was to go upon the financial statement, it ought to go a little further back to the time when the late Government came into office. The honorable member for Maranoa had made a great deal out of the surplus of £230,000 at the beginning of last year. Everyone knew how it was brought about, and that it could never be to the advantage of the present Government. It was all appropriated for the several services for which it had been set apart.

MR. PALMER: And not spent.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Not a single penny was carried forward as an available balance for the year. He found by reference to the estimates of the first Treasurer of the Palmer Administration that, when they took office, the debt of the colony was £3,021,000. For this there was a considerable extent of railway, to Dalby and to Warwick, and the Northern line westward; a great many public works producing some return to the country. When that Ministry went out of office in January, 1874, the debt of the colony was £5,253,286; and there were works in hand for which the House had had to vote another quarter of a million sterling, and for which there would perhaps be required another vote, bringing the debt of the colony up to nearly £6,000,000. In fact, the loan required to complete the works in hand at that time would make the public debt double what it was when the Palmer Government took office. When contrasting the financial policies of the two parties in the House, he had a right to ask what results those parties had obtained from the expenditure of the various loans of which they had had the management. When the honorable member for Port Curtis took office he found the public debt £3,000,000; he had railways north and south, which returned a considerable revenue; that revenue had gone on increasing year by year, and it was now becoming very considerable; the debt increased during the honorable gentleman's administration to £6,000,000; and what had the country to show for the increased burden of debt which he had placed upon the colony? What advantage had the colony realised from it yet? Not a mile of railway that paid. The line from Ipswich was open to the river, but, until goods were carried on it to the port, that extension would not pay. It was a mere convenience for the travelling public. In the North, matters were much the same. If honorable members wanted to criticise, let them answer what the country had to show for the extra £3,000,000 of debt they had heaped upon the shoulders of the people.

Mr. McILWRAITH: He never said a word about it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: When the honorable member was criticising the financial policy of the present Government, honorable members opposite applauded him; and therefore he (the Secretary for Works) was perfectly justified in drawing attention to the remarkable failure of those gentlemen when they themselves were in office. He did not think that any financial mismanagement which could possibly take place could exceed that which characterised their administration. He thought that if the honorable member for Maranoa would ask for a committee of inquiry, and that committee took evidence, the revelations would very much astonish the public, and would expose the pretensions of honorable members on the other side of the House to be good administrators. A good deal had been heard of administration, as being what the country most needed; and such a committee would show what sort of administration the country had got. He hoped that the honorable member would move for the committee, and honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House would support him. He had made rather a rambling speech, but he had to follow a rambling speech. The honorable member for Maranoa did not fasten upon any statement made or argument advanced by the Treasurer, but made a running criticism upon the financial policy of the Government. In turn, he (the Secretary for Works) had made a running criticism upon that criticism and upon the financial policy of the late Government, and he thought he had touched upon the topics that had been mentioned by the honorable member.

Mr. MILES: You have forgotten immigration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He should leave that to the Colonial Treasurer, who would also answer the very extraordinary political economy of the honorable member for Maranoa, by which he endeavored to prove that the prosperity of the country was greatest when the exports exceeded the imports. He should leave that to be criticised by honorable members who were better authorities on commercial matters than himself. He had to say that if the votes for 1874 in the Works Department were not expended as fast as they ought to have been, the honorable gentleman himself had to answer for it, since he occupied the position of Minister for Works during ten months of that year. Messrs. MacDevitt and Wight were not sent home, the honorable member might be assured, to prevent any class of emigrants going on board Queensland ships. The fact struck the Government, as it had struck many honorable members before now, that there was a large number of full-paying emigrants from the United Kingdom, to other countries, but chiefly to the United States.

Mr. McILWRAITH: They were coming back from there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: During late years, the emigration to the United States had received a great check. Under those circumstances, it was thought worth while to try, by sending agents amongst the emigrating people, in the country, not in the towns, if Queensland could not secure a proportion of that desirable class that he designated as full-paying immigrants. He thought we should get them, and that, at any rate, the experiment was worth trying; because the salaries and travelling expenses of Messrs. MacDevitt and Wight would be covered if each of those gentlemen sent out fifty full-paying immigrants within the year. If they sent five hundred immigrants, the outlay incurred would be returned five times over. He did not understand the criticism of the honorable member for Maranoa or his objection to the action of the Government. The Government must do something to diminish the cost of immigration at the present time; nearly all the immigrants to the colony now were free, and the colony had to pay £15 a head for them. If they got a good proportion of full-paying immigrants, the colony would gain greatly indeed; therefore he held that the appointment of Messrs. MacDevitt and Wight would prove highly judicious for the colony. At all events, it was premature to condemn it until honorable members could see what the result was; and that would be proved by the first year's work. If it should be seen that the agents increased the number of full-paying passengers, the Government would be justified in their appointment; if not, no doubt the appointments would not be continued.

Mr. MILES: Not for a second.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: As the matter had been spoken of, he hoped the House would see an inquiry moved for in connection with the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. The House ought to get some explanation of the extraordinary increase to the public debt when the late Government left office above what it was when they entered office, without the colony having derived any single advantage from any public work that was undertaken by the late Government, or any revenue for public works over and above what were completed when that Government took office.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he most sincerely congratulated the Minister for Works upon the success with which he had managed to obscure the whole financial statement. He should not attempt to enter into the historical circumstances which that honorable gentleman had brought into the debate, and to which he was comparatively a stranger, although an old inhabitant of Queensland. The House were considering the financial condition of the colony at the present time, and the revenue and expenditure of the year 1875-6; and there was not the slightest necessity for the Minister for Works to go back to 1866. The affairs of the past had been already

discussed by the House, and honorable members could spend their time far more judiciously in analysing the Treasurer's statement than in going back to that time. He should confine himself to what he thought required explanation. When the Treasurer made his financial statement, last Tuesday, it represented the affairs of the colony to be in a condition that surprised him; for he had expected that the honorable gentleman would have acknowledged a considerable deficiency. But instead of that, the honorable gentleman stated to the House that, on the 1st January last, he had a surplus of £39,466. He confessed to having been still further surprised when the Treasurer went on to state that, on the 31st March, there was lying to the credit of the Government in the Treasury the increased sum of £134,000. Surely, he thought, there must be some mistake about that; and when the authorised report came out he read it over and over again to discover, if possible, that mistake. He found that what—he should not call it a surplus—the Treasurer wished to delude the House into believing was a surplus, was no surplus at all. He found that the fund for which credit was taken had been created by holding over expenditure. If the Treasurer had paid, on the 31st December, the amounts then owing by the Government, there would not have been a balance of £39,000 on the credit side at the commencement of this year; nor would there have been an increase to £104,610 on the 31st March last. What was the present financial condition of the colony? Why, the Treasurer said there was a balance of £355,037 unexpended, with £120,000 additional of debentures. The position of the finances was so presented to the House that it was calculated to mislead any uninitiated member, as he (Mr. Buzacott) was himself, to believe that that amount was lying in the Treasury; and that, in the face of it, the Government had shown themselves to have been unprecedentedly economical. He did not believe in such economy. He felt with the honorable gentleman who opened the debate this afternoon, that when the present Colonial Secretary was at the head of any Administration, he would lead the colony into the position of having a deficit. It was not prejudice; but he had watched the career of the honorable gentleman since 1860, and knew the effect of his predominant influence in the Administration, and that it was to incur expenditure beyond what the circumstances of the colony allowed. The honorable gentleman who last addressed the House had not answered the charge brought against the Government by the honorable member for Maranoa, that the Treasurer's credit balance of £39,000, on the 1st January, was anything but a surplus. The Treasurer had led the House to believe that it was an actual surplus; whereas it must be clear to any honorable member who studied the subject that, had the payments been made of accounts

then due, the balance would have been entirely on the other side of the account. He (Mr. Buzacott) had not gone into the accounts sufficiently well to lay them before the House in the way that the honorable member for Maranoa did; but so far as he could ascertain, the honorable member's figures were correct, and the Treasurer's were not correct. The Treasurer had stated many truths, but, on the other hand, there were many that he had not stated; his was a partial statement, and one that deceived the House, and it was one that misled himself. The affairs of the colony were not in the flourishing condition that the honorable gentleman represented. He (Mr. Buzacott) had prepared a statement from the Treasurer's recent financial statement, and from last year's "Hansard," which he presumed contained a correct report of his previous speech on the same subject, and this was what he found:—The Estimates-in-Chief for 1874 amounted to £1,160,514; the Supplementary Estimates for the year, were £31,551. The Supplementary Estimates for 1873 amounted to £70,528, which he should leave out of the account. There was an unauthorised expenditure in 1874, which amounted to £44,455—Supplementary Estimates No. 2. Therefore the presumption might be fairly held that the expenditure for 1874, excluding that on account of the previous year, amounted to £1,236,520. This was what he found, at any rate, authorised and unauthorised. The revenue amounted to £1,160,948; leaving a deficiency by reason of over-expenditure of £75,572. Before proceeding further he desired to withdraw an expression which, he believed, he was betrayed into, in which he stated that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had wilfully deceived, or intended to deceive, the House. He should be extremely sorry to have charged that honorable gentleman with any such intention. On the other hand, he believed that honorable member was actuated by a very excusable desire to present the affairs of the colony in the most favorable aspect, and that he would not descend to such a device as to attempt wilfully to deceive the House. He hoped that if he did make use of the expression, which he believed he did, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer would accept this explanation.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear.

MR. BUZACOTT: To resume his argument: as he had previously stated, leaving out of account altogether the money paid in 1874 on account of 1873, which amounted to £70,000, there was authorised, in 1874, an expenditure of £1,160,514; in the Supplementary Estimates for that year, £31,551, and in the Supplementary Estimates No. 2, presented to the House the other day, which, he presumed, included amounts of unauthorised expenditure, there was a further sum of £44,455, making the expenditure authorised a total of £1,236,520. Then, the Treasurer's

statement showed the total receipts last year to be £1,160,948; so that, had the total expenditure authorised taken place, that, together with the unauthorised expenditure, would have shown a deficiency on the 1st of January of £71,572. He knew the honorable the Colonial Treasurer would reply that although this amount had been authorised it had not been expended; and in reply to that he (Mr. Buzacott) would say, that if the amount authorised had not been expended, it still remained and would be charged to the year 1874; and therefore, in estimating the revenue and expenditure of that year, they must fairly include the amount unexpended in that year which had been expended in the first quarter of the present year. Then, perhaps, the honorable the Treasurer might reply that there was a sum of £52,000 of this amount that they did not mean to expend. That was represented as unauthorised expenditure, and was more than equal to the unauthorised expenditure of the previous year, £44,000; and he was willing to give him credit for that, and taking it off the £77,000 deficiency, there would still be a deficiency of from £20,000 to £30,000; but instead of that, the honorable the Treasurer's statement showed a credit balance of £39,000. He thought that was the true state of affairs, and that the honorable gentleman could not accuse him of being actuated by any undue hostility in presenting what he had ascertained to be the true aspect of the case. He found that, notwithstanding the revenue of the first quarter of the current year showed no increase—for really it was not an appreciable increase, being only £175, the revenue received during the first quarter of 1874 amounting to £285,344, and during the first quarter of 1875 to £285,519—yet, in spite of that, there was an increase of expenditure during the first quarter of 1875, £26,000 over the corresponding quarter of last year. And he found further that, although the honorable the Treasurer was practically deficient with regard to last year's operations, and although the revenue was in a stationary condition, he came down to the House and deliberately asked to increase the expenditure of the coming year by £34,000. And he also took the precaution of saying that this would be subject to a further increase by the payment of such portions of interest on new loans as might come in for payment, and such unexpended balances as might be brought forward; so that, supposing the House to accept the honorable gentleman's estimate as it stood, it was perfectly clear that, unless some unforeseen accident occurred, the deficiency in the year ending on the 30th of June, 1876, would be a very serious one indeed.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. BUZACOTT: No doubt the honorable the Colonial Treasurer would tell them that although the House had authorised a certain amount to be expended within the year, if

the Government did not spend that amount, it did not mean deficiency; but when these unexpended votes were simply brought forward—transferred from the account of one year to the other—and the expenditure connected with them was taken out of the succeeding year, there would still be a practical deficit. Now, the honorable the Minister for Works had stated that the Ministry inherited something like £140,000 unexpended from 1873, which they had had to provide for in 1874, and it might be so; but if the honorable the Minister for Works was right, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was wrong. That honorable gentleman stated, in his speech twelve months ago, that the unexpended balances brought forward amounted to £41,000, and the lapsed votes to about £32,000; but the amount brought forward this year, instead of being £70,000, amounted to £140,000 under the same heads. Now, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had told the House that, instead of the revenue suffering only to the small extent he anticipated when the tariff was revised, the actual deficiency arising from that was nearly £40,000; and when they considered that the reduction in tariff did not commence until the first of July, and that then the *ad valorem* duties were only reduced two and a-half per cent., and the further two and a-half per cent. commenced from the 1st of October, he thought the estimate of £38,000, caused by the alteration, was in excess of the estimate. In any case, if £38,000 was lost during six months of last year, there would be more than £80,000 lost during the twelve months beginning on the 1st of July, 1875. And still, in spite of the revenue remaining stationary, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer proposed to increase the expenditure by upwards of £34,000. He would ask, how could he reasonably hope to meet that expenditure? He (Mr. Buzacott) was unable to see it, and he should be happy to hear some explanation on the point. In the face of losing from £80,000 to £100,000 by the reduction in the tariff, how was he going to pay this proposed increase of £34,000, besides the sums which would come under the head of unauthorised expenditure? The honorable gentleman, in his statement, took credit to the Government in reference to a uniform rate in connection with telegraphic messages. He said:—

"I shall refer to Electric Telegraph receipts, which show a small decrease. This may be accounted for entirely by the action which the Government took immediately on entering office, which was to establish a uniform rate of one shilling for messages in every part of the colony."

Now, this was claiming credit which the Administration did not deserve.

MR. PALMER: Hear, hear.

MR. BUZACOTT: The rate was made uniform on all the lines in the colony with the exception of one, that from Cardwell to Normanston, by the Administration which preceded

the present one; and when the honorable the Treasurer took credit, on behalf of the Government for this, he was taking a little more than the House would be prepared to accord to him. Then he said:—

“The railway receipts are more gratifying, showing an increase of £12,000, coupled with a small but actual decrease in the working expenses. While the gross receipts have increased, the working expenses have not increased, but have shown a very slight decrease.”

But the tables laid before the House showed an actual increase, and either those tables were incorrect or the statement itself was incorrect. He was not prepared to say which, but he should presume that, as these tables had been very carefully prepared, they were more to be depended upon than the speech, although he believed it had been revised by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, and if there were any inaccuracy he ought to have seen it. There was another thing in connection with the deficiency which he maintained occurred last year, and the still larger deficiency which would occur at the end of the coming financial year, and it was this:—The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had stated himself that there was in connection with ordinary expenditure a very large sum expended on loan and surplus revenue account, amounting to £600,000, and he would put it to honorable members on both sides of the House, whether such an extraordinary expenditure as £600,000 could have taken place last year without materially increasing the revenue from other sources—from almost every source. The ordinary expenditure within the colony, exclusive of interest, was about £800,000, the extraordinary expenditure was about £600,000; so that, in point of fact, the loan expenditure was nearly equal to the amount available from ordinary revenue. If that were so, that they had an extra expenditure of £600,000, and at the close of the year there was a practical deficiency, he would like to know how they would have come out had they not had this large sum to help them? He thought, in considering the financial position of the colony, that was a very serious subject for consideration. Surely the loan expenditure could not go on at the rate of £600,000 a year, and, if not, there must be a time when it would cease to give help, and the colony would feel the stoppage of that expenditure very severely; so that it was absolutely necessary, when there was such large extra and ordinary expenditure, that the ordinary revenue should show a considerable surplus over ordinary expenditure. There was another thing in connection with the honorable the Treasurer's statement that he thought the House would hold to be a mistake. The total receipts from railways in 1874 were under £120,000, and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer estimated to receive for the year ending the 30th of June, 1876, £150,000. Now he was afraid, from what they had seen of the railway receipts for the quarter just ended, that this was a very large

over-estimate, and it would, like several other items in the estimates of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, be found to be considerably in excess of the actual receipts. He then found that the Continental Railway Bill was referred to in the statement, and such being the case, he presumed he would be in order in making some observations upon it. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer said:—

“The first item it will, perhaps, be better to discuss when the Continental Railway Bill comes under the consideration of the House.”

He thought, when the financial policy of the Administration was under discussion, that this was a question that should decidedly be taken into consideration as well. The honorable gentleman went on to say:—

“It is proposed that the sum of £250,000 shall be advanced under that Bill, and I may explain that, if the Bill is carried, the plans and all information are ready to be placed on the table of the House, and this sum will enable the Government to call for tenders for 60 or 70 miles of the line.”

Well, the detailed estimate of their engineer showed that the first fifty-one miles of this line could be constructed for £153,000; so that, supposing they were authorised to carry out the line, he should presume above one hundred miles would be constructed by means of the £250,000 proposed to be asked for in the estimate of this year. He thought the House would agree with him, that before any new works were undertaken, those which had been previously authorised by the House should be provided for.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear.

Mr. BUZACOTT: And he might here state, with regard to the Northern railway, that the Government had received a report from the engineer, which stated that a further sum of £205,000 would be required to complete that work to the point authorised. Now, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer sought to explain away the action of the Government with regard to this by stating that there was an amount of £236,000 in hand, but he (Mr. Buzacott) was in a position to show that this was a mistake. There was no such sum as £236,000 in hand for expenditure on this work. He had been informed on the best authority that there was an indent of nearly £100,000 which had to be provided for out of this £236,000; and there would be two months' expenditure on the 31st of March, which would further reduce that amount by about £20,000, so that the Government had not really more than £120,000 available for the works on that extension. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had also said, that this £236,000 would carry the works over twenty months; but if the amount were reduced, as he had reduced it, to £120,000, it would not last twelve months; so that, when the House met twelve months hence, they would find that either the Northern Railway would have been carried on by means of unauthorised

expenditure, or the work would have been stopped. He did not wish to see either contingency occur, and he thought honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House would support him in holding that, in bringing in a loan estimate for this year, the Government ought, in all fairness, to have provided for the completion of a work of so much importance as the Northern Railway, which was authorised by Parliament a long time ago. Then, the honorable gentleman said that, unless they could get railways constructed at a less rate than £10,000 or £12,000 per mile, many districts would not be able to enjoy the advantages of them. But he (Mr. Buzacott) would point out that the Northern extension, even if the House should provide the £205,000 required to complete it, would not cost £6,000 a mile; and why did the honorable the Colonial Treasurer come down and talk about their lines costing £10,000 or £12,000 a mile? They had, perhaps, cost that where they were managed politically, as had been done down here.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear; "a job."

MR. BUZACOTT: Yes, a job; but he did not say by whom that job had been committed. He should leave that to be decided hereafter; but he was afraid, if the truth came out, the present Ministry would not escape quite.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear.

MR. BUZACOTT: He hoped he had clearly shown that it was not a fair statement for the honorable the Colonial Treasurer to say that the funds in hand were sufficient to enable the Northern Railway to be carried on for twenty months. He maintained that this work should be carried on at a very much faster rate than it was at present. If they wished to derive any benefit from this line, they must extend it with as little delay as possible to the point authorised, because at present it was of no use at all. In anticipation of railway construction, there had been no improvements to anything like the extent necessary on the main roads of the interior; and he could state, with regard to the main road beyond the railway at Rockhampton, into the interior, that it was in a worse state than ever it had been before. He had it on authority which could not be doubted, that, since he travelled by that road himself in 1864, it had never been in such a state as it was at the present time. Nothing had gone over it for the last four months; one could hardly get over it with a horse, and this was simply the result of it being supposed that, as railways were being extended, roads would not be required. But the Government were carrying on the extension so slowly that it was causing almost perfect stagnation in the country; and he maintained the Government were bound, both in regard to the claims of the central district,

and with regard to the railway proving remunerative, to carry on the work much faster than they had been doing during the last year—in fact since the present Government entered office. He did not know whether any instructions had been issued on the point, but he knew that the work had not gone on so well during that time as it did before. As he said, he did not know whether instructions had been issued, but it was very easy for an officer to understand what his superiors desired without positive instructions being issued. He did not accuse the Government of doing any intentional injury to the central district in this matter; he believed it was their intention to provide an amount necessary for completing that work; and, at any rate, he hoped that they would take the matter into their serious consideration, and either withdraw the estimate brought in, or introduce a supplementary estimate which would provide the amount required during the present year, as well as providing the £250,000 proposed to be advanced under a Bill, which he sincerely hoped would never become law. He thought it looked exceedingly strange that the Government should have placed £250,000 on the Estimates for the purposes of such a measure as the Continental Railway Bill, while they refused or declined to put on an amount to complete a work already authorised. The honorable the Minister for Works was very eloquent when he condemned the excessive railway expenditure of the last Administration, but he forgot to go further back than that—he forgot to state that the greatest extravagance that had occurred in railway construction, was at a period antecedent to the time when the Palmer Ministry came into office. While he advocated the extension of the Northern Railway, he was not opposed to the extension of railways in the southern districts. As had been clearly shown the other day, it was only by extending railways that they could hope them to become remunerative; and he said, if by a careful examination of this subject, it could be shown that the Southern line might be extended without involving the colony in any increase in the annual charge for interest, he would be prepared to support any reasonable proposal for its extension, particularly as the engineer had shown it could be carried out at a very small cost. He might say he did not believe in that estimate, but he supposed the opinion of the engineer was worth far more than the opinion of a man who did not profess to have any engineering skill. At the same time, however, he was willing to say that if, as stated by the engineer, that railway could be carried on towards Roma for £3,000 a mile, he was in favor of that extension; but, it could not, in fairness, be carried out until the Northern extension had been completed to the point authorised. While on the subject of railways he would also say that, beyond the portion of the northern district to which he had referred, they

must have railways too, and the sooner this Ministry, or any other Ministry could introduce a system of railway extension dealing equitably with the North and the South, the better, and he would be quite prepared to give it his hearty support. The honorable member for the Maranoa had explained the fallacies of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer's statement with reference to immigration, but he (Mr. Buzacott) was not prepared to endorse everything that honorable member had said, more particularly as from what he had seen of the immigrants who had been introduced into Brisbane this year, he should be very sorry to estimate them, or a large proportion of them, as worth £15 a head. In fact, he thought if they paid £15 a head to send them away, the colony would be decidedly better off. From the statement of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, the House might be led to infer that every adult immigrant was worth forty-five shillings per annum to the colony, after defraying the cost of importation; but that honorable member forgot the heavy annual expenditure for the maintenance of police, gaols, schools, and the civil service, in the whole of which the immigrant must be charged with his proportion. And when he saw that the expenditure per head of population in Queensland now was heavier than it was in 1860, which he had discovered by turning up some old records—the expenditure in 1860 was £6 per head, and now it was £7—he did not see that they were making such an enormous sum by introducing immigrants in the way proposed by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. He fully believed in introducing immigrants, but he looked for the advantage to be derived from their introduction in a way very different from that pointed out by the honorable the Treasurer, which was that they contributed about forty-five shillings per annum to the revenue. With regard to what had been said about the prospect of a crisis, he did not care to talk about such matters, because he believed if they did they would perhaps facilitate such a result, which was certainly not one to be desired. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had said that because the bank deposits were equal to the advances, therefore the colony was under no obligation to these institutions; but he forgot that a large amount of money which was placed in banks in Sydney and Melbourne as deposits came up to Queensland as advances, and that tended to increase the deposits here; but the fact that the deposits were equal to the advances did not show that they had money enough in the colony, or that they could carry on without the help of these institutions. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer also said that Cooktown had become the second town in the colony, but it had become prosperous from the importation of Asiatics, which some honorable members on the other

side were desirous of stopping; and he had no doubt whatever that if they stopped the importation of Chinese in the North they would very soon find that Cooktown, instead of being the second or third amongst the towns of the colony, it would be fourth or fifth. He thought the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, in referring to this matter, must have forgotten Maryborough, which was very nearly equal to Rockhampton, and he was the more surprised at this because the present Administration had always led the public to believe that Maryborough was a town they looked after with a peculiar regard. He thought the statement must have been unintentional, and perhaps the honorable gentleman would be happy to retract it. He quite agreed with the statements of the honorable member for Maranoa as to the excessive departmental expenditure proposed. The public works were to be reduced by £106,000, and the general expenditure was to be increased by £34,000; and seeing, as he said before, that there was no perceptible increase in the revenue—that, in fact, it was stationary—he did not think the increase proposed by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was at all justified, and he hoped the House would not endorse it, if they had any regard for the welfare of the colony. In making these remarks he must disclaim any wish to misrepresent or to distort, or to claim a mean advantage over the honorable the Colonial Treasurer; and he did not suppose that anything he (Mr. Buzacott) could say would have the effect of injuring that honorable gentleman with regard to his position in the House.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear.

MR. BUZACOTT: At the same time, he felt that it was of no use to bring in a number of Bills, such as those he saw on the paper, if they allowed the finances of the country to get into disorder. He was sure honorable members on both sides must admit that the Education Bill, the Land Bill, and other Bills, were of no use whatever, if the people were to be plunged into financial distress; and he hoped that honorable members opposite would give this matter their serious consideration. He had given a great deal of consideration to the subject, and he had endeavored, as far as he could, to explain what he believed to be the situation of the finances of the colony at the present time. If honorable members opposite could show that, instead of there being a deficiency last year, there was a surplus, and that instead of there being every probability of an increased deficiency for the coming financial year, there would be a surplus, and that they could go on paying their way, he would be happy to support the expenditure of the Estimates of the Ministry by every means in his power.

MR. FRYAR said the honorable member for Rockhampton, in the earlier part of his speech, took occasion to deprecate the course taken by the honorable the Minister for

Works in going back so far as 1866 in reference to matters with which the finances of 1874 and 1875 were more immediately connected; but the honorable member so far forgot that part of his address as to have travelled back himself so far as 1860. He (Mr. Fryar) hoped he would not fall into the same error of travelling back any very great distance into the historical records of the colony. It was a very dry and uninteresting subject generally—that of figures; but he must acknowledge, however, that he had listened with great attention and some degree of pleasure to the discussion so far as it had gone. The honorable member for Maranoa had used figures which he would have been very much inclined to have used himself if he had spoken before him. At any rate, the fact that that honorable member had done so would save him (Mr. Fryar) from making himself amenable to the charge, which had already been made against one honorable member, of presenting an address to his constituents, and afterwards using it in that House, because the same figures had been referred to which he had used under other circumstances. Notwithstanding the attention that seemed to have been given to the matter, he was at a loss to see the drift of the discussion, for he took it that the discussion was at least a year behind date; it was something like the discussion that ought to have taken place at that time last year. He had been very glad to believe since he saw these Estimates that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was coming to a sound state of mind with respect to the revenue that would probably be received. He thought that was where a very great error was committed last year, when the Estimates of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer were beyond what there was any reasonable probability of obtaining. At any rate, that was his opinion, and he thought honorable members would bear him out in stating that he did not hesitate to express that opinion. The honorable gentleman very soon, however, saw the error of his ways, for within three months from that time, when he laid the Estimates for the first six months of the year on the table, he had so far modified his opinion, that instead of showing a progressive estimate he had actually fallen back to the receipts of 1873, showing that in that short period, he had found out he had committed a grievous error in estimating so largely for the year 1874. It puzzled him exceedingly at that time to find out by what means the honorable member was going to obtain the amount calculated upon. Indeed he had never found it out; but knowing he was extremely obtuse on all political matters, and especially with regard to the *sub rosa* possibilities of Ministers, he was content to believe that the honorable the Treasurer had some reason for the hope that was in him. But when he saw the receipts for the first six months of this year, he at once came to the conclusion that the estimate for the year

was not likely to be received. The fact was, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was not himself to blame; no doubt he had had to depend on the information derived from his chief officers, and perhaps also to some extent on the estimates of his predecessors in office. When the House met in January, they were like beginning a new establishment; they had taken a very large number of new partners into the firm, and they were inclined, as people sometimes were under the same circumstances, to be a little extravagant. They cut out a great deal too largely. And besides having several new members, they had a new tailor to boot, so that there was no disposition to spare the cloth. Not only was the coat cut out considerably too large for their means, but all the accessories to the coat were on a great deal too extravagant a scale. They had an additional amount of powder for the chief wig, to the extent of a thousand pounds, had two new wigs into the bargain. They had a thousand pounds additional for gold lace for the collar and front of the coat, and they had a star for the breast, where no star had previously appeared—a star to the extent of £300, to intimate the heroic achievements of the honorable the Vice-President of the Executive Council, and they had also the Ministerial buttons, with a considerable amount of additional gilt; so that there were not only these accessories to the garment, but the garment itself, in every possible particular, was cut out on a very extensive scale—so much so, that there was scarcely anything left for the usual and necessary appendages. These particles of the coat, he might state, were officially notified in the *Gazette*, individually mentioned in the Estimates laid before the House, and regularly notified or certified in the blue books, and which were to be found in every Government office throughout the length and breadth of the land. But the appendages—the road parties, the contractors, and sub-contractors of their bridges, and similar works, and the artisans and mechanics employed on the other public works of the colony cut a very sorry figure, indeed, in the return of expenditure, as exhibited in the *Government Gazette* of the 15th of January last. The honorable member for Maranoa had saved him a great deal of trouble in referring to these matters more in detail, but there were a couple of items he would refer to under the head of roads and public buildings, departmental. For 1873 the amount was about £3,000, and for 1874 about £6,000—the expenditure was doubled in 1874, but the item immediately following roads and public buildings had not kept up in the same proportion. Indeed, instead of the expenditure being doubled, there was no increase whatever, but rather a decrease. This appeared in the *Gazette* of the 15th of January, and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer might see it; and it was therefore very plain that these appendages were of very scant proportions indeed. But he did not blame the Ministry in this matter;

he considered the House was to blame. The Estimates were before the House; they were based to a great extent on those of the honorable members who now occupied the Opposition benches, and all these extravagant accessories, or nearly all, emanated from that side of the House. The House had the matter before them; so, how they could blame the honorable the Colonial Treasurer at the present time, he could hardly make out. Certainly, there was an amount voted for these accessories—roads and bridges—and the public works of the colony, far in excess of any amount ever voted by any Parliament of Queensland for these purposes before. That amount was £306,000; but of this they found that only £221,000 had been expended, leaving a deficiency in the expenditure of some £84,000, while the revenue itself was short, he believed, £55,000, and it had already been shown where the rest of the money went to. But, as they were parties to this excessive expenditure—for he believed what was not voted in the Estimates-in-Chief was voted in the Supplementary Estimates, at all events, to a considerable extent—as they were parties to this, as they knew the salaries that were increased must be paid, that new offices must be sustained, and all existing contracts must be provided for; that casualties, which were continually arising, such as demands for education, police protection in newly discovered gold fields, and casualties in harbors, in rivers from floods, had all to be met and provided for—they must share whatever blame there was. It appeared to him that the only votes that could possibly have been left short were the votes for roads and bridges, and such like buildings. Now, the only way out of this difficulty was, that more caution should be exercised in estimating the revenue; and, above everything, to keep down the votes below the estimate of revenue. He could, perhaps, give good reason, from the tables the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had laid before them, why he considered he was not likely to receive the amount he calculated upon receiving. It appeared to him the honorable gentleman supposed that, because they had increased their importations for two years previously, they would continue to increase them; that because, for the year 1872, the importations had been £16 5s. 9d. per head, as against £12 9s. 8d. in the previous year, and, in 1873, they had been £18 13s. 6d. per head, consequently, in the next year, they would be £20 per head. He thought that was a very erroneous conclusion, and the fact that they had over-imported in those two previous years ought to have been very conclusive evidence that they should act very cautiously indeed, in estimating the revenue from similar sources during the following year. The honorable gentleman, however, as soon as he had time to see into the matter, discovered his error, but it was too late to rectify it; and he (Mr. Fryar) would only caution the House at the present time of

falling into the same error again. He found that instead of £540,000, which was the revenue expected to be received from the Customs in 1874, it was estimated that, during the year ending in June, 1876, the amount from that source would be only £500,000—£40,000 less than last year, although they had about 25,000 more people in the colony. They had received something like 17,000 additional during the twelve months, and consequently it was a fair calculation to reckon 25,000 for the eighteen months. He thought, therefore, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was not at all in excess in his estimate on this occasion. It was quite unnecessary that he should refer further to the Estimates in detail, but there were one or two matters which had been mentioned by honorable members opposite, to which he would make some reference; and, more particularly, to the table of imports and exports. He agreed to some little extent with the honorable member for Maranoa that the excess of imports might indicate prosperity, but that excess must naturally be to a very limited extent, and would be accounted for by immigrants arriving and bringing either goods or money with them, and also by the Government borrowing money, as they were continually doing, and importing railway and other material from abroad, and paying for it out of these loans; so that he was not at all afraid when he saw a slight increase of importation over exportation. At the same time, he would remind the honorable member for Maranoa that, if he looked at the table he had already referred to, he would find that, from the foundation of the colony until 1866 inclusive, in every year, without any exception, they imported very nearly double the amount of goods they exported, and he knew the result—they all knew the result in 1866! From that time the scale had been turned. In 1867 they exported very much more than they imported, and in every year since that, without a single exception, they had exported a great deal more than they imported. Now, the consequences that arose in 1866, showed that, at that time, the colony, and perhaps the people individually, were almost in a state of insolvency. But they now proposed to pay off their debts, and, at any rate, get themselves into something like a solid position; but still this question of importation and exportation was not at all a settled question. There were so many conditions and influences to be considered that it really required great caution in dealing with it. There appeared to be a marked difference in the estimate of the value of a man in the opinion of some honorable members. One considered a man to be worth about £15, and the other gave his estimate at about £112; but it was quite immaterial to go into that question at the present time. He thought it was pretty well understood on both sides of the House that they wanted men, and must have immigration, and as a consequence they must get

them from wherever they were to be had; and as there were rather more in the old country, according to the means of living, the extent of land, and other matters, than there were here, he thought that was the place to which they should look for immigrants. For instance, they had heard that in Germany there was perhaps a man for every acre, while in Great Britain there was a man for every two acres; so that those countries had plenty and to spare of people for Queensland. It was good policy for a Ministry to use every means they could for getting out a good class of immigrants to this colony. He could not agree with the honorable member for Rockhampton that the expenditure for gaols, &c., was entirely owing to the new arrivals. Perhaps, it would be found the other way; but it was not worth while going into that question. The Brisbane and Ipswich and the Rockhampton Railways had been brought into the discussion. The former was a bantling of honorable members now on the opposite side of the House, who, when in office, brought it forward for the purpose of forestalling honorable members now in power. Whatever Ministry held office, the country had to pay the piper; and the votes specially given for that line being constructed did not include the three or four surveys that had been previously made, nor the departmental expenses; and he thought he was within the mark when he said that the line would cost about £20,000 per mile before it was finished. The honorable member for Rockhampton made something of the extension of the Northern line being cheap. It would cost about £6,000 a mile. That, however, was no excuse for its having been put down on the Estimates at £4,000, and for a new vote of £2,000 a mile being required. From what he had heard, it was the fashion in the past to sacrifice a chief engineer under circumstances like the present: Mr. Fitzgibbon, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Plews had been sacrificed. Why not follow out the plan? It was the only one, it appeared, by which to make those in charge of the railways of the colony pay proper attention to the House, and to regard the estimates and calculations that they laid before Parliament. The debate had gone far enough. He hoped that the House would get through the Estimates as quickly as possible; and lay the blame, if any irregularity existed, where it should properly be laid, on the Ministry.

Mr. PETTIGREW observed that so many honorable members had come out on the financial position of the Government that it would seem they fancied they were all Gladstones. He should confine himself to a much more moderate position; and should not trouble the Treasurer by referring to any of his schedules. He should deal with a part of the subject in hand in a plain and practical manner, and straightforwardly, as it affected his constituents. The honorable member for

East Moreton had made a complaint; but he was not the only one that had occasion to complain on behalf of his constituents. He (Mr. Pettigrew) should take the Ipswich electorates—he was happy that the Premier, amongst other honorable members, was the representative of one of them—and he should deal with them in comparison with the Brisbane electorates, including Logan; and he should be able to point out first, that the present Ministry were a purely centralising Government; secondly, that they intended to deal with Brisbane as the whole colony of Queensland; and, thirdly, that the attempts of the Treasurer to introduce dry-docks, wharves, and steam-boats for merchants who would not invest their own money for their own traffic, were part of a system to bolster up goodness knew what! except a business of swallowing up for Brisbane trade the wealth derived from the wealthier districts of the colony which took nothing by Ministerial favor. He had heard so much about Ipswich being done, that he must assert at once that it was the wealthiest district of the colony. The land taken up under the Act of 1868, to 1874, amounted to 180,000 acres more than in all the Brisbane district, including Beenleigh. Although he had not time to take out the selectors, he knew that they were more numerous, and that their agricultural operations were larger, and that they had a greater area of land under crop, in his district, than could be found in the Brisbane district; and they held more agricultural and first-class pastoral land, and had it better cropped and stocked, than did those with whom he was instituting a comparison. He should show how the people in the Ipswich electorates spent their money, as against those of the favored districts. The horses numbered, in Brisbane, 6,938; Logan, 3,675; united, 10,613. Cattle—Brisbane, 39,021; Logan, 38,615; total, 77,636. Sheep—Brisbane, 6,569; Logan, 325; total, 6,894. Pigs, which formed a large item, numbered for both, 9,265. Now, he should count Ipswich, taking in Gatton and Goodna:—Horses, 11,958, exceeding Brisbane districts by more than 1,300; cattle, 108,931, an excess of nearly 30,000; sheep, 95,309—there was no comparison; pigs, 19,589, or 10,000 more than Brisbane and Logan. Now, to show that his district did not comprise only squatting electorates, he might state that the total extent of land under crop in Brisbane and Logan was 15,956 acres; while in the Ipswich electorates the area was 17,588, or an excess in their favor of 1,632 acres. Those returns were for 1874. Referring to the comparative expenditure, which was the real question, in the two districts, he took occasion to mention that he regarded the Great Northern road from Brisbane as made only for Cobb's coach, and that most of the roads and bridges outside the city were for the gentlemen who left their offices for a drive home. He went out one night in the dark, a distance of twelve

miles, on as nice a road as he ever travelled in his life, and returning next day he met an old man driving a girl in a cart! no other traffic whatever. He knew how it was done: one gentleman said to another in office, "Oh, drive out with me on Saturday and have a smoke, and I will show you a nasty place on the road," and it was made all right. But it was not a road merely that they wanted; it was a bowling-green. Well, £22,550 was the sum put down in the Estimates for Brisbane roads, and only £3,100 for the West Moreton electorate; or a difference of £19,450 in favor of the former. Those were estimates to bring before the House. And yet the Government expected honorable members from Ipswich to support them. Could the Government expect them to do it?

MR. THOMPSON: No!

MR. PETTIGREW: The honorable member for Bundamba got £150 for his district. How could he go back to his friends and say he had done his best for them? For himself (Mr. Pettigrew) he had succeeded in getting £660; and the honorable member for West Moreton got £300, for Rosewood Scrub, which was not nearly enough. The produce that came out of that scrub made a large amount of the traffic at three stations of the Southern and Western Railway. Last year, Brisbane got £11,050, and Ipswich £1,570, for roads and bridges; leaving a balance in favor of the former of £9,480. One of the bridges, at Blackfellows' Creek, for which the vote was given, in his own district, was not yet made. The expenditure was kept back by the Government in order to prevent his (Mr. Pettigrew's) election. Now, he should show about the meanest and paltriest thing that he ever heard of; and if the honorable member for Maranoa before sitting down had moved a vote of want of confidence in the Government, it would justify him in supporting that honorable member, and he would undertake to say that every honorable member who had to go by the Southern and Western Railway or Cobb's coach to meet his constituents would feel compelled to do so too. For years past there had been an endeavor to extinguish Ipswich. Before he entered the House, he had often urged members, and asked why they did not arrange with the Government. The answer was, "If we push the Government now, the Opposition will take advantage of it." That was their reason for not pushing. He should have taken advantage of such a time to push them, and he would take advantage of the opportunity to do it! Now, he should come to the point to which he desired to direct the attention of the Treasurer. After a great deal of trouble for many years, Ipswich managed to get a Custom House. It cost, for a collector, £400 a-year; a landing waiter, £220; a clerk and locker, £200; total, £820. Would the House believe it? There was provision made in the Estimates for that Custom House for six months only, up to the end of this

year! The Premier had taken it into his head that Ipswich was to lose its present position entirely when the Brisbane Railway was completed, and that it was to be turned into an appendage to Queen-street rag-fair. He was to get his vote by a fluke. To that arrangement all who represented Ipswich electorates objected. Ipswich was as much entitled to a Custom House as any other portion of the colony; and he did not see, when the railway was extended, why the Custom House business should not extend also, nor why the same facilities for business should not be extended to the mercantile community of Toowoomba, Warwick, and Dalby. Why should a man send down his money to Brisbane to somebody else to pay duty for him, when his goods could be taken up to where he had his business and put in the Customs' shed, and he could pay the duty himself? There would always be trouble about advancing the interests of Brisbane as against the rest of the colony until a Minister comprehended his duty and his position. There were in West Moreton 20,000 people. At the Treasurer's computation of £3 12s. being the amount that every immigrant was worth to the colony, they would give £72,000. The land revenue of West Moreton was £30,000. Then came land agents' receipts, Custom House payments, and all the local revenue of bond rents, spirit licenses, publicans' licenses, amounting to, say, £3,000. But irrespective of that, the Treasury received £102,000 from the district; the expenditure for roads and bridges was £3,400; so that the district lost £98,000. There was consideration in return for the taxes paid. He did have a notion that each district was to receive its own money in some shape or other; but the reality showed a result quite different. That money, if it did not return to the district, went somewhere. Where did it go? Representatives had to come crawling to the Government to ask for a pound or two for their districts, when what they wanted ought to be proffered to them without the necessity for asking. The dry-dock took £30,000 last session, and now £25,000 more was asked for to complete it. What guarantee had the House—was there a single individual who could say—that the work would be finished for that money? It could not be afforded to allow the Brisbane Government to be carried on *versus* the whole colony. The railway, too, might cost as much more as was put down for it. Were honorable members to come to the House merely as recorders of the wishes of the Government? If Ministers were made responsible for their acts, as in the good old times, they would be more careful than they were. Who were to blame for the original railway estimate? He found the parties who voted for the railway to blame; not Ministers, who were of course anxious to carry on the Government, but the House. With reference to the Gympie scheme, until a competent engineer showed the House that

that railway could be carried out for his estimate, and pledged himself to it, he (Mr. Pettigrew) should not vote for such a work. It was a monstrous thing that an engineer should undertake a work, when a man with half an eye could see that it could not be done in the time stated, at the pace at which it was going, and when it turned out that additional money must be provided for it. He had no business to bring charges against officers, and he should be sorry to bring a charge against any officer; had he thought it was a duty that Ministers owed to the public to look with their own eyes at what was going on, and if they did so they would be able to judge better of them than they seemed to be able to do now. He supposed it would take another £50,000 to finish the railway. He had heard it stated on authority that it would be completed by the beginning of the year; then, that it would be opened on the 1st of March; then for the opening of Parliament; and, now, by the first of June;—but he did not think it would be finished for the next three months. Men were engaged night and day, doing their best. If the portion of line now open had had a good settling rain before it was opened for traffic, the country would have been saved thousands of pounds. He believed that men who held contracts had been discharged without rhyme or reason, and their work put into the hands of other persons. They had yet to be settled with. The Government should show which way of doing the work was cheapest or dearest, when the engineer took it out of the contractor's hands and undertook to complete it. A good officer was dismissed, and taken back again, after three or six months; when it was found that, from the start, he was under engagement to the Government. He (Mr. Pettigrew) wanted to know why that officer had been discharged, why he was taken on again, and if the Government would have to pay him for the time he had been out of his office? And he must be answered before he voted for the estimates, now before the House, to complete the railway. Honorable members were the custodians of the public money, and they would take care of it. He had heard something about the Great Northern Railway, for which more money was required. The least said about that the easiest mended. The honorable member for Rockhampton had stated that no traffic took place for three months on account of the rain. What on earth did the country want with a railway where no traffic could take place for three months on account of the rain? That question had best be left at rest. He (Mr. Pettigrew) did not wish to annoy the Government. He was glad the honorable member for Maranoa left them just where he did. The House did not want to put the Government out, but to watch them and make them do their duty. Something had been said about honorable members doing what they were told by the Ministry, and acting for their party. He should sup-

port his party so long as his party supported his constituency, and not one hour longer.

Mr. HODGKINSON said if the statement of the honorable member for Stanley, that his district was so peculiarly rich in sheep and pigs, was worth anything, the debate could very well afford to have a little more time expended upon answering it; and he must take leave to tell the honorable member that he, for one, objected to the House being detained in proceeding with the public business to hear a lamentation of the way in which that district was treated. He did not know much of it, but he always believed that Ipswich was the one peculiarly favored district of this colony. While the outside districts were struggling to get attention to their wants, various Governments had obtained the support of the Ipswich and West Moreton party by abundant favors from the public treasury. The honorable member's lamentation over the intention of the Treasurer to dispense with the Custom House at Ipswich enlightened honorable members from a distance of the manner in which the funds of the colony had been expended heretofore to maintain such an establishment, at an unnecessary expense, or a river that was little better than a ditch, where it would be impossible to turn a canal boat. There had been many public works erected to develop the resources of Ipswich; but the sooner that honorable members' senses became awakened to the nature of the complaint of the honorable member for Stanley, whose bridge over a creek had not been built, the sooner would that honorable member hear some facts, which might have been told him before, were it not a waste of time to recapitulate the extravagant waste of public money which that town had enjoyed. Should the railway from Ipswich destroy that town from the face of this colony, it would be the greatest benefit that could befall Queensland. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) had listened to the debate with great attention, and he had not heard a single argument from the honorable members for Stanley, East Moreton, Rockhampton—not even from that arch-traitor, the honorable member for Maranoa, who had set the ball rolling—that was the gentleman who took advantage of the financial position of the colony to disorganise the Liberal party—dealing with the real question under consideration. The honorable member for Stanley, when he objected to being called upon by that party to act with them—that he would not be dictated to by the heads of that party—that he would not act in concert with them, unless it suited his own peculiar views—showed that he was ignorant of the first principles of Parliamentary government.

Mr. PETTIGREW rose to order, and protested that he never said anything of the sort. He saw in the press that the members on the Ministerial side of the House were told so and so; he never said that any Minister asked him to do anything.

Mr. HODGKINSON bowed to the honorable member's correction, and was sorry that his memory deceived him. If the honorable member wished him to retract, he must tell him that even if a Minister had asked him to do so and so, it was his duty to have listened to that application; and that a Minister, in making it, would not have exceeded his duty. Honorable members like the honorable member for Stanley introduced a very unhappy element into the constitution of the extremely liberal and progressive party, for their progressiveness and liberality were confined entirely to their especial electorates. The whole of the honorable member's address had been, not for the colony, for which he should be as much the representative as he was for Stanley, but for his own constituents—including those unhappy 19,000 pigs and the aggregation of pig-styes—who were not satisfied with the provision made for them on the Estimates; and the honorable member would not, therefore, vote this way or that way. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) knew of districts in the North which had got nothing from the Treasury, and their representatives never made a growl. He should tell the honorable member why. Because the colony was on the eve of a crisis, probably, as the honorable member for Maranoa had warned the House.

Mr. McILWRAITH: He never said so.

Mr. HODGKINSON: He was not willing to concede any longer the position taken up by honorable members of the calibre of the honorable member for Stanley. Their wants grew so, that they must be put down, whether they would vote with their party or not. Therefore he was glad that the Government announced their principle of confining the expenditure within the revenue. The colony had been increasing in wealth as well as in debt; and it was well known it was in a better state now than in 1866. Honorable members for the northern districts knew that their constituents were largely taxed, in addition to the privations they incurred by residing in those districts, for the lavish expenditure that had taken place in Brisbane and its suburbs, including Ipswich—for Ipswich was a suburb of the metropolis. But, as the Government had laid down the principle that future railways should be constructed out of the land revenue, that would do more to prevent the increase of the public debt of the colony than anything else. It would prevent the capacity of honorable members being gauged by the amount of money they could squeeze out of the Government. When the Ministry were on the eve of dissolution, the honorable member for Stanley would not be able to come to them to offer to bargain his support for a sum of money for his electorate. Was that the proper position of a representative? Referring to the honorable member for Maranoa, he (Mr. Hodgkinson) must say that he never missed his abilities so much as on the present occasion. He was unfortunately unable to correct the honorable gentleman's

figures, and he did not think it necessary to do so; for his industry and assiduity in examining the Estimates of the Colonial Treasurer were admirable and valuable. Both the honorable member for Stanley and the honorable member for Rockhampton had spoken to the same subject, the expenditure upon public works. In respect to railways especially, their electorates were much in the same position, as regarded the use that had been made of the public money. That unhappy miserable abortion, the Great Northern Railway, should have been thought of by the honorable member for Rockhampton before he dwelt much upon railway extension; and he should have remembered that the Government were not alone responsible for the expenditure upon works, because the honorable member for Maranoa had been Minister for Works during ten months of last year. There was no man whose advent to the Works Department was regarded with so much satisfaction as that of the honorable member for Maranoa, because he had some practical knowledge of the duties pertaining to his position. However, there were honorable members in the House who would waive their claims upon the revenue, so long as they saw no attempt to bolster up those naughty electorates that were bought with a bribe in some shape or other. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) said that any member whose seat depended upon the amount of money he could get for the gratification of his constituency was not to be counted on by any Ministry, and was one open to be bought at any time by the highest bidder. He should quote, in conclusion, a few lines that were applicable to the present state of things:—

“The deep fall
Of those too high aspiring, who rebel'd
With Satan; he who envies now thy state,
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from disobedience, that, with him
Bereav'd of happiness, thou may'st partake
His punishment, eternal misery;
Which would be all his solace and revenge
As a despite done against the Most-High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe,
But listen not to his temptations, warn
Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard
By terrible example, the reward
Of disobedience; firm they might have stood,
Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress.”

Mr. DE SATGE said he thought it would take more than the mismanagement of the happy family opposite to him to plunge this colony into anything like financial embarrassment. He believed there were in the colony at the present time the elements of prosperity; with the price of produce as it was, Queensland would always be able to show to those outside her borders, to the neighboring colonies, and to England, whence capital was derived, that this colony was in a state of elasticity and possessed resources that would obviate the effects of any mismanagement; that if the colony could only be kept intact, if the northern districts were preserved, Queensland was right and safe. He advised honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House to have some consideration for

those districts, and to see that their wants were not utterly ignored. If they would once get out of the present state of political exigency that seemed ever to possess them, that desire for place, that absolute truckling to every member for support, that had been going on for years past, they could manage the colony fairly. If not, he warned them that a time was coming when the people would not bear with them, but would take a different position from any they had ever taken before. What was wanted by the different districts was a state of perfect independence of interests; and unless the North had that, the colony would never prosper in the way that it should. The Estimates that had been put before the House were to secure the two ends of the colony; in everything, the Treasurer absolutely ignored the central district. He gave the greatest credit to that political profligate, the Premier, for the arrangement, as it most certainly secured to him a majority of the votes of the northern members in the House by unwarrantable expenditure. Everything had been done for the head and tail of the colony; but justice was not done to the main body of the colony, the central district. One had only to cast a glance at the appropriation of the surplus revenue fund of £240,000 to see that. There was one item, "Groins, Upper Flat, Rockhampton, £3,633 17s. 1d." In connection with the Great Northern Railway, he mentioned as a matter for consideration, in favor of its extension, that at the present moment there were actually 1,000 tons of copper waiting on Peak Downs to be carried to the port, and there was no means of getting it down, even at £9 a ton, which was offered. There was property worth £80,000, belonging to a company that had started mining some years ago, and, against all obstacles, had persevered, but never came to the House for support in any way. That company had spent their capital lavishly and had done more than any other company, in this colony at any rate, to develop the resources of the country. He did not allude to wool, the produce in which he was particularly interested in that district, because he knew he should be immediately met with an outcry from the other side of the House; but he might say that there was abundance of it waiting from last year's shearing. If 1,000 tons of copper were lying at Logan, what an outcry there would be to get a railway to the spot! Even the other day, the Minister for Works alluded to the mines at Cloncurry as a reason for carrying the Continental Railway there. But at Cloncurry nothing was developed, while at Peak Downs there were mines in operation of ten years' standing. Nothing was done for them, because they happened to be situated in the central district. But they attracted public attention in other places outside the colony. He believed it was not customary, nor was it right, to go into the details of the Estimates in the debate on the Financial Statement. It should not

be a debate of details. At the proper time, he should be prepared to show the extraordinary neglect of the central district by the present Government. The Treasurer had referred to the enormous sum paid under, and the unsatisfactory state of, the present immigration system—£132,000, one-tenth of the revenue of the colony, paid for persons brought to the colony at an expense of £15 odd per head.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That was not taken out of revenue.

Mr. DE SATGE: Well, the interest on the loan must come out of revenue. Though the loan might be saddled partially upon posterity, he hoped that posterity would be able to manage much better than we were doing, to attract immigration to Queensland. A colony with the means at command that this colony had—with its liberal land laws, the protection for property and capital it afforded, with security of tenure—to settle people when they arrived, should not be saddled with the cost of immigrants. The more he looked at the subject, the more he was sure that if the people were polled to-morrow, they would not agree to £132,000 a-year being expended for immigration. And when he regarded the class of immigrants that came, he must say that a more scandalous imposition could not be perpetrated upon a struggling colony. With regard to the way that the Government managed the finances of the colony, he thought they should be brought to task, in two instances especially. First, with regard to public works undertaken in particular constituencies, the cost of which was very much underrated, and which led to applications for successive votes of money, to complete them. There was the Maryborough Bridge—

An HONORABLE MEMBER: It was on the Loan Estimate.

Mr. DE SATGE: There was a sum of £19,000 on the Estimates to complete a work which, he thought, would cost £35,000. That sum was for one work. It would be nothing but fair for the Government to extend their scheme, and give Rockhampton what it had a legal right to. But the wants of the central district were ignored. It was the system of spending large sums in that partial way which would bring about a state of disruption, if it should be continued. A further sum of £25,000 was asked for to complete the Brisbane Railway. The system would cause general dissatisfaction throughout the colony. Some years ago, there was a general outcry for separation; and it would be raised again. Several districts he had travelled through were dissatisfied, as, in spite of their wants, they had found there was no use in asking the present Government for expenditure. With reference to the Northern Railway, something like an expenditure of £11,000 a month had been promised, to push on the work; and why did not the Government see that the line was advanced to the limit of the money that was to be spent? Why were not

immigrants imported to do the work? Everyone knew what was done in America. When the Trans-Continental Railway was decided upon, labor was imported; and 30,000 Chinamen were started at work immediately. Here, not only was there no attempt to attract suitable labor, but it was proposed to put a poll tax upon Chinamen; while £15 a head was paid for every loafer from Liverpool. Did not that strike the supporters of the Government? He was not a factious opponent of the Government; if they attended to his district, and as long as he thought them honest in endeavoring to carry out the business of the country, he should support them. Let them adopt something of the system that had been carried out in that great country which honorable members on their own side of the House were always quoting, and import the proper kind of labor for the railway. On the American line, as much as a mile and a-half was made in a day. But the very name of Asiatic labor was objectionable to honorable members opposite. The conditions of this colony were various and distinct. There was a part with a climate that was good for Europeans; but, there were also parts that would never be developed unless the right kind of labor was procured for the purpose. The Ministry in power did not dare to tell their constituents that; they dare not propose to expend a *sou* for the importation of that kind of labor which could stand the sun of this country. He had been assured that the Government had not the slightest wish to carry out the Northern Railway, and that it was at their suggestion that the work was languishing. He warned the Government that certain steps would be taken to dismember the colony; and he thought no greater calamity could befall Queensland, which had all the greatest elements of the highest prosperity within its borders. The financial statement showed that in spite of wasteful expenditure, the colony would be safe under proper administration. In New South Wales the business of the Government was carried out in small buildings, or in hired buildings; after ninety years, the Government were only now beginning to build. There, they were content to wait. But extravagant expenditure had been pushed on in Queensland from political motives. However, he hoped to see other influences prevail, and that in the supplementary estimates some addition would be made to the quota of the central district, that some attempt would be made to deal fairly with it.

Mr. THOMPSON said, that not professing to be a financier, he should not go into the Treasurer's statement, but he should offer some observations on a few facts that must strike any man, whether a financier or not. In the first place, he found in the statement, last year, that the Treasurer distinctly promised and held out the hope that there would be a further reduction of taxation this

year. He failed to see from anything that had been pointed out on the other side why that should not take place; no explanation was given. The honorable gentleman owed it to the House to explain why the £80,000 reduction of taxation which he had promised, should not take place. If that was clearly put, it would do away with a great deal of what had been said of the financial statement. Some talk had taken place about the Palmer Ministry and their conduct. Well, that need not have formed part of the deliberations of honorable members on the financial statement. When that Ministry took office, the patent fact stood before them that, for a series of years, there was a gradually increasing deficit, which amounted at last to £300,000. During their tenure of office that was gradually wiped out, and they had a balance of £30,000 when they left office. Now, the country was beginning to get on the wrong side again. There were the figures to show that what he stated were substantial facts. The statements were contained in a former financial statement of the Treasurer, and were beyond doubt in any way. In Mr. Bell's financial statement, made in 1873, he showed the excess of revenue over expenditure to be £136,833; and in the statement made in 1869—he should not attempt to follow the figures—Mr. Stephens distinctly admitted that there was a gradually increasing deficit to the amount he had before stated, and during the term of office of the late Government they wiped the whole of it out, so that he could not see any foundation for the assertion made by honorable members on the other side, that they had managed the finances badly, or increased the debt of the colony in any way. He should not have risen to point out such obvious facts as these, but he wanted to refer to something not at all obvious. He had looked through these Estimates very carefully, and he must admit that he could not see anywhere the salaries of Mr. MacDevitt and Mr. Wight.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear.

Mr. THOMPSON: Now, there must be something radically wrong in their financial system, which would enable the Government to have loan estimates which could be appropriated for secret service purposes. If they were to have disagreeable members sent to England or elsewhere, let there be a sum for secret services placed on the Estimates for the purpose of getting rid of them. He was extremely sorry that Mr. MacDevitt was absent; if he had been present, they would have had any amount of fun from him. He was sure the way that gentleman left the Ministry must have been provocative of the greatest amount of enjoyment to all parties concerned. He was quite sure the way in which he retired from his constituency must have delighted that constituency extremely, and it would have been equally delightful to the House to hear the history of it. And

he was certain the way in which the present Minister for Works stepped into his shoes was also equally delightful to all parties concerned. At any rate, it appeared that the Government had in a most unauthorised way appropriated money that ought to have been devoted to immigration. Instead of immigration, it should have been set down to emigration; and these people ought to have been sent as far out of the world as possible. There was Mr. Wight—why should he have been sent?

MR. PALMER: To take the down off the other.

MR. THOMPSON: To take the down off! Now, what these gentlemen had to do when they arrived at their destination he had not yet discovered; and what he wished to point out to the House was this:—That unless there was a substantive resolution placed on the records of the House that they should be employed, they should cease to be employed. They were employed, and he thought it was the duty of the House to express their disapprobation of officers on the other side of the world being paid large salaries, without the authority of Parliament, and especially under the very suspicious circumstances connected with the appointments he referred to. He thought, as he said before, that there must be something radically wrong in any financial system which allowed these things to be done, and that House had no control. Now, there was no one more than the honorable the Colonial Treasurer who had inveighed, and justly inveighed, against unauthorised expenditure and the House having no control; but was there anything that could have entered into the imagination of any honorable member like appropriating public money in order to get rid of those who had become publicly disagreeable? He was sure that that was an expenditure never contemplated when the amount voted for immigration was agreed to. That appeared to him to be a very serious matter in regard to their finances. Now, he came to the honorable member for Stanley. That honorable member had a happy way of making people laugh and putting them in good humor, but at the same time there was a great deal of serious common sense in what he said; and he (Mr. Thompson) agreed with him in saying that he never saw estimates which so thoroughly ignored the agricultural districts in the neighborhood of Ipswich as these did. They had been told that there had been £80,000 saved, or rather not spent, out of the vote for public works—for roads and bridges; and why? Simply because there was no proper system of spending it. The first thing the Government did on entering office was to abolish the road trusts, which had worked well, and spent the money well, and there was now no proper machinery for the purpose. He had no doubt whatever, from things that had come under his notice, that since the gentleman who had charge of the

roads department, Mr. Longlands, left the colony, there had been a complete disorganisation of the road system, and the sooner the Government re-established the road board system, or introduced some measure for local government, the better; for, at present, the districts that did not want large expenditure for improvements got it, and those which really did want it did not get it. His own district was not a very hungry one for money, and what little they did want they did not get it—not because the Government did not wish to give it, but because there was a want of the machinery necessary to undertake the expenditure. He would support the honorable member for Stanley in any stand he made to see that these districts were properly represented in the Estimates before the House. With regard to the Custom House at Ipswich, he should certainly require a very clear explanation before he could be made to believe that the proposal to abolish it had received the sanction of the honorable the Colonial Secretary. How that honorable gentleman, who was member for Ipswich, could be a party to the abolition of the Custom House there, he could not possibly understand. He had been informed by the merchants in Ipswich that, if the Custom House there were abolished, there would be a delay of seven days in passing entries of their goods. They had experience in this respect of what had occurred in the past, and the delay would not only hurt them but also their customers all through the country. He could not help thinking that this was a blow at Ipswich, and if it were not, it was certainly very like it. He thought they were justified in assuming that it was, and that the object was to force the river traffic into the railway. At any rate, it would be his duty and his pleasure to endeavor, as far as possible, to maintain the Custom House where it was. Perhaps the honorable the Colonial Secretary had some information to offer to his constituents why he was willing that it should be abolished. He hoped honorable members would not allow this matter of men being sent to the other side of the world at the expense of the immigration fund to pass unnoticed, but that they should require a full explanation respecting it; and not only that, but that a substantive resolution should be placed before the House—that they should have an opportunity of saying whether these salaries should be paid or not. He denied, for the purpose of argument, the qualifications of either gentleman as a lecturer. Mr. Wight he had heard, and he was a very good moral preacher; he had heard him deliver some very good moral lectures, but that he would be able to persuade working men to come out to the colony, he (Mr. Thompson) did not believe Mr. MacDevitt, he had heard; and he might be very good before a jury, but he had yet to know that he possessed any qualifications for appearing before

a public audience. These were matters over which that House ought to have some control; but from the defective administration, or the defective practice of that House, the salaries were allowed to be smuggled in under loan votes; and it was not likely they would get any explanation unless they strenuously insisted upon it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the figures of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had been so fearfully mangled by the honorable members for Maranoa and Rockhampton, that he thought nothing further need be said under that head. He had only a few words to say, and it was in reference to the Estimates placed before the House in general, and the conduct of the Government in particular. He was very much pleased to hear the honorable member who had just sat down inveigh—perhaps in terms not sufficiently strong—against the appointment of Mr. MacDevitt and Mr. Wight as immigration lecturers in the United Kingdom. The only argument he had heard adduced outside the House with reference to the capabilities of Mr. MacDevitt as an immigration agent, was this:—He had heard it suggested—he hoped the honorable the Colonial Secretary, in whose department the matter rested, would take advantage of the suggestion—that Mr. MacDevitt should be sent up and down the streets of Dublin, and other leading Irish towns, as an “animated sandwich,” with a placard on his back to this effect: “I was Attorney-General of Queensland; if you go out to that colony, so may you.” That was the only argument he had heard advanced in favor of the appointment. He was, as he said on a previous occasion, very much surprised that the present Attorney-General had consented to Mr. MacDevitt being appointed as Immigration Agent; and he could only account for it by the knowledge that honorable member had of his utter unfitness for the post. That was the only excuse the Ministry could have for the appointment. With regard to Mr. Wight, he knew nothing, except that he held an appointment in the Government service when he was appointed immigration lecturer for Scotland; and his place was filled by a disappointed candidate for the Logan Electorate on a previous occasion. He was very much surprised to hear the honorable member for Burke describe the Northern Railway as a miserable abortion. It said very little for that honorable member's knowledge of the subject; and he thought he must have been warmed by some sting of which he (Mr. Morehead) knew nothing, into making such an assertion, or applying an epithet which he was sure was undeserved, and which he was certain that honorable member would not have used if he knew the facts of the case. That honorable member must be well aware that on the extension of the Northern Railway depended the prosperity of a large portion of their north-western interior. That railway would tap that portion

of the colony, and would be the means of settling a very large population there, and benefiting a large number of settlers residing in the district he had the honor to represent, and in the district represented by the honorable the Speaker. He would state that, anxious as he was that railway extension should proceed from here to Roma—an extension which he considered very necessary—he certainly would not vote for that extension unless an extension of the Northern line were given also. He would not be one to support a Brisbane policy, of which he was afraid they saw the thin end of the wedge—or rather a considerable portion of the wedge—behind the present Estimates. He certainly could not see what the policy of the Ministry had been in framing these Estimates, except it was to try and injure, as far as they possibly could, those constituencies which did not return representatives who thought in the same way that they themselves did. He was afraid that that was their policy. He would take one instance in the Estimates, and that instance could be multiplied by several honorable members on that side of the House. He referred to the Springsure district. The roads there extended, he thought he would not be wrong in saying, a thousand miles; at any rate, they extended to the end of the North Gregory district, which was now being taken up to a large extent, and was returning considerable revenue to the Crown; and he found that the whole sum placed on the Estimates, for roads in that district, was £300. He had no doubt an attempt would be made by the honorable the Minister for Works to explain the matter, by telling them about unexpended votes, but had they any guarantee for what might be stated by that honorable member? Had they heard anything on the subject which would lead them to suppose that portion of unexpended loans would be spent in that district? Nothing; and judging from the past career of the present Ministry, he very much doubted that anything of the kind would be done. He thought they would be more inclined to spend that money in districts which returned members who thought as themselves, than to spend it in the district to which he had referred. He was very much surprised; he might say he was more than surprised; he was even disappointed with the conduct of the honorable the Minister for Works. Not very long ago he had the honor to call upon that honorable gentleman, and he then pointed out the necessity that existed for water storage on the main roads in the great western interior of the colony, and also in townships, which, though small in themselves, were the centres of large pastoral districts. The honorable gentleman quite admitted the necessity for water storage in these places and promised that it should be attended to, and he (Mr. Morehead) was therefore quite sure that some steps would be taken in the matter, and that a sum of money would be placed on the Estimates for that

purpose. It was not merely in the interest of travelling stock that he moved in the matter. He rather fancied that if all the stock in the colony, the property of squatters, perished, that honorable member would rejoice; that was his impression. But when it became a question of human life, he thought that honorable member would have been actuated differently, and that he would have carried out the promise he distinctly made. In that district there were places where there was no water for fifty and sixty miles for four and five months of the year, and that during not very dry weather. He had known in his own district a good many men—he could count ten or twelve—who had perished from thirst; and he certainly thought the honorable the Minister for Works ought to have carried out his promise to make provision for water storage in those districts. But he found nothing—not even in the twisted and tortured loan estimates. He hardly thought the Ministry were acting fairly. They might think that by a system of denying the reasonable demands of those who opposed them they would have candidates returned who would support them; but he fancied he knew a little more about the outside districts than the honorable the Minister for Works, and he was certain that in that they would be disappointed. When he found actual necessities denied, and when he found the honorable the Minister for Works going along the coast and scattering promises broadcast—promising to give a railway from Bundaberg to Mount Perry, a railway from Maryborough to Gympie, and that trial surveys should be made in all directions, that was bad enough; but there was something worse behind. They found that he came down to that House and actually refused to carry out his promises; but that was in keeping with his political career. What he (Mr. Morehead) wished to point out was the gross injustice that had been done to the outlying districts in these estimates. He now charged the Minister for Works with having failed to do what he distinctly promised him he would do, and which was a matter of crying necessity, not only to the individuals who had stations out in those districts, but to the whole community. The district he (Mr. Morehead) represented was one of the greatest meat producing districts in the colony, and he maintained that every individual in Brisbane had an interest in affording facilities for bringing stock to market. But far beyond that, was the preservation of human life, and he would simply add in conclusion that he sincerely regretted having to point out this action on the part of the honorable the Minister for Works. He should have thought he would have carried out that distinct promise, because the district he (Mr. Morehead) represented, and the district represented by the honorable the Speaker, asked very little from the Government. They had not had a penny spent on their roads since he had the honor of a

seat in that House. All they got was a little police protection, and a few mails. It had been asserted, he believed, that the whole rental of the Mitchell district had not paid for the mail service; but he maintained that the rental of one run had more than paid for the whole of the mail service twice over. He would again ask the House in all fairness, and he was sure that on the other side of the House there were some fair members, that they would not allow themselves to be carried away by these—he must call them bribery votes, but that they would be prepared to do justice to every district in the colony, so that it might be welded into one common whole, and the cry for separation would come to an end. He did not think that cry would come to an end if the present Ministry remained in power, but he sincerely trusted it would.

Mr. BAILEY said it appeared that the debate on the financial policy of the Government had degenerated into a discussion about roads and bridges. He believed it was usual for debates of that nature to end in that way, and he hoped they would soon see an end of all that sort of thing. He believed that that House was not the place where roads and bridges should be quarrelled about and scrambled over. He thought all such matters ought to be taken out of their hands altogether, and be dealt with under the system of financial separation proposed by the honorable member for Port Curtis some time ago. Until that system was established he believed they would have no rest in that House; but it would be a system of log-rolling, and scrambling and quarrelling. He rose for the purpose of repelling the accusation made against that side of the House, that the Liberal party were responsible for the extravagance of the Ministry. He, as one of that party, denied the charge. That extravagance was initiated from the other side of the House; it was there it first saw the light. It was as a bribe to that section of the community which hung like a black cloud over the colony—the civil service—that this extravagance commenced; and honorable members would remember that these votes were granted when the Liberal party sat on the Opposition benches and the present Opposition occupied the Ministerial benches. He, as a member of the Liberal party existing in the colony, and in that House, repelled the charge that that party was in any way connected with the extravagance of the Ministry.

Mr. IVORY said he, like the honorable member for the Bremer, did not profess to be a financier, but there were one or two remarks uttered by honorable members opposite which he did not feel inclined to agree to, and notably the remarks of the honorable the Minister for Works. The remarks of that honorable member, he had observed, had not been noticed by honorable members who had spoken. They were simply, as he himself characterised them, rambling statements, and therefore he was not at all surprised that

honorable members who had followed him in the debate had treated them as nothing worthy of being commented on. But still there were one or two statements which that honorable member put forward as statements of fact, which he felt in a position to state were statements of anything but fact. He first said there had been some talk about promises made with regard to railway extensions in the colony, and although the honorable member who had last spoken had said the debate had degenerated into a discussion on roads and bridges, still, as the matter had been brought before the House by the honorable the Minister for Works, possibly he would not be digressing from the proper course of procedure in referring to it. That honorable member said that, with regard to the promises of the railway extensions made by the Government, of which he was a member, they were given expressly subject to the financial position of the colony. Now, on referring to the *Brisbane Courier*, he found that a very influential deputation waited upon the honorable the Minister for Works, with reference to the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway, and he had not the slightest doubt that some honorable members opposite, who formed part of the deputation, would corroborate the report which appeared in the *Courier*. The deputation consisted of the Honorable George Harris, The Honorable James Gibbon, Messrs. Walter Scott, F. Beattie, James R. Dickson, George Edmondstone, M. Quinlan, G. R. Fife, W. E. Murphy, J. Cowlshaw, and A. Archer. Now, the honorable member had pointedly stated, that he merely gave the promise subject to the financial position of the colony; but so far as he could make out the wording of his reply to this deputation, he saw nothing whatever of the kind. The honorable member gave a plain straightforward answer to the deputation, and agreed to the proposal. It might be taking up the time of the House, but he thought it was due to honorable members that he should read it:—

"I may state that Mr. Patterson, the surveyor, is now on his way to Brisbane by the "Black Swan," and upon his arrival here will be sent at once to Bundaberg, to commence work on a trial survey. Mr. Hannam will also be with him, so that the survey will be pressed on as much as possible. The Government will, next session, ask Parliament to vote the money for the construction of this line. No delay will be suffered to occur in the survey, and we shall be prepared with estimates and survey of the first section of the line before the next meeting of the House. We shall have a trial survey as soon as possible, and then have it approved, and the working survey and plans for the first section of the line prepared, and that will give us time to prepare the working plans and surveys of the whole line. We shall have the estimates prepared for the whole of the line, and at the meeting of Parliament the House will be asked to vote sufficient money for the purpose. I may state that I have received letters from the Boolboonda Copper-mining Company and the Wolca

Copper-mining Company, on the same subject, and my answer to them will be of the same nature as my remarks to you."

What faith, he would ask, could they place in the Government, when they had a Premier sitting there, who stated facts which were proved next day to be falsehoods? They had a Minister for Works—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I rise to order. I appeal to you, sir.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member is out of order.

Mr. IVORY: He bowed to the decision of the honorable the Speaker, but he would leave it to the country to decide whether what he stated was the case or not. Then they had a Minister for Works standing up and saying that he had never given a promise. What confidence could the country have in such a Ministry?—a Ministry headed by—he should not use the term he might use; a Ministry seconded by a Minister for Works such as he saw before him, whose political career was well known to the country. And was the country to be guided by such a Ministry as that? However, he might state that he had before him a paper which would give what the honorable member at the head of the Government said with regard to this railway. It was from the *Maryborough Chronicle*, which gave a *résumé* of what took place when the honorable Minister at the head of affairs was at Maryborough, and was all affability and condescension:—

"When His Excellency retired amidst the cheering of the people, Mr. Macalister appeared to receive the deputations awaiting him. The first was from Mount Perry. The delegates present were—Captains Osborne and Bennett, with Mr. Dingle. Captain Osborne read the petition. The Honorable A. Macalister, in replying, said he was not aware, until he arrived in Maryborough, but that the engineer was now on the line, as definite instructions had been issued to at once go on with the work; and by what he could see and had seen since his arrival, that, with the agricultural and mineral resources of the district, Bundaberg and Maryborough would, in a short time, become as large as any other towns in Queensland; and that it had always been the policy of every Government he was connected with to endeavor to develop the resources of the colony by cheap means of transit; and in the next session of Parliament, if backed up by the people"—

Now, he would refer to the honorable the Speaker if that honorable member was not backed up by a majority who would carry him through anything he proposed? They had seated members; they were, as they said, backed up by the people; they had the power in their hands, and why not carry out this railway which the honorable the Premier had, in his generosity, promised the Bundabergians? He promised:—

"he would introduce a scheme for either a rail or tramway between the Mount Perry mines and our port."

Now, after that, what did the Ministry do? They immediately sent out an engineer, he believed of some reputation, and he would like to ask the Minister at the head of affairs, or the Minister for Works, what sort of a survey had taken place between Bundaberg and Mount Perry? Was it not well known that the engineer who was sent out there to report, might as well have been an ordinary bushman? He was sent out on a horse, and he had ridden indiscriminately over the country, and, unfortunately for himself, he got bogged and lost, and wandered all over the face of the country. Talk about a survey! It was no more a survey than a man would think of surveying the way to the moon; and yet the Government came down to the House and brought forward a report about this line. The thing was perfectly ridiculous! The honorable the Minister for Works, as he said before, characterised his own statement as rambling, but it was more than that. It reminded him of the action of a certain small animal which existed in America. If he was not satisfied with trying to raise a smoke behind him, he had raised a most abominable stink, and for that purpose he had raked up the decaying carcasses of former Governments, and tried to show that, because they were wrong, he was so, because he had followed in the same track. That was the very course the present Government always pursued. If they were proved to be wrong, they always said former Governments had done the same, and he thought it was high time that that sort of recriminatory remarks were done away with. They had simply to do with the times in which they lived. They had to do with what at present existed, and if what had been bad in former Governments could not be mended by the present Government, he thought it was high time that they gave place to another. In these few remarks he might have used strong language, but he thought it was no stronger than was demanded by the circumstances of the case, and he would now leave it to others more conversant with financial matters to carry on the debate.

Mr. PALMER said the financial policy of the Government had been so thoroughly torn to tatters by honorable members on that side of the House, and as no reply had been made by honorable members on the other side of the House, he felt it would be perfectly useless for him to prolong the debate on that subject. He thought the arguments brought forward by the honorable members for Maranoa and Rockhampton were unanswerable, and they had not been attempted to be answered by any member of the Government, or by any honorable member on the Ministerial side of the House. The addresses they had heard from that side of the House had been principally devoted to subjects which had very little to do with the debate on the financial question. One honorable member complained that his constituents had

not been attended to, another had followed suit, and another had found fault with him for doing so; but there had been no attempt on the part of the Ministry to refute the figures, or facts, or arguments, used by speakers on the Opposition side of the House. There was one question raised, but it was hardly necessary for him to allude to it, because he had noticed that, ever since the honorable the Minister for Works had had a seat in that House, every statement that he had ever made was hardly worth replying to, because it was not, and never had been, a fact. One thing he was very fond of doing, and that was, to endeavor to so muddy the waters that no one could see what he was about or what he was doing. That honorable member had made a statement which was so grossly—it would not be Parliamentary for him to say “untrue;” but he would go so far as to say that it would not bear investigation. He felt, although he did not generally reply to that honorable member, that he was bound in duty to the country not to allow that statement to go forth uncontradicted. He boldly stated that the Ministry of which he (Mr. Palmer) was the head, had doubled the debt of this colony. He stated that, when that Government came into office, the debt of the colony was £3,000,000, and that they had added £3,000,000, and he wanted to know what they had done with the money. That was a statement coming from a Minister of the Crown; and many people not knowing that honorable member might, perhaps, think it had some foundation in fact. Now, what were the circumstances of the case? He found from the budget speech of his honorable friend, and former Treasurer, Mr. Ramsay, whose figures, so far as he knew, had never been challenged, and certainly had never been proved to be incorrect, that in 1870, when that statement was made, the expenditure to date on loan account was £3,506,619. The honorable the Minister for Works appeared to think that £500,000 or £600,000 was a mere bagatelle. Half a million sterling, or rather a little more than half a million, went for nothing in that honorable member's statement, and he thought the House might judge from that how little depended upon anything that honorable member stated. He found also that, at that time, further loan requirements increased the amount to £3,814,285, and there was over-expenditure on revenue account, bequeathed to them by their predecessors, of £386,526, making a total of £4,200,812. To cover that, there were loans already authorised amounting to £3,021,186; a loan estimate of £793,100, and Treasury Bills to cover deficiency in revenue £350,000; and there was a deficiency of £36,526 on revenue account during 1869, not then provided for. Without going further into figures, and merely referring honorable members who were interested in the matter to them, he would state, as showing what credit could be given to the statement

of the honorable the Minister for Works, that the late Government had increased the public debt by £3,000,000, that on leaving office they left over £702,000 worth of debentures unsold, and they had provided for all the current works of the colony in the meantime, and left a very large surplus of over £367,000 as shown by the financial statement of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. So much for the accuracy of the honorable the Minister for Works! He would pass over the rest of that honorable member's speech, having, he believed, satisfactorily shown—and he challenged contradiction of the fact—that he had not the slightest ground for making such a statement. The remainder of his speech was something of the same character. Now, with reference to the financial policy of the Government, and the policy of the Government altogether, he thought it was merely necessary for him to say that he had never given them credit for having any policy at all.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear.

MR. PALMER: He believed they were a mere hand-to-mouth Government; that they always had been, and while the present head and tail of that Government were there, they would be nothing else. The policy of the late Government had been raked up, but he would not attempt further to defend it; he would leave the country to judge of the policy of the two Governments, and he had no doubt whatever as to what that judgment would be. He might say that in no single particular that he knew of, had the policy, or supposed policy, of the honorable the Premier of the present Government been carried out since he came into office. Looking back to that honorable gentleman's manifesto in Ipswich, when he was elected for that constituency, as far as his memory served him, the only great promise he made was to take the terminus of the Ipswich and Brisbane extension of the Southern and Western Railway down the centre of Queen street; and all his promises had been carried out in exactly the same way that he had carried out that. He had not carried it out at all, and the whole of the promises he had made since that, stood in exactly the same position. The policy of the Government as shadowed forth by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, had not been carried out. They were promised a reduction in taxation to the extent of £80,000, and they were promised retrenchment.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Where were you promised that?

MR. PALMER: He did not interrupt the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, and he did not wish that honorable member to interrupt him. They had been promised retrenchment; but, in place of that, they had a largely increased departmental expenditure. They had had money saved where certainly it ought not to have been saved; money voted for public works had not been expended, but

the departmental expenditure had been very much larger than what had been authorised by that House. The whole action of the Government—and he thought it could not be too often alluded to—had been simply that of time serving—and to get their enemies, or any person who was likely to prove troublesome, out of the road. He thought that had been clearly shown to the House and the country in the appointment of Mr. MacDevitt. Now, they had not heard, during the whole time the House had been in session, anything with regard to the necessity of immigration lecturers in Ireland or in Scotland. They had had many debates and many rows in the House on the propriety of the Agent-General lecturing at home, and they had had an Agent-General sent there for the purpose of lecturing who never did lecture; but they had never had anything put before them to show the necessity of sending gentlemen home for the specific purpose of lecturing. He maintained that if lecturers were wanted at all, they could be found on the spot for one-fifth the salary of these gentlemen, one of whom had been got rid of notoriously for political purposes. There was no doubt whatever, that Mr. MacDevitt was forced out of the Government. They knew that a judgeship was offered and refused; and, as he was likely to be a troublesome character this session, he was quietly bought off by the Government, who got rid of him as a political opponent, to make room for the honorable the Minister for Works, who had been brought into the Government in the same way that Mr. Douglas was introduced on a previous occasion.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: What about Bramston?

MR. PALMER: There was no parallel whatever in the case of Mr. Bramston. The Government wanted a person to represent them in the Upper House, and he was properly and constitutionally appointed. He (Mr. Palmer) did not know to which of the two, Mr. MacDevitt or the Government, the proceeding was most disgraceful. He thought, if he had to give an opinion on the subject, it would be that it was most disgraceful to that gentleman; but there was so little difference between the party bought, and the parties who bought him, that he should not attempt to pronounce a decision. And what necessity was there to take a person out of the Government service to send him home in the same way? He could only think that Mr. MacDevitt was too much for the Ministry, and he was sent away, and the other gentleman was sent to Scotland—where they got very few immigrants from, and he did not think they were likely to get more—he thought that gentleman was sent there to take the "down" off the other appointment. They thought, as they were going in for one job, they might as well make another. With respect to the railway estimates, the late Government had been accused

by speeches on the other side of the House, that their estimates for railway purposes had been very far exceeded. Now, he thought the Government, or independent members opposite, ought to be the very last to charge the late Government with failure of carrying out their views. Immediately on acceding to office, they removed the engineer the late Government had in charge of the works on the Brisbane and Ipswich extension. It was no use the honorable member laughing, and looking at the honorable member for Maranoa; he was not in the Ministry now, and had no sins to answer for, and a Minister of the day could not remove an officer holding such a responsible position without the sanction of the Ministry. And although the honorable member for Maranoa might not know, he (Mr. Palmer) knew pretty well the influence that was brought to bear to get that gentleman removed. Did the House or the country suppose that the Government could be held liable for extra expenditure on railways when they were out of office, and when the engineer on whose competency they depended had been removed? The idea was ridiculous! He believed on inquiring into the matter—and he hoped the honorable member for Maranoa would move for a committee to inquire into it—it would be found that the estimates of that engineer had been exceeded by the present engineer by at least sixty per cent. on the work of that line; and it was absurd in the extreme to expect a Ministry out of office, and having no controlling power over the engineer, to be held responsible for the *laches*, the remissness, and the ignorance of an officer of the present Government and of their Minister. He thought the complaint of the honorable member for Rockhampton, with regard to the extension of the Northern Railway not being provided for in the loan estimate, was a very just one; because it must be notorious to everybody, after the statement made by the honorable member, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had, to say the least, miscalculated the amount of funds available for the Northern Railway, to which, he might tell that honorable gentleman, the faith of the House was pledged. No detailed estimate was laid before the House when they authorised the Government to go into the extension of these railways, but the faith of the House was pledged that they should be carried to the points then decided upon, and it must be evident that as the indents that had been forwarded from home amounted to £100,000, respecting which they had had no information whatever from the Government, the balance in hand, as stated by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, could not be sufficient to cover the cost, and therefore in any loan vote proposed this session, the amount necessary to finish that line should be provided for. There would be so many opportunities of giving expression to his views on the subject of the policy of the Government, that he did not think it at all necessary to go into the matter at greater

length on that occasion. In fact he should hardly have risen to address the House at all, were it not for the gross mistake of the honorable the Minister for Works.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he rose to make an explanation in regard to the mis-statement he was alleged to have made; and he might state that in 1870 the total debt of the colony was £3,021,000, and, according to the statement of the former Treasurer, Mr. Bell, that debt on the 31st of December, 1873, was £5,253,286.

Mr. PALMER rose to a point of order. The honorable gentleman was not making a personal explanation. He (Mr. Palmer) had already gone into these figures.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member for Port Curtis had accused him of mis-stating the debt of the colony, and he thought he was fully entitled to explain the matter, as it was personal. His statement had been challenged to proof.

The SPEAKER: By permission of the House, the honorable member may be allowed to make the statement.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was not his intention to address the House upon the question, because the matter of the budget had been so fully discussed by both sides of the House, that he was satisfied —

Mr. IVORY rose to order. He believed the honorable the Colonial Secretary, in moving the Speaker out of the chair, had spoken.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He thought not. He had simply made a motion that the honorable the Speaker should leave the chair, and he was not aware that that precluded him from speaking on the subject.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member for the Burnett is correct. The honorable the Colonial Secretary has spoken, in moving that the Speaker leave the chair, and the House should resolve itself into a Committee of Supply; but it was usually accorded to a Minister of the Crown to be allowed to reply to any charge made against his Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, perhaps the House would indulge him in making one or two observations. It was not his intention to enter into the debate on the question of the budget, but he would say that a good deal of language, which he could not hesitate to say was very improper, had been used upon the present occasion, and that language had, to a great extent, been made use of by honorable members to whom the House was more than usually indulgent; and he must say that, under the circumstances, he regarded their statements with a very large amount of salt. Now, what he wished to do on the present occasion was to follow as nearly as he possibly could, the course adopted by the honorable member for Port Curtis, and that was to deal merely with certain assertions of fact which had been put before the House. That honorable member accused the honorable the Minister for Works with being positively untruthful—of making a state-

ment which could not be relied upon, when he charged the late Government with having increased the debt of the colony by no less than £3,000,000. Now, he said his honorable colleague was perfectly correct in making that assertion, as he was perfectly prepared to show by figures at that moment. It would be remembered that the railway from Brisbane to Dalby at one end, and Warwick at the other, had cost two millions of money, and yet the honorable member for Port Curtis accused his honorable friend, the Minister for Works, with having mis-stated the facts; but he (the Colonial Secretary) confirmed that statement—that the late Government had involved the colony in £3,000,000 of additional debt, and they had not opened twenty miles of railway. He would give the figures:—The Treasurer of the day, Mr. Ramsay, in making his financial statement in 1870, stated the debt of the colony, as incurred by the previous Governments, at £3,021,186. The Government borrowed £2,232,000, and when they came to add to that £431,000 for completing works upon which they had entered, and for which they had borrowed the money, it would be found that the amount of indebtedness was £2,663,000; and when they also took into consideration that there was £180,000 for depreciation of debentures, and £200,000 necessary to complete the Northern Railway, the amount was exactly what was stated by his honorable colleague, £3,043,000.

Mr. PALMER: The Colonial Secretary had not even stated his figures correctly.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He had given the figures exactly as they were put down, and he believed they were correct.

Mr. PALMER: Perhaps the honorable member would repeat them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: When the honorable gentleman came into office, the indebtedness of the colony, including railways, amounted, in gross, to £3,000,000.

Mr. PALMER: £2,506,618.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government borrowed £2,232,000 for the purpose of making railways. To complete those very works, £431,000 was required; and that being added, the amount was £2,663,000. To that £180,000 was to be added for depreciation of debentures; and £200,000 further to complete the Northern Railway. He asked the House what were the figures, now? Exactly £3,043,000. That was the indebtedness in which the late Government had involved the country, and for which they had not yet produced twenty miles of railway. The honorable gentleman had told the House that, whatever the policy of the present Government, it was a fishy policy; but what was the policy of that Government that borrowed £3,000,000 of money?

Mr. PALMER: They never did.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They never had a policy at all. They came into the House saying that they would merely make

the Brisbane Railway line, that they would oppose every railway in the country.

Mr. IVORY: That must have been yourself.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He must certainly ask the Speaker to deal with that honorable member, unless he could behave himself. The late Government came to the House pledged to oppose the extension between Ipswich and Brisbane and all railways; and the very next session they proposed the very railway to which they had previously most strongly objected. That was exactly the course followed out as a policy by that Government.

Mr. PALMER: He never said anything of the sort.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The honorable gentleman wanted to know what was the policy of the present Government. Well, it was the policy that always actuated him and that had actuated every Liberal Government in this colony—not only to open the country by railways, but to open the lands for settlement. He (the Colonial Secretary) was not aware that that was ever the policy of honorable gentlemen opposite.

An HONORABLE MEMBER: It was.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, that was his answer to them. When the honorable member for Port Curtis referred to the appointment of Mr. MacDevitt, he might have done so in language more moderate than he used. It was quite possible that any Government might exercise a want of judgment with regard to an appointment; but in this case he was perfectly prepared to defend the appointment, and he was perfectly prepared to assert that the honorable gentleman opposite was the last man in the House who should accuse the Government of having offered a bribe to anybody! Did the honorable gentleman remember Handy? Let him not offer any observations of that kind about Mr. MacDevitt. He defended the appointment of Mr. MacDevitt and Mr. Wight. The appointment of lecturers had been brought before the House, so that the honorable gentleman's assertion in that respect was incorrect. Not only that, but the Government felt that they were obliged to appoint lecturers at home because of what took place in the House. The subject had been brought forward by the late honorable member for Logan, Mr. Nind, who discussed it at great length with honorable members on the other side of the House, and it was pressed upon the Government that there was a necessity to appoint lecturers for Scotland and Ireland; and it had been also brought up by the honorable member for Brisbane, Mr. Stewart. When the honorable member had examined the papers which he (the Colonial Secretary) had placed on the table, instead of making such insinuations as he had made in regard to those appointments, the honorable member for Port Curtis would find as clear as daylight the grounds upon which they had been made: they were made simply on account of the

promise made to the House last session, and for no other purpose. When he heard the honorable member talk with contempt of Mr. Wight as a lecturer, he could tell him, from his (the Colonial Secretary's) knowledge of the country to which Mr. Wight was going, and of the people of the country, that that gentleman would be a very successful lecturer; and he could tell the House that Mr. Wight had been not only a lecturer upon emigration, but a writer upon that subject, and had encouraged the coming to this colony of a large number of people who were now settled industriously upon the lands of the colony. The honorable gentleman forgot to ask, amongst his other questions, the object for which the lecturers were appointed. They were not appointed to bring out free immigrants, or to lecture to them; but they were appointed to do what the honorable gentleman had failed to do when he was in the Government—to encourage and to bring out a number of full-paying immigrants to Queensland. If they did not succeed in that, they would not be continued in their appointments.

Mr. J. Scott said he should like to put the honorable gentleman who just sat down right as regarded his figures. The honorable gentleman stated that the late Government had spent a great deal of money and that twenty miles of railway had not been opened for it. Between thirty and forty miles had been opened. There was the extension between Ipswich and Oxley; and there was the extension of the Great Northern Railway, out westward. Much of the works in progress when the present Government took office, which had been since opened, were nearly completed under the late Government for the loans they had raised. If the honorable gentleman was as far wrong in the whole of his figures, they were not worth much. As regarded the number of miles of railway opened since the loans took place, he was very far wrong indeed; and he (Mr. Scott) had very little doubt that he was just as far wrong in all the other figures he had given the House. The policy of the present Government had been, all through, to repress, as far as possible, the central districts. As to votes, the sum of £5,875 was voted last year for the central districts. The excuse that was made for its being so small was, that there was a large amount added from former votes, or from loan votes, to carry on the roads in that district. But the action of the Government was, so far from spending the money, which was very much required, to keep it back; so that they might be in the position to make the same excuse as they made before. If honorable members bore in mind the large sums that were placed on the Estimates for the northern districts, and for the roads around Brisbane, they would see that the particular policy of the Government was to spend as little money as possible in the central district.

Mr. Royds said he wanted to offer a few remarks with regard to the figures of the

Colonial Secretary, and to the loans contracted by the late Government. He thought the honorable gentleman had miscalculated to the very large sum of £942,340. The honorable gentleman had charged against the late Government the whole amounts which were contracted by previous Governments, and which had to be provided for by the Loan Act of 1870, which he should recapitulate, and also £350,000 of Treasury Bills issued in 1866 and retired under the Loan Act of 1872:—Ipswich and Dalby Railway, £243,820; Toowoomba and Warwick Railway, £59,120; Rockhampton and Westwood Railway, £34,958. All those railways were guaranteed by the House years before. Then, coming down a little further, there was the provision for the new Parliament House, £34,455. That was not, at any rate, commenced by the late Government. Then there was the deficit on previous loans, £209,977. That was hardly to be charged to the late Government. The total of the sums he had given was to be deducted from the amount for which the late Government were held accountable by the Premier.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, before answering the arguments which had been brought forward at an early hour, he wished to correct two or three errors into which honorable members had fallen, more especially the very gross error into which the honorable member for Rockhampton had fallen. That honorable member insinuated that the Government had given instructions to the Chief Engineer of the Great Northern Railway to curtail his expenditure on that line. What were the facts of the case? In 1873, the expenditure on that railway, from loan, was £75,046—during the last year the late Ministry held office. During the year ending 31st December, 1874, the expenditure on that railway was £147,000, or very nearly double. If honorable members took those figures, they would not be disposed to attach very much weight to any others quoted by the honorable member for Rockhampton. The honorable member for Bremer referred to the payment of the salaries of Messrs. MacDevett and Wight out of the Immigration Loan, and endeavored to lead the House to believe that that was quite a usual course for the Government to pursue; and he also told the House that it was a very unsatisfactory state of things, when a Government had it in their power to spend large sums in salaries of which the House had no cognizance, or over which they had no control; and the inference which, it might be supposed, he wished to draw was, that the course taken was the introduction of a new principle of administration by the present Government. So far from this being the case, it was the invariable practice, a practice which he (the Colonial Treasurer) had no hesitation in saying was a very bad one. But it was a very extraordinary thing that, if the honorable member entertained such a strong opinion against paying considerable sums out of loans

for salaries, he never, as a Minister, took any steps to make other provision. Now, it was the intention of the present Government, when they introduced the next Loan Bill, to provide that all salaries paid out of loan should be voted by the House. That would be a practical remedy. During the tenure of office of the honorable member for Bremer, two Loan Acts were passed, but no provision of that kind was made in them; and he (the Colonial Treasurer) thought he was not far wrong in saying that salaries to the amount of £20,000 was paid out of loan to appointees of the late Ministry.

Mr. PALMER: Who were they?—he should like to know.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The honorable gentleman should get them to-morrow morning, if he moved for a return of them.

Mr. PALMER: In six months.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: With reference to Mr. MacDevitt, it had been stated that that gentleman had been promised a judgeship, and then that it had been refused to him. That was not correct. He could have had a judgeship if he liked, but he refused it. If the honorable member for Port Curtis wanted facts, Mr. MacDevitt could have had the Northern District Court Judgeship; he refused it, for certain reasons known to himself. If the Ministry were not allowed to give an appointment of £500 a year—which by-the-by was only a temporary appointment—to an old colleague who had assisted them to fight the battles of the session——

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: With regard to the appointment of Mr. Wight, he believed it was one of the best that the Government ever made. There was no doubt whatever of the fact that, if immigration was to be carried on at all, the colony could not go on importing people purely at the public expense. He did not attach quite the same value to an adult laborer as the honorable member for Maranoa, with his German experience. The Government would do well to introduce people into the colony, even if they had to do so entirely at the cost of the State; but he believed they would do better if they introduced people, whether from Great Britain or Ireland, who could pay their own expense. There was a great stream of emigrants, at the rate of 1,000 a day, leaving the United Kingdom, that was, of people who had made up their minds to choose a new home for themselves; and it was important that those who were entrusted with the interests of a new colony should see that those people were awakened to the attractions and the advantages offered to them by Queensland. He believed that the mission of Messrs. MacDevitt and Wight would be highly conducive to introducing a complement of full-paying passengers. But the sending of lecturers through the mother country was no new notion. The House had heard of a person named Bonwick, who knew something

about Tasmania, and who had been delivering ridiculous lectures at home upon this colony. He had been receiving precisely the same salary that Mr. Wight and Mr. MacDevitt would receive. Honorable members had said that retrenchment had been promised by the present Government, upon taking office. He (the Colonial Treasurer) could not recollect any statement he had made to that effect.

Mr. PALMER: Reduction of taxation.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Reduction of taxation and retrenchment were two very different things. He hoped the honorable member for Port Curtis appreciated the difference. Now that the honorable member referred to it, he (the Colonial Treasurer) had a few words to say on the question of taxation. In doing so, he should have to refer to what he stated on a similar occasion last year. The House would recollect that the tariff, in its passage through the House, was considerably modified from what he had proposed. In fact, in some respects, it was scarcely recognisable, when it emerged from the ordeal that it was subjected to in Committee of Ways and Means. What he stated, honorable members would find on reference to "Hansard":—

"The present proposal will have the effect of relieving the tax-payers of about £30,000 during the present year; and, if these proposals are carried into effect, the reduction next year will be about £80,000;"

—the figures quoted by the honorable member for Maranoa. The amount collected in the previous year was £140,000. Allowing for the increase of consumption of articles subject to the *ad valorem* duty, it might be fairly estimated that, had the tariff remained unchanged, that duty would have produced last year £160,000; instead of which, being reduced to 5 per cent., it produced only something more than one-half of that amount. Therein was the expectation held out to the House that a reduction of taxation of about £80,000 might be effected. He was satisfied that honorable members who were familiar with the tariff, and with the operation of *ad valorem* duties, would bear him out in saying that the estimate was not excessive. He had not been able to follow the particular line of argument of some honorable members. During the recess, it was stated outside the House that the Government were profligate and extravagant, and that they were plunging the colony into an abyss of hopeless insolvency. Extravagance was the charge during the recess; and now the Government were not extravagant, but too economical. He wished honorable members would make up their minds which charge they would maintain. A certain estimate of revenue was made for 1874, amounting to £1,223,000. The honorable member for East Moreton's opinion was, that that estimate was excessive, and he said that he warned the Government at the time. Well, he (the Colonial Treasurer) was not disposed to dispute it; but he was willing to

take all the responsibility of having framed an excessive estimate. And he was fortified in it by the fact that his predecessor, the honorable member for Dalby's, estimate was £15,000 in excess. If the Government had erred, they had not, at any rate, erred so much in over-estimating the revenue as the Government of the honorable member for Port Curtis would have done had they remained in office. The charge of extravagance having been abandoned for the time, the next charge the Government had to meet was that they had not expended all that they were entitled to expend; in other words, that not having realised their expectations of revenue, they had not rushed into expenditure so as to be left with a balance on the wrong side at the end of the year. He wished that honorable members, in making that charge, would say whether they approved of what the Government had done or not. The honorable member for Maranoa, rather slyly, did not put it in the nature of a charge.

Mr. McILWRAITH: He never stated it as a charge.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Well, the honorable member stated that the credit balance was only because the Government had not expended the money that they were authorised to spend.

Mr. McILWRAITH: In other words.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: In connection with this part of the subject, it would be advisable to direct the attention of honorable members to the particular manner in which votes of supply were taken. The terms of a vote were:—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year a sum not exceeding"

a certain amount—the amount granted, or to be granted, for the service of the particular year. Consequently, if the Government found that they could carry on the public departments for a less expenditure than was voted, it was their business to do so. If, on the other hand, they found that the revenue did not realise their expectations, that large and unforeseen calls were made upon the Treasury that could not be postponed, it was their duty to slack off expenditure in those departments where expenditure was not of such an urgent character. That was, he thought, the duty of the Treasurer—to press upon his colleagues the necessity for making both ends meet, if he found that his estimate of revenue would fall short; to call upon particular departments not to launch out with that vigor and prodigality that would be justifiable if all his expectations were realised. But he thought that when he first addressed the House, he showed the expenditure from loan surplus revenue and ordinary revenue, in the year, had exceeded £600,000, an amount unparalleled in the history of the colony; and he showed that there could have been no with-

holding of expenditure on public works. The honorable member for Rockhampton was guilty of a baseless insinuation when he said that orders had been given to the Chief Engineer of the Northern Railway to restrict his expenditure. When he (the Colonial Treasurer) was at Rockhampton, some months ago, he saw that gentleman, who showed, from the manner in which he carried on the work, that he was the "right man in the right place."

Mr. BUZACOTT: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He said, "Suppose I rush this on, I should have to put on inferior men and take them from other avocations; I should have to pay them absurdly high wages, and should get my work badly done;—but, by restricting the extent of my operations, I am able to make my own terms with the men; there are more men applying for employment than I am able to employ; and I am therefore getting the work more economically carried out than if I rushed into expenditure." He found from his honorable colleague, the Minister for Works, that no directions or instructions had been given to the Chief Engineer as to the conduct of the work; that officer was allowed to go on unfettered, and was guided by his own good common sense. The honorable member for Rockhampton had spoken of the beggarly amounts expended for roads and bridges by the present Government. Well, the Estimates would show the value of his statements:—In 1871, the expenditure on roads and bridges throughout the colony was £28,000; 1872, £31,000; 1873, £51,000; in 1874, when, according to the arguments of honorable members opposite, the Government had been starving the Works Department, in order to indulge in profligate extravagance in other departments, the expenditure had risen to £82,000. Honorable members were aware that there was a large amount of unexpended balances carried forward and available for the present year, the actual votes for roads and bridges being £69,000, in addition to the £82,000 expended. When they were in any doubt or difficulty on subjects of this kind, the House could not do better than appeal to the practice of the Imperial Parliament. He found that complaint had been made against the Government, of which Lord Palmerston was the head, that votes for fortifications had not been expended. Captain Jervis wished to know why votes taken for fortifications at Harwick were not expended within the year, and he complained that they were not:—

"In the case of Hull, money was granted for many consecutive years before it was actually spent."

What was the reply of Sir George Lewis, who was as good an authority on such subjects as could be appealed to?—

"Sir George Lewis said that a vote in Committee of Supply was in the nature of a *maximum*.

It was not incumbent on the Government to spend the whole amount which they were empowered to spend."

Lord Palmerston said, a little later in the debate, that—

"the gallant officer should know the reason why sometimes the whole sum voted was not expended. Until the estimate was voted, the drawings could not be made out or the contract entered into. That took a considerable time; and when the estimate was voted late in the session of last year, the winter came on, and the works were interrupted by the weather. That was the reason why it was often impossible to do in the financial year the works which were estimated and voted for in the course of the year."

Now, those were the explanations he (the Colonial Treasurer) had to give why the sums voted last year for public works were not expended.—In the first place, the revenue having fallen off, the country could not have afforded the expenditure without showing a considerable difference on the wrong side of the account; second, the large amount of expenditure going on throughout the colony for public works was such that, even supposing the revenue surpassed the expectations of the Government, if they had spent the sums voted during the currency of the year, they would have enhanced the price of labor, that works would have cost double the amount now to be paid for them; and, third, it was utterly impossible, in consequence of the amount of duty thrust upon it, for the department to make even a commencement with some of the works. If any honorable member could show that a particular district had suffered on account of favor to another, that would be a just ground of complaint; but he (the Colonial Treasurer) should be prepared to show, if any attempt of that kind was made, that the public money had been most equitably and fairly distributed in every district of the colony of Queensland. He should now return to the expenditure for public works in the several divisions of the colony, including buildings, roads and bridges, harbors, lighthouses, and electric telegraphs, from all the different sources of loan, surplus revenue, and consolidated revenue:—Southern District, £101,252; Wide Bay and Burnett, £32,858; Central District, £49,085; Northern District, £50,817. It was to be understood that railways were not comprehended in those figures. Those figures challenged criticism on any side of the House. The money had been fairly distributed and judiciously expended in all the districts of the colony. As the honorable member for Maranoa was his colleague and a member of the Ministry for ten months of 1874, he should not have been the man to attack the financial policy of the Government in connection with the past. He had no objection to the honorable member criticising the Government policy for the future. All the figures used by the honorable member were in the *Courier* a week ago. When he spoke on the Address in Reply to

the Governor's Speech, he proposed that the Government should go in for another large loan, simply for the construction of a railway in one particular district—his own hobby, the railway from Dalby to Roma. There was an amount of inconsistency in the honorable member for Maranoa, that he should never have expected to find. The charge of extravagance had, however, been abandoned; and honorable members had shown a wise discretion therein. Then came the question, Had the Government expended the public money for other than legitimate purposes? All the figures were before the House. The unauthorised expenditure of the Government amounted to £44,000. The Government of the honorable member for Port Curtis expended, during the last year they were in office, over £70,000. If comparisons were to be formed, he had only to say that the present Government were not so extravagant or profligate in spending £40,000, as were the Government who had spent £70,000, without Parliamentary sanction. The honorable member for Maranoa stated that the Government gave the House information which they did not care about, and that he should like to see the table which the Colonial Treasurer had referred to, giving the amount of balances brought forward and made available for lapsed votes and unauthorised expenditure. If he would look at page 141 of "Hansard," Part III., he would find all the information that he said the Government had kept back from the House. He (the Colonial Treasurer) there referred to the Supplementary Estimates, at the end of the Estimates-in-Chief, amounting to £44,456, which had been already expended. The lapsed votes, he had further explained, amounted to £52,317, and the balances brought forward to £96,839, of which £80,000 was in the Works Department. Those large unexpended balances accounted for the smallness of the estimate for works this year. There was the whole of the information which the honorable member complained of not hearing.

Mr. McILWRAITH: He hadn't it yet.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The whole information was in twelve lines. The honorable member also complained of the promise which he (the Colonial Treasurer) had made with regard to the Local Government Bill. As the honorable member knew his views on the subject, with which he entirely concurred, he could not understand the object of referring to the Bill at the present time. The Government had given notice of a Bill. What he (the Colonial Treasurer) stated, last session, on the subject of a land tax, was, that he thought a land tax premature, because local taxation ought to go with local self-government. The Bill was prepared. It was possible he should not be able to carry it this session; but he hoped that it would be passed next session. It would set at rest many questions opened up by the honorable member

for Stanley; and the subjects that would come before Parliament would then be discussed on a larger basis than how they affected individual electorates. The principle of the Bill was that districts should have the power of forming themselves into large municipalities, with powers of rating; and that it should be lawful, with the consent of the Governor in Council, to transfer to such districts the expenditure of money voted by the Assembly, so as to relieve the general Government of the necessity to attend to local works. The House would not then hear of remissness on the part of the Public Works Department in spending money, and other charges, which must render the existence of the Minister for Works anything but comfortable. Reference had been made to the increase of expenditure under the schedules, and the administration of justice was particularised. The House knew very well that the increase under the schedules arose out of their own action in passing the Governor's Salary Act, increasing Ministers' salaries, appointing new Judges, and other matters of that kind, over which the Government had not the slightest control. That expenditure was bound to be made, because it was in virtue of Acts of Parliament. A great deal of that expenditure was in connection with the administration of justice. Parliament having passed an Insolvency Act and an Act for the better administration of justice in the Northern Court, it was the duty of the Government to give effect to those Acts by providing the necessary officers in order to carry out the wishes of Parliament. The honorable member for Maranoa had referred to some remarks he had made with regard to imports and exports. In that connection, the honorable member would do well to profit by the advice of the honorable member for East Moreton. It was quite beside the question for any writer on political economy to lay down abstract principles to apply equally to countries so differently circumstanced as Queensland and Great Britain. It was well known that, in Great Britain, imports largely exceeded exports. Persons resident in Great Britain received remittances from the colonies and spent them in London or elsewhere in the old world. So far as the remarks of the honorable member for Maranoa referring to absenteeism were concerned, he (the Colonial Treasurer) quite agreed with him, that that would account for a considerable share of the increase or excess in the value of Queensland exports as compared with imports. But, when the honorable member referred to absentees who lived out of town, and who were desirous of having drains made at the expense of the poor people who lived in town—he was coming out as the "poor man's friend"—he rather sank below the usual train of his argument. Perhaps it was intended for himself (the Colonial Treasurer); but the honorable member must be aware that those persons who lived out of town contributed a larger amount to the rates than

those whom he had so recently taken under his protection.

Mr. McILWRAITH: He lived out of town himself.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The honorable member said he did not complain that details had not been given of the £25,000 required for the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. He should complain if the Government had gone into explanations on that subject. He (the Colonial Treasurer) gave in the financial statement, as plainly and as briefly as he could give it, a record of the actual transactions of the past. It was his duty not to cumber the statement by going into questions which must be discussed at a later period of the session. The Government were quite prepared to go into the fullest details on every vote which they presented to the House, and they were prepared to give all information, when they invited the House to consider and discuss the Estimates. In a preliminary statement, it would be quite out of place to go into details. He hoped the honorable member for Maranoa would not forget the promise which he made to move for a committee to inquire into the whole matter of the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. A great deal of valuable information would be laid before that committee. He (the Colonial Treasurer) did not know whether such a committee would have power to compel witnesses to answer questions; but if they should have it, he hoped they would not hesitate to exercise it. He could inform the House of one thing, that for the land resumed between Brisbane and Ipswich, the amount paid exceeded £50,000! The honorable member for Rockhampton complained that he made a reference to a surplus which the Government had of £355,000. In answer, he must say that he never made any such statement. He did not think he used the word surplus, except on two occasions, during his whole financial statement. He spoke of a surplus of revenue over expenditure for 1874, and he spoke also of the surplus revenue fund. What he did state was, that the Government had a credit balance, and so they had, and that that balance was available for every purpose that Parliament had authorised—for the payment of interest, the payment of current votes, and of all liabilities which had a claim upon the funds at the disposal of the Government. He had no intention of saying that the credit balance of the consolidated revenue account of £104,610, on 31st March, was a surplus, or anything of the kind. Honorable members knew perfectly well that the whole of that would be absorbed by the payment of interest for the next two months. What he wished to explain was that, from various balances, including that of revenue, the Government had funds to their credit, on 31st March last, amounting to £355,037. That was a very different thing from saying the Government had a surplus to that amount. Before sitting down, he should say

a few words in connection with the manner in which the figures he had quoted had been prepared. He stated to the House, not only on this occasion, but when he first had the honor to make a financial statement, that the figures he used were actual facts—representing actual disbursements and actual receipts through the Treasury during the twelve months, irrespective altogether of the year during which the votes were taken. As far as the Treasury was concerned, the department did not trouble itself whether the money was paid on account of 1873 or 1874, so long as it was paid within the twelve months. From remarks of honorable members, some of them seemed to think that was a new practice introduced by himself. He should read from the statements made by Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Bell, his two predecessors in the Treasury. Mr. Ramsay said:—

“I ought to have explained sooner that the figures I have given in connection with revenue are the actual receipts and payments at the Treasury between the 1st January and 31st December, irrespective of when the expenditure was incurred, or for the service of what year the votes were taken. I think this the better and simpler course, and it was the one adopted by my predecessor.”

That was the course taken, first, by Mr. Stephens, and approved of and adopted by Mr. Ramsay, and also by Mr. Bell. In the last financial statement but one made by Mr. Bell, he said:—

“I have now completed my remarks upon the ordinary revenue and expenditure for 1871 and 1872. These remarks I have purposely curtailed as much as possible, and have only to add that the figures given by me, on both revenue and expenditure account, are the sums estimated to be received and paid at the Treasury between the 1st January and 31st December in each year—distinguished from sums received and paid on account of the year. This plan (originated, I believe, by Mr. Stephens, and followed by my immediate predecessor, Mr. Ramsay) is far more simple than the other plan referred to, and differs little in the practical result.”

Now, he (the Colonial Treasurer) had simply followed the practice of his predecessors in dealing with the figures, and in giving the actual receipts and expenses recorded by the Treasury within a given period, and left out of consideration, except by way of illustration, any notice, so far as the Treasury was concerned, as to what year's account the transactions belonged. He believed it was the best plan to adopt. The practice of almost all the colonies was different. In Victoria, the practice was to close the financial year as the clock struck twelve on the 30th June. Everything then lapsed, and must be re-voted by Parliament. That practice had been attended by so many inconveniences and difficulties, that the present Treasurer of Victoria contemplated introducing a change. The practice adopted here was simple, and of course in accordance with

the provisions of the new Audit Act. When honorable members wished to ascertain what had been done with a particular vote, of course it was easy to ascertain at the proper time by a perusal of the Auditor-General's report. The expenditure on account of the year 1874 exceeded the expenditure within the year by about £25,000. He had heard no reference to it in the House, but as the subject had been referred to in the public papers, it would not be out of place to glance at the objection taken, that the Government had no right to make use of the Savings Bank balances. Well, that objection had been very ably refuted by Mr. Ramsay, who pointed out that, as the Government were giving 4 or 5 per cent. interest for deposits, it was not to be expected that they would leave those deposits in the safe. There were about one hundred accounts of the Government kept in the Union Bank, Brisbane, and the agreement with the bank was, that the Government should receive interest on their aggregate weekly balance. It might so happen, as at the present time, that some of those accounts were largely overdrawn, and that others were largely in credit, the result being that, on the 31st March last, the Government had, in Brisbane, about £150,000 to their credit. The amount was being rapidly decreased by expenditure on loan account, for which no provision had been made. He had heard it stated out of doors that all the Government accounts should be kept distinct; but as it had not been stated in the House, he should not trouble honorable members by refuting it. He should merely state that in this debate he never spoke of the £355,037 as a surplus, but simply as a credit balance at the disposal of the Government, for the payment of any services authorised by Parliament, whether railways or other works, salaries, or anything else. It was a matter of adjustment afterwards to which account the expenditure should be charged.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM, who was almost inaudible in the gallery, was understood to compare the statements of the Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Works and the honorable member for Port Curtis, and to say that the figures quoted by the latter could not be refuted by honorable gentlemen on the Treasury bench, and that after what had been stated by the honorable member for Leichhardt, Ministers would not repeat their statement, in the Houses or anywhere else. The honorable member for Port Curtis never said he would not construct railways; he always said that the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway was a matter of time. The entrance of the late Government upon office was not the time to make that extension, but it came afterwards, when they could command means. The honorable the Premier was confusing the honorable member for Port Curtis with himself, for it was he who had pledged himself to the people of Ipswich, on more than one

occasion, that the railway should never be made to Brisbane.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; never.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM: In reference to the statement of the Treasurer that the expenditure in 1874 was £147,000 as against £75,000 in 1873, the honorable gentleman omitted to consider that the Northern Railway works were carried on during a portion of 1873 only, as it took several months before the engineer's staff got underway; therefore the comparison instituted did not hold. He thought that would account for something similar in the first few months subsequently; and to follow out the argument of the honorable the Minister for Works, that the only way to make a railway remunerative, was to extend it to a certain length, if they only acted on that principle, they would see the advisability of pushing the line on more rapidly than it was being carried on at the present time. With regard to the labor market, he could assure the honorable member that there was very little danger, because agricultural laborers in that district, and laborers on stations were a very different class of men to those accustomed to the work of navvies. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had said he did not intend to disturb the labor market, but he (Mr. Graham) had talked the matter over with many persons not many months ago, and the universal reply by the employers of labor was, that they considered the advantages to be derived from carrying out these works would be far greater than anything that could be taken away from them in regard to labor. He believed they had no reason to fear that these people would suffer any serious inconvenience from work of that character being pushed on much more rapidly than it was at present. He had the greatest confidence in Mr. Ballard. He believed he was carrying the work out remarkably well, and he had no doubt that, if the Government increased the expenditure from £10,000 or £12,000 to about £20,000 a month, he would find sufficient labor, if not in the immediate neighborhood, in the surrounding districts, to push the work on to that extent. With regard to the appointment of Mr. MacDevitt, he thought the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had drifted into a few remarks, the effect of which that honorable member scarcely contemplated at the time. He said it was, or had been, the practice to pay salaries out of loans, and he (Mr. Graham) understood him to strongly disapprove of that practice, and yet he had been a party to doing the very same thing. If he disapproved of it, it would have been quite possible for him to have placed the salaries on the Supplementary Estimates for 1875, but he had not done so; and how could he reconcile the statement that he disapproved of the practice when he was actually carrying it out? He congratulated that honorable member on his opinion, that the practice should not be continued any

longer than his own time, but he would congratulate him still more heartily if he had put a stop to it himself. The honorable gentleman also stated that the reason why he did not propose a further reduction in taxation was, because he estimated a loss of £80,000 during the present year, and expected that that loss would be fully experienced; but he did not remind the House that, while he had reduced the *ad valorem* duties five per cent., he had imposed several fixed duties of a fixed nature. He had led the House to believe that, even this year, he would make a reduction of taxation, which one would suppose would be somewhat in proportion to the revenue imposed by these fixed duties; but still they had the fact that there was no additional reduction in taxation. The original idea of the Government was to do away with the *ad valorem* duties altogether, but it could not be done. Whether this arose from extravagance or from the revenue falling off, he was not prepared to say; but the fact was there!—that it could not be done. The honorable gentleman also referred to the fact that the Government were accused of extravagance and economy, and he (Mr. Graham) might explain what they were accused of by the honorable members who spoke early in the evening. They were accused of both; of being extravagant where they ought to have been economical, and economical where they ought to have been more liberal. He thought the honorable gentleman, to a great extent, met the objections raised; but nearly all the other speakers seemed to miss the point raised by the honorable members for Maranoa and Rockhampton, that they had spent some £40,000 or £50,000 above the authorised expenditure, in the various departments, and that they had been too economical in other expenditure authorised by the House. In fact, while there had been wasteful extravagance in one direction, there had been injurious economy in another. He might say, however, that their extravagance in exceeding authorised expenditure, had not been greater than what had been done by previous Governments. He was quite prepared to allow that, but what he did object to was, that when the honorable the Colonial Treasurer addressed the House last year, he said the present Government were not going to have any of that sort of unauthorised expenditure; that they looked upon it as utterly bad in principle, and they were determined on not having Supplementary Estimates Nos. 1, 2, and 3, to obtain authority for such expenditure; and yet they had not carried out that promise. There was another point in the financial position of affairs at the present time, referred to by the honorable member; but he had missed one of the most important statements of the honorable member for Rockhampton. He allowed that the revenue of the past year was inadequate to meet unauthorised expenditure—which was to say, that had the whole of the

authorised expenditure been incurred, there would be a heavy deficit. And although the revenue was stationary—although there was no hope of an increased revenue, he had placed upon his estimate a sum larger by £30,000 or £40,000 than the revenue of last year actually produced. What were they to conclude? Were they to conclude that the Estimates of the present year were, to some extent, dummies; that there would not be the money to spend, and, therefore, it would not be spent? He thought, if the honorable member took that view, he must foresee that they would have to come down next year for more money, and a lot of votes would have to be carried on; and if there was no money to meet them, it would be far better to leave them out of the Estimates altogether, especially as they had £97,000 on account of public works still hanging over their heads to be provided for. He would not detain the House further upon the various questions that had been debated that evening. He thought they had been dealt with in a very able manner, on that side of the House, at all events; and he gave the honorable the Colonial Treasurer credit for the way in which he had dealt with the matter on the other side. He might add that, had that honorable member made a similar statement in his tables, or in his financial speech, he would perhaps have prevented some of the unfavorable criticism which his Estimates had received; namely, that the actual expenditure for last year was only £20,000 or £30,000 in excess of the previous year. He (Mr. Graham) got an impression, and he believed that other honorable members did the same, that it would reach about £80,000.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: What he said was, that the actual expenditure on account of services in the year exceeded the actual expenditure in the year by £20,000; not that the actual expenditure in this year was £20,000, but it exceeded last year by that amount.

The question was then put and passed.