

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 23 MAY 1876**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, 23 May, 1876.*

Meeting of Parliament.—The Opening Speech.—Vacancies during Recess.—New Members.—Address in Reply to Opening Speech.

## MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

THE House met at twelve o'clock, pursuant to proclamation, and shortly afterwards proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber, to hear read His Excellency's Opening Speech.

The House resumed at half-past three o'clock.

## THE OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER reported that the House had that day attended the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency delivered an Opening Speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which, for greater accuracy, he had obtained a copy, which he then read to the House at length.

## VACANCIES DURING RECESS.

The SPEAKER reported, that since the termination of the last session the following vacancies had occurred in the House, viz. :—

1. By the resignation of William Oswald Hodgkinson, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Burke.

2. By the resignation of Charles James Graham, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Clermont.

That, upon being satisfied of the occurrence of each of the said vacancies, he had issued his writ for the election of a member to fill the same; and that such writs had been duly returned to him, with certificates respectively endorsed thereon, of the election of the following gentlemen, viz. :—

1. James Augustus Parker, Esquire, as Member for the Electoral District of Burke.

2. John Stevenson, Esquire, as Member for the Electoral District of Clermont.

The SPEAKER further reported, that during his absence from the colony, the following vacancies occurred, viz. :—

1. By the resignation of Adam Black, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Logan.

2. By the resignation of William Miles, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Carnarvon.

3. By the resignation of Edmund Molyneux Roids, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Leichhardt.

4. By the resignation of James Robert Dickson, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Enoggera.

That each of the said resignations was, as required by the eighth section of the Legislative Assembly Act of 1867, addressed to him, and was by the Clerk of the House, acting under the Speaker's instructions and authority, handed forthwith to His Excellency the Governor, who thereupon caused new writs to issue, in pursuance of the provision in that behalf contained in the eleventh section of the said Act, for the election of members to serve respectively in the seats so vacated.

That the said writs were delivered to the Clerk with certificates respectively endorsed thereon of the election of the following gentlemen, viz. :—

Frederick Shaw, Esquire, as Member for the Electoral District of Logan ;

John De Poix Tyrel, Esquire, as Member for the Electoral District of Carnarvon ;

Charles Robert Haly, Esquire, as Member for the Electoral District of Leichhardt ;

The Honorable James Robert Dickson, Esquire, as Member for the Electoral District of Enoggera.

That, also, during his absence from the colony, another vacancy occurred in the Electoral District of Logan, by the resignation of Frederick Shaw, Esquire, and, a new writ having been issued, the same was in due course delivered to the Clerk, with a certificate endorsed thereon of the return of Peter McLean, Esquire, as member for the said Electoral District.

The SPEAKER also said, that it became his duty further to report that, in pursuance of the provisions of the Act 39 Vict., No. 6, a writ was duly issued on the 25th March last, for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, for the Electoral District of Cook ; but that no return to such writ had as yet reached his hands.

#### NEW MEMBERS.

The following members having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took their seats respectively for the electorates set against their names, viz. :—John Stevenson, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Clermont ; John de Poix Tyrel, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Carnarvon ; Charles Robert Haly, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Leich-

hardt ; Peter McLean, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Logan ; the Honorable James Robert Dickson, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Enoggera.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

MR. TYREL moved—

1. That a Select Committee be appointed to prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor in opening this the third session of the seventh Parliament.

2. That such committee consist of the following members :—Mr. Macalister, Mr. Hemmant, Mr. Kingsford, Mr. McLean, and the mover.

Question put and passed.

The committee then retired.

On the return of the committee,

Mr. TYREL brought up the following Address prepared by the committee, and the same was read at length by the Clerk as follows :—

“To His Excellency WILLIAM WELLINGTON CAIRNS, Esquire, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

“1. We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Person and Government of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to your Excellency for the Speech with which you have opened the present Session.

“2. The various measures referred to by your Excellency will receive our most careful attention and consideration.

“3. We receive with pleasure your Excellency's congratulations upon the continued progress of the Colony in all its material interests ; and we beg to assure your Excellency that we shall earnestly endeavor to promote the welfare and prosperity of all classes of the community.”

MR. TYREL moved—

That the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted by this House,

and in doing so, said : Mr. Speaker,—Sir, In rising to move the adoption of the Address which has just been read, I must crave the indulgence of the House, which has ever, I believe, been generously extended to those on whom for the first time falls the very important duty which I am called upon to perform. I do not know if it is usual for an occupant of the cross-benches to under-

take this duty, but, in my case, I think I am quite justified in doing so, as I was returned by the district which I have the honor to represent on the distinct understanding that I was to be quite independent in my action. It must, therefore, be clearly understood by honorable members, that while approving generally of the Ministerial programme, as set forth in the Opening Speech of His Excellency, which we have all heard to-day, I reserve to myself the right of voting upon any measures that may be brought forward, in an independent manner, and upon their merits, as they may come on for discussion. As a young politician, I must decline to ally myself to either Government or Opposition until I have been long enough in the House to learn more of their politics than I know at present.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear.

MR. TYREL: I believe in measures, not men—legislation, not delegatism; and I have not come here with the view to looting the Treasury for the benefit of the district I represent. The first two paragraphs of the Speech need no comment from me. No doubt honorable members will be glad to hear that an inquiry was held by the honorable the Premier, during his late trip to Europe, into the alleged irregularities in connection with our Emigration Department there, and I hope that the facts elicited will justify the Government in their very abrupt and sudden dismissal of the chief clerk in that department. I happened to be in the House when this subject was under discussion, and I must say, that, from what I heard on that occasion, I could not agree with their action in the matter. I am quite sure that all honorable members will agree with me when I say I am glad to hear that the honorable the Premier's visit has resulted in improved arrangements for the conveyance of immigrants to this colony; for there can be no doubt that if the reports of some of the inquiries lately held here reached the old country without something having been done, they would not tend to the encouragement of immigration to Queensland. The prompt action of the Government in this matter will, I am sure, meet with the cordial concurrence of honorable members on both sides of the House. Next comes the land question, which appears to me to be the most important one that can possibly be brought before us, and which I hope may be finally settled during the present session, as on its final adjustment depends the whole future welfare and prosperity of this colony. I am sure all honorable members must be pleased to hear that there is still a great demand for land for *bona fide* settlement. I must express a hope that this question will be dealt with in such a manner as will give a good and secure title to miners, graziers, and agriculturists, which, I am sorry to say, is not the case now. If

this is not done, we shall be continually overrun with land-sharks and speculators instead of *bona fide* settlers, as no man knows now how the value of his property may be affected by the caprice of the Government in power, the peculiar views of a Minister, or the report of a commissioner; and I sincerely hope that the promised Bill is such a one as will make it impossible in future for such an undesirable state of things to occur as we have lately had an instance of on the Darling Downs. I am very pleased to see that the Government have taken the bull by the horns, and are anxious to deal with the question of the ten years' leases in the settled districts, and I hope that any measure on that subject will have a due regard to existing interests, and permanently settle this vexed question for ever. I am not in favor of wholesale resumptions unless it can be shown that the land is required for settlement. This question affects the district I have the honor to represent, and I shall have more to say on this subject at the proper time, as I hold what will, no doubt, be considered peculiar views on it. I do hope that honorable members will deal with this question without introducing violent party feeling into the matter, as it is, as I before said, one on which depends the future of our country, and it is one which, if not soon settled, will cause the country to go to the dogs. I am sure that the action of the Government in bringing this question forward will meet with the hearty approval of the whole of the colony, and the support of honorable members on both sides of this House. The desirability of an inquiry into the greatly increased cost of the extension of the railway from Ipswich to Brisbane over the estimate cannot be doubted, and will, I trust, prove satisfactory. I must congratulate the Ministry on having opened negotiations having for their object the abolition of the border duties, as, from the fact of my long residence within a few miles of the boundary, I know how prejudicial they are to the interests of all parties concerned, and most sincerely trust that these negotiations may prove successful. If these duties are not abolished, there will only be a continuation of the smuggling which is now carried on over the border. The increase in the revenue, and the favorable terms on which the last loan was floated, cannot fail to be a cause for congratulation to everyone. The extension of the southern line of railway to the border of the colony is a work that cannot but meet the approval of all honorable members, as it will complete at least one portion of a great national undertaking, and the railway policy initiated by the honorable gentleman now at the head of the Government over ten years ago, and at the same time forge the last link of our contribution to the chain of overland communication between the capitals of the Australian colonies, the necessity for which may, in the present state of affairs in Europe,

arise at any date, should our mother country be embroiled in an European complication, and our seaboard patrolled by a hostile squadron.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. TYREL: What is more, it will be opening up a large area of our lands to settlement, and allow me to state most distinctly, that there are large areas of first-class lands in the immediate neighborhood of the proposed extension blessed with a climate unsurpassed in Australia. This work will at the same time foster an industry, viz., tin mining, which has contributed not a little to the prosperity of the colony during the last four years, and will do so long after all honorable members I have the honor of addressing have joined the great majority in that bourne whence none ever return. Moreover, when the proper time arrives, it will be shown that this work not only possesses all these claims to favorable consideration, but also a still greater one—that is, that it will be an immediately reproductive one, as there is a very large amount of traffic which now travels in another direction, awaiting the completion of this portion of our railway system, to come over this line, and which will very largely augment the revenue of the colony. The advantages of extending telegraphic communication are, I am sure, so manifest as to need no comment from me. The necessity for the division of the colony into districts, for financial purposes, must, I am sure, have already brought this desirable measure before the attention of most honorable members. There is another matter in connection with this, namely, that such a measure might, I think, include an amendment of our licensing system and Impounding Act, which bears very heavily on some portion of our community, and leads to great bitterness of feeling, especially in the district I represent. There are many other very important items in His Excellency's Speech which deserve mention, and I only wish that this duty had fallen on some other honorable member, who could have done it justice. As I have no doubt there are many honorable members anxious to address the House on this subject, I will now conclude by moving the adoption of the Address, as read.

Mr. McLEAN said: Sir, I have much pleasure in supporting the motion of the honorable member for Carnarvon. Being a new member of this House, and not at all acquainted with the general usages of it, I was in hopes that I should have had time to better prepare myself for speaking on this question. It is not, however, necessary for me to say very much, seeing that the honorable the mover of the Address has nearly exhausted the subject, which I think will, on the whole, recommend itself to the favorable consideration of the country. Unlike that honorable member, I do not come to this House as an independent member, but as a supporter of a Liberal Government. With regard to the despatches which

are mentioned in His Excellency's Speech, and which have since been laid on the table, relative to the nomination of members to the Legislative Council, I think they will recommend themselves to honorable members, as the appointments to the other Chamber, and the discussions which have taken place concerning them have been the subject of a good deal of talk outside of this Chamber. I am sure that the public will be glad to hear of anything which will assist in clearing up this matter, and not only will it be satisfactory to them, but also to the honorable members of this House. With regard to the inquiry into the Emigration Department at home, I may say that I am only surprised that such an inquiry has not taken place sooner, for it is a well known fact, that for a number of years the emigration system at home has not been one that would recommend itself to the intelligent public. People coming out here did not receive that attention which they were led to expect they would receive on board ship, and no doubt that was due to the system at work. As there has been an investigation into the subject, I hope that in future there will be better arrangements, which will be more to the comfort of the emigrants themselves, and which will redound more to the credit of this colony. The subject of immigration is one in which all we as colonists are greatly interested. It is not in the nature of things that in a young colony like this, we should go back; and, therefore, it is highly necessary that we should maintain a steady stream of immigration to it. I know that within the last twelve months several industries have been at a standstill from want of men, and, speaking of my own district, I can assure the House that that want has been so much felt as to have considerably interfered with the prosecution of agricultural and other pursuits. If we are to have this stream of immigration, I think it is most necessary that considerable care should be observed by the officers at home, and that they should satisfy themselves that the class of people selected as immigrants are suitable to the requirements of the colony; for we all know that there have been a vast number introduced here from time to time, who, instead of being a benefit to the colony, have actually proved themselves a bane. With regard to the settlement of the land question, honorable members are no doubt aware that there is a continual demand for land for the purposes of settlement, and that the great difficulty is for people to procure suitable land on which to locate themselves. The greater portion of the land which is thrown open is not fit for settlement, and I know that to be the case especially so in the district between Brisbane and the Logan and Albert, as, when travelling there, I have noticed that for one acre of really good land there are fifty acres of worthless land. I know that eight years ago in that locality there were smiling comfortable homesteads;

but what has become of them? They have all disappeared, and in their places there are nothing but scrubs; showing that the land then selected has not proved remunerative to those who have spent their money and the best years of their lives in an unsuccessful effort to make homes for their children on land that was unsuitable. I trust, therefore, that the Government, in throwing open land in the future, will see that it is to the interest of the colony that the worst land should not be offered to people for settlement. It is absolutely necessary that land should be thrown open, and also that it should be within sight of the people, without their having to go from place to place and make so many inquiries about it. I trust that the Land Bill when introduced will be simple in its character, so that selectors shall have no difficulty in understanding its provisions and requirements, and shall have every facility given to them. With regard to the legislation promised in reference to the constitution of the Legislative Council, I trust that a light will be thrown on the question which will redound to the credit of past Governments. It has long been felt that there has been a difficulty in regard to that branch of the Legislature, and I trust that the proposed Bill will remove that difficulty, and commend itself to the people by enabling them to exercise their right by having a voice in that Chamber. The Bill for local self-government is one that I shall support, as I believe that the time has arrived when there should be such a measure passed, and if there is incorporated with that Bill a land tax, I hope it will be of so comprehensive a nature as to enable the local authorities to expend the money raised in their several districts to the best advantage. There are many things on which I could speak at considerable length; but, as there are many honorable members to follow me, I will only just glance at the question of the ten years' leases. I think it is high time that the Government should grapple with this question. I am not one of those who strongly object to the pastoral element, as I consider that the colony needs those engaged in pastoral as well as those engaged in agricultural pursuits; but I hope that, if there is such a thing as the renewal of the leases, it will be in such a form, that whenever there is a demand shown for land in the settled districts, it will be thrown open for settlement. With regard to the lands in the back country, I think they may safely be left in the hands of the pastoral lessees for some time to come; that is, looking at the question from a farmer's view, inasmuch as their distance from market would interfere with the profitable occupation of such land by farmers. With these remarks, I beg to second the motion.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that, having listened with a considerable amount of pleasure to the speeches which had been made by two new members of that House, and considering the

immense amount of matter for reflection which was contained in the Governor's Speech, which had been placed in his hands—all of which they would require to digest before they would be in a position to go fully into the discussion of it—he thought he would be only suggesting what would be of convenience to every honorable member when he suggested to the honorable member at the head of the Government that he should adjourn the House, and thus give them an opportunity of studying the Speech. He thought perhaps the honorable gentleman would make a motion to that effect. [After a pause.] He took the silence of the honorable gentleman as a refusal, and that he considered that the debate on the Speech, which had just been read, should go on. Of course every honorable member—even those on the Government side of the House, who might be supposed to know more than those on his side—must feel the difficulty they had in speaking on the matter at all, for there was an immense number of things on which to speak, and on which even honorable members opposite might wish to speak, and those matters would have to be got out in some manner or other. For those reasons, he should have preferred having an adjournment, but as the Government objected to it, he would address himself to the matter as well as he could. He had great difficulty in looking upon the paper in his hand as an Address of the Ministry at all, for the gentlemen now on the Ministerial benches were quite distinct from those to whom the Opposition had offered such good advice last year; and, therefore, before they put forward a Speech for discussion, it was their duty to explain to the House how they came to occupy their present seats. Where, he would ask, was the Minister for Works of last session—how was it that the honorable member for Ravenswood was away? When he looked at the Ministerial benches and then at the Speech, he found that the Speech was a complete reversal of the Ministerial policy of last year. It was not a Ministry that he could catch hold of at all—he could not bring anything against them. Why, they were a will-of-the-wisp; as soon as one of the number did anything wrong, he was gone and not to be found. If he tried to discuss the conduct of any particular members of the Ministry, he found they were not there. Not only did he find men that he did not expect to find when he went to that House, but he found that men he wanted to find were not there, or were likely to go; in fact, he did not know whom they might find there a few weeks hence. He thought it was a great piece of impertinence for a Government to come down to that House, all the members of which were strange, with the exception of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer and the honorable the Colonial Secretary: those honorable gentlemen also having announced their determination to go away as soon as they could

make things comfortable. It was not the Ministry that he had been in the habit of dealing with, patched up and bad as that had been; and what was more, he was perfectly satisfied that the only two competent members of that Ministry, the honorable Premier and the Colonial Treasurer, would do everything in their power to get away as soon as they could. He wanted to know, in the first place—and he hoped, with reference to this matter, he should get support from the other side of the House, which he did not get last year—he wished to know the reasons which had led to the several disruptions that had taken place in the Cabinet, and also of the threatened disruptions which they had heard something about. He desired to have that information from Ministers at the present time, because it was intimately connected with the business they had met to transact—to see not only who were the men who were to carry on the business of the country, but also what were the measures they meant to carry out. When he looked upon the position of the late Minister for Works, and considered what had been said on the subject in the Press—meagre as it had been, but not denied—he quite sympathised with that honorable member, because, although he did not occupy a position of which he (Mr. McIlwraith) could thoroughly approve, logically, so far as he could understand, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was in the wrong position. It was the honorable the Colonial Treasurer who commenced the system of extravagance in public works by bribing members and bribing constituencies; and it was by that system the Government had kept together for the last two years. The visit of the honorable Treasurer to the North was the first thing that tended to spoil the Ministry completely, for he came back thoroughly satisfied that the only good principle of government in Queensland consisted in giving the constituencies money. There was nothing of political principle in it, but simply to give them money. At that time a very little money did them; but they commenced to see, if that was the principle on which the public works of the colony were to be conducted, it was a system that would not at all square with some ideas the Treasurer had about the Treasury. That was the system introduced and carried on to a certain extent; but there was one of the party who did not believe in public works being carried out only in the central district—that was Brisbane, and the districts immediately connected with Brisbane, or which, although they might be at remote distances, still might materially affect the progress of Brisbane—for instance, the Stanthorpe Railway. When any work connected with Brisbane districts was brought before the Ministry, all notions of keeping expenditure within bounds were thrown aside, and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was there to be the advocate of that. That honorable gentleman commenced modestly, and

when dealing not very liberally with the North, he gave £25,000 for a dock in Brisbane, a work which would cost £100,000; and he did not know that it would even square at that. The system gradually edged in, and he had no doubt the honorable the Treasurer would try to have a complete system of drainage carried out in this city of Brisbane; and now he came forward with the greatest piece of extravagance he (Mr. McIlwraith) knew of, and became an advocate of the Warwick and Stanthorpe Extension. Now, what did his late colleague say? He seemed to say:—"I thoroughly believe in this system, but I do not want it confined to Brisbane." He naturally said,— "We'll deal fairly all round: what is good in Brisbane cannot be bad in the North, and I want to serve my constituents." That was the opinion that the public generally had formed of the quarrel between the two men; and, without saying that he (Mr. McIlwraith) supported any of the public works the late head of that department meant to go in for, he would say this:—That that honorable member had undoubtedly the logical side of the quarrel. The honorable member failed simply by carrying out the extravagant ideas that had been initiated by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer; and when they came to the consideration of who should go out in connection with a policy of that kind, he certainly thought the Treasurer should go. And he had not the slightest doubt that honorable gentleman would have been glad to go, instead of having to come before the House with the budget speech he would probably have to make. The honorable member for Ravenswood was not inclined to give up politics; and if he was determined to carry out that policy, he (Mr. McIlwraith) thought the man who was going to be absent from the colony for several years should have given grave consideration to that man, or, at all events, have taken a common-sense view of the position, and said, "As it is you, not me, will have to carry out this policy, I will give way." He had no doubt the honorable the Treasurer would like to have adopted that course; but he was debarred from doing so; and from the particular kind of extravagance he (Mr. McIlwraith) had mentioned, that honorable member had landed himself into a position no Treasurer ever liked to be in. They came to the House two and a-half years ago, and no Government could wish to be in a better position. They had £250,000 of revenue that had been saved from previous years, and they had what everybody believed to be a very buoyant revenue, and which turned out to be, at all events, a very hopeful revenue. The Treasurer then came down and proposed to reduce taxation, which he did, to the amount of £70,000; but at the same time, he carried on the system of manipulating members and constituencies; and what was the result? He now came before them, he (Mr. McIlwraith) had not the slightest doubt,

with a proposal to re-impose that taxation—a very disagreeable course—to meet the deficiency; and the only other alternative was not to do the work they had promised all round to do. No matter how bad things might be in the Treasury—no matter how money might have been squandered—he thought it was a position no Ministry dared take up in this colony, to stop public works. They were bound to go on with the public works of the colony, and they were bound to go on with them on some business-like principle by which the Treasury would be protected at the same time. Now, if any railway or railways had been portion of the policy of the present Government—and he was rather surprised to see that they had any railway policy at all—he should not have expected it to be the railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe, because he remembered that when the present Colonial Secretary, himself, Mr. Stephens, who had retired, and the present Colonial Treasurer joined together to carry on the Government of the country, one of the first things agreed to amongst them was, that there might be great physical difficulties in the way—that it might be so difficult a line to construct that it could not be done. But one thing which was agreed to, and publicly stated by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, was, that they should make the line from Maryborough to Gympie. That was part of the honorable the Colonial Secretary's programme, as put before his constituents at Ipswich the day after his colleagues had agreed to it. No wonder there was not a word to be said by honorable members on the other side of the House; but he had no doubt they would have something to say yet, and give expression to their astonishment that the same gentleman who was at the head of the Government now should come forward and simply manipulate the constituencies in another way, bring in another railway, and ignore the one that he had previously promised. That, he had always understood, until they had it distinctly put before them now, would be the way in which railway progress would have been extended in this colony; not, perhaps, because it was the best way to expend public money—that he did not commit himself to at all. It was a complete breach of faith to the inhabitants of that district that they should now be sold by the Ministry who deliberately promised to construct this line, not once, but twice. The Government not only promised it when they became a Ministry, but also last year; and, from the action of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, the people of that district had every moral right to come forward and insist that the Government should make this railway part of the present programme. Why, the Government, last year, put a sum on the Estimates for this work; but they attached to it a condition that it was impossible to fulfil; and when they were actually constrained by the members connected with

the Wide Bay and Burnett districts, they withdrew that, and submitted the work as part of their policy—as the honorable the Colonial Treasurer said, it was part of their policy. He, as one member, was not at all satisfied with the way in which the Government had been carrying on their executive administration. One of the paragraphs in the Speech said:—

“The progress made during the past year in the construction of railway and telegraph lines has been satisfactory, and the receipts from the railways in actual operation are steadily increasing.”

Now, he did not think that the progress made in the construction of railways was very satisfactory; in fact, the statement was not true; at all events, if it were satisfactory to the Government, he was sure it was not satisfactory to the House. As to the telegraph lines, he thought the way in which they had been managed was creditable to the colony. It was only a duty he owed to the head of that department to acknowledge that the postal and telegraph lines had been conducted with an energy not seen in connection with any of the public works left to the present Ministry to carry out. The Government came down to the House last year and debated for two or three months a new principle of constructing railways which was to do wonders for the progress of the colony. At that time there were fifty miles of the new line actually surveyed, and tenders might have been advertised for on the first day of Parliament. What had been the result? The whole of that time had gone by, and the work was not started yet. And while they were spending a large amount of money in bringing immigrants to the colony, they were subjected to the mortification of seeing their neighbors chuckling at people leaving the colony day after day for want of work. He blamed the Ministry for that. It was not for want of funds, it was not because there were no engineers in the colony, it was not because men were not prepared to have come here and commenced those works months ago. It was simply for some reason in the Ministry that they had got to explain to that House. It was a policy that had done this colony a great deal of harm, and one that he entered his protest against. And that was not the only matter. He saw that grave complaints were coming down from the North, and he should like to know what had been done with the money voted last year for a wharf at Townsville. What had been done there? He had been reading a northern paper that day, and it seemed that the Government had not done anything at all up there. It could not be because the Government were short of funds, so far as he could see, because no matter if the Treasury balances were wrong, there was plenty of money lying in the bank at their command. He should take next the Northern Railway, and he would ask, was it

creditable to the colony that they should have had a railway work like that going on for the last three years and have actually managed to construct only twenty-five miles of it? The plans and sections were prepared and the ground was surveyed and ready years ago, and the reason given last session why the works were not being pushed on more rapidly was, that the Government were afraid of taxing too greatly the labor market of the colony. But no man would say that had been a bar to progress during the last twelve months, and yet the actual result of the administration of the present Government was, that at the present time only twenty-five miles of that line were open. The same work ought, under an energetic Government, to have been finished in half the time. He supposed he should have an opportunity of discussing the report of the honorable the Colonial Secretary on another occasion, and therefore he would not refer to it at the present time. He was glad to see that at all events that his executive action at home had had the effect of improving matters very considerably; of course of that they would have to judge for themselves afterwards. He found in the Speech a lot of very old familiar faces, which he was sure the honorable the Speaker, who had had much greater experience in the House than he had, must also recognise. There was a Bill for dealing with the alienation of Crown lands. That was a stock subject, for he did not think a Speech had ever been read to the House in which there had not been a similar clause promising great things about the public lands. And he had always noticed that it was not important as a text in the Speech; never was there any idea carried by it, but the importance was in connection with the men who were supposed to carry it out. Now, he would ask the House, was the present Government a fit Government to make a Land Act, when they looked at the changes that had already taken place, and when it was rumored that the resignation of the honorable the Minister for Lands was actually in the hands of the honorable the Colonial Secretary? When not only was that reported, but when the causes of that resignation and all the details had been actually commented on in the public Press, surely they must look at those facts, and consider into whose hands they were entrusting the formation of a new land law to govern them for the next few years. But not only that; they must look further. The honorable the Minister for Lands would, no doubt, be perfectly able to clear himself of the charges that had been brought against him; but still those charges existed, and the Government ought to have taken the earliest opportunity of giving every information to the House on the subject. He said they were not fit men to carry out any legislation connected with the lands of the colony; and for this reason—they had changed their policy so completely. If there

was one point brought more prominently than another before the House last year, it was the disposition of the Government—or what remained of them—to alter the system by which land had been alienated in former times, and the immense stress that was laid upon sales by auction. That was the principle that ran through the whole of the Western Railway Bill, which was, in fact, the Bill that embodied the most important part of the land laws of last session. And not only did they show that their disposition was that way—which he considered was a retrograde system of dealing with the Crown lands of the colony—but they had kept up to it ever since; and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had shown, no matter how he might talk about liberal land laws, that the Treasury must be satisfied; and in order to make him seem right in his balances when he came before the House, he was perfectly prepared to throw aside everything liberal connected with the land laws, and to say “we must have money.” Money was of far more importance than all land laws. There was another honorable gentleman who exercised a great deal of influence on the administration of the land laws last year—the honorable the Attorney-General—and he should like to see what influence he was going to exert in connection with the Bill promised this year. They knew perfectly well the action he had taken; they knew the lever he had used to place himself in his present position. When a Land Bill, liberal in some of its most important particulars, was introduced, it was through the action he took in connection with that Bill that he got into that position. And as soon as he got into that position, what was his *role*? Having gone into a number of lawsuits, and put the colony to great deal of expense, and having placed men in a miserable state of suspense—and not only those men whom he attacked directly, but also a large class of men who were actually placed in the disagreeable position of not knowing when they would be turned out of their holdings—having done that—confining his action simply to lawsuits—he came down to the House last session and said he did not think a new Land Bill was required at all. He said he thought the present Act was a capital measure if well administered; and, therefore, if the slightest faith could be placed in the way the Government would administer the land laws, it showed utter inconsistency on their part in now coming down and stating that they were going to legislate respecting the public lands. What was the difference between this year and last year in respect to land, and were their land laws to be productive of a never-ending series of lawsuits? He might say that with the greater portion of the Speech he thoroughly agreed. In fact, he had never seen a Governor’s Speech yet with which he could not agree, because the framers of it took care to promise everything; but the House had to look and see

whether those promises were likely to be carried out, and he thought they might judge of what the Government were likely to do in regard to public works, and in connection with the land laws of the colony, by what they had done in the past. He now came to one of the most important points in the Speech—one which must be looked upon by all common-sense men as the real solution of their present difficulties. That was the Local Government Bill.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. McILWRAITH: He gave this Ministry credit, however they might like to take it, for having forced the necessity for such a measure most strongly upon that House. They had carried on the system of manipulating electorates to such an extent that honorable members did not know what Ministry might be in to-morrow, or at any time. There was a very uncomfortable feeling amongst most of the thinking classes of the colony, that the House had got to that stage, that honorable members would sit there quietly, and take whatever was voted for them or their constituents, and that the Government would not appeal to the country until they were really forced to do so. They were coming gradually to that, without payment of members, and all through the action of the Government. The Ministry had paved the way thoroughly for the Local Government Bill, and he only hoped if they remained in office, they would fulfil even a tithe of what they had promised in previous sessions. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer, in the first speech he (Mr. McIlwraith) heard him make in that House, turned to him most amiably, and said his honorable friend would bring in that Bill next session. He (Mr. McIlwraith) no doubt would have brought it in, above all others, if he had not been put out of the Ministry. The Government had made no effort to bring it in and pass it, and he had not the slightest doubt that they meant to pass it over this session in the same way that they had done in former sessions. A Municipal Institutions Bill was introduced by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer last year, but it was merely for show. The Government were going to do what they could do if they were pushed; but they let the House know, at the same time, that they did not mean to do anything unless they were pushed, and at last they got such a majority at their backs that they were not pushed at all, and did nothing. He had blamed the Government in several things, and he was only sorry that they did not entrust the gentlemen who had moved and seconded the Address to give the House some little information. They talked with extreme reticence on most matters. He believed the honorable member for the Logan would have told them more if he had been placed in a position to do so; and, in fact, he did not think the Government had made up their minds on a great many of these matters.

With regard to the Border duties, that honorable member seemed inclined to tell them something, but he did not know; and he (Mr. McIlwraith) certainly thought, if the Government considered that matter of sufficient importance to put it in the Speech, they might have told the House something about it—that there had been negotiations going on, or what had been done. He referred to it because if they would take the trouble to tell honorable members what they had been doing during the recess, it would direct attention to a great many things they had paid very little or no attention to. He hoped to hear from the honorable the Minister for Works, and from the honorable member for Ravenswood, how this question of public works and the finances of the colony had been patched up by the Ministry—how they had dealt with the difficulty put before them by the honorable member for Ravenswood. That difficulty was to make the Estimates square by either increasing taxation or reducing public works. He had no doubt the House would require some explanation, and members on both sides were waiting with some anxiety to hear what course was to be adopted. He was rather afraid of the selection they had made in the successor to the late Minister for Works. He knew that no gentleman in the House could have acquired a greater notion of the evils of extravagance than the present Minister for Works. He knew that honorable gentleman's face familiarly; when he (Mr. McIlwraith) was in office, he used to come every Thursday, as regularly as the clock struck half-past eleven, heading three or four deputations to get money for somewhere or other. Perhaps it was on account of the experience he had acquired in such matters that he had been chosen, and, possibly, he had learned how to say "no" by this time. It was some time before he got anything else out of him (Mr. McIlwraith), but he did ultimately get something. There was another matter to which he would refer, where he thought the Government might have taken better executive action than they had done, and that was, in connection with the paragraph in the Speech which referred to having sent to another colony for a gentleman to report on the construction of the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. He thought it was generally understood last year that such a thing should be done, but there was another thing that had not been done, and which was equally important. Some gentleman should have been asked to furnish a report on the manner in which the works were actually being carried on on the Northern Railway. That would have been of very considerable value to the colony, because they were actually in this position: there was a general disposition to think that the money for that work was not being spent in such a manner as to get the greatest amount of work for the least amount of money. At all events, it was not a proper position to allow the expenditure

on that line to be in the hands of one or, at the most, two officers, over whom there was not the slightest check. Without at all imputing dishonesty to that gentleman, he said it was a position no man should be allowed to be in for so long a time. There was not the least chance of him coming out of it with clean hands while he was subject to such temptation, and merely in justification of that gentleman himself, he thought some action ought to have been taken in the matter when Mr. Robert Watson was in the colony, in order to let the Government and the public know exactly how things stood there. It was, no doubt, a good thing to get that gentleman to report on the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway, but it was no use crying after the horse was gone from the stable. The horse, however, was in the stable up North, and by some such action as he had suggested it might be preserved. Another matter in the Speech, which was not an old friend, was amongst the Bills to be introduced by the honorable the Attorney-General:—

“A Bill to amend the law relating to the Ministerial head of the Department of Justice, and to provide for the appointment of a permanent officer to perform the duties of grand jury for the colony.”

He had no doubt that this would be a very useful Bill when it came to be explained by the honorable the Attorney-General, but he thought they had had quite enough of expense foisted on the country by that honorable gentleman since he had been in office. He believed if they examined the number of officers created by that honorable gentleman, his department would be found to be a most extravagant one, and they should, therefore, look with considerable suspicion on a Bill of that sort, and not commit themselves to further expenditure in the matter. The next Bill was one to divide the colony into provinces and financial districts, which he did not think needed any comment. The Government were not serious with it, and if they were serious with it, they were perfectly incompetent to carry out such a measure. He had now commented at some length on the different items contained in the Speech, and there were a great many other items he should have an opportunity of speaking to when they came to be dealt with. As he said before, he had very little to object to in the policy enunciated in the Speech. He believed in the three great features brought forward, and that had been brought forward before. He thoroughly believed in local self-government, a reform of the land laws, and a vigorous execution of public works, which, he might say, correcting himself, was omitted altogether from the programme. What he thoroughly disagreed with was that, judging from their previous action, the Government had not the slightest intention of seeing any of these measures brought to maturity—not even the railway put down as the railway to Stanthorpe. They had not the slightest faith in bringing forward such a railway, and anything further he had to say on that subject he should reserve

until he heard how it came to occupy such a prominent position in their programme. The great bulk of what they professed to do had been promised over and over again, but he believed they had not the least intention of carrying out those promises.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he was already a little disappointed with the prospects of the session. He had anticipated that this Speech would, at any rate, be discussed with something like lively interest. They waited a long time before any of the leaders of opinion on the other side of the House ventured to break the ice, and now they had been indulged with another long pause. They might, he thought, very reasonably have had an explicit, even if it were a short statement, with regard to the Ministerial position as affected by the changes which had lately taken place. As a consistent supporter of the Government, he thought he might be permitted to say, it was due as much to that side of the House as to the other side, that they should have had explained the reasons which had led to those changes. They were all important, and he thought it would have only been respectful to the House to have given that explanation.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. DOUGLAS: He had really no very decided wish to Address the House. The Address had been moved and seconded by two gentlemen, who he hoped would prove an acquisition to the House. Their efforts that day certainly justified the belief that the House would have in them two efficient speakers, who were also practical men acquainted with the wants of their districts. He had hoped that some animation would have been thrown into the discussion, because, not only was the Speech itself worthy of some notice, but there were some events that had taken place during the long recess, which naturally came up for discussion now, as the most convenient time for an expression of opinion upon them. He was not one of those who usually adopted the method of nagging at the Government, by moving the adjournment on side questions; but it was convenient to take a review of those circumstances which struck honorable members, as the most important that had occurred during the recess. He quite commended the Government as to their administration. He thought, so far they had administered the affairs of the colony effectually and creditably, and if on one or two matters he should criticise their conduct, he hoped honorable gentlemen would understand, that he by no means believed their administration had not done credit to them, and been useful to the country in many respects—in most respects, he hoped. But there were one or two points upon which he had disagreed with them, and still disagreed with them, and he must confess, if their aspects were not so encouraging to himself, he was sure they were not so encouraging to the independent supporters of the Government as they were some time ago. Before alluding to

some parts of the Speech, he should like to refer to a matter of considerable importance, connected with the executive administration during the recess, and that was, the appointment of a gentleman who lately held a seat in that House, to the position of administrator of the new Education Act. He had great respect for the late member for Clermont, and admiration for his practicability and the assiduous manner in which he discharged his duties in that House; but he regretted to see that he, above all men, was selected for the post of practical administrator of the Education Act.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. DOUGLAS: He regretted it, not only because Mr. Graham had expressed an opinion so very antagonistic to the general tenor of the Act, but for other reasons. Except that he was a hearty supporter of secular education, on other matters that gentleman had expressed a strong opinion in opposition to the leading features of the Act. He thought it was a remarkable act of indiscretion on the part of Ministers, to choose as the permanent administrator of that most important Act a gentleman who had declared himself in such unmistakable terms as opposed to it. He felt some surprise that Mr. Graham should have felt satisfied to accept a position such as that, and if his surprise was great on that point, he also felt decided regret that a gentleman of ability and high standing—a gentleman who was entitled to look forward to occupying a position of responsible Minister at some future time—should thus be attracted from the Opposition side of the House. He said that the proceeding, politically speaking, was decidedly an immoral one; and he hoped it would not be followed. He hoped honorable gentlemen now in office would, if possible, not seek for administrators among either their supporters or their opponents in that House.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. DOUGLAS: He believed that, to a great extent, they would destroy the value of representative government if they did. If men accepted seats in that House, they should look forward to a political career, and not to the career of permanent administrators in such a position as that which had been accepted by Mr. Graham. He hoped his remarks on this matter would not be accepted as hypercritical as regarded Mr. Graham; but still, as a public duty, he felt that it was necessary for him to make these remarks. And, moreover, he was not sure that the immorality of the proceedings was not magnified a good deal by the fact that the honorable the Attorney-General himself, who was responsible for this appointment, ought rather to have looked forward to the time when he might have met Mr. Graham honorably as an antagonist in another field. It was understood that Mr. Graham was about to qualify himself for the Bar; and it was quite possible he might have been a future Attorney-

General. But Mr. Graham was now disposed of. He would not apply to that proceeding the harsh term that was on the tip of his tongue; he was going to have said it was an "artful dodge," but he should be sorry to apply that to anything done by his honorable friend the Attorney-General. Still it had not a pleasant appearance, that a gentleman who was entitled to expect to serve the colony in a high position as a responsible officer of the Crown, should have been attracted to the permanent official service, and that thereby the ranks of the Opposition should have been weakened, because he thought it was most important that the most efficient men should, if possible, be retained to do the work of the Opposition. That was essentially necessary for the honor of that House, and for the proper conduct of public business. He, therefore, felt sincere regret not only for Mr. Graham's own sake, but for the possible contingency that might arise from the power which he undoubtedly would possess in the administration of that Act. Honorable members would, no doubt, remember that Mr. Graham twitted the honorable the Attorney-General, when speaking on the question of non-vested schools, with being a persecutor; he said he was going to do his burnings just in the same way as—referring to history, which Mr. Graham was rather fond of doing—on previous occasions they had taken place. The honorable the Attorney-General was not going actually to drag his victims to the stake and fire the match, but he was doing an act of political persecution, and that Mr. Graham highly disapproved of. It seemed remarkable that the man who expressed himself in decided terms as utterly opposed to the Bill, should have been the very man placed in the position to command the whole administration of the office. He believed that Mr. Graham was most likely to be a most effective administrator; and it was possible, that under the honorable the Attorney-General he would be a most capable man. So far as he (Mr. Douglas) was able to judge, he had launched that new measure with remarkable ability, and so long as the present Attorney-General was there, possibly Mr. Graham might administer the Act with great propriety, and in accordance with the principles it contained; but in a year or two, they might have a fresh Minister of Instruction, who might look with different light on the matter, and, when aided by Mr. Graham, who expressed his opinion conscientiously in that House as opposed to the measure, what then would become of the Act? The present Attorney-General might possibly be then in opposition, and not have the control which he now had over the administration. He protested against action of that kind as being likely to sap the true principles upon which representative government ought to be carried out. He observed that some prominence was given in the first paragraph

of the Speech to the furnishing of a series of despatches, in reference to the Upper House. That had been done in virtue of a resolution carried by that House, on a motion of his own; and he was glad to hear that they were to have that information. He must confess, however, that he was a little surprised that it should have been considered necessary to apply to the Secretary of State for leave to produce those despatches.

Mr. PALMER: Hear, hear.

Mr. DOUGLAS: He was surprised that His Excellency's advisers should have so advised him, because it was altogether novel in practice. He had never known such a thing done in any Parliament in the Australian colonies before, and he must submit to His Excellency's advisers, that no such leave as that applied for was necessary.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear.

Mr. DOUGLAS: The honorable gentleman cried "Hear, hear," but was he not one of those who were responsible for offering that advice to His Excellency? He hoped it might not be the case, because he felt confident that any public despatch that ever left Downing street was sent out with the full knowledge that it was subject to be called for by address to the Governor in his capacity as Governor. Every despatch was so written, unless marked "confidential," in which case it was a private communication between the Secretary of State and the Governor, with which Parliament had nothing to do; and he hoped the House would maintain its rights in that respect, and hold such despatches subject to be called for by motion without appeal to the Secretary of State. He therefore objected to the advice which had been tendered to His Excellency. It was not in accordance with practice, nor in accordance with sound theory, and he hoped in future it would not be practised. With regard to the duties which the honorable the Colonial Secretary undertook, he was happy to see him in his place again, in, he hoped, renewed health, and capable of undertaking public business. The duties which he imposed upon himself were very necessary. He (Mr. Douglas) felt it was impossible that the doubt which for some time had hung over the administration of the London office, could be allowed to attach to it for any longer time. It was far better that that honorable gentleman, or some other person in the confidence of the Ministry, with full powers, should go there to investigate matters, and there was nobody more fitted for that duty than that honorable gentleman. He should be very glad to have an opportunity of perusing the papers on the subject which had been laid on the table of the House. It was impossible now to pretend to express any opinion on the matter, but he was satisfied that the mission which that honorable gentleman undertook was one which was called for by the circumstances of the case, and he probably had got to the bottom of it. The disclosures which

were made with regard to the provisioning of the "Star Queen," no doubt let in a good deal of light as to the practices which had been going on apparently for some time, and now something like proof, he believed, had been provided, to show that there had been malpractices. He should take that opportunity of reminding honorable members, that although he felt it his duty on a former occasion to object to the course pursued by the Government in the dismissal of Mr. Wheeler, he never did object, but always strongly urged that they would have been right in suspending him, subject to inquiry. That was the proper course to have pursued, because then the dismissal would have come with less force, if he were proved to have been guilty of malpractices. It was right that he should say a few words with regard to what appeared now to be the railway policy of the Government. He thought the proposals made in the Speech were ill-judged, and unsound in principle. He had no objection to the construction of the Stanthorpe Railway; he should have been found willing to support it, if proper grounds were shown for its construction, on the first occasion that a deliberate railway policy was brought forward involving the construction, not only of that line, but of lines in other parts of the colony, where they were required just as much, and where he believed they would pay just as well. When that time came, he should be prepared to support this Stanthorpe Railway, but he would not support it as a mere fragmentary portion of a railway policy. He felt it his duty to state last session, that the railway policy of the Government seemed to him to be fragmentary. It was of different kinds. They proposed partly to make railways by grants of land, and partly from moneys voted by that House. There was a want of clearness and decision, and a want of principle in the advocacy even of the Western Railway, if it was not intended to apply the same principle to other portions of the colony. He understood one of the great arguments then used by the honorable the Minister for Works was, that the Western Railway was based upon the principle of the allocation of the land in the district to be benefited by the railway itself. That was a clear and distinct principle, and one which should be made applicable to the other districts of the colony. He did not know whether it could to the same extent be made applicable to the extension to Stanthorpe.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. DOUGLAS: If it could, well and good; and if it could not, the House would require some good reason why that principle should be now departed from, while in other districts it was to be applied. Of course, he was bound, on the part of his constituents, to protest in the strongest way against the manner in which they were now treated. They had been led to believe for some time—

they had been literally cajoled—there was no other term to apply to it—into believing that the Government would give their support to the construction of the railway from Maryborough to Gympie. There was a latent insincerity throughout the conduct of the Government which now became apparent, and his constituents were completely thrown aside. With them, the late Minister for Works was thrown aside, and it was now apparent that the Government had never considered the construction of the Maryborough and Gympie Railway was justified by the circumstances of the case, and much less would they now consider it was. One would have imagined that, as time had gone on, and it became apparent that the principle applied to the Western Railway was practicable and good, there could be no difficulty in applying the same principle to the Wide Bay and Burnett district. If that principle were not good, surely the Government had had time to consider the whole question, and to have brought forward, this session, some plan for fulfilling the expectations of the people of that district. But he was at a loss to understand how this proposed railway was to be carried out. They were told this was to be a session, if not exactly of retrenchment, at any rate, of very careful financial administration; and yet if this railway was to be authorised, it was quite clear they would be committed to another loan.

**THE COLONIAL TREASURER:** No.

**MR. DOUGLAS:** Well, how was the line to be constructed without a loan? If not by loan, then why not consider similar cases without a loan? He could imagine that the claims of several districts might be considered, without the necessity of applying for a loan this session. They had seen that the Western Railway Act had taken a long time to come into operation;—a whole year had passed, and very little had been done. That, he believed, had arisen chiefly from the necessity of giving notice to the occupants of Crown lands; and knowing that, one would have imagined that the Government, if they thought a railway in the Wide Bay and Burnett district was possible at all, would have taken time by the forelock, had the matter discussed this session, authorised the expenditure of the money, if necessary—not necessarily have applied for a loan this session—but authorised the expenditure, and so prepared the way, giving the requisite notices of resumption, and doing all the preliminary work necessary before such a work could be properly carried out. These were one or two points upon which he strongly differed from the present members of the Executive, and there were some other matters which had become public property, matters of notoriety in connection with the position of the Ministry at the present time, which were not very reassuring to him, and he did not think they could be very reassuring to the supporters of the

present Government. It was known—and he trusted the honorable gentleman would pardon him for his plain speaking—it was known that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government looked forward to returning to England as Agent-General. He did not mean to say that was not a very honorable ambition, which he hoped might be carried into effect; but that honorable gentleman must consider the effect that must have upon his Government. Then, again, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had intimated, without any reserve at all, that he was about to leave the colony very shortly. Well, with two such important members of the Ministry as the Colonial Secretary and the Colonial Treasurer actually intimating—for it amounted to that—that after a short time they would leave the Government, he said it became a serious matter for consideration, not only for the party who supported them, but for the House itself, because the Government were now in the position of offering measures to the House for their consideration when honorable members must know that they would not be there to give effect to them, even if they were agreed to. For these reasons, he must confess he did not think the position of the present Government was very satisfactory. In the interests of what the honorable member for the Logan had called the Liberal party, he should be very glad to see a reconstruction of the Ministry altogether on the basis of the genuineness of the facts to which he had referred. If they were absolutely denied, then of course it would become another question altogether; but if they were practically admitted, it must follow that their thoughts must be directed to the constitution of the Government itself. There could be no more important matter for that House to consider than the constitution of that Council to which they remitted the executive functions of the country. When that was in doubt, everything must be in doubt; and they were not prepared really to pronounce an opinion upon a policy until they knew how that policy was to be carried out; and if that policy was threatened—for that it amounted to—by the secession, for various reasons, of several most important members of the Government, then he said it became their plain duty, as a party—he spoke as one of what he hoped was truly a Liberal party, not an excitable party, carried away by mere passion or prejudice, but men who he believed were, as he believed himself to be, soundly Liberal—to consider before long what was to be the constitution of the Government of this colony. It was hardly to be expected from them, as a party, that they should pass measures, and hand them over for administration to men whom they did not know.

**HONORABLE MEMBERS:** Hear, hear.

**MR. DOUGLAS:** He admitted the circumstances of the case were peculiar. The honorable gentleman at the head of the

Government had only lately returned from his trip to England, and probably there was not sufficient time before Parliament being called together to reconstruct the Government, and appear with it in the House on a permanent footing. That was to be regretted; but the effect nevertheless remained, and the position seemed to him a decidedly unsatisfactory one. It was evident that the old lines of party in that House had to a great extent disappeared, and they must be reformed, he supposed, upon some new understanding. He hoped he had not been rather too candid. He supposed one of the most objectionable things in a supporter was to be too candid, but he had merely done what he conceived to be his duty in the interests of the party he thought it desirable to support in that House. He wished to give every credit to the Government for having during the recess performed their duty, in many respects, in a very satisfactory manner; and he hoped the visit of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to England would lead to the establishment of the London agency on a more perfect and satisfactory footing than it had hitherto been.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** I rise, sir, simply for the purpose of setting the House right with regard to one circumstance, and that is, the retirement from office of the honorable member for Ravenswood. I should have done so before if I thought the proper time had arrived to do so. But I always understood that explanations of this kind are given when the member of the Government whose duty it is, rises to address the House, and I should have done so in the usual way. Another course is, that these explanations should be given after the Address in Reply is disposed of. Of course, in the absence of such explanation, honorable members are perfectly entitled to demand it, but it was under that impression I refrained from saying anything on the subject before. I have now simply to state that the honorable member for Ravenswood retired from the Government because there was a difference of opinion between himself and his colleagues with regard to what ought to be the policy of the Government, so far as public works were concerned. That is the whole explanation so far as regards that part of the business; and with regard to what my honorable friend the member for Maryborough has said about myself, of course I cannot prevent reports and rumors respecting myself and what my intentions are; but I have never been offered the appointment of Agent-General for the colony, and I certainly am not the man to appoint myself.

**MR. GROOM** said he felt very much in the position of the honorable member for Maryborough when that honorable member observed that there were not very good prospects held out to the country in the address of His Excellency the Governor, and because, as had been remarked by the honorable member for Maranoa, there were many very familiar

features in it which it was impossible to place any reliance upon, and upon which there was very little to say until they had been put to the proof by being laid on the table. Now, he could not say that he was altogether satisfied with the manner in which things had been conducted during the recess, and particularly had he cause to complain of what he considered the mal-administration of the public lands. When the late honorable member, Mr. Stephens, brought forward his Land Bill in the previous session, there were two distinct features in it, one of which was the sale of land by auction, with or without conditions, at the option of the Minister. Those clauses, however, were found to be distasteful to the majority of honorable members, and as it was shown out of doors that if those clauses were carried into effect they would be most disastrous, in deference to the expressed wishes of honorable members, the honorable Premier had withdrawn them. But what had been the action of the present honorable Minister for Lands during the recess? Why, that the honorable gentleman had done exactly that which the House had said should not be done, and had carried out a policy in exact opposition to that of which the House had expressed itself in favor. The honorable gentleman had done that, too, in spite of public meetings, and the remonstrances of those people who were best qualified to judge of the value of the lands. He would come to the question in a very practical way, and the House would see at once to what he wished to draw attention. Last session, among other resumptions which had been authorized, was that of 7,000 acres on the Felton Run. Now, although that partly consisted of stony ridges, it nevertheless contained in many places very good land for selection and for grazing. The honorable Minister for Lands visited the district, and it was stated that an arrangement had been made by him with the owner whereby the land was to be put up for auction, on the condition that a certain portion of the Beauaraba Run was surrendered. Now, he denied the right of any Minister to make such a contract. The last-named run was infested by wallabies to such an extent that a wallaby fence had to be erected by the proprietor, at a cost of £50 a mile; and so adroitly was the whole thing managed, that the honorable gentleman had actually put the selectors between the wallabies and the Felton Run.

**HONORABLE MEMBERS:** Hear, hear.

**MR. GROOM:** Well, at the sale of the Felton land, the only persons in the auction room were the owner of the run and another person; the former purchased whatever he thought necessary, with the exception of two small lots, which were bought by the other person. Nearly all the remainder passed to the owner of the station at the upset price, he purchasing just what suited him, and leaving what was valueless only to anybody who might like

to buy it. On the very next day, when the 4,000 acres which formed the only good portion of the land surrendered on the Beauaraba Run was thrown open to selection, there were ninety-nine applicants for it, thus showing that had the Felton resumption been thrown open to homestead selection, probably every acre of it would have been taken up. As he had understood the contract, it was, that the whole of the Felton land should be purchased if it was put up to auction. Now, that land had been most judiciously surveyed in lots from 40 to 640 acres, and he had been over it and found that all the good land had been purchased, and the stony land had been left. He should like to know the reason why the honorable Minister for Lands had made such an arrangement?—why, after certain land had been resumed by that House for homestead selection, it should have been put up at auction. He understood the honorable gentleman had done so on the advice of the honorable Colonial Treasurer; but he believed that the latter had always expressed himself in favor of homestead selection. The attention of capitalists had been directed to that land, as they had been unable to obtain any, and they had looked forward to the Felton land as an opportunity for them; but instead of their having been assisted by the honorable Minister for Lands, that gentleman had done all he could to obstruct them. When it was known that the Felton land was to be put up to auction, a large number of his constituents, and also those of the honorable member for Aubigny, held a meeting in Toowoomba, and in accordance with resolutions passed at that meeting, he wrote to the honorable Minister for Lands, who replied that the wishes of the people should be attended to. Instead of that, however, the only person whose wishes were consulted was the occupier of the run. He thought that, taking the whole circumstances into consideration, he had good reason for being dissatisfied with the manner in which the lands had been administered by the present honorable Minister for Lands. He might, indeed, go so far as to assert that that honorable gentleman did not at all satisfy the public—that he did not possess the confidence of his (Mr. Groom's) constituents—and, further, that he had even been requested not to support the present Government if that honorable gentleman persisted in putting up those lands for sale by public auction. Seeing that there was such dissatisfaction with the manner in which the administration of the lands had been carried out, what security, he would ask, was there of the sincerity of the Government in their promises of a Land Bill? He confessed to feelings of disappointment at the manner in which the Government had acted, and that he did not look upon the promise of a Land Bill as one likely to be carried out. He could not forget that when a reasonable request had been presented by him to a Minister of the Crown, backed up as it had been by his constituency, and thus

rendered worthy of consideration, it had not been acted upon by that Minister, but that the action taken had been opposed to it. In regard to the first paragraph of the Speech—and he did not know why it had been singled out for such prominence—he had taken the trouble to peruse the despatches which had been laid on the table in such an ostentatious way that afternoon, and in a manner he had never seen before, and there was nothing in them, as far as he could see, likely to arise out of the paragraph in question. The Secretary of State stated, as he (Mr. Groom) had said years ago, that the sudden addition of a large number of members to the Legislative Council for political purposes was an unwise thing to do. But they did not want to go to England to know that; for, when he had formerly mentioned the matter, he had read extracts from despatches from the Duke of Newcastle, which strongly deprecated the conduct of any Government trying to pack any House;—in fact, there was nothing in the despatches laid on the table that day which at all justified the prominence given to them in the Speech. In justification of such prominence, it might be said that it detected an honorable member opposite of having made a statement on the floor of that House, in 1872, which was not correct. He had no doubt that the honorable member recollected what took place then, and he had the despatches before him now. That honorable member was very strongly spoken against in the previous session, and, as he (Mr. Groom) at the time thought, unjustifiably so; and he would again say, that having carefully read the despatches that afternoon, he could not see that there was anything to justify the prominence which had been given to them in His Excellency's Speech. Again, with regard to immigration, they were informed that the honorable Colonial Secretary had visited England and had—

“held a full enquiry into various matters in connection with the working of the office of the Agent-General of the colony in London, and the causes of certain serious irregularities in the provisioning of emigrant ships. His report, with the evidence laid before him, will be presented to you without delay.”

He was glad to find that it had been laid on the table, in order that honorable members might find out that the performance of which they had heard so much had been carried out. He might say that he had been somewhat surprised at the very bald statement which had been made that afternoon by the honorable Colonial Secretary. When that honorable gentleman rose, the House had a right to expect to hear some broad statement; but instead of that, they simply heard that the late Minister for Works resigned through some disagreement with his colleagues. What that disagreement arose from, the public surely had a right to know, especially as the gentleman in question had a large

political following—perhaps larger than any honorable member of that House; and he considered that the public had a right to know why he had retired from office, and why the honorable member for Enoggera was in his place. He thought, again, that when a Minister had informed the House of his intention to visit England for certain public purposes, he should, on his return with certain facts and figures at his fingers' ends, have got up and informed the House of what reforms he had effected. He believed that that was the custom at home, and that when a gentleman holding a similar position in Canada to that of the Premier visited England for the purpose of inquiring into certain railway contracts, he immediately, on his return, got up in the House and made an explanation of what had taken place, the result of which was, that it broke up the party in the House. He must say, that never since he had been a member of that House had he heard such a bare statement from a Minister of the Crown as that made by the Premier that afternoon. Then again, the honorable gentleman had not told the House that he had refused the office of Agent-General, and the consequence was, that the public were of opinion that it was an office still open to him. He believed, with the honorable member for Maryborough, that with the prospect of the Premier accepting that office before them, and with the expressed intention of another Minister to visit England, the House had been called together to absolutely do nothing. He had been rather surprised to hear the honorable member who seconded the motion for the Address say, that he considered that the lands in the outside districts should be allowed to remain in the hands of the present lessees for some time to come, as he thought that there were some portions of the unsettled districts—except, perhaps, those extremely outside, such as the Thompson and Herbert—that were quite as good as any in the settled districts; and although he thought that those gentlemen who had taken up country on the Thompson and Herbert were deserving of every credit for their energy, there was still much land in the unsettled districts equally as good for settlement as in the settled districts. With regard to the Northern Railway, honorable members would recollect, that when the salary of the engineer of that line was under consideration last year, they were promised that some reforms should be made; and, therefore, he considered, that when the honorable member for Maranoa referred to Mr. Watson not having been sent to report upon the Northern line, he had thoroughly endorsed what was the feeling out of doors. Referring to the Speech, he found as follows:—

“You will be asked to sanction the extension of the southern line of railway from Warwick to the southern border of the colony, which I anticipate will prove greatly beneficial to the revenue and trade of Queensland.”

Now, Ministers would pardon him for saying that he did not think they were sincere in asking for that extension, as, if they were, they would not have asked the House to accept a fragmentary legislation. If the Government had been anxious to have that railway, they would have embodied it in a scheme with others, and then there would have been some chance of their getting it; but when there was no other public work that the House was to be asked to carry out, he thought there was very little chance of having that particular railway—although, at the same time, his sympathies were strongly in favor of it. He thought that if the Western Railway Bill was to be the kind of measure on which all the railways were to be constructed, why, then, if there was sufficient land in other districts, let the railways be made. If the Maryborough and Gympie Railway was to be constructed on that principle, let it be—he saw no objection, if the people in the district wished it. Although he did not agree with the strong telegrams which had recently been sent by the people of Maryborough to their representative, authorising that honorable member to join any Government which would promise to construct that railway, still, he did sympathise with them, seeing the small amount of money which had been spent in their district, and because no mention of them had been made in the Speech. It had been said that the Government were not going to encourage Vogelizing in the colony; but he believed that if they had a man like Mr. Vogel in the colony, it would be well. It was a long time since the Western Railway Bill was passed; whereas, if it had been in America, the line would have been by this time nearly completed. Instead of that, however, he understood that, owing to the delay, a large number of strong able-bodied men accustomed to railway work had gone away from the colony, and there was to be a sort of rest-and-caution policy. He did not believe, as he had said before, that they were to have a railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe, as it was the only line mentioned in the Speech. He was very glad to think that the Ministry had come round to the opinions expressed by a section of that House last session, and that there was to be a permanent officer to perform part of the duties now performed by the Attorney-General. When the honorable member for Port Curtis proposed such an appointment last session, he was out-voted; but now the Government had come down with the same proposition, and he hoped it would be carried into effect. There was one matter which had not been mentioned in the Speech. They had, during the previous session, heard a great deal about prosecutions under the Land Act, and, on the motion of the honorable member for the Mitchell, a return had been laid on the table showing the cost of such prosecutions; but as yet there

had been nothing to show the result of the appeals—whether those appeals had been sent home, and if so, who had been the parties appointed to take charge of them, or whether they had advanced one stage at all. At present, the parties originally in possession had still the use of the natural grasses, and, as he had been informed, the matter stood in almost the same position as when the judges in this colony gave their decision, and that nothing had been heard from the Privy Council, although judgment had been given here twelve months ago. He thought it was only right that all parties should know how the matter stood. In the last paragraph of the Speech, they had been informed:—

“I have great pleasure in congratulating you upon the continued progress of the colony in all its material interests. I feel confident that by means of the steady influx of an industrious population, a vigorous prosecution of useful public works, and the development of our great mining and agricultural interests by *bona fide* settlement on the public estate, Queensland will speedily take a foremost position as an Australian colony.”

He had no doubt that all would like to see those dreams realised; but he should like to know where was to be the vigorous prosecution of public works. They were certainly not in the country, although they might be in the capital; and here he might remark, that there was a disposition on the part of the Government, which was not favorable to them, to centralise in Brisbane more than ever. He hoped that the measures they intended to lay on the table of that House would show that they were not disposed to favor Brisbane at the expense of other portions of the colony. It was hardly fair to say that there had been a continued progress of the colony in all its material interests, inasmuch as, to his knowledge, there were some interests in a very depressed state. He thought the honorable member for Carnarvon would hardly say that tin-mining was in a prosperous condition, or that gentlemen engaged in sugar production would say that that interest was very flourishing; so that there was a tinge of incorrectness about that statement. Then again, if they had been correctly informed, the revenue was not in such a flourishing state as it should be. Now, as an independent supporter of the Government, he might repeat that he had not been at all satisfied with the administration of affairs during the recess—particularly of the lands; and he considered that some explanation was due to the country from the honorable Minister for Lands of the reason why some most valuable land had been sold by auction in opposition to the remonstrances of the people who were mostly interested in them. The honorable member for Enoggera had some time ago expressed himself as not being altogether satisfied with the administration of the lands, and it was to be hoped that the honorable gentleman's acceptance of a portfolio would not blind him to the necessity of bringing

his colleague to a sense of justice. It had been said that pressure had been brought to bear by the honorable Treasurer; but he might say, that he had always thought that honorable gentleman was in favor of homestead settlement on the most liberal terms, and he hoped the Government would not change from that opinion. But he was open to say, that if some change did not take place in the land administration, and some more satisfactory explanations were not given, he should reserve to himself the privilege of taking whatever action his own judgment, or the interests of his constituents and circumstances might dictate as necessary.

Mr. PUGH said, with regard to the policy, or want of policy, enunciated in the Speech, and also with regard to the administration of public affairs by the Government during the recess, he had a few remarks to make. First of all, with regard to the administration of those lands which had been resumed by the two Houses of Parliament during the previous session, he must say, that in almost all instances the land had been thrown open for homestead selection, or applied to the purposes intended by the Parliament, and he could not understand why the Felton land should have been picked out and made an exception. He had made it his business to wait upon the honorable Minister for Lands on that very subject, and had remonstrated with him strongly against those lands being sold by auction; and he could endorse the statements made by the honorable member for Toowoomba, and say that he believed that the whole of those lands would have been occupied under the homestead provisions of the Act, had they been thrown open for that purpose. He believed that the lands accepted, as it were, in exchange for the Felton lands, were not equal to them, for the reasons which had been stated by the honorable member who preceded him, and that they were infested by wallabies. He knew that it was utterly impossible for a poor man to settle on land infested by those animals, as he would have to close fence all of it to keep them out; and, therefore, he said that the Felton lands which had been resumed by that House were far better adapted for homesteads than the leased lands of Beauraba, which were given in exchange for them. He had always looked upon the lands given for homestead selection as given away. It was true that a small fee was charged, but it had always been understood that homestead selection was giving the lands—not for a direct money consideration going into the Treasury, but in order to reap an indirect benefit from the settlement of a population on the lands, both as regards customs duties and other ways. Now, looking upon it in that light, he thought, however conscientious the honorable Minister for Lands might have been in thinking he was doing good in the arrangement he made, he made a great mistake, inasmuch as the Felton Run was better

adapted for settlement, although parts of it were stony. Although it was not all good, he believed it was much better than the Beauaraba Run, which was taken as a *quid pro quo*, and for that reason he should have been glad if the honorable Minister for Lands had given way to his representations on the subject. He had several excuses; for instance, he said that land had been put up at Clifton which had not been resumed last session, and had been purchased by a gentleman who had manipulated a good deal of land round about. Now, he had not given the honorable gentleman sufficient *kudos* for throwing open those lands, for, if he had not done so, the Ministry of the day would never have had one of their supporters returned on the Downs; but when the honorable gentleman told him he was giving the Felton lands in exchange for the Beauaraba, he did not think he was doing well. He thought that a great mistake had been made, as those lands at Felton should have been treated in the same way as any other, and then there would not have been a door left open for backbiting and for accusations against the Government, which he did not like to hear. There was another matter to which he would call attention—and he here might remark that, as he had always expressed himself in previous sessions, his sympathies were with the Government—in fact, he did not see where they were going to get another Government, either in the ranks of the Opposition or on his side of the House. He must say, that he considered that he and other honorable members who were equally as good supporters of the present Ministry, deserved to have some further information with regard to what the Ministerial policy really was than was shadowed forth by the Address. He thought he had a right to ask for some explanation as to why the honorable member for Ravenswood had left the Government, and the honorable member for Enoggera had entered it. There had also been rumors about the country of the honorable the Premier taking the office of Agent-General sufficient to justify him in asking that honorable member whether such rumors were true. There had been reports about the Treasurer leaving the colony, sufficient to ask that honorable member whether such was his intention—whether he intended to leave almost before the House rose for the session. Again, there had been reports about the Minister for Lands sufficient to justify him in asking whether they were to expect another change in the Cabinet. He considered that he and others were justified in asking what steps the Government intended to take in those matters. Let them know whom they were fighting for—who were their leaders—and then they could decide whether they were gentlemen whom they could support and trust to carry out their policy. There was another matter to which he would refer, namely, the Land Bill which they were promised—or rather

he should say, half promised—they were asked

“to determine the manner in which the land under pastoral lease in the settled districts shall be dealt with after the shortly approaching expiration of the terms of the leases.”

Now, that was not exactly the way in which a Ministry should come before that House; he did not think that they should come and ask the House to determine how a matter of that kind should be dealt with. He thought the Government should come down with a policy and ask that House to accept it. He did not see what sort of a measure it was to be; it might be one to resume all the leases at once, or, on the other hand, it might be one to continue those leases until doomsday. He thought, also, that as there was to be an adjournment for a week, the Government might have managed to place their new Land Bill in the hands of honorable members, so that they might peruse it, and, perhaps, be able to give them some valuable suggestions when the House next met. There was another clause in the Speech, which, he thought, bore the impress of what the present Ministry was. He thought that they had shown themselves to be an effete Government. Honorable members on his side of the House wanted to know who was in command, and who were all the captains; and unless that was shown, the probability was that they would not retain the confidence of honorable members. He believed that nearly half the present Ministers had been re-turned; at any rate, there were hardly half who had sat on the Treasury benches during the two previous sessions, and, putting it in that light, he did not think that the present Government, unless they could give some better explanation than they had done already, could have the confidence of the country. It was true that each individual member of that Ministry might have the good opinion of those gentlemen immediately in contact with him, and of those who believed in the policy he had enunciated previously to his joining the Ministry; but something more was wanted than that. They did not want a disintegrated Ministry, but a Ministry as a whole that would come forward with a policy in which there was no friendship and no subserviency, but one to which they would be prepared to pin their faith, and, if need be, to go to the country upon. Now, with regard to the Bill to amend the laws relating to municipal institutions, they found signs of very great weakness; the paragraph in the Speech referring to it said:—

“A Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to municipal institutions, and to extend their operations and provide more effectually for local government, will be introduced at as early a date as possible. I trust that this measure will meet with your approbation and will prove the means of facilitating local self-government throughout the colony, and of fostering and

encouraging that feeling of self-reliance which so honourably distinguishes British colonists throughout the world."

That was very pretty talk, indeed; but was there anything decided about it? A Bill was to be brought in to extend municipal institutions, but was it in the way in which the country expected them to be extended—in the way expected at every public meeting held on the subject? It had been a cry at every public meeting not only to have local self-government, but also local taxation to support that Government; and was it not a dereliction of duty on the part of the Government, or rank cowardice, that they did not come in at the end of that paragraph and ask His Excellency to mention the question of local taxation? It would have been much better for them to have stated that, and to have come straight to the point, and let the public see that they did not want to give sweeteners here or there, or a Stanthorpe Railway here, and a Maryborough Railway there. The policy they had, had been supplied by the honorable Colonial Treasurer, and he was surprised that the honorable member had ever allowed the honorable Premier to have such a clause as that in the Speech. It was very postical, no doubt, but was it practical?—could they give local self-government all over the country, unless they provided them with the means of supporting those governments? There was another matter, namely, the proposed railway extension. The honorable member for Toowoomba had expressed his opinion that it would have been better to have had a more extended railway policy laid before that House. There was no doubt that that would have been highly desirable, but he had been given to understand that there was already sufficient money in hand to carry out twenty-five miles of railway in three years on the northern line; also, money in prospect for the Roma line; and also money for the completion of the original line proposed in the colony. He believed that the original line was one to connect Brisbane with the western districts, and also with the neighboring colony; and, therefore, he looked upon the line to Stanthorpe as finishing off one sore point in their railway system, and that when they had finished that off, they would have no more calls for southern railway extension;—they might have calls for western and northern railways, but when they had finished the southern, they would have got rid of one *bête noir*. He believed this line would prove remunerative. The honorable member who represented the district that it would most affect had informed the House that evening that it would, and also that the same staff of officers—the same heads of departments, the locomotive, traffic, and engineers' departments—could work the line in connection with the present Southern and Western line, with very little addition to their staff. Supposing they were

going to start a new railway altogether, having no connection with either of the two existing lines, they would have to establish fresh traffic, locomotive, and engineers' departments, with all the contingent expenses, and therefore he said, if the policy of their leaders was to be a rest-and-be-cautious policy, he thought they were perfectly right in only going on with the Stanthorpe line, and ignoring every other line in the colony except one. That one he took very great exception to, because he believed it was more important than the Stanthorpe line, or the Bundaberg line, or Mount Perry line, or the Gympie line, or the Ravenswood line, or the Bowen line, or the whole of them put together. He referred to the extension of the present line from the terminus in Brisbane to the water, so that they could send their produce down from the country districts to the place of shipment without having to put it on drays, and have it dragged through the streets of Brisbane, which the Corporation was at the expense of repairing, and for the injury to which that body would probably come down to the House for compensation. Instead of that, they should be able to send their produce to the water somewhere or other. He did not pretend to say where it should be. He had heard talk of taking it to Bulimba, and of taking it underneath the Brisbane bridge, and making a wharf there, and of taking it from Oxley to the south side, where, he believed, it ought to have gone originally. He did not wish to enter into the quarrel as to where it was to go, but he said, before another sixpence of money was voted for railways in this colony, the first desire of every honorable member who had the good of the colony really at heart, should be to have the present line taken down somewhere where a man could ship his wool, or whatever he wished to send out of the colony, right straight out of the railway train into the hold. Until that was done, their railway would never be as it ought to be. He was very glad to see that during the last twelve months the receipts of the Southern and Western Railway were creeping up; it had begun almost to pay the interest on the money borrowed to construct it, and he had not the slightest doubt if it was once brought down to the water where the trucks could be run alongside ships of a thousand tons—or, if of two thousand tons, all the better—it would be of more benefit to the colony than 100 miles of railway in the interior would be. He did not mean that it would be a great benefit as regarded extent of area; he was speaking with reference to population, and he said very nearly nine-tenths of the population of the colony were within the influence of the Southern and Western line—they made use of it directly or indirectly—and in that respect this extension would benefit the great majority of the people. He was, therefore, extremely surprised to see nothing in the Speech about that most important link in their railway

system. The Stanthorpe line no doubt would be extremely valuable as a link connecting them with the southern colonies, where the great masses of population were, and it would be useful to Queensland indirectly as well as directly. It would not only take the direct trade which the district of Carnarvon produced, but also the trade over the border. In fact, he believed it would bring the trade of 20,000 people down to the port of Brisbane, which that port did not now receive. That was one of the direct advantages, and one of the indirect advantages which he thought they had to consider was, that this extension to the border was a national undertaking. It was an undertaking which they, as Queenslanders, might look upon with pride. If they could take this railway to the border and finish it before the New South Welshmen had brought theirs to the same place, then they could say Queensland had done her share, and let the New South Welshmen do theirs. He had no doubt when it was finished to the border it would be a thorn in the side of the New South Welshmen until they got theirs up to meet it. They now saw a good and estimable desire on the part of some of the leading politicians in the neighboring colonies not to extend railways so much to small districts as to carry them through points where they would command the trade of vast regions. There was a very strong feeling in the neighboring colony in favor of carrying the southern line to meet the Victorian line at Albury, so as to tap the traffic of the river Murray, and to extend the northern line to Fort Bourke, where it would meet the steamboats on the river Darling, and by that means connect through to South Australia. He looked upon the extension to Stanthorpe as an undertaking of national importance. It would be a link that would assist in cementing the Australian colonies together, and no doubt, in time, would bring about that which he believed every person who had the good of the colonies at heart wished to see, namely, federation of the whole of the colonies. How could they get to sympathise more with one another than by bringing themselves together by railway communication and by intercolonial free trade? So far, therefore, he fully endorsed the policy of the Government; but he thought they ought to have gone further in the same direction, and stated fully what they meant, and not minced the matter. He had commenced his remarks by asking a few questions with regard to the *status* of the Ministry, and he wanted to know something more about it. Whilst on that point, he must bear his testimony to the efficiency and activity of the honorable member for Ravenswood, who had lately left the Ministry. If any member of that House, or, he believed, any private individual in the community, wanted information on any subject, and went to that gentleman, he

would give it to him as soon as he possibly could. He showed that his whole soul was wrapped up in fulfilling, to the best of his ability, the position he occupied in the Ministry; and he thought there were some other members of the Ministry who, perhaps, had not done that. They, no doubt, had other interests besides the interests of the colony, and they had to attend to them. He did not think that many members of the present Ministry really made their position as Ministers the first place they occupied; it was a matter of secondary consideration with them, and he did not think that the House or the country could have full confidence in a Ministry of which members did not make their position as Ministers a position of the first moment. Of course, their private business and domestic affairs, and various other things, must have their attention; but still, they should consider that they were Ministers of the Crown in Queensland, and when they were asked for information, by members of the House particularly, and by the outside public—if they knew the person asking for it wanted to make good use of it—they should give it, and give it as fully as possible. He did not consider that information was given as fully as possible in the Speech they had placed before them. A word from a friend ought to be taken in good part. Now, he had very friendly feelings towards, he might say, every member of the present Ministry, and, more than that, they said that even in friendliness there was a certain amount of selfishness; and he, as one of the colonists, was a little bit selfish, and should like to see the colony go on well; but he did not see how it could go on well unless they had a Ministry in power who really knew its own mind. A Ministry consisted of fragments, and the head of that Ministry should collect those fragments together, and from that collection let the House have more wisdom than they had in the Speech before them.

MR. KING: I wish, sir, to say a few words of personal explanation, if I may be allowed to do so. Honorable members appear to expect—

THE SPEAKER: Is the honorable member speaking to the question?

MR. KING: No; I was about to make a personal explanation.

THE SPEAKER: The honorable member can only do so with the consent of the House.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. KING: The reason I did not come forward before this to explain the reason of my leaving the Ministry was because I was unwilling to lose my chance of speaking in the debate, and owing to the manner in which the Ministerial explanation was made, I feared I might lose that chance. Speaking as a matter of personal explanation, I may say that the statement made by the honorable the Premier is perfectly

correct as to the cause of my leaving the Ministry. It arose from a difference of opinion between myself and my colleagues as to the policy on the subject of public works that should be laid before the House this session. I may state, sir, that the great difference was that the policy of the Ministry, as you have already seen, consists in proposing to construct a line of railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe—to the border, and providing for no other railway construction whatever in the colony. I had, sir, laid before my colleagues a scheme of railway extension which I considered would be applicable to the circumstances of the colony, because I am perfectly convinced, from the little experience I have had in office, that it is extremely desirable that the policy of public works in this colony should not be, as the honorable member for Maryborough says, "fragmentary." I believe the system of public works which should be brought forward should be one that it would take four or five years to carry out, and which would prevent the scrambling which generally takes place in the House when public works are brought forward singly.

The SPEAKER: I must remind the honorable member that a personal explanation should be as brief as possible.

Mr. KING: I will merely say, I submitted a scheme of public works of which my colleagues disapproved. Some of those public works were works to which I had committed myself on the full understanding that not only would the Liberal party carry them out, but also that members who were in the Ministry before I joined it, were pledged to those works. I may say that financial reasons were given by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer for not going into a more comprehensive policy; but it did seem to me, that after a Liberal Government had been in office two years and a-half they ought to have been prepared with means to meet that difficulty. Every one knows that railways cannot be constructed without means, and I consider it was part of the duty of the Government to carry out the anticipations they had excited with regard to public works. At all events, I had committed myself so unreservedly to some of the projects, that when it was proposed to postpone them indefinitely, and carry out only a single railway extension in the southern portion of the colony, I felt I should not be doing justice to my supporters if I assisted in carrying out that policy, and for that reason I tendered my resignation. I feel very happy to say that that was the only cause of dissension which existed between myself and any of my late colleagues. There never was, at any time while I was a member of the Ministry, any pressing difficulty which rendered it at all hard for us to work together. I regret that my resignation came so late, as it may cause some inconvenience to the honorable member for Enoggera, who has taken my place; but I

am not to blame for the lateness, because, owing to the absence of the honorable the Premier in England, it was impossible that a decision could be come to as to the policy to be proposed to the House this session until his return. As soon as he returned, the matter was brought forward, and as soon as the Cabinet had decided the policy to be proposed, my resignation was sent in at once. I regret very much that I was compelled, by circumstances which were purely political, to sever my connection with colleagues with whom I worked so well; but the pledges I had given, and the opinion I held with regard to railway construction, left me no option but to retire rather than adopt the policy contained in the Governor's Speech.

Mr. PETTIGREW said he should like to offer a few observations on the Speech which they had had the pleasure of listening to that day. After hearing the explanation they had had from the honorable the Premier, and also from the late Minister for Works, the honorable member for Ravenswood, he thought the origination of the present difficulty was to be found in what was referred to in the third clause of the Speech, which he should read:—

"When I last met you, I intimated that it had been thought desirable that one of my Ministers should forthwith proceed to England. The honorable the Colonial Secretary was deputed for that purpose, and has since visited England,"

and so on. Now, he thought the great mistake was in the honorable the Colonial Secretary of this colony ever leaving his post. It had allowed all kinds of difficulties and ambitions to arise. He left in his place a very excellent and a very worthy gentleman—the honorable the Colonial Treasurer—to manage his affairs, but in doing so he did not leave him the full power that he possessed himself. Probably he could not delegate it to him, and, therefore, he (Mr. Pettigrew) thought his going away at the time he did, and remaining away for so long a period, was a great mistake.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. PETTIGREW: They found, on referring to the past, that the late Minister for Works went up north, and was entertained at banquets and other nice entertainments of a similar description. When there, he made promises probably of a lavish and an expensive character. No doubt, constituents were very well pleased with Ministers who would tell them they would make railways for them, or give them roads or bridges, or almost any other thing they might ask for; but, at the same time, the Minister making those promises might make them on his own responsibility, and his colleagues might not be prepared, or it might not be advisable in the interests of the colony that they should be carried out for many a year to come. On the other hand, they found that while the late Secretary for Works went to Mary-

borough, and was promising a railway there, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer required to go and see the country also, and he went up to Stanthorpe and proposed another railway there. Whether those promises had any connection with elections which might be taking place in the different constituencies, he (Mr. Pettigrew) did not pretend to say; but it was evident that all the mischief had arisen from the absence of the honorable the Colonial Secretary from the colony; and he hoped that whatever business might be required to be done in Europe at any future time, whatever Ministry might be in power, at least the Colonial Secretary would delegate his authority to another Minister, and not go himself. He thought the railway policy that had been enunciated in the Governor's Speech was somewhat different from that enunciated last session. They had a policy brought forward last session which was expected to do wonders. In fact, it was promulgated in that House by the late Minister for Works as the very best system that could possibly be adopted. It was then stated that railways should be constructed out of the lands of the colony, and not by loan, which amounted to a tax on other portions of the colony that were not likely to receive any benefit from the expenditure; but now they found a new policy enunciated. Before the policy of the Western Railway had had a fair trial, which, he submitted, it had not had, a new policy was initiated. It was not on the loan policy, but to construct the railway first, and, he presumed, borrow the money afterwards. He thought the colony had had enough of that system. If he recollected rightly—and many honorable gentlemen in that Chamber and in the colony would bear him out in saying that it was a somewhat similar system to that which was in force in 1866, which brought the colony almost to the verge of insolvency. He said that building a railway before securing the money to pay for it was probably the worst principle that could possibly be adopted in any community. What would they think of the prudence or wisdom of a private individual going to build his mansion-house without providing funds to pay for it when completed? And could it be expected that when a man wanted to borrow money, and must have it on a certain day, he could obtain it on anything like such advantageous terms as he could if he did not require it on a certain day? Like a prudent individual, they should quietly borrow the money before they were compelled to spend it—before it was actually required. It appeared to him that this was simply a fragmentary policy. They had two Ministers—two Richmonds in the field. One Minister wanted a railway from Maryborough to Gympie—he presumed by loan—and the other Minister, to counteract him, said—“We'll not have any loan this session; we shall have a railway built on credit, and afterwards borrow the money to

pay for it.” That appeared to him to be the policy of the present Government. The Government came before the House last session and enunciated a policy of making railways out of the proceeds of the sale of lands, and he believed that was the policy of the Liberal party ever since railways were first introduced into the colony. He believed he would be able to show, from the words of the late Minister for Works, that the policy that was then introduced into the House was the policy of the present Ministry. He should just quote one sentence from the speech of that honorable member:—

“He was not afraid to place the railway policy of the present Government, as indicated by their measures, in comparison with the railway policy of the late Government. They brought forward a policy, not of constructing railways by means of large loans, but by means of land sales; and they showed, by figures beyond dispute, that the result of investing the money now lying dormant in the lands, in railways, would be much more profitable to the country—taking direct returns apart from indirect returns—than any system yet brought forward.”

Now, they had another new system brought forward. The lands were to have made the Continental, or, as it was afterwards called, the “Western,” Railway, and those lands were supposed to be in the market long before now; but where were they? And all the capitalists from the South, and the East, and the West, who were to come to the colony, and go up to Dalby and purchase land, where were they? He should like to ask the Government, was that policy a failure, and had it been given up?—and upon what policy were they going? There was a loan of £250,000 advanced to carry on the Western Railway until such time as the Government could place the land in the market, but it was not yet open. And if it was good to make the Western Railway on that principle, surely it was good to make the Stanthorpe Railway on the same principle; and if it was good in those cases, surely the Wide Bay District could produce a sufficient quantity of land to pay for a railway. If that was to be the system, he should like to know why another entirely different had been introduced? Was that policy a failure, or were they to have one policy for one portion of the colony and another policy for another portion? He certainly thought the Ministry should give some information on that subject. They were also promised a Land Bill, and he should like to ask the honorable the Minister for Lands, what prospect they had of carrying out a comprehensive Land Bill this session in comparison with what they could have done two years ago? They brought in a land measure during a previous session; whether they were sincere in desiring to carry it, he was not going to say; but if they had shown that determination and sincerity which it was the duty of a Ministry to show, he had not the slightest hesitation in saying the

Upper House would have given way. But instead of that, the land policy—that great and comprehensive policy—was given up last session, and it ended simply in an extension of the homestead areas. And he might also state that he had good reason to complain of the action of the honorable the Minister for Lands as well as the honorable member for Toowoomba. There was a small portion of land in his electorate which his constituents thought ought to be opened up for homestead selection. Well, a meeting was held, and they all agreed on that point, and they were all in favor of the present Government. He then waited on the honorable the Minister for Lands, and tried to advocate their interests in the best way possible, and the result was, he could get nothing out of him at all—not a word of satisfaction. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) allowed him to talk for at least half-an-hour, and after he had talked himself nearly hoarse trying to convince him, what was his answer? “Just so, Master John; quite so.” Now, he thought when a member called upon a Minister upon an important question such as this, he should at least get an answer he could return to his constituents. He never was able to give his constituents the answer he received. “Just so!” What sort of an answer was that for a Minister of the Crown to give? The fact was, he believed the Government were acting upon no principle whatever. He believed at that time it was said they wanted cash in the Treasury, and what was the result of that land sale? They put the land up to auction; it was bought by the large leaseholders at the upset price, fifteen shillings per acre, and he believed the amount returned to the Treasury was six pounds. He certainly thought that transaction was a great loss to the country—one of those losses which it might take twenty years to replace. The land had gone into the hands of large landholders, who were not likely to use it for agricultural purposes, whereas if the same land had passed into the hands of small selectors—and it was admirably adapted for settlement—he had no hesitation in saying, that instead of receiving about six pounds and parting with the land for ever, they would have received from the same land, which was close to the railway line, in the shape of passenger and goods traffic, not merely six pounds, but sixty pounds every year. When the Government talked about bringing in another Land Bill, he would ask what had they done in the past? He should be ashamed to go to his constituents and tell them the Government were going to bring in a liberal land measure. They did not attempt to bring in and pass a liberal measure when they were strong and united; and how could they be expected to do it now when they were disjointed in the most mysterious manner—disjointed from the mere want of ability to hold together. This system of running Ministers out one after another was most derogatory and disgraceful, he had no

hesitation in saying. When the honorable member for Maranoa was Minister for Works, he had the confidence of that House and the confidence of the intelligence of the country.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. PETTIGREW: And yet, in a moment of excitement, all about some paltry letter, he was passed to one side; and was compelled to resign and another honorable gentleman was brought down to the House, and he, after being in office about twelve months, was also turned out in the most mysterious way imaginable. He (Mr. Pettigrew) saw them together at a banquet at Ipswich a short time ago, and a happier family he had never seen in his life. They were all follow-my-leader. No one would speak out, and the only course the honorable member for West Moreton and himself could take, was simply to say, they would meet them in the House to-day. They had kept their promise, and he trusted the members of the Ministry were not going to adopt the follow-my-leader business there. There seemed a calm placidity about them, and when he heard what had taken place, he really thought they must have quarrelled on the way down from Ipswich. He was never more astounded in his life. First came the rumor that the honorable the Minister for Lands was gone, and he thought—“poor man, it’s a pity;” for he thought he was the most innocent of the lot. The next thing he heard was, that it was not that honorable gentleman, but the honorable member for Ravenswood who was bound to go. He had no hesitation in stating that the policy the Government had now submitted to the House did not take half-an-hour to make up; and if the Premier of the colony had gone and consulted his supporters instead of going about the country seeking for banquets, he had not the least doubt a policy would have been laid on the table which that side of the House would have accepted. There was no use mincing the matter, and if they expected honorable members to come there as if they did not represent anything but the Ministry, they were very much mistaken. They were all friends of his own, and he should be sorry to turn them out; and one reason why they would not turn them out was, that they did not know who to put in. That was the only reason, and it was a most miserable position for any Government to be placed in. They would be compelled to listen to debates of a similar description to this, night after night, and if they appealed to the country, he had no hesitation in stating, they would never come back with the same strength as they had, bad as that side of the House might be supposed to be. He was exceedingly sorry that the Government had not taken a better course, and it had all originated, as he said before, from allowing the Premier to leave the colony for a considerable time. There were two Richmonds in the field, and the question was, who was to reign. He had no doubt the honorable the Premier was placed

in an awkward position. In the first instance, he had the late Minister for Works promising a railway to Gympie; in the next place, he had the Treasurer promising another to Stanthorpe; and what was the result? He was bound to accept either one or the other. To-night, he had alienated a large section of his followers; there was not the slightest doubt about that. No doubt they parted in good friendship, and the great battle would be who was to reign, and it would come from that side of the House. He was very sorry that a different policy had not been enunciated. There was nothing attempted to be done, and nothing would be done. As for the Municipal Council's Bill, that was brought in last session, and was allowed to lie on table, and never even got the length of the second reading; and all the rest seemed to be remnants. He must congratulate the honorable the Attorney-General on the proposal to introduce a Bill to amend the laws relating to the Ministerial head of the Department of Justice. If he mistook not, that measure belonged to the other side of the House. During the recess, the honorable the Attorney-General must have picked it up, and really looked into it, and said, "Oh! this will do for us; we will bring it out and give it a new name, and it will be put down to our side." Last session it was opposed; and if it was good last session, coming from the other side, it possibly might be good coming from that side; and if it was bad coming from the other side, it must certainly be bad coming from that. If it were bad last session, it must be bad this—it could not be bad and good. Now, they were always having something about laws; there were always some fresh anomalies in the laws which it was proposed to amend. There was a Bill dealing with the administration of the law, and "other Bills relating to important subjects." He supposed they were all law bills. Now, he had invariably noticed that, with every law Bill passed through the House, there was a fresh appointment made; in fact, if it was possible, whenever anything was introduced into the House by the honorable the Attorney-General, there was always some one picked out—some man of any prominent talent whatever was picked up at once—and fixed into one of those places. It did not matter what his views might be; that was not of the slightest consequence, as witness the appointment of the late member for Clermont. That gentleman was the very bitterest enemy of the Education Bill introduced last session, and he was one of the most effective men, and brought forward an amendment which troubled the honorable the Attorney-General very considerably. He did not say it showed fear of the talents of that gentleman, as had been said; but he certainly thought the officer who had been administering the late Act should have been advanced to the Under Secretaryship. He thought, wherever it was at all practicable, men of any

ordinary talent at all in the public service should be promoted. It was derogatory to the Civil Service to bring in men from the outside and place them in such positions; and he did not think it was right that any member of the House should, for political services, or fear of his talent—because fear often operated in small minds worse than favoritism—he did not think it was right that they should have their best men picked up year after year from that House on the carrying of every fresh measure. The principle was bad—it was vicious in the extreme. He recollected a motion was once brought before in that House that no man should be appointed to an office under the Government until he had been out of the House for at least six months, unless it was an office in connection with the administration of the House; and he thought if that principle were adopted it would have a very good effect, and prevent occurrences of the kind he referred to. He had no doubt that the Government had not the least intention of carrying a great many of the measures promised. Whether the Stanthorpe Railway was to be carried or not, was a matter he did not think the Government would break their hearts about. He noticed another matter in the Speech, which he did not think any other honorable member had taken notice of, and it was, that a private individual's name was held up to permanent renown as an engineer. That gentleman came to the colony and examined the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway, and his name was actually introduced into the Speech twice, once by his christian name, and once again; and there must be something in his report very wonderful indeed to induce the Government to place him so very prominently before the public. It looked as if the Speech had been framed how to meet that, and how to pass quietly through the session. He did not think the Government would be defeated to-night; there was no intention, he supposed, to do anything of the sort; but he thought they ought to give the House every information possible respecting every matter that they had a right to know about, without honorable members having to drag it out of them. If the Government had got up in their place and made a fair statement of all that had taken place during the recess, he believed there would not have been more than one or two observations made. But after a long recess, honorable members had a right to expect some information; the country expected it, and they wanted to know what the policy of the Government was to be. He should like to know why the policy adopted for the Western Railway was not to be adopted for the Stanthorpe line? After the initiation of that policy last session, why there should have been the slightest disturbance with regard to the carrying out of public works between the late Minister for Works and the Government was more than he could understand. Did they give him authority last

session to say that railways were to be constructed from the sale of land, or did he make that statement on his own account? Because, if he made it on his own account, they sat still in their places, and allowed it to go forth to the country that that was their policy. He did not see why the honorable member for Ravenswood should have been compelled to leave the Government if that policy had ever been sincerely their policy. Let that policy have a fair trial—let it be worked out to a legitimate conclusion; and, if it should prove a failure, let the Government come to the House and state so. If he recollected rightly, the late member for Carnarvon, last year, asked the House to adopt certain resolutions, and one of the principles of those resolutions was, that the railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe was to be made from the sale of land. He asked for certain lands to make that railway in the same way that the Government proposed to carry out the Western Railway; he also intimated to the House, that there was more agricultural land between Warwick and Stanthorpe than between Dalby and Roma; and he ought to be a good judge, and, no doubt, was well posted up in the matter. Why the Government should now propose to go against the wish of the gentleman who represented the district last session was more than he could understand. Mr. Miles had had long experience in the colony—he had been frequently in the district, and he could tell agricultural land as well as any member of the Ministry passing through the country in a coach. He (Mr. Pettigrew) should be sorry to contradict the member for the district without good reason, and he saw no reason at the time to contradict him. He thought the Government were bound to give them a clear exposition of their railway policy. The House was entitled to it and must have it—that was all about it; and if they did not get it to-night, the sooner they got it the better, and the more successful they would be in carrying out the administration of affairs.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was sorry that he had not the pleasure of seeing some more faces on the other side of the House, because there was always more pleasure in replying to hostile criticisms of honorable members opposite than there was in adverting to criticisms, more or less friendly, of honorable members on that side.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He heard honorable members on the other side laugh. They, no doubt, would like to think, and, doubtless, cherished the hope, that those criticisms were more unfriendly than he believed them to be. He took them in the spirit in which he was satisfied they were meant. He thought honorable members in criticising the Speech had scarcely done justice to the Government or to the policy they had enunciated, and he now proposed to say a

few words as to some of the matters that had been criticised. With regard to the remarks of the honorable member for Maranoa, he confessed he was unable to answer anything he had said, because he was unable to catch hold of anything to answer, except some extraordinary statement relating to the time when that honorable member was a member of the Government, which was entirely new to him. However, that time had long gone by; they fought those old battles over and over again last session, and it would be a pity to go over them again now. Some honorable members—and the honorable member for Stanley notably—wanted to know what the policy of the Government was, and said it was not disclosed by the Speech. Did the honorable member—did any honorable member—wish the Speech to disclose the details of Bills to be introduced into the House? That was not the function of a Governor's Speech, and he had never seen a speech in which it had been done. The purpose of the Speech was merely to mention the leading points of the policy of the Government, leaving the House to see, as the Bills were introduced, the details of that policy; and some credit was always given in a country in which party government was carried on, that a Liberal party would introduce Liberal measures, and that in dealing with any other subject, they would do so according to the principles by which that party had always been governed. For these reasons, the Governor's Speech never did condescend to details. Now, what were the points in which the policy of the Government was alleged to be defective? He had listened attentively to every speech, and, so far as he could discover, the objections were, that it did not denote precisely what the nature of the Land Bill would be, and that the railway policy was fragmentary. With respect to the Land Bill, the Speech referred, first, to the fact that the demand for land for settlement was increasing—that the land lately resumed had proved entirely inadequate to supply that demand—and, therefore, they would be asked to make further resumptions. That was a considerable instalment towards the land policy at once; and it distinguished the party now on that side of the House from the party that preceded it. Another question was the mode in which the lands held under lease in the settled districts were to be dealt with at the expiration of the terms of the leases. That matter must be dealt with next session or this. The Government might wait until next session, but there would then be the chance of the question not being settled until after the leases had expired. They did not do that; they took time by the forelock, and said, "We will deal with it now." And with regard to the details, if honorable members had any confidence in the Government as being a Liberal Government, they would give them credit that their mode of dealing with the question would not

be inconsistent with the past action of the party. The Speech also promised to deal with the whole question of the land laws. Now, last session, they had it dinned into their ears night after night that a Land Bill dealing with the whole question was necessary; and the session before, if he remembered rightly—he did not like to speak with confidence of what took place two years ago, especially after the extraordinary errors he had heard honorable members make with reference to what had occurred within a more recent period—if he remembered rightly, in 1874, it was not generally considered necessary that there should be a comprehensive land policy introduced. Last session, when the Speech did not, as some honorable members had said, promise a comprehensive Land Bill, but a Bill dealing with the extension of the homestead areas, and one or two other matters requiring settlement, they were taunted with a comprehensive Bill, as if it were the essence of all Bills that they should be contained on a piece of paper. He thought honorable members must know very well, if they bore in mind the questions brought before the House, that if a comprehensive Land Bill had been introduced last session, there would not have been the remotest possibility of its being carried. There were certain pressing matters then requiring settlement; and he thought honorable members would agree that, although the statute book of last year was not a very bulky volume compared with previous years, still, looking at the importance of the questions settled, the amount of consideration they received, and the manner in which they were settled, they were as great in importance, and in quantity, as measured by importance, as those dealt with in any previous session. It was quite impossible that they could deal with everything last year. Honorable members knew very well that if a comprehensive Land Bill had been introduced last year, other matters, which some of them considered of more importance to be dealt with, must have been neglected and left over, so that there was no reason why a matter which was of pressing importance in one year should be of equally pressing importance in another; or why, conversely, a thing now of pressing importance should have been dealt with last year. In considering the fitness of a measure to be introduced, the time for its introduction should also be considered. It should be introduced not only wisely, but at a fitting time, and he thought all honorable members would agree that this was the proper time—when they were fast approaching the expiration of these leases—to deal with the whole subject of the alienation of Crown lands. That, of course, was a field-day for all attacks—when all the heart-burnings of the recess were to be poured out, and all abuses, friendly or unfriendly, were to be heaped on the heads of the Ministers; but he did not think, under all the circumstances, honorable members had any fair right to complain as to what the nature of the Land Bill

would be. He did not stand there to announce the details of that Bill, of which notice had been given so that it might be laid upon the table at the earliest possible day. He thought honorable members might trust them till then—two sittings days—and that they might trust them to this extent: that the measure to be introduced would have for its object, first to provide a sufficient quantity of land for settlement, and secondly, to facilitate the acquisition of it by persons for *bonâ fide* occupation for the improvement of the country. In what particular mode that should be carried out, opinions might differ; but so far, at least, he thought honorable members might give them credit. Then, it had been adverted to at considerable length that the railway policy was fragmentary. Well, he supposed every railway policy was fragmentary; he did not know how a railway policy could be otherwise unless they proposed to make railways from every town to every other town. That, of course, would be a comprehensive scheme—to cover the colony with a network of railways. But that definition was too wide. He would narrow it. A comprehensive policy was a policy to make every railway which every body in the colony up to that time had demanded.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Of course that definition was absurd also, and the only other was the making of such railways as the resources and the circumstances of the colony justified. Such a railway policy was also necessarily fragmentary, because it always involved the making of one or two railways, so that every railway policy was fragmentary. But the question always was, what railways were most urgently needed? because the policy of the Liberal party had always been to press on the means of communication between different parts of the colony as rapidly as the resources of the country would permit them to do so. They never had proposed to do as Mr. Vogel had done in New Zealand—that was a comprehensive system, perhaps—but always to make railways when required, and when they could be made with due regard to the resources of the colony; unless, indeed, the colony was prepared to go in for extra taxation. At any rate, the railway policy of the Government was fragmentary, more so perhaps than was approved of by the honorable member for Ravenswood, whose colleague he had been for so long, and whose colleague he hoped to be again.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It had been said that the railway policy was fragmentary, because the Government had adopted the Western Railway policy last year, and would not adapt it to other places. It was said, why not adapt that policy to Warwick and Stanthorpe, or Maryborough and Gympie, or Townsville and Cooktown, or Mackay and Bowen? but honorable members appeared to

have forgotten that the principle introduced in regard to the construction of the Western Railway was one which had not yet been properly tried. Speaking for himself—for he had not consulted his colleagues on the subject—he should be quite willing to apply that principle to any part of the colony where there was any ground for a railway, and after it had been properly tested; for he believed himself that the system would prove a success, and would be found to work admirably. It was said that, in America, as soon as twelve teams could find constant employment on a road, a railway was made; but without taking that view, he believed that in the course of a few years, they would see a great many railways constructed in the colony on the principle contained in the Western Railway Act. There were, however, some parts of the colony where that principle could not be applied, and yet honorable members would not deny that railways should be constructed at those places; so that he thought they would agree that some other plan must occasionally be adopted. The honorable member for Toowoomba had referred to the first paragraph in the Speech respecting the despatches on the subject of appointments to the Upper House, and had said that mention of them was unimportant, and that undue prominence had been given to them; but he (the Attorney-General) thought that the matter was one of importance, as that branch of the Legislature had applied for the production of certain papers relating to a great constitutional question—in fact, dealing with the statute itself. His Excellency the Governor had not complied with the request, because he had been of opinion that he could not do so without the sanction of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. That being the case, he considered that it was the duty of the Government to inform the Parliament when that sanction had been given. Last session, also, there had been so much discussion on the despatches relating to the appointments to the Legislative Council, as to warrant the prominence which had been given to the subject in His Excellency's Speech. Now, there were other subjects which had been referred to—for instance, the land policy, which, he might say, always occupied a prominent position. The honorable member for Stanley had adverted to a Bill relating to the office of the Attorney-General, saying that the Government now intended to do what they had actually condemned in the previous session. He would remind the honorable member, however, that the proposition was not condemned by the Government, except for the manner in which it was introduced, as it inferred a censure upon himself and on his predecessors in office. He would confess, that although at that time he did not think such a change as that proposed was necessary, he had since altered his mind. Since last session, another department had been added to the Government, and although it did not follow that it

should be under the Attorney-General, yet it must have been added to one Minister. So far as he could see, some part of the duties of Crown Prosecutor must be taken away from the Attorney-General. Moreover, he was not ashamed to say that he considered it was extremely undesirable for it to be considered necessary to include a barrister in a Ministry. At present, with the exception of the honorable member for Bowen, he was the only barrister in that House, and he thought it was undesirable that any member of a particular class should be necessary in a Government, but considered that every facility should be given to the formation of a Government without any regard to the profession of the members of it. The honorable member for Stanley also said that no doubt the Bill would lead to the creation of a new billet, and both he and the honorable member for Maranoa had accused him of creating new billets. Now, he could not understand such a charge; if it was supported by facts it would be different, but he could not call to mind any new office that he had created. In the Education Office there had been new appointments rendered necessary by the passing of the Education Act of last session; and that brought him to the point which had been criticised at some length by the honorable member for Maryborough, namely, the appointment of Mr. Graham as Under Secretary for Public Instruction. He was glad to have an opportunity of saying that he was proud of that appointment; there was nothing in connection with it that he was not proud to repeat. He believed that making an appointment of that sort, under a new Act, was a matter of the greatest importance, and he was most anxious to find the best man for the office of Under Secretary. It had been a matter of considerable anxiety to him to find a gentleman of fitness for that office, and as to Mr. Graham having been an opponent of the Education Bill, when a member of that House, being a reason why he should not have been selected, if at all a matter for consideration, it was only a sentimental objection. Because a gentleman who had been formerly a Minister of the Crown, and in whom every confidence was placed by his colleagues in office, happened to sit on the Opposition benches, was that, he would ask, any reason why the appointment should not have been offered to him? If that gentleman had not the confidence of his colleagues, and a better man could have been found, then he should not have been appointed; but a better man, he (the Attorney-General) was confident, could not have been appointed, and that the Government could not have found a better man, outside of the colony, either as regarded experience of education matters or departmental knowledge. All he could say was, that he was proud of the part he had taken in that gentleman's appointment. So far from being open to the accusation of trying to weaken the Opposition by taking Mr.

Graham from it, he might say that it was, as many honorable members were aware no doubt, the suggestion of the honorable leader of the Opposition; and he was glad to receive it, and recommended it to his colleagues. When he mentioned the matter to Mr. Graham, he said that he would much rather see him occupy a seat in that House, and make his way to the Bar, where he had a lucrative future before him, than be moved altogether from public life; but, as regarded the appointment, he (the Attorney-General) thought he would be most fitted for it. At the same time, he hoped, as he mentioned to Mr. Graham, that his acceptance of the appointment would not prevent him from going to the Bar, for which he was eminently suited. Now, with regard to the appeals to the Privy Council, he could only say to the honorable member for Toowoomba that he had been too accurate in his statements, and that matters were not a bit more forward than they were twelve months ago. But that had not arisen from any fault on the part of the Government, as it was not in the power of respondent—which the Government were—to push on an appeal at all—there was no means for a respondent to push on an appeal; all he could do, when the matter went before the Privy Council, was to object on the ground of the appeals being too late, which in the case of the Government would be rather an ungraceful thing to do. He confessed that he had been very dissatisfied with the delay, but he was bound to say that the fault was not on the part of the Government. The honorable member for Toowoomba had suggested that the policy of the Government as disclosed by their reference in the Speech to the Local Self-government Bill, was a centralising policy; but he believed that the object of such a measure was just the reverse, and that it would lead to decentralisation. He thought the allusion made to it was a proof that it was not a centralising policy; and speaking personally, he did not feel any more regard for Brisbane than for any other part of the colony. He did, however, regard it as of great importance, that some measure for Local Self-government should be passed, which would have the effect of inducing persons in every part of the country to administer as far as possible their own affairs—of which they ought to know more than anyone else—instead of relying upon the Government of the country for an undue expenditure. Their relying upon the Government to satisfy all their wants, was a more fruitful source of immorality, not only on the part of the House, but of individual members, than anything else. He believed that had been found to be the case in the colony of Victoria, and he feared that if that tendency was not checked here, they would, in the course of a few years, go the same way; but if they introduced a measure which would induce local bodies to work for themselves

and withdraw them from the Central Government, they would conduct their own affairs more economically, and it would put a stop to what was called log-rolling. He had adverted to some matters which had been mentioned that evening, and he trusted he had shown that the Government had enunciated a more distinct and comprehensive policy in the Speech which had been read that day than some honorable members would believe, and that there were really some very important matters to be dealt with. Honorable members must bear in mind that, at the best, only a few matters could be dealt with, and if a comprehensive Land Bill was passed, and also a Bill for local self-government, they alone would be something—but they would by no means be all the work, and therefore the Speech could not be called a barren one. It had been objected that no mention had been made in the Speech of providing funds for the support of the local governments; but no man would be mad enough to suppose that a Bill would be introduced for giving local self-government without making provisions for the necessary funds; it might be just as well said, that a Land Bill should be introduced when there was no land to operate on. He had now occupied the time of the House as long as he had intended, and he trusted he had answered some of the arguments and criticisms which had been addressed to the Speech which had been read that evening.

Mr. MACROSSAN said it was not his intention to delay the House very long with the remarks he intended to make; indeed, when he had first seen the Speech, he thought it was not incumbent on him to make any comments on it; but seeing that, with one exception, all the speeches had come from his side of the House, and that the honorable Attorney-General had said that they were more or less friendly, it was like throwing down the gauntlet as to whether the Government were or were not fit to retain the confidence of that House. Now, as had been said, all the speeches against the Government, with one exception, had been made from his side of the House, and before he sat down, he intended to test the sincerity of those honorable members who had been indulging in the luxury of criticising the conduct of the Government; as he considered that honorable members who made speeches and did not act in accordance with them, were not worthy of a seat in that House. He had been much pleased with the speech of the honorable member for Maryborough, and felt that that honorable member would adhere to the tenor of his remarks; but he was more satisfied with what he had said concerning the appointment of Mr. Graham by the honorable Attorney-General. He admired Mr. Graham as much as he did any member of that House; but he thought that the system of withdrawing members of the Opposition would soon bring that House to a worse condition than they were in in any other colony. He looked

upon such a practice as immoral. When he looked beside him for a colleague who had assisted him in promoting the interests of the North, he asked, why was that seat vacant? He believed that it was because his late colleague was now earning the wages which were given him by the Government for acting on certain occasions. He did not intend to criticise the Speech in any other way than by referring to the land question and the public works policy. As to the Land Bill, it was the old story, the same old song which had always been sung in that House since he had been a member of it, and as to the word "Liberal," he believed that there had been no word so mis-called that night. He would not admit that the present supporters of the Ministry had the right to claim the term, in its true sense, more than any other party in that House. He believed that there were as liberal men on one side in regard to public works as there were on the other; and although on the land question some might be more liberal than others, still there were as good men to promote the extension of public works on the Opposition side of the House as on the other. He would ask, however, what there was between Stanthorpe and Warwick, or on the borders of New South Wales, that they should make a railway for what would practically be for the benefit of New South Wales? Were they to expend their money for the benefit of that colony alone when there were other portions of this colony so much more deserving of it? What, he would ask, was there more in the condition of the country between Warwick and Stanthorpe than there was between Charters Towers and Townsville? The honorable Attorney-General said that it had been laid down as an axiom in America—that where twelve bullock-teams were engaged in carrying goods, it would pay to make a railway. Why, between Charters Towers and Townsville there were twelve times twelve drays employed, and also there were that number running in the Wide Bay district. It was no answer to say that they must wait and see how the principle adopted in making the Western Railway worked. Although he was one of those who had supported the principle that the lands should be made to pay for the construction of railways, yet there were many ways of doing that, if there was only the inclination. He believed it would be better that the railways should be constructed first, and then the land along their route sold or leased, so as to pay for the interest on the loan for their construction and the loan itself. Such a system as that could be carried out in the Maryborough and Gympie district as well as in the Warwick and Stanthorpe district. The honorable member for Aubigny had made a very striking remark as to what would be the *personnel* of the Ministry after the present session; but he would ask the House and the party with whom he had always acted, what condition the

country would be in if the present Government were permitted to retain their position—what condition they would be in at the end of the session when the honorable Colonial Secretary and the honorable Colonial Treasurer had left the administration of the affairs of the country in the hands of inexperienced members? If the Ministry, with the changes which had been made in it, and those that were expected, had not the confidence of that House, then was it likely that they would have it more at the end of the session? He should think not, and, therefore, if there was to be any reconstruction, it should take place at once. According to some words which fell from the honorable member for Stanley, the new members would not be men that the Liberal party could follow; but they were surely not followers of men, but followers of principle, and if the Ministry did not represent the principles on which they were put into office—and he contended they did not—then they were not worthy of the confidence of that House, and the sooner the House arrived at that conclusion the better, instead of wasting night after night as during last session, in windy warfare. He did not believe in abusing the Government personally, for, as individuals, he respected them; but they had no policy, and it was futile for honorable members to expect that they would get more than was set forth in the Speech. It was by that policy that they should act, and decide whether the Government were worthy of their confidence or not. Several honorable members had adverted to some transaction in connection with the Felton Run, and he certainly considered that the honorable Minister for Lands was bound to give to that House some explanation of the reasons which induced him to alter his original intention; the reasons might have been trifling ones or weighty ones, but under any circumstances the honorable member should state those reasons, and no doubt he would do so. He had waited patiently for them, and, like the honorable member for Maranoa, had paused for a reply, thinking one would be given. He had, however, been glad to hear from the honorable Attorney-General that the policy of the Government was the policy contained in the Speech. Without delaying the House longer, he would put the sincerity of those honorable members who had spoken to the test, by moving that the present Government did not retain the confidence of that House.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear.

MR. MACROSSAN: He would move—

That the question be amended by the omission of paragraphs 2 and 3 of proposed Address, with the view to the insertion in their place of the following words, viz.:—That the public works policy enunciated in your Excellency's Speech is not such as to retain for your Excellency's present advisers the confidence of this House.

MR. BAILEY rose to speak in support of the amendment, and said he did so apart from all

private reasons, and as a delegate sent by his constituents. If there were no other reasons to support him in pursuing such a course, he found sufficient in two of the paragraphs of the Speech, one of which was as follows:—

“ Fresh arrangements have recently been made by my Government for keeping up a stream of immigration to the colony in ships properly constructed and equipped for the service.”

Now, it would have been much better if the Government had informed that House what arrangements they had made for emigration from this colony to Sydney, as he might say that for months past there had been more emigration than immigration, and that hundreds of men—good men—mechanics and others, had been leaving Queensland for other colonies—men who had been introduced at great expense, and who had been trained in the colony, were now leaving it in shoals. The other paragraph was:—

“ You will be asked to sanction the extension of the southern line of railway from Warwick to the southern border of the colony, which I anticipate will prove greatly beneficial to the revenue and trade of Queensland.”

That was nothing more than an insult to his constituency. He remembered, not many years ago, when the colony was in a most depressed condition—when universal bankruptcy existed from one end of it to the other—when the Government was bankrupt, when merchants were bankrupt, and when working men were idle, that then it was that the Gympie gold field sprung up, and was the salvation of the colony. Yet how had that field been treated? Why in this way, that after the lapse of so many years, only sixty miles of road to it had been made, and that after repeated applications, the people of that district were told that a railway was to be made between Warwick and Stanthorpe, and that their claim was to be altogether neglected. But there was a greater claim on the Government even than that. A few years ago, in the Wide Bay and Brnnett districts, copper mines were discovered, and the inhabitants had contributed to the extent of their means to develop those mines. There was only one thing that stood in their way, and that was, that they could not get ore to port. At last, the present Liberal Government promised them that they should have what was required to develop that great industry which would give employment to thousands of men—that they should have a railway to the port. He did not know whether it had been stated in so many words, but the Government said they would not refuse to give them the only means of conveying their ore to port. Yet not the slightest reference had been made to the subject in the Speech at present under discussion. There were mines in the two districts sufficient to support a population of from ten to twelve thousand men, but at present they were nearly at a standstill, and instead of those mines being a source of revenue to the colony, the popu-

lation was gradually drifting away—those who could not leave the colony, going to Brisbane. There had been a census taken lately, and he believed it would be found by it that the population had actually decreased instead of increased. Were there no other reasons than those he had mentioned, he had no other course left to him, on the part of his constituents, than to support the amendment of the honorable member for the Kennedy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he confessed that he had been somewhat surprised that evening at the course the debate had taken, as he had certainly expected that something definite in the shape of charges of mal-administration of his office would have been brought forward. The honorable member for Maranoa had referred in very general and kindly terms to the statements which had been made in the Press, to the effect that the resignation of the Minister for Lands was in the hands of the Premier; and although the honorable member did not state it, he led the House to the impression that the Minister for Lands would be impeached on personal grounds. With respect to the first part of the statement, he had only to say that it was not true—that his resignation was not in the hands of the Premier; but what the personal grounds were upon which he was to be attacked he had no right to assume. He conceived that if he was capable of perpetrating one of the charges which had been made against him, he might have perpetrated a dozen; and, consequently, it would be only setting up men of straw for him to knock down, to bring them forward. With respect to the land question, he might say that he had never altered his views. When Mr. Stephens was a member of that House, he (the Minister for Lands) had expressed his views very strongly on the question, and also had done the same last session; and when accepting the office of Minister for Lands, he had done so with the full knowledge of the land policy of his colleagues and of his predecessor in office, which was entirely in accord with his own, which had been so often expressed. The honorable member for Maranoa had been kind enough to state that the Government had carried out their own views with reference to the sales of land; but surely anything further could not have been expected from them, and it was part of the policy of the Government that a portion of the land resumed should be sold by auction. He had always, both in and out of that House, upheld the rights of the homestead selectors, and he yielded to no man in the desire to see homestead selection carried out in the fullest and most entire integrity in the colony; but he had yet to come to the conclusion that homestead selectors were the only class of selectors in the colony worthy of attention, or that his constituents, who had not the advantage of railways, but who had to pay for them, were

to give away the land to those persons who were benefited by railways. He had expected that much more serious charges would have been made against him than had been made, as only indirect hints had as yet been thrown out against him. If he had been correctly informed, as soon as he accepted his present office, an honorable member of that House, and on his side of it, had got one of his (the Minister for Lands') constituents to oppose him on the ground that the appointment was not a happy one. Possibly the appointment was not the best that could have been made, but the Ministers might have thought that they were doing the best they could when the late Minister for Lands was laid up by illness. He confessed that, in his own mind, he was not fit for the position, and he thought, at the same time, that the honorable member who had so constantly twitted him with mal-administration could have done as much if he had asked himself the question. He not only had not asked for the office, but he had been taken by surprise when it was offered to him; and he was sure that honorable members on both sides of the House must have observed the marked alteration in his demeanor after his removal from the cross-benches to those of the Treasury. At the same time, he felt that there was no one more likely to agree with the policy of his predecessor than he was, inasmuch as he had known that gentleman for the last twenty years, and had had many opportunities of talking to him on the subject. The attempt to get him defeated at East Moreton, and other means were resorted to, to prevent his taking a seat in that House, but they failed. He need not refer to anything that had taken place in that House, as honorable members themselves were the arbiters of anything said there; but with the exception of the very slight allusion he had made to the *Brisbane Courier*, which made the remarks to which he had already alluded, he believed that very little had been said about him in any portion of the Press, with the one exception of the *Toowoomba Chronicle*. From the first day of his appointment until the present, that paper had contained a series of attacks, not only on his administration of office, but on his personal character and doings. If he were to refer to the many attacks which had been made on him in that paper, he might simply bring in a file of it, and read from the beginning of it to the end. He would not, however, inflict anything of the kind on the House. There were, however, one or two matters to which he would refer. One was immediately after his visit to Clifton, for the purpose of inspecting the reserve there, which had been kept back from sale for years, and had consequently become much more valuable; and if there was anything to induce a Government to withhold land to make it more valuable, he believed that they would have been justified in doing so there. There had been three thousand acres thrown open for homestead selec-

tion before that was done. In reference to his visit, the *Toowoomba Chronicle* had the following:—

"The Minister for Lands, in company with Mr. Hume, left Toowoomba by the ordinary train at two o'clock for Clifton."

He did not think there was anything extraordinary in a Minister leaving by an ordinary train, but then the paragraph went to say—

"A few persons were present to meet the honorable gentleman."

Those gentlemen were all mentioned by name except one, and it so happened, that when any one was to be responsible for what appeared in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* one name was not expressed. Well, the Minister and Mr. Hume were conducted over the reserve, and had everything pointed out to them. But the paragraph went to say that:—

"The honorable gentleman was not very communicative to those who took the trouble to meet him."

Now, he looked upon that as a compliment to himself, as he had thereby given himself an opportunity of hearing the views of others. The writer, however, did not stop at that, but went on to say,—

"and by all accounts was not particularly civil either."

Now, if he was not very communicative he could scarcely say how he could have been uncivil; at any rate, the incivility was not expressed in words. If the editor of the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, or the honorable member for Toowoomba, which was the same, had any informant, then the incivility consisted in his (the Minister for Lands') refusing to spend his time in a public house at the station instead of attending to his business. If that was the incivility complained of, then he pleaded guilty to the charge, as it was a habit of his that he was uncivil in those matters. He submitted, however, that his refusal was contained in the most courteous language he could command. The editor of the *Chronicle*, or the honorable member for Toowoomba, also accused him of indulging—

"in language which was more remarkable for vulgarity than for courteousness or discretion."

It was certainly the first time he had ever heard that any language of his was vulgar; he would leave the indiscretion out of the matter, for he had been once indiscreet enough to defend the honorable member from a charge of lying in that House; he was then a young member, and he must apologise for his indiscretion on that ground. He need not mention the circumstance further than to say that it was when a discussion arose out of a statement made by the honorable member that he had been offered a bribe. That was not the only occasion, however; for in the following session the same honorable member had dragged the name of an estimable gentleman through the

mire, and, when asked to put his name to a statement, had refused to do so; and now the third session of his (the Minister for Lands') Parliamentary experience opened upon him, not with an attack, but with an accusation, which had been indicated all through the recess by paragraphs in that honorable member's paper. He concluded the first paragraph to which he had referred, by a poor pun on the name which he had so often refused to spell correctly. It would be in the recollection of honorable members, that on three different occasions he (the Secretary for Lands) had to rise in his place in that House, and call attention to the fact that his name was printed "Fraser" in the division lists, and on every occasion it was when that honorable member wielded the pencil. That was not the only time he had attempted to pun on the names of Ministers. He shewed his ability to pun and quote Scripture by asking, if men gathered figs of Thorns, and grapes of thistles. But that was a very harmless diversion, in which he might have continued to the end of the chapter. Having punned on the names of two Ministers, cozened to two others, and maligned two others, he might have said that these hounds hunted in couples, or, with respect to the Lands Department, that it was an Augean stable which it would require the services of an accomplished groom to put in order, and as for the qualifications of that gentleman, were they not written in the book of chronicles of Toowoomba. He would refer to one other paragraph which appeared in his paper of the 2nd of December, in which a letter also appeared dated the 30th of November, referring to the notification of the Clifton lands being open for selection. In that letter, it was stated that no notification of the fact had yet appeared in any of the public papers. Now, the fact was, that at the very moment that letter was written, and for some days before, the notification appeared in both the public papers of the district in which the land was situated, and he presumed if he had attempted to influence that immaculate organ and swerve from the line of duty by offering it advertisements to which it was not fairly entitled, he should have been amenable to the members of that House for his conduct. But that was a matter with which he had nothing whatever to do. It was a pure matter of routine, which went on without any reference to him. The course had been that lands were advertised in the papers of the district in which they were situated; and on that occasion, if honorable members chose to refer to the *Warwick Examiner* and the *Warwick Argus*, they would find the same land was advertised in those papers. But that was quite sufficient ground for the honorable member for Toowoomba, speaking of him as the editor of the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, to speak of this correspondent as "a subscriber to our journal, and a very respected one." He thought a man who

would write such a statement as that, which after all was the life and soul of the paper, and was quite consistent with its general character, and then pay for that paper, deserved to be considered a very respected correspondent. The honorable member went on further to speak of little minds producing little things, and about the Minister for Lands having taken umbrage at the papers in Toowoomba because of their outspokenness, and wishing to restrict them from getting their due share of advertisements. He simply said he had no such intention, and whatever the relative size of minds might be, he was certainly not inclined to restrict the honorable member from anything that was his just due. But he was certainly not inclined to purchase either him or his paper while he was in office and had the opportunity of doing it. If the honorable member desired anything of the kind, it was for him to make the offer; but he had more sense than to do anything of the sort. Whatever the relative capacities or developments of the mind might be, he should leave that to the honorable member himself to decide, as he seemed to have had a very fair opportunity of judging of measures. Another article which appeared in his paper had reference to the Felton lands, and he should refer to it chiefly for the purpose of pointing out some of the epithets which the editor was kind enough to apply to himself personally. After speaking of astonishment and regret which would be felt in reference to the sale of those lands, he said:—

"Astonishment that a Minister for Lands of a Liberal Ministry should be allowed to sacrifice the best interests of the country to satisfy his obstinacy and pigheadedness, and regret that no other member of the Ministry seems to have ability to grapple with a question of vast public importance."

Why, it seemed to be a very great compliment indeed to suppose that he (the Secretary for Lands) had ability to grapple with it, and no other member of the Ministry had any such ability. That was one of the peculiarities of those articles; it was really difficult to say whether they were intended as compliments or the reverse. The honorable member might have studied from analogy when herding swine or something of that kind, seeing that he knew so well the relative developments and all the forms and features of that very useful domestic animal. There was one other reference in this article he should like to draw the attention of the House to. Referring to himself, it said:—

"He knows better than people themselves what is good for them, and hence on Wednesday he frankly admitted to gentlemen from the Downs that 'he did not care what the public thought or saw. Mr. Stephens had arranged the sale of the Felton resumption before he left office, and he did not intend to disturb the action of his predecessor.'"

Now, did any honorable member of that House give him credit for the want of common sense which a statement of that kind would indicate? It was stated that this was said to gentlemen from the Downs, and the day was mentioned. Now, there was only one gentleman or individual of any sort called on that day, or that week, from the Downs, and the statement was as devoid of truth as it was possible for any statement to be. He was sorry to occupy so much of the time of the House in referring to what appeared to be personal matters. He had stated, however, that this affair of the sale of certain lands was settled before he joined the Ministry, and he perfectly well understood it was part of the Ministerial policy. But about this particular piece of land, the honorable member for Toowoomba had insinuated that it was done to please the proprietor; in fact, he had stated in the House that he understood the arrangement was made on the Darling Downs. With reference to that, he might state that at the time the sale of this land was agreed upon by the Cabinet, he had never even seen the face of the lessee of it; he did not know him, and did not even ask his name. It was represented to him that the previous resumption on this run had been mostly dummied, it was believed, and that this land, being very inferior, would probably be dummied also, and as it was intended by the Ministry to put some land up to auction, it might as well be that. And that was agreed to by the Ministry months before he had ever seen the lessee of that run. The *Toowoomba Chronicle* said, "The choice of a Land Minister was not a happy one." Why, he had admitted that already. He would admit, at any rate, that it was not for him to compare their choice with what might have been made from other members of that House; but this much he might say—he thought with safety—that it was as bad a choice as could possibly have been made, unless they had chosen the honorable member for Toowoomba himself. That honorable member, he believed, was entirely unsuccessful in damaging his character to the extent he no doubt would like to have done. He had tried to do so by every means in his power through his paper, and finding that course unsuccessful—for he (the Secretary for Public Lands) was happy to say few of the other papers seemed to think much of any of the sensational paragraphs in that paper—he thought he would try another *ruse*. He determined to hold a meeting of his constituents, and he could imagine him saying:—

"if this fail,  
The pillared firmament is rotten,  
And earth's base built on stubble."

He held a meeting of his constituents, and this was the way he talked to them:—

"Alluding to the Felton Homestead Area, Mr. Groom said the Premier might have selected a

better man for the position of Minister for Lands than Mr. Fryar; in fact, he would venture to say, that Mr. Palmer, with all his conservative opinions, would not have acted in the matter of that homestead in the manner in which Mr. Fryar had acted. The land having been resumed for homestead purposes, it should not have been dealt with in any other manner, but Mr. Fryar."—

He might here state, that all the other extracts he had referred to had been taken from the *Toowoomba Chronicle*; but he had taken this from the *Darling Downs Gazette*. It was said to be a report of the honorable member's speech, and it ought to be true. He could not have taken the report from the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, because he could not have asked them to believe it.

"But Mr. Fryar left his office in Brisbane, and, at the residence of a squatting proprietor, he entered into a contract to offer the homestead area for sale by auction, on the understanding that the lease of certain portions of Beauaraba Run should be resigned, and the land thrown open for selection."

It might be some information to honorable members, though not much, to know that never, on any occasion before or since the visit referred to, was he in the house of any squatting proprietor whatever in the settled district of Darling Downs. Imagine the present Minister for Lands being entertained at the residence of a squatting proprietor on the Darling Downs! He should as soon think of the honorable member for Toowoomba himself being so entertained. He would go further than that, and say he was never in any house, club-house, hotel, or building that could be called a house, of the proprietor of the Felton lands. That gentleman called into the Lands Office some couple of months after the sale of this land was arranged for, with a note of introduction from the Acting Premier, and that was the first ever he saw of him. The land had then, he believed, been surveyed for sale; so that so far as any personal matters were concerned, he certainly thought sufficient evidence could be brought to bear to show the charges to be altogether unfounded. He thought he had answered the charges brought against the administration of the Lands Department, which was the chief point for which he had risen, and it was not his intention to speak to the motion then before the House, except so far as that motion gave him a right to speak in reference to those charges. With respect to the particular piece of land which the honorable member for Toowoomba said ought not to have been used for any other purpose than a homestead area, it was a very remarkable fact that that land, in the honorable member's own opinion, hardly was land. It was described as "rocks, and ridges, and waterless country;" as "masses of rocks," and "steep hills of rocks," and he did not know how many other descriptive epithets such as these, and then the honorable member finished up by saying:—

"Who the genius was that recommended it as a homestead area, I have not been able to learn." Well, it was quite possible for the honorable member to look within himself and see who the genius was who recommended it as a homestead area. The fact was, he was not aware that it was ever mentioned anywhere except in that honorable member's paper as being a homestead area, so that he might say to that honorable member as Nathan said unto David "Thou art the man." With respect to the Land Bill promised in the future, he should only say that his own opinions were tolerably well known to honorable members, and it was only by having an opportunity of carrying out those opinions that he would have been a party to the introduction of a Land Bill into that House. Therefore, so far as his statement went, the Land Bill would be exactly what he should prefer to see it, and as the leases were now within a very short time of being up, he thought it was high time that matter was dealt with. It was not for him to say why the matter was not dealt with sooner. He was not responsible for that part of the business, and he could only say, that since he had been in office, he had taken such opportunities as were afforded for becoming acquainted with the public lands. He went to examine this land that was said to be a homestead area, and he had committed the unpardonable offence of finding out what was being offered for homestead selection; and farther, he had committed the unpardonable fault of getting good land for the people to settle on, instead of the rocks and ridges and waterless country which was available. It was not part of his policy to give homestead selectors the worst land when better could be obtained for them. His opinion was, that homestead selectors, or any selectors who intended to cultivate the land, should have the best land that could be procured; and he might say, the Land Bill would propose some such policy as the Government believed would best attain that object. He certainly had no intention, so far as his abilities went, of allowing homestead selectors to be restrained or restricted in any way from getting the very best land that was available. At the same time, however, they must bear in mind that the available land was not altogether inexhaustible. They had something under a million and a-quarter acres on the Darling Downs still under lease; but it must be borne in mind that that included everything on the Darling Downs—good, bad, and indifferent. And away about the Bunya Mountains, and in the neighborhood of Dalby, possibly it might be found that a large portion of that land would not be suitable for homestead purposes; and even supposing every acre was suitable for homestead selection, how many homestead selectors would it locate? Something less than two thousand, without any allowance for roads, reserves, waterless country, or anything. He admitted that the same area, or thereabouts, was still held under lease in the Moreton

District, and very nearly the same in the Wide Bay and Burnett Districts; but even with the fact that there were 3,000,000 acres of land available, would it be consistent with the principles the party at present in power had endeavored to carry out, to allow selectors to get fixed down for five years on such ridges as those described by the editor of the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, at Felton; and so take away the apparent demand at the present time, and then there would be no apparent need for further resumptions? That was about the effect of it, and possibly that was what the honorable member for Toowoomba would like to be at, although he did not directly say so. It was as well that they should know whether that was the intention, because they knew perfectly well that when men settled on homesteads, they had no further chance for five years; they could not remove for that period without giving up their areas; but he had no doubt some were anxious to get a title to 640 acres, and part with it as soon as possible for a consideration. He was perfectly well aware that there were selectors to whom 640 acres of worthless land, with a wealthy proprietor alongside them, had far more charms than 120 acres of good agricultural land on which they would be expected to settle and which they would be expected to cultivate. He did not join the Ministry with any idea that there was only one class, and was to be only one class, in the colony. He believed, if the adult male population of the colony was polled, there were possibly not more than five per cent. who were or ever had been homestead selectors. He thought they were bound to bear in mind that there were other classes in the colony besides these homestead selectors; and if honorable members supposed he ever took office as Minister for Lands with the slightest intention of totally ignoring other classes, the sooner they were undeceived the better. And if it should be his fortune to remain in office, which it probably would not be, he had not the slightest intention of pursuing any such policy in the future. The honorable member for Toowoomba accused him very roundly of not being led by the nose by his colleagues. That honorable member was of opinion that none of the other members of the Ministry were capable of grappling with that policy, and of restraining him from selling land which was intended for homestead selection. It appeared to him that that honorable member had got an idea that "a young member, and a still younger Minister," should be, like Uriah Heap, "very 'umble;" he should enjoy the office and the emoluments attached to it, and not have a soul to call his own in anything relating to the administration of the public lands; he should be called Minister for Lands, and have no idea whatever respecting the disposal of the lands, or the management of the office. His opinion differed from that of the honorable member in that respect, and if the motion which was then before the House should be carried, he would cordially commend that

honorable member to their successors as their Minister for Lands. He could hardly say it was his intention to have addressed the House at any length, and he thought he was entitled to ask honorable members to give him the credit of having been unintentionally kept back from saying what he intended to say from the feeling that it would have been very injudicious on his part to have attempted to address the House before his seniors in office. He had waited in order that the honorable the Colonial Secretary, the Colonial Treasurer, and the Attorney-General should first address the House; so that it was not because he was at all backward in saying—and that, by-the-bye, brought another idea into his mind. The honorable member for Toowoomba, in one of his paragraphs, accused him of saying things in reference to the action of honorable members in that House, and he now wished to give the insinuation the flattest denial, and to say that he had never referred in any way to the action of any honorable member in his place in Parliament, and that if he had anything to say against honorable members, he was quite prepared to say it in that House. He was saying, he had purposely refrained from speaking before in order that his seniors in office might first address the House, and that, he hoped, would be taken as a sufficient excuse for his being so late in rising to give his explanation regarding the Felton lands. The honorable member for Stanley had referred in his own humorous way to a conversation with reference to the Grantham land, and he had no doubt he was correct. He did not remember the exact circumstances; but he thought it was very likely they had some pleasant conversation together, as they were both old colonists, and knew each other pretty well. He could only say, he could not remember the words used on that occasion. With regard to the observations of the honorable member for Aubigny, he remembered mentioning the fact that they had opened more lands for homestead selection on the Darling Downs than were resumed there last year. The 7,040 acres on Beauaraba Run counterbalanced the 7,040 on Felton Run, and the Clifton land was something to the good. But as for putting the Clifton land as compensation for the Felton land, he certainly had no such intention.

Mr. STEVENSON moved—

That the debate be now adjourned.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the resumption of the debate stand an Order of Day for Tuesday next.

Mr. DE SATGE believed a large number of honorable members would rather go on with the work of the session, and get their fate decided one way or the other, as soon as possible. He should, decidedly.

Question put and passed.