

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 7 JUNE 1876**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 7 June, 1876.

Presentation of Address in Reply.—Governor's Answer to Address in Reply.—Supply.—Vacant Seats.—Supply.—Adjournment.

## PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The SPEAKER stated that, as ordered by the House, it was his intention to proceed to Government House to present to the Governor the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech which had been delivered by His Excellency the Governor.

The Speaker, accompanied by The Clerk and several honorable members, then proceeded to Government House.

## GOVERNOR'S ANSWER TO ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The SPEAKER, on returning, announced that the Assembly had been to Government House, and there presented to the Governor their Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following Reply:—

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN,—

"Your Address deserves my warmest acknowledgments, and I beg you will accept them as offered to you on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen.

"I do not doubt that you will give a careful and dispassionate consideration to the various measures to be brought before you, having for their object the continued well-being of the colony.

"You will everywhere, I trust, find evidence of progress; at the same time, that many opportunities are certain to present themselves of attaining, through your efforts and assistance, to still more satisfactory results.

"Government House,

"7th June, 1876."

The HON. A. MACALISTER moved that the paper be printed in the Proceedings of the House.

Mr. PALMER said, before the question was put he should like to know whether it was not irregular for such a motion to be made by an honorable member who was not a Minister of the Crown.

The HON. A. MACALISTER said that although he sat there as a private member, he thought it was quite competent of him to move the motion; his only reason for not referring to other matters was, because he considered it was desirable to dispose of formal business first.

Mr. AMHURST said he should like to have the ruling of the honorable Speaker on the point raised.

The SPEAKER: I have no doubt in my mind whatever that the honorable member for Ipswich can make the motion.

Question put and passed.

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## SUPPLY.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received the following message from His Excellency the Governor:—

"In accordance with the provisions contained in the eighteenth section of 'The Constitution Act of 1867,' the Governor recommends for the consideration of the Legislative Assembly that provision to the extent of one hundred thousand pounds (£100,000) be made, for defraying out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the expenses of the various departments and services of the colony, for the month of July of the financial year 1876-7, at the rates which have been sanctioned for 1875-6."

## VACANT SEATS.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received the following resignations of their seats in that House:—By Mr. Dickson, for the electoral district of Enoggera, and by Mr. Griffith, for the electoral district of Oxley.

The HON. A. MACALISTER then moved—

That the seat of Robert Muter Stewart, Esquire, hath become, and is now vacant, by reason of his acceptance of the office of Colonial Secretary, since his election and return to serve in this House as member for the electoral district of Brisbane.

Question put and passed.

The HON. A. MACALISTER moved—

That the seat of John Douglas, Esquire, hath become, and is now vacant, by reason of his acceptance of the office of Secretary for Public Lands, since his election and return to serve in this House as member for the electoral district of Maryborough.

Question put and passed.

The HON. A. MACALISTER moved—

That the seat of Samuel Walker Griffith, Esquire, hath become, and is now vacant, by reason of his acceptance of the office of Attorney-General, since his election and return to serve in this House as member for the electoral district of Oxley.

Mr. PALMER submitted that the resignations of Mr. Griffith and Mr. Dickson could not be received, inasmuch as by the Legislative Assembly Act the mere act of accepting office under the Crown rendered the seat of an honorable member void; then, the seat being void, it was impossible for a member to resign it. The clause he referred to—namely, clause 6—said:—

"If any member of the said Assembly shall accept of any office of profit or pension from the Crown during pleasure or for a term of years his election shall be thereupon and is declared to be void and a writ shall forthwith issue for a new election. Provided that nothing in this Act contained shall extend to any person in receipt only of pay half-pay or a pension as an officer in Her Majesty's navy or army or who shall receive any new or other commission in the navy or army respectively or any increase of pay on such commission to any of the official members of the Government or any officers referred to in the last preceding clause of this Act who may accept any other office."

Now, on referring to the *Government Gazette* of June 5, he found that there was an absolute resignation of those gentlemen. [The honorable member here read the notification of the Ministerial changes and resignations of seats from the *Government Gazette* of June 5, 1876.] He argued that those gentlemen, having resigned their offices, and having been re-appointed, their seats in that House, according to the Legislative Assembly Act, were void, and that it was utterly a work of supererogation for them to send in their resignations.

The SPEAKER: Do I understand the honorable member to be raising a question of privilege?

Mr. PALMER: Yes, a question of privilege.

The SPEAKER said that if the honorable member raised it as a question of privilege, then it would be for the House to decide whether the resignations should be received or not.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said that the explanation he was about to give to the House was already well known to the public outside, and was undoubtedly well known to honorable members, as it was contained in a *Government Gazette* which was issued on the day before yesterday. On last Friday, after consulting with his honorable colleagues, he, acting upon their advice, and with their full concurrence, went to Government House and had an interview with His Excellency, at which he there and then tendered his resignation of the various offices held by him as head of the Government and Colonial Secretary. His Excellency had been pleased to accept his resignation, but had not applied to him for any advice, and he (Mr. Macalister) had refrained from giving any, as to the appointment of a new Ministry. Those were the simple facts as far as he was concerned personally, which had occurred since the last meeting of the House. He had reasons which he believed were pretty well known to most honorable members, for withdrawing for a time from that House—

The SPEAKER: I must really interrupt the honorable member, as this is a digression which can only be allowed by permission of the House.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he would not have adopted the present course had he not thought that the motion would come from him better after he had explained to the House what was his own position in the matter. He had, however, nothing more to add, except that he desired to express to the members of that House his thanks for the kindness and courtesy that they had always extended to him during his connection with them. He might also mention that a new Ministry had been formed, whose services had been accepted by His Excellency the Governor; consisting of the Honorable George Thorn, Esquire, as Premier, retaining his seat in the Legislative Council, and taking the portfolio of Works and Mines in addition to

that of Postmaster-General; the Honorable R. M. Stewart, Esquire, as Colonial Secretary; the Honorable John Douglas, Esquire, as Minister for Lands; the Honorable J. R. Dickson, Esquire, as Colonial Treasurer; with the Honorable S. W. Griffith, Esquire, as Attorney-General and Secretary for Public Instruction.

Mr. PALMER said he failed to see the utility of resignation if the seats of the gentlemen just mentioned were to be declared vacant by that House in accordance with the Act. If they were going to establish a precedent that Ministers were to be allowed to resign instead of having their seats declared vacant, it would be a very bad one indeed and lead to confusion, as their resignations could only have been sent in with the object that their seats should not be declared vacant.

Mr. MOREHEAD thought the House would have to decide between two points: whether the resignation of his seat by the late and present Attorney-General was to be accepted, or whether the motion of the honorable member for Ipswich was to be accepted.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he had simply given to the House the information contained in the *Gazette*, and had moved that the seats of the gentlemen accepting office be, with one exception, declared vacant.

Mr. IVORY presumed that no mention would be made on the records of the House of the resignation of the late honorable members for Oxley and Enoggera; as otherwise, as stated by the honorable member for Port Curtis, it would lead to some confusion.

Mr. McLLWRAITH said he thought that the acceptance of office under the Crown had forced upon the gentlemen in question the resignation of their seats, and he wanted to know what interpretation was to be put upon that. It would seem from what had fallen from the honorable member for Ipswich that there was no particular meaning to be attached to the resignation of their seats of the two members whose resignations had been received, but he was perfectly satisfied that they would not have been sent in unless there was some hidden meaning.

Mr. J. SCOTT said it appeared to him very strange that two members of the new Government should have sent in their resignations and that the others should not have done so; and, therefore, what honorable members on his side of the House were desirous of knowing was, what weight was to be attached to those resignations in contradistinction to the others who had not sent in their resignations. He should like to have some ruling on the subject.

The SPEAKER said it was for the House and not for the Speaker to decide a question of the present kind. With regard to mention of the resignations being made on the records of the House, he might state that that must be done, unless otherwise ordered by the House.

Mr. THOMPSON thought the House had already decided the motion that the resignations be accepted, and therefore they would be on record; but immediately following that would be the resolution that the seats were declared vacant by acceptance of office, so that really no harm could arise from the matter being on record.

Question put and passed.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER moved—

That the seat of James Robert Dickson, Esquire, hath become, and is now vacant, by reason of his acceptance of the office of Colonial Treasurer, since his election and return to serve in this House as member for the electoral district of Enoggera.

Question put and passed.

### SUPPLY.

Mr. HEMMANT moved, without previous notice—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of the immediate constitution of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, and of the report of Resolutions therefrom, to-day; and also of the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day.

The honorable member said that the object of the motion was, to enable the incoming Government to discharge the ordinary liabilities of the colony; and it would be seen that the salaries were to be paid on the same basis as in 1875-76.

Mr. THOMPSON said the motion of the honorable member embraced a very important constitutional point. The Government, which was not represented in any way in that House, had retired from office, and matters were thus placed in the extraordinary position, that there was no one to ask for a Supply on account. Now, when the Government of the honorable member for Port Curtis resigned, the succeeding Government was not actually formed until after a vote of Supply was asked and obtained. Mr. Bell, on that occasion, moved that the Standing Orders be suspended, and a Bill authorising the appropriation of £150,000 was afterwards passed through all its stages. Then Mr. Macalister got up as an independent member and stated that in the course of half-an-hour he should be in a position to announce to the House the names of the members of the new Government, so that, within an hour, Supply was granted, and a new Ministry was formed to go on with the business of the country. On the present occasion, however, the House was asked to do something altogether in opposition to the Constitution. The theory of the Constitution was, that money could only be granted to the Crown in consideration of redress of grievances; but the present was not after such redress; and, in fact, the little business before them had not been half as

well managed as when the honorable member for Ipswich took it in hand, on the resignation of the Government of the honorable member for Port Curtis. He did not see how the Government could really ask for Supply until after they had been re-elected; for there was no one on the Treasury benches on whom the House could have any hold—no one on whom they could force their grievances; and if they gave in on the present occasion, they would lose their hold upon the public purse-strings when redress of grievances was demanded. The matter appeared to him so plain that there was only one way of getting rid of the difficulty, which was, by rejecting the motion. The Government seemed anxious to get Supply, but there was no necessity for it; there was no one to tell the House that it was necessary; there was no one they could interrogate on the subject, or to tell them how it was to be spent. Instead of that, a mere independent member of the House got up and asked for Supply. If that honorable member appeared as a Minister of the Crown, he had to go back and be re-elected before he could ask for Supply; and if he was only there as a private member, he had no business to ask for Supply for the public service. He did not suppose it would be possible in Parliamentary history to find a precedent for such a proceeding. There might be circumstances under which something of the sort had arisen but never had there been a case in the House of Commons where it met with a Government unrepresented—certainly not where a Government was unrepresented and money was asked for on their account. It was, in fact, totally opposed to all principles of Government, and whatever might be the wording of the colonial Acts, and the practice of that House, it appeared to him an impossibility that the Crown should now get Supply. Mr. May dealt with the question throughout his whole book, but there was one short passage that he would read:—

“The Crown has no concern in the nature or distribution of the taxes; but the foundation of all Parliamentary taxation is its necessity for the public service, as declared by the Crown through its constitutional advisers.”

Now in the present instance there were no constitutional advisers in the House. But it so happened that there was in the British Parliament one great exception to that rule, and that was in regard to the vote for the Militia; and it was only because of the jealousy which existed between it and the standing army that the Parliament reserved to itself the right to consider what should be granted to the Militia before other votes were dealt with. That, however, was abolished, as such a course was found to be attended with inconvenience. It would be seen, on reference to the English “Hansard,” that there was some jealousy exhibited, and that that was the reason why the Parliament

discontinued exercising their right. "May" said:—

"Until 1863, however, there was a remarkable exception to this constitutional rule in the case of the charge for the disembodied Militia. The Commons then took the initiative; the Estimate was prepared by a committee, and, when its report was received, it was referred to the Committee of Supply, and the Queen's recommendation was signified. But, inconveniences having arisen from this separation of the Estimates for military expenditure, and from divided responsibility in the preparation of them, the House agreed, on the 9th February, 1863, that this practice should be discontinued; and that, in future, the Militia Estimates, like all other Estimates for the public service, should be prepared on the responsibility of Ministers of the Crown."

So there was that exception to prove the rule, and even that had been abolished. Now, he was totally opposed to the course at present adopted by the honorable member opposite, as he was convinced that it was unparliamentary and unconstitutional for any private member to go to that House and ask for Supply for the Crown. Why was it asked for?—there was no necessity for it; there was no reason whatever why all the new Ministers, who belonged, with one exception, to constituencies in and around the metropolis—in fact, that circumstance had been used as a great weapon against the Government—should not all be returned to that House within a fortnight. Yet they wanted that House to grant them a supply of £100,000, and they asked for it through an independent member who had no right to assume the functions of a Minister. If that was the case, the House would be abrogating all its functions if it did anything of the sort. Some one should be there who was really responsible, and who could tell them where all the money granted by the Parliament had been spent, and the reason why more was wanted, and how it was to be spent. He could speak as regarded his own constituency, that he should have a great deal to say about the non-expenditure of money voted for West Moreton, and he wanted to have a few words with a Minister of the Crown before he for one could consent to grant any more money. Then again, why were the friends of the present Government wishing to get hold of such a large sum of money as £100,000, but that they might set that House at defiance for a period of six weeks or two months? If the House could stand that, whether on the Opposition or Government benches, it was more than he thought possible they could. There had been a clear precedent, which the late Premier would recollect, and although it was taken objection to at the time, it was, after all, a constitutional practice. The honorable member (Mr. Macalister) had then said:—

"I have not announced any Ministry as yet; a Ministry has not yet been formed, and until that is done, it is perfectly competent for me to come into the House."

The course then pursued was the one which should have been followed on the present occasion, and he should do all in his power to prevent the Standing Orders being suspended for any such unconstitutional purpose as was proposed by the motion of the honorable member for Eulimba.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he was quite surprised that they had got on so far in the session as they had without the House being asked for some Supply on account, as he had fully expected that the Government would have asked for a grant of £150,000 or so before then. They all knew that the late Colonial Secretary had always been most meagre in his explanations, and what had the honorable gentleman done that day?—he had not told them anything of the action of the late Ministry since the last sitting of the House, but had merely stated that he himself had resigned, and that other gentlemen had assumed the reins of Government. The next thing that occurred was the sending of a message from His Excellency the Governor, wishing the House to appropriate the sum of £100,000; and that was followed by a motion from the late Colonial Treasurer to the effect, without offering a single word of explanation, that the Standing Orders should be suspended for the purpose of voting that sum. There was one thing, however, that the House was anxious to know, and that was for how long there was to be an adjournment, as it depended upon that whether the Government would want any money or not. They had money already voted to last them to the end of the present month, and surely their credit should be good enough to carry them over another month; but if they got the £100,000 they asked for, they would most probably keep the House in recess for three months, as that money would be sufficient to pay the salaries alone, and they had the loans to work upon for the public works. He wished to direct the attention of the House to what was laid down by Mr. Todd in his work on "Parliamentary Government," as being applicable to the present question:—

"According to ancient constitutional doctrine and practice, no moneys can be voted by Parliament for any purpose whatsoever, except at the demand and upon the responsibility of Ministers of the Crown."

Necessary supplies had been voted by that House. Mr. Todd not only laid down that rule, but went on to explain why it was necessary that some Minister of the Crown should be in the House and explain why the money was asked for. But in the present case there was no Minister in the House, but the motion was brought forward by the late Treasurer, who had actually admitted that he was going to leave the colony, so that it would be impossible for the House to get from that gentleman, at least, an account of how the money was to be spent. He thought they should not vote any money until it

was known for how long the House was to adjourn. If, as rumored, the adjournment was only to be for five weeks, then the Government did not want any money; and if it was to be until the 18th July, then information of it should have been given to the House. In any case, however, the Government would not require a grant of Supply until after they had met the House.

MR. MOREHEAD said he was surprised that the honorable member for Ipswich had not given the House any information of what had occurred within the last sitting of the House and the present time, as there was nothing to show what had led to the demand made by the honorable member for Bulimba. He considered that the honorable member for Ipswich had neglected his duty to those he represented, in not stating to the House what had happened that he had met them there that afternoon, not as a Premier of the colony, but as a private member—not that the honorable gentleman was likely to remain long in that position, as rumor said he was going home very shortly in another capacity. He thought the House should be told why £100,000 was wanted, and should have some information as to what were the causes which led to the honorable gentleman quitting office; so that the House might see the justice of its doing so before they voted the sum of money they were asked to vote for the succeeding Government. He was sure the honorable member would give that explanation.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he had already made the explanation, and did not intend to repeat it. He now rose to reply to the remarks of the honorable member for Maranoa, who had quoted from "Todd," to show that no money could be granted except at the demand and upon the responsibility of a Minister of the Crown, and had argued that the House should be in such a position as to have an opportunity of asking a Minister of the Crown for some explanation as to why the money mentioned in the motion was wanted. He would like to know whether a similar course had been followed when during the tenure of office by the late Government, a similar motion had been made; inasmuch as they could not, any more than the present mover of the motion could, have said what was intended to be done with the money, as they would not have the expenditure of it. As regarded the adjournment, he believed it was intended to ask the House to adjourn until the 11th July. There was no doubt that the honorable member for Maranoa was substantially correct, that the Ministry was not represented, but he was not aware that the Government had ever been represented on a former occasion; for it was impossible that there should be a Minister present to ask for the money, unless he was a member of the out-going Ministry, and then he could not be expected to make any explanation of why the money was wanted.

MR. PALMER said the argument of the honorable member who had just sat down went for nothing—that when his Ministry got Supply there was no Minister present to answer questions. There was a Minister, inasmuch as the out-going Government were holding office until their successors were appointed. The present was, however, a different position altogether; for the late Colonial Treasurer, who really seemed hardly able to shake off the trammels of office, brought forward a motion which could only be brought forward by a Minister of the Crown. He thought that there were many reasons besides those already advanced why the House was not called upon to vote Supply. The circumstances under which the present Government had taken office and those under which the late Government took office, were totally dissimilar. The latter had gone into office in consequence of a vote adverse to their predecessors, and consequently could fairly have said that they were sure of a majority and a trial. But the present Ministry had resulted from a mere shuffling of the cards; it was not a Ministry coming into power with any majority, and no one knew that they would ever be able to command a sufficient majority in that House to carry a single measure. He did not think it would be fair, in the absence of those members, to bring forward a vote to test their strength on the present occasion, or he would do so; but he believed it was extremely probable that when they appeared on the Treasury benches they would be met by a vote of want of confidence, and that their tenure of office would be very short. He had heard a good many rumors about the change out of doors, but not one expression of approval in favor of a Government which was formed under the leadership of a gentleman who was not even a member of that House. Whilst he did not dispute the right of the Governor to send for any man to form a Ministry, he must say that the usual course of procedure had been departed from, and that the House had now a Ministry and a leader—who was Premier, Postmaster-General, and Secretary for Public Works and Mines, but who was not a member of that House, and was not able to be present in it to answer any question relative to one of his departments—namely, the Public Works—which was undoubtedly a most important one. He did not believe that any Assembly would put up with a Ministry whose Premier and whose Secretary for Works was not a member of that House. On that ground he considered they were quite justified in refusing Supply. But again, the House had not, and could not have, any knowledge that the new Ministry had authorised the honorable member for Bulimba to be their mouth-piece, and to ask for the money; and consequently the Ministry on meeting the House—that was to say if they ever did so, and it struck him that he would not see all their

faces again—might, if the motion was carried, deny that they had authorised the honorable member for Bulimba to ask for the money; he thought for that and other reasons it was utterly impossible for the House to vote the Supply. If the Ministry had shown the tact of the late Premier—although he thought it was rather a dodge—if they had had the sense to follow that, they would have put themselves into a better position, and their new agent, the honorable member for Bulimba, might have asked for and obtained Supply by an overwhelming majority. They had not tried that species of tactics now, but were in a very different position; and he maintained it was unconstitutional to grant Supply unless a Minister of the Crown was in the House to ask for that Supply, and to be responsible to the House if it were granted. He hoped the House would not stultify itself for any party reasons by breaking through the great constitutional principle of not granting Supply without an opportunity of redressing grievances. With respect to the proposed adjournment they had heard nothing definite—nothing except a report that the adjournment was to be until the 19th of July; and he could not see what earthly necessity there was for such a long adjournment. The Ministry just constituted had been formed out of the Ministerial side of the House completely, and it was the established rule in all Parliaments, and the English Parliament particularly, that when a succeeding Ministry was formed from the same side of the House as their predecessors, they stood in their position, and adopted their policy.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear.

Mr. PALMER said he believed this was thoroughly constitutional, and he was quite prepared to refer to authorities—although he was not in the habit of quoting authorities—to show he was correct. When Mr. Disraeli succeeded Lord Derby, a member of whose Ministry he was, and when Addington succeeded Pitt, that was the course pursued. Those were the only cases he could call to mind at the present moment. Mr. Disraeli, he believed, announced that in assuming the place of Lord Derby he assumed his policy and his position; and, therefore, the present Ministry assumed the policy of the Ministry who had obliged them; and, such being the case, they could not want any time to prepare and bring up a policy—it was before them already. The only time they could ask the House to give them was such time as might be necessary for them to go before their constituents and see if they would be re-elected; and, from the reports that were flying about, he thought it was very doubtful that some of them would be returned again. He thought they had no right to ask for more than an adjournment until next Tuesday week, or that day fortnight at the outside. They were all members

of Brisbane constituencies, with the exception of the honorable member for Maryborough, and the elections could be got over very easily. That would be ample time to go before their constituents, and be prepared to go on with the business of the country. He would make it three weeks from now, which would be sufficient for all purposes. They had got Supply up to the 30th June, and money would not be required to be paid before the 31st of July, and if they came before Parliament with a policy which met with the approval of the House, there would be no doubt or difficulty about their getting a vote of Supply to carry on for a month, or two months. But they had no right, without having declared any policy to the House or the country, except what had descended upon them from their predecessors, to ask for Supply, and members would not be justified in the interests of the country in granting it. There was another question which he asked honorable members to take into consideration. When the House met, a fortnight ago yesterday, notice of resumption of Crown lands to a considerable extent was placed on the table. Now, that notice was to lie on the table for sixty days, and it would either have expired, or would all but have expired, when the House met again, and it would not be possible for the representatives of the people, or the members of the Upper House—the Upper House might take exception of course in the meantime—but it would not be competent to honorable members, if they should think it necessary, to appeal to the House against those resurreptions. He thought that was an additional reason, and a very fair one, why they should not agree to this adjournment—that it would put it out of the power of the representatives of the people to object to those resurreptions if they chose to do so. Another reason why the members of the previous Ministry had no right to ask for this adjournment was, that they had brought the House into this position. They delayed calling the House together most unnecessarily; and although it might be said they could not call members together owing to the absence of the honorable the Premier from the colony, he asserted that it was his duty to be there at the proper time. But even when he did come back the House was not called together for some time; and he supposed they were maturing the policy which had been shown to be a very addled one. And the very first day the House was called together, it was on the eve of a public holiday—the Queen's birthday, and then they moved an adjournment for a week. When they met on the following week, another adjournment was proposed, and the Government consented and voted for it. They divided on it in fact, and public business had been thrown back a fortnight; and as there were three members in the present Ministry who were in the old Ministry, they were just as responsible for

that action now as ever they were. It had been part of their policy to drive off public business, and they had now no right to ask for an adjournment for one hour longer than was necessary to go to their constituencies and come back to the House. There was still a further reason why the Ministry should meet the House as soon as possible. It was confidently reported, and he believed on the very best ground, that it was part and parcel of the agreement between the outgoing Ministry and themselves that the honorable member for Ipswich was to be appointed Agent-General of the colony in England. Although they had no official ground for saying so, it had become matter of such common report; and as it had not been contradicted, they were perfectly justified in believing that such an arrangement, if not actually put down in black and white, had, at any rate, been agreed to. That was a question which should come before the House at once, and he had no hesitation in giving his opinion on the subject. He thought if that or any other Government imagined for one moment that during their term of office, short as that term usually was in the colonies, they could follow the example of New South Wales, when Mr. Charles Cowper appointed himself Agent-General—for although he was not appointed until he had left the Ministry, he did actually appoint himself—if they thought that was going to be followed again, they were very much mistaken. Of course any Ministry had a right to appoint an Agent-General; they did not come to that House to consult as to whom they should appoint; but he wished to warn the House, and to lay it down before the country, that a political appointment—such as that of a member of that House, who had so long led a party in that colony—could not possibly be acceptable to their successors in office; and that if such an appointment were made, it had better be clearly understood it must be a political appointment; and that no matter how the man was appointed, he should go out with the Ministry.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. PALMER said he should never consent to it on any other terms. He would not ask it for himself. If he appointed a strong political supporter, who had been actively engaged in politics, he could not expect another Ministry to place the same confidence in him as he had himself; and he could say, he had no confidence in the appointment of the honorable member for Ipswich as Agent-General. He therefore sounded a note of warning, that if the appointment were made, it must be with the understanding that the Opposition—and he believed he spoke the sentiments of every member of the Opposition, having consulted them on the subject—that it must be a purely political appointment, subject to change with the Ministry. That was another reason why the House should be called together as soon as possible, so that they might be told what it was proposed to do. The Opposition might

be beaten on going into committee; but he gave the Government warning, that if they pressed this question of Supply, the Ministry had better go to their constituents, and perhaps they would find the House sitting when they came back.

Mr. HALV quite agreed with the honorable gentleman who had just spoken. He would not trust the Government with one shilling of public money, let alone £100,000, without a responsible Minister in the House. He considered the representatives of the people had been grossly insulted by the manner in which the business of the country had been dealt with since the House met. Members had been called down to the House, some of them from great distances, just to suit two gentlemen who wanted to shuffle the cards, and then walk out of the Ministry, and put whoever they liked in their places. They did not care twopence about the representatives of the colony who were dragged down there at great personal sacrifice of time and money. Those two gentlemen just suited their own purposes, and, because they belonged to the great Liberal party outside the House, it must be all right; but if an unfortunate squatter, or even a conservative liberal, had done the same, they should have the whole of the newspapers in the colony crying out that it was a shame, and that robbery and corruption were going on. He had always felt inclined to vote against the amendment until he heard the speeches from the other side of the House; and he then, certainly, changed his mind, although, once he had made it up, it was not very easy to make him alter it. But he thought the way in which the Government had been carrying on was a perfect insult to the House. They had been given to understand that the health of the honorable the Premier would not permit of his continuing in office, and that the honorable member for Bulimba was about to retire; and no doubt they desired to go home and air their honors won in this colony. He said, if any honorable members would consent to such insulting treatment as they had received, he hoped, after the next general election, they would not have seats in that House.

Mr. AMHURST thought, before they came to any conclusion with reference to the granting of the Supply that had been asked for, they should be enlightened as to what was to be done with it. They all knew there was to be a deficiency at the end of the financial year, and it was believed that was a reason why the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had resigned, and was going home. He should certainly like to know why that honorable gentleman had thought it necessary to retire. It was not from illness, as was the case with the honorable the Premier; and although he was glad that honorable gentleman had retired, he regretted that it should have been through illness. As a northern member, he must object to these repeated ad-

jourments. It was a great deal too much for honorable members to be brought down there to carry on the business of the session and to be met with adjournments one after another; and to show that the course now proposed was unconstitutional, he should quote from "May's Parliamentary Practice," pages 6, 754:—

"The Crown, acting with the advice of its responsible Ministers, being the executive power, is charged with the management of all the revenues of the State, and with all payments for the public service. The Crown, therefore, in the first instance, makes known to the Commons the pecuniary necessities of the Government, and the Commons grant such aids, or supplies, as are required to satisfy these demands; and provide by taxes, and by the appropriation of other sources of public income, the ways and means to meet the supplies which are granted by them. Thus, the Crown demands money, the Commons grant it, and the Lords assent to the grant; but the Commons do not vote money unless it is required by the Crown; nor impose or augment taxes unless they be necessary for meeting the supplies which they have voted, or are about to vote, and for supplying general deficiencies in the revenue. The Crown has no concern in the nature or distribution of the taxes; but the foundation of all parliamentary taxation is its necessity for the public service, as declared by the Crown through its constitutional advisers."

The Ministers who asked for this Supply were not the Ministers by whom the Queen's Speech had been brought forward, and he could assure the honorable member for Ipswich he should do his very best to oppose the granting of £100,000 to the Government until he knew how it was going to be spent.

Mr. J. SCOTT said he had always understood that the redress of grievances was one of the grounds for granting Supply, and he had a very grave charge to bring against the late Ministry, and some of the present Ministry. That was, that they had misappropriated funds that had been left in their hands for a special purpose. He referred to the money that had been set apart for the construction of a telegraph line—

The SPEAKER: I must remind honorable members that the motion before the House is not that of Supply, but the suspension of the Standing Orders. I should not have stopped the honorable member, but the same arguments may be reiterated when the next motion is brought forward.

Mr. J. SCOTT said that might be quite true, but the object of the motion was, to ultimately get Supply, and honorable members on that side of the House wished, if possible, to prevent Supply being granted; and he was stating the reasons why he opposed the granting of Supply. He did not see how he was to obtain redress of grievances if Supply were now granted. The matter he referred to was a fraud; he could call it nothing else. If such practices were allowed, it was neither more nor less than swindling, and he could have no confidence whatever in

the appropriation of any money by the present Government. He referred more particularly to the Postmaster-General, now Premier also. It was he who had committed this breach of trust, and as he was now also Minister for Works, he (Mr. Scott) could not see how he was to get any redress at all. The case was a very simple one. The money referred to was set aside for the purpose he stated, portions of it being in the Postmaster-General's department, and portion in the department of the Minister for Works. Tenders had been called for several times, and there was a difficulty in getting anyone to tender; but at last a tender was sent in, and a short time ago, when he called at the office to see why it had not been accepted, he was told that, although recommended by the Minister for Works, the Postmaster-General said the money was no longer available. That money had been spent, he had not the slightest doubt, in bribing some constituency, and he should oppose this motion as far as he possibly could.

Mr. HEMMANT considered that an unnecessary amount of indignation had been displayed by honorable members opposite, because they must be perfectly well aware that, unless by consent of a majority of the House, the Standing Orders could not be suspended at all. He was sure the present Government had no wish to press the matter. He stood there simply at their request, to propose the most convenient course to adopt according to Parliamentary practice; and he might take that opportunity of replying to a few remarks made by honorable members opposite. He should not take notice of the observations of the honorable member for Springsure, because he thought they were made at the wrong time. The Government had come down to meet Parliament, quite prepared to hear any charges made against them; and they sat there something like three nights, listening to whatever honorable members had to say against their administration of affairs during a long recess, and prepared to justify and defend their action; and he thought it was a most improper proceeding, that after they had given up the responsibilities of office, charges of this kind should be trumped up, when there was no opportunity of meeting them. He was not in a position to refer to the books of the Government to get a satisfactory answer, but he was sure if the charge had been made at the proper time, he should have been able to furnish a reply to the honorable member. With regard to the remarks of the honorable member for Bowen, as to the inconvenience and loss to which northern members would be put by a delay of six weeks, it was notorious that that honorable member never went home during the recess, and he did not think there was any necessity for bringing forward trumpery charges of that kind.

Mr. AMHURST: I do not speak for myself alone; I spoke for others.

Mr. HEMMANT said the object of the vote he had already explained. It was simply to enable the new Government to pay salaries and meet current expenditure until such time as the Financial Statement could be made and Supply passed. He admitted that there was a great deal of force in the argument of the honorable member for Port Curtis, that if a long adjournment took place, honorable members would not have an opportunity of objecting to any items in the proposed resumptions they might wish to object to. He thought, however, that an adjournment for a month or six weeks was not at all unreasonable to ask for, seeing that one member had to go to Maryborough by steamer, and could not possibly be back in less than three weeks; and it was only fair that they should have an opportunity of consulting together after their seats had been secured and before they met Parliament. With regard to the motion, seeing the view the House took of the matter, it would be useless to press it, and, with the permission of the House, he should withdraw it.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. HEMMANT said he had been given to understand by the leader of the Opposition that no objection would be offered to an adjournment to the 11th of July, which was considered the earliest time by which Ministers could take their seats in the House. Before moving the adjournment, he wished to make a personal explanation, as that was probably the last opportunity he should have of addressing the House. Honorable members would perhaps have seen in that day's issue of the leading journal some reference to the construction of one of the drains in connection with the Brisbane Drainage Act, and as the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had given notice of two questions on the subject—"Had the Government entered into a contract to construct a sewer or drain on private property at the rear of Queen street, from Creek to Albert streets? If so, when was the contract signed, and what is the contract price?"—he wished to explain, as briefly as possible, how the matter stood. When the Brisbane Drainage Bill was brought in last year it was explained by the Minister for Works that the principal object of it was to provide for carrying off the storm-waters which in former years had been the cause of great damage to property in the low-lying parts of the town; and it was hoped that by realising a fund from the sale of land—which it was thought would have realised a great deal more than it did—this very necessary work would be carried into effect, and that the initiation of what would prove a comprehensive system of drainage would be the result of the passing of the Bill. With reference to the matter in question, in con-

nection with the creek running from the old reservoir to the river, when the Engineer for Harbors and Rivers was instructed to prepare plans, the intention was to have constructed a large drain following the course of the creek; but engineering difficulties were found to be in the way, apart from the difficulties and objections which would always be found in carrying drains of any size through private property. The engineer, therefore, advised that it should be taken down Adelaide street, the next street at the rear of Queen street, but it had been found that sufficient provision had not been made for the drainage of property between Queen and Adelaide streets, and that in fact the construction of a drain merely for storm-water really made matters worse, because formerly the flood-water flushed clean through, carrying off impurities, and in a sanitary point of view a good result followed. It was therefore proposed to make an additional drain of smaller capacity from Creek street to Albert street, to carry that drainage into the main sewer. Then the question suggested by the leading journal came under the consideration of the Cabinet, having been brought under notice by himself. That was, whether the owners of property through which the culvert passed could be made to bear the cost of its construction, and it was found that there was no power in the Act to do anything of the kind. He might explain that under the Drainage Act the Government were invested with the powers of municipalities with regard to drainage, as it was not considered expedient to entrust a work of such magnitude to the Corporation to carry out. They had ascertained, however, that even if it were desirable, there was no power to make owners of private property responsible for the cost of the work. It was true the Corporation had power to take drains through private lands, and the persons through whose land drains passed had a right to claim compensation for any damage done, and if it were proved before the proper court that the damage sustained was more than covered by the benefit of drainage, they recovered no compensation whatever. But under no circumstances, was there any power to compel owners of private property to continue drains through their land at their own cost, and in fact, it would be very unreasonable to do so. The question had been referred to the Attorney-General, and his opinion was as he had just stated. He thought it advisable to furnish the honorable member with the information he had asked for, as he should not be in a position to refer to it on a future occasion, because probably he should not be in the House again. The matter, after going backward and forward between the offices of the Attorney-General and the Engineer and the Treasury, was finally settled about a fortnight ago, and he believed the cost would be about £2,000. The Government would have power to levy a special rate upon those benefited by the

construction of the drain, or the Corporation would have that power when the drain was handed over to them. He begged to move—

That this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, the 11th of July next.

The SPEAKER: I may point out that this motion is somewhat informal, inasmuch as no notice of it has been given. It can only be moved, I think, by the consent of the House.

Mr. PALMER: It is consented to, sir.

Mr. BEATTIE said, as a matter of personal explanation he wished to state, that he was quite satisfied with the answer of the honorable member for Bulimba, and it would not be necessary to go further into the matter at present. He had attained the object he had in view in giving notice of the questions.

Mr. KING said, the announcement which the honorable member for Bulimba had just made, that he was not likely to be in the House again, compelled him to rise to discuss, on the motion for adjournment, a matter of considerable personal interest to himself, although he should prefer to discuss it in another manner. It would be in the recollection of the House, that last week, on the discussion of the amendment of the honorable member for Kennedy, the honorable member for Bulimba, then Colonial Treasurer, made use, in speaking of a certain deficit or failure in the revenue, of some expressions which had been interpreted, and he thought fairly interpreted, by honorable members, as alluding to him as being the cause of that deficit. He was scarcely able to read with the light at present in the House, but he thought it was the honorable member for Port Curtis, who, following the Colonial Treasurer, asked whether he was justified in considering that the late Minister for Works was the cause of the deficiency referred to by that gentleman in his speech; and he (Mr. King) had been informed, not only in the House but out of it, that honorable members and the public had been led to believe that that interpretation was correct. He could not consent to sit down under such an imputation. He had mentioned, that when the Supplementary Estimates were before the House, he should be able to defend the course he had adopted, but he now understood that when those estimates came on the honorable member for Bulimba would not be there; and under the circumstances, if he waited for that opportunity of defending his conduct in the administration of the affairs of the Works Department, he should be told he was speaking behind the back of that honorable member. He, therefore, took this opportunity, the only one he should have, apparently, of making the statement he wished. No doubt it would be evident to everyone, that in adopting this course, he was, to a certain extent, placed at a disadvantage, as he was not answering any specific charge, but more an insinuation conveyed by the expressions of the honorable member to

whom he had referred. He thought, after the statements that had been made public, he might be allowed to say he believed that the amount of the deficit at the end of the present financial year would be something like £40,000 or £50,000. That was not a very great deficiency—

The SPEAKER: The honorable member is referring to a previous debate, and in doing so he is out of order.

Mr. KING thought he might speak on any subject on the motion for adjournment. He thought, at any rate, he was entitled to make a personal explanation if he wished to do so.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member may make a personal explanation, but he may not refer to a previous debate. It is my duty to say so, and I do so.

Mr. KING said he would not refer further to a previous debate. He believed the deficiency they expected to hear more of this year would amount to £40,000 or £50,000. That was not a serious amount, as he was about to remark. It simply meant ten days' or a fortnight's revenue of the whole colony—that they had spent, in one year, a fortnight's revenue more than they ought to have done. But he thought it was a very serious matter for one member to be charged with having been the cause of such over-expenditure, and he was about to show that he could not be fairly charged with it. There had been a statement laid before the House of an inquiry into certain over-expenditure in the office of the Engineer of Roads in the Northern district; and he thought unfair prominence had been given in the House and in the public press to a memorandum of the Colonial Treasurer—which was a mere statement of the Treasurer—in which the expenditure in the Cook district, and in connection with the Mackay Bridge, was taken into account along with the general expenditure in the Northern district. These two items not having been incurred in the previous year, it was unfair to include them in the total expenditure for the present year; and, in point of fact, if they had not been included in the lump with the other expenditure, the whole of that memorandum would have lost its point; because it would be seen that they made the expenditure in the Northern district, during the past year, about fifty per cent. higher than the previous year, and there were other districts where it had also been fifty per cent. higher than in previous years. It must also be remembered that last year there was reference made to certain balances due to the Northern district, not expended in previous years, and they were promised that that should be expended; and it was understood by northern members, and by members of the Central district, that the system of carrying over the amount voted should cease, and that the whole sum voted in one year should be expended in that year, unless

good reason were shown why it should not be expended. He might dismiss that by simply saying that the whole amount over-expended on that vote was £4,014. And that amount of unauthorised expenditure could not fairly be attributed to the Minister, because the very gist of the offence in the case referred to was that the engineer had expended money without Ministerial authority; and he was content to say, as the case had been examined by a board, that after honorable members had ascertained the merits of it by reading the papers connected with it, he should be quite willing to take any share of the blame that might attach to him in regard to the matter. There were one or two other items upon which the House would be asked to give an additional vote in connection with the Works Department when the Supplementary Estimates came on, and he might say one of those items was in connection with the Southern and Western Railway. There would be a supplementary vote of, he thought, £5,700. Of that £2,600 was in the traffic department, but as there were lapsed votes amounting to £1,900, the excessive expenditure was only £700. The excess in the engineer's department was £5,000, that amount being charged to maintenance. In referring to this, he might state that when the Estimates were being prepared last year there was a certain sum put down for the Engineering Department, and it was reduced by £5,000 by the Cabinet, who chose to strike out that amount, and say they would try and do without it. But it was found that it could not be dispensed with. When the engineer was called upon to report, he said there were a large number of renewals to be made during the year—about 6,000 sleepers and a large number of rails had to be renewed, and it was perfectly impossible to reduce the maintenance, unless he were relieved from responsibility. Under these circumstances, he and the other members of the Cabinet saw the expediency of not interfering with the engineer when he considered the road was not in a safe condition. There was one test which might be applied to the management of railways, which he was about to apply, as he had been charged impliedly, and he believed openly outside the House, with extravagance. He had in his possession a return which he could not find at the present moment, of the railway expenditure and receipts for the last four years. During 1874 the expenditure was sixty-five per cent. of the receipts; during the present financial year—from the 1st of July, 1875, to the 30th of June, 1876—he found that the amount that had been put down as the revenue of the railway, £130,000, would be realised, and in all probability more than realised. The amount of expenditure during that time would not exceed £80,000, or about 61½ per cent. of the revenue. And when it was considered that during the whole

year they had been working a considerable portion of the line at a certain disadvantage—there being a gap in the line which necessitated the maintaining of a ferry, and horses, and men, and that in consequence of this there had been no goods traffic over twenty-four miles of the line—he thought it would be acknowledged if he could show, as he could, a reduction of 3½ per cent. on the expenditure for 1874, as compared with the earnings, it was not at all bad. He should now read an extract from the *Pall Mall Budget* of March the 31st, 1876, which, quoting from the *Times*, said that by the Board of Trade returns the average expenditure on English railways in 1873 was 54 per cent., and in 1874 56 per cent., of the earnings. The lowest rate quoted was 51 per cent., on the Brighton, Great Western, and Dublin and Drogheda lines. The highest was on the London and South-western line, on which no minerals were carried, and where it was 60 per cent.; on the Lancashire and Yorkshire it was 59 per cent.; on the North-eastern, 56 per cent.; and on the Great Eastern, 57 per cent. Now if the disadvantages to which he had alluded had not existed, the expenditure on the Southern and Western line might have been reduced to about 57 per cent., which was considerably lower than some of the English railways; and when it was remembered that the expenditure had been only 61½ per cent. of the earnings, he did not think there was much in the way of extravagance to complain of. With regard to next year, the estimate he sent in before he left office—which provided for all necessary expenditure—as compared with the anticipated revenue, would show that the amount required on the Southern and Western line for that period was reduced to 53½ per cent. He was aware that he was speaking at some disadvantage, and he should not take up more of the time of the House than was absolutely necessary; and he should now proceed to show where the cause of the deficit, for which he was blamed, was really to be found. If honorable members would refer to the Estimates of last year, they would find the estimated revenue was £1,233,000; the Estimates-in-Chief amounted to £1,155,450, the Supplementary Estimates were £29,840, balances brought forward for expenditure, £63,874, and there was a census taken during the year which entailed some expense, and if he put down the moderate sum of £5,000 for that—which he believed was the amount granted on former occasions—it would make a total of £1,254,164. The estimated revenue, as he said before, was £1,233,000, thus showing an apparent deficiency of £21,164. Now, if it were supposed that they started with that deficiency and there had been a falling off in the revenue of some £20,000 more, that would show at once how the deficiency had arisen; because, although some votes on the Supplementary Esti-

mates and Estimates-in-Chief had not been expended at the present time, yet it must be evident to everyone, that the votes which lapsed could not more than cover the Supplementary Estimates for the year. There must be Supplementary Estimates, because it was impossible to foresee the necessity for some expenditure. In former years, Supplementary Estimates had been much larger than they were likely to be this year. There were two Supplementary Estimates for 1874 passed last year, amounting to £44,000, and one for the first half of 1875, amounting to £58,000. He did not believe there would be any such Supplementary Estimates brought forward this year; and he was sure if the expenditure had exceeded the revenue, it could not be charged to the fact of an over-expenditure of £4,000 in the Northern district, or to the fact of its having been found impossible to strike £5,000 off the estimate for maintenance on the Southern and Western Railway, because the expenditure on that had been very moderate during the twelve months. This deficiency was chargeable to the fact that sufficient provision had not been made to meet the expenditure of the year. If honorable members would refer to "Hansard," vol. XVIII, page 169, they would find that the honorable member for Maranoa, last year, pointed out the very same thing that he was pointing out now, that the Estimates were not sufficient to meet the current expenditure for the year. They were then told balances from previous years would be brought forward. Honorable members would remember that those balances were made a prominent feature in connection with road votes for every district of the colony. The Government came forward last year with a very insufficient vote for public roads upon the Estimates-in-Chief—£25,950 for the Moreton districts, £7,050 for the Darling Downs district, £3,900 for the Western district, £3,800 for the Wide Bay and Burnett district, £6,150 for the Central district, and £9,600 for the Northern district—and in every case the reason given for the smallness of these votes was, that they had large balances available for expenditure. He thought, under all the circumstances, he had shown that there were reasons—much better reasons for the existence of the deficit than over-expenditure in the Northern district. When the Supplementary Estimates were before the House, he had no doubt searching inquiry would be made into the items, and he should be prepared to give every information honorable members might ask. He was sorry that he should have been compelled to rise in his place and express himself as he had done. When he left office a short time ago, he hoped he should be able to leave it without recrimination of any kind on the part of his colleagues. He thought when they could not agree as to a matter of policy, each had a perfect right to go his own way. There were no reasons why either

should attack the other; and he could certainly say he had not commenced the onslaught. He defied any member of the House to say he had in any way shown a desire to annoy or harass the Government since he left them. He had objected to their policy in the House as he had done in the Cabinet, and he did not think he had expressed himself in stronger terms of discontent in the House than he did in the Cabinet. He therefore regretted that he should have been forced to defend himself from what he considered insidious attacks. He thought he might say there was, or had been an impression that the Minister for Works was, to a certain extent, to do the work of the Treasurer—that was to say that the Treasury balances were to be regulated by the Minister for Works, and if he thought it desirable, the moneys voted by the House should not be expended. He could understand that under certain circumstances a Minister for Works might be justified in holding back money voted by the House; such as in the event of some great national catastrophe, where the revenue was falling off to a large extent. In such a case as that, he could understand a Minister for Works saying he could not afford certain expenditure, in the same way that Ministers might reduce the salaries of officials. But he did not think it was the province of a Minister, under ordinary circumstances of the revenue, to say certain money voted by the House should not be spent in order to fabricate balances in the Treasury. In fact, it would be usurping the authority of the House for a Minister to do so; and one thing he wished the House to remember was, that if such a principle were allowed, it would be carried out at the expense of the outlying districts of the colony. It would be perfectly impossible for any man, sitting in his office in Brisbane, to withhold expenditure of money voted for the Southern districts, and, as a matter of course, the only expenditure that could be withheld was that for the far outside districts. Under these circumstances, he thought it would be very wrong for the House to sanction a Minister for Works deliberately withholding moneys voted. Unless for some reasons he was prepared to give to the House, he had no right to do so; and if he (Mr. King) had given the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, by spending money which the House had approved of, but which the Treasury could not conveniently spare, he could only say he had acted in accordance with his idea of his duty, and he believed he did right. As he had said before, he regretted that he should have to speak as he had done, but when the honorable the late Colonial Treasurer moved the adjournment of the House, and stated that he probably would not be there again, and as he thought it necessary to take some notice of the remarks that honorable members made on a previous occasion, he saw that if he did not take the present opportunity, he should

be charged with speaking behind his back, and he preferred saying what he had to say to his face, to letting it stand over.

Mr. FRYAR said he should not occupy the time of the House many minutes, but in justice to the late Colonial Treasurer, and also in justice to the honorable member for Ravenswood, he would endeavor to throw a glimmering ray of light upon the matter under discussion.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Divide, divide.

Mr. FRYAR: I shall not be many minutes.

Mr. PALMER: I beg to give notice that, if the honorable member goes into a debate of this kind, I shall feel entitled to reply.

Mr. AMHURST rose to a point of order. It had been ruled by the Speaker that no member could speak upon the question now raised, except by the express consent of the House. Such consent had been given to the honorable member for Ravenswood, but not to the honorable member for East Moreton.

Mr. FRYAR said honorable members need not have been so impatient at hearing him, because he had but few words to say. He could not very well go into a statement of the land administration of the past year, nor had he the slightest intention of attempting it. He still hoped, however, to have an opportunity of entering fully into the question when he was not under the necessity of consulting colleagues, as to whether it was advisable to do so or not. Honorable members would recollect that he went into office during last session, and that, although he knew perfectly well what the policy of the land administration was, yet he had no hand in framing it. He had no hand in compiling the estimates which were based upon the sales that were to take place during the year. Those estimates had been laid before the House and accepted. He might just mention *apropos* of this part of the question, that the estimate of the sale of land during the year was £30,000, but it had been stated, or at any rate he knew it from official sources, that the actual amount received during the first nine months of the year was only £9,000, and as there had been very little received during the present quarter, it was hardly probable that the total receipts for the twelve months would be more than £10,000 instead of £30,000. He made these statements in the face of the bitter accusations levelled against him for—as it had been called—rushing land into the market for sales by auction, and he asked the House, whether he had not shown that such accusations could not fairly be made against him? This would also tend to clear away some misapprehensions under which the honorable member for Ravenswood lay. That honorable member had been supposed to have caused a deficit of £40,000, and yet he (Mr. Fryar) had shown how £20,000 could be accounted for. This was all he wished to say on the present occasion; but what he had said he hoped would give honorable members an opportunity of con-

sidering that, when he had an opportunity of fairly stating the position of the land question and its administration during the past year, things would not be quite so bad as they might appear at present.

Mr. DE SARGÉ thought the honorable member should have made his explanation when he was a Minister for Lands, and when honorable members expected from him a thorough explanation of the land policy of the Government of which he was a member. The honorable member, however, merely contented himself then with a series of recriminations against the honorable member for Toowoomba; both of those honorable gentlemen seemed to have drunk of the same fountain so deeply as to have polluted themselves, while the country, or at least the House, lost at that time the full explanation which they had a right to expect at the hands of the then Minister for Lands. If any honorable member declared that Parliamentary government was a mistake, delusion, and snare, he would probably be told that he was unfit to occupy a seat in the House; but the position of affairs in the colony at the present time pointed very strongly indeed to such a conclusion. What were they promised now? In the first place, they had a retiring Ministry which had resigned, the Premier of which, when he came home, had not the courage, seeing the position of his party, to resign office at once, and save the country the enormous delay from which it was now suffering. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer implied that there was a deficit, but he seemed to have resigned before he had the opportunity of explaining the financial position of the colony, and the House was left without any responsible party to explain to the country what had been done, or what was the present situation of affairs. Now they were promised an adjournment of five weeks. A Ministry had been formed which he did not believe one sane man either in or out of the House supposed would stand a single month, or possibly a single week, of the session. He would say advisedly that he did not believe the colony of Queensland had fallen to such a pitch that it would ever consent to keep a Ministry, one of whose members had not the courage of his opinions—a Minister for Lands who could slink away without expressing his real opinions could not be worthy of holding the position of Minister. He (Mr. De Sargé) was certain that the Ministry which had that day been announced was not one which had the confidence of the country, nor one which could for a moment expect to succeed in the House. Nothing was more certain than that any man who wished to be Minister in that House must have the courage of his opinions. The House, it now appeared, was to meet again in five or six weeks' time; and then the Ministry, after testing the House, and finding themselves unable to carry on the Government,

would have recourse to a dissolution; the House would then find that the administration or mal-administration of the colony was thrown back again for some three months further. He did not hesitate to say, that it was from the gross mistake of the honorable member for Ipswich, who from his long experience should have known better; it was from the palpable political cowardice of that honorable member, that the whole colony was thrown back for three or four months. The House was now promised a Queen-street Ministry; at the same time there were a number of members who represented far distant northern constituencies. Would the honorable gentlemen forming this Ministry, and who were no doubt already revelling in their newly acquired power, place themselves for a moment in the position of those northern members, who were *bonâ fide* residents amongst their electors, who came down this session to aid in the business of the House, which seemed from the programme issued to be considerable, and who to their astonishment found they were promised no legislation at all. They must kick about their heels in town for six weeks, with a promise of three months more in the distance, before they could serve their constituents in any way. This seemed to him to be a perfect farce; and on behalf of those northern members, he must say, they had a right to expect better treatment; the whole colony was made to suffer from disgraceful procrastination, and the northern members especially had been made fools of.

MR. GRAHAM said the honorable member for Port Curtis had alluded to a rumor, which was current outside of the House, to the effect that the late Colonial Secretary, now member for Ipswich, was, by arrangement, to go home as Agent-General. He (Mr. Graham) had often read in the newspapers, and heard from various persons a high opinion expressed of the talents of the honorable member for Ipswich, and it had been urged that so tried a veteran in the House deserved some remuneration. He (Mr. Graham) quite believed that with all the honorable member's experience in politics, with all the time he had devoted to them, it had been to his own individual loss, and at no time to his gain. At the same time, he did not consider that a person who retired from politics on account of ill-health, and at an advanced age, was the man to go home and represent the colony as Agent-General after the state of things which had been exposed in the papers laid upon the table of the House. From these it was evident that it required an energetic and able man with all his wits about him—a younger and more vigorous, though it could not be said a more able, man than the honorable member—to tackle the work which an Agent-General would have to encounter. Unfortunately the House could receive no reply and no information from the other side of the House, the new Ministry being absent.

Failing that, he personally recognised the good that the honorable member for Ipswich had done as a politician for the country, but should prefer that any substantial remuneration given should be given in another way, and not at the expense of the public revenue. He (Mr. Graham) listened to the remarks of the honorable member for Ravenswood with the greatest pleasure, but must confess that he did not believe him when he said he did not expect to address the House, and that he should not have done so had he not heard that the late Colonial Treasurer would probably not address the House again. From the manner in which the honorable member had his papers all arranged and had his facts at his fingers' end, he must have had some inkling of what was coming. However, the honorable member made an excellent speech; but considering that he left office upon a disagreement with his colleagues as to how his own department should be carried on, he (Mr. Graham) should have had more faith in the speech if the honorable member had voted on the Opposition side when the honorable member for the Kennedy's amendment was disposed of the other night. With regard to the adjournment, more than ample time had been given; but he was content to do whatever the House thought best for the country. He himself was in an exceptional position, and could get down to the House easily; but it was extremely hard upon country members, who had to neglect business, and waste time, in consequence of these repeated adjournments. To perform the natural duties of his position was what every member expected, but not to have adjournment after adjournment; and, in the interests of the members who came from a distance, he would like to see the time of adjournment curtailed. The House had yet to learn what the new Ministry intended to do: whether they meant to adopt the policy of the former Ministry—who had shuffled out, in order that their successors might shuffle in—or to bring in a new policy of their own.

MR. PALMER said it was useless to prolong the discussion any longer, especially as there was not even a single representative of the late Government on the Treasury bench, and he felt it incumbent upon him to say, if indeed it was necessary to say anything about what had been discussed before—that he felt he occupied a very painful position. He believed that the Government now formed would not possess the confidence of the colony in any way; that their appointment was a gross mistake; and that if they really wished to do their duty to the country, and see legislation prospering during the session, they ought to recommend the representative of Her Majesty to dissolve the House. They would save a great deal of time, and they would decide the question whether they were or were not the men to rule the colony in the present position of parties in the House. So

far as human foresight enabled him to form an opinion, he believed that the present Ministry had no possible chance of carrying on the Government of the colony; and that no man having the good of the colony at heart, being commissioned by His Excellency to form a Cabinet, should have formed one without some possibility of carrying measures into effect. He himself could not see the slightest possibility of any Government formed under the auspices of the Postmaster-General commanding the confidence of the House. He regarded the present position of affairs in a very serious light, because the colony just now required able and statesmanlike legislation, and he could not think such a reconstruction as that which had been recently announced as approved of by His Excellency would command the favor of either the House or the colony. A Ministry to be effective, with the present position of parties, should have been formed on both sides of the House, and particularly from the cross-benches. He had often said there was no necessity for the colony to look upon the old leaders of party as the necessary leaders of Government, and he said again now that the Ministry on this occasion should have been formed principally, if not entirely, from the cross-benches. Any man taking the responsibility of forming a Ministry should very seriously consider the possibilities and practicabilities of being able to command a majority in the House; but there was no such prospect with the new Ministry. It had been, in fact, a scramble for office, and if he was any judge of the political horizon it would be a short time indeed that that Ministry would be in power. Since he last addressed the House he had agreed, on the part of the Opposition, to consent to an adjournment till the 11th July, on the express promise, however, and on the explicit understanding from the present Minister for Lands, agreed to by the Attorney-General, that the schedule of resumptions of land placed upon the table of the House should be withdrawn, and fresh ones substituted. This was a clear understanding, and he was sorry there was no one present on the part of the Government to reply to this remark, and corroborate his assertion that this was a distinct understanding, heard by others as well as himself; namely, that the schedules of resumptions were to be withdrawn. There was no difficulty in getting this promise from the present Minister for Lands, for that honorable gentleman admitted that under any circumstances he would have to withdraw the resumptions—an admission which certainly did not say much for the late Minister for Lands, who should have made the statement he had just volunteered, if at all, when he held office. The speech of the late Minister for Works would also have come much better from him when the House wanted the explanation. He (Mr. Palmer) did not see the slightest use in prolonging

the discussion, and was of opinion that it would have been better if the House had adjourned when the proposition was first made, rather than go on fighting a shadow.

Mr. MORGAN had no wish to prolong the discussion, but was in a position to state, from actual information from the Secretary for Public Lands, that in his saying he consented to the withdrawal of the resumptions, he simply meant that he did not intend in any way, nor the Government of which he was a member, to steal a march upon the House, and that he would withdraw the resumptions for the purpose of having the whole question fully discussed.

Mr. W. SCOTT said there was no explanation needed when the promise was that the whole of the resumptions should be withdrawn.

Mr. MOREHEAD said what he understood was that the Minister for Lands had undertaken that the resumptions should stand in the same position as they did at the commencement of the session—the sixty days to date from the time the House met again.

Mr. McILWRAITH had no doubt the honorable leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Lands perfectly understood each other, and there was not the slightest possibility of mistake, although the honorable member for Warwick had rather confused the House by his explanation. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had noticed that when the honorable member for Ravenswood gave his explanation, he was not considered accurate when he said he had not expected to hear that the late Colonial Treasurer did not intend to address the House again. He sympathised with the honorable member for Ravenswood, having himself heard the late Colonial Treasurer's intimation with a good deal of astonishment. It had been his belief that the honorable member would be in the House when the Treasury Statement was made, and that the House would have had the opportunity of discussing the somewhat remarkable speech made by him the other night. He wished now simply to call the attention of the House to the fact that the late Colonial Treasurer delivered that speech when most of the members on the Opposition side of the House had spoken, and when, on that account, and because of the lateness of the hour, there was no chance of replying to any of the statements advanced. The manner, too, in which the honorable gentleman had retired, as it were, in a cloud of statistics, rendered it more desirable than ever that there should be far more explanation from the late members of the Ministry than there had been. The late Minister for Works had not half explained things to the House. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer's former speech might have been taken to be an appeal to the opposite side of the House to save him from ruin through the extravagance of members on his own side; for, upon Opposition members applauding some of his remarks, he went

more into particulars, and read a statement which led to the conclusion that it was the extravagance of a Minister of the Government that had led to a deficit. He (Mr. McIlwraith) mentioned these things as a protest against the manner in which, at the time when answers were expected and explanations required, nothing was either answered or explained. Now the House heard for the first time from a late member of the Ministry, that there was to be a deficit of £40,000, and the late Minister for Works had explained that only £4,000 of this amount could be credited to his department. The explanations thus given to the House were not in any way satisfactory or to the point, for the late Colonial Treasurer had led the House to believe that the deficit rested entirely with the Works Department, and it was no excuse for the Minister of Lands to say it arose from an under-estimate with respect to the land orders. He (Mr. McIlwraith) sympathised a good deal with what had been said by the late Minister for Works, knowing, however, nothing about the correctness of the statements made, but remembering the documents quoted by the late Colonial Treasurer at a time when no honorable member on the Opposition side of the House had any opportunity of knowing what they were about. The late Minister for Lands had delivered a speech during the present sitting that he should have heard with pleasure last year, when it appeared there was a false statement of accounts brought down to the House. It was then insisted that there would be a large balance in favor of the Treasury, while honorable members on his side of the House insisted upon an actual deficit. Now that explanation was forced to be given from the late Ministers themselves, it was proved that there was a deficit, which was now attempted to be explained. Now that he saw the late Colonial Treasurer in his place, he would say that, if all his statements bore the same amount of truth as certain statistics to which some reference had been made, the House would not place much value upon them. The late Colonial Treasurer in one of his speeches said, that the action of the Government had not resulted in the driving away of labor from the colony. This was in reference to a speech made by himself (Mr. McIlwraith), and what he had said he said advisedly, and without the necessity of backing himself up with elaborate statistics from the Government offices; he knew the accusation to be the fact, and that it could not be explained away. How then was the statement met by the Colonial Treasurer? The honorable gentleman took certain arrivals and departures from the seaports, stating that there had been 823 arrivals in excess of intercolonial departures. To that statement, he (Mr. McIlwraith) would reply, that the statistics were made up to the 31st of December last, in the middle of a rush, when the unfortunate men could not get

away; the House would know what value to place upon statistics of that kind. The Colonial Treasurer entered further into detail, and speaking of a district with which he was acquainted, said that the Maryborough district was not in the condition represented by the member for Maranoa. The figures stated by the honorable gentleman showed 220 people coming in, and 231 going out of Maryborough. Now, no man who knew the Wide Bay and Burnett district required to be told that the population was not increased, but rather decreased, by the numbers of people coming into Maryborough; from whence they went over the borders, in all directions. The figures quoted by the Colonial Treasurer had nothing whatever to do with the real matter. And if, instead of bringing down statistics, which told nothing, and gave no information, he had looked at the lugubrious countenances of his own commercial travellers returning from the district, he would have found a truer index of the state of things there; and a little personal experience like that would be a hundred times better than an array of fossil statistics. The honorable member was not content to forge his statistics to answer his purpose in producing the arguments he himself wished to advance, but he had actually gone further. He (Mr. McIlwraith) scarcely knew how to describe it; but the House would remember the old adage, "It is a dirty bird that fouls its own nest;" and the course taken, by thrusting discredit on a late colleague, was a reflection not only upon himself, but the entire Ministry of which he was a member. No man who had been in the North could deny that if the late Ministry had used proper energy in carrying on their public works, much more might have been accomplished. The late Colonial Treasurer, in the course of his statistics, said that the Ministry of which the honorable member for Port Curtis was the head spent—speaking approximately—£7,000 a month while he was in power, while he (the honorable member for Maranoa) had spent £9,621, and the honorable member for Ravenswood had spent £9,563. Now, he had always given, both outside and inside the House, great credit to the Palmer Ministry for the way in which they had executed their public works; at Rockhampton, on one occasion, he said that the way in which their works were commenced and carried on was a credit to the department, while the way in which the department was maintained was a credit to the Government. What he had said publicly he would again say at the present time—namely, that to spend £7,000 a month with judgment reflected credit. When he (Mr. McIlwraith) entered office he tried to do as much to force the Northern Railway works to a successful issue as soon as possible; but there were impediments in the way, and not the least was actual want of labor. He did everything he possibly could,

advertising his requirements all over the colony, and constantly instructing the department below to send up men. But he was checked, not because he had not the money to spend, not because he had not the wish to spend it, but because he could not, try as he might, get the men to put upon the works, while had he forced the labor by a large increase of pay it would have been challenged by other portions of the colony. When his successor came in he was in a different position, for he had a plant ready at his hands; and it so happened at that time that the men were coming about actually begging for work. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had been equally correct in what he said respecting the Southern Railway; he had charged the Government with not doing what was expected of them, and what was possible for them, in regard to that scheme, and it was only on the previous day that they were turning the first sod of the extension of the railway west. He had always been of opinion that the Government were in a position to start that scheme at once and have made rapid progress by this time. What was the answer brought against this? "Why," said the late Colonial Treasurer, "we have had one of the best engineers in the colony here, and he says it is a bad thing to commence works before you are ready." That was the whole gist of the report, large portions of which were read to the House. That could never be the real reason, but the fact was the honorable gentleman found the explanation and used it. The truth was that the Government was in as good a position to commence the works last year as when they let the contract to Messrs. Overend and Company, for they had the specifications ready, and the only thing they submitted to tender was the schedule of prices without any quantities attached. He himself considered it was a most dangerous practice to submit a schedule of prices without quantities attached, and when the proper time came he would have something to say on that point, and as to the position of the Government in letting the contract. At present he would content himself with saying that from the information they had got the Government had plenty of time to complete a schedule of the whole works required for the first fifty miles of the line, and to let the work within six weeks of the House rising last year. The Colonial Treasurer himself gave an unfortunate instance of the disaster to the Government by rushing public works. When he (Mr. McIlwraith) was Minister for Works, one of the first items he put down in that office was £8,000 for a bridge over the Pioneer, and he naturally expected that the bridge would have been built by this time; he expected that the money would have been carefully spent, and that due time and caution had been observed about the whole business. Yet, the plans and specifications having been got out two years and a half ago, the late

Treasurer now came down to the House to state that they had got into difficulties; little of the bridge had been built, and even that was bungled; and this, the Colonial Treasurer said, was what was to be expected by commencing works too soon. The Colonial Treasurer flatly denied that he came down from the North with the idea that nothing but money was required to govern the country. He (Mr. McIlwraith) would not go so far as to contradict him exactly, but he knew quite well, it was the honorable gentleman's opinion that there was no political feeling in the North at the time; he had heard the honorable member expressing himself to that effect several times in the smoking room, and the honorable member had manipulated the whole of the constituencies ever since, as if he had returned impressed with the belief attributed to him. In his belief, the late Colonial Treasurer was at the bottom of the £100,000 that had just been asked for, because the honorable member admitted that they did not actually want money to the 31st July, and he was ready to consent to an adjournment till the 11th July. Why then did they want it at all? Simply, because money was power, because it was a fine thing to have, and because the honorable member knew that if the Ministry had possession of the Treasury for three months, it would make their places secure for the rest of the Parliament.

Mr. BUZACOTT said that, as a member representing a portion of the colony which seemed to be completely ignored in the Ministerial arrangements, and in the expenditure of the money placed at their disposal by the House, it would be wrong for him to consent to the adjournment, without making a few observations respecting the present position. A fortnight since, members had been brought down from their homes to hear His Excellency's Speech read at the opening of Parliament; the Speech was one of unusual length, or it at any rate embodied a great deal more than the average of such communications to Parliament, and the promises it made were generally expected to indicate what would be the programme of the session. Amongst other things, the House was told that a Bill would be introduced dealing with the whole question of Lands. Another Bill was to be introduced for reforming the Upper House; another for consolidating the laws relating to Municipal Institutions; and a variety of other important business was to be brought forward. Amongst this was the making of a railway to Stanthorpe, a bridge over the Fitzroy, and other public works. Had this Speech been brought down to indicate the policy which the Government intended to carry out, there would not perhaps have been a great deal of fault to find with it, but from what had since transpired, they now knew that the honorable the Premier and Colonial Treasurer had not the slightest idea of carrying out the programme. Those honorable gentlemen were in fact deluding the House, for they submitted

a programme which they had not the slightest idea of executing; on the contrary, it had been confessed on the other side of the House, that they even then contemplated resigning their posts. He could not help saying, that to bring forward a false programme, was to insult the House. What happened? An amendment to the Address in Reply had been rejected by 20 to 17 votes only; and the Ministry finding out the following day that the Premier was ill, because he had only a small majority, three, and a very uncertain majority at that, proceeded to reconstruct. Finding themselves unable to do that, they determined to re-form the Ministry. He should, he hoped, be the last member in the House to interfere with the prerogative of His Excellency, who of course could send for any member in the House he thought fit; but under the circumstances, it was remarkable if, as the Premier said, no advice was given to His Excellency that he should send for the senior member of the retiring administration. He (Mr. Buzacott) thought there was no precedent in any other colony for a Premier sitting in the Upper House. While heartily approving of what the honorable member for Port Curtis had said, he must point out that this Ministry had been formed out of the personal friends and adherents of the retiring Treasurer, and that they were consequently bound to carry out the policy indicated in his speech. To say, as had been said, that the new Ministry could not be held responsible for the acts of their predecessors, was a proposition he hoped no one would be found to agree with. What became of responsibility at all, if a Premier could retire on the ground of illness and a new Ministry could be formed at his call that would repudiate all the acts of its predecessors? He must say he did not see why members should be brought down five hundred or a thousand miles to be simply humbugged. In such case honorable members had no power, as representatives of the Government could quietly slide out, introduce their friends and adherents, and then send them home for five weeks again. The honorable member for Port Curtis had said he should like to see a Ministry formed from the cross-benches; for himself, he did not believe that a Ministry so formed could stand for an hour; he thought the only member of the House fit to take charge of any Ministry was the honorable member for Port Curtis himself.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he could say more than that, namely, that there was no honorable member on that side of the House who would consent to support any Ministry that would be formed without the honorable member; there was on that side of the House so much admiration and loyalty for him that they would refuse support to any Ministry in which, so long as he was recognised leader of

the Opposition, he was not asked to take a leading position. The honorable the late Colonial Treasurer said it was not fair to bring charges against the Ministry after they had retired; why did they not defend themselves when they were in office? Why, charge after charge was hurled against the members of the Treasury bench the other evening, and they neither admitted nor denied the accusations. True, the Colonial Treasurer said the charge he (Mr. Buzacott) had brought was the most insulting he had ever heard. No doubt it was an insult, if it was true.

Mr. HEMMANT: It was not true.

Mr. BUZACOTT: It was true.

Mr. HEMMANT: I say it was insulting.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he did not wish to express any opinion upon the new Ministry, as it was called, the reconstructed Ministry as he called it. He should have abundant opportunity of dealing with them, but he could not help thinking with the honorable member for Port Curtis that the Premier had made a very serious mistake in the formation of his Ministry. There was no knowing what might have happened to the Premier since he was transferred to the purer and calmer atmosphere of the Upper House; but when he was a member of the Legislative Assembly he did not occupy a very high position, certainly not such a position as would induce anyone to consider him fit to be the leader of this House: therefore, he held that when the honorable gentleman took upon himself the tremendous responsibility of stepping in at the present time to form a Ministry which the people of the country believed could not stand, he showed that he was quite as indiscreet now as he was when he occupied a seat in that House. With regard to the honorable member for Maryborough and his connection with the new Ministry, that honorable member had in one of his speeches during the late debate said that he thought there were honorable members on either side of the House, exclusive of the present administration, who could form a stable administration, who would carry out a series of progressive public works, and of whom he would be glad to see a Ministry formed; yet that very gentleman had immediately gone in to form one of the new Ministry. There was really much inconsistency about that honorable member. Why he had even spoken in favor of the amendment of the honorable member for Kennedy, had condemned the past actions and policy of the late Government, and had gone so far as to say that had not the amendment been moved, he should have been inclined to move it; and yet when a division was taken, he had not the courage to vote for the amendment, but left the House. It was of no use to dwell further upon those matters, but he should take an early opportunity after the adjournment of letting the new administration know what he and his constituents thought of them. It was a pitiful thing that the combination under which the business of the

country was to be carried on should have degenerated into a Brisbane clique. There was no doubt that it was a purely Brisbane Ministry, for even the honorable member for Maryborough was a resident of Brisbane, and, as he himself had admitted, had no interests in Maryborough. What could the people in the outside districts expect from such a Ministry, the members of which had no interests beyond those of Brisbane? How could a Ministry of that kind stand? Why, they did not even know the geography of the colony, one of them having actually issued passes to Dalby to assist persons on their way to New South Wales. He thought the present was an occasion when members representing distant constituencies should speak out and protest against such a state of things. Supposing, after the loss of time that would be incurred by the recent change, the new Ministers, on coming back, should find that they did not possess the confidence of the House, what would happen?

Mr. HERMANT: Send for you.

Mr. BUZACOTT: Well, if he was sent for—and such a thing was not impossible—he hoped that when it was his time to retire from office he would do so with more credit to himself than the honorable member had done, and not run away from a deficit. That honorable member knew that he had been carrying on the Government extravagantly, and that he would have been compelled to retire from the Ministry on the disclosure of his extravagance, and so, like a wise man, he said, “I will retreat whilst I have the chance.” He thought that after the people had had time to deliberate upon the aspect of public affairs, and the constitution of the new Ministry, they would arrive at the conclusion that it was utterly unable to take charge of the affairs of the colony.

Mr. MOREHEAD thought that before the question was put, the least the ex-Colonial Treasurer could do was to take farewell of them, and say, “Bless you, bless you, my children.”—

The SPEAKER: The honorable member has already spoken.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I have said, sir, all I wished to say.

The question was put and passed.