

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 11 JULY 1876**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 11 July, 1876.

Vacancies during the Adjournment.—New Members.—  
Adjournment.—Ministerial Explanation.

## VACANCIES DURING THE ADJOURNMENT.

The **SPEAKER** reported that, in pursuance of resolutions come to on the 7th of June last, by which certain seats in that House were declared vacant, he had issued his writs for the election of members to serve respectively for the electoral districts concerned; and that the said writs had been duly returned to him, with certificates respectively endorsed thereon, of the return of the following gentlemen, namely:—

1. The Honorable Robert Muter Stewart, Esquire, for the Electoral District of Brisbane.
2. The Honorable John Douglas, Esquire, for the Electoral District of Maryborough.
3. The Honorable Samuel Walker Griffith, Esquire, for the Electoral District of Oxley.
4. The Honorable James Robert Dickson, Esquire, for the Electoral District of Enoggera.

The **SPEAKER** further reported that, during the adjournment of the House, the following vacancies had occurred, namely:—

1. By the resignation of the Honorable Arthur Macalister, C.M.G., Member for the Electoral District of Ipswich.
2. By the resignation of James Augustus Parker, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Burke.
3. By the resignation of William Hemmant, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Bulimba.

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

1. The Honorable George Thorn, Esquire, for the Electoral District of Ipswich.
2. James Johnston, Esquire, for the Electoral District of Bulimba.

The **SPEAKER** also reported that he had received the writ issued for the election of a member to serve in that House for the new electoral district of Cook, with a certificate endorsed thereon, of the election of William Edward Murphy, Esquire.

## NEW MEMBERS.

The following members having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took their seats respectively for the electorates set against their names, viz.:—The Honorable George Thorn, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Ipswich; the Honorable Robert Muter Stewart, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Brisbane; the Honorable James Robert Dickson, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Enoggera; the Honorable Samuel Walker Griffith, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Oxley; the Honorable John Douglas, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Maryborough; James Johnston, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Bulimba; William Edward Murphy, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Cook.

## ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. **MURPHY** said he rose to move the adjournment of the House, for the purpose of calling the attention of the Government to certain matters of importance connected with the district which he had the honor to represent. The first to which he would refer seemed to him to be of great importance, as there were at the present time a large number of persons constantly travelling between Townsville and Cooktown, and more immediately between Cardwell and Cooktown, and owing to the absence of proper coast lights, those persons were exposed to much danger. He might mention that when he was travelling recently to Cooktown, by the "Florence Irving," the captain of the steamer had to anchor at night, fearing that if he went on an accident would happen, owing to the want of lights on several small islands, which were, as a rule, not more than ten feet above the water. He thought that, as there were a good many steamers passing that part of the coast, unless some lights were placed upon those islands, and some greater facilities were given to navigators than at present existed, an accident would happen which would cause the Government to regret that nothing had been

done. Another matter to which he would refer, was the necessity for improving the roads between Cooktown and the Palmer, and pushing on public works in the district of Cooktown. That district had recently risen with great rapidity into a place of very great importance, and he might say that Cooktown was the finest port between itself and Brisbane; there was no port between the two places equal to it. That being so, he thought there was some reason for complaint of the delay in carrying on public works. There was also another matter particularly affecting that part of the country, and that was the Chinese question. Unless something was done speedily that district would be overrun with the Chinese, and so much so that if a person was dropped down in it he would be led to imagine that he was in some portion of the dominions of the Emperor of China, as there were about three Chinamen to one European. There were some seven thousand Chinese on the Palmer gold fields at the present time, and, although he did not wish to say anything against those people, it was a well-known fact that they never prospected for gold, but only took advantage of the discoveries made by Europeans and benefited by them. Then, again, the whole machinery of the law had to be put into operation to protect those men, whilst they, contributing in the aggregate very little to the revenue, tried to evade payment of their licenses. That was shown by the fact that whereas only £4,500 had been paid for license fees last year, there should have been considerably more, considering there was a population of nearly eight thousand Chinese. It was absolutely necessary that the Government should take some steps to prevent the present tremendous influx of Chinese—and the Government had the power to do so—as it was well known that those people only came to Queensland for the purpose of extracting the gold, and not with the intention of settling in the colony; all they cared to do was to extract gold as quickly as possible and then to return to their own country. As he said before, the Government had the power to prevent those people from inundating the land. He believed that the issue of miners' rights was a matter at the discretion of the Government, as they need not give them to any man; and if they took steps to inquire into the question by taking the reports of their Commissioners—of Mr. St. George, for instance, who was an excellent officer—as to the state of matters on the gold fields in connection with the Chinese, and if they thought that the time had arrived for checking the introduction of those people, they could effect that object by stopping the issue of miners' rights to them, or they could levy upon them some large charge, such as £5 or £10 a head, to make them recoup the great expenditure incurred in protecting them. They were people who did no good to the country or the community, and who endeavored to evade the payment of their miners' rights in every possible way, and therefore he con-

sidered it was the duty of the Government to take some decided steps to stop their influx, either by the absolute withholding of miners' rights to them, or by the imposition of some charge such as he had mentioned. As he understood, those men were not working on their own account but for others who employed them—in fact they were the serfs of others; he believed they were really representing large employers of labor in Calcutta, so that something should be done which would not press unfairly upon the Chinese themselves. There was another matter known to the Government, and that was the large revenue derived from Cooktown. Last year, he believed, it was about £80,000, so that what he had asked for it was not out of place. He had been told by the honorable Minister for Works that £1,000 would be placed on the Estimates for making the main street of Cooktown, but he would point out that the position of that place was different from that of other rising townships which had sprung up of late years, as the Government had retained for themselves all the water frontage, and were thus in the position of large landlords holding that valuable property; so that if the place was improved by the land being reclaimed and the roads made, there would be a larger return to the Government. None of the wharfage land was alienated from the Government, and there was already a considerable revenue derived from it, so that when he asked for money to be expended on two miles of streets he was not asking for anything out of the way. Business premises were being put up, and altogether the place showed the powerful effect of the discovery of gold. As honorable members were perhaps aware, Cooktown only formed a portion of one large belt of country in which gold had been discovered; and seeing there was such country, and being made acquainted with the circumstances connected with it, he had not thought it out of place to call the attention of the Government to the state of matters in the district he more especially represented.

Mr. BAILEY said he took the earliest opportunity of requesting the attention of the Government to the unfortunate state of affairs in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts. If he called it unfortunate, it was because those districts were so situated geographically, belonging neither to the northern or southern divisions, that they had never received any attention from the hands of any political party. It was for the reason that they had been so totally neglected that he now wished to draw the attention of the Government to them. He might say that at no time had the members representing those districts refrained from assisting other members in obtaining the means to develop the resources of other parts of the colony; they had always done so, and had been told that they would be assisted in their turn when their time came. Their time had come when the Gympie gold field was discovered, and if it had come then, much more had it done so

when the important mineral districts were opened in the Wide Bay and Burnett, where there was hardly a mineral which had not been discovered—gold, silver, iron, copper, lead, and other minerals; the only difficulty in working them being the want of roads or railways to convey the ore to the port. The late Government had given pledges that there should be railway communication to the port, but he need hardly remind honorable members how those pledges had been broken. He might also say that not only had those minerals been found, but there had been extensive coal fields discovered, so that no one could say that the means of working the minerals were not to be found. He believed the honorable Minister for Lands would say that his constituents were willing to wait a little longer, and he (Mr. Bailey) had vainly endeavored to find out why they were willing to do so—in fact, it was only a few days ago that he had made a discovery which threw some light on the subject. In the country district near Maryborough, there had been lately a small brass band, the favorite tune of which was, "Sweet bye and bye." The people of Maryborough were very much delighted with that tune, they were, in fact, enraptured with it, and the band was constantly playing it. So much so that when the honorable Minister for Lands went to Maryborough the band was playing that tune, and, whenever he was told of the badness of the roads, of the destitution of the newly arrived immigrants, of the want of attention to the district by the Government, and of the necessities of the district generally, the answer was, "Sweet bye and bye." He was afraid the Government would always sing "Sweet bye and bye," but before they did so, he hoped they would take the wants of his district into their consideration, and do something for it—that they would not put it off till next year or the year after, or until the Greek Kalends, but do what was required at once, for if a thing was quickly done, it was twice done —

Mr. BELL said he was very reluctant to interrupt the honorable member, but he would ask whether it would not be more in accordance with good taste, and with the feelings of that Assembly, if the honorable member would postpone any further remarks he had to make until they had heard the Ministerial explanation? The honorable member was not a new member like the honorable member for Cook, who had just addressed the House, and for whom there was some excuse, and, therefore, he would put it to him, whether he should not accept his suggestion. He was quite aware that he could not stop the honorable member, but he would point out that if he persisted in going on other honorable members might do the same.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. BAILEY said he had taken that opportunity, because he wanted to precede the Ministerial explanation—because he wanted

the Ministerial statement that was to come, not to be that which it was intended should be made.

The SPEAKER said he would put it to the good taste of the honorable member for Wide Bay, whether it would not be better in deference to the wishes of the House to postpone his remarks for some other opportunity.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that to prevent making a similar motion at a later period of the evening, and with the view to facilitate the progress of business, he wished to make a few remarks —

The SPEAKER said he thought the honorable member should not do so, seeing that the honorable member for Wide Bay, who was in possession of the floor, had closed his remarks in deference to the wish of the House.

Mr. McILWRAITH said, he thought the honorable Speaker misunderstood him. The motion before the House was for its adjournment, and he had merely wished to bring forward a matter which was almost one of privilege, in order to prevent moving a similar motion at a later period. It was a case entirely different from that of the honorable member for Wide Bay, for he was perfectly well aware that the present was not the proper time for bringing forward a matter of Ministerial policy. What he wished to refer to was a report of a speech made by the honorable Minister for Lands before his constituents at Maryborough, on June 19th. He was of opinion himself, from the way in which such matters had been treated by the late Government, that it was not usual for them to give any explanations as to why one gentleman had left the Government and another had joined; in fact, Mr. Macalister used to be as curt as possible, simply stating that one gentleman had retired from the Ministry and that another had joined it. He believed that there was a proper mode in which an explanation should be made—namely, by the gentleman who had been displaced. There had been no explanation made by the present Ministers, excepting by the honorable Minister for Lands—for the Premier had not thought fit to make any. Now, his object in rising was to contradict, in very strong terms, the statements which had been made by the honorable Minister for Lands as to negotiations having taken place between himself and the honorable member at the head of the Government. He intended to deny the correctness of the explanation of what had taken place between himself and the honorable Premier, and in doing so would give that honorable gentleman an opportunity of telling the House what had taken place. The honorable Minister for Lands said—

"He had hoped also that Mr. McIlwraith would have been included, who, in his opinion, would have added largely to the strength and stability of any Ministry. He saw no just reason why Mr. King and Mr. McIlwraith should not work harmoniously

together. Mr. Thorn had informed him that both had been asked to join, and he, himself, in consultation, had urged him to secure the services of both these gentlemen. Mr. McIlwraith declined, not as he believed from any personal objection, but from a sense of loyalty to his party. He had made it a necessary condition to couple with him Mr. Palmer in the position of Prime Minister. Of course such a condition could not be accepted, it would not have been acceptable to the party, nor he believed to the people they represented; it was not, therefore, possible to accept Mr. McIlwraith."

Now, all that statement was a very incorrect account of what had taken place, and he had reason to make those remarks, so that when the honorable member at the head of the Government addressed the House, he might give the proper construction of what had transpired.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### MINISTERIAL EXPLANATION.

The PREMIER said he had a few observations to make before he proceeded to acquaint the House with the policy of the Government. First of all he would refer to the remarks which had been made by the honorable member for Cook and the honorable member for Wide Bay as to certain grievances, and he thought he might assure those honorable members that they would be perfectly satisfied when the various Bills and the Estimates of the Government were laid on the table.

Mr. IVORY: Oh, oh.

The PREMIER said that with regard to the statement of what had taken place between the honorable member for Maranoa and himself, so far as he could recollect, the version given by the honorable Minister for Lands was substantially correct, especially the former part of it. Now, in regard to his own position in the House that day, he might state at the outset that he had had no inclination whatever to go to that House—he would rather have remained in the Legislative Council, and would much have preferred if the mantle had fallen upon some other gentleman.

Mr. PETTIGREW: Hear, hear.

The PREMIER continued to say that when His Excellency the Governor asked him to form an administration he hesitated for a considerable time before consenting to do so, but at last he thought that as the ball was at his feet he ought to kick it, or else some honorable member from the other side of the House might have stepped in, and he would have ever afterwards been branded as a traitor to his party if he had allowed the opportunity to pass. With regard to what had taken place in that chamber when he was not a member of it, in reference to the Agent-Generalship, he must say that he had been both pained and grieved that honorable members opposite should have made use of such strong language towards the late honorable member,

Mr. Macalister. He had expected rather that they would have come down with a vote of thanks to that honorable gentleman for the services which he had rendered to the colony. The honorable gentleman had been a member of that House for a period of nearly seventeen years; had been three times Premier and Vice-President of the Executive Council, and had once occupied the very honorable and dignified position of Speaker of that House. The honorable gentleman had also been instrumental in the construction of many of the most important public works, notably railways, and he questioned very much if it had not been for Mr. Macalister, whether railways would have been started even at the present time. With reference to the appointment of Agent-General he might state at once that Mr. Macalister had never asked him for the office, but it was given to him as a voluntary act on the part of the Government. Whilst Mr. Macalister was in England he did his work well, and it was thought that it was only right that he should remain there longer; find out what was bad in the system and remedy it. He considered that the honorable gentleman was the right man in the right place. He had been grieved to see that the honorable member for Port Curtis had got up in the House and stated that if he returned to office he should make the office of Agent-General a political one. He thought the honorable member was too much of an Englishman to advocate the American system in this colony—that when the Government resigned all the Civil officers should follow. The honorable member had certainly attacked Mr. Macalister in a most cowardly manner; and at the same time no one knew better than that honorable gentleman did, how badly the system of political appointments worked in the United States. There were many precedents for the appointment of Mr. Macalister. He would point out for instance that in England when Lord Mayo was appointed Governor-General of India, his appointment, if he recollected rightly, gave great dissatisfaction, not merely to the Liberal party but also to many conservatives. But had Mr. Gladstone, when he went into office, removed Lord Mayo? No; on the contrary, he commended Lord Mayo for the able manner in which he had discharged his duties during his tenure of office, and stated that there had never been his equal sent from England. Then again with Lord Northbrook's appointment, had Mr. Disraeli, when he took office the last time, dismissed him? He had not, but he raised that gentleman from the rank of a Lord to that of an Earl for the services he had performed in India. He would go to the Judges in England; he recollected when the Judges were appointed to try election petitions—they were appointed by Mr. Gladstone: yet he found—and he had read almost every election case—that although they were appointed by the Liberal party they had upset the return of as many liberals as they had conservatives. He mentioned that to show that people might act impartially and

fairly no matter from what side of the House they were appointed; and he had no doubt that Mr. Macalister would perform his duties faithfully and with justice to all and to the benefit of the country. With regard to the policy of the Government, he thought it would be found to be a very good one. First, as to the railway policy—and he would commence by stating that a portion of the press was under the impression that the railway policy of the Government was to be a standstill policy; they forgot that at the present time there were two lines of railway in course of construction—that in a few weeks the Great Northern line would be opened to Dingo, or ninety miles from Rockhampton, and that the line from Dalby to Roma was being pushed on as rapidly as possible. There would be some difficulty in starting any further railway lines out of loan, as owing to the system of separate electorates, no one district would be satisfied unless it had a railway of its own, and the result would be that no railways would be made at all unless the Government went into a grand system of log-rolling, in which case they would have to resort to increased taxation. Now, the Government proposed to bring in a Railway Reserves Bill, similar to the Western Railway Bill, which would make extensive railway reserves in different parts of the country: for instance, there would be reservations on the Darling Downs; in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts; in the great central district extending westward from Lurline; and also in the Kennedy district. When that Bill passed both Houses, the Government proposed to give each district a good round sum to start their railways, in the same way as had been done in regard to the Western Railway. That was their general railway policy; and they also intended to appoint an engineer-in-chief, who, he thought, should be appointed by Act of Parliament, and not by any Government. If there had been an engineer-in-chief not at the beck of the Ministry of the day the probability was that they would have had the Ipswich and Brisbane Railway constructed for £200,000 less than it cost. It was said at first that it would cost £8,000 a mile, but instead of that the price had mounted up to £21,000 a mile, owing to the deviations which had been made from the original plans, and because the engineer-in-chief had not his duties properly defined, and was not his own master. With regard to the land policy of the Government he might state for the information of honorable members that they proposed to bring in two Bills, one dealing with the ten years' leases, which would be sold by auction, subject to alienation, and the other a very comprehensive Bill, which he was quite satisfied would meet with the approbation of all true colonists; it would abolish classification and preserve the present system of homesteads; at the same time on the Darling Downs no land was to be selected except as

homesteads. The Bill would also recognise the various circumstances of the different parts of the colony with the view of meeting them all; and so far as he knew it would be applicable to all parties and to all parts of the colony. Another Bill the Government proposed to bring in would be the District and Shire Councils Bill. No one would, he thought, deny that the people outside should have the right of expending their own money, as they knew best how to expend it more economically, especially in distant parts of the colony some hundreds of miles from the seat of Government. Of course all expenditure would be under the supervision of a Government engineer. The district councils would have the expenditure of the money voted by Parliament, and the shire councils would also have the spending of whatever was voted by Parliament; but in addition to that, they would be an elective body, the same as a municipal council, consisting of five members. For the first five years they would have a sum equal to double what they raised in rates, and ever afterwards a like sum to what they raised. The Government also proposed to meet the large influx of Chinese to the colony by bringing in a Bill amending the Gold Fields Act, and placing a higher rate on business and mining licenses issued to Asiatics coming into the colony. There would also be a Bill introduced providing for the payment of the expenses of members of that House; it was proposed to allow eighteen pence a mile for travelling expenses, also steamboat fare, and a guinea a day whilst a member was from home. At present many persons could not afford to become members of Parliament if they lived a long distance from Brisbane, and even at the present time the Burke district was unrepresented. He need hardly say that this colony was very different from New South Wales and Victoria in that respect, as in those colonies the seat of Government was more central. In New South Wales a member could easily and cheaply get to the House in two days, and in Victoria in one day, but in Queensland, owing to the great extent of sea-board, there was a very much greater distance to travel. He contended that to have proper representation it was necessary that some allowance should be given to those members coming from a distance. It would be observed that they did not propose to pay the Brisbane or Ipswich members, but supposing the Ipswich members were detained in town, and were not able to reach their homes, which he hoped would not often be the case, they would be paid a guinea a day. He thought that was a measure which would also meet with the approval of the House. The Government also proposed to introduce a Bill to amend the Polynesian Laborers Act. Almost every one must be aware that great abuses had crept into the working of that Act, especially in the northern parts of the colony, and it had come to the

knowledge of the Government that cases had occurred where islanders had served one, two, and some nearly three years, and at the last moment mortgagees stepped in, and those men received no pay, and had no means of getting back to their own country. The Government proposed, in the Bill referred to, that before an islander was allowed to land from the ship, his employer should pay the price of his passage back to his island to the Government Agent, and that in the event of an islander dying, the amount should be refunded to his employer, provided he proved that during the time the islander was in his service, he had received every attention, and medical comforts; failing that, the money would not be returned. The Bill would also provide that islanders should not be employed away from the coast districts of the colony, and that their wages should be paid into the Savings Bank quarterly. It was never intended that these men should be employed in the far interior, but the Bill would provide that in special cases the Colonial Secretary might give leave for them to be employed beyond the limits proposed to be fixed by it; but those cases, he thought, would be very few and exceptional. One reason why they should not be employed outside the coast districts was, that when they were taken into the interior, they were unable to obtain the vegetable diet to which they had been accustomed in their own country, and the result was, that they died off, as the saying was, "like rotten sheep;" and this, in most cases, happened just about the time when they should return home. The Government also proposed to bring in a Bill dealing with the volunteers, in reference to which subject he observed that the honorable member for Port Curtis had given notice of a question. He (the Premier) had always been a strong advocate of the volunteer movement, and he considered it would be a great saving to the colony if they were to abolish the land-order system in connection with it. He was happy to say that he did not believe the volunteers served for any love of lucre, but from a patriotic spirit; and so far as he understood they were anxious that the land orders should be done away with. And he thought it was a lucky thing for this colony that at the present time there was not general free selection in it, because otherwise they should probably have to pay an enormous amount in connection with these land orders. He might say that in New South Wales, where there was general free selection, a fifty-acre land order was sold for something like £150, and the Government of that colony now proposed to buy them all up and saddle the country with an expenditure of £300,000 for that purpose. He thought it was high time they should take this matter into consideration, because by doing so at once they would incur an expense of only £3,000 or £4,000 a-year for capitation allowance under the proposed Bill, instead

of perhaps £30,000 or £40,000 per annum if the present system were continued and the number of volunteers was largely increased. Another Bill the Government proposed to introduce was one providing for the appointment of a Minister of Justice. That was in connection with the department of his honorable friend the Attorney-General, and it would make the office of Solicitor-General non-political, and the Minister for Justice would have a seat in that House. There were several other Bills which the Government proposed to introduce on which it was unnecessary to descant at the present time. He thought he had now in the main given the policy of the Government. He might, however, mention another matter which he had forgotten to refer to before. In consequence of the extraordinary season they had lately experienced, the roads in all directions were frightfully cut up. That period of the year was generally dry; but during the last two months, May and June, they had had more wet than during any similar time within his recollection. The roads were consequently in a wretched condition, and as settlement was taking place in all directions, the Government proposed—with a view to placing them in proper order, before the Shire and District Councils Bill became law—to ask for a loan of £100,000, and it would be found when the matter was brought forward, that all parts of the colony would receive a fair share of the expenditure. That, he felt certain, would also meet with universal approval. He did not think it necessary to say anything more. He hoped the several measures he had alluded to would become law before long. He might say further that if they were allowed to carry through this session, the Government proposed to meet the House very early next year—in January or February—at any rate at a very early date, and probably they would then be in a position, as he hoped they should, to go in for a system of cheap railways in the farming districts of the colony. They would then be in possession of valuable information on the subject from Mr. Mackay and others, and be able to bring in a comprehensive system of cheap railways in all parts of the colony. There could be no doubt that railroads were far cheaper than macadamised roads if they could be constructed at £1,500 or £2,000 per mile, and he believed they could be constructed for the latter amount, but the difficulty was in starting them. If they started one in one district every other district would also want a cheap line; consequently there was no chance of carrying out a cheap railway system at the present time.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he understood there was no motion before the House, but he thought it was usual on such occasions for an honorable member who was interested to make some remarks in connection with what had been announced by the Ministry. He therefore took that opportunity of referring

to the matter he brought before the House at an earlier part of the evening. He had not the slightest intention of making any remarks with regard to the policy enunciated by the honorable the Premier, but he would take steps for dealing with that in a more formal manner at a later period. He wished simply to refer to the explanation that was fathered now by the honorable the Premier, and that had been given by the honorable the Minister for Lands, at Maryborough, as to what took place between the honorable the Premier and himself. He always believed that the honorable the Minister for Lands stated exactly what the Premier had told him; and now the Premier actually claimed the statement referred to as having been authorised by him and as being correct. It was very difficult to draw the line as to what was a confidential and a non-confidential statement; but if the Premier chose to give a garbled statement to the public—for it must now be considered as his—of what took place between them, he (Mr. McIlwraith) felt called upon in his own defence to state what actually did take place.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. McILWRAITH said: There could be nothing farther from the truth than the latter part of the statement:—

“Mr. McIlwraith declined, not, as he believed from any personal objection, but from a sense of loyalty to his party. He had made it a necessary condition to couple with him Mr. Palmer in the position of Prime Minister.”

Now, he wished to refer as little as possible to the details.

THE PREMIER: That is not all.

MR. McILWRAITH: The honorable the Premier had interrupted him, and if he had anything to say, he (Mr. McIlwraith) would give him an opportunity of saying it now. He did not see why the honorable the Attorney-General and the Premier should consult together and interrupt him in his remarks, unless they had something to say referring to the point before the House. It would be painful to him to state, and he knew it would be painful to many honorable members to listen to all the details of what actually did take place between the honorable the Premier and himself, and he had not the slightest intention of doing so; but in order to show that the statement made was not a proper construction to put upon the conclusion they came to, he must necessarily refer to some details. The honorable the Premier first approached him by deputy; he sent a friend of his out to see on what terms he (Mr. McIlwraith) would be likely to join him in forming a Ministry of which he would be Premier. That he (Mr. McIlwraith) considered a confidential communication—what passed between that gentleman and himself—and he should still consider it so, had he not been told that it had been repeated to others. Now, what proposal did that gentleman put before him? He asked him if he

would join Mr. Thorn as a stop-gap until Mr. Palmer's time should come round to lead the colony—would he consent to join Mr. Thorn in any capacity—because it was left to him to choose what position he thought fit. It was represented to him that the time was certainly not far off when the honorable member for Port Curtis must again come to the front; and he was asked, would he consent to join the present Premier until that time arrived? Now, although he had got some temper, there was too much humor in the idea altogether for him to feel annoyed, but there could be no doubt in the mind of any man as to what the natural result would be when a proposal of that kind was made to him. It was simply that he refused to see Mr. Thorn at all, and he said he would not see him. However, Mr. Thorn came out to him, and the first proposition he put before him as a reason why he should join him in forming a Ministry, was, “You know I can work perfectly well with the Opposition.” What was his (Mr. McIlwraith's) reply to that? It was, “Well, if you can work with the Opposition, the proper gentleman to consult with as to the formation of a Ministry is Mr. Palmer, the leader of the Opposition; go to him.” Then what did Mr. Thorn say? He said, “Mr. Palmer would not work under me.” He (Mr. McIlwraith) said nothing, but he remembered that his eyes danced in his head, and he was sure his mouth opened very wide at such a remark; but he was perfectly satisfied he did not reply. That was what the honorable the Premier had twisted into the statement that he (Mr. McIlwraith) would not join the Ministry except on the condition that the honorable member for Port Curtis should be leader. That was the only thing during the conversation that he could possibly have referred to. There were a great many other ludicrous views that the honorable the Premier put before him, which were thoroughly discussed, but it came at last to the point arrived at; and it was not, as it had been rather wrongly put by the honorable member for Maryborough to his constituents, that they could not accept him (Mr. McIlwraith), but that he would not join them. It was represented that the Government would not have him, but the fact was quite the other way. He thought he need scarcely call the attention of the House to the motive—which was quite plain—that must have actuated the Ministry in making that representation. It could be nothing else than to improve their own position, and to damage his; but he had shown the statement was very far from what actually took place. He believed no one knew that better than the honorable the Premier himself, and he (Mr. McIlwraith) should have been very glad if that honorable member had gone fully into the matter. He thought it was a thing they were entitled to expect from that honorable gentleman if he considered it necessary—and

he must have considered it necessary before he gave leave to one of his subordinate Ministers to state the facts to his constituents—that the public should know exactly what took place. He ought to have told them why, in the first place, he considered it necessary to act by deputy, and then he should have come forward and stated plainly, and in a manly way, what actually occurred between them. With regard to the negotiations they had by deputy, as he said before, he should have treated that as a confidential communication, had it not been expressed distinctly to several members—two members, at all events—of that House by the same gentleman himself, and it was, therefore, not a confidential communication which should not be divulged. These remarks were simply personal, and had been called forth by the garbled explanation given by the honorable the Minister for Lands. If he were in order, he now wished to give notice of motion for to-morrow, in order to give honorable members an opportunity of discussing the policy now enunciated. The notice was—

That Ministers do not possess the confidence of this House necessary to enable them to carry measures of importance to the public welfare.

Mr. KING said he did not intend to advert to the subject the honorable member for Maranoa had alluded to, nor to the explanation which the honorable member at the head of the Government had given, but there was one subject to which he might be allowed to refer—in fact, as a matter of privilege—

The SPEAKER: There is no question before the House, at this moment. A Ministerial statement has been made, and, as is the usual practice, it has been answered by a prominent member on the other side, and since then notice of motion for to-morrow has been given. If, however, the honorable member concludes with a motion, of course, he will be in order.

Mr. KING said he would conclude with a motion. The point to which he wished to draw the attention of the House was, that the honorable the Premier, in making his Ministerial statement, omitted to refer—as he (Mr. King) thought he should have done—to a very material feature connected with the Government. He thought the House should have been informed about the unusual step taken in appointing a member of the Upper House to the office of Premier. He believed the members of the Assembly in this colony had been accustomed to consider it as a privilege that the leader of the Ministry should be a member of that House. He was aware that, by the Constitution Act, it was not absolutely necessary that that should be the case, and, although in England, as they all knew, the Premier had in such cases been a member of the House of Lords, there was no analogy between the position of the House of Lords under the English constitution and the position of the Legislative Council in this colony. And he thought that Assembly

had a right to assert their position by making a protest against innovations of the kind he referred to. It might be the case that, when the present Premier accepted the task of forming a Government, although he was then a member of the Legislative Council, he intended to become a member of that House, and informed His Excellency the Governor to that effect. If he did so, that would so far justify the proceeding; and, with a view to preserving the privileges of that House, he thought they were entitled to have it placed upon record—or, at all events, they should know whether, at the time the honorable member for Ipswich was called upon to form a Ministry, he intended to come into that House, or whether an innovation had been introduced by placing the leadership of the Government in the hands of a member of the Legislative Council. He had no doubt there were other members of the House who held the same views that he did on this subject, and they would wait with some anxiousness to hear the explanation of the honorable member at the head of the Government. He should now conclude by giving him an opportunity of making that explanation by moving the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said, in answer to the honorable member for Ravenswood, he might state that he had not decided whether he should become a member of that House when he undertook the formation of a Ministry; and he could inform that honorable member that it was not uncommon in practice for the Vice-President of the Executive Council to be a member of the Upper House. In fact, in the last Government in New South Wales, Mr. Parkes and Mr. Saul Samuel divided the honors, Mr. Samuel being Vice-President of the Executive Council with a seat in the Legislative Council; he was the senior member of the Government, and Mr. Parkes was nominal Premier. In New Zealand Mr. Reynolds was Premier for eighteen months, with a seat in the Legislative Council; and in New South Wales Mr. Robertson was likewise Premier, with a seat in the Legislative Council.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: No.

The PREMIER: He was Premier at the time, and there were other cases. In New South Wales, Sir W. Manning, a member of the Council, was sent for, but he did not form a Ministry; in fact, there were lots of precedents. But, as he said before, he must tell the honorable member that at the time His Excellency sent for him, as senior member of the Executive, he did not know where he should take up his quarters—whether he should remain in the Council or come into the Assembly.

Mr. DE SATGE thought that was not the proper time to reply to or in any way criticise the policy which had been enunciated by the honorable the Premier; but he must say a few words in reply to some remarks made

by that honorable member on his reappearance in the House that evening. That honorable member condemned and cast a slur not only on the Opposition, but, he (Mr. De Satgé) believed, the whole House, in referring to their disregard of the long services of Mr. Macalister, who had just sailed home. He thought the honorable gentleman might have enunciated his policy without casting a slur on other honorable members, and to that part of his speech alone his remarks applied. He believed if the House had been polled with regard to Mr. Macalister's services, they would never have been denied. If they had been asked in the usual course of matters—whatever mistakes that gentleman might have made, whatever public moneys had been misspent under his administration, whatever charges of corruption he might have laid himself open to—yet they would have recognised his great services in that he had not enriched himself at the expense of the public. All that was acknowledged; but he thought the way that gentleman got his appointment, after denying both in that House and out of it that he wanted it or would take it, had put the honorable the Premier completely out of court. That honorable gentleman had no right, in his seat in that House—within a few minutes of his taking that seat—to stand up and tax them with a general disregard of the services of Mr. Macalister. He did not wish to say a word as to the solatium itself, but what he referred to was the manner in which Mr. Macalister got his appointment. If he had asked boldly for it, or if some friend of his—far surely he must have some friends amongst those in office—had asked boldly for the appointment: if he had thrown himself upon the generosity of the House or the Government, he would have got the same appointment, or some other, as a sort of permanent consolation for his old age. He believed they all would have been glad to have given it to him; but for the honorable the Premier to tax them with disregarding his claims upon the public service, after this trickery in his appointment—after he had denied both in that House and out of it that he would ask for it or wanted it—was the greatest absurdity he had ever heard of.

Mr. GROOM said he rose simply for the purpose of setting the honorable member at the head of the Government right, because he thought on such a question as that raised by the honorable member for Ravenswood, honorable members who had not had experience in Parliamentary life should have the cases referred to fully explained to them, which the honorable the Premier had not done. That honorable gentleman stated that in New South Wales the Honorable Saul Samuel was Vice-President of the Executive Council, and the leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and virtually Premier, but the honorable gentleman ought to have stated the other facts connected with

that case. Mr. Samuel was practically the leader of the Government in the Upper House, and Vice-President of the Executive Council, but he received no salary; he took the position as an honorary office, and it was in consequence of his distinguished ability that Mr. Parkes made him Vice-President of the Executive Council. Sometime after he received the appointment of Postmaster-General, and he afterwards went to America as the special representative of New South Wales, to arrange the San Francisco mail contract. It was well that honorable members should know exactly how these matters stood. The honorable member also stated that Mr. Robertson had been Premier of New South Wales with a seat in the Legislative Council, but he had been nothing of the kind. Mr. Robertson simply went to the Upper House or wherever his late colleague, of whom he (Mr. Groom) desired to speak with the greatest respect, Mr. Cowper wished him to go, in order to carry on the Government. Mr. Robertson went to the Council simply to accommodate the late Sir Charles Cowper, then Mr. Cowper, and accepted a seat as Minister for Lands to carry through the Land Bill of that day. He thought the honorable member was entirely astray in saying there were other cases in point where a member of the Legislative Council had been selected to occupy the position of Premier, and in his allusion to the case of Sir William Manning he could not have introduced a more unhappy illustration. When Mr. Parkes was defeated on the motion of Mr. Robertson condemning the Gardner Minute, His Excellency Sir Hercules Robinson sent for Sir William Manning, but so strong was the feeling of the public men in New South Wales with reference to the indignity shown to the Legislative Assembly by the mover of the amendment not having been sent for, that they one and all declined to join him, although entertaining for him the highest possible respect, and he handed his commission back to Sir Hercules Robinson with that intimation. He (Mr. Groom) could not allude to South Australia, because there the Legislative Council was elective; but there was another case of a nominative Upper House having the Premier in it. He referred to Tasmania, where Mr. Kennerley was Premier, but he also had no salary, but merely held the position as an honorary office; and there, according to the press of that colony, and according to recent telegrams, the Government was in a very peculiar position, inasmuch as the Colonial Secretary, Captain Gilmour, had been twice defeated; and the Government had been obliged to resign before they could meet Parliament. He, therefore, thought the question raised by the honorable member for Ravenswood was a very important one, and that the privileges of that House had been unnecessarily invaded by a gentleman in the Upper House having been selected to form

an Administration. Of course, in saying this, he desired to speak with all possible respect; but he thought that they should take care that their privileges were not unnecessarily invaded by such proceedings as the one in question. This might be taken as a grave and dangerous invasion of their rights, and they should be very jealous of the privileges connected with the representative branch of the Legislature. He had simply risen to put the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government right, because he thought that when the younger members of the House were informed of precedents, the facts should be fully stated, in order that they might be able to form their own opinions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he did not propose to address the House on the subject raised by the honorable member for Ravenswood, which might be discussed in connection with the more general question of which notice had been given by the honorable member for Maranoa. That issue was quite distinct and clear, and he thought it was just as well that they should close with that on the occasion on which the honorable member proposed to bring it forward. For his own part, he was quite prepared to meet it, and he was sure his colleagues were also. He wished on this occasion merely to refer to a few remarks that had fallen from the honorable member for Maranoa, in reference to what he (the Secretary for Public Lands) said at Maryborough. The account the honorable member had given of that, which was from the published report, was substantially correct; he (the Secretary for Public Lands) believed that was what he did say; but he wished to correct the honorable member if he supposed that he had any authority from the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to say so. He had no conversation with his honorable friend before he proceeded to Maryborough; and in the speech which he addressed on that occasion to his constituents, he expressed, on many subjects, his own opinion, apart from that of the Government. The Government was not then fully constituted, and he submitted that he was perfectly entitled to do so, because he should always take leave to express a certain amount of individual latitude of opinion upon public matters, so long as they did not conflict with the policy which the Government to which he belonged chose to adopt. He could only hold office on the condition of having a certain amount of liberty of opinion on matters which are not of moment to the existence of the Government; and such being the case, he felt on this occasion entitled to make use of what he conceived to be his privilege. Now, although he had no authority from his honorable friend to make any statement with regard to the proceedings which took place in the formation of the Government, he did not think the statement he made was any loss to the country, or that it was a statement derogatory to any

gentleman to make. It was quite true his honorable friend, the member for Maranoa, said he sought thereby to improve the position of the Government and to damage his; but such was certainly not his intention. He merely intended to give what he believed to be an explicit statement of events which were certainly of interest to the public at large. The personal relations of their public men were of the greatest importance, and he himself should be most anxious that on such occasions as these the friendly relations which ought to subsist between members of that House should be further illustrated by a narration of any necessary acts that took place in the formation of a Ministry. He did not look upon them, when they arose, as strictly confidential; they were of a public character. No doubt what passed between the Governor and the gentleman to whom he entrusted the power of forming a Ministry was, to a certain extent, confidential, and without permission of His Excellency it would hardly be correct to state such matters; but he could not see why there should be any reticence even on that point. But this was a subject he was not called upon to discuss at the present time. It was quite clear, however, that His Excellency entrusted the duty of forming a Government to his honorable friend the Premier, and knowing, as he did, the candour and the pleasing *bonhomie* which characterised the expressions of his honorable friend, he could quite understand that during the lengthened conversation he had with the honorable member for Maranoa many things might have been discussed which it would not be desirable to repeat there. It was no doubt true, that during even the negotiations which took place between his honorable friend and other members of the Government, a good deal was said which would be mere idle gossip to repeat now; but still he affirmed that it was a distinct public advantage, that the leading features of these negotiations should be candidly stated. On the occasion referred to, there was nothing, he was quite sure, which would in any respect do dishonor to his honorable friend. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) could testify, that so far as that honorable member's relations to himself and the other members of the Ministry were concerned, there was nothing else but the most friendly intercourse. There had been a desire on his part, and he thought on the part of some of his colleagues, to endeavor to construct a Ministry, which would admit even of having some element of representation from the other side of the House. He thought, looking at the position of the country, that it was desirable they should form a strong Government, which would be able to carry out a policy of enterprise and yet of caution. That was his own wish, and he knew it was the wish of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, and with that view they made overtures to honorable members on the other side. The honorable member

for Maranoa had not been a very prominent oppositionist hitherto. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) had never understood him to be so, but no doubt on the present occasion he had demonstrated his distinct opposition to the present Government. On that, of course, they must close issue; but he had reason to believe that there was nothing with regard to the leading features of the policy which need have prevented him from working with the honorable gentleman, if such a combination could have been brought about. He made these remarks, because he hoped the honorable member would not understand that he (the Secretary for Public Lands) in any way garbled, or intended in any way to garble by his statement at Maryborough, anything that had occurred between the honorable the Premier and that honorable member. That he might have to some extent misunderstood his honorable friend at the head of the Government was just possible. He understood that honorable gentleman to say that so far as his (the Secretary for Lands') remarks were concerned, he considered the first part of them substantially correct.

Mr. McILWRAITH: He said it was all correct—especially the first part.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was quite clear what was the intention of the honorable the Premier. He merely intended to validate the statement, so far as the first part was concerned; and he (the Secretary for Lands) had evidently misunderstood him with regard to the latter part. But there was nothing dishonorable to him, or in any way dishonorable to the honorable member for Maranoa in the statement, and as some slight misunderstanding had arisen he was glad now to receive the intimation made by that honorable member. It was possible that, during a lengthened conversation, things might have been said, which raised in the mind of the honorable member for Maranoa some humorous reflections; but there was nothing remarkable in that, when they knew that the honorable member at the head of the Government was really fond of a joke himself. It was quite possible, that in the course of his conversation with the honorable member for Maranoa, the honorable gentleman indulged that feeling of his, which occasionally preponderated in his nature. He (the Secretary for Public Lands) hoped the honorable member for Maranoa would understand distinctly that he had no authority in the first place from the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to make the representation he did at Maryborough, but that he felt entitled himself to make some explanation; but, at the same time, he had no intention of giving a garbled statement of any of the circumstances that occurred during the formation of the Ministry.

Mr. PALMER said, with a vote of want of confidence hanging over the heads of the Ministry, he thought it better that they

should not enter upon any debate to-night. A great many things would have to be said which he considered it would be much better to say when the motion of which notice had been given by the honorable member for Maranoa for to-morrow came on. In giving that notice, the honorable member did not ask that it should be allowed to take precedence of all other business, but he (Mr. Palmer) took it as a matter of course, that a want of confidence motion would take precedence, and he should reserve any remarks he had to make until that time. But, in referring to the matter in question between the honorable member for Maranoa and the Premier, they would be merely following the example of the honorable member for Maryborough in airing their eloquence; and, with regard to that subject, he (Mr. Palmer) agreed with that honorable member that there was nothing to be gained by reticence in these matters; but, at the same time, when a statement was made it should be a truthful one. Now, the explanation made by the honorable member for Maryborough was not a truthful one. There could be no doubt about that. It had been put before the public that the Government refused to take the honorable member for Maranoa into office because he insisted upon having him (Mr. Palmer) as Premier. That was not a truthful statement, and he defied the honorable the Premier to say it was, for he (Mr. Palmer) heard the whole of the statement the very same afternoon, and the honorable member for Maranoa distinctly told the friend of the Premier, who wanted him to join the Government as a stop-gap, that he refused to meet or to see him. But the Premier absolutely thrust himself on him at his own house on the following morning, and whatever then passed should have been truthfully stated. The honorable member for Maranoa stated that he made no suggestion even that he would not join with him, and that when the Premier said he could work very well with the Opposition, he (Mr. McIlwraith) said he (Mr. Palmer), as leader of the Opposition, was the proper party to consult on the subject. That was the statement of the honorable member for Maranoa, and it was very different from that given by the honorable member for Maryborough to his constituents. The honorable the Premier had seen fit to attack that side of the House, and he used the word "cowardly" in reference to his (Mr. Palmer's) attack upon Mr. Macalister. Well, that honorable gentleman could have his choice of words. He (Mr. Palmer) would allow him some license, because he looked upon him as a new member who had to serve an apprenticeship in that House again, and perhaps after he had been there a short time he would be a little more careful of his words. He (Mr. Palmer) would let it pass this evening; but he should like to know what cowardice there was in attacking a member when he was in his place in that

House, as Mr. Macalister was when he (Mr. Palmer) attacked him. He should like to know which was most cowardly—to attack a member sitting opposite to him in that House, or for a member to go amongst his constituents and behind his back telling falsehoods—downright falsehoods—and accuse members of that House of things they had never done,—to do so behind their backs, not to their faces. That was cowardice, and that was what the Premier had done when addressing his constituents, and when there was no one there to answer him. For the opinion of George Thorn when addressing the electors of Ipswich he had the most supreme contempt. For George Thorn in that House he cared nothing, and he should not have alluded to that honorable member's attack upon him at Ipswich had he not said it was cowardly on his part to attack the late Premier of the colony when he was in his place in that House. There was no cowardice about it, and if it was cowardice he was afraid the present Premier during his short tenure of office would have to put up with a good deal of it; he would be pretty well attacked. He thought if the honorable member for Maranoa would tell the House all that occurred on the occasion before referred to, they would find some honorable members on the Treasury benches looking very blue at their Premier; they would look very queer indeed if they knew all the conversation he (Mr. Palmer) could tell them. There was no parallel between the cases mentioned by the honorable the Premier as to appointments made by the Home Government and the job—the downright job—which put Mr. Macalister into his present position as Agent-General. It was a bargain from first to last. It was well known to the whole country that it was a bargain. He believed himself it was arranged even before Mr. Macalister returned to the colony, and that the price of that appointment was that the present Premier should be sent for to form a Government.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear; No, no.

Mr. PALMER said, he believed that was the seal to the contract; as a job, he should always denominate it—a downright political job, and he should repeat it until he was tired, and perhaps the House was tired of hearing it. He thought the policy laid down or attempted to be laid down by the honorable the Premier to-night—it was not laid down in an intelligible manner, but merely attempted to be laid down—was one that to-morrow or next day the Government would find did not agree with the constitution of that House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL quite agreed with the honorable member for Port Curtis, that that was not the proper time to discuss the general policy of the Government; but some of the statements made by that honorable member were so extraordinary, that he did not think it right to allow even that

evening to pass without contradicting them. The honorable member said that the appointment of Mr. Macalister was a political job, that it was a bargain from beginning to end, and that he believed it was arranged even before that gentleman returned to the colony. Now, he (the Attorney-General) gave every one of those statements the flattest denial. There was not a single part of them that could have been true, without his knowledge; and he assured honorable members, that nothing of the kind had ever taken place within his knowledge. And he for one would not have been a party to it. When he joined the Government—of which his honorable friend the Premier was head—he was firmly impressed with the idea that Mr. Macalister would not accept the office of Agent-General if it were offered to him; and he believed so strongly for the reason that that gentleman told him so with his own lips within the walls of that building a day or two before. He believed it, but when he afterwards understood that Mr. Macalister was willing to accept the office, he for one was delighted to have an opportunity of giving it to him, because he considered that from his long services and his fitness to perform the duties of the position, there was no one more entitled to it. As for a bargain, there was nothing of the sort. He observed that some honorable member had asked for the production of the Executive minute of the appointment, in the expectation he supposed that it would show that it was done immediately the Government was formed; but he could inform honorable members that the appointment was not made until all the members of the Government had been re-elected by their constituents. There was nothing else the honorable member said that deserved an answer; and the statement that there was any bargain, or that Mr. Macalister had anything to do with the formation of the Government, was entirely without foundation.

Mr. THOMPSON said there was one element in the matter of this bargain—if there ever was such a bargain, about which he did not intend to express any opinion—which had been overlooked: that was, that previous to the retirement of the late Premier from office, his partner was appointed to the Upper House, and, since his retirement from office, that gentleman had been appointed Post-master-General, so that the firm of Macalister and Mein was sufficiently represented in the public service of the colony.

Mr. PETTIGREW said he did not intend to address the House that evening on the general policy of the Government, which they would have a fair opportunity of doing to-morrow, but he wished now to say a few words. He was sorry to have to contradict the statement which had been so boldly asserted by the honorable the Attorney-General. He had had to bring that honorable gentleman to book before, and he (Mr. Pettigrew) could state that the statement

made by the honorable member for Port Curtis was correct, and he thought the honorable the Premier should give a correct explanation.

Mr. KING said, with the permission of the House, as the honorable the Premier wished to give notice of motion, he should withdraw his motion for the adjournment.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.