

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 8 AUGUST 1876

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 8 August, 1876.

Adjournment.—Ways and Means.—Gold Fields Act Amendment Bill.

ADJOURNMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he wished to correct an error which had appeared in the report of the speech made by him on July 13th.

The SPEAKER: Does the honorable member intend to conclude with a motion?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would do so, but he had understood that it was not necessary for a Minister to do so when he rose to make a correction in a report. He had been made to say:—

“that it has been stated in this House, and has been said in the public prints, that Mr. Hemmant was sent for by His Excellency the Governor to form a Government, but had refused to do so, and had subsequently made overtures to the honorable member for Port Curtis to form one from the other side of the House.”

Now, what he did say was that:—

“It had been stated in this House, and has been said in the public prints, that Mr. Hemmant was sent for by His Excellency the Governor to form a Government, but had declined to do so; but a statement was circulated that his advice had been asked, and that he had refused to give it, and had subsequently made overtures to the honorable member for Port Curtis to form one from the other side of the House.”

The omission of those few words had made him deny what he knew to be a fact at the time, namely, that Mr. Hemmant had been sent for, and had declined to form a Government. He felt that some explanation was due to the House for the delay which had occurred in bringing the matter forward, but his attention had been called to the report only a few hours before the adjournment of the House for the Toowoomba Show, and as he had not been able to be present at the last sitting of the House, the present was the first opportunity he had had of making the correction. He found that another error had crept in another part of his speech, as he was reported to have accused his honorable colleague the member for Maryborough with being

“the head and front of this motion of want of confidence;”

whereas it should have been the honorable member for Ravenswood. He was quite sure that he could not have made such a mistake, as the House would have most certainly noticed it, had he said anything of the kind. He was aware that it was rather difficult to hear what he said on that occasion, and consequently, there was some excuse for the errors which had appeared. He begged to move—

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. PALMER said, that if the explanation made by the honorable member was not more audible in the gallery than it was to honorable members on his side of the House, the reporters would be able to report very little of what the honorable member had said. For his own part, he had not been able to catch a single word, except that the honorable member had accused his honorable colleague the Minister for Lands of some high crime; he had not been able to hear one word of the explanation made by the honorable gentleman. He had intended to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of referring to another matter—for the purpose of calling the attention of Ministers to a very great omission on their part, which had been the cause of a paragraph in that day's *Courier*. There had been a gross neglect on their part to an order made by that House during the previous session, and he had got the credit for it in the *Courier*. The paragraph to which he alluded was as follows:—

“Some weeks ago Mr. Palmer gave notice that he would move that an address be presented to the Governor praying that the sum of £2,000 might be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for the survey of a line of railway from Rockhampton to Gladstone. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend the House on the day when the motion was called, and consequently it lapsed. Mr. Palmer has not yet replaced it on the business paper; but he was very forcibly reminded of the interests of Gladstone on Thursday last, when, as if by one mysterious inspiration, the honorable members for Blackall and Rockhampton rose within a few minutes of each other with motions of a similar nature regarding the survey

of a line from Rockhampton to Broadmount, or some point on the Fitzroy River available as a port for large vessels."

Now, he had no hesitation in saying that that statement was utterly incorrect from beginning to end. He had given no notice of such a motion, but what he had done was to draw the attention of the Government some few days ago to the fact that they had wilfully disobeyed an order of that House, namely, that a sum of £2,000 should be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for 1875-6 to defray the expenses of a preliminary survey for a line of railway from Gladstone to Rockhampton. He had then expressed his hope that the honorable Colonial Treasurer would see it was his duty to have that sum added to the Supplementary Estimates by special message from His Excellency the Governor, but the Treasurer had not done so. He would ask, therefore, whether he was to understand that they were going to treat an order of that House with contempt? for it really looked very much as if they were. The House had made an order, and he had called the attention of the Government to their wilful and gross neglect to obey that order. He had then been assured by the honorable Treasurer, that the omission had been an oversight on the part of the Government and not any neglect, and that a sum of £10,000 had been placed on the Loan Estimates for railway surveys, out of which the cost of making the particular survey in question would be defrayed. That, however, was not obeying the order of the House, which was, that the sum of £2,000 should be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for last year. He should like to know why he should be treated as he had been by the paragraph in the *Courier*—a paragraph which had evidently been written by a person who was ignorant of what occurred in that House. He should like to know, from the honorable Colonial Treasurer, when the message from the Governor was to come down, or whether the Government intended that one should come. When a sum was ordered by that House to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates it was the bounden duty of the Government to see that it was so placed, and by not doing so they had treated a resolution passed by the House with contempt. And as to the statement which had been made by the honorable Treasurer, it was not fair to him (Mr. Palmer) to say that an order for a specific sum should be neglected simply because the Government had placed a larger sum on the Loan Estimate for surveys for railways to no one knew where.

The PREMIER said, that in answer to the remarks of the honorable member for Port Curtis, he might inform him that the present Government was not responsible for the sins of omission of their predecessors. He was not a member of the House when the resolution was passed last September, nor was the present honorable Colonial Treasurer in office then. The honorable gentleman had

been informed that a message would come down, and he might tell him that it would come down very shortly.

Mr. BELL said, he would remind the honorable member who had just spoken, of what he had forgotten, namely, that whatever Government happened to be in power an order of that House must be obeyed. The Government of the day were as much servants of that House as any previous Government, and he trusted that the honorable gentlemen now occupying the Treasury benches would never look on their position in any other light.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said, he thought it would be remembered that it had been frankly admitted at once by his honorable colleague the Treasurer that it was an omission that was quite inadvertent; and he could assure honorable members that it was never the intention of the Government to forego what was their clear duty, namely, to give effect to a resolution of that House. He had certainly been surprised at the honorable member for Port Curtis being so touched by a paragraph in a newspaper, as he had thought that the honorable gentleman was far beyond being spurred into action by anything of the kind—beyond being affected by what was a mere ephemeral production. He should have thought that the honorable gentleman was quite impervious to what was after all small chaff, which they all knew was occasionally flying about. However, he rose simply to reiterate what had been previously stated by his honorable colleague, that most unquestionably the order of the House would be given effect to.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that he could quite understand the honorable gentleman, related as he had been to a certain portion of the press, getting up and chuckling at the idea of the honorable member for Port Curtis being affected by what had appeared in a newspaper paragraph. With regard, however, to the statement of the honorable Colonial Secretary that he had been misreported in "Hansard" of July 13, he might say, that although there had been two or three numbers of "Hansard" published since, he had a distinct recollection of what the honorable member then said, and he had not the slightest hesitation in saying that the report was correct. Talking of being spurred into action by a paragraph in a newspaper, he might say that he had been spurred into action by an advertisement which he had seen in one. He had been rather surprised at seeing in an announcement of a sale of land by the honorable Treasurer, somewhere on the banks of the river, the statement that it would be with certainty "in the future of railway communication" and wharves for the export shipping. Did the honorable member mean to say that the Government had already decided those matters without consulting the House? He thought it was rather a serious matter, when a number of proposed railways were before them, to hold out to speculators in land that

a certain site would be the future terminus of a railway. Why the words he quoted were actually in big letters. He was surprised that the honorable member should have so far forgotten his position as a member of the Government as to have put in such an advertisement, and he trusted the honorable member would get up and say that the advertisement was put in without his knowledge. He was quite sure that putting in such an advertisement was not a proper thing to do, and that such a proceeding would be generally condemned.

Mr. THOMPSON said there had been certainly, a great discrepancy between the statements made by Ministers. The honorable Secretary for Lands had told the House that the Supplementary Estimate had been omitted through an inadvertency, whilst the honorable Premier coolly informed them that the present Government were not responsible for the sins of their predecessors. He rose on the present occasion, however, for the purpose of pointing out, that it was not that the honorable member for Port Curtis cared about the statements in the paragraph in the newspaper, so far as he was personally concerned, but only from the knowledge of the effect that such matters had upon the minds of ignorant readers, especially when they were propped up by telegrams, and by the sly insinuations of friends in distant places. It was not the paragraph in itself, but it was the probable effect it would have when backed up by those telegrams, in which the present honorable Premier specially delighted. At any rate, since that honorable gentlemen had been in office, the public should be careful not to take for granted what they saw in paragraphs in newspapers.

Mr. IVORY said, it appeared to him that the reporters must have been grossly in error in regard to the statements made by the honorable Colonial Secretary, to which that honorable gentleman had referred, or else they must have put their heads together and agreed to mis-report him; for he found that they were in error for a page or two of "Hansard" on the very same point. He recollected that the honorable member had promised to read a letter from Mr. Hemmant in support of his statement, but he had not done so. The honorable gentleman said:—

"I wrote to Mr. Hemmant and got from him the most positive statement to the contrary.

"Mr. PALMER: Contrary to what?"

"THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Why, to the statement made by the honorable member for the Kennedy to the effect that His Excellency had sent for Mr. Hemmant, who had refused to form a Ministry."

And then the honorable gentleman fumbled about in his pocket for the letter, which, however, had never been produced. For the honorable member to find fault with the reporters at that time of day, was he thought, conduct most uncalled for.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said, he had no recollection that he was aware of, of having promised to produce any letter, but he had merely said that if honorable members desired it, he should be prepared to produce it. The explanation he had made that afternoon was quite in accordance with what he had stated on the former occasion, as the omission of a few words in "Hansard" had made him deny what he knew to be true, and that it had also been mentioned in the public prints, that Mr. Hemmant had been sent for by the Governor. At all events, he had had no intention of denying any such thing in that House, and the few words he had given in correction were quite sufficient to put the whole thing right. With the permission of the House, he would withdraw the motion for adjournment.

Mr. McILWRAITH said, that as attention was being drawn to honorable members being mis-reported, he would draw attention to the manner in which he had been reported in a newspaper, and he might mention that the knowledge of it had come to him in rather a roundabout way, for although it was a report in the *Telegraph* of July 27, he had not seen it until after it had been copied into another paper, which only came into his hands a few days ago. After reflecting upon the conduct of some honorable members who spoke in favor of an adjournment for the show at Toowoomba, the report accused him of sarcastically telling the honorable member for Bundamba, who took occasion to remark that he was not particularly interested in the show, "Oh yes, you are; you've got some canaries to sell." Now, he could assure that honorable member that he did not know that he had any canaries to sell, or what would take him up to Toowoomba; so that he really did not see why he should be made to say such things in a paragraph, unless it was a little tit bit to go the rounds of the other papers. He certainly had not said a word about the honorable member or his canaries either.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that, now that the House had got rid of the chaff, he had something of a more serious nature to bring under the notice of honorable members, for which purpose he had intended to move the adjournment of the House, had that not already been done. He referred to the election of a member to represent the constituency of Burke, which, as honorable members were aware, had been unrepresented during the present session. That election was to take place on the 21st of the present month, but, unless something was done, the electorate would remain unrepresented in that House, most probably, for a very long time. There was a polling place at Normanton, which was over two hundred miles away from Georgetown; the mail left for Normanton six days after the election, and would be four days on the road, thus making ten days delay. From Georgetown it would go to Townsville,

where it would arrive one day after the departure of the mail for the South. Now, he thought there was one way in which the writ could be returned without that delay, for he found that by the Telegraph Messages Act of 1872—

"It shall be lawful for the Governor the President of the Legislative Council the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly the Judges of the Supreme Court and District Courts the Ministers of the Crown and any principal officer of Government or attorney or solicitor to cause to be transmitted by Electric Telegraph the contents of any writ warrant rule order authority or other community requiring signature or seal."

He thought that the Government would only be doing their duty if they sent orders to the Returning Officer at Georgetown to have the writ returned to the honorable the Speaker by wire, so that the person who was elected would be able to take his seat in that House a fortnight or three weeks before he otherwise could possibly do. If one of the candidates was elected, very likely he would be able to take his seat four or five weeks earlier, as he was a resident of Ipswich. So that if the writ was returned by wire, that gentleman could take his seat the day afterwards—that was if he was elected, but if he was not, he would not be able to take his seat for some weeks. He thought it was a matter of importance, and that he was entitled to ask the Government what they intended to do in the matter.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he believed the rule was, that no Government ever interfered with election arrangements or gave orders to returning officers, but in the present case there was no doubt that the returning officer could return the writ by telegram. If such a suggestion was made to that officer, it should be from either the honorable Speaker or the Clerk of the House; he did not think it should come from the Government. He thought that if the House agreed to the return of the writ by telegram, there would be no objection to the honorable the Speaker giving instructions to that effect to the returning officer.

Question of adjournment put and negatived.

WAYS AND MEANS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, further to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. BELL said, he hoped the honorable gentleman had no desire to avoid any discussion on the Financial Statement. He knew that several honorable members wished to speak upon it, and, therefore, he thought the debate should take place before the honorable the Speaker left the chair.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Financial Statement was made in committee.

The SPEAKER thought the debate should be in committee, although the honorable member for Dalby could, of course, make any remarks he thought proper on the Financial Statement on the motion for going into committee.

Mr. BELL said that he had made a great mistake in 1874, by which he lost a very important motion, as he thought at that time that it was the rule to make the motions in committee, but he was ruled out of order. It was a well-known fact that the reporters were not expected to make reports of speeches in committee of the same length as when they were made in the House, and that being the case, and the debate being of some importance, he thought the present was the time when he should be expected to make any remarks on the Financial Statement that he had to make.

The SPEAKER said, the honorable member would not be out of order in doing so, but there would be very great inconvenience attached to discussing in the House a statement which had been made in committee.

Mr. WALSH said that unless the debate took place in the House, there would be no report of the discussion on the Financial Statement published in "Hansard," but only the statement itself.

The SPEAKER said he would give instructions to have it reported.

The PREMIER said, it was well known to honorable members that it had always been the practice of that House that all debates on the Financial Statement should be reported in "Hansard." With regard to the question raised by the honorable member for Dalby, it had been the practice for some honorable members to give notice of motion contingent upon the motion that the honorable the Speaker leave the chair; but that had not been done on the present occasion, and, therefore, he thought they should now go into committee.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the honorable gentleman spoke as if it had been the rule of that House to have the Financial Statement discussed in committee, whereas the very last statement that was made was discussed whilst the Speaker was in the chair; although there was a special reason, perhaps, why it should have been in committee, as it was an adjournment of the Committee of Supply. If honorable members would refer to Vol 18 of "Hansard" they would see that the then Treasurer moved that the Speaker leave the chair, whereupon he (Mr. McIlwraith) rose for the purpose of initiating a discussion on the Financial Statement. To that the then Treasurer, Mr. Hemmant, who had a very good knowledge of the practice of the House, made no objection, and the debate took place.

Mr. BELL said that in 1874, when Mr. Hemmant was Colonial Treasurer, he (Mr. Bell) had endeavored to move certain resolutions bearing upon the policy enunciated in the Financial Statement. He did so in com-

mittee, but was ruled out of order, as he ought to have moved them before the Speaker left the chair. At page 99 of "Hansard," vol. 16, it was reported:—

"Mr. Stewart rose to a point of order. He was of opinion that the amendment of the honorable member for Dalby did not apply to the motion before the committee. There was a specific motion made by the honorable Colonial Treasurer, that the duty on furniture be one shilling per cubic foot, and the honorable member for Dalby had chosen to move an amendment going into the whole financial policy of the Government."

If that was not a case in point, he did not know what was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said, in regard to the point of order which had been raised, that he thought if the honorable member for Dalby chose to address the House he had a right to do so. Whether it was desirable for the honorable member to adopt such a course, was of course an open question; but the honorable member had the right, if he chose to exercise it, and the House could not prevent him.

Mr. PALMER said, he was glad to find that the honorable member who had just spoken had taken up a new *role*, and that instead of lecturing the Opposition, as it was the honorable member's habit to do, he was only trying to put his Premier right—that was, if he could do so.

The PREMIER rose to a point of order. He said that the honorable member had already spoken; the present was the third time the honorable member had spoken.

Mr. PALMER said that he did not think the honorable Premier knew what question was before the House. He was sure, in fact, the honorable gentleman did not. The question was, that the Speaker leave the chair, and he would ask the honorable Speaker, whether he (Mr. Palmer) had spoken upon it?

The SPEAKER: The honorable member has not spoken before.

Mr. PALMER said that the honorable Premier had made two statements that day which had been contradicted by the honorable Minister for Lands. First, the honorable member told the House that the present Government was not responsible for the sins of the late Government, and then he told them what was the practice of the House. The honorable member would require to have a nurse on each side of him to keep him right, for he was invariably getting into a difficulty, and had to be helped out by one or other of his colleagues. He believed it had been the invariable rule of that House to discuss the Financial Statement when the honorable Speaker was in the chair, and he thought that there could be no doubt that the debate should now proceed.

The SPEAKER said that in reference to the point of order which had been raised, there was no doubt that it was open to any honorable member to debate the Financial State-

ment on the motion that the Speaker leave the chair; but, as he had said before, such a proceeding might be attended with inconvenience, as he might have to check any reference by honorable members to what had taken place when the House was in committee. He would now put the question.

The question was put, when

Mr. MACROSSAN said that he thought every honorable member could be fully reported by the honorable Speaker giving instructions to the shorthand writers to that effect. That had been done when the Education Bill was in committee, and the late Speaker and himself had been fully reported on that occasion.

Mr. MOREHEAD, understanding that the honorable the Minister for Lands had said the honorable member for Dalby had a perfect right to speak on the question, presumed the Government did not intend to oppose him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said, he had merely held that no one had a right to prevent the honorable member from addressing the House on the motion now before it.

The SPEAKER: If the debate takes place in committee, I shall give instructions to the reporters to report the debate in "Hansard." I shall now put the question. The question is, that I do now leave the chair.

Mr. BELL said, he was glad the point he had raised had been conceded, because he believed he had a right to speak, and having been ruled out of order in a previous session he thought the House would have stultified itself if a different course had been taken; but he hoped that the fact of his speaking upon the motion that the Speaker do now leave the chair, would not have the effect of checking any reference to motions in committee, as the Speaker implied. Any measures taken to restrict or shorten a debate of this kind, when it had been the practice, both in the colony and in the House of Commons, to allow at this time free discussion upon all kinds of grievances and subjects, should be deprecated, for they would be interfering with one of the important privileges of the House. As an ex-Minister it might be expected that he should say something upon the Financial Statement made by the Colonial Treasurer, and sitting, as he did, in opposition to that honorable gentleman, he could hardly be expected to rise for the purpose of hurling compliments at him upon his speech, or to direct much attention to any of the favorable portions of the Financial Statement. There were many objections which might be taken to that statement, and the first was, the mistake the honorable the Colonial Treasurer made in not writing his speech in place of delivering it as he did, making it a speech of much greater length than would have been the case had he adopted the practice which had obtained in this and other colonies, especially in New Zealand, where Sir Julius Vogel not only wrote his

Financial Statements, but handed them round to members to follow him as he made them. While following the Colonial Treasurer through the different stages of his speech, honorable members were kept on the alert for the sensational portion. After, however, leading the House to believe that he was about to explain some important alteration in the tariff, the honorable gentleman would wade back again to some other lighter subject. The honorable gentleman kept up this excitement and suspense until members were breathless, and then the mountain labored and brought forth—what? A heathen Chinese. He objected to this, because, although it was sensational to a degree, it produced nothing but a tax upon the Chinese in the mineral districts of the colony. This was in itself extremely bad, coming as it did from honorable members on the side of the House that had always called itself Liberal. Where was the free trade in such a tax? Was there anything in it but protection to the extreme degree? On which side of the House were they to look for free trade? Was that the kind of legislation they had a right to expect from a so-called Liberal Government? He thought not. The tax was particularly bad, because it had been put forth for the purpose of checking the number of Chinese coming to the colony, while at the same time it was said to be a tax for giving a certain amount of revenue for which the honorable the Colonial Treasurer gave himself credit in his Financial Statement. Where was the consistency of this? If the tax was, as the Colonial Treasurer stated, to have the effect of checking the emigration of Chinese to the northern portion of the colony, how was it possible to derive increased revenue from the tax? The honorable gentleman seemed to expect a revenue from the very tax which was to drive away the persons who contributed to it. It must be clear to honorable members that the Colonial Treasurer's Budget speech pointed to inconsistencies in the principles of the Ministry calling itself Liberal—inconsistencies that would lead to serious consequences. Was the Liberal party in this colony to be maintained by such false policy and corrupt motives as were to be found in the Colonial Treasurer's speech? He (Mr. Bell) had several charges to bring against the Government, against the Financial Statement, and against the Liberal party. It could not be denied that the present Government, representing as they themselves said, the Liberal party, were in every way allied (as they ought to be) to the policy of the late Government. They had inherited the policy of the late Government in every instance, except where they had individually or collectively objected to it. This was the argument strongly urged by the honorable member for Maranoa, in his speech upon the vote of want confidence, an argument which he (Mr. Bell) did not see the force of at the time, but

understood it clearly since the Colonial Treasurer's Financial Statement. As regarded the Government generally, could there be anything more pernicious in a young colony like this than a Government which pretended to represent the Liberal portion of the community unblushingly snapping up every ray of policy that came within their reach, for one reason only, namely, to keep themselves in office as long as possible? It could be for no other purpose, for it could not be said that the House was in such a position that no able men could be found to fill the posts occupied by the present Ministry, and there was no urgent necessity which they could show for snapping up a policy which was denounced by them shortly before they came into office. It was degrading to the Ministry, it was degrading to their supporters, and it was a system which, if pursued, would land the colony in political disaster. If honorable members sought office merely for the sake of sitting on the Treasury benches, what would be the result? It might be said that he (Mr. Bell) in opposition, might be seeking a place on the other side; but he might say, in order not to be misunderstood, that whatever change might take place, he had no intention of taking office, and had, therefore, no object of that kind to serve in the course he was now taking. What was the first great policy that the Government had snapped up? A policy which they had previously denounced; a policy which, if the members on the Opposition side of the House had been more reticent, and if the honorable the present Speaker when he left the Government had not been so honest and outspoken, would never have been heard of from them. But for this there would have been no mention in the Budget speech of this public works policy. The cause of the honorable the Speaker's resignation from the Ministerial ranks they found was the cause espoused by the great majority of the members of the House, and of the public outside; and then and not till then was the great railway policy taken up by the Ministry. Was this a position which honorable gentlemen on the Government benches should hold without feeling ashamed of it? But worse than that. The members of the present Government not only took up the policy of the honorable the Speaker, and the policy of the Opposition side of the House, namely, a progressive railway policy, but they out-Heroded Herod, and went far beyond the policy of the honorable member for Ravenswood, for they came down to the House with a proposition for a railway from Townsville to Charters Towers, which, even in the wildest scheme of the honorable member for Ravenswood, was not heard of. The whole thing showed that when men once began to act upon wrong principles there was no knowing where they would end. He could not, therefore, help looking with much seriousness upon a Government whose members came before their

constituencies to-day denouncing a certain policy which, to keep their seats, they would put forth as their own to-morrow. But the railway policy was not the only one to which they were not entitled. But before he mentioned that he must refer to the reckless manner in which their borrowed railway policy was brought forward. If the House were to grant the Government the money they asked for to commence such a system of railways as they proposed, they would be utterly wanting in their duties as members of the Opposition if they granted them a shilling for any such purpose, unless they did it for the purpose of proving to the country that they were utterly unfit to expend it. He believed the Government were anxious that the House would throw out the sums proposed for railway extensions, in order that they might turn round and say to the country, "We have done all we could to provide the colony with good railways, but this wretched Opposition has thrown out our figures, and we are unable to carry out our policy of progression. But how could any business man, claiming abilities to fill such a position as that of the Colonial Treasurer, come to the House, supported by his colleagues in office, and ask for hundreds of thousands of pounds leading to the expenditure of three or four millions of money, without a single reason being given for it—without a single estimate being produced? It was a rotten policy, brought forth in a most unbusiness-like manner, and hurled before the country in that clap-trap manner which ephemeral Governments so often adopted. This, he regretted to say, was the position taken up by the party calling itself Liberal. They had attached to themselves a name which he considered to be a great honor, for it was an honor to represent the liberal spirit of any colony like this. He, however, would not bow to any one of that party in his love of real liberalism, and he believed he could say the same of many honorable members sitting on his side of the House, feeling satisfied, from his contact with them, that the Opposition side of the House was not a whit less liberal, nor less entitled to that high distinction, than honorable members sitting on the Government side; in fact, he would, he thought, be able to show, before he sat down, that the financial and general success of the colony had been greater during the years the Palmer Government were in power than when the so-called Liberal party held office. But, before he went so far in his remarks as that, he must refer to another case of stealing a policy from the Opposition side of the House—a policy which the present Government and the Government which preceded them were in no ways entitled to, a policy which the Government had not the foresight and wisdom to see into, but which was one of those examples of picking up, which the present Government had made part of their system.

He referred to the principle involved, and which was now adopted by the present Colonial Treasurer, of expending sums of money for roads and bridges out of loan vote, instead of out of the revenue of the colony. That was not the policy of the previous Government and he connected the Colonial Treasurer with that Government. He connected the honorable the Colonial Treasurer with this policy, because, although he did not actually inaugurate it, he was a member of the party sitting behind the Minister who announced it, and who had denounced the policy of the then Opposition. The link therefore between the policy of the late and present Colonial Treasurer was complete. But he would do the honorable member the justice to say that there were two or three words which fell from him in the course of his Financial Statement to the effect, that it would not be right to allow the previous and mistaken policy to continue, but he (Mr. Bell) held that the House ought to have nothing to do with gentlemen who had admissions of that kind to make; they wanted Ministers who could see at first sight when they came down with a policy whether it was a right or wrong one. The policy to which he had been referring was brought forward by the late Colonial Treasurer at a time when he was asking for a change of the tariff to the amount of £30,000 for that year only, while the next year it was estimated at only £80,000. But while the then Treasurer was changing the tariff for the sake of £30,000 he committed the grave error, which his successor admitted, of doing the revenue out of £100,000, or more than three times the amount, by taking it not out of loan, but out of revenue. Was not that a great mistake for a Treasurer to make? In the speech he made to the House in his capacity of Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Hemmant said:—

"In this respect, I think the policy of the present Government goes further than that of their predecessors. In the Estimates proposed by the late Government, it was their intention that a sum of £100,000 should be taken out of the surplus of £240,000 and devoted to the construction of ordinary roads and bridges. Now, the present Government are of opinion that the construction of ordinary roads and bridges should be provided for out of the current revenue, and that it is an improper practice to ask posterity to pay for the making of culverts and the clearing of roads scattered all over the colony. They consider that such works should be paid for out of the current revenue, and that if we borrow money at all, it should be expended upon works of a national character, upon such works as may be reckoned as valuable assets in the future balance sheet of the colony."

And what was said on the Opposition side of the House?

"When, however, I find that the only reason which the Colonial Treasurer has given to this committee for adding the enormous sum of £100,000 for roads and bridges to his Estimates is, that those works are not of a permanent

character, and should not be made a charge on future generations, I look upon that reason as the most fallacious and ruinous. I look upon that Treasurer who takes such a stand as a most audacious Treasurer; for he takes it in the face of the fact that the House adopted and affirmed the opposite principle when they voted £90,000 in the last Loan Estimate for roads and bridges. I say, sir, that it is flying in the face of every principle that has been laid down in the House heretofore; and I repeat that the reason and arguments of the Treasurer are insufficient and rotten, for paying that amount and all future amounts for such permanent and useful works out of current revenue. I maintain that posterity must have the advantage of such works, and that all such amounts must be, as they should be, and I have no doubt will be in future, according to the principle affirmed and adopted by the House, placed upon loan estimates. When we come to consider the enormous sums of money which have been charged yearly to revenue account for immigration purposes, and which, no doubt, should be upon loan—as posterity gets the advantage of immigration;—when we come to consider that there are remote districts of this colony which railway loan expenditure never serves or reaches in the slightest degree, and that the inhabitants of those districts are called upon to pay their quota of the interest on that expenditure;—when we consider that in this country, as in all new countries, every permanent road, every permanent bridge, is a work which, of course, we obtain our advantage from and ought to pay interest upon;—we cannot but feel that as the country is by all these means improved for our successors as much as for ourselves, our successors—I mean posterity—should pay their quota also.”

There was a great deal more said, but the policy which the Colonial Treasurer had now adopted, was one that did not originate on his side of the House, and was not known or its objects appreciated by the Liberal Ministry of that day. These of themselves were cogent reasons why his side of the House had a strong claim to the support of a majority of the members of the House. But when he looked at the financial successes achieved by the different Governments, and compared them the one with the other, there was still other grounds for that claim. It appeared in Table A of the Colonial Treasurer's statement, that during the two and a-half years of the Macalister Government, there was on the 1st January, 1875, a credit balance to the amount of £35,466; on the 1st July, 1875, it was £7,840, and on the 30th June, 1876, a Dr. balance of £43,823. The Palmer Government took office in May, 1870; in that year the expenditure exceeded the revenue by £28,941, but in the three following years the revenue exceeded the expenditure by the large amount of £320,374, so that on the whole during the three years and a-half of the Palmer Ministry there was a nett saving of £291,433, and after paying a sum of £50,000 deficit of their predecessors, the Lilley Government, they handed over £240,000 to their successors in office. It had no doubt been said, that they also handed over £108,000

liabilities on account of unexpended votes, but even if this were so, they passed on a no greater liability than they (the Palmer Ministry) themselves inherited on taking office. But the Government which succeeded the Palmer Government not only acknowledged a credit balance of £240,000, but forthwith proceeded to dispose of the whole of it, and at the end of two years and a-half, during which the country had enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, the Liberal party had to acknowledge a deficit of £43,000, and outstanding liabilities to the amount of £158,000. These were figures conclusively showing that the Liberal Government and their supporters were not a financial success in the colony. If Liberalism, and going-into-debtism, and not showing a credit balance while there was a time of uninterrupted prosperity in the country, were synonymous, so much the worse for Liberalism, and it certainly showed a want of success in the management of the affairs of the colony that left no hope of improvement on the part of the present Government. The Financial Statement of the Colonial Treasurer was, to his mind, extremely wanting in correctness, clearness, and comprehensiveness. Instead of being able to show at the end of the year the surplus which had been referred to, the colony would be landed in a very heavy deficit. He had alluded to the miners' rights, and the tax upon rice; the latter he held would be never obtained, nor half of it; and the miners' rights would never be collected. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer did not seem to reflect that if he drove the Chinamen out of the colony, as he desired, his revenue from that quarter would be extinct; that portion of his policy, therefore, as a revenue-returning policy, was utterly chimerical. There was, however, one portion of his policy which the Colonial Treasurer ought to have laid down, and which was of marked importance in the financial future, but which he seemed never to have thought of, and this was the effect which the present Western Railway Reserves Act and the proposed reserves for railway purposes would have upon the finances. The immense areas that were taken out by that Act would reduce the revenue of the country to an amount which the honorable gentleman had not thought of providing for; because the Act required that the sale of land for railway purposes should go to the credit of loan, and not revenue account. This he (Mr. Bell) considered was a serious objection to the theory which had been laid down for the financial future by the Colonial Treasurer. The honorable gentleman had formed his estimate, no doubt, for the purpose of making as cheerful a balance as he could make, but it was one of the greatest mistakes that a Treasurer could attempt. Again, the honorable gentleman had chosen to calculate upon his Supplementary Estimates for the year to the amount of £60,000, while

those of the preceding year amounted to about £99,000, and further estimates were expected to the amount of £25,000—and if he were wrong, he hoped the honorable the Treasurer would put him right—which would bring, instead of a surplus at the end of the financial year, a debt of something like £149,000. This would arise, as he would now explain:—The honorable gentleman, so far as he (Mr. Bell) could calculate, would lose by the change of the revenue, or what would have come to the revenue from the Southern and Western Railway Act, about £65,000; would lose upon the estimate on the proposed tax on rice, £10,000; would lose upon his miners' rights expectations, £10,000; and this, with the difference between his expected Supplementary Estimates for this year and those of the preceding year, would make altogether the £149,000 he had mentioned as the position the Colonial Treasurer would be in, instead of the credit balance which he had put before the House. If he (Mr. Bell) were right, the Colonial Treasurer, of course, must be wrong, and if the honorable gentleman were wrong, he would not be out-stepping his duty—if he had the authority of the leader of the Opposition or his honorable friends around him to propose a substantial vote, but as he had not he should not do it. Taking the financial position of the present Government, together with the hopeless snapping-up clap-trap policy, it must seem to every thoughtful man, that the future of the colony in their hands was anything but right. He believed that if the debate on the vote of want of confidence had come on after instead of before the Financial Statement, even the stout supporters of the Government, some of them at any rate, would find themselves with the Opposition force. Unless it pleased the leader of the Opposition to make a substantial motion, he (Mr. Bell) should content himself with referring to the position of the Government, and the Liberal party, as it was called, and in drawing the attention of the country to it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said, he was glad to find that the honorable member for Dalby had given the Colonial Treasurer the credit he deserved. It seemed that after all, some members on either side of the House were merely divided as to what was true liberalism, all being anxious to claim the character of Liberals, and the House had been asked to believe the honorable gentlemen opposite were the true exponents of the Liberal party. There was a difference indeed in the shades of liberalism, which were attributed to successive and existing Ministries. He was not quite sure himself that the liberalism of the honorable member for Dalby was very different from that of honorable gentlemen on the Ministerial side. However, he (Mr. Douglas) wished once more to protest against the perpetual charging upon the members of the present Government, of

the sins of either the last or previous Governments. He, for one, had no connection whatever with the late Government, but on many occasions, as honorable members were aware, stoutly opposed the policy of that Ministry; and the honorable member for Dalby would admit that whatever share he might have had in the formation of the present Government, he had no share in the formation or support of the past Government. But the Ministry, at any rate, from one point of view, inherited not only the policy of the past Government, but the policy of all previous Governments, and, therefore, they could claim even the merits of some portion of the policy of the Government with which the honorable member for Dalby himself was associated; and he for one did not wish to dis sever himself from that portion of their policy which was for the good of the country, and which it was attempted to embody in present legislation. In that respect every Ministry might be said to inherit the merits and demerits of its predecessors; but it should not be forgotten that the present Ministry were not the inheritors of the policy of any particular Government. As a Ministry that had succeeded to office under considerable difficulties, some of them were men not accustomed to the work of administration; but they could claim the right of saying that they had entered into power with the will and wish to give expression to their political convictions; but it was not exactly fair to attribute to them all the shortcomings of the previous Government. Perhaps it was to admit too much to say, that those shortcomings were very flagrant. One of the merits of the Government led by the honorable member for Port Curtis was, that it was constituted at a time when the policy of the colony was one of retrenchment, and the finances no doubt were well looked after. But there was a great want of enterprise and spirit in the conduct of the Government, and they were certainly not then progressive, and not connected with what was now considered to be a necessity of any Government in the colony, namely, a policy of public works; not until latterly did they give expression to any decided action on emigration. In the latter portion of their period of office they certainly did support that policy, because the position of the colony required it. He hoped the leader of the Opposition would accept from him a tribute at any rate of acknowledgment of the energy with which the honorable member never shrunk from his duty in the matter of emigration; for when the circumstances of the country required it, he applied himself most effectually to the work. But one of the tests of what was called Liberal government now-a-days, judging by the signs of the times, and even by the words of honorable gentlemen opposite, was a determination to spend money—to borrow money and spend it, and he hoped it was

part of their policy to spend it effectually upon public works for the purpose of opening out the country and introducing seaborne population into the colony. He took it that that was one of the tests of what is now called liberalism, and surely the honorable gentleman could not charge the present Government, with any justice, of having stolen, as he said they had done, the policy of honorable members opposite. The honorable member anticipated the policy of the Government; without giving them a day's opportunity of stating what their policy was—without giving them an opportunity of bringing in their Bills—without according to them the decent favor which men who were not guilty of really high crimes and misdemeanors might fairly claim—without granting them that fair trial, he brought forward a vote of want of confidence grounded on the fact that the Government were not identified with the Liberal policy, and that they were not a progressive Government. And the honorable gentleman did so on the mere assumption that he knew their policy, because the House had had no opportunity of judging them by their measures. What had been the position in which they found themselves placed? New to office, under very great difficulties they had to take a survey of the position of the colony; a few days after assuming office, new to one another as companions in the duties of Government, it must be admitted that they had hardly time to take a proper survey of the position of the whole colony, and with a merely superficial view of its condition they were admittedly not in a position to make such a statement of their views as might have been expected from them, and then they were charged with an insufficient idea of what their policy ought to be. But, during even the few weeks which followed upon the formation of the Government, they had some time to look into matters and see the position the different departments were in, and what they were capable of doing; and was it fair, was it just, was it true, therefore, to say that they had stolen the policy of honorable gentlemen opposite—a policy which they had certainly heard for the first time when the vote of want of confidence was brought against them? He said it was hardly fair; it was hardly just, and hardly true, to bring that as an accusation against them as a Ministry wanting in true liberalism, and wanting, as he hoped they should prove themselves not to be, in true progressive principles. If there was to be any strife as to the question of the term "liberal," he was willing to forego that. If it were admitted that the Government were identified with truly progressive principles, let them not trouble about the question as to who were and who were not liberals. There were some things in which both sides were conservative to a certain extent; but he hoped the progressiveness of the Government would be proved so long as they had the

honor of representing the majority in that House. The honorable gentleman had accused them of stealing the policy of the honorable gentleman now occupying the Speaker's chair. They had adopted the policy founded on the measure which was passed with a tolerable amount of consent on the part of the House last session, and in what respect could they have done better? They were following a policy which the House had been pleased to consider a wise one, and yet it was brought against them as a charge that therefore they were incapable of managing the finances of the colony. They had adopted a policy which had received the recognition of Parliament, and which was now in actual operation.

MR. PALMER: What is that?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The policy of the Western Railway Act. That was one of the leading measures which were passed last session, and it had now the force of law, and how could it be said that because they had followed that policy they had therefore stolen the policy of honorable gentlemen opposite? Whatever they had stolen; whatever that policy might be, it was not stolen from them, because it was not inaugurated by them. There was, at any rate, some justification in walking in the footsteps of their predecessors in that respect, and not only of their predecessors, but of Parliament itself. For himself, he stated emphatically to the honorable member for Dalby, that if he thought he (the Secretary for Public Lands) joined the present Government without due consideration and thought, and without a determination that it should be a Government both of action and progress, he was mistaken; for it was a distinct understanding between the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government and himself, that the policy which had been adopted by Parliament was to be further illustrated and practised by the present Government. It was on that distinct understanding that his honorable friend and himself originally came together—that if they were to join together as members of the same Government, the policy which the honorable the Speaker had done so much to illustrate and elaborate during the last session should be adopted by themselves; and therefore he felt bound and fully justified in giving a flat contradiction to the honorable gentleman, when he said that at the last moment, simply to gratify honorable members opposite and to pander to temporary popularity and the exigencies of the moment, the Government consented to accept a policy from the other side, which they were not themselves prepared to carry out. Before the initiation of the Government before a single step was taken for its formation, the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government and himself had a distinct and absolute agreement that they were to become united on the understanding that that policy was to be carried out. Therefore, he said, the honor-

able gentleman was in error when he attributed to him, or to any member of the present Government, a desire to simply trim their sails to what they were led to believe was the opinion of the House, or in accordance with the speeches made by honorable members opposite on the vote of want of confidence motion. With the exception of one or two honorable gentlemen, and especially the honorable member for Maranoa, he was not at all sure that honorable members opposite had anything like identical views with regard to a policy of progress and public works, which they were so fain to claim the merit of now. They would ask the colony to believe they were desirous of seeing that policy carried out, and that the Government had been driven into a corner, and had been obliged to follow their policy. He had congratulated the honorable member for Maranoa on the fact that he had given such expression as he did to the policy of progress and public works he had attempted to illustrate; but still he must affirm, that even that honorable gentleman's policy was, as yet, very undefined. The policy of that honorable gentleman as he understood it was, that he was anxious to see railways carried out throughout the length and breadth of the country, or at any rate, from two points piercing the great interior of the colony; but he was far from understanding that honorable member that he was prepared to give effect to that by immediate action on the part of himself or his party. At any rate, they had no pledge that that party was prepared to do anything more than the Government had affirmed that they were willing to do, and the time had not yet arrived to judge them by their actions. Those were sound reasons why the Government should not be accused of having stolen the indefinite policy of the honorable gentleman opposite; and as to the other act of felony which had also been attributed to them—that of stealing the policy, in the matter of expenditure for roads, of some past Government with whom the honorable gentleman had been connected—was it a very grave accusation that they should have attempted to ask the House to appropriate £100,000 for the purposes of roads and bridges, when they asked them to appropriate something like five or six times that amount for railways? Was it very monstrous that they should ask the capitalists of the old world to assist them to the extent of £100,000 for roads, when they were so bold as to ask them for assistance to the extent of perhaps another million for railways? That seemed to him to be almost a childish argument. Because it was contended a few years ago that money should not be borrowed for the purposes of making roads, in a Government with which they had no connection whatever, that was brought forward as an accusation that they had not followed in their steps, and they had seen fit to change the policy which was recognised by the previous Government, and adopt that

which had been recognised by honorable gentlemen opposite. All that seemed to him to be really trivial, and hardly worthy of the really important issues which were involved in the financial debate. He should be glad to hear the honorable member for Maranoa, who would probably follow him, and who would no doubt throw a good deal of light on the figures quoted by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. It was very desirable that they should have all the light that could be thrown upon them by honorable gentlemen opposite. At any rate, the wish of the Government was that the real financial position of the colony should be in no way in doubt or obscurity, and if the honorable member was able to throw further light upon it, by all means let him do so. The Government were most anxious that the House, the people of the colony, and the capitalists should understand exactly the position they were in; and if there were defects in connection with that position, they would be prepared to take proper steps to remedy them, and to place the finances in a better position than they were at present. For those reasons he was very glad to see that the honorable gentleman, who would probably follow him at a later hour, had taken upon himself the duty of asking for the appointment of a committee to investigate the financial affairs of the colony in a much more effectual way than they could hope to do in any debate. He hoped the honorable gentleman and his colleagues would devote themselves to the subject seriously; for he was quite sure it was one which deserved their attention, and he hoped, should this committee be found available for useful purposes during the session, that it would be perpetuated, and that the duties which the honorable members proposed to undertake this session might be as successfully carried out in future sessions, so that the House itself might exercise some control over the general financial policy of the colony in such a way that no Government or no Opposition—no mere party could control or manipulate the finances of the colony in such a way as to run them into confusion. He hoped the committee would devote themselves with some particular attention to the many subjects which had been treated by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer; and not only so, but that they would inquire into what he considered the very undesirable relations at present existing between the Audit Office and the Treasury Department. Here they saw two distinct departments, both, no doubt, honorably devoted to the service of the colony, taking very different views on most important subjects. He considered it was most undesirable that the Audit Office and the Treasury should be looked upon as conflicting and opposing departments. They certainly ought not to be so. While the Audit Office had been constituted for the purpose of preserving control over the Treasury, as the trusted servant of Parliament, it was,

he felt sure, never intended that it should ever prove a clog to the wheels of office, and render difficult and tedious what was already difficult and tedious enough, without further checks and delays. He, therefore, thought it most desirable that such a committee should be appointed. There could be no doubt that the investigations of such a committee would prove of more benefit to the colony and to future administration in both the Audit Office and the Treasury than could arise from a discursive debate such as was likely to arise upon the finances of the colony as disclosed by his honorable friend the Colonial Treasurer. He was quite sure, at any rate, however inexperienced the Government might be, that individually there was not one of them who would willingly accept the verdict that had been pronounced upon them by his honorable friend the member for Dalby. He took down that honorable gentleman's words when he characterised the Government as a reckless, hopeless, snap-trap Government. Those were the words he used; at any rate, he spoke of their policy as a wretched, hopeless, snap-trap policy, of, he supposed, a hopeless Government. Well, he could say they were not anxious to remain any longer in office than they could be of service to the majority of the House and the people of the colony, or whenever it was proved by honorable gentlemen opposite that they had lost the confidence of the House, or that they were ever personally unworthy of the confidence of the country—for really it amounted to this:—The honorable gentleman had almost accused them of a personal want of dignity and of those qualities which they ought to look for in the members of a Government; and he therefore in the strongest terms repudiated those remarks as applied to the present Government. Whatever their defects might be—they might have the defect of inexperience; they might have the defect even of details in administration, but he affirmed that they were not wanting in anxiety to do justice to the really progressive policy in which, so far as they could, justice would be done to every member of the community, and that the colony itself, and its vast and varied resources should be developed as they only could be by a vigorous and progressive policy connected with the maintenance of public works and immigration.

Mr. McILWRAITH said, the honorable gentleman who had just sat down had spoken in what he could not help taking as rather complimentary terms to himself with regard to the duty he (Mr. McIlwraith) had undertaken respecting the examination into the financial affairs of the colony. He did not know whether the honorable gentleman meant it as a compliment or not, but he wished pointedly to say, that the committee the honorable gentleman referred to was not intended, and he (Mr. McIlwraith) would take very good care it would not be simply a cloak to screen the sins of the late

Government in regard to financial matters. The suggestion the honorable gentleman made just before he sat down, had thrown an immense amount of light on the Financial Statement of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. When he looked back on that statement, he found no reason whatever given for the deficit in the financial affairs of the colony, except simply, that there was an attempt to make them believe that it had arisen from confusion in the accounts. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had the greatest desire to see the accounts of the colony put right, but he had the strongest repugnance to allowing the late Government to say, that they did not in fact misappropriate and malappropriate the revenues of the colony, and that they had only fallen into error through the bad financial system of accounts. He repudiated any idea that the Government could clear themselves of any responsibility by a committee of inquiry into the affairs of a department, and saying that accounts had been so badly kept, that really the Government could not help themselves. Before proceeding to a consideration of the Financial Statement, he would refer to the speech of the honorable the Minister for Lands right through. It was not a speech in reply to the honorable member for Dalby, but one that he ought to have delivered when the vote of want of confidence was before the House. But he did not make that speech then; they had not got the wavering members whom they were trying to secure, and therefore he did not come forward with the remarks he now made, which were in reply to statements of the honorable member for Dalby that did not form a prominent part of his speech and which left the whole of his arguments unanswered. The honorable gentleman deprecated being made answerable for the sins of the late Government; but he (Mr. McIlwraith) believed there was not a man of common sense in the House or in the country, who did not believe that the party opposite were responsible for the sins of the Liberal Government, and he maintained they ought to be held responsible; and if there was one thing more than another that went to prove that, it was the position they now occupied. The late Government, headed by Mr. Macalister, came down to the House with very long faces, and it was first hinted, and then they were obliged to confess, that the finances of the colony, which had held a high position throughout the colony for the last six years, were not in a satisfactory state. They were frightened to declare that, and it was only after a great deal of trouble that at last he elicited from them that there was a deficit. And before they actually disclosed it, what was the course pursued by the late Colonial Treasurer? He came down to the House and told them, as distinctly as possible, that there was a deficit, that it would be disclosed at the end of the financial year, and that it had been caused entirely through the

mal-administration of the Works Department, presided over by the present Speaker. That was the position that the late Government actually took. The late Colonial Treasurer came down and told them that, in as plain words as possible, or if not in the plainest words possible, in language which seemed to indicate a great deal more than the words he used, and every member of the House was prepared to hear some extraordinary disclosures in connection with the Works Department. He could refer to the members of the Press who had been studying what had been going on in the House, and who communicated the results to the public outside, to show that everybody was under the impression that great disclosures were about to be made, and that the deficit of £45,000 or, as some made it, £105,000 was to be accounted for. That was the position of the late Government, and how did this Government take up the case? They came down to the House and said there was a deficit of £43,000, but they had nothing whatever to do with it. Was it to be supposed that they were to sit there as a Parliament and actually allow the Government to carry on the affairs of the country for two years and a-half, and there was nobody to be held responsible for it? He would ask, how was it that the Government occupied the position they did? Simply because they were supposed to represent the opinions of the Liberal party, and whatever they found of the policy of that party to be of use to them, they adopted; but whenever they were called upon to answer for the mal-practices of that party, they knew nothing about them, and repudiated their actions. The honorable the Minister for Lands said they asked to borrow £100,000 for roads and bridges, and in consequence of that, the honorable member for Dalby accused them of stealing a policy. Well, the words might have been used, but he knew perfectly well, from the sense in which the honorable member for Dalby used them, there was not the slightest necessity for the Minister for Lands getting into a temper. The language was used in perfect good humor, and as for attributing any felonious intention on the part of the honorable member or the Government, he thought he need scarcely refer to it. But the honorable the Minister for Lands got into a great passion about it, which seemed to suit him lately; but he (Mr. McIlwraith) could assure him it did not improve his logic what he lost in temper. In fact, he went away from the question altogether, and did not return to it until he was about to sit down. One remark he made was, that the Liberal party should not be blamed for this policy of borrowing money for the purpose of constructing roads and bridges, simply because it had been adopted by Mr. Macalister, or Mr. Hemmant, in their Government. There might be something in that. He did not see why they should pin Mr. Douglas to the coat-tails of Mr. Macalister, and make

him swear to every opinion that Mr. Macalister had uttered during the last ten years, which would be a very difficult *role* for the honorable member to carry out. But if there was a definite course of policy that had been the distinguishing feature of the Liberal party, and that came to be changed by the party who claimed to be liberal, he said they should have the common decency, the common honesty, to come forward and say, "We have changed our policy; the late policy was so and so, and our policy is changed, and we have reasons for it." But there had not been one reason given yet, not even by the honorable the Minister for Lands, why that policy had been changed. He did not think the honorable the Minister for Lands did him justice when he said that when he moved the vote of want of confidence motion he assumed the policy of the Government, and knew really nothing of it. Now, that honorable gentleman would remember that one of the principal grounds on which he moved the vote of want of confidence was, that the Government had no public works policy, and that they were not a progressive Government, taking them even on the test which this honorable member had given as the only test of the Liberal party—which he (Mr. McIlwraith) did not admit was a proper test—that they were bound and determined to spend money. Now, he knew perfectly well that this Government did not require to come before the House with a speech from the Governor; members could not arrive at their policy in that way, and in what way could they get it? When the previous Government—the Macalister Government, were placed in similar circumstances, they took the proper course—the only course recognised by precedent here, which was to announce their policy in addressing their constituents. Mr. Macalister went to Ipswich and addressed his constituents, and so far as he (Mr. McIlwraith) remembered, that speech had always been referred to as his policy. Mr. Macalister said, "That is my policy," and it was his policy and nobody even repudiated it. He (Mr. McIlwraith), therefore, took the policy of the present Government as they got the policy of the Macalister Government, which the Liberal party, of which he was one at the time, were willing to be bound by; they were perfectly willing to be bound by the policy announced to their constituents. The honorable the Minister for Lands said they had not changed their policy, but he would read to the House what they said in addressing their constituents. The honorable the Colonial Secretary, on the 13th of June, told his constituents:—

"There were good reasons why no moneys should be voted for railways during the present session."

The honorable the Treasurer, on the next evening, June the 14th, said:—

"The present Government have determined not to enter any extensions of railways in their policy,

but would not stop public works in course of construction."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Read on.

Mr. McILWRAITH said, the honorable the Attorney-General—on the same date, said—and before he read this he should call attention to the fact that the Attorney-General was a lawyer:—

"As soon as there was a reasonable prospect that a railway would not be a useless burden on the State, such a work should be undertaken."

Then, the Premier, on June the 21st, said, at Ipswich:—

"The producing and industrial classes could not bear any further taxation for works in other parts of the colony, and before they went into other works they would have to turn the deficit into a credit balance."

That, he was afraid, was a very long way off. The Minister for Lands, on June the 26th, at Maryborough, said to his constituents:—

"He told them candidly that Government did not intend to bring forward, this session, a public works policy."

Could anything be more explicit than that? And was there the slightest ground for the honorable the Minister for Lands to come forward and tell him he knew nothing whatever about their policy, when he moved the vote of want of confidence? Why did he not come forward and tell him that on the want of confidence motion, instead of doing it in the debate on the Financial Statement? But he went further than that; and, in fact, it was only now they were getting at the Government policy. The honorable the Minister for Lands said that before he joined the Premier in the formation of the Government, they came to an absolute agreement that the railway policy of the present Speaker should be carried out. But when the Premier came to him (Mr. McIlwraith) and asked him to join the Government, he heard nothing about that. He (Mr. McIlwraith) was the most determined opponent of that railway policy at that time, and was so still, and the honorable the Premier would not dare tell him that that was the policy he should be expected to join in carrying out. There was not a word about it, and now they were told by the honorable the Minister for Lands, on whose advice the honorable the Premier went to him (Mr. McIlwraith), that when he did so, he knew there was a stipulation made between themselves that the policy of the Government was to be a policy of which he was the most determined opponent—he referred to the reserve system of constructing railways. Now, did that place them in a very nice position?—actually conspiring together and endeavoring to get him to join the Ministry without telling him that they had made a stipulation of that kind amongst themselves? Now, he was rather amused by the attack that the honorable the Minister for Lands had made upon him, of having no definite railway

policy; for if there was a man who had talked about railways to the disgust, of perhaps, enemies and friends, he thought it was himself. He believed people knew pretty well what his policy was with regard to railways, and if there was any particular point on which the honorable member would like to have information he would give it to him publicly or privately. But a matter of much more consideration to the country at this time, and what would be of far more consolation to honorable members than any private opinion on railways, or what he might do in regard to them—because possibly he would never have anything to do with railways in the colony—would be to know what the Government intended to do with those railways. They had brought in Loan Estimates amounting to £600,000 for railways, and they never said a single word about them.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear.

Mr. McILWRAITH: He was sure it was unprecedented in any Parliament that with such an important feature as the commencement of five distinct lines of railway involving an expenditure—they could not realise what it would cost, as there were no surveys, but it would take from £2,000,000 to £6,000,000—and it was unheard of, that in submitting that as a railway policy, the Government never said a single word about it. And yet the honorable the Minister for Lands taxed him with having no railway policy of his own. He had never been in a position requiring him to declare a distinct railway policy, or what lines he would make if he had an opportunity of making them; and if ever he had the chance he would certainly not be so backward as the present Government, who held back until they ascertained how votes were likely to go, and when they found it would suit them, they were prepared to state what view they would stand by. They had put down on the Loan Estimates under the head of railways:—£150,000, Warwick to the Border; £100,000, Maryborough towards Gympie; £100,000, Bundaberg towards Mount Perry; £150,000, Comet Junction towards Clermont, Great Northern railway; and £100,000, Townsville towards Charters Towers. Now, they had heard nothing whatever from the honorable the Colonial Treasurer about these, but his honorable colleague the Minister for Lands had put him (Mr. McIlwraith) in a very fair position to ask them what they meant to do with these lines. Did they mean to carry them out?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said, he had no hesitation in saying that when the proper time arrived—when the Bill, under which the Government proposed to take these powers, came on, and when the Estimates came under the notice of the House, they should be prepared with a full and explicit statement.

Mr. McILWRAITH said, the effect of the honorable gentleman's explanation was, that the Government would tell them nothing about it. He accused him (Mr. McIlwraith) of having no railway policy, and when he pointed out distinctly that they had none—that they had merely put down certain items without giving any reasons for doing so—and asked them to come forward, straightforwardly and honestly, and state what their policy was, he said, "I will tell you nothing about it; we will tell you when it suits ourselves." He could see, however, that the Government were making up their minds to a railway policy; he could see that in more ways than one. One thing that had confused him more than another was to find out what "Liberal" was, and he had found it out from the speech of the honorable the Treasurer. That honorable gentleman told them as plainly as possible, that a Liberal was a man who spent as much money as possible. That, of course might have been a slip, but he not only said it, but went on to prove it. When deploring the depressed condition of the country, he said, "There is not the least doubt we are in a bad state; wool is down, and when wool is down, everything goes down, and there is a bad state of things all round;" but, he said, "There is not the slightest doubt there is a great future before the colony"—and why? Because they had spent so much money in the Post Office, so much in railways, and so much in this way and that; but he forgot one thing, and that was, where the money was to come from. It was all very well to say a man was Liberal because he spent money; that was the easiest part of it. The great thing was to find out where the money was to come from, and the way in which it had gone after it was spent, both of which duties the present Government seemed to want to ignore altogether. He did not intend to proceed to examine the Financial Statement just yet, and to show the honorable the Colonial Treasurer's idea of progress, and how thoroughly it was corroborated by the honorable the Minister for Lands, he should read what he said—

"But we must not shut our eyes to the fact that the progress and settlement of the colony is now synonymous with the progress of expenditure. Our revenue may increase, and no doubt the advance which I have to-night pointed out will still go on; but in addition, it cannot well be doubted that the increase of expenditure will be fully maintained."

Now, there could be no doubt that the expenditure would be fully maintained, but whether that was synonymous with liberalism and progress was another thing altogether. Referring again to the miserable condition of the colony at the present time, he said:—

"I think it may be asserted, that the colony has made general progress during the past twelve months. We find that, notwithstanding the vicissitudes which have beset some of our prin-

cipal producing interests, notwithstanding the great fluctuation which has taken place in the wool market at home, and the present depressed price of that most valuable staple of export, it must be conceded, that during the last twelve months the colony has made very considerable progress."

Now, what was the progress?—

"We find that during the past year our Electric Telegraph lines have been extended to 5,229 miles, or 337 miles more than they were in the previous year; and that our Postal Services have been extended over 14,702 miles, as against 13,925 in the previous year, being an increase of 777 miles. The land taken up by selection during the past six months has amounted to 290,015 acres as against 198,641 acres taken up in the first six months of 1875, and the number of runs has increased from 609 in 1874 to 696 in 1875. Then, again, in 1874 there were 29,012 children attending the public schools, whereas last year that number was increased to 33,643, whilst the increase of schools has been 231, as against 230. These figures, I submit, all indicate that notwithstanding the vicissitudes through which several of its most important interests are passing, the colony is still making solid and substantial progress."

There was not a single element of progress, except the progress that depended on the expenditure of money; and when they turned over to the other side of the ledger and looked to see whether they had actually got money to carry out these things, they found there was a deficit. There was not a word about that; it was all about progress. But it must be perfectly plain to any man of business that all this was stopped as soon as a deficit was declared; and if, instead of trying to make that deficit right, they took up the present watchword of "progress," how was progress to be made? They said, "We are Liberals; we are bound to stand by the correct ticket, and that is to spend money;" and the result would be that they would not have children at school, nor postal services extended in the several districts, nor electric telegraphs extended. And if those things were stopped by their action, he said they thoroughly ignored the principles of progress, and as long as they did that, instead of being Liberals, they were the greatest enemies of progress. There were some remarks he had made, in reply to a statement put forward by the honorable Minister for Lands, which it was possible he had not made clear enough, and which he would therefore reiterate in as few words as possible. It was in regard to that honorable gentleman's reference to the work proposed to be done by the committee which had been appointed to examine into the financial position of the colony. Taking the statements of that honorable member with those put forward by the honorable Colonial Treasurer in his Financial Statement, he had come to the conclusion, that there was a disposition on the part of the Government to burke the responsibility of the real financial position of

the colony and to delegate it to others; but he considered that the financial position of the colony was something very different; it had nothing to do with the Treasurer's department and the Auditor-General's reports of the accounts of the colony. He had stated before, and he would do so again, that he looked with the greatest reliance and confidence upon every statement from the Treasury, and also with the greatest confidence upon every report from the Auditor-General; but what he had moved for, was the devising of some means by which those two departments would work harmoniously together and give proper information to Parliament at the right time. He did not complain of the information that was received from the Treasury, but only that they did not get it when they wanted it, and that it was put before them in such a manner that they could understand from it what was the exact financial position of the colony. He hoped honorable members would thoroughly understand him. He received the statements of the Treasury with the most thorough confidence, and now wished to show the position of the colony from the actual data put forward by the Treasury and Audit Office themselves. He thought he had answered the statements of the honorable Minister for Lands, who perhaps got a little warm on the subject, although the idea of a man getting hysterical on a Financial Statement, was something new to him; and having disposed of the arguments put forward by that honorable member, he would now refer to the Financial Statement made about a fortnight ago by the honorable Colonial Treasurer. That honorable gentleman had then commenced his statement in a style which was certainly not borne out by any facts adduced by him further on. He certainly thought that the tone of depression in which the honorable gentleman commenced his address, should have been borne out by statements, and that it would have been followed by some remedy. The honorable member had tried to make the committee understand that the colony was in a particularly bad position at the present time, and it was only natural for honorable members to have expected that some remedy would have been proposed, but the honorable member carefully avoided pointing out any course that would be likely to relieve it from its position. The honorable gentleman had stated that :—

“On the present occasion there are special circumstances which conduce to make the statement particularly interesting to the colony, for we find, sir, that after a period of two and a-half years of prosperity we appear to have arrived at a time when a reaction has set in, by which the Treasury, instead of presenting a surplus, shows a deficiency of £48,000, and when there also exists in the minds of many an undefined feeling of apprehension as to the future, and that we have now entered upon one of those cycles of depression which so frequently occur in colonial life.”

And then with regard to any apprehensions of the future, the only reference that was made to it by the honorable gentleman was the expression of an opinion based upon his own experience and knowledge of business in the colony that the present depression might be only temporary—that although there was great dulness in trade, and a great fall in the price of wool, the markets might soon recover from their present depressed state, and greater confidence be restored. Notwithstanding that, the honorable member still led honorable members to think that the colony was in a very bad position after all, although if he had adhered to his figures the inference would be that it was not; indeed, if the honorable gentleman had stuck to those figures, his apprehensions as to the depressing state of affairs would be relieved. Looking at the revenue and the increase in it for the last three years, what did they find? Why, that in 1874 there was an increase of £40,913; in 1875, £103,000; in 1876, up to June 30, £120,000. Now, according to the honorable member's own calculation, he expected to obtain, without any additional taxation, and without any special circumstances distinguishing the current from the past, £126,731, and surely that was not a state of things that would bear out the honorable gentleman's view of the present financial position of the colony, the depression of which appeared to be the principal feature in the Financial Statement. But he could make out a still stronger case, for the honorable member had proposed an increased taxation, by which he expected to get £27,985, and, allowing for the reduced stamp duty, that would bring up the total increase of revenue to £154,716. Now, he could see nothing in that to indicate any cause of depression; yet the honorable gentleman constantly, throughout his statement, had deplored the depressed state of the colony, although his own figures proved that it was an utterly different position. He had studied very carefully the tables accompanying the Financial Statement, and must acknowledge that honorable members had been supplied with a great deal more information than they had ever been supplied with before by any Colonial Treasurer, at least during his experience as a member of that House. He directed special attention to Tables G, H, and I, which were founded on the basis that Parliament should understand from the statement, the actual state of the financial position at the time the Financial Statement was made, and not have before them only the ordinary debtor and creditor account of the revenue coming in and the money going out. What they wanted to know was, the actual liability of the colony, more particularly at the time the Financial Statement was made; but they had never been supplied with that before, having it now only for the first time. Had they got such a statement in the previous year, he believed they would have made much greater progress; that was, that he thought

the two sides of the House would have come to a much better understanding with regard to how the government of the country was to be carried on. He had always been satisfied that they could never arrive at a proper knowledge of the financial position of the colony until tables, such as those he had mentioned, were produced; and so satisfied had he been of that, that he had taken steps, in the previous year, before the Financial Statement was made, to elicit from the then Treasurer the information now given by Table G. He knew that the late Treasurer had no intention of giving that information, till he (Mr. McIlwraith) tabled a motion which would be found in the Votes and Proceedings for 1875, page 967, as follows:—

"1. A return showing the amounts paid out of the Consolidated Revenue of 1874 for works and services voted for previous years.

"2. A return showing the amounts for services and works voted for 1874, and not expended, but liable to be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue of future years."

That was exactly the information which the House had got in the three tables supplied by the present honorable Colonial Treasurer. That return he had not been able to obtain in time for the purpose of replying to the late Treasurer's Financial Statement, but that gentleman had, when pressed, furnished him with a memorandum of the approximate amounts which were necessary for the purpose of his argument. From those data he had calculated the position in which the colony then stood, and his calculations had proved to be correct, the honorable Treasurer having now shown it to be exactly what he (Mr. McIlwraith) had then predicted it would be, namely, that up to the end of March last, there would be a deficit of £23,000, and a much larger deficit in June. He had been forced into a long argument on that occasion, extending over several pages of "Hansard," insisting upon a deficit existing, and Mr. Hemmant had replied in a few words, saying they had heard all that before, or something to that effect. His reply was not published in "Hansard," as the House was in committee. Yet, if the information had then been given, it would have prevented the accounts from being in the bad position in which they were at the present time. He had then told the Government that there would be a deficit of £23,000, and tried to prove by every argument he could use, that there would be the deficit which had been stated by the present honorable Treasurer actually existed; but he was not listened to by the gentlemen then on the Treasury benches, nor would they admit that the tables would be beneficial. He had then given the Government every advantage of the estimated revenue and expenditure relied on by them, and had come to the conclusion he had already mentioned; but the very arguments he had then used had been employed by the present honorable Treasurer for a very different purpose. That honorable member

had to account for a cash deficit in the Consolidated Revenue accounts, and he used his arguments of last year, to show that had the accounts been made out on his (Mr. McIlwraith's) plan, which he now adopted, there would have been a deficit then and a surplus now. He thought the House would understand him in the elaboration of that subject, and the honorable Treasurer had not only come to exactly the same opinion, but had actually made the case much stronger by increasing the amount of deficit for the last year. He would read what the honorable member had himself said:—

"On the 1st of January, 1874, the excess of liability over assets was £108,394 11s. 7d.; on the same date in 1875, £150,240 6s. 8d.; 1st July, 1875, £186,176 1s. 1d.; and on the 1st of July in the present year, £157,434 12s. 11d. The difference, therefore, between this last sum and the liability on the 1st January, 1874, was £49,139, being the exact sum by which the services authorised by the late Government exceeded the revenue during the term of their administration, namely, two years and a-half. This excess on the 1st January, 1875, was £41,946; on the 1st July, 1875, £77,881, and that was during the last twelve months reduced to the sum before stated, namely, £49,139."

So that £77,881 was the amount of deficit which the late Treasurer should have shown in his account last year, in lieu of a credit balance. It only proved that he (Mr. McIlwraith) had been perfectly correct in the form of account he had insisted in having put before the House last year, and in the view he then took of the actual state of the finances; and he was only sorry that it had been put forward on the present occasion when the Government were compelled to give some reason for the deficit of £43,000, which of course was a question of the greatest interest to honorable members. Now, the first duty of a Treasurer was to explain the financial operations of the past year, and they knew from the tables before them that those had resulted in a deficit of £43,000. He had looked with very great care through the whole of the honorable Treasurer's statement to find out the cause of that deficit, and although the honorable gentleman had gone over a wide scope, commencing with the acceptance of office by the Liberal Government in 1874, and had given various reasons, yet, on reading them over, he (Mr. McIlwraith) had not been able to find that any substantial reasons had been given for such deficit. The honorable gentleman said:—

"Now, sir, in 1874 the House was composed of a large number of new members. The Electoral Districts Bill had just been put in operation, and the consequence was, that the number of members to this House was largely increased. I have no doubt that we were all rather sanguine in our expectations of the ensuing year with regard to finance, especially as we found a surplus of £240,000 stood at the credit of the Revenue Account, which could afford to be written off; and not only that, but I have no doubt honorable

members had their own individual wants—the wants of their own districts to impress upon the Government, and to urge upon them to make provision for such wants. In this way, probably, rose a large provision on the Estimates of 1874 for the services of public works in that year.”

Incidentally the honorable member referred to the same thing in two or three places, but not sufficiently to make his reasoning any clearer by quoting such references; but afterwards he had given a clearer reason why the deficit had arisen, for he said :—

“To account for over-expenditure, I will state that the total sum on account of Roads and Bridges, which I have referred to previously as having been enlarged in 1874, was in this way :—In 1871, the sum was £38,690 ; in 1872, £43,597 ; in 1873, £41,047. This brings us to the end of 1873 ; I will ask the committee to pay attention to the amounts voted under the same head, in the following years :—In 1874, it was £154,184 ; during the six months of 1875 it was £46,030 ; and in 1876 it will be £74,955—showing an annual average revenue appropriated for the services of Roads and Bridges of £41,111 for the three years ending 1873, whilst for the two and a-half years just passed, the annual average has been £110,067.”

And then the honorable member gave another reason :—

“In addition to these causes of deficiency in the Treasury balances at the present time, I would direct attention to the accumulation of interest on the public debt, a portion of which was not provided for in the Estimates brought down to the House last session.”

Those were all the reasons given for the deficit, and he would ask, whether they were sufficient for the Treasurer of a Government, which went into office two years and a-half ago with a credit balance of £240,000, and who now informed the House that there was a deficit of £43,000 ? The whole thing showed an error. If the honorable member had taken Education instead of Public Works, he would have had as strong an argument for the extravagance or abolition of that department ; for there the expenditure for 1871 was £36,217 ; 1872, £38,249 ; 1873, £46,561—or an average annual expenditure of £40,342. In 1874 the sum was £77,567 ; during the six months of 1875, £40,615 ; and in 1875-6, £101,009—or an average annual increase of £87,676. That was the same argument as that from public works. He would use it further, however, and he thought that the following considerations ought to bring honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches to a sense of what he considered to be the foundation of the matter, in connection with over expenditure. In the Colonial Secretary's department, the expenditure was—in 1871, £201,880 ; in 1872, £223,984 ; in 1873, £260,386 ; or an average annual increase of £228,783. In 1874, the expenditure was £322,835 ; for the half-year of 1875, £158,491 ; and for 1875-6, £852,601 ; thus showing an average increase during the last two and

a-half years of £112,257 in one department, which the honorable Treasurer had not thought it worth while to mention. This increase of £112,250 would cover the deficit three times over. This was the place to find out to where the enormous amount of money had been going. There was nothing but the Education department which could be called reproductive, and the money was squandered over the country for police, and in a dozen other ways. The increase in this department alone should make the Parliament pause, and consider what the colony was coming to. It was not a paltry amount spent on the repairs and creation of roads and bridges that was to make all the difference, but the enormous amounts going into the departments.

HONORABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear.

Mr. McILWRAITH said, to make his argument a little stronger, he would take the Colonial Treasurer's own figures for the two years and a-half during which the Liberal party were in power. He might call them Liberal now, for though he had grudged them the name a long time, he did so no longer ; for liberalism was, in the words of the Ministry, synonymous with expenditure. What was the average increase during the two and a-half years of the Liberal administration ? The average increase in the Colonial Secretary's department alone was £112,257 ; and the average increase on roads and bridges which were said to be the ruin of the colony was £68,956, not much more than half—these facts spoke for themselves. The honorable the Treasurer made an admission, which he however (Mr. McIlwraith) never believed in, namely, that figures might be made to prove anything. His belief was, that no sounder reasons could be got than from figures ; it was in the conclusions that the danger lay, for often, though the figures were correct, the conclusions were erroneous. Respecting the enormous increase of expenditure that had taken place in the colony generally, he would ask the attention of the House to the following figures :—The expenditure in 1873 was £954,856, but in 1875-6, the last financial year, it was £1,314,931, showing an increase of £360,075. Contrast this with the revenue during the same period. In 1873 it was £1,124,107, and in 1875-6, £1,288,375, showing an increase of only £164,270. He would ask any honorable member to put these increases before any Treasurer, or any person who had considered the financial position of the country, let him study those balances, and then ask himself, as a common-sense man, whether he was not bound to come to the conclusion that the deficit might be easily accounted for from them ? The figures could not be gainsayed ; there had been an increase in revenue during the two and a-half years of £164,270, and they had to contrast with that an increase of expenditure of £360,075 at a time when the revenue had been increasing, and increasing in a way to

gratify every man who considered himself a Queenslander. It was so good that it could not, under the circumstances, be wished for to be better; still it had been nothing to the increase of the expenditure in the colony. The House ought to have had a lucid account from the Treasurer as to how this deplorable state of things had come about, and a suggested remedy for the evil; but instead of dealing with these facts, and stating them as plainly as he (Mr. McIlwraith) had done, the Colonial Treasurer tried to prove his position by arguments which vanished when figures were brought to bear on them. He put these facts before the Ministry, and dared them to come to the proper conclusion. He maintained that the present Ministry was one that, by extraordinary and extravagant departmental expenditure, had reduced the country to such a pass, that they were not able to carry on the Government of the country with the revenue, and what they in effect proposed to Parliament was this:—"We admit our position, and we want to borrow £100,000 to help us out of our difficulty." That, in plain terms, was the whole of the financial policy of the present Government. The honorable the Minister for Lands had been very severe upon the Opposition for considering that they (the Ministry) ought to have the opinions of their predecessors. The opinions of their predecessors, however, they ought to consider with, at least, a good deal of respect. Some of those honorable gentlemen were very sound thinking men, and he had a great respect for them. He had a great respect for the ability of the late Colonial Secretary, and the Treasurer, and thought the opinions enunciated by those honorable members were not to be lightly thrown aside, for they long represented the Liberal party. The present Government, however, said they were not going to be responsible for what the Liberal party had done years before. He held that as the Liberal party had changed their opinions on what had always been one of the distinguishing points of their creed, they ought in coming before the House to give very strong reasons indeed for what they did. This theory of borrowing money for roads and bridges he had opposed ever since he had been in the House, and he had not changed his opinion. He believed there was no course more ruinous than what was proposed, and that it would land them in a difficulty from which they would have great trouble in extricating themselves. He could quote other leaders of the Liberal party, besides Mr. Hemmant, already quoted by another speaker, who were entitled to great respect, and amongst others he would mention the late member for Fortitude Valley; but what he wanted to call attention to was put perhaps more tersely by the late Colonial Secretary than any one else, and he would quote his words to the House. The occasion upon which the late Colonial Secretary made these remarks, was on a proposition made by the honorable member for

Dalby to remit £100,000 of taxation, and borrow the money. That was the real meaning of the motion in 1874, to remit a certain amount of taxation, and borrow the money for roads and bridges, and a definite proposal was put before Parliament to that effect. On account, however, of some difficulties that occurred, the motion was never actually put; but that it would have been lost by an overwhelming majority there was no doubt, for there was not a single speaker on the Liberal side of the House who did not oppose the proposition. What did the Premier at that time say?—

"The honorable member had started another point, and had proposed that instead of the £240,000 being refunded to the loan, £100,000 should be expended in making and repairing the roads and bridges of the colony.

"The honorable member, in support of his proposition, stated that it was one, the principle of which had been confirmed by that House; but that, he (the Colonial Secretary) denied. He was perfectly aware that there had been one Parliament in which that proposition was carried, but he was proud to say that ever since the establishment of Queensland that had been the only Parliament that had done such a thing."

A stronger deprecation of the plan of borrowing money for the purpose of making roads and bridges could not have been uttered. The late Colonial Secretary, as was his custom sometimes, got quite eloquent, and on that occasion he was applauded by the members on his own side of the House. Now, the present Government, representing the Liberal party, as they were continually telling the House and country, had, without announcing their reasons, changed their opinions, and came forward and perfectly ignored all that had been done in previous days. Having thus tried to throw some light upon the financial position of the colony during the past two and a-half years, which he held the Treasurer himself had wholly failed to do, he would come to examine the honorable gentleman's propositions with regard to the future. The honorable gentleman estimated that there would be an increase in the revenue of £126,731 for the present financial year, without taking into consideration at all the increased taxation which was estimated in the Financial Statement at £27,985, and amongst the items that made up this increase he would only direct the attention of the House to those of the largest magnitude which made up the bulk of the gross amount. He might presume that the increase expected generally, was from three heads. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer expected £40,290 additional from Customs, £11,341 rents of runs, and £42,889 from railways. In speaking of the item of £40,000 as the expected increase in the Customs revenue, the honorable gentleman was kind enough to let the House so far into his confidence as to tell them that his opinion was backed up by the opinion of the depart-

ment over which he presided, and in fact, that they were rather inclined to say that it was an under estimate. It was very undesirable to make a remark of that kind, because it threw doubts upon the estimated increases in other departments as to which the honorable gentleman did not take the House into his confidence. It would have been better if the honorable gentleman had informed the House with which of the other increases the department had coincided. The very fact, that the honorable gentleman had quoted the confirmatory opinion of one department only, was enough to make them look with considerable doubt, and ask whether there might not be some very important matter upon which the honorable gentleman was acting entirely on his own judgement, and without the approval of the departments. There was the expected increase of £42,899 on railways for example; although he had the highest opinion of the honorable Treasurer as a business man, he had not much opinion of his estimate of what was likely to accrue from railways, especially in districts with which he was but slightly acquainted himself. It would have gone a great way with him (Mr. McIlwraith) in accepting his authority, if the honorable gentleman informed them that his opinion was backed by that of the department. This was a reason why he thought the remark about the Customs increase was ill-advised, and why the House had a right to feel disappointed. Some of the reasons given for the expected increase in Customs were very bad indeed. We were, the honorable gentleman told us, to anticipate a great increase of revenue to the Customs because of the floods, which had forced a large stock of goods to remain in bond. That would be a first-rate argument when applied once, but the honorable member evidently forgot that exactly the same argument was used by the late Treasurer last year when accounting for the reason why his anticipated increase in the Customs revenue had not taken place. The late Colonial Treasurer stated that the revenue had not come up to the Estimates, because the floods had prevented the goods from coming out of bond, and that this would be all duly acknowledged next year. That acknowledgment, however, had not appeared in the present Financial Statement. There was a well-known practice current amongst people in London who had to do with public companies; directors at the meetings would apologise to the shareholders for the smallness of the dividend, by the dreadful floods in Australia. Next year they tried the floods again; but one of the directors, more wily than the rest, remarked, "We have tried floods twice, let us now have a turn at the droughts." It would have been better if the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, the other night, had tried a drought, or something else that would have had more common sense in it, than the bringing forward of floods on two successive years.

If the honorable the Treasurer had analysed the increase in revenue for the year just ended, and inquired how it occurred, he would probably have come to a totally different conclusion than that he was justified in estimating the probable increase for the present year at £41,000. The increase in the revenue from Customs last year was £18,544, and the honorable gentleman argued from that that it would be increased in proportion during the current year. How did that increase of £18,544 accrue? He found that Brisbane had not aided in that increase, except to a very limited extent; Rockhampton had contributed £6,425; Cooktown £12,395; so that, in round numbers, the whole of that increase last year was from two causes which possibly might not operate at all during the present year—namely, an increase of trade in the western pastoral district, and an increase from the Palmer rush. How could the honorable Treasurer conclude that there would be a similar increase this year, because of a big rush to a new gold field? And it was not another rush of itself that would do it, but another rush added on to that of last year. Who could predict that this would take place? It was a thing, at all events, that no Treasurer ought to calculate upon. He might as well calculate upon a large rush in the Gympie district, and put down an expected increase in the Customs revenue there. He repeated, that the increased revenue of last year was derived mainly from an exceptional source, that was to say, the Customs revenue from Cooktown, induced by the large rush of miners to the Hodgkinson gold field, and an industry which the Government had taken their best means of depreciating, namely, the squatting industry, which had increased the revenue of Rockhampton. The fall in wool would do much towards stopping this, and the honorable gentleman was mistaken if he thought the revenue would be increased considerably from that source for some time. He had no hesitation in saying that there had been a very large amount over-estimated on that item alone. There was another item which he should be inclined to dispute, notwithstanding the confident opinion expressed by the Colonial Treasurer—namely, that respecting pre-empted purchases. The amount the honorable gentleman anticipated depended a good deal upon what he was pleased to call the squeezability of the squatters; but there could be no doubt that the fall in the price of wool would have a most serious effect upon the item, and would prevent it from being looked upon as a permanent addition. The rents of runs were also over-estimated. He, himself, could strike out £5,000, which he knew would be forfeited on account of the depressed squatting industry, arising from the cause he had mentioned and other causes. He believed this item was over-estimated by as much as £8,000 or £10,000. With regard to the estimated income from railways, as the hon-

orable the Colonial Treasurer had given no reasons for anticipating that increase, he might content himself by saying that he did not at all agree with the calculations upon which the item was based, and that they were another instance of over-estimating. If the honorable gentleman examined the composition of the Railway revenue, he would see that the same causes that depressed the general industries of the colonies would have a very direct effect upon the railway receipts. He sincerely hoped they would keep up to the estimated amount, but looking at the exceptional character of the present condition of the colony, he could not believe that they would. The honorable gentleman had anticipated a large amount of traffic from the opening of the line from Brisbane to Ipswich; he (Mr. McIlwraith) believed that the increase of the passenger traffic would be very considerable, but that the good effects of this had been experienced already in last year's revenue. The amount of traffic anticipated from goods would, no doubt, from the charges which had been imposed, prove to be very considerable; but the Government would find that the railway would be worked without a profit. In that case, although the honorable gentleman might realise a revenue, he must expect it to be counterbalanced by a large increase of expenditure that would arise. They might get the revenue, but it would be at the expense of the Railway department; and this would be seen in the shape of Supplementary Estimates that would be quite as embarrassing to the Treasurer in his next Financial Statement, as some other items of a similar description. He had now criticised the main items where increases had been anticipated in the Estimates, and he would next come to notice a feature that betrayed a want of faith in the Government's own success in legislation this session, and that was the complete way in which their proposed legislation was ignored in the probable revenue of the coming year. There were on the table of the House at the present time resumptions in the settled districts, and those resumptions he (Mr. McIlwraith) privately understood—for the matter had not been spoken out publicly in Parliament, and he only elicited it by information got in the department—included the whole of the settled districts. If that were so, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer must be perfectly alive to the fact that the rents paid by those who held them ceased, once the resumptions took place, and that the only thing to balance the loss of rents would be the additional amount received from the selections taken up; and, from their previous experience, the receipts never came up to what was lost in the Treasury, and the amounts got from the first year's receipts would not be sufficient to cover the squatters' rents which they had given up. But there was a much more serious point than even this, and it was one of the prominent portions of their

policy: it was proposed to put a large portion of the lands of the colony into railway reserves, and the result would be of course, that the money received from rents, no matter in what way, after that time, except it accrued from the rents of runs, went into a special railway fund, and did not go into the Consolidated Revenue of the colony. If the honorable the Treasurer turned to one of his own estimates he would, in the Trust Balances, see for himself the argument now advanced—and it was a point the honorable gentleman did not comment upon, as if he had lost sight of it; he (Mr. McIlwraith) referred to the sum of £10,459 appearing as an item of Western Railway Account. That was an amount actually withdrawn from the revenue; in other words, extraordinary circumstances the land would have been sold, and the amount would have gone to Consolidated Revenue, and assisted to reduce the deficit of £43,823. He was astonished that the honorable the Treasurer had not seen that, because, as Treasurer, it was his special duty to put the true state of the finances before the country; and he ought to have pointed out that under ordinary circumstances, before the Bill passed, the deficit would be reduced by this amount of £10,000, which was actually taken away from the consolidated revenue of the colony. They could, therefore, form some kind of estimate of what the effect would be if the policy which the Government proposed to carry out this session was actually carried out; and from the fervor with which the honorable the Minister for Lands gave his adherence to that system of constructing the railways of the colony, he had no doubt he would do all he possibly could to see that policy carried out. The effect of it would be this:—There would be several districts of the colony from which large rents were received under the Acts of 1868 and 1866, and possibly other Acts, that would be handed over to the trust account and actually withdrawn from the consolidated revenue. For instance, a great portion of the Maryborough and Bundaberg districts, all the land in the Tenningering, Gympie, Townsville, Warwick, Stanthorpe, Clermont, and Springsure districts—all the rents from those lands at the present time would be taken out of the consolidated revenue of the colony, and appear next year in trust account, and that would represent a large deficiency in the general revenue. What did this prove? It proved that the Ministry were incompetent to see the effect of the measures they proposed, or that they had not the slightest intention of carrying them out.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, Hear.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that having shown in what points the revenue of the colony had been over-estimated by the honorable the Treasurer, and having also tried to show, in addition, the causes that would help to

reduce it still further, and of which that honorable gentleman had taken no cognizance, he would now allude to another matter which had come under his attention, not so much from what the honorable the Treasurer had said, as from what he had left unsaid. He referred to the question of railways. The honorable the Treasurer had put a great deal of information before them, from which important conclusions might be drawn, but that honorable gentleman did not draw them. He (Mr. McIlwraith) could say that during the whole time he had listened to the honorable the Treasurer he had never heard a remark from him laudatory of a public works policy, but they had heard him on two or three occasions speak in a deprecating way of that policy. For instance, when commenting on the immigration table, he said there were 2,500 immigrants for this year, and that the ordinary market would absorb all the labor that was coming into the colony, without going into further public works. The other conclusion he drew from the tables put before them, was the extraordinary one that railways were a great deal less profitable in Queensland than in Victoria. He (Mr. McIlwraith) called his attention at the time he was drawing the conclusion, that it was not at all borne out by the facts, but he paid no attention to it, but simply repeated the statement. His statement was, that in Victoria the public works revenue was 26 per cent. of the gross revenue of the colony, and that in Queensland the public works revenue was only 13 per cent. of the total revenue, and his conclusion was, that therefore railways did not pay so well here as in Victoria. He led them to suppose they paid in the proportion of 13 as compared with 26 per cent.; and he (Mr. McIlwraith) had only to state the argument to show that it was absurd on the face of it. He would not go to the trouble of refuting it, because it was quite unnecessary to do so, and he only referred to it to show the rich material there was in the table if the honorable gentleman had only studied it. He had got a great deal of sound information from that table, but very little from the deduction of the honorable the Treasurer. He referred to Table P, which in addition to giving the railway revenue, also gave the territorial revenue of the colonies of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia; and under the head of land sales the following figures were given as the revenue of the different colonies for the year ending on the 31st December, 1875:—Victoria, £286,168; New South Wales, £1,186,872; Queensland, £85,011; and South Australia, £177,530. Now, on looking at this table, and also at the fact that railways were mentioned in that table, and the fact that the honorable the Treasurer drew from it the conclusion depreciatory of the railways of this colony, it struck him that from the fault of not studying his own tables, that honorable gentleman had not drawn a proper lesson from the information it con-

tained. In New South Wales the land revenue was £1,186,000 last year, whereas in Queensland it was only £85,000, and he would ask him, how that arose? It arose from the fact that Victorian enterprise in railways on the one hand, and the Almighty having placed a navigable river along Riverina on the other, had enhanced the value of lands in New South Wales. That accounted for the fact that they could raise such a large land revenue, whereas in Queensland they could raise only a very small revenue from that source. The conclusion he had drawn was this:—That they should try to attain the same position artificially that New South Wales had to some extent naturally, by making railroads through the rich lands of the colony. It was nature and the Victorian railroads that had given value to the land of New South Wales. The honorable the Treasurer had failed to draw the right conclusion from that table, and it seemed to him that he failed because he had no faith in a policy which ought to be a strong point in the Ministerial programme. But the honorable gentleman appeared to be more hopeful when estimating the probable traffic on present railways, and he (Mr. McIlwraith) would put a calculation before him in connection with Table L which ought to throw some light on the subject. Taking his present estimate, he placed the gross railway receipts for next year at £195,000, and the gross expenditure at £107,326, leaving a balance of £87,674 as the net proceeds of the railways of the colony. That was for the 272 miles of railway now at work, and if that 272 miles had been made at £8,000 per mile, or if the next 272 miles could be made for that, as he had not the slightest doubt it could, the result would be that they would be getting a little more than four per cent. on the capital invested; and he thought that was an argument from his own estimates that the honorable the Treasurer ought to have directed the attention of the House to. The next point he had to refer to were the remarks of the honorable the Treasurer in regard to immigration, when speaking of Table K. The honorable gentleman read a large portion of the table, and said very little about it, but there was matter in it for very serious consideration. They all knew that they had gone to very considerable expense in sending immigration lecturers to the old country, and the course adopted by the Government in appointing those lecturers had never been approved of by that House; and it was an exemplification of the evils that crept in under the expenditure of loan money by the Government, who could do a thing in the recess, get it condoned by a certain number of members, and so clear themselves when they came before Parliament. If the amounts of these salaries had been brought before Parliament, he did not believe there would be any immigration lecturers in England at the present time.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. McILWRAITH said they had, in the course of general debates on other subjects, elicited from the late Treasurer why these lecturers had been appointed, and the reason given was, that at that time there was a very small proportion of full-paying immigrants, and it was with the object of increasing them by inducing people to pay their own passages that the lecturers were sent home. Now, they would reasonably expect to find some results from this on the table before them, but they did not appear. The full-paying passengers, in 1873, was 9 per cent.; in 1874, 7 per cent.; for the six months ending the 30th of June, 1875, 7 per cent.; and for the year ending on that date, 7 per cent.; so that it seemed, on the whole, to be pretty much the same. It was believed at the time that the sending home of lecturers would not have the desired effect, and so it had proved. He knew perfectly well that it would be argued in reply, that if they had not succeeded in increasing the number of full-paying passengers, they had induced a larger number of assisted passengers to come out, and the figures bore that out. In 1873, the number of assisted passengers was 27 per cent.; in 1874, it was reduced to 20 per cent.; during the first six months of 1875 it increased to 22 per cent.; and for the year ending on the 30th of June, 1876, to 36 per cent.; showing a large increase during the last year. Now, he would like the honorable the Treasurer to explain what it cost the colony by an assisted passenger coming out, compared with a free passenger. If he explained it otherwise than by showing it was a great loss to the colony, he (Mr. McIlwraith) would give him credit for being a better financier than he thought him to be. An assisted passenger paid, say £4 at home, and £12 in the colony within twelve months, and he got a £20 land order, which the Government took as payment for £20 worth of land. That was, in fact, £4, or 100 per cent., for the use of £4 for about twelve months. The system was completely rotten. The only reason why lecturers had been appointed was certainly not borne out by the facts. Now, he could not sit down, in justice to his colleagues, who were members of the same Ministry as himself in 1874, without defending them in the course they adopted, and which he considered, in ordinary decency, out to have been done by some of the honorable gentlemen now on the Government benches. He referred to the course of action they took in 1874, in dealing with the surplus revenue, and in increasing so largely the expenditure on public works. At that time, they entered office with the surplus revenue to the extent of £240,000, and they took a large amount of that and dealt with it as if it had been money borrowed for the construction of permanent works; it had been devoted entirely to the purposes of permanent works, for which alone he believed they were

justified in borrowing money. At the same time, they saw that in previous years there had been an increase in the revenue of the colony to the amount of £167,000. In order to prevent the finances of the colony being deranged, and for the additional reason, as was stated by the then Treasurer and fully commented on by the present Treasurer, that it would be unwise to reduce taxation by the tariff all at once, because it would interfere with vested interests in the shape of large stocks held by merchants, they decided to reduce it gradually. It was a matter of anxious consideration on the part of the Ministry before they came before the House, what they should do, and they determined to, in the first place, reduce taxation, so that in the course of twelve months they would abolish five per cent. of the *ad valorem* duties. This proposed gradual reduction of the tariff left them with a larger amount in hand than they could expect in succeeding years, when the complete reduction had taken effect, and they came to the conclusion to spend it on roads and bridges, and as an additional reason for adopting that course, which told completely with the House, they promised—and it was a most prominent part of their policy—to bring in a Districts Government Bill providing for local revenue and local expenditure for those purposes the following year. They first proposed putting the roads of the colony in a good state before they were handed over to local government. That was a complete policy, and they had the money to carry it out. They could not attempt to carry out such a policy without funds, but they had the funds, and they stated that they would devote the excess of revenue to the purposes of roads and bridges, and give the districts fair warning that in the following year they would have to find the necessary revenue for themselves. Where the Government failed was in not keeping their promise, and not bringing forward that measure, but still keeping up a reckless style of expenditure which was not confined to roads and bridges, but ran riot through the whole of the departments. The honorable the Treasurer, in winding up his remarks—and it was the only allusion he made to the railway policy which the Government claimed to have put before the colony—said:—

"I believe the chief thing at present in dealing with the finances of the colony is to see that a certain amount of care is bestowed on the administration of those finances, to endeavor to guard against extravagance, to provide against what is termed, in colonial parlance, log-rolling, and not to create unnecessary expenditure for the sake of indulging in temporary and artificial prosperity."

Then, having indulged in those remarks with reference to log-rolling, his next remark was that there were certain works included in the Loan Estimates which would have to be provided for, but he did not say a word as to the intention of the Government respecting

them. Now, he had heard the honorable the Minister for Lands endeavoring to explain the meaning of log-rolling, and he explained it pretty well, and claimed to be given to log-rolling himself, and said he saw no great harm in it after all; but it seemed to be deprecated by the honorable the Treasurer. He thought the meaning of log-rolling was plain enough. It was an American term, which meant that a man would go to his neighbor and say, "I have a good many logs on my farm; come and help me to roll them off or burn them off, and when that is done, I will go over and help you." That was what the Ministry had done; that was the system of log-rolling they adopted in regard to certain doubtful members, who were asked by their constituencies to countenance the Government, and in return they would get railways in their districts. In fact, they wanted those members to roll their log, and having got them to do so, they had not the slightest intention, as indicated by the honorable the Treasurer, of making the log-rolling complete by carrying out their promises. He believed they had not the slightest intention of carrying out those railways. If they had, would they not come forward like men and say so? He had been taxed by the honorable the Minister for Lands, in spite of all he had said in favor of railways, with having no railway policy; and that honorable member insisted that he should state what railways he would make. But how could he be forced into such a position? He (Mr. McIlwraith) asked him, as it was his duty to have done—or, rather, as it was the duty of the honorable the Treasurer to have stated when explaining the Estimates—what railways they intended to make, and the answer he received was, that he would be told at the proper time, and the honorable gentleman refused to give any other answer whatever. He (Mr. McIlwraith) said, before going on with the business of the country, the Government should indicate plainly what they intended to do. There was no shirking the fact that their financial position was the most momentous question before the House at the present time. There was no legislation to which the present Government had invited their attention which demanded more serious consideration than that; and he believed the Government were working their own objects to the detriment of the country by keeping such valuable information as this back. The House wanted their policy before them, and when they were asked for it they distinctly refused to give it, and simply said, "What would you do if you were in our place?"

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. PALMER said, he certainly thought after the masterly speech of the honorable member for Maranoa that some member of the Ministry—if the honorable the Premier did not feel himself quite competent to reply in some way—would favor the House with a reply, to what he believed to be the un-

answerable arguments of the honorable member for Maranoa. He (Mr. Palmer) had occupied a position in that House for ten years at least, and during the whole of that time he had never heard such a masterly exposition made of the finances of the colony. He was quite sure that every honorable member who had listened to that speech would agree with him when he said he had never heard a Colonial Treasurer's Financial Statement so dissected and so thoroughly torn to rags as he had on this occasion; and he certainly expected to hear the honorable the Treasurer in reply. He (Mr. Palmer) had no intention of adding anything to the speeches of the honorable members for Maranoa and Dalby; he believed it would be a mistake to attempt it. But he would say a few words in reply to the honorable the Minister for Lands, who, instead of replying to the honorable member for Dalby, tore himself to tatters on quite another subject. He (Mr. Palmer) would admit at once the difficulties of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer in connection with his Financial Statement. He had felt for him for a long time in consequence of the difficulties he labored under in trying to patch up a Financial Statement on the remnants left by the late Treasurer, who, while he (Mr. Palmer) did not like talking much about the absent, he must say displayed more political cowardice than any Treasurer who had ever faced that House. The late Treasurer entered office with £240,000 of surplus revenue, and when he was afraid to face the House with a Financial Statement, and with a known deficit, he thought he was quite justified in accusing him of political cowardice. He was not saying a word about that gentleman's private character; he had great respect for him, personally and for his talents; but he said, the very fact of his coming down to the House as Treasurer with the intention of going home and never facing the House with a Financial Statement after having entered office with a surplus and leaving with a known deficit, was cowardly. But he could not excuse the present Treasurer or the present Ministry completely, on that score, because they supported the late Ministry, when they knew they came into the House with a policy they never intended to carry out.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. PALMER said, they must have known; it was well known throughout the country, that when the then Colonial Secretary came back from England he had not the slightest intention of remaining in the colony. He was another Esau ready to sell his political birthright for the position of Agent-General, and that he did it with the connivance and assistance of the present Government, they all knew. They knew also that the late Treasurer was never going to face the House with a Financial Statement, and yet they allowed that Ministry to carry on, and they supported them. Their duty under

the circumstances was a very clear one. Before the Ministry of that day faced the House, knowing what they did, they should have come forward boldly, and said, if they were not going to face the House with a policy they were prepared to carry out, they should resign and let another Ministry come in. He did not say the Ministry should be formed from that side of the House, but the reconstruction should have taken place before the House was called together. That was the proper course to have pursued, and while he admitted the difficulties the present Government and the honorable the Treasurer labored under, he said it was a just judgment upon them. They aided and abetted the late Government in facing the House, and in putting a speech into the Governor's mouth, which they knew to be a lie, and in bringing forward a policy which they knew was never intended to be carried out, and they had shown that by utterly disclaiming that policy, although they supported the men who brought it forward. He contended that for the actions of the late Government, the parties calling themselves Liberals or Extravagantists, or whatever name they went by, were clearly responsible. They had permitted the late Government to play the fool by coming down to Parliament with a Governor's Speech, not one atom of which they had ever intended to carry out. They were responsible, as he said before, and much as he sympathised with the position of the honorable the Treasurer—a position on which the honorable member endeavored to put the best face—he would repeat that it was a just judgment on the Government. The honorable Minister for Lands had twitted the Government of which he (Mr. Palmer) had the honor to be the leader, with not having been a progressive Government; but after he had taken the opportunity of directing the attention of honorable members to the actions of that Government, and to the fact that they took office with an empty Treasury and left it with a large surplus, he thought they would say that they were a really progressive Government. If they had not been a party to encourage extravagance for the sake of courting popularity, they were at least a party who knew how to hold their hands if the finances would not admit of expenditure; although, at the same time, when they had money, they knew how to expend it for the benefit of the colony. When they found that a renewal of immigration would answer the purposes of the country, they encouraged it, and he could safely say that no Government had ever done more in that direction. But looking at the fact that they had entered office with a deficiency and left it with a large surplus, they had been justified in all their expenditure; had they been in office at the present time, however, and found how things were going, they would have trimmed their sails for the winds they knew were coming, and would not have carried on all sail until the last moment; they would not have gone on

increasing their expenditure, to the last moment as the present Government had been shown to have done. If that was the progressiveness which the honorable Minister for Lands meant, his (Mr. Palmer's) administration were certainly never guilty of it, and if they were in office again, they would never be guilty of it. Now, he would ask, what had the Great Liberal Party done? Let them look at the time when the Government took office, and compare the state of things with what it was when the late Government went into office. Why, when the latter took office, there were times of great depression; the whole trade of the colony was in a bad state, and they had a deficiency in the Treasury; but when the Liberal party came in the times had changed, they were glorious times, days of prosperity, such as the colony had not enjoyed for years, and, moreover, there was a surplus of £240,000 in the Treasury; and yet what had they done? Why, the late Government had actually left office with the colony in debt, and the present Government were going to do—what? They knew very well that the days of prosperity had gone, and that the colony was about to face as severe a crisis as ever it had floated over; they knew that its great staple production had gone down forty-five per cent. on prices of eighteen months and two years ago, and that all other interests must suffer as well, and yet what had they proposed to do? Had they proposed any retrenchment? Had they proposed to reduce the Civil Service, by cutting off the excrescences forced upon it by the late Government in the shape of useless men? Why, so ashamed were the Government of those appointments, that, although on the first day of the House meeting he had moved for a return of all appointments made by the late Government, he had not yet got it. Were they going to reform the Civil Service in any way? Had they shadowed forth, in fact, any scheme of retrenchment? They had not; but what they considered a progressive Ministry, according to the honorable Minister for Lands, and as shadowed forth by the honorable Colonial Treasurer in his Financial Statement, was a Ministry who would spend money liberally among their supporters. The honorable Minister for Lands had complained bitterly that the Opposition had not treated the Government liberally; that they had not given them time to state their measures, and that a vote of want of confidence had been brought forward before the House knew what their measures were. But he thought that the Opposition had been perfectly justified in judging them, as had been stated by the honorable member for Maranoa, from the speeches made from their own mouths to their constituents at their recent elections. He thought that they had been perfectly justified in what they had done, seeing that only one member of the Government had spoken of the bogus railways which were

now referred to in the Estimates. Why, those railways, or any railway policy had not been even shadowed forth in any one of the speeches made by those honorable gentlemen, but they had been smuggled into the Estimates in a manner so well known to the honorable Premier. They had been smuggled into the Estimates after the Government had individually spoken against the construction of railways during the present session. Was that the way, he would ask, to declare a railway policy—to introduce a policy that would cost unknown millions of money? for it was utterly unknown how much they would cost. Instead of putting before the country a scheme of railways by which they would be prepared to stand or fall, they were smuggled into the Estimates by certain sums of money being put down for them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have got a Bill.

Mr. PALMER said that they had got a Bill certainly. Then it had been stated by the honorable member that they had not been allowed time to prepare their measures; but he would ask, how could five men, honorable gentlemen all of them, have possibly entered into an agreement to form a Ministry? They had been told by the honorable Minister for Lands, that he had an agreement with the Premier as to what the measures were to be, but how the other three members of the Government could have been smuggled in without knowing those measures, he (Mr. Palmer) could not understand. They must have known them, for they must have been cut and dried before the agreement was made with the other members of the Government, and those honorable gentlemen must have known that it was under that agreement that the Premier had tried to induce the honorable member for Maranoa and the honorable member for the Kennedy to join the Ministry. He should like to hear that matter properly answered, for they had never heard a word about it. Then they thought that they would catch some stray votes by putting down a few railways in the Estimates, of all matters connected with which they were as utterly ignorant as any men could be; there was not one honorable member on the Treasury benches who knew how to commence a railway or how to end it. The fact was, that they had not wanted time to prepare their measures, but what they wanted was, to judge from the tone of the debate on the motion of want of confidence, whether they would be likely to obtain votes and then to state their policy accordingly. Having escaped the consequences of that motion, they brought forward a policy, and what was it? Was it part of their policy when the honorable Minister for Lands made his agreement with the Premier, to catch votes?—he would not say to buy them, as that might be objected to by the honorable Minister for Lands. Was it part of their

policy that if the honorable member for Cook asked for a lighthouse on the Low Islands, he should have it, or for a main street in Cooktown. They might have heard something of the main street, but they had certainly never heard of the necessity of a lighthouse on the Low Islands until the honorable member had got up and expressed his anxiety to have one, when the Premier said, "It is all right and square, they shall be attended to." He would ask, whether the Government had received any report from Captain Heath or anybody else as to the necessity of a lighthouse being erected on the Low Islands before any other part of the coast—was there any report before the Government on the subject?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that a report by Captain Heath had been forwarded to the Treasury before the Loan Estimate was compiled, and that the Loan Estimate had been compiled long before the honorable member for Cook had raised the question in the House.

Mr. PALMER said, he hoped the honorable member would excuse him for saying that he thought he was laboring under a gross misapprehension; at any rate, he should like to see the report. He was quite certain that if the Loan Estimates had been compiled as stated, the Government would have told the House long ago what their railway policy was, as the railway Estimates were on the same loan. He did not mean to say that a lighthouse on the Low Islands was not necessary, but he held that there were many places along the coast equally as dangerous. He had never got into a funk when passing the Low Islands, nor had he asked for a lighthouse for other parts that were more neglected. Perhaps the honorable Treasurer would tell them whether he had received a telegram from the honorable member for Cook saying that the lighthouse would be extremely desirable; for they knew that telegrams had passed about the main street of Cooktown. Another statement which had been made by the honorable Minister for Lands was, that the railway policy of the Government was the policy of the late Government in regard to the Roma railway. But he would ask, whether that was the policy of the late Government? Why, their policy had been to make a line to the Gulf of Carpentaria, but the Roma Railway was the policy of the Opposition, who cut down the Government Bill from being a Continental Railway Bill, to being merely a Roma Railway Bill; he supposed that would be admitted by the honorable member. That the Opposition had not approved of the principle of that Bill so far as regarded selling the lands first, and making the railway afterwards, was perfectly true; they did not agree with that principle at the present time, for a more dangerous principle he believed there not could be. He thought that honorable members opposite, even the present occupants of the Treasury benches, had

not believed in it, but that the present honorable the Speaker had, with his force of character, carried the Bill against their conviction. He thought they did not understand it at the present time, for he was quite certain that if they did, they would be the first men in the country to repeal it. He was not going into the Financial Statement, as it had been so thoroughly answered by the honorable member for Dalby, and by the honorable member for Maranoa; nor would he attempt to go over the same ground as they had done, for he could not if he tried. He wished, however, to call the attention of the Government and of that House to some facts displayed in the last report of the Auditor-General. He contended that there must be something radically wrong between that gentleman and the Treasurer, and as far as he could understand the correspondence between the two, there must be some gross injustice towards the Auditor-General, who said, in his report, that he had never been once furnished by the Treasury with the vouchers required under the Audit Act. In his letter of 21st April, 1876, the Auditor-General said—

“Expenditure is not supported by vouchers, but by abstracts only.”

And again, in another part, he said—

“The statement that vouchers have been forwarded to me is likely, I think, to lead to a misapprehension. Unexamined abstracts have been forwarded to me which do not supply the information necessary to enable me to comply with the provisions of the 33rd clause, but vouchers such as are required and described in the 37th clause of “*The Audit Act*” have not been sent to me.”

Now, it appeared from that as if the Treasurer was attempting to override the Audit Act, and he might say that if there was one thing which that House should do, it was that they should support the Auditor-General, who was a servant of that House, and who was supposed to be responsible for checking the Treasury accounts. How that gentleman was to do that, however, if the vouchers were not furnished to him, he could not understand.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear.

MR. PALMER said, he was glad to hear the honorable gentleman say that, and he hoped that some inquiry would be made into the matter, for when he had mentioned it to his honorable friend the member for Maranoa, he could hardly believe that such a thing was possible. It was a very serious matter indeed. As to the Under-Secretary for the Treasury and the Accountant at the Audit Office, he would pass them over; they might be very good officers, but he contended that when an officer like the Auditor-General made such a complaint, it was the bounden duty of the honorable the Treasurer to see that it was attended to, and it was the duty of that House to see that the Treasurer did attend to it. There was one question to which he would refer very briefly—and he

might say that he differed from the honorable member for Maranoa on the subject—and that was the propriety of the proposed loan of £100,000 for roads and bridges. That was a principle which had been initiated by the Government of which he was a member, and he believed that it had been found a very beneficial one as regarded the colony. In fact, believing that it had been so, he should be prepared to vote for such a loan, provided it was proposed to allot it fairly to the different parts of the colony. But how the present Government could propound such a proposition surprised him, for it was completely contrary to every thing they had hitherto stated to be their policy, and was quite the reverse of what had been the policy of the late Treasurer, and the honorable members on the Government side of the House. He must say that he was amazed at them proposing such a thing, but, after all, that was not remarkable, as he had been in a state of amazement ever since the present Government had been in office.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said, that he must, before entering into any remarks, acknowledge the very fair spirit in which his Financial Statement had been criticised by honorable members; and he must say, that considering the short experience he had had as Treasurer, he had expected that the onslaught on that statement would have been much more dangerous than it had been. He should now endeavor to prove the correctness of the position he had assumed when making the Financial Statement, and those matters which had been most criticised. The honorable member for Dalby had objected to certain amounts being placed on the Loan Estimate without the plans and details of the works proposed to be carried out being laid before the committee. But he thought that that was a very unnecessary objection, as that honorable member's own experience must have shown him that Loan Estimates were always framed long before the details were gone into, and that it was when the votes were individually considered, that the details were submitted. He hardly thought that in considering the general question of the financial policy of the Government, the details of a Loan Estimate should be discussed, and he thought that the good sense of the House would lead them to see, that if such a course was adopted, it would lead to a protraction of the present debate to a very extended period. The honorable member had also commented on the proposal of a loan of £100,000 for roads and bridges, and had pointed out that the present Government had stolen the policy of a previous Government. Now he was not at all prepared to deny that he should not hesitate to adopt a principle, no matter by whom it had been first introduced, provided he thought it could be followed with advantage to the colony. But he might say, that although the Government had adopted that part of the policy of the Opposition, it was not because they considered it altogether a good one, but rather because it was a

matter of expediency. For his part he would say, that he should be glad to see the revenue in such a prosperous condition that it could afford to bear the expenditure of £100,000 for such works as roads and bridges, rather than that amount should be taken from the loan vote. But he was in the position that he found that the £240,000 surplus of two years and a-half ago should never have been withdrawn from the revenue whilst there were outstanding liabilities on account of services of the previous year amounting to £138,000 against it; because they were now, after two and a-half years, finding their revenue reduced, and inadequate to meet the demands for repairs to roads and bridges. He maintained that if that £240,000 had not been retired, they would not be in their present position of having to resort to loan for those works. There was another reason which at the present time confirmed the Government in asking for that loan of £100,000, even although the revenue was able to bear it, which was, that in view of a large sum of money being required when the Shire Councils were formed, it was incumbent upon the Government to have funds in their possession in order to put those Shire Councils in motion; so that when they took over the management of their own affairs they should have some assistance from the Government, and not be called upon to take charge of their public works empty handed. It had been another charge against the Government, that they had changed their views with regard to the loan vote of £100,000, and also other portions of their financial policy; but he had already stated that as Treasurer, he had had occasion to alter his views from those entertained by the late Government; and he had had to submit to his colleagues the advisability of placing a loan on the British market during the present year. Now, that had not been intended by his predecessor, who was averse to it, but he did not think that the Government should be hampered in any way by the opinions of their predecessors. But the greatest charge which had been made by the honorable member for Dalby, was in connection with the omission by him (the Colonial Treasurer) from the Financial Statement of any reference to the deficit likely to accrue from the proceeds of the sale of land on the Western Railway Reserve being applied to railway construction. Now he thought the honorable member had rather over-estimated that point, because it would be found that there would be no withdrawals of land in that reserve for some time to come. A Treasurer must deal with actual present facts—with the operations of the present year—and honorable members were well aware that within a few weeks the pastoral rents would mature, and he did not believe that, within that time, there was a probability of any large amount of withdrawals. It was a question if there would be any large withdrawals during

the present year; but even supposing the whole of the rents within that reserve were to lapse, the amount would be only £18,000, and would not be such a serious matter as the honorable member appeared to think it would be.

Mr. BELL said he was sorry to interrupt the honorable gentleman, but his remarks were applied to the policy of railway reserves which the Government had adopted under the Railway Reserves Act.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had understood the honorable member to refer, chiefly, to the reserves in connection with the Western Railway; he would take an opportunity of referring to the other reserves presently. It was chiefly in regard to pre-emptives, and withdrawing lands from pastoral occupancy that the estimate would be reduced; but he might inform the honorable member, if he was not already aware of it, that in his estimate the receipts from pastoral leases, within the Western Railway Reserve, was purposely excluded, knowing that they would have to go to the trust fund, to pay the quarter of a million already advanced towards the construction of that work. So that no matter what land was resumed in the Western Railway Reserve, it would not affect his estimate. One of the chief considerations, however, and one to which was naturally attached a great deal of consideration, was a statement about the Supplementary Estimates being insufficiently provided for in the Estimates. Those Estimates were, it was true, put down at £60,000, which was a considerable reduction on the amount that had been called for during the past year; but honorable members must bear in mind that in these very large Supplementary Estimates which had this year been required, some £27,000 alone was demanded for interest on the public debt; and in the Estimates which had been placed before the House, interest on the full amount of the debentures, sold or unsold, had been provided for up to the end of the financial year. In that one item it might be expected that the Estimates, represented at £60,000, would not exceed that amount. They had, in considering the question of Supplementary Estimates, chiefly to regard how they arose; and he had already told the House that sometimes, in consequence of expenditure authorised by the House not being carried out in the direction in which it was anticipated, a certain amount of votes necessarily lapsed, and expenditure under Executive authority took a fresh direction, which formed the basis of Supplementary Estimates; but a large number of them were formed by the various departments in incurring liabilities which must be defrayed by Executive authority. Now, if a strict economic hand was held over the departments, and the departments were made aware that no expenditure was to be incurred without Executive authority, it would be found that the Supplementary Estimates would be confined to a very narrow point. This, he

thought, was the weak point of the Supplementary Estimates; and although honorable members might smile and consider the idea impracticable, he did believe that the Government, exercising a keen and stringent supervision over the departments, and letting them know that no liability must be incurred without previously obtaining Cabinet sanction, might materially reduce the Supplementary Estimates. In support of this view, he might refer to the financial statement of Sir Julius Vogel, which showed how they managed these things in New Zealand. With a revenue amounting to £2,300,000, and expenditure to nearly a similar amount, commencing with a surplus of £76,000, Sir Julius anticipated at the end of the current financial year only a surplus of £29,000, and out of this he expected to cover the Supplementary Estimates. In his (Mr. Dickson's) statement, he anticipated a surplus of £27,000 after providing for Supplementary Estimates put down at £60,000. He merely introduced this illustration to show that in New Zealand they imagined their Supplementary Estimates could be kept within a figure which, in Queensland, unfortunately, had never yet been carried out. He did not argue that because the Supplementary Estimates in the past had been so enormously large, they could not be reduced within a moderate compass in the future. Supplementary Estimates, although they were unavoidable, ought to be deprecated, but notwithstanding the deprecation continually made by Treasurers, they kept on augmenting, chiefly, he contended, from the fact that the departments were allowed to incur responsibilities, without previously applying to the Executive for permission to do so. The honorable member for Dalby contended, and very fairly from his point of view, that the anticipated results for the present financial year would not be warranted by facts, and he especially pointed out that the proposed duty on rice would, to a large extent, be unproductive of the amount estimated, and that the estimates of what would be produced by miners' rights and business licenses to the Chinese, would prove entirely fallacious. At the time he introduced the resolution on these matters, he expressed a doubt whether those imposts would sustain the figures he had put down, but as far as the figures concerning rice went, he believed they would be fully warranted; as for the licenses and miners' rights, time alone would decide whose estimate was correct. He would, however, point out, that even assuming the whole of the taxation to remain uncollected, their position at the end of the financial year would not be worse than it was at the present time; it would have improved to this extent, that they would have covered the present deficiency, and while, if the increased taxation did not produce all the results which he expected, they would have at least succeeded in liquidating the present deficiency.

Mr. McILWRAITH: With an unexpended liability of £150,000.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, it must be remembered that item the Treasury was not after all called upon to liquidate this year. No doubt it was very desirable, and he hoped, before any further appropriations were made from revenue, they would see that all the outstanding liabilities were discharged annually. That, he took it, was a business-like view to take of the finances of the country, but it had never been adopted in the Treasury. There they dealt with the results of the period, disregarding the liabilities undischarged, which remained at the time up to which the financial year terminated. The honorable member for Maranoa, in the course of his remarks, pointed out particularly the deficiency, and spoke of it as a thing of which he had a horror. No doubt he had, but unfortunately the experience was, that the deficiencies occurred more frequently than otherwise; for, at the end of the Treasury tables, honorable members would see that out of eighteen years, six only had produced surpluses to the extent of £397,000, while the other twelve had produced deficiencies amounting to £632,000. Unfortunately, therefore, the Treasurers of Queensland appeared to have had more frequently the opportunity of deploring deficiencies than of rejoicing over surpluses of revenue. No doubt a deficiency in revenue was a very undesirable thing, and it was a matter to be regretted whenever it occurred; but there were causes which the honorable member for Maranoa had dwelt upon, which had combined with others to produce an increased expenditure, and so bring about the result which, as he had said, was always to be regretted. He believed that the condition of things he had pointed out, namely, the Estimates being very largely loaded with expenditure on public works such as roads and bridges, had tended more than even the expenditure of the departments to the condition of things which the honorable member for Maranoa had pointed out. And at the same time, it must be borne in mind that the remission in Customs duty made by the late Government, to the extent of £175,000, must be taken into consideration in a fair and impartial view of the financial position of the colony. Had this remission not been made to that extent—not, however, that he considered the remission inadvisable—things would have been different; but the House should fairly take into consideration that it had been made during two years and a-half, and, doubtless, had contributed, with other causes, to the formation of the present deficiency. The honorable member for Maranoa commented upon three sources especially from which he considered the anticipated revenue would prove fallacious. First came the Customs estimates. Here, no doubt, there did appear to be a considerable increase beyond what was received last year; but he was free to assert that when he considered the very

largely increased quantity of bonded stores—nearly 50 per cent. more at the end of June, 1876, than at the corresponding period of the previous year—he thought he might fairly consider that there would be a large increase shown in the Customs receipts during the next year; and as the honorable member had remarked upon the departments, he might mention that the department had furnished larger estimates of Customs revenue than he himself had introduced. Another item commented upon by the honorable member was the Railway estimate. Here again there was doubtless a large increase shown; and he had endeavored to show that the railway receipts would probably be increased very largely upon the previous year. He explained that a very large amount of goods traffic would necessarily ensue, together with a large amount of passenger traffic, on account of the removal of the obstruction to the Ipswich traffic to Brisbane; and, singular to say, he had received during the past month a strong confirmation of the soundness of the opinion he expressed. During the month of July, the railway receipts had increased by more than 50 per cent., as contrasted with the receipts in same month of 1875, the receipts being—July, 1875, £7,323, and in the month just passed, £11,606. This was the dull season of the year in railway traffic, and when the busy season came on, he had no doubt even this ratio would be increased. On the whole, therefore, he considered he was justified in submitting to the committee his estimates for railway receipts during 1876-7. The honorable member for Maranoa then proceeded to comment upon the statement he had made, comparing the Queensland railways with those of New South Wales and Victoria. The figures he had quoted, no doubt, indicated a possible improvement in the receipts, which would make the Queensland railways compare more favorably with the neighboring colonies. Still, his original statement, he had every reason to believe, was perfectly justified. He found that in Victoria, with an invested capital of £12,000,000, the annual expenditure being £481,000, the receipts were £920,000, or $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. towards defraying the interest on the capital. In New South Wales, the capital invested was £8,000,000, the annual expenditure £313,000, and the receipts £585,000, showing in that colony also a return of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. towards the interest on the capital invested.

MR. MCILWRAITH: The honorable gentleman is now bringing forward an argument perfectly distinct from the one he used the other night. He is going upon another ground altogether.

The **COLONIAL TREASURER** said, the honorable member for Maranoa had probably misunderstood him. He made a statement that the railways in New South Wales and Victoria were more profitable than those constructed in Queensland, and he now brought forward these figures to support that statement. He

believed, however, that if the cost of construction in Queensland had been confined within its legitimate limits, the colony would have seen its railway revenues contrast much more favorably with the neighboring colonies. The honorable gentleman also mentioned that he thought the estimate respecting pre-emptive purchases was fallacious. The amount, however, as honorable members would see, was very little in excess of the amount received last year, and at the present time, there were vouchers in the Treasury to the extent of £11,000, which might be paid immediately, and which would bring the amount even considerably above the estimate of last year, and notwithstanding that the honorable gentleman said it depended upon what he was pleased to consider the squeezability of the pastoral tenants, he saw no reason why this item should fall so much below the operations of the previous year. There were also vouchers for pre-emptive selections taken up under the Western Railway Act amounting to £24,000 at the present time in the Treasury, which he had not included, for reasons he had already given in comments upon the speech of the honorable member for Dalby. He (the Colonial Treasurer) was not aware that he had in his speech taken a desponding view of the position of the colony, for there was nothing to cause mistrust or fear. There was, however, everything in favor of a determination to hold a tight hand on the reins of Government, so that no extravagance should be committed. The revenue of the colony should be looked after with a keen supervising eye, and the departments should be strictly controlled to prevent extravagance.

MR. BELL: Such as railway expenditure.

The **COLONIAL TREASURER** said that was a thing of the past, and there was no use in raking up old scores, except to find in them examples for the improvement the administration of the Government departments. He made no reflections whatever upon previous administrations, but merely expressed what he believed to be the duty of the present administration; and if that duty were performed, he believed all the anticipations he had shadowed forth would be realised. There was one remark of the honorable member for Port Curtis to which he was bound to refer. He quite agreed that it was undesirable to refer to an absent member; but the honorable gentleman said that his predecessor in office, Mr. Hemmant, never intended to deliver a financial statement. He (Mr. Dickson) could assure the House that when he joined the late administration, Mr. Hemmant gave him a distinct promise that the Financial Statement should be made by him; and he had every reason for believing that he intended to make it, but for the unexpected withdrawal from office of Mr. Macalister. Mr. Hemmant not only intended, but was fully prepared to make a financial statement this session. He (Mr. Dickson) felt quite justified in saying

this much, to show that the charge of cowardice against Mr. Hemmant was unfounded. It had been said during the debate, that unless the Government instituted a thorough reform in the Civil Service, results would never follow their expectations. The Government, however, did not intend to make a sweeping reform in the Civil Service; but if they were able to carry out some reform in the departments, and curtail the Supplementary Estimates in a moderate manner, their action would be productive of much good to the colony. With regard to the remark made by the member for Port Curtis as to the corruption he said was practised by the Government in buying votes—

Mr. PALMER: Catching votes.

The COLONIAL TREASURER was willing to accept the expression; but the honorable member adduced a most unfortunate instance when he spoke of the lighthouse on Low Island—the only work which came under his (Mr. Dickson's) immediate supervision; for he had a report from Captain Heath, submitted to him immediately upon his entering the Treasury, and it was dated June 20, which he believed was before the date of the return of the honorable member for Cook, whose vote was said to have been caught by the work referred to. The lighthouse itself was a most important thing, and he could assure the House that he placed the matter on the Loan Estimates without the slightest knowledge whatever of the honorable member for Cook, who, on his first appearance in the House, as would be remembered, departed somewhat from the forms of the House in order to make the demand. It was because of the danger to life and property which had been so urgently brought under his notice that the Cabinet decided to give the matter their immediate consideration. The honorable member for Port Curtis' remarks about the relations between the Auditor-General and the Treasury were well-timed, and he quite endorsed them. It was, no doubt, very unsatisfactory that those two departments did not work more in concert than had been the case hitherto. He would not say on whose side the blame was, but he must say, in defence of his department, that at the present time vouchers were now forwarded regularly every day to the Treasury. He had been two months in office and had not yet got a regular discharge for disbursements made during that period. He had addressed the Auditor-General himself, pointing out to him the inconvenient and very unsatisfactory position in which the Treasury was placed by these delays, and he had, at last, got the Auditor-General to promise that he would henceforth regularly send a monthly discharge to the Treasury. He felt it his duty to make this statement in justice to the Treasury Department. He had also suggested to the Auditor-General that the annual report lost all its interest and value by being

delivered so long after the end of the financial year, as was mentioned in a recent debate; he had suggested also that the Auditor-General should lay before the House an interim or progress report during the current financial year. To this he had not yet received a reply, but he wished the Auditor-General to know that the Treasury was desirous to expedite the auditing of the accounts, and that the report when furnished should not deal with technicalities which would tend to perplex rather than enlighten members. One matter seemed to have furnished a great handle for correspondence between the Auditor-General and Treasurer. It had been decided on legal authority that the expenditure on the services authorised preceding the 30th June should be charged to the preceding year, if disbursed before 30th September; but the Auditor-General insisted that it should be charged to the current year, and he (Mr. Dickson) had no doubt but that the payments he was now making on account of the services of the past year, and which would continue to be made up to 30th September next, would form part of the Auditor-General's next report as Treasury misappropriation. The alleged irregularities committed by the Treasury were trivial matters of detail into which he did not intend to enter; but he did contend that the auditing of public accounts was a matter of great importance. It should be done with great promptitude and exactness: it should be drawn close up to date; and it should place before honorable members a judicially audited account and report of all the departments. He did not think that he need trespass on the time of the House any further. He would repeat, that he had to thank honorable members who had addressed themselves to the consideration of the subject for treating it in a generous manner, and possibly, for having borne in mind that he had been so recently placed at the head of the Treasury department, and for having withheld a considerable amount of animadversion that they might otherwise fairly have indulged in. He repeated, that his statement had been placed before the House and the country with a view of showing the true financial position of the colony. Whether his expectations would be fully realised or not, he could not say, but he believed they would be. It had afforded him some satisfaction to hear from the honorable member for Maranoa, that the tables which he had caused to be prepared, and which he deemed it his duty to furnish to honorable members, had afforded them a considerable amount of statistical information which would enable them, not only to know and follow the course of the current year, but also to see the position and progress of the colony.

Mr. BUZACOTT said, although it was rather unusual for an honorable member to speak after the speech in reply, he was compelled to do so this evening, because of the absence

of any argument or intimation from the Ministerial side of the House as to their policy. They had had rather a long evening's debate, and they had had one of the most able speeches ever delivered in that House—a speech that had apparently upset all the arguments contained in the Financial Statement of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer made a fortnight ago.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

Mr. BUZACOTT said, the honorable the Treasurer had since been afforded an opportunity of replying to that speech, and he would ask honorable members if he (the Treasurer) had given the House any answer?

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

Mr. BUZACOTT said, on no important portion of the speech of the honorable member for Maranoa had the honorable the Colonial Treasurer given one conclusive answer; but he devoted the principal part of his time in replying to matters of entirely an inferior character, and he had completely failed to show that his estimates of revenue and expenditure for the year 1876-7 would place the colony in any improved condition at the end of this financial year, to what it occupied on the 30th of June last. On the other hand, any honorable member, who had given the slightest attention to the Financial Statement, must see that at the end of the current financial year the colony would be in a far worse position than it was at the present time. He should not go over the whole of the observations of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, because he did not see that any of his explanations upset or interfered in any way with the conclusions arrived at by the honorable member for Maranoa. For instance, the £240,000 surplus which the Macalister Government had on acceding to office, ought not to have been set apart for expenditure; or, at all events, £108,000 should have been taken out of it to provide for the obligations which that Government inherited. He should not stop to refer further to this question, but he should have thought the honorable the Treasurer, finding there was a mistake made in appropriating that £240,000 two years and a-half ago, would not make the same mistake in his statement, but that he would have provided for the liabilities of the Government accruing during the current year, so as to enable any incoming Treasurer, if there should be one, to start, at any rate, with a clean sheet. When charged with having changed the financial policy of the Government since they had acceded to office, the honorable the Treasurer acknowledged that he, for one, had changed his views. He acknowledged that, although when returned by his constituents, he told them he would not go in for increasing the liabilities of the colony during the present session, yet, as soon as the Government

faced the House, they came to the conclusion that they would increase those liabilities by something like £1,200,000. There was £180,000 depreciation of debentures to be provided for in addition to the £998,000 comprised in the Loan Estimates, and besides that, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer said he expected that the amount would be further increased by provision which the House would be asked to make for other services during the session. He should like to know whether these Loan Estimates were going to end. Was it to be £988,000, or £1,900,000? He thought, judging from the progress made by the Ministry during the first six weeks of their tenure of office, it was more likely that before the end of the session the Loan Estimate would arrive at £1,900,000 than it should remain at the £900,000 it now stood at. In excusing the deficiency of £43,000 the honorable the Treasurer said he was very sorry to say the returns showed that there had been oftener deficiencies than surpluses; and it would appear that, because in former times Governments had erred and spent more than they ought, therefore he was now warranted in coming down to the House and presenting Estimates which would involve a much larger deficiency than at present existed. That was the honorable gentleman's argument, and he thought a more unsound argument was never brought before that House. The honorable the Treasurer also said, in replying to the observations of the honorable member for Dalby, with regard to the tax on Chinese, that he stated a fortnight ago there was some probability that the amount he estimated to receive from that source would not be realised; but he (Mr. Buzacott) observed, that whether the estimated amount would be received or not, at any rate the honorable the Treasurer had provided for the expenditure of it. That honorable member must know perfectly well, that unless the revenue receipts were fully up to his estimates, he could not hope to face the House next year without a much larger deficiency than there was at the present time. After the full and clear statement of the finances of the colony, which the honorable member for Maranoa had placed before the House, he thought it was quite unnecessary for him to go very minutely into figures, but still, there were one or two facts which he considered it necessary, even at that late hour, to call the attention of the House to. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer commenced his speech by saying that they had arrived at a period of depression; that they had had two and a-half years of prosperous times, and must now look forward to a time of depression. Well, how did that honorable gentleman look forward to a time of depression? Why, by increasing the expenditure more than any preceding Treasurer had ever proposed to increase it!

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

Mr BUZACOTT said, he had commenced by increasing the expenditure of the current year by nearly £104,000; and then he told them that in the face of the advent of times of depression, the decline in the wool market, and all sorts of evils, that they were to receive a larger increase to the revenue of the colony than had ever been received in any previous year since it had been in existence. He expected, although the actual receipts during 1875-6 were £1,263,000, that during 1876-7 they would amount to £1,390,000, or an increase of £126,000, besides £30,000 which he expected to get from the Chinese, which made a total increase of £156,000. Now, he asked, how could the Treasurer come down after saying that they had entered into a time of depression, and ask the House to believe that the revenue would increase to the extent of £150,000? And he not only said the revenue would increase to that extent, but he proposed to expend nearly £140,000 more than was expended last year. He (Mr. Buzacott) asked the serious attention of the House to those figures, which were taken from that honorable gentleman's own Financial Statement, and from the accounts published in the *Government Gazette*; and he was quite prepared to support them, and challenged the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, or any member on the other side of the House, to prove they were incorrect. The honorable the Treasurer acknowledged that he would have to increase the expenditure this year by £139,000, and he (Mr. Buzacott) would show that he would have to still further increase that expenditure. Last year he found that the expenditure was £60,000 over the estimate, and he should add £60,000 to the estimate for the year ending on the 30th of June, 1877; and he thought honorable members would admit that what had occurred last year was a fair criterion of what would occur this year. The honorable the Treasurer, in placing his estimate before the House, admitted that he was inexperienced, and not well conversant with the accounts of the departments, and he (Mr. Buzacott) preferred to take the expenditure from the quarterly and half-yearly statements published in the *Government Gazette* to any statements which that honorable gentleman in his inexperience might bring before the House. The honorable member for Maranoa had shown that a most extraordinary increase in departmental expenditure had occurred since the Ministry on the other side of the House had been in office, and he had also shown that that expenditure had increased out of all proportion to the revenue; and he (Mr. Buzacott) said it had increased out of all proportion to the requirements of the community. He said there was no necessity whatever for the extravagant outlay, which had brought the expenditure up to the very extraordinary point it had now attained. And what did the honorable the Treasurer tell them he was going to do? Instead of

going in for retrenchment, he proposed expenditure which went beyond that proposed by any of his predecessors. He would out-Herod Herod, if they believed his own statement. This was not what he (Mr. Buzacott) said; it was what the honorable the Treasurer himself acknowledged, and what was contained in the Estimates he had brought before the House. It was very remarkable that in estimating the sources of revenue, and also in speaking of the exports of the colony, the honorable the Treasurer entirely omitted to refer to an export which had now attained the highest position—that of gold. The export of gold last year was in excess of the export of wool, by something like £40,000. The honorable the Treasurer talked about the depression in the wool market, but he said nothing which would lead the House to any conclusion as to what the production of the principal export of the colony would be during the current financial year; and when they considered that the whole increase in the Customs revenue, he might say, was obtained from the production of that article, and when the Treasurer expected an increase of £40,000 in Customs revenue, it seemed very extraordinary that the honorable member, in bringing his statement before the House, made no reference to it. He asked, was it reasonable that the honorable the Treasurer should come and tell them that during the current year he expected an increase of £40,000, knowing the condition of the colony at the present time, knowing that owing to the fall in the value of wool pastoral enterprise generally would feel the effect of it, and that there would be no extension of the pastoral industry; and knowing that it was not at all probable that the yield of gold last year would be exceeded, if even it were maintained? He had no hesitation in saying that the expected increase in the Customs revenue would not be obtained, and that if they were successful in obtaining an amount equal to that received last year, they would get all that the most sanguine man in that House could hope for. The honorable the Treasurer had also given a great deal of information with respect to the comparative revenues of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and elsewhere, and pointed out that the Customs revenue was £2 14s. per head in Queensland; but his estimate was formed on the assumption that the population of the colony was 180,000, instead of 175,000, as shown by the census returns. Those returns showed that the estimate of the Registrar-General was excessive; and, therefore, instead of the Customs revenue yielding £2 14s. per head, it gave over £2 15s. 6d. per head, and that was 23s. 6d. per head higher than in New South Wales, and 16s. 10d. per head higher than in Victoria, with all their protection. The total taxation instead of being £3 5s. 8d. per head, was actually £3 7s., or an excess over New South Wales of 30s. and

over Victoria of 26s. per head. These figures showed that the Customs revenue in Queensland was already far in excess of that of any of the other Australian colonies, and, therefore, he thought it was absurd for the honorable the Treasurer to come to the House and say he expected next year to obtain an increase of £40,000. There was not only depression in the wool market, but there was a falling off in immigration, and there was a considerable exodus over the Border into New South Wales, and he believed also by sea, and they could not expect any increase of Customs revenue from an increase of population. Another matter to which he must refer was in relation to the estimate of the honorable the Treasurer for railway extension. Now, he maintained, whatever the Treasurer or the Minister for Lands might say, that they were entitled to demand, on the discussion of the Financial Statement, a full disclosure of their railway policy, and they could not wait for the Railway Reserves Bill. The Government might or might not intend to introduce that Bill; and if they did introduce it, he did not believe they were sincere in carrying it through. It was a Bill that would destroy one source of revenue. It had been shown that it would entirely upset the Treasurer's calculations, and that, at the end of the current year, should no other causes operate, it would cause a very heavy deficiency of itself. He had shown that the Customs revenue was over estimated, and that the Roma Railway revenue would also cause a reduction in the revenue from pastoral rents. There would also, as the honorable member for Maranoa had shown, be a great deal of pastoral country on which people would refuse to pay rent in this time of depression. The increased revenue expected from railways was problematical, it might or might not come up to the honorable the Treasurer's estimate, and the figures that honorable gentleman had brought forward for the month just ended, the month of July, he maintained were no criterion of what the average receipts would be during the ten months that were before them. There was no doubt that, previous to July, there had been very great interruption to the railway traffic in the southern portion of the colony, and it was not at all an extraordinary thing that the returns for that month should show an increase of fifty per cent. But he was by no means sure that the returns for August or September would maintain a corresponding increase. At the same time, he might say, he believed the increase on the northern line would be found to even exceed the estimate. That line was being rapidly extended. On the 1st of September, twenty-two miles more would be opened; in December they would have another eighteen or twenty miles open; and as there had been a continuous and steady increase in the receipts since the beginning of this year, he believed the

estimate of the honorable the Treasurer, so far as that railway was concerned, would be fully realised. He must say, that that honorable member, in referring to the railways of the colony, quite omitted to point out a very satisfactory feature in connection with their working. He estimated that, after paying working expenses and all other expenses connected with carrying out their railway system, he would receive £87,000 towards paying the interest on the outlay. Well, that was a very satisfactory feature indeed. £87,000 meant five per cent. on £1,500,000; it meant the interest on nearly the whole of the railways constructed in Queensland, had they been carried out at the cost of construction that had been attained on the northern extension—£6,000 per mile. That was to say, that had all the railways in Queensland been constructed for £6,000 per mile, they would not only be paying all working expenses, but also the whole of the interest. He thought if the honorable the Treasurer had brought that forward as an argument in favor of railway extension, it would be a very strong one, and the House would not refuse to acknowledge the strength of it. He would not trouble the House longer; but he asked honorable members seriously to consider whether they thought the estimate of the honorable the Treasurer, by which he expected to receive and expend £150,000 more this year than he did last year, was likely to be attained; and whether it was not absolutely necessary on the part of the House to say, that the Treasurer should take back his estimate, and bring in one which would be supported by the probabilities of the case? They would not authorise the expenditure of a much larger amount of money than they could hope to receive this year.

MR. MOREHEAD moved—

That the debate be now adjourned.

The PREMIER said he would put it to the honorable member for Port Curtis whether it was not better to bring the debate to a close that evening. He was aware that it had been the practice of the House to adjourn, as nearly as possible, at ten o'clock, but seeing how little business had been done he thought they should go on with the debate. If the honorable member for Maranoa had not made such a long-winded speech, the discussion might have been finished long ago. That great financial authority of the opposite side had, he was glad to hear, given the honorable Colonial Treasurer great credit for his Financial Statement, and for the tables which had been supplied by him, and as honorable members had had ample time to criticise the statement, he trusted that the debate would be proceeded with. If the style of speeches that evening might be accepted as a specimen of what they might expect in future, all he could say was, that the Parliament of this colony would be in almost perpetual session, the same as the Parliament of New South

Wales, without passing any measures. He would put it to the honorable member for Port Curtis whether they should not finish the debate that evening, so that the Government would be able to get on with some of the very important measures he had referred to in his statement some weeks ago.

Mr. PALMER said, the honorable gentleman himself had already wasted a great deal of time, and was likely to waste a great deal more. It was entirely the honorable member's own fault that there was any waste of time; he was the only Minister who was responsible for it, as he had come down with a bogus Ministry, and with bogus measures—measures he never intended to carry out. As to the honorable member's remarks about the speech of the honorable member for Maranoa—which, by the way, the honorable member had not the brains to understand—all he could say was, that it was the very best speech he had ever heard made in that House in reply to a Financial Statement. It was of no use wasting time in a discussion on the adjournment. Several honorable members on his side had intimated to him that they intended to speak on the question; and although the honorable Premier might think that the debate was ended, and that nothing would come out of it, he might tell that honorable gentleman that he was counting his chickens too soon, and that something might come out of it which would surprise him. They had not heard the honorable member himself on the present question, and there was no doubt that if he did address the House there would be another debate. The subject was not at all exhausted, whatever the honorable gentleman might think, and therefore he would suggest that the honorable member should at once accede to the motion for adjournment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he was one of those who was very anxious that they should get on with the business of the country; and whilst most desirous that there should be a full discussion of the subject before them, he was equally sure that honorable members were longing for the Government to have an opportunity of bringing forward their Bills. Being of opinion that there could not be a more important question than the Financial Statement, and that it ought to be well discussed, it must, at the same time, be admitted that since that statement was made there had been ample time allowed to honorable members to thoroughly consider it. And admitting that a very able speech upon it had been made by the honorable member for Maranoa —

The PREMIER: No, no.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said, he was always ready to make fair admissions, and he considered that the speech of the honorable member for Maranoa was an able one. At the same time, honorable gentlemen opposite should be satisfied; they had put forward their most able financier, and having

done so he thought they should come to a settlement of the question that night. If they did not, they would dribble away another night in personal badinage, and that would be tantamount, so far as the Government were concerned, to another week being spent in doing nothing. The Opposition had already tried their strength, and had failed, and therefore they should be satisfied, and willing to go on with the real business of the country. If he were the leader of the Opposition—if he had the brains which he presumed that honorable gentleman had—he should contrive some way or other to drill his men better than that honorable gentleman did. He presumed that honorable member had brains, although that honorable member said the honorable Premier had not; but he was quite ready to accept the brains of his honorable colleague in preference to the honorable member's brain policy. They were met in that House to discuss thoroughly the most important questions, and above all things to get on with the business of the country, and if they could not do that what was the use of their sitting there at all. He maintained that the honorable member opposite must really take that matter into consideration; they had already frittered away sufficient time, although he might be wrong in using such a term—and as the fate of the Ministry had been decided on the want of confidence motion, surely honorable members opposite must know that it was better to admit that they had been fairly beaten, and go on with the business before them. He would submit that if honorable members persisted in wasting time in long desultory debates which merely led to a loss of time, they were throwing difficulties in the way of what the Government wished to do. The earnest desire of the Government was to bring forward their measures, which honorable members opposite seemed so anxious to know more about, and yet would not give them an opportunity of submitting to them.

Mr. THOMPSON said it was perfectly useless for the honorable member to get up and exhort the House as he had done. Honorable members of the Opposition had gone there to do business, and the way in which they did it must be to their own satisfaction. They satisfied themselves as to their duty, and they considered it was their paramount duty to thoroughly criticise the Financial Statement, especially after the speech of the honorable member for Maranoa, which the honorable Minister for Lands said was an able speech, and which the honorable Premier said was not a good one. It appeared to him that it was quite useless to oppose the adjournment, especially after the quarter of an hour which had been wasted by the honorable member who had preceded him. The Government might depend that whatever might be the brain powers the Opposition had, they had a certain amount of determination. They had learned a certain lesson from

the Government and their supporters, which was, that the business of the country should be done by the Opposition. After all, the present question was the business of the session; and yet they were asked to pass it through that evening, when some of their best speakers would not be reported. He was not a figure man, and did not intend to make a figure speech; but he would say that there were some lesser lights on his side who had to be heard, and who would yet eclipse the greater lights on the Government benches. When they had a bald statement from the honorable the Treasurer, in which he proposed a Loan Estimate without saying what he was going to do with it, although they had been told by the honorable Minister for Lands that they would know in time, he thought that it was only right that they should not close the debate too soon. Some of the most able financial speeches had been made that evening, to which he had listened most patiently; and yet, however much the Financial Statement had been attacked, he thought it could be torn to tatters still more. He was of opinion that the railway estimates were not correct, for instance, and there were other matters; but it amounted to this, that the Opposition must be, in regard to the course they took on all occasions, the best judges, and all the exhortations of the honorable Minister for Lands would not affect them one bit.

Mr. BELL said, there was one thing he should very much like to know, in regard to the conduct of business in that House, which was, whether they were to accept any understanding come to with the Minister in charge of the business of the evening as an understanding approved of by other Ministers or not, or whether a misunderstanding between the Ministers was to be a misunderstanding with the whole House. He asked that question because he happened to know that the honorable Treasurer, who was the Minister on the present occasion, who was supposed to direct the management and arrangement of the business connected with his department—had come to an understanding with honorable members of the Opposition which was satisfactory to them, when suddenly another member of the Government got up and disarranged the whole matter. He should like to know whether that was to be the way in which the business of the House was to be conducted, or whether it was an exception to the rule;—he trusted it was an exception, and that, for the future, a Minister whose department was under consideration would be allowed to make his own arrangements with the House. He thought it would have been well if the honorable Minister for Lands had allowed the matter to be settled, as it had been to the satisfaction of all but that honorable gentleman himself, who appeared, he must say, to be very unsettled indeed; there was, in fact, a certain disquietude on the part of the honorable gentleman which showed an un-

certainty on his part as to his position among his colleagues.

The PREMIER said, he rose for the purpose of informing the honorable member that he had not opposed the adjournment, but had only put it to the honorable member for Port Curtis whether it would not be better to finish the debate that evening.

Mr. IVORY said, he must express his deep thankfulness to the honorable Minister for Lands for the dissertation on the propriety of manner which they had heard from him that evening for the sixth or seventh time during the present session. He had listened to the same thing over and over again, and he must say that he did not think the effect of it was at all to economise the time of the House. They had had speeches from the honorable member which they considered should have come from some other member of the Government; and if the honorable member would accept his advice, it was that he should confine himself more to the question before them, and not set himself up as the arbiter of morals and propriety of demeanor to the members of the Opposition.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had had some conversation with honorable members opposite as to finishing the debate that evening, and had he not been of opinion that it would have come to a close that evening, he should most certainly have reserved his remarks until after other honorable members had addressed the House. He knew that there was no use in holding out if honorable members wished to adjourn; and at the same time he might say, and he thought honorable members would admit it, that there was no desire on his part to shirk any discussion on the question before them—in fact, every opportunity had been given to honorable members to discuss it. If honorable members who had not spoken wished to do so, he had no objection on the part of the Government to consent to the adjournment; but he trusted honorable members would be prepared to bring the debate to a close on the next evening.

Mr. PALMER: No understanding.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he trusted honorable members would do so, as it was most necessary to proceed with the Estimates with as little delay as possible.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that the honorable Minister for Lands professed very great anxiety to get on with the business of the country; but there were many honorable members on his side of the House, who were at far more loss when attending to the interests of the country, than that honorable gentleman was, and who were quite as anxious to have the public business transacted. He would tell that honorable member, that the business now before them was the most important that they could consider. The honorable member had also said, that as the Opposition had been fairly beaten, they should be willing to let the Government go on with their

business. It was true they had been beaten, but how? They were beaten by a majority of 21 to 18; which majority was obtained by the absence through illness of the honorable member for Ravenswood, through the absence of a brother of the Premier, who was fearful of committing political fratricide, and through the electorate of Burke not being represented. That was how the Opposition had been beaten. He hoped the honorable gentleman would accept the advice given to him by the honorable member for the Bremer, and refrain in future from lecturing the House; he was sure that so long as he was in the House he should not be guided in any one way by what was said by the honorable gentleman.

Mr. STEVENSON said, that when the honorable member for Port Curtis rose to speak in reply to the Premier, he thought it was rather unfair of the honorable member to do so until he had given one of the Ministers an opportunity of explaining what the Premier meant; for he had noticed during the debate on the vote of want of confidence, that one of the honorable Premier's colleagues had always been obliged to rise and explain what that honorable gentleman said, or in some instances to flatly contradict what he had said. He thought the business of the country could not be gone on with, so long as the present Premier was at the head of the Government, and there was no likelihood of any important business being done, as long as he remained in that position. For his own part, he had something to say on the question before the House; and he intended to show that the Estimates had been prepared, simply as stated by the honorable member for Port Curtis, for the purpose of catching votes. He did not think that honorable members on his side of the House had any intention of allowing the debate to be closed that evening.

Question put and passed.

GOLD FIELDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The question upon which the House was counted out on the 3rd instant was again put from the chair,—“That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.”

The House divided.

And there being no tellers for the noes, the Speaker declared the question to have been resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of the Premier, the House went into committee on the Bill.

On the House resuming, the Chairman reported no progress, and obtained leave to sit again.