

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 9 AUGUST 1876

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 9 August, 1876.

Ways and Means.—Customs Duties Bill.—Stamp Duties Amendment Bill.—Adjournment.

WAYS AND MEANS.

On the Order of the Day being called on for the resumption of the debate on the question that the Speaker leave the chair,

Mr. PETTIGREW said he had expected that some further explanation of the Financial Statement than had been given to the House would have been offered. The great lights had shone out; after them came the lesser lights with their grievances of various descriptions, and it could be no more than justice to them that the intentions of the Government respecting them should be stated. He had to congratulate the Colonial Treasurer upon

his admirable address, but it struck him very forcibly that that excellent speech bore internal evidence that it had been prepared for a very different purpose than the present Estimates. There could be no doubt the honorable gentleman intended it to be a rest and caution speech, and prepared it for that express purpose. The Treasurer said relief could not be got from public works revenue. If so, would it not be advisable that the honorable gentleman should state how they were going to carry out a large and expensive public works policy, and raise a revenue to meet the intended loan? But the honorable gentleman had utterly failed in dealing with this question at all. It was somewhat important that before a person went into debt he should try, by some fair means, to be able to show to himself and others that he would be in a position to repay it. In a case like the present, both lender and borrower should be satisfied that the works proposed to be constructed should be remunerative, and that they would at least pay the interest. It struck him very forcibly that when the Colonial Treasurer said, "We cannot expect relief from the public works," he did not mean what he said. From what source, then, was it to come? From increased taxation on the necessities of life, or what? The Treasurer, in fact, had not attempted a reply to that question. How could he when his statement was originally intended to be a rest and caution policy, such as the Ministers brought before their constituents at the first, but which, for reasons which he would endeavor to show, they had changed to a policy very ably described by the honorable the Minister for Lands, when he said one of the tests of the Liberal party at the present time was their determination to borrow money and spend it on public works; without any reference to whether the public works would be remunerative or not? It was a very serious thing, indeed, for any Government to spend money in this way for the sake of being thought progressive; and to create works without any prospect of receiving something in return in the shape of interest, and without some sort of promise that the country would not be saddled with a further burden of indirect taxation. He quite agreed with the Colonial Treasurer that this was an opportune time to consider the position of the colony. It was a time, if the truth must be known, when there was a large deficit made by what he would call cooked accounts. This had evidently taken place, because it was shown to the House last year that there was no deficit at all. He would now congratulate the Colonial Treasurer upon showing the real state of affairs in the colony; but if he had adhered to his own observations, that this was an opportune time to consider the affairs of the colony, he would have gone a little further and shown how the interest was to be got from the proposed railways that appeared on the Loan Estimates.

Nominally, the Colonial Treasurer went in for £600,000, but virtually it might prove to be £6,000,000 or more. The House knew where the beginning was, but no one could tell the end. He gave the Treasurer the credit of being a sensible man; but he ought to have shown that, if he did borrow this money, he had some prospect that it would not be virtually a drag upon the general taxpayers of the country. The Colonial Treasurer, however, had failed to do this. Another reason he had for thinking that the Treasurer's speech was prepared for quite another state of affairs than that at present existing. The honorable gentleman cautioned the House that if the colony was to be progressive there should be no log-rolling. What, however, did these six railways mean but six big logs that would be rolled about in order to keep the Ministry in power? To his mind that was the real and actual fact. He maintained, and he believed the Colonial Treasurer would agree with him, and he believed the Minister for Lands—notwithstanding the excitement he got into the other night—would agree with him, and he believed the Colonial Secretary would agree with him, that the Financial Statement was prepared for another purpose. He had no hesitation in making the assertion that, when the Colonial Treasurer commenced to prepare his speech, he had not the slightest suspicion that he would be required to make provision for six new railways in the colony. The new railway scheme sprung up all at once, like Jonah's gourd: it grew up in a night, and, when the daylight was opened upon it, it would wither away like the gourd, and there would not be a single remnant of it left except six broken promises. He held it now, and he held it the first session he was in the House, that for a Government to adopt a policy that had been forced upon them was wrong—was a mistake. It had been the ruin of the Government of which the honorable member for Port Curtis was the head, and which lost position in the country by accepting the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway, when it was forced upon them. Every Government ought to be able to enunciate its own policy, otherwise it occupied a very false position. What was the actual condition of the colony at the present time? They were nearly seven millions in debt, and going into new expenses without any prospect of entering into works that would pay. The Premier thought differently, but then the Premier could manage his own business and that of everybody else at the same time. Who could doubt that this railway scheme was brought forward without any intention of carrying it out? He had never heard of those six railways, and did not believe they had been heard of by any member of the Government until very recently. Who ever heard of the necessity of a Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway? He heard something about it, to be sure, on a platform at Ipswich,

addressed to a constituency there; but when he heard of the rest of the policy, he could not help exclaiming "When, in the name of goodness, is all this to be done?" to which a certain gentleman, who was now in the House, said, "Oh, we are only foreshadowing a policy. It may be done in twenty years, and it may be done in a hundred." But this works policy was now brought to the test of immediate action, and was put on the Estimates without the slightest intimation whether it would pay for even the grease of the wheels on the carriages. It was the absolute duty of the Treasurer to give the House every information respecting the Loan Estimates; and his neglect of this duty convinced him, and he believed a great many other persons also in the House, and throughout the country, that there was no serious intention on the part of the Government to carry out these public works. It was an extraordinary thing, but it was nevertheless true, that six railways were to be provided. Six! Now, why should the number be limited to six? He could not possibly understand it. The great creative mind of the Premier limited the number to six—six only! Surely the honorable gentleman must have borrowed from his (Mr. Pettigrew's) remark about Genesis the other night, some idea as to the creation of the world in six days. What did the House find? A railway from Warwick to the Border. Now, there was a class of persons in the old country called pawnbrokers: whether the honorable Premier knew anything about that class, he was not prepared to say. These people hung out three golden balls—two to one that when an article was put into pawn it never got out again. The Premier, in his policy, seemed to be prodigal, like an indifferent housewife. The wages were paid on Saturday night, and Sunday being got over, Monday morning arrived, and he found all the money gone. So the coat had to go to the pawn to secure the vote of the honorable member for Carnarvon. It was a case of come-easy go-easy. Tuesday arrived, and the trousers and vest went to the pawn to secure the support of the Gympie and Maryborough portion of the constituency. Wednesday morning bringing no improvement, the boots followed the other articles pawned to secure the vote of the honorable member for Burnett. Then the Comet junction, for the benefit of Clermont came in; on Thursday, when things began to get more difficult, away went the smoothing-iron to secure the vote of the member for Blackall; the hat went to the pawn on Friday to secure the Kennedy; and, finally, the fire-irons had to go to secure the member for Aubigny. He should always maintain that these schemes were proposed simply to serve these purposes. He should not say a great deal more upon the railway question, because the subject had been most ably handled on the previous night, when a formidable array of figures was

produced to support unanswerable arguments, and he did not profess to be a great big politician, as some members did. He would now come down a bit from the high stage upon which he had been standing, and have a little talk with the Government. He had never voted against them but once, he believed, and should not, perhaps, vote against them any more; he had no desire to do so for the mere sake of opposition. But the Government ought to do something for them. They could get up schemes for no less than six railways, which meant millions of money, and he did not object to railways individually. What he objected to was projecting railways without possessing or offering to the House the amplest information. He had a word or two to say about buildings. It would be remembered by honorable members, that, in the Loan Estimates last year, the House voted £15,000 for wharves in Brisbane, and the House was told that the scheme would pay at least ten per cent. An item appeared also on the present Loan Estimates for a sum of £15,500 for sheds for those wharves; and it seemed to him a monstrous absurdity that the House was told nothing about it. If this amount was expended, it would make the wharves cost £30,500, and there would be etceteras that would work it up to £35,000, or £3,500 a-year interest. Was there a business man in Brisbane who would warrant any merchant in spending anything like £3,500 a year in the shape of rent? Iron sheds were all that were required for the wharves, and £1,500 would be a much more reasonable sum to ask than £15,500. He had been told by a gentleman who was very likely to become a lessee of those wharves at a moderate rental, that £15,500 was evidently a mistake, and that what was intended was really £1,500. He should like to know whether any of the Ministers knew anything about this plan. Was there any serious intention of building brick sheds? If not, what sort of buildings? He should never dream of consenting to this vote without full information. He looked upon the sheds of the Railway department at Brisbane as a complete waste of money. Brick sheds were far too expensive, when there was no likelihood of the railway permanently remaining there for many years for goods traffic, because the line must sooner or later go to the water's edge. The item wanted inquiring into, and he called upon the Government for information. Again, he noticed that unfortunate town Ipswich, and he congratulated the Government upon putting down a sum of £2,500 to build a land office there. He congratulated them, because it was the first time since the Liberal party had been returned to power that they had expended a shilling in that place. They might, however, when they began, deal as fairly with Ipswich as with other towns in the colony. A proper court house for both Supreme and District business was

badly wanted; also a registrar's office. An immigration office ought to be provided, for a police court was not the place where they should keep women and children waiting about for hours. Immigration to Queensland might be worked much better in this way than by agents and lecturers in England; the best plan was to do something that would induce people to send home for their friends when there was work for them to do, and one advantage of such a system would be, that immigrants, instead of stopping at the depôts at an expense to the colony, would, upon their arrival, be taken away to the homes of their friends. A Savings Bank was necessary in Ipswich, where there was a large amount of money deposited every year, and all these buildings might be concentrated into one block. He would state, without fear of contradiction, that the Premier had done great injustice to his own city by not paying proper attention to these matters. Compare what was proposed in Ipswich with the £15,500 with which Brisbane was favored, for the erection of sheds over the wharves; one place ought to be treated as well as another, and he hoped the Premier would without loss of time make provision for these matters which were so urgently demanded. Another matter to which he wished to call attention was the gross injustice which invariably happened at Ipswich with respect to the Roads Department of the Southern Division. It was a notorious fact that East Moreton was provided for to the extent of £13,400; whereas West Moreton, that had double the quantity of selections, and that possessed new country that was being opened up every day, was down for only £7,850. This was a gross injustice, take it from any point of view. Take the population basis, or the cattle and produce basis, and it was evident that the West Moreton district was shamefully treated by the present Government. Then came the item of bridges and culverts, as to which they were better treated at Ipswich than in some other matters. He did not wish to complain, but he noticed that £7,850 was promised to Warwick; and he thought the Government were nearly as sure of his vote as they were of the honorable Chairman of Committees'. If that honorable gentleman had been as faithful to his promises as he (Mr. Pettigrew) had, he would never have given his vote to the Government the other day. He would now turn to his own electorate. He was a marked man, but hoped to live down a little hardship in that respect; and he begged to state that he intended to stand up boldly for his constituents. He had been promised a court house at Gatton; it was only a small affair, but Gatton was a central place; and yet there was no mention of it in the Estimates. A petition signed by 250 persons was sent in for a court house at Murphy's Creek, and a bridge was promised over Laidley Creek; but still there was no

sign of the promises being fulfilled, although in the latter case the bridge was promised two years ago. There was a land office at Helidon too, but why a land office was put there he never could understand; he never knew what business the Commissioner of Lands had at Helidon, except that he could get a good dinner there. He now came to the Asiatics, a subject that was dealt with at the close of the Treasurer's speech :—

"However, to provide a certain amount to cover any deficiency that may arise, and also any fortuitous expenditure which may be required, we propose to increase the duty on rice, and also to raise the price of miners' and business licenses issued to the Chinese. Last year, duty at the rate of £2 a ton was paid on 2,200 tons of rice; and we propose to make it one penny a pound, which is equal to £9 6s. 8d. a ton. Now, that alteration will not be sufficiently burdensome to prevent rice from being an article of domestic use, nor will it be incommensurate with its commercial value; and when we consider that 1,400 tons of this commodity have been landed at Cooktown, we may presume that it is chiefly consumed by those colored races, whose arrival in such large numbers in this colony we have to deplore. In connection with that additional taxation, there is now before the House a Bill dealing with miners' rights and business licenses issued to Chinese. At the present time, miners' rights are issued at the rate of 10s. each, and business licenses at the rate of £4 each."

These licenses were to be increased, and the Chinamen were to be looked up, let the country they occupied be rough or smooth; but he would just like to know how these licenses were to be collected. Let any man go into a rough country where there were nothing but Chinese, whose language a European could not understand, and see how he would prosper in looking up the miners' rights. How was any policeman to mark the men? Then the Chinaman had no money, but the Attorney-General said that they could sell the Chinaman's property. Would the Colonial Treasurer tell him who were to be the purchasers of the Chinaman's property? It took two people to make an agreement, and how were they to sell a Chinaman's property that was twenty miles away from any buyers? A few old spades and shovels, and an old bark gunyah or so, were offered for sale, and the whole stock, lock, and barrel realised next to nothing. Then the Chinaman was to be brought into prison. Who was to do it? One policeman could not do it; for, unless a man had his eyes open night and day, John Chinaman would escape. There was only one way in which this Bill could be worked. The Chinamen had pigtails, and the proper way was to square them, and the honorable the Premier might go and assist in the operation as senior sergeant. But, seriously, it was a mistake to tax a man's poverty. By taxing the Chinaman, they taxed the poorest man on the gold field, and taxed him for his very existence. Could not the ingenuity of the

Government devise anything better than that? Were there not enough brains in the Ministry to invent some other scheme than to tax 165,000 Europeans for 5,000 Chinamen? Was it not a monstrous absurdity to say that the financial ability of the colony was not superior to a paltry tax like this? He believed that, without the slightest trouble, all the work could be done at the port of Cooktown by dealing direct with the Chinese when they arrived and left the colony. He had made these remarks with the very best intentions towards the Government, who, he thought, were in a false position with respect to their financial affairs. He believed that the honorable the Treasurer felt he was in a false position, and to relieve himself of that, he ought to get up and give the House some idea how, with these public works, they were to provide for a deficit next year. Was it to be additional taxation on the articles already taxed, or were they to go back to the old system and tax the child from the day that he entered the world until he went out of it? He thought if the Colonial Treasurer would give some information on this point to the House, he would afford relief to a great many members who wished to give the Government fair and open-handed play. But on the other hand, if the Government were prepared to continue their system of bringing forward measures gathered up in a minute, railway estimates prepared at half an hour's notice, and all merely to catch votes, it became all persons who intended to make Queensland a permanent home, and rear their families there, to stand up and oppose such a system, and consider in what direction they were drifting at the present time. There were six railways proposed, but there was not a word about the probable payment of them. The colony might, for all he knew, be about to plunge into an expenditure of £6,000,000 of money or more. The Colonial Treasurer, who was a very intelligent man, and who had made the most out of a very miserable position, was deserving of pity in preparing a speech for one set of things, and having quite another set forced upon him. The honorable gentleman, however, had had a fortnight of discussion, and it was the duty, as it ought to be the pleasure of the Government, now to lay before the constituencies how they were going to provide for the increased expenditure. It was the duty of the Liberal party, when they went on with progressive works, to see that they should be profitable; but he had yet to learn that it was their duty to import immigrants into the colony for employment on public works. That was certainly a false policy, and the sooner the colony got out of its present position the better would it be.

Mr. STEVENSON said that after the able speeches made upon the Financial Statement, he did not intend to prolong the debate, especially when it was remembered that the argu-

ments adduced by members on the Opposition side of the House, and their exposure of the fallacies of the Treasurer's Statement, remained unanswered. Attempts had been made to refute some of the arguments, but they were very feeble. The Minister for Lands, for instance, pretended to reply to the honorable member for Dalby, but never went into figures at all; he simply gave the House a long lecture, which when analysed meant merely nothing. The Colonial Treasurer met the speech of the member for Dalby in a very solemn kind of way, and in doing so, intimated what really seemed to be a fresh policy. After bringing before the House a policy which commenced by an immediate expenditure of a million of money, and which involved an ultimate expenditure of two or three millions more, he told the House he had made up his mind to keep a tight hand upon the reins of the colony. What did all this mean? Did it mean that the honorable gentleman did not know what he was talking about, or that the Ministry were not sincere in their public works policy? One of the two must be the case. The Colonial Treasurer, in response to a remark made by the honorable member for Port Curtis, told the House last night that he was not to be trammelled by the opinions of the late administration. Such an argument might have some force coming from the Minister for Lands who was not in the administration, but it had no force at all coming from the Treasurer. The honorable the Premier met the speech of the honorable member for Maranoa by saying that he had talked against time, but in making a comment of that kind upon one of the ablest speeches ever delivered in the House upon any financial statement, the Premier proved that he was totally unable to comprehend what the member for Maranoa was talking about. An abler speech than that delivered by the honorable member for Maranoa could not have been heard, and it was upon a question of paramount importance; it was, in short, a disgrace to the colony that the head of the Government should refer to such a speech in the way he did. Having said this much, he wished now to speak of one or two items which had come within his own personal knowledge. It would not be difficult to show that the Estimates had been prepared simply to catch votes. This £100,000 loan for roads and bridges, which had been spoken of a good deal, was put down for nothing else but for the purpose—he would not say of bribery and corruption—but for political purposes. The money, no doubt, was very badly wanted for the purposes for which it was put down in the Estimates, but it was not wanted to be spent in the way proposed by the Ministry. For himself, he would not trust them to spend it at all. He would instance the bridge over the Fitzroy as one which was put down simply as a bribe to a constituency, and nothing else. He did not object to the bridge over the Fitzroy, or the expenditure it would involve,

if it were done at the proper time; but when communication was almost entirely stopped between Rockhampton and the interior, it was not the time to spend a lot of money upon a bridge that was not required. Who wanted the bridge at Rockhampton? Not the general public of Rockhampton at all, but a few interested parties; and he would point out the honorable member for Blackall as one of them. They simply wanted the bridge across the Fitzroy to improve private property on the other side of the river, and for nothing else. He maintained the Rockhampton people generally did not want the bridge, and that they would be much more benefited by spending the money on railway extension than for such a purpose. He said the money would be misspent, if it were spent at the present time on a bridge across the Fitzroy, but if expended on railways it would benefit the whole community. Why, as he pointed out on a previous occasion, goods which had been sent by rail to Duaringa had to be brought back in consequence of the state of the roads, and sent by sea to Broadsound for the purpose of being forwarded to Clermont. He wished to point out what the railway policy of the Government was, and to show another instance of how the Estimates had been prepared, simply for the purpose of catching votes. He found in the Loan Estimates the item, "Comet junction towards Clermont, Great Northern Railway, £150,000." Now, he should like to ask the honorable the Premier if the route of the Great Northern Railway had been changed without that House knowing anything at all about it, or, did he think his (Mr. Stevenson's) constituents were fools enough to be caught by his putting in "Clermont" instead of "Emerald Downs," when, as yet, they had taken no steps to have the route changed? He was satisfied that the item had been framed in that way to catch the votes of the constituency of Clermont, because there were no voters at Emerald Downs. It showed either that, or that the Government were just as defective in knowledge of the geography of the colony, as the honorable the Colonial Treasurer was when he sent navvies to Dalby to assist them on their way to New South Wales; because a railway to Emerald Downs would not go near, or in the direction of Clermont; it would pass at a distance of 65 miles away from Clermont. He thought that conclusively showed that they were not really sincere in their railway policy, when they did not know where they were taking their railways to; and, he said, the expenditure of such large sums of money should not be entrusted to men who knew nothing at all about what they were doing. He sympathised very much with the honorable member for Stanley, when he said, they must have some information about these railways, and about this proposed loan; because he thought that on a question involving the expenditure of something like three or four millions of

money, information ought not to be either refused or delayed.

Mr. MACDONALD said, it was very unfortunate that the honorable member for Clermont never addressed the House without indulging in personalities. On the present occasion he had thought fit to accuse the Government of catching votes, and if he had been content with criticising the Government, he (Mr. MacDonald) would not have interfered, because they were quite able to defend themselves; but he did object to a young and mushroom politician coming there and trying to mislead the House.

Mr. STEVENSON rose to a point of order. He said he had not mislead the House. He did not—

The SPEAKER: That is not a question of order, and the expression used by the honorable member for Blackall is not unparliamentary.

Mr. MACDONALD said, the honorable member had tried to mislead the House as to the facts connected with the bridge across the Fitzroy River, which he might state for the information of honorable members. In 1872 when the Palmer Government was in power, a large and influential deputation waited upon that Government, and succeeded in obtaining a promise that the Government would give full value in land for any sum of money that was subscribed by the people of the district, and expended on a bridge over the Fitzroy.

Mr. McILWRAITH: What do you say?

Mr. MACDONALD: The Palmer Government promised the people of Rockhampton that any sum raised towards the construction of the bridge over the Fitzroy should be equalled in value by a grant of land which should be given to them. Since then there had been a petition presented to the House in the first session of this Parliament, signed by 700 or 800 of the Rockhampton people, who were interested in that particular work, asking that it should be carried out. And again last year they asked the House to vote a sum of money for that purpose, and pledged themselves to guarantee the interest upon the cost of construction. They undertook to guarantee the interest on any reasonable amount up to £50,000 or £60,000. He thought it was very improper for the honorable member for Clermont to say that his (Mr. MacDonald's) vote had been bought by the promise of that work being carried out. Almost every honorable member in the House knew that that bridge was promised last year; and he thought the Government had been very slow in recognising the claims of the Rockhampton people in respect to that bridge.

Mr. BUZACOTT: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACDONALD said it was not a matter affecting the interests of a few individuals. He said there was a very large agricultural district on the north side of the Fitzroy River, which would be opened up by that bridge. He thought the construction of it was the very best policy the Government could adopt,

because the land would be considerably enhanced in value; a large population would be encouraged to settle there, and he was sure the revenue would be very considerably increased.

Mr. BUZACOTT: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACDONALD said he did not think it worth while to go into any lengthy argument on the matter, because the necessity of a bridge over the Fitzroy had been acknowledged by every unprejudiced member of the House. He hoped the honorable member for Clermont would endeavor to talk about matters he understood. Let him advocate the claims of his own constituents, and not try to deprive others of what they were entitled to. He had promised the people of Clermont, that he would use his influence with a view to getting the line diverted towards that town, and a large petition had been sent down to the Government on the subject; and now, when he saw that the Government had introduced something of the kind in their railway policy, with a view of establishing a railway reserve towards Clermont—when he saw that their inclination was in that direction, he raised an objection, and said it was done for the purpose of catching his vote; so that the views and wishes of the people of Clermont would not be taken into consideration, at all so far as that honorable member was concerned. He (Mr. MacDonald) did not think his vote was of sufficient importance to induce any Government to try to catch it, and he should certainly be very sorry to see him sitting on the Government side of the House.

Mr. PALMER said he rose for the purpose of making a personal explanation. The honorable member for Blackall had imputed a promise to him in such a curious way, that he (Mr. Palmer) could not understand him, and he would explain what the promise was. A deputation waited upon him some years ago with reference to a bridge over the Fitzroy, and he suggested that they should put it up as a private speculation—that they should erect a public bridge with their own capital; and he said he would recommend to the Government—he never promised it on the part of the Government because such a promise would be absurd—that they should be given a grant of land to the extent of an acre for every pound expended in the construction of the bridge up to a certain sum; he made no promise that it would be done.

Mr. THOMPSON said he should not attempt to go into figures very heavily, as it was not his forte, but there were one or two remarks he wished to make in connection with the question now under discussion. In the first place, he thought it was the duty of the Opposition, as well as the members supporting the Government, to insist that they should have some explanation with reference to this £600,000, so that they might know what they were asked to vote it for. All they had at present was the statement of

the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, that he did not intend to go into it, which had been supplemented by the statement of the honorable the Minister for Lands, that it would be explained at the proper time. He (Mr. Thompson) always thought the proper time to explain those matters was when the Financial Statement was before the House, and if that were not the proper time, he imagined the proper time would never come; and, perhaps, that was what the Government intended—that it should never come. He maintained that it was the duty of that House to insist upon having a full explanation of the loan policy of the Government. They could not too often insist that, before they committed themselves to any such expenditure as that proposed, they should have full and complete information as to what would be done with the money, and as to whether there was any prospect of it being repaid, or of the interest being paid, or in some way provided for out of the public revenue. There was another matter which seemed to have been lost sight of, and that was with regard to the duty proposed to be levied on rice. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer, in making his Financial Statement said, one of the means of improving the position of the Government was to improve taxation so as to lighten the burdens on the people. Now, rice was a necessary of life, and if they put a burden on rice, they taxed one of the necessities of life, and threw the consumption on other articles. For instance, in one of the Acts, rice was set down as of twice the value, as an article of consumption, as maize-meal, and the result of putting a tax upon rice would be, that there would be a larger consumption of maize-meal and flour and other consumable articles. It would have that effect, and more than that, it was in direct contradiction of the statement of the honorable the Treasurer, that they were to lighten the burdens on the people; because this would be a great burden on them, and it must fail for many reasons. If it were sought to put it on as a tax for revenue purposes, it failed, for the reasons he had stated. If it were intended to prevent the introduction of Chinese, which was one of the reasons given for it, and did prevent their introduction, it could not be for the purposes of revenue; so that the Government must take one stand or the other. They could not take both; the tax could not prevent the introduction of Chinese, and be of assistance to the revenue as well, for various reasons. If the Chinese were not to be introduced, it ceased to be a source of revenue; if they did not take the Chinese, they did not get the revenue, and they had their choice. Another matter which struck him at the time the statement was made was this:—He found the honorable the Treasurer estimated that he would receive an increase from the traffic of the Southern and Western Railway of £33,300 in round numbers. The

honorable gentleman evidently imagined that that would arise from the completion of the arrangements for the traffic between Ipswich and Brisbane. In fact, he said so; and as he had already taken credit for the passenger traffic, he must intend that this increase should be derived from goods traffic. Now, what was the policy of the Government with regard to goods traffic? It was to run the railway between Ipswich and Brisbane at a loss, so that where was this item of revenue to come from? In regard to that policy, he believed he might say, the view he took respecting it was supported by the highest authorities on railway matters in England; and before going into the general question, which he should not do at any great length, he would say sufficient to show honorable members that the Government stood in a very different position, with regard to internal communication, from that held by a railway company. The sole object of a railway company was to make a profit, but the object of a Government was to develop industry, and to benefit the country indirectly as well as directly. They had proof of that with regard to coal. They carried coal from the Downs to the port of Brisbane at a direct loss—at something like a half-penny per ton per mile—so that they had recognised the principle by carrying coal for the sake of developing the industry of coal mining. If that were an admitted principle, why did the Government run the railway at a loss for the purpose of running off the river traffic? The Government being the servant of the public, and therefore having the sole interest of the public at heart, should work the railways not merely for the sake of profit, but to make them of benefit to the public. What did they find was the view taken of the subject in England? By authorities which he should quote to the House, from a review on railway statistics and management, in the *Edinburgh Review*, it was distinctly shown, and indeed it was admitted by all the railway authorities, that not to allow water carriage fair play was detrimental to profit on railways. It had been the ruin of several railways, and in other cases it had reduced the profit to a minimum; and the reason was perfectly plain. It was this:—For heavy traffic they required large capital, they had to carry at a low rate, a great deal of time was taken up in shifting goods, and there was considerable expense in various ways; so that it was shown clearly that heavy traffic was generally carried at the expense of the revenue from passenger traffic. In fact, that was pretty well shown by the honorable the Treasurer himself, because he admitted that the short piece of line between Ipswich and Brisbane had paid on account of the increased passenger traffic; and now they wanted to burden the whole of the rest of the line, and reduce the profits, in order to run off the river steamers. It was a most suicidal policy, detrimental to the colony and detrimental to

the railway, even if it were a private speculation, as could be distinctly proved. He should read one or two extracts from the review to which he had referred, because they were really admirable. In the first place, they went to show that the railway companies in England had tried to run off the coasting traffic—he wished the honorable the Premier would not leave the House, because this might do him some good—and the remark the reviewer made was this :—

“There can be no doubt that the low cost at which the Newcastle and Durham coal can be delivered by sea in the Thames, is the one great safeguard to the public, which has kept down the railway freight of coal over the whole network of our lines.”

Therefore, it was for the benefit of the public that water carriage should be kept alongside railway carriage. In regard to the question of paying, it was distinctly shown by those authorities, and if any honorable member went into figures in connection with the matter, he would see it could not be denied that competing unfairly with water carriage would never pay. With regard to this the authorities pointed out that, although the traffic on the English lines had increased beyond anticipation, the net return had decreased in proportion. The passage was this :—

“Traffic has increased, even beyond our anticipations. How is it that the net returns, which in 1858 was 3·75 per cent. on the capital, was no more than 4·14 on the capital in 1874?”

That was the question they asked, and they went into it and proved it in the way he had stated. They said that in all these cases the mineral and heavy traffic had been carried at the expense of the light and passenger traffic. It arose in this way :—When a line was started, of course the company made every effect to get traffic, whether it paid or not. So long as the line was unemployed, or wanted employment, it paid to carry at the very lowest rates, and gradually it had crept on until now in England the heavy traffic was carried at the expense of the other traffic on the lines, and to such an extent had that been done that it had actually shut up several railways. These extracts illustrated what he said; and the matter was so important to his constituents, and to the whole country, that he must be excused for reading them :—

“We do not attempt, now, to determine how far the average condition of the railways of the United Kingdom has advanced towards the time when it will become necessary, either to abandon a portion of the heavy traffic, or to double the lines of way. That such is the prospect before us no competent witness will, we imagine, deny. Our object is not recrimination, but reconsidering. It is not whether the traffic of 1875 has been conducted on the best principles, or no, that concerns us. We look to the dividends to be earned during the remainder of the century. Sooner or later the practical question, will it pay to lay down separate lines of railways for mineral traffic must be solved.”

And it wound up in this way—

“As far as the information before us goes, the proprietors of railway property will enjoy a more lucrative trade if they allow water carriage fair play.”

And then they went on to adduce the facts which he had referred to in a general way in support of that opinion. Then, again, they went into the question and summarised the various matters that had been inquired into, and showed that, in order to estimate profits, it was necessary to have proper returns—not such returns as they got in this colony of gross expenditure here and there, but returns showing the cost in regard to “goods” as distinguished from “passenger” traffic, not only on the railway itself, but incidentally in regard to the handling of goods, storing them, and all the necessary paraphernalia, such as bookkeeping and the like. It showed that only on the French railways was that properly done, and the results were what he had stated. In summarising the various reports, it was said :—

“Thirdly, comes the question of the true economy of mineral and other bulky traffic. It is almost a truism to say that artificial methods of forcing traffic on to a line of railway are contrary to true economy. The public, at all events, will be the ultimate loser, and so, in most cases, will be the grasping traffic manager. Now, there can be no contradiction to the statement that the whole policy of the railway boards towards the canals has been based on the principle of rendering fair competition for such traffic as was water-borne before the construction of railways, impossible. Had the railways been essentially a cheaper and better medium for mineral traffic, the canal would have been let alone. The public would soon have found out the truth, and the traffic would have followed its best natural channel, whichever it were.”

So they went on in the same style, proving distinctly the principles he had laid down, and they wound up the whole matter in an admirable passage, which he should read. These were truisms, and all he had stated was demonstrated by figures; they were not speculative deductions or anything of the sort. There were three reports under review, and Captain Tyler’s report was the chief one. Now, how did they wind up the whole of the argument, which he believed was admitted by all persons who understood railway traffic?—

“Public economy demands, that the traffic of the country should flow in its natural course, whether that course be by land or by water. All artificial competition with the requirements of true economy must, sooner or later, occasion loss, or even disaster. We believe that the railway proprietors, and therefore, the public, have suffered, and are likely to suffer yet more heavily, from a mistaken policy, based on unacquaintance with controlling facts. And we cheerfully submit, not only our arguments, but the data upon which they are based, to the verdict of scientific opinion, when fully and exactly informed as to the truth.”

That was public economy where they were talking of competing private companies and competing modes of carriage ; but, here the duty of the Government was not simply to make a profit ; it was not to crush, but to foster industry ; and the bad policy of what had been proposed by the Government was doubly evident, if it were true in regard to private competition. If it were true in regard to private competition and competing modes of traffic, how much more was it true in regard to a Government competing with private traffic and crushing private industry ? Why, the whole of this financial policy of the Government, a mere lawyer like himself could cut to shatters. Their policy was admitted to be this : To run the railway at a loss to run off the river traffic, which was worked at a profit and employed, as was shown on a recent occasion, one hundred families in and around Ipswich.

The PREMIER : Two families.

Mr. THOMPSON : The honorable member said "two families," but it had been shown distinctly that it employed one hundred families in and around Ipswich. And what was more, the scheme would not pay. That was the best of it. It was put on with the view of making the railway pay, but it would not pay. It was a financial mistake, a commercial mistake, and a mistake in every way they could look at it. The petition he had had the honor of presenting from his constituents went into this matter in another view. He was not aware, when he presented that petition, that the railway authorities were so entirely in his favor as to the bad policy of putting on differential rates to run off the river traffic. He did not pretend to be a financier, but he thought no financial policy had ever been so thoroughly shattered as that of the present Government had been by honorable members on that side of the House who were able to deal with such matters.

Mr. MACROSSAN said, in rising at that stage of the debate, he felt that he was laboring under a disadvantage, coming after the able speakers on that side of the House who, he might say, last night tore the Financial Statement of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer to rags—more especially the speech delivered by the honorable member for Maranoa. He considered that the arguments, and the logical deductions adduced last night by that honorable gentleman from returns before the House, were unanswerable, and had yet to be answered by honorable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. The only attempt that had been made to answer that honorable member, and it was scarcely an attempt, was by the honorable Treasurer himself. The honorable the Minister for Lands seemed to him to be entirely unaware of the importance of the debate now going on. In his second speech last night, the honorable member said he was extremely anxious to get on with the

business of the country, as if the most important business of the country was not that which they were now discussing. He said there was nothing the Government could bring before the House at the present time so important as the financial position of the colony ; and, so far as the debate had gone, it justified the members on that side of the House, and any impartial person outside, in the opinion formed on the want of confidence motion brought forward by the honorable member for Maranoa a few weeks ago. Honorable members on the opposite side of the House, and Ministers especially, seemed to be hopelessly unaware of the position the colony was drifting to. They did not seem to know there was a financial depression ; they seemed to be quite ignorant, or they professed to be ignorant, of a commercial depression, or they would certainly get up and answer the statements made by the honorable members for Maranoa, Rockhampton, and Dalby yesterday evening. Either that, or they were incompetent to do so. They could choose whichever horn of the dilemma they pleased—they were either ignorant of the position of the colony, or they were incompetent to answer the arguments that had been brought forward. The honorable the Minister for Lands had laid great stress upon what was said by the honorable member for Dalby, about what he called a "snap-trap policy ;" and instead of going into the financial debate at all, he endeavored to defend himself, and stated what he should have said when the want of confidence motion was before the House. He stated distinctly last night that when he joined the present Ministry he made an agreement with the honorable the Premier that a certain public works policy should be carried out. Now, he having made that statement, honorable members in that House were certainly bound to take it for truth ; but although they were bound to do so, they were not prevented from criticising it, and perhaps imputing to that honorable member that he had made a mistake—that his memory had played him false. He thought if they read the speech of that honorable member to his constituents at Maryborough, and the speech of the honorable the Premier to his constituents, they would find that all the agreement that seemed to have been made between them, was one to impose a duty on gold. As to a public works policy, the honorable the Minister for Lands distinctly stated to his constituents that he was speaking his own sentiments and not the sentiments of the Ministry ; and every member of the Ministry, in addressing his constituents, stated that the Government had agreed to one thing, and that was, not to bring forward any public works policy this session.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

Mr. MACROSSAN said : Now, was it possible, by any species of mental dexterity, that

the honorable gentleman had made a mistake when he informed the House that he had come to an agreement with the honorable the Premier? He thought the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, who he was sorry to see was absent, ought to be aware above all men in the Ministry that they were now approaching—in fact, that they had entered a period of depression, which, he hoped, would not be as great as that which occurred about ten years ago, but which would certainly be as great as that which existed during the two years immediately preceding the taking of office by the honorable member for Port Curtis. And he thought that in studying the position of the colony the honorable the Treasurer should have tried to place before the House the cause which had brought about the financial deficit which now existed, and also to have introduced some remedies to prevent the further extension of that deficit, which he had not done. During his Financial Statement the argument he used was that the deficit had been caused by the large extension of public works entered into by the preceding Government, in the beginning of 1874; but that argument was shattered to pieces by the honorable member for Maranoa last night. That honorable member proved that the deficit had been caused by the extraordinary and extravagant expenditure in the departments, and not on public works. The honorable the Treasurer, in rising to answer the honorable member for Maranoa, completely shirked that question; he never approached it or attempted in the slightest degree to make any reply. He (Mr. Macrossan) had expected that that honorable gentleman would have fallen back on the argument that was usually adopted by the late Treasurer, and said that the great expense incurred in the departments had been caused by the extension of territory and the discovery of gold fields in the North. But he did not even use that, because he knew it would be futile. He (Mr. Macrossan) believed there were some members in the House who really imagined that some portion of the present financial distress might be imputed to the extension of territory, but such was not the case. By returns which were moved for in 1874 by the late member for Bowen, and which would be found in the first volume of the Votes and Proceedings for that year, and by returns moved for by the present member for Bowen, it would be found that there was very little difference between the expenditure in the years 1873, 1874, and 1875, in the districts north of Cape Palmerston, where the great extension of territory had taken place. In 1873, the expenditure under the Government of the honorable member for Port Curtis was nearly double that of the year 1871; but it was £18,000 less than in 1874 and £20,000 less than in 1875. In the year 1875 there was only £20,000 more expended in the Northern districts than in the year 1873, so that that

argument, had the honorable the Treasurer attempted to use it, would not have met the argument of the honorable member for Maranoa. The cause could not be attributed to public works, because, if that honorable gentleman referred to his own statement, he would find that the greater portion of the money voted for public works within the last two years had been allowed to lapse. Therefore, it arose simply from the extravagance which was entered into by the Government in 1874, for which the majority of the members on the Ministerial side of the House were responsible, because they sat there day after day, and night after night, and assisted them to go into extravagance knowingly. It seemed as if they had inherited an estate which they could never see the end of. They were simply like a young man who succeeded to an inheritance he never expected: they dropped into the full treasury left by the honorable member for Port Curtis, and good credit, and they thought the sooner they squandered the money the better for the country. He was happy to say that he was one member who, while sitting on that side of the House, protested day after day against the squandering of public money upon such things as it was squandered upon; and he said that the gentlemen now on the Government side of the House would be held responsible for the country drifting into the state it was approaching by their guilty silence at present. There was not one of them who had risen to speak in this debate, thereby distinctly proving that they were ignorant of the real importance of the question now under discussion.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

MR. MACROSSAN : And he maintained that they would be held responsible by the country as accomplices of the present Government if they allowed the colony to arrive at that condition, which it was certain to arrive at if they were allowed to remain in office another year, and to go on as they had been doing. He had information of appointments by the present Government which were simply disgraceful; and he said the greatest amount of extravagance and expenditure had arisen from these appointments, from overcrowding the public departments, not by raising men up in those departments, but by bringing in men from the outside, and placing them over old and deserving servants, and demoralising the public service. He maintained that those improper appointments were the chief cause of the present deficiency. In addition to the arguments of the honorable member for Maranoa, last night, showing that it was extravagance in the departments that had led to the present financial crisis, he would point out that in 1873, when the population was 144,000, the expenditure from revenue was £706,710, or exactly £4 15s. per head; and at the present moment, the money asked for by the honorable the Treasurer, for revenue expenditure,

was £978,407, or £5 13s. per head, an increase of 18s. per head in the cost of the administration of the Government of the country in two years and a-half. Was it any wonder they had a deficiency? How could those gentlemen account for that increase? It was not the interest on the public debt; it was independent of the interest on the public debt, which would increase it, in the two years and a-half, by £1 5s. per head. That was how things were going on. He appealed to honorable members opposite, and asked them, were they content to allow certain gentlemen, because they called themselves Liberals, because they assumed a certain name, to go on squandering money—to go on borrowing money, and spending it merely for the sake of spending it to gain support? The addition to the expenditure at the present moment, after two and a-half years' experience of Government by the party on the other side of the House, was £1,000 per day. Now, how were they going to meet this? The honorable the Treasurer said they would receive a certain sum from Customs duties, and other sums from the Railway department, and all the departments; but he (Mr. Macrossan) contended that he would not receive anything like the amount he expected from Customs. He expected £35,000 or £40,000 more than was received from that source last year, and during last year the increase was £18,500, and of that only £890 was due to the southern portion of the colony. Almost the whole of that increase was derived from north of Gladstone; and, if they took into account the traffic which was carried on from the city of Brisbane northwards, and the value of goods sent north on which the duty was paid here, instead of £890 being due to the South there would be a deficiency of £5,000 or £6,000 in Brisbane, besides similar deficiencies at Ipswich, Bundaberg and Maryborough. Now, he would ask, could the honorable Treasurer expect to get additional revenue from the Customs? Did he anticipate that there would be during the present financial year two or three good alluvial rushes on the Palmer gold fields? He must expect something of that kind, surely; but, even supposing the country remained in its present condition, and there should be a rush, it would not produce such an increase as was shown last year. But the honorable member said that he expected it from the goods at present in bond; but it was not from that source that it should be expected, because, if the purchasing power of the country had been reduced during the last year, it was only reasonable to suppose that it would be reduced during the present financial year, and he was confident it would be reduced very considerably, judging from the tables produced by the honorable gentleman himself. Last year the reduction in the value of the export of sugar was £38,366. The value of tin exported was reduced by £120,000, the value in the export of wool was reduced by £84,000, and the

value of copper ore exported was reduced by £38,000; in fact, every producing interest in the country, with the exception of gold, suffered a very material depreciation in the value of its export last year, which depreciation was not then felt, but would be during the present year; and in addition to that, was the recent depreciation in the price of wool. The depreciation last year amounted to a sum which was equivalent to a reduction in the purchasing power of the whole of the country of £3 1s. 6d. a head. Now, how could the honorable member expect an increase in the face of that? If the purchasing power of the people had been so reduced, he thought that no person, having any pretence to a knowledge of commerce, would make such calculations as the honorable member had made. The arguments of that honorable gentleman in respect to the anticipated receipts from land had been completely upset by the honorable member for Maranoa, and in regard to railways—from which he said there had been an increase of 50 per cent. last month—he would mention that, according to the return in the *Government Gazette*, the increase in the receipts from the first day of July to the 29th July had been £1,160, which made an average increase in the whole year of £13,900; but that was very far indeed from being 50 per cent. Now, when they took into consideration the fact that neither from the Customs, nor the land revenue, nor from the railways, could the honorable Treasurer expect the increase which had been put down, he thought that honorable members were justified in maintaining that the present occupants of the Treasury benches were not competent to administer the affairs of the country. He contended that the debate, so far as it had gone, had been such as to fully justify the honorable member for Maranoa in the vote of want of confidence which he had moved some weeks back. With regard to the railway policy of the Government, it was certainly of very little use asking for any information, or why they had so suddenly changed their policy on that subject; for they had been asked so often to give it, and they had not done so. It had been said by honorable members on his side of the House, that the object of the Government in changing their policy, had been to catch votes; and before going any further on that subject, he would briefly refer to what had passed between the honorable Treasurer and the honorable member for Port Curtis on the previous evening, in respect to putting a sum of money on the Estimates for a lighthouse on the Low Islands. The honorable member for Port Curtis was, he believed, thoroughly satisfied that the document which had been produced by the honorable Treasurer on the previous evening was a genuine document; but there was something more to be said, for even although that document was quite correct, he should like to ask, how it was that the honorable member for Cook

was kept in ignorance of it, and of the recommendation contained in it? Now, there was a little paragraph in the *Cooktown Herald* of July 15th, which was published at the very time the debate on the vote of want of confidence was going on in that House, which would throw some light on the matter. It might be remembered by honorable members that he and other honorable members had said at the time that the honorable member for Cook had been caught by the Estimates; and the honorable member for Ravenswood said, also, that that honorable member had been shown the Estimates. In the paragraph he referred to, which was headed very affectionately, "Our Member," it was stated that, in reply to a telegram sent by the town clerk to Mr. Murphy, the following had been received:—

"Am doing all that I possibly can to get money voted for the repairs and making of Charlotte street. The Government, however, will not definitely decide the question until the want of confidence motion is disposed of. The sum of £7,000 has been placed on the Estimates for the repair of Charlotte street, Cooktown, and improvements, &c., of the roads leading to your valuable gold fields. Provision has also been made for the erection of a good lighthouse on the Low Islands. The Government appear very favorably disposed towards the Cook electorate."

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that the telegram was dated July the 13th, and he would ask, whether it did not contain all the elements of a bargain on one side and a sale on the other? The Government had placed a sum of money on the Estimates, but yet they would not decide definitely until the vote of want of confidence was disposed of. If the honorable member for Cook was present, he would tell him that, although he was a young member, still he should not be so young as to be caught by chaff, and that the district of Cook had been as well looked after before it had a representative as it was likely to be by the gentlemen at present on the Treasury benches. The honorable member should also bear in mind that nothing the Government could do—that no matter the roads, &c., which were given to his district, ought ever to induce him to forget the most important of all questions to the North, namely, that of Financial Separation. In regard to the question of railways, he would ask the honorable member at the head of the Government, whether they were prepared to stand or fall by the whole of their railway policy; or whether, if they were not determined to stand or fall by the whole of that policy, they would stand or fall by any part of it? Were they prepared to make it a party question, or were they going to leave it an open question, as the Maryborough and Gympie Railway had been left last year, when every member was allowed to vote as he liked; the

result of which was, that the whole thing fell through—that it was a mere bogus railway? He would ask the honorable Attorney-General, how long it was since he had become convinced that the making of the Maryborough and Gympie, and the Bundaberg and Mount Perry railways would not be a useless drain on the resources of the colony? He thought it was only since the honorable member had become convinced that his pay as a Minister of the Crown was endangered by the do-nothing policy of the Government. He would ask another honorable member of the Ministry, whom he would not name, but whom, no doubt, honorable members would know, how long it was since he had supported the making of a railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe? Had that honorable member already forgotten the declaration he made, that even if the late Government made it a party question he would not vote for it, as it would be a waste of money. He would warn honorable members opposite not to forget those things, but to remember that the promises of the gentlemen who now proposed those railways were very slippery indeed. As regarded the railway put down for his district, he would state his opinions plainly, so that everybody, both inside and outside of that House, might understand him. At the present moment the district north of Cape Palmerston was producing a revenue to the country of between £190,000 and £200,000 per annum; whilst the expenditure in that district last year, exclusive of interest on the public debt and departmental expenses, was £123,000, leaving a balance of about £70,000. Now, the question of disposing of that balance was of far more consequence to the people of the North than making a railway from Townsville to Charters Towers. The capital which that sum would represent as interest would make several railways; and he might say that, when they had a railway made, they would be prepared to take the whole responsibility of guaranteeing the working expenses and interest of that railway. He contended that before any northern member could conscientiously give his vote in favor of the Loan Estimate for railways, he must have a guarantee—a guarantee made by law—that the interest and working expenses of every railway would be paid by the people in the district through which that railway went. If such a guarantee was given, he should vote for railways in every district; otherwise he should oppose them, and accept the responsibility with his constituents. He was fully aware of one thing, namely, that the people in his district would never consent to sacrifice the great principle of Financial Separation for the promise of a railway a hundred miles long, or even for the making of one. He knew that if the railway to Charters Towers was not made a party question, there were not five honorable members opposite who would vote for it; if it was made a party question they might carry it, but not otherwise. At the same time, there would not be

an honorable member who voted for that loan estimate as it stood who would not recede from the question of Financial Separation. He would ask, what benefit the railway would be in his district, except to the district itself? What benefit would the people of Bowen or Mackay derive from it? Why just as much as the people in his district derived from the making of railways in the South. It must be borne in mind that there had been a very large expenditure on railways in the Central and Southern districts. Seven loans had been contracted since 1863 for making them at different times, the interest on which, together with the depreciation of debentures, had amounted in round numbers to nearly a million and a-half of money. Now, he maintained that not one single penny of that interest should have been legally levied on the people north of Cape Palmerston. There was no more connection between the railways in the Southern and Central districts and the people north of Cape Palmerston than there was between the railways in Adelaide and the people of Brisbane; and the people of Brisbane could be just as fairly called upon to pay for the railways in Adelaide, as the people north of Cape Palmerston could be called upon to pay for those in the Southern and Western districts. But the people in the North had been compelled by force of circumstances to contribute a very large share of that million and a-half of money; he believed that, at a very moderate computation, a quarter of a million had been contributed by the people north of Cape Palmerston. He would ask them then, whether it could be expected by men knowing anything about finance, or anything of the people in the Northern district, that any money put down for railways for that district could swerve them from their desire for financial separation? No, as soon as they had the principle of financial separation settled—and it would be settled either with or without the consent of the present Government—they would commence to make railways in the North, and would not call upon the South for one single penny towards their construction. But how was it proposed by the Government that the railways should be made, which were at present on the Loan Estimate? Very large reserves were set apart by the Bill before the House for the purpose, the whole of the land in which was to be sold. But he would ask, if the Government were in earnest in expecting that the amount of money required for making those lines would be obtained from the sale of those lands? If it was possible that they could be sold, were not the Government aware that the withdrawal of so much money from ordinary circulation would have a most injurious effect upon the traffic of the colony? But he believed they could not be sold; for, what with the depression in the pastoral and other interests, there was not in the colony the money to purchase them. Why, more land would have to be sold for

those half-dozen lines of railway than had been sold since separation from New South Wales. The whole amount which had been sold up to the present time was only £2,207,000, whilst £4,000,000 would scarcely make those railways; and were the Ministers prepared to say, that they could raise that £4,000,000 in a few years, when it had taken so many years to get that £2,207,000? The Government were not financiers, or they would have considered the construction of railways on a very different principle; they would have borrowed the money required to make the railways first, and then have looked to the lands for the payment of them afterwards. They were not financiers, and their policy on railways was another proof that they were incompetent to administer the affairs of the country.

Mr. Ivory said that he had not had the slightest intention, when he entered the House that evening, of speaking on the present question, and the only thing which could possibly have brought him on his legs was the apathy which evidently existed on the opposite side of the House on the question before them. He had been taught ever since he knew anything of politics that the financial position of the colony was the most important question that could possibly be entertained, and he must say that the arguments upon that subject which had been adduced from his side of the House had appeared to him to be almost unanswerable. Possibly it was owing to their being so that no honorable member from the other side had risen to refute them. He should have expected that the Premier, at least, would have risen during a financial debate, and have let the House have his views on the subject; and he thought it said very little for a Ministry on an important occasion like the present, that only two honorable members of it should have spoken, one of whom, however, had not addressed himself to the question at all, but only on matters entirely apart from it. He thought that there could not be stronger arguments to show the incompetence of the honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches than their conduct during the debate. All the arguments had been adduced from his side, and no honorable gentleman opposite had got up to answer them. Was that because they agreed with those arguments, or what? If they did not agree with them, why then, in the name of goodness, had they not got up and expressed their views? The honorable Treasurer stated on the previous evening that he had hoped to be the last speaker; but, in that case, the House would have had only one speech from the Government on the question, for the speech of the honorable Minister for Lands went for nothing—to answer the arguments of half-a-dozen speakers from the Opposition benches. Why, he ventured to say that on the previous evening the honorable Treasurer had not answered one argument put forward by the

honorable member for Maranoa, but had gone into a different line of argument altogether; that honorable gentleman had never tried to controvert the arguments of the honorable member for Maranoa in any way, and consequently it must go forth to the country that the arguments of the Opposition were unanswerable, or that the Government held the same views as the Opposition held on the subject of the financial position of the colony. As he had said before, he was no financier; but still there could be no doubt that there were one or two points which might be brought forward to show that the present occupants of the Treasury benches did not understand the position of the country, and that they evidently from their extravagant habits expected that the country was to progress next year with the same rapidity that it had done. He thought, however, that no reasonable man, seeing the depression in trade and in the leading producing interests of the colony, could hold such a view; and he believed that, long before the present Estimates were framed, such had been the downward tendency of all products, that they should have been framed very differently indeed. The sugar interest had suffered a severe depression; all the mineral interests, with the exception of gold, had suffered a material collapse also; and for several years the price of wool had been deteriorating, until, according to the latest advices, it had realised a very low sum indeed. In the face of all those depressions one would have expected that the Government would have tried to stop the extravagance of the past two and a-half years. But in place of that, he found, on looking over the Estimates, that innumerable increases had been made; and, on referring to the *Gazette*, that innumerable appointments had been made, many of which, as had been already said in that House, were a disgrace to the public service; they were the appointments of people who were likely to be brought forward at any fresh election, and of whom nothing was known until a short time ago; except in one case, where it was known that the person appointed was likely to contest a seat with a member of the Premier's family, and thus had been foisted upon the service merely to get him out of the way. That being the case, he thought it was high time to try and open the eyes of the country to the state in which its finances were in; and in place of the honorable Premier having accused the honorable member for Maranoa with taking up the time of that House, he thought the honorable gentleman should have occupied himself in studying that honorable member's able speech and in trying to master the arguments contained in it—that was to say, if he could do so. The honorable Premier had certainly made some derogatory remarks of the very lucid speech of the honorable member for Maranoa, and, he thought, had shown a very great want of appreciation

of talent in doing so. No doubt the honorable Premier considered himself the great luminary of the House—at any rate, he was never backward in expressing himself as such both outside and inside the walls of it—and he (Mr. Ivory) had been surprised on the previous evening to hear the honorable Minister for Lands patting the honorable gentleman on the back, and telling him that he was quite as clever as the honorable leader of the Opposition. If such was the case—if the leader of the Opposition and honorable members of the Opposition did not possess more brains than the Premier—all he could say was, God help the country and that House. If the leader of the great Liberal party could not rise in his place and take part in a financial debate, he was not in the place he ought to occupy. The leader of a party ought, at least, to be a good all-round man, and able to take his part in a debate on every subject that came before the House, and not remain in his seat like a dumb dog and not say a word on the financial position of the colony, which was a position for which he was responsible. There was no doubt the Premier was responsible for the whole of the actions of his Ministry, and he should be so far intelligent as to be able to discover faults in finance as in other things. Surely, at least, if the honorable gentleman could see faults in the arguments set up by the Opposition, it was the honorable gentleman's duty to point them out and expose them. The honorable member for the Kennedy had made a most capital point, when he read the telegram of the honorable member for Cook to the *Cooktown Herald*. He thought that that had most decidedly cut away the ground from under the feet of the honorable gentleman who stated that the sum of money was placed on the Estimates after the want of confidence motion was disposed of. If that was not an attempt on the part of the Government to make their promises to do anything for a district dependent upon the vote of the member for that district, he did not know what it was. To his mind, it seemed perfectly clear that making the street through Cooktown, and building a lighthouse on the Low Islands, were made entirely dependent on the way in which the vote of want of confidence went. By so doing, they had drawn the honorable member for Cook into a corner; if the honorable member voted on one side he would get these works, and if not, he would not. He thought it must be quite evident to everybody that it depended upon the honorable member's vote whether the people of Cooktown had a main street made and a lighthouse erected on the Low Islands. The honorable member for the Kennedy had asked the Government to state positively whether they were wedded, as a party, to their railway policy, and he (Mr. Ivory) was most anxious to know whether, as a party, they were prepared to stand or fall by that policy, or whether the whole thing resolved itself

simply into promises. They had had abundant promises with regard to the Maryborough and Gympie and the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railways, and also the Warwick and Stanthorpe line. Certainly the promise for the last-named line was only given during the present year in order to catch a vote; because, when the Government had been asked previously whether they intended to make that extension, they said that they did not intend to do anything of the kind during the present year. How came it, he would ask, that all of a sudden the Government were going to do such wonders? Were they, as a party, determined to stand or fall by their new railway policy, or were honorable members in favor of those railways to depend upon getting them, on their conduct in regard to the various matters brought forward by the Government? He would like to know whether it depended upon the vote of the honorable member for Mulgrave whether the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line was to be constructed. Again, he should like to know whether those railways were to go hand in hand, or whether one was to be made before the other; those were points on which he did not hesitate to say many people wished to be enlightened. He did not suppose the Government could find labor to go on with all those six railways at the same time, and, therefore, he should like to know which was to be made first. He thought it was the bounden duty of the Government, when they had brought forward estimates involving the expenditure of such large sums of money, to give some information on the subject; but they had not done so. In regard to the estimates for the roads and bridges, he found that sums for that purpose had been taken from loan, and he certainly considered that that should not be done. He agreed entirely with the honorable member for Maranoa, that only permanent works should be paid for out of loan; bridges might be included under that head certainly, but the mere repair of roads rendered necessary by the hurricane of a few weeks ago should be paid for out of revenue. But what had he found? He found that for the roads in the Moreton districts £30,000 was to be taken out of loan, and that the amount proposed for roads and bridges in the Wide Bay, Burnett, and Central districts had been exceeded by that for the Moreton roads. Now, it was well known, that by far the larger part of the land in the Moreton district had been alienated, and consequently, the country was making roads for the benefit of private individuals—for the benefit, in most instances, of persons who had been brought to the colony at great public expense, and who had had every facility given to them to obtain the land at a mere nominal value; yet now the public money was to be spent to improve the property of those individuals—money in amount infinitely above

the value of the land. He thought the Government should propose some scheme for taxing that land, and thus providing a fund for making roads, for until some such scheme was carried out in populous districts, there would be no end to the demands made upon the revenue. He had heard that in a particular district, money had been placed on the Estimates to make a road to lead to one single farm, because the owner of that farm happened to be an ardent and valued supporter of the honorable Premier. Now, when they saw such things going on, surely it was time for them to show their reasons for not supporting the Government; and if honorable gentlemen opposite were not like dumb dogs, he should have expected to see them get up and attempt to refute some of the arguments which had been used by his side of the House. There was one item among those from which it was anticipated that increases would accrue, to which he should briefly refer, as he thought that the honorable Treasurer had somewhat over-estimated it. He saw that the honorable member expected from pre-emptive purchasers under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 an increase of about £3,000. The amount received from that source in 1874-5 was £4,096; in 1875-6, £33,920; and it was anticipated, that for 1876-7 it would be £36,000. Now, owing to the railway system established last year, a very large number of holders of runs paid their pre-emptives, which caused the increase on the previous year; but he thought it was most absurd to suppose that there would be an increase during the present year; in fact, he ventured to say, that in place of receiving £33,920 the honorable Treasurer would not get £3,000. He implored members on the other side to show their appreciation of the position they occupied in the eyes of the colony, and meet the statements that had been made on the Opposition side with arguments that were worthy of the name.

Mr. MURPHY said he regretted that the honorable member for the Kennedy, with that gallantry for which he was remarkable, took the opportunity, during his absence, of making a personal attack upon him, and forcing him, a young and comparatively inexperienced member, into what he had not intended to do, namely, taking part in the debate on the Financial Statement. He was informed that the member for Kennedy had stated, in effect, that the vote he gave on a previous occasion was given in consequence of promises made by the Government to him. The honorable member said in effect, if not in words, that he sold his vote; to that statement he begged to give a most unqualified denial. He gave his vote in the division referred to as disinterestedly, and certainly with as much desire to do justice to the colony, and to the northern districts, as the honorable member for Kennedy himself. It had been said that if he (Mr. Murphy) had been faithful to his promises, he would have voted

against the Government; but he challenged the honorable member for Kennedy to say he had promised anyone how he should vote, or in any way intimated it. He might add that the only honorable member who took him to task about his vote was the honorable member for Kennedy himself, who constantly went out of his way to attack him—not that those attacks caused him any discomfort, but he thought the House ought to know that the member for Kennedy was continually catechising him. During the recent debate, the honorable member invited him into the library, and, in the presence of two other honorable members, put him to the question as to how he should vote. He (Mr. Murphy) told him on that occasion that he declined to be lectured in any way by him as to how he should vote, and he supposed it was because he answered the honorable member in that way that he had since been taken to task by him upon every possible occasion. Other honorable members who had known him for years did not think it necessary to catechise him in that way, but he had given the honorable member to understand, as he now again did, that he should always vote as he pleased, keeping the interests of his constituents continually before himself, and without feeling in the least degree responsible to the member for Kennedy. He came into the House as a very humble individual, not wishing to force his opinions upon anyone, and it was, to say the least, ungenerous of the member for Kennedy to take advantage of his inexperience. The attempt in the library failed, and he supposed because of the manner in which he resented it he was always to be subject to attack. Although he (Mr. Murphy) felt himself of no importance in his own estimation, the member for Kennedy thought him of sufficient importance to justify him in hunting up the Cooktown papers to find out the telegram which he sent. He (Mr. Murphy) was, however, quite prepared to explain that telegram, although he denied the member for Kennedy's right to hunt it up; he had a right to act as he pleased, so long as he acted in the interests of his constituents, and was not selling them or the best interests of the country. This telegram, which he had that evening seen for the first time, was sent by him to Cooktown, and, though not precisely in the words he had used, it was substantially correct. How was that telegram brought about? It had no more reference to the late discussion in the House on the vote of want of confidence than a telegram sent six months ago. When he went to his constituents at Cooktown, and the question of public works was discussed, he naturally promised to see that they should have fair play, for he saw that an immense deal was required. On his return, he put himself in communication with the Government, and, after various interviews, before there was any suggestion of a vote of want of confidence, he went to the Minister for Works

to see what he was going to do for the Cook electorate; he called almost every day, but with no desire to press unduly in favor of Cooktown. The result was, that before the meeting of Parliament, it was intimated to him that £7,000 would probably be placed upon the Estimates for repairs. This was the result of several interviews, and it was a general intimation. He was then receiving telegrams from his constituents to know whether anything was being done; and the Minister for Works told him what he thought was very creditable, namely, that he could make no promise until the vote of want of confidence, which had just at that time been proposed, was disposed of. This he considered to be a very proper course, and he stated the fact in a telegram to his constituents; it was not true that there was an inducement from the Government in order to catch his vote by a promise of work for Cooktown, for the probability of this sum being placed on the Estimates was known to him long before the vote of want of confidence was talked of. He had only asked what Cooktown was fairly entitled to, and it could not be said that the Government, by placing this £7,000 on the Estimates, had acted unfairly. One of the charges he thought it was the custom to bring against the Government was, that they were unwilling to do justice to the northern electorates; but now it was attempted to be shown that too much was being done. At any rate, he again stated that the promise of the £7,000 had nothing whatever to do with the manner in which he gave his vote, and that he had heard nothing of the vote of want of confidence at that time.

MR. PALMER: Then how did it get into the telegram?

MR. MURPHY said he had already told the House that the first reference to the grant was made days or weeks before Parliament met, and while he was constantly pressing the Minister for Works to do something for his electorate. The day after the notice of the want of confidence motion was given, he asked the Minister for Works again, and the honorable gentleman said he would make no promise until the vote of want of confidence had been disposed of.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Just so; hear, hear.

MR. MURPHY thought this course was highly creditable to the Minister for Works; it showed that he was not to be bought, and he did not in any degree hold out the hope to him that the money would be given. He understood from the honorable gentleman that from the moment the vote of want of confidence was placed upon the paper, all executive action was stayed; whatever else, therefore, was to be said against the honorable gentleman, and whatever other shortcomings might be laid to his charge, this much could be said in his favor. He (Mr. Murphy) had asked nothing from the present Government he would not have asked if the present

member for Port Curtis had been in power ; all he wanted, and all his constituents wanted, was fair play ; if he got that he should not ask for any more. The honorable member for the Burnett had made a suggestion respecting the railway policy of the Government. He (Mr. Murphy) certainly understood that that policy would be proceeded with. He understood that the present Government pinned their faith to the carrying out of public works, and intended to stand or fall by that policy. He (Mr. Murphy) acted now as he would if the Opposition were in power, and if they were in power, he should very likely be sitting where he now was ; he sat in the House to represent the wants of his own district. He had now, he hoped, answered the unnecessary attack of the member for Kennedy, and would say once more, that his action was never in any degree prompted by any promise either from the Government, or any private member acting on their behalf. His constituents, as he had told the House before, gave him free action when they sent him there, and left him to his own judgment, and it was certainly unfair that the member for Kennedy should take every opportunity to attack him.

MR. AMHURST begged to state that he was one of the members referred to by the last speaker as being present in the library when the member for Kennedy spoke to him, and that the explanation was very simple and natural. All the northern members had the interests of the North very much at heart. There were only five members representing the wealthiest part of the colony, and they had to fight very hard to obtain what they wanted. For once, they all joined in consultation together, and then they resolved to invite the newly-elected member for Cook to consult and act with them, in their endeavors to get the same justice done to the North as had been done by the South ; their opinion being, that they ought not to be called upon to pay taxes for railways and other works from which they derived no benefit. They had found by experience that if, as northern members, they did not take care of their own interests, there was no chance of the South taking care of them. They therefore simply asked the honorable member for Cook whether he would join them, and it was paying him a high compliment, as a new member, to do so. It was quite true that the honorable member was consulted in the library, and the northern members who met him there told him that they were united to get justice done to their constituents in the North, and that they wanted financial separation, which could not be got without union amongst the northern members. If they had said, "Because you are a Brisbane member, and belong to Queen street, we are ashamed of you, and are suspicious of you," there might have been some cause for complaint. But that was not said ; and although the member for Cook was undoubtedly an hon-

orable man, and he had known him to be so for years, it was well known he knew nothing about the North. The northern members therefore wished to give him a little advice ; and although the honorable member might wish to do his duty to his constituents, as of course every member did, he ought not to be above taking advice, and being told that in doing his duty to his own constituency, he was doing it to the whole of the North. He (Mr. Amhurst) congratulated the honorable member for Kennedy upon the manly way in which he had repudiated the attempted bribe of a railway at Townsville. With respect to the telegram, nothing would convince him that the whole thing was not settled beforehand ; the member for Cook might not have seen the Estimates, because on the 13th the telegram was in Cooktown. There could be no doubt that the Premier, in his usual way of doing business, did tell the member for Cook he would do anything he wanted. On one occasion the member for Cook had spoken of Cooktown as the best port between itself and Brisbane ; and he (Mr. Amhurst) wished to take this opportunity of asking, whether he had not, in that remark, wholly forgotten the existence of such a place as Gladstone ? He would again state, that unless the members for the North, amongst whom he included the honorable the Speaker, who was one of their chief supporters, joined heartily together, they would not get justice from the South, while by joining together they might enforce it. Members for the North belonging to Brisbane were hardly the proper men to represent the North. He begged to inform the House that he for one—and he believed he was in this supported by the member for Kennedy—would object to the passing of anything in the shape of loan until a financial Bill that did full justice to the North was brought forward. They had been taxed for the South too long, and would now be taxed no longer.

MR. WALSH said he had not made up his mind to speak that evening until he heard the extraordinary speech of the honorable member for Blackall. He was sorry that honorable member was not present, and, to a certain extent, his absence would interfere with the remarks he intended to address to the House. He must also say, that he was forced to take up the position he now occupied by the extraordinary conduct of the Government. After having listened to the distinct well-directed charges, able speeches, and forcible arguments, which had been addressed to them by honorable members on that side of the House, no member of the Government seemed to be able to rise to the occasion, and to meet those charges.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

MR. WALSH said, it appeared the country had arrived at a lamentable state when they found the Government proposing to expend something like a million and a quarter, or

more than a million and a-quarter; when they found the Government proposing to borrow almost *ad infinitum* to begin public works, which would lead the colony into extravagant expenditure, that would end Heaven only knew where; and when they found direct and able charges brought against them, and they seemed quite unable to meet their opponents in argument in the ordinary fair field of debate in that House. It had driven him from the character which he had intended to occupy in that House. He had intended, if he possibly could, to take up a position almost neutral, because he felt, that having occupied the position of Speaker of that House for some time, it had to certain extent disabled him from being an active politician or a party-man. He was told that the honorable member for Blackall was within the precincts of the House, and if there was any member in that chamber who had a right to give that honorable member a word of advice, it was himself; but as he was not present, he must refrain from doing so until he appeared. Now, no one respected the honorable member for Cook more than he did, and if that honorable member would allow him to tender him a little piece of advice, it was this:—If he did not wish the remarks of the honorable member for Kennedy to obtain absolute potency, he would cease to reply to them in the verbose and violent strain which he was in the habit of doing. Surely if the statements of that honorable member were utterly incorrect, they need not be labored in the refutation which the honorable member for Cook applied to them, and he would kindly advise that honorable member that he would cease to give them that prominence which he did by his, to a certain extent, able but labored replies. No one, he was sure, who had known that honorable member as long as he had, would accuse him of being bought by the Government. He did not hesitate to say that he was a man who would not be bought; but he was young in politics; he was a child—a perfect child in wickedness compared with some honorable members of that House; and he (Mr. Walsh) knew the general opinion was—and it was freely spoken of in Brisbane and elsewhere—that, to use a vulgar sporting phrase, he had been “got at.” That was the idea. The honorable member did not know it, of course, and he would not know it for a few months. It might take a session before he found out how he had been “got at;” but that he had, and in a way which he (Mr. Walsh) feared too many electorates, or too many members of that House had been insidiously “got at,” he had not the slightest doubt. It was his constituents who had been “got at,” who had been bribed, and who had been made to force their wishes upon him, as he feared had been done in too many other electorates of the colony. It was not from the Treasury benches he was told what he should do, but it went from there

to his constituents, and was then sent back to him. That was what was going on, and what had been too frequently done; and he was sure when that honorable member found that he had been so acted upon, he would feel as ashamed of himself as he (Mr. Walsh) should feel under similar circumstances. He would exhort the honorable member that if he did not wish to make everybody believe that the charges of the honorable member for Kennedy were strictly correct, he would take less notice of them; he was quite sure that at that moment the honorable member had given undue prominence to them. When the honorable member for Blackall was outside the House, he (Mr. Walsh) said he had not intended to address the Chamber until he heard the remarks of that honorable member, which he certainly thought were as an unjustifiable a reply or castigation of the honorable member for Clermont as ever he heard in his life, and he must confess that he did so with considerable pain; and it was with sorrow he saw that honorable member occupying a seat in that House.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear.

MR. WALSH said he did not hesitate to say, and the honorable member knew, that he (Mr. Walsh) was his best friend. In the very question he was now dealing with, the honorable member knew that he was instrumental in gaining the conclusion that he had been unjustly treated by the Government of the colony. He knew that he (Mr. Walsh) laid the foundation of the action he brought against the Government, or that it was his action that led to the proceedings in a court of justice, which resulted in a large verdict against the Crown. And he said from the moment that honorable member ceased to be a suitor in the Supreme Court, he became an applicant to that House and to the Government to requite him for the expense or loss he had sustained in consequence of the action of the Government; and he said, from that moment he should never have had a seat in that House. He regretted it with pain; and it was with pain he regretted that he was unable to give full expression to his feelings when he saw a member of any representative institution speaking the English language, occupying that position, and getting up and persistently voting with the majority. He regretted, for the character of their representative institutions, that they should have a claimant in that House for £6,000. It was not creditable to the country—it was not creditable to that House—and it was not creditable to their representative institutions. He wished that this money had been paid to the honorable member years ago, because it would have prevented the lamentable scenes which they had witnessed. That honorable member had actually become, he feared, a partizan, a paid—he could not help saying—a paid voter, and he regretted seeing him occupying that posi-

tion. He had always understood him to be a man of honor, and that he had a claim against the Government; but the course he had pursued had led him (Mr. Walsh) a long way into the belief that he had forfeited all his claims; he had certainly forfeited his claim by appearing in that House as an applicant, or a supplicant, for that money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS rose to a point of order. He took exception to the words that had just been used. It was a direct imputation upon the honor of the honorable member for Blackall, who came there as the representative of a certain constituency, and he (the Secretary for Lands) did not think the honorable member for Warrego—

Mr. BELL: What is the question?

The SPEAKER: The honorable member for Maryborough has risen to a point of order.

An HONORABLE MEMBER: He never mentioned it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The point of order is, that the honorable member for Warrego has reflected upon the action of the honorable member for Blackall by attributing to him dishonorable motives; that he sought to serve his own purposes and not the interests of his constituents, or the country; that, in fact, his motives were corrupt.

The SPEAKER: If the honorable member for Warrego used the words in that sense, they were certainly out of order, and in that case he will withdraw the expressions.

Mr. PALMER: What are the expressions?

The SPEAKER: The expression I imagine the honorable member alludes to is, that the honorable member for Warrego is inclined to be of opinion that the honorable member for Blackall has forfeited his claim to honor by the action he has taken in this House.

Mr. BELL: I would ask you, sir, to obtain from the honorable member who rose to the point of order what the exact point of order is, because you have expressed an opinion, and the honorable member who rose to the point of order also expressed an opinion. We do not want opinions, but the exact words of the point of order; and I ask you to obtain them before you give your ruling.

Mr. PALMER: I submit that the Minister for Lands is entirely out of order in rising as he did to take exception to the words of the honorable member for Warrego. The proper course to pursue, and he should know it from his long experience in this House, is to move that the words be taken down. We have not heard from him what the words were, and I say that honorable member has no right to get up and interrupt another honorable member while speaking unless it is to move that the words be taken down. He has never stated the words. He says he considers an imputation was made; what have we to do with what he considers?

The SPEAKER: Other honorable members having spoken, the words cannot now be taken

down. It is not necessary, therefore, to continue the discussion on the point of order. I do hope that the discussion may proceed without any expressions such as will justify honorable members in rising to points of order.

Mr. BELL: I ask you again, sir, to obtain from the honorable member the point of order—what the exact words were. He merely expressed an opinion that the words of another honorable member were words that ought not to have been used; but we do not want his opinion; we want to know what the exact words were, if you will be good enough to get them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said: Acting upon your suggestion, sir, that it is not desirable to proceed further with the point of order, the words not having been taken down, I shall decline to do so unless requested by yourself.

Mr. WALSH, in continuing, said this interruption by the honorable the Minister for Lands was most unnecessary. The honorable member did not seem to know what he was talking about; he was unable to explain, apparently, the words he complained of; and he (Mr. Walsh) thought he should be more certain of his ground before he interrupted a member of that House. He (Mr. Walsh) was guarded in the remarks he was making; and he said, when he looked at the Estimates he found there a sum of £6,000, on which that honorable member would have a vote, and in which he was personally interested. That was what he intended to say; and he said, so long as that was before the House, that honorable member should never be visible, and his voice should never be heard there, especially to reflect upon an honorable member who was not charged with sitting in that House for the same reason. He had listened night after night to the accusations brought against that honorable member, and it ran through him with anguish almost to hear them repeated again and again. He felt that the honor of the House was sullied by having there a member who was an applicant for £6,000—who, on important occasions, might have a casting vote, and who persistently acted with the Government or the majority. He wished the honorable member had been paid years ago, and he wished much more that the integrity and honor of that House should be maintained; and as he should proceed further, he trusted the honorable the Speaker would shelter him from those extraordinary interruptions which he had good reason to believe the honorable the Minister for Lands intended to bestow upon him. He must say at the outset, that he considered it was a most extraordinary thing that the Premier of this colony—it did not matter what his capacity or incapacity might be so long as he was Premier of the colony—so long as the Governor had charged him with the onerous duty of carrying on the Government of the

country—it was his duty to be present to lead the House, and to repel the accusations made against the Government with all the ability he could. Here was a most important debate; the Government were charged with having changed their policy in order to maintain their seats, and with sorrow he confessed he believed it was too true; and if the honorable the Premier were worthy of the position he occupied, he would endeavor to meet those charges. It should be his desire, his anxiety, his privilege, to reply to the statements he (Mr. Walsh) was now making, and to the arguments which had been much more ably made by honorable members on that side of the House; but in place of that, he absented himself from the chamber. He (Mr. Walsh) said the colony had arrived at a perilous state when they had a Premier who could not face his foes—who could not even hear the arguments of his foes—who could not explain the condition of the colony; and when they found in the present perilous state of the country, with the finances in a falling condition through extravagant expenditure, part of the reform policy of this very Premier was to rush into extravagant public works, and when he was not able to remain in the House to listen to the arguments brought forward, or to do his duty to the House, and to the colony. At that critical time, was it not a sad sight to see the Treasury benches occupied by only two subordinate members of the Government?

MR. IVORY: Two dummies.

MR. WALSH said he found that at that moment they were paying interest on the public debt of the colony to the extent of no less than £350,000 annually; and the public debt, in round numbers, was already seven millions of money. He found the population of the colony was about 170,000 souls only—men, women, and children—and the revenue was £1,400,000, only four times as much as the interest they must pay annually for the debt already incurred. And he found this Government, with the full knowledge gained by their predecessors, from whom they now wished to disassociate themselves—when the revenue was falling, when the expenditure was beyond the revenue, and when it was time to enter upon a system of rest and caution, to try and reduce their expenditure—he found, in the face of all this, this Government—five-sixths of whom were associated with the late Government, notwithstanding the policy of caution promulgated in that chamber during this session, and enunciated in the general policy of that Government,—had completely changed their tactics and taken up a new front. He found, notwithstanding the present enormous debt and the enormous interest they had to pay, and notwithstanding the falling off in the revenue and in the general prosperity of the colony, in one short month they coolly turned round and proposed, without

giving any explanation on the subject, the construction of five fresh railways in the colony. Well, it was either madness or worse.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Madness or madness.

MR. WALSH said he regretted exceedingly to hear the Government urged to a policy of that kind by members on that side of the House, who had been advocating what they called a policy of progress. The colony was not now in a position that they could afford to rush into fresh expenditure of that kind for the sake, as it was assumed by honorable members opposite, of restoring prosperity. It seemed to him sheer madness, and he was certain it would not have that effect. There was another question. He should like to ask the honorable the Premier, if he were present, why propose only five new railways in the colony? Surely there were other electorates which might be made equally docile to the Government by promising them railways. Why should they stop at five? They were told at the beginning of the session by a Minister, that the Maryborough and Gympie Railway would not pay for the grease on the wheels, and that Minister showed statistics to prove it; he quoted the traffic on the road, and gave faithful evidence for the faith that was in him. But this Government proposed now to make that very railway without giving any evidence for the faith that was in them. And the other railways—what justification was there, in Heaven's name, for the Government setting forth such a wanton piece of extravagance? He was deeply interested in the prosperity of the Bundaberg district, but he said it would be madness to make a railway there. He was also deeply interested in the railway from Maryborough to Gympie—hardly a man in the colony would benefit more by it than he would; but he warned the country that expenditure for such a purpose would be madness, and he did not hesitate to say so. It appeared that they had a Government who would promise a railway anywhere for a vote. He was sorry to say he was forced to that conclusion. There was another reason why he had a strong objection to this Government holding power any longer, and that was the pandering to popular feeling which seemed to have overtaken them. He was sorry to see the honorable member for Maryborough in such society. He never believed he would descend to that; he thought he had a soul above anything of the kind. But he did not hesitate to say that this legislation, now being directed against the Chinese of the colony, was the most pandering, petty, personal, partial, and he believed unconstitutional legislation ever any Government descended into.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear.

MR. WALSH: Why, what did they propose to do? To make themselves popular with a

few people down here; for the purpose of gaining a little pettifogging popularity, they proposed to make the most one-sided, the most unjust law, which they would be most heartily ashamed of in a few years. Because these Chinese were considered to tread on the toes of a few Englishmen, and only very few, he believed, and to make themselves popular, those members—he could not call them statesmen—had brought in this kind of legislation; and what would be the effect? It would bring ignominy on the colony in all parts of the world. They should have it proclaimed to the world that 170,000 Englishmen in this colony were not able to hold their own against a few thousand Chinamen. That was what they would do. They proposed to put an enormous tax on rice to drive away the Chinese; and what would be the effect of it? It would bring, he would not say actual ruin, but disease, and probably death, to hundreds and thousands of people in this colony. Who were the greatest consumers of rice in this country? The people living in the far western districts, where they could not possibly get vegetables, and where the only food for themselves and their children to counteract the effects of a meat diet was rice. Those were the people; and the Government were so little far-seeing, and so pandered to the petty popular cry, that they proposed to punish 170,000 people for the purpose of putting down the Chinese—men who, when they came to the colony, should be treated as visitors, if the people of the country had any manliness in their composition. They should be under their peculiar protection, rather than under peculiar persecution. This tax on rice would be an absolute prohibition on its consumption by the comparatively poor people of the interior—by the children of shepherds, and bullock-drivers, and stockmen; and, in fact, all over the far western country, the people would be unable to purchase it. Did they not see in the papers the other day that, owing to the wet season, the only food a large number of people in some particular place could get was rice; all the flour and other articles of consumption were gone, and they had to fall back on rice only. The effect of this duty would be, that they would not be able to get rice in the interior; and when the next visitation of bad weather came, probably they would not have that to fall back on. And was there no one manly enough to say something on behalf of the Chinese? He looked upon them as the benefactors of the diggers. He said, thousands of diggers, during the early rushes in this colony, would have died of scurvy had it not been for the Chinese; and the honorable the Speaker would bear him out, that on Gympie alone, a considerable amount of disease, and, perhaps, death, was prevented by the Chinese working day and night to produce vegetables. He remembered the time when a Chinaman coming into Gympie with

his load of vegetables was really looked upon as a blessing and a benefactor, and the people would go out and meet him to purchase his commodities. And it was the same in all the inland towns of the colony. Those great necessities of life, vegetables, were mainly produced by the perseverance, the assiduity—and he would go further, and say—the honesty of these very Chinamen, against whom it was now proposed to legislate in a peculiar and persecuting way. If he had the paper before him, the *Moreton Bay Courier* of not very long ago, he should read something which would make the Government ashamed of themselves for introducing this class legislation. He noticed that, in a long list of subscribers to the Brisbane Hospital, Chinese names were frequent, but he did not see there the name of a single member of the Government, or of any influential Brisbane man. But there were the names of these men, who, although they were British subjects, were now proposed to be persecuted, and they subscribed as largely as any other men whose names appeared in the list. He took a note of it at the time, and he almost blushed for his country to find that the Chinese contributors to the Brisbane Hospital were more prominent than members of the Government or other influential people in the country. There was another point in connection with that subject. He felt that a large number of the Chinese in this colony were British subjects—that they had come from Hongkong; and on that ground, he believed that if the Government had consulted His Excellency the Governor before they proposed such a tax, His Excellency could not possibly have assented to it being imposed on any British subjects in the colony. He felt perfectly satisfied, from his knowledge of the Royal instructions, that if the House passed any measure such as that proposed by the Government, His Excellency the Governor would be unable to give his assent to it. Why, he should blush for his kind if the people at home had their attention directed to such legislation. He did not know what the effect upon the honorable member for Cook would be if the tax was carried. He believed there was a petition, signed by white men, against the tax, coming down from Cooktown, which would be placed in the honorable member's hands; and he trusted that, as an Englishman, that petition would have some effect upon the honorable member; that he would see what the wishes of his constituents were on the subject, and would hesitate before giving his support to legislation which would be so pernicious to the country. He had made up his mind that unless the honorable Premier was present, and felt himself able to rise in his place and meet some of the arguments which had been made from the Opposition side of the House, it would be his duty to give the honorable gentleman an opportunity of doing so by

moving the adjournment of the debate. As the honorable gentleman was not present, he should therefore move—

That this debate be now adjourned.

The question was put, when—

Mr. MACROSSAN said he rose for the purpose of making a few remarks in reply to the statements which had been made by the honorable member for Cook. That honorable member, because he was a young member, appeared to take a special pride in calling himself a very humble member of that House, and although the character of Uriah Heep, who was very “umble,” might be all very well in its place—it was not so in that House. What he wanted to say was that whoever had reported the words he had used to the honorable member for Cook, had reported them very wrongly, and in order that that honorable member might know what had actually been said, he would repeat the remarks he had made some short time ago, and would also read again the telegram which the honorable member had sent to his constituents; at the same time, he would deny that he had accused the honorable gentleman of being unfaithful to his constituents. If the honorable member had been as constant in his attendance in the House as he (Mr. Macrossan) had been, he would not have labored under the disadvantage of having words reported to him second-hand. The only words which he had used which could be interpreted as in any way unfavorable to the honorable member, were in showing that whilst an enormously large revenue had been derived from the district north of Cape Palmerston, the expenditure in that district had been very small, and that overlying the promised expenditure for roads in Cooktown, and the erection of a lighthouse at the Low Islands, was the far more important question of Financial Separation. He had further stated that until that question was settled, no northern member could be true to the North who voted for the Loan Estimate. As to having asked the honorable member to vote with the Opposition, that was a mistake—he had done nothing of the kind. What had occurred—and the honorable member was present in the library when the conversation took place—was that he said it was absolutely necessary that the northern members should be united on all questions affecting the question of Financial Separation, and that they should let all other matters rest until they obtained Financial Separation. He would repeat that if the northern members had any hope of obtaining justice from the present Government, it was only by establishing a close union of themselves; they would never get it if they continued disunited as they were at the present time. As to the accusation made against him of hunting up telegrams, all he could say was, that there was no hunt-

ing up required. He considered it was the duty of every northern member to read the northern newspapers, so as to be able to judge of the wants and the feelings of his district. He had been aware of the existence of the telegram in question long before the debate on the vote of want of confidence, but he had not thought fit to say anything about it, nor, perhaps, should he have referred to it at all, had not the honorable Treasurer on the previous evening produced a document in reply to some remarks of the honorable member for Port Curtis, which showed that Captain Heath had recommended the erection of a lighthouse on the Low Islands. He (Mr. Macrossan) had said in his speech that the Government had not acted fairly towards the honorable member for Cook in keeping him in the dark as regarded the existence of such a document, and that they ought to have told the honorable member that a lighthouse had been recommended, instead of keeping him in suspense on the subject. He would repeat, that any one on reading the telegram from the honorable member could arrive at no other conclusion than this—that it contained all the elements of a bargain and sale—no other construction could possibly be put upon it. What was it the honorable member said in the telegram? He would read it:—

“Am doing all that I possibly can to get money voted for the repairs and making of Charlotte street. The Government, however, will not definitely decide the question until the want of confidence motion is disposed of. The sum of £7,000 has been placed on the Estimates for the repairs of Charlotte Street, Cooktown, and improvements, &c., of the roads leading to your invaluable gold fields. Provision has also been made for the erection of a good lighthouse on the Low Islands. The Government appear to be very favorably disposed towards the Cook electorate.”

So that, after having placed a sum on the Estimates, the Government had not decided definitely whether it should remain there until the vote of want of confidence was disposed of. Last year, the then Premier had been accused of dangling certain things before the House; and he would ask, whether the telegram he had just read did not show that the present Premier had dangled certain works before the honorable member for Cook? He did not say that the honorable member had been bought, but still there was a strong suspicion that he had been very much influenced by the conduct of the Government. Since the honorable member had thought proper to challenge the truth of what he had said, he would give him something more to answer, and, perhaps, a little worse. He would ask, how it had come about that the honorable member, knowing, as he must have done, that the sums were upon the Estimates, should have asked the Government, in that House, whether any provision had been made for his district? Could the honorable

member deny, that five days after that telegram was sent, he did not know that the money was on the Estimates? Why, on the 18th July, or five days later than the date of the telegram, the present honorable .the Speaker, when speaking on the motion of want of confidence, said that young members were liable to be interviewed and influenced in various ways, and that the honorable member for Cook had not denied that he had been shown the Estimates for the benefit of his constituents. The honorable member for Cook had denied that, and the honorable member for Ravenswood said that he would accept the honorable member's denial. But if the honorable member's denial had been accepted then, how could it be accepted at the present time? Could they accept the denial made on the 18th of July, when the honorable member for Cook admitted, as he must do, having sent the telegram he (Mr. Macrossan) had read, dated the 13th July, saying what sum had been placed on the Estimates? Then, again, he had heard it said outside that the honorable member would support any Government, even if the honorable member for Port Curtis was in power, if they would do what he wanted for his constituents. Why, before Parliament met, the honorable member had been constantly with the honorable the Premier, and he must have heard of what the Government intended to do for his constituents; yet, on the very opening day, after the present Government was formed, that honorable member, to show his zeal for his constituents, had gone over the same ground that was in the telegram, with the addition of referring to the Chinese question, and the answer then given to him by the Premier, was that it was all right. The whole thing seemed to have been agreed upon before the House met. He might say again, as he had said in the absence of the honorable member, that the district of Cook was as well looked after before the honorable member took his seat, as it was likely to be at any time, so long as the present Government remained in office. The late member for Burke, and the present honorable Speaker had always taken care that the interests of the Cook district should be carefully looked after, unrepresented as it had been by a member of its own.

Mr. MURPHY said the honorable member for the Kennedy seemed determined not to leave him alone, but he could assure him, that whatever opinion he might have of his conduct as a representative, it would have no effect upon him. Although the honorable member had made a second speech, he had not denied that he had attempted to lecture him (Mr. Murphy) in the library for voting with the Government. The honorable member seemed to think that he was to be the censor of those honorable members who differed from himself—for that was the tone the honorable member had assumed in the library, and because he (Mr. Murphy) chose

to resent such interference, the honorable member now attacked him. Having received assurances from other honorable members that they believed his statements as regarded the telegram, he was quite contented to allow the honorable member for the Kennedy to hold a different opinion—he was quite willing to be judged by those honorable members who had had an opportunity of judging whether his statement was correct. All he could say was, that so long as he had the honor of a seat in that House, whether the present Government was in office, or whether the honorable member for Port Curtis was in office, he should endeavor to do, as he had done, his duty to his constituents.

Mr. AMHURST was understood to say, that the conversation in the library had been for the purpose of the northern members consulting each other on the subject of Financial Separation. All he could say was that no Ministry who would not give Financial Separation should have his support. He hoped the honorable member for Cook would not imagine for one minute that he and others had wished to bring any pressure to bear upon him.

Mr. STEVENSON said he rose for the purpose of saying that in the remarks he had made at an earlier stage of the evening, he had had no intention of saying anything which could be construed as an attack upon the honorable member for Blackall. He had simply stated that it would enhance the value of certain property in Rockhampton, one of the owners of which was the honorable member, if the bridge across the Fitzroy was made. That was no reflection upon the honorable member, who could not help his property being near the site of the proposed bridge. He had no objection to that bridge, but he thought that seeing how traffic was stopped in the country around Rockhampton through bad roads, the £38,000 proposed for the Fitzroy bridge could be spent in other ways with more benefit to the people of that town. The honorable member had also referred to his remarks in connection with the extension of the Northern Railway, but all he (Mr. Stevenson) had said, was that he had seen on the Estimates a sum of £150,000 for extending the line from Comet Junction towards Clermont, and had wanted to know whether the route to Emerald Downs had been changed. He had not objected to the line going towards Clermont, as that was one of the things he had been working for.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not intend to detain the House for long, but he wished to call attention to the notorious absence of the honorable the Premier during the present debate; that honorable gentleman was only represented by a box, and a very small one too. He certainly thought that when the Financial Statement was being debated, it would have been good taste if the honorable Premier—even supposing he was only the figure-head of the Ministry—had been present. There was one thing deserving of

notice in connection with the Financial Statement, which was, that it was evident to any one who had read it, that it was prepared before the Government had altered their public works policy—before they had tried to trim their sails to what they thought was the breeze of popularity—and that it should have been altered considerably to fit in with the Estimates which had been placed on the table of the House. He thought, therefore, that the Government had been driven into their Loan Estimates by the action of the Opposition, and not by the action of their own supporters—for he saw one honorable member opposite who had not opened his mouth since he had been in the House, who was returned on the ticket that there were to be no railway extensions and no public works. One member of the Government had certainly said that there was to be one railway, but the other members had told their constituents that there was to be none. They had come down to that House, however, and finding that they were likely to be defeated, they stated that they were going to do what previously they said they had not believed in. He would ask, what the country could think of them after such conduct, but that they were merely clinging to office for the sake of the emoluments attached to it? They would have been hopelessly defeated had they gone down to that House with the programme on which they had been elected, and there was no doubt that they had thus betrayed their constituents. No doubt it would be said that they had a majority; and that they had one on the vote of want of confidence, he would admit. Whether that would be a secure basis or not for their trying to thrust anything they liked down the throats of the House, remained to be seen. He did not think that the fiscal policy of the honorable Treasurer, who said, "We are in a difficulty, and we will get out of it—not by any general system of taxation, but by putting a penny a pound on rice," would satisfy the country. Again, he did not think that the imposition of that duty would bring in the revenue anticipated by the Treasurer. He would go further and say, that he thought the Government were committing a most serious mistake in putting that tax on the Chinese. It was all very well to say that the Chinese extracted a great deal of gold from the land and took it away to a foreign country, but what would be the result of imposing such taxes upon them? Why, anyone who knew anything about the Chinese would know that the result would be that they would go into other channels of industry, and drive out Europeans from making a livelihood in many occupations. He would ask the Government to consider seriously what would be the effect of the taxes they proposed. He had read in the newspapers that the Chinese in San Francisco had actually driven the Europeans out of many branches of manufacture, and such would be the case in this colony if those

people were driven off the gold fields. In regard to the Estimates, he had been rather surprised to see, that whilst the appropriation for the expenses of elections in 1875-76 had been £750, the sum of £2,005 was put down as required for 1876-77. That appeared as if honorable members opposite intended to have a dissolution; if so, why did they not say so. If there was one, he was perfectly certain that many of those he now saw opposite would not be in that House again. If he was holding out a threat, he was only doing what the Premier had done to every member of the Opposition. The honorable Premier was not present, and it looked very much as if he wished to shirk being present; but the honorable member was bound to have been present, so that he might set the colony right with his great intellect. In conclusion, he would point out that the Estimates had evidently been framed before electoral pressure had been brought to bear upon the honorable Treasurer, or, in other words, pressure from electorates. In order to enable the honorable gentleman to cling to office, he had said, "I will alter anything; I will make a railway to the moon—anything to save our lives." Such a thing had never been done in the colony before.

Mr. BAILLY thought the speeches of the members for Cook and Kennedy would have been more appropriate on a certain resolution which he had on the paper, to be brought forward on a future occasion, setting forth that the centralising principle of the Government on works and land was unsuitable to the present state of the colony, and he hoped those speeches would be given when that question came on. As to the Chinese, there was a peculiarity about the present system of Chinese emigration that had not been considered. Formerly the Chinese emigrated by half-dozens, each being an independent man coming to the colony to prosecute his own business. Now, Chinese emigration to Queensland was in the hands of companies, who were sending thither what were really slaves—slaves before they departed from China, slaves while they were in Queensland, slaves when they went back again. It was to meet this condition of things that the Government had brought in this Bill. China possessed an enormous population, which was now in process of swarming, and if Northern Queensland was found out to be as good as it was, the Chinese would very soon get the whole of that part of the colony into their hands, and the Government were not in a position to keep them out. A great deal had been said about the financial position of the colony, and he attributed the present depression, with a probable approaching crisis, to three causes:—Firstly, extravagant departmental expenditure; secondly, the system of foreign banking used in the colony; thirdly, the numerous rich resources which they had never taken the trouble to develop. The first two might be discussed when the Estimates came on. As to the third, the

colony possessed large mineral districts to which access was almost impossible—to which there was not even an ordinary road during the principal portions of the year; and in his opinion the only hope there was of prosperity for the colony was to develop these resources. If this was not done, there must be a crisis sooner or later; they could not be always spending money upon court houses and bridges, or even roads, unless the expenditure developed some new resource. The Government, he thought, had very properly taken active steps to get them out of the difficulty which they were rapidly approaching, and the country consequently demanded that the Government should have a fair trial. These were the words he heard used everywhere, and he for his part was prepared to give them that fair trial. He had at various times freely said what he believed about them, but was not disposed to go into factious opposition merely to gratify his own personal feelings.

Mr. HALY said it was a significant thing that five new railways were proposed, but that it had not been shown how one of them was to be paid for. The system was introduced last session of trying to construct railways by the sale of lands, and the experiment of a line from Dalby to Roma was decided upon, but no other railway was to be constructed, except from Warwick to the Border. Now, there were five different railways besides, and of most of them it might be said that no survey had been made. He remembered the late Colonial Treasurer saying that they hoped to gain a good deal of information from Mr. Watson's report, and that no construction ought to be entered upon before a complete survey had been laid before the House. It was because this principle had not been attended to that the colony spent some £250,000 more on the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway than should have been spent. He thought, at one time, that the present Government were coming round to their senses, but was now sorry to find that they were not. So far as he could see, the only idea of the great Liberal party was to construct railways, no matter how extravagant they were, and they were proceeding as if the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway did not convince them how improper it was not to begin by a proper preliminary survey. In looking over the returns, he found there had been a great reduction in the produce of sugar—nearly 50 per cent.—and every other agricultural interest had suffered considerably, though sugar had suffered most; and at such a time the Government ought not to propose to go into any extravagant expenditure. There was not a single agricultural interest which had not decreased in value during 1875. When it appeared that there was rust in one thing and blight in another, their own common sense ought to have told the Government there was something radically wrong. But the only thing the present Government—the

great Liberal party—thought of, was going into railway works and throwing open the land, not caring whether the agriculturists lived or starved; they did not care twopence so long as they threw open the lands and made railways. The Government ought to take a common-sense view of the matter, and follow the example of Mr. Clark, a great landed proprietor in Victoria, who actually sent home to England for the best practical and scientific man he could get, to travel amongst his tenants and tell them how they could dress their land to the best advantage, and grow the produce that was most suitable for the soil and climate. If the Government had taken some such precautions before throwing open these millions of acres of land, and making these railways, how much better it would have been. The free selectors were the tenants of the Government until they paid every farthing of their settlement money, and it was the duty of the Government, before throwing open so much land, or attempting to do so while every agricultural interest was in a state of depression, to have sent to England or elsewhere for a scientific man to show the free selectors how to work the land to the best advantage. Not only did they neglect this: he was one of a deputation that waited on the Minister for Lands to ask for £2,000, and he was just quietly wiped out, and all that he wanted was to allow a practical and scientific board to carry out experiments to show the people how they might best cultivate the land. If the Government did not think such a Board was worth £2,000 they ought to have told them so, and a person might have been got to instruct the people in the manner he had described, so that they would not have been forced to starve, or become cattle-stealers and bush-rangers, or something equally bad. When the Government, by means of agents and lecturers in England, induced men to come out upon the land they were bound to show them how to cultivate it to the best advantage. He had often been laughed at about irrigation, but he was not afraid to tell the House that they would never make Queensland a great colony until irrigation had been tried. There were two extremes in the colony—wet and dry—and both had to be guarded against. With a great deficit, the Government now intended to resume all the land they had marked out, and make a railway to Roma; but if that was to be done in order to make up the deficit, the Government must carry on their system of emigration in a different way. It was no use putting people on the land without money. He was sorry the Premier was not at present in his place; he was not going to say one word against him, but the Premier ought to be there to answer any questions put to him. He (Mr. Haly) stood in a very poor light before his constituents, for there was not upon the Estimates a single thing for their

district. The court house at Taroom was a disgrace to any Government that ever existed, and to a thriving colony that was about to make five new railways. The telegraph office was also a disgrace. There was a good bridge, but it could not be approached in time of floods, and if they got upon it, they could not get off it. He had been to every Minister of Works and presented the complaints of his district, and had got nothing but promises; he had got plenty of those and only hoped they would be carried out; and if the Premier had been in his place, he intended to ask him whether those promises were to be fulfilled. If they were not, his district would be most shamefully treated. He decidedly objected to the tax on rice. He should not fight for the Chinaman, however, but should fight, as the honorable member for Warrego said, for the people in the far West, who could not grow vegetables, and whose children could not exist without rice. He knew, as an old pioneer squatter, that the children in the interior could not do without rice. It was the only vegetable they could procure, and he would oppose with might and main, and would join anyone who opposed this projected tax. At the same time, he would support the Government in any fair taxation to keep Chinamen out of the country, for they were coming too quickly, and the sooner they were stopped the better, else the time would come when they could not be got rid of. The colonists might be very fine Britishers and all that, but the Chinamen might prove too many for them in the long run. He would now ask the honorable the Premier, who had just returned to his place, whether he had promised that there should be a new court house, at Taroom, that the telegraph office should be attended to, and that the bridge should be looked after if possible? Things like these ought to be put upon the Estimates so that members should not be under the favor of any Minister; if asking, however, would do, he should have got them three times over. He hoped the Government, before they thought of putting people on the land, would really take a common-sense view of the thing, and see if they could not get such a man as Mr. Clark had got, to lecture to the people, and teach them how to cultivate the land to the best advantage. Unless he was promised this, he should oppose the resumption; no, he would not use the word resumption, but would say he would oppose the confiscation of lands that were now producing a large revenue to the colony.

Mr. PALMER said he had a few questions to ask of the Premier, who had now happily made his appearance, and put an end to the very insidious remarks which had been made about his absence. It had been rumored that he had been suddenly deposed, and had done something desperate; some even said he was dead; some, that he only slept; others, that he had gone to set the wires working. At any rate, the Premier's absence created

quite a sensation in the House. But he (Mr. Palmer) hoped, laying aside all levity, the honorable Premier would answer questions which were of the greatest importance to the country at the present time. The Premier might rest assured that fair and straightforward answers to the few questions he wanted to put to him would do more to further the business of the session than ever he himself would perhaps believe. The Opposition had endeavored all through the debate to get at what was really the policy of the Government, and up to the present time he must confess the attempt had been a most miserable failure. Last night, in reply to a question from the honorable member for Maranoa, they heard the Minister for Lands saying they would declare their altered policy when the Loan Estimates came to be discussed.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: On the Railway Bills.

Mr. PALMER remembered distinctly that the answer given was that the Government would explain their policy at the proper time. He (Mr. Palmer) begged to say, what had indeed been said repeatedly on his side of the House, that the proper time was when the financial policy of the Government was under discussion. Then it was the duty of the head of the Government to declare what really was the policy of the Ministry. Were they to judge of that policy from the remarks of the honorable member the Minister for Lands last night, or from the speech just now delivered by the member for Cook, who stated that the Ministry were pledged to the policy set forth in their Estimates—an assertion that was cheered by the Minister for Lands?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hear, hear.

Mr. PALMER would ask, whether the policy of the country was to be laid down by the "Hear, hear" of the Minister for Lands in response to the speech of the member for Cook? Were they to look for it from the Premier himself? Or were they to look for it in the business advertisements of the Colonial Treasurer? Was the whole policy of the Government contained in the advertisement that Bulimba must inevitably be the terminus of the railway? If that was the way in which the Government intended to lay down their policy, he did not envy them. He wanted to ask the head of the Government, on his resurrection, were these five railways which he found on the Estimates to be the policy of the Government? He wanted to know first the policy the Premier was going to propose with reference to public works, and then whether these five railways were to be made a party question? If not, were any of them; and if so, which? These were a few plain questions to which his side of the House was entitled to an answer, and he asked for an answer from the head of the Government.

Mr. JOHNSTON believed the honorable member for Mitchell had spoken of him as a new member who was pledged to support the

present Government, and to support them in the construction of these new railways. As only one of those statements was strictly true, he wished to say a few words. He came to the House pledged to his constituents to give the present Government a moderate support, and he was pledged to a moderate railway policy, the line, for example, from Warwick to the Border. He pledged himself, also, to any well-considered plan of extending the railways of the colony. When he came into the House he found that the Government were doing this, and gave them his support.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it was the bounden duty of the Premier to answer, at once, the questions put to him by the member for Port Curtis. Since the vote of want of confidence, it had been a constant source of complaint against him (Mr. McIlwraith) that that vote had been brought on hurriedly before the Government had had time to enunciate their policy. That motion was based on the fact that the whole of the Ministerial speeches had been against a railway or public works policy, and the other side had ever since reproached him with the so-called unfairness of bringing forward such a motion simply on the information he had got from the newspaper reports of speeches delivered to constituents. It was some time since that vote of want of confidence was disposed of, and still no information had been given to the House. The Financial Statement had been made, proposing five new railways, but without a single word of explanation. Members continually asked for information, and had waited patiently for it, but it had been positively denied by Ministers. After members on that side of the House waiting to hear the policy of the Government until they had got this length in the session, the Government complained about keeping back the business of the country, and still they refused to state what was of the greatest importance to the country—that was, their railway policy. Now, he would draw particular attention to what took place last night. The honorable the Minister for Lands then told him that he (Mr. McIlwraith) had no railway policy, and that it was a matter of great doubt what railways he would carry out if he had the power. He (Mr. McIlwraith) retaliated by saying, it had never been his business to put a railway policy before the country, and that his railway policy was well known, and asked them to explain theirs with regard to the five new lines they proposed, respecting which they had said nothing at all. The honorable the Minister for Lands rose, interrupting him, and said distinctly he would tell nothing of the sort; and that the proper time to disclose their railway policy was when they came to discuss the items in the Estimates.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And Bills.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it was a distinct refusal to state what their railway policy

was. Then, what did they find? The honorable member for Cook, in what capacity he could not imagine, came forward in reply to some member of the House, but whom he could not find out, and mentioned a fact that he had no right to mention, because he had been absent from some of the most important debates that had taken place in that House. That honorable member said they ought not to complain, because the Government had distinctly stated their railway policy by putting five new railways on the Estimates, and by stating that they would stand or fall by them. That was the statement of the honorable member for Cook, and the honorable the Minister for Lands cheered it. That, perhaps, was an acquiescence sufficient for the party, but it was deceiving the country. They wanted the honorable the Premier to answer the questions put to him as to what railways were actually vital questions connected with their policy. Were the five new railways to be a vital portion of their policy, and were they to be party questions; and if not, what railways were to be party questions? What railways were they prepared to take action upon at once, and what were their reasons for proposing them? That was the business of the country at the present time, and the most important business, which could not be kept in the background; it must force itself to the front. He could see quite well the course of action of honorable members opposite. It was to say nothing—in the first place, because they could not answer the arguments brought forward, and in the next, because they wished to be placed in this position: that all the talk being on the Opposition side of the House, they were taking up the time of the country. But he could tell them plainly that it was their own apathy and want of energy, and their refusal to go into public business, that had caused the debate to take the shape it had. The Government absolutely and persistently refused to enter into questions which were of the utmost importance to the colony, and that was what he blamed them for. He put it to them most distinctly that they were keeping back the business of the country. The Opposition were quite prepared to go on with business, but they would not do so until they knew exactly what was the policy of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he rose for the purpose of replying to the remarks of the honorable member who had just sat down, in reference to the fact that he cheered the statement of the honorable member for Cook.

Mr. MOREHEAD: We want the Premier.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said the honorable member seemed to place considerable importance upon that, and probably it was not unimportant. The matter amounted simply to this:—That a policy having been clearly laid down and signified by Bills and other measures now on the table of the House,

the Government must be prepared, of course, to stand by it.

Mr. MORREHEAD : We want the Premier.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he was replying to a challenge on the part of the honorable member for Maranoa, who attributed to him the exercise of the right which he was happy to say every honorable member enjoyed—that of cheering a remark made by some other honorable member. He felt he was justified in cheering the remark of the honorable member for Cook, that the Government were prepared to stand or fall by their measures; and he was ashamed that honorable members would attribute to them any other position in that House.

Mr. McILWRAITH : That is not a statement of your policy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said, of course they had a policy; and they had a policy declared in their Bills, which they had laid before the House.

The PREMIER said he did not think the remarks of honorable members opposite were worth replying to. Arguments they were not; but simply statements, which, as he had said before, might have been made in a speech of a few minutes instead of hours. He thought he plainly indicated the policy of the Government when he made his Ministerial Statement; but, for the information of honorable members, and in order that the country might know distinctly what that policy was, he should read from "Hansard"—although he knew he had no right to do so—what he then said, so far as railways were concerned. He asserted that the country universally approved of the policy of the Government. He had no hesitation in saying that, and he would only like to try conclusions with honorable members opposite on the policy—the progressive policy—of the Government. He should now read the policy of the Government with reference to railways, as he announced it when making his Ministerial Statement —

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Answer the questions.

Mr. IVORY said he rose to a point of order.

The SPEAKER : What is the point of order ?

Mr. IVORY : The honorable member is about to read from "Hansard." If he has got such a strong policy, why not state it and not read it ?

The SPEAKER : The point of order having been stated, the honorable member for Burnett cannot address the House. The honorable the Premier must be aware that he can only read from "Hansard" by permission of the House.

The PREMIER said he was aware of that. What he said was this :—

"The Government proposed to bring in a Railway Reserves Bill, similar to the Western Railway Bill, which would make extensive railway reserves in different parts of the country; for instance, there would be reservations on the

Darling Downs; in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts; in the great central district extending westward from Lurline; and also in the Kennedy District. When that Bill passed both Houses, the Government proposed to give each district a good round sum to start their railways, in the same way as had been done in regard to the Western Railway. That was their general railway policy."

He also stated what he did not find in "Hansard," that the Government intended to go into the loan market for a sum of money to give each district a good round sum for the construction of railways. That was the statement he made of the policy of the Government with regard to railways, and with regard to anything further he did not think it worth while answering. The country knew the policy of the Government, and he said again, the country approved of that policy, and honorable members opposite, especially the honorable member for Port Curtis, knew it well.

Mr. PALMER : You answer my questions.

The PREMIER said he should not go further with the policy of the Government. He might talk for hours on details, but he did not choose to do so on the present occasion. He announced that policy in his Ministerial Statement, and the country had it in the different Bills now on the paper for second reading, which had gone to all parts of the colony, and they were favorably commented upon by the press of the colony.

Mr. McILWRAITH : Will you answer the questions ?

Mr. PALMER : He dare not.

Mr. IVORY thought they ought to have a little more definite information with regard to the policy of this Ministry. It was all very well for the honorable the Premier to get up and read an old speech he had made, which was certainly worth very little. If he could enunciate a policy in about half a minute's speech, and could only do it by reading from an old "Hansard," it said very little for what he thought of the position he occupied. He (Mr. Ivory) thought that the Premier of the colony should be able to carry his policy in his head, and state it clearly and distinctly without having recourse to an old copy of "Hansard" to remind him of what he said before. Possibly his statesmanship was of such a versatile description that if he stated his policy again it would be contradicted by what he had stated previously. That was the only reason he could suppose why the honorable gentleman should have been obliged to have recourse to a copy of his previous speech. He thought that side of the House had been treated with very scant courtesy by the honorable the Premier, by absenting himself from the House when the most important debate of the session was proceeding; and not only by absenting himself, but by pertinaciously refusing, when he did come into the House, to state definitely what the policy of the Government was.

He denied that any definite policy had been announced by which they were prepared to stand or fall.

Mr. THOMPSON said he rose to repeat the questions that had been put to the honorable the Premier by honorable members on that side of the House. What railways did the Government intend to make?—did they intend to make any; and did they intend to insist upon one more, or all of those railways?

The PREMIER: All.

Mr. THOMPSON said that was an answer to only one question.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he must confess that the action the Government had taken on this occasion was deeply humiliating. He said it was highly discreditable to themselves; it was discreditable to that House that they had not condescended to make any reply to the accusations, and to the proved charges brought against them and their Financial Statement, by honorable members on that side of the House. Why, it appeared that the honorable the Premier, on being compelled to reply to certain questions put to him by the leader of the Opposition, could not give a straightforward answer, but had to resort to "Hansard," and it was a most humiliating thing that the Premier of the colony should have to do so. If that honorable member were up to his work, would he not have his answer at his fingers' ends? Would he not be able to inform honorable members of the House instantly, without the slightest hesitation, as to whether he intended to commit himself and the administration of which he was the head, to the programme he had introduced, or whether he intended to allow members of his Ministry to vote in opposition to his own programme? Why, it was not twelve months since the Maryborough and Gympie Railway was introduced and placed on the Estimates, and it was supposed by the House that the Ministry would stand or fall by it; but what did they do? When that question came forward for consideration, they told members on the other side of the House that they did not want it to go through. And that was the administration which several members of the present Ministry were also members of. Now, he maintained, as representing a strong Opposition in that House, they were entitled to demand from the Ministry to-night, a full and explicit statement of what they intended to do with the £600,000 for railways which they had put down on their Estimates; and he said, if they could show any precedent for an estimate of that kind being brought before any House of legislature in Australia without full explanation, then they would submit. But he maintained they could not show that in any other House of legislature was ever an estimate involving the expenditure of £900,000 introduced without a full explanation as to the intentions of the Government.

Honorable members on that side of the House had asked no more than that from the commencement; they had demanded it from the very start of the debate, and the Government had refused it. They had sat there, no matter what honorable members on that side of the House had said—no matter how they had proved the incapacity of every member of the Ministry; and, notwithstanding it had been shown that, in spite of the existing depression, they intended spending more than was ever before spent since Queensland had been constituted; notwithstanding it had been clearly shown that the honorable the Treasurer's statement was entirely astray, and that he could not hope to receive the sums he had stated he expected to receive; notwithstanding it had been shown distinctly that the deficiency of £43,000 would be four times £43,000, if they could place any dependence in present indications; notwithstanding all this, the Government had not vouchsafed to offer any explanation, or to show how they expected to carry on the Government of the colony, honestly. If they allowed the present Government to continue the extravagant expenditure they had been carrying on, the colony would be involved in repudiation before they knew where they were. He said unhesitatingly, that unless something was done to prevent the extravagant expenditure they were going into, they would have to repudiate their just obligations. He was not going to occupy the time of the House, but he would warn honorable members on the other side, that honorable members on that side would not allow the Estimates to go through—and they would not consider the Railway Reserves Bill at all—until they had a full explanation of what the Government intended to do with those railways, and whether they intended to stand or fall by them. He knew that nearly all the members on that side had spoken, and would not be able to address the House again, but they would have ample opportunity of speaking in committee, and they would take good care in Committee of Supply to get all the information they asked. Before sitting down, in order that the honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House should be afforded another opportunity of giving the explanation they asked, he begged to move that this House do now adjourn.

The SPEAKER: The question of the adjournment of the House cannot be put before the question of the adjournment of the debate has been disposed of.

Mr. WALSH said, with all due submission to the honorable the Speaker's ruling, he was bound to say he thought the motion of the honorable member for Rockhampton could be put. It was a matter of some importance that it should be put, so that Ministers might have an opportunity of replying to the questions that had been put to them, and it was with that object it had been done. He had always understood the motion for the adjourn-

ment of the House can be put at any time and under any circumstances.

The SPEAKER: I find I was wrong in the opinion I expressed. It appears the motion for the adjournment of the House takes precedence, and the honorable member for Rockhampton is, therefore, in order in making that motion.

Mr. WALSH said he should not have risen again had the honorable the Premier been present when he did himself the honor of addressing the Chamber at an earlier part of that evening; and although he was not going to repeat all he said then, he thought he might say he believed that honorable gentleman did not fully understand or appreciate the important, and, he might say, awkward position he occupied at this particular crisis in the affairs of the colony. He wished the honorable the Minister for Lands would not occupy the attention of the honorable the Premier, for he had weighty words to say to him. Certain questions had been put to that honorable gentleman, and it was his duty, out of respect to the House, and to honorable gentlemen who had preceded him in the position he occupied, to give proper replies to those most important questions. They were questions affecting the future and the well-being of this colony, and which any Premier who was fit to occupy the position for one moment should be able to reply to without having recourse to any document. And he must confess, that all the time he was addressing the House at an earlier period that evening, he felt himself almost inadequate to fully represent what he wished to state, or to elicit the information he desired, because he saw on the Treasury benches only two subordinate members of the Government. The Premier alone, he considered, was able to enunciate the policy of the Government. He did not think the honorable member for Cook, much as he respected him, even when his remarks were endorsed by a subordinate member of the Government, was a great authority on the subject. The members of the Opposition had quite as high and as important a duty to perform to the country as members on the Treasury benches, and he respected an honest, determined, and vigorous Opposition even more than the ordinary supporters of any Government. And he said, from the Premier alone they had a right to demand pertinent replies to the questions that had been fairly put on behalf of the interests and for the information of the country. Then alone could they consider they had replies that could be relied upon. He had known a Premier in that House get up and repudiate statements made by his subordinates in the Ministry, and say they were not his, and he had nothing to do with them. It was a common occurrence; and he hoped they would not see the same lamentable sight again. He was sure his honorable friend the Premier would not submit to the kind of schooling he was subjected to, and to the

explanations that, he was almost ashamed to say, were made for him. He believed he (the Premier) would rise above that, and appreciate the high, important, and extraordinary trust reposed in him. Had he been present when he (Mr. Walsh) addressed the House, he believed he should have said a great deal more than he did; but he felt that he might be talking to a section of the Government that did not fairly represent the Premier. He thought, considering the questions put, and after the admirable speeches that had been made, criticising the Government and their versatile, effervescent, and extraordinary railway policy, the honorable the Premier alone was the member who should give some assurance as to what was clearly the policy of the Government. He would ask the Premier, in all good faith, whether he really intended to make the railways mentioned in the Estimates?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. WALSH said, he would then ask the honorable gentleman if he could show any justification for those lines; and if so, whether he could not show justification for a dozen others? Why, for instance, should there not be a line from East Moreton into Brisbane, through a district which deserved far more consideration from that House than any of the wild schemes of the Government? He would ask the honorable member, also, whether there was any fresh data to go upon to justify a railway from Maryborough to Gympie, which was a line he wished to see made? Had the honorable member any fresh data to go upon since the time when one of his honorable colleagues said that that line would not pay anything like its working expenses? If the honorable member had, perhaps he would furnish it to the House. He should not have troubled the House again, but had waited for the honorable gentleman to be present.

Mr. PETTIGREW said he had been glad to hear the Premier distinctly state that the five railways were to be made a party question. He must inform that honorable gentleman and the House, that a public meeting had taken place that week, at which it was resolved that the Government should be asked for a railway from Fassfern to Ipswich, and he thought that if the five lines mentioned by the Government were worthy to be made in their respective districts, a line from Fassfern to Ipswich was very much more so. He should like to know, also, whether that line would be made a party question. But there were other lines which were very much needed, namely, from Walloon or the Rosewood Scrub up to the Upper Brisbane River, in order to go through the magnificent lands on Baramba Creek; he should like to know whether the Premier would give his word that that line would be made. They did not want an expensive line, or expensive stations and rolling stock, but they wanted a railway, and he contended that such a line would be in-
fini-

nately better than some which the Government had proposed. He could assure the honorable Premier that he would relieve his mind and the minds of his constituents very much if he would place those lines on the Loan Estimates. Then so little had been done for the agricultural interest that he should like to know whether the Premier would not put down £1,800 for a tramway from Laidley station, about twelve miles up Blackfellows' Creek, which was a very important place. He should also like to know why a railway or tramway should not go from the Redbank Plains to Goodna, and also from Oxley to the Logan, to connect that district with the Southern and Western Railway, so that farmers could bring their produce into the city of Brisbane at once. He wished the honorable Premier to give a distinct understanding, so that when they were going in for a large sum of money, or what he might term a big swindle, they should do the thing properly; he did not believe himself in doing things by halves. He contended that they should give railways to all those places, and as there were no orators in the Premier's family, he should be able to give a good reason for every line he had mentioned, and be able to show by figures that every one would pay enormously; there would be the traffic, and he was confident the lines would pay the interest on their cost of construction. If the Premier would give a guarantee that he would make the lines in West Moreton, he would not bother him about East Moreton—just those two lines from Fassifern to Ipswich, and from Walloon to Baramba Creek. If the honorable gentleman would only consent to those lines, honorable members would be able to tell their constituents that the Government had a public works policy of which they need not be ashamed. The Government had already been squeezed out of promises of five railways, and he thought they could be squeezed out of two more. If the Premier would give those railways, or even go in for a dozen, he would be supported when he went to the country. It had been already suggested that evening that the honorable gentleman should stand up and give the House some idea of the probability of the proposed lines paying; had the honorable gentleman done so, he would have saved a great deal of time from being wasted, for every honorable member must admit that a great deal of time had been wasted simply because the Premier would not speak.

MR. FOOTE: No.

MR. PETTIGREW said that such was the case, notwithstanding what the honorable member for West Moreton said; and he could tell that honorable member, that if he backed him up as he ought to have done, the two railways he had mentioned would have been included on the Loan Estimate with the others. He hoped the Premier would tell the House as to whether the proposed lines were likely to pay.

MR. MORGAN said he had listened with some regret to the remarks of the last speaker, because he was sorry to hear that honorable member say that he would support any vote that would be a swindle, for he thought it would be derogatory to say that any vote of that House would be a swindle. The honorable member had spoken of a line from Fassifern to Ipswich; but there were, at least, fifty lines that could be made, if they were going in for a general system of railway making. He might himself go in for some; but the Government had no loan for such purposes. They did not want any little pettifoggish lines, but railways that would open up the country—national undertakings.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: The Highfields line, for instance.

MR. MORGAN said he should oppose that line, as he had a far greater claim for the Warwick district than Highfields or Fassifern either. He wished to correct the honorable member for Stanley, who had accused him of having violated some pledge made to some persons either inside or outside of that House. He would challenge the honorable member to prove that he had ever violated any pledge since he had first had the honor of a seat in the House to the present time.

MR. McILWRAITH said that by way of explanation of the remarks of the honorable member for Warwick, he might mention that he had never asked the honorable member's support on the want of confidence motion; but the honorable member had told him in the presence of the honorable member for Stanley, that he was sorry that he could not vote for that motion, as his position of Chairman of Committees prevented him from doing so; but that all his sympathies were with it. He should not have mentioned the circumstance had not the honorable member provoked the explanation. He had stated the conversation exactly as it took place. It was not very often that speeches were misreported in the *Courier*, but he found that the honorable Minister for Lands had been misreported on the previous evening. The honorable member said, that "one of the tests of a Liberal Government was their desire to spend money." Those were the honorable member's words as he had taken them down at the time; but the *Courier* made the honorable gentleman say:—

"Now, one of the tests of a Liberal Government at the present time was their determination to borrow money and spend it on public works."

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said that in reference to what the honorable member had just stated, he should be inclined to believe that the *Courier* report was the correct one. If he recollected his remarks, he was contrasting the difference between the two Liberal parties—both professing to be Liberal. But he would say now, that it might be a weakness in a Liberal party to spend too much money. He had never said,

that it was the test of a Liberal party to be mere spendthrifts, but he knew there was a tendency to make use of their great credit, and to open up the country to employ the large population they wished to induce to come to it.

Mr. AMBURST said, what honorable members were anxious to know was, what was the intention of the Premier in reference to the railways put down on the Loan Estimates; they wanted some definite information on that point.

Mr. PALMER said that having given the Government every opportunity of explaining their policy, and they having consistently refused to do so, he did not mean to offer any further obstruction to the motion for going into committee.

The motion for adjournment was put and negatived.

The motion that the Speaker leave the chair was put and passed, and the House went into committee.

Mr. WALSH suggested that the debate should now finish. The Government were commencing to oppress the people by taxation before knowing whether the people would bear it. They were, in fact, putting the cart before the horse, and he believed when the country considered the sudden jumped-up expenditure which was proposed on the railways, there would be a general outcry from one end of the colony to the other against them. If the Government really intended to make the six railways, they were justified in asking for six millions of money to carry out lines in other parts of the colony where they were quite as much required as those now on the Estimates. The district mentioned during the evening by the honorable member for Stanley was quite as much deserving of a railway as the districts selected by the Government; the district of East Moreton, from its dense population, should have been amongst the first thought of by a southern Government, though, he believed, it would require a northern Government yet to do justice to East Moreton. He asked honorable members whether they could possibly support these railway propositions which so completely ignored a district which deserved a railway both from its locality and its dense and thriving population as did East Moreton? He trusted the Premier would see that it was perfectly futile to attempt, at the present sitting, to add such oppressive taxation to the burdens of the people, for the purpose of pandering to a few individuals who wished to show their animosity to one class in the colony. He hoped the Premier would see that there were enough members in the House to resist this shameful increase of taxation upon the poor at such a late hour of the evening, and before it was known whether the country was likely to approve of so preposterous a proposition as these five railways. No voice had ever been raised asking for a railway from Townsville

to Charters Towers, and he doubted whether anyone in the district ever heard of such a crazed notion. Of one or two of the other railways the same thing might be said. There were certain districts where men could not get their produce to market on account of the badness of the roads, and the peculiarities of the country, which defied the most anxious projects to make a road through it. He had seen produce in West Moreton actually rotting because the owners could not get it to Ipswich or Brisbane, and these people were not thought of at all. And why? He was sorry to say it, but it was because the Government knew they could secure the votes of the members for West Moreton, Bandamba, and other electorates in the same part of the colony. This taxation to which he objected was necessary to meet the increased expenditure of the country, and the interest upon it; but that expenditure had never yet been sanctioned by the House, and he hoped before the tariff was altered one jot, the country would have time to reflect whether it should be done or not, and the Government would get some certain knowledge as to whether they would be allowed to carry on this extravagant policy.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had seen some bitter scenes in the Chamber, and would promise the Government that if they pushed this matter as they were threatening to do, they should regret it. There were some members opposite, who were no doubt very determined, and he remembered once seeing the honorable member for Wickham staggering down to the House at 5 in the morning to take his watch in turn with his friends. Perhaps it would be well for the Government to know that they (the Opposition) could carry on for four and twenty hours—carry on in fact as long as the books on the table, and in the library lasted. Under these circumstances he hoped the Premier would see fit to give way to the Opposition.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE said, he, like the honorable member for Warrego, claimed to have a long experience, and this enabled him to say that now emphatically the time had arrived when the Government should proceed decisively with the business of the country. The business of the Assembly had been frittered away by most useless contentions that had brought forth nothing. Believing, then, that the time had come when the business ought to be allowed to progress, he said that, no matter what sacrifices were made, the Government, now that they had been driven to it, ought to go to the utmost extreme and push the business forward. Of course, a small number of members of the Opposition could, if they thought proper, resist business, and they were quite aware that for several days there had been a determination amongst them to stop all progress in the business of the Assembly.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: No, no.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Ministerial side: Yes, yes.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE repeated his assertions, and urged that it was the duty of the Government to exert themselves to the utmost to press forward, so that the business of the country should no longer suffer. So long as he could—to use the honorable member for Mitchell's expression—stagger, he would assist the Government in this, and he blushed now, as he had often of late done, to hear the manner in which honorable members opposite thought proper to address the House.

Mr. THOMPSON said the Government, of course, were aware that an extensively signed petition was on its way from the European residents of Cooktown, protesting against class legislation, and he thought it would be only decent on the part of the Government, to wait until they had received that expression of opinion from their white fellow colonists, although, upon a question of vital principle one color was as good as another. The discussion ought to be postponed, if only in courtesy to the petitioners, and to show that the House was willing to hear their prayer. It would be extremely ungenerous to the strangers whom the Government were attempting to oppress, to refuse to hear what those white colonists had to say of their yellow-skinned brethern. It was rather amusing to know that in the treaty which the English forced upon the Chinese, at the cannon's mouth, it was urged that the Chinese ought to receive christian ministers, because the christian religion, the religion of the British, taught the virtue of doing to others as others should do unto them: this was how we quoted Scripture; after breaking all the commandments and forcing a treaty upon the Chinese, the British went to them with a christian precept. It was Manchester all over. In 1866 a Bill passed the Assembly which incidentally gave the home producer protection as against the foreigner in the matter of rum, and although it did not come within the category of the differential duties, Mr. Lilley thought it his duty to call the Governor's attention to the matter, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies replied to the Governor in these words:—

"I have had under my consideration 'a Bill to authorise distillation by the owners of sugar mills or manufactories,' which you have been advised to reserve for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure, because your advisers considered that the thirtieth clause imposed a differential duty. That clause provides that there shall be paid upon all spirits distilled under the provisions of the Act two-thirds of the Customs duty payable upon imported spirits. This, no doubt, involves a protective duty in favor of the home producer, and is therefore liable to all the objections which are familiar to political economists: it does not however affect the terms on which different foreign nations import their produce into Queensland, and it does not therefore fall within that class of laws which you are required

by your instructions to reserve for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure.

"You inform me that the Bill, as originally introduced by your Government, imposed the same duty on imported and on home-made spirits, but that an amendment lowering the duty on the produce of the colony was inserted in committee, in a thin House.

"As the measure is one to which it was competent for you to give the Royal Assent, and as I think it desirable that the provisions to which I have adverted should be subject to the deliberate decision of your Legislature, I shall not take upon myself to advise the Queen to assent to it, while, on the other hand, if it shall be re-enacted by your Legislature, and assented to by you, I shall not think it necessary to advise Her Majesty to exercise her power of disallowance."

It would thus be seen that Mr. Lilley thought the matter of sufficient importance to take the exceptional course of reserving the Bill for Her Majesty's pleasure, and it would be as well, perhaps, to give Mr. Lilley's own opinion, as submitted by him to the Governor. It was the report of the Attorney-General of Queensland on the Bill to authorise Distillation by the Owners of Sugar Mills or Manufactories, and was transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by His Excellency the Governor, September 17, 1865. Mr. Lilley wrote:—

"This Bill was passed to encourage the cultivation of sugar-cane, by relaxing the laws relating to distilleries; so as to enable the sugar-grower and manufacturer to utilise the whole of his product and prevent waste when the earlier crops might be used for rum. But could not be at a profitable return manufactured into sugar. It contains strict provisions to prevent illicit distillation, but as section 30 would operate as a differential duty in favor of spirits distilled in the colony, it was deemed advisable to reserve it, under section 7 of clause 6, and under clause 11 of the Royal Instructions, so as to insure its validity. It is a Government measure. This measure was introduced originally by the Government, without any differential duty, which was inserted in committee, in a thin House, at the end of the session."

He (Mr. Thompson) called attention to this for the purpose of showing that the Royal Instructions were to receive a favorable construction, and were not to have a narrow interpretation put upon them. It took place under the old instructions given to Sir George Bowen, and when Lord Normanby came the instructions were repeated with the addition of some others. He would read those which referred to the particular question before the House. Amongst the Bills which the Governor was not to assent to were any Bill imposing differential duties, and any Bill, provisions of which should appear inconsistent with obligations imposed upon us by treaty.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. THOMPSON said that was an instruction which, to his mind, applied to the case before the House. The Government proposals were professedly aimed at the Chinese, a nation a

amity with England at the present time, and he would call attention to the peculiar wording of this clause: "Any Bill provisions of which shall appear inconsistent with obligations imposed upon us by treaty." It did not say "any Bill which *would be* inconsistent," but "*which shall appear*" to be inconsistent, &c.—a very different matter indeed, and those words were, of course, purposely used. But there was an addition made to Lord Normanby's instructions as to Bills to which he was not to assent, namely:—

"Any Bill of an extraordinary nature and importance, whereby our prerogative or the rights and property of our subjects not residing in the colony, or the trade and shipping of the United Kingdom and its dependencies may be prejudiced."

He could not see how the trade of the United Kingdom would be otherwise than much prejudiced by the proposed taxation of the Chinese, by this special impost upon a friendly nation, a people who were helping to carry the mail services throughout the colonies. This additional clause added by Mr. Lilley, perhaps the best lawyer in the colony, was very strong evidence in favor of the member for Warrego's position, namely, that the Bill ought not to receive the Royal assent without being referred to England, and if it was referred to England he did not believe there was the slightest chance of its being carried. It was against all the enlightened principles of the intercourse of nations, principles which the British Government had enforced by the violation of Divine law at the cannon's mouth, by forcing into China that dreadful drug opium, which the Chinese Government did not want to come there, and then by forcing a treaty down their throats. And now the Queensland Government were actually trying to put restrictions upon these people who were in their midst. If the Chinese were well advised, they would all become British subjects, by taking up their papers at Hongkong before they came here, so that they might say, adapting the words of St. Paul, "I am a Roman citizen; with great price bought I these privileges, and I insist upon my rights." For himself, he should never cease to protest against this most iniquitous tax.

Mr. PALMER said, in proposing this increase in the duty on rice with a view to exclude the Chinese, the Government forgot that in doing so they were also punishing the white inhabitants of the colony to a very considerable extent—to an extent far greater than he was sure the honorable the Treasurer had taken into his calculations. He should like to know the quantity of rice used in the western and other districts of the colony except the Palmer district, where the Chinese "do most congregate." What was the proportion of duty levied on rice in Cooktown compared with that levied on the whole of the rest of colony, where the Chinese formed a very small portion of the population? He thought

it was not the way to advance the business of the House to endeavor to force this motion on at that hour without giving any reason, or showing in any way the necessity for it, and without showing what was the proportion of taxation already received from rice in all the other parts of the colony, except Cooktown. The honorable the Treasurer had shown what had been received at Cooktown as a matter of policy; he had shown that as a reason for imposing the tax. In the next place, he quite agreed with the honorable member for Bremer, and he had stated himself when the tax was proposed, that he did not believe, even if they stultified themselves so much as to pass this increased duty, it would be approved by the Governor without referring it home for consent to the Bill—for he presumed a Bill would be necessary to legalize the tax. But he was astonished that the Government should attempt to pass this measure, and that they should be apparently supported in that attempt by the presence of the honorable member for Cook, who had not been very regular in his attendance in that House, and who, he thought, should have urged upon the Government the propriety of delaying this motion until the petition of his own constituents, which they had been given to understand by telegram had been very largely signed, even by the white inhabitants of Cooktown, was received, and the House was placed in possession of the information they should no doubt find in that petition. He thought that was a strong reason why the motion should not be pressed on. He objected to increasing the taxation of the people of the colony, and he objected all the more if it was to be imposed as a special tax on the Chinese. He did not think that was enlightened legislation in any respect. It seemed to him that they were retrograding very fast, and he should not be at all astonished to find that the next measure from the present Ministry would be a protective tariff such as that in force in Victoria, or that they should even adopt the tariff of the United States. It tended in that direction so far as he could see. This was a most invidious tax. They were proposing, for all they knew to the contrary, to put a tax upon their fellow-subjects. They had no means of knowing how many Chinese coming to Cooktown were not their fellow-subjects, and he was perfectly certain it would create a very bad opinion of the colony if this tax should be carried by a majority of the House. He should protest against it as long as he was able to speak, and he thought the Government had made a very great mistake—that they had introduced this motion under false pretences. If they put in a preamble like this:—"Whereas it is desirable to improve the breed of cattle and sheep in this colony, and to increase the price of beef as much as possible, it is exceedingly desirable to impose a tax on rice in order to make the Chinese eat beef and mutton," it would show what the effect would be. He

knew the Chinamen well, and he knew them favorably. He knew that in many parts of the colony the inhabitants would not have been able to carry on operations without them. He did not say he liked them as well as his own countrymen, but in justice to them, he must say that if the colonies were polled for intelligence and ability, if "John" did not beat the other colonists, he would run them very close indeed. He did not think for the sake of mere clap-trap they should endeavor to keep these people out of the colony in this manner. The Government stated their object was to keep them out by this measure, and by increasing the digging and business licenses; and if their object was really to keep them out of the colony, why did they not pass a Bill, and say, "After this date no Chinaman should be allowed to land in the colony under any circumstances whatever?" Why did they not try conclusions in that way? It would not stultify them any more than this ridiculous attempt to stop them from coming to the colony. If there was gold on the Palmer, a penny a pound on rice would be a mere bagatelle to them. They could take to beef and flour, when they could get it, very readily, and they would do what white men failed to do, that was, grow their own vegetables. That was his experience of them, and it had been a pretty long one. He did not say it was desirable that the northern portion of the colony should be inundated with Chinamen in the proportion that they were coming. He confessed candidly that he should prefer to see fewer of them coming, and he would not care if they did not come at all, except in very small numbers; but if they were prepared to come, as they seemed to be, he said the attempt to keep them back in this way was like Mrs. Partington's broom sweeping back the waves of the Atlantic. Nothing could be more absurd, and in the attempt to keep them out, they were punishing their own countrymen, and women and children particularly. They had been told by the honorable members for Warrego and Springsure, and every member of the House who knew anything about it, that the only substitute for vegetables in the interior was rice; that was the only variation from the never-failing beef, mutton, and damper. Some honorable members had no idea of the value of rice in the interior, and he said to put a penny a pound on it, when it was an important article of food, for—he would call them their own blood relations, their own women and children in the western country—was tyrannical to a degree, and a course of proceeding he should have thought unworthy of a Queensland legislature or of a Queensland Ministry to propose.

MR. BELL said he regretted that such good speeches should have been wasted on that House to-night, and he admitted that honorable members on that side of the House were falling into the trap of the honorable

gentleman at the head of the Government, and playing into his hands in an innocent manner he had not seen before. He had had the personal satisfaction of hearing the very lucid and good speech by the honorable member for Bremer, and the too good speech for the occasion by the honorable member for Port Curtis, which had been completely thrown away, because they would not be reported, and they ought to be recorded in the public prints. He thought sufficient reasons had been shown for not proceeding with the debate to-night. It was a most important subject, and one that he was sure would take more than one night to debate. He saw it was clear that it was a question that would not be decided by division in one fell swoop, but that it would be done by pounds, shillings, and pence until it came down to a very small point, if the Government gained it eventually as a tax at all. He was sure the honorable the Treasurer must see it was hopeless to attempt to get the question disposed of to-night, and if there was any use in sitting through the night he would sit there for a week rather than it should advance one step. The Government had done very well in getting so far as they had with their Financial Statement, and it was absurd to attempt to go on with this question.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought honorable members opposite had overlooked the fact, that the Government had given every opportunity for the consideration of this matter. The Financial Statement was made a fortnight ago, and the consideration of it was postponed entirely to suit the convenience of honorable members opposite, and the proceedings to-night were merely consequent on that statement, and would only advance their proceedings one stage, inasmuch as these resolutions must be reported to the House before any Bill or measure dealing with the subject could be introduced. He, therefore, thought the Government were not asking too much when they proposed to proceed with the resolutions. It was not an act of precipitation or undue haste, and he thought honorable members should view it in that light—that it would only advance the proceedings one stage. He was glad honorable members had not indicated any desire to obstruct, but rather to thoroughly argue the merits of the question. He anticipated, from the course they had pursued, that they intended to occupy an hour or two in fully considering the matter, and that then they would divide on the resolution, and deal with it in such a manner as the majority of the committee might determine. With regard to the information asked by the honorable member for Port Curtis, concerning the consumption of rice in the western districts, and the proportion in the different portions of the colony, he thought the statement he should now make would show conclusively that the consumption in the western interior had been largely over-

estimated. He found that during the past year, expiring on the 30th June, 2,200 tons of rice had been imported. In Brisbane, there had been landed and duty paid 450 tons; at Maryborough, 60 tons; while in Rockhampton, the quantity was 103 tons; at Cooktown, 1,320 tons; at Townsville, 85 tons; and at Mackay and St. Lawrence, 91 tons. In all, they found that at Brisbane and Maryborough about 500 tons had been landed, while in the northern ports over 1,600 tons had been landed; proving, conclusively, that the large importation of rice was chiefly due to the large Chinese population settled in the North. The Government did not propose the duty simply for the purpose of preventing Chinese from coming to the colony, but to make them contribute more largely to the revenue than they did at present. With regard to the question of class legislation, referred to by the honorable member for Bremer, which ought doubtless to be answered by some legal gentleman, he thought the honorable member's argument would have assumed greater force had he referred to the duty on opium, which was essentially class legislation, the duty being twenty shillings per pound, which had been assented to by His Excellency, although, possibly, it was contrary to the spirit of the Financial Treaty. But this duty could not be classed in that category. Rice was a commodity consumed to a certain extent by the white population as well as by Chinese; whereas opium was consumed exclusively by Chinese, and the heavy impost on this commodity partook far more largely of class legislation than the additional duty now sought to be put upon rice. Then again, great stress had been laid, and with some show of reason, by the honorable member, upon the petition which was now in course of transmission from the northern ports to that chamber, concerning the proposed increase in the duty on rice; but he thought the honorable gentleman had forgotten that that petition, or the framers of it, offered the Government the alternative of imposing an export duty on gold, which he was sure a far larger number of members than those who now objected to the duty on rice would consider decidedly objectionable, and the Government did not see their way to accept the alternative. They had fully considered the question of increasing the duty on rice, and the increased duty was not by any means exorbitant or so excessive that it would drive rice out of consumption. From the value of the commodity, and the moderate quantity that was used, the increased cost necessitated by this extra duty would not be of an oppressive character, or diminish its consumption. He looked upon this as an item of revenue that would be fully maintained; and any objections that honorable members had to urge, he conceived, might be very fairly heard and discussed and dealt with that evening. He would again impress upon honorable members, that they should reflect

that there was really no desire on the part of the Government to press the matter with undue precipitation, and that by passing the resolutions, they would only be advancing it one stage.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, before stating what the "Encyclopædia Britannica" stated about rice, and what other books which he was having looked up by the officers of the House said on the same subject, he would ask the Government whether they were prepared to push this resolution to the bitter end to-night, or until three o'clock to-morrow? He would point out to the Government that they were making a great mistake if they believed "John Chinaman" would eat rice if it cost more than flour, or the vegetables they could produce. Chinamen were likely to eat whatever cost the least amount of money, and if rice were dearer than flour they would eat flour; and unless the Government were prepared to carry out the policy proposed by the honorable the Colonial Secretary some years ago of putting a duty on flour, they could not fix the Chinaman by merely taxing rice. He should like it to go forth to the country that the Colonial Secretary of this administration did propose to put an import duty on flour, because he thought the fact ought to be ventilated more than it had been, and that it would be, that honorable member might rest assured. It was hopeless for the honorable the Treasurer to try to push these measures further to-night, and the best thing he could do was to move the Chairman out of the chair.

Mr. PETTIGREW said he had no wish to join in any factious opposition in reference to this matter, but he thought taxation to the amount of a penny a pound on rice was far too high. According to the statement of the honorable the Treasurer, 1,600 tons of rice had gone into Cooktown, and 500 into Brisbane and Maryborough; and he wished to point out that these high duties tended to stop consumption. He believed that Chinamen, instead of paying the proposed duty would go into flour. For example, a ton of rice would cost in Brisbane about £30 a ton in ordinary times, and sometimes, perhaps, a great deal more, while a ton of flour would average something like £15 a ton. That was exactly one-half; and by overdoing this tax, the revenue that was expected from it might be lost almost entirely. Now, maize meal had exactly the same duty upon it that rice would if this resolution were agreed to, and he should like to know how many bags of maize meal had come into Brisbane since the duty of a penny a pound had been upon it? It was sold at 1½d. per pound, and he was sure none had ever come into the district at all; in other words, it was a tax without an object. As he had pointed out, on the average, a ton of rice would cost about £30 if this duty were carried, and a ton of flour £15; so that two tons of flour would cost the same as one of rice, and he presumed, under those circum-

stances, Chinamen would at once adopt, as he had known them to do at Stanthorpe, European diet. As he had said, the duty on maize meal was a penny per pound, and that tariff was specially framed by the late Treasurer to prevent the grocers from making any money, and to enable the drapers to pocket seven and a-half per cent.; and if the honorable the Treasurer had been long enough in office, he should be very pleased if he had brought in a fresh tariff altogether. He thought it was a great mistake to try to impose this duty; in other words, that it was a great mistake to tax 165,000 Europeans for the sake of 5,000 Chinese. It had been said that the Chinese were not good citizens, and perhaps they were not; but they were very valuable adjuncts to the farmers of West Moreton, as there was not a vessel going to Cooktown which did not take up a large number of pigs, for which the Chinamen paid in gold. He believed that the honorable Treasurer made a mistake when he expected that another penny a pound on rice would bring in a large addition to the revenue, as the Chinese, who were the largest consumers of rice, would go in for flour instead, and their gold would go to Adelaide to pay for it, instead of going to West Moreton to pay for pigs. He did not admire the Chinese as a race, but he thought that a poll-tax of £3 on every Chinamen coming into the colony and £5 on his leaving it, would be preferable to an additional duty on rice, which would be a tax on the 175,000 people in the colony, although the grocers would really be the parties to pay the tax, as they would never be able to get it from their customers. There was another feature in the matter, namely, that rice was a perishable article, and supposing it was put into bond at a hot place like Cooktown, the probability was that it would all be destroyed by weevils before the owners of it would be able to take it out of bond. He really thought that if the honorable Treasurer consulted his colleagues, they would come to the conclusion that more revenue would be got by charging £5 a ton than by charging £9 a ton.

Mr. WALSH said that it should have been shown by the Treasurer that the duty upon rice was directed against Chinamen alone, for, to his knowledge, three-fourths of the rice now consumed was consumed by diggers. Again, there were a great number of persons in his own electorate, for instance, who were unable to get vegetables and had to use large quantities of rice; so that, whilst the Treasurer was endeavoring to tax the Chinese, he would be actually placing a tax upon those people in the outside districts who had to use rice as a substitute for vegetables. He should certainly oppose the imposition of the duty.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he thought it was most desirable that the committee should come to a division that night. He thought that, as in accordance with a suggestion made by the honorable

member for Dalby, the debate on the Financial Statement had taken place in the House instead of in committee, the work of the committee might be looked upon more as a matter of detail. If honorable members had wished to take exception to the duty, they should have moved some amendment against the financial policy of the Government; but they had not done so. He could quite understand that the question of imposing a duty on rice was a very debatable one; but he might state that the object of the Government in proposing it, was to secure a revenue from the Chinese, who put the country to very great expense; and they thought it was the least objectionable form of obtaining that revenue; it was in fact, rather a choice of difficulties the Government were in. He could quite understand honorable members wishing to identify themselves with an opinion adverse to the Government; but they could easily attain that object by recording their names on the division list. He thought the present question should be disposed of as soon as possible, for if honorable members persevered in carrying on their opposition, there would be another week lost. If they had the power to prevent the resolution being carried, well and good; but if not, they should, as he had already said, be content to have their names recorded on the division lists as opponents to it. In other portions of the Government policy, they might find weak points; and, therefore, they should allow them to bring forward their measures as early as possible. He thought the object of the Opposition would be gained much sooner by not dribbling away time in a game of politics such as the discussion on the present question. For instance, he believed that they considered the Government public works and railway policy very defective, and they would have an opportunity of expressing their opinions on it all the sooner if they did not put obstacles in the way of the Government getting on with their business. All he could say was, that the Government were most anxious to give them an opportunity of expressing their opinions on their policy as soon as possible.

Mr. FOOTE said he should be glad if the Government could see their way clear to accept the smaller sum of £5 a ton. He must say that he believed that the object the Government had in view would be defeated by their insisting on the large sum they proposed to put on the article of rice; for, supposing a merchant imported a hundred tons of that article, he would be compelled to keep it in bond for some time, and in the course of a few months, if it was kept in an iron store at a hot place like Cooktown, the half of it would be destroyed by weevils, and the parties would naturally refuse to take it out of bond.

Mr. HALY said that his great objection to the duty on rice was altogether apart from

the Chinese question, as he could assure the committee that people in the interior, who could not procure vegetables, could not be healthy unless they had rice. It should be remembered that those people had not only to pay the duty, but also very heavy carriage; in fact, if the resolution was carried, they would have to pay £9 a ton duty, and £20 a ton carriage, or an addition of nearly £30 to the actual cost of the article, which was a great deal too much. He did not generally offer factious opposition, but in the present instance he would not leave the House so long as there was a chance of having the duty reduced.

The PREMIER said he was surprised to hear honorable members talk about rice being so largely used in the interior, where people could not get vegetables; for, although he had had some experience of the interior, he had never seen rice used on any station. In regard to what had fallen from the honorable member for Port Curtis and other honorable members, he would say that the duty on rice was to increase the revenue, and the Government had proposed to tax it as being the article best able to bear it. He considered that they would have no difficulty whatever in getting that duty—not more than they had in getting the present duty of a farthing a pound. With regard to an additional duty on opium, which was an article only consumed by the Chinese, the Imperial Government would give their dissent to it far sooner than they would to a duty on rice. He might mention that, when he was at Cooktown, almost every business man to whom he spoke advocated strongly an increased duty on rice, notwithstanding the memorial which it was said was coming down against it; and he thought honorable members were all aware how memorials were got up, and how signatures to them were obtained. With regard to the duty on maize meal which had been referred to, that duty was imposed as a protective duty, as maize meal could be produced in the colony, but rice could not; and the reason why maize meal was not now imported was because it was so little consumed. There was a duty on currants, and yet diggers used more of them than they did rice. He hoped the committee would go to a division.

Mr. THOMPSON said, in regard to a statement of the honorable Treasurer that the Chinese did not contribute to the revenue as they should do, that it was a proof that they were either very poor or very frugal, and therefore the honorable member said they should be taxed. But it was not a proper or just argument that because a man lived frugally he should be taxed. He denied *in toto*, however, that the Chinese did not contribute to the revenue as much as any other class.

Mr. STEVENSON said that he could go further than the honorable Minister for Lands, who spoke of the present being a game of politics, as he thought it was a farce, and

would be so as long as the present Premier was at the head of the Government. The present was the only occasion on which that honorable member had spoken that one of his colleagues had not got up to interpret, which was equivalent to contradicting, what the honorable member had said. He objected to class legislation in any form whatever. The honorable the Premier said rice was not used in the interior, but he (Mr. Stevenson) recollected when they were pioneers in the Mitchell district, they had to use rice largely, because they could get nothing else as a substitute for vegetables. If it was necessary to talk against time, he was prepared to quote "Hansard" to any extent to show that the Ministry were unworthy of confidence.

Mr. HALY was surprised to hear the Premier say that rice was not eaten in the interior. Surely the honorable gentleman must have confined his travels to the coast. His experience was, that rice was very largely used, especially on the stations, by people who had children.

Mr. FRASER said the main question had of late been very much lost sight of. The Government proposals must be considered from two considerations—first, from the digger's point of view described by the honorable member for Kennedy; secondly, from the colonist's point of view. If he regarded the proposal simply from a revenue aspect, he should not support it. The diggers objected to the Chinese for filling up their places; the colonists, because they carried away the gold without contributing their quota to the revenue; and the diggers, no doubt, looked upon the Chinese question as a very serious grievance. The object of the Government, however, was not to prevent the Chinese from coming into colony, but to check an undue influx of Chinese emigration. He was ready to admit, that to a certain extent the Chinese were a very great service.

Mr. MOREHEAD called attention to the state of the committee; and a quorum was formed.

Mr. FRASER, continuing, said he should be satisfied to check an undue influx of Chinese, and put a stop to large quantities of gold being carried away, leaving no beneficial results behind.

Mr. MOREHEAD called attention to the state of the committee; and a quorum was formed.

Mr. FRASER, continuing, said, one of the ends contemplated in the gold diggings was, that it led to the profitable settlement of the colony; the money made at the diggings was invested in profitable industries. It might be said that the digger was a sort of restless unsettled animal, and to some extent that was the case. Notwithstanding, there were large numbers who made money at the diggings and afterwards permanently settled down in the colony, contributing materially to the development of its extensive resources. He could point to many industries in the neigh-

borhood of Brisbane and elsewhere entirely established and supported by money made on the gold fields, but the same could not be said of the Chinese, whose gold was carried away. With regard to the hardships of their fellow-colonists in the interior, who found in rice a substitute for vegetables, it was not denied that vegetables could be grown, and that people who suffered from want of vegetables were themselves to blame. This could not be called class legislation, because the Chinese, being aliens, were not supposed to be legislated for at all. It was a question, also, whether the petition from the Chinese at Cooktown could be received, because they were not, for the same reason, colonists. Altogether, from a utilitarian point of view, he should be inclined to support the proposition of the Government.

MR. BUZACOTT was sorry, at that late hour of the evening, to have to stand up, and resist what he considered to be an obnoxious impost. He promised to give a strong opposition to the Aliens Bill, and this impost had the same object, and was intended to apply an increased duty of a penny per pound on rice to all consumers, both European and Chinese. He admitted there was so far a distinction between the Aliens Bill and this particular impost, and, he believed, the honorable member for Bremer argued as he did because the increased amount, proposed in the Aliens Bill and the rice tax, were intended to have a restrictive effect upon Chinese emigration to Queensland. He (Mr. Buzacott) maintained that what the committee were now actually discussing were the financial proposals of the Government; the Government refused to discuss them in the House, and he warned them that their refusal would not help them, because opposition could be offered in committee until a satisfactory explanation of the financial position was given. When the Premier said he would make his five or six railways a policy upon which to stand or fall, members on the Opposition side refrained from obstruction, and were quite prepared to discuss that particular feature of the Financial Statement, if a proper opportunity were allowed, but after a long and exhaustive debate, members did not naturally feel inclined to discuss so important a question in the intelligent manner it deserved. It was a most serious thing to place any imposition upon any article of consumption that would have the effect of restricting the emigration of Chinese to the colony. Before the Colonial Treasurer asked the House to vote for such an impost, he was bound to show—first, that the Chinese were an injury to the colonists; second, that they did not contribute fairly to the revenue; third, that they involved the colony in increased expenditure; and fourth, that the imposts proposed were the only means of discouraging them. If it was necessary to discourage the Chinese, there was a way of doing it honestly; hit them straight. Say that

only a certain number should come into the colony every year; do it in Englishman's style, but not impose duties that were intended to starve them, or make the prosecution of their industry so hard that they could not carry it on with profit to themselves. He had given the Chinese question a great deal of consideration. Twelve months ago the inhabitants of Rockhampton called a meeting to consider it, and that public meeting passed motions against the Chinese. He told the leaders of that meeting that although he would present their petition to the House, he would resign his seat rather than support their views. He had never been asked to present that petition, and this showed him there was no really strong feeling amongst the people of the colony in opposition to the Chinese. He had lived in the interior, and had been under great obligations to the Chinese himself; he was placed in such a position that had it not been for the Chinese he could not have maintained his family with him, but must have sent them away nearer to civilisation, or left the colony altogether. He believed the Chinese were a great advantage to the colony, especially to those persons who were doomed to live in isolated portions of the interior. He knew a number of stations where the Chinese were largely employed in raising vegetables that were absolutely necessary to keep the people in health. As to the ill consequences of Chinese on the gold fields, no doubt sometimes, when the Europeans deserted the works the Chinese took their places. What then? Why should they be prevented from doing so? The Europeans always had the first chance; they probably discovered the existence of gold in a locality, and had ample opportunity in working it out; then, because they did not think it worth while to remain any longer, they went elsewhere, and the Chinese came in to take possession. Was it not then advantageous to the whole community that the Chinese should come in and work the ground profitably? There was another aspect of this question which the Colonial Treasurer had not alluded to, although it had several times been brought under his notice; even that evening, in defending his tax, the honorable gentleman had not referred to this aspect, namely, that the whole of the increase last year from the Customs revenue was from the advent of an increased number of Chinese. It was the Chinese who yielded that increase of £18,000 in Customs revenue, and in the new imposts to be levied upon these people, the honorable gentleman would not only fail to secure the amount he expected, but would injure the revenue in other ways. He would ask honorable members on the other side, whether, even though they had a small majority in the House, it was worth their while to force this sort of obnoxious impost upon a strong minority, who firmly believed that it would prove injurious, not only to the Chinese, but to the inhabitants of the

whole colony? He had been reading a good deal about the Chinese in San Francisco and other parts of California, and found an undoubtedly strong feeling against them there. That, however, was soon accounted for; it was because, by the laws of the United States, Chinese who had resided in the country two years were entitled to all the privileges of citizenship. Here there was no such fear. In Queensland the Chinaman was an alien and remained so. There was only one condition under which he could be entitled to rank as a citizen of Queensland, a condition which it was certain not one in a hundred could comply with. There was little fear that the Chinese could do much harm in the colony, because they could not hold freehold. This was very different from the position of the Chinese at San Francisco; the Chinese in California, also, were there in much larger numbers than he supposed they would ever be in Queensland; at any rate the Government would be quite prepared, when they came in in their hundreds of thousands, as they had in San Francisco, to take some steps to meet the case. It had been said that if the influx of Chinese was not stopped at once, they would by-and-bye be utterly beyond control, and that the northern districts would be so overwhelmed, that Government would have to spend much larger sums in police protection than the colony could afford. When that contingency arose, it would be quite time to deal with it, but he did not believe the time would come when the colonists of Queensland would be unable to control the Chinese immigrants. Why, in the English settlement at Singapore, and the islands there, a mere handful of Englishmen controlled 200,000 or 300,000 Chinese, Malays, and other Asiatics; and should it be said that 200,000 people in Queensland were unable to control the few thousand Chinese who might be expected to find occupation on the gold fields of the colony? He thought, therefore, the apprehension that the Chinese would overwhelm the other inhabitants of the colony was a most absurd and discreditable one. He did not feel the least apprehension about it, and the report of the Commissioner of Police showed that there had been no extra expense incurred for police protection in consequence of the influx of Chinese. He had also turned up a report in which he found that the expense of police protection in 1875 was £4,000 under the amount spent in 1874 in the northern portion of the colony. Therefore, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had not shown that the Chinese involved any extra expense for police protection; he had not shown that they did not contribute their fair share to the revenue; he had not shown that they had done any harm to any industry in Queensland, or harm in any way: but it had been shown that they had done the community very important and valuable service, as he himself had pointed out, and would continue to do so if they were

not interfered with and oppressed by unfair legislation of the character proposed. He thought the request that this question should be postponed until they received the petition from the inhabitants of Cooktown ought to be conceded, because they did not know the arguments used in that petition, and he considered that those arguments should be before the House before they consented to this proposed alteration in the tariff. He would point out that several supporters of the Ministry had suggested that instead of the duty being increased to £9 2s. 6d. per ton the Government should be satisfied with £5 per ton, and he believed a majority in the House, if they had their choice, would prefer that a tax of only £5 per ton should be imposed; and he would put it to the committee, whether, if the tax was to be increased to only that extent, was it worth while making any alteration at all; was it worth while making an alteration in the tariff for the sake of a small sum of about £6,000? When the honorable the Treasurer was making his Financial Statement, and brought in a surplus, he thought they were going to have important fiscal alterations; that they were going to have the *ad valorem* duties dispensed with, and other important changes made which would have the effect of assimilating the tariff of this colony to that of New South Wales, and that he intended in some other way to provide for the exigencies of the revenue; but he proposed nothing of the sort. He acknowledged that the expenditure was increasing faster than the revenue, and that some provision should be made to remove the present deficiency, and prevent its recurrence; but all he proposed to do was to extract about £30,000 a-year from the Chinese. He put it to the committee whether it was worth while going into legislation of this kind for £30,000 a-year? He knew it had been stated that the duty was not proposed with the view of increasing the revenue, but that it was for the purpose of preventing Chinese from coming into the colony; but he said, if the Government wanted to do that, they should do it by express prohibition. He would put it to the committee, also, whether it was not desirable to postpone the consideration of this question. He thought honorable members on that side of the House had shown that they could keep up the discussion until three o'clock to-morrow if they wished, and he did not see that the Government would gain anything by pressing it further. He was anxious to go home, but still he was not going to surrender.

Mr. MOREHEAD again urged upon the Government the desirability of postponing the further consideration of the question, and pointed out the futility of attempting to force it on in the face of such strong and determined opposition.

Mr. PALMER said that whilst disagreeing with the tax of even £5 a ton, yet, with a view of bringing the matter to a settlement, he

would meet the Government half way. He therefore begged to move as an amendment—

That the sum of one half-penny be substituted for one penny.

On that amendment he should be prepared to take a division, and, so far as that evening was concerned, to abide by it; with the understanding, however, that the Government did not proceed with any other business. He disapproved entirely of the duty, but believing that compromises were sometimes advisable, and with the view, as he had said, of bringing the discussion to a close, he was willing that the committee should go to a division. He did not wish to be misunderstood at all, for when the Government brought in a Bill the matter might be again discussed; but as far as that evening was concerned, he was willing to abide by the division on his own amendment.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had been glad to hear that the honorable member for Port Curtis was desirous of bringing the matter to a settlement that night, and he only wished that his views had been such as to enable the Government to see their way clear to accept the reduced amount of duty the honorable member had proposed, but he considered that the small increase it would be on the existing tariff would be entirely unproductive of the results which he wished to attain. He believed that the price of the commodity would be increased per pound by the amount he had proposed, and he could not see why the merchant should have a profit on a commodity which under ordinary circumstances would go into the Treasury. Honorable members would perceive that there had been no desire to disturb the existing tariff, but that the only object had been to meet a disturbing element through having a large population of Chinese amongst them. The amendment of the honorable member would not have the effect of meeting the object of the Government, which was to make that population contribute their proportion to the revenue, which they did not contribute at the present time. He was glad to hear the honorable member say that he should be willing to abide by the division, and he should not ask honorable members to proceed with further business that night than the passing of the resolution.

Mr. PETTIGREW said he was exceedingly sorry to hear the remarks just made by the honorable Treasurer, as he believed that the proposed tariff would not answer the purpose for which it was intended. He thought that if the Treasurer wanted to increase his revenue he could do so far better by reducing a lot of useless expenditure in the appointment of police magistrates and other public officers who were not required. He would point out in regard to the increased duty on rice, that the onus of it would fall upon the grocers; and that it was only because certain people at Cooktown had lost money by trust-

ing Chinamen, that they wished to tax their food for the future. He believed, also, that the Government would get more out of the Chinamen by the imposition of a half-penny duty than they would by a penny duty. But if it was desirable to put a tax upon the Chinese, why should it not be confined to the Chinamen at Cooktown, instead of imposing it in such a way that, for the purpose of dealing with 7,000 Chinamen, the whole 175,000 people in the colony were to be made to suffer?

Mr. MACROSSAN said the object of the Government in imposing the tax was either to raise revenue or to prevent the Chinese from coming into the country; for either purpose the proposals of the Government would be a failure. If the Government wished to make itself unpopular it could not do a better thing than put a tax of £9 per ton upon rice as it was proposed to do. Leaving the question of principle on one side, if the members of the House wished to assist the Government in becoming unpopular, they should let the tax go. It was a tax that would not operate upon the Chinese at all; it would operate in different parts of the colony where rice was used as an article of food, and where there were no Chinamen. He knew that the Chinese merchants at Cooktown had resolved that if £9 was asked they would import no more rice; so that instead of getting more revenue the Government would lose the £2 it was now getting. It was idle to think that by putting a tax upon rice they were keeping Chinamen out of the colony; so long as there was gold in the North, where a Chinaman could earn a good living, he would go there. Chinamen would leave the rice and take the flour. So long as he had known them, they had used as much of the latter as the former. He did not know whether the Government would agree to the reduction of the tax to a half-penny per pound; but if they wished to get a revenue they would certainly accept it, because it was not merely a tax which the consumer would have to pay, but it was one which would cause the wholesale dealer to put up his prices so that the consumer would pay double. He thought even the member for Cook would agree with him, that the tax would not meet the object the Treasurer had in view, and that the Government would do well to accept a compromise, since one was proposed, even at the loss of any dignity which they fancied they might have had in bringing such a tax forward. He (Mr. Macrossan) would agree to even a smaller tax than that proposed by the member for Port Curtis, and even then he was certain the Treasury would be the gainer. If the information he had received from Cooktown was correct, and he had no doubt it was, the Government would neither keep out the Chinese nor increase the revenue.

Mr. WALSH thought the honorable the Colonial Treasurer ought to explain what he meant by saying that the Chinese did not con-

tribute their fair share towards the revenue of the colony. Did the Government mean to say that they were unable to collect from the Chinese the tax which they collected from the European population? If not, what did he mean? If the Chinamen consumed the goods that had paid duty, and were not evading the laws in other ways, the Colonial Treasurer's statement was beyond his (Mr. Walsh's) understanding. If they were guilty of habitual crime in evading the customs or fiscal law, the Colonial Treasurer should say so; either way it was a serious statement. If it was one of those assertions made by clap-trap politicians when they were pandering to popularity, the sooner the system was put an end to the better would it be for the dignity of the House. It was the duty of the Treasurer to see that every person paid his fair share of the revenue, and he (Mr. Walsh) was, therefore, perfectly justified in asking the question.

Mr. KINGSFORD intended to vote for the tax on rice, but would not discuss whether it would answer the purpose for which it was intended. He did not vote, however, for it without expressing a hope that they would never again be asked to vote for a thing which struck at the root of all social and political economy, namely, a tax upon the common necessities of life.

Mr. WALSH wished to press for the explanation he had asked from the Colonial Treasurer, who had either attempted to mislead the House by *ad captandum* remarks, or who knew something of which the House was not in possession, when he said that it was well known the Chinese did not contribute a fair share of the revenue.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, although he was not able to place any statistical information before the committee to fortify the opinion he had expressed, he would repeat that opinion, namely, that neither in Queensland nor the other colonies, to which the Chinese had been attracted by gold digging, had they ever been considered to contribute their proportion to the general revenue of the State; that is to say, they had never been considered to be equally large consumers of dutiable commodities. The Chinese were very frugal in their habits, and there were many things in which they did not contribute individually as much towards the revenue as Europeans.

Mr. WALSH: Then we are to understand that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer of this colony makes a serious statement of that kind on mere hearsay, and that these poor Chinamen are to be taxed because of their frugality. It is a miserable exposition for a Colonial Treasurer to make; it is a miserable reason for this bad class legislation.

Mr. BUZACOTT said that, after the statement of the Colonial Treasurer, the House need not be surprised at anything he might say. On the second reading of the Aliens Bill he showed, from Census returns, and got

abstracts issued from the Treasury showing, that the inhabitants of the Cooktown district contributed more largely towards the revenue than the district which derived its supply from Rockhampton. The Treasurer said there was a general belief throughout Australia that the Chinese did not fairly contribute to the revenue; in opposition to that, he (Mr. Buzacott) had proved from the Treasurer's own statistics, that in the North they did contribute more than the average of Europeans in the southern districts. He (Mr. Buzacott) was perfectly astonished that the honorable the Treasurer should get up and state calmly what his own figures denied.

Mr. PALMER must also add his testimony to the fact that the Colonial Treasurer was wholly mistaken in this matter. When he lived beside the Rocky River diggings in New England, he often noticed that when Chinamen got their money, they treated themselves to more luxuries than the white digger. If the Treasurer had ever been out of Brisbane he would have known that the Chinamen were frugal when they had no money, but at other times would spend money freely, on the very luxuries that were dutiable goods.

Mr. IVORY said he could conceive no argument against the rice stronger than that of the Colonial Treasurer, which was in effect that they were purposely trying to crush down a frugal and industrious population.

Mr. WALSH: Are the Government going to accept the proposition of the honorable member for Port Curtis?

The PREMIER said the proposal of the honorable member for Port Curtis was to take a division, and the sooner the House got to that the better. As to the Chinese, he would remark before sitting down, that the Chinese came to Queensland only for a short time, and that two vessels recently left Cooktown, for China, with between £50,000 and £60,000 worth of gold, owned by Chinamen.

Mr. WALSH: That is not an answer to my question. Will the Government accept the proposal of the honorable member for Port Curtis?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. WALSH said he had known Chinamen residing all their lives in Queensland, bringing up their families there, and living lives that were examples to Europeans. He himself had had Chinese servants in his employ for twenty years, and had afterwards made prosperous citizens in businesses of their own. What the Premier said about the Chinese, applied only to Chinese diggers, and that remark would equally apply to white diggers, who were the most changeable men in the world. They never stayed long in one place, but might be at Charters Towers to-day, and in New Zealand to-morrow almost, if they heard of a better claim there.

Mr. PETTIGREW would again express a hope that the compromise proposed by the honorable member for Port Curtis would be

accepted. He was sorry there had been some disagreement on the other side; but it was always much better that when the leaders on either side had agreed together, a division should be taken as soon as possible.

Mr. PALMER said that he rose for the purpose of saying that it was not his fault that a division had not been taken hours ago, or immediately after he had moved his amendment. He had not interrupted the discussion which had been going on since, but he now rose to say—and it would be perhaps the last occasion on which he should address the House in his present position of leader of the Opposition—that he was willing to go to a division at once. He regretted exceedingly that for the first time there should have been an apparent breach of faith on his part with the Government, but he could assure the committee that it had been no part of his policy, as leader of the Opposition, to offer any factious opposition. If some honorable members on his side had gone too far in their opposition, he was not responsible for them; but he certainly blamed the Government very much indeed, notwithstanding his repeated assertions, that sitting late at night never led to any good result, for having allowed the discussion to be so prolonged. If the Government were inclined to go to a division he was prepared to do so, as he believed that the honorable Treasurer had never made an arrangement with him which he was not prepared to carry out, unless the honorable member was blocked by one of his own side.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he wished to call attention to the circumstances under which the present misapprehension had arisen. At about twelve o'clock that night, the honorable member for Port Curtis submitted the proposition of a definite amendment on the resolution of the Treasurer to the effect that the duty on rice should be reduced from one penny to one half-penny a pound, and whilst submitting that proposition, had assured the Government that he should be prepared to take a division at once upon it. He now wished to call the attention of the Chairman to the fact, that it was the way in which the question had been put from the chair that had led to the position in which they now found themselves; for instead of putting it in a definite way—that the duty on rice be one half-penny a pound, the chairman had put it—that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question. Thus honorable members had been prevented from voting definitely on the question, and any misunderstanding that had since occurred had arisen entirely from the erroneous way in which the question was put. If the question had been put, whether it should be a half-penny, and the amendment was lost, then some other compromise might have been arranged; but that could not have been done as the question was put. That was how the misunderstanding had arisen, and there had been no

desire whatever on the part of honorable members to thwart the honorable leader of the Opposition. They had only to look at the way in which the question had been put to see at once that the Opposition had no alternative but to carry on the discussion.

Mr. WALSH said that when he went to the House that evening, he had no intention whatever of taking part in the discussion, and that it was only on seeing how obnoxious the proposed tax would prove to the country that he had considered it his duty to take an active part in the opposition to it. He had had no part whatever in the arrangement between the honorable Treasurer and the leader of the Opposition, and he thoroughly disclaimed having broken faith with any party. He had entered into no compact with either side of the committee that would lead to any division tending to bring such a disastrous result and such disgrace upon the colony as would be involved by the imposition of that tax.

Mr. PALMER said that the explanation of the honorable member for the Warrego was entirely uncalled for, as he had never accused the honorable member of breaking any agreement, inasmuch as no agreement had been made between them. As to an agreement between himself and the honorable Treasurer, there never was any, but he had merely made a proposition, and had expressed his willingness to go to a division at once upon it, so that the Opposition might endeavor to show to the country that they were desirous of going on with the public business. As he had already stated, he entirely disapproved of the tax; but as all politics were a series of compromises, he had, in order to bring matters to an end, and to show the country that they were not a factious Opposition, submitted his amendment to the committee. At the same time, he had been very careful to guard himself from being committed to any Bill that would be brought in; he had carefully guarded himself against supporting even the duty of a half-penny if it came into a Bill, and what all the wrangling in the committee had been about since he submitted his amendment, he could not say. If honorable members on his side of the committee, who had hitherto—with the exception of the honorable member for the Warrego, who had never voted for the leader of the Opposition—could not allow the leader of the Opposition to propose an arrangement of that sort, why the sooner that leader abnegated his position the better. He would repeat that they had simply got into the present trouble through the arrogance and want of brain of the honorable member at the head of the Government. He had, over and over again, set his face against legislating late at night, for he had watched late legislation in the other colonies, and had come to the conclusion that after a certain hour in the evening it was not legislation but only a wordy warfare, except on certain occa-

sions. He thought the proceedings of that night confirmed his opinion. If it not been for the promise he had given to the honorable Treasurer, he should have been home hours ago; but instead of his proposition being carried out, there had been a perfect Babel for some hours. He had never been a factious obstructionist and never would be. If a majority of the members sent to that House beat him in fair fight, he should always give in; but he would fight first. As long as he was leader of a party he would lead, and when he could not lead he would resign the position of leader very quickly.

Mr. BUZACOTT said that as a member of that House, who had always followed the respected leader of the Opposition, he extremely regretted the misunderstanding which had occurred that night. He was sure that there was no honorable member on that side, who had intentionally set the honorable gentleman at defiance, or who would not make every effort to support any reasonable request of the honorable gentleman; and he was sure the honorable gentleman would not make any other but a reasonable request. How the whole affair had occurred still remained to be explained. He only knew that at an early hour of the evening there was a distinct understanding that the Opposition should resist the duty to the utmost. Had he understood, however, that the honorable member for Port Curtis had arrived at any understanding with the honorable Treasurer, he should most certainly have acceded to it.

Mr. STEVENSON said that being one of those who had spoken since the amendment of the honorable member for Port Curtis had been moved, he might mention that when that amendment was moved, he was under the impression that a compromise had been arranged, and he was quite prepared to follow the leader of the Opposition, and support the proposition of one half-penny instead of one penny; but when the honorable Treasurer got up and would have nothing to do with the compromise, he understood that they were in the position they originally occupied, and were bound to resist in every way the imposition of the duty.

Mr. IVORY said he was in the same boat as the honorable member for Clermont, although, possibly, he had been a greater sinner on the present occasion. He had been under the impression, until a very late hour, that there had been a compromise offered to the honorable Treasurer, and that it having been refused by him, the duty should be opposed until the very last moment. He was very sorry that the affair should have caused any annoyance to the honorable leader of the Opposition, and, at the same time, he could assure honorable members opposite that if they thought there had been any split in the ranks of the Opposition, they were very much mistaken indeed.

The CHAIRMAN said that the honorable member for Port Curtis had most distinctly stated that he was willing to go to a division on the amendment he had proposed.

Mr. WALSH said that he thought the Chairman of Committees was not justified in giving a tone to any debate by making such remarks. He said that with all due deference to the honorable gentleman, but such remarks might call for some comment.

Mr. PALMER said that the Chairman had not gone far enough in his explanation, as the honorable gentleman should have stated that he heard him say that his proposition of that night should not bind him to any future action.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that he still thought that the whole misunderstanding had been caused by the way in which the question had been put from the chair.

The question was put—That the duty payable on rice shall be one half-penny per pound, and the committee divided as follows:—

AYES, 12.—Messrs. Palmer, McIlwraith, Thompson, Graham, Buzacott, Macrossan, Ivory, Haly, Morehead, Pettigrew, W. Scott, and Stevenson.

NOES, 20.—Messrs. G. Thorn, Dickson, Stewart, Griffith, Douglas, Fraser, Foote, Fryar, Bailey, Tyrel, Groom, J. Thorn, Murphy, Edmondstone, Johnson, Low, Kingsford, McLean, Beattie, and Peehey.

The question—That the duty on rice be one penny per pound was put, and the committee divided as follows:—

AYES, 19.—Messrs. G. Thorn, Griffith, Dickson, Douglas, Stewart, Peehey, Foote, Kingsford, Edmondstone, Low, Fraser, McLean, Johnston, Groom, Murphy, Tyrel, J. Thorn, Fryar, and Beattie.

NOES, 12.—Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, McIlwraith, Stevenson, W. Scott, Morehead, Macrossan, Haly, Ivory, Walsh, Buzacott, and Graham.

Mr. PETTIGREW said the House had put a tax on rice to the extent of fifty per cent. more than what he called the liberal members were inclined to vote.

An HONORABLE MEMBER: You voted for it.

Mr. PETTIGREW said he had been caught in a trap, and the next time he was caught that way they could tell him about it. He was in conversation with the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and did not notice that the bell was ordered to be rung, and he expected honorable members on the other side to walk over to that side. He was not at all likely, after having spoken so strongly in favor of a half-penny per pound, to knowingly vote for a penny. He considered this was simply a tax for the benefit of the lawyers, and he believed it came from the honorable the Attorney-General, who was always bringing forward something for the lawyers—always looking after number one;—it was simply for the lawyers.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER on the Ministerial side of the House: You are quite wrong.

Mr. PETTIGREW said well, perhaps it was an auctioneer's Bill. He knew in Ipswich the auctioneers did a great deal of conveyancing, and other matters of that kind, and no doubt they did in Brisbane, too. He thought the question required further consideration; it was unreasonable to ask honorable members to discuss it at that time of the morning; and he moved—

That the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

If the honorable member for Bremer assured him this would be for the benefit of the farmers of the colony, he would be prepared to support it; but if it were merely for the benefit of squatters, to relieve them, and enable them to get a clean release at a very low figure, he should not support it.

Mr. WALSH protested again against any Ministry, no matter what power they possessed, introducing a question of that kind, affecting the finances of the colony, at five o'clock in the morning. He did not believe, in the annals of parliamentary government, such a thing had ever been attempted before. It was perfectly atrocious; it was a gross innovation of parliamentary practice; and he feared there was some sinister object in it, when it was brought forward at that time. He loudly protested against such a course of proceedings.

Mr. PETTIGREW said, with the consent of the House, he would withdraw his motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

The resolution was then put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Chairman left the chair, reported that the committee had come to resolutions, and obtained leave to sit again.

The COLONIAL TREASURER then moved, without previous notice—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of the reporting of Resolutions from the Committee of Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed in such committee.

Mr. THOMPSON said this was a hurried move which he did not understand, and he wanted some explanation of it. It could only be done by consent of the House.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was only a formal motion for the purpose of enabling the Government to introduce some Bills, so that they could be read a second time next week.

Mr. WALSH said it was most extraordinary and quite unprecedented to endeavor to suspend the Standing Orders at five o'clock in the morning, when some honorable members had gone away, some were asleep, and all were tired. If that were parliamentary government the sooner they got rid of it the better, and became that of a rude majority, determined to support the Government, guided by no parliamentary practice or con-

stitutional rule, but who had the sway and intended to maintain it. Honorable members opposite were setting an example which would recoil upon themselves. It was an example of hurried legislation, and it was time that somebody took up a position not only of protesting against it, but of doing so in the strongest language possible, as he now protested against it.

Mr. PALMER said at that hour of the morning it was perfectly monstrous to attempt to pass this through the House. He had shown every inclination to help the Government so far as he had promised, but he said it was absolutely monstrous to attempt to suspend the Standing Orders at five o'clock in the morning. If it had been brought on about eleven o'clock last night he should have supported them, but it was absurd to propose it now. Were the members of the Opposition going to support this innovation on the privileges of the House, and suspend the Standing Orders simply to get a Government Bill advanced one stage? He should oppose it to the last, and he did not think the question could be put after objection had been raised.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said there must be some misunderstanding about the matter. The honorable member for Port Curtis must know that resolutions of a Committee of Ways and Means could not be reported on the same day as they were agreed to.

Mr. PALMER: There is no necessity for it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he would call the honorable member's attention to that.

Mr. PALMER: I forget nothing.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said then there was no necessity to remind the honorable member of it. As to this being an innovation, he could refer to several instances where there had been an alteration of the tariff, in which not only was the report received from the committee, but Bills were passed through all their stages in one day. Here it was simply the report from the committee that was asked to be reported, so that the question might be considered next week instead of the week after next, because if the report were not received until Tuesday, the Bill could not be introduced till then; and whatever happened, it could not go to the Council next week, and the result would be that the debate would be put off until the week after next. Whatever delay there had been in the early part of the night had not been the fault of the Government.

The SPEAKER: The consent of fourteen members is required to the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Mr. PALMER: Without notice?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. PALMER: As a new Speaker I should like to support you; but I think you had better consider that ruling.

The SPEAKER: No notice need be given for the suspension of the Standing Orders. The correct way to put the question is, I

believe, this:—Is it the pleasure of the House that this question be put for the suspension of the Standing Orders without notice?

Mr. WALSH said, rising to the point of order, he thought the honorable the Speaker was now right. He thought the question was not discovered by division, but by the Speaker glancing over the House and seeing if there was the consent of fourteen members.

The SPEAKER: I shall put the question in this way:—Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders be put without notice?

The SPEAKER having declared the voices to be in favor of the "Ayes," a division was called for, with the following result:—

Ayes, 17.

Messrs. G. Thorn, Dickson, Griffith, Douglas, Stewart, Johnston, Fraser, Fryar, Low, Tyrel, Groom, Morgan, McLean, Pechey, Edmondstone, Bailey, and Foote.

Noes, 6.

Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, Haly, Graham, Walsh, and Stevenson.

The division showing that, as required by Standing Order No. 286, at least fourteen members consented to the motion being made without notice, the original question was then put and passed.

The question for the suspension of the the Standing Orders was then put, when

Mr. PALMER said he wished to know whether the motion was to apply to the whole of the session, as it appeared from the wording of the motion that it would. He thought it should be amended by the insertion of the words "this day."

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would move that the motion be amended by the insertion of the words "for this sitting," after the word "suspended."

Mr. WALSH said he wished to preserve the forms of the House, but there was evidently an idea on the part of the Government to go outside of them. Nothing could be worse than permitting such a resolution to pass, for where would it end? It would lead to a subsequent motion, and honorable members would find before separating that they would be asked to pass a whole Act of Parliament; that was not legislation at all. He would ask the honorable Premier, whether that was to be the last resolution? or the honorable Treasurer, whether the present motion was to be a cessation of the work for that evening?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. WALSH said he believed that had been the object of the whole evening, and he had some inkling of what would take place. He protested against such a proceeding, and trusted that a record would be made of the manner in which business was carried on under the present *regime*. He was not astonished at the honorable the Premier, for the present proceeding was part of that honorable gentleman's system, but he was surprised at the honorable Minister for Lands sitting down so quietly, and not rising as he

(Mr. Walsh) had done to protest against such a practice.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the object of the action taken by the Government was merely to place the resolutions adopted by the committee in a substantial form, so as to have them introduced to the House and printed. He believed that the honorable member for Port Curtis had been aware of such an intention at an earlier hour of the night, but owing to the misunderstanding which had taken place between honorable members opposite a delay had arisen, the consequences of which should not be visited on the Government. He thought the honorable member for Port Curtis should not object to the Government doing now what he would have permitted at an earlier part of the evening.

Mr. PALMER said that whilst admitting much of what the honorable member had said, he must repeat that all the delay had been caused by the Premier; for if that honorable member had allowed the honorable Colonial Treasurer to manage the conduct of his own business, all would have been finished long ago. But, as the old adage said,

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread;"

and the honorable Premier had interfered and prevented the business being finished. If that honorable member would think for only one moment that his brain did not contain the whole of the brains of the colony, the business of the country would go on much better. If the honorable gentleman would only leave to the Ministers of the different departments the conduct of their own business—if he would only, as a late Premier said, despise a man under him who could not take charge of his own department, things would go on a great deal more satisfactorily, and more profitably for the country.

The PREMIER said, in explanation, that he had not interfered with the business of the Treasurer that evening. All the bellowing of the honorable member for Port Curtis would not prevent him from doing his duty to the country, and that honorable member and other honorable members opposite, would see that the Government understood their business, and would do it properly. He should regret very much seeing the honorable member for Port Curtis ever occupying his position as Premier of that House.

Mr. STEVENSON said he agreed with the honorable gentleman, for he should regret very much indeed that the honorable member for Port Curtis should ever take up such a position as that of the present Premier.

The question was put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the resolutions of the committee be now adopted by the House.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That Bills be brought in founded on the resolutions.

Mr. WALSH said he rose to protest against a Bill being brought in at five o'clock in the morning. Such a proceeding was utterly new to him; it was a bad precedent and would establish a most dangerous practice. He was quite sure that honorable members, tired as they were, were unable to discover the object of the Government in introducing their Bills in such an extraordinary way.

The question was put, and the House divided with the following result:—

AYES, 17.

Messrs. G. Thorn, Dickson, Griffith, Douglas, Stewart, Johnston, Morgan, Edmondstone, Peehey, McLean, Groom, Tyrel, Bailey, Foote, Low, Fryar, and Fraser.

NOES, 7.

Messrs. Palmer, Walsh, Stevenson, Haly, Graham, Pettigrew, and Thompson.

CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, this Bill was read a first time, and the second reading of it made an Order of the Day for Tuesday, 15th August.

STAMP DUTIES AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, a Bill to amend the Stamp Duties Act of 1866 was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday, 15th August.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said that as there was so little private business on the paper, he would move that the House adjourn until the following Tuesday.

Mr. WALSH rose to a point of order. He said it had always been the practice of that House to give notice of such a motion, and he thought that they should not depart from that practice on the present occasion. Notice of such a motion should have been given at an earlier hour of the night. He objected, however, to the adjournment, as he had a very important motion on the paper, which had been already postponed, and he was desirous to bring it forward; at the same time, he was not surprised at the honorable Premier wishing to get rid of it.

Mr. PALMER said there was no doubt that such a motion could not be put without the consent of the House, but it was usual, after the leader of the Opposition had been consulted, and had not objected to it, for the House to allow such a motion to be put. As there was not the slightest probability of there being a House at a later hour that day, or even on the next day, there was nothing to be gained by opposing the adjournment.

The SPEAKER said that the motion was undoubtedly irregular, but that similar motions had been put by the consent of the House. He would suggest, as a means of getting rid of the difficulty, that the Premier should move the adjournment in the ordinary way,

and leave it to some honorable member to move an amendment.

Mr. WALSH said that he had not the slightest doubt that if there was the usual adjournment, there would be a quorum to discuss his important resolution.

The PREMIER moved—

That the House do now adjourn.

After a slight discussion,

Mr. PALMER said there would be no House again that day, for it was now nearly six o'clock in the morning, and he would, as an amendment, move—

That this House do now adjourn till Tuesday next.

Mr. PETTIGREW seconded the amendment.

Amendment carried.