

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

MONDAY, 16 OCTOBER 1876

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this Legislature any provision giving such exclusive power to the Legislative Assembly.

"M. C. O'CONNELL,
"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber,
"Brisbane, 12th October, 1876."

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved,—
That the Bill be laid aside.

The House divided.

Mr. WALSH (the House being in division) said before the honorable the Speaker gave the result of the division, he should like to point out that this was a most irregular course which the Government were pursuing—the most irregular he had ever seen under the circumstances. When the two Houses could not agree, it was much the best that they should meet in consultation (or whatever other term it might be called.) The Government were now doing the most unprecedented, most arbitrary, and insulting thing he had ever known done by the House towards the other chamber, and it was equally insulting to the House, the members of which, to say the least, should have had some notice of the message, and the manner in which the Government intended to act upon it. He protested against the division being recorded; it was their duty to try, by conference with the other House, to come to an amicable arrangement. He protested as a matter of order.

The SPEAKER: This is not a point of order. According to the Standing Orders this motion may be put.

Mr. WALSH: Which Standing Order?

The SPEAKER: I refer to the 246th Standing Order, which says, that—

"When a Bill shall be returned from the Legislative Council with amendments, such amendments shall be considered in Committee of the Whole House, and agreed to, or agreed to with amendments, or disagreed to, or the further consideration thereof put off for three or six months, or the Bill ordered to be laid aside."

The motion is in accordance with the latter practice, and I therefore announce, Ayes, 13, Noes, 13. The numbers being equal, it remains for me to give my casting vote. As this is the first case I have had of the kind since I have occupied this chair, I shall take upon myself to claim for myself and all future Speakers, that the Speaker has the same right as any other member of Parliament to give his vote according to the merits of a case. But it has of late years been the custom for the Speaker, while determined to be thoroughly impartial, to give his casting vote (unless at the final stages of the Bill) so that the matter may be further discussed; but as this Bill has passed through its various stages in this chamber, and has not to be discussed here any more, I shall give my vote with the ayes, and I do it because the amendment proposed by the Legislative Council on the Stamp Duties Act Amendment Bill is clearly an

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 16 October, 1876.

Stamp Duties Act Amendment Bill.—Navigation Bill.—
Devastation by Marsupials.—Municipal Endowments
Bill.—Supply.

STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER reported the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"MR. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council having taken into consideration the message from the Legislative Assembly, No. 2, of 11th October instant,—

"Insist upon their Amendment, because this House fails to discover in the Act constituting

invasion of the undoubted rights and privileges of this chamber. I declare the question, therefore, to be resolved in the affirmative.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

NAVIGATION BILL.

The SPEAKER reported the following message from the Legislative Council:—

“MR. SPEAKER,

“The Legislative Council having taken into consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly, No. 1, of the 11th October, 1876,—

“Insist on their amendment in clause 115, because coal is in most cases used as a substitute for ordinary ballast; and further, because the reason assigned by the Legislative Assembly is untenable, the Legislative Council having full power, under ‘*The Constitution Act of 1867*,’ to vary the provisions of any Bill that may be submitted to them for their consideration.

“Insist on their amendment in clause 166, because it is the custom for masters of vessels to pay the expense of conveying powder to the magazine in accordance with the terms of their bills of lading, and that the amendment is no innovation upon the existing trade of the colony.

“And do not insist on their amendment in clause 176.

“M. C. O’CONNELL,
“President.

“Legislative Council Chamber,
“Brisbane, 12th October, 1876.”

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the Navigation Bill be laid aside.

He did so because he desired to do all he could to preserve the privileges of the chamber with respect to all measures connected with money matters. He might inform honorable members that it was his intention to introduce a Bill that would incorporate some of the amendments of the Legislative Council immediately after the Bill had been laid aside. Unless this course were adopted, a measure which was of real importance to the country would be lost this session. It was an excellent Bill; it dealt with a description of legislation that had long been required, and it would be a great loss to the community if the Bill should be thrown out merely because the two branches of the Legislature stood upon their respective dignities. The case would be met if the Bill were now laid aside, and a new Bill introduced in which some of the amendments of the Legislative Council were included. If time permitted, he would be willing to adopt the course pointed out by the honorable member for Warrego, namely, to request a conference; but the honorable member himself must see that if a conference were moved for, a considerable portion of valuable time would be lost before any decision was arrived at. Keeping in view the desirableness of having a Bill that would be accepted by both branches of the Legislature, he hoped the House would agree with him that the simplest thing to do would be to lay the Bill aside.

Mr. WALSH hoped the House would pause before doing what was proposed. The course suggested might make certain honorable members popular before the country, but it would be injurious to legislation. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer was now prepared to bring in a short Bill to include the valuable amendments drawn up by the Legislative Council, and—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I did not say I would bring in a short Bill: it will be substantially the same Bill as before, with the amendments added.

Mr. WALSH said it might perhaps be possible to accept the valuable amendments and reject all the rest, but it would have been wiser if the Government in the first instance had brought in a Bill containing these sound amendments of the Legislative Council. Had they done so, the present difficulty would have been avoided, and time would have been saved. He very much doubted whether it was within the power of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer to introduce another Bill, if the original measure were laid aside. The honorable gentleman did not seem to have considered this possibility. If the Bill were laid aside it was rejected by the House, and a Bill of the same tenure could not be introduced again this session. At any rate, on behalf of good legislation, and from a desire to preserve the good feeling which ought to exist between the two branches of the Legislature, he must urge that the principle which the Government were initiating, and which would produce most injurious effects, ought to be deprecated by every member in the House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the Colonial Treasurer’s proposition was in strict accordance with parliamentary practice. “May,” page 306, last edition, laid down:—

“A proceeding somewhat similar may arise when a Bill is returned from the Lords to the Commons with amendments which the latter cannot, consistently with their own privileges, entertain. In that case the proper course, if the Commons be willing to adopt the amendments, is to order the Bill to be laid aside, and another to be brought in.”

By a majority in committee, the House had already adopted one of the amendments, and the others were of such little consequence, that there was no danger of the two Houses falling out about them. So far from this being an irregular course, they might have done what was now proposed directly the amendments came down from the other House. “Cushing” said a Bill might be laid aside at once:—

“This course is also adopted when a Bill from one House is passed in the other with amendments, which the former cannot entertain, consistently with its own privileges, as coming from the latter, but to which it has no other objection. In such a case, the House to which the Bill is sent, orders it to be laid aside, and another, embodying the amendments, to be prepared and

brought in, which is proceeded with and passed as an original Bill of the latter House. A Bill may be thus laid aside immediately upon its being introduced, or after it has been proceeded upon, and at any stage, or in any interval of its progress."

There was a case in point in the House of Commons Journals, 91. It appeared that:—

"The House proceeded to take into consideration the amendments made by the Lords to the Bill intituled '*An Act for consolidating and amending the Laws relating to the Presentment of Public Money by Grand Juries in Ireland.*'"

Here was an instance relating to the principle of raising money; and what followed after the message?

"Ordered, that the Bill be laid aside.

"Ordered, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the presentment of public money, &c."

The practice, therefore, appeared to be to order the Bill to be laid aside at once, and to follow this by an immediate order for leave to bring in another Bill for the same purpose. They had already considered in Committee of the Whole House the desirableness of introducing such a Bill, and there was no necessity to go through that form again.

Mr. WALSH contended that the cases quoted were rare exceptions to the general practice.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said they were cited in "May" as being the ordinary practice, and it was perfectly regular. There were two courses open. Every member of the House wanted to see the Bill passed, and one way was to adopt the course now suggested—lay the Bill aside, and bring in a fresh one. The other way was to have a conference between both Houses, in which case either themselves or the Legislative Council must give up what they conceived to be a right and a privilege. To his thinking, a conference was not the way out of the fix; the other course was the way, especially when they remembered that the House had already affirmed the principles of the Bill. If the amendments themselves could be amended, it might answer, but this could not be done. He wished to call the attention of the House to the reasons given by the Assembly for rejecting the amendments. It was because it varied the duty payable to the Consolidated Revenue.

"This House is of opinion that in practice the power of imposing, varying, or repealing taxes should be maintained as the exclusive privilege of that House which is elected by the people."

And the message just read to the House stated that the Council insisted on their amendment in clause 115, because the reason assigned by the Legislative Council was untenable.

Mr. PALMER said what was proposed seemed to be a very extraordinary way of getting out of the difficulty with the other House. Instead of adhering to their reasons, and maintaining that the Legislative Council

had no right to interfere with anything affecting the revenue, it was proposed to escape from the dilemma through a side door. When, then, was the question to be settled? Were they to go on in this way for ever—the Legislative Assembly maintaining that the Legislative Council had not the right of interfering in money bills, and the Legislative Council maintaining that they had? It would have been more reasonable if the Government had given honorable members some notice of the course they intended to pursue. Such a thing had never happened in the House to his knowledge, and members might have been allowed a little time to look up authorities, and be prepared to decide the question at issue. But the House had been taken by surprise, and he congratulated the Ministry upon showing the Legislative Council that they could legislate for the colony in any way they liked. If the Council did not by this action see that it was within their power to have their own way, they were much simpler people than he took them to be. They had only to introduce amendments to have any Bill laid aside in order to have their amendments included. This was the uncertain course the Government had followed, and he objected to it. He would rather the House made a firm stand now, and determined to abide by their principles, so that it might be settled once for all whether the Upper House had any right to interfere in any way with Money Bills. That was his idea of what ought to be done, and that would be a much more honorable and straightforward course than what was now proposed. But, he repeated, the principal objection he had was to the moving of such a motion without the slightest notice of the intention being given to honorable members. Why were they not informed in the first instance what the Government intended to do with the Stamp Duties Act Amendment Bill? If the honorable member for the Bremer had not called for a division, the House would have known nothing about it. Did the Government intend to take the same course with this Bill as with the other?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. PALMER said he expected that answer, and he had no hesitation in saying that the reason was that it referred to liens on wool. This was a specimen of the even-handed justice which the Ministry intended to mete out to the colony! The Stamp Duties Bill, because the amendment of the Upper House referred to liens on wool, was to be thrown aside and taken no more notice of; but the Navigation Bill, in which the Government or their constituents were somewhat interested, was to be converted into a new Bill. He wished the House and the country to take particular notice of the different methods of proceeding with the two Bills. One Bill was to be thrown aside because it contained an amendment in favor of the wool-grower, and the

other was to be reintroduced because it was in favor of the coal interest. He hoped the country would not forget this favoritism. He himself should not forget it, although he had no interest in liens on wool; but the difference was so marked that he was sure that the country at large would notice it; a matter in which the Government were interested was to be made the subject of a new Bill, and the House was to be put to the trouble at this period of the session, of passing a Bill of that length through committee. He, however, did not think there was the slightest chance of the Bill passing through committee. The Government might thank the Opposition for passing that Bill through committee. The Opposition made a House for them on the Friday when the Bill was passed through, but he did not believe they would be likely to do it again. He gave the Government fair warning of this, for the Bills were of equal importance to the country, and ought to receive the same treatment.

MR. THOMPSON said he thought the Government were very much to blame in not giving notice of their intention to set aside the last Bill. He admitted that, according to practice, they were justified when the matter came forward, in moving that the Bill be laid aside, and that, if this had been done, there would have been no expression of opinion about it. But the conduct of the Government, with respect to the last Bill, was, if the expression was not unparliamentary, shabby, and what the motive was he did not exactly understand. If the Navigation Bill were allowed to go in this way, he did not believe they would get another this session. There was too substantial a disagreement between the Assembly and the Upper House, for it was one of their rules to refuse to entertain the same thing again during a session. If the matter was merely formal they would entertain it again, but if it was a matter of substance, like this Navigation Bill, they would not do so.

MR. J. SCOTT said the House in a case of this description must be bound by its Standing Orders, and Standing Order 56 distinctly declared that no question or amendment should be proposed which was the same in substance as any question which, during the same session, had been resolved in the affirmative or negative. No practice laid down by "May" or any other authority could get over that, and he maintained that the Bill, if laid aside, could not be brought in again.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it was neither the wish nor intention of the Government, when they proposed this form of procedure, in any way to steal a march upon honorable gentlemen opposite. He himself was somewhat taken by surprise, he confessed; it was a matter that had hardly been discussed at all, and he thought possibly it was a matter of serious moment. The practice quoted by the honorable the Attorney-General was very important, and he

was certain there was no member of the Government who wished to precipitate matters. All they were desirous to do was to secure legislation this session, and there was no wish to throw any impediment in the way of the House coming to a mature decision upon the subject. It would, perhaps, be well if the motion were postponed, so that the subject might be thoroughly well looked into. For himself, he should prefer further consideration of the matter postponed till to-morrow.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I will withdraw the motion if the House permits, and bring it forward for consideration to-morrow.

MR. PALMER: No, no.

Question put—That the Bill be laid aside.

The House divided with the following result:—

AYES, 14.

Messrs. Griffith, G. Thorn, Dickson, Douglas, Stewart, Morgan, Edmondstone, McLean, Fraser, McIlwraith, MacDonald, Beattie, J. Thorn, and Fryar.

NOES, 14.

Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, Amhurst, Irony, J. Scott, O'Sullivan, De Satgé, Stevenson, Rutledge, Bailey, Macrossan, Bell, Graham, and W. Scott.

The SPEAKER: As before, I give my casting vote with the "Ayes" and declare the question resolved in the affirmative.

DEVASTATION BY MARSUPIALS.

MR. DE SATGÉ said he wished to move the adjournment of the House, not with the view of prolonging an already lingering session, but to draw the attention of the Government and the country generally to the devastation of a district by an invasion of marsupials—a district second only to the Darling Downs. Within the last few months, the evil had reached to such a length that he believed it required, like all cases where great and sudden calamities visited a particular class of people, the immediate attention of the Government. By the permission of the House, he would read an extract from a letter which he had just received from a large settler—one of the largest in Queensland—who had settled in the Peak Downs district. This gentleman wrote:—

"Of course you will have heard of this frightful invasion of marsupials on the Peak Downs country. The first station they attacked was completely denuded of grass, the owners having to remove the whole of their stock. They next attacked my place, moving in a westerly direction. They seem to have cleared out of their native habitations in the big scrubs, and then taken to the Downs. I have sent my manager over one hundred greyhounds and kangaroo dogs, and also a lot of guns and ammunition. He is now putting round the scrubs a six feet high close-stake fence, supported by an ordinary two-wire fence. This will be expensive, but what is even worse, it will be tedious to erect. Meanwhile the dogs and guns will be operating, and may to some extent be effective in frightening the enemy."

The means described had been tried within the last month, but had proved ineffectual in stopping these pests from overrunning as fair a district as there was in Queensland. It seemed that the only steps that could be taken to stave off absolute ruin from formerly wealthy settlers in this district was to erect a most costly description of fence, which, if they surrounded their runs, would stand them in 3s. an acre. That was the sole alternative for this once prosperous class in a district which was now subject to a new Act that would further harass them, and condemn them to an immediate purchase of land which in the very face of it was becoming absolutely worthless. The evil was not only making this district a wild waste, for, in addition to the stations mentioned in the letter he had read to the House, there were other stations which were indirectly suffering. He knew of one run carrying 120,000 sheep, 70,000 of which were travelling in various directions, inflicting by their presence a considerable amount of inconvenience and almost disaster on various stations. The general effect of the devastation was the most serious evil to this class of leaseholders that they had ever had to deal with in the colony up to the present time. The condition under which the Peak Downs were originally taken up was that there was sufficient feed for the marsupials in their own native scrubs. These Downs on three sides were surrounded by some 70 miles of brigalow scrub. It was a magnificent volcanic piece of country, equal in appearance to the Darling Downs, and promising to be fit eventually for the best agricultural purposes. This country was now invaded by marsupials to that extent that they had ruined, and were ruining, some of the best settlers the colony had. Some of them had spent £50,000 in hard cash in improving their runs, which they now had to desert, knowing well that the measure before the House would complete their ruin. There were some motives, such as the depreciation of the interests of these leaseholders, that would have made him very guarded in introducing this subject before the House, because it was not possible to draw public attention to a disaster of this kind without lessening the value of the securities held by this numerous, and up to the present time, most prosperous class of settler; but, he considered, the matter was one which needed the attention of the Government; it was a class of lessees whom they were bound to protect. The evil was intensified by the effect it had upon the transit of goods into the interior of the colony. The matter had come to this, that bullock teams were utterly unable to travel. A person travelling from Rockhampton to the terminus of the railway to the Barcoo, was compelled to carry all the feed for his horses, for the kangaroos and wallabies had swept away every vestige of vegetation from the face of the country. During recent trip to the North, settlers had ex-

plained to him the position of affairs, and there could be no mistake that the condition of the country was precisely what he had described it to be; it was a bare waste from which bullock teams were being driven, and the cost of carriage was doubled because the horses had to be laden with their own feed. The matter was worthy, not only of discussion in the House, but of some immediate and energetic movement on the part of the Government. It was, to a certain extent, the same as the starvation, or visitation by pestilence of individuals, which would be met by prompt measures, on the part of the Government, applied to the district which had been smitten. The matter was bad enough in itself, but it was even more serious in face of the legislation that was about to take place, under which the settlers, already taxed by costly and permanent improvements, were offered, as a relief, a further choice of either having their remaining tenure completely swept away, or purchasing the land at auction under the Railway Reserves Bill. The sooner the country knew what was happening to this once fair district, which was second only to the Darling Downs, the better. He trusted the matter would at once meet with the serious attention of the Government, and that it would be discussed in the feeling that something ought to be done for this large and unfortunate class of settlers. He might add, that to fence with wallaby fences required time, and, before the work was done, it would be necessary to have hordes of kangaroo dogs, and pay men for shooting the marsupials. He had known as much as a shilling a-head offered for kangaroos, and he knew one station where they had paid for 30,000 head of kangaroos killed. If the owners of this station had not been men of capital, and determined to develop the country they had settled upon, they would have long ago had to abandon every inch of the Peak Downs country. He hoped the matter would be dealt with by the Government in a serious manner.

Mr. J. SCOTT said he himself had received letters from the Peak Downs district, in which similar complaints were made to those indicated by the honorable member for Normanby. His letters stated that for thirty or forty miles along the road everything was being destroyed. The difficulty he saw was where to find the remedy. He wished the honorable gentleman who had moved the adjournment of the House had suggested some feasible mode of dealing with the question, but it appeared to him (Mr. Scott) to be a very difficult thing to deal with. What could the Government do? The evil no doubt had assumed vast proportions, but it was not easy to see what was to be done.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was perfectly aware that the pest referred to by the honorable member for Normanby was a very serious one indeed, but hoped it was not quite so serious as it had been described.

Nevertheless, he freely admitted it was a very important matter, demanding—he would not say the attention of the Government, because if the Government could do any good, it would be the duty of the Government to have recourse to the best means to remedy it, but—the attention of the House and the public. He had failed to see from anything that had fallen from the honorable gentleman how the matter could be taken up by the Government unless the House was prepared to legislate on the matter. It was just possible that by some united action a certain amount of check might be placed upon the inroad of these destructive animals. He knew that the sheep inspector—Mr. Gordon—held that it would be possible to apply a similar system of legislation to that adopted in Tasmania with respect to rabbits. The difficulty, however, was greater with kangaroos in Queensland than with rabbits in Tasmania, and the number of animals had, he was well aware, attained serious dimensions. The only way he had heard of that was likely to cope successfully with the evil was the erection of a paling fence, and the shutting in of the protected country. Of course, it would be a matter of private enterprise. It was true that the erection of such fences required the expenditure of considerable sums of money; but in many instances they had been erected, and he believed the result had been most beneficial. Coming nearer home than the Peak Downs, they were aware that, in the Western districts, in the vicinity of Dalby, the inroads of those animals were almost equally serious, and they were being met, in some cases at any rate, by the adoption of the remedy he had referred to; and if the honorable gentleman would take the matter up and have it investigated more thoroughly, he thought he would be doing a great deal of good. It was a matter which more naturally fell under his (the Secretary for Lands') department than any other, and he should certainly be disposed to take the advice of Mr. Gordon on it. He had referred to this subject during the discussion on the motion which was brought forward by the honorable member for Leichhardt, as being one of the objects which the scientific and practical board with which that honorable gentleman was connected might take in hand, and he still hoped they might be induced to do so. He was satisfied the honorable member for Normanby had done good service in calling attention to it, and if it resulted in anything like united action among settlers to provide a remedy for this evil, the country would be considerably benefited. If they were unable to unite in such a way without legislative action, he was sure, if they applied to the House, the House would endeavor to provide a remedy. He was inclined to think the House had not, at present, sufficient data to legislate on the subject; and if any way could be pointed out by which settlers could be induced to unite

to keep down these pests, that measure ought to be adopted. He was happy to hear the honorable gentleman bear testimony to the admirable character of the country on the Peak Downs, and describing it as being suitable for occupation by human beings; but he thought the question of railway reserves was quite distinct from that of marsupials. The invasion of marsupials was a very serious matter, and he was sure the House would be very happy to do what it could to provide against that increasing pest, if a remedy could be pointed out. Public opinion had not crystallised in any form at present to show how it could be done, and if the honorable gentleman would take some action, and move for a Select Committee to investigate the subject, it should certainly have his support.

Mr. STEVENSON said he could assure the honorable gentleman who had just sat down, that this matter was quite as serious as the honorable member for Normanby had pointed out. There was no doubt that the Peak Downs, at the present time, was more like a desert than anything else, and it was well known amongst those who had any knowledge of that country, that, in one instance, when £40,000 had been paid for a station a short time ago, that station had been entirely deserted; there was not a single sheep on it; there was not a bite of grass left for them, and they had had to be removed to another station altogether, and he believed other stations would drift to the same end. He believed it was not the Peak Downs only that was suffering in this way, as the honorable members for Normanby and Springsure had pointed out, but also teamsters between Dingo and the Barcoo, who had to carry food for their cattle; and, in consequence of that, he knew that at the present moment, carriage could not be obtained in Rockhampton at £40 a-ton. With regard to the remedy proposed by the honorable the Minister for Lands this evening—to fence out the kangaroo—he thought it was rather hard lines to ask holders of runs to spend money for that purpose when their tenure was about to be taken from them. He thought it would be well if the Government thought about this matter before they entirely ruined the people on the Peak Downs, by taking their runs to make a railway in another district altogether—a railway that would not benefit the Peak Downs people in the slightest. Their tenure was being ruined entirely by the action of the Government at the present time in taking that course, and he thought something should be done to provide a remedy to prevent them from being entirely ruined in that way.

Mr. MORGAN said he had heard a good many complaints against the present Government, but the idea that they had joined with the marsupials for the purpose of destroying the graziers of the colony was quite a new view of the matter; he understood that to be the argument of the honorable gentleman

who had just spoken. He (Mr. Morgan) quite agreed with the honorable member for Normanby that the marsupial plague was one that ought to be put a stop to as soon as possible; but how could they legislate to remedy the evil, he should like to know? He thought honorable members on both sides of the House would recollect, that a few years ago it became the general fashion to poison native dogs and fence in runs to economise labor, and the result of those evil doings was now coming back upon those who adopted that course. They had poisoned the native dogs and eagles—destroyed the enemies of these marsupials, and fenced in their runs; and the consequence was, the shepherd and his dog, the eagle and the native dog had been got rid of, and the marsupial plague had increased.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Put black-fellows in.

Mr. MORGAN said they civilised them with religion and bad rum, and got rid of them also. What did the honorable gentleman want? Were they to further tax the already over-taxed colonists of Queensland to recoup these gentlemen who had injured themselves by destroying the enemies of the vermin from which they are now suffering? Were the people of the colony to suffer for such misconduct on their part? He protested against such an attempt at legislation for a particular class. It was outlandish; and he did not believe there was an honorable member on either side of the House, who had had any experience in the colony, who would support any over-legislation of that sort.

Mr. MACDONALD said this was not a question merely affecting pastoral lessees; it was one which equally affected every interest in the colony; because if this land, which they had heard so much about, and which produced such large revenue to the colony, both in rents and produce, were devastated by this plague, the whole country would suffer. Those who were interested in that country did not expect that the whole colony should be taxed to remedy the evil, but he thought they should be afforded some relief. He thought while the Railway Reserves Bill was being passed through committee, they might make provision to offer some encouragement to justify the lessees in fencing in portions of their runs—whatever portion might be left to them. Of course no man would be mad enough to do so without some security of tenure. With regard to the injury done by these pests to the portion of the country referred to, he could state that he himself had found it necessary to abandon a run he once looked upon as first-class country, solely from the kangaroos having accumulated in such numbers that he found it impossible to keep stock upon it.

Mr. PALMER said he did not believe the importance of this plague could be overrated. It was a very serious matter, but he admitted

at once that he could not see how the House could take any action in reference to it on a motion for adjournment. He thought the honorable member for Normanby ought to have been prepared with some remedy, or some proposed remedy, when he brought the question before the House. He could not see what effect a motion for the adjournment of the House could have, except to draw the attention of the country to the fact; and he presumed it was pretty well known already that the damage done by marsupials could hardly be overestimated. It was becoming positively frightful in the northern districts, and attention had been called to it more than once during the present session, though perhaps not in the pointed and forcible way the honorable member for Normanby had now done. The honorable the Minister for Lands had suggested legislation on the subject, but he could not see what they could do by legislation. Unless the parties concerned combined with a strong hand to try and eradicate the pest, he did not see what could be done in the matter; and except some definite proposal were made, he did not see what the House had to do with it. He did not suppose the honorable member for Normanby for one moment proposed, as the honorable member for Warwick had stated, to tax the whole colony at large for the eradication of this pest. But he could tell the honorable member that this was a matter in which the whole colony was concerned. Whatever affected the pastoral interest affected the whole colony, and affected it very thoroughly; and if he did not know it, there was not a shopkeeper in Brisbane who did not know it; there was not a working man in Brisbane who did not know it; and he was astonished at the representative of an important squatting district making such a speech as that honorable member had favored them with. They afforded very little protection to those settlers, and certainly the pastoral lessees were entitled to equal-handed justice on the part of the Crown; but they would not get it, as was very evident from the proceedings that afternoon. When a Bill which affected them in the slightest was concerned, it was thrown into the waste-paper basket without the slightest hesitation, and he was astonished and disgusted to see squatters voting for it too.

Mr. DE SATGE, in reply, said, with regard to the remarks of the honorable the Minister for Lands, he thought it was the duty of the Government in power to protect certain classes of colonists who were exposed to a sudden calamity. He had heard the honorable member for Port Curtis move the adjournment of the House on matters he (Mr. De Satgé) considered of less importance than this. That honorable member had taxed him with, he might say, taking up the time of the House.

Mr. PALMER: I did not tax you with anything.

MR. DE SATGÉ said he could only say the matter was one which had arisen suddenly, because however much it might have been known to members of the House, it was only within the last few weeks that they became aware of the fact that the injury arising from this cause had increased to such an extent that sheep had to be removed from stations in the district to which he had referred to another district altogether. He would not have attempted to take up the time of the House for one moment had he not thought the matter was one that required some remedy, or, at any rate, that it should be brought under the notice of the House. Those who had taken steps to protect their runs by enclosing them with such a fence as the honorable the Minister for Lands had mentioned—which was, perhaps, the only absolute safeguard against the kangaroo—were those who had acquired freeholds, and were prepared to spend money on their own property. The chief reason why he had moved the adjournment and brought the matter before the House was, that they were on the eve of completing legislation relating to that district, which would further assist to effect the ruin of those gentlemen. The honorable the Minister for Lands had introduced the subject very forcibly, and he expected a great sale of the rich lands in that district; and he (Mr. De Satgé) thought it was as well that the House should know the circumstances under which that district was laboring. This was a fresh invasion on the pastoral lessee, and if it were carried out he could look for no security whatever. The position of leaseholders on the Peak Downs was this: They were tenants who had taken a lease, say, of a building which was falling down on their heads at the present moment. That was their position, and the disaster was such as to call for some support from the Government. Legislation as to the damage caused by marsupials was a question on which many suggestions could be made, but he thought it was well timed, with regard to a district which he knew intimately, and which was one of great importance, to draw the attention of the Government to the very great ruin already brought upon those settlers, when they were on the eve of fresh legislation, which would tend still further to ruin them. He considered it would be well if the colony could be roused to a sense of this danger, as the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria were some time ago with regard to scab. He considered that at the present time our scab was marsupials; and the legislation adopted in the other colonies to remedy scab was not to tax the general body of the colonists, but to levy a scab tax; and in this case they could levy a marsupial tax to be devoted to the extermination of those animals. He thought that was the only thing they could do in the matter; but to talk of erecting paling fences upon land which they knew was shortly to be resumed

from those settlers, was out of the question. He had drawn the attention of the Government to the point, as much in regard to the ruin already being inflicted upon them as in regard to that which they were about to inflict upon them by legislation. That was the principal point. If they passed this Railway Reserves Bill, they would further harass and worry and ruin this class of settlers in that district. The remarks of the honorable member for Warwick were particularly uncalled for. From that honorable member's long and well-known connection with the pastoral interest as a worker amongst stock, he (Mr. De Satgé) was surprised at his remarks. This matter was a very serious one. It did not seem to have been taken up in the spirit he thought it might have been; but, perhaps, men who were enthusiastic were generally condemned when they tried to bring a matter of this kind before the House. He should not have taken up the time of the House at all, had he not thought some discussion would have followed, and, if possible, some immediate legislation would have taken place. He did not think that moving for a Select Committee at that period of the session—when they ought to have finished the session—would have any effect. Before it could be called together, possibly the session would come to an end, and no legislation could take place this session, and in the meantime, the evils he had spoken of would be carried out to the utmost limit. He thought a suggestion affecting the safety of a large class of colonists ought to come from the Government, and not from a private member of the House, who, being known as a pastoral tenant himself, any opinions he might advocate with regard to the support of his own class would be met with a considerable amount of doubt and disregard. He was always prepared when he spoke with regard to the class to which he belonged, to be listened to with a considerable degree of doubt as to the seriousness of the matter he referred to; but he could only express a hope that after the session, some members of the Ministry might wend their way to Peak Downs and see the present state of that part of the country; and they would then see that the time of the House had not been taken up this evening for nothing.

Mr. Low said he thought, as a remedy for this evil, it would not be a bad plan to stop poisoning eagles and native dogs, and to encourage blacks to hunt down kangaroos.

Question—That this House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

MUNICIPAL ENDOWMENTS BILL.

The PREMIER moved,—

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE moved that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of altering the

portion of it respecting the mode of voting at municipal elections. He moved:—

That the question be amended by the omission of all the words following the word “be,” with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words “recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clause 1, the preamble, and the title.”

Mr. WALSH thought the honorable member now saw the necessity of what he (Mr. Walsh) had endeavored to carry out, and that was, not to allow the third reading of Bills to go as formal motions. He had never known a Parliament where such necessity existed for examining Bills before they passed through that House as he had seen during the present Parliament. He was sure the honorable member, who was an authority on the subject, would have allowed the Bill to have gone to a third reading, had it not been for him (Mr. Walsh); and he took it for granted that that honorable member would give him credit, for the future, when he endeavored to prevent this Government from passing the third reading of Bills as formal motions, for having some good object in view. He was satisfied that the honorable member, on reflection, had seen that this Bill was not in the form it should pass through committee, and he, no doubt, would be prepared in committee to offer some valuable suggestions. But what he (Mr. Walsh) would impress on the House was this fact: That the Government proposed the third reading of this Bill, which was to cost the country at least £25,000 a-year by way of endowment to municipalities, and what preparation had the honorable the Treasurer made for that? He asked, on the Estimates, for £4,000 for this year. He (Mr. Walsh) said this was a matter of serious importance. The honorable the Treasurer sat there the other night, and did not deign to give them any reason for launching the country into this expenditure. He asked the House for £4,000 for the year, and he readily assented to a measure, which, by a paper he (the Treasurer) had lent him, he was sure would cost the country £25,000 a-year at the beginning for the endowment of municipalities, and it would go on *ad libitum* so far as he could see. He thought the honorable the Treasurer was guilty of great inconsistency in first bringing in his Estimates, apparently to assure the House that only £4,000 would be required for this purpose, and then sanctioning a measure, not introduced by the Government, which would involve an outlay of at least £25,000 for the first year. He would ask that honorable gentleman, was he prepared to show that the revenue could support this strain upon it, or was he going to do like his predecessor did, when Parliament met again—shirk all responsibility of the extravagance of his Government by leaving the department?

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and affirmed.

Question—That the Bill be now read a third time—put.

Mr. WALSH said he did not think honorable members understood the way in which that motion was put.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH said they seemed to be getting into a very loose and uncertain way of doing business, when a Minister of the Crown acknowledged that the motion was not understood in the way in which it was put. He believed honorable members opposite were taken by surprise.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said there must be some misunderstanding. The honorable member for Wickham moved an amendment that the Bill be recommitted, and the question was that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question, which had been put and carried.

The SPEAKER: The question was put in the usual way—that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

The original question was then put and passed, and the Bill was passed through its remaining stages.

SUPPLY.

On the Order of the Day for the resumption of Committee of Supply being called,

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had intended when this Order of the Day was called to move the honorable the Speaker out of the chair in the usual form, so that the House might proceed to Supply; but unless there was a desire on all sides of the House to proceed with business in Supply, and not take up time unnecessarily, especially as the first item they should meet with was one on which they had hitherto agreed to differ, he should not do so. He appealed to the honorable the leader of the Opposition if he would assent to the Government postponing this item in the meantime, so that they might proceed with the general Estimates. He had offered to postpone it till the Estimates-in-Chief were passed, and to take it into consideration before they proceeded with the Loan Estimates; but he did not think the honorable gentleman was inclined to accede to that suggestion, although he (the Treasurer) was sure it was one by which the business of the country would be materially expedited. The Government had no desire to enter into an acrimonious debate, which would not result in any progress being made with public business. If the leader of the Opposition would assent to this, they might do a considerable amount of business in Supply, without touching at the present time this much-debated question; but if he could hold out no expectation of that, they might proceed with the committal of the Settled Districts Pastoral Leases Bill. He thought the view that the Government held out was a very reasonable one, and the reason he moved that the Order of the Day be postponed was for the purpose of affording honorable gentlemen

opposite an opportunity of expressing their opinions on the matter; and he hoped upon reflection they would see that they would be consulting the general interests of the country by allowing this postponement to take place. It would be very undesirable to waste another night, when they had so much important business before them, merely for the purpose of obstructing this individual item. It occupied a considerable portion of last week, and he thought they might now very fairly elect to proceed with more urgent business. The Government were desirous to push on with all reasonable expedition the large accumulation of public business which still remained undischarged on the paper, and he thought they might very fairly ask the Opposition, in this view of the case, to assist them in so doing. The Government could not honorably be expected to withdraw the motion at the present time, and it was a concession to the Opposition to postpone its consideration; and while he moved that this Order of the Day be postponed, if honorable gentlemen opposite took the view of the case he submitted for their consideration, he should be glad to proceed with Supply, and take some of the items with which they might make some progress. He, therefore, moved, with a view of eliciting an expression of opinion from honorable members opposite—

That this Order of the Day be postponed until the next Order of the Day has been disposed of.

MR. PALMER said if the Government were anxious to proceed with the public business, which they prided themselves so much upon, they had it in their own hands to do so. They had nothing to do but to withdraw the item in question, which was not public business, and could not be constituted public business, but which merely concerned an individual member of that House. They could withdraw it, as was done before, without any loss of honor, he presumed, by the previous Government, and if they did not do it now, they would have to do it at a later period of the session. His opinion was strong that it would have to be withdrawn before the Estimates got much further. It was all very fine for the honorable the Colonial Treasurer to get up, and talk to the Opposition about going on with the business of the country. Throughout the whole of the session, the Opposition had been most anxious to get on with the business of the country; but after the manner in which that House was kept up the other night, and after the manner in which the Government tried to force that motion, which the Opposition told them they would not carry, down their throats, he thought it was a little too much to appeal to honorable members on that side to help them to go on, and merely postpone this most objectionable item until the conclusion of the Estimates. He did not believe the honorable gentleman had power to post-

pone it until the end of the Estimates, and before the Loan Estimates came on. If it were postponed at all, it must be postponed to the end of the Estimates which were on the table.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Estimates-in-Chief.

MR. PALMER said the whole of the Estimates. However, there was no use arguing that question, as they were not at all likely to get that far. The opinion of a strong minority had been strongly expressed upon that vote; and the Government would show they had the interests of the colony at heart a great deal more by withdrawing the item altogether, than by postponing it to the end of the Estimates, and making appeals to that side of the House such as had been made. Honorable members on that side of the House were not going to be dragooned into this vote. They were tried pretty well, he thought, last week. Honorable members on the other side seemed to think they had nothing to do but to sit a few hours, and they were sure to get it; but they sat a good many hours, and they were no more likely to get it now than they were then, or likely to get it at all. Nothing had occurred to alter the opinion of honorable members on that side on the subject of this vote. There was nothing the Government could show that would alter that opinion; and what was the use of delaying the business of the country? The Government alone were responsible for the delay in the public business, and not the Opposition.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he did not know, under the circumstances, who was doing the dragooning business in connection with this vote, but he had a very strong suspicion it did not come from that side of the House. He must be pardoned for having arrived at that conclusion, but he certainly had done so, and events only could prove whether he was right or honorable gentlemen opposite. It was quite certain that on the last night this matter was before the House the Government were most anxious to come to a decision one way or the other, and that was the very thing the honorable gentleman and his followers would not allow them to do. The honorable gentleman was in a minority, and he appeared to intend to govern by a minority. Now, the Government had met him in the most conciliatory manner, and had offered—and he was very doubtful whether they were justified in going so far—to postpone this motion to the end of the Estimates, merely on the understanding, he imagined, that it would then be considered on its merits.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said the honorable gentleman had no right to demand that it should be withdrawn. He was at perfect liberty to divide upon it if he liked, and even to delay it in order to secure a majority if he liked, but he certainly had

no right to stop the public business indefinitely for such a purpose. The honorable gentleman had doubted their power even to postpone the motion, but he would refer him to the 283rd Standing Order, which provided :—

“It shall be held to be in order, at any time during the discussion of any estimate or item in an estimate which has not been previously amended, to move the postponement of such estimate or item ; provided such postponement be until the whole of the Estimates or Supplementary Estimates for the year for which the proposed vote is intended to be taken shall have been disposed of.”

He considered it was a most moderate demand, and that it was meeting honorable members opposite half-way, to say that they were prepared to postpone the vote until after the other Estimates-in-Chief had been disposed of. He hoped that if the honorable leader of the Opposition would not consent to that proposition that evening, he would before long alter his mind. It was not the wish or intention of the Government to provoke ill-feeling by insisting upon the vote; but so long as they had a majority, they considered that they had a right to assert that majority. They had asserted that they had considered it a matter of duty to put the vote on the Estimates, and they had invited the opinion of the House on that vote, and a majority was in favor of it. The honorable gentleman referred to the action of the previous Government in connection with the claim of the honorable member for Blackall, and said that they were contented with having brought it forward, and showed no anxiety to have it passed; but the present Ministry had no intention of following the example of their predecessors in that respect. They did not intend to introduce anything, and shrug their shoulders, and say “Oh, very well, let it go,” if a minority of the House objected to it; but if they brought forward a vote, they intended to either carry it, or be defeated in the attempt in a straightforward way.

Mr. J. SCOTT said that the honorable member who had just addressed the House appeared to think that the Government had made a great concession to the Opposition; but he would remind the honorable gentleman that on the last occasion on which the matter was under discussion, the same offer was made over and over again to the Government by the Opposition, and that in place of accepting it, they preferred sitting up all night with the hope of thrusting the vote down the throats of the Opposition. They now came and said, “Do, like good fellows, postpone this item until the end of the Estimates-in-Chief.” Such conduct was monstrous—that honorable members should have been kept up for twenty hours last week, and that the Government should now take credit for conceding what had then been proposed over and over again by the Opposition.

Mr. MACROSSAN said it was rather amusing to hear the honorable Minister for Lands talking about the wish of the Government to have come to a decision on the matter last week—everyone knew that. It seemed to him that if the Government were determined to go on with the business of the country, they should postpone any further consideration of the vote for the honorable member for Blackall until that honorable member resigned his seat in that House; for until that was done, the Government might rest assured that even with their majority they would never get that vote.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that there had been no offer made by the Government to postpone the item when the matter was before honorable members.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : The offer was from us.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he must have misunderstood honorable members. The honorable member for the Kennedy had just stated that the Government ought to postpone the item until the honorable member for Blackall resigned his seat; but he thought that the very fact of a committee having been moved for by a member of that House, and the report of that committee having been brought up by a member of it and having been adopted by the House, shut out any honorable member who was on that committee from objecting to the money. When the committee was moved for, it was understood that a sum of money would be recommended; and he would ask whether the labors of that committee were to go for nothing? But, as had been remarked before, so long as the honorable member for Blackall sat on the Opposition cross-benches, not one word was said about the money not being granted; but the moment the honorable member crossed over to the Government side, the Opposition discovered that they ought not to vote the money so long as the honorable member remained a member of the House. He maintained that the honorable members who assented to the adoption of the report of the Select Committee had no right to take up that ground now.

Mr. BELL said the honorable member was quite wrong in his remarks about the power of any honorable members who took part in the adoption of the report of the committee to object to the vote now on the Estimates. At that time the report of the committee had reference to the merits of the case, and they were considered by the House; but voting the money was another question altogether, and that was the question at present before the House. He had not heard any honorable member on his side of the House deny the merits of the question as regarded the justice of the honorable member's claim, but so long as that gentleman was a member of the House—and that was the real question now before them—he should not have the money. That was the question, and not the

one put forward by the honorable the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. MORGAN said he had heard a good deal of what he must consider acrimonious debate on the subject, and he must say that he certainly thought it was very undesirable that any honorable member of that House should have a claim against the country; on that ground, he quite agreed with honorable members of the Opposition, and he thought there could not be two opinions about it. He recollected, however, that a session or two back, there was a gentleman who occupied a seat in the Cabinet without a portfolio, and who, although he did not put his name to an Executive minute for the purpose, was allowed to take 20,000 acres of land worth £3 an acre in exchange for 7,000 acres, and therefore he was greatly interested in it. But in the present case there was a tremendous uproar because it was thought to be a breach of etiquette for a gentleman to put forward a claim whilst he was a member of the House. He could not see any distinction between the cases—of a member of the Executive in the one case voting himself 20,000 acres of land, and a member of that House having a claim against the country of £6,000.

Mr. THOMPSON said that the honorable member for Warwick appeared to be in a pugnacious humor, and desirous of raising up the old squatting ghost of the Darling Downs once more. He totally denied that Mr. Ramsay, who was the gentleman alluded to by the honorable member, had anything to do with the exchange of land whilst he was a member of the Executive. He denied also that it was an unjust exchange, but, on the contrary, it was one that would have done a great deal of good to the country if it had been carried out. It, however, had nothing to do with the present question, and he did not see why it should be raised up again.

Mr. IVORY said he should very much like to hear from the Government that they were not like the previous Government, inclined to bring forward questions, and then shrug their shoulders and say they did not care to force them through, and he was very glad to have heard from one member of the Government that they were not so inclined; although he must say he was surprised to hear it coming from the honorable Minister for Lands, as it cast a reflection upon a member of the present Government who was also a member of the previous one. He believed the honorable Attorney-General, as well as the Premier, were members of the late Government, and he supposed that the Minister for Lands must, therefore, have wished the House to understand that those honorable members had washed their hands clean of any desire to act again in the same way. The honorable Attorney-General appeared to applaud that statement, but the Premier, no doubt, would be glad to act in the same way as the previous Government had done; and, therefore, he (Mr. Ivory) had

been pleased to find that the country had a strictly honorable Minister in the Minister for Lands, who said that if he undertook to do a thing he would either do it or be defeated in a straightforward manner. With regard to the claim of the honorable member for Blackall, he should like to hear whether the Government had received from that gentleman a statement of his willingness to accept the money if it was voted; because, from information he had learned that very day, he believed that the honorable member had distinctly stated that he would not receive it. If that was the case, then the position in which the House was placed was identically the same as that with regard to the claim of Dr. Lang, who stated, when a sum of money was voted to him, that he would not accept it, only in Dr. Lang's case he had abused the Legislature, which certainly the honorable member for Blackall had not done. He could not see any use in the House voting money which the Government ought to know the honorable member for Blackall would not accept; in fact it was placing the House in a false position to ask them to do so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that all the Government had attempted to do was to carry out a resolution of that House which recommended that the sum of £6,000 should be paid as compensation to the honorable member for Blackall. If they had omitted to carry out that resolution by not placing the sum on the Estimates, they might have been called to account, as they had been some weeks ago by the honorable member for Port Curtis for not having put down a sum of money for the purpose of surveying a line of railway from Gladstone to Rockhampton. They had placed the sum on the Estimates, and if the honorable member for Blackall refused to take it, it would be to his loss and a gain to the country. The honorable member for the Burnett had been pleased to refer to what the late Government had done, and to say that they had proposed a sum for mere show, and not with the intention of having it voted; but he might tell that honorable member that the previous Government placed the sum on the Supplementary Estimates, and everyone knew that a sum when placed on the Supplementary Estimates was not passed by the Government but the Opposition, and that if there was any serious opposition to such a sum, it was withdrawn. The late Government had made a mistake in placing the amount on the Supplementary Estimates, and the present Government had corrected that mistake, and that was why he had expressed his approbation of the statement made by his honorable colleague the Minister for Lands. The honorable member for Dalby said that it was a very different thing to recommend the payment of a sum of money to a member of that House from actually carrying out that recommendation, but he

(the Attorney-General) failed to see the difference. If when the honorable member for Rockhampton moved the adoption of the report of the Select Committee, it was wrong, how was it that the honorable member for Dalby did not propose an amendment, saying that the money should not be paid until the honorable member for Blackall ceased to be a member of that House? It was all very well to say that any faint ideas of such fine feelings crossed the minds of honorable members opposite—their arguments were too transparent to carry any weight with them.

Mr. WALSH said it was very well for the honorable Attorney-General to say that it was nonsense to suppose that the fine feelings of the Opposition had anything to do with their action in regard to the matter before them, and he was not surprised at the honorable member saying such a thing; but he should have been surprised if any other honorable member opposite had made the same remark. He objected to the Attorney-General putting himself forward as the exponent of what were the fine feelings of any honorable members representing constituencies, and who were attempting to do their duty to the colony. The statement which had been made by the honorable Attorney-General was not altogether in accordance with their parliamentary information; nor could he (Mr. Walsh) for the life of him see why the Government had taken the case out of the hands of the honorable member for Rockhampton, who was well able to conduct it, unless they had done so to keep faith with one of their own supporters. What, after all, were the real facts of the case? It was true that a Select Committee did bring up a report, and it was also equally true that that report was adopted without any consideration having been given to it by honorable members. The next proceeding in that House was, that the Chairman of the Committee gave notice of motion that he would move that the House go into committee to vote a sum of money to the member for Blackall, and what followed? Why, that the honorable member himself got up and said that he would not take it. In the face of that, he did not think it could be argued that the Government were bound session after session to put a sum on the Estimates for the honorable member. The Government were bound to acknowledge the honorable member as a necessary supporter, and they had to drag him into the House to vote for them. Why, the thing was preposterous. When the honorable member for Rockhampton, who acted on behalf of the Chairman of the Committee, was told distinctly in that chamber that Mr. MacDonald would not accept the money, he abandoned the affair altogether; and that was what the Government should have done, and the country could have come to no other conclusion than that they were right in so doing. It was perfectly true that the members of

the committee were so lukewarm on the subject, that the moment the honorable member for Blackall said he would not accept the money, they withdrew altogether, and there had been no subsequent motion to put the present sum on the Estimates. He had no hesitation in saying that he thought Mr. MacDonald had a claim, and he should have been glad to support it under other circumstances, and had it not been for the painful scenes he had witnessed—had he not seen that honorable member dragged into the House by a Minister of the Crown to vote. He had told the honorable member the other day that he had seen him in that humiliating position, and the honorable member had not denied it. He should oppose the sum being granted.

Mr. MORGAN rose to a point of order. He wished to have the ruling of the honorable the Speaker on the point whether it was competent of an honorable member of that House to accuse a Minister of the Crown of dragging in any honorable member to vote for the Government.

The SPEAKER said the point of order should have been raised at the time the words were used; he had not a sufficient recollection of the words to say whether they were or were not out of order.

Mr. MURPHY said that if he understood rightly the question, it was, that the vote for the honorable member for Blackall should be postponed until after the Estimates-in-Chief were passed—that was really the question before the House, and he must say that he could not understand why there should be any objection made to such an arrangement. The case put by the honorable member for the Warrego was, that after all, he admitted that there was an amount due to Mr. MacDonald.

Mr. WALSH: I did not say so.

Mr. MURPHY said the honorable member thought that gentleman had a fair claim which he should be willing to consider favorably, assuming that the honorable member was no longer a member of that House. That being so, there was an admission that the claim of the honorable member for Blackall was a fair one. The question seemed to him to be this—that admitting the honorable member had a fair claim, and from having gone very carefully through all the papers, he considered there was a fair claim; how was it to be got rid of? It seemed to him that the claim was as fair a one as had ever been put on the Estimates. It was a claim that stood first of all upon the verdict of a jury at Rockhampton, which to some people appeared to be rather a large one, and which also stood upon the award of a Select Committee of that House, who recommended the payment of a sum of £6,000. He considered that any man who pertinaciously pushed forward his claims, after having been subjected to the wrongs that the honorable member for Blackall had been, would be entitled to consideration; but,

as they all knew, that honorable member was one of those reticent men who would not push forward his claims. On reading over the papers, however, he had come to the conclusion that the honorable member's case was one deserving of the small sum which the Government had placed on the Estimates—a sum which really seemed to be inadequate to the costs which that gentleman had had to pay; for his legal expenses had been, no doubt, very great. There would, in fact, be very little of the £6,000 left after paying the costs. But another question was, that the country was really indebted to that gentleman, and should recoup him for the unjust treatment he had received. The whole history of the case was very simple, and was known to most honorable members. The honorable member for Blackall had certain country, which he could have retained against the action of anybody; but the Government having given the same country under a misapprehension to some other parties, the honorable member preferred, rather than resort to physical force, to give up the country, and seek redress at law. The honorable member did so, and, ultimately, the case was referred to a Select Committee of that House; and he, after reading the papers and making himself acquainted with all the facts, must say that he had not seen a case where the claim for damages was so easily estimated. If it was suggested for a moment that the sum of money was inadequate to the wrongs sustained, that it was in excess of what was actually due to the honorable member, he should not be found to support it. No doubt it was an unfortunate circumstance that Mr. MacDonald was a member of the House at the time his claim was under consideration, but the question was whether a case had been made out that the money was actually due to him; if so, whether he was a member of that House or not should not influence the House in dealing with the money, if it was due to the honorable member in fairness, equity, and common reason. It would be remembered that the honorable member's constituents were well aware of his position when they elected him as a member of that House, and was it to be said for one moment that those constituents were to be shut out from their right to select that gentleman simply because he had a claim against the country which depended upon the investigation of a Select Committee? It was not an isolated case; in fact, in the Legislature of New South Wales there was a much stronger case, namely, that of Mr. Scholey, who was at the time in opposition to the Government; there the matter was discussed, referred to a Select Committee, who recommended an amount, which was afterwards placed on the Estimates, and paid. He was not aware that in that case any objection was taken to Mr. Scholey being a member of the Assembly at the time. It amounted after all to this: was

the present, which was admitted to be a fair claim, to be completely set at naught, because Mr. MacDonald happened to be a member of that House? If honorable members opposite thought it should be, they had a perfect right to think so, and show their opinions by the way they recorded their votes. He believed that the honorable members for the Mitchell and Kennedy said, when the question was previously before the House, that they would vote against any vote so long as Mr. MacDonald was a member of that House, and they were consistent in adhering to that resolution; but they were the only honorable members who, so far as he was aware, had from first to last resisted the vote. Assuming they had done so, were they, he would ask, to go further and say that the money should not be voted? It was a case that was not likely to come before the Legislature again, for he was not aware of any other case beside it and that of Mr. Scholey, and it seemed to him that the claim having been admitted to be a fair one, the whole question was one of etiquette. It was simply a question whether a strict regard to the rule of Parliamentary etiquette should be allowed to prevent the House from doing justice, and giving to the honorable member for Blackall what was beyond doubt fairly due to him. For his own part, he believed it was not a case where the strict rule should be enforced.

The question was put and passed.