

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 1876

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, 17 October, 1876.*Pastoral Leases Bill.—Navigation Bill.—Resumptions from
Runs in the Settled Districts.—Victoria Bridge Bill.

PASTORAL LEASES BILL.

Mr. BELL said he rose to move the adjournment of the House, with the view to make an appeal to the Government in regard to the principle contained in the Pastoral Leases Bill, which was passed through committee on the previous evening, with the hope that some time having elapsed since the second clause on the Bill was passed, honorable members opposite might have given sufficient time to the subject to have enabled them to reconsider the bearing of the result that would ensue from the division on that clause. He thought that, as there was only a thin House on the previous day, it was only right that they should consider the advisability of recommitting the Bill; but, of course, if a majority of the House objected to such a course, the clause to which he had alluded must go, and they would have to abide by it. He must say that he looked upon the result of passing that clause with great alarm; for he knew what the effect of it would be, principally upon men holding runs at a great distance from the capital; namely, that it would very much damage a

large number of men now engaged in a very useful pursuit in the colony. He was sure that the Government had no other desire than to pass a measure most suitable to the interests of the colony, and he now asked them to consent to a recommitment of the Bill, with the view to reconsidering the second clause, before the Bill was read a third time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said that, with regard to the remarks of the honorable member for Dalby, he could only say that the Bill was set down for its third reading on the following day. If it was at all considered an objection that the decision on the previous day was arrived at in a thin House, he had no objection to its being tested in a full House, if the honorable member wishing for a recommitment of the Bill would promise that there should be a full House on the following day. When the third reading was called on it would be perfectly competent for the honorable member to move for its recommitment, and he would promise the honorable member, so far as the Government was concerned, that there should be no factious opposition on their part.

Mr. STEVENSON said he quite sympathised with the honorable member for Dalby in drawing attention to the matter—

The SPEAKER: I must remind the honorable member that he is not in order in referring to a matter which is put down for consideration on a future day.

Mr. WALSH asked if he was to understand that when an adjournment was moved, no discussion was allowed to take place on any matter under the sun? if so, it was a new proceeding altogether. He believed that the honorable member for Clermont was just as much justified in addressing himself to the question now under discussion, as either the honorable member for Dalby, or the honorable Minister for Lands had been. Before he sat down, he might say that he sincerely trusted that the Government would not make fish of one and flesh of another; because when, on the previous day, he had asked the honorable Minister for Lands to consent to a recommitment of the Bill for another purpose than that now stated, the honorable gentleman refused to do so. He believed that it was at the instigation of the Ministers themselves, or if not of them, of one of their principal supporters, that the appeal was now made. He strongly protested against the Government, or any Government bringing in a Bill which, although it might be keeping faith with some of their supporters, would be the means of doing irreparable injury to a large and most valuable class of the community. Let the Government stand the consequences of such a measure; and if the country would sanction the existence of such a Government—a Government that would bring in such *ad captandum* Bills as the one referred to, he went with the Government so that the country might reap its own reward, and the Government might be fairly punished. He knew

that that Bill would ruin hundreds and hundreds, and the Government knew it, and introduced it in the first place for that purpose; but now they began to see the misery and rapine that it would produce, and wished to have it recommitment. He saw some honorable members opposite laughing, but they knew that what he said was a fact. Let them fancy for one moment a thousand Crown tenants being locked out of their holdings, to make way for what? Why, for a thousand other tenants. Let them fancy for one moment the women and children who would be turned out of their homes—homes where many of them had been born. Let them think of the tens of thousands of stock that would have to be removed from those holdings,—where were they to go? Why, he contended that nothing short of an enemy invading the country and sweeping away all the inhabitants by force would equal the result if the Bill was passed in its present form. He had no doubt that when the Government saw the tremendous responsibility they had devolved upon themselves by passing such a measure, they would take every opportunity they could of evading that responsibility; but he should like to see that responsibility fixed, not only on the Government, but on their supporters. Bitter as the trial would be through which the colony would have to pass on the eviction of Crown tenants—bitter and severe as that would be—let the colony endure it, if only for the advantage of showing what iniquitous measures might be introduced and carried by the majority which the Government at present commanded.

The SPEAKER said with regard to the point of order raised by the honorable member for the Warrego, that it was not competent, under cover of a question of adjournment, for a member to discuss the subject of any Order of the Day, for the consideration of which the House had appointed another time.

Mr. DE SATGE said that the honorable member for the Warrego had said in effect that he would cut off his nose to spite his face. He thought, with regard to the opposition to the Government, the country had its own say not only in that House but in another place, and he hoped for the sake of the country that a drag might be put on the State coach in that respect. If the honorable Minister for Lands intended to reconsider the Bill on the following day, he would advise the honorable gentleman to take the suggestion of the honorable member for the Kennedy, and endeavor to divide the northern from the southern districts, as by that means the honorable member might benefit men in the northern districts considerably.

Mr. STEVENSON presumed that he might speak, as honorable members had done so, although he had been told, some little time ago, that he was out of order. It appeared to him that the mission of the present Government was, in their

opinion, to play into the hands of capitalists, and to oppress the squatters as much as possible. A great deal had been said about removing stock, but he thought that honorable members opposite were not aware of the difficulties of that removal, as it would be very hard to find a place to remove stock to, the whole of the western district being at present taken up; in fact, some squatters were now over the border of the colony, having crossed the Herbert River into South Australia. The question was one of the greatest importance, and therefore he hoped the Government would take into consideration the recommitment of the Bill.

Mr. IVORY said he would advise the Ministry to re-commit the Bill, although for his part he should not try to force the recommitment upon them; they had accepted the responsibility of the Bill, and the consequences of course rested upon them. They had been repeatedly warned regarding the measure, and all the facts connected with the passing of it had been placed before them, but they had insisted, with a majority at their backs, on systematically not answering one of the arguments raised by honorable members of the Opposition, but to do as they had done all through the present session, namely, sit still and vote. At the second reading, hints were thrown out that the Opposition were going to make a great stand against the resumption of the ten years' leases, but the Opposition knew that it was of no earthly use to adduce reasons against the Bill when the Government had made up their minds that they and their supporters should remain quiet and vote. If the Government were prepared to take the responsibilities of such a measure, all he could say was, let them do so.

Mr. BAILEY thought that when an appeal was made to the Government to do an act of grace, honorable members opposite should remember that the worst way of getting it granted was to insult, if possible, every honorable member on the Government side of the House. If those who felt deepest in regard to the present question wished to ask a favor from the House, the least they could do would be to ask it without any insult to those from whom they asked it.

Mr. J. SCOTT said, in regard to the remarks of the honorable member for Wide Bay, that the Opposition had not asked for any favor; what they asked for was a matter of justice to the colony, and not to individual members of the House.

Question put and passed.

NAVIGATION BILL.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that when the motion standing in his name was called on, that he move for leave to bring in a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the Marine Board, navigation, pilotage, harbor lights, and the keeping and carriage of gunpowder, he had called out "Not formal,"

because he wished to draw the attention of the House to some matters connected with it. He believed that the motion would have to be amended on account of his having allowed a day to intervene. It was his intention on the previous day to revive the Bill, as it was laid aside with the amendments in it, so that it might go through during the present session; but he had since learned that as there was no connection between the Bill he wished to introduce and the one laid aside, owing to the intervention of a day, the proper course would be for him to introduce a Bill in committee. With that view, he would ask the House to allow him to amend his motion by inserting the following words after "That,"

"this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the Marine Board, navigation, pilotage, harbors, lights, and the keeping and carriage of gunpowder."

It was also his intention to move for the re-introduction of the "Stamp Duties Bill" in the same way. He might mention that the position in which he was placed arose from his ignorance of the fact that on the previous day he might have done it, in accordance with the practice of the Imperial Parliament, but that if a day lapsed, it was rendered necessary to re-introduce a Bill in a Committee of the Whole House.

Mr. PALMER said he did not see any necessity for a discussion upon the point, as it was laid down by the 56th Standing Order that

"No question or amendment shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any question, which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative."

He should like to know how the honorable member intended to get rid of that Standing Order. Had the honorable member gone on with the Bill on the previous day, he might have got over the difficulty under the practice of the Imperial Parliament, although he could not have done so under their own Standing Orders. It was simply an example of sharp practice on the part of the Government—an attempt on their part to snap a judgment, as the lawyers would say. He did not believe that either Bill could be introduced again during the present session.

The SPEAKER said that, as the House did not consent to the amendment, the question could not be put.

RESUMPTIONS FROM RUNS IN THE SETTLED DISTRICTS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved, pursuant to amended notice—

That in order to encourage the settlement of population in the Settled Districts of the colony, and in pursuance of section 10 of "The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868," this House resolves to resume from the leases of the under-mentioned Runs the areas hereinafter specified,

as described in the Schedule laid on the Table of this House of the lands proposed to be resumed from the Runs in the said districts.

He said that as the list of runs had been described more at length in the schedules which had been laid on the table of the House, he did not think it was necessary for him to read it through, as it would have to be read when the question was put. It was not his intention to make any lengthened remarks on the subject, as it was so intimately connected with the various Land Bills which had recently been before the House, and was merely a matter of detail connected with the Land Bill and the Bill which had been passed through committee on the previous day. The areas which it was proposed to resume, with some deductions which the House might think fit to make, as they were blocks containing less than eight square miles, amounted in the whole to 2,761,502 acres; and the estimated acreage in each district was—In the Moretons, 918,684 acres; in the Darling Downs, 971,869 acres; and in the Wide Bay and Burnett, 870,949 acres. They represented the area at present included in the Settled Districts under the ten years' leases Bill; and the Bill which had been passed through committee on the previous evening provided for the tenure of the country resumed at the expiry of the leases. The area of land fit for agricultural settlement, compared with the actual amount to be resumed, was not very considerable, but it included, no doubt, a large portion of country very available for occupation and settlement, and those resumptions must be taken in connection with the Land Bill which had passed through that House. The object of that legislation had been, that whilst the quantity of land in the areas was somewhat smaller than formerly, the number of areas thrown open would be very much increased; and although remarks had been made that the description of tenancy required was not what might be called liberal, he trusted that in practice it would be found to be the reverse. He trusted that it would promote actual settlement, and that although it diminished the quantity of land to be taken up by an individual, it would conserve the public estate for the future profit of the people of the colony. Before he sat down he might say that there were a few amendments, the mode of putting which he should consult the House upon. There were some runs, such as Coochin Coochin, Westbrook, Eton Vale, and others, in which the area was less than eight square miles; and according to the Land Act of 1868, blocks of less than eight square miles could not be resumed, and although the acreage of them taken together would permit of them being resumed, still it was thought that in accordance with the Act of 1868 they should not be resumed, but be allowed to fall into the hands of the Crown by effluxion of time. According to that the area of Coochin Coochin would have to be reduced from 23,000 acres to 22,100 acres,

and Nindooimba, from 20,000 to 19,000; but he believed the best way to effect those matters of detail would be that after the resolution had been discussed, one of his honorable colleagues should move the necessary amendments.

MR. DE SATGE said the honorable gentleman had not made it at all clear what the amendments referred to were to be; he had merely mentioned that some runs would have to be deducted from the whole number because they contained blocks of less than eight square miles. He should like the honorable member to say what reductions he meant. He thought that the honorable gentleman, in moving the resumptions, should have stated to the House whether they included the whole of the unreserved portions of the runs, or if they did not, what proportions were left; he believed it was the opinion of honorable members that the areas comprised the whole of the unresumed portions of the runs.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

MR. DE SATGE would ask, then, why leave the small areas under eight square miles? The honorable member had not made that clear, but he said that in some areas there was a certain amount taken off, and that in Coochin Coochin the amount was reduced from 23,000 acres to 22,000 acres, and in Nindooimba there was to be another. He might also ask why the resumptions were tabulated in some instances as so many acres, and in others as so many square miles—why the reduction of square miles into acres had not been followed out in all instances? He thought that in a schedule of such importance the area in all instances should have been given in acres.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said, in explanation, that clause 10 of the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868 ran thus:—

“No land within the part so leased to any pastoral tenants shall be resumable during the term of the lease except by a resolution of both Houses of Parliament when it shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to resume any tracts of land not less than eight square miles in area in one block and in respect of such land so resumed to make a proportionate reduction of the yearly rents paid by such pastoral tenants.”

MR. DE SATGE said the honorable gentleman had not explained why, in the case of the Coochin Run, the block had been reduced to eight square miles.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because it consists of more than one block.

MR. BELL said he regretted the honorable Minister for Lands had not taken the same view of the larger areas on the different runs contained in the schedule as he had of the smaller areas comprised in some of the blocks, and so let the whole of the runs revert to the Crown by the effluxion of time under the Act of 1868. If the Government had done that, they would have meted out that share of justice which was the only quantum which

the lessees of those runs could fairly expect. He believed that the Government had failed to show why those lands should be taken away from the lessees before the expiration of their leases. There had been no immediate necessity shown for the action now taken by the Government, and the only hope he could see for the Crown lessees was, that there might be some time given to them, and that that time might be sufficiently long to run eventually to the end of their leases before the land was put up for sale or thrown open to selection, as the Government of the day might decide. He had some sympathy with those Crown lessees who lived within the range of the schedule of runs to be resumed, and he did not hesitate to say that he had some hope that the Government would not rush too quickly into the resumption of those runs, as he had understood the honorable Minister for Lands to say that it was the intention of the Government to allow full time before the lands were resumed from the Crown lessees. He had not much to say on the present question; but he wished to enter another protest against what he considered another breach of faith towards the pastoral lessees in reference to improvements. Honorable members were aware that under the Homestead Act of 1872, compensation for improvements was allowed to Crown lessees; but under the Bill recently passed by the House, there was no provision made for any such compensation, as the Homestead Areas Act was repealed by that Bill, and with it the provision for compensation for improvements. Under the proposed resumptions, he assumed in strict justice that the Crown lessees would be as much entitled to compensation for improvements as they would be under the Homestead Areas Act of 1872. If under that Act they were to be compensated, and that Act was to be repealed by the Bill just passed, he thought compensation ought to have been provided for in some other way which he had failed to discover. The subject had been alluded to, he believed, in another place, and the honorable Postmaster-General had then pointed out that as the Crown Lands Act of 1868 and the Homestead Areas Act of 1872 were repealed by the Bill just passed by the Assembly, consequently compensation for improvements would naturally follow with the repeals. Although no reference had been made to that in reference to the resumptions, it appeared to him that either the honorable the Postmaster-General was in error, or those honorable members who had been led by that honorable gentleman had misunderstood him. It seemed to him (Mr. Bell) that both of the Acts he had mentioned having been repealed, there was no hope of compensation for the Crown lessees; but he should be glad to hear the opinion of the honorable Attorney-General on the point, as there appeared to be some doubt on it.

Mr. THOMPSON said he merely rose to express a hope that the honorable Minister for

Lands had his schedule correct now, as he perceived it was very different from the one which appeared in the journals of the House—for what on the 5th September appeared as miles now appeared as acres.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said, with regard to the remarks of the honorable member for Dalby on the question of compensation for improvements on runs resumed, he could only repeat what he had said on the previous evening—that the lessees would be entitled to compensation, even if the Land Bill now under consideration in another place became law. The rights of all parties holding runs were especially reserved, and he could assure the honorable member for Dalby there was no doubt about their position. The Postmaster-General, in the other chamber, endeavored to remove all possible doubt, and had done so; and neither of the Bills now before Parliament would in any way affect the owners of runs upon the resumptions. That was his opinion, not given now, however, for the first time, for he had given it when the question of compensation for resumptions arose last session. His honorable colleague, the Minister for Lands, had pointed out some inaccuracies in the list in consequence of some of the lands proposed to be resumed being in blocks of less than eight square miles. It was somewhat doubtful whether the Act was open to the construction that had been put upon it; but in matters of this kind it was better to err on the safe side, and on the side of mercy, rather than hard justice; and it would, therefore, be advisable to make some verbal amendments. The first was with regard to Tandy Run, and he would propose that after the word "Tandary," the words "or Tarrameo Run" be inserted.

Mr. BELL said he should like, with the permission of the House, to say a word or two with reference to what the Attorney-General had said. That honorable gentleman scarcely appeared to understand the position he desired to convey. Under the Act of 1868, there was no compensation allowed for improvements to those men who had pre-empted to the extent of 2,500 acres; under the Homestead Areas Act of 1872, compensation was allowed. The Darling Downs District had been made a homestead area of, and he presumed the people there were entitled to as much under the present Homestead Areas Act—for it amounted to that—as under the previous Homestead Areas Act. The same principle should apply to the latter as to the former. If that was to be the case, he presumed that the Crown lessees under these resumptions, though not under the Homestead Areas Act, would have a fair claim for compensation. He gathered from the words of the Postmaster-General that he did not take the same legal view as the Attorney-General. If this was so, the Crown lessees on the Darling Downs were not entitled to compensation for improvements. This, he

felt sure, could not have been the intention of the Government.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the Act of 1872 was an amendment of the Act of 1868, and the provision in the 14th section applied to all lands resumed from runs. There was no mistaking the meaning of the section. It said—

“When lands under lease for pastoral purposes are resumed from runs the lessee shall be entitled to the value of the improvements effected by him on the land so resumed such value to be agreed upon by the Crown lands commissioner of the district and such lessee and in the case of their failing so to agree the same to be decided by arbitration as provided by ‘*The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868.*’”

In regard to improvements, therefore, effected before the division of the run, if the lessee had made any pre-emption at all in respect of any part of those improvements, he was not entitled to any compensation now; but with respect to improvements after the division of the run, he was entitled to compensation from time to time, as the improvements were resumed.

Mr. BELL: Under what law?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is the Homestead Areas Act, the latter part of the 14th section of which says—

“Provided always that where any lessee of a run in the Settled Districts shall take or shall have taken advantage of the power of pre-emption given in lieu of compensation by section 14 of ‘*The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868*’ he shall not be entitled to the value of his improvements under this section unless the said improvements have been erected since the division of the run under the said Act.”

Mr. BELL: That is quite satisfactory, but what provision is made for those lessees who come under these resumptions?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If these resumptions are carried, the lands will be resumed from lease, and this section applies to the lessees and gives them the privilege I have stated. The same power which takes away gives a corresponding advantage.

Mr. BELL: But this is under the Act of 1868.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Act of 1872 is to be read with the Act of 1868, of which, in many cases, it is but an amendment.

Mr. HALY would like to know whether it was possible that an Act of this kind was to be allowed to pass without any further discussion. If the Act passed the House, it would be a disgrace to every member of the chamber, no matter on which side he sat. A greater piece of repudiation, confiscation, and suicidal policy was never committed in any colony or country in the world. The Attorney-General, who was smiling at his words, had no more idea of the misery the Act would create to individuals, and the mischief it would do to the colony, than he (Mr. Haly) had of a point of law. He could assure the

Minister for Lands that if he allowed the resolutions to pass without discussion, and without having the matter fully investigated, it would be a disgrace to the Ministry of which he was a member. He could see no reason for this hasty legislation and the repudiation of all these immense runs. It did not affect him (Mr. Haly) in the least. He had not got a single acre in any of the resumptions, but he knew from experience that when men had gone to a considerable expense, perhaps thousands and thousands of pounds, fencing in their runs in the full belief that there was some honor in the colony, and that they would be allowed to go to the full extent of their ten years, when they actually gave up half of their runs, and paid the full amount of rent as if it had been for the whole, it was very bad when they were now forced to the conclusion that the colony was so devoid of honor and justice as to openly repudiate the ten years' leases. This was not a question of squatting, but a simple question of justice; and when he heard the honorable member for Dalby merely content himself with making a protest, he thought it was time for him to get up, although he was quite unprepared to enter into so great and important a subject. He should like to hear both sides of the question discussed a good deal more; to hear how the new legislation would bear on the colony generally; and how people were to get grass and water when these thousands and thousands of sheep and cattle would have to be removed. Unfortunately, under that Bill, which he regretted to know was passed last night, things would be made worse. What necessity was there for this repudiation? The Government were going to take these lands from the men who had improved them, and to put them up to auction. This meant that the Government intended to squeeze as much more out of the unfortunate men, and perhaps ruin them. When the Government were so devoid of honor, and so unfair as to do such a thing, he could not help saying, as an honest man, that they would be quite capable of sending a man to run up the bidding to the last penny. If they would do one thing, they would do another. He advised the Government to consider seriously before they went any farther. The leases had only two short years to run; and if the Government would promise that the land should not be put up to auction until the full time had expired, he would vote with them, because he did not expect the lands to remain a week after the lease had actually expired. Put them up to auction, then, by all means; but until the two years had expired, he would be the last man to vote for such a course. There was one particular matter to which he wished to call the attention of the Government. By the action they were now taking, the colony would lose hundreds, and thousands, and tens of thousands, of sheep. Already, instead of

14,000,000 there were only 7,000,000; disease was spreading amongst cattle as well as sheep, and all this was the result of bad legislation; and here the House was asked to pass worse legislation than ever. It was nothing less than repudiation and confiscation. He noticed that runs were being resumed from which Brisbane would some day have to get its water supply. He had long ago predicted that Enoggera Creek for supplying Brisbane with water would be a failure, and he believed every medical man agreed with him that it was not fit for the supply of a large town, and that sooner or later they must go somewhere else for pure water. He was sorry that he had not in his possession an article written in the *Brisbane Courier* some years ago on this subject by a professional man, showing that the water from Enoggera Creek was not fit for human beings to drink. If that creek was not healthy now, when we had had such a splendid season, what would it be when, as he had seen it since he had been in the colony, two years passed without rain falling in the West Moreton district. They would then have to go to the Brisbane river, and the Government were now resuming the very land that they would require, and would have to repurchase it, to procure a proper water supply for the capital of the colony. He believed the Government had already been informed that there was no water in the locality so wholesome as the Brisbane River water. Instead of retaining this land, which they would have to re-buy, the Government ought to let it go to the end of the proper term, and he had no doubt that during the two years that would elapse, the question of pure water for Brisbane would be forced upon the House; he only hoped it would not be forced by some severe epidemic. He was, however, certain that it would be forced upon them in some way that Enoggera Creek was not fit to supply Brisbane with pure water, and that the Government would have to go to the head of the Brisbane before many years. What the Government were now proposing was to take the land from the unfortunate grazier, to put it up by auction, and to force them to buy before the ten years were up. He hoped the Government, and members on both sides, would consider the question most seriously, because it would be a dishonor to Queensland if they resumed these runs before the ten years were up.

Mr. GRAHAM said he also must disclaim having any interest whatever in these resumptions. He considered the Minister for Lands acted very wisely this year in first of all bringing the three land measures before the House before the resumptions were brought on, thus giving the House and the country some opportunity of knowing how they proposed to deal with this large and valuable public estate under consideration. Last year a different course was adopted. The resolutions were put on the table first, and before

even the skeleton of a Land Bill was brought forward, and that was, he believed, one of the reasons why many members on his side of the House voted against them. He thoroughly agreed with the course now taken by the Minister for Lands. He regretted that the resolutions had not been accompanied by some proposal to compensate the lessees, not for the actual improvements, but for breach of faith in taking the leases from them two years before the time they expected them to expire. There was a very good precedent. He did not expect the Government to give the lessees a money compensation, or even compensation in land, except in the way of pre-emption. They had a good precedent, however, in 1868, when they only took half the runs from them, and gave them the right to pre-empt, under certain conditions, so much land at a fixed price according to the classification of the lands. How much more, then, could this be done now when they proposed to take the whole of the runs at one fell swoop? He was quite certain no lessee of any of these runs would have expected any compensation in the event of the leases running to the full time; it was thoroughly understood that they were then gone. Had five or six thousand acres been taken out of each run, he did not think anything would have been expected, but he did consider it hard that, when they took in some cases as much as 150,000 acres from one run at one swoop, there was not some compensation proposed for what he could not but call breach of faith. These lessees would no doubt have a right to compete for leases with others, but that was not an advantage, or a very slight advantage indeed. He would have been glad to have seen these resolutions take a wider range. He would have been glad to have seen some of the unsettled districts brought in. They had suffered in no way, and many of them derived quite as much benefit from railways and public works as the lands in the settled districts. A merely arbitrary line had been drawn, and he knew many runs close to it which had never been touched at all. Some of these might have been resumed, and by extending the area the operations of the law would have fallen much lighter on individuals. He still thought lessees were entitled to compensation for the breach of faith which shortened their leases by two years.

Mr. MORGAN said he had no objection to lessees getting compensation for improvements, although he did not consider they had any perfect right; still, as a matter of common justice, the country could afford to give them something. He denied *in toto*, however, that there was any breach of faith with the lessees, as the honorable member for the Darling Downs had implied. The Land Act of 1868, among other provisions, laid down that by the vote of both Houses the whole or part of the leased lands of any of the runs should be resumed. Where, then, was there any breach

of faith? He confessed he could not see it. He believed the Government meant to deal fairly, and not throw these runs open to selection without considering the interests of the present lessees, so that there should be the least possible hardship falling upon them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he rose merely to put the honorable member for Leichhardt right. The honorable member, in common with other honorable members, seemed to connect the second clause of the Bill passed last night with the resolutions now before the House. Those honorable members seemed to think that the resumptions would come under the operation of the clause as to offering leases by auction. The operation of that clause was not intended to apply to these resumptions, but only to runs that had expired by effluxion of time, or that had become determined by forfeiture. It was an error, therefore, to suppose that these were to be offered by auction at the present time. The honorable member for Warwick had just shown that in the Act of 1868 there was a proviso that any portion of these runs could be resumed; and it was under that Act, and under the terms of the lease, that they were resumed now. They were wanted for settlement, and the Government had a right to resume them.

Mr. McLEAN said he intended to vote for this resolution, because he knew that in the locality he had the honor to represent, there was an urgent necessity for land being thrown open for settlement. Not long ago, to his knowledge, there was not a single acre of good land to be had for settlement.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he supposed he should have to vote for these resumptions, but it looked to him as if they were all of a piece with the rest. He thought the honorable member for Warwick was mistaken. By the Act of 1868 these resumptions were not resumable except where there was a demand for the land, and he had understood that the lessees would always give way when there was a demand. What he understood, however, of these resumptions was, that they were taken from the present holders to be leased again. In that case, surely, they would be entitled to compensation, besides compensation for improvements. His own idea was, that this meddling with the leading interests of the colony would unsettle it; the squatter interest was already so much unsettled by the legislation of this session that he believed it would injure the whole colony; it would injure every shopkeeper and storekeeper. They could not afford to part with this interest at the present time. Of course, whenever there was land wanted for settlement it must be had, and he had been at issue with the leaseholders because he was always under the impression that there was not enough land open for the small farmers and men of that class to settle upon. He wished, therefore, to see the lands thrown

open; but now he began to think the thing was overdone, and that there might be too much land thrown open. That would be a great mistake indeed. There was, however, so much meddling with this interest that it would unsettle the whole colony, and in the present state of the colony they could not afford to meddle wantonly with this or any interest. Of course, the lands of the colony could not be locked up from the settlers and selectors, but he objected to the Government taking up the land for the mere purpose of re-selling and re-leasing it. The honorable member for Darling Downs very properly remarked that there were some runs bordering on the settled districts that required looking after. He, too, thought these resumptions might be extended very far from the settled districts. The difference between the settled and unsettled districts was after all only an imaginary line very often. There was, for example, the Kilkivan Run, and the next run, which he believed was Baramba, and which was in the unsettled districts, was the finest run in the country; and yet a stone might be thrown from one to the other. He could not see why such runs as that should not be taken in, because they shared in the benefits that were derived from railways and increased means of traffic. As they were revolutionising the whole of the lands of the colony, they might at least enlarge the boundaries of the settled districts.

Mr. FRYAR said it was rather singular, after the full discussion the Bill had in committee last night, that one honorable member after another should rise and speak on the assumption that these resumptions were to be offered at auction or re-lease. The fact was, the Bill showed very plainly that the Government had no power to offer these lands to lease, for the second clause provided that lands might be so offered when they expired, or when they were forfeited, but not otherwise. The position of the resumptions would be this:—If they were resumed at the present time, and with the law as it at present stood, the lessee would have no further claim or title to them; but if the Bill passed through committee last night became law, then the present lessee had a title, as set forth in the 6th clause:—

"6. Whenever the whole of the land comprised in any existing lease of any run in the said 'Settled Districts' shall have been heretofore or shall be hereafter resumed from lease under the provisions of the tenth section of the said 'Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868' the following consequences shall ensue that is to say—

"(1.) The land comprised in the lease and so resumed shall be subject to alienation under the provisions of the laws in force for the time being relating to the alienation of Crown lands and shall be liable to be withdrawn from the lease by such alienation or by reservation for any public purpose

- "(2.) All the provisions of the fourth section of this Act relating to the withdrawal of land from the leases therein mentioned shall extend and apply to the land so resumed and the lessees thereof
- "(3.) Except as aforesaid the lease of the run shall be deemed to be still subsisting and unaffected by such resumption."

The third sub-section of this clause seemed conclusive. There was no power whatever to offer these lands for lease. With respect to the resumptions in the Burnett district, he might inform the honorable member who had just spoken that the Baramba Run to which he referred was actually withdrawn at the present time. Notice was given more than six months ago, and the schedules had been laid on the tables of the two Houses for the appointed sixty days, and had not been objected to. This was the only way in which the lands could be resumed in the unsettled districts, and to his knowledge several runs had been resumed in this way. They could not be resumed by resolution of the two Houses, and a different process was required to be gone through with the settled and unsettled districts, because they were under different Acts. In passing the Act of 1868, honorable members who were then in the House would no doubt remember that there was a clause introduced providing that the land could be resumed during the ten years' lease, and if that clause was intended to be put in force when necessary, there was no repudiation in asking to resume them at the present time. If it was not intended to be put in force, it was very strange that one portion of the country and the House should be hoodwinked by a provision of that description being placed in the Bill. On the whole, seeing that the lands had been held eight years out of ten, and that it was considered necessary under that new system to make such a provision, the lessees had had a very fair run. It was well known to honorable members that the system had increased enormously; lands had been taken up that were never calculated upon; every year, although the lands had been well picked over and the best were taken up in the earlier years, showed a greater selection of lands. The selections last year were greater, both in number and area, than they had been since the passing of the Act in 1868. There were over 2,700,000 acres it appeared, and it might be naturally supposed that, as the best half was to be resumed on the first settlement and selection, the worst half or portion of it still remained, and that a large proportion of it would be country which, although available in some sense for the pastoral tenants, was hardly available for the uses of smaller settlers, who would, consequently, taking a smaller quantity, need land of a better quality. A great deal of this land would not be fit for selection, and the Bill passed last night, giving power to the lessees to retain what was not actually selected, was about as much

as they could hope to have at the present time. If these resolutions passed without any change in the law, evils would arise in the North where lands had been resumed, and was now, so to speak, in nobody's hands, the present holders being continually annoyed by other people bringing mobs of cattle through. This sub-section was introduced to meet difficulties of that kind. It certainly did not take away any of the present rights from the present holder, but gave them additional rights which they would not otherwise possess. Under all the circumstances, he thought it necessary at the present time to withdraw these lands from sale, and he hoped the resolution would pass.

Mr. PALMER said the Minister for Lands had not shown the necessity for the resumption of such quantities of land. He had never heard it pointed out, nor seen it shown, that there was a demand for it. Before putting these resolutions on the table, the honorable gentleman was bound to show the House conclusively that there was a demand for such an enormous quantity of land as was proposed to be resumed. As far as he (Mr. Palmer) could see, the word "resumption" was falsely used; "confiscation" would be a far better term for it, and much nearer the truth. He confessed he was at a loss to understand the policy of the Government. They appeared to him to be exceedingly liberal in one respect; while they resumed land in the style of a freebooter, utterly reckless of the consequences to the party at present holding the lands of the colony, according to their Land Bill they proposed to retail it in the spirit of a petty shopkeeper. That was their idea of liberality, and, so far from having a tendency to increase, it had a tendency to restrain population from settling on the land, and to hold the land down in small portions. What had been done on the Opposition side of the House to remedy this had been, after all, very little, and the Bill still remained a monument of the liberality of the Great Liberal Party. It appeared to him that so long as people called themselves liberal they might do what they liked: the most tyrannical acts would pass muster so long as they gave themselves the name of a Liberal Ministry. He maintained that it had not been shown in any way why such enormous resumptions as this should take place, while they very well knew that of the half of runs resumed over a great part of the colony, not an acre had been selected in many of them. Why, then, were they to unsettle the whole of the pastoral interests in the settled districts by resumptions of this kind? What was to be gained by them? The House had never been shown yet. It had been argued by some member who had addressed the House, that under the provisions of the 1868 Act, it was intended to resume those lands before the falling in of the leases. He was in the House at the time of the passing of the Act, and he could

state, without fear of truthful contradiction, that the idea then was that the lands would be resumed if they were wanted for sale, and no one would object to that; but it had never been shown to the House yet that they were wanted for sale, and that there was a demand for land, except in certain small limited localities. The Darling Downs had been the bane of the country in this way, and all legislation on the land question had been legislation for the Darling Downs. The Government were now proposing to resume the land before the end of the leases, and that was a clear breach of faith. It was a breach of the Act of 1868, no necessity having been shown for it. He did not intend to make a long speech upon this subject, for it was evident that any opposition in the House to the resumptions would be useless; those resumptions must go as they were proposed by the Government; but he would, before they were passed, enter his protest against them as utterly unnecessary and utterly uncalled for. If small resumptions had been taken up where they were wanted, more good would have been done by way of settlement than would be done by this enormous quantity of land being open for selection where no necessity had been shown for it.

The PREMIER said, with regard to the statement of the honorable member for Port Curtis respecting the demand for land, he could say there was a great demand for land for settlement in all those districts; and he might point out with respect to pastoral lessees demanding compensation for the lands resumed, that some honorable members opposite seemed to be of opinion that the ten years' leases were indefeasible; but they were nothing of the sort. They could be resumed under the Act of 1868, and section 14 of that Act gave the holders a pre-emptive right in consideration of their improvements. The honorable member for Dalby seemed to be under the impression that the pastoral lessees who held land under the ten years' leases should get an additional sum as compensation for improvements; but the Act of 1868 clearly enacted that they should have a pre-emptive right to the extent of 2,560 acres in consideration of improvements effected under the currency of their leases. In reference to the resumptions now proposed, he might state, that although the land might be resumed, it did not necessarily follow that the whole of that land should be thrown open simultaneously by proclamation. It would be thrown open as it was required for settlement. On the Darling Downs the whole of the lands proposed to be resumed were required for settlement; the whole of the resumptions in East Moreton were also required for settlement; and he believed if the whole of the lands in those districts were thrown open at once, it would be all snapped up before a month. He was glad to see the House was likely to agree to those lands

being resumed; and he was astonished at the opinion which had been expressed by the honorable member for Burke. If he recollected rightly, when that honorable member occupied a seat in that House before, he was an advocate for free selection all over the colony. He then wished to assimilate the land laws of this colony to those in force in New South Wales, and he (the Premier) was somewhat astonished at that honorable member stating that in some districts of the colony there was no demand for land. He could not understand how the honorable member could have so changed his opinions; and he had no doubt that some day or other they would see the whole of the lands thrown open for settlement as they were in New South Wales. He had no hesitation in saying—in fact, he could prove—that large numbers of men had gone over the Border into New South Wales in consequence of the greater facilities offered for settlement there by the lands being thrown open, and there being none open on the Darling Downs. That was well known to honorable members opposite.

MR. DE SATGE said he had only one remark to make on the amendment, and that was in reference to a matter which seemed to have been lost sight of. They proposed now to resume upwards of two million acres, and they forgot that the people of the country would have a further choice from eight million acres on one reserve under the Railway Reserves Bill, and altogether the land thrown open in those reserves would amount to perhaps twenty million acres. He would, therefore, ask the Government and the country whether they did not think that such an amount of land being thrown open in such a reckless manner, when it was not absolutely required, would not only cause the eyes to be picked out of it, but be certain to result in its depreciation? With regard to the arguments of the honorable the Premier, if he only knew the amount of land that had been taken up on some of the runs in the Wide Bay and Burnett district, of which the honorable member for Burnett could speak, he would see how unnecessary some of these resumptions were. Take Widgee, for instance; there had been no land taken up there at all in the resumptions already made, except by the lessees, and if they could judge by that run—if other runs were in the same position, it was evident there was not the slightest necessity for these resumptions on the scale proposed; and if half the amount were resumed in these districts—he did not refer to the Darling Downs—and the other half were allowed to remain in the hands of the lessees until expiration of the leases, it would fetch far better prices; while on the other hand, by throwing open these two million acres, and twenty million acres under the Railway Reserves Bill, that would depreciate the whole of the lands of the colony. If they had free selection all over the country, it

would be a measure of justice to some extent, and he could quite understand the honorable member for Burke advocating a measure of free selection in preference to this, which was picking out certain districts for spoliation throughout the colony, without any regard to system in throwing open the lands. He believed that the effect of throwing open these two million acres which were now proposed to be thrown open, and the eighteen or twenty million acres more that would be thrown open under the Railway Reserves Bill, would be to make too light of the lands of the colony and their value. They would part with them at a time when the colony was not in a position to afford investment in land, when the money market was depressed, and when there was a greater reduction in the value of the staple product of the colony than there had been for years. They were, therefore, taking the very worst time to throw open their lands—not for the poor man, or for the gradual introduction of labor and for settlement on the land, but it was one more measure to defeat the man of small capital, and to attract only the rich man.

Mr. IVORY said he was certain the honorable the Premier must have felt a thrill of satisfaction pass through him when the last speaker opened his remarks; he meant with regard to the compliment that honorable member paid to the remarks of the honorable the Premier by characterising them as arguments. That was about the last thing he would characterise them as; they were in the honorable gentleman's usual grandiloquent style, and he (Mr. Ivory) had got a short *resumé* of his speech, taken down almost *verbatim*, and if they called them arguments, then they had very much worse taste than he gave them credit for. He started by saying—one of his cogent arguments was that the Opposition were opposed to resumptions. Now, he (Mr. Ivory) was certain no member on that side of the House ever stated anything of the kind. They had all admitted the reverse; they had all admitted that resumptions were required, and they were perfectly willing to give them; they were perfectly prepared to agree to anything in fairness; but until some arguments were brought forward to show why such large resumptions should take place, they said the Government were not acting in the way they ought to do. Another of the honorable the Premier's remarks was, that although they were resumming the land, it did not necessarily follow that they were going to make use of it. If they were not going to make use of it, why ask for these resumptions—why disturb the present tenants at all? There was not the slightest doubt there were numerous runs comprised in this schedule upon which not a single selection had yet been made on the previously resumed half, and in that case what was the use of disturbing the tenure of the other half? Another statement of the honorable the Premier which was charac-

terised "as argument" was that he knew, and could prove, and it was notorious, that an enormous demand existed for land. Was that an argument? It was the kind of argument they were subjected to whenever that honorable gentleman addressed the House. He, last night, stated it was notorious that the honorable member for Port Curtis had stated on the second reading of a Bill that such and such was the case, and when that honorable member turned up "Hansard," he found he never made a remark on the subject. Those were the statements of the honorable the Premier, and they were of a piece with his usual arguments. Another of his arguments was, that he was astonished at the honorable member for Burke having changed his opinions. Now, he thought if honorable members paid any attention to the remarks of the honorable the Premier, which he was rather afraid they did not usually do, they would bear him out in saying that the observations he had taken down formed a very fair *resumé* of the arguments, so-called, of that honorable gentleman. He should not vote against these resumptions himself, and his opinions had been so often expressed on the subject, that it was no use expressing them again.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he wished to say a few words on the amendment, but before doing so, he would remark that possibly the most convenient way of dealing with this series of amendments was to go into committee upon them, and he should like the advice of the House upon that. There were at least seven or eight amendments, and it would be very inconvenient to make them in the House; yet it would be necessary to make them in that way, unless the honorable the Speaker could suggest a mode by which the convenience of the House would be consulted. He hoped there might be some expression of opinion on the subject, and it would probably be more convenient to move the Speaker out of the chair and take them in committee. He thought he was bound to say something in reference to the remarks which had fallen from the honorable member for Port Curtis. That honorable gentleman affirmed that he (the Secretary for Lands) had not advanced sufficient reasons as justification for those resumptions; and he must confess he had considered that, as those resumptions had been so long under the notice of honorable gentlemen, they must necessarily have been taken in connection with the whole argument on the land question, which had been so fully discussed; and it was hardly necessary for him to reopen that discussion. He was very much surprised to hear the honorable gentleman speak in the terms he had chosen to adopt with regard to the proposal of the Government now under consideration. He understood him to say it was a wholesale system of confiscation, or spoliation, or something of the kind.

Mr. PALMER: Hear, hear.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said: Then the honorable gentleman went on to assert that the whole policy of the Government, as evidenced by their action in connection with this matter, was one worthy of a peddling shopkeeper. Now, how are these two statements to be reconciled? One was that this was a grand system of confiscation, which after all only amounted to throwing open something under three millions of acres in this vast area of country they had to deal with. And yet the proposal to throw that area open for selection, in districts which had been occupied five-and-twenty or thirty years—which had been held long beyond the originally contemplated time of leasehold—was stigmatised as a process of confiscation.

Mr. PALMER: Hear, hear.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said: And yet at the same time they were treated to an illustration or assertion of the fact that this grand system of confiscation and spoliation, was being carried out in a spirit of peddling shopkeeping.

Mr. PALMER: I said the proceeds of the resumptions would be disposed of in a peddling way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said He did not know what the honorable gentleman considered a peddling disposal of an area of land. He had always supposed that the disposal of thousands of acres was by no means a peddling process.

Mr. DE SATGE: Eighty.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he should like to know why the honorable gentleman despised eighty acres? They found that in the case of the large majority of the homestead selectors, who were the many and not the few, and who had really taken up the land with the view to making their homes upon it, the average acreage that had been taken up by these men was exactly ninety-one acres. It was a matter of choice with them, and it was shown by figures extending over a series of years, that the average area which those men, who really made the country, chose to take up, was about ninety acres; and when the Government proposed to afford unusual facilities for settlement—facilities never yet proposed by that House, for the many, and not for the few, he said it was a great and a liberal measure which was not worthy to be stigmatised—as the honorable gentleman had been pleased to stigmatise it—as a peddling shopkeeping measure. It was one in which there was evidence of a desire to open out large tracts of country, and afford facilities to the many—to the large numbers of the laboring classes rather than to the few capitalists. But at the same time, they offered considerable facilities to the capitalists to settle under the Railway Reserves Bill. The honorable member for Normanby had referred to the land which would be thrown open

in those railway reserves, but those reserves had not yet been adopted; they had not yet received the final ultimatum of the House, but he hoped they would be carried into effect. And he would remind the honorable gentleman that the Government did not at present propose that these areas should be open for conditional selection; and when, on the one hand, they opened such a large area for sale by auction and for homestead selection, surely it was in accordance with the arguments of honorable members opposite that an equivalent proportion should be thrown open for conditional selection. At any rate, if they were not able to offer such a large area for conditional selection as in the railway reserves, why should objection be taken to what they now proposed to offer? After all, it was only three million acres. Exception had been taken to the absence of any statement on his part as to the demand for land, but he did not think it necessary to recapitulate statements which had been in the hands of honorable members during nearly the whole of the session. The report of the Under Secretary for Lands distinctly showed what was their exact position with regard to settlement, and it was not necessary for him now to refer in detail to that which every honorable member was conversant or familiar with. Altogether there had been an amount of inconsistency. He liked the open, candid way in which the honorable member for Kennedy sometimes argued his question; but he confessed he should be afraid to follow him in the direction he now proposed, simply because he was prepared to perform a far greater act of what he (the Secretary for Lands) supposed the honorable member for Port Curtis would call spoliation and confiscation—that was to give free selection all over the country. The Government preferred to have it at the present time within districts where population was settled, and where there was a demand for land. That was the sort of free selection they required. They did not wish to go into the comparatively unoccupied wilderness, and interfere with gentlemen there in their pastoral pursuits. That was no part of their proposal. They thought that portion of the country might be very well left for pastoral occupation; but in the settled districts, where there was a large demand for land, and where people preferred to select, it was justifiable to throw this area open. It was a wise policy to provide in this way for settlement when there was a demand for land for that purpose, and at the same time not to interfere unnecessarily with portions of the country to which that class of settlement had not extended. He thought honorable members should be a little more consistent in the illustration of their policy. He considered that this measure was a moderate one, and he hoped it might also prove to be a sufficient one. He saw nothing immoderate in proclaiming that the remaining portions of those lands should be thrown

open for settlement, when in doing so they did not interfere with the tenure of the present holders. Instead of making the resumptions in such a way that the leaseholds would be absolutely withdrawn, they preferred to leave the leasehold intact, but subject to the right of selection. If, therefore, the land was not selected, it would remain in the hands of the leaseholder until by effluxion of time the lease expired. That, surely, was not confiscation! That, surely, was not spoliation! And the honorable member for Port Curtis, who was thoroughly conversant with the question, tried to delude his followers into believing what he did not believe himself.

MR. PALMER: How do you know what I believe?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said the honorable gentleman knew this was a measure of justice which was inevitable, and why should he, at the head of his followers, lead them to suppose he really believed what he did not believe. He hoped, in discussing this question in regard to small matters of detail, the House might decide, on the honorable Speaker's advice, what course was best to be adopted to effect the object they had in view, in making whatever alterations might be necessary.

MR. WALSH confessed that he could not understand why these amendments were proposed until the honorable the Minister for Lands rose and made one of his extraordinary, extravagant, and spirited speeches, which was quite unnecessary, and then he saw the object of it, and why he had induced one of his colleagues to give him this opportunity of again addressing the House. The honorable gentleman had a very important duty to perform, and that was to bring forward other subjects, and so distract honorable members from the real question. He (Mr. Walsh) thought the honorable member for Port Curtis made a very reasonable speech, and other honorable members had also made reasonable speeches. That honorable member did not scream; he did not go into hysterics almost in his speech; and it was evident the honorable the Minister for Lands seemed to think there was something wanting in the debate; and he therefore got these amendments moved. There was no necessity whatever for it, and he believed the whole thing could have been passed by this time, had it not been, in the first instance, for the difficulty that honorable gentleman had raised, and which he (Mr. Walsh) felt must have depressed the honorable the Speaker. The amendments could be made in the House, and there was no necessity to go into committee, unless they wished to waste the whole evening, by giving every member an opportunity of talking as often as he pleased; and he believed that was what the Government desired—to get the measure defeated in that way. There was no necessity for the pretext of placing the honorable the Speaker in the

difficulty of advising them as to which was the best way to proceed. He did not think it was in the Speaker's province to do so, and he did not think the honorable the Speaker would undertake to say whether they should go into committee for the purpose of making these alterations. He said there was nothing in the practice of Parliament requiring it should be done in committee, and it seemed to him that the Government wanted time wasted again in committee, and have another real business day lost. And there was another reason. These amendments seemed to him to be the most extraordinary he ever heard of, and he trusted the honorable member for Mulgrave would pay attention to what he was saying. The Government now proposed an amendment, and what was the result of it? It was put in apparently because they had made a blunder by putting in the name of a run which did not exist, and probably a name which did not exist in the Land Office books; and they now proposed to amend it, and the result would be that it would be either "Taromeo," or "Tandary," according to the way that honorable member voted. He did not hesitate to say it was a threat, and if not intended as a threat, at any rate it could be carried out; and he doubted whether the honorable member could conscientiously vote at all if this amendment were allowed to be put. He threw back the words which were used by the honorable the Attorney-General last night—that it was one of the most indecent amendments that he ever heard emanate from any member on the other side of the House. Now, they understood the object of the amendment. As far as he could see, if the honorable member for Mulgrave voted against the Government, it would be "Taromeo," and if he voted with them, it would be "Tandary."

The motion was then put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the next amendment was in line—

THE SPEAKER: The honorable member has already proposed one amendment.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is an amended question.

MR. WALSH: The honorable member has spoken.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have not spoken on the amended question.

THE SPEAKER: The question now before the House is the same as the original question.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL said if that were the case, it would require a separate member to move every amendment. He respectfully submitted that as the question has been amended, it was a separate question.

MR. WALSH: Amended at the instigation of the Government.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL said it did not matter by whom. By general consent, the long list of runs had not been read through, but it was part of the main question, and

supposing there were thirteen amendments, and there were only twelve members present to move them, and one could not be moved—

Mr. J. SCOTT rose to a point of order. He submitted that the honorable member was entirely out of order, because, if the course he proposed were taken, the result would be that one member could move an amendment, and the whole House could speak on it, and the question would never be settled; there would be no end to it if that were admissible.

The SPEAKER: I am certainly of opinion that it would be more correct that each amendment should be moved by a separate member, unless the House consents to the course proposed.

Mr. THOMPSON said the honorable Minister for Lands had asked the opinion of the House as to how the Government should conduct their business, but he thought the Government should lead the House. Why did they not move for a committee where the amendments could be made? Surely they did not expect the whole House to wade through a matter like this.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

That on the 10th line, the figures "23,000" be omitted, with a view of inserting "22,100."

The SPEAKER: With the permission of the House, as there are numerous amendments, I will put the question in a different way. I will put the question—

That in the 10th line, the schedule be amended by omitting the figures "23,000" and inserting "22,100."

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McLEAN moved, by way of amendment—

That "and B" on the 11th line be omitted.

Mr. WALSH: Perhaps the honorable member will explain what it is for.

Mr. McLEAN said the reason why he moved the amendment was, because of the area being reduced.

Amendment put and carried.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE moved, as an amendment—

That in the 11th line "20,000" be omitted, with the view of inserting "19,000."

Question put and passed.

Mr. FRASER moved—

That the letter "B" in the 13th line be omitted.

Mr. WALSH rose to a question of privilege. It appeared that the Government supporters were moving amendments on the motion introduced by the Government, and, in fact, defeating it. He did not understand this kind of procedure at all. He wished to know if this was the measure of the honorable member for Bandanba, and whether the Government had abandoned it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he might be allowed to state in explanation, as

this was an inconvenient course of procedure, that if this amendment were carried, he would undertake to get the other amendments made in the other House.

Mr. PALMER said this was a very easy way of disposing of the matter—to get the amendments made in the other House. It was the first time he had ever heard a Minister of the Crown proposing such a thing. He would point out to the honorable the Minister for Lands that he had amended the schedule in the hands of honorable members; but what was he to do with the schedule on the table of the House? There was no amendment there.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This is only omitting parts of the schedule.

Mr. PALMER said they seemed to be getting the business into a very nice mess. It would be impossible for the clerks at the table to follow all these amendments which were being put to the House; and the proper plan for the honorable the Secretary for Lands to have pursued was to move that the House go into committee. He could not do it in the House; and it was ridiculous getting one member after another to move amendments they knew nothing about.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he understood that the amendments would be allowed to be made, and that the motion could then be put in its amended form.

Mr. PALMER: Who asked for it?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he understood the honorable the Minister for Lands to ask for it, and he was surprised the proposal was not acceded to.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: It was never asked for.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said it was the first time he had heard it had not been asked for, and it was the first time his honorable friend had heard of it. That was an obvious way of avoiding the difficulty. He submitted, as a matter of order, that every amendment made a new question, and there was no necessity for adopting the absurd practice of getting a different member to move every amendment. He would point out that the amendments were more in number than the number of members on that side of the House, and therefore, if this practice were held to be correct, all the amendments could not be made. He remembered last session, or the session before, the Speaker reading the whole motion through from beginning to end, and every amendment made it a new motion—an amended motion, and every member could speak on every amendment.

Mr. BELL thought justice would be done to these unhappy Crown lessees after all. He believed this was a measure of justice that had crept in by the direction of an all-providing Providence to oblige the reproduction of the schedule and fresh thirty days' notice.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It does not require any.

Mr. BELL said he heard it did not require any. Then it would be totally informal, so that there might be nothing done this session after all.

Mr. J. SCOTT asked the ruling of the honorable the Speaker as to whether the question had been formally put. He submitted the motion had never been formally put; it had never been read over either by the mover or the honorable the Speaker. They seemed to be getting very irregular in their proceedings. The motion ought certainly to have been read by the mover of it, and, at all events, it ought to have been read once by the honorable the Speaker. He remembered on a former occasion, when there was a long list, the Speaker said he would read it over once, and ask the permission of the House to allow that to stand for altogether. The whole of the motion had never been read, and it seemed to him their proceedings were altogether wrong.

The SPEAKER: I would point out that I understood the honorable the Minister for Lands, in moving the motion, to request the House to agree to taking the motion without reading the schedule; and since it was not read by the honorable member who moved the motion, I do not think I was bound to read it myself.

Mr. J. SCOTT said he understood the honorable member that the schedule should be read once, and that would do, not that it should not be read at all.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member did not read the schedule himself in moving the motion, and the motion I put is precisely the motion he moved; and I understood he requested permission, in order to save time, to allow the motion to be put without reading the schedule—taking the schedule as read.

Mr. PALMER said he should like to know, if the amendments were carried, how they were to get the schedule on the table amended?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There are no amendments in that schedule.

Mr. PALMER said he rather thought there were.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said the schedules were laid on the table merely for the information of the House.

Mr. PALMER said if the schedule were laid on the table merely for the information of the House, then they were resuming three million acres of land without any boundaries whatever. That was what the statement of the honorable the Minister for Lands amounted to. This schedule must correspond with the one which defined the boundaries; and if it did not, they were resuming three million acres anywhere and everywhere all over the colony, wherever they liked.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honorable gentleman misunderstood the motion. The boundaries were merely described in the schedule that had been laid upon the table.

If he would look at the schedule he would find "Colinton, East and West Run, 94,080 acres."

Mr. PALMER: Coochin Coochin.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said: Well, take Coochin Coochin. That stood "about 23,000 acres," as per descriptions marked A and B, and it had been amended by omitting "and B," and it now read "Coochin Coochin Run, 22,100 acres, as per description marked A," so that they knew exactly the boundaries. In the case of Nindooimba, an amendment had also been made so as to stand "19,000 acres, as per description marked A"; and these were the only two instances in which the area of each piece was not mentioned. It was only where the area was very small it was not mentioned; and all the other amendments would be with regard to pieces which were not required.

Mr. WALSH said the explanation of the honorable the Attorney-General went for nothing. If these amendments were made—and important amendments had had been made—then the provisions of the Act had not been complied with, that the proposed resumptions should be laid on the table of the House. That was as clear as possible. He wanted to see the resumptions pass; he wanted to see everything done in the way of throwing open the lands of the colony for the benefit of the people, and for exposing the Government for the way in which they do it.

Amendment put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought it would be more convenient to both sides of the House that the further consideration of the matter should take place in committee. He therefore moved:—

That the question be amended by the omission of all the words following the word "That," at the commencement, with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words "The Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider these resolutions."

Mr. PALMER said, before this was done, the motion should certainly be read once in the House. It had never been read yet, and he submitted that before the question could be put, they must have the motion before them, and recorded in the journals of the House. There was nothing before the House except what the honorable the Speaker had read; the rest was all a blank. He thought the sooner the Government got out of their difficulty the better, but there was one objection he had, which was, that the motion had never been read even by the Minister who had proposed it; they were actually amending a motion which had never been read to the House, and he did not think in his experience they had ever come across a case of the same sort before; why, they might just as well bring in a Bill and not

read it. He thought the Government had better retrace their steps.

Mr. WALSH said the point raised by the honorable member for Port Curtis was a most serious one. He did not know whether the Government considered that it was material that the practice of Parliament or their Standing Orders should be obeyed, but still, as the question had been raised by the honorable member, some notice of it should be taken by the honorable the Speaker. He should be very sorry to see the trouble of reading the schedule repeatedly inflicted upon the Speaker, but if an honorable member demanded that it should be read, he did not see how the honorable gentleman could help reading it. As the objection had been raised, he apprehended that the question must be formally and properly put. He recollected that on one occasion the then Speaker, the late Mr. Eliott, put it to the House, after a long motion had been read once by the mover, whether it was necessary for him to do so again, and the House consented to his not doing it. But in the present instance, an honorable member had called the Speaker's attention to the fact that the motion had not been properly put, and he (Mr. Walsh) should, for one, ever stand up for the forms of the House being observed. He thought the honorable Speaker was bound to rule that no amendment could be made until the motion had been formally put.

The SPEAKER said he thought that the point of order raised by the honorable members for Port Curtis and the Warrego was an important one, for although the honorable Minister for Lands had asked the House to consent to the schedule not being read, he thought it was very doubtful whether the House could consent to passing a motion without its first of all having been read.

Mr. PALMER said that if the motion had been read once it would suffice, but it had not been read at all. He did not say that it must be read from the chair, but it must be read by somebody. He did not wish to give the honorable the Speaker the trouble of reading it, but he thought the honorable Minister for Lands should have read it, and that the Speaker should then have followed the example of a former Speaker, and have asked the House to accept the motion as read.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said that in order to save any further discussion, he had better read the motion, but he trusted his reading it once would be deemed sufficient. The motion was:—

That, in order to encourage the settlement of population in the Settled Districts of the colony, and in the pursuance of section 10 of "*The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868*," this House resolves to resume from the leases of the undermentioned runs the areas hereinafter specified, as described in the Schedule laid on the table of this House, of the lands proposed to be resumed from the runs in the said districts.

SETTLED DISTRICT OF MORETON.		
		To be resumed from the
94,080 acres		Colinton East and West Run.
120,320 "		Mount Stanley East and West Run.
107 sq. m.		Kilcoy Run.
120 "		Eskdale Run.
127 "		Cooyar Run.
59,670 acres		Cressbrook Run.
150 sq. m.		Emu Creek Run.
6,601 acres		Waverly Run.
33,000 "		Tandary Run.
About 23,000 "		Coochin Coochin Run, as per descriptions marked A and B.
" 20,000 "		Nindooimba Run, as per descriptions marked A, B.
" 38,000 "		Telemon Run.
" 44,000 "		Durundur Run.
" 11,600 "		Bromelton Run.
" 11,000 "		Grantham Run.
" 18,000 "		Tarampa Run, as per descriptions marked A, B.
" 72,000 "		Mount Brisbane Run.
" 26,000 "		Buaraba Run.
" 11,500 "		Undullah Run.
" 35,000 "		Helidon Run, as per descriptions marked A, B.
" 52,000 "		Fassifern Run.
" 58,500 "		Melcombe Run.
" 58,000 "		Franklin Vale Run.

SETTLED DISTRICT OF DARLING DOWNS.		
About 47,500 acres		Canning Downs Run.
" 6,850 "		Goomburra Run, as per descriptions marked A, B, C, D.
" 15,450 "		Westbrook Run, as per descriptions marked A, B.
" 51,600 "		Cecil Plains Run, exclusive of 29,400 included in the Western Railway Reserve.
" 9,300 "		Ellangowan Run, as per descriptions marked A, B.
" 11,000 "		St Ruth Run, exclusive of 20,000 included in Western Railway Reserve.
" 35,000 "		North Branch Run.
" 83,000 "		Yandilla Run.
" 54,000 "		Tummalville Run.
" 12,600 "		Talgai Run, as per descriptions marked A, B, C.
" 6,800 "		Pilton Run.
" 74,560 "		Rosalie Plains Run.
" 40,624 "		Jondaryan Run, as per descriptions marked A, B, C.
" 46,500 "		Canal Creek Run.
" 9,180 "		Peel's Plains or Felton Run, as per descriptions marked A, B, C.
" 18,500 "		Eton Vale Run, as per descriptions marked A, B, C, D.
" 37,000 "		Beauaraba Run.
" 81,000 "		Jimbour Run, as per descriptions marked A and B, and exclusive of 92,000 acres included in the Western Railway Reserve.

About 13,798 acres	Clifton Run, as per descriptions marked A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H.
" 70 sq. m.	East Prairie Run.
" 30,000 acres	Irvingdale Run.
" 128,380 "	Rosenthal Run.
" 8,270 "	South Toolburra Run.
" 10,094 "	West Prairie Run.

SETTLED DISTRICT OF WIDE BAY AND BURNETT.

28,500 acres	Conandale Run.
54,300 "	Tahiti Run.
14,350 "	Toweran Run.
54,080 "	Kolonga Run.
72,080 "	Molangul Run.
50 sq. m.	Moolboolomon Run.
17,280 acres	North Kenilworth Run.
16,000 "	Cambrook Run.
58,000 "	Teebar Run.
9 sq. m.	Glenbar Run.
12,870 acres	Warrah Run.
107 sq. m.	from Gigoomgan Run.
16,000 acres	Tantitha Run.
25 sq. m.	Sarahanna and Agnes Vale Run.
6,000 acres	Lower Doongal Run.
32 sq. m.	Toomolongyore Run.
66 "	Stanton Harcourt Run.
20,200 acres	Doongal Run.
197 sq. m.	Yabba Run.
39,000 acres	Walla Run.
14,000 "	Toogoom Run.
8,360 "	Tagigan Run.
69,300 "	Kolan Run.
34 sq. m.	Imbil Run.
65 "	Munduran Run.
23,350 acres	Curra Run.
8,300 "	Kulogum Run.
10,960 "	Clifton Run.
About 43½ sq. m.	Bingera Run.
" 43,000 acres	Widgee Widgee Run.
" 34,000 "	Gin Gin Run.
" 38,900 "	Kilkivan Run, as per descriptions marked A, B.
" 16,500 "	Wonbah Run.

With the permission of the House, he would add the following words as a second resolution:—

(2.) That the foregoing resolutions be communicated to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message, in the usual form.

The question was then put, when

Mr. WALSH asked what had become of the amendments which had been made?

The SPEAKER said that they were now starting afresh from the beginning.

Mr. WALSH said that by solemn motion of that House, certain amendments had been agreed to, and they could not ignore them at the wish of a Minister. Those amendments were absolutely records of the House, and therefore the motion could only be put with the amendments.

The SPEAKER said that the motion had never been put in its proper form, and that being the case, no amendments could be made in it.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that the motion, as put by the honorable Speaker, was not the motion read by the honorable Minister for Lands at all, who had read it with the amendments.

Mr. J. SCOTT said he thought there was only one course open to the honorable Minister for Lands which was, to withdraw the motion and introduce another in its place; the proceedings had been altogether irregular.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS apprehended that, although in reading the resolutions he had recognized the amendments made, yet the honorable the Speaker having ruled that there was an informality, they had to commence again.

Mr. PALMER raised a point of order that the honorable Minister for Lands had not read the motion at all as it was on the paper, and he had called attention to the fact; but still the honorable gentleman had read the resolutions with the amendments in them. The honorable Speaker, however, had read them as they appeared on the paper. He did not see any other course but to withdraw the motion.

Mr. WALSH said he had been waiting for an opportunity to offer another reason why the honorable Minister for Lands should withdraw the resolutions. It was proposed by them to resume sixty-five miles from his run, Munduran, or about the last acre left, although not one had been purchased; but the description given in the schedule was that of a boundary fully one hundred miles away.

The SPEAKER thought the remarks of the honorable member would be more in order when the motion was under consideration. At the present time a point of order had been raised that the honorable Minister for Lands had not read the motion as it was on the paper; the honorable member had certainly read it with one or two alterations.

Mr. WALSH said the Government must withdraw the resolution, and bring it in in a new form; but he was going to point out that while they proposed to withdraw sixty-five square miles of his run, to the very last acre he believed, they had actually described the boundaries as some 100 miles away. So imperfect was their measure, that they had not in one single direction indicated the boundaries of the land they intended to resume within 100 miles of where they lay. He confessed he was doing himself an injury in thus exposing the error, but he would prefer suffering that to seeing an injustice done to the colony. The description of Munduran Run was:—"It commences at the summit of Mount Larcom"—that was 100 miles from Munduran Run—"bounded on the south-west by the Mount Larcom Range"—that was about 120 miles south-west of the run. Then the description went on to a place which everybody knew—"passing through a tree marked MXII to the shore of the Nar-

rows." The Narrows, as was well known, was the water highway between Gladstone and Rockhampton, and that was at least 100 miles beyond the boundary of his run. He mentioned this subject to induce the Government to withdraw their resolution, for he could point out imperfections in other descriptions of runs that would be affected by this persecuting measure. It was something amazing that the Government, while they proposed to take away his run to the very last acre, had described the boundaries of a run 100 miles from it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, as it was the honorable the Speaker's ruling that consideration of the resolution must commence *de novo*, he supposed the amendment that the House should go into committee must be proposed again. He begged, therefore, to move as an amendment to the original question,

That the question be amended by the omission of all the words following the word "That," at the commencement, with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words "The Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider these resolutions."

Mr. WALSH said it would be a more rational motion to propose that the House should proceed to the Orders of the Day. The Government were evidently in a muddle, and had been so for hours, and now they proposed to go into committee, simply that the House might enjoy a few hours' confusion while the Chairman of Committees was in the chair. The Government, in short, wanted to waste another evening. Having discovered that they had been bungling all the night, it would be much better for them to move that the Orders of the Day be read. Let the House get out of the entanglement and do something for the good of the country; at present they were preparing to heap confusion upon confusion. He could see that the Government knew so little of their duty in connection with this matter, and there was so little sympathy on the part of their followers, that when they got into committee they would be in such a towering mess that the Speaker would have to be sent for sooner or later to hear the announcement that no progress had been made. Out of kindness to the Government, therefore, he moved—

That the Orders of the Day be now read.

Mr. IVORY said he hoped it would not be said any more that the members on his side of the House obstructed the business of the country. It must be patent to the House that the present Government were unable to conduct the business of the country, and had been systematically making a series of muddles during the whole session. They had brought in Bills in a wrong manner; one Bill was brought in twice or three times, and had to go back again; and now they had brought in schedules which were absolutely

ridiculous on the face of them, and had got into an entanglement out of which they were unable to get. He hoped the country would exactly understand how the delay in the business of the country arose, and see that it was not owing to the Opposition, but owing to the gross incompetency of the present Ministry.

Mr. HALY said the Government ought to have taken his advice and withdrawn the resolutions early in the evening, for he was convinced even then that they knew nothing about them. They were in a fog then, and had got into a worse fog since, and did not know how to get out of it. If they took his advice, they would withdraw the resolutions and reconsider them, and bring them in again, not this, but next year, for he was certain Christmas would arrive before they would get out of their present fog.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he regretted they had not met with a little more forbearance from the other side of the House in this matter. The motion was unusually long, and involving many details seldom given while the House was out of committee. He took occasion to point out this fact when he submitted the resolution, and it was quite true a certain amount of informality attached to the proceedings through his not reading the resolution. But that was condoned by the House, and no serious objection was taken to it, and the business proceeded with the consent of the House. It was, perhaps, somewhat of a violation of the practice of the House; but it was tacitly admitted, and the debate went on. Then the honorable member for Port Curtis raised the question formally, that the motion should be read, and that objection must be considered effective. If it was a mistake at all, it was one committed by the toleration of the House. He had been permitted to proceed, and it was hardly fair that after the proceedings had arrived at the stage they did, objections should be taken. He contended that, it being an unusual motion, he was not wrong in submitting the matter for the Speaker's opinion, as he now did. He (the Minister for Lands) wished to mention, now that the member for Port Curtis had taken exception to his not having read the motion, that he was proceeding to do so when the honorable the Speaker ruled that, there having been an informality in the proceedings, any amendment must be ignored, and the proceedings begun *de novo*. Under these circumstances, he might claim the toleration of the House, and he thought his honorable colleague was not wrong in submitting his amendment; it would, perhaps, be best now if the subject were at once discussed in committee. He frankly admitted the error pointed out by the honorable member for Warrego respecting the Munduran Run. Though responsible in the House for everything connected with his department, it would be at once seen that this was an error committed in the Survey Office, and no doubt

some other run of the same name had been described. This error, of course, must be remedied, but that was no reason why the whole of the proceedings should be stopped. He hoped, therefore, the House would agree to going into committee.

Mr. PALMER said the speech of the Minister for Lands showed that they must not go on with the subject before the House until the schedules had been taken back to the Survey Office. If such a gross mistake as this occurred, how did they know that every one of the items was not equally incorrect? With such a mistake as that pointed out by the honorable member for Warrego, the House had no guarantee of the accuracy of anything. He and other members on that side were well aware that the Munduran Run was wrongly described, and that what was given was probably a description of Mount Larcomb Run, near Gladstone. Certainly it was not a description of Munduran Run. The whole of the schedules must therefore be returned to the Survey Office, and be compared with the original surveys, and then come back to the House guaranteed by the head of the Survey Office as correct. If the honorable member for Warrego had not had the honesty and manliness to point out the error, his run would not have been resumed at all. The honorable member was quite right in saying that his run could not be within a hundred miles of the run described in the resolution. If this glaring mistake could occur in a run they knew of, how many others might there not be equally incorrect? The Minister for Lands must not only take the schedule back, but must not bring it forward until he could guarantee that it was correct in every particular. With respect to the forbearance spoken of by the Minister for Lands, it was the duty of the Government to conduct the business of the House; but the way in which the present Government conducted their business was to get into every conceivable muddle during the whole of the session. There had never been a Ministry in Queensland amongst whom so many blunders had been made. The Government blundered systematically and apparently on principle, and it was about the only principle they had got. Another irregularity slurred over by the Minister for Lands was not only that he did not read the motion at the proper time, but that when he did read it, he did not read it as it was printed, as the Speaker did. This was another thing probably demanding the forbearance of the House. In his opinion they had forborne enough, and in a serious matter of this sort, it behoved the House to be very careful in resuming lands with such boundaries as they had had a specimen of. If the House did not take care, the Government would be resuming runs in the very centre of Queensland.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that, had he known the blunders in the schedule had been so

glaring as they were, he would not have promised to vote for the resolutions. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government told him he had changed his mind, because he said he would vote for these resumptions. He could not see from what source the Premier had obtained the information that he had changed his mind as to the necessity of free selection. He was well aware that if the honorable gentleman had no facts of his own, he knew how to create them, and he (Mr. O'Sullivan) must assure the House and the country that the honorable gentleman had done so on this occasion. Had he first heard the speech of the Minister for Lands, it was very doubtful whether he would have committed himself to saying that he would vote for the resolutions. The honorable gentleman had no grounds whatever for saying that he had been unfairly treated by the Opposition. The honorable member for Warrego had put him on the right road, and he ought to be very grateful. When he (Mr. O'Sullivan) said at an earlier portion of the evening that he would vote for these resolutions, he was under the impression that they would be thrown open to free selection; but, instead of that, he found now from the Minister for Lands that they would not be open for selection at all, nor would the railway reserves be open for free selection.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the Minister for Lands had further stated that eighty acres of land were enough for any settler.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did not say that.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said a Chinaman could not live upon that quantity of land, and the most industrious men in the colony, the Germans, could not do so. The honorable gentleman informed the House that the average amount of land taken up under the Act of 1868 was ninety-one acres, but the reason of that was evident—the settlers could get no more. It was not from want of a will, but from want of means in many instances. He knew himself, for a fact, that men had refused more than eighty acres, when they were ready and anxious to take up double. In reality, therefore, it was no benefit at all to the colony to have these resumptions; the only thing to do was to have them thrown open to free selection. He could assure the honorable the Premier that he had not changed his mind upon this point. On looking around him he found that there were two members on his side who were in the House when the Act of 1868 was passed, and he went in for free selection; and he could well remember that the honorable members for Warrego and Port Curtis were in favor of free selection; and since then he had heard the honorable the leader of the Opposition say it would be a good thing for the colony when every acre was open to selection. In the face of these facts, how could the Premier say he

had changed his mind; and why should the honorable gentleman think it worth while to make a statement which, from his position, would go forth to the country, about such a humble individual as himself? He (Mr. O'Sullivan), however, had not the slightest notion of allowing such an assertion to go forward without a direct contradiction.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honorable member for Warrego had discovered what was no doubt a mistake in the schedule, but he had not pointed out any others, and probably there were no more. He admitted that, it having been pointed out that there was a serious mistake in the schedule, it was desirable the House should have an opportunity of satisfying itself that there were no other mistakes. He rose, therefore, to suggest that the debate should be adjourned till to-morrow. By that time there would be full particulars of every run, and the House would be in a position to find out whether there were any further mistakes. The honorable member for Warrego had moved a motion that would have the effect of adjourning the matter for an indefinite time.

MR. WALSH: But that is not my intention.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I know nothing about intentions. I only state the fact.

MR. WALSH: The Attorney-General is imputing unworthy motives. That is not my intention.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was imputing no motive whatever. He merely stated that the result of the honorable member for Warrego's motion would be the indefinite postponement of the question. The matter as it was would not come under their consideration for a week, as no notice of motion could be given till to-morrow.

MR. PALMER: It will take you till next week to get the corrections made.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was authorised to state that the Government would, to-morrow, be in a position to correct the errors and give particulars of every run on the schedules. If the honorable member for Warrego's motion was carried, the session would be protracted for, at least, a week, and probably more. By the Standing Orders of the other branch of the Legislature, every matter of this nature was referred to a Select Committee, and there were sixty or seventy matters upon which evidence would have to be taken. He suggested, therefore, that the honorable member for Warrego should withdraw his motion, and allow the debate to be postponed till to-morrow. If the honorable member would not do that, let them put the matter to a division whether the House would allow the matter to be postponed indefinitely, or till to-morrow.

MR. THOMPSON thought enough had been said about the forbearance which the Minister for Lands asked them to exercise, and he would say nothing more on that subject. What he wanted to do was to point out

that these resumptions were not made in the way they should be. The resolution before the House referred to the schedule, and the schedules gave a good deal of extraneous information; now, he did not see how they were to amend the motion without amending the schedule. If the Government took the matter back, they would have the advantage of bringing it on again in an amended form, and putting the whole thing *in globo*. It was a very cavalier way of resuming people's properties to put a schedule on the table of the House with the faults which had been exposed by the honorable member for Warrego. When he (Mr. Thompson) had once to introduce a similar proposition, he had a separate resolution for each run, and the resolution distinctly pointed out the particular piece of land which was to be taken. Some of these schedules commenced by stating "Part of this run is situated in a timber reserve"; or, "this resumption is exclusive of alienated land," and so on. This was not at all the solemn instrument of resumption that should take place on an occasion of this sort. Of course, if they were going to make a wholesale sweep, the shorter it was and the less said about it the better. This only showed the necessity of carrying out the forms of the House, because if the motion had not been read, they should never have thought of looking at the schedule, and that mistake would probably never have been discovered. He thought if the Government were trying to be a reform Government in reference to Parliamentary practice, the less they said about it the better, especially after what they saw yesterday.

Question—That the Orders of the Day be now read—put.

MR. WALSH: My motion was that we proceed to the Orders of the Day.

The SPEAKER: I put the motion in the form given in the Standing Orders. The question is—That the Orders of the Day be now read.

The House divided with the following result:—

AYES, 16.

Messrs. Palmer, Bell, Thompson, Walsh, McIlwraith, Macrossan, Haly, Amburst, J. Scott, Stevenson, Graham, W. Scott, Ivory, O'Sullivan, DeSatgé, and Buzacott.

NOES, 18.

Messrs. Douglas, Thorn, Dickson, McLean, Stewart, Griffith, Tyrel, Beattie, Groom, Fraser, Bailey, Murphy, Fryar, Kingsford, Morgan, Edmondstone, MacDonald, and Footc.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said, in order that this matter might be disposed of, he moved:—

That the debate be adjourned.

MR. PALMER: Till when?

A MEMBER of the Government: To-morrow.

Mr. WALSH thought the Government should take sufficient time to consider the matter, because he was sure they would be found committing the same blunder to-morrow as they had to-day. He was quite certain that there would not be time in the Land Office to correct the many blunders that existed in these descriptions by to-morrow; and besides that, members of the House required more than twenty-four hours to look into these propositions of the Government. He would ask members of the Opposition whether, seeing the position they had been placed in this evening by the confessed blunder of the Government, they would be able to get anything like the information they required by three or four o'clock, or any time to-morrow, to enable them to approach the subject and deal with it in a statesmanlike way. If honorable members were going to vote simply because they were members of the House, whether they were right or wrong, of course, they did not want any information; but there were honorable members who did want information, and he said twenty-four hours was not sufficient time to allow. He thought the Government should take at least a week to endeavor to correct the glaring blunders which existed in the descriptions of these proposed resumptions. In the Darling Downs district there were no doubt blunders, and more than that, there was gross favoritism applied to those runs; and that, he believed, was what the Government were afraid of, and they wanted to prevent honorable members from having time to consider it.

Mr. BELL thought it would be almost necessary now to send out a staff of surveyors to make a fresh survey of all these runs, instead of taking the descriptions from the existing maps and plans, because it was impossible at present to say whether these mistakes had arisen in the office in taking the descriptions from the plans, or in the original surveys. The surveyors might have made blunders, and he thought before the House could be thoroughly satisfied, the Government should commence *de novo*. It would be quite time enough to bring this resolution in next session. He thought it would keep very well until next session, and if there was any moiety or portion of these lands that the Government found it absolutely necessary to dispose of in other ways than by selection or sale, and it should be so dealt with, they would have no difficulty in getting a resolution passed to meet such object. He quite agreed with the honorable members for Port Curtis and Warrego, that correct descriptions were of vital importance, and they now required actual and accurate descriptions made by surveyors upon the land. He thought the Government ought to think of this seriously, and if they did, he had no doubt they would get the support of some honorable members on that side of the House.

Mr. GRAHAM said the honorable the Attorney-General had stated that that probably was the only error in the schedule, but he should strongly advise the Government to take time. From the extremely jubilant and airy manner of the honorable member for Warrego, he (Mr. Graham) had no doubt he had another trump in the heel of his fist, and that he had only been restrained from going further to-night by the fear that he would utterly overwhelm the Government.

Mr. PALMER said he presumed there would be no objection to the adjournment of the debate, seeing the muddle the Government had got into; but he could not see how they would be prepared to go on with the question to-morrow. The schedule would have to be corrected and reprinted, even from the amendments that had been made through the bungling of the Government that evening.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. PALMER said the Attorney-General had got the Government into more muddles in the conduct of the business of the House than any other member of it. He stated that without fear of contradiction—of sound contradiction—that the Attorney-General, by his *visi prius* proceedings in that House, had got the Government into more muddles in the conduct of the business of the House than all the other members in it put together. He had done it over and over again this session.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If you repeat it often enough, people will believe it.

Mr. PALMER said they believed it now, both in the House and out of it.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No, they don't.

Mr. PALMER: Who made the mistake that a Bill that had been sent down by message could be read a first time without going into committee? Was that the Attorney-General? Who made the assertion that it was not at all necessary to pass the preamble of a Bill? Was that the Attorney-General?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And right too.

Mr. PALMER said, but he, the Attorney-General, had to give in though. The honorable gentleman might be very good in court; he (Mr. Palmer) had no doubt he was, but he knew very little about the conduct of business in that House. He said the schedule must be properly printed, and the Government could not have all the descriptions in this schedule compared and corrected and reprinted by to-morrow. If they chose to adjourn the debate, and brought it on again before they were properly prepared, they would get into another muddle with just the same result.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he thought the motion might stand for the adjournment of the debate until to-morrow, but he freely admitted that the Government would not bring the business on again until it was in a complete form. He emphatically expressed his regret that the gross mistake which had been pointed out in the schedule

should have occurred. It ought never to have appeared in the schedule, and he was happy that the fault had been pointed out; and he should take care that when the schedule and the full details were again before the House, they were in proper condition; whatever time it might take, he should not bring them before the House until they were.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he had moved the adjournment of the debate without making a speech, and he wished to know if he could speak now? He believed he could.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Speak, speak.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he only rose because he thought the honorable member for Port Curtis had tried to take an advantage of him when he could not speak. That honorable member had made an assertion, which he (the Attorney-General) interrupted by saying that if he repeated it often enough it would be believed; and that was the reason, he supposed, why the honorable member would go on repeating it. It was a custom of his to make assertions, and when they were denied, to repeat them again, and as he was very persevering, he might go on repeating assertions that were groundless until at last they were believed. The honorable member was pleased to charge him with wasting a great deal of the time by mistakes in the conduct of the business of the House; but he (the Attorney-General) was not aware that he was responsible for the conduct of the business of the House. The honorable member was unable to give any instance, but he was pleased to say there were two, one in reference to a Bill sent down to that House.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Two Bills.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said there might have been two Bills, but it was the same thing. They were both sent down by message, and they were read a first time without having been introduced in committee; and whose fault was that? There was only one precedent to guide them in that House, and that was a precedent established by the honorable member for Port Curtis himself, which they were advised to follow, and did follow, and then they were wrong. Were the Government, or was he to blame for that, when the only precedent they had was one set by the honorable member for Port Curtis, who set himself up to-night as such a paragon of perfection in the manner of conducting the business of the House? In the other case, the Chairman of Committees ruled in contradiction to the only authority he (the Attorney-General) could find, that the enacting part of a Bill was part of the preamble. That was a matter on which they could easily agree to differ, and he maintained his opinion, and the Chairman of Committees could enjoy his. That was the only point on which the honorable member could make his assertion, and

he had no doubt he would go on repeating it for the next six months, until at last he could get somebody to believe it. He was glad to have this opportunity of pointing out that it would be just as well for the honorable member not to make such accusations so freely, unless he had some better foundation for them. He did not know any other instances the honorable member could allude to, and if there were more, no doubt they would be stated, and would be found to have about the same foundation.

Mr. PALMER: One to-night.

Question—That the debate be adjourned—put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved—

That the resumption of the debate stand an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

He said this was merely a formal motion. It did not necessarily follow that the debate would be taken to-morrow.

Mr. WALSH said, after the announcement of the honorable the Minister for Lands, he thought he might as well promise that it would not be taken to-morrow.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: He said so.

Question put and passed.

VICTORIA BRIDGE BILL.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said in introducing this Bill to the House for its second reading, he had no wish to re-open the old vexed question concerning the action of former administrations, or of the Corporation of Brisbane in the past. He had no desire to inflict on the House a recital of the history of the past in respect to this subject, and to occasion a debate which would be composed of apologists for the Government on one side and apologists for the Corporation on the other. However much they might, in looking at past occurrences, deplore what had taken place, and regard it as something to be avoided in the future—inasmuch as he believed that both by former administrations and by the Corporation there had been a great want of ordinary business foresight and vigilance shown in the construction of this bridge—it was not his intention to dwell upon that. He proposed simply to point out to the House the reasons which had induced the Government, during the present session, to introduce this Bill, and also to put before the country what the Government conceived to be the equitable considerations not only connected with this bridge, but also with similar constructions throughout the colony. The present Bill was introduced in pursuance of a resolution of that House, arrived at on the 2nd of September last year, to this effect:—

“That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, for the purpose of considering the following resolutions, viz.:—

“That in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when the Victoria Bridge, across the

River Brisbane—being one of the main thoroughfares of the colony—together with the lands granted towards the payment of the cost thereof, and all tolls and revenues incidental to or accruing from both, should be transferred from the Corporation of Brisbane and vested in the Government of the colony, with a view to the discharge by the said Government of the obligations incurred in respect to the said bridge and the extinction of the tolls thereon.

“That an Address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency may direct a Bill to be brought into this House to give effect to the foregoing resolutions.”

Upon these resolutions, which were arrived at without division, the present action of the Government was based in presenting this Bill, which was now submitted for second reading. One principle, he might say, which induced the Government to arrive at the conclusion that it was desirable that the bridge should be taken over, was this:—That they considered the whole question of its position, both at the time of its construction and at present, might be regarded as that of a national work, and not one of a purely local character. They were of opinion, and he thought it would be borne out by a perusal of the report of the committee which had been appointed to inquire into the construction of the bridge, that during the time of its construction, the Government of the day so far regarded it a national work that they insisted, and perhaps properly so, upon its construction being carried out with a view to the general requirements of the colony, and not solely with regard to its local character, or for local benefit. And there was no doubt that the action of the Government of the day in so regarding it, and providing for its being part of the main thoughtfare of communication from the seaboard to the interior of the South-western districts of the colony, created a considerable item in the cost of its construction; and in that light he contended that it might fairly be regarded as having been originally intended to be a work of a national character, and not entirely of a local character. They had now, both at home and in the colonies, outgrown the principle that those who used or traversed roads ought to pay for the cost of their construction by the means of tolls. Tolls in their day answered remarkably well, and no doubt did good service; but still that principle was considered to be one they had left far behind, and that restriction upon the ordinary traffic on their highways had been long looked upon with disfavor. Now, if the bridges which had been constructed by the Government in the past, and which were now being constructed on a scale of considerable magnitude in different portions of the colony, were constructed with a view to afford increased facilities for communication without the restriction of tolls, he could not see on what grounds that restriction should be maintained on the Victoria Bridge if it

were taken over and considered as a national undertaking. Very recently the Government had constructed works of a somewhat similar character, namely, over the Condamine at Warwick, over the Pioneer at Mackay, over the Mary, and they had it in contemplation to construct one over the Fitzroy, besides various other bridges of a smaller description, such as those over the Logan, the Brisbane, and the Albert; and if those bridges were to be constructed for public convenience, and were not to be encumbered with tolls, he repeated that in that case, if it were deemed, in the wisdom of the House, desirable to take over the Victoria Bridge as a national work, it certainly ought also to be exempt from tolls. Whilst he did not wish to introduce any matters that need not necessarily be imported into the debate, in reference to the claims of the Brisbane Corporation; and whilst he did not wish it to be understood for one moment that he appeared there as the champion of those claims, or wanted to obtrude them before the House; still, to afford the House some knowledge of the financial position of matters connected with the bridge, he should be compelled to refer to the report of the select committee to whom was referred in the previous session the petition of the Brisbane Corporation on the subject. He might preface any remarks he would have to make by saying that that report was drawn up in direct opposition to the wishes and opinions of the chairman, who thought it did not go far enough in some respects, and that it introduced matters which ought not to have been introduced. He believed, therefore, that it would be conceded by honorable members that he was acting very fairly when he selected, as the basis of his arguments, a report which might be considered as unfriendly to the claims of the Brisbane Corporation. The committee, when dealing with those claims, obtained a large amount of information with regard to the endowment in lands due to the Corporation, but which they had not received; and stated in their report that under the Parliamentary Buildings Act of 1864, lands were sold realising £27,846 10s., on which the Corporation received no endowment. The report proceeded further to say—

“That portions of the land included in ‘*The Parliamentary Buildings Act*,’ were withdrawn from its operation by ‘*The Brisbane Waterway Act*’ and ‘*The Brisbane Drainage Act*.’”

Also, that through the operation of the Parliamentary Buildings Act, some valuable lands were withdrawn from the operation of the Municipalities Act, and that the Corporation would be thereby deprived of the moiety which would, if those lands were sold, be due to them. The sixth clause of the report also said—

“That the works in connection with this bridge were commenced on plans and specifications differing from those approved of by the Governor in

Council. That a year after the contract for the bridge was entered into the Municipal Council was requested by the Government to modify their plans and to bring the design more in accordance with the requirements of 'The Brisbane Bridge Act,' so far as relates to the navigation of the river by sea-going vessels. That negotiations followed, and finally the Bridge Committee agreed to amend their plans by making the road-way six feet higher, the swing-bridge larger, and to construct a free wharf above the bridge, whilst the Government agreed to ask Parliament to grant certain additional lands to the Corporation. That the Corporation carried out the alterations at a cost estimated by your committee at £16,000, and built the wharf as required, but did not raise the floor of the bridge, and the Government did not ask Parliament to make further grants of land."

The report contained, also, the following recommendations:—

"Your committee, therefore, recommend that the above £16,000, additional cost of the bridge entailed by the alterations suggested by the Government, and the cost of the free wharf should be repaid to the Corporation.

"7. The committee further recommend:—

"That after deducting the amount paid to the Corporation under 'The Brisbane Waterway Act,' and the value of the lands granted under 'The Brisbane Drainage Act' from the amount received for lands sold under 'The Parliamentary Buildings Act,' (£27,846 10s.) half of the balance be paid, with interest at the rate of five per cent., to the petitioners."

He had abstracted those recommendations, which he thought should be before the House when considering the Bill; and it would be seen from them, that the Corporation were entitled to a moiety of the money received for lands sold under the Parliamentary Buildings Act, which would amount to £13,923, amounting with the foregoing £16,000 to nearly £30,000. In addition to those two sums, there was the outlay incurred by the Corporation in making the alterations in the bridge desired by Government, and altogether the report recommended that they were justly entitled to £40,198, which was due to them, with interest, at the rate of five per cent., added. He would again remark that that was not the report of a committee favorable to the claims of the Corporation, but that it was a report drawn up in direct opposition to the wishes of the chairman. Now, the amount of bridge lands handed over to the Corporation, out of which the cost of construction was expected to be defrayed, had been valued at £54,000. It might be said that that valuation was excessive, and that the amount was not one that could at the present time be obtained. Assuming, however, that it was £40,000, the Corporation would be entitled to an endowment when those lands were sold, amounting to £20,000, which, with the items he had mentioned before, would bring the Govern-

ment in debt to the Corporation of a sum of £60,000.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Is that all?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that amount, viz., £120,950, would reduce the amount due on debentures to £60,950, or a sum equivalent to 10s. in the pound would be handed over to the Corporation; if the endowments were paid and the recommendation were carried out; but instead of handing it over to the Corporation, the bridge, if taken over by the Government, would actually cost the colony £60,000; and against that the bridge lands, which had been valued at £54,000, would accrue to the Government. He believed that if the bridge was declared free at the present time the value of those lands would be greatly enhanced—even to double their present value—in a few years, with judicious handling; and that the whole amount, or at any rate the greater portion of the debt, would be liquidated by their sale. He would point out that the Corporation were not, on the present occasion, suing the House *in forma pauperis*; but they were, on the contrary, quite willing to stick to their bargain, provided they obtained from the Government the moiety due to them. To show the House that the statement he had just made was correct, he might mention that the bridge at the present time, with its tolls, was paying the Corporation well, and was beginning to establish a sinking fund which would, in time, wipe out the whole liability. The expenses were £6,062 10s., for interest; collecting, and contingencies, £937 10s.; in all, £7,000 per annum; and during the months of July and August last the tolls amounted to £604 and £680 respectively; in all, the bridge was producing from tolls alone, £8,000 a year, taking the average receipts as those of July and August.

MR. GROOM: August was the Exhibition month.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: In the month of September the receipts were within a fraction of £600, and even that covered the interest on the cost of construction. At any rate, he produced those figures to show that the Corporation were not bringing forward the matter from necessity, and that it was not from any wish expressed on the part of the Corporation that the Government were bringing forward the present Bill; they merely brought it forward on behalf of the people settled in the southern and south-eastern districts of the colony who had occasion to use the bridge, and on whom the tolls charged were a great burden. It was not from any feeling in favor of the Corporation that they had introduced the Bill, but to maintain the principle which they had already affirmed in the case of bridges constructed by them and those about to be constructed at Rockhampton and Mackay. It was in view of those bridges that the Government deemed it desirable, while they could do so without loss, to take over the Victoria Bridge.

He thought that it was a satisfactory thing, financially speaking, that the bridge was not entailing a loss on the municipality at the present time; because he knew that, if he went to that House to ask it to release the Municipality of Brisbane from an amount of loss, he should not meet with that support which he now hoped to receive. As he had already said, he wished honorable members to entirely separate the present question from the Brisbane Municipality; it was not introduced on their account, but they were parties to the work, and therefore they must be introduced more or less in discussing the Bill. It was introduced in the interest of persons residing beyond the municipality—those persons in the southern and south-eastern districts—who had to use the bridge in order to communicate with the metropolis. The Bill might have been made a much more simple measure, but for complications between the Corporation and the Bank of Queensland. In the first place, the lands which were handed over to the Corporation for the purpose of paying the cost of construction had, together with the city rates, been mortgaged to secure payment of £121,250, which was represented by debentures, and was held by various persons in Great Britain; and it would be necessary to arrange for the redemption of those bonds in 1891, and to offer a Government guarantee for such redemption with accruing interest. But, on investigation, it had been found that before the mortgagees would surrender their security, the capital sum must be provided for; and the Bill before the House authorised the Treasurer to deposit that sum, namely, £120,945, in the hands of two commissioners, who would buy the bonds at nominal value or retain the money until the bonds were matured, and he understood that if one bondholder objected, this course would have to be pursued. The Bill appeared a very large one, but the greater part of it was confined to the preamble, which was a matter of recital of the agreements between the Bank of Queensland and the Brisbane Corporation, and also the debenture holders. The principle of the measure was contained in ten clauses, which were very simple in their character. He might mention that, when a resolution on the subject was passed by that House last session, his predecessor in office communicated with the Municipal Council, with the object of learning if they had any suggestions to make in the matter, and the following reply was received, on which the present Bill was initiated. He mentioned that, as he had not shown that the Corporation had expressed their desire in any way that the Government should take over the lands:—

“Municipal Council Chambers,

“Town Hall, Brisbane,

“7th September, 1875.

“SIR,

“I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, forwarding

copy of certain resolutions of the Legislative Assembly upon the subject of the Victoria Bridge, and inquiring upon what terms the Corporation will be prepared to part with their interest in the bridge and bridge lands to the Government on condition of the bridge being thereafter free. In reply thereto, I have the honor to acquaint you that the letter has been carefully considered by this Council, and I am authorised to submit the following for the consideration of the Government:—

“1st. That the Government become liable for the payment of the debentures issued by the Corporation under ‘*The Brisbane Bridge Debenture Act*,’ amounting to £121,250 and the interest accruing thereon.

“2nd. That the Government undertake that no claim shall be made upon the city rates or revenues for or in respect of such debentures or such interest.

“3rd. That the Government satisfy all the provisions of ‘*The Brisbane Bridge Act*.’

“I would draw your attention to the fact that the Council being cognisant of the advantage of a *Free Bridge* to the city, forego a claim against the bridge now amounting to over £20,000, cash advanced.

“I have, &c.,

“JAMES SWAN,

“Mayor.

“To the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer,
“Queensland.”

He read that letter to show that the Corporation were cognisant of the proceedings that had been taken; and that, whilst they had not in any way solicited the Government to take action, they were still prepared, in view of a free bridge, to hand over the lands which they had received to defray the cost of construction, to forego the £10,000 he had mentioned, and also the land endowment, which, under the Municipalities Act, would have come to them. The fourth clause of the Bill contained the principle that the Governor in Council might guarantee the payment of the debt, and suggested the three following modes by which the liability on account of the bridge might be liquidated:—

“(1.) Upon the execution by the said bank of a release of the said several mortgages and the lands comprised therein by Order in Council to guarantee the due payment of the principal and interest secured by the said several mortgages and by the said debentures

“(2.) Upon the execution by the said bank of such release as last aforesaid to authorise the Colonial Treasurer to pay from moneys standing to the credit of the Public Account a sum not exceeding one hundred and twenty thousand nine hundred and forty-five pounds to two commissioners of whom one shall be nominated by the Governor in Council and the other by the said bank and who shall hold the same upon trust for the due payment of the moneys secured by the said debentures and the interest thereon under and subject to such conditions as may be agreed upon by the Governor in Council and the said bank

- "(3.) To authorise the Colonial Treasurer to pay from moneys standing to the credit of the Public Account a sum not exceeding one hundred and twenty-thousand nine hundred and forty five pounds to the credit of a special account to be called 'The Brisbane Bridge Account' which shall be opened in the books of the Treasury for that purpose and shall be credited with all interest which may from time to time accrue thereon or on any part thereof."

The commissioners would act as intermediate parties between the Government who paid and the mortgagees who released, pending the retirement of the debentures. That course was necessary, because one debenture holder might, unless he thought the Corporation held the security, object to the matter being accomplished as suggested. He did not intend to take up the time of the House at any great length; he had no doubt honorable members had given their consideration to the matter, as the Bill had been on the table for a considerable time, and had arrived at a conclusion, one way or another, on the subject. He would only refer them to the debate of last session, which showed the unanimity of feeling which then existed as to the desirability of the Government taking the bridge. He had endeavored to show that the expense of taking the bridge over would be to a considerable degree met by the assets, and that the disbursement would be met to a great extent by what was justly due to the Corporation, according to the report of the select committee of last session. The Government desired to see the bridge free, for the sake of the great benefit it would be to the whole community. It was not Brisbane they considered, although he had no doubt it would be said that it was another gift to the Brisbane people.

MR. WALSH: Hear, hear.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER had no doubt that the honorable member for the Warrego would dilate in his usual manner upon the injustice that the people of Brisbane sought to impose upon the country; but he could appeal to wider sympathies than those of the honorable member—to those of honorable members who objected to have the highways of the colony impeded by tolls. Again, it was with the knowledge of the great boon that would be conferred upon settlers and others residing in the southern and south-eastern districts that the Government, acting upon the resolution of that House, which was so substantially affirmed during the previous session, had been induced to bring forward the present Bill. He begged to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. DE SATGE said the honorable member who had just sat down had appealed to the wider sympathies of honorable members, and he had no doubt that the members of the Opposition would give him some; but even the brilliant manner in which the honorable gentleman had introduced the Bill could not

fail to convince him that it was not a measure that should have been introduced by a member of the Government, but one that should have been brought in by a private member, in the same way as the honorable member for Kennedy had introduced his proposition for a bridge across the Burdekin River. There were several metropolitan members on the Government side of the House who had been dumb during the last few nights, when far wider measures had been discussed, and who, he presumed, had reserved themselves until the present Bill was brought in. When they came to some petty work, however necessary it might be, such as the Brisbane Bridge, then were aroused the sympathies of those honorable members; but when they were considering a measure that would ruin a large and important class in the colony, then those honorable members were dumb. He thought the introduction of a Bill to authorise the payment of £120,000—a sum of money that would be sufficient to make miles and miles of cheap railway—in the present depressed state of the colony was a piece of indecency. Was it, he would ask, for such a measure that the honorable Treasurer had reserved his long speeches? He denied that with railways coming in from the interior into the heart of the city that the present Bill was anything but a Brisbane measure; the bridge was a further proof of mismanagement on the part of those who could not manage their own affairs; it was a bridge worth, at the outside, £60,000, and yet now the House was asked to pay £120,000 for it. He thought the time was unfit for the introduction of such a measure; but, above all, it was a matter which should have been brought forward by a private member. The metropolis was fully represented in that House, and, therefore, the Bill should have been introduced in a private manner, by a private member, on a private business day. When the sympathies of honorable members on his side of the House were asked for, it should be when the question before them was a wide one. Within the last few days the country must, he thought, have resounded with the doom pronounced by the act of the present Government, and that was a case in which the sympathies of honorable members might reasonably have been arrested; but now, when they were dealing with a purely local measure, the Government sought the sympathies of those very honorable members who had appealed to them in vain. He thought the Government might have postponed the Bill until the tail end of the session—until those grave measures which were occupying the attention of the House had been disposed of, and not have introduced it in the manner they had done. After all, it was part of a system of log-rolling; he had come to that conclusion because he noticed that when the motion of the honorable member for Kennedy, for the Burdekin Bridge, was under consideration, the Government and their supporters, in a

most extraordinary manner, hardly offered any opposition, knowing that the present Bill would be coming on during the session. That, also, was the reason why such large sums had been put down for the Fitzroy and Pioneer bridges; for those districts had never met with the sympathies of the Government before—never until they wanted a sum of £120,000 to give to the people of Brisbane a free bridge—and that, too, in the most depressed times that had been known in the colony for the last ten or twelve years.

On the question being put—That the Bill be read a second time,

Mr. WALSH said, that he should move the adjournment of the House, if the Government could not find any one of their supporters to say a word in favor of the Bill—not even the honorable member the Mayor of the city; under the circumstances, the Government should either withdraw the measure or adjourn the House. He confessed, for his part, that he wanted to see a far better case made out than had been made out by the honorable the Treasurer, before he could give his support to the Bill; and he must say, in regard to the honorable member's speech, that as custodian of the public purse, he should have been the very last to have made the statement that the Government were indebted to the Corporation to the extent of £60,000. The honorable gentleman should have closed his pockets and have defied the Corporation to prove that they had a claim. That was what the honorable gentleman should have done, and not have told a tale which would probably be at the expense of the tax-payers of the colony. He never saw such a scene in his life. Where was the Mayor of Brisbane that he did not get up and show the claim of the Corporation to this mighty sum of money? They seemed to have arrived at that stage of corruption that money, money, was all the Corporation thought of, asked, or voted for their supporters—those who kept them in power. He did not hesitate to say as much; he did not charge the Mayor of the city with being actuated by that feeling personally, but his constituents were; and he was compelled by his constituents to sit there and vote for the Government until this bridge question was passed; and he had not the least doubt that as soon as this was over, he would prove one of the most independent members of the House, and he (Mr. Walsh) should be very glad to see it. It was a new state of things, however, for a Minister of the Crown to try and prove that the Crown owed £60,000 to a corporation. It showed to what a depth of corruption they had sunk; it was unheard of, and disgraceful. He once heard a Minister of the Crown on the top of a coach boast that he had compelled the Government of that day to pay a little more money than they needed for resuming for railway purposes; that was bad enough, and probably there was a little *badinage* in the remark; but here they had a Minister of

the Crown getting up and telling them that to his knowledge the Crown owed £60,000 to the Corporation of Brisbane. It was perfectly disgraceful on the part of any custodian of the public purse to make any such admission. Let the members for Brisbane, those faithful supporters of the Government, get up and make these claims, but not a Minister of the Crown. The reason why he (Mr. Walsh) moved that the House should now adjourn was, that on the 6th of October, he moved for very important returns, which had not yet been furnished. They were returns showing the correspondence that passed between the Corporation and the Government on the question before the House, and they dated back from the beginning of the erection of the bridge. If this return had been honestly supplied, he would have been able to show that the Corporation absolutely refused to be interfered with in the construction; that the Ministry of the day were prepared to make the bridge; that estimates were given, one for £20,000, and another for £30,000; that when the Government offered to do the work, the representative of the city of Brisbane, as the correspondence asked for and the annals of Parliament would show, requested the Ministry to mind their own business, and said the Corporation of Brisbane could do their own work, and did not want any assistance. He could show that the Government were prepared to build the bridge, and that the Corporation protested against the Colonial Secretary of the day, Mr. Herbert, interfering. Mr. Herbert endeavored to carry on a correspondence showing that the Corporation were wrong and that the Government would put them right, but they were snubbed all through the correspondence. If these returns could be produced, he was sure honorable members would see the question in a different light. But they were refused this altogether, although the Government might have placed them upon the table of the House within twelve hours of their being asked for. It was, to use a word that had been employed by the Attorney-General, indecent to introduce the Bill prior to laying the correspondence on the table of the House. Those members who were not old colonists, and who wanted to know what were the claims of the people of the country, should procure and study this correspondence so improperly withheld. Notwithstanding this, the Colonial Treasurer had the courage, and he might also say want of delicacy, to move the second reading of the Bill; and not only that, but to state, with all the authority of a Minister of the Crown, that the Crown was indebted £60,000 to the Corporation of Brisbane. He (Mr. Walsh) did not believe it; he did not believe the city had been so badly represented for the last twelve years that they could have allowed such a claim to remain in abeyance,

without at any rate making an application for its settlement. He was a good deal struck with the levity of the Colonial Treasurer in introducing the motion. That was another reason for adjourning the House. When the people's pocket was to be touched to the extent of £120,000, the Colonial Treasurer should at any rate perform his duty with a grave face, and not with a levity of manner quite unbecoming of the occasion. If the honorable member for South Brisbane had brought in this measure, he would have done it with all the seriousness he could command with the knowledge that he was not justified in asking for the money; and when one of the custodians of the public purse asked for it, he (Mr. Walsh) demanded that something a little more serious than the manner assumed by the Colonial Treasurer should be depicted in conducting the business. The honorable gentleman might laugh, but taxing the ratepayers of the colony to the extent of £120,000 for a profitless, gaudy, and unnecessary piece of work that could have been done for £30,000, and would have been satisfactory to the people during their lifetime, was no laughing matter. There were many other defects in the Bill, all of which were additional reasons why the House ought to adjourn. If they were to go into the question, it would be simply a recommencement of that gross system of log-rolling that would bring the country to a state of ruin, ay, and a state of insolvency again. When he said again, he spoke from actual knowledge. How many members on that side of the House had been bound to the Government during this session by the fact that the Government initiated and introduced this measure. To how many had been given a kind of secret, implied promise that if they voted for the bridge they would get something? The railway extravagance was bound up with the extravagance of the bridge. The honorable member for Wide Bay was compelled to vote for the bridge because he wished for a similar piece of extravagance over the Mary.

Mr. BAILEY: No, no. I beg to contradict that statement.

Mr. WALSH said he would again urge the adjournment of the House. They were not in possession of the information—they were bound to have information that would enlighten members on both sides on the real question at issue. It had been especially intended by the Government to keep them in the dark. If he thought a reasonable sum of money for the bridge would put a stop to that log-rolling system, and would open the mouths of members on the other side who were unable to express their opinions on important matters connected with the welfare of the colony, but who could do nothing else until the bridge question was settled, he would vote for it, and it would be money well spent in relieving the constituencies who forced upon their members

support of the Government for one reason only. Another thing he would like to point out to honorable members was, that there was nothing in the Bill that he could see to prevent the Corporation, after the Government had paid the £120,000, from re-imposing the tolls. He thought there was a little wiliness in that. Ostensibly this action was taken to relieve the great travelling public from the irksomeness of paying tolls. But there was nothing in the Bill to prevent the Corporation, when the bridge was handed back to the Government, from demanding tolls.

The PREMIER: Look at clause 3.

Mr. WALSH said he had looked at clause 3, and it was just what he thought:—

"3. Upon such assignment and transfer being made as aforesaid the bridge and its appurtenances and all the materials thereof and the approaches thereto shall vest in Her Majesty and all tolls upon the said bridge shall thenceforth cease and be determined."

He had looked also at clause 8, which said:—

"8. It shall be lawful for the Governor in Council at any time after the said bridge and the said lands shall have become vested in Her Majesty by proclamation to transfer the said bridge with its appurtenances and the approaches thereto to and vest the same in the said Municipal Council. And thereupon the said Council shall become and be charged with the care construction and management of the said bridge."

Did not that restore to the Council the right of imposing tolls?

Mr. KINGSFORD: No, certainly not.

Mr. WALSH said he must retain his own construction of the Bill. The bridge absolutely became again the property of the Council, which would have been twice paid for it. They would have the same rights as before, and it was not likely they would allow the Government to step in and say they should not again charge tolls. He threw this out as an intimation to honorable members that if the Bill went into committee they should look sharply after this part of it, knowing that the same spirit which animated the Council when they made the bridge to get a large revenue out of it, would animate them again the moment they got the bridge back once more into their hands. The old animosity that had existed from the beginning between North and South Brisbane would necessitate that the tolls should be re-imposed.

Mr. BAILEY said he was very much disposed to vote for the honorable member for Warrego, agreeing with him that there ought to be a great deal more information given to the House before members were asked to vote for the second reading of the Bill. He was not, however, desirous to vote against the Bill, being as desirous as anyone to see the main arteries, so to speak, of the colony open and free. He objected most strongly to anything like a toll system, and it was a disgrace to a city like Brisbane that there should be a

toll between its northern and southern portion. But he had to learn a great many things before he saw the propriety of the total expense of this bridge being thrown upon the country. The assets, he believed, were merely some small portions of land. Why did not wealthy and populous North Brisbane bear something of the expense? He was not surprised that the Colonial Treasurer introduced the Bill with a certain amount of levity; gravity would have ill become him. The honorable gentleman knew he represented Brisbane quite as much as the country generally, and it was well known that the Ministry, as a body, represented Brisbane peculiarly, and, therefore, had such works as this under their special care. The statement made by the honorable member for Warrego seemed a very plausible one, although generally he rather mistrusted the honorable member. On this occasion, however, he gave him a certain amount of credence, and no doubt his statements were to a certain extent correct. He believed nevertheless, the honorable member would require no reason at all for opposing the bridge, if he thought it would be for the benefit of any particular set of people. The honorable member was in the habit of opposing everything that was for the benefit of anybody generally, and he had no doubt when he came to Wide Bay and his beloved Maryborough, he would oppose everything to the bitter end.

Mr. AMHURST said that by taking the third and eighth clauses, it would be seen that as long as the bridge was vested in Her Majesty she could not raise tolls, but there was nothing to prevent the Corporation doing so when they got it back. The scheme was a snare, a trap, and a delusion got up by the present Government to gratify their supporters. He was ashamed that the Bill had been brought in, and that the Premier had tried to hoodwink and blind people. No one seemed to know anything about the matter; no one knew what the revenue of the land was. Some time ago they were told that the bridge was to cost the country only £25,000. He should oppose the Bill tooth and nail for the rest of the session.

Mr. FOOTE said he had no intention at this particular time of going into the merits of the Bill, but as the member for Warrego insisted that this was a party question brought forward by the Government, he (Mr. Foote) begged to say that he held himself at liberty to vote in any way he chose, and he did not regard the Bill at all in the light of a party question. He trusted the House would not deal with it in that light, but upon its own merits; and, whether the measure was carried or not, he trusted it would be dealt with upon the real merits of the case. For himself, he had not read the Bill, and hoped the Government would not pass it to a second reading at the present time. There was a good deal of close reading in the Bill,

and as he had only had it in his hand for an hour, he required something more to convince him than what he had heard.

Mr. GROOM said no doubt the Colonial Treasurer had not made out so strong a case as ought to have been made out before the country was asked to undertake the payment of £120,000. He was not in the House when the Brisbane Bridge Bill was passed, but he was there in 1864, when the then Secretary for Works (Mr. Macalister) moved for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the mode of construction of the Brisbane bridge. When the honorable member for Warrego referred to this, he (Mr. Groom) turned to "Hansard" to refresh his memory, and he could very well understand that the Colonial Secretary of the day (Mr. Herbert) did undertake to construct a bridge for the city of Brisbane, and that the offer was indignantly spurned. The member for North Brisbane at that time (Mr. Pugh) informed the House that there were three designs for the construction of the bridge. He (Mr. Groom) referred to this matter because this was the first time the House had had the opportunity of speaking about the bridge, and as it was to cost £120,000, they should have some substantial reasons for the outlay. When some exception was taken to the construction of the bridge, Mr. Pugh said:—

"In accepting the design which was submitted to the Government for their approval, the Corporation merely acted for the best, inasmuch as that design was accompanied by tenders, which showed that the bridge could be built for a sum not exceeding £30,000."

The cost of the bridge, then, was to be £30,000; and yet, according to the Bill, they were asked to vote £120,000; and he must contend that the country ought to be in possession of some information why the cost had risen so much from the first estimate. Some good reasons could, no doubt, be given. He remembered a deputation coming down from Ipswich to inform the Colonial Secretary that if the Brisbane bridge was erected as it was proposed, large ships, like the "Great Eastern," would never be able to go up to Ipswich; and it was in consequence of the representations made to the Colonial Secretary that the designs were altered by the Corporation. The Colonial Treasurer had told the House nothing about this—nothing about the origin and construction of the bridge—information which the House certainly ought to have.

Mr. WALSH: Take the correspondence.

Mr. GROOM said the correspondence moved for by the honorable member might show all this, but on the other hand, perhaps, it would not. He hoped some honorable member would give the House every information. The Mayor of Brisbane, no doubt, had made himself sufficiently master of the subject to supply the House with data in connection with the case. The honorable member for

Warrego went a little too far when he said there were members on the Government side of the House who would vote for this bridge for certain money considerations for their own constituencies. Members ought not to be charged in that way. They gave the honorable member himself credit for a certain amount of independence, and he might, in return, give them the same credit on his part. The Ministry wanted, for some reason or other, to retain the fathering of the Bill; but it was not a party question, and he was not sure that it was necessary the Bill should be brought in by the Government because it made an inroad upon the Consolidated Revenue. What he now said was that, before the Bill was read a second time, there should be supplied ample information why the cost had jumped up from £30,000 to £120,000. The Colonial Treasurer stated that the tolls amounted to £8,000 a-year, and that there was a sinking fund being formed which would wipe out the debt altogether. If that was the case, there was no necessity for the interference of the House at all. As far as the value of the bridge lands were concerned, in 1864, Mr. Blakeney, one of the members for North Brisbane, estimated them at £20,000, and now they were said to be worth £54,000, and no doubt the increase in the value of property had been sufficiently rapid to account for the difference; but one of the chief points he should like noticed was, that if the Government were going to establish the principle of taking over the debt of this particular bridge, it might be asked why the principle should not at once be extended to all corporations. Why should not all corporations be relieved of all their debts, and so begin on a fresh basis everywhere? And whatever debts they contracted after the consolidation—after paying off their previous debts—they should liquidate. At present, when they were called upon to pay their debts, some did so most religiously, but others did not pay one shilling of the large amount they borrowed from the Government. He found that the total liabilities of the corporations of the colony at the present time amounted to something like £72,000, and there were some five or six which owed thousands of pounds, and did not even pay the interest, much less anything towards the principal. He thought something should be done in reference to those cases. Either the principle should be applied as a general one, and all corporations should be relieved from their liabilities and start afresh, or they should be allowed to liquidate their liabilities in the best way they could. There were seventeen corporations in the colony, which were pretty well represented by members in that House, and before they were called upon to sanction taking over a liability of £120,000, some better grounds should be shown than had been shown by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. He quite agreed with the

honorable member for Warrego, that it was an extraordinary thing for the honorable the Treasurer to state that the Government were indebted to the Corporation in the sum of £60,000. In what way were they indebted to that amount? He could very well understand the spoliation Act, as it was called, that was introduced, when the whole of the lands within the municipality were taken to pay for the cost of the building in which they were now seated. He could understand that at that time a general outcry was raised in connection with that Act, but it was passed. Parliament in its wisdom thought it was a fair obligation on the part of the metropolis—that if the metropolis required to be embellished with such splendid buildings, portions of the unsold lands should be sold to pay for their construction. That was affirmed; it might not be considered just at the present day, and it was scarcely a fair basis to go upon; but he should like to know how it could be proved to the satisfaction of the House that the Government were indebted to the Corporation of Brisbane £60,000; because if the Government did owe the Corporation that amount, and the lands at South Brisbane were to realise £50,000, then the whole thing, they might say, went to the wind; because, according to the statement of the honorable the Treasurer, when the bridge was declared free, land in South Brisbane would immediately rise in value. Like the honorable member for Wide Bay, he would not give a pledge to vote for or against the Bill; and he thought if the honorable member for Warrego would withdraw his motion for adjournment, the matter could be deferred for a short time to enable those who were interested in it—and particularly the representatives of Brisbane—to supply the House with the origin of this bridge, and why its cost had increased from the £30,000 mentioned by Mr. Pugh in 1864, to £120,000. Those were Mr. Pugh's words:—

“In accepting the design which was submitted to the Government for their approval, the Corporation merely acted for the best, inasmuch as that design was accompanied by tenders, which showed that the bridge could be built for a sum not exceeding £30,000.”

Mr. BEATTIE: That is a mistake.

Mr. GROOM said the honorable member for Fortitude Valley said that was a mistake, but he (Mr. Groom) was only reading the words of Mr. Pugh, who was then member for North Brisbane. He might state that the late Mr. Blakeney, who was then a member of the House, frequently interrupted the Colonial Secretary of the day, and provoked him into making this rather sharp retort:—

“Referring to what had been said about pickings, he believed that the contractor and engineer would make from £30,000 to £40,000 out of the job, unless steps were taken to prevent them.”

That, of course, proved it was a mistake, and all these things went to show that they

should be supplied with reliable information and data to satisfy them that there was a really good case to justify honorable members in voting for the second reading of the Bill. He had no doubt the Mayor of Brisbane had made himself sufficiently master of all the facts of the case to place them before the House, but, perhaps, he had been waiting to hear what honorable members had to say before doing so. He (Mr. Groom) would not pledge himself to vote either one way or the other, until sufficient data was laid before the House.

MR. WALSH said, with the permission of the House, he would withdraw his motion, on the understanding that the debate be adjourned until they had placed before them the correspondence the House had ordered.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said his honorable colleague, in introducing this measure, stated that he thought honorable members were so well conversant with the first part of the transactions connected with the alteration of the bridge as to render it unnecessary for him to enter at any length into a discussion of that question, which would have the effect of raising up old sores. There was no doubt that the very mention of that matter would to some extent raise up the old feeling of jealousy which existed at one time between Ipswich and Brisbane; and he thought the House was well acquainted with those circumstances, as the matter was laid before the House last session, and a report was brought up from the committee appointed to inquire into this question, as well as some others connected with the Corporation of Brisbane. As, however, some honorable members did not seem thoroughly to understand the matter, he should very shortly detail the main points of the arrangement. The contract was not, as stated by the honorable member for Toowoomba, for £30,000. It was a very much larger sum—he thought over £50,000.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: £52,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said £52,000, he thought, was the amount; and after the Corporation had proceeded some length with the work, it was discovered by the people of Ipswich that it would be impossible to take sea-going vessels up to Ipswich through the bridge; and they insisted on having the swing made very much wider, and this entailed an actual increase in the expense of some £16,000. This was only a portion of the actual expense incurred by the Corporation. He might also mention that two or three members of the Ministry at that time represented Ipswich and West Moreton—and they requested the Municipal Council of Brisbane to make some alterations in the design, and he believed they were asked to do so in such a hurried manner that they had not time to bring the matter before the Corporation, and the Mayor and one of the aldermen took upon themselves to do what the Ministry required. No doubt the Minis-

try could have put a great deal of pressure on the Corporation, especially if they were borrowers, and they agreed to those alterations. It was in consequence of the alterations having been acceded to that the whole of the difficulties connected with the bridge arose. The time lost through those alterations brought the Corporation into the severe crisis of 1866; and the Bank of Queensland, which was supplying the contractor with money, was obliged to succumb to the pressure of circumstances, and was unable to find any more money. The consequence was, the whole thing was brought to a standstill; and further than that, the interest was going on, the plant of the contractors had to be sold, and there was a stoppage in every way. This raised the cost of the bridge up to over £140,000, but the Corporation were willing to forego £21,000 of it; and he thought, with regard to the remark which fell from one honorable member, that North Brisbane was not inclined to do anything in the matter—that this was a very fair contribution to the bridge, the Government having interfered in its construction at the time they did, and having brought about the very serious consequences which ensued. Because, he maintained, that if the bridge had been allowed to go on towards completion under the original contract, something like £60,000 would have been sufficient to complete it. They had evidence to that effect from Mr. Jones, the bridge engineer—that it would not have cost more than £60,000 in the way they intended to complete it. He might mention that the original design was not strictly adhered to by the Corporation, but this portion that the Government asked to have altered was the cause of the whole of the delay, and of the whole of the enormous expense that had been incurred. It had also been stated by his honorable colleague that it was not as if it were the Corporation only that this Bill would benefit. There was no doubt it would be a great boon to the citizens of Brisbane, but it would also be a great boon to many people outside. With regard to the financial view of the matter, in the evidence taken before the Select Committee, it appeared that the rates for the half-year just preceding amounted to £3,120, and the cost of levying the tolls and other expenses amounted to about £500, and the total annual interest was £6,000, thus leaving a very small loss at that time on the whole transaction. There was no doubt that as population increased the tolls would increase, and he understood his honorable friend to say the bridge was paying more than the interest now. It would, therefore, be no loss to the Corporation to keep it on as it was, but he thought it would be a very unjust thing to the citizens of Brisbane, and residents in all parts of the colony who had to travel over that bridge, and who contributed to the general taxation at the rate they did, to have to pay the tolls each time they crossed it. He thought on

that ground they were entitled to consideration. It was one of the main outlets of the colony, and for that reason, if any bridge ought to be free, it was the bridge over the Brisbane river. There was no doubt that if the Corporation had not been interfered with, the cost of the bridge would be now nearly liquidated by the land that had been given to them, and they would be enabled to make it a free bridge. But as the Government had interfered with them, they should take the matter up, and place them in the same position they would have been in if they had not been interfered with. He considered that was a just and reasonable thing to ask. It had been stated that this Bill should not have been brought in by the Government; but he thought after the resolution the House came to last session, it was the duty of the Government to put the matter in some way before the House; and he would point out that this was not an ordinary question that could be dealt with by a private member. He did not think there was a private member who would undertake it. It was a measure that specially required to be dealt with by the Government, whether this Government or any other Government, because they had to make overtures, and ascertain the views of the debenture holders; and he said any private person applying for that information would scarcely get what he wanted. The honorable member for West Moreton had mentioned that he had only had the Bill for half or three-quarters of an hour; but it had been in the hands of honorable members for a fortnight or three weeks,—since it had been read a first time. He had no doubt it had been sent with the honorable member's papers, but it could scarcely be expected that members could read all the papers sent to them. However, the Government did not wish to press it until fair time was given for its consideration, and they were quite willing to agree to the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. PALMER said when the honorable the Colonial Secretary got up, he said he was going to tell the House all about the matter, but he had quite omitted to mention that the Government discovered, after the Corporation had begun the bridge, that they were working on quite a different plan from that which the Government had approved of. He forgot to mention that part of it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I said it was not the plan agreed upon.

Mr. PALMER said he did not think the honorable member mentioned that the Corporation were working on a plan which the Government had never approved of, and which they led the Government to suppose had been approved of. He (Mr. Palmer) thought he, the Colonial Secretary, might have stated that fact, for no doubt he knew of it. He thought it was very necessary that this motion should be adjourned. He did not say whether he should vote for

the second reading of the Bill or not, but he should certainly oppose it in committee as it at present stood; and he thought any member who had the good of the country at heart would see it was utterly unfair to call upon the whole country to pay for the gross mistakes of the Corporation of Brisbane, for that was what the proposal of the Government amounted to. And it was evident from the manner in which it had been supported by the honorable the Treasurer and the honorable the Colonial Secretary that it was about the only Bill brought forward this session they really had their hearts in. They were Brisbane to the backbone, and all the rest of the colony was nothing at all. There had never been so much energy thrown by those two honorable members into any Bill this session as into this measure to make this bridge free and the property of the Government, and then hand it back to the Corporation—a consummation which he could not see would be at all desirable. If the country was called upon to pay for this bridge through the nose, it should be the property of the country for ever; at all events, they should not hand it back to the Corporation, to do as they pleased with afterwards. The honorable the Treasurer, in proposing the second reading of the Bill, admitted that the Corporation had evinced a want of foresight and ordinary vigilance, and yet, by some extraordinary method of reasoning, he came to the conclusion that the Corporation were immaculate, and the Government owed them £30,000. He (Mr. Palmer) had listened attentively to the various debates on the subject, and he never remembered hearing before of the Government owing the Corporation £60,000, and he could not imagine in what way such a conclusion could possibly be arrived at. But he thought, in bringing forward a measure of this sort, the honorable the Treasurer was bound to tell the House what was the value of the bridge lands.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: By the last resolution—£54,000.

Mr. PALMER said, then he should have told the House who appraised them.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It was mentioned in the debate last session who appraised them.

Mr. PALMER said that he did not remember the debates of last session, and he should like to have more than one appraiser of those lands, and he thought the Government were trying to mislead the House by stating the value by one appraiser. He could state that in a committee of the House, within the last week or ten days, he heard three different witnesses, all gentlemen supposed to be very good judges of land in Brisbane, and their values had differed as much as fifty per cent. in town property—quite as much as fifty per cent., and thirty per cent. in many instances; and he thought it was very unfair that the House should be

given the valuation of any one individual of the lands in South Brisbane. Why, he should have thought that £54,000 would have bought the whole of South Brisbane in a lump! There was another thing they should be informed of; that was, what was the value of the bridge—not what it had cost the Corporation through their blunders—but what was the actual value of it, for he supposed there was hardly a majority in that House who would commit the country to the serious loss of paying for the blunders of the Brisbane Corporation. If they were impecunious, or commenced an undertaking they could not possibly go on with through mismanagement and quarrelling among themselves, and thus delayed the construction of the bridge, and heaped up interest, and piled up the agony to the extent they had done, was it at all fair to call upon the community at large to pay for their mistakes? If, as the honorable member for Toowoomba had stated, they took up the debts of the Corporation of Brisbane in that way, they were bound to carry out the system and take up the debts of every municipality in the colony—there was no half-way house. He had expressed himself in favor of purchasing the bridge and making it free, but in saying so, he carefully guarded himself against being supposed to vote for paying for the blunders of the Brisbane Corporation. He thought now it would not be a bad speculation for the country to purchase the bridge at its value, but beyond that he should not be prepared to go in committee. Then, instead of the information asked for by the honorable member for Warrego, which might easily have been furnished if the honorable the Treasurer had been at all anxious to furnish it, and which would guide the House in some way, all they had been favored with, so far as he had heard, was a letter from the Mayor of Brisbane last year. Now, he did not suppose the Mayor and Corporation of this year were bound by the actions of the Mayor and Corporation of last year; and if there had been any correspondence with the Mayor and Corporation of this year as to the terms they were willing to accept for the bridge, the House should be informed of it. It appeared to him that so long as Brisbane was concerned, the Ministry were utterly reckless as to what expenditure they rushed into. Where was the money to come from? Was it to be recouped after a while by the sale of land in South Brisbane to the extent of £54,000—a valuation which he did not believe in one bit? He had no doubt, if the Government had to buy the land, it would cost perhaps that; but when it had to be sold to the public, he very much doubted that it would reach that valuation, or anything approaching it. He trusted honorable members would take time to consider this question before they consented to the second reading of the Bill; for although the honorable the Colonial Treasurer and the Colonial Secretary had stated that it had been

in the hands of honorable members for a long time, he had no doubt that many of them, like himself, had not even read it. He confessed that he had not read the preamble, and he hoped he should not be condemned to read it—for it would take a Philadelphia lawyer to understand all the references in it. The question was one requiring more serious consideration, and he should vote for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. FRASER said there was only one point he should like to refer to before the debate was adjourned, and it was this:—That honorable members should not go away with the impression that this Bill was exclusively for the benefit of the Corporation of Brisbane. If they did so, they would be very much mistaken. He had never entertained the opinion that the Corporation of Brisbane were justified, under any circumstances whatever, in undertaking this piece of work. When he brought the resolutions before the House last year on which this Bill was based, he stated then, as he repeated now, that he did so in the interests of a large section of the community outside the municipality, who were heavily taxed through the present position of the bridge; and in taking the question into consideration during the interval that might elapse before the discussion would come on again, he would impress upon honorable members the desirability of fairly looking at the question, and considering that it was not a matter which merely affected the Corporation of Brisbane. He had not the least sympathy with the Corporation of Brisbane in the matter, but there was a large section of the community who were very seriously affected by the present position of affairs. The fact that had been brought before the House that evening, that the tolls on the bridge were largely increasing, and that it might become a paying concern to the Corporation, to his mind was one of the most serious aspects of the case, because he believed that if the Corporation in a short time derived considerable revenue from this source, they would not consent to the Government taking over the bridge, and there was no provision to compel the Corporation to hand it over to the Government; so that it might become a source of revenue to the Corporation and a heavy burden to an important section of the community.

Mr. KINGSFORD said he rose to move the adjournment of the debate.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member cannot do so at present.

Mr. WALSH said if it would conduce to the progress of business, he would withdraw his motion, on the understanding that the Government would accede to the motion of the honorable member for South Brisbane.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. KINGSFORD moved—

That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. MACROSSAN said before the debate was adjourned, he should like to call the attention of the House to the difference between the action of the Government in this matter, and their action in another matter of a somewhat similar character four or five weeks ago. He supposed they thought that this Bill would be allowed to slide by members on their own side of the House, but he was happy to see that some members on that side had independence enough not to permit them to saddle the country with a debt with which it should not be saddled. If any proof were required by the House or the country that the Government at present in power were purely and simply a Queen-street Government, their action on the present occasion was sufficient to do so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the honorable the Colonial Treasurer cried, "hear, hear," and well he might do so, because every word he had spoken, and every action of his, and of the honorable Colonial Secretary's, showed they were nothing but members of a Queen-street Ministry.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Stale.

Mr. MACROSSAN said it was not stale. It would be stale if the actions of the Ministry proved otherwise, and it would never be repeated; but their action to-night proved beyond doubt that they were nothing else. Now that magnanimous Corporation, which was so proud that it would not sue *in forma pauperis* for the Government to take over the bridge, what did it go to that House for at all, if that was not its object? Did the Government wish to take over the bridge and saddle the country with an expenditure of £120,000, or did the country wish it? It had been said that the bridge was a highway, but he repudiated such an assertion; he utterly denied that that bridge was one of the highways of the colony. There was a time when it was so, perhaps, but since then there had been a railway made at a cost of nearly half-a-million of money; so that all the arguments in favor of the bridge being a highway had been removed by the construction of that—the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway. It was simply a local affair; and it was simply for the benefit of the people of South Brisbane, and for the enhancement of the value of property in Queen street, that the Government were moving in the matter. Let honorable members compare the action of the Government now with their action when he moved for a sum of money to make a bridge across the Burdekin. Was there one of them who said a word in favor of that work—a work which would have been of such value to the people of the North, as it would have spanned one of their main arteries, and would have been to the benefit of thousands of pioneers—of the men who were making the colony, instead of for the benefit of a few men who had settled down in Queen

street, to fatten upon the earnings of hard worked taxpayers? When he brought forward his motion, he was called upon to prove the necessity of the bridge—to make out a case, and to prove what it would cost. But not contented with that—not contented with opposing the motion—the Premier, when he found he was deficient of facts, created some, and produced a telegram from a person purporting to be an engineer, stating that the length of the proposed bridge would be 4,050 feet; but he (Mr Macrossan) could now prove what he could not prove then, namely, that the total length of the bridge from one high bank to the other, was scarcely more than one-third of the distance stated by the honorable gentleman. That telegram was, he believed, produced by the Premier to prevent his getting the bridge, and he would ask the House to contrast the action of the Government generally, of the present Queen street Ministry in the one case, with their conduct in the other. He could prove that the length of the bridge over the Burdekin would be scarcely over one-third of what had been represented by the Premier. He had also been told on that occasion, by the same honorable gentleman, that his motion might go into committee, but that it would never come out. He might retort in the same way on the honorable Treasurer, that his Bill might go into committee, but that it would depend upon two or three honorable members whether it ever got out; he was not certain that it would during the present session. He was certain of one thing—that the Government would never do anything for the North, as long as there was a penny to be spent in Brisbane; and he thought the happiest day would be, when the time arrived for the removal of the capital from the little corner of the colony in which it was now situated. So long as it remained in one extreme corner, they would have in future what they had hitherto had—constant demands for money to be spent in Brisbane. They had made railways for the Brisbane people, made a harbor at the cost of £100,000, made streets and drainage, and were doing so now; they had done all those things for the benefit of the citizens, and now it was proposed to buy a bridge for them. In return for those things, the Brisbane people, as regarded tax-paying, were not so heavily burdened as those to whom bare justice was refused.

The Question was put and passed.

Mr. WALSH said he trusted before the debate was resumed the return which the Government had promised would be laid on the table.

Mr. KINGSFORD said that that was what the debate was adjourned for.

Mr. WALSH said he was glad to hear that ordinarily silent honorable member say so; but he wanted a promise from the Government that the return alluded to would be in the hands of honorable members before

the debate was resumed, so that they would be in possession of all the facts they could get before being called on to give a decision.

The PREMIER said that it was only the other day that the return was moved for in connection with the bridge. It was rather voluminous, but he was in hopes that it would be laid on the table on the next day. As it would take some time to print, he had suggested the adjournment of the debate until the following Tuesday, in order to allow plenty of time.