

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 1876**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, 14 November, 1876.*

Papers.—Suspension of Standing Orders.—Fire Brigades Bill.—Agent-General for Queensland Bill.—Pastoral Leases Bill.

## PAPERS.

The PREMIER laid upon the table the undermentioned papers, viz. :—

Return to an Order, relative to Government work at Ipswich, made by this House, on motion of Mr. Groom, on the 26th ultimo.

Return to an Order, relative to Mr. Jack, Geological Surveyor, made by this House, on motion of Mr. Macrossan, on the 2nd instant.

And moved that they be printed. He said he might inform honorable members that the return in reference to the workshops was not quite completed, but it would be before the session closed.

Mr. WALSH said the return was imperfect, and that he thought it was the duty of the honorable the Speaker to see that returns when moved for should be laid on the table in a complete form.

The PREMIER said that the motion of the honorable member calling for a return was rather indefinite in its wording, as he asked for all the correspondence connected with work done at the Ipswich workshops. At all events he was most anxious himself that all information asked for should be laid on the table before the House rose for the session, but he should not be able to supply it for a fortnight.

Mr. IVORY said he thought it was perfectly right for the honorable member at the head of the Government to lay what information he had at present before the House; but at the same time he thought that the honorable member, before laying the return on the table and moving that it be printed, should have stated that it was imperfect, and also the reasons why it was so. He should be sorry to impute to the honorable gentleman any desire to hoodwink the House, but to lay a return on the table without first saying that it was imperfect, looked very much like it.

Mr. PALMER said the return was not the return asked for at all; it was not worth sending to the Printing Office.

Mr. WALSH said he was not quite sure that the paper was worth printing, or that the country should be put to the expense of printing that which appeared to him to be a cooked return.

The PREMIER: It is not a cooked return.

Mr. WALSH said it was very well for the honorable gentleman to say that it was not, but he wanted to know how the Commissioner for Railways was dragged into it.

The PREMIER remarked that the Commissioner for Railways authorised work to be done in the Government workshops, and not the Minister.

Mr. WALSH asked if the Premier would give notice of a motion for the next day for the printing of the paper in question, in order that honorable members might have an

opportunity of seeing, in the meantime, whether it was worth printing; otherwise, a finality might be given to an imperfect return. It was not the return that was ordered to be laid on the table.

Mr. IVORY said he would call attention to the fact that the motion for the production of the return was not made by the honorable member for the Warrego, but by the honorable member for Toowoomba, and yet it was stated to be a return made on the motion of the former gentleman. It seemed as if the Government had made a muddle of the two motions, or that the return was utterly wrong; one thing was certain, namely, that the return of all private work done at the Ipswich workshops was moved for by the honorable member for Toowoomba.

The PREMIER said that it was a mistake of the Under Secretary probably; he would withdraw his motion if the House would allow him.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

The PREMIER moved—

That the second of the two returns laid upon the table be printed.

Question put and passed.

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved, pursuant to amended notice—

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

He might inform the House, as the motion had not been allowed to go as a formal one, that when he tabled it he had intended to ask the House to pass another Appropriation Bill; but as they were getting near the end of the session, the Auditor-General had informed him that that would not be necessary, but that he could wait until the Appropriation Bill in Chief was passed.

Mr. WALSH said the honorable member had not stated why the motion should be passed. The Government had been dallying and delaying the business all through the session, during which time they had tried to impress upon the country and that Assembly, that the delay was caused through the obstruction of the Opposition; and now they wanted honorable members to rush through the work just to suit their convenience. As far as he could see, the Opposition were not in any way responsible for the delay, but it had been caused by the Scotch eccentricities of one honorable member of the Government, and the vague explanations and conduct of the Government generally. At any rate, the honorable Treasurer, in moving such a motion as the present one which was really stultifying the practice of Parliament, should have given some reasons showing the necessity of it. They had had none whatever. The real business of the session had been carried on—pushed on he did not hesitate to say, by the Opposition; and the very policy of the Govern-

ment had, in fact, been created by expressions of opinion from honorable members on his side of the House. The very necessity of pushing on business had been caused by honorable members opposite, who had done nothing but sit quiet and acquiesce in the extraordinary conduct which had been exhibited by honorable members on the Treasury benches. Before they submitted to the proposed stultification of the House in the mode of carrying on its business, the honorable Colonial Treasurer, or some other member, should give a better reason for the motion before them.

Question put and passed.

#### FIRE BRIGADES BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

That the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the consideration of this Bill in detail.

Mr. KINGSFORD said, before the question was put, he wished to call the attention of the House to a petition which was presented to it some time ago, from the Municipal Council of Brisbane, in relation to the Fire Brigades Bill. That petition was objected to by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, on the ground more especially, that the statements in it were devoid of truth. It had been his intention to have directed the notice of the House to that very serious charge when the motion was brought forward for the adoption of the report of the Select Committee, but, unfortunately, he was compelled to be absent attending to his municipal duties when that motion passed the House. The Municipal Council had read the records of the Select Committee, and had come to the conclusion, that the whole report, and the evidence that was given against the petition of the Council was not only unfair, but was in the main substantially not true. The Council was also of opinion that in taking the evidence, an unfair advantage had been given to those parties who were in favor of the Fire Brigades Bill, and that not sufficient evidence was either sought for or asked for to rebut the evidence given by those who were in favor of the Bill. It was not his intention to occupy the time of the House by referring to matters of detail, but simply to raise an objection to the Bill going into committee that afternoon, on the ground that very serious charges had been made against a large and influential body, which should not be allowed to go by unnoticed. He thought the charges which had been made were worthy of investigation, and that before the measure became law, it was necessary that further investigation should take place, and that the charge that the petition of the Council was devoid of truth should be inquired into. For his own part, as Mayor of the City of Brisbane, he knew the substance of the petition, and that the statements in it were perfectly true; and as a member of that House, representing a highly respectable constituency, he did not

intend to remain silent under a charge of having introduced anything that was devoid of truth. He, therefore, asked as his right, and he would, if such a word was allowable, say that he demanded, that the matter should be investigated before further proceedings were taken, and that measures should be taken for the hearing of evidence which should either acquit or condemn those immediately concerned.

Mr. BEATTIE said he had been rather surprised at the statements which had been made by the honorable member for South Brisbane against the Select Committee to whom the petition of the Municipal Council had been referred. He might state that the Fire Brigades Bill was introduced by the Colonial Secretary at the instigation of the honorable member for South Brisbane himself—at least, he believed so—although he did not know it as a fact. He was not aware of such a Bill until it was sent to him to see if he had any suggestions to make in it. A petition from the Municipal Council against the Bill was presented, and it was referred to a Select Committee, the report of which was adopted on the previous day on his motion; and he must, together with the other honorable members of that committee, take the responsibility of the evidence that was called. The evidence that was required was with reference to certain allegations contained in that petition, the first of which was, that the Fire Brigades Bill had never been called for by the citizens of Brisbane, “which is the only town in the colony in which a fire brigade exists.” That was one of the inaccuracies, to call it by no stronger term, in the petition that was presented, which he had felt it to be his duty to state was incorrect, and he believed that the members of the committee were satisfied that that statement was incorrect. The next statement was:—

“That your petitioners having contributed over one thousand pounds (£1,000) to the present brigade, in which they are so largely interested, consider it unjust that the property of that brigade should be conveyed to a nominated and totally irresponsible body of private residents.”

He would leave the report and the evidence to honorable members to guide them in forming their own conclusions upon that paragraph, and he was perfectly certain that the honorable members forming the Select Committee were as satisfied as he himself was that that statement was not founded upon fact. With respect to the fourth paragraph in the petition:—

“That the proposals to confer such extraordinary powers upon persons appointed to be superintendents and assistant superintendents of fire brigades, as pulling down and destroying buildings within the Municipality, is, in the opinion of this Council, dangerous in the extreme, there being no provision made for the removal or suspension of such persons for misconduct, and no responsibility is incurred by them, and should the

Bill become law, the control of the city during fires will be entirely taken out of the hands of your petitioners.”

That was a question on which he should always join issue so far as the Corporation were concerned, and he believed that no honorable member would disagree with him that it was necessary that some action should be taken to protect the lives and property of the citizens, if those whose duty it was to do so neglected that duty; it was also to the interest of the Council and of the Government, who had a large amount of property in the city, that the fire brigade should be placed on a proper footing. The honorable member for South Brisbane stated that the committee had acted unfairly by taking evidence all on one side; but to that he would reply, that the evidence they had to take was to rebut the allegations contained in the petition. He would leave it to the honorable members to look over the petition and the evidence, and judge whether the committee had done more than their duty in inquiring into the allegations of the petition, and in the report they had brought up.

Mr. BUZACOTT said that he was absent from the House when the Fire Brigades Bill was brought on for discussion, and therefore he should like to take advantage of the present opportunity for saying a few words in reference to it. He would commence his remarks by stating his intention of opposing the Bill from beginning to end, because he thought it interfered with the functions of Municipal Councils throughout the colony. He believed it had been framed with peculiar regard to a state of affairs existing at the present time in Brisbane, and that there had been some misunderstanding between the local fire brigade and the Municipal Council of that city, the result of which was the measure before the House. He must say that he considered the time of that House, especially towards the close of a session, could be far more profitably employed than in discussing such a measure. According to the 70th section of the Municipal Institutions Act, all municipal authorities were empowered to frame by-laws for the regulation of all proceedings connected with them, and amongst other things, to make provision for the prevention and extinguishing of fires; and he did not see, therefore, why the control and management of fire brigades should be taken out of the hands of those Councils and placed in those of the central authorities. It was in opposition to the whole principle on which local government was established. He thought that if the honorable gentleman who had introduced the Bill had put the thing in a more serious way, and had had more regard to the whole of Queensland than to some miserable petty dispute between the Municipal Council of Brisbane and the local fire brigade, it would have been much better; at the same time, he believed that a measure like that before them should not have been introduced

at all. Into the merits of the dispute he did not feel disposed to enter. He had observed from the petition of the Municipal Council, that in some respects they had made mistakes, and that there were some statements in it which could not be substantiated; but as a member of the House he did not care to go into that question. The Bill should not have been authorised or entertained by the House at that late period of the session. He considered also that if the members of the Municipal Council had not done their duty in the matter, the ratepayers of the city should turn them out.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that, as one of the members of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the allegations contained in the petition which had been presented by the Municipal Council, he must say that he had been very much surprised to hear the honorable member for South Brisbane give expression to the opinions he had done. He thought it would have been a far more worthy course for that honorable member to have acknowledged that the Brisbane Municipal Council had made a mistake—which any Council might do. As to the necessity of such a measure, he thought evidence taken before the Select Committee was sufficient to satisfy every honorable member that there was such a necessity. Whether it was the intention of the Government to press it at that late period of the session, he could not, of course, say; but for the honorable member for Rockhampton of all others to say that there was no necessity for it was rather strange, inasmuch as he had received a telegram from the Superintendent of the Fire Brigade in the honorable member's own town, saying that the Bill was regarded by that body as a desirable one. There was no dispute between the Fire Brigade and the Municipal Council of Rockhampton, and that being the case, he did not see that because there happened to be one between the Brisbane Brigade and the Municipal Council, it should be brought into the matter of all; seeing, as he had already remarked, that the superintendent of the Rockhampton Brigade was in favor of the Bill. He knew of many little towns in the North where brigades were required, and where they had tried to establish them and failed; but if the proposed Bill became law, the assistance afforded by it would enable them to overcome their present difficulties. He should support the Bill because he believed its operation would be especially useful in small towns.

Mr. PALMER said he thought that the opinions of the honorable member for Rockhampton were founded upon a misconception of the object of the Bill. He took it that if any Municipal Council chose to establish a fire brigade they should have the control and management of it; but he saw no reason why any Council should be allowed to interfere with a brigade established on voluntary principles, and whose whole plant was pur-

chased with money either subscribed or collected by themselves. He believed that experience had proved to them that the most efficient fire brigades had been those which were established voluntarily, and he did not see why they should be under the control of a Municipal Council, or even under the control of the central authorities.

Mr. WALSH said he could not understand why the business of the country should be impeded by such a measure as that before them. Every day the Government made a point of introducing something to distract the attention of honorable members from the more important business of the session. At the same time he did not think the honorable Colonial Secretary had done justice to the measure he had introduced, or that the honorable member for South Brisbane, who, in his capacity as Mayor of the city—

Mr. PALMER: In this House he is only the member for South Brisbane.

Mr. WALSH said that, at any rate, the honorable member for South Brisbane, as Mayor, if the city had any wrongs, would take them to that House to be redressed; and he contended that as the Mayor of Brisbane was a member of that House, some reason should be given for a member of the Government having introduced the present Bill, instead of the honorable member himself doing so. He had listened, as he always did, with some attention to the remarks of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and he could not understand what he was driving at—whether he wished to consider himself and his brigade as above the City Council, or what?

Mr. BEATTIE: I did not say anything about the fire brigade.

Mr. WALSH: Then the honorable member was not addressing himself to the Bill.

Mr. BEATTIE: No, but I was to the petition.

Mr. WALSH said he was sorry that no other honorable member but the honorable member for Rockhampton should have addressed himself to the Bill—for there was nothing in the Bill about the petition—and in order that the honorable members for Fortitude Valley and South Brisbane might have an opportunity of getting themselves up in the Bill, and addressing themselves to it, he begged to move—

That the Question be amended by the omission of all the words following the word "That," with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words, "That this House will, on this day fortnight, resolve itself into the said committee."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY thought the honorable member for the Warrego had adopted a most unusual course. After the honorable member for South Brisbane, who was unavoidably absent from the House when the report of the Select Committee was adopted, and the honorable member for Rockhampton,

who was also absent on the occasion of the second reading of the Bill, had availed themselves of the present opportunity of addressing the House, he was in hopes that the Bill would have been allowed to go into committee, but the honorable member for Warrego, who seemed to forget that the Bill had been already discussed, now wanted to delay its progress still further. The Bill had been introduced by him at the instigation of some of the insurance companies, and the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was one of the gentlemen who had waited upon him also; at the same time he would acknowledge that the Bill, as introduced, was not in all respects the one they were in favor of. They wished to introduce a Bill at present in force in New South Wales, and he was not prepared to say that if that Bill had been brought in, the honorable member for South Brisbane would not have supported it; but when the present Bill was in committee, that honorable member would be able to move amendments in it, and thus make it more acceptable to the Brisbane Municipal Council.

Mr. McLEAN thought there was something more in the Bill than was supposed by the honorable member for the Warrego. Owing to the uncertain position now occupied by the Brisbane Fire Brigade they might be indifferent to turning out on the occasion of a fire; and even supposing the Bill did not affect any other part of the colony, he thought the House might consider it only as affecting a large and important city like Brisbane. He certainly thought that the sooner the subject was grappled with the better. He did not say the measure was perfect—in fact, he intended to move some amendments in it, but he thought the sooner the question was settled the better, as then the members of the brigade would know the position they occupied, and brigades elsewhere might be placed in the same position.

Mr. MORGAN said he did not rise for the purpose of opposing the committal of the Bill, as he thought it was necessary to have a measure of the sort, but he rose to take exception to the 5th clause, as he would not have an opportunity of doing so when the Bill was in committee. That clause seemed to him to give the superintendent immense powers, for he could—

“Take any measures which appear to him expedient for the protection of life and property and may by himself and his men break into or through or take possession of or pull down any premises for the purpose of extinguishing such fire and may also cause the water to be shut off from any mains or pipes in order to give a greater supply and pressure of water for the purpose of subduing the fire.”

That was all very well so long as the superintendent was a good officer, like the present officer of the brigade, but a suitable man might not always be found. It was of course only right that the Superintendent should

take any measures which might appear to him expedient for the protection of life and property, but the clause went on to say:—

“and may by himself and his men break into or through or take possession of or pull down any premises for the purpose of extinguishing such fire and may also cause the water to be shut off from any mains or pipes in order to give a greater supply and pressure of water for the purpose of subduing the fire.”

This was a power that would have to be used with great discretion; besides, there might be no water to shut off. He wished, also, to call attention to the succeeding words:—

“And any damage caused by the due execution of the powers hereby conferred shall be deemed to be damage by fire within the meaning but subject to the conditions of any policy of insurance against fire which shall be effected or renewed after the passing of this Act.”

He had been connected with one of the most respectable insurance offices for the last ten years, and protested against this clause—protested against the damage done by a person appointed by the Corporation, or by the Government of the day being considered in the manner mentioned in the clause. No damage done by this person's interference ought to fall upon the insurance offices. This was quite a code Draconian, and he hoped the clause would be amended, at least to the extent of doing away with this extraordinary provision.

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

The House accordingly went into committee on the Bill.

#### AGENT-GENERAL FOR QUEENSLAND BILL.

The PREMIER presented this Bill, and moved—

That it be now read a first time.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved—

That the Bill be printed.

Mr. WALSH said he understood the honorable the Premier did not intend to press this Bill through the House this session, and what was the use of going to the expense of printing it?

Mr. PALMER: It is printed.

Mr. WALSH said he did not wish to see the country put to unnecessary expense.

The SPEAKER: I wish to call the honorable member's attention to the 219th Standing Order, which says:—

“When any Bill should be presented by a member, in pursuance of an order of this House, or shall be brought up from the Legislative Council, the question, ‘That this Bill be now read a first time,’ and ‘That the Bill be printed,’ shall be decided without amendment or debate.”

Mr. WALSH: As a question of privilege, sir, I may say that you allowed a debate

before the House adjourned for dinner, and that you interrupted it by saying that you would resume the chair at seven o'clock.

The **SPEAKER**: The honorable member was about to address the House when I said that I would resume the chair at seven o'clock. The honorable member is not in order in addressing the House on the motion that the Bill be printed.

Mr. **WALSH**: Then I rise, sir, to a point of order. We have it on good authority, that the Government are not going to prosecute this Bill, and I wish to save unnecessary expense.

The **ATTORNEY-GENERAL**: The honorable member has not stated his point of order.

The **SPEAKER**: There is no point of order. The honorable member had not stated that there is any violation of standing order, rule, or practice of the House, and, therefore, I shall put the question.

Mr. **WALSH**: I rise again, Mr. Speaker, to point out—

**HONORABLE MEMBERS**: Chair, chair.

The **SPEAKER**: I may inform the honorable member that a debate cannot take place on this question: the honorable member has not stated any point of order.

Mr. **WALSH** said he had not been allowed to move his point of order, and as there was a compact phalanx on the Treasury benches against him he should not state it, but would move the adjournment of the House, and he thought it was time he did so. They had been told that the Government had introduced the Bill, and they had it on the authority of the leader of the Opposition that the Government were not going to proceed with it, and yet there was now a motion before the House that the Bill be printed. What a farce the whole thing was! Why, the Government were merely playing fast and loose with the Agent-General, their late Premier. Having introduced a Bill to carry out as it were a compact with that gentleman, they now entered into an arrangement with honorable members on the Opposition side of the House that they should sell the Agent-General and not proceed with the Bill. That was the ground of his objection, and he felt that he had a right to raise up his voice and protest, not only against the printing of the present Bill, which was a mere sham, but also their conduct in treating the present Agent-General now in London in such an improper manner. If Mr. Macalister was fit to be Agent-General, he should receive the proper salary befitting his office; but the Government, he regretted to say, were shelving the matter altogether. Having introduced the Bill in what he might say a most extraordinary manner, they had given a distinct intimation to the honorable leader of the Opposition that they did not mean to go on with the Bill beyond the second reading. The whole secret was, that Mr. Macalister had been got rid of as a Premier, and as an incubus, as it were, on the present Government, and had been sent

home; and now it appeared he had been betrayed—not only from the information which he had discovered himself, but also from a statement which had been made by the honorable member for Port Curtis. He contended that if Mr. Macalister was worthy of being Agent-General, he should receive more than the small pittance doled out to him. But he saw that the Government had shelved that gentleman, and had entered, as it were, into a kind of bargain with honorable members, that the Bill which was introduced professedly to benefit that gentleman, should be shelved. He moved—

That this House do now adjourn.

The motion not being seconded, lapsed.

The question was then put and passed.

The **PREMIER** moved—

That the second reading of the Bill be made an Order of the Day for that day week.

Mr. **WALSH** said that the whole thing was a sham, if the Government had no intention of proceeding with the Bill; if there were no honorable members opposite who cared about the position of the present Agent-General, he hoped that at least honorable members on his side of the House would show that they cared. There was no doubt that the statement was correct that the Government had introduced the present Bill after giving a promise to Mr. Macalister that they would do so, and yet they had since made an arrangement that it should be shelved for the present session. The whole thing was a right-down swindle.

Question put and passed.

#### PASTORAL LEASES BILL.

On the motion of the **MINISTER FOR LANDS**, it was resolved to postpone Order of the Day No. 5, viz., consideration in committee of Legislative Council's amendments on the Settled Districts Pastoral Leases Bill, until after the consideration of No. 6—Supply.

The **COLONIAL TREASURER** moved that the House should go into committee to proceed with Supply.

Mr. **PALMER** said he should like to know why the previous Order of the Day had been postponed? The Legislative Council met to-morrow, and it was a matter of importance that the question should be settled one way or another. The House were entitled to some information as to why the Government wished to postpone the question.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS** said the Government proposed to deal with the question to-morrow. It was a matter of considerable importance, and, after consultation, the Ministry found that they would be best consulting the public convenience by postponing. They were very anxious to get on with Supply, and might get through a large quantity of work if the Order of the Day No. 5 were postponed.

Mr. IVORY did not consider the remarks of the Minister for Lands any answer at all. It was publicly rumored, out of doors, that the Government intended to let the Bill slide amongst the innocents, and, if this was the case, the House ought to know it. At any rate, it was very unfair to keep an important matter like this dangling in suspense.

Mr. DE SARGE said a great deal of time had been spent over the Fire Brigades Bill, while the business paper contained much more important matter. The Government raised no objection, but it did seem rather odd that when they came to important business they were to postpone it. Whether they had a small number of supporters in attendance or not, they ought to go on with their business.

Mr. BUZACOTT said the Government ought to deal with its business in its proper order. Members on both sides of the House were anxious no doubt to get through the Estimates, because they were sick of the session, and wanted to get away to their homes; at the same time, they ought to deal with this Pastoral Leases question without loss of time.

Mr. AMHURST said that honorable members on his side did not want to obstruct, but they did want to see justice done. In order that the matter might be further discussed, he would move the adjournment of the House.

The COLONIAL TREASURER hoped the honorable member would withdraw his motion. It was highly important that they should get into Supply that evening, and it was chiefly with the intention of achieving that object that the consideration of the Pastoral Leases amendments was postponed. The business of the evening had occupied a longer time than the Government expected, and as it was very urgent that the resolutions of the Committee of Supply should be reported before the sitting closed, which could only be done when they got to the Estimates-in-Chief, he hoped the motion for adjournment would be withdrawn, and he hoped the action of the Government in postponing this motion would not prevent honorable members from proceeding with due expedition to the consideration of Supply. The Pastoral Leases Bill would be proceeded with the first thing to-morrow.

Mr. PALMER: Why did not the Minister for Lands say so, then?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had no intention of withdrawing the Bill until it had been fairly discussed, at any rate. The matter must be brought under the attention of the House, and the opinion of the House invited, upon the very important amendments of the Legislative Council. He believed they were furthering the object they had in view, namely, to arrive at a friendly understanding with the Council, by agreeing to a postponement of the Order of the Day.

Mr. PALMER believed the amendments of the other House on the Pastoral Leases Bill could

have been disposed of in less time than the debate had occupied, in consequence of the bad tactics of the Minister for Lands, who gave no reasons for disturbing the order of the business, as the Colonial Treasurer had since done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No such thing.

Mr. PALMER said the only information given by the Minister for Lands was that his colleagues, after consultation, had agreed to postpone the Order of the Day. It was extraordinary how rumors got abroad; but it had been rumored during the day that it was the intention of the Government to throw out the Pastoral Leases Bill, casting the onus upon the other House. This, coupled with the course of procedure now proposed, made him naturally suspicious. He could not see how the postponement of the question would expedite Supply. The Government had a majority upon the question, which was fully debated, and everybody knew they might have done what they pleased with their amendments, and that no objection would have been offered on the Opposition side of the House. Instead of getting the amendments through, they were so deplorably bad in their tactics, that under the dodgery and trickery of the head of the Government, there was every room for suspicion. The Minister for Lands had better, without further delay, let the country know what they meant to do with the Council's amendments. That would be the way to expedite Supply, for it was a matter of too much importance to be passed lightly over. The Opposition had expressed their opinions fairly, and had been defeated, and they were not going to revive the matter in the House; but they did maintain that both they and the country had a right to know what the Government intended to do. He repeated for himself, that there would be no opposition on that side; the Government had only to state what they meant to do, and do it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I may say, in answer to the honorable member for Port Curtis, that the Government propose to disagree with the amendments of the Legislative Council.

Mr. MACROSSAN asked why, under those circumstances, they did not consider the Bill at once, and let the Council know the determination of the Government. There was undoubtedly a rumor outside of the House that the Government intended to allow the Bill to slide this session; whether this was the intention or not, he could not say; but such was the rumour, and it is a very ugly one. It was high time the question was settled, and that the whole question of the land was settled in regard to leases, and to the reserves, and Crown lands alienation. Let the question be settled, and settled as it ought to be for years. The Minister for Lands made use of a strange expression when he said they would consider the Bill to-morrow, and did not intend to withdraw it until it



had been well discussed. If any one was fond of making use of dubious words or expressions, it was the Minister for Lands, and this was a specimen. Bearing in mind the ugly rumors outside of the House, he was afraid the Bill was to take its place amongst the innocents, somehow or other, and the blame would be thrown on that side of the House, or upon the other Chamber. He was not satisfied with the action of the Council, and a perusal of the speeches delivered there led him to suspect that they looked upon themselves as being entitled to the land in perpetuity. The sooner, therefore, the House settled the question, the better for both the House and the country. Let the Government come to a decision at once, therefore, that the Council might know to-morrow what it was.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: As it seems to be the general wish of the House to proceed with the Pastoral Leases Bill, I will withdraw my motion for going into Committee of Supply.

Motion for adjournment withdrawn by leave.

The COLONIAL TREASURER's motion was also withdrawn, and the House went into committee on the Pastoral Leases Bill.

The House having resumed,

The CHAIRMAN reported that the committee had agreed to an amendment with an amendment, and had disagreed to the other amendments.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved—

That the report be adopted.

Mr. PALMER said: Before the report is adopted, I shall take this last opportunity of entering my protest against the disagreement, on the part of the Government, to the amendments of the Legislative Council; and I sincerely hope it will be remembered, as I said before, when the House was in committee, that those very amendments, which they are now disagreeing to, were absolutely drafted and printed by themselves, and were ready, I believe, to be received by them if the House had not, at the last moment, by a majority of one, disagreed to them. We have the fact before us that on a question, on which we are told by the ministerial organs the welfare of the colony depends—on which the cry of "the land for the people" has been got up, the very amendments of the Legislative Council were originally drafted and printed by members of the Government; that they had them in this House, ready to distribute, before the resolution of the honorable member for Rockhampton was even brought on; and we are perfectly justified in supposing from that, that they were not only willing, but anxious to adopt those very amendments which now they would lead us to believe would be ruin to the colony. I have stated before, and I repeat again, that I believe the non-adoption of these amendments of the

Legislative Council will do more to ruin the colony than any act of any Ministry for the last ten years, and that is saying a great deal. I say more—I say all the acts of all the Ministries of the colony for the last ten years. It is very evident, however, that the members of the present Ministry care nothing for the welfare of the colony, or a great portion of the interests of the colony—the pastoral lessees in the settled districts. The question with them is not the interests of those people at all at this moment. It is as clear as possible that the object of the Ministry in disagreeing to the amendments of the Council is to have the Bill thrown out, and on that to get up a clap-trap cry of "The land for the people!" Well, I believe there is sufficient good sense and discrimination in the people of the colony to see that the Bill, as it passed the Legislative Council, does contain every provision necessary for giving the land to the people. It provides for the alienation of the lands wherever they are wanted over the whole of those runs; but the Ministry are determined to run them up, and to send the Bill back to the Legislative Council with, I believe, the knowledge, on their part, or the foregone conclusion, at all events, that the other House will not accept it unless the amendments that they have made, I think twice, are agreed to; and the report outside the House in the early part of the evening, that they intend to shelve the Bill, is, I believe, perfectly true. That such is their intention, I think, is patent to everyone who has taken the trouble to give the matter the slightest consideration. There is the fact that those very amendments were drafted by themselves, and that they, on their own showing, were prepared to accept them; and yet they now turn round and tell us, that owing to some assumption of right by somebody somewhere—they dared not even mention where or by whom—they are determined to force the Legislative Council to accept the Bill as they sent it up from this House, with a few insignificant amendments. If this is legislation, I can only say it is not my idea of legislation. It has never been attempted to controvert the assertion so often made in this House, that the action of the Government in putting up the leases of these runs for sale by auction will bring distress and ruin on a very large and a very influential portion of the people of this colony. It has never been attempted to controvert the statement that these amendments, so far from keeping the land from the people, will only have the effect of preserving squatter from squatter;—the poor squatter—for I suppose it will be allowed that there may be poor squatters as well as poor men in other classes of the community—from the capitalist; that the only tendency of the auction system will be to drive those men to utter ruin without any corresponding benefit to the colony. It has been asserted in this House over

and over again, and it has never been controverted, that the appraisement system is much more likely to bring in higher rents to the Crown—although I do not for one moment believe that the only advantage to be gained, or that should be looked for to be gained, is simply a higher rent—it has never attempted to be controverted that the system of appraisement recommended by the Legislative Council will bring in a larger amount of revenue than is likely to be got by the auction system. We have had no argument whatever on the subject from the other side of the House. We have had assertions, and dogma, and clap-trap, and the cry of “The land for the people,” which means nothing. The land is there for the people; it is open to selection in every possible way in the Bill, and we have had no argument whatever, but, as I said before, simply clap-trap and dogmatic assertion that they will have the system by auction. As I pointed out before, this evening, the only parallel case the Minister for Lands brought forward was his assertion that this was not a tentative measure, because they had already had experience in selling forfeited and vacated blocks by auction with good success, so far as the revenue is concerned. But there is no parallel whatever between the two cases. One is waste land of the Crown where you interfere with nobody; but in the other you are driving the man in possession, who has paid his rent for years, and who is willing to pay a higher rent by having his land appraised in a fair way between landlord and tenant, out of the land, and ruining him to all intents and purposes as far as you can. It has been shown over and over again that if his land is purchased over his head, the absolute removal of his stock must tend to his ruin. It opens the door to fraud of all sorts. The man with money in his possession is likely to—will be sure to, for we know what money will do—buy at a price considerably over the value of the land, for the purpose, immediately afterwards, of buying the stock at his own price. That will bring grist to his mill, but it will ruin the original occupier, and do no good to the country. On the contrary, it will do a great deal of harm, because the welfare of the greater number must be to the welfare of the whole; but the capitalist who buys merely to make money does not care what becomes of the country. That is the effect that will follow from defeating the amendments of the Legislative Council; and very wise amendments they were, and it would have redounded to the credit of the Government had they adopted them, as was very nearly being done. I hope, too, it will be remembered that this evening I almost forced the Ministry to proceed with the Bill, and I assured the House then that I had no intention of going to a division and beating them; but I could have defeated them on this very Bill. If I and many other honorable members had not gone out of the House,

simply because I had made a promise in the early part of the evening, when I forced them to go on with the Bill, that I would not go to a division, I would have defeated them. I hope that will be remembered, and that the onus will not be attempted to be thrown on the “elsewhere,” which the honorable the Minister for Lands so delicately alluded to. I could have defeated them this evening on this very amendment if I had not made, perhaps, a rather rash promise; but a promise which once made I should despise myself if I did not keep. It was hardly a promise; it was simply a declaration that I had no intention of opposing whatever the Government proposed to do; as the fight is now between the majority of this House and the majority of the Legislative Council. I repeat, that had it not been for that declaration I could have defeated them this evening; and they can count heads if they like, and they will find it is true. With the members who walked out of the House with me, it is clear I could have defeated them by two. I hope that will not be forgotten. When this very same amendment was previously before the House, the majority of the Government on this most momentous question was only one. That is a fact that should not be forgotten, whatever may be the fate of the Bill when it goes back to the Legislative Council. It is not for me to anticipate what will be the action of that House, but it is for me to declaim against the Government shelving this Bill, with, as I believe, the intention now uppermost in their minds, of getting up a clap-trap cry against the Upper House, in the event of this Bill, with their amendment rejected, being sent back to this House. That, I believe, is the object of the Government; and that has been their object all through. I never believed in their sincerity in this Bill, as I told them over and over again, and their action to-night has fully confirmed the impression I entertained, that their object is to throw the onus on the Upper House, and humbug the country. But I believe the country will not be humbugged; I believe that they will properly appreciate this Bill, which provides that they may take up land by conditional selection, by auction, and by homestead selection, and that they will see that the object of the amendment of the Upper House is for the public interest on grounds of public policy; that there is no claim whatever on the part of the members of the Opposition in this House that the lessees of the Crown have any claim *per se* for a continuation of their leases, but that as a matter of public policy it is desirable that those leases should be continued under a system of appraisement, such as that in force in the sister colony, and not under a system of auction, which is likely to bring utter ruin and confusion amongst them.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said: I think the deliverance of the honorable gen-

tleman on this occasion, I suppose the last opportunity he will have of addressing the House on this subject, does him very little credit.

Mr. PALMER: In your opinion, I dare say.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In my opinion it does him very little credit for several reasons, and it does not do him the credit which his general character justifies. The honorable gentleman commenced by imputing to us a course of action which he knows we have never adopted.

Mr. PALMER: I know nothing of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He knows that when the honorable member for Dalby moved the recommittal of the Bill, I distinctly told the honorable gentleman that he could hope for no support from the Government; that all he could hope for was a fair chance of discussing the question again in a full House. We had the courtesy to tell him that, and I think the amenities of debate, at all events, ought to have justified us in expecting from the honorable member for Port Curtis that he would have allowed us the credit of the fair antagonism which we asserted at the time the honorable member for Dalby stated it was his intention to move the recommittal of the Bill. I then stated, on the part of the Government, that no obstacle would be placed in the way of that course, but he must distinctly understand that the Government could in no way lead him to suppose that they would give him any assistance in retracing the steps taken by this House already. If it was a ground of complaint that the decision was arrived at in a small House, that should be a ground of complaint no longer, for the decision has been arrived at in a larger House. The honorable gentleman ought to be capable of estimating the courtesies of debate, and, at any rate, on this question, he should not impute to us motives which never actuated us. We were anxious to have fair discussion; that there should be no doubt; and, more than that,—we were anxious that, even if we were defeated upon a subject such as this, at any rate, the form in which the contrary ideas should be embodied should be at least in accordance with the rest of the phraseology of the Bill. It was that reason, and that reason alone, which led the honorable the Attorney-General to assist the honorable gentleman in framing the appraisalment clauses before the matter came up for discussion, and that was what induced us to go on with the Bill when the honorable member for Dalby announced his intention to move the recommittal of the Bill. It was a matter of doubt, I admit, whether the Government could have carried their way.

Mr. IVORY: You were prepared to accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I hope the honorable gentleman will be good enough not to interrupt me. The recom-

mittal of the Bill was carried by a considerable majority, and that seemed to indicate that the previous conclusions of the House might not be substantiated. At any rate, it established this: That there was a majority of this House at that time who were anxious to afford an opportunity for, if nothing more, fair discussion in a fuller House; and under those circumstances, it was a matter of courtesy which should not be brought against us as an accusation. It was never justified by anything said by me or by any member of the Government.

Mr. IVORY: You were prepared to accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We were not. I stated distinctly, on the part of the Government, that we should not do so. I stated distinctly that we should do the best we could to carry our way and pass the Bill in its present form. I have done my best to advocate this system of auction; I may be mistaken, but, at any rate, I am in earnest about it; and nothing I have done justifies the accusation that we wished to see any other system adopted. From first to last—from the day I moved the second reading of the Bill, there was no hesitation on the part of the Government in adopting the principle of auction as applied to a re-settlement of the question whenever the leases expired. And I go further, Mr. Speaker; I doubt very much whether, anticipating as we have attempted to do by this legislation, the time when the leases fall in, we should now be justified, in the present state of public opinion, in renewing the tenure, without placing that before the constituencies, and asking their opinion upon it.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Ha! ha! Hear, hear.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I doubt very much whether we should be justified in renewing the tenure when it expires. The whole equity and law of the tenure will have expired at the end of the ten years, and should we be justified, as public men, in renewing that tenure in the form in which it might possibly be put elsewhere for another ten years—should we be justified in handing over the public estate to the present tenants, especially when it has been asserted by this side of the House and admitted by the other, that the legal and equitable claims to that tenure lapse at the end of the ten years? Under those circumstances I doubt very much whether any Government would be justified in renewing the tenure without consulting the constituencies upon the subject. The honorable gentleman has done us the honor to attribute to us “clap-trap,” and “dogmatic assertion,” in so much that we have spread far and wide the cry of “The land for the people.” We have done nothing of the kind; and I defy the honorable gentleman to say so. We have tried to prove by our acts and our words that we have endeavored to make the best provision

we could to enable the people to settle upon the land. We have descended to nothing like the clap-trap or dogmatic assertion used by the honorable member for Port Curtis himself. In his first address he used more clap-trap and dogmatic assertion than I have heard during the whole course of the debate on this Bill. And, I ask, in what position is the honorable member for Port Curtis now? He has told us that this is a momentous question; that it is fraught with the gravest consequences to a large body of persons in this colony; that the interest of the whole colony are involved; that it may be the ruin of many, and that it can only benefit the few. These are the sort of assertions he has made. He has painted a dark picture of what the effect of this legislation may be; and yet he has admitted that at this momentous crisis, on which depends the future of the colony, he could have defeated the Government to-night, but yet he refrained from doing so.

MR. PALMER: I gave my word.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Why did the honorable gentleman give his word? He has, by so doing, sacrificed to-night what he considers of far greater moment—the public interest—to a mere temporary accident, to a statement that he would not oppose the Government on this occasion. Why, sir, I ask, did the honorable member say that he would not oppose the Government on such a momentous occasion? We, sir, have been accused of dishonesty, but it seems to me that the honorable member's action this evening has far more the appearance of dishonesty. I do not pretend to be a judge of any man's honor than my own, but I must say that I think the honorable member for Port Curtis is very wrong, if he supposes that the public interest will be injured by this measure, in not taking the whole responsibility of opposing it upon himself and his party. Why has he not done that, instead of trying to shift it upon us? I say, sir, that such conduct is not the most honest, not the most open, not the most creditable, and certainly not the most statesmanlike.

MR. DE SATGE said he wished to explain why he had called for a division, and departed from the usual course of abiding by the decision of the honorable leader of his party. He had done so because he felt that the interests of his district, a district which asked for very little public money, were wholly wrapped up in the measure before the House. He had been determined, whatever the leader of his party might say, to call for a division, to show what was the feeling of the House on a measure of so much importance to his constituents. No matter what had fallen from the honorable Minister for Lands, there remained the fact, that the measure before them established a principle for all future legislation in regard to pastoral leases in the unsettled districts. The honorable member must re-

member that he had established an undoubted principle of including in the same category and in the same ruinous regulations the unsettled with the settled districts. It had been continually explained in that House by honorable members opposite that the members of the Opposition were interested in the present measure; but he had heard the honorable member for Dalby state that he had no such interest in it. He must say that he thought the sooner they did away with the necessity of honorable members saying that they had no interest in a subject before the House, the better. He thought that no honorable member should be debarred from speaking on a subject simply because he happened to be personally interested in it: if they were to continue that argument they would in fact be dissolving themselves. He thought all should be free, and that whether they were interested or not, should have no weight in discussing a question. With one exception, there was not an honorable member on the Opposition benches who was interested in the settled districts personally; and, therefore, they had been fighting for the question, purely as a financial question, and not for vested rights—or those rights which had been alluded to by the honorable member for the Kennedy, in reference to what had taken place in another place; it was never once mentioned in that House. With regard to what the honorable Minister for Lands had said about the five years' leases, it was nothing more or less than saying that they would be resumable at six months' notice; and he hoped the country would not be led away with any other idea by what the honorable member had said. There would be nothing more in Queensland than a six months' lease, and to say to the contrary was mere clap-trap, as stated by the honorable member for Port Curtis. Anyone inside or outside the House must know that when the honorable member talked about a five years' lease, it was nothing more than a six months' notice, and the sooner the capitalist who wanted to invest his money knew that, the better.

MR. BAILEY said that the honorable member for Normanby, with his usual candor—that candor which so often disgusted the party to which he belonged—had hit the right nail on the head that evening. The honorable member said that the present was not a question merely affecting the lessees in the settled districts, but that it would in future affect the people in the unsettled districts. Now, that was just what was wanted. What was wanted was, that the ten years' lease should be a ten years' lease, and nothing more. The honorable member had certainly given his opinion that the construction of five years' leases would establish a principle which he (Mr. Bailey) should like to see carried out, namely, that it would not be a lease for all time to come, but at the end of a given time the lands would be open to all classes.



MR. AMHURST said he much regretted that the honorable Minister for Lands had altered his style of argument altogether that evening, and should have treated the remarks of the honorable member for Port Curtis with the levity he had done. The honorable member commenced his speech, not in the calm and deliberate manner usual to him, but by saying that the speech of the honorable member for Port Curtis was not creditable to him. He did not think that it was the sort of a speech for a Minister of the Crown to make when the question under discussion was one of such immense importance. The honorable gentleman was evidently not aware of the responsibility he had assumed—a responsibility he was not capable of understanding—but as long as the honorable gentleman could manage to keep his party together and himself and his colleagues in office, he did not care what happened to the country, or what the effect upon it would be of the measure now before them. It was high time that the country should know that the honorable member was not the Minister for Lands honestly. The honorable member talked about imputing motives, but there had been nothing of the kind, for everything said by the honorable member for Port Curtis had been most straightforward. Every honorable member, no matter on which side of the House he sat, knew very well that the Government had the amendments drawn up, and that they caught the honorable member for Rockhampton in a trap.

MR. BUZACOTT: Oh no; I had my eyes open.

MR. AMHURST said he was glad that the Government were not so bad as he thought they were. There was one mistake they were making. What was proposed by the amendment of the Council was not an extension of the present leases, and when they expired something must be done with them; but, as pointed out by the honorable member for Port Curtis, the question was whether they should be let by appraisement, or whether they should be swallowed up at auction by what were called on the Government side of the House, the cormorant squatters. He wanted some explanation on that point. The honorable Minister for Lands told them that the Government would not consider themselves justified in acceding to any alteration in the five years' leases, without first appealing to their constituencies—

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did not say so; what I referred to was the renewal of the present tenure.

MR. AMHURST said he knew he might not be quoting the honorable member's exact words; the honorable gentleman said "renewal of the present tenure." It was of no use shuffling; he wanted to keep the honorable member to the point, but he could not do so. The Government brought in a clause and thought they were going to have the principle of appraisement, but as soon as they found by some of the newspapers that certain

constituencies would not have that, they turned round and changed their policy, although, if the truth was told, they had never had any policy since they were Ministers—except the policy of the expediency of sticking to office. As there were other honorable members who might wish to address the House, he would move—

That this debate be now adjourned.

MR. MACROSSAN said that he had not had the pleasure of hearing the whole of the speech delivered by the honorable Minister for Lands, but the portion he had heard should be sufficient to lift the scales from the eyes of any honorable members of that House who at present believed in the sincerity of the Government in introducing the Bill. Comparing the words spoken by the honorable member a few minutes ago, with those spoken by him earlier in the evening, the only conclusion to be drawn was that the Government intended to withdraw the Bill, and that its withdrawal was to be made the groundwork of an electioneering cry. In the early part of the evening the honorable Minister for Lands said that he would not withdraw the Bill until it had been well discussed, but now it appeared that the leases were not to be continued on the present tenure without the Government consulting the constituencies. But he would ask, whether anybody ever thought that they were to be continued on the present tenure? Why, the tenure proposed by the Government was as different from the present tenure as day from night. He believed that the Government who were now opposed to the amendment had actually passed one of the most conservative, ultra-squatting Land Bills that had ever been passed; but finding that, as the honorable member for Toowoomba had warned them, they would, in twelve months' time, become the most unpopular Government, as regarded the land question, that ever sat in that House, they were now trying to retrace their steps by passing the present Bill. They had lost the confidence of their supporters, who believed in a liberal land legislation, whilst they never had had the confidence of honorable members on his side of the House. If ever he had given them credit for any sincerity at all, the two speeches he had heard delivered by the honorable the Minister for Lands that evening had completely taken it away. If they had ever intended honorable members inside of that House, and the people outside to do so, they could not have done better than to have put up the honorable Minister for Lands to make the speeches he had made that evening. That honorable member was the orator of the Government, but he was never put up to say more than what they wanted him to say; and he believed the honorable gentleman's colleagues never for one moment thought that he would

have gone so far as he had gone that night and say that the Pastoral Leases Bill was to be made an electioneering cry; and to make the people outside believe that the object of the Government in that Bill was to get the land for them, knowing full well at the same time, that if they once settled the land question, their occupation as a liberal Government would be gone. They knew well enough that, if they once settled that question, there was no longer any cause for the existence of their party, and knowing that, they made the present Bill a last plank on which to stand, and go before the country. The Government had made up their minds not to settle the question, after it was placed in their power by the Upper Chamber to do so; and he believed that if the Upper House agreed to substitute auction for appraisement they would find some loop-hole by which they could shelve the Bill, knowing that otherwise the very cause of their existence would be gone. What policy, he would ask, had ever placed any liberal party in power in the colony but that of the lands—what power was it that placed the Macalister party in power? Already that question was settled in a very different manner to that in which the present Government would dare to settle it; and they knew well enough now that if the question before them was settled, they would no longer occupy a position on the Treasury benches. It was of no use the honorable Minister for Lands attempting to throw dust in the eyes of the people of the country. He hoped that the speeches of honorable members would be reported, and if they did not upset the minds of the people who believed in the present Minister for Lands being a land reformer, nothing in the world could do so. The honorable member for Toowoomba, who was a consistent supporter of the honorable gentlemen now on the Treasury benches, had condemned them on their land legislation; others had done so. The honorable member for Burke, who believed in free selection all over the country, had done so; and in fact, he might say, they were condemned by every one. It was well known that with the settlement of the land question, Othello's occupation was gone, and that, instead of the Government occupying the position they hoped to do next year, they would find themselves on the Opposition benches; he would not say who would be in their places, but they would not be there. He congratulated them on having such a candid member as the honorable Minister for Lands, who never said what he meant to say, but often said what he did not mean to say. Since that honorable member had opened his mouth, that afternoon, there could no longer be any doubt of the object of the Government. If ever they were sincere on the land question, they had lost that sincerity since they were told by the honorable member for Toowoomba that they were becoming a most

unpopular Government, through their land measures; and they now thought that it was only by pretending to protect the lands of the people from the cormorant squatter that they could hope to retain the position they had held for a long time, but which he hoped they would not retain much longer. He was extremely grateful to the honorable Minister for Lands for having exposed his hand and the hands of the Government so completely by saying that the question was to be simply an electioneering dodge. He believed that if they could have the question settled as they themselves pretended they wished to have it settled, they would not have it settled at all.

Mr. PALMER said that after the speech of the honorable Minister for Lands, he could not but think that there were very good grounds for stating that the rumor outside was well founded, and that the Bill was only intended as a mere clap-trap on which to go to the country. If any proof had been wanted, they had had it that evening from the honorable gentleman, when he said that before the Government could consent to any renewal of tenure they would have to go to their constituents; that showed exactly what their intention was, and that the report which had been in circulation was a perfectly true one. What, on earth, reason was there for the Minister for Lands to talk about an extension of present tenure?—who on earth ever asked for it?—where was it?—in what part of the Bill? Was appraisement for five years to be argued into a renewal of the present tenure?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course it is.

Mr. PALMER said if that was so, the honorable member argued in the most extraordinary manner all round the world. It was not a renewal of the present tenure but something quite different altogether; but the honorable member had shown his hand without intending to do so, although as a rule when he got into his high falutin he said something more than he intended to come out. He wished to refer to what the honorable member had said about his breaking his word—

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did not talk about that.

Mr. PALMER said that most decidedly the honorable member had done so—he talked about his (Mr. Palmer) neglecting to take a temporary victory because he refused to break his word. If such a remark had come from the Premier, he should not have been surprised, but he certainly gave the Minister for Lands credit for attaching some value to a promise.

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

Mr. PALMER said he thought the honorable gentleman would have set more value on the sacredness of his word. It appeared, however, that they had different ideas on that point, and he should adhere to his own, and for no party and for no temporary advantages

would he break his word once given. Then the honorable gentleman accused him of shirking responsibility and putting it "elsewhere." That was the honorable gentleman's little delicate allusion to the other House. He had shirked no responsibility whatever. He said now, and had said whenever he had spoken on the question, that this was not a question between the members of the Opposition and the members of the Treasury benches, but between a majority of the House, including the Treasury benches, and the Legislative Council, and it was for them to fight it out, and he hoped it would be fought out. With the assurance they had now had, which he hoped would go forth to the public, that the Government never intended to pass this Bill, but were only using it as a foil—that they had all along meant to do what they now proposed with regard to the present tenure, which the Minister for Lands again explained meant the tenure of the present Bill, namely, a renewal of the leases for five years by appraisal or auction; and when they were told that the Government could not consent to a renewal of the tenure without an appeal to the constituencies, it was too late to attempt to hoodwink people any longer. What did this mean, except that it had been a delusion and a snare all the time, as he had pointed out? He was asked by the Minister for Lands why he had not consistently opposed this Bill? Had he not done so?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not to-night.

Mr. PALMER would ask, whether he had not opposed it at every stage, and pointed out the utter ruin it would be to a large class of the community? He did not know what the honorable gentleman would call consistently opposing this Bill; if he had not consistently opposed it, he had never opposed any, for he had endeavored in the strongest manner to point out the ruin which the Government were bringing upon a large portion of their fellow-colonists.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL wished to say a few words with regard to what the honorable member for Port Curtis had said at an earlier period of the evening, touching the preparation of the amendments. He was accused by name of having drawn them up, and the suggestion at any rate was, that he and the Government also approved of them. Ever since he had occupied a seat on the Treasury bench, he had always done his duty in assisting honorable members in bringing in amendments, and whenever notice was given of any amendment which there was any possibility of being carried, he had always thought it his duty to assist the business of the House, and save time in the recommitment of a Bill, by preparing, as far as possible, such a motion. But by drawing up such an amendment, he by no means committed himself to agreement with it. He did not consider he was doing any kindness to anybody in simply doing his duty. It was in this way, and this way only,

that he assisted in preparing the amendments on the Pastoral Leases Bill. He did not propose to say anything upon the general question.

Mr. JOHN SCOTT said the Attorney-General declared that he assisted in the preparation of these amendments to help an honorable member, but it was freely stated about the House that the amendments were in print before the honorable member for Rockhampton had given notice of his amendment. He should like to know how these two statements could be reconciled by the honorable member. One of them must be untrue, and he heard many honorable members say they saw the amendments in print before anything was heard of the member for Rockhampton's motion.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the Attorney-General's statement was quite good enough to leave a wrong impression upon the minds of honorable members, namely, that he merely assisted the honorable member for Rockhampton in drawing up the amendments.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. MACROSSAN: Were you asked to draw up such an amendment?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No. What I say is, that as soon as I heard that an amendment was going to be proposed, I do not say by the honorable member for Rockhampton, for it was announced at the second reading of the Bill that it was to be done, I did my best to have it prepared in proper shape. It might have been a mistake on my part, but that is the real state of the case.

Mr. MACROSSAN said he had nothing to do with the amendment, and did not know any person was going to propose one, but he was informed, a long time before it was proposed, that the Government was going to bring one forward, but had altered their intention and determined to adopt the principle of sale by auction, all that they wanted being a plausible excuse. This he was told a long time ago, long before the member for Rockhampton moved his amendment. It was not right that a false impression should be allowed to remain, because of the Attorney-General's information, so scanty yet so full.

Mr. WALSH: I will move the adjournment of the debate, to give the Attorney-General an opportunity of replying.

The SPEAKER: That motion was negatived just now.

Mr. WALSH: Then I'll move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. MACROSSAN: I will add to what I have said that if you, sir, were allowed to speak upon this question, you also could say what I have said, namely, that you had heard that the Government were going to act upon the question, and going to adopt the system of appraisal. You asked me whether I had heard of it, and you must have heard it from some other source.

Question—That the House do now adjourn—negatived.

Mr. IVORY said he could fearlessly state that before the member for Rockhampton moved his amendment he heard the Government were prepared to accept the amendments. Now they tried to throw dust in the eyes of the country, saying that the amendments involved principles they utterly discarded. The falseness of the whole business was known to every member.

Question—That the report be adopted—put and passed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—

That the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message, viz. :—

“ Mr. PRESIDENT,

“ The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council’s amendments in ‘ *The Settled Districts Pastoral Leases Bill*,’—

“ *Agree* to the amendment in clause 1.

“ *Disagree* to the omission of clause 2,

“ *Because* it is considered that at the expiration of the existing leases it is desirable that the actual value of the land for pastoral purposes should be determined by open competition amongst the public rather than that renewed leases should be granted to the present lessees at an appraised rent.

“ *Disagree* to the omission of clause 3 for the same reasons.

“ *Disagree* to the amendment omitting the first five lines of clause 4 down to the end of subsection 1 and inserting other provisions, for the same reasons.

“ *Disagree* to the amendment in clause 4, subsection printed 4, lines 1, 2, and 3.

“ *Because* such disagreement is rendered necessary by previous disagreement.

“ *Disagree* to the amendment in clause 4, subsection printed 8, lines 13, 14, and 15,

“ *Because* improvements, in respect of which the right of pre-emption has been exercised, became by such pre-emption the property of the Crown, and it is unjust that the lessee should be paid for them a second time.

“ *Disagree* to the amendment in clause 4, subsection printed 9,

“ *Because* it is reasonable that the person who has to pay for the improvements should have a voice in the valuation of them.

“ *Agree* to the amendment in clause 4, subsection printed 12, with the following consequential amendment.

“ *Omit* ‘ under the said ‘ *Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868* ;’

“ And *insert* ‘ not being improvements in respect of which any right of pre-emption has been exercised or compensation paid ;’—in which they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

“ *Disagree* to the amendment omitting clause 5, and to the amendments in clause printed 6, to the proposed new clauses to be clauses 4, 5, and 6, and to the amendment in clause 8,

“ *Because* such disagreement is rendered necessary by the previous disagreements.”

Question put and passed.