

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 1879**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, 15 January, 1879.*

Presentation of Speaker.—Swearing-in of Members.—  
Members Sworn.—The Governor's Opening Speech.—  
Member Sworn.—Elections and Qualifications Com-  
mittee.—Bill *pro forma*.—Ministerial Statement.—  
The Opening Speech.—Address in Reply to Opening  
Speech.

## PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER.

The House met at a quarter past eleven o'clock a.m., and shortly afterwards the Speaker, accompanied by the Acting Clerk and several honourable members from both sides of the House, proceeded to Government House.

On their return,

The SPEAKER reported that he had, accompanied by certain members of the House, proceeded to Government House, and there informed the Governor that the Legislative Assembly had, in the exercise of their undoubted right, elected their Speaker, and that he presented himself for His Excellency's approbation as the member chosen by the Assembly for that high and honourable office; to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply—

“Mr. SPEAKER:

“I approve, on behalf of the Queen, the choice which the Assembly has made in your person.”

After which he had, on their behalf, laid claim to all the undoubted rights and privileges of the House, and prayed that the most favourable construction might, on all occasions, be put on their proceedings; to which His Excellency had been pleased to make the following reply:—

“Mr. SPEAKER:

“I further recognise, on behalf of the Queen, all the lawful rights and privileges claimed by the Legislative Assembly of Queensland in as full and ample a manner as they have been heretofore granted or allowed by Her Majesty.”

## SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

The SPEAKER reported that he had received a commission from His Excellency the Governor, under the Great Seal of the

colony, empowering him to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance to such members as may hereafter present themselves to be sworn.

#### MEMBERS SWORN.

The following members presented themselves, were sworn, and signed the roll :—

Roger Hall Sheaffe, Burke.  
William Rae, Rockhampton.  
Thomas Price, Wide Bay.  
William Sheffield Paul, Leichhardt.  
Jacob Low, Balonne.  
William Gill Bailey, Wide Bay.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

Shortly after twelve o'clock, a message was conveyed by the Usher of the Black Rod that His Excellency the Governor requested the attendance of the Speaker and honourable members of the Legislative Assembly in the Council Chamber.

The SPEAKER, accompanied by honourable members of the Assembly, proceeded to the Legislative Council, and having heard the Address of His Excellency the Governor, returned to their own Chamber.

The House resumed at half-past three o'clock.

#### MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. DE BURGH FITZPATRICK PERSSE presented himself, and having been sworn, took his seat as member for the Electoral District of Fassifern.

#### ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE.

The SPEAKER, in accordance with the Legislative Assembly Act, laid on the table his warrant appointing the Committee of Elections and Qualifications for the present Session.

#### BILL PRO FORMA.

The PREMIER (Mr. Douglas) introduced a Bill to amend the law relating to Trade Marks, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

The PREMIER: I rise, sir, to make a brief Ministerial Statement. Since the last occasion of meeting the House some change has taken place in the composition of the Ministry. When the present honourable member for Darling Downs, Mr. Miles, resigned the position which he held as Secretary for Works,—

Mr. MILES: No.

The PREMIER: When the honourable member resigned, that office was temporarily filled by my honourable friend, the present Minister for Works, who was also at the time Attorney-General. He held that office temporarily, for a short time, and subsequently he resigned his office

of Attorney-General, which was accepted by the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Garrick, and the vacancy thus created was filled by the appointment of the present honourable member for the Logan, who now holds the office of Minister for Lands. I simply make this statement as due to the House, and as representing the changes which have taken place since the close of last session.

Mr. MILES: I feel it due to the House and to honourable members, for me, at all events, to state really and distinctly the cause of my now sitting on the back benches. The honourable gentleman at the head of the Government says that I resigned. Any one who has read the correspondence, which was very brief, would come to the conclusion that I was dismissed. Any one who had a seat in this House last session knows that the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government, at the end of the last session, was always going in for reconstruction, and as I was of opinion that the Government of which the honourable member was the head, and I was a member, could not continue very long, I thought it was hardly worth while to go in for a change. Not only that, but I objected to be made a scavenger of—to be sent from one office to another to sweep out what filth and rubbish might be in it. Even had I been willing, I had not the time to do so, and I am never willing to undertake what I cannot properly carry out. The honourable member said he had reason to transfer me from one department to another. He had very good reason, as he stated that the Lands Department was not carried on as satisfactorily as it should be, and that I was the proper party to take charge of it. But I did not see that, and although the honourable gentleman had a perfect right to ask me to change my office, I also had a perfect right to refuse. We had several interviews on the subject. It is true that when this took place the honourable gentleman was suffering from a severe cold, and had almost lost his voice; therefore, if I state anything wrong that took place on those occasions, he can correct me, but he led me most distinctly to understand that the Lands Department was not being carried on satisfactorily. I myself knew that it was not, for I was continually getting complaints from my constituents about it, and I asked the honourable member to stir up that department. I saw by a paragraph in the *Courier* that the honourable gentleman denied that that was the reason why he wished to transfer me. If it was not, or whether the Minister for Lands took exception to being found fault with, I cannot say; but, at any rate, that was the reason given to me. I believe one reason was that I had come to the conclusion, whilst in the Works Department, that the system on which the Northern Railway was car-

ried on was a costly one, and I had come to the conclusion that all such works should be carried out by contract. The honourable gentleman at the head of the Government, for one, disapproved of that, and I believe he was rather inclined to think not only that the Northern Railway should still be constructed on the same principle, but that the Townsville and Charters Towers line should be carried out in the same way. I felt that from what I had seen it was a costly system. Now, I do not want to say one single word against Mr. Ballard, but I felt that if I was at the head of the Works Department I ought to be in a position to know how the money was expended, and for what it was expended. I am very glad to see that the honourable gentleman has put a paragraph in the Opening Speech to the effect that, in future, railways will be carried out on the contract system. I believe that that was the real reason why the honourable gentleman got rid of me—that I would not sanction a system by which no check could be exercised by the head of the department. I saw that there would be no check on Mr. Ballard, as regards the line from Townsville and Charters Towers, that there would be no check whatever on any vouchers that would be sent in, and that consequently all sorts of extravagance and abuses might be perpetrated. I do not say that those things have existed, but they might have, and that is the reason I came to this conclusion. The honourable gentleman said I resigned. The facts of the case are these:—He asked me very point blank to give him an answer, and I said, "If you want it now you shall know." He said, "Oh! no, consider it till to-morrow morning." I sent in an answer next morning declining, and he sent a message from the Colonial Secretary's office, saying that he would be obliged if I would place my resignation in the hands of His Excellency. If that was not a dismissal I do not know what was. There is another reason which I wish to impress on this House and the country to show that I was dismissed. We all—at least it was the general impression—believed that this Government was doomed. Now, sir, I was connected with them, and I did not want to run away from them like a rat from a sinking ship. I would not have deserted them under such circumstances. If they had been in a better position it would have been different, but I looked upon it as cowardly in the last degree that I should run away from them. The honourable gentleman, however, gave me an opportunity of leaving them, and I took it.

The PREMIER: I trust, sir, I may be allowed to say a few words in reply to what has fallen from the honourable member, more particularly as he has made reference to my honourable colleague, the present Attorney-General, in terms which I cannot allow

to pass unnoticed. It must not be forgotten that on many occasions during the last session of Parliament the honourable member and myself did not, to use a colloquial expression, "hit it" together, and on more than one occasion, he almost declared his independence of the Ministry in the House itself; and, in fact, he did me the honour, on one occasion after so doing, to hand in his resignation, which, however, I did not accept. In regard to his statements about being transferred to the Lands Department, I think the honourable member considered himself better fitted to take charge of that department than probably any other member of this House, or of the Ministry; and perhaps his great experience in land matters would have made it advantageous to the public service had he done so. I submit that changes of this kind may be made without any prejudice to a Minister. It is quite probable that the Attorney-General may have considered himself more suited to his present office than to the Lands. It was only when the honourable member for Darling Downs came to a determination, and informed me that he could not change his office—not on the grounds he has asserted, but on the ground that his own reputation as a Minister would suffer if he at that time changed his office for that of Minister for Lands, that I asked him to resign. With regard to his administration of the office I made no imputation whatever on him. I might have thought at that time that he had not put his shoulder to the wheel in the direction I thought most desirable. I was very anxious that the Townsville and Charters Towers Railway should be commenced, and it might have been commenced some time before it was; and I believed it was in consequence of some little misunderstanding between him and Mr. Ballard that it was not.

Mr. MILES: No.

The PREMIER: I thought that Mr. Ballard had not sufficient to do, and that he would be a suitable man to take charge of the Townsville and Charters Towers line; but month after month passed without any commencement being made with that line. That was one reason why I had some grounds of dissatisfaction with the honourable member, and that was one reason why I thought such a change as that I proposed might be made with advantage to ourselves and the public interest. I do not know what the honourable member meant by saying that it was not desirable to leave the Ministry because it was a sinking ship, and that he wanted to stick to it to the last. It must be remembered by the honourable member that last session he differed from the Government on some points, and may himself have contributed towards the state of things he described, and that it is above all things necessary that the head of a Government should have the loyal support of

his colleagues, as on the whole I am bound to say I have had. I think, therefore, the honourable gentleman must remember that there is another side to the question. As to my retaining office during the last session when there had been some indications that the Ministry did not possess a working majority, I need not go over that again. I felt bound to retain office for certain reasons. Being the custodian of the opinions of a party who were committed to a certain line of action, I felt bound to retain office, and up to the last I hoped to secure the support of my colleagues and those who agreed with me. I think that is sufficient reason to justify the course I adopted. With regard to the honourable member (Mr. Miles), I have no unfriendly feeling towards him, and I believe he has none towards me.

MR. MILES: I have none towards you.

THE PREMIER: I always worked cordially and harmoniously with the honourable gentleman, though there is no doubt upon some public questions I did not agree with him, and under any circumstances, it is not probable that we should have gone on working together for any length of time. As to the mode of resignation, I am satisfied that I adopted the proper course. For the head of a Government to gazette out a colleague, is, I think, a most improper proceeding, until he has communicated with his colleague and afforded him every opportunity of resigning. It must be apparent that the head of a Government must have the confidence of his colleagues, and if he have no longer confidence, it is no arbitrary exercise of his power to ask the resignation of office. That was all I did in the case of the honourable gentleman. I endeavoured to do so without any acerbity, and without attaching to it that bitterness which certainly does attach to what is called the dismissal of a Minister. I should have no share in any such proceeding. I have always endeavoured to work amicably with those connected with me in office, and when I can no longer do so I shall part with them on as friendly terms as possible.

#### THE OPENING SPEECH.

THE SPEAKER reported that the House had, in the earlier part of the day, attended the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency delivered an Opening Speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which, for greater accuracy, he had obtained a copy, and which he would now read to the House:—

"HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"I am happy once more to have an opportunity of addressing you on this the first meeting of a new Parliament,

"The Electoral Districts Act of 1878, which has now been brought into operation, makes provision for a more equitable distribution of representation, in accordance with the present population. One of the most important constituencies, however, is still disproportionately represented; and it is, therefore, proposed, as soon as possible, to remedy this defect by the introduction of a Bill to provide for a second member for Fortitude Valley, in accordance with the original intention of my Ministers, as expressed during last Parliament.

"It has been deemed expedient to obtain a rectification of the present maritime boundary of Queensland, so as to include certain islands in Torres' Straits, at present beyond the jurisdiction of the Colony. Her Majesty the Queen has issued Letters Patent for this purpose, and you will be asked to make provision for extending the application of our laws to the islands included in the new boundary as now defined.

"A Royal Commission has been appointed to report upon the working of the Real Property Office. Certain forgeries lately committed by an officer in that department appeared to render a searching inquiry necessary. There is no reason, however, to suppose that there have been any serious defects in the working of the system, which has conducted most materially to the convenience of the public, and to the security of landed property. The report of the Commission, when furnished, will be laid before you.

"The Chinese Question has again forced itself upon public attention by the action of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, in sending to China for seamen to be employed in vessels trading in these waters. The consequent strike among the men previously in their service has now happily terminated; but my Ministers are of opinion that the circumstances connected with these occurrences point to the necessity for having recourse to further precautionary measures, with a view to discourage Chinese Immigration in any form; and a Bill dealing with this most important subject will be submitted for your consideration as soon as possible.

"The necessary notice has been given to the Australasian Steam Navigation Company to terminate their present Mail contract, and tenders have been called for a new contract under different conditions, among which it is provided that no Asiatics or Polynesians will be allowed to be employed as seamen or firemen.

"The rate of speed now attained by the steamers engaged in carrying the Mails *via* Torres Straits, under the present contract, appears to be insufficient for our requirements. The Agent-General has been instructed to give

notice to the contractors, in terms of the contract, of the termination of the service at the expiration of the seventh year; and it is proposed immediately to invite tenders for a fresh service, under conditions better adapted to the existing circumstances of the colony.

"The short time that has elapsed since the prorogation of Parliament has been insufficient to allow of the Local Government Act of 1878 being brought into active operation. My Ministers regard the principles of this measure as of great value, and they propose to extend its provisions as soon as practicable to all the more settled portions of the colony.

"It has for some time been manifest that it will be desirable to revert to some of the principles recognised in the Civil Service Act of 1863, which was repealed in 1869. My Ministers have endeavoured to encourage the present permanent Officers of the service by securing to them promotion wherever it was practicable. Nevertheless, provision ought to be made by law for regulating the admission and promotion of Civil Servants, and a carefully considered Bill dealing with this subject will be submitted to you at an early date.

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"You will be asked to make provision for the Estimates of the remaining portion of the present financial year, on the scale already authorised by the late Parliament.

"The Estimates for the ensuing financial year will be framed with due regard to economy and to the exigencies of the Public Service.

"Your sanction will be asked to certain alterations in the Tariff, which have been designed with a view to adjusting, on a more satisfactory basis, the incidence of indirect taxation.

"In order to give effect to the Public Works policy which is contemplated, it will also be necessary to obtain your authority for the raising of an increased revenue. As the expenditure to be incurred will tend materially to enhance the value of the public estate and other forms of property, the additional revenue required should be derived chiefly from those sources. My Ministers believe that this may be done without any serious inconvenience to our producing interests, and without any prejudicial effect to our established industries.

"HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"Your early attention will be invited to the important subject of Railway construction, which has now for many years engaged the

anxious consideration of the Legislature. Three main trunk lines of railway from the coast into the interior have already been authorised by Parliament, two of which, leading from Brisbane and Rockhampton, are now open for considerable distances, and are being further extended, while arrangements have been completed for the immediate commencement and speedy prosecution of the third, which will connect the Northern interior with Townsville. In determining the character of this line advantage has been taken of information in the possession of my Government which warrants a confident expectation of a large reduction in the cost of future railways, and a corresponding increase in the power of the Colony to push forward these necessary means of internal communication.

"My Ministers are of opinion that each of these lines should be still further extended into the interior, on the most economical system compatible with efficiency, and in directions such as to open up the largest amount of territory without bringing the several lines into competition with each other. These three lines should be designed and carried out with a view to their being afterwards connected together, at convenient points in the interior, by a line which will form part of a complete Australian Railway system.

"In addition to the main lines of railway, my Ministers regard it as of the highest importance to extend the advantages of Railway communication to the more settled agricultural and mineral districts of the colony. There is no reason to doubt that light railways, suitable for this purpose, can be constructed at a cost such that the earnings of the lines will be sufficient to defray the working expenses and provide for the interest upon the cost of construction. You will be asked to approve of the plans and provide the necessary funds for the construction of some of these lines.

"The extension of the Southern and Western Railway to South Brisbane must be carried out at no distant date, and you will be invited to include in the loan for which your authority will be sought a sufficient sum of money for that purpose.

"My Government are of opinion that our Public Works can be most economically and satisfactorily carried out by means of contracts, and they propose that this system should be generally adopted in future as far as practicable. The construction of a short section of the Northern Railway from Townsville, under the direct supervision of the officers of the Railway Department, has been authorised, but instructions have been given to make the necessary preparations for carrying on the remainder of

that line, as well as all extensions of the Central Railway, upon the contract system; and tenders will be invited, in accordance with this decision, as soon as the necessary plans and specifications are completed.

"Your attention will also be called to other public works of scarcely less importance than railways, and you will be asked to make provision for improvements in the principal harbours of the colony, for drainage, and for the supply of water to the chief towns and centres of population.

"It will be necessary to make provision, by way of loan, for carrying out the various public works already referred to. Full information will be afforded you as to the cost of the several undertakings proposed to be authorised; and you will be asked in connection with them to provide for continuing the present system of European Immigration.

"The laws relating to Polynesian Immigration are at present in an unsatisfactory state. Your early attention will be invited to this subject, and you will be asked to make such provision as will prevent the reputation of this Colony, as a field for European Immigration, from being imperilled by an undue competition from a coloured race.

"Amongst other matters of importance, Bills, relating to the compensation of Members of the Legislature for their attendance in Parliament, the Conservancy of our Forests, the Care of Orphans and Deserted Children, the Improvement of our System of Higher Education, the Custody and Treatment of the Insane, the Alienation of Land on our Gold Fields, the Protection of the Public Health, the Inspection of Mines, the Regulation of Travelling Stock, and the dealing with lands now held by the Crown under exceptional circumstances, will be laid before you.

"The monetary and commercial depression which has for some time existed in the United Kingdom, together with the prevailing uneasiness in Europe and throughout the East, have unquestionably affected business here. These causes, operating in connection with a trying period of unfavourable seasons, have somewhat checked enterprise. Production and consumption have not increased in the same ratio as in previous years. Nevertheless, I see no reason to anticipate any sustained depression, and there are solid grounds for confidence in the permanent character of our great natural resources.

"I confidently anticipate that the measures brought under your notice will receive your most careful consideration, and I trust that, under Divine Providence, they may be dealt with in such a way as to conduce to sound

legislation, good government, and the advancement and prosperity of this people and territory."

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

Mr. MESTON moved:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor in opening this, the First Session of the Eighth Parliament. That such committee consist of the following members, viz.:—Messrs. Douglas, Paterson, Tyrel, Rutledge, and the mover.

Mr. PATERSON seconded the motion.

Question put and passed.

The committee retired, and, having returned, brought up the following Address, which was read by the Acting Clerk:—

"To His Excellency Sir ARTHUR EDWARD KENNEDY, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"1. We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Person and Government of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present Session."

"2. We shall give our careful and serious consideration to the various measures to which your Excellency has referred; and we beg to assure your Excellency that it will be our earnest endeavour to unite with your Excellency and the other branch of the Legislature in passing such laws as will tend to the advancement and prosperity of all classes of the community."

Mr. MESTON moved that the address, as read, be adopted. He said, regarded as a formal matter, the adoption of the address might be moved without any comment at all; but as it was customary to speak to the motion, he should have something to say on this occasion. Considering the short time the speech had been in his hands, he had not had an opportunity of giving it that consideration which would enable him to deal fully and fairly with it. The first paragraph alluded to the Electoral Districts Act of 1878, which had been the means of adding twelve members to the Legislative Assembly; whether it had been the means of adding more to the eloquence

or to the wisdom of the House was a question yet to be decided. However, the chief defect in that Act appeared to be that Fortitude Valley had only one member. That might or might not be regarded as a national calamity, but at any rate it was proposed to remedy that defect, and then probably the Act would be as near perfection as possible. The intention to extend the maritime boundary of Queensland, so as to take in certain islands in Torres Straits, was, he thought, a wise resolve, considering that those islands were so situated that they might to a certain extent control the passage of Torres Straits. It was, as it were, the Bosphorus to the Turkey of Queensland, and it was impossible to say what service this step would be to the colony in years to come. They must look a long way a-head—to when the colony contained twenty or thirty millions of people instead of 200,000, and when perhaps Australia was a united empire. The Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the working of the Real Property Office had been the means of revealing what had been done there, and probably they would be able to suggest a remedy so as to prevent a repetition of such proceedings. They could not have absolute safety against fraud, but they could exercise a vigilant supervision which would reduce rascality to a minimum, and prevent it as far as possible. With reference to the Chinese question, to the credit of the Government he it said, they had always endeavoured to bring measures forward to exclude Chinese as far as practicable. They had established a principle—a principle which had been admitted by the Imperial Government,—and he could see no reason why they should not extend that principle by the introduction of a measure which would have the ultimate object of excluding Chinese from the colony altogether. They had in this a national danger—a most serious danger, which required the immediate attention of all Queensland legislators. In dealing with the Chinese question they should also endeavour to secure the co-operation of the other colonies, because the danger was one that affected the whole of Australia as much as Queensland. Not only should they endeavour to prevent Chinese coming here in large numbers, but in small numbers also; because, if they were allowed to come here in small numbers, they would gradually accumulate, and the ultimate result would be the same as if they were permitted to come in large numbers. It would simply be a question of a little longer time. They had, within a few miles of the coast of this colony, a vast Mongolian country, with an immense number of people—with a surplus population of millions, who were on the verge of starvation, and who, by their

peculiar method of living, were able to subsist upon what it would be utterly impossible for Europeans to live upon. Their civilization, although much older than ours, was such that we could not possibly amalgamate with them. They were essentially an alien race, with which we had nothing in common. As to the doctrine of "the survival of the fittest," it did not apply to the Chinese. They might just as well say that weeds were the fittest product of the ground. This great Mongolian reservoir was threatening to overflow and sweep away all modern European, or at least all British civilisation in this colony; and he did not believe that the Imperial authorities would refuse to sanction a measure much more stringent than even that introduced last session,—a measure which had for its object the safety and preservation of a British colony. The step which the Government had taken with regard to the A.S.N. Co. was, he thought, a wise one, but it was only a small portion of what was required to be done in reference to the Chinese; but still it was all that could be done in that case. The next paragraph referred to the Local Government Act of 1878; and he thought most honourable members would agree with him that the principle of local government was a thoroughly sound one, and the sooner a comprehensive and effective measure of that kind was brought into operation the better it would be for the colony. It would prevent the lavish waste of public money that had been going on for some indefinite period in the Works Department, where works were carried out too often by grossly incompetent officials. He thought the people themselves ought to have some voice in the expenditure of money on public works; and any measure which would have for its object the lessening of the cost of administration and abolishing the present expensive system of managing the Roads Department, was entitled to the serious consideration of every member of the House. With reference to the Civil Service Act of 1863, he thought it was necessary to take some steps to put an end to the pernicious system of patronage at present in existence, under which members of Parliament were looked upon as being in the position of men supposed to provide billets for every man in the colony who had failed in business for himself, and was anxious to obtain employment in the Civil Service, in the fond hope that he would have nothing to do. He thought the sooner all patronage was withdrawn from members of Parliament the better it would be, because they would occupy a much more independent position, and be able to give more attention to legislation, and leave administration and appointments in the Civil Service to a system which would provide for such appointments being made solely



upon merit, and not upon patronage, which meant gross favoritism in some cases and gross injustice in others. He noticed that there was an intention to make an alteration in the tariff; and he should like to see the *ad valorem* duties abolished and transformed into fixed duties. There were many who were of opinion that the Border Customs ought to be abolished; but, looking at the fact that these duties were not only a source of revenue, but also a means of protection, he thought they should be retained, because he believed most honourable members would agree with him that it was necessary, by means of Customs duties and other imposts, to provide protection to a certain extent. He noticed that Canada, a free-trade country, had discovered that a protective policy would be necessary, in a modified form, to enable her to compete with the United States. He noticed also that Germany was entering upon a protective policy, and that in Great Britain there was now agitation towards the same end. He observed that it was the intention to endeavour to raise an increased revenue, which implied additional taxation. This was an admission that the revenue had not been keeping pace with the expenditure; but they must remember that they had been spending money at a considerable rate for some years, and during the last two years, through the drought, the colony had suffered enormously in both stock and produce, and were it not for that we should be in a different position to-day. He should oppose any increase of the Customs duties, because that simply meant that the working classes should pay it, and they were not in a position to be further taxed. He thought the system introduced should be fair and equitable, so that it should press upon all classes of the community in proportion to their capacity to pay. Referring to railways, there was an intention expressed to extend the three main trunk lines into the interior, to be connected with a transverse line, which meant, he took it, the ultimate establishment of an inter-colonial railway federation. No doubt at some future period they would have inter-colonial railway federation. If he mistook not, the Stanthorpe Railway was undertaken as a step in that direction—that it was to connect with the New South Wales line, and would also bring down the New England trade to this colony; but New South Wales intended to run a line to the Clarence to take the New England trade, and, in the meantime, there was no intention to extend their Northern line so as to meet ours. Consequently this Stanthorpe line, which was originally intended, and he believed was only justified in the views of some honourable members as being a national work, would not answer that purpose at all. He thought that inter-colonial railway federation might very well be talked

about forty or fifty years hence, when the population of Queensland numbered twenty or thirty millions, instead of 200,000. Allusion was also made to the extension of railway communication to the more settled agricultural and mineral districts of the colony. This he strongly approved of. He thought that at present the main trunk lines had been extended sufficiently far, and they should now turn their attention to giving the settled districts facilities for getting their produce to market. There were one or two districts in particular in which there was a large quantity of land available for cultivation, and, were the people supplied with railway communication, the amount of production would be ten or twenty times what it was at present; but, by reason of the distance from market, it was utterly impossible to carry on agriculture with success without railway communication. Branch lines ought to be introduced in those districts. He would particularly refer to one to Fassifern, and one up the Valley of the Brisbane River. The extension of the Southern and Western Railway to deep water was, he considered, a very necessary undertaking, if only for the sake of the coal trade, which promised to be a very important and prosperous one. The whole of the West Moreton was evidently a coal formation, and the trade in coal was comparatively stagnant, because there was no railway to deep water. He quite approved of the policy of constructing public works by contract. Every work which could be done by contract should be done on that system in order to prevent swindles, from which the country had suffered too long. He regretted to find in the Speech no mention of a Volunteer Bill. A thoroughly sound and liberal Volunteer Bill was necessary, to give encouragement to the volunteers of the colony, such encouragement having never yet been received by them. The people ought to be made into a nation of riflemen, because, in a country like this, it was useless to talk about fortifying our enormous coast line, for the true policy would be to receive any enemy on shore with their rifles, instead of preventing his landing on a coast so exposed to hostile invasion. Mention was made in the Speech of the water supply to the chief towns and centres of population; but he wished to remind honourable members that there were other places equally in need of an efficient water supply, and in which the country would be equally as much justified in spending money for that purpose. The honourable member for Fassifern could bear him out with regard to that district, and in the district which he had the honour to represent there was no natural supply of water whatever. In connection with public works, mention was made of the intention of the Govern-

ment to continue the present system of immigration. He (Mr. Meston) believed the period had arrived at which the existing system of immigration was no longer suitable for the colony. He would, however, pass over this paragraph in the Speech chiefly for the reason that he was totally opposed to State immigration. The laws relating to Polynesian immigration were no doubt in an unsatisfactory state, and although the question of the immigration of Polynesians was not so important as that of the immigration of Chinese, still it was necessary for the future welfare of this colony, that Polynesian immigration should be stopped; and that they should gradually get into that condition of things, when the greater portion of the work of the colony would be done by British labour—black and yellow labour being excluded from the colony altogether. Their object should be to see settled in the colony a British population working for a high rate of wages, and that could never be while they had for competitors Mongolians and Polynesians. Amongst the minor matters referred to in the Speech, mention was made of the conservancy of forests. He was particularly pleased to see this subject brought out, because it was one to which it was high time the attention of the Legislature was called; especially considering the wholesale destruction of timber that had been going on for many years past, and that one of the “improvement” clauses in the Land Act had special reference to the ring-barking of trees. The whole of our cedar was going to Melbourne and Sydney, and in a few years it would be all gone and the colony would have received nothing whatever in recompense. As to the monetary and commercial depression to which reference was made in the Speech, no doubt the famine in India, the war in Europe, and the strikes and bankruptcies in Great Britain, had a very serious effect upon the monetary and commercial world. The two past seasons had no doubt had a very depressing effect upon the welfare of this colony, and he failed to see why, at this particular juncture, when the revenue showed a deficit, when the balance was on the wrong side of the account, and when they were committed to a very extensive system of public works—to complete which money would have to be obtained from somewhere—why any honourable members out of office should be too enthusiastic to come into possession of power. The look-out ahead was very dark, and it would ultimately become a question whether the present system of expenditure should be continued, or whether the finances of the colony should be allowed to rest in order to enable the revenue to recover itself. It was a question whether the colony would

not make considerably more progress by comparatively letting it alone. Like a child, the less interference with its natural growth the better. If they took the child and put on him the tight bandages of trunk railways, and the tight boots of proper dredges and dry docks, and the tight collar of an over-grown Civil Service, they could not but hurry it into a premature grave. He felt inclined to speak at considerable length on this subject, but as this was his first appearance in the House, he would conclude by moving the adoption of the report.

Mr. PATERSON, after craving the indulgence of the House in rising to second the adoption of the Address in Reply, said that on reading *Hansard*, he had noticed that in former Parliaments honourable members who had occupied a similar position to himself, usually qualified their positions as mover and seconder by stating whether they were supporters of a party or of the Government. Whether such was the rule or not, he would take the opportunity of saying that when he was asked to come forward for Rockhampton, the inhabitants of that town never asked him to which side of the House he should attach himself, and it was not until he addressed his first meeting, during his candidature, that he notified to which side he should adhere. He did so because, in the southern part of the colony especially, it was stated that he was a special Ministerial candidate; and it was only due to himself to state that the platform on which he placed his foot was the Liberal side of the House. It was not, therefore, surprising that he should have been chosen to second the adoption of the Address in Reply, seeing that he hoped, as long as he remained here, to be a member of what had long been known as the Liberal party, and he trusted to be as strong a “sticker” to that party as the honourable member for Darling Downs himself, being quite aware at the time of his candidature that the prospects of that party were by no means in the ascendancy. Coming now to the subject of the motion, he would begin with the matter last referred to by the honourable member for Rosewood, who spoke of the colony as a child who should be left alone to grow of its own accord, and not be destroyed by dredges, trunk railways, and other important public works. In his opinion great and important public works were essentially necessary to the welfare of the colony, and all true colonists contemplated with pleasure the efforts of the Liberal party, as represented by the present Cabinet, to carry out a vigorous railway and public works policy. As to the clause relating to railways—

“Three main trunk lines of railway from the coast into the interior have already been autho-

rised by Parliament, two of which, leading from Brisbane and Rockhampton, are now open for considerable distances, and are being further extended, while arrangements have been completed for the immediate commencement and speedy prosecution of the third, which will connect the Northern interior with Townsville. . . . My Ministers are of opinion that each of these lines should be still further extended into the interior."—

He believed that if his constituents themselves had prepared that part of the Speech they would have used words nearly similar. It was very pleasant, therefore, to notice, in the interests of both North and South, that the Government intended to carry out their public works policy in a vigorous and methodical manner. Referring to the Electoral Districts Act of 1878, he was personally very glad to find that it was intended to bring in a Bill to give an additional member to Fortitude Valley, for he felt sure that few honourable members could feel entirely comfortable until the injustice to which that constituency had been subjected was rectified. The action of the Government on the Chinese question must be gratifying to the entire colony. It had been said that the happy termination of the strike was owing to the efforts of a gentleman of Newcastle, but he (Mr. Paterson) believed—although the matter had not been noticed in the public prints—that the action of the Queensland Government, prohibiting the employment by the A.S.N. Company of Chinese or Polynesians in Queensland waters, had had far more to do in bringing that company to that frame of mind which induced them to settle the question in such an amicable manner. He felt satisfied that that determination of the Queensland Government had had a great deal to do with the speedy settlement of the strike; and all honour was due to them for it. While on the subject of steam navigation he might say he was much pleased to note that the Torres Straits mail contract was about to receive attention. That contract certainly required revision, for from his own experience in travelling on that line he could speak as to the necessity for increased speed. The last time he went to Rockhampton in one of these boats there was an intelligent American gentleman on board who would willingly have forfeited his passage money and given £50 or £100 into the bargain to have gone back to Sydney, although his intention was to go to Japan. The whole distance to Keppel Bay was traversed at the rate of not more than seven or seven and a-half knots per hour. It was generally admitted that vessels of the stamp of the "Somerset" belonged to an extinct type of the fast mail ship. Every business man, therefore, was pleased that that contract was about to receive the necessary revision. Not much could be

said about the Local Government Act, but they all hoped that its result would be to relieve the Works Department from a considerable amount of its administration outside of Brisbane, and at the same time teach the people to be self-reliant and accustomed to attend to their own local wants, thus preparing them to take a higher position in the government of the colony. As to the proposed return to the principles of the Civil Service Act of 1863, repealed in 1869, he could only say it was a notorious grievance that whether a Liberal or a so-called Squatting Administration was in power, a great deal of backstairs influence was used to put the wrong men in the wrong places—putting round men into square holes, and *vice versa*. If such a Civil Service Act as that indicated would remedy the evil, it could not but be accepted with gratitude by every honourable member of the House. It was a mistake, he held, to transfer officers from one department to another of the public service, for the practice tended to demoralise the service to its very core. No man in a given department would put forth his best efforts if he supposed that at some ultimate period some man from another department would supplant him in the promotion he ought to achieve. If they wished to make the Civil Service the most honourable service in the colony, they should pass some such measure as that alluded to in the Speech, by which it would be made attractive to the best men in the country, instead of, as was said to be sometimes the case, men of a very different calibre. A good deal had been said recently in the public press, about the present Administration having gone in for reckless expenditure, more especially during the past six months. If any honourable members present were of that opinion, he hoped they would justify such statements. He did not think the last half-year's expenditure, either on loan or on revenue account, had exceeded the average of that of the preceding twelve or eighteen months, and even if it had done so he should have been glad, because it would have been strong evidence that the Government were alive to the interests of the colony by finding, during a period of depression, employment for its people. The recent failure of the City of Glasgow Bank created much disaster, especially in Lanarkshire and other parts of Scotland, as well as in England, and relief works had been established by the Lord Provost of Glasgow to give employment to those who had been thrown out of employment by that lamentable failure. He would say to those journalists who had written down the Government in consequence of their alleged ultra-expenditure, that if Government had acted as they advised, and diminished their expenditure, much distress would have resulted. The

colony had been suffering severely financially during the past twelve or eighteen months.

Mr. GROOM: We are only just commencing to suffer.

Mr. PATERSON said that if that were so it showed that the honourable member for Toowoomba, at any rate, had not suffered during the that time. The circumstances of depression had nevertheless existed over the period he had named, and he believed that if the Cabinet had taken the advice of the journals to which he alluded, there would have been so much distress that deputation on deputation would have waited on Ministers, and meeting on meeting would have been held throughout the colony, asking the Government to at once initiate relief works. He was very glad indeed to find that the Government had not hesitated to take upon themselves the responsibility of carrying on the expenditure upon public works as vigorously as heretofore. Every one would admit that it was the best policy to utilise labour in periods of depression, for at that time labour was cheaper, and the works could be prosecuted vigorously comparatively cheaper. The Ministry who would stand idly by in periods of dullness in the labour market and did not provide means for employing the labour of the country in the construction of works of public utility, failed to fulfil the functions for which they were appointed. He was glad, therefore, that no great change had been made in the expenditure to which he referred. As to the formation of an Australian federation of trunk lines of railway, he, like the honourable member who had preceded him, thought it was certainly somewhat premature, and if the clause referred to the scheme propounded in the report laid before Parliament last session or since, it would have his strong opposition. Very few members would live to see these trunk lines prosecuted to their proper points if the construction of them went on at the existing rate. As to the proposed line by way of Nanango, Gympie, and Bundaberg to Gladstone, and thence to Rockhampton, he would simply say that the idea was ridiculous. The only law by which the Executive should be guided in such schemes was the commercial relation of the termini of those railways. The engineer, except under exceptional circumstances was not the man to determine the proper points to which the trunk or branch lines should go. In these days when men were more and more confined to special branches of work, it was not an engineer, but a man of business, who should undertake to settle a question of that delicate and important nature. At the same time his constituents would be glad to have that survey carried out, which should ultimately connect their line with the Southern

and Western Railway. He did not believe it was yet too late to consider the matter. The best route would probably be a bee line from Miles to Westwood, a distance of 200 miles, which could be constructed for a million or so. Such a line would connect the two districts, and completely annihilate their idea of separation. He did not believe in the proposal to carry the line by way of Tambo and Roma, for such a line would run through a sparsely-populated country, whereas the other route would tap a country inhabited by a large population, and open up at a minimum cost, a fine country for free selection, and which would take years to absorb. It was evidently the wisest policy to keep the western land closed until the whole of the coast lands were properly settled upon. As to immigration, he was glad to see so steady a stream of European immigrants pouring into the colony, and he trusted that such immigration would not be merely confined to the big towns. The climate of this colony, its resources and its good soil, were such as should induce them to introduce southern Europeans in a fair proportion to the immigrants from the British Islands. And he wished to say a word or two with regard to what had fallen from the Premier in his reply to the honourable member for Darling Downs. As there were many new members present, it might be desirable that he should remind the House that the point which he understood to be the ground which had led that honourable member to retire from office, was that Mr. Ballard had a power not consistent with his position, and that of the honourable gentleman as Minister for Lands. Now, the system to which the honourable gentleman objected was, so far as he could understand, about to be brought to a close; at any rate, if it was not completed at the time referred to, there were only some thirty or forty miles of a very inexpensive kind to be done. It should be borne in mind that Mr. Ballard's mode of construction was initiated and systematised under the Palmer Administration, when Mr. Walsh was Minister for Works. It had been carried on for six years in round numbers, and no fault had been found with it until recently. He was certainly sorry that no previous Minister found out that it was desirable to put an end to it, and he was sorry, also, that the honourable gentleman attempted to alter it, when they had got to the "heels of the system." Although Mr. Ballard did not carry out the work on the large contract principle, he believed that a large majority of the work, if not the whole was done by small contracts. At all events, whatever might be the merits of the system, it was due to the House to let it be known that it was established at the special suggestion of the Palmer

Administration, and so far as he had known, it had given unqualified satisfaction in the district. With these remarks, he had great pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. Whatever might be said of the Ministry individually or collectively, they were at this moment the representatives of the old Liberal party, so far as any member knew it. He did not see the representatives of that Liberal party on the opposite benches, and on the Government side of the House he saw what one gentleman had termed that day the "remnants of the Liberal party." He supported the Address in Reply, notwithstanding that it came from the "remnants of the Liberal party," and he believed that the present as well as the preceding members of that administration had faithfully and efficiently performed their functions ever since the party came into power.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I compliment the honourable gentleman who has just sat down on the speech that he has delivered to the House; but at the same time I cannot compliment the Government on the kind of support he or the mover of the Address have given to the programme upon which they have spoken. Both honourable gentlemen have gone carefully over some matters about which we all decidedly agree; but they dissented from these paragraphs in the Speech, which embody the real policy of the Government. For the last month it has been a matter of consideration with me why the Ministry have not resigned, they having had precedents for such a course. When they saw that they had not the confidence of the country, it was their business to resign, and it was more their business to do so, assuming the facts to be as stated by me, because the country was not in a prosperous condition. Did the Government not have the fact revealed to them plainly during the last general election, that they were not supported by the country? No one should more thoroughly know than they, that one of the most prominent things to which a candidate, no matter how high his standing may be, has had to give consideration during the election was the question of local works. For that I put the blame upon the Government. Next to that the most prominent question that was put to candidates was, whether they believed in the present Government, and an actual majority have declared that they would support a vote of want of confidence in it. With that information before them, I hold it was their business at once to have given in their resignations to His Excellency, so that he might secure advisers who have the confidence of the country. They did not do so, and now that we read the Speech the cause is apparent enough; they have remained in office for the purpose of putting before

the country a programme most difficult to carry out, which they have failed in carrying out themselves, and which they have left as a difficult legacy to whomsoever might be their successors. While their administration for the last five years has brought the colony to the position it is now in, as shown by the last Treasurer's statement, they come forward with a programme in which we are promised three main trunk lines, branch railways in all parts of the colony, but not enumerated, the extension of the Southern and Western Railway to South Brisbane, two branch railways which are enumerated, improvements in the principal harbours of the colony, drainage, water supply, immigration, compensation to members of Parliament, and some other things, all involving money. The other prominent part of the Speech is the reticence of the Government as to the probable way in which the money is to be raised. No attention is given to that subject; the Government simply refer to the fact that probably additional taxation would be required, and in case it should, say that it should be put on the landed interests of the colony. Some ground ought, however, to be given to show why, in the present position of the colony, these interests should be so taxed to enable the carrying on of public works in the ratio that we are now doing. The depressed condition of the colony affords a stronger reason why this subject should have been made a prominent feature in a scheme to provide for additional works and other expenditure. As I intend to move an amendment on this Address, I will refer to the conduct of the Ministry during the last few years; but before doing so I will allude to one or two of the items which have been commented upon by the previous speakers. With regard to the Chinese question, I intend to see put upon the table of the House the correspondence that has passed between the Government and the A.S.N. Co. We have had Chinese legislation within the last two years bearing directly upon the question how to defend the colony against Chinese immigration. There can be nothing clearer to anyone who has watched the course of events during the last two months in Sydney and Brisbane than that the A.S.N. Co. has been induced to take the steps it has taken by the weakness of the Government in the administration of the Chinese Immigrants Regulation Act. Reading the accounts of the way the directors of the company spoke to their shareholders and to the deputations which interviewed them, nothing to me is clearer than that; and I believe when the correspondence with the Government is produced, it will be seen that the Government did not act in the way they are now doing, and that if they had acted as business men should

have done the directors of the A.S.N. Company would not have acted in the way they did.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The correspondence is on the table of the House.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I have not seen the correspondence, but I believe it will show that the action of the Government will substantiate my charge. I will now shortly refer to the legislation of the past five years. We know that in 1874 the Government of which the present occupants of the Treasury benches are the representatives, went into office under the most favourable circumstances; the revenue had been evidently rising, and all the industries were in a prosperous state; so prosperous, in fact, had the revenue been, that when Parliament met there was a credit balance of £240,000. In regard to this balance, the Government have always spoken as if they had been accused of mis-spending the money. That is not my contention. There were two ways of treating this rising financial position—one was to increase public works and spend all the money raised by taxes; the other was to reduce taxation. The Ministry at that time went carefully into the matter of reducing taxation, and it was thought necessary that the reduction should not take place all at once; it was determined that the decrease of the *ad valorem* duties should spread over one year. At the same time, in order to carry out this reduction, and to provide for the amount required for public works, in accordance with the progress of the colony, it was resolved that local government should be introduced throughout the colony, and, with that object in view, it was considered wise to put all public works in as progressive a state as possible. It was consequently determined, as the year 1874 had yielded more revenue than the preceding year, to spend the full amount of the money on roads that would not have to be attended to in subsequent years by Parliament, and make provision at the same time for the introduction of local government. That theory should have been carried out, and if it had been we should not be in the position we now are. Accordingly, in 1874, a vast increase of expenditure took place, mostly on roads and bridges. The Government, next year, should have carried out their programme; but they forgot that they had reduced taxation, and that to make the revenue keep pace with the expenditure, they must lop off what were really local works. The Government, in 1875, refused to go on with the Local Government Bill; they had promised it, but declined to fulfil the promise. The void thus created required to be filled in some way; it could not be by taxation, for it had been lately reduced. The Government entered upon a course always held inimical to the principles of the Liberal party—of bor-

rowing money for temporary public works. In defiance of the expressed opinion of the oldest and best Liberals they adopted this course. What followed after that? As soon as they got Parliament to sanction local expenditure out of borrowed money, they continued the system. It was perfectly plain that members on that side of the House were not content to be taxed locally, while they had a Government which would give them local supplies from the colony. The Government knew they would have the support of their party, and therefore, in 1876, they ignored a Local Government Bill, always putting it off to the end of the session, but still going on in the same way at an increasing ratio. That is one of the heaviest accusations I bring against the Government; it is the real key to our present financial position. They have brought us into such a condition that we cannot, with decency, go on borrowing for local and perishable works. They deliberately postponed the Local Government Bill, and at last, in 1878, having made it the primary measure of the session, they passed it in such a form as to make it thoroughly inoperative. Power, however, to enforce the Act in any locality they chose was left to the Government. Instead of employing that action, I do not believe that up to the present time they have made any attempt to enforce it. In 1876 the Government were in a much better position financially than they are now; and, considering themselves safe in their position, that they could satisfy their constituents by the amount of money which was borrowed for local works, they determined to commence the session without putting forth any works policy. A policy was, however, forced upon them by a strong expression of opinion from the House, although I was not backed up by a majority when I moved a vote of confidence motion in 1876. Instead of adopting my policy in its entirety, they thought they would make it more popular and more in accordance with their own previously expressed opinions and went into the "Railway Reserves system," which has been most ruinous to the colony. The ruin is to be seen in much stronger colours than it has yet been presented. I believe there was a great deal of truth in what the honourable member for Darling Downs said that afternoon,—that there is disorganization in the Lands Office. I am satisfied that a strong head is wanted to pull that system through. I do not blame the present Attorney-General for the confusion. The reason there is a complete confusion is because of the different Acts of Parliament dealing with the land. There is not the slightest doubt that the office is in a bewildered state. Land has to be dealt with under two or three different Acts, and how it is to be disposed requires consideration which his staff cannot give. The next result of that

policy was that the House, in the most reckless way, voted for railways which they did not believe in. They passed those railways simply because the Government told them that under the Railway Reserves system it would not be necessary to borrow money. Their system has gradually dwindled down. They have given up every principle of the Railway Reserves Act, and left the country committed to a large amount of railways which the Government never thought they should be called upon to construct. The Government have committed us to works which we are not in a position to go on with. Had the Government put this scheme in a proper way before the House, had they admitted to the House that borrowed money would have to be required, we would not have given our consent to the railways that were proposed. Admitting, however, that we had given that consent, we would have made provision for the money being raised. We are committed to these railways, and at the present time see a black prospect of raising the money. Had the Government taken the second best course—had they borrowed sufficient money, or made arrangements to secure the carrying out of the works sanctioned,—we should have seen the colony safe from a catastrophe such as might result from the stoppage of public works. The Government, however, made no such provision, and the consequences must lie at their doors. It is amusing to notice the cool way in which the Government gave up every principle of the Railway Reserves Act, although the Treasurer said last year that the Bill was the best which, happily, had passed for the country, on account of the wonderful way in which it conduced to the prosperity of the country. Yet we find the Premier referring to it in a way which could only lead one to the conclusion that he must see, as the only means of righting our finances by the 30th June, is by repealing the Railway Reserves Act. I will read the words of his speech, and I have confidence that they are correct, because I know that they were twice carefully revised by him. Speaking at Maryborough he says:—

“As a financial operation they would be perfectly justified, if it were thought necessary and desirable to recognise that the interest simply should be found to write off the difference between the two amounts of £120,000 and £322,000, and to pass it to the credit of the revenue, and thus create a surplus. He mentioned this because some people were very much alarmed at the future prospect of a deficit. He alluded to the matter not to say that they had decided upon doing this, but merely to point out that a large sum which, under other circumstances might have gone to the revenue, had really gone towards paying off the capital amount required for the construction of railways. But it would be quite possible, and be

perfectly justifiable as a financial operation, supposing a deficit were to arise—which, however, was not probable—to reduce it by this means.”

The Premier foresees a deficit, and intends to provide for it by taking all the money realised by the Railway Reserves Act, except that paid for interest, and putting it back to the Consolidated Revenue. There is one drawback, however, to that course; it is against the law which makes special provision that the money raised under the Railway Reserves shall be devoted first to the payment of the interest, next to the construction of the railways, and if any balance is left, to paying off the amount borrowed up to that time. The only way in which the Premier can carry out what he calls “a proper financial operation,” is to repeal the Railway Reserves Act of 1877. If he succeeded in doing that, I have little doubt the step would help to relieve our disaster at the present time. In order to relieve the Government from some of the disasters that they were bringing upon the colony, I brought forward last year a three-million vote. It is perfectly clear that all our predictions with regard to the Railway Reserves Act have come true; but had I carried the motion, we should not be placed in the position we now appear to be. At the present time it is a matter of considerable difficulty, from the confused way in which the Treasurer's accounts have been presented, to find out the state of the Loan Account; but, so far as I can make out, we had on the 1st a balance of £710,946. Add to that the nett proceeds of the 1878 loan at 87 per cent., £1,184,000, and we have a total of £1,740,922. Now, taking eighteen months' expenditure at our present rate of £92,882 per month, we should have a total of £1,673,244; and at the end of June, 1880, should only have a balance left of £67,678. It is quite plain to any one that after the payment of the two or three months which are usually in arrear, that two months before the end of next financial year our loan will have been expended and that this Parliament must provide funds to carry us on. I predicted last year that if we meant to go on we should have to make provision for carrying on these works, otherwise we should have to do so as soon as this Parliament met. I have no doubt there is a great deal in what has been said as to the calamity which would have resulted had the Ministry suddenly collapsed in the expenditure of money on public works; but there is a great difference between the prudence which may be exercised in the administration of the Consolidated Revenue of the colony, and the imprudence of launching out into great public works without seeing the means by which the money for carrying them out could be raised. I think the Government were imprudent in both ways.

When they saw the revenue decreasing as it was—10 per cent. in the last six months—they might have decreased the expenditure, although it was not necessary to confine the reduction exclusively to the works of the colony. The distress prevailing was not a sufficient reason for the Government going on increasing the expenditure in the ratio they did, when the revenue was decreasing at the rate of 5 per cent. below the revenue raised last year, and 15 per cent. under what they calculated it would be; nor do I consider it was prudent for the Government to make preparations, involving the necessity of borrowing at once, until they had met the House, and that I believe they have done. I have shown how the Railway Reserves Bill has led to the present state of things. What remedy do the Government propose at the present time? The remedy we see lies entirely with them, but they do not disclose it in their Speech. They point out that taxation is necessary, but I question the judgment of the men who make that Speech, because the members of the Government—especially the Treasurer—told us two years ago that, by prudent administration, taxation would be reduced. When challenged, he said he would bring forward a scheme for reduced taxation the next year. That was promised no later than eighteen months ago. It was useless for us to point out that there was not much chance—under the depressed circumstances, owing to the drought and other causes—of his being able to carry out his promise. He persisted, and it took some forcing to induce him to admit ultimately the necessity for increased taxation. I question their judgment; and it is left entirely to our opinion of their judgment whether they are competent to provide funds, not only to supply the deficiency of £220,000, but also for the payment of public works, which must be carried on by means of loan. I question their judgment because, in their administration during the last five years, they have completely failed in fulfilling their own promises, the expectation of their followers. Some hope is no doubt intended to be given to the House in the statement that a great reduction would be made in the expenditure by an improved method of construction being adopted. It is rather curious, that the last time of the meeting of the House, the present honourable member for Darling Downs repeatedly contradicted me on that one point, that improved methods were quite possible, and should be adopted. It comes out now that the present Minister for Works discovered a correspondence on the subject four or five years old. I saw several years ago the correspondence, the latter portion of which has been put on the table of the House to-day. The Speech says that in determining the character of

the Northern line, advantage has been taken of information in the possession of the Government, which warrants a confident expectation of a large reduction in the cost of future railways; but that information is not to the point if the Minister for Works proposes to make cheap and nasty lines, as proposed by Mr. Ballard; and I think the sooner he reconsiders the subject the better. I repeat that railways, at the price Mr. Ballard speaks of, and as constructed in other colonies, we can get constructed and not be forced to the necessity of adopting the plan suggested by him. I think the Minister for Works is rather doubtful of the lines being remunerative. He points in one paragraph to the necessity for increased taxation to pay for public works, and in another that light railways will pay themselves. I doubt the latter. I think our experience has shown that main lines of railway have paid better than branch lines. The experience in England is the same, and how the Minister for Works has arrived at his conclusion I do not know. If he is right, and branch lines will pay, I think main lines will pay also, and therefore no taxation will be necessary at all. It was, no doubt, necessary to put in some bit of hope in the Address, and this is intended for something of that kind. It is rather wonderful that another paragraph says:—

“My Government are of opinion that our public works can be most economically and satisfactorily carried out by means of contracts, and they propose that this system should be generally adopted in future, as far as practicable.”

One would suppose this was something of a new idea, and not one which has been insisted upon by all men of common sense all along, and has only been opposed by the members of the present Government for the last four years. There is not the slightest doubt that the continuance of the present system during the last four years has been their own action; and if they promise reform now, the reform is only in their own practice. I believe the paragraph must refer to the change carried out by the Minister for Works, and be intended to intimate that the same system will be pursued in the North as before. The opinion of the late Minister for Works was that that system was a failure. I believe the system is essentially bad, and that the conclusion come to by Mr. Miles was that it was a bad, or at all events a dangerous system. We know very well that about a million and a-half has been spent upon that line. It has been spent most irresponsibly; money has been passed without the control of the House, and expenditure has been passed which we should have condemned had we known of it. As an example, a



Minister spent about £300 from Loan Fund on a public dinner without our knowing anything about it. The information would never have come to the House at all, except through the inquisitiveness of one member. The system is a bad system, because it depends entirely upon the honesty of Mr. Ballard, though I do not impeach that. There is not the slightest stain upon his character; but the system should not depend on the honesty of any man. I am perfectly sure that the House should not allow the system to be carried out, and I should be sorry to see any retreat back to it. We believe in the contract system. We want to see contracts let in sections, and know what we are going to get for our money. One trunk line in the North has been commenced in the same way as followed by Mr. Ballard. In the northern papers advertisements appear calling for 30,000 sleepers, 100 round piles, 100 girders and head stocks, 10,000 feet sawn hardwood, 2,000 feet foot-planking, and other materials. We understand the proper way to construct railways is to let them in lengths, as pursued successfully by the southern engineers, and not to allow the Government to expend money without the control of the House, as is the case on the northern line. The amendment I propose to the motion is this—

“That the question be amended by the omission from the Address of all the words following the word ‘Sovereign,’ in the first paragraph, and the omission of the second paragraph, with a view to the insertion in their place of the following words:—‘And we beg further to inform your Excellency that, while recognising the importance of some of the subjects submitted in your Excellency’s Speech, we decline to proceed to their consideration until new advisers, possessing the confidence of this House, have been called to your Excellency’s Councils.’”

I have said sufficient to satisfy the House at all events that I am in earnest in condemning the action of the present Government. I throw on them the onus of our bad position at the present time. Though not blaming them for the drought or the bad times caused by the Indian famine and the Chinese, I say they have put us in a position where we should not have been, to meet those bad times. Bad times came upon us, and they have been aggravated by the action of the Government. They have forced themselves into this position—that they must go in not only for additional taxation, but also for economy, which has not previously been exercised. That is not a pleasant position, and they have made it very unpleasant for whoever may be their successors. It is very clear, in fact, from reading the Address, that they did not intend to remain in office themselves. If I were to consider the matter from

an entirely party point of view, I should certainly not have moved such an amendment, because at the present time the Government have most unpopular work to do. I would much rather see this Government, if competent, working the colony through the bad times they have contributed so much to bring about. It would be only right and proper that they should be made to feel the ill-effects of their own work. As a party leader, I should benefit by refusing to take office at the present time; but I see my position, not as a party leader, but as a colonist. I have expressed thoroughly my want of confidence in the present Government; I have condemned it over and over again. I do not care whether the party is called liberal or not; the time has passed when a word could make a party strong. It is plain that there will be £200,000 short at the end of June, and the Government does not know how to make it up. I am satisfied that the men on the Treasury benches are not the men for the time, and for that reason I have brought the amendment forward. As a party leader, I would sooner they carried on the Government; but as I am quite sure they are unfit, I move the amendment in the full hope that it will be carried.

The PREMIER: In rising to speak to the amendment which has just been moved, I have, in the first place, to congratulate the honourable members who did me the favour to move and second the Address, for the manner in which they have performed their duties. The expression of their opinion has to some extent been criticised as being in some slight respect divergent on the various topics treated of in the Speech. I am quite sure of this, Mr. Speaker—that the gentlemen who have addressed us on this occasion as mover and seconder have proved themselves likely to make useful members of this House. Though they have shown a slight divergence on one or two topics arising from different views in some minor matters, there is no reason to suppose from any remarks which fell from them that they are not prepared in the future to support the party committed to the prosecution of those liberal measures to which this party has previously been committed. I will now proceed to make a few remarks on the indictment which has been made against the Ministry by the honourable gentleman opposite. He has first told us that, considering the result of the general election which has just taken place, he is surprised that the resignation of the Minister did not follow from the announcement of the result of the elections, and he assumes to come to the conclusion that a majority has been declared against the Ministry from statements made in country newspapers. I have observed that many

other members have been attributed as followers of the honourable member—including the mover of the Address himself—the honourable member for Rosewood. The same thing might be said of various other members, and I think the only way in which we can really convince ourselves of the support likely to be accorded to the Ministry and to the honourable gentleman opposite, is by bringing the matter to the test of actual experience. We have not here, as in older countries, traditional parties—Whig or Tory, Conservative or Liberal—welded together by ties of time and experience. I question whether there are any parties here deserving of the distinctive terms as applied to Liberals and Conservatives. I am quite sure that the constitution of this House is entirely different from the constitution of the old House, and whatever lines of party demarcation there might have been in the last session of the last Parliament, those party lines are now completely obliterated by the result of the recent elections. Whatever may have been the result of those elections, parties in the House have to be reformed. The results have in many respects been remarkable. This, at all events, is evident—that by some of the largest and most influential communities members of the Ministry have been returned by commanding majorities. I instance myself, in the first place, as having been returned by a commanding majority; the case of my honourable friend, the Minister for Works, selected by a commanding majority by the capital of the colony; my honourable friend the Colonial Treasurer, elected by a larger majority than any other member now sitting in the House; and similar remarks may apply to both the Attorney-General and Minister for Lands, the latter having been unnecessarily subjected to two contests, through a thorough spirit of party warfare. Then again, I observe the absence of some well-known faces of men who took a prominent position last year, and were looked upon as leaders of their party. Where is the late honourable member for Kennedy? Where the late honourable member for Warrego? Where the honourable member for Burnett? These were, at all events, men of some mark, and if the results of the general election have been remarkable in the case of the Ministry, they have been much more remarkable in the case of prominent men opposite. What is the constitution of the present House? We hardly know until it is tried. There is a large proportion of new members—a larger proportion than it has been our fortune before to meet. How can we jump to the conclusion that inevitably those members will vote against the Ministry and support the Opposition? How could we infer that the honourable gentleman himself—whom I congratulate

on the position he occupies—would necessarily have still continued to be the leader of the Opposition. It was generally circulated that the honourable gentleman had declined to undertake the onerous duties of the position. That remark arose from the same source as the remarks to which the honourable member has referred. It has been said that the junior member for Brisbane was designated as the future leader of the Opposition in spite of his disclaimer ever to take office again. These may prove to be idle rumours, but they have been circulated; and, under these circumstances, I felt it was only right that the Ministry, whatever their position, should submit themselves to the verdict of Parliament, whatever that verdict might be; for I think that Parliament, as now constituted, has some right to affirm, if pleased to affirm, not only that it has no confidence in the Ministry, but also to affirm in whom it has confidence. This is of quite as much importance as the negative question of want of confidence in the Ministry. I hope it will express an opinion on this subject decisively and affirmatively. There should be no doubt at the commencement of a new session of a new Parliament as to who possesses the confidence of the people. These are the reasons, Mr. Speaker, which I think have justified me in declining to resign until the verdict of Parliament was pronounced upon us, and I am satisfied they will be recognised as sufficient. I am sure the honourable member himself, when he comes to consider the matter, will admit that it is far more desirable that this result should be attained after full discussion of the present condition of the colony than that I should have three or four weeks ago tendered my resignation to His Excellency. I do not think it fair of the honourable gentleman to say we have come down with a manifesto as a bar to the procedure of business, and in order to throw difficulties in the way of those who may possibly succeed us. I say we have done nothing more than our duty in here publicly, on the first occasion we could, making a manifesto and stating the belief we have in the future prospects of the country. Surely the Parliament may demand from us what our opinions are as to the future. In the past it has often been my portion to contend with the honourable gentleman opposite as to the policy we have adopted in the Railway Reserves Bill. It is a well-known ground, and has been well fought over. The honourable gentleman simply alluded to the failure of the Bill. I do not know, even now, that the Bill can be said to be a failure. I know a very large amount of money has been obtained under the authority of that Bill, and appropriated to the construction of railways. I know, also, that a very much larger amount might have been ob-

tained if it had not been necessary to secure it by means of the sale of land. But the expression of opinion of the late Parliament during the last session was such as to a great extent to debar the Government from giving effect to the further illustration of the principles of the Railway Reserves Bill by increasing the sale of land. And it was not only in our own particular circumstances, but circumstances had arisen in New South Wales which operated in the same direction. We had witnessed there a financial fact which might redound to the credit of the colony, so far as to produce a surplus. New South Wales was then and is now supposed to be benefited by an abundant surplus, but it is doubtful whether that system has been productive of prosperity to the colony. They are now suffering, and the depression there at the present time may be traced to the fact that the pressure upon banking institutions there has been caused by the effort to meet indebtedness consequent on the sale of land, and that the sale of land here at the present time is not to be thought of. We must judge and deal with the present by the facts and experience of the past, and we cannot ignore the very important fact that the state of pressure put upon us now in our commercial circles is mainly to be attributed to the pressure put upon the banks in New South Wales. Throughout the world we see that there has been monetary depression—a monetary depression unparalleled during the last ten years. That is a fact which is apparent, and allusion is made to it in the last clause of the Address. We do not immediately feel the effects of monetary depression in England; it comes to us after a time. It has come to us now, and there is no doubt it must also be taken into our calculations when dealing with the financial affairs of the colony, for we cannot be wholly independent of what is going on around us; and, in addition to a general monetary depression, we have had to contend here with very unfavourable seasons. The result of those seasons has been, in many cases, ruinous. Some have lost a large proportion of their stock; others have lost the whole; and, taking all these matters in consideration, we are perfectly justified in reviewing our position, and in not forcing things to an immediate conclusion. The honourable gentleman who moved the amendment on the Address referred to the ruin that has been effected by the Railway Reserves. Now I ask him where is there this ruin? But the honourable gentleman does not go so far as to say that the holders of runs have been ruined by the action of the Railway Reserves. In fact, the amount of land sold has been very small, and the pastoral lessees of Crown lands have not been inter-

fered with to any serious extent; but it has been made possible by the working of the Railway Reserves to resume large portions of Crown lands, and therein lies the sting of the Railway Reserves Bill quite as much as in its financial aspect. I must confess I feel to some extent confirmed in that opinion by the array of honourable gentlemen I see opposite. The possibility of the future extension of the same system possibly may have alarmed some pastoral lessees, though I think it does not alarm the honourable gentleman himself. I believe his opinions on this subject are generally pretty well known—that the sale of a certain proportion of land does not materially affect the pastoral lessee, and the sale of land has been so small that no serious injury could take place. But the honourable gentleman's opposition to our public works policy is not that, but that we have not borrowed money for the purposes of public works. We have done it prudently and carefully, not in the large amounts which he proposed, and which it would be impossible for us to employ profitably, but from time to time as necessity arose. Herein lies the value of the Railway Reserves Bill. The counter proposition of the honourable gentleman was to borrow large sums of money and invest them here in the banks.

Mr. McILWRAITH: No.

The PREMIER: What else could we do with it? Having raised the money in large amounts, that money must be invested. It must either be invested in our own debentures or deposited in the banks, or in the debentures of the neighbouring colonies. If we could not employ the money at once, it must be re-invested. That was the proposition which he has made over and over again. On the other hand, we have contended, let us reserve what Crown lands we require, and borrow money when required, and in moderate amounts. Does the honourable gentleman now say that there is no justification—that the last Parliament did not believe in the railways it had authorised? Surely the honourable gentleman who has moved this resolution does not believe in that? There was justification, I believe, and I believe it is supported by a vast majority of the people, that these railways were required. I would ask him to point out a single line of railway that is not required.

Mr. GROOM: The Bundaberg and Mount Perry line.

The PREMIER: That, by most people, is considered a railway that is required, and we cannot be accused—the honourable gentleman cannot accuse us—of want of earnestness and want of energy in carrying out those public works. We have endeavoured to give effect to the resolutions of the House in this respect. If, at the present time, people were not employed on

these railways—and here I quite agree with the remarks on this subject made by the honourable member for Rockhampton—for the benefit of the community, we should probably have heard of great distress, and complaints of want of employment just now. Where is the distress that has been referred to?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Everywhere.

The PREMIER: It may prevail to some extent in certain quarters; there is distress in commercial and monetary circles; but I do not think and do not believe that it prevails to any appreciable extent among the working classes. In spite of everything which has been said about over immigration, the immigrants who have landed here lately have all found work—cheaply it may be—upon our public works, and are thus largely and profitably employed. But, if they were not employed in this way, we should hear of them. There are no grounds for the remarks made by the honourable gentleman. It would appear, from what he has just said, that he is looking forward to the time when these public works may be stopped. At all hazards I say these public works must go on; but the honourable gentlemen who was so full of anxiety three or four months ago to give vigour to our public works policy, and made grave charges against us that we did not give sufficient vigour and progression to our public works, now comes forward after a lapse of only three months with an entirely different programme so far as he has expressed himself. He now says nothing about borrowing large sums of money, but he points rather to the cessation of those works now in hand. I hope, whatever the result of this motion, he will not be successful in a policy of that kind. The public works must be carried on judiciously, as they are now being carried on. When the honourable member last addressed this House, what he complained of was that we were not giving proper effect to our policy, and here I will ask honourable gentlemen to listen to what he then said:—

“Every man acquainted with public works knows perfectly well that once works are commenced expenditure must go on. If the workmen are allowed to go, expense must still be incurred for keeping a staff together. All the clerks, engineers, carpenters, drivers, and waggon-repairers, who constitute the staff, have to be kept on whether the railway is made quickly or not. All these things have to be paid for, and if the staff becomes dispersed it is more still, because the expense of forming a new staff is very considerable. That is the danger that Government is closer upon than they think. On the northern line it will most undoubtedly occur within three months, and on the western line it will happen within twelve months, if steps are not taken to get more money from England for the purpose of carrying on our railway works. I say it is not credit-

able to the colony to limit our engineers in their operations by the narrow views of finance the Government seem to entertain. For instance, it is creditable to the colony that such a staff of engineers should be kept on the Northern railway, making a railway over country, about thirty miles of which is perfectly level. I am quite sure I could get an intelligent carpenter (who as a class are engineers enough for a short level line) to do the work as well as those engineers; but they are kept there and will be kept there until some further progress is forced upon the country. I have given, I think, very good reasons why I differ from the Ministerial policy—because they do not intend to make that progress in public works that, in my opinion, the country demands.”

That was the justification which the honourable gentlemen put forward, and he complained at the same time that we were not pushing on our railways at the rate we should be doing—that the rate of progress was far below what it should be; but now he comes forward and advocates rather a policy of retrogression or suspension. I would ask, sir, what cause is there for advocating such a change in his policy? Last session we took a loan for carrying on some important works; and now, three months after, we come forward with a programme of other public works which we consider necessary, and for which we state that a further loan will be required. The honourable member makes a complaint that now we are beginning to talk of additional taxation to carry on our public works, but what did the honourable gentlemen talk of last session:—

“No Treasurer will be found very willing to tax the people of the colony to a greater extent than they are taxed at the present time. The present Colonial Treasurer suggested it last year; but he was more prudent than to mention it this year, although there was much more occasion to refer to it, because we are much nearer the time when additional taxation will be required than we were last year.”

Here the honourable gentleman himself admits that this question of additional taxation may have to be entertained,—

“But he knows as well as I do that the people of this colony do not intend to be further taxed; and I should like to know in what other way we can possibly look for larger revenue without further taxation? In what way can it be done except through the lands of the colony? Our public policy should be to foster and cherish that source of income by expending two or three millions of money so as to make a source of revenue to the colony, that which is now bringing in far too little.”

There is an admission of the honourable gentleman himself; he admits that a source of revenue, and a very important source of revenue, is now bringing in far too little. Yet the honourable gentleman is now accusing us of desiring to increase our revenue from the very source he re-

ferred to last year as bringing in far too little. Of course, if this money for carrying on public works is to be found, it must come from territorial revenue. What do we find is the case in other colonies, but that an inevitable increase of taxation is before them, derivable from territorial revenue. If these great public works are to be carried out cheaply for the benefit of the people in the interior, if those works are to be carried out to the necessity of which the honourable gentleman has so frequently referred, the means for doing so must come from territorial revenue. I venture to say that the statements in the Speech are to a great extent the same as those contained in the doctrines which have been laid down by the honourable member himself; but his remarks now are evidently of a very much more cautious nature than they were three months ago. Yet circumstances have not so very much changed as to justify such an alteration in the opinions of the honourable gentleman. What is the difference in our position? It is very probable that there may be a falling off in our revenue, as there has been in previous years, when the revenue has shown a deficit; but is that sufficient to cause us to lose heart, and to make us change our whole scheme of public works? Surely the honourable gentleman does not mean to say that these are the principles by which he would be governed. What have we seen in the other colonies, in the whole of the Australian group, during the last six months? Has there not been a diminution in the imports and exports? I think nobody can deny that. The same may be said both of Victoria and New South Wales. In New South Wales the revenue has been largely augmented by the sales of land, and if it had not been for them there would have been a deficit; but because we have not had forced sales of land, we are told that we are to retrace our whole position. Simply because there is a decrease in our revenue we are to suspend our public works policy; but I doubt very much whether the people of this colony view things with the views of alarmists, and I think the honourable gentleman should be the last to do so, or to try and lead us to suppose that during the last three months there has been anything in the aspect of affairs to warrant such a change in his opinions. The honourable member made some remarks about the formation of railways, and also some criticisms of Mr. Ballard; and I have been rather amused to see what he said in the course of the three-million loan debate in reference to these matters. I see there that he seemed to think that we were very much behindhand, that we expended too much on engineers; in fact, that all he thought necessary was that we should get an intelligent carpenter to construct our

lines. "I am quite sure that I could get an intelligent carpenter (who, as a class, are engineers enough for a short level line) to do the work as well as those engineers." Now, if the honourable member intends to carry out his lines with the assistance of intelligent carpenters, and substitute them for a staff of engineers, I am afraid that he will launch the colony into trouble; for, although intelligent carpenters are very well in their own positions, they are not exactly the men to whom such works should be entrusted. He then spoke of making railways at half of what they are costing.

Mr. PALMER: He has always done so.

The PREMIER: That is nothing more than my honourable friend the Minister for Works had said. There is no doubt that, whatever honourable members opposite may think of him, he has brought a great deal of vigour and energy into his department. I have no doubt that if at some time the House may think fit to entrust the public works to him he will impart an amount of vigour into those matters which has been wanting hitherto. I am quite sure that the announcement made by my honourable colleague in the paragraph of the Speech referring to public works will be endorsed by the country. They partake, no doubt, of the same principles that were at one time announced by the honourable gentlemen opposite, but there is this difference—that whilst on the one hand my honourable colleague is prepared to give effect to them, the honourable gentleman opposite is evidently shrinking from them. Well, sir, it has been an imputation against us that it was quite unnecessary for us, as a moribund Ministry, to make any declaration of our policy at all. But I ask are we not entitled to make a declaration of it? This party with which I have been identified have carried out a policy for the past five years, and surely I should be entitled to say something of the policy they have proposed for the next five years. There is nothing in that programme which has been addressed to us by His Excellency which may not well be carried out during the time of this Parliament. I do not know whether it may be my fortune to have a share in carrying it out. I hope that if the honourable gentlemen opposite assumes the responsibility of that programme, he will gather round him men of ability and power who will assist him to do so. If he can find a set of men who will carry out that policy, he will gladly have my support; but it must be upon some principle intelligible to the people of this colony. If we are to raise revenue for this purpose, we must raise it from the only source we have,—we must raise it from the vast territorial area in our possession. The resources in that large territorial area are ample to carry out all the works that may be sanc-

tioned by the House. It is quite clear that we cannot go on the principle that has been advocated by the honourable gentleman—that the growth of population in this colony will of itself supply the means for meeting this indebtedness. We must look for it from other sources, and those sources are abundant to our hands. I hope they will be applied. I care not if it is the will of the House to dispense with the services of myself and my honourable colleagues. I care not how soon they announce that to me; but I do hope that our successors will be a set of men competent to guide the destinies of this colony for years to come. We cannot afford to bandy charges against each other; if we are to carry out the policy embodied in this programme, we must have a Government composed of able men to do it. But before that time arrives probably the honourable gentleman will have to take upon himself the responsibilities—if he succeed in carrying this motion—of forming from the men around him a sufficiently strong Ministry to carry on the government of the country. I am quite confident that it will never do to leave the administration of the affairs of this colony in the hands of a weak Ministry. We require above all at the present time a Ministry of some strength, and there is no question upon which we should pronounce more emphatically than the present land question, both as regards the settled and the unsettled districts, and as regards Crown land and alienated land. On this point I confess that I have not the prospect at the present time of feeling able to deal with that question in the manner that it deserves to be dealt with; but it must be dealt with, and that it is ultimately connected with the future financial operations of this colony I think there can be no doubt. I have said, Mr. Speaker, all that I wished to say; but I must say that I should have wished to hear from the honourable gentleman opposite something more tangible, something more open, something more declared, as to his future policy. The intimations of policy we have heard from him now are very different from what we heard from him three months ago. He is now possibly on the verge of the responsibilities of office, and yet he shrinks from adopting those very principles by which he has sought to turn us out of office. He has consistently advocated the extension of railways wherever they are required; he has advocated to some extent the formation of branch lines in the settled districts; and I conjure him, as he values his reputation as a politician and a statesman not to shrink from the conclusions that he had previously arrived at; and if he should not find support from the honourable gentlemen who are now arrayed behind him in such numbers, I hope he will look elsewhere for

support—that if he cannot find it amongst his immediate followers, he will find it amongst those men who are really and truly committed to the policy of progress in this colony.

Mr. A. H. PALMER: I shall not attempt to follow the honourable the Premier through the whole of his speech, but shall confine myself as far as I can to the Speech which has been furnished to us to-day, and to some remarks which he has been pleased to make upon it. However anxious I may be to look upon it with the greatest possible consideration, still we cannot but look upon it as the last dying speech and confession of the Ministry, as far as I can judge; and I say it is highly culpable, almost indecent, on the part of a Ministry, who must know that they have not met the House or the country with a majority in their favour, to come down with such a speech. It is impossible for me to characterise it as anything else than the most impertinent speech I ever listened to. They must know they have not the slightest prospect of carrying out the many questions now submitted to our consideration; and yet they put a speech in the mouth of His Excellency which would lead us to suppose that they were going to govern the country for the next five years. Impudence could not go further. They have tried—I believe this to be their object—to leave such a legacy to their successors, whoever they may be, that I, for one, do not envy the position in which they will be placed in trying to meet the many shortcomings of the present Ministry and their immediate predecessors. In fact, it has been the same Ministry for the last five years. There has been some shifting of dresses and places; and, as we heard so graphically described to-night by the late Minister for Works, the present Premier has a mania for reconstruction. No matter how the dresses and places have been changed during the last five years, we have always found the same men popping up again when least expected. I was glad to hear the honourable member for the Darling Downs say he would not submit to be placed in such an invidious position as that proposed by the Premier. There is no doubt that, if he had submitted to it, the country would have believed it was for some fault of his own he was put out of the Works Department. In the Premier's reply to the statement of the late Minister for Works, I particularly noticed that he left out the main charge brought by his late colleague—the member for Darling Downs—against his administration, in which he complained of the absolute inefficiency of the Minister for Lands, or the department then administered by the present Attorney-General. He carefully avoided any allusion to that, which I consider the most serious and

damaging charge made against the Government, and that, too, by a late colleague. We have not had a word from the Premier defending the administration of the Lands department; and, if we can judge from the complaints we are constantly hearing on all sides, no department could be worse administered than it has been, and I may say is, with all due deference to the present Secretary for Lands. I do not blame him, for he has not had time to apply the broom with any effect in such a department as that. In the first paragraph of the Speech we are told:—

“The Electoral Districts Act of 1878, which has now been brought into operation, makes provision for a more equitable distribution of representation, in accordance with the present population. One of the most important constituencies, however, is still disproportionately represented; and it is therefore proposed, as soon as possible, to remedy this defect by the introduction of a Bill to provide for a second member for Fortitude Valley, in accordance with the original intention of my Ministers, as expressed during last Parliament.”

Well, sir, I should like to know whose fault it was that Fortitude Valley was not properly represented? Why, it was the fault of the Ministry themselves, who brought in the Bill and had not the courage to carry it through in its integrity. I say it is an insult to the House to put such a paragraph before us. They were bound, if they considered themselves a Ministry at all fit to represent the intelligence of the colony, to stick to what they themselves believed to be a main part of their Bill. But they did not do it. They shuffled out of it, and allowed themselves to be defeated on that very question; and they still went on, as they will go on to the end of the chapter, until they are shown by a large majority of this House that we want them no longer. They actually introduce, as the first paragraph in a new speech, a statement to the effect that they are going to give another member to a constituency which they most disgracefully deserted; and the main reason why honourable members on this side of the House refused a member to that constituency was, as was stated over and over again, not because they did not think the constituency was entitled to another member, but because they were determined to put the Government on their trial to see whether they would stick to their Bill. And they did not stick to it. They allowed themselves to be beaten upon it, and yet they stuck to office, and they now bring in this clause in the Speech. Well, sir, I shall leave the public to be the judge of that. The next paragraph is really beneath contempt. What on earth have little beggarly rocks of islands in Torres Straits to do with this colony? What influence can they possibly

have on the destiny of this colony I am at a loss to imagine; and to bring forward these paltry little matters into the Speech is rather too good. Then we have the Real Property Office; and we knew all that is stated on that subject before from the newspapers. Then the Chinese question crops up again; and I have not the slightest hesitation in reiterating the statement of my honourable friend the leader of the Opposition, that we have to thank the imbecility of the Government for all the trouble we have had in connection with the Chinese question as far as the A.S.N. Co. is concerned. If they had had only the moral courage to have enforced the law as it now stands, and as brought in by themselves, the A.S.N. Co. would not have dared to send Chinese sailors to this colony. But instead of putting that law in force, and levying the £10 on each Chinamen, what did they do? They took an acknowledgment from the Company that if they did not return in a certain time they would pay the £10. I should like to know what this is worth. I call it trifling with the law, and going beyond the powers of any Ministry. I repeat that we have to thank the imbecility of the Government for the greater portion of this Chinese trouble. Of course, if the A.S.N. Co. found that they could play with the great Liberal Government of Queensland who had passed an Act expressly for the exclusion of Chinamen, and were afraid to enforce it, they thought, as there was no law in New South Wales against Chinese, they could employ as many as they liked and make a good thing out of it. The whole affair arose from the Government being afraid to put their own Act in force; for, had they done so, we should have heard nothing of this Chinese question. The Torres Straits mail route is, of course, a matter of moment; but I think we might have been spared quite so much upon it at the present time. We all know that the Government are going to call for tenders, and I hope they may get good ones. I should like to know whether they intend to insert a condition in the tenders similar to that for the coastal service,—that no Polynesians or Asiatics are to be employed; because, if they do, I feel quite sure they will not have a chance of getting a contract at anything like present rates. The next clause refers to the Local Government Act of 1878 being brought into operation, and all I can say in regard to that matter is that the Government have shown most masterly inactivity. I believe they have taken no action whatever under the Bill, except to give notice to the Gympie people that unless objections were lodged within three months showing cause against it they would feel it their duty to establish a municipality. That is all they have done in connection with this Local Government

Bill, which was to do so much for the colony, and which we told them at the time it was passed was only a municipal Bill, and would never answer the purpose for which it was introduced, and which the Government had not the courage of their opinions to put in force. In fact, I remember when the Bill was going through the House, I said the Government would not be game to put it into force—that they could not afford to lose a member for any district where the inhabitants were averse to the measure coming into operation; and my observation has been fully carried out by the result. Then we have the Civil Service Act of 1863; and I am sick of hearing of that Act in speeches. We have been promised, I do not know how many sessions, a Bill to amend it; but we have never seen it. The next question is that of railway construction; and I have no hesitation in saying that a Government like the present, who knew the position in which they were placed—I go further, and say that no Ministry were justified in introducing into a main trunk line of railway the important alterations which they proposed under the Executive minute we have seen to-day in connection with the Townsville and Charters Towers line. The question of cheap railways is only on its trial in this colony; and before such sweeping alterations were made by any Government, it was their duty to submit the plans to Parliament, and have the sanction of Parliament for carrying them out. No person would be better pleased than myself to see the question of cheap lines of railway tried; but it should be tried on a short line of railway, and then we should be able to judge what its effects would be on the permanent railway construction of the colony—instead of setting at naught by a sweep of the pen, by a mere *ipse dixit* of a heaven-born Minister for Works, as we were told by the Premier this evening, all the railway traditions of the colonies, and all the previous railway constructions of the gentleman in charge. There has been introduced a sweeping introduction in the gradients, the curves, the weight of the rails, in fact, in almost every possible way, on the sole scratch of the pen of a newly appointed Minister for Works whom his chief chooses to call heaven-born. I do not know anybody who believes in the honourable member's ability as Minister for Works. He is an able barrister, and as such we may respect him; but as a Minister for Works we know nothing of his abilities. Yet, before he was a month in office, he departs from all the railway traditions of the different colonies and introduces a new system on a main trunk line which, if it fails on the first fifteen miles, will all have to be renewed. This is an innovation which no Minister has a right to make without the

consent of Parliament being first obtained. I have the highest opinion of Mr. Ballard as an engineer, and I believe he has done his duty to the colony thoroughly and well as far as he has gone; but before he had another appointment on that line, the question as to the compensation to which he is entitled under his agreement should have been decided by this House. So much having been said in previous sessions as to the dislike of honourable members to the small contract system, it was the duty of the Government to take the opinion of Parliament before going into such a very new style of construction. It is a question which ought to have been decided before now. The line has been open for some time, and yet the question as to Mr. Ballard's compensation for the saving which he says he has effected—and I do not mean to contradict him—has not been brought to the test. The Government had no right to go into another agreement for a different line, particularly when the previous Minister for Works had stated very fully and very obstinately, as is his manner, his objection to that course being carried out. I sincerely hope the honourable members for those districts will show the Government that their feeling on the subject is the same as mine. If any engineers in the colony can carry out the line of railway well, Mr. Ballard is one of them. I will not say the only one, by a long chalk; but I reiterate my statement that the Minister for Works had no right, without the consent of Parliament, to initiate a new style of railway altogether. I need hardly add that the particulars must have been in the possession of the Government for years, for I, as well as the honourable member for Mulgrave, saw such a project at least four years ago. The Premier's remark struck me as curious, in reply to the leader of the Opposition, who, more in fun than anything else, suggested that an intelligent carpenter could carry out the line, because he tried to turn it into ridicule. But the Premier had gone still further—he had entrusted the line to an intelligent barrister. The honourable member who seconded the Address told us that in these times it was quite enough for a very good man to have one speciality. I quite agree with him, and I do not think the speciality of a practising barrister is likely to enable him to make a good Minister for Works; and nothing that has been done under that honourable gentleman's management has been done in such a way as to convince me that I am not right in my idea. The Premier, in the early part of his Address, was good enough to inform us that what the House and the country want very badly is a definition of party. I will not contradict him entirely on that point. We do want a better definition of party; but, judging from the re-



sults of the elections, what the country wants still more is a definition of what a Ministry should be; and the country, judging from the speeches of candidates, most unmistakably declared against the present Ministry. There was nothing said about party; the people only condemned the Ministry of the day. I was very sorry to hear the Premier touch, in what I consider exceedingly bad taste, on the subject of the members he misses from this side of the House. He absolutely gloated over the absence of certain prominent members of the Opposition. If he will only ask the the honourable gentleman on his right, he can easily account for the absence of some of the leading members of the Opposition. That trip to Rockhampton will account for some of them. If ever bribery and corruption were put in force by a Minister, that trip to Rockhampton by the Attorney-General of the day brought him out in his most shining colours. It was the first time I ever heard of a Minister of the Crown using the influence of the Crown to induce the labourers in the employ of the Crown to vote for a particular candidate.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Griffith): What do you mean?

MR. PALMER: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid of personal violence from the Minister for Works. If the honourable gentleman will allow me, I will very soon explain what I mean. His own letters in the public papers will explain what I mean. Did he not tell us how he had been in correspondence with people at Rockhampton whom we knew little of, and that a strong party was being formed there in favour of the Government? Are people so blind as not to see that the servants in the employment of the Government voted for the Government candidates *en masse*? We are not quite so blind as not to be able to draw our own conclusions from what we see, and I say that this is the first time I ever heard of a Minister of the Crown organising a strong party of Government employees for the purpose of defeating a political opponent. Nothing could have been worse than the manner in which the Premier gloated over the absence of prominent members of the Opposition, some of whom he was proud to call his personal friends. It came with a particularly bad grace from an honourable gentleman who, for so many years, played the part of a Peri waiting at the gate, and trying numerous constituencies in his endeavours to get into the House; and I venture to prophesy that these prominent members will not try as many constituencies before they are in the House again, as he did when he was out of it. About the question of railway reserves, the Premier has said nothing new on the subject. He knows it is a failure, and he has admitted it by his actions. He gave

it as one of his reasons for having abandoned it, that the feeling of the House was against it. As I have said over and over again, he would abandon any measure, or pursue any course of action, as long as it would keep him in office. He has admitted to-night that he gave up carrying into effect his darling dear little love—the Railway Reserves Bill—because the expression of feeling in this House was against it. The only expression here was the speeches of different members. No vote was given on the subject, and it is the duty of the Ministry not to take action on a mere expression of opinion, but on the vote of the House. But they knew from the first that the Bill was bad, and if they did not they ought to have brains enough to learn it from members of the Opposition. As to the sting which the Bill presented to us, I should like to know where it is. As I have often said, the Government had full power to resume land without that Bill at all. They had it under the old Lands Act of 1869, and their subsequent measure only seemed to make a muddle of the whole thing. The Railway Reserves Bill did not give them a tittle of extra power for the resumption of land, for that power they had always possessed; and yet to carry out some idea—which, I believe, first entered your prolific brain, Mr. Speaker, for they could not invent it themselves, and every bit of their policy has been stolen from somebody else—they brought in the Railway Reserves Bill, which we told them frequently would only place them in difficulty. That seems to have been the opinion of the ex-Attorney-General who very soon found a way to ride through the clauses of the measure and take away a lot of money which ought to have gone to the credit of the Railway Reserves; and yet we are now told that the sting of the Act is in the power it gave to the Government to resume land—a power which we have always possessed, and to which this Act does not add one iota. Another mis-statement of the Premier's is that my friend the honourable member for Mulgrave—the leader of the Opposition—proposed to borrow three millions of money to invest in the banks. I challenge him to find any place in *Hansard*, or to point to any honourable member who will say he ever heard the honourable member for Mulgrave say in what way he wanted to invest that money. My impression is that he said he had no intention of investing it in the banks at all. That honourable member's policy was to go openly before the capitalist and let him know that we wanted three millions of money, not all at once, but as we required it. That was his policy, and that marked the difference between the policy of the Opposition and that of the Government, who proposed to take their loans in drips and drabs—asking, in short, for a succession of small loans; and I

think ours is the far better policy of the two. We are told again a good deal about New South Wales which does not very much concern us in this colony, except so far as to judge by their failure where we should avoid failure too; and I have no hesitation in saying that the crisis in New South Wales has been caused by the policy of forcing lands into the market—and that was the policy of the Railway Reserves Bill—which policy was defeated only by inability on the part of purchasers to absorb large quantities of land, and by an expression of opinion in this House that the Government did not wish to press the lands into the market. No doubt the enormous amount of land bought within the last few years has brought about the financial crisis in New South Wales. The Government there made the mistake of borrowing large sums of money and lodging them in the banks at fixed deposits. At the same time the Government forced a large quantity of land into the market, which speculators bought up. They went to the banks to borrow money to pay for this land, and paid for it absolutely in Government money, and the Government cannot call in their deposits at the bank without ruining the country. That is exactly the position in which the Railway Reserves Act would have forced this colony had it been carried out, for there are very few men in it with so much capital that they can afford to devote it to the purchase of land. The Premier made a great deal of the land question, and said the country wanted legislation upon it. I have looked carefully over the Governor's Speech, and I can find nothing in it which alludes to the absolute necessity for legislation on the land question. If the land question was of such enormous importance, why did not the Premier put it in this precious document? Apparently, however, it never struck him until he got excited, and then he referred to it, thinking it was another thrust at the Opposition. The honourable Premier, I must say, misrepresented *in toto* the statement of my honourable colleague the member for Mulgrave on the subject of cheap railways. The honourable member mentioned over and over again that railways of a substantial character, and on a broad gauge, were being made in Victoria for £3,000 per mile. That was the cheap railway he advocated. He advocated that good substantial railways should be made at the same low cost as in Victoria, and maintained it could be done here. In addition to what I have already said as to the Government having no right to initiate a new system on the Northern main trunk line, I am also reminded that they have no right to do it, because the plans have been passed by Parliament for the work; they have absolutely flown in the face of

this authority by the Executive minute brought forward by the Minister for Works. I have very little further to say on this subject. I shall have the very greatest pleasure in voting for the amendment, and I am sure the Government will not be taken by surprise by my telling them so. I have no personal objection to them, but I believe them to be thoroughly unfit for their positions. I believe they have had such a long period of success—particularly the Attorney-General, who has never had a cross—that if they had gone into office good men they would have been demoralised. I believe it would be for the benefit of the country that they should be displaced. A Ministry that has held office so long—even if they had the best intentions to control the expenditure—could not make the alterations which they are bound in honour to do, through being tied down by the appointments they have made, and have often had forced upon them; it wants new brooms to make a clean sweep. I believe it is a mistake for any Ministry to remain in office long; three or four years is ample, and if they remain longer they degenerate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is the fourth time that I have had to defend the Government against motions which were in form and substance want of confidence motions. On previous occasions, with one exception, some objection was made to the policy of the Government, and some reason was given why it was not suited to the circumstances of the colony. On one occasion, when the honourable member for Mulgrave was also the mover, no reason was given; but the House was asked to affirm that they did not like the members of the Government. I have been listening attentively to the honourable member for Mulgrave and to his colleague, as he called himself, the honourable member for North Brisbane, to discover the reasons for bringing forward the amendment now before the House. The only one given by the former was that the Railway Reserves Act has not been a success owing to certain circumstances, such as the bad weather and other things; the other reason was advanced by the honourable member for North Brisbane, and it was that the Government had remained in office long enough. No other reasons were given than these two. I shall show presently why they did not condescend, or did not dare to give other ones. We have been told that we had no business to meet the House, and that the Government had no business to ask His Excellency to deliver a speech to the House; the speech has been characterised as an indecent one, and it has been said that it was delivered to hamper our successors. I do not think the charge comes with very good grace from an honourable member who was himself once defeated, and had made up his mind to

tender his resignation, but nevertheless allowed the Governor to come down with a speech to the House. The honourable member for North Brisbane was that member.

MR. PALMER: I deny it *in toto*.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say that in 1874 the honourable member was defeated on the election of Speaker; that on the following day the Governor delivered the usual speech, and that the honourable member announced that he and his colleagues had resigned, but that he had nevertheless thought it desirable that the Speech should be delivered. That is recorded in *Hansard*. The honourable member might then with decency have announced that the circumstances of the colony called for the Governor's Speech to be delivered at another time. On the present occasion the circumstances are very different; and that leads me to the charge that we ought to have resigned. Here I beg leave to differ on a matter of detail from my colleague the Premier. With reference to his remarks as to the state of parties, I would observe that in my opinion there are two parties, and there may be more. During the whole period of the last Parliament the Liberal party had a majority.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: They had, and carried their measures. It is true that owing to the defection of certain members who left the party with whom they had always been allied, under circumstances which can and may yet be stated, the party became diminished, and we had only a majority of one during the last session. We went to the country, and honourable members tell us the result will be that we shall be beaten; but did we go to the country as two distinct parties—Liberal and Conservative? If the honourable member for Mulgrave had been recognised as the leader of the one party, and if honourable members sitting opposite had been returned pledged to support him, I admit that the Government might perhaps have followed the course which Mr. Gladstone, at home, and Sir James McCulloch, in Victoria, adopted, and tendered their resignation. But what was our position—what was the majority? It was, according to members opposite, a majority against the Government—not for the honourable member for Mulgrave—and I venture to say the two things are not convertible terms. I have said elsewhere that there is a party in this House which used to be called the Squatting party, and which is not dead, but on the contrary is stronger than ever. I am confirmed in this opinion when I see the honourable members who are sitting in a row opposite. There are the honourable member for Northern Downs, the honourable member for Fassifern, the two honourable

members for Leichhardt, the honourable member for Balonne, the honourable member for Burke, the honourable members for Mulgrave, for North Brisbane—I am sorry to say, for Port Curtis, for Dalby, for Normanby, for Warrego, for Gregory, and for Maranoa. I also see one honourable member who represents what has been and will again be a Liberal constituency, though perhaps he can hardly say that he represents himself, the honourable member for Stanley; is there any doubt that these honourable members will vote solidly together, like a machine, for the old traditions of the squatting party? I say that their true leader is not the honourable member for Mulgrave, but that at present it suits their purposes—I say this without intending any disrespect to my old friend—to follow the lead of the honourable member for Mulgrave. Yet it is said that the squatting party is dead. I know it is dead and no longer to be feared in one sense, but we also know that it is prepared to coalesce with any other party in the colony to assist it to the Treasury benches. There has lately been an attempt made in this colony to form an extreme Northern party and to trade upon the supposed grievances of the North. I am happy to think that some at least of the Northern constituencies have pricked that bubble, and to know that it is exploded. They know it, and will not be fooled any longer into setting themselves up into a distinct party, which must necessarily lead to their own disaster. They may for a short time and for a temporary purpose coalesce with the old squatting party, but before long they will be found coalescing and working with members representing constituencies whose interests are identical with their own. I am glad to think that probably, before long, there will be fewer of them to sit and support that old Squatting party, for the present is only a temporary coalition. I see there also members who used to be amongst the foremost supporters of the Liberal party, and who have been hovering in the air, or sitting on a rail for a very long period, and at last have made up their minds to alight on that side. Perhaps they think the pastures on that side are richer than on this; they may be sure we shall not do our best to provide rich pastures for those gentlemen who have left this side of the House and joined their fortunes, and endeavoured to join the fortunes of their constituencies, to those who have been their natural enemies. I see further, honourable gentlemen who owe their seats in this House to declaring that, if elected, they would sit on this side of the House, and who would, otherwise, have had no more chance of being returned than I should have had a chance in opposing the honourable member for Mulgrave in that constituency. Members having been returned under these circumstances, I think

that even if the majority of members are opposed to us, it was quite sufficient reason for our action to compel those gentlemen to show whether they have the courage of their opinions, and whether others have the courage to go against their expressed opinions. We shall see whether they will have the courage to vote against the principles they have advocated. If we have not the confidence of this House, by all means let them say so, and if it is our fate to retire, after a somewhat long tenure, it will not grieve us to any material extent. We are satisfied in declaring a Liberal programme which we believe in, and are prepared to carry out. Honourable members opposite, when put to the test, have been contented to criticise and object, but have not said whether or not they are prepared to carry out that programme themselves. They have failed to accept the challenge now—but they will have to accept it before long. Whatever the result of this discussion, and whatever Government may be in office, I am satisfied, as certainly as if it had been already fulfilled, that the programme set forth in the Speech delivered by His Excellency will be carried out in the next three or four years. I think I have said sufficient to show why we should have taken the course we have. From a party point of view, I believe myself that we should have consulted our own interest by retiring before; but I believe it was our duty to meet the House and let the country hear what our programme was, and let the members they have returned decide upon the clearly expressed programmes of the leaders of the Liberal party and the Squatting party, and take the verdict of the country on the result. The reasons given by the honourable members who have spoken in favour of the amendment have consisted mainly in an attack on the Government; but they have not dared to criticise the programme offered. Have they nothing to say, or are they afraid to criticise it? They have spoken of the past, but have not criticised what we are prepared to do in the future. Honourable members know that before they can sit on this side of the House they must face their constituents, and the result may tell very heavily against them. They cannot get into that position without having to submit to a catechism before being elected. Both the honourable members who have spoken have said that the recent employment of Chinese by the A.S.N. Co., and the consequent strike and trouble, were caused by the imbecility of the Government. The charge is the more amusing in that the present Government of all others have taken the foremost part in preventing the immigration of Chinese. The charge, in fact, is too grotesque to be anything more than laughable.

Mr. A. H. PALMER: It is quite true.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I only wish the honourable member had spoken plainly on the subject when contesting the electorate of North Brisbane. That was a subject upon which the honourable member declined to speak at all. The fact is the Government had no more to do with the employment of Chinese than the honourable member for North Brisbane had. If the charge were made that the election of the honourable member had led the A.S.N. Co. to the conclusion that public opinion on the subject had changed, it would be only not quite so grotesque as the one the honourable member has made against the Government.

Mr. A. H. PALMER: Do you mean to deny that you took the Company's bond instead of their money?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The fact was that the local manager of the A.S.N. Co. came to me one day and said that one of the steamers trading to China was coming down with partly a Chinese crew, and would probably call at Cooktown; and he asked whether the Government would have any objection to the men coming on shore for not more than a day or two, and whether they would accept a bond for the money which would have to be returned on their leaving. I told him I could give no opinion; he must consult the Colonial Treasurer, and if there were any objection, he would no doubt refer to me as Attorney-General. The next communication was from the Treasurer, asking if, in the event of the crew landing for a day or two, it would be absolutely necessary to collect the money. The reply I made was that in such a case, as the money would have to be returned, I apprehended that the undertaking of such a company would be sufficient guarantee. That advice was quite consistent with the spirit of the Act and perfectly justifiable. No Attorney-General giving an opinion according to law and his oath to administer his office honestly and fairly could give any other. If that is the imbecility of the Government that led to the employment of the Chinese, we are in the wrong; if not so, we are right. If that old phalanx of members who affect to ridicule us on Chinese immigration are now coming forward, and thinking to delude and gull the people of this colony into the belief that they are the champions of the objectors to Chinese immigration, they have made a mistake. I say that the conduct of the Government is not only strictly consistent with the old system of discouragement, but that they have acted without precipitancy, and without unduly influencing the strike. The Government could not interfere actively in the first instance without obstructing a possible settlement between the company and the men, but they communicated with the A.S.N. Co. in a private and proper manner.

what their opinion was. More than that, I believe the ultimate settlement of the matter was due to the action of the Government, even more largely than the honourable members who moved and seconded the Address were aware. I believe the Government did their duty well in sticking by principle throughout, and giving the company fair warning that they would not submit to have the coast steamers manned by Chinese sailors and firemen. They would not have done their duty had they acted so as to prejudice a settlement of the strike; but when the company refused to give a proper answer, then formal notice was given and new tenders called for upon altered conditions. My honourable colleague—the member for North Brisbane—let the cat out of the bag when he wondered if any condition had been attached to the tender for the Torres Straits service, and said he was quite sure that the contract would not be taken under such circumstances.

MR. A. H. PALMER: At the price.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not hear that qualification. Of course, the contract would not be taken at the same price. An extra £5 would alter the price. At all events, the matter did not escape attention, and a special provision has been made in that contract, as well as in the A.S.N. Co.'s. The honourable member for Mulgrave professed to review the history of the last five years, beginning in 1874, and told us of the admirable programme of the Liberal Government of that year. He did not appear to agree on that point with the honourable member for North Brisbane, who said that it had been the same Government during the five years, evidently forgetting that the honourable member for Mulgrave was a member of the Government all through 1874. The honourable member for Mulgrave told us what an admirable programme it was then. I agree that it was, and what is more, I say that it has been consistently carried out since. The honourable member, when he first sat on the opposite bench, told us that he was not a member of the Opposition. He has told us that it was in that year that we first went astray—that the practice of borrowing money for the construction of roads and bridges commenced. The statement struck me as being very singular, and I referred to the Estimates. I find that in 1875 we borrowed £10,000 to make roads in the Cook district under very special circumstances, there being a large influx of diggers in the district, and the roads being almost impassable. Under those circumstances, hardly any honourable member could object to the expenditure, and I am quite certain that neither the honourable member for Mulgrave nor the honourable member for North Brisbane objected or pointed to the circumstances as the beginning of a career of ruin and

destruction, or anything of the kind. It is quite true that in a subsequent year, and under exceptional circumstances, £100,000 was borrowed for roads; but I only mention that fact because, when an honourable member of his standing and experience in the House proposes to give the history of the last five years, many members may think that what they hear are the facts, and may be led away by them. That is all I have to say about 1875. Then he repeated that in 1876 the Works policy was forced upon the Government. He said this in 1877, and twice in 1878, and every time he said it the allegation was disproved and answered. He has made these statements so frequently—and it is known that whoever says a thing often enough will get someone to believe it—that I verily believe he has got to believe it himself. We have replied to the charge over and over again until it is wearying to reply to it. Then he says that last year, to relieve the difficulties the Government had got into, he brought in a motion for a loan of three millions to assist them out of their difficulties; but honourable members will recollect that that was not exactly what he said on bringing in the motion, so that it appears strange that this warning he has given us should come now. I rather think the lecture on our sins which he has given us was chiefly proposed for the benefit of those gentlemen who take their seats for the first time in this House. His suggestion may be very well and perfectly true, but it is strange that he never thought of it before. Then he said that he brought in the proposition for a loan because the Government had run to the end of their funds, and were not able to deal with the affairs of the country. We, in reply to this, said that the last expiring moments of an old Parliament was not the proper time for the country to take upon itself any additional burden by way of loan, and for a large expenditure on trunk lines. It was known throughout the country that we should be prepared to carry those trunk lines on, and to carry them on as fast as possible from the commencement of this session, when a deliberate opinion of the people had been arrived at; but we were not prepared to carry those works on until, at a proper time, the country had had a fair opportunity of expressing its opinions on the subject. And now the honourable gentleman says that we shall have to get a loan this year. Very possibly we may; but I may point out that if we do, we now have a House composed of representatives of constituencies which will fairly express the opinion of the colony, and which an expiring Parliament could scarcely have done. Now, the honourable member for North Brisbane says that a reference—which he

qualified with some particular adjective, "indecent," I think it was—to Fortitude Valley should not have been made in the Governor's Speech. He tells honourable members that it was the Government's fault that Fortitude Valley obtained only one member, and that being so, it is "indecent" of them to allude to it. When the representation of Fortitude Valley was contended for by honourable members on this side of the House, the honourable member for Toowoomba moved a motion which would have the effect of taking away one of the members it was proposed to give the electorate. That motion was supported, to a man, by what is called the Squatting party, and their reasons were that the metropolitan constituencies were not in need of any large representation. They therefore took one member away from Fortitude Valley, and gave that member to a constituency called the Gregory, where, as a matter of fact, it proved very difficult to find a place of nomination, and almost as difficult to find a returning officer; while, if the honourable gentleman who now represents the constituency had been opposed, it would have been next to impossible to take a poll.

MR. MOREHEAD: No.

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, I believe it would. That side of the House went unanimously together to take away a member from Fortitude Valley. The honourable member says that Government should have withdrawn their Bill when they were defeated on that point. Of course, they might have done so; but we considered that we should not be justified in doing this, which would inflict an injustice on the rest of the colony. The best comment on the position the honourable member has taken is the speech he delivered on this question in his candidature for the representation of this city in replying to some remarks of mine to the effect that, under the scheme originally proposed by Government, there would have been a distinct gain of Liberal constituencies. The honourable member gave that as one reason why, if for no other, his party should have endeavoured to try and throw out the Bill. They wished to make Fortitude Valley the scapegoat. The Government, however, did not see that they should do this, and they therefore preferred to allow a solitary injustice to be done rather than that a general injustice should be done to the whole colony by withdrawing the Bill. We shall best see what the sentiments of the honourable gentleman are when a Bill to give Fortitude Valley another member is introduced, as introduced it will be, whether from this side of the House or by a private member on the other. The honourable member for North Brisbane then went on to ridicule the propositions of the Government in the Governor's Speech for the annexation of

certain islands in the Torres Straits. Now, we in this colony are charged with the protection of life and humanity and civilisation in the various waters bounding our northern coasts. These islands are inhabited by lawless men of various races who commit the grossest acts of violence, and even kidnap our aborigines, who are not amenable to any civilised power, and defy all law and justice. Why, when I was Attorney-General, I was horrified at cases that came under my notice, but I was unable to do anything in the matter because it took place beyond our jurisdiction. The Premier deserves the thanks of every civilised community in the world for having taken the subject up; and, when the attention of the Home Government was called to what was occurring, they naturally took immediate steps to bring those islands under our power. It is, therefore, well and proper that the matter should be mentioned in the Governor's Speech. The honourable member next referred to the Local Government Act, and he says nothing has been done under it. I do not see how, with a general election on hand, and a general election which has been brought to a conclusion in such a remarkably short time as this has been, and under the difficult circumstances which surrounded it, how we could be expected to put into general operation that which we understood would be received in some parts of the colony with reluctance, but which Government were determined to put in operation wherever they could. I might instance one very important district which referred to me whether it would be necessary to come under the Act, and the answer I gave was perfectly straightforward and definite—the Act must be put in operation and they could no longer expect to get assistance from the revenue unless they came under it. I trust that every Government which may come into power will adhere to that determination. The honourable member for the Mulgrave, in referring to cheap railways, spoke of them as if what he meant now by cheap railways was something quite different to what he had previously insisted on. He wanted exactly the same kind of railways we have now, but they were not to cost so much money. With regard to what is called Mr. Ballard's system, he says it was approved of by the Government and disapproved of by the Opposition, whereas the facts are that Mr. Ballard was appointed by Mr. Walsh when he was Minister for Works.

MR. PALMER: We know all that.

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; I know he knows it, but other members do not, and it is for that reason that I am reminding him of it again.

MR. McILWRAITH: If the honourable gentleman will allow me, it was I who

made the assertion that, almost from the time I have had a seat in this House, I have been a consistent opponent of Mr. Ballard's system.

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honourable member for Mulgrave, when he said that system was approved of by Government, knew that Mr. Ballard was appointed by the Government of which the honourable member for North Brisbane was leader—knew that it was under a contract which did not expire until the railway to the Comet was completed, which was last year. If the honourable member for Mulgrave did not like this system when he was Minister for Works, why did he not then do away with it? Simply because the contract was made, and he could not do it. We had a chance, for the first time, when the extension from the Comet to Emerald Downs was authorised, but we did not adopt it for certain reasons. The honourable member says that that system should not have been adopted on the Townsville line, and I will tell him how it was that it was adopted. My colleagues and I have always been of opinion that the most economical system of constructing railways is by contract, and that the other system depends too much on the honesty and ability of one man. Now, with regard to the adoption of Mr. Ballard's system in the construction of the Townsville line, I will state the reasons why that was done. The Townsville line was sanctioned by Parliament more than twelve months ago, and there was a continual cry kept up and spread almost all over the colony—a cry got up by northern members opposite—that the Government were not sincere in the construction of that line. I believe that up to a very short time ago people were led away by that false report, whereas the real facts of the case were just the reverse. When I went to the Railway Department, I found that months would elapse before contracts could be accepted for this line, for this reason: that this and all the southern lines were under the charge of Mr. Stanley, and his staff were already overworked. That being the case, under the then arrangements the Townsville line would not have been commenced for a long period, and even then it would have been more expensive, and there would not have been that change of system in the construction of railways, to accomplish which was the one thing which induced me to take the office of Minister for Works, which I had always said I would not accept. Under the circumstances, it seemed to me to be desirable to continue for a short section the system carried on on the Central line, seeing that the staff here were overworked, and that the Maryborough line was hanging fire. We considered that we were bound, in the interests

of the North, and in our own interests, to contradict the slanders of the opposite side of the House, and to show that we were in earnest to see that the line was commenced at once and under a more economical system; and finding that there were some heavy works to be done in the first section, it was thought best that they should be proceeded with by Mr. Ballard, whilst drawings were being made for the other portions of the line for which contracts could be called; that is one reason why Mr. Ballard was appointed. The honourable member for Mulgrave objected that a change in the design ought not to be made without the sanction of Parliament. Now honourable members have been talking for years about different systems by which railways may be constructed more economically; but the only way in which that can be begun is by some Minister having the courage to make the experiment, and, if he does wrong, let Parliament censure him. I should be very sorry if such should be my case; but I am quite sure that if I did wrong, I should be willing to submit myself to be censured. I believe that a system of economy must be adopted not only on the Townsville line, but in any extensions of the Southern and Central lines. The cost of a railway must be regulated by the rolling-stock that is employed; and that being determined, other things follow. On that line I proposed to adopt 30-pound rails, and that is the condition upon which depends the hope that that line and the extension of others could be made at a lower cost. At any rate, that is my opinion, and that of the engineers whom I have consulted. The honourable member has talked about intelligent carpenters being better than an intelligent barrister; but I might be better than an intelligent squatter, and I do not know that a liberal education is likely to be any disqualification to a man in forming an opinion on such matters. I have always taken a great interest in railways, and I am not afraid to justify myself before Parliament, or any tribunal of this country, on any judgment that I may form. The honourable member for North Brisbane complained of what the Premier said as to the defeat of some members of the Opposition. The honourable member for Mulgrave had said that the results of the elections showed that the Government were in the minority. My honourable colleague, answering that, pointed out that the members of the Government had large majorities in their own constituencies, and showed that some prominent members of the Opposition had not the confidence of their constituents, for they were defeated. I do not call that "gloating" over defeat. It has also been said that I influenced railway servants to vote for supporters of the Government; but if the hon-

ourable member says so on authority, it can only be on the same authority on which the slanderous remarks were made about me at Rockhampton—that it was my intention to desert my party and my colleagues. If he has any authority, it is perhaps from the same persons who made these charges; and, perhaps, if they had contented themselves with adhering to the truth, their faces might now have been seen on the opposite side of the House. As to influencing railway servants, I have never influenced any Civil servant in my life. The only act in any way connected with influence occurred just after I entered the Public Works Department. An officer who had a family of whom I had some knowledge applied for a rise of salary, and stated that a relative of his had a vote for a certain constituency which he could get for the Government. Upon this being made known to me, I sent for him, and told him that, but for my respect for his family, I should have dismissed him instantly. That is the only “influencing” I have had with any Civil servants, and I doubt if the honourable member for North Brisbane could say as much. I think he must be thinking of the time when he and his Government had the control of their general elections. I notice that there are some matters about which honourable members have thought it best to keep silence. Last year the honourable member for Mulgrave said something about making branch lines out of the three million loan. He said nothing about them now.

MR. MCILWRAITH: No.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The honourable member is right; he did mention them but said they would not pay; but I think that branch lines will pay quite as well as trunk lines, and that they can also be constructed more cheaply. I believe they can be made sufficient to meet all the requirements of these districts at a cost of two-thirds of the price of trunk lines. I believe that they can and will be made at that; and if honourable members opposite are not prepared to carry out that policy, they will find that they will have to make way for those who are. I have now endeavoured to answer some of the charges made against the Government. Summed up, the Opposition say we do not like the Government, and they are incompetent. That is what their charges amount to. Now, although anything is a sufficient reason which will satisfy honourable members, I do not think you will find in the annals of Parliament that the leader of an Opposition has attempted to put out a Government on no better ground than a charge of incompetency. They generally condescend to give some better reason than the honourable gentleman has given. The honourable gentleman has said we are incompetent to manage the affairs of the colony. In what respect are

we incompetent? Which of us is incompetent to manage his department? The only particular objection the honourable gentlemen has made is that a Minister had the boldness to do certain things without first consulting Parliament. If that is the only blame to be attributed to the Government, I think they still deserve the confidence of the country; and I believe, whatever may be the result of the vote on this question, that we do possess the confidence of the country, and that the policy which we have now proclaimed will, as I said before, be yet adopted and carried out in its entirety.

MR. GROOM said he spoke to-night for the first time during the last five years from the Opposition side of the House. He did not know whether he was one of the gentlemen referred to by the honourable the Minister for Works as being a member who had been sitting on a rail, and at last jumped to that side of the House; but he had a lively recollection of five years ago, seeing in the House an honourable member who at that time was undoubtedly sitting on a rail. He also observed in the House a young and enterprising colonist, who had risen from the rank of a school teacher, graduated as a barrister, and became Attorney-General of this colony. He observed that honourable member worried to death almost by another honourable gentleman—so worried that at last he resigned his position as Attorney-General—vacated the House, and he (Mr. Groom) saw the gentleman who had been riding on the rail jump into his shoes at once. Now, although he (Mr. Groom) had removed to the Opposition side of the House, he was not going to worry any one to death; but he would say this to honourable gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches: That his constituents had sent him back to the House this session to take his seat where he was now sitting. He had been charged by honourable gentlemen opposite with being a squatter, but he had no landed estate—he had not even a paddock that he could call his own—he had not even a Ross's paddock in the North, where a railway station could be put; he had not even a sheep or bullock that he could call his own; and therefore how he could be called a squatter, or how his constituents could be branded as squatters for having returned him, he was at a loss to understand. The honourable the mover of the Address in Reply, in the paper of which he was editor, was also pleased to put him (Mr. Groom) down in the list of squatters; and he wondered to himself why, if he were a squatter, he had not an estate of 40,000 acres of land, with 80,000 sheep, and a large balance to his credit at the bank, and did not take his seat amongst the honourable members to whom the honourable gentleman referred in the course of his



address. He had taken the seat he now occupied conscientiously, believing that the course he adopted was one founded upon right and justice. The Premier had himself given the text as to why he (Mr. Groom) had removed his seat to that side of the House. When he first entered the House this session, he took his old seat, because he fully believed that the result of the elections would have satisfied the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government that there was some necessity for land legislation—that from facts within that gentleman's own knowledge, and also within the knowledge of the gentleman who had recently taken charge of the Lands Department, there was necessity for reform in the administration of the public lands. The honourable gentleman admitted that there was necessity for land legislation, and why in the name of fortune had he not put it in the Governor's Speech? Why had he not done so to satisfy the Darling Downs members? Twelve months ago an exchange was effected with Mr. Wienholt, by which the Government got 20,000 acres of land at Allora for 40,000 acres at Jondaryan; and why had not that land been thrown open to selection, so that it might be taken up by farmers and by this time have produced a crop of wheat? The late Minister for Works had given the true reason. Because they had had at the head of the Lands Department a gentleman who did not care a straw about settlement or anything else. It was true that within the last fourteen days—and it appeared as if it were done to influence votes—certain lands on the Darling Downs had been thrown open to selection, but upon what conditions? It almost seemed as if the ghost of the Premier still hovered over the Lands Department, for his highest cash price theory was still adhered to; and while gentlemen on the Darling Downs were prepared to sell the choicest portions of their runs at £3 per acre on deferred payments, the Government insisted that a man who took up 80 acres of useless stony land should pay £2 per acre for it. There was not the slightest indication of reform, and he (Mr. Groom) maintained that he would be unworthy of the position he held if he did not take his seat where he did that evening. The honourable the Minister for Works and the Premier had spoken of the commanding majorities by which members supporting the Government had been returned; but what had been the conduct of the Premier in reference to his (Mr. Groom's) electorate? It was said that the honourable gentleman came to Toowoomba to select a site for the lunatic asylum, and he thought the subject and the visitor were worthy of each other, for he believed the honourable gentleman must have been temporarily insane to have taken the course he did on that occasion, and that the

gentlemen he met were also insane. The honourable gentleman then met a deputation, and the chief of that deputation he (Mr. Groom) believed he was right in saying, was the high-priest of a sect called "spiritists," who held nightly *seances* with the mighty dead, and if they wanted to know Lord Palmerston's opinion of the present Government, they had only to get a medium, who would immediately be able to tell them whatever they desired. This was the particular gentleman selected by the Premier to tell the electors of Drayton and Toowoomba and Aubigny what they should, and what they should not do. The honourable gentleman met the deputation at the Royal Hotel, and with all the gravity and solemnity becoming the Premier of the colony on that occasion, he told them that whatever they did, not to vote for Groom or Perkins—that those two gentlemen had voted against the Government on critical occasions in the past, and might do so again in the future; and if it were necessary for him to go to Toowoomba to aid the cause of the Liberal members, he would most gladly do so. He was also good enough to inform the deputation that he (Mr. Groom) was not a Liberal. After that terrible denunciation, and after the spiritists departed, and, he supposed, held another *seance* with the mighty dead to find out a candidate upon whom they could rely to support the honourable gentleman, he (Mr. Groom) met his constituents, and he would ask the honourable gentleman to look at the result of the poll. In the face of that election could he say that Ministers and their supporters had been returned by commanding majorities—even after he had gone up and warned and cautioned the electors as to what course they should adopt? The honourable gentleman drove in a cab to the house of a candidate, whom on another occasion he supposed he would hardly deign to notice; and he would ask him where was that candidate when the election took place? In a minority of 500. Was that, he would ask, a commanding majority? Was that an indication that the public had confidence in the honourable member? And he would ask him to look at all the elections on the Darling Downs, no matter whether the candidate was a squatter or a townsman, and see what the verdict of the constituencies had been. It was distinctly that they had no confidence in the honourable gentleman's administration of the Lands Department, and that they had no confidence in himself; and the members returned were desired to take their seats in that House, and whatever they did, not to support a Government of which that honourable gentleman was a member. That was the verdict of the constituencies; and he thought it was extremely bad taste of the Premier to refer

to gentlemen who had previously occupied seats in that House, and who had not been returned during the last elections. The honourable gentleman was in the habit of referring to precedents, both colonial and Imperial, but he could not find an instance in which such a course had been adopted. Was it not within their own recollection that some of the brightest ornaments of the House of Commons had been defeated, but the finger of scorn had never been raised against Richard Cobden and John Bright, who differed from Lord Palmerston with reference to the Chinese war; the Ministry were defeated, and on the general election, those two gentlemen were rejected by their constituents. But when Lord Palmerston met the House, did he turn round and say, "Where is John Bright, or where is Richard Cobden?" No; but what was his conduct? When Cobden was re-elected by the electors of Rochdale, and Lord Palmerston was again called upon to form a Cabinet, he gave the position of President of the Board of Works to the man who had previously moved the motion which led to his defeat. He maintained it was exceedingly bad taste for the Premier to refer in the way he did to those gentlemen. Where were some of the members who previously supported the Government? Where was the reverend bench of bishops? They were where he thought they ought to be. He had heard the honourable the Premier state in that House that he was entirely at the mercy of the Opposition. And who were his friends? Men sitting behind him who invariably, as soon as the clock pointed to eight, took their departure from the House to engage in evening prayer. He did not make use of that observation in any irreverent spirit, and he should not have alluded to it at all had not the Premier gone out of his way to refer to gentlemen who formerly sat on that side of the House who were now absent, but who might come back much more quickly than the honourable gentleman imagined they would. The honourable the Minister for Works also went out of his way to refer to honourable members on that side of the House, and made use of expressions which, to his (Mr. Groom's) mind, were quite insulting. He referred to the honourable member for Stanley (Mr. Kellett) as scarcely representing himself. Why, that honourable gentleman represented one of the largest constituencies in the colony; and he (Mr. Groom) would go so far as to say this: that if Ministerial influence—and he would go further, and say, without fear of contradiction, that if Ministerial money could have put the gentleman's opponent into the House, it was expended.

MEMBERS ON THE GOVERNMENT BENCHES: No, no.

Mr. GROOM said some members called out "No, no," and all he could say in rejoinder was "Yes, yes."

The PREMIER: No, no.

Mr. GROOM said there were different ways of spending money, both directly and indirectly; and he was perfectly sure that every possible influence was brought to bear on railway officials and school-teachers and others to return the Government candidate for Stanley. It was that only that induced him (Mr. Groom) to take an active part in that election; and he was rejoiced at the result. He himself was a freeholder of Stanley, one of the largest and most intelligent constituencies in the colony, and the honourable member represented him (Mr. Groom), and it was an insult to the 500 and odd electors who voted for the junior member for Stanley to say that he simply represented himself. He would not go so far as to say that the Minister for Works simply represented himself, because he was here in his legislative capacity, and it was an insult to tell the honourable member for Stanley that he scarcely represented himself. That was not the way to obtain friends; in fact, it was rather calculated to estrange those who might otherwise be inclined to go over to the other side of the House. He must confess his surprise at the conduct of the honourable member for Rosewood. He was sorry to have to refer to that honourable gentleman, because they both belonged to the same fraternity—to the guild of literature—and in accordance with the *esprit de corps* which existed among journalists, he would speak kindly of him. From his knowledge of that honourable gentleman and his constituents, he fully expected that one of his first motions would be to enable them to obtain artificial water, as they had no means of obtaining natural water. In place of that, the honourable member's first motion was to deprive honourable members of their beer. That was very unkind of the honourable gentleman. If he could not appreciate luxury, he should not attempt to deprive the rest of them of what they considered a necessity. Indeed, the speech of the honourable member showed that he himself required a stimulant sometimes. The honourable member talked about a child, and about bandages, which, as some of them knew, had a connection with stimulants. He hoped that after the motion had been duly talked over, the honourable member would either gracefully withdraw it, or else make it apply not to this House but to his own constituents, that they should drink artificial water and not natural water. With regard to the Chinese question, he was strongly opposed to the Chinese coming to the colony, and he was prepared to endorse the opinion of the honourable member for North Brisbane, that a great deal of

the trouble that had arisen from the strike was owing to the Ministers themselves. He (Mr. Groom) was surprised at finding Ministers dilly-dallying with the question, because he considered that the Act gave them ample power to deal with the question in the fullest and most comprehensive manner; and if they had done so, they would have been backed up both by this House and by public opinion outside. He should like to know how the Government were going to carry out the notice they had given to the A.S.N. Company about their not employing Polynesians or Chinese as seamen or firemen. They had already had a forecast of the opinion of the Imperial Government on this subject, and it was not likely they would allow their treaty obligations with China to be broken through. Surely, the Premier's own Act was sufficient for every purpose, and if he wanted anything better he should follow the example of Sir Henry Parkes, in New South Wales, and introduce a Bill limiting the number of Chinese in proportion to the number of Europeans. He held, however, that in the present Act there was ample provision for keeping the Chinese out of the colony; and if he (Mr. Groom) could have his way, neither a Chinaman nor a Kanaka should enter the colony. Coming now to the Local Government Act, he felt constrained to say that the Government had been remiss in carrying out its provisions. Up to this moment nothing whatever in relation to it had been done, and no doubt when the Estimates again came on for discussion, almost every country member would, as in past years, ask for money for his district, and thus add to the amount of the country's burdens. The Local Government Act was passed for the purpose of preventing such a state of affairs. But why, for instance, had the Bill not been brought into operation on the Darling Downs. He was recently asked by one of the electors there whether the Government were keeping the Act back until after the general election, and he referred the inquirer to the Colonial Secretary, as he was a brother Scotchman and a strong supporter of that honourable gentleman. That district and the two Moretons were the very places of all others where the Act ought to be put into operation, and the result would no doubt be that the House would again be asked to vote £20,000 or £30,000 for East and West Moreton. The fact was, the Bill was not put into operation simply because the Government were afraid, in view of a general election, to apply the provisions of the Act, as they ought to have done. He did not envy any Government who succeeded the present Administration, for they would have a most unpleasant duty to undertake. Looking at the revenue returns for the quarter ended December

31st, he trembled for the results of the March quarter. A very large amount of revenue was expected to be derived from the selectors, but he would warn honourable members that there would be a large deficit as far as those persons were concerned. Many of the selectors in the district where he lived had to mortgage almost everything they had to enable them to pay last year's rent. The answer given by the Government was so unsatisfactory that they were afraid some action would be taken that would deprive them of their homes. This very day he had received a letter from one of those men making a somewhat novel application. He would read a portion of it, and although honourable members might smile at the simplicity of the writer, they might take it as an earnest of what was coming. The letter was dated "Avoca Vale, Darling Downs, January 12, 1879," and the writer said:—

"I want to send a petition to the Legislative Assembly to try and get a sum of £176 on account of my losses during the drought. I have lost altogether, not counting increases, 1,000 and odd ewes, besides two draught horses, and have during the past two years lost all my crops. I have far more than the money I want laid out for improvements on my selection. Cannot you kindly advise me in the matter. I observe that Mr. Baynes, the member for the Burnett, has pledged himself to try and have a different Selectors' Relief Bill passed. The best relief Bill that could be passed is for the Crown to be lender to the *bonâ fide* selector. Say a man had losses to the amount of £300, and had improvements to the amount of £250, let the Crown lend him £200 at from six to eight per cent. interest per annum. I myself am paying interest as high as from fifteen to thirty per cent. for money now, and you know it is impossible for us poor selectors to be able to stand that sort of thing."

That was a sample of many letters which he was sure honourable members would receive from the class of selectors to whom he referred. This was the case of a 200-acre man on stony ridges, who had to cart his water three miles each way every morning, and who had to pay from 15 to 30 per cent. for money in order to pay his Government rent. His sheep and horses had gone, and he was compelled to mortgage his property to pay his rent. The incoming Government would no doubt have to deal with hundreds of cases like that, and it was the uncertain conduct of the Government that compelled those men to resort to such extreme measures. He would refer honourable members to the speech of the highest gentleman in the land at the opening of the Show yesterday to bear out his statements. His Excellency had seen what was going on amongst the selectors on the Darling Downs; he had seen the selectors' children with their tattered clothing and their shoeless feet, and had seen that they

were willing to sacrifice everything to retain their homes. As a member of the hospital committee of his own electorate, he knew the amount of distress that prevailed amongst a large circle of the community, and the talk about solid and permanent prosperity was simply nonsense. The colony was in a more difficult position than the Government imagined; and the Colonial Treasurer was quite mistaken if he judged of the prosperity of Queensland from what he saw in the vicinity of Brisbane. If he wished to know the real state of the colony the honourable gentleman must go into the interior, and if he did, he would not indulge the House with such grandiose remarks, especially when there were thousands of our fellow-colonists in poverty and distress. He (Mr. Groom) was in favour of a vigorous public works policy so long as it was in consonance with the financial position of the colony; but, at the same time, he believed that the forcing of the sale of Crown lands had been one of the greatest evils which the Premier had brought upon the country. The Railway Reserves Bill had been a perfect failure, and had filled the country with works which would be a burden on the people for years to come. If any honourable member would bring in a motion to cancel the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway, and give the contractor compensation, he would vote for it, so as to save to the country the money which would otherwise be thrown away. And if it were possible for the Maryborough and Gympie Railway to be stopped, it would be to the interest of the country to stop it. Those were undertakings which they ought never to have gone into, and he (Mr. Groom) would never have voted for them had he not been greatly mistaken as to the amount which it was said those lines were to cost. They were told the cost would be £2,000 per mile, instead of which it would be £10,000. On that ground, when so much money was involved, and where additional taxation was necessary, it was evidently wrong to force on the people useless works like those he had named. No matter what Government came into power, there must be additional taxation, although he (Mr. Groom) would say nothing as to the direction which that taxation should take. The Government had indirectly hinted the direction taxation should take; they might mean one thing, and he might construe the Speech to mean another; but whatever direction it might be intended to take, he would assure the present or any future Government, that so far as the industrial classes were concerned there must be no additional burdens. He believed the true remedy was to make a judicious compromise with the contractors and stop these useless railways, and exercise economy in the different departments; by

doing this, the additional taxation and difficulties staring them in the face might be partially avoided.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: And sell the dry dock.

Mr. GROOM said that he did not know about that. The dock was also a useless work, and had been launched into when the party now holding office came into power. They had a credit balance of £240,000, and thought they could spend £120,000 of it upon a dry dock. He did not think, however, the work had done the people of South Brisbane any good. He had been alluded to as a squatter, but he took his position as an independent member who considered it his duty to vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Mulgrave. He would record this vote in accordance with the pledge that he gave to his constituents after the honourable the Premier visited Toowoomba, and advised the electors not to vote for him (Mr. Groom). He believed that it would be an act of justice to put in a new set of men. Even if they held office for a month only he believed it would do good. He believed that if the three million motion of last session had been carried, and a new Ministry had come into power, the Petersen frauds would have been discovered, and there would have been no necessity for a Royal Commission. The proper remedy to apply to the Real Property Office was to clean it out, not make one clerk the scapegoat, as might be the result of the Royal Commission. He believed the whole office from top to bottom was in a most irregular and inefficient condition, for which perhaps the head of the department was to blame, and that the best remedy was to root out all the officials. He did not mean the junior clerks, but the higher class of officers, the men who went home occasionally on six and twelve months' leave of absence, living on the fat of the land all the time. In giving his vote for the amendment he should not only act in accordance with his convictions, but with the views of a majority of the large and important constituency he had the honour to represent in this House.

Mr. KELLETT said he would not have spoken that evening had it not been for the uncalled-for remarks of the honourable member for North Brisbane (Mr. Griffith), who stated that he (Mr. Kellett) hardly represented himself. He knew that he represented as large and influential a district as any in the colony, and that nine-tenths of its inhabitants were the bone and sinew of the land. He was returned by a very large majority, because he distinctly told the electors of Stanley that he would vote against the present Ministry, and support such men as the honourable member for Mulgrave, whom he considered to be the proper man to be at the head of affairs.

He also stated distinctly—and that was why the late Attorney-General had alluded to him—that he disbelieved in him, more than any other member of the Ministry; and his reason for holding this view was that he knew the honourable gentleman was disloyal to his party and to the Premier. He also told them that the honourable gentleman had done a great deal of injury by forcing the land cases home, thereby putting the country to a great deal of expense, and that his only reason for doing so was to put money in his own pocket and that of his brother barristers. He further told them that he was perfectly satisfied the honourable gentlemen knew, from his legal knowledge, that the cases must be lost. These were his reasons for stating that he would not support the Attorney-General until, at any rate, he had had a few years' experience on the back benches, and had profited by it. He would not have mentioned this had the honourable gentleman not spoken in a rude and uncivil manner to a young member. It was a habit, however, these young barristers had of intimidating members, thinking that they had them in the witness-box; but the honourable gentleman had the wrong pig by the ear, and would find it out.

MR. BAILY said that, on an occasion like this, he thought that it would be his duty, whilst recognising there was sometimes a large distinction between a party and the Ministry which claimed to represent it, to lay aside all smaller points. He felt bound, seeing to-night the Opposition benches filled as he had never seen them before, and chiefly by one particular class of men, that the ties of party should assert themselves, and that, whatever the shortcomings of its supposed leaders might be, that he was bound to vote for the Liberal party, and the principles its leaders were presumed to carry out. The Governor's Speech read that day would command respect from both parties when it went before the country. It promised a good deal—more, he was sorry to say, than the Government would put into practice; but honourable members had to deal with the Speech, and the question was whether they should pass the reply to it. He could not see that the settled districts were to be totally ignored, whilst the inland ones were to be pampered and petted. He could not see why a large expenditure for the metropolis should be called a national work, and for a country district a local work. He looked upon all works as public wherever they might be. He did not recognise the right of the squatters in the far interior to have not only roads, but railways, whilst the settled districts were not to have even ordinary roads. He maintained that the tendency of the other side, if it got into power, would be to spend nearly the whole of the public money in the direction of the far interior.

He did not know whether the Government would carry out the policy enumerated in the Governor's Speech, but he agreed with it, and he should vote with them.

MR. REA said he should not have risen to speak had he not been charged, together with his colleague, with having secured his election by means of Government bribery. He would admit that there was bribery, but it came from the Opposition side of the House, in the way of using hired writers of the Press to abuse those who did not believe in the Opposition. Never before in his experience did a Government take so little part in an election as the present Government did in the last Rockhampton one, or give so little help even in supplying information. With reference to the state of the money market following upon the motion for a loan of three millions, the leader of the Opposition had no ground for the statement that the loss of his motion had an injurious effect upon the colony's securities. Immediately after he lost his motion, the question was tested in London by a surprising coincidence in a way that he had never known before, because very shortly after the event referred to, the Queensland securities stood better than those of any of the other Australian colonies. On that occasion, when the Russian question was supposed to have been settled, and there was a rush to obtain Turkish securities, a question arose as to which of the colonial securities the brokers could recommend their principal to sell out of. The advice they gave to the holders of colonial securities was to sell all others and hold on to those of Queensland, because the Ministry there would not be forced into borrowing more money than was wanted. The other question which had been referred to to-night, and on which he would say a few words, was the Railway Reserves Bill. He held that that Bill had done more to preserve the credit of the colony in London than any other Act which had been passed by the Parliament of this colony. The brokers who gained their living by watching closely all that took place in the colonies, the securities of which they dealt in, were bound to spend a large amount of money in getting correct and reliable information by telegram, and they pointed to the Railway Reserves Bill as affording a better security to lenders than any other colony had given to bond-holders; and, notwithstanding the supposed large surplus of money lying in New South Wales, the preference was given to Queensland on account of the confidence inspired by the provisions of the Railway Reserves Bill. Remarks on the subject had been made on both sides of the House; but it was not very difficult to find out what was the matter with them about the Railway Reserves Bill, and why it met with such opposition. The fact was that the dislike was owing to

the action of the bank managers and directors who had been troubled with a sort of nightmare since the last drought. They would look at their wallaby-eaten securities, and exclaim, "Good God, what have we here; where are those pre-emptive rights? We shall have to buy them up at once instead of twenty years hence." That was the kind of leverage honourable members opposite were afraid of in this Bill; the eyes of the runs they had spotted for their pre-emptive rights were likely to be selected by others. The real reason why honourable members had such a detestation of that Bill was that they saw they must give better securities to the banks. He hoped *bonâ fide* squatters would see the mistake they would make in giving way to pressure arising from speculation in connection with any of the banks of the colony, for he believed that before long some of the local banks would some fine morning be found speaking out with a very loud Glasgow accent. He asked the House to be very cautious indeed in looking after bank charters after the experience they had lately had in London and Scotland, because in this colony, when those securities began to be looked upon as doubtful, the position of affairs would be serious. With regard to other questions of party, he would leave them to be dealt with by older members of the House.

Mr. MACFARLANE moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. HENDREN seconded the motion.

Mr. McILLWRAITH hoped the motion was not made with the consent of the Ministry, as there was time to go on for another hour or two, and other honourable members would have an opportunity to speak. He would not consent to such a motion unless the Government would give a guarantee that the debate would finish to-morrow. Such a motion should not have been made without the consent of the Ministry; and the fact of the honourable member for Ipswich wishing to speak to-morrow was no reason for the House adjourning.

The PREMIER said that at such an hour, when it was known that some honourable members wished to address themselves to the debate, it was not much use going on. It was only fair that the privilege which had been conceded to some honourable members should be extended to others, and more especially to new members. Considering the importance of the debate, it would be better to allow the adjournment to take place. The debate was hardly likely to terminate to-night, and such being the case, it was only fair to have another night's discussion. He was prepared to say that the debate should close to-morrow if honourable members agreed to adjourn now.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said, as a new member, he hoped the discussion would not close that evening. With the modesty which

became a new member, he had not intended to take any part in the debate at that stage, considering that the older members should enlighten new members to the utmost possible extent. He did not, therefore, come prepared, but should not like to let the opportunity pass without expressing a few of the opinions he held upon the subject under discussion. In courtesy to honourable members in a similar position with himself, the honourable gentlemen opposite should agree to adjourn the debate till to-morrow.

Mr. ARCHER said, after the opinion given by the Premier, the leader of the Opposition would, no doubt, agree to the adjournment of the debate. Courtesy to new members was never thrown away, and they would be afforded an opportunity of thinking what to say before the debate closed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the honourable the junior member for Enoggera might have known that there would have been a debate, and could have come prepared with what he wished to say. He did not look upon the honourable member as altogether a new member. He had contested the city on a former occasion, and had uttered threats that he would be prepared to meet the honourable member for Fortitude Valley on the floor of the House at any time. He did not agree either with the honourable member for Blackall that the debate should be adjourned. The discussion was complete; the Government were defeated, and in a minority, and should accept their position. Nearly all the members were present, the Government knew that their defeat on division was inevitable, and that they were at present only a Government on sufferance. He, therefore, hoped that the division would be taken to-night.

Mr. McILLWRAITH wished to explain that the honourable member for Enoggera had quite misapprehended the tenor of his remarks. He was anxious to see the debate going on, and had not the slightest intention of pushing a division upon the matter. Every honourable member ought to have an opportunity to speak; but as the session must be a very short one, he was against wasting time by adjourning at so early an hour. He was quite content, however, to take the pledge offered by the Premier, that the debate would be closed to-morrow.

Mr. BAILEY said time should be given for honourable members to decide which party they would support. Some Liberal members sitting on the other side of the House might, on further consideration, be inclined to support their party. It was a battle of party to-night, and if the Government were defeated, it would be by old and trusted members of the Liberal party. One was the honourable member for Toowoomba, another the honourable member for Gympie. Those gentlemen should have at least twenty-four hours to consider what had

been said this evening, and to see their way clear before deserting their party.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN entirely went with the very sensible remark made by the honourable member for Blackall. After the remarks which had been made by the honourable member for Enoggera, the House ought to adjourn in compliment to the new members. A little concession of that kind was very good. The only thing that appeared strange to him was that the adjournment was not proposed by a new member. Had such been the case, not a single word would have been said about it, but it was proposed by a very old and a very knowing member.

Mr. MESTON said he had been accused by the honourable member for Toowoomba of neglecting the interests of his constituents in not tabling a motion in reference to a water supply.

The SPEAKER: The question before the House is the adjournment of the debate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS suggested that an honourable member might take the opportunity on a motion for adjournment of answering an attack upon him.

The SPEAKER: That is usually done on a motion for adjournment of the House. This being a motion for adjournment of the debate, the question should be adhered to.

Mr. McILWRAITH thought it was exceedingly bad taste on the part of the Premier to advise any honourable member to speak. The honourable member for Rosewood would have an opportunity of replying.

The PREMIER: I do not think I advised, but I simply pointed out what I conceive to be the rights members possess. I understand the honourable gentlemen at the head of the Opposition has signified that he consents that this debate will be closed tomorrow and that he consents to the adjournment now.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 10 o'clock.