

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 16 JANUARY 1879

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Upon which Mr. McIlwraith moved—

“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, viz.:—‘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.’”

Mr. MACFARLANE said that when he moved the adjournment of the debate on the previous evening, it was not that he might have an opportunity of speaking in daytime more than at night, for, as far as he was concerned, the remarks he had to make might as soon have been made last night as to-day; but he thought that honourable members opposite were desirous of coming to a division on the previous evening, and that as some honourable members were anxious to express their opinions on the matter before them, it would be undesirable to come to a division without giving them an opportunity of doing so. As far as the result of the debate was concerned, a division might just as well have been taken on the previous evening—the result would be the same. At the same time, seeing that the country had by a large majority shown its feelings in the matter, it seemed to be a foregone conclusion that nothing that could be said in the House could alter the feelings of honourable members. As regarded the Opening Speech, so much had already been said by honourable members concerning it, that it was not his intention to take it clause by clause; but, looking at the Speech as a whole, he believed that it had honest intentions, and that if the present Ministers remained in office, those intentions would be faithfully carried out. The present Government had been branded by some portions of the Press, as well as by some honourable members opposite, as being unable to carry on the duties of the high position in which they were placed. Now, that was a matter of opinion; whether expressed by the Press, or by members of that House, it was still a matter of opinion. His opinion was that some of the gentlemen occupying the Treasury benches were the ablest men in that House; and if the honourable members who succeeded them only conducted themselves as ably as they had done for the past five years it would surprise him considerably. The honourable member for Mulgrave remarked in his speech on the previous day that he was not anxious for office at the present time. They must take his word for that, but if he was not, why was it that so much money was spent by his party on the elec-

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 16 January, 1879.

Address in Reply to Opening Speech—adjourned debate.—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past three o’clock.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read by the Acting Clerk for the resumption of the adjourned debate, on the motion of Mr. MESTON—

That the Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor’s Opening Speech, as read by the Acting Clerk, be now adopted by this House.

tions—why so much energy put forward? He must compliment honourable members opposite for the energy they displayed; and would add that if the Government had shown the same amount of energy and had spent one twentieth part of the money, he believed the relative position of the two parties would have been very different at the present time. As the honourable member remarked that he (Mr. Macfarlane) wished to speak in the daytime rather than in the night, he would perhaps remember that there was an old-fashioned book which said, “he that speaketh the truth preferreth the light.” Now, he wanted to speak this truth, and he believed that before a very short time passed away, those who were so active in putting out the Government would be just as anxious to undo what they were now endeavouring to do. The honourable member, in reviewing the past five years and the actions of the Government, referred to the fact that when they took office there was a considerable balance in the Treasury, and he argued from that that the colony was in a prosperous condition financially; but he (Mr. Macfarlane) would ask, what put the country in a good financial position? Would additional taxation do it? He thought not. They knew that there was a ten per cent. *ad valorem* duty when the present Ministry took office, and that it was reduced by them gradually to five per cent. Now, supposing the Opposition went into office, and they again put on an *ad valorem* duty of ten per cent., and thus oppressed the people whilst replenishing the Treasury, could it be said that on account of the Treasury being replenished by additionally taxing the people the country was in a more prosperous condition? He denied it. He had promised the House that he would not take up much time, and looking at the matter as a foregone conclusion, he had no desire to prolong the debate; but, at the same time, he would recommend the leaders of the opposite side of the House, when they occupied the Treasury benches, not to attempt to increase the *ad valorem* duties. There were things that would bear additional taxation, but he did not think additional taxation would be required. It was true that the colony had passed through two years of drought, but that was over, and he believed that no matter who sat on the Treasury benches, the prosperity of the colony would go on advancing, and that within the next six months things would assume a very different aspect. That, however, would not be due to any Ministry, but only to Providence. If there must be increased taxation, it should not be in the shape of *ad valorem* duties. There were some articles which could be taxed without being a burden on the people; for instance, if luxuries were taxed, the

burden would fall on people well able to bear it. He did not see, for instance, why there should not be a tax on intoxicating liquors, which would be for the benefit of the people—that would not be a tax upon them, but only upon luxuries. He observed during the debate on the previous day that several honourable members indulged in personalities; he hoped that that would not be repeated, as it did not look well for either side of the House. If honourable members would keep their tempers they would get on much better, as they were bound to accept the decision of the country, and until the country came to a different opinion, it was the duty of those who were defeated to do the best they could for it, thus showing that their desire of being in that House was not to follow men but to do their best for the country generally.

Mr. MACKAY said that he rose with considerable diffidence to address the House, and he certainly should not have done so had it not been for the expression of opinion last night in favour of giving new members an opportunity of speaking on the present very important subject of debate. He stood there as a perfectly free and independent member of the House, and was as little party biassed as any one who had ever had a seat in it. Very probably he had the leaning of the profession to which he had the honour to belong to look with a kindly eye upon everything that promised well; and looking at that House, and knowing the honourable gentlemen sitting on both sides of it, he willingly admitted that a very great deal might be expected by the country from them. There were honourable members on both sides who had his very warmest respect and admiration for years past, and he should expect that from those gentlemen being in office the country might rely on having intelligent and the best services that they might be able to give to it. He was very anxious to hear those honourable members speak on the present debate before he got up to express any opinions he might have. He might state that he, somehow, “suspicioned” certain honourable members opposite of being closely connected with nastiness of some sort; but at the same time he was quite willing to take the best view of their intentions, and to credit them with every honesty of purpose. He was, perhaps, brought to that from a remark made by a countryman of his who had just returned from the Highlands of Scotland. He asked him what were the most important items of news from a certain place, and his reply was, speaking of a rather famous game-keeper in that part of the country, that he had actually succeeded in training a brock. That being the case, he (Mr. Mackay) had hope for any living thing. He would remark, also, that he had not expected the debate to close up in such a short time as

it had done, and to find himself addressing the House at that stage of the proceedings. He took that as an indication that the debates of the present House would be of a less windy nature than those of its predecessors, and as a warning he should accept not to stand up to speak unless he had something to speak about. Going back to the debate on the Speech, to which they had had the privilege of listening to, he came to the subject of railways, which had, to his mind, a much larger scope than the mere making of them or where they might go. For many years he had been a close watcher of settlement in this colony, and it was his conviction that they had reached the limit of settlement, unless they had a better system than the present of enabling persons to get their productions to markets and to ports. Seeing that, he had taken a somewhat active share in bringing the railway question before the public, and he had some facts to bring forward presently which he believed were most important in that connection. He believed no Government in this colony would ever hold the reins of power for long unless they paid attention to those facts, and that the country would never prosper until they adopted some scheme of railways adapted to it. With reference to the Speech itself, he could only say he was as much disappointed with it as any man very well could be. The good points in it, he took it, were in connection with the Chinese question—that really wanted attention;—the promise that something would be done with the lawless islands in the South Seas, and the mail service *via* Torres Straits. Then came the promise that something would be done for the agricultural and mining districts, but that promise had been so often made that he looked upon it as the same old story that had been repeated in Governors' speeches ever since he had known Queensland. That promise had been kept dangling before the agricultural sections of the community until the people were so sick of it that, at the present time, he believed there were ten or twelve gentlemen in the House who would use every legitimate effort they could to have fair and square justice meted out to what was sometimes sneeringly referred to as the farming interests of Queensland. He next came to the monstrous proposition to increase taxation to carry railways out to the "never-never country"—three of them. He must say that when he came to that proposition he was literally staggered. He certainly did not expect any such proposition to come from the Government at present occupying that position in this colony. He would ask what parts of Queensland could stand extra taxation at the present time? He felt bound to say that there was not a single

class in the colony that was not now taxed to the uttermost limit, and his firm belief was that any Government or any portion of that House that attempted to inflict extra taxation on the country would find themselves as woefully disappointed as men could possibly be. And there was not the slightest justification for the proposition to put additional taxation on the people of Queensland to drive railways to literally nowhere. It was one of the rules laid down in railway making, and it was followed by all sensible business men, and it would be followed here, if our railways were in the hands of private parties—that a railway should always be made towards an objective point. Recently he was in the Rockhampton district, and he could state that some of the engineering staff there were opposed to the extension of the Rockhampton line out west. These men—and their opinions were well worthy of consideration—were of opinion that that line should be carried to Clermont, that being an objective point, where there was some traffic to be gathered; and until that question was more studied, and railways were constructed to places where there was traffic, he was perfectly satisfied that the people of Queensland would not much longer submit to railways being extended to the interior, and, above all, until they knew what the cost was likely to be. He thought it would be a much better plan if the Speech, instead of proposing extra taxation, had proposed something in the way of a reduction of taxation; and before he went further, he would ask the indulgence of the House for probably half-an-hour, in order to bring forward certain matters which he considered to be worthy of attention. He said it would not have been a bad idea on the part of the ruling powers to commence reducing expenditure instead of putting on extra taxation. He thought that even the highest in the land—that Ministers themselves could with very good grace have come forward, and proposed a reduction of their own salaries, and the reduction could be carried all through the Civil Service. By that means they would considerably reduce expenditure, and it had been done before by their predecessors when times were hard upon the people, and the good names of those men would never be forgotten in Queensland. There were portions of Her Majesty's Empire where they paid their Governor but £3,000 a-year, and they were colonies quite as important as Queensland. He knew in saying this he might ruffle up the backs of some parties, because it had been the common practice in and out of Parliament, in the Press, and on the platform, to crack up Queensland as being something extraordinary in the way of a wealthy colony,

but he had never taken that view of the case. He did not believe that they had got such a specially wealthy country in Queensland. They had been spending nearly three-quarters of a million of borrowed money per annum ever since the colony had been established, and he did not see any great prosperity, or how they were to maintain the state they were now keeping up, unless it was through the English money-lenders. But he maintained that that was not the sort of prosperity they should look for in a young colony like this. Unless they had a more solid basis than that, it would not only be most unjust to invite people to come here, but large numbers of those at present here would become so heartily sick of the place that they would leave and try "fresh fields and pastures new." The Public Works Department had been forcibly spoken of as one of the heavy and most expensive bugbears of the country, and it was to that department he should now especially ask the attention of the House. He certainly should have liked to read in the Speech something like a decisive intention to completely remodel that department, so that many of the existing absurdities connected with it should be done away with. Queensland, even amongst professional men, was looked upon as an absolute paradise for suckling engineers of all grades. They had only to come to Queensland, secure a certain amount of patronage, get into the Government service, and then they were about as well off as they very well could be, but heaven help those who had no patronage! At the present time they had in Queensland no less than three chief engineers, and a fourth who considered himself as good as a chief; and besides these they had eighteen other gentlemen, all chiefs more or less, and each one practically working independent of the others. He could give the titles of those officials and their stations, but in debating this subject on the platform he had studiously avoided bringing forward any man's name, his aim being, while fighting a bad system, to avoid doing any individual harm, and he should follow the same course now. The salaries of these officers—the chief engineers and the subordinate chiefs—amounted to no less than £12,450; and the most singular part of the whole affair was that, while they had nearly thirty gentlemen in the Service rated as engineers, and receiving from £500 to £1,400 per annum, there were only eight engineers—really professional men—in the colony, and they were not all in the Government service. In addition to that force, they had the Harbours and Rivers Department, the Waterworks, the Railway Reserves Department, and they had the huge Roads and Bridges Department, costing altogether £155,064, according to the ways

and means at his disposal. That was what they paid in salaries for the Works Department of the colony, which had a population of only 220,000 people—not more than a "one-horse" town in England—while they had enough officials in the country to almost run a large empire. He certainly did expect that a gentleman of the reputation of the Minister for Works would have probed into these things, and suggested some means by which the country could be relieved of some of this fearful burden, which was certain to bring down destruction upon the colony, if it were not removed. He had seen some of the extravagance on our public works. He was up at the Comet lately, and the scenes he saw there and the indications of prosperity—that was to say if grog shanties, which were moved along the line as the works progressed, meant prosperity—convinced him that there was something going on that was not all fair and square. True, some men spent their money easily, but men who had to work hard did not usually spend their earnings rashly. Besides, rations and bread were expensive on the Comet, and money could not be very hardly earned to support such a number of grogeries as there were along that line. The deduction he drew from these circumstances was that there were too many masters or "bosses" in the Works Department; and that, if the Minister for Works was to take the thing in hand himself—supposing he were able to do so—and run the department with one intelligent head, he could get rid of at least one-third of the present salaries by lopping off officers who were practically working in antagonism to each other, and using their best efforts to carry out works that would be superior to anything else any other engineer might propose, and for which the country had to pay as the work went on. He might here say that there was a great deal of cant at the present time about trunk lines of railway and branch lines. He understood the Minister for Works to inform the House last night that the main trunk line from Townsville was to be laid down with rails 32-poundsweight to the yard.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: 30-pound rails.

Mr. MACKAY, continuing, said that if it was stated in the organ of the Institute of Engineers in England, that it was intended in Queensland to construct a main trunk line with 30-pound rails, what would these men say or think of the colony? They would say, "If their main trunk lines are to be constructed with 30-pound rails, what in heaven's name will their light lines be like?" It would almost seem as if they intended to put down fencing wire, and try to run railway carriages on that. The thing was a rank absurdity; and while he did not wish to say anything damaging of

Mr. Ballard, still, if anything would shake his faith in that gentleman, it was that, after submitting report after report to the House condemning what every other man brought forward in the shape of cheap railways—after a consultation with the Minister for Works for four days, during which they travelled from Townsville to Charters Towers and back—that in these four days he was so converted that he re-arranged the whole affair, and proposed to construct a trunk line with 30-pound rails. Any man who had studied the question—and he (Mr. Mackay) had studied it very closely during the last eighteen months, and had perhaps as good opportunities for doing so as any man in the country ever had—must know the very cheapest material that could be used for railway making in Queensland at the present time was rails. There was no material so cheap, and no man, unless for some object of his own, would attempt to lay down a trunk line with lighter rails than were being used in the colony at the present time. It would be enough to damn his professional reputation. Amongst other absurdities the country was saddled with at the present time, was an item of £100,000 for an iron bridge across the Burdekin, and he had heard a gentleman state on the floor of that House that it would cost nearly £20,000 to haul the iron to the place where it was to be used. Now, men, looking at the colony from other places, must think the people here were a precious lot of noodles to bring iron all the way from England to build bridges, when there was in the colony any amount of stone and timber in every way sufficient for such purposes, as had been testified by gentlemen in the colony whom he could name, and who had as much knowledge and skill as any Government officials. He (Mr. Mackay) was satisfied that, by using Queensland stone and timber for such a bridge as this, it could be made for one-half the cost, or even less, and then leave a good profit to be made out of it. They had also some other nice works going on at the present time, and he certainly did expect to hear something about them from the Government. There was the railway from Maryborough to Gympie, and the line between Bundaberg and Mount Perry; and if the department wanted to know where some of the money now spent was dribbled away, they could not do better than look at the station in Brisbane. It was the strongest illustration he had ever come across in his life of a bad system. There was more material used and more space occupied than there was in the Midland Counties railway station in England, and scarcely a month passed that buildings were not pulled down and put up again. That was the way the money went, and on looking into the matter it would be found that people were asked to go through a place not fit to

drive hogs through; and yet, if anybody attempted to offer a suggestion on the subject, they were immediately scouted as knowing nothing at all about it. But there was no very great difficulty in acquiring engineering knowledge. He made no pretensions whatever, but having an aptitude for study, and by determination, he had got the qualification papers as a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and he had only studied the subject eighteen months, and was as well qualified, so far as professional standing was concerned, as the best civil engineer in the country. There had been a great deal of bungling with our railways. He did not say this with severity, but in the hope that something would be done to put a stop to it. Look at the bungles on the Main Range, by which thousands and thousands of pounds had been wasted. He might also mention the bungle of carrying the line round Warwick, and the other proposed one of carrying a line round South Brisbane to the Logan—to a district where the people could scarcely make enough to keep body and soul together, and where they certainly could not grow produce profitably; and to ask them to travel an extra nine miles and pay for carriage from that distance was the height of absurdity. It was not in construction only that our railways were defective. Another defect was that they were worked about as badly as they possibly could be. Any man who travelled by our railways, and paid attention to what was going on, would observe that instead of the officials endeavouring to meet the convenience of passengers, their whole object appeared to be to see that they did not break the laws in any way. This appeared to be the official standpoint on all our railway lines. What he hoped to see in this colony, whoever might hold office, was that a different system of railroading—a system more adapted to the country, a system somewhat similar to that in operation in Canada, which was quite as prosperous a country as Queensland—would be tried here. The honourable member for North Brisbane last night expressed a hope that a test line would be carried out, for they had been experimenting in railways in this colony ever since railway works had been commenced, and he thought it was time they laid down something like a definite system, a system that could be understood from the time of the turning of the first sod until the people were carried along the line—a system suited to the circumstances of the country, where the officials, instead of locking the carriage doors, and carefully examining tickets before passengers were allowed to enter, would, when small articles of, say, produce, &c., were sent to town, take charge of them and see that they were delivered at their destination. He

knew that such a proposition would be a horrible profanity to the official mind; but it was done in Canada and other countries, and he believed they were now adopting the system in Victoria and the other colonies. He heartily hoped to see something of the kind adopted here. He did not mean that it should be adopted on such a line as that from Townsville to Charters Towers, where there would not be any very great traffic at first, but on the southern coast line, where there was a large population, and a considerable amount of local traffic. He believed if such a system were adopted, not only would there be an increase of revenue from our railways, but it would give one hundred per cent. more convenience to the public than they had at the present time. It would foster settlement—a thing which had never been attempted up to the present time. He had known gentlemen to settle down in different kinds of business in the country, but no effort was ever made to try and draw traffic to the railway lines; but these people had to send deputations down to the Minister to get a station, or something of the kind put up, so that they might have a means of access to market in order to carry on their business. Men did not conduct other kinds of business in that fashion. On large railway works in England, doing as much work in a week as was done here in a couple of years, there was only one chief engineer; and he knew of one railway line, 3,000 miles in length, and with a number of branch lines, which only had one chief engineer, and he was not a better paid man than some of our chief engineers in Queensland. The object he (Mr. Mackay) had in view, was to state distinctly that he should oppose any Government that did not take this matter into its earnest consideration, that did not attempt seriously to open up the country in a way which the country could afford, and did not get rid of the terrible piece of bunkum that Queensland was such a rich country we could afford to go on borrowing millions of money, and spending them on high official salaries—swelling themselves out like the frog in the fable, and believing themselves the greatest people on the face of the earth. Any man who had had to earn his living in the bush could tell a different tale from that. He would go further, and say that agriculture in Queensland, if it was not diminishing, was absolutely at a standstill, and that the agricultural population was not so great now as it was four years ago. He believed he was correct in stating, on the authority of those who had studied the matter closely, that there would never be any progress in that direction unless something was done to relieve the burdens of the settlers in the way of facilitating traffic through the country districts. There

was nothing produced in the country that would stand those burdens, and one of the first things any Government should do was to look patiently and carefully into this matter, and try to work it out. He looked upon the bunching of the six railways as the most illiberal thing ever done in Queensland, if not in the whole of Australia, and as leaving a debt the burden of which would not be got rid of by the next generation. If some of those lines were kept in abeyance for twelve months, a better system might be devised for carrying on the works to which the country was committed. He would be one of the last to repudiate anything that had received the sanction of Parliament, but it was a most injudicious thing, and one which would meet with determined opposition here, to borrow money in order to carry three railways to the west. Something must be done to make the people of the country stay in it, and any Government that attempted to do that should have his heartiest support.

Mr. PAUL said he wished to make a few remarks in reply to what had fallen from the honourable member for South Brisbane. He felt bound to compliment that honourable gentleman on being able to speak a great deal and say a very little in a given time. The honourable member had considered it necessary to attack the professional character of a gentleman without giving a detailed statement to prove the assertions he had made. He thought it disgraceful on the part of any honourable member to take advantage of his position in the House to detract from the professional character of a man unless he could prove by facts that his assertions were correct. Not long since he read a very long and verbose report from the same honourable member with regard to his trip to Cometville, and that report gave almost unqualified praise to Mr. Ballard for his construction of the line. He was at a loss to account for the honourable member's change of opinion, unless he had been charged with the expense of the special train which took him up on that occasion. With regard to some electoral facts which had been mentioned, he might say that he was himself informed by an official on the railway that the Government had sent up instructions, that in the event of a poll taking place at Cometville, the men on the line were to have a holiday and a full day's pay. As far as he (Mr. Paul) was concerned, he was not very sorry to hear this, because he knew he had three-fourths of the working men on the Comet on his side. Indeed, they wished to give him plumpers; but he asked them to split their votes and return along with him his friend, the late honourable member for Springsure. With regard to the Rockhampton election, it was a strange fact that immediately after

the arrival of a special train there was a great and sudden increase in the votes for the Government candidate. From these facts he could not but conclude that the Government used undue influence over the elections, and were in an indirect manner guilty of bribery. He was sorry to hear the Minister for Works raise again the old "No squatter" cry. At one time, he was well aware there was good reason for raising the cry of "No squatter;" but he felt bound to say that since political power had been transferred to the people, the people had been still more tyrannical than the squatters ever were. He hoped a better time had now arrived, and that squatters, merchants, traders, agriculturists, miners, and labourers, would see that the interests of each would be best advanced by supporting one another. He hoped no honourable member would again attempt to set class against class. The Minister for Works, speaking yesterday on the division of parties, said very properly that there was a Squatting party and what he termed a Liberal party; whereas, in his address to the electors of North Brisbane, he said there were two parties in the House, one representing wealth and property, and the other representing the people. He (Mr. Paul) was surprised and astonished that a gentleman of the education and position of the Minister for Works should have pandered to the prejudices of the uneducated many, especially at a time when strikes and unions were rife, and when he ought to have given them kindly advice, and shown them how wrong they were in striking and leaving their employment. That question ought to have been kept separate from that of Chinese immigration, which was a far more difficult one, and could only be properly settled by appealing to the Imperial Government. It was highly wrong on the part of a gentleman holding so high a position as the Minister for Works to mislead working men. One of the greatest evils that afflicted society was the insufficient interchange of thought between the different classes of the community, and much of the misconception regarding the relations between capital and labour arose from the apathy and selfishness of those in high positions. He had had a great deal to do with working men, and during the last sixteen years had associated with them much more intimately than with his own class, and he had always found that they preferred being represented by men of education and position, who could sympathise with and advise them, rather than by men of their own class. When addressing a meeting of over 300 working men at the Comet, he told them he was going to give expression to opinions which might cost him his election, and he detailed to them the true relations between labour and capital. At first he

was received with hisses, but opposition gradually vanished as he expounded his views, and the meeting finished with three cheers for Her Majesty. He would now allude to another important subject, and hoped honourable members would listen to him patiently. Lord Beaconsfield, a short time back, in a speech concerning the occupation of Cyprus, said the first duties of the Government would be to restore order and tranquility, and that that could only be done by the due administration of justice. He was sorry to say that ever since what was termed the Liberal party had come into power that power had been misused in the appointments to the magistracy—the necessary qualification apparently being the amount of political influence they could bring to bear. Such a state of things was most disgraceful, and calculated to injure the well-being of the colony most seriously. If they looked at the old country and saw the character of the men who occupied the position of magistrates, they could easily account for the state of society which prevailed, and which he hoped would continue long to prevail there, viz., a feeling of respect for the law. While other countries were in a state of anarchy and confusion, Great Britain had always been orderly and happy, and this was mainly attributable to the confidence which the people of all classes had in the due administration of justice. Since responsible Government had been introduced into these colonies—and he did not wish to express an opinion that it ought never to have been introduced—members of Liberal Governments, as they termed themselves, had adopted the practice to which he had referred just now, and the result had been most disastrous. Anyone who had studied the history of New South Wales must admit that the fearful state of anarchy and confusion in which it was so long held by bushrangers must have resulted in a very great degree from the bad appointments to the magistracy. Those men had not the moral courage to refuse licenses, granting them to persons of known bad character, whose houses were the noted resorts of bushrangers. So that it was not the police fighting half-a-dozen bushrangers, but fighting a whole district. And it was not until a most stringent measure was passed, making it capital for any person to harbour bushrangers, that the evil was crushed out. He was sorry to see by the late Commission that the Government of Queensland were adopting a similar course; and if it was persisted in, Queensland would eventually be landed in the same state of anarchy. Considering that magistrates had most important duties to perform, such as the revision of the jury list and the electoral rolls, it was essential that men should never be appointed as magistrates for political reasons. He did not desire to see magistrates formed out of any particular

class of men; he did not wish to see it exclusive in any way; but he wished to see them appointed solely with regard to their honesty of character, education, ability, and moral courage. And it was because he felt that the Government had failed in this direction that he believed they were not worthy to retain the confidence of the House. There were one or two matters in connection with this subject which he himself had brought under the notice of the Government—cases which affected the welfare of society; but his letters had been neglected, and he had felt almost insulted by the contemptuous way in which he had been treated. About three years ago he had occasion to hold an inquest at Towers Hill Creek. On investigation, the evidence showed a very sad state of things. Two persons had committed suicide, and a third man, whom they found on the road, was nearly dead. In forwarding the depositions to the then Attorney-General, he felt it his duty to call special attention to them, fearing lest otherwise they might have been put into a pigeon-hole and left unnoticed. In that letter to the Attorney-General he embodied a statement made by the gentleman who was travelling with him at the time as to the condition of the man whom they had picked up on the road. That man's mouth was in such a condition that he could not touch solid food. His friend remained with him and made a soup to afford him nourishment; and, in gratitude, he said, "If you open my swag you will find a bottle of Hennessy's brandy, if you would like a nip." He accepted his offer, but, in attempting to drink it, it took the skin off his tongue. To this letter there had been no acknowledgment. His voucher at the same time for £5 2s. 6d., for fee and travelling expenses, was returned to him with a request that the Inspector of Police should certify to the mileage charged, seeming thus to indicate a suspicion as to his veracity. If any want of confidence was felt in a magistrate, surely an investigation ought to be held; and if he (Mr. Paul) had taken advantage of his position as a magistrate for the purpose of extorting £5 out of the Government, he ought simply to have been wiped out. In another case he (Mr. Paul) sat on the Bench where a man was summoned under the Timber Licensing Act for trespass. The man had erected a public-house without obtaining the permission of the manager of the station on which it was erected, on the ground that the Government were about to declare the place a township. The manager of the station directed him to camp on the river, because he was interfering with a waterhole where about 2,000 bullocks were in the habit of coming to drink. The man refused to move, and the case came before the Bench, resulting in

his being fined in a minimum penalty. His (Mr. Paul's) conduct was called in question in the public press. The Government ordered the township to be proclaimed, and the consequence was that the public-house was entered upon, and in three months afterwards a man was stabbed there, and the man who stabbed him was allowed to make his escape. The publican in question never reported the facts to the police, nor sent for a doctor, and in six weeks afterwards the man who was stabbed died a miserable death. At the inquest which was held the doctor reported that the man died from blood poisoning, and his assailant was brought up for murder and acquitted. The action taken by the Government in over-riding the opinions of their own magistrates was the indirect cause of that man's death. Magistrates ought never to be appointed unless they were fit for the office, and when afterwards they were found unfit they should promptly be disgraced. The mere fact of their being in danger of being disgraced would have such a salutary effect on many of them that the fear of public opinion would keep them honest and prevent them from doing unfair things. It was, therefore, of great importance that the Government should exercise a strict supervision over the actions of their magistrates, and when their actions appeared to be prompted by malice or wrong-doing an enquiry should be instituted; and, if the charges against them were proved, they should be disgraced. He had in his mind another case, but he should not allude to it now because it might create an undesirable discussion. It would be sufficient to say that his (Mr. Paul's) letter on the subject had appeared in the public press, and that the Attorney-General—to whom he wrote on the same subject—had not the courage to carry out the investigation which he demanded. He wrote officially as a magistrate, setting forth certain things done by benches and police authorities, and asked the Attorney-General, in justice to himself, that an inquiry should be held, so that it might be ascertained whether he or the other magistrates, or the police authorities, had been actuated more by private feeling than with regard to the public weal. No notice whatever was taken of this letter. Having made these remarks on a subject of considerable importance, he would not detain the House any longer.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had no intention to speak on the question before the House, as he had been under the impression that the Government, seeing the close ranks of the Opposition arrayed against them, and feeling that they had been tried and condemned by their countrymen, would not have allowed the debate to drag beyond one night. Their fate was as plain as the hand-writing on the wall; and

yet they had come before Parliament with a Speech full of specious promises, and which appealed almost solely to the imagination for the means of carrying them out. They tried to foist it upon them—not with the idea of gaining the vote of a single member of the House, but merely to lead the people to believe that they could carry out the promises contained in the Speech, knowing at the same time that they had not the slightest chance of attempting to do so. The true solution was given by the honourable member for Mulgrave, when he said that the Speech had been introduced merely as a stumbling-block to future legislation. It would have been far more generous of the Government, when they saw the majority arrayed against them, to have gracefully retired, and allowed better men to be chosen to fill their places. He should not have spoken had it not been for the remarks of the Minister for Works—that the Opposition “took away one member from Fortitude Valley, and gave it to a constituency called the Gregory, where it proved very difficult to find a place of nomination, and almost as difficult to find a returning officer.” With regard to these two matters, the first idea which came into his head when he heard, in Melbourne, the name of the station chosen as the place of nomination, and that Mr. Monaghan had been appointed the returning officer, that it was a most extraordinary appointment—that it was a Government job. He thought he had arrived at the correct explanation of the job. He had to thank his friend the honourable member for Fassifern for bringing forward the motion which gave the Gregory a member. He imagined that the Government—knowing that the honourable gentleman was in the district at the time—thought that he might save the expense of a contested election and have the honourable gentleman returned for the electorate, leaving Fassifern open to a Ministerialist; but his honourable friend, who had promised him his support, was true to him and faithful to his old constituency and his party. Had the Government gone to anyone who was acquainted with the Gregory, they could have learned that there was a more central and more thickly-populated place than the very out-of-the-way station fixed upon which could have been chosen, and where there would have been no difficulty in getting a returning officer. He had known Mr. Monaghan for ten years. He had no position in the district, nor was he a voter for it; he was sent a distance of 230 miles at the Government expense, he presumed, whereas, at the place he had named, a man could have been readily got to fill the office without remuneration. As to the difficulty of conducting a poll, had it been necessary, he could assure the House that there would have been none.

In point of area his district compared favourably with any in the colony, being 96,960 square miles in extent. The population was not great, he granted, as at present the district was little known. He went to the printing office this day to get a copy of its electoral roll, but none could be found, and he was referred to the Colonial Secretary's office. On going there he was shown into a room filled with disorderly pigeon-holes, and, after some searching was done, he was told that there was no roll. He believed, however, the roll would compare favourably with that of the Mitchell district when the present member was first returned for it, between seven and eight years ago. He was quite sure that no district had shown more progress than the Mitchell. Its electoral roll was equal to that of Fortitude Valley, for which another member was to be demanded, and its adult male population was larger. If at any time an additional member was asked for the Valley, the question of an additional member for the Mitchell should also be brought forward. With reference to the representation of Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, from the force of circumstances, had become their capital, and they were all proud of it; in the interior they were all anxious to see it advance. It had always got this advantage, that the whole of this branch of the Legislature was well acquainted with its wants, and could see that it had justice done to it; whereas, with respect to the outside districts, there were not more than ten out of a House of fifty-five members who had ever had the opportunity of judging from personal experience of what they were called upon to legislate for such districts. He had heard one honourable member talk about railways to the interior as lines leading to nowhere; he presumed it was so to him, because he had never seen it. Few people knew the wealth that lay dormant in these inland districts; in his opinion the real stable wealth and capital of the colony lay there, and the money spent in developing them would be repaid tenfold. Let not Brisbane act as a sponge on a wet blanket, absorbing everything for itself. Let it rather act as a generous heart, which received circulation from the extreme parts of the body, and sent it forth purified to all its members impartially. Let it do that, and its rise would be more rapid. He did not represent a class of wealthy men—millionaires; these were not the men who went out into the interior to pave the way for future civilization; they were men with a capital of a few hundred pounds and as much credit as they could get, and they went out to risk their lives in the wilderness, and live as hard as a man could live on the bare chance of obtaining an independence. He would join any party which was resolved to do credit to these men, whom

he put on a par with the class of suffering selectors to which the senior member for Toowoomba had alluded yesterday. His friend, the member for Leichhardt, had so ably deprecated the raising of class feelings that he would not speak upon that question. The member for Ipswich had deprecated the use of personalities, but the present Ministerialists had already set the example, the first exhibition of "dirty clothes washing" having taken place between an ex-Minister and the Government; next came taunts from the Minister for Works, levelled at one of the honourable members for Stanley; and taunts at his (Mr. Hill's) constituency, and the class to which he belonged. That class was pretty strongly represented in the House, but so was also the legal profession, to which the Minister for Works belonged. Eleven legal gentlemen were in the House, some being on one side and some on the other, as they generally were. Taking population as a liberal basis, he did not see why the legal profession was entitled to such an undue amount of representation. He did not know what they had done for the colony, or what they had brought into it, whether they were large employers of labour, or had embarked any capital in the land; they certainly had their wits sharpened and their minds fertilised in the shape of refreshers. His mind had not been fertilised with such refreshers as legal gentlemen obtained; if it had, he had no doubt his powers of oratory would have been greater.

Mr. HENDREN said that, as a new member, he rose with considerable diffidence to address the House after the able speeches that had already been delivered, and not being accustomed to the forms of the House, he craved the indulgence of honourable members. When he went before his constituents he declared himself an independent liberal, and he hoped he should be able to carry out the principles he then professed by his votes and actions. He took his position with a minority on the cross-benches on the Government side of the House because he approved, on the whole, of the programme contained in the Governor's Speech, and thought the Ministry deserved to be complimented on the progressive policy therein enunciated. He should not speak with the view of being reported in *Hansard*, as he believed some honourable members opposite had already done, but should confine himself to the question before the House. With reference to the Chinese question, he entirely approved of the action taken by the Ministry during the last two years, and recently, in giving notice to the A.S.N. Company that it should discontinue the employment of Asiatics in Queensland waters. He was glad that a Bill had been promised for the purpose of restricting Chinese immigration; he also

believed in what was stated in the Speech with regard to black labour. With reference to the Local Government Act of 1878 being brought into active operation, he was of opinion that, with some slight alteration, it could be made a very valuable measure; and he was satisfied, notwithstanding the remarks from some honourable gentlemen opposite, that it would be hailed with satisfaction in all the settled districts of the colony. As to the Civil Service, the Bill which was promised in the Speech he considered a step in the right direction, and believed it should have been in force long ago. It was considered by both sides of the House that such a measure was absolutely necessary, and he hoped they would all see that it was brought into existence. The Speech went on to say "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." The Government must have money to carry on public works and effect improvements. The Custom House was a fair method of raising revenue, but the taxation in this way fell heaviest on the poorer classes, who had, as a rule, the largest families. It was admitted that a man earning £2 a-week contributed as much to the revenue through the Customs as the man who had £1,000 a-year; therefore some alteration seemed necessary in the direction indicated. The Speech went on to say:—

"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 this source."

He fully approved of the policy indicated in that clause; the more so because great public works—railways into the interior—were foreshadowed, and to carry them out the owners of property in the direction which these lines would run were entitled to bear an equitable proportion of the cost of construction and otherwise. He believed that a very infinitesimal tax upon the pastoral lands of the colony would be sufficient, not only to pay interest on the £3,000,000 proposed by the honourable member for Mulgrave during last year, but for three times that amount; and under such conditions he would not mind supporting not only the £3,000,000, but quadruple that sum, so that the country might be covered with a network of railways, north, south, east, and west. He was in favour of the view taken by the Ministry with reference to the carrying of branch lines into the thickly settled districts of the colony, believing,

despite what had fallen from honourable members opposite, that these lines would pay very much better than the trunk lines into the far interior, where in many places a traveller seldom met a man or saw a house for a whole week. These branch lines would be supported by continual traffic of people and the carriage of produce, whereas he could not see what would support the trunk lines into the interior; the carriage of wool, tallow, and hides, and the return loading of rations, once a-year, would certainly not pay interest on the cost of construction, much less the working expenses. He did not agree with the opinion of some honourable members on the other side, including, he believed, the honourable member for North Brisbane, that main trunk lines would pay better than branch lines. The extension of the Southern and Western line to South Brisbane he entirely approved of, believing that South Brisbane was the most suitable place to which it could be extended on account, if for nothing else, of the facilities it would afford the proprietors of coal mines and other producers to ship their produce. The coal mines of the colony put forth the most valuable export it was possible for a country to possess; but under the present difficulties of shipping, the coal having to be dragged by horse drays to the wharves, and punted down the rivers, sometimes two or three days' journey, coal proprietors were prohibited from taking orders for large quantities of coal for sea-going vessels. Not many days ago one of his constituents, a coal mine proprietor, had been obliged to decline taking an extensive order for coal for an outgoing vessel because he could not fulfil the order in time, and the vessel had to leave in ballast. The same kind of thing had been going on ever since Queensland had been a colony; and it was time now that, if only on account of the large employment of labour it occasioned, some facilities should be given to one of the best interests of the country. With reference to European immigration, he was of opinion that it should be almost entirely restricted, for many years to come, to purely agricultural labourers. Such men soon became employers of labour themselves, and made the best colonists, and made room for others; but, unfortunately, very few of that class had come out lately. Suitable domestic servants of good character should only be sent out, instead of the women who had been foisted upon the towns of Queensland from the cities of the old country, and who were a disgrace to the Immigration Agent, and soon became a burden upon this country. In carrying out the great public works of the colony, most honourable members would agree with the terms of the Speech, where it said that all public works should be performed under contracts. He should like it better

if the clause went a little further, and recommended that all labour contracts should be let in short lengths, so that our own colonists of moderate capital would be enabled to compete with southern contractors and English capitalists, so that the money thus earned might be spent in this colony, instead of being carried away out of the country as was done by Brassey, Peto, and Betts, and others. It seemed to be admitted on all sides that Polynesian immigration required to be restricted or discontinued altogether. He was not singular in the opinion that it should be discontinued altogether after due notice—say of three years—had been given to the employers of Kanakas. It was no use travelling from the question; the evil was similar to that of Chinese immigration, as they both interfered materially with the European population and British emigrants. The best interests of the country suffered exceedingly by their being encouraged, and the immigration should therefore be restricted for the time being, and in a short period altogether stopped. The protection from destruction of the valuable timbers of this country was a matter which should have received attention a long time ago. An honourable member yesterday referred to the wholesale exportation of cedar from the northern part of this colony to the southern colonies, which was being carried on without rendering one particle of profit to the revenue of this country. That should decidedly be put a stop to. A Victorian gentleman who had travelled over America, and observed the system of making railways there, had suggested to him in a letter that it would be wise in carrying out railways in this colony to keep a much wider reserve on each side of the line—say from six to ten chains—for the purpose of planting trees which hereafter would become valuable as telegraph poles, railway sleepers, firewood for engines, and other purposes. In course of time, also, they would probably attract rainfall, and if proper means of holding water were provided, would prove very valuable in the interior; and in future years, if found necessary, the extra land not so required could be sold at high prices. These opinions he suggested as worth the remembrance of the Minister for Works, or the Minister for Lands, whichever the matter concerned most. He trusted that whatever Government might be in power, the clause referring to the inspection of mines would not be forgotten. Last year a similar mention was made in the Opening Speech, but nothing was done in the matter. It was absolutely necessary if we would avoid catastrophes such as have occurred in Great Britain, where 287 men were recently blown into eternity, and in the collieries of New South Wales, where several men were lately killed in the same

way, without a moment's notice, that some step should be taken for the security of men working in underground mines. As he did not wish to occupy the time of the House at greater length, he begged, with those few remarks, to support the Address in Reply.

MR. KATES said it was not his intention to criticise the different clauses in the Ministerial programme, as he thought such a course was only wasting time. It was quite evident that the present Government was all but dead, and their policy he believed would expire with them. When he had addressed the electors of the Darling Downs, he made a distinct promise that, unless they could get a third party to form a Government, he should not support a want of confidence motion; that promise he would keep. Was it because they had had a vacillating, infirm, Liberal Government, that he should desert the Liberal cause and throw himself into the arms of the Squatting party? He said, no. It was his opinion that the result of the late elections, in returning so many members apparently belonging to and supporting a chiefly northern squatting party, was a sign of retrogression, and threatened the development of the fast rising agricultural interests of the south of the colony. It would be a good thing, he thought, for the South and the North to separate, as their interests were not at all identical. They only dragged upon one another, and legislation to satisfy both was almost impossible. The constituency he had the honour to represent was chiefly agricultural, and the district was destined to become the granary of Queensland. He should certainly betray the confidence reposed in him by the bone and sinew of that electorate were he to desert the Liberal cause and to join the other side, especially at this critical juncture. It was all very well to say that there was no Squatting party, but he affirmed there was. As long as there was an acre of land worth having and fighting for, that party would try to get it to the exclusion of the agriculturist. For that reason he had no faith in the Opposition. His intention, as the House was constituted, was to steer an independent course and join no party; and, should the honourable leader of the Opposition assume the reins of Government, he would most heartily support any measure that might be brought forward tending to encourage settlement upon the agricultural lands of the colony. He hoped that in their programme they would make provision for connecting the outlying farming districts to the main trunk lines; also for the extension of the homestead areas, which was very much wanted; and also a scheme to recover, either by purchase or exchange, the alienated lands of the Darling Downs with a view

to permanent settlement upon them. The exchanges that had taken place in the Darling Downs district had been the best bargain the Government had ever made. They had secured something like 21,000 acres of excellent, valuable, agricultural land for a double amount of inferior country not suitable for agriculture. He maintained that the Government had neglected in many instances to secure the good portions of the Downs when they had the opportunity. It was not so very long since Westbrook Station was in the market, and there were now no less than 30,000 acres of land on the Darling Downs offered for sale. It would be a wise thing if the Government were to secure those lands, and cut them up into homestead areas, in order to create permanent settlement. There was also a great necessity for the amendment of the Impounding Act, and the settlement of the difficult question of what constituted a sheep-proof fence. On several occasions magistrates on the Bench had been unable to define it. Many other measures he would most heartily support if brought forward for the good of the country, from whichever side of the House they might come.

MR. PRICE said he had not intended to address the House on the present occasion, but had been carefully watching and endeavouring to find out which side of the House represented the Liberal party. He had declared himself for neither one nor the other, but had conscientiously sought to discover which was the Liberal party. From the appearance of the House tonight he believed the Ministry might be turned out; but he did not believe the other side of the House could make a Government to rule the country. When they came to a division, he believed they would bring all the Liberal members on to that (Ministerial) side, and then it would be seen who constituted the Liberal party. The Government had, no doubt, made a mistake; but he believed that if the House wanted legislation for the benefit of the country, they must stick to the Ministry, or a portion of them, because they would never be able to form another Ministry without at least some members of the one they had now.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. Dickson): Mr. Speaker, the Government, sir, were quite prepared last evening to abide the issue of a division; but I think the several speeches we have heard this evening have clearly justified the application which was made from both sides of the House, that the debate should be adjourned until this evening. We have now heard from both sides some very interesting speeches furnished by new members. It is certainly desirable that the large number of new members sitting at the present time in this House should give some distinct expression

of their opinion upon a motion of such moment as affecting the Ministry who have had the destinies of the country confided to them for a considerable time. It was not my intention yesterday evening to speak, for the simple reason that I did not wish to protract the discussion; but the debate has now assumed such a shape that it would be unbecoming in me, occupying the position of Colonial Treasurer of this colony, and whose department has been most chiefly referred to as that exhibiting the greatest instance of Ministerial incompetency, to allow this debate to terminate without challenging those statements, and giving a distinct contradiction to those who have made them. I certainly did expect in the debate initiated by the honourable member for Mulgrave yesterday evening, that he would have imparted to the discussion of this subject some of that vigour and animation which he so well knows how to introduce when he attacks the Government. I think, however, and I believe that it is an opinion shared by other members of the House, that the honourable gentleman felt so confident with the large phalanx at his back to support him, that he did not think it necessary to enter into minute details. He rather confined himself to reiterating the charges made by him during the late session and which he imagined would be received by those members who recently entered this Chamber without investigation, for the reason that, coming from the honourable gentleman as leader of the Opposition, they bore the impress of accuracy. Now the statements made by the honourable gentleman are those which I intend briefly to challenge. I have no intention of taking up the time of the House unnecessarily, because I do not suppose that any words of mine will affect the vote of this Chamber. I was glad to hear from my honourable colleague, the member for Enoggera, that he had come prepared to receive impressions which might arise during the debate, and I should have liked to hear other members express themselves similarly. The remarks which the honourable member for Mulgrave made in the introduction of his motion were exhaustively answered by the Minister for Works; but I propose to add a few words in connection with them which I feel myself at liberty to make on this occasion. The honourable gentleman's speech chiefly resolved itself into an accusation against the Government generally of incompetency, and he attempted to show that they had commenced what he considers their disastrous administration of the affairs of the colony in 1875, when £100,000 was obtained on loan for the purpose of improving the roads and bridges of the colony. He dwelt upon that statement, which I need scarcely refer to, inasmuch as it is of very little moment

whether the money was borrowed for roads and bridges or for other purposes. I have this evening laid on the table of the House a statement bringing forward the Treasury returns up to the end of the 30th September of last year; and from that statement it will be seen, that instead of the finances of the colony being in a worse position than in 1876, that the Treasury balances, together with the outstanding liabilities, exhibit an improvement of between £45,000 and £50,000, when contrasted with the similar period of 1876. Figures speak better than any allegations, and honourable members can have an opportunity when the Parliamentary papers are circulated of observing the manner in which this statement is worked out. They will see that it is reliable; and that, instead of the finances of the colony being in a worse condition than in 1876, they show a very large improvement. I should have liked to show this improvement to a larger extent, but we all know that a variety of forces have combined during the last six months which have rendered that period one of general depression. Another statement which the honourable member made, and, to use the expression of the honourable member for North Brisbane, gloated over, was that the revenue would, on the 30th of June next, exhibit a deficiency of £200,000. That, at best, is a matter of conjecture; but there are no grounds for such a presumption. There are many reasons which would satisfactorily explain where the deficiency occurred in the past half-year—principally in the depression which has existed, but I do not believe that depression will become permanent. I have a firmer belief in the resources of the colony than to think that the abnormal decline of revenue which took place in the last six months is likely to be continued for any length of time in the future. The figures I have laid on the table of the House show that, in 1878, our liabilities, together with the balance on the 30th of June last year, represented £134,000 as against £175,000 in the corresponding period of 1876. If further corroboration is necessary, it will be found in the Auditor-General's report. The balance on the 1st July, 1876, was £142,500; 1st July, 1878, £96,000. I am charged, also, with having expressed commendation of the Railway Reserves Act, and it is right I should give to the House the reasons which led me to express approval of that measure. We know that previous Governments, whenever they found there was a falling off in the revenue, displayed no higher aim or financial ability than to directly appeal to the Custom House, and relieve their necessities by clapping on 10 per cent. on the *ad valorem* duties. I trust that it will never be done in the same way and to the same extent in which it was tried during 1873; but the reason why I advo-

cate and approve of the principle of the Railway Reserves is this, that it has taught men who are interested in the welfare of this colony to look to some other source of revenue besides the Custom House as a legitimate means of enlarging revenue. I cannot better illustrate this than by pointing out the different forms of contribution to our revenue at the present time. During the year ending 30th of June, 1878, we had a revenue representing ratably about £7 13s. per head of the gross population; £3 9s. 6d. was furnished from direct and indirect taxation, of which £3 0s. 6d. was furnished by the Custom House alone. Now, what did we receive from the territorial estate? Including the pastoral rents, we received £2 4s. 4d. per head; therefore, unless we had some other means of increasing the territorial revenue, we would have exhibited what had been exhibited since representative Government has existed in Queensland—the revenue of this colony as chiefly derived from the labouring and industrial classes, who from their consumption of the necessaries of life, contribute out of all proportion with other classes of the community to the necessities of the State, action directly opposed to the fundamental principles of political economy. Last year the Reserves produced £172,000, which represents 16s. 6d. per head of the population, which, added to the previous revenue derivable from territorial estate, make up in the aggregate an equivalent to the amount derived from the Customs. This explanation may be deemed a little out of place, and somewhat too much like a financial statement. I have no desire it should be so, but wish to relieve myself from the imputation of having unreservedly approved of the Railway Reserves Bill without being able to show the House good reason. This approval resolves itself into this: I have all along contended that the revenue of this colony might be chiefly obtained from some other source than the Customs; and it was the introduction of a Railway Reserves Bill, founded upon the the Western Railway Act, of which you, sir, were the author, that has educated us to the point of acknowledging that taxation, if it be increased, must inevitably go in this direction and be obtained from property holders. I care not what Administration comes into power, the intelligence of the people of this colony, now that it has been directed to this question, will see that the revenue must not be raised solely through the Customs—not through the facile mode of adding 10 per cent. to the taxation, but upon a more legitimate basis, by making those contribute to the necessities of the State who are the best able to do so. I further contend that the Railway Reserves Bill, up to the present time, has been beneficial. Possibly, from a Treasury

view, it might be contended that it has withdrawn from Consolidated Revenue a larger amount of money than could be conveniently spared. We are told that this is a *bête noir*, and is compared to the action of the Administration in New South Wales, where large areas of Crown lands have been sold, and what represents the consideration money is deposited in the banks, which the State is unable to touch; and we are cautioned to beware of the policy of the Railway Reserves Bill, lest we get into a similar dilemma. At present we have not got into such a dilemma. A contrast between our action and the New South Wales Government in alienating such large territories may be very briefly summarised thus: We have handled the money, and spent it in construction, and to that extent, reduced by £400,000 the necessity of applying to English capitalists. I say, then, the money from the Railway Reserves Bill has been well employed in reducing our liabilities. Of course, the Railway Reserves Act might be injudiciously administered. It will devolve upon the ruling powers to show when it is wise to dispose of land under that Act; but, up to the present time, I maintain incontestably that the action of the Government under the Railway Reserves Bill has not been in any way financially disastrous to the country, but has, on the contrary, taught the people to see that our landed estate and property holders must, in common with the Customs, become joint contributors to the interests of the State. If even a further illustration were wanted, I would still refer to the increase of our revenue which took place last year. We, last year, received an increase of revenue to the extent of £122,000; contributed by 40 per cent. from the Customs, 39 per cent. for services rendered, and 12 per cent. only from land revenue. These figures will show, in the direction of the Railway Reserves Bill, that an additional rental from our property holders is absolutely necessary in the interests of revenue. Of course our legislation is not necessarily like that of the "Medes and Persians." If it be found that the Railway Reserves Bill, or any action under it, can be carried out in some other manner by which the revenue will be equally provided for, a limitation of the Railway Reserves Bill might in the future be possibly judiciously re-considered by the House, and its provisions either modified or abrogated; but before that comes to pass it will be necessary that the revenue shall be derived in the manner I have indicated—not from the Custom House solely, but equally from property. I think there has been some misconception in the mind of the honourable member for South Brisbane, as, from his remarks, he seemed to imagine that it was the intention of the Government at once to submit

a tariff by which a largely increased scale of taxation would be introduced. This surmise is entirely without foundation. The intention of an amended tariff, to my mind, is this: that we are quite justified in relieving the tax-payer as far as practicable upon those commodities which are things of daily consumption, and enter most largely into the necessaries of life. Other articles may be taxed, and, possibly, an increased fixed list may be made; but it is not necessary that an increased *ad valorem* duty should be established. I have already told the House that we derive £3 Os. 6d. per head from Customs duties, but during the last six months that rate has been somewhat reduced. At the present time we are receiving £2 16s. 6d. per head, and if we had an amended tariff, we might fairly enlarge it to what we were receiving six months ago, and this without entailing any greater pressure upon the tax-payer. Honourable members will understand that it would be impossible for me at the present time to indicate in what direction any revising of the tariff could be made, although I have my own ideas of what direction it should take, and how it should be subsidised. We have had from several speakers condolences upon the financial condition of the colony, and we have even heard a disclaimer from the honourable leader of the Opposition of a desire to take office, saying that he does not want to be the leader of this House; and he has based his disclaimer on the fact of the disastrous condition of the colony, and of the ruinous state to which it has been brought by the present Administration. This, sir, I believe to be only a flimsy veil to conceal ambitious desires. I do not condemn the honourable gentleman because he is ambitious, for he is right, as leader of the Opposition, in having an ambition to govern; but why does he not boldly state it in the House, and not present a mock disclaimer of office on the grounds of the financial state of the colony being so deplorable? Now, I object to such acting; it is not creditable to him, it is not honest to the country, and it is putting a false colouring on the condition of the colony. And I am very sorry to see the honourable member for Toowoomba stand up in his place in the House and talk of disaster, and, in his usual generalities, tell us about the Darling Downs farmers. That honourable member has often tried to appal us with the condition of the colony. I do not think the colony has suffered permanently, and I have not the slightest doubt—and my opinion is corroborated by what has been said by the honourable member for the Gregory—that we have no idea of the wealth which exists in the interior—that material wealth which must be made available to our credit in the future. Even not-

withstanding the charge of incompetency brought against the Cabinet, the honourable gentleman who leads the Opposition, should he occupy these benches, will find the departments in quite as good order, if not far better, than at any time during previous Administrations; what he will require when he assumes government is, in dealing with the finances of the colony, to have a strong and loyal following, and not a "nagging" Opposition. It was through this action of the Opposition that the Government has been cramped in carrying out its best intentions, and I charge the leader of the Opposition with this—that instead of assisting the Government to resist constant demands for local expenditure, he allowed those votes to proceed. I resisted them—here standing alone—and I was promised support, which that honourable member failed at subsequent times to render me from his side of the House. I trust I have a higher sense of office than that of merely acquiescing in the proposals for local expenditure made by honourable members on this side and on that opposite to me; and if the honourable member for Mulgrave does come into office, and finds himself financially embarrassed as I have indicated, it would only be the just retribution of a political Nemesis for the action he has taken in not carrying out his word to the Treasurer of the colony on the occasion I have referred to. I know that what I say, or have said, may not have the least effect on a single vote; but I believe there can be no charge of incompetency satisfactorily established against us. I have no wish to tax the time of the House; but there is one matter, before I have done, that requires a few remarks from me, and that is the question of our railway construction. The honourable and junior member for South Brisbane, referring to our railway policy, expressed his disapproval of continuing the system which has been carried out by Mr. Ballard, and of directing our sole attention to the construction of trunk lines of railway; but the honourable member must have misconceived the statement in the Speech, as it is the intention of the Government to proceed with the main lines of communication in the colony by contract, and in such a manner that the means of construction shall be provided by the districts through which they pass, so that they shall be no charge to the general ratepayer. I think that if their construction be proceeded with in this direction, and revenue therefor is provided by the districts benefited, it will be a judicious scheme of railway extension. There is, however, another question connected with railways which must not be overlooked: that whilst any Government administering the affairs of this colony must proceed with railway construction, their efforts must not be confined to one

direction, or to benefit one class solely. The large populous districts of this colony will insist upon cheap lines of railway being constructed; and I quite concur with the honourable member for South Brisbane when he said that he should insist upon any Government, when proceeding with railway construction, providing for branch lines for the convenience of the agricultural population. I assert that people are thoroughly alive to the necessity of railway construction in this direction. I regret that I did not gather from the remarks of the honourable member for Mulgrave, either on the present or on former occasions, that he has a wholeheartedness in this matter. On the occasion of the celebrated three-million debate the honourable member referred to the construction of branch lines by making provision to the moderate extent of £350,000. I fear he has since receded from that position, as anyone must have gathered from his speech last evening. When he spoke he said that experience showed that main lines of railway paid better in England than branch lines; but I contend branch lines hold a different position in this colony to what they do in the mother country. I maintain that if the locality for branch lines is judiciously selected, the converse of that statement will hold good; and I trust that, whatever Government may hold the reins of power in this colony, they will proceed with the construction of branch lines in the manner I have indicated. I must say that I have no unanimity of feeling with those honourable members who regret the lines now in course of construction. I believe they will prove highly beneficial to the colony, and I do not agree with the honourable member for Toowoomba, that if the question of the construction of the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line was re-considered he should vote against it. I do not imagine the constituents of the honourable member for Mulgrave would assent to such a proposition. Although, in the present state of affairs, we may view with some anxiety the construction of the various lines sanctioned by Parliament, I believe in the future they will be found of great benefit to the country. Regarding the burden that their construction will be on the tax-payer, what is it, after all? Assuming there were no further authorised extensions, less than one million additional to what Parliament has already provided will cover the cost, including all the rolling-stock necessary to work the lines. If that be so, and these matters have been carefully looked into by me, and I make the statement upon calculations and returns which have been submitted to me by the authorities of the Public Works department—if this be so, and it only takes another million to complete

all these lines, are we to be alarmed at this great expenditure? Is this expenditure for one moment to be weighed against the great benefit accruing to the country through the construction of these lines. Are we afraid that our credit with British capitalists is so curtailed that we shall be unable to borrow the money when wanted? I believe, sir, we should not. I believe that if our loans are not launched too hastily, but judiciously, they will always meet with a favourable reception in the English market; and I may say that I look constantly forward to a better state of things in the London money market by the month of May, when our loan will be floated, and that I believe it will be as successfully floated as the last. I have made these remarks with a view to vindicate the first part of my speech, and to disprove the charges which have been made against the Treasury. I do not suppose that what I say will have the least effect with honourable members as to the way in which they will vote, but I have had my say. The present debate is on a matter of great importance to the country, and I trust that honourable members opposite will be able to give to the country good and satisfactory reasons for the faith that is reposed in them.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he would not detain the House for more than a few minutes; but he rose to take exception to one statement which had been made by the honourable Treasurer, which, going forth to the country without some contradiction, might create a false impression. He was perfectly aware of the object of the present debate—it was to go forth to the country to bear fruit at some future time. As the poet said, "Coming events cast their shadows before them." It would have been far better, in his opinion, for the honourable gentleman to give up the ghost quietly; but, if they wished to have a good fight, let them have it. The honourable the Treasurer stated that the honourable the leader of the Opposition had helped to depress the finances of the colony by assisting private members on that side of the House in getting expenditure for their various districts. That was a very bold statement, and, if true, it ought to go forth as such; and, if untrue, it should be contradicted on the spot, so that both statements might go forth to the public together. Now what were the facts of the case? For all the members sitting on both sides of the House, there was put on the Estimates something like £50,000; to the best of his recollection it was about £55,000; but he had put down £50,000, and out of that the Government acquiesced in £43,000. And they were not even satisfied with that, for afterwards the Treasurer and the Ministry assisted the honourable member for Wide Bay—one of

their supporters—to carry £2,000 more, but honourable members on the Opposition side of the House resisted it; so that, in reality, out of £50,000 the Government actually assisted in carrying all but £5,000. Let that go forth to the country, and let the Treasurer, or any member of the Government, contradict it if he could.

Mr. BELL: It is not my intention to unnecessarily prolong this debate, and it is the fact of the Treasurer having made the statement he has that has caused me to rise to address the House, because I think his arguments and deductions are not such as ought to be allowed to pass unchallenged. I think it is a great pity that the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government did not think fit to conclude this debate, as far as it was in his power to do so, when he made his speech—a speech which I consider was a very excellent defence of his position; and if the Government had died upon the delivery of that speech, they would have gone forth to the country in better circumstances than I think they will now, having allowed the debate to be so far prolonged. I think this, because we have listened to anomalies in the opinions entertained by the members of the present Government—*anomalies* which I do not think we had any knowledge of before to-night—and we find that they are a very long way from holding opinions that coincide with one another. The honourable gentleman at the head of the Government told us, with that openness which characterises him generally when speaking in this House, that he found that the politics of this colony had drifted into a state of things in which there were no longer the old existing parties of the Squatter and the Liberal; that he found there were liberals on both sides of the House, and that there was now no longer any occasion for holding up those party differences which used to be the bane of this colony in its earlier days. But, on the other hand, we find the Minister for Works rising in his place, and telling us that he disagrees with his colleague at the head of the Government. He tells us he finds that there are still existing the two old parties; and that, in fact, the Squatting party have become richer and more powerful than ever they were. When we examine the reasons and the causes which produced these two very opposite speeches, it cannot for a moment be denied that the one speech—that of the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government—was an open, plain, unvarnished tale of the position of affairs as he found them at the present moment. He is always open and straightforward, and I shall say this, that if this is his dying night, he has my full sympathy with him; we have been colleagues together, and I never felt the same sympathy for him as I do at this

moment. But, on the other hand, the Minister for Works, with that astuteness which belongs to his speeches, has endeavoured to create a party feeling, and an interest in that old cry which is now extinct, in order that he may base upon it the future platform upon which he intends to go to the country. But what do we find to be the verdict of the country, as shown by the last elections? Can the honourable the Minister for Works for one moment suppose that his single opinion can weigh against the verdict of the country? And what do we find on these benches? We find mixed with the old Squatting party gentlemen representing every interest in the country. We find that the majority of the constituencies in this colony have thrown together a set of men who have never before been otherwise than separated, and occupying different sides of the House. The intelligence of the country has shown that the argument of the honourable the Minister for Works is a fallacious one, and it has been brought forward for a purpose which is not dignified and not useful to the best interests of the country. If we, or if the Government, can do any good, especially at this retiring moment of the Government, it can only be done by placing before the public the state of parties exactly as it now exists, and the politics of the colony as we know them; but when we find an astute lawyer putting forth to the country a state of politics which absolutely does not exist in this colony, I think the sooner that is plainly put forth as being non-existent the better. I feel with the honourable member who spoke last that when an inaccuracy is made by a Minister upon such an occasion as this the sooner it is stamped out by contradiction the better. Now, sir, the Treasurer, who is my special object at this moment, has attempted to show that the manner in which the Government have conducted the finances of the colony has brought about a satisfactory instead of an unsatisfactory state of things at the end of their term of office. I admit that it is quite fair that he should make such an attempt; but I think a more fallacious attempt could not have been made, because the honourable gentleman did the worst of all things—he attempted to defend the result of the Railway Reserves Bill. He told us that the Bill had done good, because it had led the people up to the belief that the only correct system of taxation was direct taxation from the land. Now, what is the fact, even if it were necessary for the people to be taught up to that belief? We all know that the time must sooner or later arrive—whether it has arrived I am not going to say—when the land will have to produce a modicum of taxation, whether for local purposes or general purposes has yet to be discussed. But when we find the Treasurer attempt-

ing to defend the most wrong-headed Act ever passed in this colony by such arguments as we have listened to to-night, I think some of us would be wrong if we did not attempt to show them up. He told us that the people have now learned to understand that taxation must come from the land, and that this had been shown by the Railway Reserves Bill. But what has the Railway Reserves Bill been doing? I give it credit for being one of the greatest causes of the very deficient position of the revenue at this moment. The honourable member has quoted, and the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government also quoted, New South Wales as an instance and as a precedent for the passing of such an Act in this colony. But at the time that Act was passed we knew that it was a blot on the statute-book of New South Wales. We knew that it was diverting the resources of the country to purposes which were not legitimate; and yet we followed in the same course. And now members of the Government who passed that Bill have the hardihood, by the most false arguments, to attempt to defend it. The fact is, that by the operation of that Bill a sum of money—a large sum of money for a small colony like this—was diverted into the construction of railways that ought to have gone into the general revenue of the country. Is that providing revenue? Is that the way in which the land resources of the country are to be diverted? Why, we find when we look back to 1874, when this Government, or those whom they represent, took office, they had a full surplus of £240,000. That went directly over to public works, and was so absorbed. And what has the Treasurer done ever since? Why he has been burning the candle at both ends. He has been raising money from the pockets of the people, or those of them who could pay at all; he has been scraping it together in every way, and taking it out of the generally useful business of the country, and applying it to the construction of railways. Not only under the Railway Reserves Bill has he taken it, but also from every auction sale that has taken place in the country, and from every sale on deferred payments—every pound raised in that way has gone to the construction of railways. What, I ask, has that to do with taxation? What has that to do with interest? The duty of the Treasurer, if he knew his work, would have been to look after the interest; to see that it was paid, and to prevent the deficiency we find existing to-day. If even a modicum of the interest had been paid from land revenue instead of being devoted to railway construction, the Treasurer would not be in the position we find him to-day. That must be the future policy of this country;

it must be the payment of interest, and not that our land revenue shall go into that great absorbent—the public works of the colony. I regret very much that the Treasurer should have given his countenance to that Bill, because I thought he had better judgment; that although he has not been as open-handed in finding money as he ought to have been—for that is the Treasurer's duty—at the same time I think he has shown a strong desire and capacity up to this point, and I regret to say that I am now very much disappointed. A more perverse system than that introduced by the Railway Reserves Bill, and the sales of land forced on the country by the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government, could not possibly exist; and if we, as Members of Parliament and guardians of the public purse, do not show our thorough disbelief in such a suicidal system, we shall be neglecting our duties as representatives of the people.

Mr. MILLS: I shall not detain the House many minutes, but I do not think I should allow a remark made last night by the honourable member for North Brisbane (Mr. Palmer), respecting Mr. Ballard's claim, to pass without a word of explanation. That honourable member accused the Government of dilatoriness in settling Mr. Ballard's claim for compensation. It will be in the recollection of old members of the House that when Mr. Ballard entered on the construction of the railway, arrangements were made with the then Government that he was to be rewarded for the saving he might make on the work. It was utterly impossible to come to a conclusion as to what those savings were until he had carried out his contract to the Comet. I went into the office about that time and was extremely anxious that the claim should be settled before Mr. Ballard should carry on any further works. I do not believe in repudiation; whatever has been sanctioned by any previous Government, the Government in power ought to do their utmost to carry out. I therefore wished the claim to be settled with as little delay as possible. Mr. Ballard was brought down for that purpose, and I had two interviews with him on the subject, to endeavour to ascertain from him the amount of his claim. All who know Mr. Ballard know that he has a great "gift of the gab," and he talked away at such a rate that it was utterly impossible for me to follow him. I ascertained, however, that he considered he had made a saving of from 30 to 50 per cent. on the cost of construction. The line was 100 miles long, and the average cost per mile was £6,000, so that 30 per cent. on the whole sum, to put it at the lowest, would amount to a very large sum; and I did not feel justified in coming here and asking the House to vote £30,000 or £40,000 for Mr. Ballard

until I had some definite information before me. The House would naturally want to know the grounds on which Mr. Ballard claimed this large sum, and I was not in a position to tell them. I have taken the opportunity of visiting the work, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is well and substantially constructed. But I found there were 63 miles out of the 100 where there was simply a water-table cut on each side, and the loose stuff thrown into the centre, and the ballast and sleepers laid upon it. In some places the line is ten feet under flood mark. I was anxious to give Mr. Ballard an opportunity to furnish me with information enabling me to ask for a sum of money sufficient for his compensation. I called upon him to furnish the quantities of the various materials, but he only sent them in about a month before the session closed. My intention was to compare the quantities with the prices we paid on the lines constructed in the southern part of the colony, and to ascertain whether there was a saving or not. I am very doubtful that this large saving has been made. At all events it was only fair and proper to ascertain the exact amount to which Mr. Ballard was entitled before asking the House to vote a sum of money for him. What has been done since that time I am unable to say. Mr. Ballard, in making up his statement, draws a comparison between the cost of the line and of the lines in the southern portions of the colony. But from Westwood to the Comet there are only three stations, whereas the southern lines run through populous districts, and had a station every two miles. The comparison is obviously unfair. The stations on the northern line are also of a very inferior description, although they are quite suitable for all requirements. I hope whatever Government is in power will give their attention to Mr. Ballard's claim, because whatever arrangement was made with him ought to be faithfully carried out. That is the reason, and the only reason I can give, why this claim has not been settled. When the matter is fully gone into, it will be found, I believe, not only that he has not made a saving of 30 per cent., but that Mr. Ballard is the most costly railway contractor we have got. This is my opinion, and I give it for what it is worth. There are the quantities, and it can be very easily ascertained whether Mr. Ballard is right or wrong. I hope that, whatever party may be in power, they will never make any such arrangement as that made with Mr. Ballard. If Government should be of opinion that he is entitled to that reward they will ask the House to vote it. I do not believe in these slipshod arrangements, and I am, and have always been, of opinion that that system of railway construction is bad, because the Gov-

ernment has no check whatever on the expenditure; in fact, they know nothing about it. Mr. Ballard has had the expenditure of this large sum of money without check, and the Government has no knowledge as to how it was being spent. The arrangement was that he was to construct the railway as he chose, and I do not know that he has not done right. But it must be remembered that in time of flood traffic on the railway will be stopped for days and weeks, and it is not fair to make a comparison between that railway and the lines constructed in the southern parts of the colony, where they are all above flood-level. I will not make any remarks upon the Speech, and I believe that if the leaders of both parties had had a friendly interview with each other, it would have done quite as much good as all the speech-making we are likely to have. I trust honourable members will endeavour to cut their speeches shorter, or the House will be in session the whole year. Of course I have no right to dictate to honourable members what they shall say. At all events I do not mean to say any more, and the sooner we go to a division the better.

Mr. SCOTT said he had no intention of defending Mr. Ballard, but the honourable member for Darling Downs had accused that gentleman of making a railway partly under flood-mark. He (Mr. Scott) happened to know that, although portions of that railway were under flood-mark, it was not constructed on that level through any fault of Mr. Ballard's. Nearly every honourable member present knew that Mr. Ballard was not in any way to blame for it.

Mr. ARCHER said that in the very few remarks he was going to make, he should not wander through the lengthy Speech read to the house yesterday. It was stated by Lord Brougham, that Wyndham once said that William Pitt could have spoken a King's Speech right off without stopping. But poor Wyndham had only the experience of the House of Commons to go by. Had he lived in Queensland, he would never have given anybody credit for being able to speak a Queen's Speech right off. There was certainly one great advantage attached to the long Speech they heard read yesterday. Both the Premier and the Minister for Works, in their eloquent perorations yesterday, boasted that whatever party came into power, they would have to confine legislation almost within the limits of that Speech. It could hardly be otherwise, when there were gathered together within it all the subjects that could be legislated upon. How could the Ministry go outside it? It would, perhaps, have been more complete if they had introduced a new Bankruptcy Bill, or a penal statute for the repression of larrikinism. That

would have made it so perfect that no Ministry could have legislated otherwise than on the lines there laid down. Of course, they must legislate upon the questions brought before them the other day. They must take all the great questions in which the colony was interested, and they were nearly all collected in the Speech; but did any one suppose that they could be disposed of in one session. No one would be silly enough to imagine that. He was going to remark, however, upon the wonderful cleverness of the Government in managing to leave out of the Speech the only subject which was of real interest to the colony. The land question, which was the great question of the colony, had not been touched upon. The reason why gentlemen who formerly sat on the Government side of the House had come over to the Opposition, was because there was no reference to it; they had been driven to the Opposition benches on that account. Several times, yesterday, it had been stated that public works was the great question of the colony. It was true that no Ministry could possibly hope to live for a month which failed to recognise it as one of the great questions; but he denied that it was the greatest. The foundation of the colony must rest upon its lands, and the way they were administered; and the first question was, undoubtedly, that of administration. However, he was not going to enter into particulars, except to say that the Ministry had shown themselves incompetent to deal with the land question as it had come before them. It was only within the last few years, in fact during the time the Liberal Ministry had been occupying the Treasury benches, that it had really come to the knowledge of the people what enormous wealth Queensland had in its land. The Government had not shown their capacity in any way to deal with the subject. They had not in any way assisted the working pioneer squatter in the way that they should, and had not acted as a large landlord would have done, by administering the public estate not only for their own benefit but for that of the people settled upon it. They had shown themselves incompetent to make proper use of the enormous territory, and by that miserable Railway Reserves Act had destroyed an enormous amount of the credit squatters might have got on their runs. With this Act they actually took from the squatters the credit by means of which they could have carried on their stations, and had put them in a worse position, without adding one penny to the revenue. Had they benefited the revenue one penny, he might have felt disposed to forgive them to some extent, but they had done nothing of the kind; in fact, the paper upon which the Bill was written

had been declared by most of the speakers to be waste paper, and a mischief instead of a benefit. There was not the slightest doubt that our public lands, when properly administered, could be made to contribute more to the revenue, but they must be properly administered by men who really were liberals and did not merely go under the name of the great Liberal party. His special reason for rising to address the House was to enter his strongest protest against the way in which the Minister for Works had spoken yesterday. Attention had been called by several speakers to the class feeling which he had attempted to raise by talking of squatters as opposed to liberals. A very great man, the greatest orator England had produced, and the leader of the people in every reform that had been carried through the House of Commons—John Bright—once made use of the words “Residuum of the people,” and said they were not fit to be entrusted with political privileges; that of course applied more to the people of England than of Australia, for he believed that the latter were infinitely better fitted for all the rights and duties of public life than the former. England, however, recognised that such a class of people existed to whom John Bright’s term was applicable. A great many of the so-called Liberal party in this colony were no doubt educated men, and knew that the anti-squatter cry was absurd; but to think that a gentleman who was a graduate of a University, a Queen’s Counsel, and a Minister of the Crown, should in his place in the Assembly try to revive this silly cry, which could only reach the “Residuum of the people,” was not only to be regretted but to be condemned in the strongest terms. The Minister for Works also made the wonderful statement that the northern members were sitting with their natural enemies. He could not understand what the honourable gentleman meant, but still it seemed a remarkable thing to say, and it followed from it, he imagined, that the nearer people lived together the more likely they were to quarrel. On the Opposition side of the House, however, there were representatives of every section of the community, and from every part of the colony. He certainly considered these attempts to breed bad blood among men who were content to sit together instead of resigning on the measures before the House, would certainly not raise the Minister making the attempt in the opinion of the House. He also felt compelled to enter a decided protest against an opinion which appeared to prevail in this part of the country, that because a party called itself liberal it was therefore composed of liberal men. There was an old proverb, “Give a dog a bad name and you will kill him;” but here this was reversed—they gave a party a good

name, and the party lived by it. He claimed to be one of the greatest liberals in the House, and to have done more than any one sitting on the Government side. Long before he entered public life he had got a theory that a liberal land law should be introduced in the colony. He knew for years that persons who possessed money had been driven out of the colony because they had been unable to obtain land. He wrote and lectured upon the subject, and at last got the people of Rockhampton to elect him. Long before that, though, he went to Ipswich to see the great liberal leader of the day, Mr. Macalister, and laid his schemes to fix a population upon the land before him, but he would not attempt to give effect to them. They were somewhat beyond his comprehension, and it was walking out of his course. Mr. Macalister rejected his proposal with scorn, and said it would ruin his party, as if the ruin of a party should be taken into consideration in carrying a good law! What had the so-called Liberal party done with the defective Land Act of 1868? They had made it less liberal—they had doubled the restrictions. Instead of continuing what was really a good feature of that Act—classifying lands according to quality—they had abolished it; instead of encouraging the settlement of an industrious and successful population upon the soil, they had shown themselves more anxious to get the last penny out of them. He did not call that liberalism; and he said that, if they were going to continue calling the members on the opposite side the great Liberal party, they should do so not because they were liberal men. They were certainly liberal in one sense—they had been in power for some length of time, and had managed to spend every penny that they had been able to borrow. He was not at all blaming the Liberal party because bad times had made a falling off in the revenue. No statement had been made which would warrant the Colonial Treasurer in saying that they had taken a very dark view of the subject. No one would take a dark view of the prospects of the colony; but they were now dealing with a time of temporary depression. It was the duty of a statesman to look ahead to the future, but in times of depression it was necessary for him to take surrounding circumstances into consideration, and, like a private individual, cut his coat according to his cloth. There was, therefore, no necessity for twitting the Opposition for taking an exceptionally gloomy view of affairs. They were certainly quite gloomy enough, as there seemed to be a difficulty in getting the necessary money to carry on public works. The subject was specially treated of because it was the one now before them, and when other questions came before the House, such as the Chinese or Kanaka,

they would receive the same consideration. There was another side to the question that he hoped would distinguish this side of the House from that of the great Liberal party. He trusted that the measures of any Ministry that might succeed the present would be more liberal, and that the supporters now sitting on this side of the House would be prepared to act much more on their own independent judgment than the greater number of those who had supported the Ministry had done. A few had acted on their own judgment, among whom were the honourable members for Toowoomba and Stanley, who had come over to this side of the House. He was perfectly satisfied that if any incoming Ministry were ever to propose such transactions as the lumping of six railways together on purpose to carry their scheme through in spite of the opinion of the House, the party would desert and leave them in a minority of five members. They would be so liberal that they would not assist the great Liberal party, or any other, to force any measure that could not secure a majority down the throat of the House. If they had to support anything, they would let it stand on its own merits, and not try to back it up by bringing other interests to support it. The whole conduct of the Liberal party had been illiberal, and therefore it would not be surprising that he should heartily vote for the amendment. As an older man than the honourable the Minister for Works, he would advise that honourable gentleman not to try to rise by fomenting bad feelings. Let him stick to good measures, pass them if he could, and go out if he could not. He would then be sure to rise, not only in the esteem of the country, but in his own esteem at the same time.

MR. RUTLEDGE said he did not envy the feelings of any honourable member who, under circumstances like the present, standing for the first time in an Assembly of this kind, would not experience a certain amount of trepidation. As a new member, entirely unaccustomed to surroundings like those, he craved from honourable members on both sides of the House that indulgence which the good sense of honourable members usually accorded to those circumstanced as he was. Notwithstanding the energetic protest of the honourable member for Blackall, as to the unadvisableness of stating that there was such a thing as a distinct Liberal party, and no such thing as a Squatting party so called, he claimed to exercise the right of private judgment; and all his thoughts and all his investigations had led him to the conclusion that there was a very wide line of demarcation between the two parties, not only in the House, but in the colony. The honourable member for Blackall, so far from anim-

adverting in terms of such severity upon the speech of the Minister for Works made last evening, should have considered that such a speech from such a man was something of which a gentleman of his experience and venerable years ought to have been proud. As a young legislator, he (Mr. Rutledge) felt proud of the honourable the Minister for Works, and felt proud that Queensland possessed a gentleman able to defend his party when the occasion required, and able to rise to the necessity of the occasion in a way, he ventured to say, the honourable member for Blackall had not often heard excelled in the House of Commons itself. He was far from believing that they had in this colony a party that answered in all respects to the party which went by the name of the Tory party in the old country; but as they found there were artificial divisions in the constitution of the Legislature, rendered necessary by the existence of laws upon our Statute book, which divisions answered to those existing in the constitution of the English Parliament, so they found that there had grown up in the popular branch of the Legislature here a party which bore some analogy to the Tories of the mother country, resulting in a marked distinction between the parties supposed to represent democracy and those who, if not aristocrats themselves, were supposed to represent aristocracy. There never was a clearer proof than they had at the present time that there was, in the House at all events, a very distinct party entirely opposed to all the traditions associated with the past history of the Liberal party. The honourable member for Blackall had combated the opinion that there was a Liberal party and wanted to know what evidence there was of liberalism; but he (Mr. Rutledge) would remind the honourable member that he himself had had a great deal to do with the creation of that party which he now denounced. The honourable member was said to have been the life and soul of the Land Act of 1868 which caused the feeling of resentment to be engendered in the public mind which issued in the Liberal party. If there were anything so objectionable in this Liberal party, then upon that gentleman must rest the responsibility of its creation. A very great deal of stress had been laid on the fact that upon the other side of the House there were a number of gentlemen who could not be designated squatters. The honourable member for Drayton and Toowoomba had assured the House last night that he was not a squatter. He (Mr. Rutledge) considered it to be a matter for regret that there should be in the House honourable gentlemen who did not take their seats in accordance with the views entertained by the constituencies they represented, but were actuated by personal pique, and by

hostility to individual members of the Government, for reasons other than political.

Mr. GROOM said he must call the honourable member to order, though he was sorry to have to do so in his maiden speech. He considered it was most indecent and improper to impute personal motives.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member is out of order.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he had to seek for a reason to explain the sudden change which had taken place in the attitude of certain honourable members, and for what seemed to be a very great change in the spirit of certain constituencies, which, until lately, had been regarded as the most liberal constituencies in the colony. He did not wish to impute anything that was unpalatable, or to suggest any but the broadest and most patriotic grounds for the action taken by the honourable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, in placing himself among gentlemen entirely new to him in a legislative sense; but he was struck by the fact that here was a gentleman occupying a seat on the other side of the House who had always been foremost as the champion of the people's rights, and that represented a constituency which had always been foremost among constituencies that had been regarded as having an antipathy to gentlemen who were representatives of the pastoral tenants of the Crown. In the presence of the disclaimer of the honourable member that he had acted on other than political grounds, he (Mr. Rutledge) was perfectly mystified as to why he sat now where he did not sit when the House met last session. He had also regarded Gympie, for whose representative he had reason to feel every respect, as being one of the liberal constituencies, and he had not heard of any such wonderful change having taken place in the minds of the people of that constituency as to lead them to choose a member who did not truly represent the principles they held. Then he came to the honourable and learned member for Bulimba, who was to be found sitting on the other side of the House, though the gentlemen who elected him were as liberal and as pronounced in their political preferences as any who sat on the Ministerial side of the House. When he thought that one of the honourable gentleman's predecessors was Colonial Treasurer of this very Administration—a Colonial Treasurer of whom his constituency was not a little proud—he was puzzled to know why the present representative of that constituency sat on that side of the House. He had not risen for the purpose of making an apology for the Government. Without having pledged himself to support the Government, he had always expressed his sympathy with the Liberal party. He would challenge anyone to say

that he had come pledged to support the Government; on every occasion during his canvass he had stated that he would support the Liberal party, but he never stated that he would support the particular set of men forming the Ministry, either individually or collectively. But his support to them was the result of conviction that in the hands of those gentlemen the interests of the colony were safe; the interests of the colony would not be safe, in his judgment, in the hands of any Administration formed from the benches on the other side. He was sensible that there had been many shortcomings on the part of the members of the Government, and he did not support them in everything; there had been many measures brought forward of which, personally, he disapproved. For instance, the bunching system of railways, which had committed the country injudiciously to a very large expenditure. The leader of the Government of that day was chargeable with a very serious amount of culpability for the part he had taken in that matter. He would be told by gentlemen on the other side of the House that they opposed these railways; that they used all the forms of the House to try and defeat the intentions of the Government of the day. What conclusion was he to arrive at from that. Was it that these gentlemen were actuated by a desire to economise or to protect the country from extravagance? He did not think so. He feared that their opposition to these proposals to construct these five lines of railway was simply because the Government of the day was taking the wind out of their opponent's sails. What did he find they did? Why, the leader of the Opposition came down to the house, even after this enormous expenditure, which they opposed, had been incurred, and calmly and quietly proposed—and very nearly carried his proposition—that the country should be committed to an expenditure of three millions more, for the purpose of carrying railways into the "Never-never" country, in the far interior. If, then, the sin of the Government, in going in for expenditure, was great, the sin of the Opposition was infinitely greater. As a public man, and as leader of the Opposition, he (Mr. Rutledge) looked on the honourable member for Mulgrave with respect, and he believed that had that party had the wisdom sometime before they did to have appointed the honourable member for Mulgrave their leader—and he did not say this out of any wish to disparage the honourable member who was previously the leader—had they induced the then leader of that side to give way to the honourable member for Mulgrave, the present Opposition side of the House would have made very much

more headway during the last Parliament than they did. Much praise had been bestowed upon the honourable member for North Brisbane for his special qualities; and, while he believed in firmness, and bluntness, and John Bull honesty, and all that sort of thing, still it might be carried just a little too far. One of the great sins which was constantly held up as committed by the honourable member at the head of the Government was that he was weak and vacillating. It would certainly be a fault if the honourable gentleman were to endeavour to oblige everybody, and it was certain he could not please everybody if he tried; but if it were a fault to endeavour to please and be courteous, it was a fault that some of those who condemned the honourable gentleman might imitate without incurring much disadvantage thereby. There had been several charges made against the Government last night, and he now proposed in a very few words, for he did not wish to make any lengthened observations, to refer to two or three matters which were thrown out as accusations against the Government, and indirectly at the party who were supporting them. He entirely dissented from the remarks of the honourable member for Blackall, and from the statement of some others that it would have been better had the debate concluded last night, after the leaders on each side had addressed the House and given their views. What did honourable members come to the House for? Surely they were not dumb dogs, and never to open their mouths. Besides, the leader might say something to which honourable members did not entirely assent—and were they to remain silent then? The constituencies, too, had to be considered, and they had a right to know the reasons, and the worth of those reasons, when it was proposed to do such an important legislative act as to give a vote which was to decide the fate of a Ministry. However, the first charge laid by the leader of the Opposition, was that the Government were responsible for the state of things which resulted in the Chinese agitation. He (Mr. Rutledge) thought the honourable member must have been conscious at the time he was making that statement, that he was going beyond the facts—that he was dealing in the language of hyperbole. Now for any member of Government to say that the action of the A.S.N. Company, in endeavouring to inundate the colony with Mongolians—to open the door of every department of labour to the Mongolian race, was to make an assertion really not borne out by the actual facts. He (Mr. Rutledge), with the impatience which characterised some who were enthusiastic in a good cause, might have felt some impatience with the honourable

gentleman at the head of the Government that he had not, when interviewed, spoken more decidedly—that he had not intimated the full intentions of the Government in respect of the A.S.N. Company and the question of Chinese immigration; but now that they saw that a fresh contract was to be called for, and that steps had been taken to meet the difficulty, then he thought that it became evident that the intentions of the Government were pure and honest. Why, then, should they join in hurling the accusation at the head of the Government? And who were the gentlemen who did it? Why, they were those who had been accustomed to support Chinese immigration. Had not those honourable gentlemen joined themselves hand-in-hand; had they not endorsed the statements of an honourable gentleman who sat on that side of the House in the last Parliament, and who constantly referred to the necessity of having Chinese introduced into this colony, and who deprecated the action of the Government in endeavouring to prevent it—the only Government, too, in the Australian colonies which had had the courage to take such steps as were likely to prevent an inundation of Mongolians. And while the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government was writing to the various Premiers of other colonies, and trying to induce them to unite in representing the facts to the Imperial Government, he was met by the strongest opposition from the other side of the House. And yet this statement was made by the honourable leader of the Opposition that the Government were responsible for the Chinese agitation. He (Mr. Rutledge) was sorry to find that the honourable the junior member for North Brisbane and the honourable member for Drayton and Toowoomba were of like mind with the leader of the Opposition. He hoped the honourable member for North Brisbane had changed his views on the subject of Chinese immigration. It was said that the honourable member would form one of another Administration, and he (Mr. Rutledge) did not suppose that whatever was said would affect the vote that was to be given. If it should come to pass that he was called to become a member of a new Administration, he (Mr. Rutledge) warned him that he would have to speak out on the Chinese question in no ambiguous terms if he desired to come back to the House. Another charge against the Government was, that they were responsible for the pressure which was brought to bear and which led to the disfranchisement of Fortitude Valley. Now nothing could have been in worse taste than such a statement made by the gentleman who helped to bring about that state of things, for which he now sought to fasten on the Government the responsibility. The

honourable member said that, when the Government were defeated on the motion, which was brought in by the honourable member for Toowoomba, they ought immediately to have withdrawn the Bill. That was a peculiar idea of justice—that, because one constituency could not get its proper share of representation, twelve other constituencies were to go without their proper representation; and while it was a matter of regret that the intentions of the Government were not carried into effect, still it was much to their credit that that Bill was carried through the House with so little mutilation. And when the Electoral Districts Act became law, public opinion was so strongly expressed that an injustice had been done, that it was believed neither side of the House would attempt to refuse to give Fortitude Valley its just share of representation. On the members opposite rested the responsibility of the great injustice done to the electorate. The honourable member for Toowoomba last night had produced a letter from a selector on Darling Downs, who, being what was known as “hard up,” sought to obtain relief from the Government. This Darling Downs gentleman was one of those who always turned up to the aid of the honourable gentleman who produced the letter. He (Mr. Rutledge) did not know whether the honourable member had been having anything to do with the necromancy to which he referred last night, but it really was a very remarkable coincidence that when these documents were wanted they always turned up as having been received that very day. There was nothing wrong in the selectors being distressed, and he sympathised with them very much—

Mr. GROOM: They don't want your sympathy.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said they might find that the time would come when his sympathy would be of more value to them than that of the honourable member for Toowoomba. He did not think that the fact of a selector being destitute of the necessaries of life was a thing for which the Government should be impeached, and for which they should be found guilty of having brought the country to its alleged present state of impoverishment. The fact was that we have been sharing in the state of depression that had existed all over the face of the globe. He considered that we had reason to be thankful that, whilst in China millions of our fellow-creatures had been dying of starvation—that whilst we had been subscribing to keep the people in India alive—our farmers had not been obliged to become the recipients of charity as those unfortunate people had been. The fact was that the colony had been passing through two years of severe depression caused by drought, and that he thought should have excited the sympathy of hon-

ourable members, and not have caused them to hastily condemn the Government. He would just remind the House, in order to show how valueless were the arguments of the honourable member for Drayton and Toowoomba—that in the speech the honourable member made last evening, when deprecating the condition of things, he said that the Government was responsible for it, and, moreover, that if he had his way he would immediately pay off the contractors of the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line, and the Maryborough and Gympie line, and give them compensation for throwing up the contract. That was legislation, certainly, with a vengeance. He must say that he should be ashamed to give expression to such an original idea; that honourable member was one of the members that backed up and supported the Government when the five railways were before the House, and who said that the Government should carry on public works, and provide something for the people to eat; and for that honourable member to say that he would plunder the exchequer by taking out money to pay off the contractors, and to render utterly unproductive the expenditure on those lines for the distances they had already been carried, was to admit a thing that would be a monstrosity in the shape of legislation, and to which he (Mr. Rutledge), at all events, would never be a party. He agreed with the honourable member for Blackall that there was no occasion to go through the clauses of the speech delivered by His Excellency; but he must say that, if they were to have taxation, and to have public works suited to the resources of the colony, they ought to trust gentlemen whom they had proved rather than gentlemen who had not been proved. They knew that honourable members on his side of the House were a united party, whilst those on the opposite side were a heterogeneous mass. No common sentiment actuated them, and just as by a kind of unexplainable influence, a kind of magnetism, they had been recently drawn together, so when that magnetic influence had been removed they would undergo a process of disintegration as rapid as that of their formation. He apologised to the House for having occupied their time for so long.

Mr. PERKINS said he regretted that he was unable to go at any length into the debate; but at the same time there was no necessity for his doing so, as he believed that the minds of honourable members were made up as to which way they would vote. He thought that the Government could not be congratulated on the speech which had just been delivered by the honourable member for Enoggera. That honourable gentleman had told them that half a loaf was better than no bread; that suggested a political problem which he (Mr. Perkins) should

like to see solved. If half a loaf was better than no bread, what was the value of a whole loaf? He began to think that there must be some blunder about politics, something to be picked up which he had not yet got on the scent of. It was evident that if the pursuit of politics paid better than divinity, or many other pursuits that hypocrites cloaked themselves with or took shelter under, outside the House, then they came to politics. He did not know whether it was a hopeful sign of the times or not, but he was very doubtful of it. He supposed some day or other they would tap the spring of oil in the rock, whether with Aaron's rod or not he could not say. It was not necessary for him to refer to anything that the honourable member for Enoggera had said, beyond saying that the honourable member had studied his sermon very well. He, however, for one, would not submit to be sermonised, and it was quite time enough for honourable members, especially new members, to talk about their honesty when it was doubted. For his part, whenever he heard a man talk about his honesty he had his doubts about it, and looked at that person's antecedents. He considered the charges which had been made by the honourable member against honourable members on the opposite benches were most intemperate and uncalled for; they were not delivered as by a man telling the truth, or one who believed the statements he was making. Some insinuations had been made concerning himself which he should not have noticed were it not that there were many new members in the House with whom such statements might have some weight if they were not contradicted. It was well known to honourable members who had been in the House last session why he crossed over. He had made a promise to his constituents that, if some change was not made in the administration of the lands, he should shift his seat, as he had found that the honourable Premier, who was Minister for Lands, at the time, handicapped the persons of small means who wished to settle on the lands, whilst he looked with a kind eye on parts of the Darling Downs, and merely winked when letting capitalists get thousands of acres there. He merely mentioned that for the information of new members. There was one little piece of machinery on which the Government had always operated, and that was, that they represented the Liberal party—not the great Liberal party, as they had dropped the word "great" lately, and that machinery had been used most dexterously by the Minister for Works. After the speeches, however, which had been delivered by the honourable members for Northern Downs

and Blackall, he should like to ask any member of the Government what they had to say about liberalism? It was also well known that, whenever anyone wanted redress, their best friends were to be found on the Opposition, and not on the so-called Liberal side of the House. What better evidence could there be of that than the encounter between the Premier and the late Minister for Works. Let honourable members look at the different accounts given of the matter, and judge for themselves. Of course a longer account was given by one side than by the other; but on the one there was a short straightforward statement, whilst on the other there was a long rigmarole of words which meant nothing. He happened to know that the honourable gentleman encouraged idlers. If to be liberal was to fill places with idlers and incompetent and incapable people, and to give the proceeds of sales of machinery and instruments to undeserving people who had no claim whatever—to have one law for the rich man, or man of title, and another for the poor man, and to mal-administer the laws—then he said the honourable gentleman had every claim to the title. He (Mr. Perkins) confronted him with it now, and let him deny it if he could. It was quite time that the public were made aware of the false cry about Liberal and Squatter. He had a distinct recollection that when the Maryborough and Gympie railway was brought forward—and there was some rebellious spirits in the camp—the honourable the Premier said that if he did not get that line carried out—that was at £2,000 per mile—he would resign immediately, and go into the Opposition. That was how he tried to keep his party together. He held them together by a rope of sand, by tricks, and by telling them that if he left office the squatters would come into power.

The PREMIER: I rise to correct the honourable gentleman. The fact he has stated is perfectly new to me, and unknown to those gentlemen with whom I am acting.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hear, hear.

Mr. GROOM: You must have a very bad memory to say so.

Mr. PERKINS repeated that the Premier said so, and said so more than once. The honourable gentleman also went about the country holding it out as a red rag to candidates, that if they did not support him the squatters would come into power. Let him recollect his statement at Toowoomba. Perhaps he forgot that also. Perhaps he was blest with a convenient memory. He would not willingly misquote the honourable gentleman, but he said what he (Mr. Perkins) had stated, and there were members in the House who could say the same thing if they chose to do so. That was the threat.

The PREMIER: I rise to order. The honourable member has made a statement which is not correct. I never made that statement.

The SPEAKER: The honourable the Premier having denied the statement, the honourable member is out of order in repeating it.

Mr. PERKINS said he would not persist in his statement, as he had no wish to infringe the rules of the House; and he would now direct attention to another matter. While the threat was being held out to the great Liberal party—that if they did not act in a certain way, the squatters would come into power; he felt it his duty to call attention to the matter, and he put it before his constituents that if the squatter was such an offensive creature as the Premier had pointed him out to be, and such terrible calamities were to overtake the country on their advent to power that the Premier had foretold, it was very extraordinary that when that honourable gentleman had anything to give away he was more liberal to the squatters than anyone else; that he was more liberal with them in dealing with lands, never making troublesome inquiries as to whether the conditions were performed or not, than he was with 80-acre people.

The PREMIER: No, I was not.

Mr. PERKINS said there was the case of the Yandilla selections, where the honourable gentleman gave away 11,000 acres of land without any inquiry whatever—land that was worth £3 an acre, while other land, not worth 10s. an acre, was put up in eighty-acre blocks, and selectors had to pay 30s. or £2 an acre for it. Did that show any desire to settle people on the lands? He also thought it very strange if all these calamities were to accrue to the colony if the squatters came into power, that whenever there was a vacancy in the Ministry the honourable gentleman always applied to the squatters to fill that vacancy.

The PREMIER: I deny it.

Mr. PERKINS would repeat his statement, but with this correction:—that the honourable gentlemen himself did not ask those gentlemen to join his Ministry, but it was done nevertheless. The gentleman who acted as ambassador or mediator on such occasions was called into existence, and it was done. He therefore thought the honourable gentleman was not entitled to be considered the father of the liberals any longer. If he (the Premier) did not arrogate so much to himself, perhaps this might have been allowed to pass unnoticed; but when he went flying about the country from constituency to constituency as if he had not the place to rest the sole of his foot, he must expect it. He thought the honourable gentleman, in place of going to Toowoomba and other constituencies, and dic-

tating to the people as to whom they should return, should have stopped at home where he had trouble enough on hand. And this reminded him (Mr. Perkins) of the way in which that honourable gentleman plumed himself yesterday on the result of the elections. But what did he do? As a test he (Mr. Perkins) would refer to the Maryborough election, in reference to which the honourable gentleman stated he had been returned by an overwhelming majority. But he (Mr. Perkins) believed the fact was that he tacked himself on to the coat-tails of some other candidate at the start, and hence the result. He (Mr. Perkins) and other members happened to know at what cost to the country the honourable gentleman had been returned; and, so long as he remained in the colony, he should always regret his conduct in connection with the Maryborough and Gympie Railway. He did not say that the people there were not entitled to a railway, because he believed in railways more than a road; but he would say this: that the honourable gentleman, whether intentionally or not, had contrived to deceive his party into voting for that railway on the distinct understanding that it would not cost more than £2,500 per mile. If it had not been for that statement he (Mr. Perkins) would not have voted for it; and, after being imposed upon on that occasion, and seeing that some of the most substantial men of Maryborough admitted that the construction of the line would be a waste of money, and that it might as well be divided amongst the people at once, he thought he was justified in coming to the conclusion that he had; and that when he found he was on the wrong road the sooner he retraced his steps the better. In what way, therefore, could the finger of scorn be pointed at him, because he had crossed over to that side of the House? Could any member on the Treasury bench say that he had done so to serve himself, or that he expected anything? He was not looking for anything; he was not a voting machine or a time-server; he did not pretend to be a guardian of the people and their defender against capitalists and land-sharks and others; but they had seen the exchanges that had been made; they had seen the exhibitions that had taken place in that House, and he was sure that if the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government occupied that position much longer, he would soon become tired of some of the supporters he had been instrumental in bringing to the House. But whenever he had a vacancy in the Ministry, and he could not get a squatter to join him, he must always go to Queen street. He must stick to the gutters up and down Queen street; and it was notorious that this colony from Normanton to Stanthorpe, and from Cape Bowling Green to the far west, was

ruled over by a few persons picked up by accident or design in Queen street. Was that fair, he would ask? Would the honourable gentleman say for one moment that any man endowed with a reasonable amount of common sense, would submit to, or endure any such treatment—that Queen street was to rule the whole of Queensland? He (Mr. Perkins) resented it now as he had done before, and he had told the honourable gentlemen that he should do so, and therefore he had nothing to complain of. The honourable the Treasurer had stated that the Treasury was now in a better condition than it was in 1876; but they knew well to the contrary. Figures, of course, could be made to prove anything, and looking at the circuitous route the honourable gentleman took in dealing with them, it was quite possible that he might have made an impression upon some honourable members; but they all knew, without any figures at all, that the Treasury was not in as healthy and sound a condition as it was in 1876. The Treasurer was told twelve months ago that his estimates would never be realised; but he pooh-pooed the statement. After eighteen months or two years' drought the Treasurer was foolish enough to believe that the revenue would be as elastic and buoyant as it had been previously; but it was not reasonable to expect that it would be so, and his trying to hoodwink members by saying that it was as sound as in 1876 was simply a delusion. As to the operation of the Railway Reserves Act, if it had been attended with so much success as the Treasurer would have them believe, why did they not continue to operate upon it? Where was the necessity to go elsewhere for money? He did not for a moment intend to blame the honourable the Treasurer, or any member of the Ministry, for the misfortune that had overtaken the colony; but why did he keep on repeating that the measure was a success, when it was known to be a most egregious and lamentable failure? The honourable member for Ipswich (Mr. Macfarlane) said that the Ministry did not spend any money on the elections, and he (Mr. Perkins) would not charge them with having done so; but he would say that they had done everything short of it, and a good deal that was more unfair than spending money, in trying to prevent the return of members to the House who were likely to be opposed to them. He did not think it was necessary for him to do more than explain this matter about "Liberals" and "Squatters," and to say that he failed to discover the Liberals on the Government side of the House. If he wanted to see the Liberal party he had to look on this (Opposition) side for it; and if he found at any time, so long as he remained a member of the House, that the

gentlemen on this side, when in possession of the Treasury benches, ceased to be liberal, ceased to act for the benefit of the multitude, and began to play those tricks and pranks and frauds on the people and the Treasury which had been hinted at and foretold by some supporters of the Government, he should immediately walk across the floor of the House and support some other party.

The PREMIER: I wish, sir, to make a personal explanation with reference to a statement made by the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, and to which it is necessary I should reply. The honourable gentleman stated to-night what he has previously stated, that I made offers to honourable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. I refer to a statement published in the *Courier* of the 8th November, similar to that which has now been made, where the honourable gentleman, addressing a public meeting, is reported to have said:—

"In referring to the 'Liberal party,' as defined by Mr. Douglas, he stated that, to his (Mr. Perkins') own knowledge, Mr. Douglas had tried to get three of the most prominent members of the Opposition to join him before he took Mr. Miles, who eventually proved too honest for the Queen-street politicians, and was got rid of."

That was such a precise statement that I requested the honourable gentleman to contradict it. It had no foundation in fact. I had made no such offers, and I felt I was bound to inform the honourable gentleman that he could not have stated it upon his own knowledge, because it was incorrect. But the honourable gentleman never did me the honour to contradict that statement, as he ought to have done, and as it would have been only manly and truthful for him to have done. The question was not a question of the Liberal party at all, but simply of truth or falsehood, and I deliberately stated that it was not true—that there was not the slightest foundation for it, and I regret very much that the honourable gentleman did not contradict it.

Mr. PERKINS said the words "of his own knowledge," in the newspaper report, were not exactly correct, but he still adhered to his statement notwithstanding the assertions of the Premier.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I think I have a perfect right to state what I know on the matter. It is unfair for the Premier to contradict the statement made, for I can state most positively —

The SPEAKER: The honourable gentleman merely rose to make a personal explanation. The honourable member for Mulgrave, having already addressed the House, can only speak again by the indulgence of the House.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I know I shall have the indulgence of the House for what I have to say. In contradiction to what has fallen from the Premier, I may say that I know, of my own knowledge, that before the place occupied by the late Minister for Works was filled up, it was offered by an agent of the Premier to a squatter on this side of the House. That is a fact within my own knowledge.

The PREMIER: Name!

Mr. McILWRAITH: I shall mention no names, but I know it of my own knowledge.

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

The House divided:—

AYES, 20.

Messrs. Douglas, Garrick, Griffith, Dickson, McLean, Kingsford, Price, Rae, Macfarlane, Grimes, Stubley, Hendren, Bailey, Meston, Rutledge, Mackay, Kates, Horwitz, Tyrel, and Paterson.

NOES, 32.

Messrs. Bell, Thompson, Palmer, McIlwraith, Stevenson, Morehead, Kellett, Perkins, Pesse, Norton, Low, Scott, Simpson, Beor, Hill, Stevens, Paul, Amhurst, H. W. Palmer, Lalor, Deane, Walsh, Sheaffe, Baynes, Pring, Hamilton, O'Sullivan, Cooper, Swanwick, Groom, Davenport, and Archer.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted, be so inserted; and that the Address, as amended, be adopted—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: Before moving the adjournment of the House, I beg to intimate that His Excellency the Governor, as I have ascertained, will be prepared to receive the Speaker at half-past eleven tomorrow. I move, therefore, that the House do now adjourn till eleven o'clock tomorrow.

Mr. McILWRAITH said there were certain motions on the paper, and in order to have them disposed of before the Address in Reply was presented, he would ask the Premier to amend his motion so as to make the adjournment until half-past ten o'clock.

The PREMIER said that after such a motion as that just disposed of had been carried, he could not undertake to proceed with further business.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that he would then move, as an amendment, that the House should meet at ten o'clock.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the honourable member had taken a very unusual course. When a motion involving the defeat of the Government had been carried, the Government could not go on with other business; and it was also one of the first principles of Constitutional law that none

should be proceeded with until a Government had been obtained which possessed the confidence of the House. The amendment just carried was that the House declined to consider business so long as the present Ministry remained on the Treasury benches; it was obvious, therefore, that the Ministry could not go on. It was the practice invariably, under the same circumstances, for the Premier to move the adjournment of the House, and the first thing the Ministry had to do was to signify the intelligence to the Governor. His Excellency had fixed upon half-past ten to receive the Address, and it was rather remarkable that they should transact business before presenting it. He could give some other reasons—

Mr. BELL: No; it's all right.

Mr. McILWRAITH said his chief object in wishing to go on with business tomorrow was to save time. No doubt the ex-Attorney-General was right, that under the amendment, the House declined to consider business whilst the Ministry held office, but that meant business introduced by the Government. It was perfectly competent for the House to select its officers, and he was quite justified in taking that course from the action of the Government. The Premier, after putting down the name of the gentleman he intended to propose for the office of Chairman of Committees, informed him that he declined to proceed with the motion. It was therefore necessary for the Opposition to go on with the election of that officer, and there was nothing inconsistent in their doing so; he would therefore press the amendment.

The PREMIER said the decision arrived at that evening would not prevent the honourable gentleman from proceeding with the business he had named, or any other at a future time.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that if the honourable the Premier would, when the House met on Tuesday, take the business of which notice had been given, he had no intention of forcing the appointment of Chairman of Committees, and on the understanding that the honourable gentleman would do so, he should have no objection to withdraw his amendment.

The PREMIER replied that he could come to no understanding. If the honourable gentleman referred to previous circumstances, he would see that there was no difficulty in transacting the ordinary business, and the same course might be adopted on this occasion.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he would point out to the ex-Attorney-General that he had been inaccurate in his statement of the terms of the amendment; it referred merely to some of the subjects submitted in the Speech, and they now declined to proceed with their consideration; not with all the business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he sat down on its being said by one honourable

member on the Opposition benches that the matter was settled; he understood then that there was to be an adjournment in accordance with the usual practice.

Mr. BELL said he had not the authority of the leader of the Opposition for calling out "All right." He hoped his honourable friend would not persist in doing that which he might carry into effect without difficulty.

Mr. PALMER had no doubt that if the honourable the leader of the Opposition pressed his amendment to a division it would be carried, but strongly recommended him not to do so. Let them get the Address presented first. There was plenty of time, whether the Government liked it or not, to appoint a Chairman of Committees. Supply must be had by any Ministry coming into power, and before it could be got there must be a Chairman of Committees chosen.

Mr. McILWRAITH said, from the assent given by the Premier to his honourable friend's remarks, he concluded that he was in favour of appointing the Chairman of Committees before the recess. He had been told that it was the intention of the Government to prevent the appointment taking place, and his object was to defeat that intention being carried out. Seeing that the Government had no such wish, he would accept the advice given by the honourable member for North Brisbane.

The PREMIER could not agree with the remarks of the honourable member in the sense conveyed by him. On previous occasions an Acting Chairman was chosen, and the same course, it seemed to him, might be now followed.

Mr. McILWRAITH then withdrew his amendment, with the consent of the House. Original question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes after nine o'clock.