

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 20 MAY 1879

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 20 May, 1879.

Presentation of Address in Reply.—Governor's Answer to Address in Reply.—Vacant Seat.—Privilege.—Adjournment of the House.—Petition.—Formal Motions.—Adjournment of the House.—Questions.—Supply.—Financial Districts Bill.—Mines Regulation Bill.—Divisional Boards Bill.—Electoral Rolls Bill.—Licensing Boards Bill.—Criminals Expulsion Bill.—Sale of Food and Drugs Bill.—Stamp Duties Act Amendment Bill.—Joint Committees.—Queensland Coast Islands Bill.—second reading.—Impounding Act Amendment Bill.—Election of Members during Recess Bill—second reading.

The SPEAKER took the chair at twenty-five minutes past 3 o'clock.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS IN
REPLY.

The SPEAKER invited the Assembly to proceed to Government House, to present to the Governor the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech delivered by His Excellency.

The Speaker and honourable members accordingly proceeded to Government House.

GOVERNOR'S ANSWER TO ADDRESS
IN REPLY.

The SPEAKER, on returning, announced that the Assembly had been to Government House, and there presented their reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following answer:—

"Mr. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN,—It affords great satisfaction to receive on behalf of Her Majesty your assurance of continued loyalty and affection towards the person of our Most

Gracious Sovereign. I sincerely reciprocate the expression of your trust that your labours may result in promoting the permanent well-being of the general interests of Queensland.

"A. E. KENNEDY.

"Government House,

"Brisbane, 20th May, 1879."

VACANT SEAT.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) moved—

That the seat of the Honourable Ratcliffe Pring hath become and is now vacant by reason of his acceptance of the office of Attorney-General since his election and return to serve in this House as member for the Electoral District of Fortitude Valley.

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH said that this was certainly a very unusual course of proceeding. How was the House to know whether the Honourable Mr. Pring had accepted the office of Attorney-General or not? At any rate, there was nothing to show that he had. The course followed on previous occasions was, for the Premier to present to the House the *Gazette* containing the announcement of the resignation of one member and of the appointment of another. It was also usual to state the reasons which led to a change in a Ministry. He did not know what the reasons were which had caused the resignation of the Minister for Justice, but in any case the course now adopted was an unusual one;—at least the House was entitled to the usual courtesy of an explanation from the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government, in reference to any changes which might have taken place in the Government. There was another remarkable feature about it that, when notifications of a change in the constitution of a Government were made, it was usual for them to be signed by the Premier; whereas, the notifications contained in the supplement to the *Gazette* of Saturday last were signed by the Colonial Secretary. Seeing this, he had half expected that there would probably be a notification of a further change in the Ministry—that its head was changed. He could not think why the customary method of procedure had been departed from on this occasion, or why the notifications were signed by the Colonial Secretary, although he was Vice-President of the Executive Council. There might be nothing in it, for it might be that the notification was drawn up by the Clerk to the Executive Council; but it was curious that it should have happened, and it had attracted a good deal of attention. He was especially surprised to hear that in the course of a few weeks after their formation such a change in the Government had taken place.

The PREMIER said that the honourable member who had just spoken had com-

menced his career as leader of the Opposition by criticisms of a really very small character. There was no doubt that it had been usual for any Minister when moving the seat of an honourable member to be vacant, by putting on the table of the House the *Gazette* containing the notice of his resignation; but in this case there was a notification of a further appointment. Everybody could see from the *Gazette* itself that the late member for Fortitude Valley had been appointed Attorney-General; and he did not think that, in making a motion in the way he had, under similar circumstances, it had been the practice to accompany such motion with the *Gazette*. That was filed in the House, and was easily accessible; and if the honourable gentleman had not seen the *Gazette* he had not been up to his duty. With regard to his (Mr. Griffith's) doubts about who was Premier or going to be Premier, he might be easy on that point; and if the objection was that the notification was signed by the Colonial Secretary, the honourable member had hit the nail on the head when he said it might have been the Clerk of the Executive Council. It was the Clerk of the Executive Council who had drawn out the notification, and he (Mr. McIlwraith) did not care who signed the notifications so long as they were signed properly. When the leader of the Opposition had some really substantial facts to go upon, he (the Premier) would be very glad to listen to him.

Mr. REA said that a flagrant insult had been offered to the House by the head of the Government refusing to afford them information about the change in the Ministry. What were they sent there for if it was not to acquire information affecting, it might be, very important questions? It was an offence for the leader of the House to treat the subject which had just been brought forward lightly in calling the remarks of the leader of the Opposition criticisms of a small character. With regard to the substitution of a subordinate Minister to the Premier in the signing of the notifications, it would have been as well to have bracketed together the names of the two men who really formed the Ministry, and who had been, and were now, Ministers—the twin Premiers of the colony. The House had a right to the first knowledge of any Ministerial change, and he would like to know whether they were to receive that information first, or to be passed over and informed indirectly?

Mr. BAILEY called attention to the fact that he had a motion on the notice paper to some extent similar to that of the Premier, and he wished for the Speaker's ruling, what would result if the present motion were carried?

The SPEAKER said that it was true the terms of the honourable member's motion were

to similar effect; but, by the 6th section of the Legislative Assembly Act, an honourable member's seat became vacant immediately on his acceptance of office, and it was the business of the House at once to declare the seat vacant, in order that a fresh writ might issue for the election of a member.

Question put and passed.

PRIVILEGE.

Mr. REA had no wish to argue the question, but called attention to what was a breach of privilege in what appeared in the metropolitan papers, and which had a direct bearing on the correctness of the Speaker's ruling. In the *Telegraph* of Friday last he read:—

"We are pleased to observe that *Hansard* has suppressed the frivolous charges against the Postmaster-General."

In the *Courier* of the next day he read—

"We were glad to think that even in the privileged columns of *Hansard* the disgraceful and preposterous charges against the Postmaster-General were suppressed."

These two paragraphs he called particular attention to, because, in the first place, it was an indirect insult to the Speaker to suppose that he would allow anything to pass the chair which was unfit for publication in *Hansard*. In the next place—

The SPEAKER said that the extracts simply referred to something occurring in the House on which comment was founded. That did not constitute a breach of privilege, and therefore the honourable member could not proceed to address the House on a question of privilege on the extracts he had read. With reference to the fact of the whole of a speech delivered in the House not being reported in *Hansard*, he might state that it had been understood by honourable members that the *Hansard* report could not be a *verbatim* report, and that towards the latter part of the evening speeches must be, and were, frequently condensed.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. REA said he would now move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of making a few remarks. He quite agreed with what had fallen from the honourable the Speaker with regard to the omission of portions of his speech from *Hansard*. Had his remarks, which were omitted, applied to a private member of the House, he should have passed the matter over without further notice. He believed, however, that anything that was said in the House as a comment on the conduct of a Minister should not be suppressed. Their reading as students of history told them of occasions on which the conduct of Ministers had been denounced in the House of Com-

mons; and he could mention ten, aye even thirty, occasions where far stronger language than he had used had been reported. He ventured to say that if a Minister in England had used the opportunities taken advantage of by the Postmaster-General of this colony to obtain a seat as Minister, he would have been ignominiously expelled. He did not ask for one moment to have a *verbatim* report of his speech, nor did he expect such a thing, especially at a late hour of the evening; but he would ask how it came about that the earlier part of his speech was omitted—it was not a question of shortening at all, but of suppression. He begged honourable members to bear in mind that *Hansard* was the only document by which the people of Queensland had an opportunity of seeing what was done in that House. It was the only impartial document that was published, as in the journals of the day the conduct of the present Ministers was only mentioned with laudation, and it was not therefore to be expected that anything but perverted statements of what happened in the House would appear in those journals. Therefore, if anything was allowed to be suppressed in *Hansard* about a Minister, honourable members lost the only opportunity they had of showing the people of the colony what was really done by them. He could not but remember what had taken place in America, and he traced the whole of the political degradation of that country to the fact that there was in it no newspaper similar to the *London Times*. He believed that if the House was to be disbanded for two years it would not be so great a calamity as to allow a publication like *Hansard* to be tampered with. What use, he would ask, would it be for honourable members to be battling and doing their duty if any animadversions they made on the conduct of a Minister who dared not face that House were to be suppressed in *Hansard*? He had been told that it was unfair to speak of a Minister in his absence; but it was because he was absent from the place where he ought to be that he (Mr. Rea) attacked him, for as a Minister his duty was to be in that House. He should always denounce that Minister for not being in his proper place, and for not going to a constituency to be returned by them before he accepted office—if he could find a constituency who would trust him. In conclusion, he would submit that anything that was said in the House, and was allowed to pass the chair, should not be suppressed in *Hansard*.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) wished to take advantage of the motion for adjournment to make a statement in reference to the discharge of the men from the Ipswich workshops. If the honourable the Minister for Works had allowed the motion he had tabled to go as a for-

mal motion he should not have spoken on the present occasion; but as the honourable gentleman had not done so he should call attention to some few facts:—On the day of the last election at Ipswich, several of the supporters of the liberal candidate were informed by the supporters of the Ministerial candidate that they would never have another opportunity of voting in Ipswich as *employés* in the railway workshops. That was rumour number one, and they had not to wait long before there was another, which was that word had been sent to the superintendent of the locomotive shops that a list of names must be sent to the Minister for Works of men who could be spared so as not to interfere with the proper working of the department. A list was sent down of forty or fifty men, but it was rejected and another was sent up to the superintendent containing the names of 103 men to be dismissed, three only of whom were of the same creed as the honourable Minister for Works. It was known at Ipswich that of that list at least 100 men were supporters of the liberal candidate, although the honourable Minister for Works stated a few evenings ago that he knew no creed and was guided by no political bias. The honourable member might have been perfectly justified in making that statement, as he might not have known the creed of those men, but it was strange that those very men should have been so accurately spotted out. Rumour said that the list was made out in the back parlour of a grocer's shop in Ipswich by three of the supporters of the Ministerial candidate, but even supposing it was only rumour, he thought it would be conceded that he had sufficient reason for bringing forward the matter. Another strange incident had turned up in connection with these men. He had taken a great deal of trouble to learn who put these men into the workshops, and he had ascertained that, out of the 103, ninety-eight had been put in by Liberal Governments and five by the Government which was in power from 1870 to 1874. That was a fact which would bring out another strange coincidence. The honourable the Minister for Works told the House that he knew no political bias, and yet only five of the men appointed by his party were discharged, whilst ninety-eight of those put in by the Liberal Governments were sent adrift. He wished to know whether such conduct was to be taken as a precedent, and whether the colony was to be Americanized in such a way that every new Government was to send adrift those public servants who did not support them in their elections;—in other words, that men were to be discharged on political grounds, and on no other. Before sitting down he would mention that the places of many of the men who had been paid off

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must be filled up, and that there were not men in the department to fill them up: he referred more particularly to engine drivers and stokers. He had heard it said that the superintendent of the locomotive department had not men to fill up those vacancies. Again, he found that in the year 1864—the year when the first railway was opened—one of the men now dismissed received his appointment on the works, and had since never had any complaint made against him. That man was unfortunate enough to lose a thumb whilst in the discharge of his duty, and now, after working for fourteen years for the Government and being almost entitled to a pension, he was turned adrift on the world without a character, as all these men were dismissed as incapables. Five more men had been employed since 1865 and four more since 1866—all old servants, in fact. He thought the honourable Minister for Works had made up his mind to ruin the colony, and he trusted the honourable gentleman's colleagues, more especially the Colonial Treasurer, would see that he was not allowed to go too far. The effect of these 100 men leaving the colony—by the way, one a blacksmith, who was an independent man, had already advertised his furniture and was about to go to New Zealand, where he would soon be followed by many others—the effect of these men leaving the colony would be this—that, being nearly all married men, the colony would lose 500 persons who consumed dutiable articles. Therefore, it was a matter for the honourable Treasurer, and he should show that such high-handed conduct as that of his colleague was not approved, and such a scheme as the dismissal of 103 men, to-morrow, should not be entered into, but that justice should be done to all. Before he sat down, he wished to say, in regard to a statement made by him in the debate on the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech, that after these men had received notice of dismissal a new man had been appointed—that he had since ascertained from a person whose word was reliable that the man was working in Mr. Cross' department, and not in the locomotive shops.

Mr. MACKAY said he wished to make a few remarks on the subject of the men who were to be discharged to-morrow. He could state from his own knowledge that, within the last two years the overseers in the Ipswich workshops had been endeavouring to induce mechanics to leave Brisbane and to go to Ipswich; and the honourable Minister for Works knew very well that the most difficult class of men to get to the colony were good mechanics. If those men left the colony it would be a positive loss, although he should not wonder if it turned out the best thing that could happen for the young

men who left; but it would be bad for the country. At the same time, it would be a positive hardship to those men who had been induced to leave good employment in Brisbane to go into the Government workshops at Ipswich, that they should be dismissed in such a manner. A great deal had been said about political patronage in connection with the dismissals, but he thought that the hardest men to be patronised were mechanics, as they were most independent; but even supposing some of them had shouted and bawled at election time, he would urge on their behalf that such a thing should be overlooked. We had spent about £5,000,000 in this colony on railways, and of all the money thus spent that which had brought the best return was the money spent on the Ipswich workshops, although he would not say he was altogether in favour of carrying on all work by Government, as he preferred to see all work done by contract. Possibly those workshops might be turned into a co-operative concern and take the work from the Government. But there was another point to be looked at, which was that of all things to be studied in this colony was the training of mechanics; and it was to be lamented that, whilst millions had been spent on the railways, more attention had not been given to the instruction of young men so that they should learn what were the best description of engines to run on our lines. That was the reason why he should like to see encouragement given to the education of mechanics, and it was for that reason he believed it was good that the workshops should be kept in as active a state as possible. He would therefore urge upon the honourable Minister for Works, if not too late, that he should reconsider his decision. He thought that, considering the inducements offered to mechanics by other colonies at the present time, it would be better to put the men on half or three-quarter time rather than dismiss them;—that would at least have an excellent effect upon the hundreds arriving in the colony from the mother country, as it would show them that, although the colony was suffering from great depression, the Government were anxious to do all in their power to keep the hands going at the workshops. Without further occupying the time of the House, and without imputing any motives to the Minister for Works, or any other man, he would ask that honourable gentleman, if he possibly could, to reconsider his decision, so as not to drive those men out of the colony. He would beg of him, as one man to another, to do so before it was too late.

Mr. MESTON said he had no idea of speaking when the subject came before the House, and he would not say more than

a dozen sentences. He would, however, submit to the honourable the Minister for Works that it was a very serious matter to dismiss these men at a time when the colony was in such a state of depression. Here they were paying to bring untried and unskilled immigrants by the front door, while they were chasing the old skilled men out by the back door. They were driving them away without leaving them any prospect of emigrating elsewhere, and looking for the work which was denied them here. If the Government, at the time of dismissing the men, had intimated that they would proceed with the construction of one of the branch lines, so as to give employment to the floating population of West Moreton, there would have been no necessity for any man to leave the country. From personal knowledge of the men, he was in a position to state that they were undoubtedly skilled mechanics, firemen, and engineers, and who had been in the service, not merely for a few months, but for fifteen, sixteen, and in some cases as long as twenty years. He would therefore submit to the Minister for Works the propriety, and even the necessity, of keeping the men in the service until the country could offer them some prospect of other work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) said the honourable member ought not to hold him responsible for the rumours he chose to pick up in Ipswich, nor use them as a lever to try and get him to reconsider his decision with regard to the dismissal of the men in the Ipswich workshops. He had considered the question for three months, and it was not to-day or yesterday that it first came under his notice. The matter had been considered calmly, and had been looked in the face by the Government, who knew that when they wanted men they could get them equally as good as those who had been discharged. As to the fact of men leaving the colony, he pointed out that there were many men leaving the colony belonging to other trades, and some of no trade, who had been partly driven out of the colony through our action in bringing thousands of immigrants to occupy the places which should have been occupied by the men who were going away, and partly in consequence of excessive taxation to keep these and other men employed. That was a thing which should always be borne in mind in connection with this matter. The Government could not move in any part of the colony to dismiss even a policeman, but immediately a public indignation meeting was held, and a petition sent down to the Assembly, or to the Government, for the purpose of getting that man reinstated. Only this morning there appeared in the *Courier* a report of a meeting held at Ravenswood, because he, knowing the requirements of the Mines Department, had taken upon himself to make

a reduction in it. Knowing that the work could be carried on equally well, and at far less cost, he had amalgamated the office of Mining Registrar, who was simply a clerk to the Warden, with the office of Warden. An indignation meeting was at once held, and he was denounced because he had tried to economise the resources of the people of the colony. As to the suggestion about a branch line in the Ipswich district, no doubt the suggestion was very good and would be considered in its own good time. He was trying as much as possible to give employment to those who were unemployed, but it would be profitable employment and not employment given simply to keep them at work. It was not generally known—probably, not to one member in the House—that at the present moment the Government were employing, either through contractors or through the works carried on by the department, in the Central and Northern districts, as many as 3,000 men in the construction of railways. That number was entirely independent of those who were being paid from the revenue on other public works; and, probably, in reality, there were 5,000 or 6,000 men employed by the Government, directly or indirectly, in the colony of Queensland. Because he had taken upon himself to make a few dismissals, here and there, for the purpose of retrenchment, he was denounced outside the House and inside the House, and rumours were gathered together and brought there to be heaped upon him. It was a matter of indifference to him what honourable members said, so long as he knew that he was doing right; and it was simply absurd talking about creeds and politics, or about lists being made out in storekeepers' back rooms. He said now, as he had said before, that he was responsible for the dismissals—with the officers of the department. He had been told that it was said in Rockhampton that the Postmaster-General had selected the men there for dismissal because, forsooth, they had voted against him. He could affirm that there was not a single man in the colony who had suggested in any way the dismissals of the men from Rockhampton, with the exception of the locomotive superintendent and the chief engineer. Those two men, himself, and the Commissioner were responsible; and the same Commissioner, himself, and the officers of the department were responsible for the dismissals at Ipswich. Honourable members, he thought, might take that statement as the last word on the subject. As far as he was concerned, he was doing his best to increase employment on the railways, although 3,000 men were already employed, in order to find employment for the floating unemployed population.

MR. GRIFFITH said he did not exactly see what the employment of men, by con-

tractors, for the construction of public works had to do with the dismissal of men from the Ipswich workshops. He did not dispute the propriety of economising the public resources, but he did think—and should hold the opinion until it could be changed by the production of documents—that, at a time when the colony was in a depressed state, it was a most unwise and unfortunate step to drive three or four hundred people out of it. He would express no opinion further as to the circumstances relating to the dismissals, but would tell the Government that, had they not objected to the motion of which the honourable member for Ipswich gave notice on the 14th May, probably some part of the discussion this afternoon would have been unnecessary. He did not know why the motion was not allowed to go as formal. It would certainly conduce to the carrying on of business if information were given frankly when asked for. With respect to the matter which the honourable member for Rockhampton had brought under the attention of the House, both the local newspapers had spoken of *Hansard* as suppressing part of the honourable member's speech; and nothing could be more unfortunate for the reputation of *Hansard* and every one connected with it than the supposition that anything had been deliberately suppressed. He, for one, had too much faith in the honour of the gentleman who had the charge and supervision of that paper, to suppose that anything had been deliberately suppressed. That a charge of that kind should have been made was in itself an unfortunate thing; because honourable members relied upon the impartiality of *Hansard* to answer any unfair charges which might be made against them by the Press, or in the House. In the same newspaper article in the *Courier* to which reference had been made he had been accused of having travelled into the regions of personal vilification. If it were supposed that *Hansard* suppressed things of that kind, it might be supposed that he had done as stated; but he was happy to think that *Hansard* did not deliberately suppress anything, and he appealed to its report to show that he had not travelled into any such region, nor descended to the personal vilification of any man. While he fully agreed with what had been said as to the extreme undesirableness of anything like personal attack, and while he would always endeavour to avoid personality in debate, he must entirely dissent from the idea that the Opposition were to proceed upon the assumption that their opponents were angels incapable of doing anything wrong. The function of the Opposition was to watch, and, if they saw anything to cause suspicion, to have an explanation by the best means they could get it. He conceived it to be their duty—

without attributing greater credit to one side or the other—to see to the manner in which the Government was administered and the affairs of the colony conducted; and if animadversion were deserved, it was their duty to animadvert—if they attributed blame to the Government for their conduct of business, it was their duty to say so. He had done so when he rose to speak upon the Address in Reply, and he should follow the same course upon any other occasion. He challenged a careful perusal of what he then said; and the more carefully his speech was perused, the clearer it would be seen that he then spoke of the administration of the Government during the recess, and said only what he had a right to say and should say. In one instance, only, he had occasion to say what might have suggested a personal imputation on a Minister; but he then immediately expressed a disclaimer against any such inference being drawn. It was the duty of every honourable member to avoid reference to private character or motive: but he was not aware that there was any authority of Parliamentary government or usage in the world to prevent the public conduct of any Government from being canvassed and criticised. If he were not permitted to impute blame to an honourable member—in his capacity of Minister, only, and not as to his private character—it struck him as very strange that for more than four years while he was sitting on the opposite benches he should have been the victim of the most savage attacks of all kinds from nearly every member of the Opposition. A wonderful change of opinion had taken place, and Ministers' skins had, it appeared, become as thin as if they had never in their lives heard of worrying a Minister. His political education, gained in the House and from the conduct of four separate leaders of the Opposition, had taught him that the most perfect freedom was admissible in criticising the political acts of a Ministry. He did not propose to follow the other part of the lesson he had had set before him, and reflect upon private character; but as far as the rest was concerned, he intended to use the most perfect freedom in exposing any maladministration in the public departments, or any departure from what the Opposition might conceive to be right. It was to *Hansard*, as giving a fair report of what they did say, that honourable members of the Opposition appealed as their best defence against any charges made against them from the other side of the House.

The PREMIER said no honourable member would deprecate criticism in any form—the Ministry were subject to it, and wished to be criticised; but no honourable member who was present when the honourable gentleman delivered his first speech that session, would think the Press were speaking harshly in describing it as

vilification. They did not want to be considered angels, but they ought to be considered as something different from the very opposite. They were not devils, nor ruffians capable of conduct such as would render them unfit to sit on those benches. With regard to the question of suppression, he could only say, after having witnessed the painful scene on that night, that if any suppression actually did take place, no man ought to be more thankful than the honourable member for Rockhampton himself. He (the Premier) did not think there was any suppression, and he gave every credit to the reporters for what they had done. There was not a reporter in existence who could have reported such a speech. The honourable member danced up and down like a madman for half-an-hour, and, as honourable members on the opposite side could not understand what he said, how could he expect that the reporters would be able to do so? It was evident that they failed to report what they actually could not catch. He hoped the honourable gentleman who had just spoken would conduct the leadership of the Opposition on the principles he had laid down—refrain from insinuation and vilification, consider that Ministers were sometimes capable of doing an honest action, and, instead of attributing dishonest motives, give the Ministry credit for the intention to act honestly, unless anything apparent led to a different conclusion. With regard to the workshops question, he wished to direct the attention of honourable members to the fact that this was entirely a working man's question, and it had no doubt been brought forward on the present occasion with full knowledge of the circumstance: it was well known that there was an election pending in a constituency largely composed of working men, and would be made prominent. He, therefore repeated it was a working man's question, concerning the monopoly being set up, especially by a section of working men at Ipswich. It was a question between the working men of the colony and the men that were employed in the Ipswich workshops. It meant that in times of distress men could not be taken into Government departments indiscriminately to relieve them. At the present time taxation was pushed to the utmost extent to which it could be levied, so no money could be expected from that quarter; and as loan expenditure was going on quite as far as authorised, no help could be looked for there. How, then, in the name of common-sense, were means to be found to keep those people in employment when the honourable the Minister for Works told them the work was not wanted? It was a question for the taxpayers of the colony. All the statements made by the honourable member for Ipswich could not well be true,

because they were so contradictory;—at all events, he paid a poor compliment to the men, and to the late Government, when he said that ninety-eight of the men were appointed by the late Government, seeing that the men dismissed were selected as being the least efficient. The supposition that the workshops had become a nest of political loafers was quite consistent with the statement that 98 per cent. of the men had been appointed by the late Government. On looking through the honourable member's arguments, it was evident he deprecated the idea of any man on the Ministerial benches getting information about the matter—they were to take for granted what he told them about the men; but as they had taken some responsibility, it was to be supposed they knew something about the matter and did not require to go to the honourable member for little matters of detail. They were, it would appear, to ignore the knowledge gained in their official capacity and accept that of the honourable member. He would tell the honourable member that they would yet have to go lower and reach higher—that at the present time there were a great many more men in the Government service than the colony could afford, and that even although the country might get more prosperous than appeared probable at present, the knife would yet have to go a great deal deeper than it had been.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS would not have addressed himself to the motion had it not been for the remarks of the honourable gentleman who had just sat down. In the first place, he would say that more leniency ought to have been shown towards the honourable member for Rockhampton, as it was the first occasion on which he had addressed the House. He (Mr. Douglas) was willing to admit that on such an occasion an honourable member naturally felt his unusual position, and was not so *au fait* as he otherwise would be, and probably not so correct. The honourable member had shown, to-day, that he was capable of addressing the House in a business-like form, and to the purpose. He had now proved himself perfectly able to cope with any honourable member of the House. There must have been a great difficulty in reporting the honourable member, and no doubt the late hour at which the reporters were called upon to report him made the difficulty greater still. Some allowance might be made for the *Hansard* staff on that occasion; but he perfectly agreed with the honourable member that, if the remarks were such as could have passed the chair, they might and ought to have been reported. It would be the knell of *Hansard* if what the Speaker allowed to pass was suppressed. They must all know that methods of condensation must be and had often been

used by *Hansard* with great benefit, and he hoped that no objection would be taken to the reporters exercising discretion in that respect. It had been admirably exercised in the past, and he was sure that they could appeal to them for an equally admirable exercise of it in the future. With regard to one or two remarks made by the Minister for Works respecting the dismissal of the men in the Ipswich workshops, it was hardly desirable that the question should be discussed on a motion for adjournment of the House. He hoped it would be discussed in a more positive form, which would admit of its being thoroughly sifted; and he would promise honourable gentlemen opposite that if the honourable member for Ipswich did not take it up he should. He, of course, reserved the expression of his opinion until the papers had been produced.

The PREMIER: You are not going to get them.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he understood that there would be no objection, and that the papers would be placed on the table of the House without a motion; if such was not intended, he had been misinformed. He hoped no time would be lost in bringing the matter in a positive form before the House, and, he repeated, that if the honourable member for Ipswich did not take the initiative he (Mr. Douglas) should. He would reserve his opinion until he had seen the papers, but the papers he would have, and, if they were not satisfactory, he should endeavour to secure an investigation by a Committee of the Whole House. He might not be successful, but he should leave no stone unturned to secure that object, though he was quite sure the matter would be better in the hands of the honourable member for Ipswich;—he would gladly leave it in his hands, and give him his support. The House had been read a homily by the Minister for Works on the present position of the working men of the colony, and their past and future prospects, and he had attempted to justify his action and to show that the present condition of the colony was owing to the action of the Ministers of the past. A few months ago the Premier told the House that the country would require to borrow more millions of money for public works, and that immigration would have to be carried on more vigorously. In order that he might not make a mistake, he would read the honourable gentleman's words when proposing his contingent motion for a loan of three millions. The honourable gentleman proposed to devote £200,000 of that amount to immigration purposes, and said—

“I consider that amount will be necessary, because it provides for the continuance of this service for the next three years on a somewhat

ampler scale than at present, but not more than we have a right to expect will be the wants of the colony."

Now a change, at any rate, had come over the dream of the honourable gentleman. A short four or five months in office had told him that it was necessary to recant upon the whole of his professions. He was not only going to stop immigration, but to reduce public works in all directions;—railways and immigration alike were to go to the wall now that he was in office, supported, as he deemed, by a sufficient majority. He (Mr. Douglas) warned him he would not hold it long if that was the policy he proposed to adopt. The honourable gentleman was good enough to read the leader of the Opposition a lecture upon his conduct when he spoke upon the Address in Reply, and stated that, though he did not expect to be considered an angel, he was not quite the antithesis of one. As a certain amount of importance had been attached to the present motion, he would add that the honourable the Premier really did not appear to know the quicksands to which he was guiding the colony;—he was every day showing his incapacity, and he warned him that people would not stand this trifling with the real interests of the country. The Minister for Works had referred to the fact that 3,000 men were employed by the Government on the railway works. This statement did not startle him: he had seen by a computation that something like 50,000 men, more or less, were directly interested in the Government of New South Wales. This might be a condition of things not very desirable, but it had been forced upon us by the past experience of the country, and by the present small population. This colony, at present, stood in the premier position in the energy which it had displayed in railway construction. The honourable member's announcement that 3,000 men were employed was not at all startling; and, here again, he was met by the conviction that the Minister for Works—on account of the statement he had made—was incapable of estimating the real responsibility he had taken upon himself.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said that if they went on in this way, upon motions of adjournment, the present session would run into the next decade. He did not intend to take up much of the time of the House, but there were a few remarks to which he must allude. The leader of the Opposition had accused the honourable the Premier of recantation on the subject of immigration. It was very easy to accuse, but he should like to hear some proof that the accusation was founded upon fact. On the contrary, the very quotation he made from his honourable friend's speech showed that there was no recantation at all. The speech

from which the leader of the Opposition quoted was with respect to a loan of three millions, and if that loan had been granted, no doubt additional men would have been required; but the motion was opposed by honourable members opposite, and was defeated. This quite altered the case. It must be patent to the meanest understanding that if they had not money they could not carry on immigration. With respect to the dismissals from the workshops—which question had been worked up without the slightest care on the part of the honourable members who introduced it as to what became of the men dismissed, but for political purposes at the present moment—he would say that no man was more sorry than he and his honourable friends sitting near him were that the dismissals were necessary; but if they had not money to pay the men and carry on the business of the country what were they to do? If they were not madmen, trusting to the chapter of chances, they must dismiss a certain number, and bring their expenditure somewhere down within their means; and if honourable members opposite thought that the dismissals from the public service were going to stop with the dismissals from the railway workshops they were much mistaken: he was sorry to say that the dismissals must go further. They had an overloaded public service and a deficient Treasury, and none but fools or madmen would attempt to carry on the Government of the colony at an expenditure which could not be met. Whoever was dismissed or censured, even if it was a policeman, as the Minister for Works had described, either a telegram or a petition was sent. He himself, the other night, received a communication three pages long, protesting against the dismissal of a man; and this thing was carried to such an extent that, when a man was dismissed or found guilty, he must be leniently dealt with because he was a good fellow. This was the sort of thing the Ministry had to take in hand. They were bound to reduce the public service, and that being so, they must expect, he presumed, all kinds of obloquy and all sorts of talk. For his part, he did not know or care anything about the creed or religion of any man who was to be dismissed. Honourable members would do well to remember that the members of the Opposition, who now taunted them and thought it a great crime for stopping immigration, were absolutely forcing hundreds of people into the colony for which they were not at all adapted. Germans and Englishmen were coming out as farm labourers who had never seen a spade in their lives, and who had since confessed they were told by the different agents that, so long as they said they were agriculturists, it was all right. It must be remembered that these men were poured

into the country in the hottest months of the year, and it was reported by one of the officials on the Northern Railway that men were sent up his line absolutely to die, and did die in numbers. When the Government stopped immigration, in February and March, the thing was going on to such an extent that before it could be stopped 1,200 people left England to come out to this colony; and what they were to do with them when they got here he did not know. The Opposition forgot that it was their own action which had plunged the colony into this mess: they ought to have foreseen the dark weather ahead. They were often warned to reduce immigration; and they refused to go into a large loan which would employ the men they were bringing out. The fault was entirely with them, and not with the present Ministry, who were driven against their own inclinations to a course of economy which must be carried out if the colony was to be saved. The honourable member (Mr. Douglas) said in a very bumptious manner that he would have the papers about these dismissals; but supposing they did not exist? And he could assure them that, if they did exist, they were very small ones. The members of the present Ministry were not gifted with the *cacôthes scribendi*, like the honourable gentleman opposite—they could do a great deal of business without writing about it. He (Mr. Palmer) found no fault with what the leader of the Opposition said as to how he would conduct public business; but if he had adopted that tone last week, much unpleasantness would have been avoided, for any unpleasantness which then occurred was solely owing to that honourable gentleman's speech. If that honourable gentleman would confine himself to criticism on the public acts of the Ministry, he would be answered; but he (Mr. Palmer) quite agreed with him that it would be better to say nothing about their private lives. That had been done, however, and it had been insinuated that they were guilty of acts unworthy of honourable men.

Mr. GRIFFITH: No, no.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that it was so;—they had been attacked as bank directors and managers, and that was attacking them, not in their Ministerial, but in their private capacity. Neither he nor his honourable colleagues had anything to be afraid of with respect to their private lives; but, at the same time, it would be better for all parties if the honourable gentleman confined his criticisms to public matters. As to their being thin-skinned, he could assure him that he was not thin-skinned, but that if he ever touched him on the "raw" he would give him back as good as he sent. If the leader of the

Opposition, however, attempted to conduct the affairs of his party as he began last week, he would not find that things were very pleasing; while, if he conducted the business in the tone which he had just recommended, he would find it much more worthy of respect.

Mr. GARRICK said he did not intend to address the House at any great length, but he could not refrain from remarking upon the inconsistency of the policy now advocated by the Minister for Works, and that so strongly advocated by him and his colleagues when the contingent motion was brought before the House, last year, for the purpose of ousting the then Ministry. It would be in the recollection of honourable members that all sorts of insidious attacks and violent assaults were made upon the late Government by the present one, with a view to getting into office; but from the policy the latter had now enunciated in reference to public works he could not conclude, if they were to be at all credited with consistency, that they were honest men then and honest men now. The Colonial Secretary said, in reference to the stoppage of immigration, and to the discharge of men at Ipswich, that they would be either fools or madmen to abstain from such action in the present state of the Treasury. He would just call the attention of honourable members to what were the opinions of the Minister for Works, little more than six months ago, when he formed one of a band who were desirous of getting into office. Honourable members would remember that last year the present Premier brought forward a motion for a loan of three millions, which included an item of £200,000 to continue immigration. With reference to this subject the Minister for Works then said, according to *Hansard*—

"He agreed with the Attorney-General that the immigration must be increased to even a greater extent than was advocated by the honourable member for Maranoa. He believed in doubling it in conjunction with the making of railways, but he would not increase it beyond its present rate if the present Government, or any other that might get into power, would not take up the making of railways with more energy."

Subsequently, in the same speech, the honourable member said—

"The present indebtedness of the colony, according to the statement of the Colonial Treasurer, was £48 per head. By borrowing three millions more and initiating a vigorous system of constructing railways and other public works, and increasing the population by immigration for other five years at the same ratio as for the quinquennial period ended in 1876, the result would be that in 1881 the indebtedness of the colony would be £2 per head less than at present."

Little more than six months ago the honourable member was for continuing immi-

gration at the same ratio until 1881, and said by doing that the general indebtedness would be reduced by £2 per head. He there used what he (Mr. Garrick) considered a good argument. He said—

“Increase the taxpaying power of the country by increasing the population by immigration.”

Then the honourable member went on in the same speech to apostrophise the senior member for Maryborough thus—

“There was a policy for the Premier to take up: by increasing the debt of the country and by making railways population was increased, and the comparative indebtedness of the colony was reduced from £48 to £46;—and yet the gentlemen on the Treasury benches seemed to have no confidence in the country over which they were ruling.”

Was that speech not a commentary upon the hostile criticism to which he (Mr. Garrick) and his colleagues were exposed when in office, and upon the policy of the present Ministry? Now let honourable members turn to the Governor's Speech read last week. In the clause in reference to public works and railways it was stated—

“You will therefore be asked to make provision by loan for carrying on these and other public undertakings with vigour.”

These were exactly the words used by the Minister for Works little more than six months ago. Was it not part of the policy of the Ministry which honourable members had been asked to endorse that they were going to carry on public works? And yet the late Ministry had been abused for carrying on a system of immigration which they were taunted, six months ago, for not increasing, and which the Minister for Works then said he would continue until 1881. At one time they were told they were not carrying on public works fast enough, and at another that they were prosecuting them with undue haste. In fact, while they were in office, nothing would please the present occupants of the Treasury benches but to get them out, and their course of conduct was neither consistent nor honest.

Mr. ARCHER said, in the course of the debate on Thursday he referred to the honourable member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) as enunciating a new doctrine with respect to the advisability of floating rumours being brought into the House, so that those against whom they were directed might be able to reply to them; but he had since discovered that he had made a mistake in attributing it to that honourable gentleman. He did so simply through a lapse of memory, and he regretted it very much.

Mr. DICKSON thought that, if they could ascertain the policy of the Government by continuous motions for adjournment, the time so occupied would not be unprofitably spent. The Ministry had themselves to blame for these interruptions to business by not being more explicit in their policy.

It was only by statements made now and again by Ministers that the House and the public could really get any light upon the very meagre policy placed before them in the Governor's Speech. He had hoped that when the Colonial Secretary rose he would have given some explanation or reason why the Premier had distinctly intimated to the House, when the honourable member for Maryborough was speaking, that they would not get the papers relating to these dismissals. The honourable gentleman did not say that the papers were not in existence; but he put it hypothetically—if there were no papers, how could they be produced? It seemed to him that the mere fact of the Government not allowing that motion of the honourable member for Ipswich (Mr. Macfarlane) to pass in the ordinary way, as formal, would indicate that they had some hidden reason for not placing the papers before the House. If there were no such papers in existence, why was not a straightforward statement to that effect made?—it would have satisfied all parties. He was sure that the country would look with the greatest consternation upon the statement made by the Premier this evening, to the effect that the Government had determined, in regard to dismissals, that the knife should yet go deeper—that dismissals should extend further. That determined announcement, in conjunction with the action of the Government in restricting immigration, was such as to assure him that the Government were not taking steps by which the present depressions would be relieved. If any statement was calculated to make men in all positions in the colony uncertain as to the future, it was the statement of the Premier, and he (Mr. Dickson) should be sorry to see such a policy carried out. The quotation read by the honourable member for Moreton showed that the Colonial Treasurer had previously some confidence in the recovery of the colony from its present depression; but his present course would add to the feeling of uneasiness and distrust which, unfortunately, was very widespread at the present time. He contended that those dismissals were not the way to meet the present financial difficulties of the country. The proper course was to increase the revenue and to decrease expenditure where necessary—all superfluous expenditure; but it certainly would not tend to the recovery of the colony from its depression to dismiss a number of men at Ipswich, many of whom had been employed there for years, and whose labour could, he believed, be still utilised in the manufacture of rolling-stock, which must be constructed if they were to carry on railway extension with anything like vigour. He regretted that the late Minister for Justice

(Mr. Thompson) had not been present during the debate to contribute his share towards it, because he should have been glad to hear how that gentleman could reconcile the action of the Government with a speech he made at Ipswich, wherein, in dealing with the individual merits of the members of the present Ministry, he dwelt particularly upon the energy with which public works were likely to be pushed on; and in which he referred to the present Minister for Works as a man who was fully conversant with the requirements of the working men of the colony, and who would be likely, by every means in his power, to increase their number and continue them in employment on public works. He considered the intimation of the Premier with regard to these papers was very unsatisfactory, and that that gentleman must accept whatever blame there might be for delaying the business of this evening, because he could have allowed the motion for their production to go as formal if they existed, and if they did not exist, he could have disposed of the matter by stating so.

The PREMIER said, if the honourable member for Ipswich had asked why the motion was not allowed to go as formal, he (the Premier) would have given it at once. There was no secret about it. The only papers the Government had were those from the officers of the department, recommending the men to be dismissed, and those papers would not be produced as long as he occupied a seat upon those benches. He would never allow confidential papers from public officers laid before Ministers to be produced. One of the papers was from the foreman of the works, and he believed that man's life would not be safe in Ipswich if they were produced. The House could rest assured that no papers of that kind would be produced. He should endeavour to protect overseers and other men who gave confidential information to the Government.

Mr. BAILEY said what they wanted was the list sent up, not the one sent down. They did not want to injure the overseer, but they wanted to see the list prepared by the Minister for Works or his agents. This was the working man's Ministry! They had been told, in the first place, that this was the Ministry that was to save the working men of Queensland from further taxation; and in the next place, that they were a Ministry of economy! One instance of their economy was to appoint an officer in that House, in January last, at a salary of £400, and he had not done duty up to this day. In February they had a number of new Attorneys-General drawing hundreds of guineas from the Treasury. This was when they were considering about dismissing hundreds of working men. In March they found the law-suit of *MacDonald v. Tully*—which was practically settled years

ago, and as to the justice of which no one had any doubt—dragged before the Courts again at enormous expense to the country. This was the economy of the present Government! The late Government were charged with having brought out immigrants to die; and he was sorry to say that he had seen a little of the same thing lately. During the recent hot weather a number of immigrants were landed in Brisbane, some of whom wished to go to their relatives in the Maryborough district, and begged to be sent there; but they were turned out in the streets to get there the best way they could. They endeavoured to drag themselves there, and actually died by the road. Who were the people who killed immigrants? That was under the present, not the late Government. They turned those unfortunate foreigners out in a strange country under a tropical sun, to make their way as best they could to their friends at Maryborough at their own cost.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not true.

Mr. BAILEY said he held an inquest over one of those immigrants who died on the road, and heard the whole of the evidence, which the Colonial Secretary would find in his office. These were the working man's friends! These were the economical gentlemen who, in order to pay large salaries and large fees to a number of barristers, and to conduct an expensive lawsuit against a political opponent, punished the working men and had to dismiss large numbers of them to pay the bill!

Mr. MILES said he was much surprised at the remarks of the Premier respecting the production of the papers referred to. If the life of the overseer or the superintendent of the works was likely to be placed in danger by the production of those papers, the Premier had no business to say anything about them; but his statement would do ten times more injury than the production of the papers. There had been a good deal made of a statement he (Mr. Miles) made some time ago, to the effect that one-third of the workmen in the Government service could be dispensed with. He believed he had made a statement something like that, but it did not refer in any way to skilled labourers, but to the drones and supernumeraries who were drawing large salaries for doing nothing—those were the parties he alluded to, and not to skilled labourers. He should consider himself a fit subject for Woogaroo if he entertained any such idea as to dispense with the services of such valuable men.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins): What did you say a week ago?

Mr. MILES said honourable members now on the Government benches complained bitterly, when in office, that the late Government did not bring down plans and books of reference so that they

might be adopted and the Central Railway proceeded with, because there was a large amount of valuable labour collected there that could be utilised to carry on the works; but now they dismissed those men and turned them adrift to go where they pleased. He would support the Government in a system of economy, if it were carried out in the right direction; but he would be no party to dispensing with the services of such men as were employed in the Ipswich workshops.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) said no doubt his honourable friend, the member for Moreton, felt himself relieved by saying what he intended to say in the debate on the Address, but he (Mr. Perkins) had intended to produce some facts and papers which would have put a different appearance on some matters that had been referred to. He should not occupy the time of the House but for the inconsistency—he might say hypocrisy—of some honourable gentlemen who had spoken, and who wished it to appear now that they, and they only, were the working-man's friends. He had taken the trouble since this matter was last before the House to look into it and see who were the employers of labour on the other side of the House. In the first place, he would ask was there any honourable member opposite who would say that he (Mr. Perkins) did not deplore as much as any one of them, or any man in the colony, the necessity that had arisen for dispensing with labour in the colony at the present time? He did sincerely deplore it, and in saying that he spoke candidly and fairly the feelings of his colleagues—for if they did not entertain those feelings he could no longer remain a colleague of theirs. It was the remarks of some honourable members who professed to be the friends of the working man that he wished to draw attention to. With regard to statements about rumours, the speech of the present leader of the Opposition, on Tuesday last, was founded almost entirely upon rumour or insinuation. The honourable member would make a statement, and afterwards endeavour to qualify it by saying he did not believe it or he hoped it was not true. He had looked upon that honourable gentleman as the fountain of truth and honour up to that occasion, but he should certainly change his opinion of him in the future. When that honourable member was in office he was in the habit of waving his hand in a mystical supercilious way if any insinuation was made against him, as much as to say that his accuser was entirely wrong, although he was frequently in the right; and he (Mr. Perkins) believed, up to this time, that the honourable gentleman was incapable of making such insinuations as he had done, especially against monetary institutions and persons

outside that House who had no opportunity or prospect of being there to defend themselves. It clearly showed him that when the honourable gentleman was extirpated from office and got into the cold shades of Opposition, he was determined to get back to office, and was not over particular as to the means he employed to get there. They had heard a great deal about rumours, and he would ask who originated them?—where did they come from? He had heard all sorts of rumours about these Ipswich workshops. He scarcely ever travelled in a train but no less an authority than the honourable member for Toowoomba was continually dining in his ears—and he was an unwilling listener—about the rascality and jobbery that was carried on at those workshops, which ought to be swept away body and bones; and now they found that honourable member advocating the cause of those workmen in his paper, and making it a peg to hang all sorts of rumours upon. The honourable member for Ipswich had also indulged in rumours, and they all knew where they originated. The fact was, there were four persons in Ipswich who were in the habit of sending letters of recommendation for certain men to be employed in the railway works there, and if they were sent back they insisted upon their employment; and only four or five firms derived the benefit of the custom of those men. That put a very different colour upon the rumours that the honourable member and his friends had given rise to during the last few weeks. He would go a little further and refer to the honourable member for Darling Downs (Mr. Miles), who appeared to be feathering himself with the prospect of a walk over the course being not very remote. He, also, was now standing forward as the working-man's friend; but what did that gentleman tell him (Mr. Perkins) a week ago? He (Mr. Perkins) did not like to be a retailer of statements of this kind, but the period was so recent that he could give the honourable gentleman's statement word for word. He said, "You are perfectly right; I would have done the same thing myself, only I could never get my colleagues to do it;" and he repeated several times, "I would have done it, but I could not get my colleagues to do so."

Mr. MILES: I give that statement a flat denial.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he repeated the statement, which was made by the honourable gentleman a week ago. As to how many times he made it six or eight months ago he could not say, but on the occasion he referred to he made it directly and voluntarily; but he now appeared to come forth in a new character, with another set of opinions. With regard to the question of immigration, to which the hon-

ourable member for Moreton had referred, what, he would ask, was the duty of a body of men who, on entering office, found the first difficulty staring them in the face was how to provide for immigrants arriving? Telegrams were received from Bowen and Rockhampton, where ships had recently arrived, pointing out that there was no work for the people and it was a matter of the greatest anxiety to himself for days how these unfortunate people were to be employed. However, some means were improvised, with the assistance of the Colonial Secretary, by which many of these people were transported into the interior, where they obtained employment. In the face of that, and remembering the three-million vote had been refused, how could the Ministry be so cruel as to persist in encouraging persons to come here when there was no employment to offer them? In addition, they had to look at the fact that many of the immigrants coming to the colony were leaving it by steamboat and otherwise, and would it not have been the height of madness not to let our Agent-General know the state of things here, and put a stop to immigration until the prospects of the colony looked more prosperous, when it could be resumed? Besides that, some alteration was necessary with regard to the quality of the immigrants that were being sent out, and, if the Government did nothing else but make a step in that direction, he believed it would be admitted that they did right. With reference to this labour question, it had been stated as almost inevitable that if these men were dismissed they must leave the colony, as there was nothing for them to do; and yet, in the same breath, they were told of the boundless resources of the colony! Was there any consistency on the part of honourable members who argued that the resources of the colony were unlimited, and in the same breath said that there was not sufficient employment in the colony for one hundred and three of its best artisans? If the dismissed men were, as he understood them to be, expert artisans, he hoped a few of them would go to Toowoomba, and he would promise them to do everything in his power to start something within their particular line, and to see that they obtained success. If, according to the statement made by some honourable members during the debate last week, there was not sufficient work in the colony for these 103 men, he himself would seriously think of leaving Queensland with them, at the first seasonable opportunity. But he did not believe that such was the case, and he was of opinion that the statements were made to serve the special purposes of those who uttered them. He was sure that the Minister for Works, upon whom devolved the responsibility of dismissing those men,

felt as much anxiety about them as any member of the House. He (the Minister for Lands) hated to hear anything so despicable as the word "creed" introduced into this Assembly, and it was a notable fact that that word came from the other side of the House. Some honourable members, there, had made the discovery that there were only three Roman Catholics amongst the one hundred and three men discharged from the Ipswich workshops! He had made inquiries into this statement, and the answer he got was an expression of surprise that there were even three Roman Catholics amongst the dismissed men, because no Roman Catholics could find standing room in the Ipswich workshops. He (the Minister for Lands) believed he was speaking within the mark when he said that there was no room for Roman Catholics there; and those who introduced the odious word "creed" into an Assembly of this kind were political mountebanks—men who traded on politics, and who tried to climb to popularity upon the backs of the people;—in fact, what they wanted was to fill their own pockets. That was the ultimate end they had in view in introducing this disturbing element. He denied that those men had any religion beyond their pockets; and, as to their consciences, they had none, for they put their consciences on their backs and they had taken flight long ago. He trusted they would hear no more about "creeds" from either side of the House.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) wished to make an explanation. The last speaker had stated that there were only four people in Ipswich who were interested in the dismissals. He did not know who those four men were; but he could say for himself that, having resided for the last seventeen years in Ipswich, he had never been able to put three men into the shops.

Mr. BEOR said a point had been made by the honourable member for Wide Bay with regard to the retaining of counsel to do the Attorney-General's work at some of the circuit towns, as if such a thing were quite unusual; but the fact was that the present Government, in doing this, had only been following the example of their predecessors. During the time the last Government was in power, members of the bar were retained quite as frequently to prosecute for the Crown in distant places as they had been since the present Government had come into office. With regard to the Ipswich dismissals, it had been said that the Government, by making a frank statement of what they considered the true position of the colony, had done more harm to the colony than could have been done in any other way. Did the Opposition desire the Government to keep up the apparent prosperity of the colony by false pretences?—to tell the

world that the colony was going on prosperously, when the facts were precisely the reverse? His (Mr. Beor's) opinion was, that nothing would be more damaging to the colony than to do a thing of that kind, and to establish the shop at Ipswich as a kind of relieving works for artisans out of employment. It had been suggested by honourable members of the Opposition that the whole of the men at Ipswich should be kept on at short time, in order to prevent them going to the other colonies. Surely, nothing more disastrous to the good name of the colony could be imagined than to make a certain number of men work only two-thirds of their full time, in order to provide sustenance for other men who were not wanted. He held that the Government had done wisely in making the House and the country acquainted with the true state of affairs, for the adoption of an open policy of this kind would make them trusted by the people. Had they stated that the colony was in a prosperous condition, when it was actually in a bad state, they must unavoidably, in time, be found out, and so lose the confidence of the country and the rest of the world. They were certainly adopting a wiser policy than that followed by the late Ministry when, during the middle of the last drought, they sang a sort of psalm on the country having got over its difficulties, and promised all sorts of good things instead of making efforts at retrenchment. They were told at the time, by honourable members on this side of the House, that they were only living in a fool's paradise, and that worse evils would inevitably follow; but yet they made no attempt at retrenchment, and rendered necessary the almost violent effort in that direction which the present Ministry had felt themselves bound to make. Had the late Ministry foreseen what was coming, and at the proper time instituted a system of vigorous retrenchment, and drawn in their horns, the state of things which at present, or at all events until recently, existed would never have been brought about, and the stringent measures of the present Ministry would never have been required.

MR. RUTLEDGE deprecated the introduction by the Minister for Lands of anything like a sectarian element into the House. That honourable gentleman had been the first to introduce amongst them that bone of contention.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

MR. RUTLEDGE positively asserted that the word "creed" had not been first used by any speaker on his side of the House. The Minister for Works was the first to introduce it, the other evening; and he was sorry to hear him do so, because after that honourable gentleman had stated that he acted quite disinterestedly in the matter,

he (Mr. Rutledge) did not feel it his duty to disbelieve him. He was sorry that the Minister for Lands should so demean himself as, on the floor of the House, to introduce an element that could not have anything but a disastrous effect on the debates. As to the gentlemen who traded in politics, the Minister for Lands might have the honour of numbering some of them among his acquaintances; but he (Mr. Rutledge) did not know that that could be said of those with whom he associated on the Opposition benches. Information had reached him from good authority, that sufficient discrimination had not been exercised by the underlings of the Minister for Works, in the matter of the dismissals. He did not charge the honourable gentleman with the responsibility of these wrongful dismissals, supposing any such had been made; but somebody was to blame for the dismissal of men who ought, to-day, to be in the Government service. The Premier had rather let the cat out of the bag by stating that there was a nest of political loafers in these workshops that ought to be rooted out; and that statement might afford some indication that the dismissals were more owing to the Premier than to the Minister for Works. He did not blame the Minister for Works for having done anything in the matter that would not bear the light, for that honourable gentleman was only acting under the direction of his chief. If these shops contained, as was asserted, a nest of political loafers, it was perfectly clear that political reasons had had something to do with the dismissal of some of these men. He would mention three cases in point:—There was an engine-driver named William Spiers, who had charge of a train that ran off the line somewhere near Dulacca. This man, it was said, was in the habit of getting intoxicated, and had been reported to his superior officers as a man of intemperate habits; and yet, when the official ukase went forth, that man was not amongst the number dismissed, because he did not happen to be a politician. There was another man named Macartney: this man had been for fourteen years an engine-driver; he was a careful, worthy man, against whom there had never been breathed a single complaint, and yet, because he was supposed to be somewhat of a politician, he was sent about his business. Another man, named Watson, had been known as a careful engine-driver in the service of the Government for seven years;—he, also, because he was considered to be a politician, was sent about his business. It was plain, therefore, that sufficient discrimination had not been used in selecting the men who ought to be dismissed.

MR. MOREHEAD said that had the honourable member who last addressed the House been present a little earlier, he

would have heard the word "creed" introduced by the honourable member for Ipswich.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich): I deny it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was a fact, notwithstanding, and he would have thought a gentleman who in another capacity had preached the precepts of his late Master, "Peace on earth and good will to men," would have adopted a different line of action. The honourable member (Mr. Rutledge) had said that none of those with whom he associated traded on politics. Supposing he (Mr. Morehead) were to tell that gentleman a parable about a Mr. A, who having been a Wesleyan was called to the bar—

Mr. RUTLEDGE rose to a point of order. The honourable member had no right to misrepresent him in this way—by a parable. He was what he had always been, and was recognised as such by those with whom he associated.

The SPEAKER said the honourable member was out of order if he was saying anything offensive to an honourable member under the guise of a parable.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was talking about a problematical individual of the name of Mr. A., and if the honourable member objected to A. he should move it on to B. This Mr. A. was formerly a Wesleyan clergyman, but ceased to be so in order to be called to another profession, and of that profession he was now a shining ornament. For reasons best known to himself, Mr. A. took a brief from the Presbyterian Church, and on certain occasions, and for certain remuneration, no doubt, appeared in certain chapels to preach a variation of the same creed. He introduced this parable to point out that honourable members on the other side of the House had better be careful in making such gross attacks as had been made by the honourable member for Enoggera on the Minister for Lands. He would re-assert that, had that honourable member been in his place a little earlier, he would have found that the whole of the facts upon which he had based his sermon arose from a remark made by the honourable member for Ipswich.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) wished to say, in explanation, that the first time he heard the word used during the debate was by the Minister for Works. Someone might have used it before, but he (Mr. Macfarlane), in repeating it, was simply replying to the statement of that honourable gentleman—namely, that while he knew nothing of creeds, yet creeds were acknowledged in the dismissals.

The SPEAKER: Before putting the question finally, I may inform the House that I have heard from the *Hansard* reporters that it was very difficult to catch the

speech of the honourable member for Rockhampton, on Thursday last. The reporter who happened to be taking his turn in the gallery at the time found, on attempting to transcribe his notes, that a large portion of the speech had to be cut out as being quite unintelligible.

Mr. REA, in reply, said he intended to comment upon the somewhat contradictory statements given to the House by the Minister for Works and the Premier. In the one case they referred to the dismissals from the Government workshops as a necessity; on the other hand, he found that those 3,000 men who were said to be employed in making railways were proof that it would be wrong to reduce, unnecessarily, skilled workmen. A very large proportion of the men discharged were experts in mechanical construction, he was informed, and to dismiss those men who, it is said, were most required, was a thing he could not understand, and he did not see how the Minister for Works, or any other member of the Ministry, could reconcile the two statements he had noticed. To honourable members who were able to see why those dismissals were ordered—who were men of some engineering knowledge—it might be right, but to honourable members who were not up in railway construction the Ministerial action was unintelligible. There was one feature he had noticed with regard to the Minister for Works whenever he addressed the House, though he had not heard him often, that, when exception was taken by several honourable members to the working of the department, and that the honourable member was implicated in the dismissals, he had always set up an *alibi*. He did everything from his office—that was the only place he was ever to be found at; and when anything was done, he raised a cry of *non me recordo*; and it was noticeable that whatever measures were taken by the Government, whether it was in regard to these dismissals, the construction of railways, or the Townsville election, they must have come from his office! It appeared that the honourable member had adopted the strategy introduced into Europe by Moltke, of sitting in the office, and, by telegraphic communication, carrying on war against the enemy. That seemed the policy. Not one of the Ministers, either inside or outside the House, ever referred to the statement made by the honourable junior member for South Brisbane (Mr. Mackay) when he pointed out the disadvantage of discharging men who were able to perform particular branches of work, and thus allowing them to disperse, so that when again wanted there would be unusual difficulty in supplying their places. When the Minister for Works spoke on this subject he led the House to suppose that there were not any

dismissals of mechanists actually or likely to be wanted, but the only machinists wanted by the Ministry were the wire-pullers in office. He hoped the Opposition side of the House would stick to this action for some time. When new appointments were made the strictness of rule carried out at the immigration office in London should be put into force—namely, that each man should bring a certificate of his character from the clergyman of the parish. That appeared to be nearly the best thing, in his judgment, which could be done. The Minister for Works had often alluded to what he called the Ministerial policy, which he believed had been planned since last January, and still Government were afraid to let it out. Then it was said that the workshop officials had sent down lists of men who could be dispensed with. The Minister for Works knew nothing about that—in fact, he had been unable to find out anything about it beyond what could be read in the papers, and the Minister was apparently unable to tell them more about them than that. Now, he would like to ask the Minister for Works whether he was in a position to deny that he himself had asked a superintendent or superintendents of the workshops at Ipswich to sign papers recommending these dismissals, or many of them, and that the superintendent had refused to do it? Could the honourable member deny that? Certainly, this did not look like a good explanation of the disclaimers which had been continually before the House, that the Minister for Works knew no men or class of men. He had also something to say of the conduct of another member of the House—the honourable member for Mitchell—who seemed to have made it his special part to attack the honourable member for Enoggera, reminding him constantly that he had changed his position and calling. He had done right to do so, and he (Mr. Rea) hoped that the honourable member for Enoggera would long continue to remain in the House and think as he thought then. He believed that, however useful that honourable member might have been in the pulpit, he was doing ten times more good to the public and to the service of his Creator by denouncing the political ruffianism of honourable members opposite; and he wished the country had many more such men to speak out in the open way in which that honourable member spoke. Then, again, an honourable member had described as political loafers the men who had been dismissed from the Ipswich workshops; but such a charge was far more applicable to the members and the supporters of the Ministry themselves. Next, they had had a statement from the honourable Premier to the effect

that honourable members should never have the papers in connection with the dismissal of those men. The honourable member did not even offer any modification by saying that they could ask for a committee of investigation, but gave a point-blank refusal, defying the House, and telling them that they should never have the papers. After such a peremptory refusal, he should not be surprised at the honourable the Premier some day entering the House, and saying, "Take away that bauble!" What, he would ask, had Parliament come to, that one side of the House should be defied by the honourable member who presumed upon the faithful timeserving following behind him? Having such a following, there was no political animus that he would not indulge in. Then he came to the honourable Minister for Lands, from whom they had heard little else than about "creed." If the honourable member had remained talking in that strain he (Mr. Rea) would not have referred to him, but he had closed his speech with a charge of low motives, especially directed against honourable members of the Opposition. There was, however, something far more degrading than that or anything the honourable member could say of the Opposition in the conduct of the honourable gentleman himself—namely, in allowing those men who put him in office to make a tool of him. The honourable member had no excuse, as he had an independent income, and it was his duty to have said that he would insist upon carrying out his office, and the reforms in his department, in the way he thought best, and would not be made a tool of. He should have said, "I will put people on the coast lands instead of bullocks;" and if the Premier had refused to allow him to do as he thought best, he might have told him that the country would, two days afterwards, know all about it, and that then the Government might put up their shutters. Had he done that the country would have stuck to him. What did the honourable gentleman get for all his pitiable subserviency?—what better position was he in than if he was merely a private member for the district by which he was returned? He would tell the honourable member what he got—he was allowed to hob-nob with a number of men at the club, which he had not a chance of doing before;—that was the whole secret, and therefore never again should the honourable member taunt any member of the Opposition with low motives. He would say, again, that he did not know of any other instance of a man being made such a tool of by such a Nebuchadnezzar Government. They had him completely under their thumb, whilst he might have got their necks under his heel, and have had the country with him for so

doing. He would refer to something that was on record which indicated the truth of his remarks, and that was in the ninth clause of the Opening Speech—

“A Bill will be shortly introduced making other provisions for leasing these runs.”

That was the honourable member's dirty work, and he had admitted it, and had promised to do all the work of degradation his colleagues wished him to do. He had very few words to say with regard to *Hansard* beyond what he had already said. He considered that the new members of the House owed their thanks to the old members for this being the only colony that had inaugurated, carried out, and paid for a *Daily Hansard*: it was the greatest boon that could be bestowed on the colony, and he hoped the new members would appreciate it, and would allow no vote to pass the House if the vote for *Hansard* was left out.

Question put and negatived.

PETITION.

Mr. GRIFFITH presented a petition from Lucy Anne Tooth, asking for leave to be given to introduce a Bill to enable the Trustees of the late William Butler Tooth to dispose of certain Trust Property; and moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following resolutions were agreed to:—

By Mr. DICKSON—

“That there be laid upon the table of this House, a comparative statement showing all sums allowed to the Government by the Union Bank of Australia, or paid by the Government to the bank, during the twelve months ended 31st December, 1878, for interest, exchange, commission, or otherwise, under the existing agreement between that bank and the Government, and the several sums that would have accrued to the Government and bank respectively for the same services, &c., under the proposed agreement with the Queensland National Bank limited.”

By Mr. AMHURST—

“That there be laid upon the table of this House, a return showing, in detail, all moneys expended on Trial Railway and other Surveys during the year 1878 and first four months of 1879.”

By Mr. MOREHEAD—

“That there be laid upon the table of this House, a return showing, in detail, the expenditure and the sum of money voted by this House in connection with the late Philadelphia Exhibition.”

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he wished to make a statement, and would conclude with a motion. He had no wish to provoke a debate on the subject, but it was necessary

that he should take some notice of the matter to which he intended to refer. Honourable members had no doubt heard a statement made by the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government with reference to the Roads Department. In speaking of road parties the honourable gentleman said—

“They were put on for election purposes. That was my experience in travelling about the country, and I had the information from the very best sources—that in all the road gangs there were men employed for merely political purposes.”

The honourable gentlemen stated that from his own knowledge, and as he had been some time in office and had ample opportunities for searching the record of the public offices he would, no doubt, be prepared to give the grounds upon which the statement was made. He (Mr. Douglas) did not ask the honourable gentleman to do so now; but he presumed he would be prepared with proof, either documentary or of some other kind, which would satisfy the House that that statement was correct. If true, it was inconsistent with his (Mr. Douglas') honour, both personal and as head of the late Government, that he should have diverted public funds for such a purpose. He was perfectly incapable of such an action. He had never been guilty of such conduct, and he knew that none of the gentlemen with whom he had been connected had been. If it could be proved, they would be wholly unworthy to associate with him or with any set of men with whom he would aspire to bear office. He undertook to say deliberately—though he hoped the honourable gentleman would choose his own time, as there was plenty of opportunity between now and the bringing forward of the Estimates—that he should expect the honourable gentleman to do one of two things: either to furnish the House with some proof of the statement he had made, or apologise to him for having made a statement which he was not able to bear out by any such facts as the House would consider sufficient. He would go further, and state unreservedly that, if the honourable gentleman brought any such proof in a way satisfactory to the House, he would undertake to resign his seat in the House and never to sit in it again. He now proceeded to notice what had been stated by the honourable the Minister for Works the other day. That honourable gentleman, speaking of a practice in the Works Department—which he said appeared to have been in force for some considerable time—said he found that influence had been brought to bear upon him. On making inquiries, he (Mr. Douglas) understood the honourable gentleman to say it appeared that the practice had been customary:—

“He asked one of the heads of department whether it had been the practice for

Ministers to give way to influence, political or otherwise? The answer was—'Well, it looks like it.' He then said, 'Has it been the case?' and the answer was, 'Yes; it has been done very frequently.'

Then he thought it was necessary to take notice, and ask the honourable gentleman to particularise. The honourable gentleman did so, and mentioned as an instance the acceptance of the third and fourth sections of the Western Railway, and the transactions connected with it. The honourable gentleman, in this matter, had made a most unguarded and unwarrantable statement, and he (Mr. Douglas) hoped he would find so on examination, and be willing to admit his error—the least that could be expected from an honourable man who saw he had made an incorrect statement. In this case, also, he hoped the honourable gentleman would take his own time, and furnish the House with all papers connected with the acceptance of that contract. Reference had also been made to a recommendation which came to the Cabinet, and was sent back. In that case, also, all the papers connected with the matter should be produced, including the recommendation of the Engineer-in-Chief, and whatever correspondence there might have been in connection with it. The charge was one of direct personal corruption against an honourable friend of his whom he believed to be quite incapable of such acts—Mr. Thorn, the present honourable member for Northern Downs, who desired to have been present in the House, but unfortunately had been prevented from coming by private business: however, he would, no doubt, have something to say for himself. He (Mr. Douglas) was simply concerned in so far as he was the head of the Government at the time. It must be remembered that a direct personal imputation was made upon his honourable friend that, whilst he held office as Minister for Works, influence was brought to bear upon him by one of the railway contractors, and was of such a character as to induce him to accept a tender which would not otherwise have been accepted. He hoped the honourable Minister for Works would take his own time to prove his charge;—he would leave it to him to take the proper means to do so. He should not call for the papers. The honourable the Minister for Works had also stated that he had got his information from a Government officer. When the papers were in the hands of honourable members, he (Mr. Douglas) thought it would be necessary to examine at the bar of the House that officer, as also the Engineer-in-Chief and the Commissioner for Railways, to satisfy honourable members whether the statements were correct. If they were, then they involved a most direct charge against a trusted Minister in his executive capacity—a

charge which would unfit him for the discharge, in future, of such duties. He knew that there was not the shadow of foundation for such an accusation; but it was most necessary that the standard of their public men should be maintained, and that such an accusation should be disproved; and, under the circumstances, he had a sufficiently good opinion of the Minister for Works to believe that he would afford every opportunity to have a clear exposition of the case. He was willing to admit that the honourable gentleman made the accusation without making himself sufficiently acquainted with the papers; but he demanded that they should be forthcoming and made available; and then, after a sufficient period had elapsed for honourable members to study them, that the House should take a further opportunity of ascertaining from the professional gentlemen connected with these matters what foundation there was for the accusation. He begged to move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said it did not look as if the leader of the Opposition meant to keep his promise to facilitate business, that, on the first evening, as it were, that they met to proceed with business, there should be two motions for adjournment of the House. He had not the slightest intention of withdrawing anything from his statement in regard to political road-gangs. As to the mode of proof that the honourable member wished him to adopt, that was another consideration, and one that concerned him (Mr. McIlwraith). He believed now, as he had believed all along, that not only during the late election were road-gangs made a great lever by the late Government, but he was satisfied that they had been so made for many years; and he repeated the statement.

Mr. DOUGLAS: The statement that persons were placed on the road-gangs for political purposes?

The PREMIER said whole gangs had been put on by the late Government for that purpose, especially during the late election. He stated what he thoroughly believed to be true, and what he knew from his personal knowledge. The honourable member might make a cheap challenge, and say that he would withdraw from the House if the accusation were proved; but what proof would there be which would satisfy him and induce him to take such a step? There was a majority on both sides of the House which knew that the statement was perfectly true.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was all very well for the Premier to say that motions for adjournment were not conducive to the business of the House, but it was not conducive to the business of the House for the honourable gentleman and his colleagues to make accusations against the late Government which could not be sub-

stantiated. Was it likely that honourable members who had sat on the Treasury benches for years would sit quietly and hear accusations made against them which they knew themselves to be perfectly innocent of? When the Government conducted their business on the ordinary principle, and refrained from accusing their predecessors of misdeeds which had never been committed, then the business of the House would proceed smoothly. The fact was, the Government had not yet realised that they had changed seats in the House. Their duty was to transact their business, and—

The PREMIER: And sit by and get "slogged?"

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not say that. So long, however, as the Government made accusations against the late Government, and refused to attempt to prove them, or supply the papers which would enable the Opposition to disprove them, so long would the time of the House be occupied while the Opposition repelled the charges. The Premier had now distinctly formulated a charge that the late Government had, during the late election, appointed persons on the road-gangs for political purposes. He (Mr. Griffith) was Minister for Works at the time, and said that not a single man had ever been put upon a road-party for such a purpose. He did not believe that six men were ever appointed on the road-gangs by him—he did not remember appointing even one. As to the number of votes which were authorised to be operated on during the general election, he challenged the Premier to lay a return upon the House, when it would be seen how far he (Mr. Griffith) had exercised his power for political purposes. Ministers had the papers by which these charges could be disproved, but refused to come forward with them;—they made charges in this vague manner, and were afraid to attempt to prove them; but they must remember that they would not always be in a majority. If they ran away now from the proof, the time would come when the members of the Opposition, or their successors, would displace them, and would be able to show how the present Government had condescended to abuse men who had not the means of disproving their charges. The Opposition were content to wait. They challenged, however, the fullest inquiry. He emphatically denied that a single man had been appointed on a road-party for political purposes during his time, or that a single road-party had been appointed for such a purpose. With respect to the other matter, he had only to add to what the honourable senior member for Maryborough had said—that he also challenged the Minister for Works to prove his words.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that, with the Premier, he had hoped they would

have been able to get to business sooner, and he thought that both honourable gentlemen could have called for the papers for some private night, and had a discussion then;—this course seemed better than obstructing the business and airing their grievances on a Government night. With respect to the challenge, honourable members would recollect, on the occasion of the statement complained of, that the late Colonial Treasurer had imputed corrupt motives to the present holder of the office; and it struck him (Mr. Macrossan), at the time, that probably he and his late colleagues were labouring under the impression that the present Government were subject to influence such as had been used or attempted on the late Government; and he then stated that scarcely any tender of importance had been received by him during the short time he held office without some influence being attempted on him. When he sat down the leader of the Opposition got up, in the high Roman virtue style, and said that no person had thought so meanly of him as to approach him in that way. He (Mr. Macrossan) did not know whether any persons had ever approached the honourable gentleman personally, but they must have his Government. Then the head of the late Government challenged him to state a particular case. He happened, fortunately, to have come fresh from certain papers to which his attention had been called on a question of ballast for Nos. 5 and 6 sections of the Western Railway. He was prepared to prove, that evening, the statement he had then made. He would have preferred to leave the matter alone until the honourable member for Northern Downs was in his place. He had no wish, then or now, to bring anything discreditable upon the late Government or the member for Northern Downs; but as he had been challenged to substantiate that which he could prove from papers he could produce he would do so. There was no running away from charges such as had been alleged by the leader of the Opposition. The statement he made was, that certain tenders were called for Nos. 3 and 4 sections, Western Railway; that one of these tenders for No. 4 was £5,000 lower than another; that the then Minister for Works recommended to his colleagues that Nos. 3 and 4 should be let; and that an Executive minute came up with certain erasures made, and No. 3 section only was let to Bashford and Co. At a future day, an executive minute was presented in more definite terms, recommending that the 4th section should be given to Bashford and Co., although their tender was £5,000 higher than the lowest. He also said that the honourable gentleman's colleagues did not think fit to agree with him, and that on the margin of the Executive minute—which was

blank, as no tender was accepted—were written the words, “Fresh tenders to be called.—G. T.” They were called for, and the successful tenderer was £3,000 below the tender recommended by the then Minister for Works. That statement he was prepared to prove. It was not a small thing.

MR. GRIFFITH: That is a small part of the charge.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was not. He also stated that the Minister for Works was in possession of the detailed estimates of the engineer for the works a week before the tender was accepted. And he stated now, what he did not state then, that this was a thing, he believed, unprecedented in the history of the Works Office. No Minister for Works had any necessity to know what the engineer's estimate was: the Commissioner for Railways himself need not know it. The whole proceeding was secret. The estimate was made out secretly by the engineer, and given by him, under seal, to the Commissioner. It was then deposited in the tender-box and opened along with the tenders, and, until it was opened, it was kept under lock and key, from the prying eyes of any person except the engineer himself. He thought he need not detain the House by saying anything further on the matter, because documentary proof was certainly the best. He made no reckless charges whatever, on Thursday night—his memory served him too well to do so, and, besides, the matter was fresh upon his mind, from having been reading the papers upon this particular case. Tenders were called for, to be deposited in the Works Office on the 2nd October, 1876. On the 23rd September, 1876, the Chief Engineer of the Southern and Western Railway wrote the Commissioner for Railways, as follows:—

“Brisbane, Sept. 23rd, 1876.

“SIR,—As requested in your memo. of 19th inst., I have the honour to submit herewith, for the information of the Honourable the Secretary for Public Works, detailed estimates of the work to be executed under contracts Nos. 3 and 4, as well as an estimate of the probable cost of the permanent way and other materials to be supplied by Government.”

He (the Minister for Works) did not impute motives, but the honourable member for Maryborough had spoken about “undesigned coincidences,” and on reading the engineer's estimate and finding that it agreed, in the total sum, with the tender sent in by Bashford and Co., within £1 2s.—barring the 5 per cent. for contingencies which is usually added, he could not help remarking that this was a very extraordinary “undesigned coincidence.” The detailed estimate was sent in with that memorandum. He was not in a position to prove whether the Minister for Works had actually these things in his pocket; but

this memorandum proved distinctly that they were asked for, and given to him one week before the tenders were deposited. That is one statement he made, and here was the proof. He also said that upon the very same day that the tenders were deposited, the question of ballast, which he decided the other day, had then arisen by Bashford and Co. addressing a letter to the Minister for Works in these terms:—

“Brisbane, October 2nd, 1876.

“The Honourable the Minister for Works, Brisbane.

“Roma Extension Southern and Western Railway.

“SIR,—Referring to contracts Numbers 3 and 4, lodged by me to-day, if my contract should be accepted, I wish it to be understood that the ballast shown by me to the Chief Engineer, Mr. H. C. Stanley, will be accepted; or, if not accepted, that for any ballast which I may cause to be brought from a distance of more than three miles I may be allowed 1s. per yard extra, providing that if a road is laid into the quarry by me that such road shall become the property of the Government, after my contract is completed, at a fair valuation.

“I have, &c.,

GEORGE BASHFORD.”

That was referred to the Engineer to report upon, and his report was as follows:—

“MEMO.—

“I am of opinion that such a stipulation as that contained in this letter should not be entertained, being informal. Any special condition of the kind ought to appear on the face of the tender and schedule, otherwise tenderers are supposed to base their prices upon the terms of the specification.”

H. C. S.”

That was exactly what he carried out, and what he had been called in question for doing, and in connection with which motives had been imputed to him. That was proof second of his statement. He held in his hand the tenders for sections three and four, with the estimated total amounts—he need not read the whole of them; there were four tenders, and he should read the two lowest, and the estimated amount:—“George Bashford and Co., £72,959 13s. 9d., for contract No. 3.” In connection with that he might explain that there was a slight error—whether it was first discovered by an anonymous writer in the *Telegraph*, or by the engineer, he could not say—but there was an error of about £5,000 discovered, and the engineer sent a letter to the Minister for Works respecting it, on the same day as the *Telegraph* had an article upon it. The tender of Neil M'Neil and Son, for No. 4, was £57,099 10s. 3d.; and of Bashford and Co., for No. 3, £72,959 13s. 9d., and for No. 4, £62,483 13s. 1d. Before proceeding to the Executive minute, he might say that the engineer recommended strongly that Bashford and Co.'s tender for sections 3

and 4 should be accepted, and gave reasons for it which would have been very good if tenders had not been called separately, but as they were not called in one block he contended that the lowest tenderer in each case should get the contract—and Ministers, also, held that opinion when they refused to sanction the recommendation of the Minister for Works. The minute was as follows:—

“Brisbane, 13th October, 1878.

“MEMO.—

“Ministers recommend acceptance of the following tenders for the construction of section 3, Western Railway, viz.:—Section 3, Messrs. Bashford and Co.”

The next minute was this:—

“8th November, 1876.

“MEMO.—

“The Secretary for Public Works recommends that the tender of Messrs. George Bashford and Co., for contract No. 4, Western Railway, be accepted.”

The words “Ministers recommend” were added, but there were no signatures, and on the margin were the words “fresh tenders to be called for.—G.T.” Fresh tenders were called for for that section, and, although the successful tenderer was not so low as McNeil and Son, yet he was £3,000 lower than the tender recommended by the then Minister for Works. Now, he would ask, had he made any statement that he could not substantiate? He defied the late Minister for Works, or the honourable member for Maryborough, to say that he ever made a statement in that House that he had not been able to substantiate as well as these. He also stated that he discovered, in reading over the papers, that the gross amount of the Engineer-in-chief was only a few shillings different from the gross amount of Bashford and Co.’s tender for the two sections. The total amount of the two tenders on the Engineer’s estimates was £135,442 4s. 6d., and Messrs. Bashford and Co.’s tender £135,443 6s. 10d.: the difference was about £1 2s.—that was, as he said before, without the 5 per cent. for contingencies. As he had said previously, he quoted this case because it was fresh in his memory, having read papers a week previous in connection with the ballast question; but he had read other papers connected with other tenders, and he found certain tenders which, in his estimation, ought to have been accepted—tenders that were some thousands of pounds lower than those that were accepted. He was prepared to go into this matter now, but he did not desire to prolong the discussion; and if honourable members opposite wished to go into the question they would have sufficient time on private members’ nights to do so, and they should now let the Government get on with the business of the country. These were the statements he

had made on Thursday night, in connection with which the late leader of the Government had challenged him to proof. He had now furnished that proof, and they could put what construction or what explanation upon it they pleased.

Mr. MESTON said he feared there was some danger of a feud arising between the Minister for Works and the leader of the Opposition, as enduring as that between the Orsini and the Colonna, or the Houses of York and Lancaster. With regard to the charge of the late Government making use of road-parties for political purposes, he would point out, before any member of a road-party could vote at an election, he must twelve months previously have had his name placed on the electoral roll. It would be useless to bring men from an electorate in which they had a vote and place them on road-parties in an electorate for which they had no votes;—in fact, the leader of the Government appeared to be cherishing a delusion, and in the words of a great writer, “Those who are making frantic efforts to establish delusions must of necessity fail.”

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the honourable member for Rosewood was likewise under a delusion. The charge was not that road-parties were put on to vote, but that they influenced the votes.

Mr. DOUGLAS, in reply, said he had not anticipated that the Minister for Works would go into figures and papers to-night, but he was satisfied that the statements made to-night were necessarily insufficient. No mere reading of extracts could possibly satisfy the House as to the charge which had been made—namely, that a Minister had recommended the acceptance of a certain tender. No Minister had ever recommended the acceptance of that tender in the way described by the honourable gentleman. Mr. George Thorn never recommended the acceptance of Mr. Bashford’s tender—indeed, he did the reverse, and the tender was accepted on the strong recommendation of the Engineer-in-Chief. But these were matters which must be proved by the persons themselves. The Minister for Works had not shown that, on any occasion, Mr. Thorn had recommended the acceptance of a tender. When this charge was first made it was stated that a tender higher than the lowest had been accepted. The honourable gentleman, before making a statement of that kind, ought to have consulted his officers upon it, and no doubt their explanation of the papers would have amply justified the action that took place. The lowest tenderer was a person named Neil McNeil, and on inquiring it was ascertained that Mr. McNeil had been permanently disqualified from the acceptance of Government contracts in the colony of Victoria. Reference having been made to Victoria in connection with this

very tender—he was personally conversant with the facts, they having come under his notice—it was decided that they could not accept a tender from a gentleman who had been disqualified by a neighbouring Government. He was aware that the Premier had occasionally given expression to a different opinion; but however that might be they knew nothing of the character of Mr. McNeil, and, having before them the fact that he had been permanently disqualified by the Government of Victoria, they would have exceeded their duty had they accepted his tender. In this matter the honour of our public men was at stake, and this bad practice of loosely making accusations which could not be substantiated must be put an end to. In this matter the accusers must be brought to book, first by having all the documents laid on the table, and then, if necessary, by the examination of the persons concerned. Mr. Thorn was incapable of doing anything mean, corrupt, or dastardly, as this would have been, and he was willing to believe that the accusation had been made carelessly. The Minister for Works had really discovered a mare's nest—he had got hold of some papers, half of which had not been explained to him, and upon that he had made a charge before the whole of Queensland that Mr. George Thorn was capable of corrupt actions. He did not think the people of the colony would believe anything of the kind. The honourable gentleman was greatly to blame in having thus loosely brought forward a charge without having taken the proper means to substantiate it by inquiry, and he (Mr. Douglas) would undertake to disprove the accusation by documentary evidence, and, if necessary, by the examination of the officers concerned at the bar of the House. He begged to withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. MESTON asked the Minister for Lands—

"1. How many Land Commissioners are employed in connection with the Lands Department, and what salaries do they receive?"

"2. How many chief clerks are there in the Lands and Survey Departments, and what salaries do they receive?"

"3. Is it the intention of the Government to appoint Mr. Tully as Surveyor-General?"

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied—

In answer to questions 1 and 2, I beg to refer the honourable member to the Estimates for 1878-9.

3. The intentions of the Government will be disclosed at the proper time.

SUPPLY.

The SPEAKER read the portion of the Governor's Speech addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

The PREMIER moved—

That the House will, to-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Question put and passed.

FINANCIAL DISTRICTS BILL.

On the PREMIER moving that the House go into Committee of the Whole, to consider the desirableness of the introduction of a Bill to Provide for the Division of the Colony into Districts for Financial Purposes,

Mr. SCOTT said that, before taking his seat as Chairman of Committees, he wished to return thanks for the honour done him in electing him Chairman of Committees of the Whole House, and to say that he should endeavour to the best of his ability to perform the duties of that office with fairness and impartiality. He trusted that, while in the chair, he should obtain the countenance and assistance not only of those who voted for him, but also of those who thought it their duty to vote against him on the occasion of his election to that responsible post.

The House then affirmed in Committee of the Whole the desirableness of introducing a Bill to Divide the Colony into Financial Districts.

The Bill was read a first time, and made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

MINES REGULATION BILL.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the House affirmed, in Committee, the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the better Regulation and Inspection of Mines and Collieries.

The Bill was then introduced and read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

DIVISIONAL BOARDS BILL.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House, in Committee, affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for Local Government outside the boundaries of Municipalities.

The Bill was then introduced, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ELECTORAL ROLLS BILL.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House, in Committee, affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Laws relating to Parliamentary Elections.

The Bill was then introduced, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

LICENSING BOARDS BILL.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House, in Committee, affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend

the Publicans Act of 1863, so far as relates to the granting of Licenses and for other Purposes.

The Bill was then introduced, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

CRIMINALS EXPULSION BILL.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House, in Committee, affirmed the desirableness of introducing a Bill to prevent the Influx of Foreign and other Criminals to Queensland.

The Bill was then introduced, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS BILL.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House affirmed, in Committee of the Whole, the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the Sale of Food and Drugs in a Pure State.

The Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order for the following day.

STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The PREMIER moved—That the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Stamp Duties Act of 1866.

Mr. DICKSON said it was his intention to call the attention of the House to a question of privilege as to the manner in which this Bill was introduced, but he thought it would be better to defer his remarks until the Bill was called on for the second reading, by which time honourable members would have read it. If it was a Bill to increase taxation he should raise an objection to its coming down to the House by message from His Excellency the Governor, instead of emanating in a resolution of a Committee of the Whole House. It was a matter which they could all discuss, and he had made these few remarks because he intended to raise a question of privilege upon it.

Question put and passed.

The desirability of introducing the Bill was affirmed in Committee, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order for the following day.

JOINT COMMITTEES.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the following honourable members were nominated members of the Joint Committees of the two Houses:—

For the Library Committee: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Douglas, and Mr. Ambhurst.

Refreshment Management Committee: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Morehead, and Mr. Tyrel.

Parliamentary Buildings Committee: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Stevens, and Mr. Griffith.

The nominations to be communicated to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

QUEENSLAND COAST ISLANDS BILL— SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the Bill he proposed to read a second time was a very short one, and its object was known to most honourable members, and to the members of the late Government especially. It followed as a sequence to despatches which had been received from the Imperial Government on the subject of annexing certain islands in Torres Straits. He could not explain the object of the Bill better than by reading the preamble:—

“Whereas by letters patent under the great seal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland bearing date the tenth October in the forty-second year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria her said Majesty did authorise the Governor for the time being of the colony of Queensland by proclamation under his hand and the public seal of the colony to declare that from and after a day to be therein mentioned certain islands which are described in the schedule hereto shall be annexed to and form part of the said colony And in the said letters patent it was provided that the said Governor is not to issue such proclamation as aforesaid until the legislature of the said colony shall have passed a law providing that the said islands shall on the day aforesaid become part of the said colony and subject to the laws in force therein And in the said letters patent it was also provided that the application of the said laws to the said islands might be modified either by such proclamation as aforesaid or by any law or laws to be from time to time passed by the legislature of this colony for the government of the said islands so annexed And whereas it is desirable that the said islands shall be annexed to and form part of the said colony of Queensland.”

That proclamation, he might state for the information of honourable members, was brought out after a long correspondence between the Imperial authorities and the then Ministry of the colony. It was then deemed desirable—and he quite agreed with the opinions expressed by the leader of the late Ministry—that the islands in the Torres Straits lying outside the present jurisdiction of the colony—that was to say, at more than sixty miles from the coast—should be brought within the boundary. Many of those islands, it was very well known, had become the resort of criminals from all parts of the world—a lawless set of men under no jurisdiction, except the nominal one of the Imperial Commissioner for the Pacific, the Governor of Fiji, Sir Arthur Gordon, which was to all intents and purposes none whatever. It had been considered desirable that those

islands should be brought under the jurisdiction of Queensland, but the proclamation, the preamble of which he had read, was entirely dependent on the legislature passing an Act to bring it into force. The Bill, therefore, only contained one clause, namely—

“From and after such day as His Excellency the Governor of Queensland shall by such proclamation under his hand and the public seal of the colony as is authorised by the said letters patent mention and appoint for that purpose the Islands described in the schedule hereto shall be annexed to and become part of the Colony of Queensland and shall be and become subject to the laws in force therein.”

He did not wish the House to pass even the second reading of the Bill without understanding that the annexation of these islands entailed some expense upon the colony, as it would be ridiculous to suppose they could assert a right over the islands without taking steps to enforce our laws there. It was absolutely necessary that the Government should have a cruiser there, both for the repression of violence on the part of the natives and for the enforcement of the law on the many people of all nations congregated on those islands. Those things had been, no doubt, well weighed by the previous Government before they recommended the annexation. He agreed to the full extent with what had been done, though he could have wished that the Island of Sabai had been left out. Under the proclamation, however, they could not draw a line, but must take all or none. The island to which he referred lay too close to the Island of New Guinea, and there was a probability they might be brought into unpleasant contact with the inhabitants there, who were credited with a taste for human flesh. That was a remote contingency, which he felt it was his duty to mention to the House. If the House agreed to pass this small Bill, it would, to some extent, become necessary that the Government should keep a cruiser. Believing that the Bill would pass without objection, as the Ministry of the day were in favour of it and the previous Ministry brought it to the condition in which it now stood, the Ministry had purchased the schooner formerly engaged in the survey of the coast, the *Pearl*, at a very fair, or even low, price, with the intention of sending her out there should the Bill pass. She would be manned and armed sufficiently to enforce law and order. Although there would be some charge upon the colony, he might state that the income derived from Thursday Island as a Customs port—which income would be considerably augmented by revenue derived from those islands—would more than treble, as far as they could judge, the expense. The present Customs receipts averaged

£4,000 a-year, while the expense of the cruiser in round numbers, after purchase and outfit, would be—master, £200; mate, £120; four seamen, cook, and provisions. That, as far as he could arrive at it, would be the expenditure the country would be called upon to provide. He had pleasure in recommending the House to pass the Bill, and, without further remarks, would move that it be read a second time.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he had no objection to the Bill becoming law, and it was worth notice that on this occasion the Imperial Government had recognised more fully than previously the right of the colony itself to have a voice in the annexation of territory. On previous occasions they had not been consulted, but in this instance the proclamation was made contingent on the legislation of this colony. That marked an important change in the policy of the Imperial Government toward the Australian Colonies, no doubt to be traced to the events of a few years back. It was a matter for serious consideration whether they could not decline the responsibility of taking Sabai, but with the rest of the measure he entirely agreed. It was, however, his duty to call attention to what appeared to him to be a serious invasion of the privilege of the House in the mode in which it had been introduced—by message from the Governor. The Constitution Act provided that all measures requiring expenditure from Consolidated Revenue should be introduced at the instance of the Governor; and that no Bill authorising expenditure should be introduced until the expenditure or appropriation of money had been first recommended by the Governor during the same session. By the Standing Orders of the House, the House considered, in Committee, the desirableness of introducing the Bill. Thus a Message was first sent by the Governor recommending the appropriation, and then the deliberate consideration of the House, in Committee, took place as to whether the Bill should be introduced. If carried in the affirmative, the Bill was then introduced. There had not been any resolution of the House with reference to this Bill. The Standing Orders ran thus—

“214. Every Bill shall be ordered to be brought in upon motion made and question put that leave be given to bring in such a Bill, unless such Bill shall have been directed to be brought in by resolution of the House.

“215. Every Bill shall be ordered to be prepared and brought in by one or more members named by the House.

“216. Every Bill not prepared to the order of leave, or according to the rules and orders of the House, will be ordered to be withdrawn.

“217. A Bill shall be presented by a member.”

All those Standing Orders had been violated by the way in which this Bill had been introduced. New members might

think this was to some extent a matter of form, but it was really a matter of substance. It was an acknowledged principle that the House could not be interfered with by any authority outside the House. The Representative of Her Majesty could recommend an appropriation, but beyond that he had no authority, conferred either by the Constitution or by the Standing Orders, to introduce measures. The idea of a Bill being so introduced had never been even suggested in England, and such a practice was entirely unknown to the Imperial Parliament. He had looked in this colony for a precedent, but as far as he was aware there was only one, which occurred in 1876. Reference had been made to the case of the 19th September, 1866, when four money Bills were sent down—"Additional Customs," "Stamp Duties," "Additional Treasury Bills," and "Government Treasury Notes" Bills. Those were introduced by message from the Governor, and were read a first time then. But they were all money Bills, properly introduced by message from the Governor, and formed no precedent of any use whatever in this case. He could not say what took place between then and 1872; but from the latter date no Bills were so introduced until 1876, when two Bills—"the Victoria Bridge" and the "Members' Expenses" Bills—were introduced on the 14th September, and ordered to be read a first time: they were both money Bills. A day or two afterwards the honourable gentleman who was lately Minister for Justice, one of the oldest members of the House, and whose opinion was much valued in such cases, took objection that the Bills could not be introduced in that way, and pointed out that they must be introduced in Committee. In consequence of that objection the Bills were both discharged from the paper. He found that on the 26th September—

"Mr. Thompson objecting that the motion was not in order, inasmuch as there had been no previous compliance with the 18th section of the Constitution Act, the Speaker gave it as his opinion that the point of order was premature until it had been seen what course would be taken by the Committee of the Whole House, were the question of introducing such a Bill referred to the Committee."

A debate ensued, and Mr. Thompson's objection was allowed to be valid. On the 27th September, on the motion of Mr. Thorn, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee. The Chairman reported the resolution to the House, when—

"Mr. Thompson objecting that if this Bill were so introduced, the provisions of the 18th section of the Constitution Act would not have been complied with, which provides that it shall not be lawful for this House to originate any Bill for the appropriation of any part of the Consolidated Revenue which shall not first have been recommended by a message of the Gover-

nor, and asking the ruling of the Speaker whether the message of the 14th instant, transmitting a similar Bill which had since been discharged from the paper, could be held to apply to the Bill now proposed to be introduced, the Speaker said that, although he could find no precedent to guide him, he was of opinion that as the Bill transmitted by the message in question had been discharged from the paper, the proposed Bill should either be introduced by another message from the Governor, or after the necessary appropriation had been recommended by message.

On that occasion it was held that the introduction of the Bill was not in order, and that not only was it necessary there should be a resolution of the Committee of the Whole House, but that there should be a fresh message. These were the only precedents that could be found in the colony bearing upon the subject. There was no precedent in this colony, and none that he knew of in Great Britain, for May's Practice was silent, as to introducing a Bill which was not a money bill otherwise than in the ordinary form. This was an important matter; it was quite conceivable that a Bill might thus be brought before the House which the House would have declined to allow to be introduced. Their Standing Orders embodied great principles, and it was desirable that the forms of the House should be complied with. He therefore felt it his duty to raise the point. The usual forms had been dispensed with in this instance, and the Bill had been introduced without the necessary notice. He remembered a case where the House had refused to allow a Bill to be brought in.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, without going back to the dark ages he thought that if he had followed a bad precedent it had been one laid down by the late Attorney-General, when in 1878 he introduced a Bill precisely similar in character to the one before the House in the same way as this was being brought in. He found that on the 9th May, 1878, a message was received for the introduction of a Bill to provide for the Construction of Drains and Sewers in South Brisbane.

Mr. GRIFFITH: That was a money Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was a money Bill, as this was incidentally a money Bill. This Bill would involve the expenditure of money, although there was not a word about money in it. The Bill was thrown out on its merits—not on a point of order, but on a division by 19 to 16. If he had gone wrong, he had only followed the bad example of the late Attorney-General. He should leave the question entirely to the Speaker.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that in the case referred to, in 1878, the correct practice was followed; the Bill was recommended by message, was considered in

Committee, and the Committee affirmed the desirability of introducing it, and it was then introduced.

Mr. DOUGLAS, speaking to the question of order, said the assertion made by the Colonial Secretary—that it involved the expenditure of money—would apply to all Bills; there was hardly a Bill brought under the notice of the House which did not involve some expenditure of money; and, if so, then all Bills should be introduced by message; but, unless there was a specific reference to the raising of money, the ordinary course would be to introduce in the way described by the senior member for North Brisbane.

The SPEAKER: With reference to the point of order raised by the senior honourable member for North Brisbane, I understand it to be that our Standing Order 214 provides that no Bill shall be brought in except upon a motion or by a resolution of the Committee of the House. The Standing Order is certainly precise, but it will at once strike everybody that it does not refer in any way to Bills received by message from the Legislative Council. During every session we have Bills originated by the Council sent here and accepted without leave being first obtained, thereby clearly showing that the 214 Standing Order does not affect the privileges of the Legislative Council with regard to the introduction of Bills here without leave being first obtained. It is consequently evident that, as the Legislative Council has this privilege, the Crown, also, may have a like privilege. With reference to the distinction drawn by the senior member for North Brisbane as to the introduction of money Bills and those which are not money Bills, I may point out that, in the beginning of Parliamentary Government here, it was not the custom to send down money Bills; but it was customary to bring down a message for the necessary appropriation. The objection seems to me to be on a technical ground. We are bound to receive a message from the Crown on any subject. In admitting this Bill it seems to me that the Crown does directly that which it might have done indirectly, since every Bill which is introduced by Ministers would first have to receive the sanction of the Executive Council;—there is therefore not sufficient ground for ruling that the Crown cannot introduce a Bill in the absence of any express enactment. The law to which the honourable member has referred with respect to money Bills does not appear to limit the Crown from recommending other Bills. I certainly should not think of giving a ruling which would restrict, on purely technical grounds, the privilege of the Crown of referring matters to this House. There is no substantial difference between a recommendation to consider a particular subject, a Bill dealing with it

being introduced shortly after, and a message direct from the Crown enclosing a Bill. In the absence of any express authority declaring that such course is forbidden, I see nothing to prevent the course adopted in this instance being sanctioned.

Mr. DOUGLAS, speaking to the general question, said that the Colonial Secretary had stated all that was necessary in explaining the scope of the Bill. It was very desirable it itself that certain islands close to the Queensland coast should be incorporated, and the boundary proposed in the Bill was much beyond that at present in force. Sixty miles from their shores was a somewhat indefinite distance, and, therefore, the boundary proposed was better for every purpose. He noticed that it included Murray, Darnley, Talbot, Deliverance, and Sabai Islands, which were near the coast of New Guinea. It was not likely, however, that they would get into hot-water by embracing those islands; it was not likely that their incorporation would interfere with any number of natives, though a few from New Guinea resorted to Sabai and Talbot islands. There were good and fertile islands on our coast which it was desirable to incorporate; and in reference to the report that a band of Italians were on their way to colonise New Guinea, he might suggest that here was an opening for the Colonial Secretary to make a good bargain. For an advance party one of the islands named was more suitable than the coast of New Guinea. The islands were really eligible sites for a colonising party, and the same might be said of many others still unoccupied. Inducements might very well be held out to people to occupy some of them, and he was quite sure, if the information was made known generally that they could be occupied, that many persons would be found who would take up their residence on them. With regard to the cruiser which had been purchased, she would be sufficient for all present purposes; but the "Pearl" was not a smart sailer, and it would probably be found desirable to have a smart schooner, or a screw steamer like the "Ellangowan" or the "Laura." In the meantime, the "Pearl" would do the work very well, but he did not think it would be for long. He had much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The question was put and passed, and the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

IMPOUNDING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was very short, but still it was one of very considerable importance in dealing with this question. It had been introduced almost entirely on the recommendation of the Inspector of Brands, who had been asked to model a Bill of this sort by many persons

who found how much need there was for the provisions it contained. They had now Inspectors of Brands under the Act of 1872, but they had no authority to inspect pounds. This was an anomaly which was known to all members, and especially country members. This Bill made provision that the Inspectors of Brands should be Inspectors of Pounds; and also that in the case of indistinct brands such brands should be clipped. This, he was informed, was frequently neglected by poundkeepers, and the consequence was that wrong brands were given, and cattle that would otherwise be reclaimed by the owners were sold. It provided also for the sending of notices of impounding by telegram. The same objection might be taken to this Bill as was taken to the last—that it would necessitate expenditure. There was no mention of any expenditure in the Bill; but some slight expense would have to take place under it, as there must under almost any Bill that could be introduced; but the ruling of the Speaker in regard to the previous Bill would apply equally to this. He moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not intend to offer any opposition to this Bill, but he thought that when they were amending the impounding law they should do so in a substantial manner, and not in this way. The anomalies intended to be met by this Bill were trifling compared with others that existed under the present law. The late Government never had time to attend to the matter under the circumstances in which they were placed and the opposition they had to encounter. At present a grazier or freeholder could impound off unenclosed land, but selectors could not, and that, he thought, was an anomaly not very creditable to the statute book;—where it came from most members knew. He thought this was a fair opportunity for dealing with the whole subject, and regretted that the Government had not taken advantage of it in introducing the Bill.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the honourable the leader of the Opposition had anticipated his remarks, to some extent. When canvassing in his electorate, the selectors complained very much of the operation of one of the clauses of the Alienation Act of 1876—he thought it was clause 86. They said that people could bring their cattle and eat up their grass, but they could not impound because the land was not enclosed. Perhaps that clause could be repealed in committee. It would certainly give great satisfaction and remove a great deal of heartburning if it were repealed, and he thought this was a favourable opportunity of doing so.

Mr. McLEAN was disappointed with the Bill. The honourable member for Too-

woomba took action, last session, with a view to introducing a Bill on this subject, but it never came before the House, and he was sorry for it. There was a very strong feeling with respect to the present Act; and he had had occasion to try its operation. He was not aware of the Amending Act enabling freeholders to impound cattle off unenclosed lands, and he tried a case at Beenleigh, and lost it. It was rather anomalous that two classes of persons, squatters and freeholders, were allowed to impound off unenclosed lands, and that selectors were not. He hoped the Government would deal with that part of the question in Committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it seemed rather absurd for an honourable member who ardently supported the passing of the Act of 1876 to get up and cavil at one of its clauses. No doubt it was a hardship that selectors were not allowed to impound off unenclosed lands, but who was to blame for that? The present Government and their supporters opposed the Act of 1876, and it was strongly supported by honourable gentlemen opposite, including the late Minister for Lands.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I did?

Mr. MOREHEAD said the leader of the Opposition had been so many things that he did not know when he was attacked, but no doubt he thought he deserved every attack. He (Mr. Morehead) thought this was a step in the right direction, and he quite agreed with the remarks of the honourable member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan); but he doubted whether the amendment that honourable member suggested could be made in Committee.

Question put and passed; and the commitment of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS DURING RECESS BILL—SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said a very few words would serve to explain the object of this Bill. By clause six of the Legislative Assembly Act it was provided that—

“If any member of the Assembly shall accept of any office of profit or pension from the Crown during pleasure or for term of years his election shall be thereupon and is hereby declared to be void and a writ shall forthwith issue for a new election.”

On examining the Act to ascertain what power the Speaker had to issue a writ for a new election in a vacancy created in this way, it was found that, unless a vacancy had been caused by death or resignation, the Speaker had no power whatever, and the seat could only be declared vacant by a resolution of the House. This was provided for by clause 10 of the Act. Cases might easily occur where a seat might become vacant without either death

or resignation of the member, and the House would meet without a member for a particular district. It had been the practice for the Speaker to issue a writ in such cases, but such a proceeding was evidently contrary to law. In order to remedy that defect this Bill, which was nearly a transcript of the English statute on the subject, had been introduced, and he moved that it be read a second time.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he fully agreed with the Premier that the Bill was necessary. Although it had been the practice to issue writs during the recess, it was clearly unauthorised by the Legislative Assembly Act. This Bill was substantially a transcript from the Imperial Act; but he saw two or three days ago, in "May" or "Todd," or some other work on Parliamentary practice, a statement that the law in England was qualified by a provision that the Speaker should not issue a writ in the event where a member's seat was petitioned against and claimed. This was a matter which deserved consideration, because, supposing a member's seat was petitioned against and claimed, it would be very unfair that a new writ should be issued. Before the Bill went into committee, he would endeavour to find the earlier statute containing the provision to which he had referred. In a measure of this kind, both sides of the House were concerned in making it as perfect as possible.

Mr. SCOTT asked whether, in the event of the death or resignation of the Speaker, the Governor would have the power of issuing writs in the same manner as the Speaker issued them at present?

The PREMIER replied that that was provided for in the Bill.

Question put and passed, and the committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

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